

**ECOSYSTEMIC FACTORS AFFECTING COMPREHENSIVE  
SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN JUNIOR GRADES IN ZIMBABWE**

**By**

**MUKAU KENNETH**

**THESIS submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree**

**DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

**(PhD)**

**in Psychology of Education**

**in the**

**School of Education Studies**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**at the**

**UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE**

**QWAQWA**

**Supervisor: Dr. HJ Nichols**

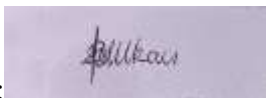
**November 2023**

## DECLARATION

I, MUKAU KENNETH declare that:

- (i) This thesis that I herewith submit at the University of the Free State is my independent work and I have not previously submitted it for qualification at another institution of higher education.
- (ii) I am aware that the copyright is vested in the University of the Free State.
- (iii) All royalties as regards to intellectual property developed during the course of and/or in connection with the study at the University of the Free State will accrue to the University.
- (iv) I am aware that the research may only be published with the Dean's approval.

Signed:



Date: 21.11.2023

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DEDICATION**

I dedicate this Thesis to my late mother, Patricia. Her infinite belief in me and my ability has taken me this far. I cherish the values and ethos I learned from her. Mother, you have always been my fortress, my hero, and my pillar of strength!

My heartfelt thanks to the following people for their contributions to this study: First, and foremost, I would like to express my profound gratitude to The Most High and Sovereign God, our Heavenly Father, had it not been for His sufficient grace, I could have done none of this (2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV – “And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness...”).

To my supervisor and my inspiration, Dr. H.J Nichols, I am overwhelmingly grateful for your immeasurable patience, support, encouragement, and motivational speeches throughout the study. Your faith in me is awe-inspiring. I will forever be thankful for your presence in my life, you are such an inspiration!

To the administrators, teachers, and parents who consented to participate in the study, thumbs up to you. Without you, this study would have been a flop.

A special thanks to Uncle John, all my relatives, colleagues, and friends, for all your love, encouragement, and support. Thank you for believing in me.

Special thanks to my personal people: my wife Tabeth and my three kids (Praise, Worship, and King G), for the opportunity to do this for your love and support when I just wanted to give up, and for your patience when I was busy working on this research.

Lastly, I would like to thank the University of the Free State for your financial support. Without this support, the study would not have been possible.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the ecosystemic factors affecting Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in junior grades in Zimbabwe. Particular interest has been placed on a variety of factors affecting CSE including the attitudes and perceptions of school administrators, teachers, and parents, and strategies to help promote successful CSE implementation. At this time, child marriages, sexual abuse, and early pregnancy cases are on the rise in the country. This can be attributed to the ineffective implementation of CSE.

This study adopted a qualitative approach and was guided by the interpretive paradigm underpinned by the assumption that reality is socially constructed. What is more, it allowed for the capturing and interpretation of unique attitudes and feelings of school administrators, teachers, and parents towards the implementation of CSE. Since the topic has no pre-determined outcomes, an exploratory case study design was apt to use. Two data collection tools were triangulated and these are semi-structured interviews and documents, and the collected data was analysed using the thematic analysis method. Urie Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological theory and the transformative education theory by Paulo Freire were the two theoretical frameworks informing the study.

Fifteen participants made up the sample and these were three school administrators, six junior-grade teachers, and six parents with junior-grade children. Even with the positive attitudes and perceptions from these participants, the study revealed that CSE was not being effectively taught to junior-grade learners principally owing to several ecosystemic factors. These included but were not limited to the absence of clear-cut policies on the CSE curriculum for junior-grade learners, the existence of diverse cultural and religious beliefs, the lack of resources and proper training in CSE, and so on.

The study recommended an active all-stakeholder involvement in the formulation of the junior grades CSE curriculum. This will help create a sense of ownership of the CSE program amongst parents, school administrators, teachers, learners, and the community at large. Additionally, in-service training of both school administrators and the teaching personnel coupled with the provision of teaching and learning resources on CSE for teachers was also recommended.

**KEY WORDS:** Comprehensive Sexuality Education; sexuality; ecosystemic factors; junior grades

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DEDICATION .....	ii
ABSTRACT .....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xi
LIST OF TABLES .....	xii
ABBREVIATIONS .....	xiii
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Concept Clarification .....	4
1.2.1 Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).....	4
1.2.2 Sexuality Education .....	4
1.2.3 Ecosystemic Factors .....	5
1.2.4 Junior Grade .....	5
1.3 Problem Statement .....	5
1.4 Rationale.....	6
1.5 Objectives of the Study .....	7
1.6 Research Question .....	7
1.7 Research Methods and Design .....	8
1.7.1 Research Approach .....	8

1.7.2 Research Paradigm.....	8
1.7.3 Research Design .....	9
1.8 Sample and Sampling Procedure .....	9
1.9 Data Collection .....	10
1.9.1 Semi-Structured Interviews .....	10
1.9.2 Documents .....	11
1.10 Data Analysis .....	12
1.11 Trustworthiness and Credibility .....	14
1.12 Ethical considerations .....	15
1.13 Preliminary Literature Review .....	16
1.14 Theoretical Framework .....	20
1.14.1 The Socio-Ecological Model .....	20
1.14.2 Freire’s Transformative Theory .....	22
1.15 Outline of the Study .....	23
1.16 Conclusion .....	25
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>26</b>
2.0 Introduction.....	26
2.1 CSE and its relevance to junior grades in Zimbabwe .....	26
2.1.1 The concept of CSE .....	26
2.1.2 Concepts to be covered in CSE.....	27
2.1.3 Relevance of CSE to junior grades in Zimbabwe .....	31
2.2 Policies governing CSE implementation .....	36

2.2.1 International policies on CSE .....	36
2.2.2 CSE in the African context.....	39
2.2.3 CSE in Zimbabwe .....	43
<b>2.3 Effects of ecosystemic factors on CSE implementation.....</b>	<b>46</b>
2.3.1 Family’s attitudes and perceptions towards implementation of CSE.....	47
2.3.2 Effects of the family’s culture towards implementation of CSE .....	49
2.3.3 The effects of administrators’ attitudes and perceptions towards CSE implementation .....	53
2.3.4 Teachers’ perceptions and attitude toward CSE implementation .....	54
2.3.5 Lack of government support.....	56
2.3.6 Social Opposition .....	57
<b>2.4 Strategies for promoting effective implementation of CSE in schools .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>2.5 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>3.0 Introduction.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>3.1 The Socio-Ecological Model .....</b>	<b>63</b>
3.1.1 The Microsystem .....	65
3.1.2 The Mesosystem .....	68
3.1.3 The Exosystem.....	69
3.1.4 The Macrosystem .....	70
3.1.5 The Chronosystem .....	71
<b>3.2 Freire’s critical pedagogy .....</b>	<b>73</b>
3.2.1 The banking system of education in relation vs CSE .....	74
3.2.2 Change in curriculum planning process .....	76
3.2.3 Change in role of teachers and learners .....	77

3.3 Conclusion .....	80
<b>CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>82</b>
4.0 Introduction.....	82
4.1 The Research Approach .....	82
4.2 Research Paradigm.....	84
4.3 Research Design .....	86
4.4 Population .....	88
4.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure.....	88
4.5.1 Purposive Sampling.....	88
4.5.2 Convenience Sampling.....	90
4.6 The Sample .....	91
4.7 Data Collection .....	91
4.7.1 Interviews.....	92
4.7.2 Document analysis .....	94
4.8 Data Analysis .....	96
4.9 Participant selection and data collection setting.....	98
4.10 Trustworthiness.....	100
4.10.1 Credibility .....	100
4.10.2 Transferability .....	101
4.10.3 Confirmability.....	101
4.10.4 Dependability .....	101
4.11 Ethical Consideration .....	102

4.12 Conclusion .....	103
<b>CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>105</b>
5.0 Introduction.....	105
5.1 Research setting and participants .....	105
5.2 Section A: General profile and characteristics of the respondents and documents .....	107
5.3 Research Results.....	114
5.3.1 Theme 1: Knowledge and understanding of CSE .....	114
5.3.2 Theme 2: Hindrances to effective CSE implementation and their effects .....	126
5.3.3 CSE policies in place .....	142
5.3.4 Promotion of CSE in schools .....	145
5.3.5 Content covered in CSE .....	156
5.4 Conclusion .....	164
<b>CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>165</b>
6.0 Introduction.....	165
6.1 Chapter Summaries.....	165
6.2 Findings of the Study.....	168
6.2.1 Knowledge and understanding of CSE .....	168
6.2.2 Hindrances to effective CSE implementation and their effects .....	169
6.2.3 Strategies to improve CSE program implementation .....	171
6.2.4 Suggestions on other strategies to improve CSE .....	172
6.3 Discussion of findings and answering of questions .....	174
6.4 Contribution to the body of knowledge.....	176

<b>6.5 Recommendations for Future Research.....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>6.6 Limitations of the Study.....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>6.7 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE .....</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: PERMISSION TO CARRY THE STUDY .....</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANTS CONSENT FORMS.....</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>APPENDIX 5: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE .....</b>	<b>208</b>
<b>APPENDIX 6: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE .....</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>APPENDIX 7: RELEVANT PARAGRAPHS FROM INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS, INSTRUMENTS AND STANDARDS THAT ARE OF RELEVANCE TO COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION ARE QUOTED BELOW:.....</b>	<b>210</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner’s theory (Guy-Evan, 2020)</i> .....	64
<i>Figure 3: Participants distribution by percentage</i> .....	91
<i>Figure 2: Data collection instrument</i> .....	92
<i>Figure 4: Participants’ distribution by school</i> .....	99
<i>Figure 5: strategies to ensure trustworthiness</i> .....	100
<i>Figure 6: Summary of participants’ age groups</i> .....	113

## LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table 1: The CSE sub-categories</i> .....	29
<i>Table 2: Some key issues children will learn</i> .....	30
<i>Table 3: Participant selection and data collection setting</i> .....	99
<i>Table 4: Summary of teachers' biographical information</i> .....	112
<i>Table 5: Summary of parents' biographical information</i> .....	112
<i>Table 6: Themes and sub-themes from the data</i> .....	114
<i>Table 7: Sub-themes to knowledge and understanding of CSE</i> .....	115

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

**CSE:** Comprehensive Sexuality Education

**UNICEF:** United Nations International Children’s Fund

**UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

**WHO:** World Health Organization

**ITGS:** International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education

**SIDA:** Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

**UNFPA** United Nations Family Planning Agency:

**SRHR:** Sexual Reproductive Health Rights

**HIV:** Human Immune Virus

**AIDS:** Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

**GoZ:** Government of Zimbabwe

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Introduction

In 2015, Zimbabwe underwent a significant curriculum update, incorporating Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) into its revised educational framework. This addition is relatively recent, and as such, the program encounters numerous challenges in its implementation, particularly influenced by various ecosystemic factors. This chapter serves as a comprehensive overview of the study, commencing with an exploration of the background that necessitates the research. It includes a survey of preliminary literature relevant to Comprehensive Sexuality Education, highlighting existing knowledge gaps and issues. Additionally, the theoretical framework underpinning the study is expounded upon. This chapter further outlines the chosen methodology, encompassing the processes of data gathering and analysis. By presenting these key elements, this introduction establishes a foundation for the subsequent chapters, providing a roadmap for the study's progression.

## 1.1 Background

Sexuality education has a long history in the United States (US), Western European countries, and the global South (Brown, 2018). Over the years, it has been evolving in response to societal changes (Guttmacher, 2020). However, the focus on sexuality education continues to be influenced by societal norms, values, and the prevailing political climate in a country (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency [SIDA], 2016). In Zimbabwe, traditionally, discussions about sexual matters were considered taboo, and adolescents in many cultures were not provided with information on sexual issues (Mahoso, 2020; Ngara, 2019; Amnesty International, 2018). Such education, when provided, was the responsibility of parents, and was often delayed until just before marriage.

Sexuality education began as 'Education, Information, and Communication' and was known as 'Family Life Education', 'Population Education', and 'Life Skills Education' in countries like

Britain and France (Browes, 2018; Browne, 2018). This shift towards sexuality education has been driven by institutions such as the United Nations Family Planning Agency (UNFPA) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (Ketting & Ivanova, 2018). These organisations established interventions, typically centred on short-term mass media campaigns on specific topics, as well as developing curricula for schools, primarily focused on behavioural changes concerning reproduction rather than the social aspect (United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2018). The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2017) suggests that educational programs in schools, aiming to bring about health-related behaviour change, increased rapidly due to heightened attention to adolescent health and the surge in HIV/AIDS in the 1980s.

As noted by Barr et al. (2014), there was a wide-ranging vision on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), and thus, sexuality education emerged in the 1990s resulting in the increase in attention for adolescents, and young women in particular. Hence the realisation of additional comprehensive, and open-minded global assertions on gender, sex and reproduction at gatherings like the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994. Against the aforesaid, various organisations and donors took a stand to render support resulting in the sprouting of more comprehensive and rights-based sexuality education programs (Ketting & Ivanova, 2018). Nevertheless, an International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE) document was published and it provided the first intricate international standard for sexuality education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2017).

For the period between the 1970s and 1980s, the official inclusion of sexuality education in most schools in some parts Europe happen together with significant societal shifts. The widespread adoption of the contraception pill, the legalisation of abortion, and the emergence of HIV/AIDS in the early 1980s collectively underscored the imperative for sexuality education, emphasizing safe sex practices and the use of condoms (Ketting & Ivanova, 2017; Barr et al., 2014). According to Fairfield & Charman (2022), the 1980s witnessed the integration of sexual violence prevention into sexuality education programs. Generally, CSE initiatives during this period primarily focused on curbing the transmission of sexually transmitted infections and preventing teenage pregnancies. Over the past few decades, particularly in North-Western countries, CSE programs have evolved

to address contemporary challenges such as the influence of the digital sphere, sexual pleasure, online sexual behaviours like sexting and grooming, and the impact of pornography (Barr et al., 2014).

Regarding Zimbabwe, there are no clear-cut policies on CSE in the country (Mahoso, 2020; Muridzo, 2017; UNESCO, 2018). CSE was not included in the curriculum until the recent introduction of the updated Curriculum in 2015. Within this updated curriculum, elements of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) were integrated into the subject of Guidance and Counselling, and life skills orientation, marking the initial incorporation of CSE-related topics (Amnesty International, 2018). As a result, the history of CSE in Zimbabwe can be traced primarily through the lens of the Guidance and Counselling subject.

Prior to independence in 1980, planned school guidance counselling services were not available for African children in Zimbabwe (Muridzo, 2017). Such services were primarily designated for former white schools. For the black population, guidance counselling was typically administered by missionaries in mission schools and occasionally by elders who offered informal advice (Mapfumo, 2017). Ngara (2019) asserts that it was only after independence that the significant expansion of secondary school education led to an increased demand for guidance and counselling services, aimed at providing academic, career, social, and personal support to students. Furthermore, the Nziramasanga Commission of Enquiry on Education (1999) reinforced the necessity of guidance and counselling, recommending its integration from pre-school through tertiary education, on the grounds that this learning area furnishes learners with the essential knowledge and skills for personal development.

Currently, as previously indicated, CSE is incorporated within the Guidance and Counselling, and the life skills orientation learning domain, as part of the updated curriculum in Zimbabwe. It spans from grade three to grade seven, with the subject first being examined at the grade seven level in 2021. The topics covered in the Guidance and Counselling, and life skills orientation curriculum include relationships, norms and values influencing attitudes and behaviour, gender and gender-based violence; human growth and development, health and well-being, understanding child rights and responsibilities, educational and career guidance, as well as safety and protection.

Therefore, the historical development of CSE in Zimbabwe is closely intertwined with the current challenges and dynamics of sexual education within the country resulting in limited access to comprehensive sexual health information for adolescents (Mahoso, 2020). This historical context underscores the ongoing necessity of integrating CSE into the national curriculum, particularly in light of ecosystemic factors such as cultural norms and societal values (Ngara, 2019). The recent inclusion of CSE topics in the Guidance and Counselling curriculum reflects a significant departure from past practices and signifies an increased recognition of the importance of addressing sexual health issues among Zimbabwean youth (Amnesty International, 2018). However, challenges persist, including restricted access to resources, cultural barriers, and shortcomings in teacher training. Recognizing the historical context that has shaped the current sexual education landscape is crucial for informing policies and practices aimed at promoting holistic sexual health and well-being among Zimbabwean adolescents and young adults.

## **1.2 Concept Clarification**

### **1.2.1 Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)**

CSE encompasses more than sexuality education. It extends its focus to incorporate various other critical aspects such as sexual roles, gender relationships, the pressures related to sexual activity, sexual and reproductive health, and the development of decision-making skills among learners (Browes, 2018; Ketting & Ivanova, 2017). CSE is designed to be age-appropriate and culturally relevant. It aims to facilitate open discussions on relationships and sex by providing technically realistic, and broad-minded information. It also offers opportunities for learners to explore their values and attitudes towards decision-making, as well as enhancing their communication and risk reduction skills concerning matters related to sexuality (Rijsdijk, 2018; Guttmacher Institute, 2020; UNESCO, 2018).

### **1.2.2 Sexuality Education**

Sexuality education as an age-compatible, culturally apropos style of teaching about sex and relationships through delivering information which is technically accurate, genuine, and

openminded (Bonjour and Van der Vlugt, 2018; Barr et al., 2014). Bay-Cheng and Goodkind (2016) went on to say that sexuality education is a lifelong process of acquiring information and attitudes, beliefs and values that pertain to sexual development, sexual health, reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, and body image and gender roles.

### **1.2.3 Ecosystemic Factors**

Ecosystemic factors, originating from Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, conceptualise child development as the product of the interplay between children, and their contextual growth environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; McLeod, 2020). This developmental milieu consists of nested systems, with the child situated at the core of these systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Schunk (2020) defines ecosystemic factors as environmental components that can impact child development either positively or negatively. Similarly, Guy-Evan (2020) characterises ecosystemic factors as components within a child's social context that influence their development. These factors, as delineated by Lefrancois (2019), are present in various environmental settings classified by Bronfenbrenner (1977) as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. Some of these factors may include government policies, politics, religion, and family culture.

### **1.2.4 Junior Grade**

In Zimbabwe, junior grades refer to the last five grades that is from grades 3 to 7 of the Zimbabwean primary schools (Thabela, 2018). These junior grades children are normally from the ages eight to thirteen (Thabela, 2018; Mahoso, 2020).

## **1.3 Problem Statement**

In 2015, Zimbabwe updated its Primary and Secondary School Curriculum. It incorporated CSE at both the primary and secondary school levels (Mahoso, 2020). Various factors contribute to the success of any policy within the education system, with the attitudes and perceptions of different partners and stakeholders playing a crucial role. The school environment serves as the playground

where the implementation of various policies takes place. Therefore, the attitudes and perceptions of administrators and teachers towards CSE hold significant importance. Furthermore, Matswetu and Bhana (2018) suggest that schools often reflect the value systems of their immediate communities, underscoring the significance of parental attitudes towards CSE. Given the recent introduction of CSE into the Zimbabwean education system, the attitudes and perceptions of school administrators, teachers, and parents regarding CSE remain largely unexplored.

#### **1.4 Rationale**

CSE represents an age-appropriate and culturally relevant approach to engaging with matters of sex and relationships. It achieves this through the provision of scientifically accurate, non-judgmental information, enabling learners to explore their values and attitudes, enhance their decision-making abilities, and develop their communication and risk reduction skills concerning sexuality (Rijsdijk, 2018; UNESCO, 2018; Guttmacher Institute, 2020). Strong evidence suggests that well-designed CSE programs, which are scientifically accurate, culturally and age-appropriate, gender-sensitive, and grounded in life skills, empower young individuals with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to make informed decisions about their sexuality and lifestyle (WHO, 2022; Ketting-Style, 2014).

Similarly, an assessment of CSE initiatives in Uganda, Kenya, Thailand, and Indonesia demonstrates that when equipped with accurate, and relevant information, young people are able to grow in their spaces and develop skill enabling them to make sound decisions, solve problems, communicate well, and think critically, which is critical in the innovation space. The youths reflect association with non-judgmental and affordable counselling and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)/HIV services, they are better equipped to seize educational and other opportunities (Ketting & Ivanova, 2017). It follows that positive engagement influence their lifelong well-being, prevent unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions, ensure their sexual and reproductive health, protect themselves against sexually transmitted infections including HIV, understand and challenge social norms and practices related to sexuality, gender, and relationships (Barr et al., 2014). It also contributes constructively to society as a whole. This also enhances their ability to navigate various life challenges, particularly during the transitional phase from childhood to adulthood.

As a junior grade teacher in Zimbabwe, I have witnessed a concerning rise in cases of child marriages, sexual abuse, and early pregnancies. Given these circumstances, the introduction of CSE at the primary school level is increasingly imperative as it has the potential to address and mitigate these challenges. However, the absence of clear policies on CSE in Zimbabwe (Mahoso, 2020; UNFPA, 2018) remains a significant barrier. Moreover, the effective implementation of any existing CSE policies is hampered by various factors, including ecosystemic elements such as the attitudes and perceptions of parents, teachers, and school administrators, as well as cultural beliefs, political affiliations, and religious convictions. This study is therefore being carried out based on this framework.

Additionally, the necessity for conducting this study is underscored by the relative novelty of this research area in Zimbabwe. This study is poised to make a valuable contribution to the existing knowledge base on CSE. It is crucial to recognise that these factors, along with several others, play an influential role pertaining to the success or failure of CSE implementation.

## **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

### ***Research Aim***

The aim of this study is to discover the ecosystemic factors affecting CSE in junior grades schools in Zimbabwean. The study's objectives are to explore the ecosystemic factors (perception and attitudes of administrators, teachers and parents) affecting CSE in primary schools, to evaluate these ecosystemic factors (attitudes and perception of the school administrators, teachers and parents) affect the implementation of CSE and to determine strategies that schools, homes can use to support CSE.

## **1.6 Research Question**

How do ecosystemic factors affect the teaching and learning of CSE?

Secondary Questions:

1. What are the ecosystemic factors (attitudes and perceptions of school administrators, teachers and parents) affecting CSE in primary schools?
2. How do these factors (attitudes and perception of the school administrators, teachers and parents) affect the implementation of CSE?
3. What strategies can be adopted to promote effective implementation of CSE?

## **1.7 Research Methods and Design**

The methodology for this study has been delineated in this section by providing, and justifying the research approach, design, paradigm, and other techniques opted for in this study.

### **1.7.1 Research Approach**

This study employs a qualitative style to look into the various ecosystemic factors affecting the integration of CSE in primary schools in Chikomba district of Mashonaland East Province, Zimbabwe. The qualitative methodology aims to articulate and elucidate the sentiments, outlooks, and experiences of the participants (Yin, 2017; Bonache & Festing, 2020; Martic, 2018). This approach was particularly well-suited for this research, as it facilitated a comprehensive exploration of diverse attitudes and perceptions, thereby providing valuable insights into the impact of CSE implementation in the school environment.

### **1.7.2 Research Paradigm**

The interpretive paradigm guided this research. Cresswell (2014) and Buestrol (2020) concur and point out that this paradigm interprets feelings and perceptions from the participants' point of view because it acknowledges that knowledge is socially constructed. A research paradigm refers to ontological and epistemological assumptions, which is a belief of what real knowledge is and how it can be grasped, it simply describes a matrix of beliefs and perceptions of the researchers that influence how they carry out research (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Thomas, 2020). As such, this paradigm allowed for the capturing and interpretation of unique attitudes and feelings of school principals, teachers and parents towards the implementation of CSE.

Given the nature of this research on ecosystemic factors affecting CSE in junior grades, the interpretivist approach emerged as a suitable paradigm, considering its sensitivity to time and context. This approach guided me to be meticulous during data collection and interpretation, as individuals' perspectives on CSE are often shaped by contextual factors such as cultural beliefs (Hassan & Hashim, 2021).

### **1.7.3 Research Design**

The study used an exploratory case study design to explore a research topic that has no pre-determined outcomes (Cresswell, 2014). Cresswell and Poth (2017) add that a case study helps to gain an understanding of the problem in real-life settings. Therefore, this design allowed for close examination of the data within three primary schools from which the researcher gained insight into the various attitudes and perceptions towards the implementation of CSE within the primary schools and beyond.

### **1.8 Sample and Sampling Procedure**

A sample was selected using convenience and purposive sampling methods. According to Ford (2017) and Yin (2017), participants who are accessible, and available, are selected using convenience sampling. Convenience sampling can be described as the data collection procedure from a research population that is effortlessly reachable to the researcher (Rahi, 2017). Nikolopoulou (2022) further notes that when conducting a qualitative study, convenience sampling is frequently utilised in education, and social sciences, where researchers have ready access to existing target populations. Three selected primary schools made the sample because of their convenient geographic proximity.

In addition, I purposefully selected from each of the three school the principal, two junior grade teachers and two parents. The selected parents were members of the school development committee (SDC) and have children enrolled in the junior primary school level. Therefore, my sample was made up of three school heads, six teachers and six parents totalling 15 participants. Purposive sampling allows a researcher to select participants who have meaningful knowledge of

the subject that is being studied (Rahi, 2017). Hassan and Hashim (2021) purport that purposive sampling is also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling, and the method of sampling was very useful to this study because the sample needed to be reached quickly as was the case with the study. The other reason was that a proportional sampling was of concern in this study.

Thomas (2022) defines purposive sampling as a method of choosing the number of sets of components in such a way that the dependent object makes approximately the same percent or approximation as the population for those personal features that are currently the subject of data gathering. In other words, purposive sampling was chosen based on the objective of the study and the population characteristics (Rahi, 2017). As such, only teachers whose experience in teaching the subject of guidance and counselling exceeded five years were included in this study for their familiarity with the topic under study. School administrators were also vital in this study since they are the ones who supervise the day-to-day activities within the school.

## **1.9 Data Collection**

I gathered data through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. These two data gathering instruments were triangulated in the study as a way to increase the credibility and validity of the results. These instruments were taken aboard because of their compatibility with the qualitative approach used.

### **1.9.1 Semi-Structured Interviews**

According to Nickerson (2022), semi-structured interviews comprise of a set of open-ended questions prepared by the researcher to direct the interviewer. A semi-structured interview is a data-gathering approach where the interviewer is not meticulously obliged to stick to the formal questions (Crossman, 2020). The interviewer is expected to ask open-ended questions at the same time giving room for conversation with the respondents instead of a direct question-and-response structure (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Semi-structured interviews enabled me to gain insight into the participants' attitudes and perceptions because they included open-ended questions that allowed for asking probing questions (Maree, 2017; Bernard, 2017). Answers were audio-recorded to obtain a true record of the interviews. Field notes supplemented recorded data, and allowed for triangulation of results (Bowen, 2017). Bonache and Festing (2020) complement that semi-structured interviews allow flexibility of coverage and the production of rich data as the respondents have the chance to introduce issues the researcher may not have considered. The semi-structured interview allowed me to cater to individual differences among the interviewees during the process (Bernard, 2017), and this helped in the generation of data. Moreover, I used pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants.

### **1.9.2 Documents**

In research, documents serve as essential sources of data (Bowen, 2017; O'Leary, 2014; Triad, 2016). They provide valuable information that can help address research questions. Maree (2017) emphasises that researchers can derive data by examining records and documents relevant to their study. Similarly, Cherry (2022) describes document analysis as the process of interpreting and analysing data obtained through the scrutiny of pertinent records and documents for a specific research study. Triad (2016) and Bowen (2017) highlight that documents are non-reactive data sources, meaning they can be reviewed repeatedly without being influenced by the researcher during the research process. Additionally, documents are advantageous because they exhibit low bias since the researcher does not directly interact with the user groups and authors (Breznau, 2016).

Given the lack of well-defined policies on CSE in Zimbabwe, as indicated in the literature (Mahoso, 2020 & UNFPA, 2018), I conducted an analysis of four key documents: the junior grades guidance and counselling and life skills orientation syllabus, the school health policy, the child protection policy, and the guidance and counselling file. My analysis focused on identifying the content related to CSE within these documents. However, it is important to note that not all information in these documents was considered, as they were not originally designed with my research topic in mind.

This approach enabled a systematic examination of existing educational and health policies, providing valuable insights into the current status of CSE implementation in Zimbabwe. By critically assessing these documents, I aimed to identify potential gaps or areas for improvement within the policies, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for enhancing CSE in the country.

### **1.10 Data Analysis**

The data analysis process involves the identification of patterns in the data and the generation of ideas to elucidate the existence of these patterns (Bernard, 2017). In my study, I employed thematic analysis to identify, and analyse, emerging themes within the collected data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This thematic approach allowed me to discern and comprehend shared meanings and experiences present in the data. The research was guided by the six phases of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2020), which provided a structured framework for the analysis process. These steps enabled full immersion into the data by first transcribing the 15 interviews (six teachers, six parents, and three administrators). Subsequently, I engaged in extensive reading and re-reading of the transcriptions, coupled with attentive listening to the interview recordings, thereby documenting initial ideas and observations (Nickerson, 2022).

This rigorous approach facilitated the systematic identification of recurring themes and patterns across the data, enabling a comprehensive exploration of the factors including the attitudes and perceptions of the participants affecting CSE in Zimbabwean primary schools. In the first place, as espoused in Braun and Clarke (2022), a comprehensive understanding of the content is going to be developed. I had to first familiarise myself with the data aspects. This phase involved immersing myself in the data by repetitively reading textual data and listening to audio-recordings of data from the teachers, parents and administrators. The aim of this phase was to become intimately familiar with datasets content, and to begin to notice things that might be relevant to the research questions (Cresswell & Poth, 2017). This step provided the foundation for the subsequent

analysis that would follow. This is a key phase of data analysis within interpretive qualitative methodology (Bird, 2005).

Phase two was systematic analysis of data, through coding. As envisioned by Cresswell and Poth (2017), I highlighted sections of the text usually phrases or sentences, and came out with short labels or codes to describe their content. Bernard (2017) concurs and advises that a researcher makes sure that data is potentially relevant to the research questions and that the codes allow gaining of condensed overview of the main points, and common meanings, that recur throughout the data.

The third phase was about searching for themes. In this phase, analysis shifted from codes to themes (Nickerson, 2022). Dwadi (2020) postulates that a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning with the data set. At this stage, I diverted my focus from the interpretation of individual data items within the dataset, to the interpretation of aggregated meaning and meaningfulness across the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2022). I then reviewed and analysed the coded data to combine the different codes sharing common meanings such that they may form themes or sub-themes. Thus, themes are generally broader than codes and several codes may combine into a theme (Martic, 2018). As alluded to by Cresswell and Poth (2017), I collapsed those multiple codes that shared a similar underlying concept or feature of the data into one single code. Moreover, I let go and abandoned those codes, and themes not fitting into the overall analysis.

The themes reviewing is at stage four. I made sure that the themes were useful and accurate representations of the data by returning to the dataset, compared, and checked the themes against it (Braun & Clarke, 2022). As outlined by Cresswell and Poth (2017), there were some instances where I combined themes while in some cases I either discarded or created new ones trying to make them more useful and accurate. After making the final list of the themes, I went on to define and named them accordingly. Defining themes involves formulating exactly what each theme means and figuring out how it helps understand data and this was the fifth (Braun & Clarke, 2021; McCombes, 2020). In line with Hijmans and Kuyper (2020), I made sure that I come out with an unambiguous and easily comprehensible or understandable name for each theme.

Phase six of Braun and Clarke's (2020) thematic analysis is finalisation and thorough review of the report. This phase emphasised the creation of a coherent and compelling 'story' derived from the analysis conducted. Braun and Clarke (2020) suggest that this narrative should be both vivid and intricate, firmly rooted in the scholarly field, and should extend beyond mere description to formulate an argument that addresses the research questions. Nickerson (2022) further highlights that codes and themes may evolve during the analysis process, leading to changes in the write-up. Consequently, my approach to report writing took on a recursive nature, allowing for the continuous recording of all changes in the form of informal notes and memos throughout the research.

I ensured that my themes were interlinked in a logical and meaningful manner, constructing a coherent and persuasive narrative that accurately represented the data, aligning with Braun and Clarke's (2020) guidelines. This meticulous process enabled me to present a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the ecosystemic factors influencing CSE in Zimbabwean primary schools.

### **1.11 Trustworthiness and Credibility**

The four techniques which were used to uphold trustworthiness and rigor, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Morrow, 2006). To guarantee the credibility of the study, I made provisions to promote confidence that I accurately recorded the phenomena under enquiry (Creswell, 2014). Pilot and Beck (2014) are of the view that the trustworthiness method should consider the careful consideration of the interview process and techniques, aspects of debriefing, and strategies of triangulation. Creswell (2014) proposed the use of multiple sources of evidence for the basis of credibility. To gain insight into the ecosystemic factors affecting CSE, I triangulated data from teachers, administrators and parents. Moreover, semi-structured interviews and documents were triangulated as data collection instruments.

Pham (2018) summarises confirmability in qualitative research as the influence that the researcher might have on participants. In addition, it refers to objectivity in quantitative studies (Martic, 2018). To augment confirmability, I have tried to clearly document my role as a researcher.

Moreover, I was in a position to acknowledge my personal biases; and what is thought could have influence on data collection and interpretation was outlined. During the data collection process, I availed myself to the participants, and generated a cordial relationship with them to stimulate the provision of authentic information from participants (Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger, 2020).

For there to be transferability in a qualitative study, researchers have to present a detailed description of the context and the participants as well as to be transparent about the processes of data analysis (Cresswell, 2017). The aim will be to supply readers with an all-embracing disposition and fully informing them of the research. These dynamics were presented all through the study, especially in the methodology and findings and discussions chapters.

### **1.12 Ethical considerations**

Considering ethics in educational research is of utmost significance, exclusively when researching sensitive issues (Martic, 2018). Participants need to be sure-fire that the researcher espouses ethics from the outset to the end of the research; because each phase and aspect of the research has the prospect to be a source of ethical problems (Westby et al., 2018). This justifies the reason why attention was given to a number of ethical philosophies in this study and these included informed consent, privacy and confidentiality.

Hijmans and Kuyper (2020) hold that researchers take upon themselves obligation to safeguard the identity of the participants. The participants and myself agreed that their real names were not going to be used during the course of the research to warrant confidentiality. Pseudonyms were allocated for each of the participants. I, subsequent to the interview, informed the participants that the information they made available was for research purposes alone and was not to be used for any other.

Cherry (2022) points to consent as dire in any research as it symbolises to respecting research participants, their dignity and also their autonomy. This has to be a voluntary procedure free from any form of pressure or physical and or psychological coercion (Nichols, 2018). All of my participants approved to take part on the basis of informed consent.

Most essentially, the research was carried out in line with the requirements of the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State. An ethical clearance certificate applied for and obtained. I was granted the permission to undertake the research from my parent ministry; the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe through the District Schools Inspector of Chikomba District.

### **1.13 Preliminary Literature Review**

This section briefly reviewed literature related to the concept of CSE, and its relevance, to junior grades in Zimbabwe; the policies governing CSE implementation; the effects of ecosystemic factors on CSE implementation as well as strategies that can be used for promoting effective implementation of CSE in schools.

Teaching CSE has become crucial as it plays an important role in recognising and upholding human rights; knowledge, values and skills necessary for HIV prevention; and, gender parity (Fairfield & Charman, 2022). An evaluation by Vanwesenbeeck (2018) reveals that CSE help young people by arming them with exact and apt information, nurture skills in decision-making, negotiation, communication and critical thinking, and encourage the provision of access to counselling and SRH/HIV services that are non-judgmental and inexpensive. Such young people are in a position to take gain of educational, and other prospects, that will develop their sexual and reproductive health and safeguard themselves against STIs including HIV; impact their lifelong well-being; dodge unwanted pregnancies as well as unsafe abortions; comprehend and interrogate social norms and practices vis-à-vis sexuality, gender, and relationships and contribute positively to society (UNESCO, 2018).

Further, teaching CSE to junior grade learners is not only crucial because of its capacity to help children to develop skills that help them to avoid sexual harassment, but also to help them develop the ability to establish quality relationships with others (Chirwa-Kambole, 2020). Kirk (2017) describes such relationships based on equality, respect and empathy implying that comprehensive sexuality education helps develop interpersonal intelligence in children. Furthermore, Mahoso (2020) establishes that in Zimbabwe, CSE immensely helps learners to acquire accurate knowledge

of their bodies. Keog (2018) echoes this by saying that, through CSE, learners are able to identify the different parts of their bodies, know how these parts change over time as well as become aware of the functions of these parts.

Regardless of the efficacy of CSE, parents' perceptions and attitudes can lead to its failure. Guy-Evans (2020) posits that parents form part of the microsystem of child development in the ecological theory. Their perceptions towards CSE are of paramount importance and contribute to the accomplishment or let-down of the program. The perception of parents in Zambia is noted as not an exceptional one following Chavula, Zulu and Hurting's (2022) report that parents with strong cultural values and traditional beliefs oppose the implementation of CSE in schools. Furthermore, these parents resisted the teaching of some topics which are socially unacceptable within their culture for instance; initiation ceremonies, menstruation, homosexuality, and contraception. Consequently, teachers end-up forsaking teaching CSE notwithstanding knowing its significance and being competent enough to teach the subject. In addition, in yet another study again in Zambia, when parents were asked whether they were comfortable having their children taught sexuality education by teachers, they expressed discomfort and insisted that a school must be a place for studying, and not a place for children to learn about sexuality (Banda, 2017).

In some cases, teachers fail to implement CSE in junior grades, because of the negative attitude they have towards it (Chavula et al., 2022). In a study carried out by Beyers (2017), participating teachers indicated that they did not want to teach CSE because they felt that it was unnecessary to address sexuality issues to young children as it is an adult issue and they also indicated that they were not taught CSE by their parents and teachers, hence they had no reason for teaching it. These negative perceptions, and attitudes, are attributed to the teachers' lack of adequate training to teach it (Mocheche, 2018; UNESCO, 2018; UNFPA, 2017).

Some of the teachers who may teach CSE to children in junior grades do not teach all the content that they are expected to, rather, they avoid teaching topics that are at crossroads with their values and beliefs (Mkumbo, 2018). In support of this, Vanwesenbeecka et al. (2018) concluded from the studies they carried out in low-income African and Asian countries, that particular topics were difficult to talk about for many teachers, and this was often because their attitudes and perception

were not in line with CSE standards. They supplement by proclaiming that conflict between personal norms, and CSE program requirements, were to an imperative extend due to a lack of training and a supportive school environment. These findings are broadly in line with what was found by Beyers (2017) in several South African teachers indicated discomfort in teaching some of the aspects of CSE owing to cultural reasons.

Concerning existing policies, guiding the implementation of CSE in Zimbabwe like in many other countries, faces no clear-cut policies on CSE (Machamire, 2018; UNFPA; 2018). It has not been part of the curriculum until the recent introduction of the Competence Based Curriculum (CBS) in 2015. It is in this updated curriculum that components of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) have been incorporated, within the examinable subject of Guidance and Counselling (Amnesty International, 2018). The unavailability of CSE-specific policies in Zimbabwe has negatively affected the implementation of the program. These sentiments were echoed by Gudyanga, de Lange and Khau (2019) lamenting that in Zimbabwe there is a lack of a mandate to teach CSE. Resultantly, teachers were hesitant to teach the subject recalling that they are policy implementers as such, they need policies to guide them in their routine operations, such as clarity on amount of time per lesson, and the number of CSE lessons expected of them. Policies are required to operationalize CSE (Bell, 2019), as their absence makes it challenging in supporting the provisions of CSE thereby hindering the implementation of the program. There is, therefore, an urgent need to address the policy issue.

In order to promote effective CSE implementation, effective leadership and management systems in schools are pivotal in fortifying CSE implementation. School administrators, teachers and parents should take the lead in motivating and supporting CSE, as well as in creating the appropriate climate for implementing CSE and addressing the needs of young people (Milton, 2019). Creating, and or strengthening policies that support the provision of CSE is another way to uplift the program (Fairfield & Charman, 2022). Implementing CSE within a clear set of relevant national and school-wide policies or guidelines has numerous advantages, and these, according to Zulu (2019), include providing an institutional basis for the implementation of CSE programs; anticipating and addressing the sensitivities concerning the implementation of CSE programs; setting standards on confidentiality; setting standards of appropriate behaviour; protecting and

supporting the teachers responsible for delivering CSE; and, if appropriate, protecting or increasing their status within the school and the community.

Parental involvement in the formulation and implementation of CSE programs is of paramount importance. In most of the cases parents tend to reject the implementation of this program. For instance, in Zambia, most parents were opposed to CSE being taught in schools to young children as they were worried about the age appropriateness of the content (Chavula et al., 2022). Additionally, teachers are pivotal when it comes to the implementation of CSE to junior grades, these are the policy implementers. For De Haas and Hutter (2019), effective implementation of the CSE curriculum, is also strengthened if these classroom managers have the backing of some legal structures, the school administration and local leaders as well as being able to access resources and obtain continuous training. Moreover, there is need to combine CSE and other related services and this has proven to be an effective way of supporting the youths' SRH in Zambia, Nigeria and Uganda respectively (Chirwa-Kambole, 2020; Kunnuji, Robinson, Shawar, & Shiffman, 2017; Kemigisha, 2019).

Furthermore, students too should be actively involved in building and mobilising backing for CSE and this is indispensable. Student councils, other student groups and individual youth leaders should be actively encouraged to provide input on the design, monitoring and evaluation of CSE programs (Sofman, 2019). This resonates well with the Freirean critical pedagogy where he proposes for active involvement of the learners in the formulation of knowledge (Levin, 2020). This could be because there are some knowledge gaps between the young and the curriculum planners as a result of the generational gaps. Freire (1996) indicated that learners know the problems they face in their daily lives, as such, involving them would result in the formulation of more meaningful and purposeful policies and curricular. These, in another way help to uphold CSE if they are empowered as they can be in a position to gather information about the needs of their peers thereby further upholding and justifying the need for CSE, and may also help institute discussions with parents and other societal members *vis-à-vis* the vitality of CSE in their lives.

## **1.14 Theoretical Framework**

This study was informed by Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological theory and Freire's critical pedagogy theory.

### **1.14.1 The Socio-Ecological Model**

The model by Uri Bronfenbrenner (1976) offers a theoretical framework for understanding how individuals are affected by their surrounding environmental factors or ecologies (Bronfenbrenner, 2007). In the model, there are five systems namely; microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem as well as chronosystem (Schunk, 2016). For Bronfenbrenner, the microsystem was defined as the system that is closest to, and had a direct link with the child. It is, therefore, seen as the most influential of the systems in determining the child's development (Lefrancois, 2019). This system includes the home, school and peer group. In that regard, Bronfenbrenner and Evans (2000) promulgates that the child's experiences at home, school and in the peer-group conjunctionally contribute to the child's development and are the most influential systems because the child is in it most of the time.

The second one which is the mesosystem, refers to the products of the interactions among microsystems, for example, the interaction between the home and the school (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Thus, if the relationship between the two settings is cordial, this setting will support child development (Martinello, 2020; Clarke, 2020). The third system was exosystem, and according to Santrock (2010), children are not found in this setting but what happens in it affects them. An example could be the occupation of the parents. The macrosystem refers to the larger society and includes its values, laws, conventions and traditions (Schunk, 2020) as the forth system. The society within which the children are nested affects their development. This is because the child is affected by values, laws and economic patterns of that society, including other factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The chronosystem is described as the fifth system that includes shifts in one's life span and includes socio- historical events (Lefrancois, 2019). Examples of chronosystem

include political instability, divorce and farm invasion (Mahoso, 2020) and these may affect child development.

The theory appealed to this study because it considers the complex layers of environmental factors that influence child development with specificity to their education (Schunk, 2016). The functionalists aver that education is the transmission of norms and values of the society (Haralambos & Holborn, 2016), thus the relationship between the various systems play a prime role in what the child learns at school (Kitchen, 2019 & Martinello, 2020). Accordingly, this justified the use of Bronfenbrenner's (1975) ecological theory of child development as a lens for understanding these environmental factors, and their effects on CSE delivery in junior grades in Zimbabwe.

While Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model centred around, and focused on, various ecosystemic factors affecting teaching and learning, it is also crucial to remember that two of the immediate ecologies of the junior grade learners are their parents and the school. These two ecologies influence the child in either a positive or a negative way (Chinyoka, 2016). Clarke (2020) goes on to say that the model offers a theoretical framework for understanding how surrounding environmental factors or ecologies affect individuals. Organising his theory into systems and creating a model depicting encircling levels around a child as the centre point, Bronfenbrenner (1995) explains how the immediate and distant settings and the interactions between them influence the delivery of CSE to the child.

Increasing efforts are being made to understand CSE and the extent to which the different levels/ecologies are affecting its implementation and development (Muridzo, 2017; Martinello, 2020). This theory identifies different layers of the environment, each having a significant effect on the delivery of CSE in junior grades. Chinyoka (2016) concurs, and adds, that it is relevant to acknowledge the extent the home and school environments impact young learners' holistic wellbeing and development.

In socio-ecological theory, there are holistic relationships between organisms and their environment; therefore, all parts affect the system as a whole. According to Bronfenbrenner (1994), the system is greater than the sum of its parts. So, how the child thinks, feels, and perceives

CSE is inevitably linked to the social groupings, forces, and relationships that make up their environment, for example, families, peer groups, and the school, the socio-economic forces, and the interpersonal, cultural, religious, political and power relationships (Martinello, 2020). Changes or conflicts in any one layer will ripple throughout the other layers (Chinyoka, 2016). In other words, Kitchen (2019) further pens that it is imperious to note that any change in one layer will have a cascading effect on the other layers. The system is like a spider web, whereby if one end is shaken, the whole system vibrates.

Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model posits that child development occurs within an interactive system of nested influences between the child and the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Whereas numerous environments and mechanisms are present, the core of this research was to focus on the examination of the ecosystemic factors affecting CSE by focusing mainly on the micro and mesosystems, exploring the attitudes and perceptions of the parents, teachers, and administrators.

#### **1.14.2 Freire's Transformative Theory**

The critical pedagogy (Freire, 1968) is a transformative theory based on the theory that stipulates that when a society undergoes significant change, the education system must also be changed (Freire, 1996). Plenty of changes are taking place the world over and SIDA (2020) indicated that sexuality education is developed continuously to meet the demands of the changing world. Among the emerging developments affecting societies have been the HIV the 1980s, a rise in teen pregnancy and early marriages, pornography and online sexual behaviours (Keog, 2018). Thus, the introduction of CSE aligns very well with what Freire supports. While various stakeholders usually receive changing the curriculum with pessimism due to fear of the unknown, Freire (1968) came up with a theory to validate and authenticate such changes. Freire noted that changes in the curriculum should bear the input of those to whom it is going to be implemented (Freire, 1970).

According to Levin (2020), Freire castigated the banking method of education in the process of transforming any education system, and suggested dialogic education whereby there is a need to

realise the learners' prospects and needs. In connection to CSE, Freire suggests that the curriculum should change constantly to address the problems learners are facing about sexuality and rights. Freire pressed towards a dialogic education in which effort was called upon to appreciate learners' expectations (Roberts, 2022). In this context, Freire's theory offers a practical outline of what can be done to counteract the ecosystemic factors hindering CSE in junior grades in Zimbabwe as well as justifying why the learning area should be introduced to the Zimbabwean primary school curriculum. Further, the theory encourages teachers to be liberal, and humanitarian, and respect the freedom of the learner as espoused by Rogers in his person-centred theory (McLeod, 2019). Again, for Freire, learners should be active contributors in knowledge construction. Malott (2017) advances that learners understand well the problems they face concerning sexuality and other social issues, and are thus, in a better position to come up with solutions to such challenges.

Freire (2007) proposed problematic education. Through problematic education and inquiring of problematic issues on sexuality and reproductive health rights (SRHR) in the lives of junior grades learners, they learn to be critical thinkers as well as developing critical awareness skills that equips them for life, and to become responsible members of the society (Leopando, 2017). Thus, critical pedagogy contests all sorts of domination, oppression and subordination to liberate the oppressed (Levin, 2020). Still existing among some other cultures in Zimbabwe is the fact that all sexuality-related issues should be left for that period just before marriage, and to be delivered by the aunties and uncles (Ganga, 2018). Freire challenges learners from such societies to critically analyse and question such lines of thinking. As Kessing-Styles, Nash and Ayres (2014) have mentioned, critical pedagogy is an academic reaction to inequalities and oppressive relations of power that exist in schooling system. Accordingly, the fundamental aim of education is to achieve a critical awareness, which enables individuals to prepare the ground for their progress (Levin, 2020). A detailed discussion on the theories informing the study is done in Chapter 2.

### **1.15 Outline of the Study**

The study was divided into six chapters. The division of the chapters is given below.

#### *Chapter 1: Introduction*

The chapter introduces the study by presenting the setting of the problem, focused on the background to the study, the problem statement, the research questions then the significance of the study. The assumptions of the study were as well delineated. The chapter briefly reviews literature for the study and the theoretical frame work has been outlined.

### *Chapter 2: Literature Review*

Chapter 2 focused on reviewing the literature related to factors affecting CSE implementation, reviewed in line with the research aim and questions. Several authorities and research studies are referred to together with those exploring the ecosystemic factors affecting CSE in junior grades in Zimbabwe, and the world over.

### *Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework*

The chapter deliberates on the two theoretical frameworks sustaining this study. The chapter discusses Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model in relation to ecosystemic factors affecting CSE delivery specifically in the Zimbabwean context and internationally in general. Additionally, Freire's transformative education theory is also reflected upon.

### *Chapter 4: Research Methods*

This chapter presents the research approach, research paradigm, research design, sample and sampling techniques, instruments used to gather data, and the data analysis procedures. The research was carried out in three rural primary schools in Chikomba district of Mashonaland East Province, Zimbabwe. It also shows how data was collected further noting how it was analysed.

### *Chapter 5: Data Presentation and Analysis*

Chapter 5 presents, analyses and discusses the findings of the study. The chapter demonstrates how the empirical data was analysed leading to the generation of the themes. The chapter further shows themes as divided into sub-themes, and repetitive themes used to facilitate the presentation and discussion of the findings. Discussion of the findings is thus done in relation to the theoretical framework provided in chapter 3.

### *Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations*

Chapter 6 is the final chapter showing how the gathered data managed to shed light on the research problem, as well as to answers the sub-questions pointed out in chapter one. A summary of all the study is also given. Subsequently, the recommendations arising from the findings as discussed in chapter 5.

## **1.16 Conclusion**

In this chapter, background of the study, brief review of literature related to the study were given. The chapter also discussed the theoretical framework as well as the rationale for the study. The chapter went on to state the research objectives and research questions; discussed the research methods and design that was adopted. It also briefly outlined the data collection and analysis procedure as well as highlighted the layout of the chapters. The next chapter explores the literature related to ecosystemic factors affecting CSE.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Introduction**

The core of this research is to explore the exosystemic factors affecting CSE in junior grades in Zimbabwe. This chapter reviews literature related to the relevance of CSE to junior grades in Zimbabwe. Literature on policies governing CSE as well as the effects of ecosystemic factors towards CSE is also engaged. Furthermore, the strategies for promoting the effective implementation of CSE also gains attention in the chapter. All these discussions are meant to provide a broad understanding of the current state of CSE locally and internationally with the intention of identifying factors affecting the program's implementation to junior grades.

### **2.1 CSE and its relevance to junior grades in Zimbabwe**

The concept of CSE is discussed in its general sense. The guidelines on the expectations of how, and what, is to be taught under the CSE learning area have been put in place by UNESCO through the ITGS document, and this document is also discussed in detail in this section in relation to that.

#### **2.1.1 The concept of CSE**

CSE plays a fundamental role in the preparation of young people, and adolescences, for a harmless, productive, fulfilling life in a world where HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unplanned pregnancies, gender-based violence (GBV), gender inequality and, violation of rights among other things still pose severe threats to their well-being (Chavula et al., 2022). Regardless of clear and gripping evidence for the benefits of high quality, curriculum-based CSE in countries like Zambia (Zulu, 2019), few children and young people receive preparation for their lives that endows them to take control, and make informed decisions about their sexuality, and relationships autonomously and conscientiously.

The general description of CSE by Ram, Andajani and Mohammadnezhad (2020) is that it is a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It intends to furnish children, and young people, with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to recognise their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships (Chavula, 2021); consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; understand and guarantee the protection of their rights throughout their lives (Zulu, 2019).

Chirwa-Kambole (2020) illuminates CSE as an age-appropriate, culturally relevant style to teaching about sex and relationships by providing scientifically thorough, accurate and non-judgmental information. The above description reverberates very well with Vygotsky's (1978) thinking that concepts taught at school should be culturally relevant or valid for it to knock some meaning and sense in the learner in question (McLeod, 2020). Marxists concur with the former and explain that if what schools teach does not match with one's culture, there tends to be some cultural shock and/or inconsistency (Haralambos & Holborn, 2022), and this consequently, affects comprehension of the particular matter. While in Zimbabwe CSE is still at its grade one level, it is important to note that it is quite a long way from meeting those standards set by UNESCO.

UNESCO came up with its International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE) for Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) providing a first intricate international standard for sexuality education (Ketting & Ivanova, 2017; UNESCO, 2017). Zimbabwe is a signatory to ESA, and the ITGSE acts as the basis on which its CSE program underlies. The CSE program in Zimbabwe is being carried out under the Guidance and Counselling learning area, and it, however, is still running short of the international standards. A lot is still to be desired for the program in Zimbabwe to become fully comprehended, as such is still at its grassroots level.

### **2.1.2 Concepts to be covered in CSE**

Vanwesenbeecka, Westeneng, de Boer, Reinders and van Zorge (2016) found out that in many African countries CSE implementation was being obstructed, among other things, by low-teacher motivation, and lack of knowledge on proper content to cover at each particular age group.

Mocheche (2018) and Rijdsdijk (2018) reverberate by disclosing that the case was the same in Kenya and Uganda respectively, as such, Zimbabwe is not alone in this struggle.

In 2018, UNESCO drew up a standard guideline, the International Technical Guidelines on Sexuality Education ITGSE, which comprised of comprehensive set of key notions, topics and descriptive learning objectives to guide development of locally-adapted curricula for learners (Rijdsdijk, 2018). This document was informed by curricula from 12 different countries (Botswana, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, USA, and Zambia) where CSE was being implemented (Vanwesenbeeck, 2018). Data was collected through interviews with relevant participants; appropriate databases and websites; consultation with global experts as well as several members of different Non-Governmental Organization (Rijdsdijk, 2018). The Comprehensive Sexuality Education Advisory Group, (CSEAG), thus, reviewed all the relevant documents as well as data compilations mentioned above, and came up with this standard guideline (Fairfield & Charman, 2022).

This standard guideline, as noted by Banda (2017), took a rights-based approach which puts much prominence on principles such as impartiality, respect, empathy, being responsible and mutuality as inseparably connected to universal human rights. Chavula (2022) goes on to state that the document is based on the idea of progressing gender parity and regards it as obligatory to the youths' sexual health and wellbeing. Finally, as outlined by Freire in the theoretical framework for this study, the guideline encourages a learner-based style to education, wherein the concentration of instruction is on the student (Vanwesenbeeck, 2018).

The ITGSE broke down the curriculum for CSE into six broad categories as follows: Relationships: Values, attitudes and skills: Culture, society and human rights; Human development; Sexual behaviour and Sexual and reproductive health (UNESCO, 2018). Each of the categories is then further chunked into sub-topics, as illustrated Table 1:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Subtopic</b>
<b>Relationship</b>	Family; friends; romantic relationships; tolerance and respect and long-term commitment, marriage and parenting.
<b>Values, Attitudes and Skills</b>	Values, attitudes and sources of sexual learning; norms and peer influence on sexual behaviour, decision-making; communication, refusal and negotiating skills; and finding help and support
<b>Culture, Society and Human Rights</b>	Gender-based violence including sexual abuse, harmful practices and exploitation; sexuality and media; sexuality, culture and law; and understanding gender.
<b>Human Development</b>	Body image; reproduction; privacy and bodily integrity; puberty; and sexual and reproductive body parts.
<b>Sexual Behaviour</b>	Sex; sexual behavior and sexual response; and sexuality.
<b>Sexual and Reproductive Health</b>	HIV and AIDS stigma, care, treatment and support; pregnancy prevention; and understanding, recognizing and reducing the risk of STDs, including HIV.

*Table 1: The CSE sub-categories*

Furthermore, the international guideline came up with specific age groups (thus 5-8 years; 9-12 years; 12-15 years 15-18 years, and 18 years +) intended for both primary and secondary education and each age group was given concepts which matched their cognitive level (UNESCO, 2018). Content organisation took a spiral approach whereby it increases in intensity going up the educational ladder. As such, the issues, and ideas, that a child, for example, aged 9-12 years (junior grades) under the topic of relationships is age-appropriate and will be built on as the child grows up. Table 2 outlines an example of the key issues that children of the junior grades age group will learn and understand in the first topic.

Topic/Subtopic	What learners should do	What learners should understand
<b>Relationships: Family</b>	Describe the roles, rights and responsibilities of different family members	-Families can promote gender equality; -The importance of communication between parents and children; -Family members guide children’s decisions and values; -How poor health can affect families.
<b>Friendship, Love and Romantic Relationships</b>	Identify skills needed for managing relationships	-Different ways to express friendship and to love another person; Friendships and love help people feel good about themselves; -Relationships can be healthy or unhealthy – gender equality is a part of healthier relationships; abuse is an example of an unhealthy relationship.
<b>Tolerance and Respect</b>	Understand the concepts of stigma, intolerance, harassment, rejection and bullying	-Bullying, stigma or discrimination of, anyone based on health status, colour, origin, sexual orientation or other differences is never ok; -We have a responsibility to defend people who are being bullied.
<b>Long-term Commitment, Marriage and Parenting</b>	Explain the key features of long-term commitments, marriage and parenting	-Laws and cultural practices shape how marriage, partnerships and having children are organised in society; -Every person has the right to decide whether to become a parent; -Parenting comes with responsibilities;

*Table 2: Some key issues children will learn*

Despite the assertion by Zulu (2019), that individual countries can adjust some of the topics so that they suit the needs of their learners and societal needs, the CSE programs in most African countries runs far short of the provided guidelines. In this, Zimbabwe is not an exception, and Machamire (2018) divulges that much still needs to be done to improve the country’s CSE program.

### **2.1.3 Relevance of CSE to junior grades in Zimbabwe**

Young people should be accorded the prospect to attain necessary life skills that can help them develop progressive competences. Ankipelu (2018) argues that education, if relevant and valid, should not only prepare learners for their future but also equip them to confront the challenges they encounter in their daily lives. Freire (1996) indicated that education should foster critical awareness, problem-solving skills, and understanding among learners. CSE is an approach that recognises and promotes human rights, imparts knowledge, instils values and skills necessary for HIV/Aids prevention, and fosters gender equality (Fairfield & Charman, 2022).

The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2022) has provided evidence indicating that CSE is scientifically accurate, culturally and age-appropriate, gender-sensitive, and life skills-based can equip young people with the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed decisions about their sexuality and lifestyle. Donko, Kyeren, Asare, and Still (2018) found that in Ghana, the Board of Governors expressed support for CSE, recognising its importance in providing students with a comprehensive knowledge development and life skills packages that fosters decision-making abilities and addresses issues related to healthy sexual behaviours.

Research by Vanwesenbeeck (2018) in Ghana also supports the idea that CSE can effectively delay sexual activity among young individuals while increasing the use of condoms and contraceptives among sexually active youths. Over the past two decades, scholarship investigations, for instance, Rijdsijk (2018), have revealed that sexuality education does not lead to higher rates of sexual activity among young people; instead, it enhances knowledge about sexual behaviour and its consequences. It also reduces risky behaviours among those who are sexually active (Anna, 2020). However, this perspective contrasts with the findings by The Health Development Initiative (HDI) (2020), where rural parents involved in the study expressed concerns that CSE promotes promiscuity. Nonetheless, Donko et al. (2018) argue that there is a need to dispel such misconceptions and educate parents about the fact that CSE covers essential topics such as gender, menstruation, rights, autonomy, prevention of STIs, and family planning.

An evaluation of CSE programs in Uganda, Kenya, Indonesia and Thailand by Rutgers (2015) reveals that the programme furnishes young people with exact, and apposite, information developed in them the ability to make decisions, negotiate, communicate and think critically, and inform them on how to access inexpensive, and non-judgmental counselling and SRH/HIV services. It follows that empowered youths are capable of taking gain of educational, and other, opportunities that will influence their lifelong well-being; circumventing unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions; developing their sexual and reproductive health and self-defence skills against STIs (Barr et al., 2014). Further, they are able to comprehend and interrogate the social norms and practices *vis-à-vis* relationships, sexuality and gender from which they can also positively contribute to society (Kirkby, 2020).

It is important to recognize that the implementation of CSE is often influenced by cultural, religious, and social factors, and different stakeholders may have varying perspectives on what is deemed appropriate content (Keog, 2018; Tabong, 2018). For instance, the contrasting views on CSE implementation in South African public schools reflect the ongoing debate surrounding the approach and content of such education. On one hand, Family Watch International (2022) criticizes the implementation in South African public schools, arguing that it takes a rights-based approach rather than a health-based one, emphasizing sexual rights over sexual health. In contrast, The Department of Basic Education (2019) is of the view that CSE helps learners to not to get misleading and confusing information pertaining gender, relationships, sex, and sexuality. This perspective emphasizes the importance of age-appropriate education, good health, and protection from abuse for learners (UNESCO, 2018; Zulu, 2019). The argument here is that teaching CSE is crucial as it caters to various rights of children, including education, safety, and health. Basing on these two contrasting assertions with regards to CSE adoption, it can therefore, be realised that achieving a balance that respects cultural values while providing essential information for the well-being of learners is a complex task faced by education systems globally. Ongoing dialogue and collaboration among educators, parents, policymakers, and communities are necessary to address these challenges and develop effective, inclusive, and culturally sensitive sexuality education programs and this has helped to improve CSE programme fidelity in Zambia (Chavula et al., 2022).

In the teaching of CSE to junior grades, the content taught must be developmentally appropriate and age oriented in accordance to Piaget's (1952) cognitive development (Cherry, 2022). This reflects the significance of CSE because children are likely to understand if concepts taught are within their level of mastery, and learning becomes fruitful (McLeod, 2020; Haberland, 2017). The teaching of apposite information on CSE fortifies learners to face real life challenges. Astra Networks (2018) and Kirby (2020) advise that children enjoy a better opportunity to develop appropriate health attitudes, and values, pertaining to sexuality if they are given reliable information. Teaching CSE age-oriented content to junior grades in schools is attainable due to the fact that in most cases, learners in the same grade are the same age averagely. Schools tend to consider the age of the learners as they enrol them for the first grade. This means children in the same grade are usually age mates (Gordon, 2017).

UNESCO (2018) views the school as the best place to offer CSE to children especially those between 5-13 years of age. This is because most of these children are found in schools. This resonates well with findings by Donko et al. (2020) and Machamire (2018) who discovered that most people prefer having CSE being introduced at primary school level with the later proposing that it CSE can even start at infant level. Offering CSE at school means it may reach a large number of the young people at one go since they attend school almost on a daily basis. Astra Networks (2018) also supports the provision of CSE to young children at school viewing it as so crucial to them, and that they may not obtain this form of education at home. The idea is further substantiated by HDI (2019) who found out that, in Rwanda, parents believe that teachers are the best people to teach CSE; these parents expressed that the influence of culture and religion make them shy to teach sexuality related issues to their children. In the same vein, findings by Banda (2017) reveals that parents in Malawi, as well, expressed discomfort in teaching CSE insisting that schools must be the place for studying sexuality. However, not all parents acknowledge the teaching of CSE in schools for various reasons. A case in point is of the parents in Uganda, Kemigisha (2019) found out that parents with strong cultural and traditional beliefs castigated implementation of CSE especially in primary schools.

Usually, this is because the African culture does not allow parents to teach sexuality to their children (Mahoso, 2020). It is considered a taboo and should be left for the 'aunts' and 'uncles' to

teach the youth as they prepare to enter matrimony (Smith, 2020). The CSE stance, however, is that if the youth are not socialised in sexual matters from childhood, they will be ignorant in sexual matters making them extremely vulnerable to sexual abuse (Nyarko, 2018). Ganga (2018) adds that lack of CSE among children stimulates harmful sexual behaviours. UNFPA (2018) and UNAIDS (2018) emphasise that withholding CSE information from children make them vulnerable to sexual coercion, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, STIs and HIV/AIDS. Hence, teaching young children CSE is hoped to instil competences on how to eschew sexual abuse as well as knowing how, where and when to report perpetrators. Findings by the APHRC (2017) shows that Burundi has taken a creative initiative by incorporating the idea of ‘aunts’ and ‘uncles’ in their school-based CSE programmes. It has made available ‘school aunts’ and ‘school fathers’ to teach sexuality related concepts; interestingly, these are members of the school staff who are chosen with students input.

Freud (1953) in his psychosexual theory, postulates that individuals are born active sexual beings and they exhibit this through different ways like the pleasure sucking by babies during breast feeding (McLeod, 2020). Browne (2018) and Ganga (2018) studying Kenya and Zimbabwe primary-school-going children respectively, reported that children from the age of two years engage in explicit sexual evoking behaviour like touching of genitals, kissing each other and rubbing of genital organs against other children. This is further evidenced by the fact that primary-school-going children are interested in the genitals of their peers as reflected by looking at them when these colleagues undress as well as being attracted by nude pictures (Ganga, 2018; Island, 2017; Kellogg, 2016). Such behaviours underscore the importance of providing age-appropriate CSE for junior grades. Bancroft's (2019) stresses on the necessity of a strong foundation of age-appropriate CSE to help children avoid developing misconceptions is relevant in this context. By introducing CSE at an early stage, educators and parents can play a crucial role in shaping children's attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions related to sexuality (Keog, 2018). This education can empower children with the knowledge and skills to navigate their feelings, relationships, and personal boundaries in a way that is healthy and respectful.

Astra Networks (2018) alludes that CSE is imperious to children as it helps clear fallacies on sexuality that the children develop through receiving harmful information from media such as

magazines, televisions, and the Internet. Mahoso (2020) reverberates the idea of the media deceiving children. Mahoso (2020) further cites that sex is brought to every household through WhatsApp, videos, and movies, and these facilitate the development of misapprehensions on sexuality as the information is ambiguous and age incongruous. As a way of counteracting such harmful information, and its possible consequences, it all points to the need for CSE.

The situations described in Zimbabwe and the United States, as highlighted by Mahoso (2020) and Goldman (2017) respectively, indeed underscore the urgency of introducing CSE at the primary school level. The alarming cases of pregnancies among nine-year-olds and early adolescence in the USA highlight the need for proactive measures to address issues related to sexual health and abuse among children. This underscores the urgency of introducing CSE at the primary school level in a bid to arrest the abuse of children. Delaying CSE until secondary school may be detrimental, and insufficient, in addressing the critical issues, as emphasised by the ITGSE (UNESCO, 2028) and echoes from parents as well (Chiba, 2021; Banda, 2017). Delayed CSE is not effective, rather, it should be provided to students well before adolescence, potentially preventing them from falling prey to perpetrators (Goldman, 2017), as is the case with cases in Zimbabwe Mahoso (2020) reported on.

Girls who become pregnant while in school are at risk of facing gender-based violence (Kemigisha, 2019), and may also experience bullying from their peers, leading to high school dropout rates. Despite efforts within the Zimbabwean education system to support pregnant students by allowing them to continue attending school (Mukoro, 2017), many of these learners still feel ashamed and eventually drop out. The Guttmacher Institute (2020) laments the plight of children who reach adolescence while still in the junior grades, as many countries do not provide them with CSE. This calls for urgent action globally, emphasising the need for the introduction of CSE in schools as early as possible to address these critical challenges.

The insights shared by Gudyanga et al. (2019) underscore the critical importance of CSE for primary school learners, especially for those who are born HIV positive. This vulnerable group faces the risk of reinfection, particularly in cases of sexual abuse. CSE can play a vital role in educating these children about adhering to treatment and living positive lives, providing them with

essential knowledge and skills to navigate potential stigmatisation. As Mahoso (2020) highlights, the impact of stigmatisation extends beyond the infected learners themselves as it affects their families and guardians too. By integrating CSE into the educational curriculum, efforts can be made to address, and eradicate, the challenges of stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS within the community.

Teaching CSE to the young learners does not only capacitate them to develop skills that help them escape sexual harassment, but helps them develop the ability to establish quality relationships with others (Mahoso, 2020). Such relationships are based on equality, respect and empathy meaning CSE cultivate in children interpersonal intelligence crucial to every social being (Kirk, 2017). Furthermore, Haberland (2017) indicates that CSE immensely helps learners acquire accurate knowledge of their bodies. de Haas (2018) noted that, through CSE, learners are able to identify the different parts of their bodies, know how these parts change over time as well as become aware of the functions of these parts.

## **2.2 Policies governing CSE implementation**

Since the roots of CSE are hinged upon sexuality education, it is provident to track the historical background of the later from an international level narrowing it down to the Zimbabwean context. Different countries have particular policies that guide their CSE programs. In 2016, UNESCO, put in place a standard guideline which now provides the basis from which various countries draw up their own policies, depending on their needs (Zulu, 2019).

### **2.2.1 International policies on CSE**

Understanding the historical context, and global influences, on sexuality education is crucial for grasping the diverse perspectives and approaches in different regions. The evolution of sexuality education is intertwined with emerging societal issues and is subject to the influence of various factors, including societal norms, religious beliefs, cultural values, and the prevailing political climate (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021). Despite its global significance, sexuality education

remains a contentious topic in many regions, often sparking debates and differing viewpoints, (SIDA, 2016).

In this study, the focus is mainly on exploring the impacts of two key ecological factors: the home environment and the school setting. By delving into these specific contexts, the research aims to shed more light on how attitudes and perceptions within these environments might influence the implementation and effectiveness of comprehensive sexuality education.

The evolution of sexuality education throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen it take on various names reflecting the diverse focus areas and societal needs of different regions (Browes, 2018). Initially termed ‘Education, Information, and Communication,’ the concept later manifested under different monikers, including ‘Family Life Education’, ‘Population Education’, and ‘Life Skills Education’ (Browes, 2018; Barr et al., 2014). The variation in nomenclature across countries underscores the tailored approach to address the specific societal challenges, and concerns, surrounding youth development and sexual health (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021). This adaptability emphasises the need for comprehensive sexuality education to be responsive to the cultural, social, and demographic contexts within which it is implemented.

Stirred by institutions such as the UNFPA, NGOs developed interventions, mainly grounded on impermanent mass media campaigns on certain topics, but in some cases also developing courses for schools as well (Ketting & Ivanova, 2018). These interventions were customarily targeting on conduct change appropriate to reproduction (UNFPA, 2015). WHO (2017) promulgates that with the greater than before attention for youths’ health and the upsurge of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s, educational programs in school centring on health-related behaviour change increased hastily in number giving rise to CSE.

Barr et al. (2014) provide insights into the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s progressive shift towards a more comprehensive approach to sexual reproductive health, and rights, highlighting the increased focus on adolescents and young women. This shift was propelled by influential international conferences such as the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994 (UNESCO, 2016), which paved the way for broader, more inclusive discussions on sexuality,

reproduction, and gender. Ketting and Ivanova (2018) further underscore the role of donors and NGOs in advocating for comprehensive, rights-based sexuality education programs. Notably, the year 2009 marked a significant milestone with the release of the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGS) for Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) by UNESCO, establishing the first comprehensive international standard for sexuality education (UNFPA, 2018; UNESCO, 2018; UNICEF, 2018). Zimbabwe, among other regional countries, became a signatory to these standards, providing the foundational framework for the development of their own CSE programs tailored to address specific societal concerns and priorities.

Notwithstanding the growing interest towards CSE, several countries the world over notably in Pakistan, Indonesia, Hungary, Burundi, Uganda, and Brazil, the space for civil societies was lessening while opposition to CSE is on an increase. In South Africa, the FWI (2022) strongly opposed the proposed implementation of CSE in the Life Orientation curriculum for public schools, the Roman Catholic in Burundi on the other hand strongly lambasted and molested the type of education in schools (Burundi Catholic Church, 2023). However, several West European countries have a long tradition with national CSE in schools as the solution to addressing sexuality related problems (Browes, 2018). Consequently, taking a look at the teenage birth rate in European countries, it shows that the low rate of teenage pregnancies is directly linked to the presence of CSE in their curricula (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021). On the other hand, the teenage pregnancy rate tends to be very high in central Asian countries (such as Georgian, Russian Federation, and Tajikistan) where CSE programs are still in at their early stage of development (IPPF, 2017). Each country has its own different topics or themes in their CSE and approaches to the program are varied as well.

Robust global commitments have emerged from human rights, health, and youth empowerment perspectives, emphasising the importance of CSE (Rutgers, 2015). Most governments have pledged to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health information and education, including CSE, as evidenced by a multitude of international and regional resolutions (Bonjour & Van der Vlugt, 2018). These resolutions, while diverse, converge on various aspects of CSE (Benedict, 2021). Notably, UNESCO's International Guidance on Sexuality Education includes pertinent

excerpts from international standards, instruments, and agreements relevant to CSE (Bonjour & Van der Vlugt, 2018) (see **Appendix 6**)

Rutgers (2015) emphasises that most policies highlight the critical necessity and right to be informed about sexual health issues, underscoring the significance of CSE not only for sexual health but also for gender equality and broader societal development. Conversely, Smith (2020) laments that sexual rights and sensitive topics such as the use of condoms and contraceptives by unmarried individuals, gender equality in sexual consent, same-sex relationships, and safe abortion have long been contentious issues, both within the realm of sexuality education and beyond. There were substantial societal and political ambivalence, and resistance, particularly in conservative societies such as the USA, and most developing nations (Barr et al., 2014). It is imperative, therefore, to recognise the intricate political dimension of sexual rights (De Haas & Hutter, 2019). The inclusion and wording of sexual rights-related matters in conventions at the United Nations and other international gatherings invariably provoke heated debate.

### **2.2.2 CSE in the African context**

Vanwesenbeeck et al. (2016) posit that most Eastern and Southern African (ESA) countries have in the past few years begun dealing with the continually fraught question of how to teach the school youth about sexuality. While ubiquitous social attitudes in many cases restricts what can be discussed in class, some African nations are adopting creative steps toward education that could sustain not both healthy sexuality as well as heightened gender relations and a decline in sexual violence in the world's most youthful continent (Guttmacher Institute, 2020). Findings by Engleman (2018) are in agreement showing that in Kenya, primary and secondary school students take courses called 'Life Skills Education'.

Researches done by the Guttmacher Institute (2018) revealed that the same applies to learners in Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, and Swaziland where South Sudan has supplements 'peace-building' to the subject title, and countries like Lesotho, Madagascar, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia have a more direct approach to CSE augmenting the word 'sexuality' to the course name. Guttmacher Institute (2020) notes that Rwanda and Zambia, in fact, put up with what the United Nations avows young people most needed in an increasingly crowded, and challenging,

world of human relationships. In those countries, schools offer a bit of what is branded, perhaps reflecting aspiration, more than technical accuracy CSE. Not rallying behind is South Africa, with its 'Life Orientation' curriculum for schools (Family Watch International, 2022). In spite of being at its grassroots level, in Zimbabwe, under the recently updated curriculum, CSE is cooperated in the 'Guidance and Counselling learning'.

Despite the considerable efforts being made, schools often encounter a myriad of challenges during the implementation of CSE. Benedict (2021) has found out that in South Africa, CSE teachers do not always receive the necessary support for effective program implementation. The attitudes and approaches of practitioners, when delivering CSE significantly impact the success of the program in that country (Benedict, 2021). Keog (2018) echoes this sentiment, elucidating that individual values and attitudes, as well as the type of support provided by the school, influence the methods teachers use to deliver CSE, and ultimately affect learner interest in the subject. Thus, whether young learners accept or reject CSE, it often depends on how their respective schools offer and present the material.

The restricted documentation on CSE available in Africa paint a hopeful, but somewhat mixed picture. On one hand, 21 governments in Eastern and Southern Africa agreed in 2013 to enhance sexuality education and youth-oriented reproductive health services in their countries, primarily in response to the HIV/AIDS threat facing the young people (Guttmacher, 2018). All the countries mentioned earlier are signatories to this agreement, which is reflected in the courses they offer today. A Population Reference Bureau (PRB, 2019) scorecard of youth-oriented family planning policies in 15 sub-Saharan African countries revealed that 13 were in support of providing sexuality education. However, the actions taken have often fallen short of the intended goals. Among the countries surveyed by PRB (2019), notably Cameroon, Zambia, Senegal, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, and Uganda, only Côte d'Ivoire fully adhered to the UN's CSE standards. Nonetheless, the extent to which the country's policy was being implemented in schools was unclear. Nigeria omitted sexuality education entirely (Kunnuji et al., 2017). Uganda placed excessive emphasis on sexual abstinence despite labelling its course as sexuality education (Anna, 2020).

A 2019 report on CSE in sub-Saharan Africa, a collaborative effort by FAW (2019) and the African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC, 2019), established that most countries do not have frameworks for monitoring and evaluating CSE programs, and were not in a position to fully engage youths as key stakeholders in formulating the programs. This directly contrasts with Freire's (1996) transformative education which advocates for engaging the learners when designing their curriculum (Freire, 1996). The report concluded that the teaching of topics like masturbation, abortion, and homosexuality were being prohibited from being taught by in most African countries by the prevalent social taboos. Experts would tell us that it's not CSE if it does not include lesbianism and gayism, according to the report, one education official in Zambia said, "That one we just had to put a foot down" (Chirwa-Kambole, 2020). Mukoro (2017) found out that in Zimbabwe, many school teachers scarcely mention even condoms and other contraceptives fearing to encourage promiscuity or to ignite the fury of parents and local authorities. Conversely, research has shown that some countries like Kenya (Keogh, 2018) and Senegal (Chau, 2016) managed to develop their own frameworks to assess performance.

It's encouraging to learn that there are positive initiatives taking place in pockets of Africa, as highlighted by Engleman (2018). Despite the obstacles, there seems to be a recognition of the importance of CSE, and efforts are being made to support and nurture such initiatives. The program in Burundi, as revealed in the findings by APHRC (2017), is particularly interesting. The introduction of 'school aunts' and 'school fathers' reflects a culturally sensitive and community-oriented approach to addressing matters related to sex and sexual violence among students. By aligning with the country's family tradition, where trusted paternal aunts traditionally work with girls on sex-related issues and fathers take on a similar role for boys, the program recognizes the importance of cultural context in implementing effective education. While it may not be strictly classified as CSE in the traditional sense, the program demonstrates a creative and culturally adapted step towards addressing sexual health issues. By involving school staff chosen with learner input, the initiative creates a supportive environment for students to seek guidance and counselling on sensitive matters.

A study by Zulu (2019) shows that the idea of incorporating trusted figures from the community into the school environment for counselling demonstrates a holistic and community-driven

approach to addressing the challenges related to sexual health and this has led to CSE programme fidelity in Zambia. This type of initiative not only provides valuable support to students but also fosters a sense of trust and openness, which are crucial elements in any effective sexuality education program. Efforts like these highlight the importance of tailoring CSE programs to the specific cultural context and traditions of a community, making them more likely to be accepted and effective (Machamire, 2018). It also emphasises the need for continued advocacy, advertising, and nurturing of such initiatives to ensure their success and potential expansion.

Several small-scale CSE programs have been implemented in countries like Senegal, Ghana, and Mozambique. PBR (2019) reveals from its studies that these programs have made substantial investments in both pre- and in-service training for teachers to enhance their capacity to deliver CSE in schools. Zambia's CSE program, despite some reservations on specific topics, has received significant acclaim for its collaboration with various stakeholders, including the country's ministries of health and education, as well as development, gender, and sports organizations (Zulu, 2019 & UNICEF, 2018). Data gathered by Chirwa-Kambole (2020) discloses that digital technologies complement the country's (Zambia) school-based programs, and improved internet connectivity has facilitated online research on CSE. Zulu (2019) further reveal that Zambia's education budget includes line items for sexual and reproductive health instruction, with a focus on teacher training, monitoring, and evaluation.

In Africa, Zambia's CSE program is outstanding. The element that CSE appears to be moving forward in that country like in Namibia, which earned similar praise; it, therefore, looks promising for the continent (Vanwesenbeeck, 2018). Whereas some experts in African affairs have argued that CSE cannot happen in Africa, given pervasive social mores, and taboos related to sex and gender (PBR, 2019), Engleman (2018) is in disagreement for the reason that the available documentation makes it apparent that CSE can happen and that there are schools in Africa that are beginning to approach the ideal right now.

Rwanda has incorporated CSE into its competence-based curriculum. According to the Rwanda Education Board Curriculum Framework (2015), the primary goal of CSE in their curriculum is to equip learners with competencies in an age-appropriate and culturally gender-sensitive mode,

empowering them to make responsible choices about sexual and social relations. Additionally, CSE is considered a cross-cutting theme in many of their learning areas. Rwanda's curriculum review process aligns well with one of the theoretical frameworks for this study, the transformative education theory by Freire (1996), which emphasises that curricula should undergo constant transformation to align with the ever-changing societal needs.

### **2.2.3 CSE in Zimbabwe**

In Zimbabwe, as in many other countries, there is still a lack of clear-cut policies on CSE. The introduction of the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) in Zimbabwe mirrors similar curriculum changes in countries like Rwanda, which are in line with the principles outlined by Freire (1996), as mentioned earlier. Notably, the updated curriculum in Zimbabwe has incorporated components of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) within the subject of Guidance and Counselling, marking a significant step in the integration of CSE into the educational framework (Amnesty International, 2018). Consequently, the history of CSE in Zimbabwe can be traced through its incorporation within the realm of Guidance and Counselling.

Prior to independence in 1980, Zimbabwe lacked planned school guidance counselling services for African children in the then Rhodesia. The existing services were intended for White, Indian, and the Coloured schools, resulting in a racially segregated approach to school guidance and counselling during the colonial era (Urombo, 2018). Missionaries in mission schools provided guidance counselling services for African children, while, in rare instances, members of the community offered informal advice to students (Mapfumo, 2017). The significant expansion of secondary school education after 1980 in Zimbabwe led to the introduction of school guidance and counselling services as supportive measures for students (Ngara, 2019).

Presently, CSE is included in the guidance and counselling and life skills orientation learning area under the CBC. The first examination for this learning area at the Grade 7 level was set for in 2021. However, the set for 2023 Grade 7 examinations included only two questions that were somewhat related to CSE. The integration of CSE into the curriculum represents a significant shift in Zimbabwe's approach to sexual and reproductive health education (Amnesty International, 2018).

Gudyanga et al. (2019) observe that an increase in awareness of the range of individual differences in intelligence, motivation, needs, and interests, resulting from developments in the Zimbabwean education system, led to the introduction of school guidance and counselling services. Muridzo (2017) notes that the introduction of guidance and counselling services in Zimbabwean secondary schools aimed at addressing the diverse needs of students, including academic, career, social, and personal needs.

Initially, following Zimbabwe's independence, the country had only one Education Officer (EO) for school guidance counselling services, overseeing the entire country upon the launch of the services in 1987 (Mapfumo, 2017). The number of Education Officers increased to four in 1991 (Secretary for Education and Culture, 2001). In 1995, then the Ministry of Education, Sport, and Culture, appointed an Education Officer for guidance and counselling for each educational region, sending them to the United Kingdom (UK) for further education (Mapfumo, 2017). Upon their return, these officers updated the national syllabus for School Guidance Counselling, originally drafted in 1987, to include comprehensive areas such as personal and social guidance, educational guidance, career/vocational guidance, HIV/AIDS Education, and individual counselling (Murwira, 2018; Ngara, 2019).

Regrettably, all the Education Officers who received training in Guidance and Counselling in the UK left the Ministry of Education, Sport, and Culture (Murwira, 2018). These were replaced by unqualified officers who had no qualifications in this area. Additionally, these officers were burdened with additional responsibilities in other curriculum areas, leading to divided attention and subsequently compromising the delivery of guidance and counselling programs (Mapfumo, 2017).

The Nziramasanga Commission of Enquiry on Education (1999), after carrying out a thorough research of the state of education in the country (Zimbabwe), commended the offering of guidance and counselling in all educational institutions that is from lower primary to tertiary levels. The commission considered the discipline as indispensable to learners as it would equip them with a variety of competences necessary for growth (Murwira, 2018). Part of the learners in primary and

those in secondary schools are at a critical stage of development which is the adolescence stage (Mapfumo, 2017). The adolescence stage is a transitional stage from childhood to adulthood which is characterised by accelerated growth and development as manifested in weight, height and other body changes (Cherry, 2022). McLeod (2020) mentions that adolescents go through physiological changes and become more mature physically and sexually. There is therefore need for the individuals to adjust constantly to these changes as they grow into adulthood, hence, the need for proper guidance.

The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) has adopted specific health policies to improve the youths' sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and these were instigated through the Ministry of Health and Child Care, and it was not available in schools (Mukoro, 2017). Currently, Zimbabwe subscribes to the ITGS standards by virtue of it being a signatory to ESA (Mahoso, 2020). Nonetheless, there is extensive misperception amongst youths, parents, teachers and others *vis-à-vis* the age at which girls could receive sexual and reproductive health services (Ngara, 2019). Part of the debate emanates from the inconsistency in the laws regarding to the exact age of permission to sex and marriage. While under Zimbabwe's Constitution and the Legal Age of Majority Act (Act No. 15 of 1982), full legal capacity is attained at 18, the first section of the Public Health Act (Act No. 19 of 1924) on the other hand defines an adult as "a person of 16 years of age or over" pointing towards the fact that anyone under 16 needs the consent of a parent or guardian for medical treatment Amnesty International (2018).

In addition, the Child's Act (as amended by Act No. 23 of 2001) fails to outline clear specifications in terms of the age consent to access health and medical services outside the approval of parents (Murwira, 2018). The GoZ recognises that the laws regarding the age of majority have been problematically interpreted, resulting in the requirement for parental consent for youths to access sexual and reproductive health services before the age of 18-years (Urombo, 2016). However, Mahoso (2020) points out that the government has yet to take definitive steps to address the existing legal and policy inconsistencies.

While age of consent provisions may be intended to provide protection from child sexual abuse or early marriage, in practice they often result in denial of access to essential health services and

information best obtained through CSE programs (Murwira, 2018). As such, the government needs to take urgent steps to guarantee youths' access to sexual and reproductive health services and information without discrimination, restrictions due to age or marital status, or requirements of third-party authorization (from a spouse, guardian, parents or others) (Amnesty International, 2018). In view of that, this can best be obtained through CSE.

The unavailability of CSE specific policies in the country has deleteriously affected the implementation of the program. Findings from a research carried out by Mahoso (2020) revealed the same, bewailing that there are clear-cut and or CSE specific policies in Zimbabwe. These sentiments were echoed by UNESCO (2015) lamenting that in Zimbabwe, there is a lack of a mandate to teach CSE. This makes teachers reluctant to teach the subject as is the case in Kenya where Mocheche (2018) revealed that teachers side-lined CSE and focused on core learning areas. Teachers are policy implementers and who need these policies to guide them in their day-to-day operations by for example stating the amount of time per lesson, and the number of CSE lessons expected of them. This need for the policies to operationalise CSE is also brought to prominence (Keog, 2018), who asserts that the absence of policies to support the provision of CSE can hinder the implementation of the program. Thus, there is urgent need to address the policy issue.

### **2.3 Effects of ecosystemic factors on CSE implementation**

Absolutely, recognising and understanding the barriers to CSE in Zimbabwe is crucial for devising effective strategies to promote its successful implementation at the junior grade levels. Although eliminating some of these barriers might present a significant challenge due to their deep-seated nature within society, acknowledging and addressing them is a critical first step. By acknowledging these obstacles, stakeholders can work towards finding viable solutions to facilitate the effective provision of CSE to junior grade students, thereby promoting their sexual health and well-being.

### **2.3.1 Family's attitudes and perceptions towards implementation of CSE**

Parents play a critical role in shaping the successful implementation of CSE, considering their influential position within the microsystem of child development, as outlined in the ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Their attitudes and perceptions towards CSE significantly influence the effectiveness of the program, ultimately contributing to its success or potential setbacks. The alignment between parental expectations and school curriculum is instrumental in ensuring that children receive the education that aligns with the values and beliefs upheld within their families (Mahoso, 2020).

As evidenced in the studies by Badenhorst (2018) in South Africa and Keog (2018) in Peru, the resistance from parents towards CSE can pose significant challenges to the implementation of such programs. The findings highlight the importance of garnering parental support and addressing their concerns through effective communication and engagement strategies. Teachers involved in the delivery of CSE must take proactive measures to involve parents in the educational process, fostering an environment of collaboration and understanding. By addressing parental concerns and providing them with comprehensive information about the goals and benefits of CSE, teachers can foster a supportive and conducive learning environment for students.

In Zambia, Chavula et al. (2022) recorded that parents with strong cultural values and traditional beliefs have reprimanded the implementation of CSE in schools. Furthermore, they resisted the teaching of homosexuality, initiation ceremonies, menstruation, and contraception mentioning that these are socially and culturally unacceptable. Consequently, teachers give up teaching despite knowing the significance of CSE and being competent enough to teach the subject.

Some parents were never taught CSE by their parents when they were still young, and as a result, they desire that their children be socialised in the same way (Haberland, 2017). Such parents are not comfortable discussing sexuality issues with children as they regard it as taboo to do so (Ngara, 2019). In Rwanda, research shows that most parents believe that teachers are the best people to teach CSE (HDI, 2019). Furthermore, they reveal that shyness; religion, and culture influence their decisions negatively while discussing CSE at home. Therefore, they opt to remain silent, which is

sexually risky to the youths (Mahoso, 2020). Donko et al. (2020) expound that silence on the part of parents and teachers becomes sexually risky in the sense that children may be starved of reliable information on sexuality. Subsequently, Mahoso (2020) found out that children who have not learned CSE end up consulting their peers who are not capable of providing scientifically accurate information pertaining to sexuality. They may then get inaccurate information that could be deleterious to them.

The interception of teaching CSE to junior grade learners is also reflected in a study carried out in Malawi by Banda (2017), where parents were asked whether they were comfortable to have their children taught sexuality education by teachers. From this study, it was unveiled that the parents were uncomfortable about CSE being taught in schools and this stemmed from various cultural, social, or personal beliefs. For them, primary schools must focus solely on academic subjects and not explore sensitive topics like sexuality. Additionally, parents expressed the fear that teaching CSE to primary school learners was likely to prematurely expose the not so mature children to sexual activities. Similarly, Chavula et al. (2022) purported that Zambian parents felt that teaching CSE was a way of initiating their children into sexual activities. A negative attitude towards teaching CSE to junior grade learners on the part of parents can potentially militate against its provision. Engaging parents in discussions about the importance of CSE, emphasizing that the content is age-appropriate, and highlighting the potential benefits of such education can help alleviate apprehensions. Zambia, for instance, has made effort of educating parents on the significance of CSE with a focus on ensuring that the content is age-appropriate and safe for learners (Chavula et al., 2022; Zulu, 2019), and this proactive approach has helped in overcoming parental resistance.

Conversely, Machamire (2018), indicted in his research findings that there are some parents who have defied the odds, and are in support of the program. They encourage their children to take this subject at school and they go on to send them to schools where CSE is taught. They help their children in doing homework on CSE and they buy them the required educational material for the learning area. Such children are very assertive and are well informed on issues to do among other things with gender, sexuality, health, and rights (Machamire, 2018).

It follows that uneducated parents are the ones who are always against the provision of CSE to junior-grade children because of a lack of empathy with their children (Browes, 2018); and in Zimbabwe, Mahoso (2020) discovered that most of the uneducated parents professed ignorance about CSE and were against the idea of it being taught in school. They are unlike the educated parents who understand the predicament of their children with regard to problems that develop due to misconceptions resulting from a lack of CSE (De Witt, 2018). Educated parents are said to be aware of the negative effects of lacking CSE and the importance of having their children taught sex education (Mahoso, 2020). Contrarily, their non-educated counterparts may be against its teaching, and may not be comfortable with a situation where their children in junior grade are taught CSE (Milton, 2019; De Witt, 2018; Fairfield & Charman, 2022).

### **2.3.2 Effects of the family's culture towards implementation of CSE**

Scholarship reflects the need to promote CSE not only in Zimbabwe and Africa but also beyond the region. In this regard, more attention and discussion on CSE is needed not only in the developing world but rather the world over as this could help yield genuine personal relationships and healthy sexuality in young people across the globe (the Guttmacher Institute, 2020).

Family culture has surfaced as the main cause of nurturing negative attitudes, beliefs, and taboos that impede the acceptance of crucial aspects of CSE (De Haas & Hutter, 2019). Rijdsdijk (2018) laments that culture is one of the factors that can be detrimental to the execution of CSE. Culture denotes the way of life of a people which entails their beliefs, norms, values, myths, and taboos (Gwirayi, 2016) and according to the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), these cultural elements lie under the microsystem level. These cultural elements include socioeconomic status, wealth, poverty, and ethnicity (Chinyoka, 2016). Some cultures in Zimbabwe believe that sexuality issues should be left for the period just before marriage where aunts and uncles would take up the task (Mahoso, 2020). This feel that it is too early to teach CSE at junior grade level.

The cultural sensitivity surrounding discussions about sexuality remains a significant obstacle to the effective implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in many societies, including Zimbabwe. As was highlighted by Ngara (2019) and De Haas and Hutter (2019) in their

research findings, cultural taboos, and norms, were often perpetuating reluctance to engage in open conversations about sexual matters, especially between minors and adults. This reluctance is further reinforced by the prevalence of traditional cultural beliefs that view discussions on sexuality as immoral or taboo, a sentiment (Farieta, 2015; Chavula, 2022). Such cultural attitudes contribute to an environment of discomfort and embarrassment, causing both teachers and students to shy away from meaningful discussions on sexuality.

As shown in their research findings, the Human Development Index (HDI, 2019) similarly emphasised the impact of shyness, religion, and culture on the reluctance of parents to engage in conversations about CSE at home. This cultural dynamic often results in students being hesitant to seek clarification on sexual topics, (Chinyoka, 2016); Amnesty International, 2018). Consequently, the lack of open communication, and clarification, on these matters can lead to the persistence of misconceptions among students, potentially promoting engagement in sexually risky behaviour.

Vygotsky's cultural concepts (McLeod, 2020), underscore the importance of aligning educational content with the prevailing cultural context for effective learning to occur. Therefore, in the context of Zimbabwe, there is a critical need to sensitize and educate communities about the importance and relevance of CSE, fostering an environment where open dialogue about sexuality is not only accepted but also encouraged. Encouraging a cultural shift that allows for open and informed discussions on sexuality can help create a more conducive environment for the successful implementation of CSE in schools.

There are some practices in Zimbabwe that are severely harmful to the youths. According to Mapfumo (2017), if a person intentionally kills another or by accident, the perpetrator or their family is expected to compensate, and a girl child is given to the bereaved family for marriage. Chinyoka (2016) adds that some Zimbabwean cultures permit the exchange of the girl-child for food during times of famine. The 'starving' family gives away a girl for marriage in exchange for food even without her consent. According to these cultural practices, the age of the child does not matter and it is a form of forced marriage. It is, therefore, apparent that CSE needs not be

undermined as it helps castigate such practices as well as enlighten the learners on their sexual rights.

In addition to the cultural practices which are at cross-roads with CSE principles, is the belief among some ethnical groups, like the Shona, where a man can socialise and have love play ‘*chiramu*’ with his wife’s young sisters. (Ngara, 2019) and Chinyoka (2016) lament that this violates the sexual rights of the girl-child. Also, in case of rape, Milton (2019) echoes saying that some cultures believe that a girl cannot marry if she is no longer virgin, thus, the perpetrator is forced to take the victim for marriage. There is also this belief that having sexual intercourse with a virgin leads to good fortunes and also helps to cure HIV and AIDS and this was be-mourned by Mapfumo (2017). The junior grade learners are not spared from all these malpractices and they can only be empowered through CSE.

Still under culture, religion is another factor that is detrimental to the provision of CSE, thus, some social gatherings like churches prohibit the teaching of CSE (Beyers, 2017). Some of these churches argue that good morals can be instilled among children through teaching them religious and moral education and they see no need to teach CSE (Denver & Falconer, 2018). For some Christian families, abstinence-only education is better compared to CSE, implying that children from such families will risk not being taught CSE and might lack the knowledge, attitudes and skill on sexuality.

Scholarship has also insisted that Christianity does not permit adults to talk about sexuality with children because they believe that it will defile these young ones whom they regard as innocent and righteous (Banda, 2017; Chavula et al. 2022). An attempt to talk about sexuality with children is believed to conjure up the wrath of the Christian-God who will then punish those who talked about sexuality with children in this regard demonising the sexuality education (Matswetu & Bhana, 2018). In other words, CSE is regarded as unholy by some Christians (Chinyoka, 2016) and an endeavour to offer it to junior grade learners is construed as a way of leading away children from God. Banda (2017) posits that in Christianity, sexuality education is to be offered only to those who are planning to get married since sex is believed to be for procreation only. In Zambia, Chavula et al. (2022) established that Moslems, Hindus and Christians were resistant to the idea

that learners be taught topics on kissing, caressing, masturbation, withdrawal, ejaculation, erection and the use of contraceptives. They considered these to be at logger heads with their religious beliefs. In Burundi, as well, the Burundi Catholic Church (2023) revealed that the Catholic strongly reprimanded CSE as a violation of church principles and Burundian culture.

Even if children in some African cultures are taught CSE, those below the age of 12-years of age (junior grades) are usually excluded in anything pertaining to sexuality because they are regarded as too young for that education (Mwamwenda, 2010; Matswetu & Bhana, 2018). In African culture, sexuality education usually starts at the age of 12 (Chinyoka, 2016), and these should be taught abstinence-only education by aunts, and other senior members of the society. The idea is further embodied by De Haas (2019) who found out that teachers and parents in Kenya, Indonesia, and Uganda were still inclining to abstinence only and continued to use fear based messages. This cultural practice militates against the provision of CSE to junior grade learners as it emphasises abstinence-only education. If CSE is offered to junior grade learners, there might be some struggle between parents and teachers leading to the abandoning of the learning area.

Another cultural impediment to the provision of CSE is language (Beyers, 2017). Beyers (2017) unveils that CSE is being taught in English in South Africa even to children whose first language is not English and this is compromising their understanding. Similarly, Mahoso (2020) also noticed a similar practice in Zimbabwe, where CSE is taught in English as well instead of their native languages. Furthermore, the socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, (1979) amplifies language as a key factor to effective learning. Thus, communication breakdown as a result of language barrier is in tandem with the theory. This theory emphasises the use of one's cultural language when teaching to enhance understanding of concepts because language is taken as a thinking tool (McLeod, 2020). Benedict (2021) further notes that in some cases children are not allowed to ask questions about what they do not understand using their mother language. They are forced to carry their misconceptions back home, as a result the teaching of CSE gets compromised and does not become comprehensive as it should be. More so, Bayes (2017) laments that there are some words which are regarded as vulgar especially in local languages, thus complicating the situation. It can be noted that due to the nature of this learning area, quite a number of these words make up the content, hence the need to teach them in English or any other foreign language.

The main problem now is that most of the CSE principles are at loggerheads with the various cultural practices, hence communities end up resorting to castigate CSE as a whole or pick some items that do not interfere with their interests (Mukoro, 2017). Most adults in Zimbabwe were never taught CSE when they were at school (Amnesty International, 2018; Banda, 2017). In Rwanda, the HDI (2019) found out that parents did not know about CSE, and or any policy related to it. The incompatibility of CSE with local norms and understandings about adolescent sexuality, combined with teacher-parent role dilemmas emerged as the key problem in its implementation (Zulu, 2019). In Zambia the case is the same, Chavula et al. (2022) found out that some topics were regarded as sacred, and only traditional counsellors were supposed to teach those causing the teachers to succumb to these in order to be seen as supporters of dominant cultural norms and values. Thus, all these have led to the development of negative attitudes towards the teaching and learning of CSE.

### **2.3.3 The effects of administrators' attitudes and perceptions towards CSE implementation**

Effective monitoring and evaluation are the other fundamental components for a successful program. While in most countries, government bodies are in charge of monitoring the performance of teachers (Guttmacher Institute, 2020), in Zimbabwe, school administrators are the ones who play this supervisory role (Thabela, 2018). Thus, their attitudes and perceptions towards the implementation of CSE to junior grades in schools strongly determines its success and or failure. Effective supervision of the program would follow a positive attitude and the right perceptions of the supervisors.

The attitudes and perceptions of school administrators can go as far as to affect the setting up of the school time tables. Those who support CSE would allocate it enough time on the school time table, the ones who do not would skip it and use the time for other learning areas they deem more important (Muridzo, 2017). Moreover, school administrators are the ones who are in charge of school funds and are responsible for allocating or directing these funds towards different purposes. Those who promote CSE would see to it that some funds are channelled towards CSE. They would make sure that adequate teaching and learning resources on CSE are in place for its effective

implementation. In contrast, if these do not support CSE delivery to junior grades, they will not commit any funds towards it and it might die away.

Stakeholder involvement is of paramount importance when it comes to policy implementation and it has proven to be efficacious in several countries. Thailand CSE program has gotten to be a success through the involvement other stakeholders like teachers and parents in the formulation of school based CSE programs and these are being seen supporting CSE (Chiba 2021). In countries like Uganda (Kemigisha, 2019); Nigeria (Kunnuji et al., 2017), and Zambia (Chirwa-Kambole, 2020), researches divulge that CSE programme fidelity has been further enhanced by collaborating with law enforcing agents and traditional leaders. Ram et al. (2020) revealed that Fiji has added community health workers to the list of engaged stakeholders conscientize them on the momentousness of CSE. In connection to this, the school administrators play a crucial role by being the linkmen between the different stakeholders and the school (Mapfumo, 2018). They can effectively perform this role with regards to CSE if they hold the proper attitudes towards the program. They can engage well-wishers and donors to fund CSE programs in different ways. They may seek donations in the form of funds, teaching and learning materials or even inviting resources personnel in the area like health experts (Mahoso, 2020).

Since parents have been mentioned as key stakeholders in the foregoing discussion and also in the ITGS (2017) document, administrators are the ones who can engage them easily. They help conscientize these parents on the germaneness of CSE. For example, during annual general meetings and on any other school gathering like parents' days. Basing on the professional authority they possess; these have the audacity to influence both the teachers and the learners to have a buy-in of CSE. To teachers they can do this through staff development sessions and for learners they can get in touch with them during school assemblies.

#### **2.3.4 Teachers' perceptions and attitude toward CSE implementation**

Militating against the implementation of CSE is the unavailability of competent classroom practitioners who have the efficacy to deliver this learning area (Mocheche, 2018; Tabong, 2018; Zulu, 2019). This is substantiated by Milton and Walker (2006) who maintain that classroom

managers in Sydney did not know what to teach and how to teach it. Benedict (2021) noted that the same applies to South Africa where teachers lack the vital skills to tackle this learning area. Malawi is not an exception to this as Banda (2017) reported that most teachers fell short on how to teach CSE chiefly because they were not trained. This shows that the educators lack knowledge on the apposite content to instil under CSE and the active teaching methodologies to use when delivering lessons. Ofsted (2017) further opines that even if a very good curriculum is available, it will not have any impact as long as the teachers are not qualified. Thus, if teachers lack the proficiency and understanding to implement CSE, then the intended results are unachievable. Such teachers will have difficulties in delivering lessons on complex and debatable CSE concepts, thereby down-playing the efficacy of a good CSE curriculum.

Apart from lack of knowledge, some teachers fail to implement CSE in junior grades because of the negative attitude they have towards it. In a study by Beyers (2017), participating teachers clearly indicated that they did not want to teach CSE, because they felt that it was unnecessary to address sexuality issues to young children as it is an adult issue. They also indicated that they were not taught CSE by their parents and teachers as a result they see no reason for teaching it. These negative attitudes are attributed to the teachers' lack of adequate training to teach it (Mocheche, 2018).

Some of the teachers who teach CSE to junior grades do not teach all the content that they are expected to. Rather, they avoid teaching topics that are at crossroads with their personal values and beliefs (Beyers, 2017; Mkumbo, 2018). In support of this, Vanwesenbeecka et al. (2016) concluded that particular topics were difficult to deliberate on for many teachers, and this was often due to their attitudes and norms which were not in tandem with CSE standards. These skirmishes of personal norms against CSE program requirements emanate from lack of training and supportive school environment (Vanwesenbeecka et al., 2016). Similarly, in South Africa most teachers indicated discomfort in teaching some of the aspects of CSE owing to cultural reasons (Bayes, 2017), and in Kenya, Mocheche (2018) found out that teachers side-lined CSE mainly because they have not had any training on sexuality and they chose to focus mainly on core subjects.

Banda (2017) asserts that some teachers in Malawi were avoid teaching CSE to learners because they were unacquainted with appropriate CSE content to teach and also a lacked knowledge on proper teaching methods to deliver the subject. In this way, effective teaching of CSE is thus substantially compromised. On the other hand, some teachers perceive that it is the responsibility of the parents to teach CSE (Beyers, 2017). In Zambia, Zulu (2019) found out that limited ownership of the CSE curriculum by various stakeholders has undermined the teachers' motivation to actively implement this learning area. For these reasons, they ignore teaching it. The above situations align well with the situation in Zimbabwe. Teachers have not received any meaningful training on CSE implementation.

### **2.3.5 Lack of government support**

There is not much financial support from the government towards the implementation of effective CSE. Due to the fact that most teachers have not been trained to teach CSE, there is, therefore, need for some staff development sessions to acquaint them with the requisite skills in the learning area and this requires funding from the central government (Ngara, 2019). Since CSE is still new to the Zimbabwean education system, government funding will make it easy to allow acquirement of the various teaching and learning material.

Through the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, the government has up to now not put in place a CSE curriculum and policies for teacher training institutions (Murwira, 2018). All teacher training institutions should be mandated by government to have CSE as one of the core modules in their curricular. If possible, to have teachers who are specifically qualified in CSE should be made available at each and every school (Mahoso, 2020). Additionally, like in Zambia (Zulu, 2019), the absence of proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms from the government also impinges on effective CSE implementation. These should be put in place as they may as well guide teachers on what is expected of them.

Teachers have a tendency of giving much focus on those subjects which are examined, this then imply that there might be a need to add CSE to the list of learning areas that are examinable. To improving the percentage content, it contributes in the Social Science paper is another way that

can be used to promote it. A results-based approach to CSE learning in schools would ensure that learners acquire information that is standard, and with great quality; and will also improve the government's effort to ensure that the educators are well skilled to teach the subject.

### **2.3.6 Social Opposition**

Guy-Evan (2020) stipulates that social opposition mainly in the form of resistance by key line ministries and is one of the major drawbacks of CSE. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) in Zimbabwe has openly declared its unwillingness to take up CSE (Mahoso, 2020), and has subjected to picking some topics in the circular that they deem necessary and relative for the learners to embrace (WHO, 2022). Omission of key topics results in the learners having a scanty understanding of CSE and how it fits their needs. This resonates well with the findings by Vanwesenbeeck et al. (2018) who have it that in resource poor settings in Africa and Asia CSE lessons, have been skipped and some topics compressed especially those that are sensitive-like abortion, masturbation and homosexuality.

As earlier alluded to, the MoPSE has a learning area referred to as Guidance and Counselling, and life skills orientation which addresses a lot of livelihood topics and amongst those: Life-skills, sexuality, HIV/AIDs (Nziramasinga, 1999). The Ministry has the mandate to build and nurture learning, life-skills and information gathering for all children in Zimbabwe. Thus, denying them proper CSE is robbing them of the opportunity to be prepared for the future.

Another barrier is on the capacity strengthening of teachers who teach CSE. Donko et al. (2020) revealed that CSE program fidelity in Ghana was largely hindered by the absence or unavailability of qualified teaching staff, and such is the situation in Kenya (Mocheche, 2018). Likewise, there are no specific trained junior teachers to take CSE in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the teachers deliver it to their particular classes only whenever they have some free periods (Mahoso, 2020). This is probably because CSE is not a stand-alone learning area and not fully examined. Its weight in the Guidance and Counselling learning area is quite insignificant and has not been specified in the syllabus, accordingly, most teachers do not find it worth their time and would rather concentrate on the learning areas that are fully examined. A case in point is of the 2022 grade 7 examination,

there was not even a single question specifically on CSE in the Social Science paper. Therefore, there is need to emulate what some other countries are doing, PBR (2019) discloses that CSE program fidelity in Mozambique, Ghana and Senegal was being enhanced by the extensive investments they were making in pre- and in-service training of CSE teachers.

Insufficient funding is another major drawback to the program. Exclusive of the NGOs operating in Zimbabwe, who have a health mandate, the government is yet to finance CSE in schools no wonder why there are inadequate funds to provide for it (HDI, 2019). Training of teachers on CSE and teaching the learning area itself require resources, and funding, thus most schools drop it in favour of a fully-funded learning areas (Mahoso, 2020). An example is of the science subjects from which learners excel because they always receive government funding through the presidential scholarship to encourage them. In Zimbabwe, there is the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) program in place to support science related learning areas.

## **2.4 Strategies for promoting effective implementation of CSE in schools**

Generally, positive school environments facilitate full implementation of educational programs making sure that they are effective. The following are some strategies which school authorities, management and staff in general can use to make a difference in as far as CSE implementation is concerned.

Effective leadership and management systems in schools are pivotal in fortifying CSE implementation. School administrators should take the lead in inspiring and supporting CSE, as well as in creating the fitting climate for implementing CSE and addressing the needs of young people (Milton, 2019). From a classroom standpoint, instructional leadership demands teachers to promote growth and understanding of sexuality in learners through discovery learning (Guy-Evan 2020). In a climate of uncertainty or conflict, the leadership abilities among managers and teachers can make the difference between a successful programmatic intervention and a failed one (Mkombo, 2018).

Creating and or strengthening policies that uphold the provision of CSE is mandatory and another way to enrich the program. Engleman (2018) posits that the sometimes sensitive, and controversial nature of CSE demands for supportive and inclusive laws and policies to be in place, to demonstrate that the CSE implementation is a matter of policy rather than personal or individual choice. In Zimbabwe, the absence of CSE specific policies has been pointed out as the culprit hindering efficacious program execution (Ngara, 2019; Machamire, 2018; Matswetu & Bhana, 2018) Implementing CSE being guided by relevant and clear-cut national and school policies is indispensable and according to Zulu (2019), this will help to provide clear institutional basis for the CSE programs; anticipate and deal with the sensitivities pertaining to the execution of CSE programs; put in place guidelines on confidentiality; set principles of apt behaviour; safeguard and back teachers liable for delivering CSE as well as sustain or uphold their standing within the school and the community at large.

Parental involvement in the formulation and implementation of CSE programs should never be undermined and they are key stakeholders of the education system (Gudyanga et al., 2019). In most of the cases, parents tend to reject the implementation of this program. For instance, in Zambia, research findings unbosom that most parents were opposed to CSE being taught in schools to young children as they were worried about the age appropriateness of the content (Chavula et al., 2022). In Rwanda, the revelation from research is that parents thought that open discussions on sexuality would lead to greater comfort in those issues resulting in learners accepting, tolerating and even indulging (APHRC, 2019); and in Uganda, as was discovered by Kemigisha (2019), parents with a strong proclivity to their culture and traditions excoriated CSE delivery specially in primary schools. To curtail this challenge, it is revealed through research that Zambia, Fiji and Nigeria had their personnel well versed in CSE using community dialogues to engage parents, teacher associations, community health workers, the police force, psychologist and religious and traditional leaders (Tabong, 2018; Ram et al., 2020; Kunnuji et al., 2017; Chavula, 2021) and this was effective in garnering community support and their buy-in.

In addition, teachers are pivotal when it comes to the implementation of CSE to junior grades because they are policy implementers. There is need to develop in them confidence and commitment for effective delivery of CSE. Schools and the government at large should see to it

that they are well resourced in order for them to be in a position to deliver effectively and be able to teach the more complex issues of sexuality and SRH (PBR, 2019; Mocheche, 2018). For Keog (2018), Matt (2019), and Zulu (2019), effective implementation of the CSE curriculum, is also strengthened if these classroom managers feel supported by a legal framework, the school management and local authorities as well as having access to training and resources. Bonjour and Van der Vlugt (2018) view CSE as not being the obligation of any specific teacher, but somewhat a united effort by which all educators support each other and share best practices of implementing the CSE program. Teachers responsible for the delivery of CSE should be trained on the specific skills needed to address sexuality perfectly and clearly, as well as the use of active-learner-centred methods (Zulu, 2019; Mocheche, 2018). Thus, there is need for some in-service staff development sessions.

It is worthwhile to combine CSE, and other related services and this has proven to be an effective way of supporting the youths' SRH in Zambia (Chavula et al., 2022). The role of people like health providers, and other non-teaching personnel operative within the school environment cannot be undermined. Hadley et al. (2016) further notes that non-academic staff like school nurses can provide additional information and counselling, support classroom activities and refer children, and young people, to external SRH or other services. The example set by Zambia can be emulated, they have incorporated health workers, and the police, enforcing agents into their CSE trainings sessions and involved them in the establishment friendly health services (Chavula et al., 2022). Zambia also established safe spaces where young people can access the services they need (Keog, 2018). Additionally, UNESCO (2018) opines that the non-academic staff, for instance janitors and cleaners, need to be conscientized and be made to understand and appreciate the policies and ethics of CSE and child protection, together with the guidelines pertaining to young people living with HIV, LGBTQI, and others.

Furthermore, students should play an active role in building, and mobilizing, support for CSE and this is indispensable. Student councils, other student groups and individual youth leaders should be actively encouraged to provide input on the design, monitoring and evaluation of CSE program (Sofman, 2019). This reverberates well with Freire's critical pedagogy where he proposes for active involvement of the learners in the formulation of knowledge (Freire, 2004). This could be

because there tend to some knowledge gaps between the young and the curriculum planners as a result of the generational gaps. Freire (2007) propounds that these learners know the problems they face in their daily lives, and as such, involving them would result in the formulation of more meaningful and purposeful policies and curricular. These, in another way help promote CSE if they are empowered as they can gather information pertaining to the needs of their peers, and may also help the initiation of dialogues with parents and other societal members *vis-à-vis* the vitality of CSE in their lives.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The chapter has discussed the literature related to the relevance of CSE to junior grades in Zimbabwe, exploring various ecosystemic factors and how they are affecting program implementation. More so, some strategies for upholding effective execution of CSE have been explored. In a nutshell, the thrust of the discussions was to provide an insight into the current state of CSE locally and internationally with the intention of identifying factors affecting the program's implementation to junior grades.

## CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework for the study. Theories are put together to authenticate, validate, understand, predict, and explain a certain phenomenon which are in most cases formulated to challenge and extend on existing knowledge (Clarke, 2020). They also help to link between educational research and practice (Schunk, 2020). On the other hand, Lefrancois (2019) postulate that theories provide a basis for judging the accuracy and usefulness of beliefs. Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological theory and Freire's critical pedagogy were the basis for this study on exploring the ecosystemic factors affecting CSE in junior grades in Zimbabwe.

I found these two theories to be in a position to effectually inform this study in a number of ways establishing links between them. The socio-ecological theory considers the child/learner to be at the centre of the whole system and being surrounded by various ecologies. These ecologies affect their education directly or indirectly (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) and the theory outlines the effects of each and every one of them. Among other things, Bronfenbrenner acknowledges that there is a myriad of changes that happen over time and these have a rippling effect on the learner. These changes always come along with new challenges thus demanding for new solutions.

For Freire, the solutions to these societal changes and challenges lies on an effective education system. Like Bronfenbrenner, he coincides with the opinion that the world is ever changing; hence the need to continuously review the education curriculum. Freire (1998) holds the view that the role of education is to create critical consciousness in learners thus, the ability to examine the surrounding world and act collectively based on achievements after the analysis. In other words, done properly, education should inculcate, in the learner, problems solving skills. Aside from justifying the inclusion of CSE into the junior grades curriculum, the transformative education theory as well offer some guidelines on curriculum development and refinement processes. Consequently, these two theories link well and are inescapable in this research.

### **3.1 The Socio-Ecological Model**

Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory is also known as socio-ecological model, the ecological systems theory, the human theory or the bio-ecological model. For consistency's sake, I referred to the theory as the socio-ecological model of theory. The model offers a theoretical framework for understanding how individuals are affected by their surrounding environmental factors or ecologies (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The theory is apposite in this study because it takes into consideration the complex layers of environments that influence child development with specificity to their education (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The functionalists aver that education is the transmission of norms and values of the society (Haralambos & Holborn, 2016), thus the relationship between the various systems play a prime role in what the child learns at school (Hayes et al., 2017). Accordingly, this justifies the use of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of child development as a lens to understanding these environmental factors and their effects on CSE delivery in junior grades in Zimbabwe.

While Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model revolves around and focused on various ecosystemic factors affecting teaching and learning, it is also crucial to remember that two of the immediate ecologies of the junior grade learners are their parents and the school. These two ecologies influence the child in either a positive or a negative way (Chinyoka, 2016). Schunk (2016) says that the model offers a theoretical framework for understanding how surrounding ecosystemic factors or ecologies affect individuals. Organising the theory into systems and formulating a model depicting encircling layers around a child as the centre point, Bronfenbrenner (1995), explains how the immediate and distant settings and the interactions between them influence the delivery of CSE to the child.

Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) postulate that this model stresses the importance of the interaction between people or any of the ecologies and their changing environments. With reference to this study, junior grades learners taking CSE as part of their curriculum are at the centre of model and their acquisition of CSE hinges upon the interactions they have with the members of the various settings. As aforementioned, the junior grade learners spend most of their

time at school and at home. Figure 1 below illustrates Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) theory. It shows the various systems and some examples of the systems.

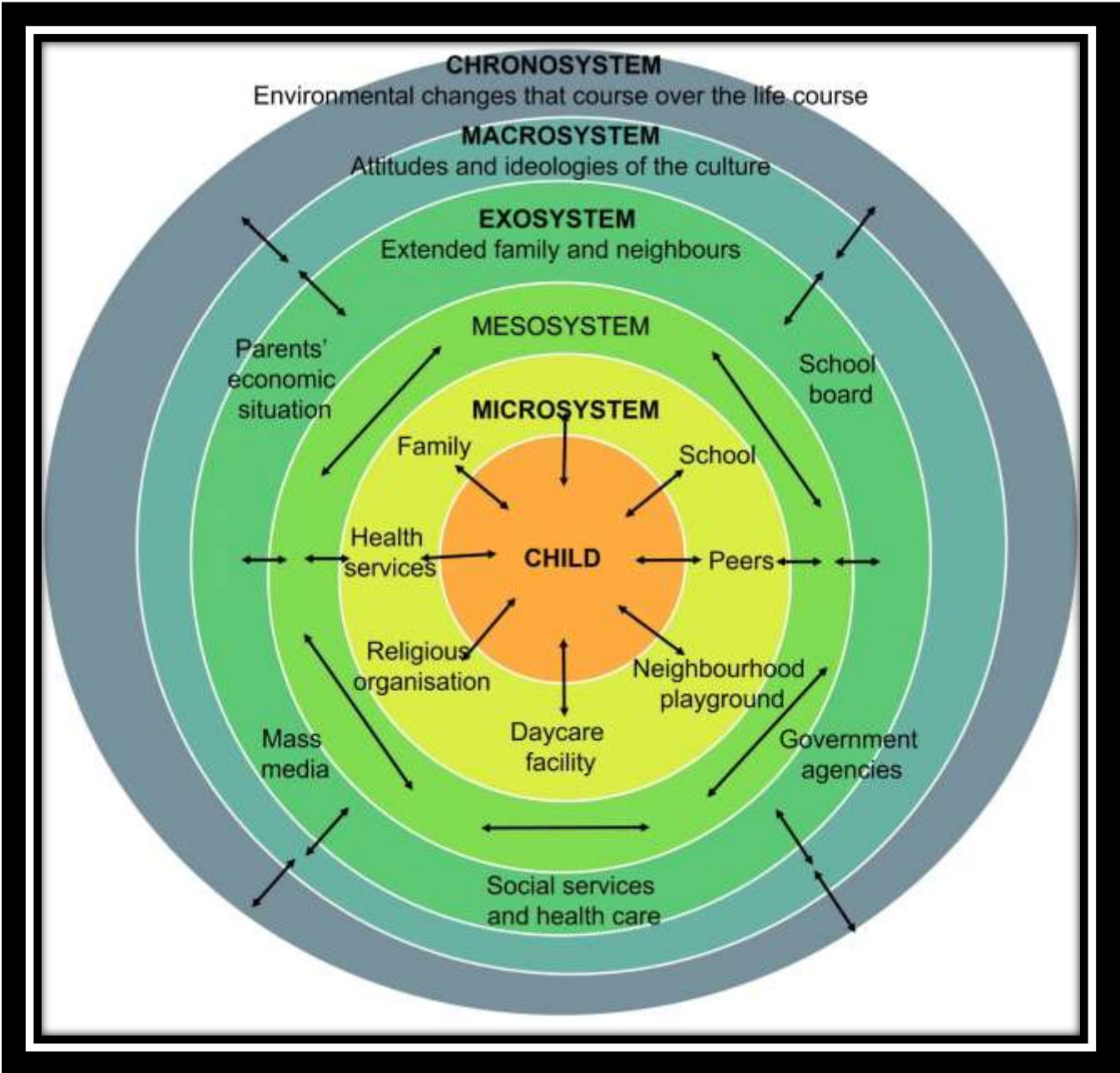


Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner’s theory (Guy-Evan, 2020)

### **3.1.1 The Microsystem**

Pertaining to child development, this is the setting that is closest to the child and it comprises of the relationships and interactions a child has with its immediate surroundings (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The child is found in these settings on a daily basis. these settings include but are not limited to the family of the child, the school and the peer group (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017). It is within this setting that children have direct social contact with their surroundings and through socialization, children learn both socially accepted and antisocial behaviours (Lefrancois, 2019). Consequently, the child who is receiving CSE is found at the core of these corresponding settings cited above daily.

The factors within these settings affect the child on a daily basis when it comes to receiving CSE. If a setting promotes the provisions of CSE, the child embraces this learning area, and is in a position to acquires skills that protect them from being sexually abused, and gain accurate knowledge on their sexual and reproductive health (UNESCO, 2018). Thus, learners from a family that backs the acquisition of CSE benefit a lot. Those who go to schools where CSE is taught and have a CSE curriculum that is in agreement with the international guidelines on sexuality education, being delivered by trained teachers, could acquire and develop competences needed to evade sexual exploitation without any hindrances (Mahoso, 2020). This is especially if there are materials that support the teaching and learning of CSE (Tabong, 2018). Zulu (2019) concurs and pens that children from such schools may grow up to become adults who are assertive, communicative and knowledgeable in ways of outwitting sexually risky behaviour.

The children within the context above, as propounded by Machamire (2018), are expected to develop differently from the ones who may come from homes where the efficacy of CSE is disregarded, and are against its teaching. Parents from such families are likely to send children to schools where CSE is not taught. Even if they attend those schools where there is a CSE curriculum, learners have a negative attitude towards it, hence, the ineffective learning (Lippard, La Paro, Rouse & Crosby, 2018).

When it comes to homework on CSE, Chinyoka (2016) argues that learners from such families suffer since they do not have home support. Subsequently, the children may miss the vast competences attained through CSE. Even when sexually abused, Machamire (2018) revealed that such children usually do not report the cases because they do not even know that they have been abused. Even if they feel the need to report, in most cases learners do not even know the suitable reporting procedures since such competences are mainly acquired through CSE. In the majority of cases, where children go to a school without CSE programs, and with teachers who are untrained to teach these, they lack the development of communicative skills as well as failing to attain confidence (Mukoro, 2017). Consequently, Martinello (2020) espouses that such children may then become targets of child sexual abuse since they lack the skills that protect them. Children grow to become adults who are ignorant of sexuality-related issues like reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases (Haberland, 2017). They may as well be unaware of the various ways to safeguard themselves from STIs. Usually, upon attaining adolescence, chances are high that these may engage in sexually risky behaviour out of ignorance.

Lefrancois (2019) promulgates that school going children usually fall victims of peer pressure. Some children belong to peer groups with members who also lack knowledge of CSE (Mahoso, 2020). Lefrancois (2019) indicates that members of these groups may share wrong information about sexuality which they could have acquired by being exposed to misleading information from the media like pornography and romantic movies, thus jeopardising the lives of each member of the group. Such information, which is not blue-pencilled, leads to the development of many misconceptions pertaining to sexuality (Haberland, 2017). These misapprehensions may coerce a child to engage in sexually dangerous behaviour. The fallacies may also be passed on from peer-to-peer during peer group interactions (Mukoro, 2017). The provision of CSE to children from these peer groups is obligatory as it may help to clear the delusions that are related to sexuality (Mahoso, 2020). A case in point is of the Vuzu parties held by the teenagers in some parts of Zimbabwe where youth share drugs and engage into risky sexual activities like group sex and taking sex enhancing herbs (Tshili, 2015).

The neighbourhood as a sub-system in the microsystem plays an important role in the education of children (Chinyoka, 2016). Less privileged parents are quick to counsel their children regarding

community dangers like sexual abuse, to encourage them to remain home, and to restrict their autonomy, as a means of protection (Clarke, 2020). In relation to CSE, theirs is usually abstinence only (Haberland, 2017), and nothing else. Less privileged parents are inhibited in their choice of neighbourhood and in the same line Martinello (2020) noted that it leads them to belong to poor neighbourhoods, pigeon-holed by deteriorating buildings, and all forms of violence and abuse, and hard-up neighbourhood resources such as libraries, and internet connectivity. Thus, it directly influences the child's acquisition of CSE competences. A humble neighbourhood discloses the child to physical hazards and criminal activities (Chinyoka, 2016), and limits access to proper CSE. While some neighbourhoods can exert a non-supportive or negative influence towards CSE, this is not the case for all families living in poverty. Some may defy the odds and go for it.

The effect of a neighbourhood for families living in poverty can also be supportive as espoused by Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010: 4) indicating that:

Friends and neighbours who reside in the same community may exert some influence as role models, and in establishing a sense of cohesion, where they look out for each other.

A good example regards a neighbour who notices a girl child engaging into sexual activities, they may intervene directly, or inform the parents. The characteristics of families residing in the same neighbourhood influence the child's progress through the availability of financial and social capital or the resources available (Chinyoka, 2016).

From the above scrutiny one can settle that:

the microsystem encompasses roles, relationships and patterns of daily undertakings that shape many aspects of the cognitive, social, emotional, physical, moral and spiritual development of the child negatively or positively (Donald, et al., 2010: 42).

Bronfenbrenner's (1994) theory is, therefore, a disclosure for teachers, parents, members of the community, and the children themselves, since they are roused to make use of the interwoven relationships between the child and the immediate environment.

### 3.1.2 The Mesosystem

The mesosystem is a set of interrelations between two or more settings in which the developing person becomes an active participant (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Freire (1996), in his transformative education, theory, echoes and stood-up to the fact that learners are not passive recipients of experiences in these settings, but reciprocally interact with others, and help to construct the setting. Thus, learners should be actively involved in the generation of knowledge.

Microsystems also involve roles, relationships and patterns of daily activities that shape many aspects of the cognitive, social, emotional, moral and spiritual development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Structures in the microsystem include the family, the school, the neighbourhood or child-care environments (McLeod, 2019). Taylor and Gebre (2016) are of the same mind and they summarize that the mesosystem is a set of microsystems that continuously interact with one another. Consequently, these interacting microsystems have a bearing on the implementation of CSE. To add on, what happens in the family or peer group can influence how children respond to CSE at school, and vice versa. For Chinyoka (2016), a child's scholastic performance is influenced by the involvement of the parents at home, the peers, the neighbours, and the educators at school. Schunk (2020) conclude that researchers may explore the strengths and weaknesses of family mesosystems in relation to primary school child-care programmes, and how they can be fortified.

Chinyoka (2016) maintains that a pleasant-sounding relationship amid these ecologies can uphold the delivery of quality education whilst a conflicting one can militate against its endowment. An example could be one of these settings, the home, for instance, is in favour of the provision of CSE while the other, probably the school, is against it; successful provision of CSE may be made thwarted, since the interests of the two systems at loggerheads and the child loses (Martinello, 2020). This is solely because the child will be at the epicentre where the greatest impact is located. Accordingly, the child is left ignorant and with misconceptions concerning sexuality and this according to Mahoso (2020). This propelled the child to engage in sexually risky behaviour (Kirby, 2017).

### **3.1.3 The Exosystem**

The exosystem is yet another system of Bronfenbrenner's (1994) theory considered concerning the provision of CSE as it portrays succinctly how ecosystemic factors impact on the provision of CSE in junior grades. Clarke (2020) describes the exosystem as a social system where children are not involved, but which still affects their growth. It also comprises interconnections of social settings that children do not experience directly yet these interconnections influence their development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Examples of ecosystems are the school development committee, parents' clubs or associations (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). These settings can also play an instrumental role in shaping the provision of CSE. An instance could be of parents who subscribe to an association that disregards CSE teaching; these will most likely discourage their children from learning it. Resultantly, the children remain unaware of issues regarding to CSE, they may become easy targets of child sexual abuse with its consequences.

Since this study intends to explore the attitudes of the School Development Committee (SDC) members as well, it is very crucial to identify them within the theoretical framework and their impact towards the teaching and learning of CSE. In this way, the SDC members are another example of the exosystem. Even though a child is not a member of the committee; but funding of any of his/her school program including CSE relies heavily on the decisions made by this committee. The resolutions they come up with during committee meetings impacts on the child either positively or negatively.

When the SDC is in support of CSE, they can hire teachers who are qualified to teach it to junior grade learners. Kirby (2020), and Ettekal and Mahoney (2017) and UNESCO (2015) concur and uphold that teachers trained to teach CSE are capable of effectively delivering age-appropriate content and in a scientifically accurate way using the participatory methodology recommended by the ITGSE. Due to their knowledge, such teachers make use of learner-centred approaches nurturing immense understanding of the CSE concepts. Since these committees are the ones responsible for the school funds, they may also consider procuring some teaching and learning materials that promote effective CSE delivery.

### 3.1.4 The Macrosystem

The macrosystem is a structure that is far away from the microsystem. Since it encompasses the values, ideologies, rules and laws that are practiced by participants in that particular community (Kitchen, 2019). These social norms, and philosophies, make societies peculiar from one another. Regardless of being detached from the microsystem where the child is located, its far-reaching effects are quite noteworthy; for that reason, Martinello (2020) calls it as the master set. Martinello (2020) surmises that this system is the most influential of all as it is so unescapable. For the reason of its inescapability, its effects can easily seep to the microsystem where the children are established (Clarke, 2020). Tajfel et al., (1979) posits that individuals tend to abide by the norms and values of the particular groups they belong to and as such, if the group is pro CSE or vice versa, its individual members are likely to have the same perception (Tajfel, Turner, Austin, & Worchel, 1979).

Kitchen (2019) indicates that the microsystem responds positively to the demands of this system regardless of whether these are good or bad. Conversely, the demands of this setting can either be for or against CSE thus affecting child development. Bronfenbrenner (1977) listed culture, politics and the economy of the nation as part examples of macrosystems. Such aspects are instrumental in determining the provision of CSE in Zimbabwe.

The state of the economy in Zimbabwe is not that much favourable to effectively sponsor the CSE program in junior grades. UNESCO (2018) postulates that in Zimbabwe, the slowly sprouting CSE program relies chiefly on donor funding from non-governmental organizations and well-wishers. For a curriculum to have a successful establishment, it undergoes various processes before its enactment at national level (Anna, 2020) and all these require adequate funding.

In terms of culture as part of the macrosystem, it intrudes on the establishment of CSE (Ettekal & Mahoney; 2017; Muridzo, 2017). There is diversity in cultural norms and values in Zimbabwe. Matswetu and Bhana (2018) avow that in Zimbabwe, just like in other Sub-Saharan African countries, children are obliged to be meek to adults. This subservience should be reflected by acting in accordance with commands from the elderly. Adults who are perpetrators of child sexual

abuse take advantage of this subservience principle and victimise the children who do not resist and are silent (Chibba, 2021). This cultural practice, consequently, makes children be at risk, calling for the establishment of CSE. Through CSE, learners are taught about their rights together with consent to sex, they will comprehend that no one can force them into sexual activities out of their best interest. In addition, its provision helps children develop autonomy or self-sufficiency, consequently supporting them to question elders and their authority in appropriate circumstances (UNESCO, 2018).

Another serious Zimbabwean cultural belief inherent in the macrosystem from Muridzo (2017) is the uncontrollability of men's sexual compulsion. Due to this cultural belief, men tend to deal with their sexual craving by coercing girls to have sex with them. Child sexual abuse from such societies is usually not reported (Gudyanga et al., 2019). These perpetrators of sexual abuse usually continue their evil deeds as they will be aware that the possibility of interception is non-existent. It is also fundamental to note that in an African society, adults do not discuss issues concerning sexuality with their children, and consequently, even teachers feel uncomfortable to teach CSE (Mkumbo, 2012; SIDA, 2016).

### **3.1.5 The Chronosystem**

The chronosystem is one of the systems recognised by Bronfenbrenner (1994) in his socio-ecological theory that can have a bearing on the provision of CSE in the Zimbabwean context. The chronosystem is defined by Bronfenbrenner (1994: 40) as:

encompassing developmental time frames over the life of an individual in family structure, socio-economic status, employment, place of residence or the degree of pressure and ability in everyday life.

In this study, courtesy was given to the background history of CSE in Zimbabwe. Sexuality education was traditionally offered to adolescents and not to those who have not to the junior grades, for the reason that they were regarded as still young for such information (Matswetu & Bhana, 2018; Gudyanga et al., 2019). There was the broad-spectrum belief that teaching children about sexuality would lead them to experiment with it (Ngara, 2019). This historical credence is nevertheless still ubiquitous in some parts of Zimbabwe and resultantly, they may be against the

teaching of CSE to their children, and the other historical background that may hinder the development and operationalization of CSE curriculum in junior grades is the way of life of some Christians (Mahoso, 2020). There are those who demonize sexuality education and inculcate the culture of silence vis-à-vis the teaching of CSE (Muridzo, 2017). This leaves children without knowledge, skills and attitudes that empower them to survive in this world that is verminous with HIV and AIDS and sexual abuse.

While Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological theory has offered valuable insights into understanding the influences of various environmental systems on CSE implementation, it also has limitations when used as a theoretical framework for exploring ecosystemic factors affecting CSE. The theory has limited focus on specificity of sexual education contexts, Bronfenbrenner's theory provides a broad framework for understanding environmental influences on development but may not sufficiently account for the unique dynamics and complexities (Schunk, 2020), of sexual education contexts. CSE involves sensitive and nuanced topics related to sexuality, gender, and relationships that may not fit neatly within Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems. Additionally, Bronfenbrenner underemphasises the influence of culture and the society. While Bronfenbrenner's theory acknowledges the importance of cultural contexts, it may not adequately capture the diverse cultural and societal factors that shape attitudes, beliefs, and practices related to sexuality and sexual education (Matinello, 2020). CSE is deeply influenced by cultural norms, values, and beliefs, which have not been fully addressed within the theory's framework.

Conclusively, Bronfenbrenner's theory offers an immense explanation of ecosystemic factors that have some impact on the teaching of CSE. The systems underscored by the theory are of paramount importance because they act as lenses to researchers, providing them with an understanding of the structure of societies. Thus, they will be in a better position to decide the apt point of entry when determining intermediations to problems society is facing, including those that may be caused by a lack of CSE in the society.

### 3.2 Freire's critical pedagogy

While various stakeholders usually receive changing the curriculum with pessimism due to fear of the unknown, Freire (1968) came up with a theory to validate and authenticate such changes. He notes that these changes in the curriculum should bear the input of those to whom it is going to be implemented (Freire, 1970). According to Levin (2020), Freire castigated the banking method of education in the process of transforming any education system, and suggested the dialogical system of education instead, whereby there is need to realise the learners' prospects and needs. In connection to CSE, Freire suggests that the curriculum should change constantly to address the problems learners are facing about sexuality and rights.

Freire pressed towards a dialogic education in which he made every effort to recognize learners' expectations (Roberts, 2022). These experiences led to the belief that ignorance, illiteracy and a culture of silence are the outcomes of the ubiquitous economic conditions, social and political developments in society, which prejudiced his views on education (Freire, 1998). In this context, Freire's theory offers a practical outline of what can be done to counteract the ecosystemic factors hindering CSE in junior grades in Zimbabwe as well as justifying why the learning area should be introduced to the Zimbabwean primary school curriculum.

Freire (1970) examined society through an amalgamation of religious liberalism and Marxist thought. For Freire (1998), the conscious person thus, observes the close world and mutually acts basing on achievements from the analysis, that is, the 'critical conscientization'. One of the major draw-backs of the banking system is of perpetuating the culture of silence in this world jam-packed with abuse. The recommendation to teachers was that there is need to be liberal, humanitarian, and reverence the freedom of the learner as espoused by Rogers in his person-centred theory (McLeod, 2019), and to participatorily teach. Learners should be active participants in the structuring of knowledge, as such Malott (2017) emphasises that learners understand well the problems they face concerning sexuality and other social issues and are thus in a better position to come up with solutions to such challenges. Freire further instigated the empowerment process based on the policy of utilizing the creative potential of the learners. At the same time, in his view, education should make the learner optimistic and increase correlation (Freire, 1998).

Freire transmutes oppressed learners and inhibit them from being objects of education into subjects of their self-rule and emancipation (Leopando, 2017). With this in mind, learners have to act in some modus that capacitate them to alter their societies and CSE can be one of the corner stones of achieving ‘critical consciousness’ in learners. Through problematic education and questioning of problematic issues on sexuality and reproductive health rights (SRHR) in their lives, the junior grades learners learn to think critically and cultivate critical awareness that helps them advance their lives and take responsibility, and they get to understand the measures necessary to construct a greater just and equitable society. Thus, critical pedagogy often contests all sorts of dominance, repression and subordination for the reason freeing the oppressed (Roberts, 2022).

Still existing among some cultures in Zimbabwe is the fact that all sexuality related issues should be left for that period just before marriage and to be delivered by the aunties and uncles (Muridzo, 2017). Freire challenges learners from such societies to critically analyse and question such lines of thinking.

### **3.2.1 The banking system of education in relation vs CSE**

Paulo Freire (1970) battles with the banking opinion of education due to the fact that it begins with a misapprehension about learners as objects, it hardly buoys up development. Following Freire, the banking model of education runs short of critical consciousness. Therefore, the outstanding feature of this type of education is the mere sound of the words, void of the changing power. What used to be vital about sexuality issues in the past no longer hold the same value these days due to the advent of internet. The available texts and media on these issues are no longer valid and cannot meet the challenges learners face anymore.

Banking education generates a situation of oppression in society acting as a means of oppression whereby sexuality issues are hardly discussed independently as it is considered taboo (Matswetu & Bhana, 2018). In this system, learners are likened to a blank slate where the instructor accrues information (Freire, 1990). Interestingly, there is now a knowledge gap between the teachers and the learners. As mentioned earlier, through the advent of the Internet, the learners are being

exposed to sexuality-related issues at a tender age like the junior grade level in Zimbabwe, and this contrast with their predecessors (Mahoso, 2020). Unfortunately, using the banking system, the teachers impose or imprint on learners what they learnt during their days about sexuality; such as abstinence only. Such information, while it may be important, however, fails to address the real issues the learners are going through. What was deemed to be crucial during these teachers' youthful days no longer match the current needs of the learners in today's world.

The focal point of Freire's critical instruction is on critical thinking grounds on the objective realities of a person's life (Levin, 2020). In contrast to different strategies, the problem-based technique presented by Freire in this case requires exchange of thoughts and beliefs on sexuality, and rights, through dialogue whereby both educators and learners have critical cooperation in research (Ford, 2017). Freire (1970) states that the starting point of education must be to solve the ludicrousness of the teacher-learners, including the poles of incongruity on sexual issues that both the instructor and the learner belong together. Cognisance is accepted as the indication of progress and advancement (Freire, 1998). Such a progress and advancement are the principal outcome of good critical pedagogical plan.

Malott (2016) promulgates that in the banking system of education, the more learners work to accumulate knowledge, that is the CSE deposits entrusted to them, the less they produce substantial sensations that will arise out of their arbitrariness as modifiers of that state of affairs. Leopando (2017) agrees and further explains that the more the learners fully consent to the passive role enforced on them, the more they adjust to the world in general and amassed the divisive outlook will be on reality.

Accordingly, teachers who knowingly or mistakenly use the banking style to sexuality education fail to experience that deposits themselves are logical glitches (Roberts, 2022), about reality on sexuality. In view of that, Freire (1970) refers to the metaphor of the old-fashioned way to deal with sexuality education which most junior grade teachers use as the banking model of education since it resembles saving cash in a bank. Kessing-Styles et al. (2014) echoed the same sentiments stating that this model replicates the structure of an oppressive society wherein the oppressed and

the oppressors are divided. It advocates the determination of reality. Therefore, it is a way of proceeding with the political and social ill-treatment and defusing freedom.

In line with the ongoing discussion, it is apparent that there is need to implement freedom-based teaching strategies when delivering CSE lessons. A human being naturally desires freedom and individuals can determine their own direction and position (McLeod, 2019). In Freire's view, education is a practice of freedom, and education should be an action of freedom (Freire, 1970). It follows that the teacher should possess an assortment of methods to heighten the prospect of freedom to the learner while delivering CSE. Through this system, there is active participation in the learning process from both teachers and learners hence meaningful learning. There is an interchange of ideas between the teacher and the learners thus empowering both parties (Milstein, Pilegi & Morgan, 2017). Accordingly, the teacher can ask questions during lessons, for instance, about sexuality-related problems in the learner's lived experiences and allow them to think critically. With this, the learners can construct new value of life for themselves. Ford (2017) further submits that such a state of teaching actually gives the learner some room to come up with self-choices and self-decision making.

### **3.2.2 Change in curriculum planning process**

Freire (1970) propounds that the curriculum should be based on a combination of the learner's different learning experiences, meanings, and should also address social issues. Thus, the theory validates the inclusion of CSE in the teaching and learning process. The aim of education is to develop in the learner proper knowledge, skills, attitude as well as human values, self-reliance, self-awareness and self-realization in the field related to various aspects of life (Ford, 2017), as espoused in the CSE curriculum. Therefore, when planning the CSE curriculum, teachers and or curriculum developers should think deeply about how students will achieve the expected goals of education.

Based on this perspective, CSE curriculum development is not an upward-down process, and all those involved in education and learning process should play their role in educational planning in the best way (Ford, 2017). From this line of thinking, CSE education is a means to make learners

aware, even though the status quo of society impedes their mental progress due to political and social conditions (Kessing-Styles, 2014). In this context, providing of critical awareness is seen as the starting point of the CSE curriculum forming process from Freire's perspective.

Freire (1970) states that it is necessary to deliberate on the rural reality, in implementing CSE, therefore, there is need to adjust sexuality education to the realities of the country. In fact, Freire advocated for taking into consideration the existing and lived experiences of the lower classes of society when partaking in educational planning, and that this must be the basis of the curriculum (Ford, 2017). Freire considers that education is generally a political activity aimed at analysing social relations (Milstein et al., 2017). This resonates well with Zvobgo's line of thinking that education is live politic (Haralambos & Holborn, 2016). Levin (2020) further disseminates that such analysis develops the political consciousness of the people. Therefore, CSE curriculum planning should be able to bring the backward communities in the society into the mainstream of education and make them aware of their Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR).

Freire's pedagogy hinges upon the education of the oppressed wherein people do not have critical thinking power (Ford, 2017). Freire suggested critical pedagogy for society wherein the silent culture is dominant and the oppressed people are depressed of their rights (Roberts, 2022). Knowledge of this method of instruction is important for CSE curriculum development and can help learners develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Malott (2017) supplements noting that Freire emphasises education to help a person become self-sufficient rather than ready-made. Therefore, the CSE curriculum should include learners' daily-lived experiences and modus operandi based on traditional skills. In addition, they need to be able to think critically and creatively, to have useful life skills pertaining to sexuality while being able to lead a humane life with freedom.

### **3.2.3 Change in role of teachers and learners**

According to Freire's approach, the educator is a problem poser to learners and teachers in this regard should be involved in the incessant rebuilding of their own path of curiosity, opening the doors to learning habits that benefit everyone in the classroom (Freire, 1990). In fact, learners are

able to play a more active role in determining their experiences, and positions within society through learning problem-solving and its practical application (Leopando, 2017). Teachers should empower their learners by building awareness about the reproducibility of the process of unequal status in school education and offering social institutions (Ford, 2017). Therefore, teachers must have the knowledge, skills, and ability to critique and transform existing inequalities in society, and in this sense, they are transformative intellectuals (Freire, 1998). This transformative intellectual role is associated with learning from learners, esteeming their ideas, and partaking in the dialogue process (Giroux, 2014). For educators to understand the learners better, they can do so through enquiring from them (learners) the problems they face in their day-to-day lives (Kirylo, 2022). Once they understand the challenges the learners face, they then guide them to find possible solutions.

Classroom experiences with the help of instructors according should create relationships in which learners should act as active agents in their learning (Freire, 1998). In other words, they are expected to develop a critical awareness, help to evaluate fairness and rights within their educational and life situations, and allowing them to develop legitimacy. Therefore, teachers need to be able to know the opinions of learners about sexuality issues and make teaching interactive. It is also imperative that teachers have a reflective role for creating an open and equal environment, they must engage in deeper self-reflection about their position in the classroom and the implications of their authority (Martinello, 2020).

While teachers should have authority over their subject (CSE), the learner should be accorded an open opportunity to express his or her views while interacting in classroom activities (Horton & Freire, 1990). In critical pedagogy, classroom practitioners communicate with learners about society and culture so that they can judgementally reflect on different aspects of the culture they are studying and preparing to enter (Roberts, 2022). Freire (1970) further notes that ‘educators’ efforts need to be tailored to learners to engage in critical thinking and the pursuit of mutual humanization. For this, the teacher should help the students to understand the reasons behind the facts on CSE. In addition, the teachers are concerned about releasing knowledge that helps learners understand how power and privilege relationships are distorted and manipulate social conditions, and help oppressed learners by identifying with them (Levine, 2020).

Following Freire (2007), learners are those who are active participants in the teaching-learning process. They collaborate with the instructor, correct the curriculum like in this case through the introduction of CSE, and they share their ideas, expectations and experiences. They should learn to challenge retrogressive assumptions like the idea that CSE orients youths into sexuality (Martinello, 2020). Thus, learners contribute to curriculum decisions and determine the field of study and related reading material. For Moore and Parker (2007), critical learners are those who can accept, reject, or suspend judgment on a claim. For them such learners can also support their thoughts and correct their own and others' processes.

There is a fluid rapport between instructor and learners where the teacher is a learner and a learner is a teacher (Freire, 1970). Therefore, learners are not recipients of knowledge, rather they become creators (Malott, 2017). Freire (1970:61) also affirms that “no one teaches the other, and no one is self-taught, people teach one another, mediated by the world.” He suggests that learners should develop their knowledge power to critically comprehend their existence in the world and where they are; they see the world not as an unchangeable reality, but as a reality in the process of transformation.

Freire (1970) confirms learners as beings in the process of becoming - as unfinished beings. The unfinished character of the learners and the transformative nature of reality requires that education be a continuous activity undergoing necessary changes. Kirylo (2020) goes on to say that the learner is not always only a listener but rather, important co-investigators in dialogues with the teacher. Consequently, learners have to face problems related to themselves in the circumstances and with the circumstances. They need to simply accept the challenges and be prepared to respond to that challenge (Levin, 2020) and CSE can help equip them with such skills. In their response, new challenges like sexual abuse, teen pregnancy and children's right abuse must be challenged followed by new understanding; and committed to it. Hence, co-operation and co-existence between learners and educators in learning seem necessary to improve our current education system.

Contrasting traditional approaches, education in critical pedagogy endeavours to have a transformative effect on learners, Freire (1998), and the goal of this style is to change the attitudes of the people through which they used to look at Comprehensive Sexuality Education. It seems that such an approach is not being given a fair share in the Zimbabwean system of education. The present-day education system of Zimbabwe is somehow still suffering from traditional colonial thinking where the freedom of the learner is not being recognised (Roberts, 2022). The participation of ordinary parents and learners in the educational planning and decision-making processes is being ignored. The educational process is from top to bottom. Learning is not a matter of discovery and rediscovery, but of memorising preconceived facts. Teachers need to realise the relationship between the child's situations and the teaching strategy. The teaching strategy should be related to the learner's experience, freedom and development of human qualities. Therefore, critical pedagogy is very essential for the transforming of educational systems.

While Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy theory has managed to offer valuable insights into education, it also has limitations when used as a theoretical framework for exploring the relevance of introducing Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE) in primary schools. Freire's theory primarily focuses on the emancipation of adult learners through critical consciousness and dialogue (Levin, 2020). This implies that it may not fully account for the developmental needs, cognitive abilities, and socio-emotional considerations of primary school-aged children, for whom CSE programmes are typically designed. Further, Freire's concepts, such as conscientization (critical consciousness) and praxis (reflection and action) (Kirylo, 2022), appear to be too abstract and complex for primary school students to grasp fully. CSE curricula for young learners highly prioritise age-appropriate language, content, and instructional methods that may not align seamlessly with Freire's principles. Lastly, Freire's theory does not explicitly address the developmental stages and needs of children at different ages (Roberts, 2022). CSE programs in primary schools must consider developmental appropriateness, including the gradual introduction of concepts related to human sexuality, anatomy, relationships, and personal boundaries.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

Integrating Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy theory with Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological systems theory offers a nuanced approach to exploring the relevance of and factors affecting CSE in primary schools. Freire's emphasis on critical consciousness and dialogue can inform CSE curriculum development by encouraging students to critically examine societal norms, values, and power dynamics surrounding sexuality and relationships. By fostering a participatory learning environment grounded in respect and empathy, educators can empower students to engage in open discussions about sensitive topics and develop the skills to navigate complex socio-cultural contexts. Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective complements this approach by highlighting the

interplay between individual, interpersonal, and societal factors that influence students' experiences with CSE. By considering the multiple layers of influence within students' microsystems, mesosystems, and macrosystems, educators can design CSE programs that are responsive to the diverse needs, backgrounds, and developmental stages of primary school learners. By integrating Freire's critical pedagogy principles with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework, educators can create holistic and empowering CSE initiatives that foster critical thinking, social responsibility, and informed decision-making among young learners.

## **CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY**

### **4.0 Introduction**

The preceding chapter discussed the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model and Freire's critical pedagogy were presented as the lens to apply for comprehending ecosystemic factors affecting CSE in junior grades in Zimbabwean schools. The methodology used and the justification of the adopted approaches in this study were deliberated on in this chapter. It is in this chapter that the sampling methods, data collection, data analysis and also the ethical issues in the study were explored. At the end of the chapter, the ethical considerations have been discussed. The chapter, consequently, unloads the drive for the use of a qualitative research methodology to carry-out this study.

### **4.1 The Research Approach**

This study has taken into use the qualitative approach to research. Thomas (2020) regards a qualitative research approach as one that pursues understanding of a phenomenon from the standpoint of the participants. Haberland (2017) pens that in a qualitative research approach, researchers make every effort to understand the meaning people generate as well as to support people to understand how to make sense of their world and experiences. Busetto et al. (2020) supplement professing that qualitative research is the study of the nature of phenomena, as well as their quality, diverse manifestations, the context in which they appear or the perspectives from which they can be perceived, but not including their range, frequency and place in an objectively determined chain of cause-and-effect. The definition of qualitative research can also be accompanied with a more pragmatic rule of thumb: qualitative research commonly includes data in form of words rather than numbers (Martic, 2028).

In carrying out this study, I gained an intense understanding of the authentic ecosystemic factors that impact the provision of CSE. I opted for a qualitative approach because its naturalistic manner. The qualitative approach to research hubs on participants in their natural settings without

any attempt to alter the research environment, that guarantees that the primary prominence falls on the natural circumstances where the ethical reality could be monitored (Braun & Clarke, 2022). What's more, this research approach is apposite for this study as it facilitates the understanding of the ecosystemic factors from the participants' standpoint. The qualitative approach permitted me to hang up my prejudiced ideas pertaining to ecosystemic factors which are affecting CSE in Zimbabwe. I managed to efficaciously focus on the meanings and interpretations of participants on CSE, rather than my subjective interpretation (Cresswell & Poth, 2017). Resultantly, my description of factors affecting CSE in this study reflected on participants' intuitions and the meaning they ascribe to the factors that affect CSE.

Thomas (2022) orates that the meanings people attach to a phenomenon could be concealed. Thus, I opted for an approach that could facilitate the unearthing of those surreptitious truths. Subsequently, Busetto et al. (2020), noted that the qualitative approach is usually used principally for its explanatory nature. During data gathering, this approach permitted me to be more of a listener (Schein, 2017). The research participants' understandings were used to generate meaning and this assisted me to remain in touch with reality pertaining to the factors affecting CSE in junior grades in Zimbabwe. Above all, I opted for this approach for its strengths which include that it is excellent for studying contexts the researcher is personally inquisitive about but have never before had a valid reason for exploring it (Zojceska, 2018); its data provides insight into cultural activities that might else be flouted in structured surveys or experiments; and yet again qualitative research can unearth salient issues that can later be studied using more structured methods.

The research resulted in close and trusting interactions between the participants and myself, and that intensified the level of disclosure unparalleled in self-reports or snapshot examinations of a scene (Martic, 2018). Dawadi's (2020) point view has the capability to make available a deeper understanding of marginalized, stereotyped, unknown or forgotten populations; a foretaste into normally guarded worlds, and any prospect to tell a story that a few have known about.

Moreover, qualitative research approach has been selected according to Widner, Woolcock and Nieto (2022), for its ability to help accessing tacit, taken-for-granted, and instinctual understandings of a culture. Rather than merely asking about what people say they do, studying in

context offers a prospect to see and hear what people actually do (Thomas, 2020). As an alternative to relying on participants' espoused values, I came to understand participants' values-in-use (Schein, 2017) and how they live out these values on a daily basis. The greater researchers become submerged in the scene, the higher the chances that they can make second-order interpretations (Basaffar, 2017); this enhanced me to generate explanations from the participants' explanations.

## **4.2 Research Paradigm**

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) understand a research paradigm as a framework of accepted conventions about the directions to take when conducting research. A research paradigm refers to ontological and epistemological assumptions, which is a belief of what real knowledge is and how it can be grasped, it simply describes a matrix of beliefs and perceptions of the researchers that influence how they carry out research (Braun & Clarke, 2022). A research paradigm can also be defined as the model or pattern that directs the way practitioners approach and interpret knowledge. It offers accumulated results of practices and tools, upon which a scientific community can more specifically scrutinise unlike aspects of pre-existent knowledge (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Crossman (2020) further describes a paradigm with respect to social sciences, and finds it as the philosophical conventions underwriting a miscellany of approaches to social science. These conventions link the ontological, epistemological, methodological, and human nature of the research practice pertaining to the nature of the social world. In general terms, a research paradigm is a framework, model or approach from which to carry out research.

In carrying out this research on ecosystemic factors affecting CSE in junior grades, the interpretivist approach was an apt paradigm to consider as it took cognisance of time and context. It informed me to be particular during the data gathering process and interpretation; since people's views on CSE can be influenced by factors within their environment like cultural beliefs (Muridzo, 2017). The truth is that human beings are not all the same, they can view the same thing in a different way (Yin, 2017), as the pragmatists' adage goes that 'one man's meat is another man's poison'.

Interpretivism is a line of attack to social science that asserts that understanding the beliefs, motivations, and reasoning of individuals in a social situation is essential to decoding the meaning of the data that can be collected around a phenomenon (Nickerson, 2022). Interpretivism is a philosophical stand point, and qualitative research method that examines events in society based on the specific value-system of the society or culture they occur in (Busetto et al., 2020). Cresswell (2014) points out that this paradigm interprets feelings and perceptions from the participants' point of view because interpretivist acknowledges that knowledge is socially constructed. As such, this paradigm allowed for the capturing, and interpretation, of outstanding attitudes and feelings of school heads, teachers and parents towards the implementation of CSE.

The interpretive paradigm helped me to understand human behaviour and social contexts by facilitating him to understanding the meanings actors provide to their actions, goals, roles, identities, and all aspects of the world they experience (Hassan & Hashim, 2021), pertaining to CSE. Meanings are commonly said to transpire in an intersubjective way, as the outcome of communicative action between subjects (Pham, 2018). Common techniques include 'Verstehen,' whereby the researcher attempts to see the world through the eyes of the person or group under investigation (Busetto et al., 2020). For the critical paradigm, the point is to understand the social world as well as to change it.

Such a paradigm would augment better understanding of the values, attitudes, perceptions, prejudices, perspectives and experiences of the people, in their normal settings (Yin, 2017), and assist in getting a deeper insight into the ecosystemic factors affecting CSE implementation in Zimbabwe. Cresswell (2014) reiterates that researchers who take an interpretivist standpoint would obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and its complexity, in its unique or natural context instead of trying to generalise the base of understanding for the entire population. This is expedient in coming to grip with the comparative reality pertaining to particular educational problems, and challenges, that calls for policymakers and educational planners' proactive, informed input and contingency attention (Bonache & Festing, 2020). Additionally, by allowing researchers to conduct these types of research in natural settings, this substantiates the researcher's choice of the exploratory case study design in this study.

Further, making reference to the significance of interpretivism, Pham (2018) conjectures that valuable data collected would provide academics with enhanced insights for supplementary action later, thereby upholding transferability as well as validity of the research product. Contrarily, Chowdhury (2014 in Bonache & Festing, 2020) perceived that the results from interpretive research are often criticised in terms of validity, reliability and generalisability despite its strength in providing contextual depth. Hence, there was need to triangulate the methods of data collection and improve the degree of trustworthiness and dependability of findings. Taking cognisance of the above-mentioned critique, this study triangulated document analysis and interviews to beseech qualitative data pertaining to ecosystemic factors affecting CSE implementation in junior grades in Zimbabwe. Subsequent to the foregoing, I also strongly felt that application of this paradigm, in this study, would presumably promote meaningful and authentic understanding of these impediments to CSE implementation.

### **4.3 Research Design**

Research design refers to the whole strategy applied in research that describes a succinct and logical plan to deal with established research question(s) through the collection, interpretation, analysis, and discussion of data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The study design outlines the study type (descriptive, correlational, semi-experimental, experimental, review and so on) research problem, hypotheses, independent and dependent variables; experimental design, and, if applicable, data collection methods and a statistical analysis plan (Caulfield, 2014; Chery, 2022). To add on, a research design is a strategy for answering one's research questions using empirical data (Yin, 2017; Pham, 2018). It explores the overall research objectives and approach, whether one will rely on primary research or secondary research, the sampling methods or criteria for selecting subjects, the data collection methods, the procedures a researcher would follow to collect data as well as the data analysis methods (McCombes, 2020). Thus, a research design can be seen as a data collecting, measuring and analysing blueprint or plan.

This study adopted the case study design. Yin (2017) views a case study as any form of inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life situation where the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear using multiple sources of evidence. A case study

is an in-depth study of one person, group, or event. and nearly every aspect of the subject's life and history is analysed to seek patterns and causes of behaviour (Dwadi, 2020). Case studies can be used in various fields, including psychology, medicine, education, anthropology, political science, and social work (Cherry, 2022). Martic (2018) further goes to describe the case study approach as an exhaustive study of a single unit or a small number of units (the cases), for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units (a population of cases). A case study is an in-depth, detailed examination of a particular case(s) within a real-world context.

To establish the exact ecosystemic factors that impact on CSE in Zimbabwe, an in- depth study of this concept was indispensable; thus, the use of an exploratory case study was apt, and it added impetus to my investigation. Exploratory case studies often involve collecting qualitative data through methods such as interviews, observations, document analysis, or focus groups. The goal is to gather rich, descriptive data that provide a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study (Cresswell, 2014). As outlined above, I used semi-structured interviews and document analysis as my instruments for collecting data. Braun and Clarke (2022) goes on to explain that in exploratory case studies, researchers typically use purposive or convenience sampling to select participants or cases that offer valuable insights into the research question, and in this case I used both. Pham (2018) explains that the focus is on selecting cases that are representative of the phenomenon being studied and allow for in-depth exploration. From a data analysis point of view, an exploratory case study is often iterative and inductive. Researchers engage in constant comparison, thematic analysis, or pattern recognition to identify recurring themes, relationships, or trends within the data (Crossman, 2020). The goal of this research was to uncover emergent patterns and generate new knowledge and data was analysed using the six phase thematic approach by Braun and Clarke.

While exploratory case studies are a good research design, they are mainly characterized by their qualitative nature and limited generalizability (Mc Combes, 2021). Moreover, findings from a single case or a small number of cases may not be applicable to other contexts or populations (Cresswell, 2014). Consequently, I was very mindful of potential biases in data collection and interpretation. Overall, exploratory case studies offer a valuable approach for generating new knowledge, exploring complex phenomena, and laying the groundwork for further research in a variety of disciplines.

I interviewed junior grade teachers, parents of children in junior grades as well as school administrators on a one-on-one basis. The depth was further enhanced by triangulating the interviews with document analysis. My interaction with the participants during the interviews permitted me to gain a deeper insight into their attitudes and perceptions on CSE in junior grades in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.4 Population**

Zojceska (2018) defines ‘population’ as all the people who are eligible to be incorporated in a study. On the other hand, Nickerson (2022) views a population as the target group with whom the research shall be carried out. In the same vein, Gay (2017) further describes a population as all the possible components that should be encompassed in the research. This indicates that the population refers to a group of people from which a sample can be extracted. The population for this study is made up of all school administrators, junior grade teachers and all parents who had children in junior grades the Chikomba rural district, Mashonaland east province in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure**

This section outlines the sampling procedures that I used. I used two sampling procedures in this research namely purposive sampling and convenience sampling. I further justified why I used them.

##### **4.5.1 Purposive Sampling**

Thomas (2022) defines purposive sampling as a method of choosing the number of sets of components in such a way that the dependent object makes approximately the same percent or estimation as the population for those personal features that are currently the subject of data gathering. Hassan and Hashim (2021) purport that purposive sampling is also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling, they go on to note that this method of sampling can be very useful and in situations where an intended sample needs to be reached quickly and where

proportional sampling is looked-for. In simpler terms, purposive sampling is chosen based on the objective of the study and the population characteristics (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The inherent biases of the method contribute to its proficiency, and the technique stays robust, even when tested against random probability sampling (Chinyoka, 2016).

Given the above advantages, choosing a purposive sample was vital to the excellence of the data that was collected in this study, the reliability and competence of the informants was ensured, since the participants were based on defined qualities. Notwithstanding the aforementioned merits, Cresswell and Poth (2017), however, pens that the main danger with the purposive sampling method is that researchers exercise their own judgment on the reliability and capability of the participants.

Purposive sampling was befitting to this study as it enabled the researcher to select those who had the vivacious and rich information on the topic understudy (Nickerson, 2022). The teachers were selected basing on their experience teaching junior grades and have taught guidance and counselling for at least five years. School administrators were selected because they are the ones who supervise and monitor the implementation of CSE in schools. The parents were selected from those who have children who are in the junior grade level. Additionally, the researcher opted for the ones who are members of the School Development Committees (SDC) since they are actively involved in the day-to-day activities of the schools and that they are the ones who monitor the curriculum on behalf of other parents.

Other than selecting participants purposively, I also considered their accessibility hence triangulating purposive sampling with convenience sampling.

Since the research included document analysis, it meant I had to select the most appropriate ones that can help provide the much needed information. This meant not all documents were necessary for this study, I therefore, with the aid of the teachers and school administrators, purposively selected three documents namely: the primary school guidance and counselling and life skills orientation syllabus, the child protection policy and the school health policy.

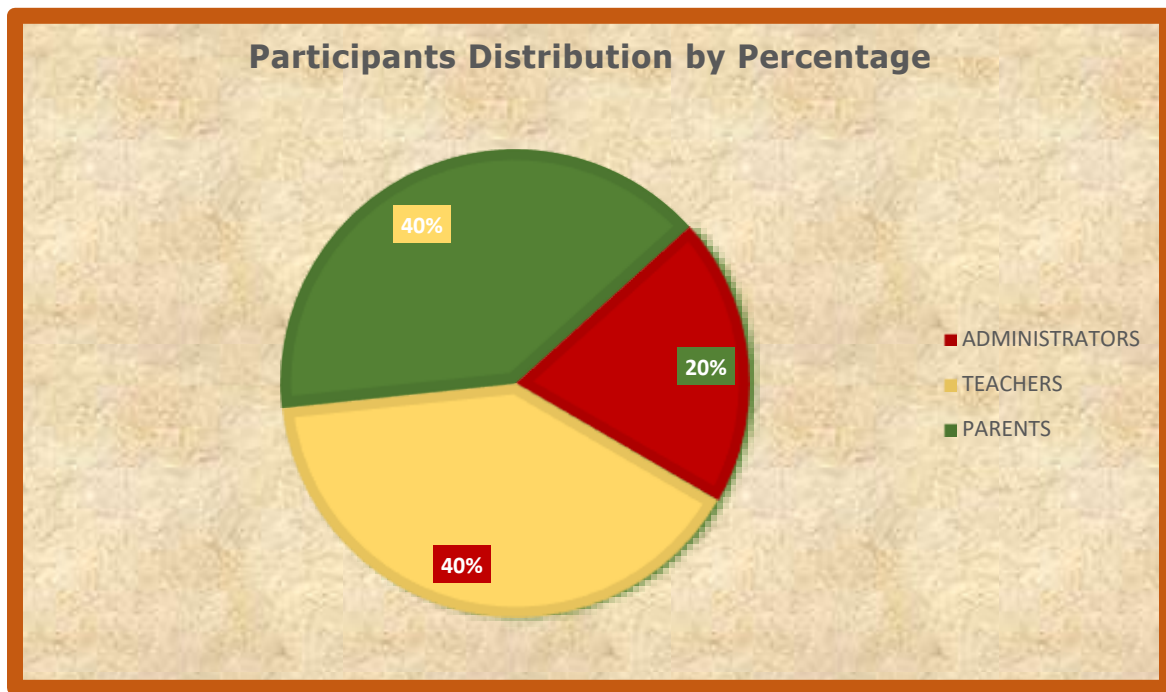
#### **4.5.2 Convenience Sampling**

Convenience sampling can be described as the data collection procedure from a research population that is effortlessly reachable to the researcher (Rahi, 2017). Since convenience sampling basically entails the utilization of a readily available and accessible sample, I found it very useful in this particular case where the purposively selected participants were also within my reach and I did not have to travel far and wide to get in touch with them. Nikolopoulou (2022) further notes that when conducting a qualitative study, convenience sampling is frequently utilised in education and social sciences where researchers have ready access to existing target populations, and this is true in this case since most of the participants are fellow workmates. Westby et al. (2018) went on to note that this technique is a good fit for a study when the researcher plans to obtain people's perceptions and attitudes. This then authenticated the use of convenience sampling in this study on ecosystemic factors affecting CSE in junior grades where particular interest was on the attitudes and perceptions of school administrators, teachers and parents towards CSE.

Convenience sampling was selected for the following benefits. Firstly, the researchers consume less effort to select the participants compared to other non-random sampling techniques (Alvi, 2016). Secondly, convenience sampling requires the researcher to select participants at a very low cost; thirdly, the researchers invest less time since the sample taken from the target population is readily accessible, and finally, they do not need to prepare a list of all the population elements (Braun and Clarke, 2020). It also provides a wealth of qualitative data. This technique can provide a satisfactory sample in several situations despite its potential pitfalls.

Conversely, Yin (2017) and Braun and Clarke (2022) lament that the major short fall of this sampling method is centred around sampling biases and high chances of systematic errors.

## 4.6 The Sample



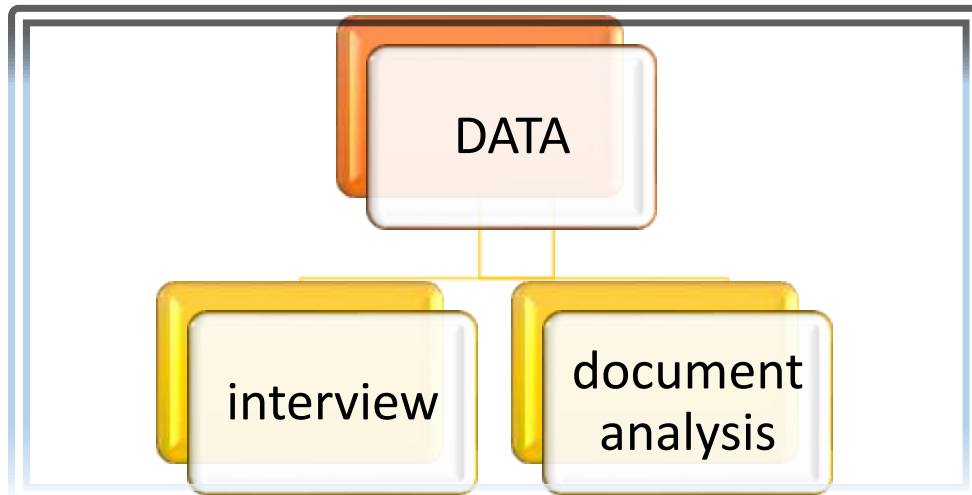
*Figure 2: Participants distribution by percentage*

Figure 3 shows a sample of 15 participants. The sample was drawn from the teachers, the administrative staff, and parents, using the purposive and convenience sampling methods. Figure 3 shows that 40% represents teachers (two from each of the three school); another 40% represent parents (two from each school) with 20% being school administrators (one from each school). This means that each of the three schools had a total of five participants (two teachers, two parents and one administrator).

## 4.7 Data Collection

Two data gathering instruments were triangulated in this study as a way to increase the credibility and validity of the results. Interviews and document analysis were chosen, and these instruments

were taken aboard because of their compatibility with the qualitative approach used. Figure 2 below is a simple illustration of the two data collection instruments combined.



*Figure 3: Data collection instrument*

#### **4.7.1 Interviews**

Interviews involve asking questions and getting answers (Widner et al., 2022). McCombes (2020) describes an interview as a way of getting data from participants by asking them questions to get what is within their minds. The above definitions are in tandem with Chinyoka (2016), who describes an interview as a way of soliciting information and at the same time obtaining knowledge from participants. Braun and Clarke (2022) distinguish three types of interviews which are structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews.

In this study, I adopted the semi-structured interviews. According to Nickerson (2022), semi-structured interviews comprise a set of open-ended questions prepared by the researcher to direct the interviewer. Semi-structured interview is a data gathering approach where the interviewer is not meticulously obliged to stick to the formal questions. The interviewer is expected to ask open-ended questions at the same time giving room for conversation with the respondents instead of direct question and response structure (Yin, 2017). Carried out conversationally with one interviewee at a time, the semi-structured interview employs an amalgamation of closed- and open-ended questions, often complemented by follow-up why or how questions (Adams, 2015). A semi-

structured interview as a data-gathering tool was appropriate for this study, because during the interview processes, it created opportunities for me to interact with the participants on a one-on-one basis (Basaffar, 2017), leaving the participants comfortable enough to freely discuss on sensitive issues pertaining to sexuality education.

In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer prepared a list of questions but did not essentially ask them in any particular order (Schein, 2018). The interviewers used these questions to guide the conversation. This is common with interviews as in some cases the interviewer prepares only a list of general topics to be addressed (Dwadi, 2020). A common practice in semi-structured interviews is to lead with open-ended questions, which are questions that can't be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." Based on the answers, the interviewer ask follow-up questions to draw out more specific evidence about the candidate's assets (Doyle, 2022).

This interview type allowed me as a researcher to hunt for further clarification from participants on those answers that might sound nebulous (Mahoso, 2020). In the same vein, Westby, Burda and Mehta (2018) postulate that semi-structured interviews afforded participants prospects to solicit further clarification on interview questions that were vague to them.

During the interviews, I had the chance to build an amiable relationship with the interviewees (Chinyoka, 2016) noting that interviews allow the researcher to monitor interpersonal relationships as they unfold. The good rapport would also coax the participants to cooperate, thereby promoting the provision of the desired information needed (Cresswell & Poth, 2017). Hijmans and Kuyper (2020) describe qualitative interviews as an interchange with an informal character, a conversation with a goal. Interviews are used to gain intuitions into a person's subjective experiences, opinions and motivations – as opposed to facts or behaviours (Zojceska, 2018). Semi-structured interviews are usually branded by open-ended questions, and the use of an interview guide (or topic guide/list) in which the broad areas of interest, sometimes including sub-questions, are defined (Hijmans & Kuyper, 2020). The pre-defined topics in the interview guide can be deduced from the literature, previous research or a preliminary method of data collection, such as document study or observations (Zojceska, 2018). In this case, the questions mainly hang around the research questions.

The other main advantage of an unstructured interview is their personalised approach. This is especially useful when you equate candidates who are equally qualified (Zojceska, 2018). They are excellently apposite for several research tasks, most especially when open-ended questions need additional probes (Westby et al., 2018). They are applicable in mixed research methods because of their harmonising nature that give room for adding depth to other methods of data collection (Hijmans & Kuyper, 2020). Additionally, since unstructured interviews allow for a free-flowing chit chat (Cresswell & Poth, 2017) note that they seem much more casual and help candidates relax and feel more comfortable during the interview and they as well encourage two-way communication. Both the interviewer and candidate can ask questions which allow for comprehensive discussion of pertinent topics (Doyle, 2022).

Regardless of the afore-mentioned advantages, semi-structured interviews have their own shortcomings. Bowen (2017) argues that they are usually time-consuming and are labour intensive requiring experienced interviewers. Semi-structured interviews required smartness, sensitivity and composure on the part of the interviewers and well as good mastery of the subject matter (Zojceska, 2018). Moreover, Caulfield (2023) further pens that semi-structured interviews regularly involve strenuous efforts on data analysis that usually come in large volume of notes for transcription.

#### **4.7.2 Document analysis**

As mentioned earlier, document analysis is the other data gathering instrument that has been used in this study. It is described by Bowen (2017) as a form of research that makes use of records to obtain data for providing answers to research questions. Cherry (2022) maintains that document analysis involves analysing and interpreting data obtained by the researcher through scrutinising records and documents relevant to a specific study. In recent years, documents have become easier to access and use as digitised documents (Westby et al., 2018). Document analysis, according to Nickerson (2022), is the principal method for undertaking historical and policy analysis, although other methodologies also depend on documents to provide additional evidence. An example is that of Mulimbi and Dryden-Peterson (2017) who successfully used document analysis in their study on Botswana's use of educational policies to discourse ethnic conflict and how policy documents

reflect those dialogues, the duo analysed a set of Botswana's post-independence policy frameworks and other documents.

I opted to use document analysis because documents are not affected by the 'researcher's effect'. Thus, the propensity by participants to modify their behaviour under study as a result of the presence of the researcher (Breznau, 2016; Manaham & Fisher, 2016). This is further supported by Triad (2016) and Bowen (2017) who refer to documents as non-reactive data sources. This means that documents can be read and reviewed over and over again, and they remain unchanged by the influence of the researcher during the research process. According to Bowen (2017), and Triad (2016), documents have the advantage of providing data that can no longer be observed.

Documents encompass both digital and written materials including, but not limited to, official publications and reports of programs and organisations, policies, and written personal works of participants such as stories, written diaries and educational tasks (Hassan & Hashim, 2021). Document analysis provided me with the opportunity to explore the junior grades CSE policies in place and the teachers' CSE file. Literature has revealed the lamentations by some scholars and organisations that there are no clear-cut policies on CSE in Zimbabwe (Muridzo, 2017; UNESCO, 2018; Mahoso, 2020). Thus, I found it noble to first find out the available policies on CSE and then explore them checking on the content covered in comparison to the international standard guidelines. The suitable policies I found were the junior grade guidance and counselling and life skills orientation syllabus; the child protection policy and the school health policy.

Document analysis was fundamental in this study for the reason that it allowed me to have access to the data that I most needed. The documents were able to provide the information on what is being taught to the junior grade learners pertaining CSE. Additionally, the information I obtained from document analysis was very easy to handle (McCombes, 2020). The main goal of using documents as data bases was to acquire information from naturally occurring, easy to get to data that was being used in the teaching and learning of CSE (Nickerson, 2022). The four documents were particularly expedient in that they were, by-and-large readily available, unobtrusive to obtain, and stable (Dawadi, 2020). I was very cautious when selecting the suitable documents as a way to avoid the major disadvantage given that documents may run short of sufficient detail to address

the research questions (Bowen, 2017), and there is selectivity in terms of what is being put into a document and what is being left out. In addition, triangulating documents with semi-structured interviews were a way to counter the aforementioned shortfall. Doyle (2022) opines that document selectivity might stem from considerations such as length and type of language used as well as active decisions *vis-à-vis* exclusion or lower visibility of some groups or issues. For this research, I considered only those documents that had some content on CSE

#### **4.8 Data Analysis**

The data analysis process involves the identification of patterns in the data and the generation of ideas to elucidate the existence of these patterns (Bernard, 2017). In my study, I employed thematic analysis to identify, and analyse, emerging themes within the collected data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This thematic approach allowed me to discern and comprehend shared meanings and experiences present in the data. The research was guided by the six phases of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2020), which provided a structured framework for the analysis process. These steps enabled full immersion into the data by first transcribing the 15 interviews (six teachers, six parents, and three administrators). Subsequently, I engaged in extensive reading and re-reading of the transcriptions, coupled with attentive listening to the interview recordings, thereby documenting initial ideas and observations (Nickerson, 2022).

This rigorous approach facilitated the systematic identification of recurring themes and patterns across the data, enabling a comprehensive exploration of the factors including the attitudes and perceptions of the participants affecting CSE in Zimbabwean primary schools. In the first place, as espoused in Braun and Clarke (2022), a comprehensive understanding of the content is going to be developed. I had to first familiarise myself with the data aspects. This phase involved immersing myself in the data by repetitively reading textual data and listening to audio-recordings of data from the teachers, parents and administrators. The aim of this phase was to become intimately familiar with datasets content, and to begin to notice things that might be relevant to the research questions (Cresswell & Poth, 2017). This step provided the foundation for the subsequent analysis that would follow. This is a key phase of data analysis within interpretive qualitative methodology (Bird, 2005).

Phase two was systematic analysis of data, through coding. As envisioned by Cresswell and Poth (2017), I highlighted sections of the text usually phrases or sentences, and came out with short labels or codes to describe their content. Bernard (2017) concurs and advises that a researcher makes sure that data is potentially relevant to the research questions and that the codes allow gaining of condensed overview of the main points, and common meanings, that recur throughout the data.

The third phase was about searching for themes. In this phase, analysis shifted from codes to themes (Nickerson, 2022). Dwadi (2020) postulates that a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning with the data set. At this stage, I diverted my focus from the interpretation of individual data items within the dataset, to the interpretation of aggregated meaning and meaningfulness across the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2022). I then reviewed and analysed the coded data to combine the different codes sharing common meanings such that they may form themes or sub-themes. Thus, themes are generally broader than codes and several codes may combine into a theme (Martic, 2018). As alluded to by Cresswell and Poth (2017), I collapsed those multiple codes that shared a similar underlying concept or feature of the data into one single code. Moreover, I let go and abandoned those codes, and themes not fitting into the overall analysis.

The themes reviewing is at stage four. I made sure that the themes were useful and accurate representations of the data by returning to the dataset, compared, and checked the themes against it (Braun & Clarke, 2022). As outlined by Cresswell and Poth (2017), there were some instances where I combined themes while in some cases I either discarded or created new ones trying to make them more useful and accurate. After making the final list of the themes, I went on to define and named them accordingly. Defining themes involves formulating exactly what each theme means and figuring out how it helps understand data and this was the fifth (Braun & Clarke, 2021; McCombes, 2020). In line with Hijmans and Kuyper (2020), I made sure that I come out with an unambiguous and easily comprehensible or understandable name for each theme.

Phase six of Braun and Clarke's (2020) thematic analysis is finalisation and thorough review of

the report. This phase emphasised the creation of a coherent and compelling ‘story’ derived from the analysis conducted. Braun and Clarke (2020) suggest that this narrative should be both vivid and intricate, firmly rooted in the scholarly field, and should extend beyond mere description to formulate an argument that addresses the research questions. Nickerson (2022) further highlights that codes and themes may evolve during the analysis process, leading to changes in the write-up. Consequently, my approach to report writing took on a recursive nature, allowing for the continuous recording of all changes in the form of informal notes and memos throughout the research.

I ensured that my themes were interlinked in a logical and meaningful manner, constructing a coherent and persuasive narrative that accurately represented the data, aligning with Braun and Clarke’s (2020) guidelines. This meticulous process enabled me to present a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the ecosystemic factors influencing CSE in Zimbabwean primary schools.

#### 4.9 Participant selection and data collection setting

The participants belong to three different schools that is two parents, two teachers and one administrator from each school of the three schools. The inclusion criteria for the 15 participants to participate in this study was as in the table below:

Participant	Criterion
<b>Parents</b>	1. They have children who are within the junior grade level.
	2. They are members of the school development committees in their respective schools.
<b>Teachers</b>	3. They have at least five years’ experience of teaching junior grades.
	4. They teach guidance and counselling.
	5. They currently teach the junior grade classes
<b>School Administrators</b>	6. They have been in the administrative role for at least three years.
	7. They have been at their current stations for at least one year.
	8. They have guidance and counselling carried out at their schools.

Table 3: Participant selection and data collection setting

The individual, semi-structured interviews were held at a location most convenient to the participants. A single interview lasted for approximately 15 minutes. It is of paramount importance to take note of the fact that the researcher had migrated to another country, thus, these interviews were done online using zoom and google meeting. The participation was dependent upon the participant's willingness to form part of the interview, their availability as well as their suitability. The study was, however, limited in terms of network connectivity. Poor network affected the flow of the interviews.

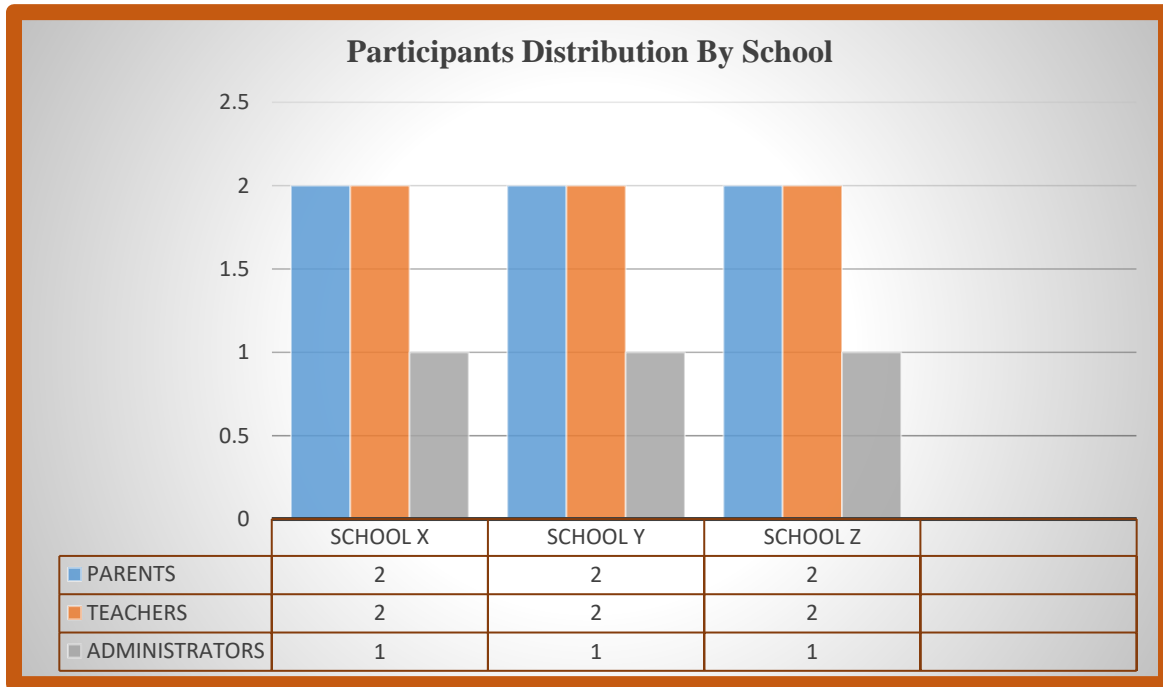
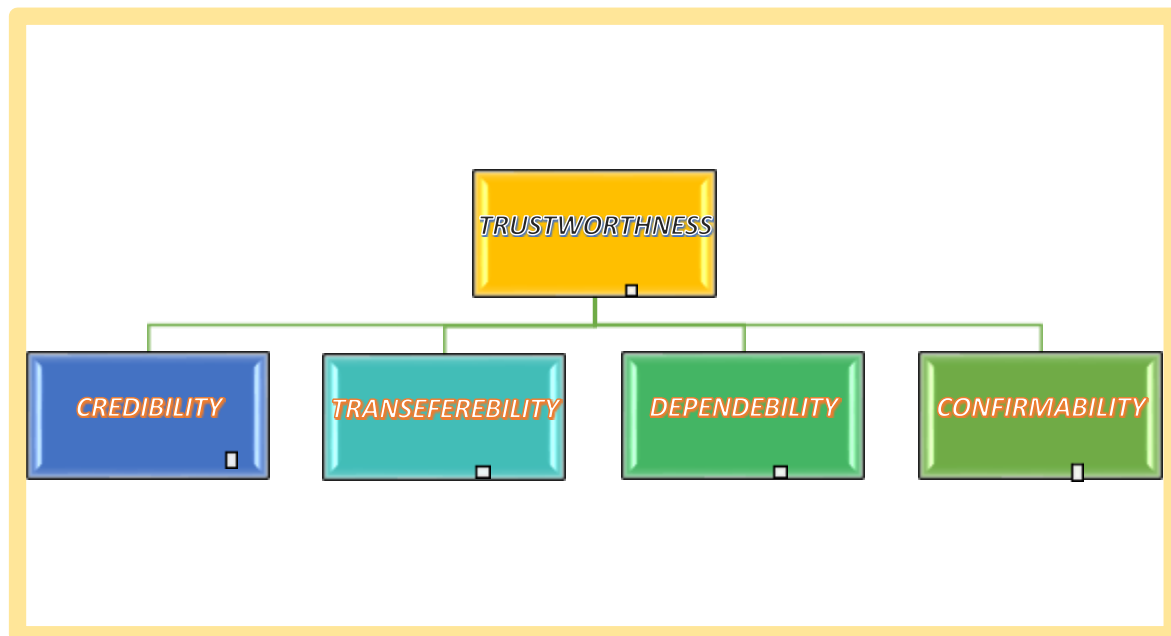


Figure 4: Participants' distribution by school

Figure 4 shows the distribution of the 15 participants at each of the three schools presented as School X, School Y and School Z. Each school had a total of five participants.

## 4.10 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was considered in this research. Trustworthiness is defined by Thomas (2020) as strategies of guaranteeing rigor in research. Braun and Clarke (2022) outlined the four strategies for ensuring rigor and these are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. What I did to cater for the above components of trustworthiness is provided below. The figure below shows the four strategies that have been employed to ensure trustworthiness. These strategies are shown in Figure 5.



*Figure 5: strategies to ensure trustworthiness*

### 4.10.1 Credibility

Thomas (2020) propounds that credibility evaluates the magnitude to which the findings of the research are consistent with the truth. On the other hand, Nickerson (2022) views credibility as pertaining to confidence in the truth of outcomes of research. For research conclusions to be regarded as dependable there must be congruent to reality. Cresswell (2014) proposed the use of multiple sources of evidence for the basis of credibility. To gain insight into the ecosystemic

factors affecting CSE, I triangulated data from teachers, administrators and parents. Moreover, semi-structured interviews and documents were triangulated as data collection instruments. I then compared the research outcomes to see whether there was correspondence. As well, I explored the outcomes to determine the extent to which each one linked to the other. Additionally, I also weighed up the findings against the claims they support (Phillimore & Goodson, 2017).

#### **4.10.2 Transferability**

Cresswell and Poth (2017) consider transferability as another aspect of trustworthiness which is concerned with the applicability of results in any other contexts in qualitative research. It also refers to the degree to which data represents the population from which the sample would have been taken out from (Widner et al., 2022). To depict the extent of transferability in this study, I was in a position to describe the factors that I considered when selecting the sample in detail. I also clearly stipulated the way data was gathered and went further to explain fully the context of the research.

#### **4.10.3 Confirmability**

Pham (2018) summaries confirmability in qualitative research as the influence that the researcher might have on participants. In addition, it refers to objectivity in quantitative studies (Martic, 2018). To augment confirmability, I have tried to clearly document my role as a researcher. Moreover, I was in a position acknowledged my personal biases; and what is thought could have influence on data collection and interpretation has been outlined. During the data collection process, I availed myself emotionally to the participants to generate a cordial relationship with them stimulating the provision of authentic information from participants (Busetto et al., 2020)

#### **4.10.4 Dependability**

McCombes (2020) envisions the aspect of dependability as analogous to reliability in quantitative research. For Thomas (2020), dependability concentrates principally on whether the research was carried out in accordance to conventions of the research methodology that one would have opted for.

To heighten dependability, I explained the methodology that I chose, and gave justification to it. The meticulousness of the research questions was and is going to be checked, and also whether these questions were commonsensically associated. More so, the magnitude to which the conventions of qualitative research are being subscribed to when carrying out the study were continuously checked as commended (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

#### **4.11 Ethical Consideration**

Considering ethics in educational research is of utmost significance, exclusively when researching sensitive issues (Martic, 2018). Participants need to be surefire that the researcher espouses ethics from the outset to the end of the research; because each phase and aspect of the research has the prospect to be a source of ethical problems (Westby et al., 2018). This justifies the reason why attention was given to a number of ethical philosophies in this study and these included informed consent, privacy and confidentiality.

Hijmans and Kuyper (2020) hold that researchers take upon themselves obligation to safeguard the identity of the participants. The participants and myself agreed that their real names were not going to be used during the course of the research to warrant confidentiality. Pseudonyms were allocated for each of the participants. A male was addressed as ‘sir’ whilst a female as ‘ma’am’ such that if by any chance, anyone comes across the audio recordings, they hardly identify the participants. I, subsequent to the interview, informed the participants that the information they made available was for research purposes alone and was not to be used for any other. I likewise let them know that the only people other than me who had the right to access the information collected from them were my project supervisors.

Cherry (2022) points to consent as dire in any research as it symbolises to respecting research participants, their dignity and also their autonomy. This has to be a voluntary procedure free from any form of pressure or physical and or psychological coercion (Nichols, 2018). All of my participants approved to take part on the basis of informed consent. Preceding to the start of the interview, each participant read the written information form specifying the purpose of the

procedures encompassed in this research and was made to sign letters of consent to warrant that they participate while being entirely cognisant of their rights.

In addition, I made it clear to the participants that they were at liberty to stop participating in the interview at any stage and were given the choice as to whether the data they would have availed should be destroyed immediately or not. The interviews were recorded using a smartphone and were identified using number codes. The audio recordings were stored on a separate flash disk which is kept under lock and key in an office safe. The data shall be exclusively accessed by the supervisor and myself. Proximately, after each interview, a debriefing session took place. This accorded both myself and the participants the chance to discuss issues that arose from the interview, clarified procedures from that point on, and expressed appreciation and gratitude.

Most essentially, the research was carried out in line with the requirements of the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State. An ethical clearance certificate applied for and obtained. I was granted the permission to undertake the research from my parent ministry; the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe through the District Schools Inspector of Chikomba District.

#### **4.12 Conclusion**

This methodology employed in carrying out this study was outline in this chapter. I went on to explain the qualitative research approach as well as justifying why I opted for the interpretivist paradigm, and the case study design. I considered the data collecting instruments which I used in terms of their significance, and the suitability to the nature of the topic under exploration. As a final point, trustworthiness and ethical considerations have been clearly outlined. In the following chapter, I shall deal with the data presentation, analysis, and discussion.



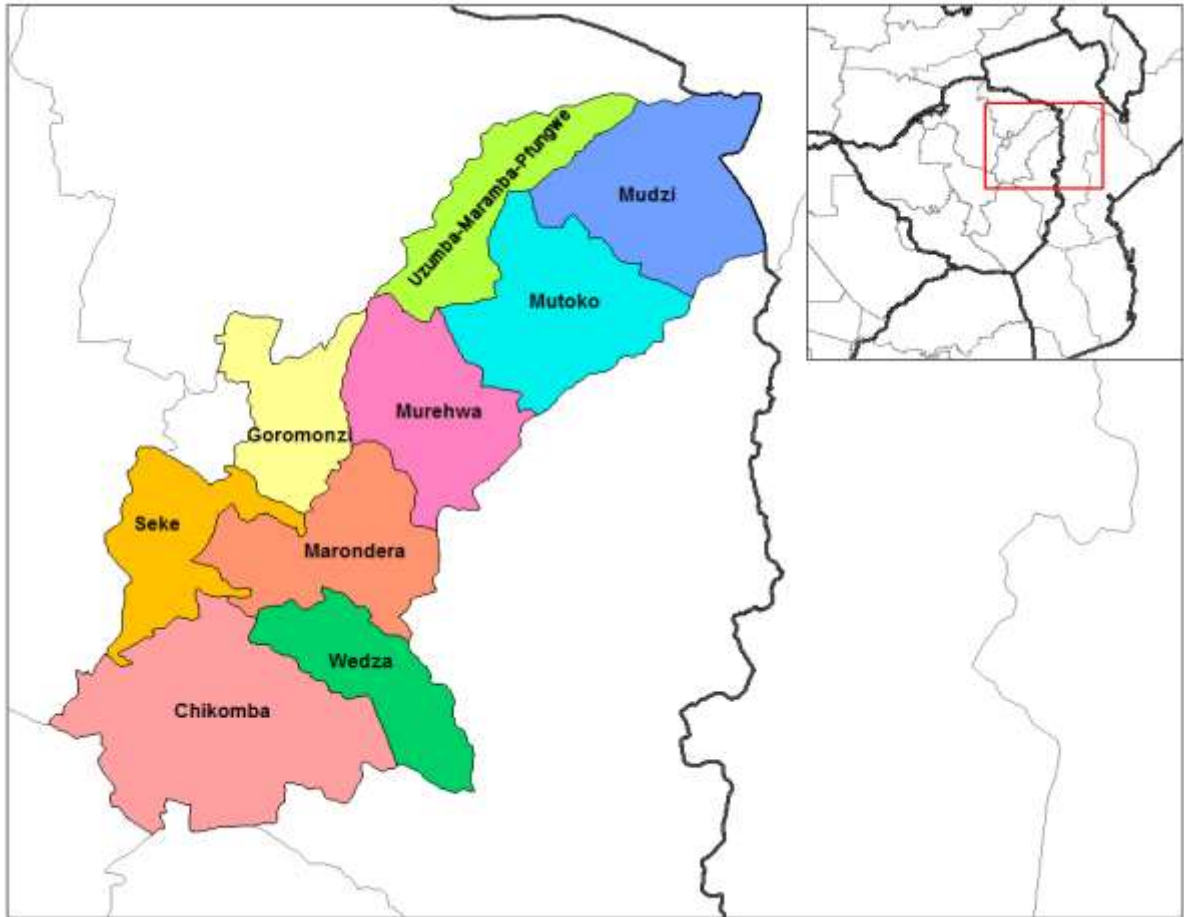
## **CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **5.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, I present, analyse and discuss the data gathered through semi-interviews and documents. The key informants were six teachers, six parents and three school administrators from three primary schools. Prior to analysing the ecosystemic factors affecting CSE, the background information on the respondents was given. In order to make sense of the collected data, I made use of Braun and Clarke's six stage data-analysis style for identifying the themes and sub-themes. I used detailed descriptions and direct quotes from interviews for analysing, presenting, and discussing the findings. It was pleasing to note that all the participants were able to respond in English, thus, making it the medium of communication.

### **5.1 Research setting and participants**

This study was undertaken in Chikomba District of Mashonaland East Province in Zimbabwe. This province consists of nine districts namely Chikomba, Wedza, Marondera, Seke, Goromonzi, Murehwa, Mutoko, UMP and Mudzi. Map 1 for Mashonaland East Province shows the location of Chikomba District.



*Map 1: Map of Mashonaland East Province showing where Chikomba District is located.*

(Adapted from Bartholomew, 2014, p. 10).

Chikomba district has a population of 152 585 people with over 70% of the people in this district have their livelihood based on communal farming. While around 7% are vendors and some operating various business enterprises, less than 5% of them are commercial farmers and illegal miners, and the rest are civil servants (UNICEF, 2018). According to Ngara (2019), some parents in rural areas in Zimbabwe left the country mainly to South Africa and Botswana seeking employment. Children were left behind to live on their own or under the care of relatives. The children became vulnerable and were exposed to sexual abuse, hence, the need for CSE in schools. The district has 133 primary schools located in the communal, urban and resettlement areas. Most

of the schools in Chikomba are found in the communal and resettlement areas where child sexual abuse is rampant, whereas, only three of these primary schools are in the urban.

## **5.2 Section A: General profile and characteristics of the respondents and documents**

The total number of participants in the study was 15. There were six teachers, six parents and three administrators. I applied purposive and convenience sampling to select these participants. Purposive sampling allowed me to select participants who had meaningful knowledge of the subject of CSE and this helped me to obtain rich information regarding the subject matter. On the other hand, these participants from the three primary schools were chosen for their geographic proximity (close to one another and easily accessible saving me both in terms of time and financially). The composition of these participants is given below including their social characteristics. Although literature has revealed that there are no clear-cut on CSE policies in Zimbabwe, I, with the aid of the school administrators managed to identify three key documents on CSE namely: the school health policy, the child protection policy and the primary school guidance counselling and life skill orientation syllabus.

### ***Teachers***

TR1: He is a junior grade teacher, aged 36. He has taught the junior grades for 10 years and is a holder of Diploma in Education. By the time of the interview, he was teaching a Grade 5 class with 41 learners. His participation in the interview was with great enthusiasm. He expressed himself freely in terms of how he perceived CSE and as well had a good idea of how parents in Zimbabwe felt about CSE. He was very worried about some of the cases he had read from the online newspapers of two 9-year-old girls who recently fell pregnant. He alluded all this to the lack of proper CSE which he strongly thinks should be introduced even as early as in early childhood grades.

TR2: This one was a female junior grade specialist teacher with a Bachelor of Education in Psychology. She had been teaching the junior grade classes for the past 12 years. At the time of the study, she was teaching a Grade 6 class with an enrolment of 43 learners. She displayed a

strong willingness to participate in the interview and her responses to the questions were articulate. She was really concerned about the need to teach CSE to the junior grade learners. However, she cited culture as the major hindrance to the teaching of CSE.

TR3: Teacher 3 was 39-year-old female teacher, teaching learners in the junior grades department. She held an undergraduate degree in Educational Management. She indicated that she had been teaching for the past 17 years. In all the years she had taught, she had been manning junior grades. She claimed to have mentored quite a good number teacher who were undergoing training as junior grade teachers at some universities and colleges in Zimbabwe. By the time of the interview, she was taking a Grade 5 class of 39 learners. She was very excited to be a participant in the research.

TR4: She is a 40-year-old, well experienced junior grade teacher who has taught in service for 16 years. This teacher was in possession of first degree in primary education. Despite being a junior grade teacher, she is a member of the school disciplinary committee. Aside from teaching, she deals with learners' discipline as well. She reported having presided over several sexual related cases where learners imitating sexual acts like kissing and fondling as well as learners proposing love to another. All these points to the need for effective CSE teaching and learning. She was very positive about the teaching of CSE to junior grades. The teacher, nevertheless, be mourned lack of proper training on CSE.

TR5: This 51-year-old female educator has vast experience in the teaching profession as both a temporary and a trained teacher. She holds an undergraduate degree in Primary Education and Special Needs Education. At the time of the interview, she had slightly above 25 years' experience as a junior grade teacher. She is the chairperson for her school's guidance and counselling team. She is one amongst those who back the teaching of CSE to junior grade learners. More so, this teacher believes in the efficacy of CSE in helping to clear the misconceptions that learners develop due to exposure to media and peer influence. Despite her positive confessions, she, however, revealed that her religious beliefs were hindering her from fully implementing CSE.

TR6: This male teacher claimed to have seen it all within the education system and was extremely positive about having CSE taught in junior grade classes. He is a 49-year-old man with 25 years and some months' experience teaching the junior grades. He had taught both the old and the updated curriculum in Zimbabwe. He was very grateful for being chosen to participate in the research as he anticipated to see his contributions help to improve the state of CSE at school and at national level. He hoped that CSE would help by equipping the learners with knowledge and skills that they can use to protect themselves from sexual harassment as well as sexual abuse.

### *Parents*

P1: She was 27-years old and a mother of junior grade learners. She is a peasant farmer in her local community. She initially professed ignorance concerning CSE. She thought that CSE was not necessary at all since she did not do it when she was still at school. This parent confessed that she was in some cases shy and not in a position to help her children do homework on CSE. She was courageous enough to ask me to explain to her briefly on what exactly is CSE, and what would be taught to junior grade learners. After the brief explanation, she finally consented to the teaching of CSE but strongly advised that schools educate all parents on CSE issues.

P2: This parent is a 35-year-old father to a pair of twins (a boy and a girl) in junior grade. He works as an illegal miner at a nearby mine. He highly appreciated the introduction of CSE to the junior grades. Additionally, the parent confessed that he never has time to teach these children or to help them do their homework, and he felt the honours to teach CE should be upon the school. He laid much emphasis on the need to consult headmen and chiefs first before the teaching of CSE to junior grade children in schools since they are the custodians of culture and, once they are convinced in terms of the relevance of CSE to junior grade children; they can use their authority to influence their subjects to accept it.

P3: Parent PC is aged 39, she is a mother to four children. Two girls and one boy of her own and a nephew, all in the junior grade level. She is a holder of an ordinary level certificate, and makes a living from vending. She mainly sells vegetables and second-hand clothes around the

community. This parent strongly felt that there is need for sexuality education that is truly comprehensive.

P4: P4 is a mother aged 35 with one child in junior grade level. She is a small-scale horticulture farmer. This woman was very excited to be a participant in this study. She contributed with a great deal of gusto and managed to provide rich information. She was strongly against delayed introduction of CSE to learners arguing that children's misconceptions about sexuality would keep accruing and this have serious upshots. She said some children who share bedrooms with adults might have witnessed live sexual intercourse activities being performed and they may teach their peers during play. Most importantly, she notes that the school is the best place to have learners acquire sexuality education which is comprehensive.

P5: P5 is a female both a peasant farmer and a vendor in her late forties. She wanted her children to be taught CSE because she was aware of several children from her community who had been sexually abused. She notes with concern that these cases of abuse were not being reported and believed that CSE can equip these young children to understand the different forms of abuse and how to report. She further opined that these children did not even know that they were being abused and was afraid that her own daughter might fall victim one day. She as well believed that if she is given the right content to teach, she can try to help her daughter at home.

P6: He is a father who is 47 he is not formally employed, but is a peasant farmer. P6 is a father to two junior grade children and also lives with his a grand-child. He appreciated being a participant in the study. He openly acknowledged the teaching of CSE to junior grade learners. Unlike other participants, he mentioned the issue of children's right and gender issue.

### ***Administrators***

Ad1: A female school principal aged 50. She got promoted to the post at a very young age and she now has 22 years of experience as an administrator. She had been at her present school for the past six years. She was very much in support of CSE being taught in schools though it was being implemented to lesser extend at her school. Upon being asked why the implementation level was

low at her school, she revealed several challenges they were facing as school which included negative attitudes from and the absence of clear-cut policies on CSE which made it difficult for her and other administrators to fully enforce it. They have a CSE club at their school as a way to promote its implementation.

Ad2: He is aged 49 with some 20 years' experience as an administrator. He has been at the school for the past 15 years. He proved to have fair understanding of CSE and have the learning area being implemented at his school. He said because he supported CSE, so it was easy for him to introduce it at his school from the word go and was fighting hard to convince every teacher on the efficacy of this subject matter to junior grade learners. Nonetheless, there were several challenges being faced in trying to promote CSE implementation. These ranged from the unavailability of clear-cut polies, lack of expertise on the part of both the teachers and the administrators as well as inadequate resources in schools. Resistance from parents was another thorn in the flesh according to him.

Ad3: He is another school principal in his late forties. He leads a school with about 35 teachers and close to a thousand learners. By the time of the interview, he had 18 years of experience as a principal and has been at the school for the same number of years since he never moved after his promotion to the post. This administrator claimed to have experienced a lot of child sexual abuse cases at the school. According to him, CSE was the way to go when it comes to equipping these young learners with competences relating to sexuality and many other social issues. For him, monitoring and evaluating CSE programs was quite problematic since there no were tools to use from the ministry. This principal admitted that much still need to be done for there to be proper CSE in schools.

Tables 4, 5 and 6, and Figure 6 summarise the participants' general characteristics.

Pseudonym Name	Pseudonym Code	Gender	Document Code
<b>Teacher 1</b>	TR1	Male	D1
<b>Teacher 2</b>	TR2	Female	D2
<b>Teacher 3</b>	TR3	Female	D3
<b>Teacher 4</b>	TR4	Female	D4
<b>Teacher 5</b>	TR5	Female	D5

<b>Teacher 6</b>	TR6	Male	D6
------------------	-----	------	----

*Table 4: Summary of teachers' biographical information*

<b>Pseudonym Name</b>	<b>Pseudonym Code</b>	<b>Gender</b>
<b>Parent 1</b>	P1	Female
<b>Parent 2</b>	P2	Male
<b>Parent 3</b>	P3	Female
<b>Parent 4</b>	P4	Female
<b>Parent 5</b>	P5	Female
<b>Parent 6</b>	P6	Male

*Table 5: Summary of parents' biographical information*

<b>Pseudonym Name</b>	<b>Pseudonym Code</b>	<b>Gender</b>
<b>Administrator 1</b>	AD1	Female
<b>Administrator 2</b>	AD2	Male
<b>Administrator 3</b>	AD3	Male

*Table 6: Summary of administrators' biographical information*

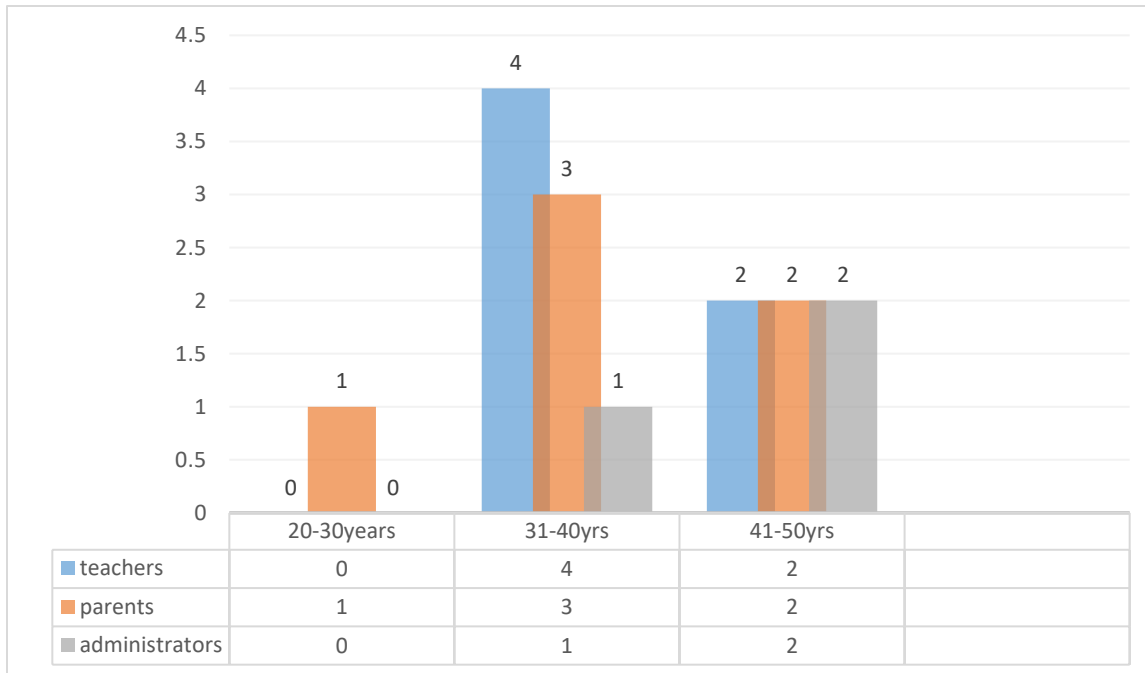


Figure 6: Summary of participants' age groups

### 5.3 Research Results

From the data collected, I extracted themes, and the results are presented in this section. The data was categorised into themes. Five themes and eighteen sub-themes emerged and each of the themes ,its sub- themes and the research question(s) being answered are provided in Table 6. Each of the sub-themes was explored separately.

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub-theme</i>	<i>Question addressed</i>
<b><i>Knowledge and understanding of CSE</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-teachers' understanding of CSE</li> <li>-teachers' qualification on CSE</li> <li>-parents' understanding of CSE</li> <li>-administrators' understanding of CSE</li> </ul>	<i>Questions 1&amp;2</i>
<b><i>Hindrances to effective CSE implementation and their effects</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-teachers' attitudes</li> <li>-parents' attitudes</li> <li>-administrators' attitudes</li> <li>-unavailability of resources</li> <li>-cultural and religious detects</li> </ul>	<i>Question 1&amp;2</i>
<b><i>CSE policies in place</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-the school health policy</li> <li>-child protection policy</li> <li>-guidance and counselling syllabus</li> </ul>	<i>Question 1&amp;2</i>
<b><i>Promotion of CSE in schools</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CSE programs currently in schools</li> <li>-suggestions on strategies to improve CSE</li> </ul>	<i>Question 3</i>
<b><i>Content covered in CSE</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-topics taught on CSE</li> <li>-teachers' views on the relevance of CSE</li> <li>-teachers' ability to deliver the content</li> <li>-parents' views on the relevance CSE</li> </ul>	<i>Questions 1&amp;2</i>

Table 6: Themes and sub-themes from the data

#### 5.3.1 Theme 1: Knowledge and understanding of CSE

Data was gathered in an attempt to determine the knowledge and level of understanding of CSE from Zimbabwean teachers, parents and administrators. In order to obtain this information, I lobbied for the views and perceptions of the junior grade teachers, parents with junior grade children and administrators (school principals) on teaching CSE to junior grades. In addition, I studied the guidance and counselling file for those junior grade teachers. The above theme was generated from collected data and four sub-themes were established. All the sub-themes within this theme and helped to unearth what teachers, parents and administrators in Zimbabwe knew and understood about CSE. Shown below are the sub-themes:

➤ <i>Teachers' knowledge and understanding of CSE;</i>
➤ <i>Teachers' qualification in CSE</i>
➤ <i>Parents' knowledge and understanding of CSE</i>
➤ <i>Administrators' knowledge and understanding of CSE</i>

*Table 7: Sub-themes to knowledge and understanding of CSE answering questions 1&2*

In order to make sure that every sub-theme is given adequate attention, each one of them was scrutinised separately.

### ***Teachers' knowledge and understanding of CSE***

In the first place, these teachers were asked to outline their understanding of CSE. To further probe their understanding, they were asked if it is necessary to teach CSE to junior grades and to justify the cause why they had those perceptions. This was in a bid to gain insight of whether they knew CSE or not and the extent to which they knew it. The explanations given by these educators helped to clearly determine the depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding they possess about CSE. All the six junior grade teachers gave varied explanations of what CSE is about, there was not a universal definition of the concept. This helped to learn why they perceived CSE the way they do. Of paramount importance is the fact that all they said was in a way encompassed in the CSE program as outlined in the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality (ITGS) guideline. After critically analysing the teachers' views, I concluded that their differences were chiefly due

to the way they were oriented into program. If these teachers had gone through the same training on CSE, they could have had a common understanding of it.

To explain CSE, TR1 said:

*CSE is sex education which aims to give learners knowledge, attitudes and skills to make appropriate healthy choices in their sexual lives.*

From the above response, it is quite clear that this teacher knows CSE to certain extent, there is evidence of a fairer understanding of CSE. A closer look at the narrative shows that the teacher mainly understands CSE from health-based perspective. Two important points were raised in this explanation and these are healthy choices and sexual lives. These are part and parcel of life skills education concepts.

According to TR2, CSE has to do with:

*...provision of information about bodily development, sex, sexuality and relationship. It is education about sex, it aims to teach how to navigate matters concerning sex, sexuality and sexual health.*

The explanation of CSE by this teacher was quite comprehensive, touching on a number of aspects. These included bodily development, a key element of CSE for these junior grade learners. It is during this stage where most of these learners were reportedly undergoing some changes in their bodies especially girls. It meant that they needed to be aware of such changes well before hand. This would help them easily embrace the changes when they occur. Such developments include development of breast, pubic hair, skin changes where some will develop pimples and so on. Moreover, sex and sexuality have to do with the characteristics of being sexual, and can spread to issues to do with sexual interest and the likes. Halwani (2023) describes sex as referring to psychological and physiological process interconnected to reproduction and erogenous pleasures while sexuality as incorporating all facets of sexual behaviours, together with gender identity, orientation, attitudes, and activities. Like the TR1, this teacher seemed to perceive CSE as health-based sexuality education as outlined in the last part of the definition where he said: “*...and sexual health.*”

Of importance from the teacher's description of CSE, are relationships. Basically, learners will be taught about the different types of relationships both good and bad.

TR3 viewed CSE as:

*...it involves teaching learners content that is based on sexuality as a way of equipping them with life skills.*

Like the previous teachers, this classroom practitioner also pointed out the issue of sexuality in the explanation of CSE. Furthermore, the teacher added life skills to the definition. This is quite broad and is about an assemblage of psychosocial proficiencies and interpersonal abilities that support these youngsters to come up with informed decisions, reason in a creative and critical way, empathise with others, communicate efficaciously, develop problem solving skills, be in a position to nurture sound relationships and; manage and cope with their lives in a healthy and productive manner (UNICEF, 2019).

For the other educator TR4, CSE is:

*...education on life skills, well-being and diseases that some may be living with.*

This is another interesting definition from this teacher. Aside from “*...life skills*” as outlined by TR3, this teacher added “*well-being*” and diseases to the view of CSE. By educating learners on well-being, it means they would be equipped with skills to refine their sense of purpose, cultivate the individual's potential, develop control over one's life as well as experiencing positive relationships (Huppert & Ruggeri, 2018).

From TR5's view, CSE is a:

*...program designed to teach about reproductive health.*

On the other hand, TR6 says:

*CSE is whereby young boys and girls learn about their health and sexuality and disadvantages of teenage pregnancies, and empower them on their choices in life.*

Just like TR2 and TR3, the educators TR5 and TR6 also pointed out the issue of health and sexuality. Moreover, the issue of being empowered with choices in life has been mentioned by TR3 and TR4 where they described CSE as having to do with life skills.

Subsequent to outlining their understanding of CSE, the teachers' views on the relevance of teaching CSE to junior grades were sought after. I went on to solicit for some justifications for their views. This was a way to further explore their understanding of the CSE concept. When asked if it was necessary to teach CSE at junior grade level, the teacher had this to say:

TR1: *It is necessary for junior learners to learn CSE at school....*

TR2: *Yes, I think it is necessary.*

TR3: *Yes, it is...*

TR4: *...it is.*

TR5: *Yes, to help them....*

TR6: *Yeah, yes! So much....*

All the six teachers consented to the teaching of comprehensive sexuality education to junior grades. It shows they have seen and understood the value of the program to these young learners. I then further probed by asking them to justify their views above. They gave a wide a range of reasons but all pointing to the materiality of CSE to junior grades.

After being asked to justify why she consented to the teaching of CSE to junior grades, TR1 pointed out that:

*...because one of the components of CSE is about making healthy choices. There are also cases in newspapers on two 9-year-old girls who fell pregnant. In most cases those abused do not report may be because they do not know how to go about it. So, CSE might help to equip learners with proper information.*

In the same vein, TR3 revealed the following:

*...we have had cases of students who are being abused at home, hence teaching them CSE will help them deal with such cases on their own. Cases are not being reported, some recent cases of religious leaders marrying very young girls, ...there is also another case of a 9-year-old girl who fell pregnant....*

The responses from the two participants were in agreement as they both outlined the issue of early pregnancy. Having 9-year-old falling pregnant was uncalled for and directly points to the absence of proper CSE. Concepts to do with consent to sex, safe sex and delayed sex could have bailed them out from falling victim of these unfortunate circumstances. Lamentably, they even mentioned the issue of having sexual abuse cases not being reported. TR1 went on to suggest that the reason for not reporting could be that these young children do not know how, where and to whom to report to. As revealed by TR3, that some religious leaders are marrying the very young girls, this is a clear sign that they (the young girls) are ignorant about the idea of consent to sex and marriage, and the danger associated with early pregnancies as espoused by Mahoso (2020). Importantly, by mentioning that some nine years old have fallen pregnant, it justifies the need to have CSE taught from junior grade or even earlier. With reference to the transformative education theory, it quite apparent that Freire's ideas in curriculum formulation were not being implemented by curriculum planners. If learners had been consulted during the CSE program development, there is no where they could have been that much ignorant, at least they could have had some clues on various CSE concepts.

TR6, a guidance and counselling chairperson at her school again strongly agree that CSE should be taught to the junior grades saying that:

*...we once had cases of boys who showed off their private parts and imitate sexual intercourse.... on another case girls reporting having their "don't touch" touched by boys. By 'don't touch' they meant their private parts....*

The cases above show that these young learners are already interested in sexual activities. This then helps clear out the air where some parents, for example, in Peru and South Africa, expressed that they did not prefer to have CSE taught in school (Keog, 2018; Beyers, 2017). Bronfenbrenner outlines how individuals are influenced by their surroundings; this entails problems of imitating these uncalled-for behaviours might continue among the children through peer interaction.

On the other hand, the other two teachers seemed to agree with the rest of the teachers that CSE can help inform and equip learners with knowledge and skills to deal with sexuality issues as outlined by TR2 who opined that:

*...they will be well versed with all the negative effects or consequences of early pregnancies, early marriages.*

TR4 who viewed CSE as:

*...life skills education, equipping learners with knowledge and skills on sex related issues....*

TR6 had to go beyond in justifying the relevance of CSE to the junior grades adding that:

*...children get to know about...sexual abuse, and they also know more about their sexual rights....*

To further try and explore these junior grades teachers' knowledge of CSE, I scanned through their guidance and counselling files. It has been pointed out during literature review in chapter 2 of this study that, in Zimbabwe, CSE is encompassed in the guidance and counselling, and life skills orientation learning area. I skimmed through the file, checking the nature and amount of content on CSE covered.

To begin with, not even one of the six teachers mentioned 'comprehensive sexuality education'. Upon trying to find out why it was so, it prompted me to closely examine and analyse the junior grade guidance and counselling, and life skills orientation syllabus. I discovered that there was nothing like 'comprehensive sexuality education' clearly stated in it. I had to conclude that the problem was not with the teachers since they are guided by the syllabus when scheming and planning their lessons. Theirs is to breakdown syllabus concepts into smaller and teachable units and not to bring their own content. Regardless of having the syllabus failing to clearly spell out comprehensive sexuality education, the teachers had better understanding of the concept as evidenced through the responses they gave prior. What is it meant is that they got the fragmented information they possess on CSE from the child protection and health policies. These two policy documents are the ones which have tried to address some of the concepts on CSE.

Notwithstanding the absence of the term comprehensive sexuality education in the schemes of work, I proceeded to check the content covered in that particular term. D1, D3, D4 and D6 had some little content related to CSE. D3 and D4 pointed out something on human growth and development, which was okay though the content covered was not fully comprehensive and did not align well with what the ITGS specify should be covered. D1 covered something on health, however, the content covered was generalized to health problems, for example, resulting from accidents, malnutrition and a bit of sexually transmitted infections. In contrast, CSE should cover content mainly on sexual reproductive health and rights often abbreviated as SRHR (UNESCO, 2018).

This was due to what the syllabus specifies should be covered. D6 had a topic ‘understanding rights and responsibilities’. Of course, this is one of the topics that should be covered in the CSE program as outlined in the ITGS guideline. Literature also supported revealing that the teaching of CSE is crucial as it caters for all rights for children including the rights to: education, safety, and health as was (Abdurrahman (2022). Good as it was, the content covered was mainly biased towards the general constitutional rights of the children, and nothing on sexual rights was deliberated on.

D2 and D5 contained information on educational career guidance and citizenship and volunteerism respectively. These topics however do not have a direct connection with CSE. An analysis of the guidance and counselling and life skills orientation syllabus revealed that these are some of the topics that the teachers are expected to teach in this learning area. These teachers as policy implementers had to abide by the dictates of the syllabus. Despite having literature revealing that countries need not follow the ITGS guiding principles religiously, but may make adjustment depending on local needs (Zulu, 2019), the content covered by these two teachers was quite divorced from the guidelines.

Still on the same note, one common aspect observed from all the six teachers’ documents (D1-D6) was on the cross-cutting themes. They all mentioned gender, sexuality, HIV and AIDS and child protection amongst other cross-cutting themes. These cross-cutting themes are what the ITGS recommends should be dwelt on in depth as key concepts and or topics. Considering them as cross-cutting themes meant that they are just mere additional issues that intercepts with the main topics

without diverting from the focus of the main goal. In other words, not much focus is placed on cross-cutting themes during teaching and learning.

Despite the knowledge the teachers seem to have as gathered through the interviews, the analysed document rather showed that what they are teaching is not purely CSE. The content they covered in their schemes of work ran short of the international standards. These documents depict a clear picture of the situation on the ground since teachers deliver lessons following those plans.

### ***Teachers' qualifications in CSE***

In a bid to continue probing on the teachers' knowledge of CSE, each of the six of them was asked to tell the qualification they have with regards to CSE or if they have had any form of training in CSE.

Upon being asked TR1 said:

*I went for a workshop and I have a certificate of attendance from that workshop.*

The case is almost similar to that of TR3 revealing that:

*I only had an in-service training on CSE.*

On the other hand, TR2, TR5 and TR6 revealed that they had not any qualification in CSE with TR6 further elaborating that she only had attended some workshops, and TR2 additionally saying that he only uses the knowledge he had from teaching science since some of the concepts are similar. However, TR4 said she has an Honours' Degree in Psychology. This meant she was qualified to teach Guidance and Counselling although it is not necessarily CSE.

From the above explanations, it is quite apparent that lack of proper training on CSE is the amongst the main reasons why it is not being effectively implemented. The Zimbabwean case is not an unwonted one, in Kenya, teachers indicated that they have not undergone any form of training on

sexuality and they pointed out that they needed special skills such as guidance and counselling, sex education and communication skills (Mocheche, 2018). This reverberates well with the situation in Ghana where Benedict (2021) divulges that there is not enough support and training being offered to teachers and this is affecting their CSE delivery. Similarly, in South Africa, teachers do not really know what to teach and how to teach it (Benedict, 2021), and such was the case in Sidney (Mutton & Walker, 2006).

In contrast, the Rwanda Education Board trained all teachers in 2017 in the country, and teachers were given CSE tool kits. In July 2022 70 master trainers were trained who then trained the 15000 across the country who had not been trained in previous training session (REB, 2023). UNESCO (2019) went further espousing that Malawi has embraced CSE, and has been holding pre-service and in-service training of teachers since 2012. In the same vein, Senegal, Zambia, and Mozambique invested extensively in pre- and in-service training of teachers to develop their capacity to deliver CSE in schools (PBR, 2019). Chirwa-Kambole (2020) confirmed that Zambia proved in-service workshops on CSE to work well, no wonder why it is being highly ranked in Africa in terms of CSE implementation. Guttmacher Institute (2020) likewise, applauded Zambia and Rwanda for putting up with the United Nations' guidelines on what the young people need.

### ***Parents' understanding of CSE***

The literature reviewed has shown that parents are fundamental curriculum determinants. They are the most immediate and influential elements in terms of child development (Hayes et al., 2017). Guy-Evans (2020) posits that parents form part of the microsystem of child development in the socio-ecological theory. Their perceptions towards CSE are of paramount importance and contribute to the success or failure of the program (Chavula et al., 2022). Their attitudes, perceptions and decisions about CSE have a very strong bearing in its implementation. In other words, their decisions about CSE directly influence the learning of their children. For them to have a buy-in of any program, they needed to understand it well, and literature has showed that collaborating with them especially before program implementation has worked very well in countries like Nigeria and Zambia (Kunnuji et al., 2017; Chirwa-Kambole, 2020). As a way to

make inquiry on the parents' understanding of CSE, I asked them to explain what they know about it.

*P1: A sex education teaching method based on a curriculum which is aimed to give learners the knowledge on their sexual live.*

*P4: Aims to equip young children and young people with knowledge that that empower them to realize their health, and sexual relationships and the protection of their rights throughout their lives.*

*P3: A concept which seeks people to appreciate the existence of young girls and even boys and try to educate them towards progress, not early sex, reproduction and so forth". On a different note, P5 simply viewed CSE to be [learning about sex].*

The other parent (P2) was not in a position to give a proper definition of CSE, this parent said:

*I'm not sure about what CSE actually means.*

Despite having varied understanding and not being able to explain fully what CSE entails, it was pleasing to note that five of the parents knew something about it. What each of these parents said is to an extend part and parcel of CSE. This is unlike the Rwandan rural parents who perceived CSE to be teaching promiscuity to learners and did not understand much about this program (HDI, 2019). It then becomes difficult to appreciate something one does not understand as the case of parent (P2) who was not sure about what CSE is. It can be concluded that the Rwandan rural parents' attitudes and perceptions towards CSE are basically hinged upon their lack of proper knowledge about it.

HDI (2019), however, recommends that there is need to demystify such thoughts and create awareness in parents that CSE encompasses some important topics like family planning, anatomy, menstruation, gender and prevention of STIs. Had there been serious collaboration and cooperation with the parents from program development level, these could have had much knowledge about CSE. Since these parents are members of the school development committees at their respective schools, the responses for P1, P3, P4, P5 and P6 shows that there could be some discussion done

at their schools though at shallow levels and that for P2 they might not be any talk about CSE at her school.

### *Administrators' understanding of CSE*

These are the immediate supervisors of CSE curriculum implementation in Zimbabwe. Moreover, they are the glue that binds together the home and the school, as well as the school and the community at large. Thus, their understanding of CSE means a lot in terms of its success and failure. All the school principals seem to have a fairer understanding of CSE.

AD1 understood CSE to be:

*...sex education based on knowledge, attitudes, skills and values to make choices in their sexual lives.*

AD2 on the other hand says:

*... about children's behaviours, desires and attitudes related to sex and physical intimacy with others.*

AD3 says:

*I think it talks about human wellbeing, child birth, STIs and other diseases that may affect people.*

Basing on how the school principals described CSE, it can be seen evidently that they all do not fully understand its comprehensiveness. These understood CSE in part and this can affect the way they perceive and the extent to which they supervise it. If these school principals are to be effective supervisors of the CSE program, they should have a clearer understanding of it. This will not only help them in supervising but also in carrying out and leading staff development sessions. More so, once they understand CSE in its entirety, they will be in a position to set up their own school-based monitoring tools as was the case in Kenya (Keog, 2018), and they can also initiate other programs that can help up hold it. From how the school principal AD3 expressed himself “*I think....*” It somehow shows that he was not very sure of what CSE is about as he started. Again, it is quite prudent for curriculum planners to collaborate with the school administrators when formulating

CSE programs. This would enable them to give their input as well as having first-hand information about a program they are going to lead and supervise.

### 5.3.2 Theme 2: Hindrances to effective CSE implementation and their effects

With reference to the data solicited from the three groups of participants, that is, the teachers, parents and administrators, the above theme emerged. According to the reviewed literature, the attitudes of the teachers, parents and administrators were part of the factors that affect effective CSE implementation. Therefore, there were some questions I asked during the interview whereby I sought to obtain their initial attitudes towards CSE and then their attitudes later after some time of teaching it. Additionally, to obtain more comprehensive data on the hindrances, I further prodded to hear what these participants considered to be hindrances to effective CSE. As a result, the following sub-themes emerged:

1. <i>teachers' attitudes</i>
2. <i>parents' attitudes</i>
3. <i>administrators' attitudes</i>
4. <i>unavailability of resources</i>
5. <i>cultural and religious detects</i>

Table 8: Sub-themes to the hindrances to effective CSE implementation and their effects answering questions 1&2

#### ***Teachers' attitudes***

Initially, the teachers were asked to narrate their reaction when they first heard they were supposed to teach CSE and as a follow-up, they were asked to justify the reactions. It did not go down well with TR1, TR2, TR4 and TR6, they did not initially embrace the idea of teaching.

TR1 had this to say:

*I wasn't prepared to teach CSE.... I had no idea and was unaware of what I was going to teach....*

TR2 revealed that:

*Initially, I was not in support.....I thought it was a way of initiating or exposing learners to the sexual world. I did not know what has to be taught. Such topical issues were basically meant for adults ready for marriage or at least for secondary scholars.*

In the same vein, TR4 said:

*I was a bit unsettled on the content...I wasn't sure of how I was going to present the material to the children....*

TR6 noted that:

*I was not comfortable with some of the CSE terminologies... I didn't have knowledge and more information on the teaching of CSE. I thought it was too early for the learners to learn about CSE, and I wasn't knowledgeable on the matter on CSE.*

A closer analysis of the narratives above shows that the main reason why the teacher did not initially embrace teaching CSE was due to their lack of knowledge. They all revealed that that they were not sure of what they were supposed to teach. While TR2 added that he viewed CSE as a way of initiating learners into the sexual world and that the junior grade learners were too young to receive such information, TR6 on the other hand as well thought it was too early for the learners to learn about CSE. The above sentiments resonate with findings by Chavula (2021) where some parents in Zambia view CSE as a way of initiating children into sexuality, the same is with the perception of community leaders in Ghana (Donko, 2020) saying that they view sexuality education as promoting promiscuity and likewise.

Some of the teachers in South Africa as revealed by Beyers (2017), they clearly indicated that they did not want to teach CSE, because they felt that it was unnecessary to address sexuality issues to young children as it is an adult issue. They also indicated that they were never taught CSE by their parents and teachers, and as such they saw no reason for teaching it. Basing on Freire's transformative theory of education, such parents need to be conscientised of the fact that the world ever changing and the problems they faced when they were young are way different from what the

current young generation is facing thus the need to continuously review the curriculum, since education is meant to address the challenges, society is facing.

These negative attitudes are attributed to the teachers' lack of adequate training to teach it (UNESCO, 2018; UNFPA, 2017). Proper training on CSE can help de-mystify these thoughts. What these teachers need to understand has been outlined by UNESCO (2018) and WHO (2022), where they described comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) as the one that teaches about sex and relationships through providing scientifically exact, genuine and non-judgmental information which is culturally and age-appropriate, gender-sensitive and life skills-based, and providing opportunities to learners to explore their attitudes and values on decision-making together with their communication and risk reduction skill on sexuality matters. Browes (2018) further supports and elucidates that CSE is education that spreads its wings outside of sexuality education and goes yonder to look into other issues like sexual health, reproductive health, gender relationships, sexual roles, the pressure to be sexually active, developing decision-making skills among learners. The above narrative of CSE managed to touch all the areas of concern by the participating teachers. This implies that once teacher understand CSE through the mentioned lenses, they would have most if not all of their grievances addressed.

Subsequent to obtaining data on the teachers' initial perception and attitudes of CSE during its introduction stage, I then endeavoured to explore the same, now after they had started implementing the program. I asked them to explain how they feel about teaching CSE, if they find it necessary to teach it to junior grades and to support their views. Data obtained showed that there was a paradigm shift in the way these teachers were now viewing CSE, they were gradually changing their mind-sets towards appreciating it. The reason could be that they were getting to understand the program better by reason of teaching it. Some of the responses from the teachers are as follows:

TR1: *"I am feeling great..... It is necessary for junior grade learners to learn CSE at school so as to learn how to make choices in life. I can support the above because one of the components of CSE is about making healthy choices.*

TR2: *I began to appreciate after discovering that the content was not harmful. Yes, I think it is necessary. Learners will be independent. They will be well versed with all the negative effects or consequences of early pregnancy, early marriage, having dignity, refraining from drugs and gullible behaviours. Learners will be conscious about sexuality, abuse, rights and etcetera.*

TR3: *It is overwhelming, for starters, this is a new program... Yes (agreeing that CSE is necessary), we have had cases of students who are being abuse at home, hence teaching them CSE can help them deal with such cases on their own. Cases are not being reported, ... some recent cases of religious leaders marrying young girls...*

TR4: *"I used to be uneasy and shy but I have now impro... it is; it prepares them for later life"*

TR5: *I feel normal when teaching CSE. I no longer have any problems or challenges when delivering CSE lessons... Yes, to help the understand sex issues....*

TR6: *Yes, it is important. Children are knowledgeable on sex and sexual abuse and they know more about their rights...*

Despite having TR3 viewing CSE as overwhelming, the other five participating teachers had positive attitudes towards teaching CSE. The statements by teachers TR2 and TR4 respectively indicated that:

*... began to appreciate after discovering that the content was not harmful...[and] I used to be uneasy and shy but I have now improved....*

Both authenticate the existence of some change in attitude towards CSE. These narratives clearly show the former and the current perception of the teachers. By being able to justify why they think CSE should be taught to junior grades, it is an indication that they now understand the importance of the program. Even TR3 who perceived CSE to be overwhelming, she was in a position to support the teaching and learning of CSE. Conclusively, the positive attitude that the teachers were now having is vital for effective implementation of the program.

Still on the same note, having obtained some data from the teachers themselves on how they perceive CSE, I went on to ask the school principals. Here, I was seeking to hear from the

supervisors' points of view. I asked them to explain if the teachers like teaching CSE, whether they are effective and to support their views. All the three administrators revealed that their teachers had a positive attitude towards CSE. They had this to say:

*AD1: Most teachers like to teach CSE and they are effective in the lessons. However, they do not have enough where they find information. They use the internet... there is negative attitude from a few teachers. Some topics are against their religious and cultural teachings.*

*AD2: Yes (agreeing that teachers like teaching CSE), they have well planned lessons, adequate media, use ICT tools. We try to provide enough media, having staff development sessions, encouraging the use of ICTs in CSE and use of demonstration lessons from those who understand better.*

*AD3: Most teachers teach the subject, they seem to be effective since learners are doing well in the social science paper and the parents are confirming that their children can freely tell them about the content they are learning, can also be seen when they are doing their homework at home. Though CSE is not clearly spelt out in the syllabus and we have a few others who have negative attitudes, these just skip it feeling it is not culturally fit to do so.*

With reference to the above accounts, the majority of the teachers in the schools like to teach CSE showing that they have a positive attitude towards it. When AD2 was asked to outline how they managed to have a successful CSE program implementation at their school, he narrated that they made sure enough resources are available, they used staff development workshops to improve their teachers. He also pointed out that teachers were being encouraged to use ICT tools when implementing CSE and there were demonstration lessons from the ones who understood the program better. These noted strategies are worthwhile and they have improved program delivery at the school. AD3 supplemented to the positive attitudes from teachers by saying that parents were confirming having their children learning effectively. In other words, it can be concluded that the positive attitude from teachers can help influence parents.

The few outstanding individual teachers who had a negative attitude towards CSE cited cultural and religious reasons as hindering them from implementing the program. Literature revealed that in Zambia the same was the case. There were also Moslems, Christians and Hindus who were against the teaching of some concepts based on their religious background (Chavula et al., 2022).

The same goes with Uganda and Pakistan (Kemigisha, 2019; Svanemy et al. 2015) adding that in most cases CSE resistance is hinged upon cultural prescriptions. This entails that there is need to demystify these thoughts if CSE is to be a full success. Several ways can be used to transform such thoughts like collaborating with all stakeholders, awareness campaigns, workshops and so forth as have been outlined under the sub-theme strategies to improve CSE.

### ***Parents' attitudes***

Upon being asked how they reacted towards the introduction of CSE to junior grades learners, the six parents had varied view. While some of the parents were in full support, the other group of parents felt it was not a good move. They all gave their own reasons to support their reactions. Elsewhere, literature correspondingly shows that parents do not always agree over the issue of CSE. Whilst Browes (2018) maintains that uneducated parents are in most cases reprimanding the teaching of CSE to junior grades children because of a lack of empathy, in contrast, they are unlike the educated counterparts who understand the predicament of their children with regards to problems that develop due to the absence of CSE, they consent to having their children taught CSE (De Witt, 2018). Similarly, Milton (2019) and UNESCO (2018), noted that there is yet another group of parents who believe that sexuality education should never be taught by anyone except for the parents themselves. Such parents may not be comfortable with a situation where their children in junior grade are taught CSE.

These variations in the way the parents perceive the idea can even affect the choice of schools they send their children (Browes, 2018). Mahoso (2020) further notes that such parents send their children to schools that teach what they want them to learn. Usually, parents avoid sending them to those schools that teach what is at crossroads with what they expect to be taught. Upon asking the parents in terms of how they felt when they first heard that their children were going to learn CSE, they had the following to say:

Parents coded 2, 3, 5 reacted and P2: thought:

*... teachers were exposing our children to the destructive world of sexuality. I was personally not confident of the age appropriateness of the content to be taught. We really feared for our children”.*

P3 had this to say:

“I was not pleased by the idea at all because in our culture it is too early to teach about sexuality to these young children”

P 5 submitted that:

*At first, I heard my child talking about condoms and saying that he had learnt about it from school. I was very much surprised to learn that at such a young age she already knew about the use of condoms...*

From the preceding narratives, these parents were not in agreement with the teaching of CSE to junior grade learners. P2’s view of CSE as way to introduce children to the destructive world of sexuality goes hand in glove with their counter parts in Rwanda (HDI, 2019) and in Zambia (Chavula et al., 2022). P3 raised another different issue on culture and sexuality stating that it is not permissible to teach CSE to junior grade learners and also P5 was worried about the age of these children. The same was also revealed by De Haas and Hutter (2019) who discovered that teachers in Kenya, Indonesia and Uganda still incline to abstinence only, continue to use fear-based messages and had problems in abandoning traditional cultural beliefs regarding sexuality as immoral and taboo. What is more, discussions of sexual matters between a minor and an adult is regarded as taboo (Walker, 2004). However, Chavula (2021) is of the view that CSE should be started early well before sexual activities begins.

Even if children in some African cultures are taught CSE, those below the age of twelve (junior grades) are usually excluded in anything pertaining to sexuality because they are considered to be very young for that education (Mwamwenda, 2010; Matswetu & Bhana, 2018). In African culture, sexuality education is introduced at the age of twelve (Chinyoka, 2016) and these should be taught abstinence-only education by aunts (Muridzo, 2017).

As a way to solicit more data on the parents’ attitudes, I asked them if they help their children do homework on CSE and how they felt when assisting these children. Varied responses were obtained from these parents. The responses were a clear indication of their attitudes and perceptions towards CSE. Data showed that there was a shift in parents’ perception towards CSE,

when it was introduced, they were sceptical about it and now they were comparatively appreciating it. They had the following to say:

*P1: It is very rare to see children bringing homework of this type and that is what P5 and P6 pointed out. I think it has to do with the conscientization of the teacher. The parent also explained that it is an opportunity to teach the children away from classroom and it give them the latitude to expand their understanding of life.*

*P2: The parent agreed that he helps his children do homework on CSE but he sometimes feels shy on some of the concepts. He said he feels fatherly because he will be equipping the children with life skills for example the dangers of early pregnancy, early marriage and drug abuse.*

*P3: Yes, I sometimes help though at times I do not know some of the aspects. In some other circumstances it is very difficult to explain some facts in detail using the mother language. It is difficult to name the private body parts in the vernacular language especially to one's own child.*

*P4: Yes, I help the children finding information from the internet and books. I feel great because I know that my child will be gaining knowledge which would help her in her entire life.*

From the above accounts, P1, P3 and P4 all agree that CSE helps their children to gain some life skills which P4 believes would help them throughout their lives. From the literature reviewed, CSE is beneficial in that it imparts life skills including self-efficacy, decision making, self-esteem, and assertiveness (Emambokus & Oogarah-Pratap, 2019; Tabong, 2018). According to P2 and P3, the issue of language was sometimes hindering them from effectively assisting in homework. They felt shy to express some of the term in the vernacular language since culture prescribes that it is a disgrace to do so.

More to the quagmire of these cultural dictates, Mwamwenda and Bhana (2018) forwarded that it is a forbidden for a parent to discuss matters on sexuality with their children. Nonetheless, Chavula et al (2022) sharply contradict the above and rant that CSE makes it possible for the adolescence to openly deliberate on the so-called 'sensitive issues' like menstruation with their parents, teachers and peers. CSE would provide censored information which age appropriate.

Despite the language barrier as outlined by some of the parents, they generally agreed that CSE is indispensable to their children. They always try their level best when it comes to assisting children

in doing their homework. This shows that their attitude towards the CSE program is relatively positive and they perceive it to be useful.

In pursuit for even more data on the parents' attitudes and perception towards CSE, I asked the teacher on the quality of feedback they received through homework. In combining the data obtained from parents and from teachers, I was attempting to come up with a solid, clear and broader picture of the parents' attitudes.

These teachers had mixed feelings in the way they viewed the parents' attitudes. TR1 and TR4 agreed that parents help out their children as much as possible to do CSE homework. TR4 went on to point out that there are however some topics which parents reported not be comfortable with. TR3 even mentioned that she had received some calls from parents complaining about some of the content being given to learners. On the same note, TR5 has experienced that the nature and quality of feedback depends on the level of education of parents. The teacher stated that uneducated parents do not usually help their children doing homework while their educated counterparts do. On the other hand, TR2 said:

*Yes, I give homework once a week to hear the views of the parents pertaining to CSE.... there are mixed reactions from parents were some seem to support while others profess ignorance*

TR1 had this to say:

*I do give homework on CSE once a week. Homework is done regularly and parents assist their children where possible.*

In contrast, TR6 reported having received poor quality of feedback from parents citing lack of time and knowledge on CSE as the major constraints.

Analysis of the data reported above shows that there are still some gaps in terms of the parents' knowledge and understanding of CSE. In Zambia, Chavula (2021), pointed out that resistance from some of the parents was due to their strong cultural values together with traditional beliefs that are in antagonism with CSE and this was also noted by Chavula et al. (2022). As a way to deal with

some of these challenges, Kunnuji et al, (2017) espouses that, in Nigeria, some schools have engaged parents and the community at large on the veracity of CSE clarifying the content to parents prior to delivering it. Zulu (2019) and Gudyanga et al. (2019) resounded suggesting that collaboration with parents facilitates understanding of local contexts through carrying out some consultations which can for instance result in the renaming and rephrasing of sensitive topics like ‘sexuality education’ to ‘life skills education’.

TR3 reported that she often received criticism from parents as to why she teaches certain concepts in CSE. The consequence of such behaviour and attitudes from parents are not desirable, some teachers will end up skipping other topics. For Beyers (2017) in South Africa and Keog (2018) in Peru, the situation could be worse. In their studies, the researchers in both cases established that parents themselves were the ones who prohibited teachers from teaching CSE to their classes. They regard it as a way of initiating or orienting the youth into sexual activities. Results in these two cases revealed that the parents even threatened to report to the principals, those teachers who would teach CSE. The perception and attitudes of some Zambian parents are not incomparable, Chavula et al. (2022) minute that those parents with strong cultural values and traditional beliefs have strongly castigated the implementation of CSE in schools. Specifically, they resisted against the teaching of homosexuality, initiation ceremonies, menstruation, and contraception declaring that these are obnoxious both socially and culturally. Subsequently, teachers give up teaching despite knowing the significance of CSE and being competent enough to teach the subject.

### *Administrators’ attitudes*

School administrators and specifically principals are key players in any educational institution. They oversee all the programs that are held at their schools. This means that the success level of any activity at a school can to a large extent be determined by their attitudes towards it. Whatever these school leaders perceived to be important would always succeed, and anything they disregard usually crumbled. The assessment of the administrators’ attitudes existed in two folds as well just like the previous participants; that is how they felt when they heard that they were supposed to introduce CSE at their schools and their feeling when they started supervising citing reasons for each case. In line with the above, the principals’ narrations were as below:

AD1: *I had a positive attitude towards the introduction of CSE. My reaction was influenced by girls who were falling pregnant while at primary school level... I was pleased because the problems were now being addressed... I supervise CSE once in a month.*

AD2: *I was a bit doubtful, and was not in full support. I slightly supported because of the rise in in school drop outs due to early marriages and pregnancies. Most of these, especially the girls led a miserable life afterwards. I doubted it because I wasn't sure of what exactly should be taught.... I developed interest into it after attending workshops and browsing the internet on what CSE is... it is a way of empowering the learners with necessary life skills. Yes, once a month”.*

AD3: *Mixed feelings about what learners were going to be exposed to; it looked like too much information because we did such topics at secondary school. I was sceptical a bit, fearing that learners would end up experimenting... anxiety on where to start from, how to start, the question that culturally those topics are not discussed in public, the age of the learners. I felt they were too young. There were no policies, no resources to use, CSE not clearly spelt out in the syllabus. I was really sceptical because learners these days are indulging in sexual activities so early and I thought it was all because of CSE...Felt uneasy at first and then realised its necessity later. I supervise once a term and at time never because some CSE concepts are part of science.*

Initially, AD2 and AD3 confessed that they had a negative attitude towards CSE. They had their reason as to why they disbelieved the program and these were in agreement with what some other teachers and parents revealed. A closer examination of their reasons pointed towards ignorance. AD2 even revealed that the alteration of his frame of mind towards appreciating CSE only emerged after being enlightened through workshops and surfing through the internet. AD3 on the other hand like the other teachers, talked about having to realize the necessity of CSE much later. The revelation here is that what Senegal, Ghana and Mozambique did is the way to go. PBR (2019) discovered that the CSE program in these afore mentioned countries was moving in the right direction due to the reason that they managed to have extensive investments in capacity development of teachers through pre and in service training programs.

Again, the issue of culture as an impediment was raised by AD3 and it continued to be a recurring issue. I had to consider it as an independent sub-theme. AD1 pointed out that her decision to support CSE from the word go was based on the increasing numbers of early pregnancy and

marriage cases. AD2 in the same vein, said that he was much worried about the dropout rate of learners as resulting from the above-mentioned reasons by AD1. True to that, Tabong (2018) found out that in Ghana there is delayed initiation into sexual activity amongst learners who have acquired CSE. Further, engagement into risky sexual behaviours is more prevalent amid those who have not done CSE. In Fiji, Ram et al. (2020) remark that there is substantial data attributing to reduced number of teen pregnancies, early marriages, STIs and HIV for those who have learned CSE. In a nut shell, where others are walking towards effective CSE implementation, Zimbabweans have to run since they are already lagging behind. The above is proof that CSE is of utmost importance and should be embraced without any hesitations whatsoever.

### *Unavailability of resources*

Scarcity of teaching and learning resources was one of the major challenges put forward by school principals and teachers. They bewailed the difficulties they encountered while attempting to deliver lessons effectively without the apposite resource materials. All the six junior grade teachers spelt out that their effort to deliver CSE lessons were being obstructed by the shortage of proper teaching and learning material. One of the teachers spelt out that:

*...it is very difficult to teach this new learning area without enough resources. We need, for example, colourful posters on CSE to display in our classroom. These will help draw the attention of these young learners...we always appeal for these to school administrators”.*

The other educator be-mourns non-availability of ICT at their school. This teacher outlined that:

*ICT tools can help make work easier... projectors will reduce the task of writing on chalk boards. We already have a lot of work to do....*

A study by Van der stock (2014) confirms the above sentiments elucidating that unavailability of teaching and learning material and computers coupled with staff's negative attitudes continues to impinge successful CSE implementation. In Kenya, Mocheche (2018) observed that teachers deplored unavailability of CSE material, they do not have books for the learning area. Since the teachers already have a lot of work to do, the use of projector can save a lot of time and energy on

the part of the teacher and having enough CSE text books can also help as learners can be asked to work on tasks in those books. They will no longer solely rely on the tiresome traditional method using the chalkboard. More so, using colourful posters when teaching CSE can make teaching and learning more captivating and encouraging to these young learners.

Furthermore, this issue of resource availability was directed to the school administrators. These are the ones in charge of school funds and have the mandate of providing all the teaching and learning materials in schools. They were asked if enough resources were in place at their school, and to explain why things were the way they are.

One administrator AD1 says:

*...somehow there are not enough resources for effective teaching and learning of CSE. The government has promised to supply some CSE textbooks and are yet to come. So far, we are using the internet.*

In responding to the question, AD2 went on to say:

*There are no clear-cut policies on CSE. The G and C syllabus doesn't clearly outline CSE programs. I had to download the so called ITGS guide line. It is helping us a lot. Also, we use science text books for some of the concepts.... yeah, resources are not adequate and we would want more. Right now, our school coffers are empty and there is no extra support from government and donors.*

On the other hand, AD3 revealed:

*We don't have enough resources, there is lack of funding from the government at the moment. We mainly rely on science text books and we have very few computers and no projectors. Teaching and learning in this area of CSE is still a challenge.*

From the above narratives, it shows that schools do not have enough funds to put in place the required resources. Elsewhere, findings by Keog (2018), Zulu (2019) and Kassa (2018) authenticate that the issue of funds shortage is ubiquitous, they spelt out that schools have limited funds which are disjointed and unreliable. All the three principals clearly spelt out that they are looking on to the government for support. It also shows that although there might be some teaching and learning of CSE at their schools, it is limited due to little or no resources. Mocheche (2018)

has it on record that the case is alike in Kenya where unavailability of CSE material is hindering effective program implementation.

From AD1's response, it shows that there are no textbooks on CSE. It then becomes very difficult for teacher to create their own content even with the syllabus for different reasons including the one previously mentioned by one of the teachers that they already have a lot of work to do. In addition, the CSE program being implemented at AD2's school could be a good one. The administrator mentioned that he had downloaded the ITGS document meaning that they have had a feel the international guidelines.

### *Cultural and religious detects*

Culture denotes to the way of life of a people which entails their beliefs, norms, values, myths and taboos (Haralambos & Holborn, 2022) and according to the socio-ecological model by Bronfenbrenner (1977), these cultural elements lie under the microsystem level. Chinyoka (2016) further indicate that components of culture include but are not limited to socio-economic wealth, poverty, status, as well as ethnicity. As alluded to before, culture was mentioned by most of the participants as one of the factors affecting effective CSE implementation. Reviewed literature is in harmony, and Rijdsdijk (2018) corresponds and expresses that culture is one of the factors that can be detrimental to the implementation of CSE. Still on the same note, De Haas and Hutter (2019) championed that family culture has surfaced as the main culprit of nurturing negative attitude, beliefs and taboos that impede the acceptance of crucial aspects of CSE.

Consequently, I decided to include it as a sub-theme under the theme hindrances to effective CSE. Culture is part and parcel of the child's macro-system. Regardless of it being detached from the microsystem where the child is located, its far-reaching effects are quite noteworthy; for that reason, Martinello (2020) calls it as the master set. He surmises that this setting is the most powerful of all as it is so inevitable.

With regards to culture, the participants had the following to say:

*AD3: Anxiety on where to start from, how to start, the question that culturally those topics are not discussed in public...the age of the learners, I felt that they were too young and some others who have negative attitudes, these just skip it feeling that it is not culturally fit to do so.*

*TR4: I used to be uneasy and shy... some of the topics like reproductive organs and menstruation which culture prohibits from public forums like schools...meant for uncles and aunties....*

*TR6: I was not comfortable with some of the terminologies used in CSE which are not culturally allowed in public...*

*P5: ...our culture does not permit the teaching of sexuality issues and we fear that our children would experiment using the information they would have learnt.*

*P3: I'm sometimes shy to explain some of the issues in detail because it is an embarrassment to translate some of the words used in CSE into our mother language.... it is very difficult to teach the child on private body parts using the vernacular language, it is dishonourable especially when talking to my own child.*

The above reports from the principal, teachers and parents substantiate the findings by Mahoso (2020) who revealed that that most cultures in Zimbabwe believe that sexuality issues should be left for the period just before marriage where aunts and uncles would take up the task. He further pens that some teachers reported finding it difficult to teach CSE since the Zimbabwean culture does not permit the teaching of concepts like the names of private body parts, worst still in the mother language which is the medium of instruction for early grades learners. In reverberation, literature shows that some teachers in Malawi were running short of the obligatory expertise on how to deliver some of the topics normally due to their norms and attitudes with regards to certain topics (Banda, 2017).

During the interview, I also observed that P3 was uncomfortable and ashamed when she was trying to explain teaching the private body parts in the vernacular language. She faced downwards and lowered her tone as she outlined her point, it shows the parent is seriously imbedded into her culture. This entails that the situation could be worse when discussing with her child, no wonder she revealed that she, at times find it is very difficult for her to help out the child owing to language barriers as dictated by culture. In light of the above predicaments, parents need to be conscientized on the fact that CSE is not only about sex and sex related activities.

Venketsamy and Kinear (2020) described CSE as a curriculum-based progression of teaching and learning wherein the emotional, cognitive, physical and social dimensions or aspects of sexuality are the primary focus. Even as the teaching embraces knowledge that children most needed to know, they also spelt out that CSE raises the value of the need for the development of competences. These skills, values and attitudes will endow them with an understanding of and how to protect their rights, provide them with guidance in making virtuous choices as well as helping them understand the consequences of the choices they make towards their well-being. They are also able to realise the prominence of their health, and dignity, and to cultivate in them deferential social and sexual relationships (UNESCO, 2015). Once the parents get to know and understand CSE from this line of thinking, they would support it.

AD3, TR4 and TR6 howled over the idea of culture prohibiting the discussion of sexuality matters in the public. Gudyanga et al. (2019) in the same vein bemoaned that there are some cultures which still believe that the discussions relating to sexual matters between minors and adults is a taboo. This was also revealed by De Haas and Hutter (2019) who indicate that teachers in Kenya, Indonesia and Uganda favoured abstinence over any other teachings pertaining to sexuality; they perceive teaching sexuality as forbidden. Talking to children about sexuality is alleged to invoke the rage of God resulting in him punishing those who discuss it with children hence the demonization of sexuality education (Matswetu & Bhana, 2018) and findings by Mahoso (2020) concur with the previous and revealed that some parents believe that discussing sexuality related issues with children can offend the gods and the ancestral spirits resulting in drought and outbreak of deadly diseases to the community in question. Subsequently, attempting to teach sexuality to learners from such cultures is usually unfruitful, Muridzo (2017) opines that such learners will not play any part into it, as a result of embarrassment and fear.

P3 opposed the idea of teaching primary school learners about sexuality education due to its perceived conflict with traditional culture. According to her viewpoint, such education should be reserved for teenagers in high schools rather than introduced at the primary school level. This is in line with the findings by APHRC (2017) where the Catholic Church in Burundi strongly chastised the teaching and learning of sexuality education in schools. They cautioned school leaders never to join forces with organisations who were sponsoring this type of education as this was in

defilement of the church doctrine and the Burundian culture. Elsewhere, Katsande (2013) reported that the negative attitude from teachers in Botswana when it comes to teaching CSE was grounded on the belief that if children are taught CSE, they will be motivated to engage in early sexuality activities. The belief is that teaching children CSE coerces learners to experiment. Such beliefs are a result of lack of proper understanding of CSE; schools can engage parents and help them understand.

In Zambia, Chirwa-Kambole (2020) concluded that CSE is indispensable to the children as it helps in conveying life skills comprising assertiveness, self-worth, decision making, critical thinking and self-efficacy. UNESCO (2018) revealed that research-based confirmations have proven that the notion of CSE compelling learners into experimentation is a fallacy, and speculative, which must be disregarded. The evidence that was gotten for instance in Ghana, according to Tabong (2018), exhibited that CSE delays initiation into sexual activities and also augments the development of upright decision-making skills regarding to sexuality, which in turn curbs sexual abuse.

### **5.3.3 CSE policies in place**

From the data collected, participants lamented over the absence of clear-cut CSE policies. This prompted me to try and find out what the situation was like on the ground in terms of these policies. Teachers are policy implementers and they work well in any area as long there are some clearly defined policies in place. With regards to the policy issue, participants for instance TR2 and TR3 pointed out the syllabus does not outline CSE clearly. On the other hand, AD3 had this to say:

*... there are no policies to use, CSE is not clearly spelt out in the syllabus... there are no CSE specific guiding policies.*

Upon inquiring from the teachers and administrators, I found out that the documents available which were linked to CSE included the school health policy, child protection policy and the guidance and counselling and life skills orientation syllabus.

<i>1. Guidance and counselling and life skills orientation</i>
<i>2. The school health policy</i>
<i>3. The child protection policy</i>

*Table 9: Sub-themes to CSE policies in place answering questions 1&2*

***The Guidance and Counselling and life-skills orientation program syllabus***

I started by analysing the Guidance and Counselling and Life Skills Orientation syllabus for the junior grades. It is for Grades 3-7 learners, and it was published in 2016. I discovered that it has several cross-cutting themes most of which are not directly linked to CSE. The ones on CSE are based on gender, children’s rights, HIV and AIDS education, child protection and sexuality. As espoused by Freire (2008), the syllabus suggested the use of child-centred approaches to teaching and learning. Since the teachers revealed having differing number of lessons per week in the learning area, I went on to check the official time allocation from the syllabus and discovered that there were four by thirty-minutes’ periods per week. According to the teachers’ scheme-cum-plans as observed, TR1 and TR4 planned for one-hour lessons per week while TR2, TR3 and TR5 had half-an-hour lesson per week for the learning area and TR6 had three lessons. All the teachers were running short of the required lessons. One other important thing to note, these time allocations both in the syllabus and scheme-cum-plans are not necessarily meant for CSE alone, rather they are for the Guidance and Counselling and Life Skills Orientation learning area as a whole.

As I was analysing this document, I bore in mind the out-cry by most of the teachers and principals that the topics were not directly linked to CSE. Based on the syllabus, the topics that should be taught are: human growth and development, health, understanding rights and responsibilities, educational career guidance, citizenship and volunteerism, management of resources and asserts and traffic and road safety.

After exploring the content for each topic, I discovered that CSE related issues were very shallow and the better part of the syllabus covered some other issues linked to Guidance and Counselling in general. Much to my stupefaction is the fact that CSE was never mentioned in the whole

document. Hence, what TR2, TR3 and D3 said was true that CSE was not clearly spelt out in the syllabus. What this means is that the idea by some of the teachers and administrators of having CSE become a stand-alone and even examinable learning could be one of the best strategies to ensure proper implementation.

Having observed that CSE was not being clearly mentioned in the syllabus, and that the teachers were running short of the stipulated lessons per week, it then made sense to me why it was mentioned in the literature review that the 2022 Social Science examination paper had no questions on CSE. This led me to understand why some of the teachers neglected the area, from experience, teachers usually focus on those areas which are examined and have weight in examination papers. Such is the case in Kenya as revealed by Mocheche (2018) who explains that teachers mainly focus on core and examinable learning areas side-lining CSE.

### ***The school health policy***

Subsequent to analysing the syllabus, I moved on to deconstruct the school health policy which was put in place in 2018. Importantly, CSE was mentioned and explained. The document was quite rich covering issues on gender sensitivity, best interests of learners, age appropriate sexual and reproductive health and life skills orientation including CSE, school-based health and nutrition services and careers in special needs. In order to gain insight on what exactly each school was doing, I speed-read through their school health files. These showed that the policy was generally meant to inform schools on how to promote good health among the learners by providing them with at least one balanced meal per day, counselling learners on different issue include sexuality related issue and offering a variety of sporting activities.

The school feeding programs were clear and there was evidence that learners were being fed at school. Some weekly menus, cooking shed and utensil were in place and at one of the school the learners were served lunch in my presence. In connection to sexuality, the minutes at one other school were mainly on counselling learners on sex related issues, menstruation, hygiene and care. In general, if monitored properly, the school health program is one that could be of much help pertaining to CSE implementation.

### *The child protection policy*

Finally, I reviewed the Child Protection Policy promulgated in 2018. Like the school Health Policy, this document was fairly in line with CSE covering a number of important issues. The policy stipulates that school must have child protection committees in place. These are responsible for reporting all child abuse cases as soon as they happen or get be known. It states that the children should be respected, have their views and voices encouraged on matters affecting them plus ensuring confidentiality in all issues that have to do with children among other things. The policy goes as far as to encourage schools to make sure that children are well protected from all forms of abuse and to promote a cohesive and harmonised approach to violence and sexual abuse.

It pointed out the codes that guide response to sexual violence and abuse as well as setting out the children's roles and responsibility. Besides, the document managed to spell out the five forms of abuse namely; sexual, neglect, exploitation, emotional and physical. All the schools visited had their child protection files in place where they file all their programs, activities carried out together with the minutes. The filed data showed that the program was being implemented in the three schools though not frequently. All the three schools had clubs in place related to child protection and sexuality and these were also mentioned in the interviews by the participants. If school administrators could monitor and or supervise the program, CSE could be a success and can benefit the learners to a greater extend since the document comprises of some of the aspects outlined in the ITGS guideline document for CSE.

#### **5.3.4 Promotion of CSE in schools**

This theme emerged both from literature and collected data. Thus, it led to the formulation of two sub-themes namely the CSE programs currently in schools and then suggestions on strategies to improve program implementation. Examined literature has it on good record that an all-stakeholder approach to the CSE program is the way to go. Tabong (2018) and Chirwa-Kambole (2020) elevate the idea and submit that collaboration can help heighten fidelity. On the other hand, Chandra-Mouli et al. (2018) revealed that it has promoted understanding of CSE in Pakistan. It against this

background that all the three groups of participants had their views sought in line with the aforementioned theme under the below listed sub-themes.

**1.CSE programmes currently in schools**

**2.Suggestions on strategies to improve CSE**

*Table 10: sub-themes for content covered in CSE- answering questions 3*

### ***CSE programs currently in schools***

This sub-theme has been created to determine what is being done in schools seeking to help establish why things are the way they are currently. As well, the response from these three stakeholders, that is the teachers, parents and school administrator mirrored their perception of CSE. Results unveiled that different schools have different programs being carried out to uphold CSE. Ergo, a combination of these strategies and programs would result in a high-class program. On discussing the programs currently running in schools, the participants were able to mention what they are doing to uphold CSE. The administrators had the following programs that were being offered at their schools: they all mentioned Guidance and Counselling with AD1 additionally saying that they incorporate CSE into various school clubs, AD2 revealing that:

*We have staff development sessions on CSE, Schools Annual Science and Arts Festival (SASAF) were learners show case various talents in Arts and Science for example performing drama and reciting poems on CSE. In addition, we have boys' clubs and girls' club.*

On the other hand, AD3 adds CSE awareness campaigns on the list.

Guidance and Counselling were mentioned by all the three administrators probably because it is both a learning area and a club in schools and also that it is where CSE is merged in as outlined earlier. The idea of fusing CSE into various school clubs as explained by AD1 and AD2 is a noble one. It helps to save time since a number of concepts can be covered in a single activity. Dramas and poems on the other hand aids in bridging the gap between the academic world and the real-life situations. Acted out concepts makes more sense and are better linked to real life than what is merely learnt in class. In short, it is a captivating way of learning and a memory enhancing

technique as espoused by the cognitivists. According to literature, the main hindrance to CSE implementation is lack of proper knowledge on the side of both teachers and administrators. Both the reviewed literature and collected data show that while teachers are not sure of what, when and how to teach CSE, the administrators on the other hand suffers the same in terms of supervision. This then pointed towards the facts that staff development sessions, as opined by AD2, had to be highly commended. It is a form of in-service training helping to further polish the knowledge, skill and attitudes of the administrators and teacher towards CSE.

As nice as it might sound, the idea of boys' and girls' clubs as stated by TR4, needs to be handle with proper care. It has to be done in such a way that it will not end up perpetuating gender discrimination between the two groups like for instance, it will fine if done for gender sensitivity purposes. Nowadays, gender advocates are pushing towards the fact that whatever boys do, girls can also do and can do even better. In Ghana and Uganda, research has found out that gender stereotypical boundaries were to an extent thwarting effective CSE program implementation as reported by Panchau (2018) and Kemigisha (2019) respectively. In light of the above, proper considerations should be taken when setting up those clubs and carrying out various activities.

Still on the same note, the other participating teacher (TR6) have guidance and counselling clubs as the main strategy in place to espouse CSE. They, likewise, have a myriad of other programs they are carrying out at their schools. To add on to Guidance and Counselling, TR1 said they were having gender education and HIV and AIDS programs. As was mentioned earlier by AD1 and TR2, the teachers too mentioned SASAF festivals as another way they are using to promote CSE. For TR3, their school has girls' leadership which is a program that was initiated by World Vision. At TR4's school, they are having some health clubs while TR5 pointed out that they have what they call reproductive health clubs and CSE homework policy.

For TR6, their school has an AIDS club, poetry club, drama groups and some music and dance groups. The idea of having some non-governmental organisations like World Vision stepping into the school based CSE program deserves a notch, these could help fund the program and be a solution to the challenges of resource unavailability as outlined earlier. Despite having some teachers not mentioning CSE homework as a strategy they use, data collected showed that most of

them were giving their learners work to do at home. Giving homework can help cover up some concepts outside the normal school learning time and this could be a solution to the problem of unavailability of enough time for the CSE programs as lamented by some of the teachers.

The parents were asked if they are aware of any programs on CSE being carried out in their schools. Parents P1, P5 and P6 professed ignorance of any CSE programs being carried out their schools. Since these parents are members of the school development committee, the assumption was that they have a general understanding of programs being done at their respective schools. Accordingly, this might either mean that there are no other CSE programs being run at their schools or that they were not being informed and consulted on issues to do with the program. While Parent 4, like the teachers and principals, mentioned Guidance and Counselling and gender clubs being done at their school, P2 revealed that children were always talking about SASAF at their school.

P3 seemed to have a more ostentatious understanding of CSE programs their school was holding. She said:

*Yes, for example, at our school we have the aunt and the uncle's group, we were told of these groups in during a meeting. Also, the police force often come and carry-out awareness campaigns educating children on ways to evade rape and what to do when in the event that one has been raped.*

The narration by this parent was evidence of strong CSE programs being undertaken at their school. The parent explained that there are two groups the Aunt's and the Uncle's, an idea borrowed from the indigenous knowledge system. These groups are there meant to educate these young junior boys and girls on issues pertaining to sexuality and the school was being gender sensitive. The Aunt's group oversees those issues that are specifically meant for the junior Grades girls. These may include concepts on menstrual processes and hygiene. On the other hand, the Uncle's group would similarly do so to the junior Grades boys when the need be. The aforementioned notion concurs with what Burundi is doing, literature revealed that some schools made available 'school aunts' and 'school uncles' were school staff members chosen with student input, to counsel students who ask for help on matters of sex or sexual violence (APHRC, 2017). Literature further spells out that some parents wanted CSE to be taught by aunts and uncles so the change in terminology for the facilitators by these schools might convince some these parents.

Importantly, the parent revealed the idea of involving the police force in educating learners on sexual abuse. Zambia has been highly extolled for their flourishing CSE program and upon reviewing literature, Chavula (2021) and Chirwa-Kambole (2020) revealed involvement of police as one of the major secrets the success. These law enforcing agents will, from a legal perspective, help teach learners on all types of sexual abuse, how to be safe, what do when one has been abused, including visiting health centres promptly and filing police reports. Nyarko (2018) laments that if children do not receive such lessons, they will live in ignorance concerning sexual matters, thus, making them extremely vulnerable to sexual abuse. Literature and collected data both points to the fact that most sexual abuse cases go unreported and perpetrators are roaming around spot-free.

Moreover, involvement of various stake holders was mentioned by some participants during data collection like TR4 and TR5 who both suggested this approach. In agreement, literature suggests collaboration with other stakeholders in addressing CSE as another strategy schools can use (Chavula et al., 2022). Nigeria, as outlined by Kunnuji et al. (2017) and Uganda according to Kemigisha (2019) added traditional and religious leaders on the list of the stakeholders engaged on CSE. On the same note, Fiji included community-based health workers whom they then use to engage parents and the community at large with regards to how germane CSE is. Hadley et al. (2016) further notes that non-academic staff like school nurses can provide additional information and counselling, support classroom activities and refer children and young people to external SRH or other services. Aside from the aforementioned, literature also shows that Zambia cooperated psychologists in their all-stakeholder engagement process (Chavula, 2021; Chirwa-Kambole, 2020).

An overall analysis of all the points raised by the principals, teachers and parents point to the fact that some green CSE shoots are sprouting within the Zimbabwean education system. A combination of all the strategies being employed by the different schools can help further improve the quality of CSE delivery in schools. Schools can holder cluster and or zonal staff development sessions where they share practices best on CSE delivery.

### ***Suggestions on other strategies to improve CSE***

As a way to draw up some strategies to uphold CSE implementation, all the participants were asked to share their opinions on possible best practices that schools can use. The schools' administrators were also asked to outline the plans they have at their individual school which they intend to use. A number of strategies were outlined, and these were amalgamated with the ones obtained through literature review. If all these ideas are brought together and be recommended for use in all schools, the national CSE program would blossom.

The following was discovered with AD1 suggesting that:

*To promote teaching and learning of CSE, schools may educate teachers through workshops. They should emphasize on the use of CSE as a cross-cutting theme in other learning areas and also, schools should engage parents and communities educating them on the significance of CSE and what is taught to learners....*

Kunnuji et al. (2017) reverberates that in Nigeria, some schools had to clarify the importance of CSE content to parents, and other community members, prior to delivery. The principal more so noted they have planned to increase the activities like clubs, and give more time to the teaching of CSE at their school. The observation of continuous teacher training through workshop or staff development sessions was a recurring one with P1, P2, P3, P4 and TR1 mentioning it. On the same note, TR5 and TR6 even advised that there is need to have qualified and specialized teachers to take up this learning area. Teacher training on CSE has helped to improve program implementation in Senegal, Ghana, Mozambique and Rwanda (PBR, 2019). In Kenya, teachers bewail the need for special skills for communication, Guidance and Counselling and Sex Education as was discovered by Mocheche (2018). Extending the need for teacher training as a strategy, Goldfarb and Lieberman (2020) editorialize that trained teachers are much motivated to carry out CSE lessons. They comprehend class dynamics much better and, in most circumstances, they are able to deal with challenging relationships and cultural issues. Such educators know well how to integrate CSE across other learning areas.

Since some of the participating teachers decried time constraints as hindering effective CSE program delivery, merging it into other learning areas can also work well. AD1 and TR2 envisioned having CSE be strongly utilized as a cross cutting issue in the different learning areas. However, TR5 and AD3 stood firm on the fact that CSE should be a stand-alone learning area. AD2 went on to describe CSE as a very important program and that it can even be examined on

its own. Another strategy is to have a well-established stand-alone CSE programs which can be examined and be independent from other learning areas since it is a very important program.

D3 is in agreement with the former opining that:

*In reality, making CSE a detached and examinable learning area would mean serious business on the teachers' side....*

As a teacher and an administrator, I have discovered that my colleagues tend to give more attention to those areas where learners will sit for examinations simply because they are mainly concerned with pass rates. Looking at both narratives from another angel, addressing CSE as both a learning area and a cross-cutting theme can be likened to a double-edged sword. This would rather help to cover more content at one go.

*AD2: Schools need to hit the ground running if CSE is to be a true success. As schools, we need to engage our local communities through some awareness campaigns on CSE. We need to carry-out some field trips where our learners can learn any concept in CSE. Moreover, school authorities must make sure that they procure all the required teaching and learning material for the program, and we need to educate our parents on CSE during annual general meetings.... As a school, we are planning to procure more computers, have as many staff development sessions as possible and to formulate more clubs on CSE.*

The above narrative is closely linked to what TR1 opines:

*...provide enough textbooks for learners and make an awareness to parents on the importance of CSE.*

P3 added that schools should provide resources like ICT tools for effective CSE teaching and learning. When teaching and learning resources like text books are available, it becomes very easy for the curriculum implementer to deliver lessons. They will not waste time trying to set up teaching content. With internet and ICT tools available, educators can go online and search for contemporary and supplementary information on CSE and they can use projectors to deliver lessons. Learners can also read on their own online and from hard copies.

Field trips are an interactive way of engaging learners where they can discover information on their own through interacting with more knowledgeable others on various CSE concepts. This is in agreement with the submission by Goldfarb and Lieberman (2020) and Vanwesenbeeck et al. (2016) who made the allusion that CSE delivery methods should be of an interactive nature as this can help increase knowledge, enhance skills and develop attitudes. Such methods should depict real-life situations. They include, but are not limited to role play, short films, brainstorming, illustrations, songs, group discussions, and drawing. AD3 added drama and music to the list as well as suggesting the idea of rewarding participating learner as a way to motivate them. As further corroboration, data from the documents (Guidance and Counselling and Life Skills Orientation Syllabus, 2015) and the theoretical framework (Freire, 2004) also point to the use of child centred approaches to CSE.

According to McLeod (2020), behaviourists believe that for behaviour to re-occur, there is need for reinforcement and Skinner outlines that behaviour is a result of the consequences associated with it. As suggested by AD3, rewards can be used to motivate learners to actively participate in various CSE programs. Teachers and school authorities can use both positive and negative reinforcement. For positive reinforcement, they can give learners stationary, merit badges, and so on. As negative reinforcement, teachers can take away undesired stimuli like cleaning toilets and sweeping the classroom for those learners who participate actively. This will motivate them to want to do even more in anticipation of rewards. Bandura (1979), in support talks about vicarious reinforcement. Teachers reward those learners who are active in CSE related programs in the presence of other learners, this can be done at assemblies and in the class when everyone is present. Those watching others being reward would get challenged and may join the CSE promotion wagon.

Awareness campaigns cannot be overlooked, both AD1 and AD2 mentioned these as one other strategy to use. P3 was in support, and felt that parents should be involved in CSE related programs for them to be aware of what it entails. AD2 raised another very important suggestion that parents can be engaged during annual general meetings, and on Parents' Day when they come for consultations. School authorities can slot CSE into their agenda and take this as an opportunity to enlighten parents and gain their buy-in of the program. Awareness campaigns can too be carried

out during morning and end of day assemblies. This will be a great opportunity to reach out to all learners at once and address various knowledge gaps. Of importance here is to note that CSE is an age-appropriate approach to sexuality and so when addressing large groups of learners, there is need to consider this fact.

Two administrators and three teachers proposed collaboration with other stakeholders as another strategy schools can use to uphold their CSE programs and this is in tandem with Chavula et al. (2022) who said likewise.

TR4 suggested that:

*...schools can invite different people like resource persons to come and address different topics...they can use an all-stakeholder approach to the teaching of Comprehensive Sexuality Education....*

TR5 opined that:

*.... engaging other stakeholders who can help uphold the program, for example, the health ministry on issues to do with sexual reproductive health and the police force when dealing with legal issues around sexual abuse....*

TR6 on the other hand suggested:

*...Involve other stakeholders like health personnel, police and parents to talk about Comprehensive Sexuality Education.*

AD2, about involving other stakeholders said:

*...community awareness... Educating parents during meetings like the annual general meetings.*

AD3 from another angle thought schools should:

*...engage parents to gain their support and they will encourage their children.*

Gudyanga et al. (2019) upheld collaboration elaborating that it leads to the formulation of environments which are supportive plus refuting critical voices and any other social factors opposing CSE. Collaboration has helped improve CSE program fidelity in Zambia (Chirwa-Kambole, 2020) and in Ghana (Tabong, 2018). In these two countries, collaboration has gone as far as to make the local context understandable and, in some instances, through consultations, having to rename sensitive topics taking, for example, ‘sexuality education’ becoming ‘life skills orientation’. Likewise, while South Africa has its life orientation curriculum (Family Watch International, 2022), South Sudan has added to the title peace building (Engleman, 2018) and as reported by APHRC (2017) and Burundi re-stated facilitators to school aunts and school fathers. In consequence, Zimbabwe can engage the various stakeholders and collectively come up with CSE curriculum that best suit the needs its junior grade learners.

According to both literature and collected data, most teachers lamented lacking the vital knowledge and skills on different aspect of CSE. The submission by TR4 explaining that schools can engage resource persons to tackle certain topics and that from could be a helpful one. These invited people should be well versed in the concepts they will be presenting resulting in effective teaching and learning. As alluded to earlier, and as outlined by TR5 and TR6, the police personnel can deliberate on the legal issues to do with sexuality. Since literature has it on record that some sexual abuse cases are go unreported, such sessions will help equip learners with knowledge on how to handle these issues. On the other hand, the those from the health department would deliberate on sexual reproductive health aspects as well as enlightening these youngsters on what to do if they fall victims of rape. Basing on the reviewed literature, Tabong (2018); Chirwa-Kambole (2020) and Chavula (2021) set the record straight outlining that such an initiative is among the strategies that have made the Zambian CSE program a success to the extent of receiving praise globally.

The bi-ecological theory, which is the major theoretical framework for this study spells out that parents fall under the micro-system environment of the child implying that they have uninterrupted influence over the child (Guy-Evans, 2020). Both AD2 and AD3 believe that there is need to involve parents when dealing with CSE programs. According to AD2, schools can take advantage during parents’ meetings to deliberate on the appositeness of various CSE concepts. For AD3, this

will help to gain support from these parents, and because they have a direct link with the children, they will in turn influence them positively leading to program acceptance. The idea is further authenticated by Le Matt (2019) revealing that the CSE program in Ethiopia has been to an extent facilitated by active parental and community involvement which has helped to influence both implementation and acceptability, as outlined by the literature.

Additionally, reviewed literature suggested including the young in the curriculum formulation process. Zulu (2019) and Keogh (2018) reason that this would help ensure that the content being included in the curriculum is custom-made to suit their needs. As reviewed in the literature, student councils, any other student groups and leaders should be encouraged to be active in providing input on the design, monitoring and evaluation of CSE programs (Sofman, 2019). The idea resonates very well with one of the theoretical frameworks for this study, the critical pedagogy theory. Freire notes that developments and changes in the curriculum should bear the input of those to whom it is going to be implemented (Freire, 1970).

According to Levin (2020), Freire castigated the banking method of education in the process of transforming any education system, and advocated for the dialogic education wherein there is need to appreciate the learners' prospects and needs. Curriculum planners and implementers have to bear in mind that these learners are not blank slates, they know well the challenges they face and, what they want in life. They should also know that what used to be 'true' about sexuality during their old days might not hold any water today. Times are changing and the advent of Internet has brought much changes within this subject, and this calls for continuous reviewing of sexuality program hence comprehensive sexuality education. Conclusively, involving learners in CSE curriculum formulation and review would mean that the program will be inclusive of all their challenges and expectation.

Chavula et al. (2022) suggest that there should be effective CSE monitoring and evaluation frame works in schools. Monitoring and evaluation would help in tracking the extent and progression being made in program implementation. AD3 complained that it is difficult to supervise CSE lessons since there are no policies and supervision instruments to guide them. Some countries like Ghana and Senegal already have some established CSE curriculum monitoring and evaluation

frameworks which they are using to assess performance (Keog, 2018; Chau, 2016). Likewise, schools in Zimbabwe can do the same, they can come up with their own school-based tools to monitor and evaluate the program.

### 5.3.5 Content covered in CSE

The intention here was to try and explore the views of the teachers and parents on the relevance of CSE in connection to its content. More so teachers were asked tell if they are able to deliver the content effectively. In an endeavour to do this, I started by outlining the topics on CSE extracting them from the three policy documents on CSE found in the schools namely, the syllabus, the school health and the child protection policies.

The sub-themes are:

<i>1. Topics covered in CSE</i>
<i>2. Teachers' views on the relevance of the content</i>
<i>3. Parents' views on the relevance of the content</i>

*Table 11: sub-themes for content covered in CSE answering questions 1&2*

#### ***Topics covered in CSE***

Only the topics which are linked to CSE were selected and the views of the participants on these were sought and if the teacher were able to teach or deliver the content effectively. From the Guidance and Counselling and Life Skills Orientation Syllabus for the junior grades the topics are: human growth and development, health, understanding rights and responsibilities. Then the school health policy has topics such as gender sensitivity, best interests of learners, age appropriate sexual and reproductive health and life skills orientation including CSE, school-based health and nutrition services. Lastly, the child protection policy encompasses protection from all forms of child abuse, reporting child abuse cases, respecting children's views and voices, codes guiding response to sexual violence and abuse, children's roles and responsibility, and the five forms of abuse namely;

sexual, neglect, exploitation, emotional and physical. Even though the Zimbabwean CSE program is not fully comprehensive as outlined by the ITGS document, some green shoots seem to be sprouting as evidenced by the topics spelt out by the three guiding policy documents above.

### ***Teachers' views on the relevance of the CSE content***

The teachers' attitude and perceptions are crucial in determining the success of any program within the school system. Reviewed literature as opined by Le Mat (2019) revealed that CSE was being hindered among other things by the individual teachers' personalities which are inharmonious with the program objectives. In a study carried out by Beyers (2017), participating teachers clearly indicated that they did not want to teach CSE, because they felt that it was unnecessary to address sexuality issues to young children as it is an adult issue. Chavula et al. (2022) in support, reveal that in most cases such teachers teach abstinence only and, in some cases, they focus on upholding life skills and morality overlooking the topics they believe are more complicated. To be more specific, some teachers and parents still incline to abstinence only in Indonesia, Uganda and Kenya (De Haas & Hutter, 2019). I had to ask teachers to share their views on the relevance of CSE, this was done intending to uncover their attitudes and perceptions towards this program. Upon being asked, and on a positive note, all the six participating teachers agreed to the fact that CSE is important and should be taught to the junior grades. The following were the responses from these teachers.

*TR1: It is necessary for junior grade learners to learn comprehensive sexuality education at school so as to learn how to make choices in life. I can support the above because one component of comprehensive sexuality education is about making healthy choices. After acquiring comprehensive sexuality education, the lives of the learners will be better because they will be in a position to make appropriated choices.*

From the above account, the teacher had a positive attitude towards teaching and learning of CSE perceiving that learners will be in a position to make informed choices pertaining to sexuality matters. With reference to literature, there are several forces that influence choices made the youths and these include cultural detects (Mahoso, 2020) and the Internet. Astra Networks (2018) alludes that CSE is imperious to children as it helps to clear fallacies on sexuality that the children cultivate through attaining harmful information from media such as magazines, televisions, and the internet.

It is against this background that effective CSE becomes necessary as it is the best, accurate and comprehensive source of information on sex and sexuality. Vanwesenebeck (2019) echoes and submits that pertaining to sexual reproductive health, sexuality and relationships; the young would be empowered to make informed decisions.

*TR2: Yes, I think it is necessary. Learners will be independent. They will be well versed with all the negative effects or consequences of early pregnancy and marriage, drugs and gullible behaviours and the importance of dignity. Learners will be conscious about sexuality, abuse, rights and so on. They will grow up being conscious adults....*

Much to the negative effects of culture, it goes to the extent of prohibiting children from participating in any deliberations on sexuality regarding it as an embarrassment (Muridzo, 2017). This means that they do not have the autonomy whatsoever to exercise their right of airing out their voices and be heard. Freire (1996) strongly emphasized that effective education should lead to independence where learners are free to express their thoughts and Rodgers concurs accentuating freedom of expression by the learners during teaching and learning as key to effective learning (Cherry, 2022).

Literature supports the idea with Emambokus and Oogarah-Pratap (2019) stating that discussions on sensitive topics like menstruation can be discussed openly with teachers and peers once adolescence acquire CSE. Independent learners cannot be forced into early marriages, too, they cannot be inherited as wives or husbands out of their best interest which is a common practice in Zimbabwe as outlined by literature. As delineated by the teacher in the above narrative, autonomous learners are not gullible, they make informed decisions and they do not merely follow the masses. It shows that the educator had a strong perception of CSE as he managed to outline some other benefits of the program like enlightening learners on the consequences of early pregnancy and marriage and the dangers of drug abuse.

*TR3: Yes, we have had cases of students who are being abused at home, hence teaching them comprehensive sexuality education can help them deal with such cases on their own. Cases are not being reported, ... some recent cases of religious leaders marrying young girls.... another case of a nine-year-old becoming pregnant. I will empower them in issues related to their rights and so on.*

It is appealing to note that the teacher, in the above narrative managed to link the challenges being faced by learners with CSE as the solution. It shows that the educator understood CSE very well as a tool that equips learners with life skills. Tshabalala and Khosa (2017) discovered and advanced that many abused children are not even aware of the abuse. In light of that, through learning CSE, these learners would understand sexual abuse and all its variations and will be in a position to report such cases. In the first place they will be equipped with skills on how to evade abuse, they will know what to do if the unfortunate befell them. Such conscious learners would also know that there is urgent need to seek medical attention once raped. As demarcated earlier, CSE makes the young to be aware of their sexual rights (Kemigisha, 2019), this will help to deal with cases of some religious leaders abusing their positions to molest the young. Having the nine-year-olds falling pregnant is quite lamentable and it point to the fact that CSE should be introduce the learners as early as possible. Similarly, according to Goldfarb (2020), literature of significant evidence that education on sex and sexuality is best and most effective when begun early prior to the onset on sexual activities.

Other scholars like Mahoso (2020) even went on to argue that CSE has to introduced starting as early as the infant level from ECD classes. This is very possible and UNESCO (2018) advises that the most important thing is to make sure that the content has been expurgated to match the learners' age and Bruner (1960) believes that any content can be taught at any level as long it has been blue-pencilled to suit the cognitive levels of the learners in question.

*TR4: It is; it prepares them for later life. It's life skills orientation equipping learners with knowledge and skills on sex related issues....”*

Mahoso (2020) laments that there are some people who have grown to become adults yet they do not know how to handle sexual harassment cases. Such people have fallen victims of sexual abuse almost on daily basis but do not know what to do. The classroom practitioner in the aforementioned narrative perceived CSE to help prepare these young learners for later life. Chavula et al. (2022) resound avowing that CSE leads to the inculcation of self-protective skills and knowledge thereby increasing the prospects of knowing how to respond in dangerous situations and report sexual abuse, all without increasing anxiety. Furthermore, Chirwa-Kambole (2020) and Emambokus and

Oogarah-Pratap (2019), in coherence with the veracity of CSE, stress that it leads to the impartation of life-skills including decision making, self-efficacy, thinking critically and being able to make proper decisions. Similarly, in Fiji, as championed by Ram et al. (2020), there is substantial evidence that early acquisition of CSE has led to a reduction in sexually transmitted infections like HIV, early marriage, and teen pregnancy.

*TR5: Yes, to help them understand sex issues. Some become pregnant early or catch cancer due to poor use of sanitary wear use. However, few stubborn students can experiment but many will benefit.*

As opined, the teacher in the above account, the issue of the girl child contracting cancerous diseases due to poor sanitary wear use is a serious concern. Even literature has shown that the chance of such having such ailments could be high as some teachers be-cry their gender to be influencing delivery of lessons. In Ethiopia, while male teachers found it difficult and embarrassing to deliberate on topics like menstruation, the girl-child was also uncomfortable and shy to share experience on such topics (Le Mat, 2019) and obviously, they cannot discuss about proper sanitary wear use in so doing putting the lives of the young girl learners at stake.

Contrariwise, Zulu (2019) discovered that in some other situations in Zambia, the older teachers used their experience and were able to teach CSE without any challenges; thus, other schools can emulate this strategy. Much more to the success of the Zambian program, they included the community health workers in their CSE implementation program (Tabong, 2018; Chirwa-Kambole, 2020). These can be engaged and they can be effective resource persons in different areas apropos to sexual and reproductive health.

On a different note, the educator explained that a few stubborn learners might experiment using the information they would have acquired through CSE. This point cannot be totally ruled out, chances are always there that this may happen but importantly, as opined by the teacher, the majority will benefit. To some extent, it would be better when these experiments are done by those who are informed than the ignorant one.

*TR6: Yes, children become knowledgeable on sex and sexual abuse and they know more about their rights. We once had cases of boys who showed off their private parts imitating sexual intercourse, we also had girls*

*reporting to have their private parts touched by boys. By teaching them about their bodies they may change their practices that lead them becoming pregnant before they are ready.*

The teacher above like the other teachers believe in the efficacy of CSE as a problem-solving strategy. Another revelation from the foregoing narrative is that the learners are already sexually active at such tender ages. This is a very important submission helping to de-mystify the misconception held by some other teachers and parents that it is too early to teach CSE to junior grade learners as revealed by Kemigisha (2019) where he pointed out that some parents in Uganda reprimanded the implementation of CSE to particularly to the young children. Tshabalala and Khosa (2017) discovered and advanced that many abused children are not even aware of the abuse; they are not aware of their sexual rights.

### ***Parents' views on CSE of the CSE content***

It is very important to take note of the fact that all the parents upheld the teaching of CSE to their junior children. That alone is a major step in the right direction for Zimbabwe as there are still some countries grappling with parents' negative attitudes leading to poor program implementation. In Ghana, parents with robust traditional and cultural norms and values tell off CSE program implementation especially to children at primary school level. Outlined below are the attitudes and perceptions of the parents towards CSE and what is being taught. They gave wide-ranging reasons as to why CSE is pertinent.

*P1: It is very important for the primary school-going children to learn comprehensive sexuality education because they will grow up understanding themselves, their rights and concerns they have in life. When they learn comprehensive sexuality education, it enhances their moral standing and it affects their moral and social life. After going through comprehensive sexuality education, the lives of these children would change seriously as they would seek to learn more, postpone early marriages and realize their full potential in life.*

The above parent perceived CSE in a variety of ways including that it teaches children about their rights. When children know their sexual rights, they may manage to handle manipulation into engaging in sexual activities. As outlined in literature, what the parent said about delaying marriages until the right age is very true. Tabong (2018) advises that there are some delays in sexual initiation among the learners who have acquired CSE. Ram et al. (2020) rebound and be-

mourn that engagement into risky sexual behaviour is among those who have not done CSE; this leads to the spread of sexually transmitted infections and even early and unwanted pregnancies.

*P6: Yes, it is very important for learners to understand their bodies while they are still young... the children would know how to associate with those of the opposite sex. The program is very important. Like I have said earlier, our children are getting to know about sex and sexuality at tender ages. They get the information from films; they teach each other once some get to know about it. In some cases, they are taught by their elder siblings and they may also get the information from the internet.*

*P2: If children learn comprehensive sexuality education, they grow up being wise and aware of their lives. Comprehensive sexuality education enables the children to have accurate knowledge not what is obtained from internet. It also helps to do away with some other myths and unfair practices about sex and sexuality which are based on culture like the being given to a husband while young or the culture of inheriting a spouse after the death of their partners. Children will be knowing their rights with regards to these issues.*

Both parents had a positive attitude towards the implementation of CSE. Amongst what they said, P6 revealed the issue of the association between boys and girls. Through studying CSE, the children get to know the proper ways of associating with those of the opposite sex, such knowledge is important and it is another way of preventing sexually risky behaviours. To add on to the significance of CSE, the parent emphasised that children are obtaining sex and sexuality information at very tender age and P2 agrees that the information is obtained through different ways like the internet, peers, films and siblings. Importantly, P2 acknowledges that such information from the media is not always accurate. In the same, Astra Networks (2018) concedes that CSE is imperious to children as it helps to clear fallacies on sexuality that they develop through receiving risky and uncensored information from media like televisions, the internet and magazines. Accordingly, CSE does not initiate children into sexuality but rather a way to equip them with accurate and reliable information forearming them to face real life challenges (UNESCO, 2018).

Again, parent P2 raised the issue of some unfair practices held about sexuality which are based on culture giving some examples like the girl-child being given to a husbands or issue of inheritance. Literature supports and shows that there are some practices in Zimbabwe which are severely harmful to the youths. According to Muridzo (2017), if a person intentionally kills another or by

accident, the perpetrator or their family is expected to compensate the bereaving family using a virgin girl-child, a cultural belief called '*kuripa ngozi*'. Chinyoka (2018) adds that some Zimbabwean cultures authorise swapping of the girl-child for food during times of famine. The starving family gives away a girl for marriage in exchange for food even without her consent.

Moreover, there is also this misconception that engaging into sexual intercourse with a virgin result in good fortunes and as well helps to cure HIV and AIDS (Hayes et al., 2017). The junior Grade learners are not spared from all these malpractices and they can only be empowered through CSE. According to all these cultural practices, the junior grade learners are not spared, and the age of the child does not count; they are forms of forced marriage. It is, therefore, apparent that CSE needs not to be undermined as it helps thwart such harmful practices and through enlightening the learner.

*P4: ... some parents share bedrooms with their children and they observe them making love; children from such family would then teach the other children during play....it is also important for the children to learn comprehensive sexuality education as false teachings are becoming more common, this will affect them tomorrow....*

As well, the parent is worried about the fact that some children already know these sexual related behaviours. Those are the ones who will teach their peers during play, and at the end of the day they will be experimenting with the behaviours. CSE benefits both, those who know about sexuality and those who are yet to know; they will all receive accurate information which will always protect them. More so, the CSE information would assist them to counter false information from other different sources.

Like the other parents, P3 and P5 all agreed that CSE is crucial and should be taught to junior grade learners. P3 and P5 concurred that some parents fear that teaching CSE to these young learners would end up leading them into experimentation using the information they would have learnt. The same point was raised again by TR5, and as has been alluded to, that cannot totally be ruled away but the most important thing is that the majority would benefit and those experimenting would do so with proper knowledge.

## 5.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented research-evidence to answer the question on the ecosystemic factors effecting Comprehensive Sexuality Education in junior grades in Zimbabwean schools. The data shows a significant paradigm shift in the attitudes and perceptions of administrators, teachers and parents towards comprehensive sexuality education. Initially, participants were cynical as to whether CSE was germane or not, nevertheless, they gradually changed their minds and ended up hailing its implementation.

The analysis of the empirical data led to the generation of five themes namely knowledge and understanding of CSE, hindrances to effective CSE implementation and their effects, CSE policies in place, promotion of CSE in schools and content covered in CSE. Obtained data was interpreted using the reviewed literature and the two theories underpinning the theoretical framework (Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory and the transformative education theory by Freire). Various ecosystemic factors were discussed outlining how they hinder program implementation. CSE policies in place were explored reflecting what they cover, as well, some strategies to strengthen the program were discussed. Data illustrated that there was a general consensus among the participants that CSE is inescapable and should be taught to the junior grade learners. In the next chapter, provides the chapter summaries, gives conclusions and provides recommendations in relation to the results.

## **CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.0 Introduction**

This final chapter establishes whether the gathered data managed to shed light on the research problem, as well as to answer the sub-questions pointed out in chapter 1. A summary of findings on then ecosystemic factors affecting Comprehensive Sexuality Education in junior grades is underscored. In addition, this chapter confirms that justice has been done in addressing the research problem and that the research aims were achieved. The chapter further gives attention to the conclusions drawn from the reviewed literature, the theoretical framework, the methodology and the data presented and discussed. Subsequently, the recommendations which arise from these findings will be made for prospective studies on factors affecting comprehensive sexuality education. Recommendations for further studies are as well included.

### **6.1 Chapter Summaries**

This study explored the ecosystemic factors effecting CSE in junior grades in Zimbabwean schools. I will briefly discuss the summaries of the five chapters of this research, depicting striking issues that were of significance in the study. As a result, the summary accentuates the synopsis of the study.

Chapter 1 gave the context of the problem which also focused on the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions then the significance of the study. The assumptions of the study were as well delineated. In addition, in this the chapter, the prominently featuring and operational terms in the study were underscored, illustrated and defined. The chapter established that there are several ecosystemic factors affecting comprehensive sexuality education including but not limited to the attitudes and perceptions of school administrators, teachers and parents, unavailability of CSE resources, negative cultural practices, lack of proper CSE knowledge and absence of clearly spelt out CSE policies.

More so, the chapter further went on to identify the breadth and length of the effects of these various ecosystemic factors and to suggest strategies to improve program fidelity. The background to the study additionally established that even though Zimbabwe has recently introduced CSE in the updated curriculum, what is being delivered in schools is not fully comprehensive sexuality.

Chapter 2 reviewed literature related to factors affecting CSE implementation. The review was done in line with the research aim and questions. Several authorities and research studies were referred to, exploring these ecosystemic factors affecting CSE in junior grades in Zimbabwean schools and the world over to determine the gap that the research would fill by contributing new knowledge to the field of junior grade education. A number of these factors, and their effects, were discussed and some strategies to improve the program were outlined.

Regardless of introducing comprehensive sexuality education in its updated curriculum, reviewed literature showed that what is being taught in Zimbabwe does not align well with the stipulation of the international guide on CSE, the ITGSE and is not fully comprehensive in nature. This is in part due to the lack of clarity in the policies available on CSE in the country (Zimbabwe) and there is need to put in place CSE specific policies. Existing literature shows that if implemented properly, CSE can go a long way in controlling sexuality related issues like early pregnancy, early marriage, child sexual abuse, sexually transmitted infections and sexual reproductive health and rights.

Chapter 3 discussed the two theoretical frameworks sustaining this study. The chapter discussed the Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model in relation to ecosystemic factors affecting comprehensive sexuality education diversity specifically in the Zimbabwean context and internationally in general. The theory helped to understand the relationship between the various systems surrounding the child and how they affect his or her education. Furthermore, Freire's transformative education theory was also deliberated on. The theory justifies and authenticates the need for continuous curriculum reviews to match the demands of the ever-changing world. It emphasised that proper education should address the needs of the learners hence the need to involve them in the formulation of the curriculum. Therefore, policymakers should make sure that they involve the learners if they are to formulate an authentic CSE curriculum.

Chapter 4 was devoted to the methodology of the study which focused on research approach, research paradigm, research design, sample and sampling techniques, instruments used to gather data, and the data analysis procedures. The chapter showed that the study was carried out in three rural primary schools in Chikomba district of Mashonaland East Province, Zimbabwe. The target population comprised of three administrators, six junior grade teachers and six parents with children within the junior grade level. The data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews and documents.

In order to make sense of the collected data, the chapter indicated that the Brown and Clarke's six phase data analysis technique identifying themes and sub-themes from recurring data was used in the study. Permission to conduct the study was sought from Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe, as well as from the principals of the selected schools. Further permission was sought from the University of the Free State through the Ethics Committee. The participants were assured of their anonymity in the research report. They signed consent forms and were informed that their involvement in the study was on a voluntary basis.

Chapter 5 presented the findings and discussions were done based on the research questions. The analysis of the empirical data led to the generation of five themes, namely: knowledge and understanding of CSE, hindrances to effective CSE implementation, CSE policies in place, promotion of CSE and content covered in CSE. These themes were divided into sub-themes repetitive themes were used to facilitate the presentation and discussion of the findings. It is in this chapter that the results and findings were discussed relative to the reviewed literature and the theoretical framework which buttressed the study, that is Urie Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological theory and the transformative education theory by Paulo Freire. As well, the participants and the data were given codes.

## **6.2 Findings of the Study**

### **6.2.1 Knowledge and understanding of CSE**

Basing on the collected data, the participants who are administrators, teachers and parents understood CSE in part and from different angles. The teachers and administrators mainly understand CSE from health-based perspective, bodily development, relationship, life skills well-being and empowerment. Despite not fully understanding CSE, parents in Zimbabwe are unlike their counterparts in rural Rwanda who perceived CSE to be teaching promiscuity to learners and did not understand much about this program (HDI, 2019). Literature also shows that in Peru (Keog, 2028) and in South Africa (Beyers, 2017), some parents were against the teaching of CSE taught in school.

Despite the knowledge the teachers seem to have as gathered through the interviews, the analysed document rather showed a serious discrepancy between what these teachers know about CSE and what the syllabus say they should teach. An analysis of the syllabus and the teachers' scheme-cum-plan of work showed that what was being taught was not necessarily Comprehensive Sexuality Education. The content covered in these two main teaching documents run short of the international standards on CSE.

Findings from the research showed lack of proper training on CSE was amongst the main reasons why it is not being effectively implemented in Zimbabwe. Teachers revealed that they had not gotten enough training on CSE for them to be able to teach effectively. These findings are consistent with previous researches where in Kenya, Mocheche (2018), gathered that teachers had not undergone any form of training on sexuality and they pointed out that they required special skills like Guidance and Counselling, sex education and communication skills. In the same vein, Benedict (2021) as well found out that the situation is similar in Ghana where there is not enough support and training being offered to teachers and in South Africa, teachers do not really know what to teach and how to teach CSE thus negatively affecting program delivery.

In contrast, literature reviewed shows Rwanda trained all its teachers and availed CSE tool kits (REB, 2023). UNESCO (2019) further reveals that Malawi had embraced CSE and has been holding pre-service and in-service training of teachers since 2012. On the other hand, Senegal, Zambia, and Mozambique invested extensively in pre- and in-service training of teachers to develop and capacitate them to deliver CSE in schools (PBR 2019). In support, as was discovered by Murunga et al (2019), Zambia proved in-service workshops on CSE to work well, hence being highly ranked in Africa in terms of CSE implementation.

### **6.2.2 Hindrances to effective CSE implementation and their effects**

Data solicited from the participants showed that there was a paradigm shift in terms of how they perceived CSE. The data seemed to follow a similar trend across all the participants. Initially, most of them were strongly against CSE and they had negative attitudes towards it. For the teachers and administrators, the negative attitudes were due to their lack of proper knowledge and understanding of CSE. They did not see the need for teaching CSE and Bayes (2017) echoes the same, revealing that some teachers in South Africa felt that it was unnecessary to address sexuality issues to the young children.

While few of the parents understudy were in full support of CSE from the onset, most of them castigated its implementation. Those parents who were against CSE implementation viewed it as way of introducing children to the destructive world of sexuality and such was the case in with their counter parts in Rwanda (HDI, 2019), and in Zambia (Chavula et al., 2022). Parents also pointed out the issue of culture and sexuality stating that it is not permissible to teach CSE to junior grades learners since they are too young and it is immoral and taboo. Reviewed literature is in harmony, however, Rijdsdijk (2018) laments that some cultural beliefs are detrimental to the implementation of CSE, and an example is of the *ngozi* tradition outlined prior. Still on the same note, De Haas and Hutter (2019) championed that in most cases, family culture has surfaced as the main root cause of negative attitudes, beliefs and taboos that impede the acceptance of crucial aspects of CSE.

Still under culture was the issue of language as revealed by the parents. They bemoaned being hindered by language when trying to assist their children do homework. Specific examples were made with reference to private body parts, which according to culture, are classified under vulgar language. Parents found it very difficult to explain such concept using their vernacular language.

Based on the data collected, attending workshops and searching for information on the internet on CSE were the major reasons that led administrators and teachers to change their frame of mind towards the program. Some parents revealed that they got to understand CSE better through some awareness campaigns carried out during parents' meetings where school administrators took some time to explain what CSE is about.

Scarcity of teaching and learning resources was one of the major challenges put forward by school principals and teachers. They bewailed encountering difficulties while attempting to deliver lessons effectively without the apposite resource materials. All the teachers spelt out that their effort to deliver CSE lessons were being obstructed by the shortage of proper teaching and learning material. A study by Van der stock (2014) ratifies the above sentiments elucidating that unavailability of teaching and learning material and computers alongside staff's negative attitudes continues to impinge successful CSE implementation. Much the same, in Kenya, Mocheche (2018) observers that teachers deplored unavailability of CSE material, they do not have books for the learning area.

Gathered data further showed that schools do not have enough funds to put in place the required resources. In concurrence, findings by Keog (2018); Zulu (2019) and Kassa (2018) resonate the issue of funds shortage being ubiquitous, they spelt out that schools have restricted funds which are disjointed and unreliable. Mocheche (2018) has it on good record that the predicament is the same in Kenya where unavailability of CSE material is hindering effective program implementation.

Another major challenge raised by the administrators and teachers during the interviews was of the absence of clear-cut policies guiding CSE implementation in schools. Data from the document analysis also confirmed this problem. After analysing the major policy document that informs

teaching and learning of CSE, the national junior grades Guidance and Counselling and Life Skills Orientation Syllabus, I discovered that it was not consistent with the dictates of the international guidelines on comprehensive sexuality education. The document ran short of what must be taught under the CSE program.

### **6.2.3 Strategies to improve CSE program implementation**

Basing on the data gathered, in some schools, CSE was being merged into different school activities like clubs. The idea of fusing CSE into various school clubs can help to save time since a number of concepts can be covered in a single activity. Dramas and poems on the other hand aid in bridging the gap between the academic world and real-life situations. Acted out concepts make more sense and better linked to real life than what is merely learnt in class. Some administrators revealed that they were using staff development sessions as a form of in-service training helping to further polish the knowledge, skill and attitudes of the administrators and teachers towards CSE. Some of the participating teachers revealed that they were having gender education and HIV and AIDS programs. All the teachers said they have health clubs at their respective schools. The school health club could be one of the most effective strategies considering that its guiding document, the observed and analysed school health policy is one of the best in terms of CSE content coverage. Basing on data, some schools managed to set-up CSE homework policy mandating the issuing of CSE homework to the junior grade learners. Giving homework can help cover up some concepts outside the normal school learning time and this could be a solution to the problem of unavailability of enough time for the CSE programs as lamented by some of the teachers.

In addition to the above, some of the participating parents disclosed that their schools were engaging other stakeholders like the police force who often visit and carry-out awareness campaigns enlightening children on ways to elude rape and what to do in the event that the unfortunate has befallen them. This is in coherence with Chavula (2021) and Chirwa-Kambole (2020) who revealed involvement of police as one of the major secrets behind the lucrative CSE program in Zambia. More to these, one other parent avowed that they have school aunts and uncles who were there to help the children in matters related to sexuality and literature confirms that the same strategy has proven to be effective as it was being used in Burundi.

#### **6.2.4 Suggestions on other strategies to improve CSE**

The principal more so noted they have planned to increase the activities like clubs and give more time to the teaching of CSE at their school. On the same note, some of the participating teachers advised that there is need to have qualified and specialized teachers to take up this learning area. PBR (2019) concurs submitting that teacher training on CSE has helped to improve program implementation in Senegal, Ghana, Mozambique and Rwanda. As well, the finding is in agreement with the discovery by Mocheche (2018) where the Kenyan teachers bewail the need for special skills for communication, guidance and counselling and sexuality education. Extending the need for teacher training as a strategy, Goldfarb and Lieberman (2020) editorialize that trained teachers are much motivated to carry out CSE lessons.

Research findings showed that some teachers and administrators were of the view that CSE should be a stand-alone learning area describing it as a very important program, and that it should be examined on its own. This might lure teachers to give the program a fair share of time since they mainly focus on examinable learning areas in order to maintain and raise pass rates.

More to the strategies, teachers and administrators opined the need to embrace ICTs in the teaching and learning of CSE. Educators would go online and search for contemporary and supplementary information on CSE and they can use projectors to deliver lessons. More so, learners can study on their own online and make personal notes.

The guidance and counselling and life skills orientation syllabus (2015) and the theoretical framework (Freire, 2004) additionally point to the use of child centered approaches to CSE. As further collaboration, literature shows that CSE delivery methods should be of an interactive nature as this can help increase knowledge, enhance skills and develop attitudes. Such methods depict real life situations, they include but are not limited to role play, short films, brain storming, illustrations, songs, group discussions, and drawing.

As suggested by one other administrator, rewards can be used to motivate learners to actively participate in various CSE programs. Teachers and school authorities can use both positive and

negative reinforcement as espoused by behaviourist. For positive reinforcement, they can give learners stationary, merit badges, and so on. As negative reinforcement, teachers can take away undesired stimuli like cleaning toilets and sweeping the classroom for those learners who participate actively. Bandura, in support talks about vicarious reinforcement. Here, teachers reward those learners who are active in CSE related programs in the presence of other learners, this can be done at assemblies and in classes when everyone is present. Those watching others being reward would get challenged and may join the CSE promotion wagon. According to McLeod (2020), behaviourist believe that for a behaviour to re-occur, there is need for reinforcement and Skinner outlines that behaviour is a result of the consequences associated with it.

Data gathered suggested collaboration with other stakeholders as another strategy schools can use to uphold their CSE programs and this is in tandem with the literature as recapitulated by Chavula et al (2022) who said likewise. Gudyanga et al (2019) re-echo upholding collaboration and unfolding that it leads to the formulation of environments which are supportive plus refuting critical voices and any other social factors opposing CSE. Collaboration has helped improve CSE program fidelity in Zambia (Chirwa-Kambole, 2020) and in Ghana (Tabong, 2018).

According to the socio-ecological theory, which is the major theoretical framework for this study, parents fall under the micro-system environment of the child implying that they have uninterrupted influence over the child (Guy-Evans, 2020). Thus, parental involvement in CSE programs is key and it is a strategy to gain their support and this was a belief held by most administrators and teachers. These suggested that schools can take advantage during parents' meetings to deliberate on the appositeness of various CSE concepts. The idea is further authenticated by Le Matt (2019) revealing that the CSE program in Ethiopia has been to an extent facilitated by active parental and community involvement which has helped to influence both implementation and acceptability, as outlined in the literature. In the same vein, Kunnuji et al (2017) reverberates that in Nigeria, some schools had to clarify the germaneness of CSE content to parents and other community members prior to delivery.

finally, reviewed literature suggested including the young in the curriculum formulation process. Zulu (2019) and Keogh (2018) reason that this would help ensure that the content being included

in the curriculum is custom-made to suit the needs of the learners. As further reviewed in the literature, student councils, any other student groups and leaders should be encouraged to be active in providing input on the design, monitoring and evaluation of CSE programs (Sofman, 2019). The idea resonates very well with one of the theoretical frameworks for this study, the critical pedagogy theory. Freire notes that developments and changes in the curriculum should bear the input of those to whom it is going to be implemented (Freire, 1970).

### **6.3 Discussion of findings and answering of questions**

Three research questions formed the basis for my studies. The focus was on the ecosystemic factors affecting the teaching and learning of comprehensive sexuality education with particular interest on the attitudes and perceptions of administrators, teachers and parents and to determine strategies that can be employed to improve CSE program implementation. All of my data was gathered through two instruments; the semi-structured interview and documents. I interviewed administrators, teachers and parents, and I analysed the guidance and counselling and life skills orientation syllabus, the school health policy and child protection policy documents. As explained in chapter five, the findings of the study responded to my three research questions as delineated in a summary below:

- **What are the ecosystemic factors affecting CSE in primary schools?**

The data I collected through interviewing administrators, teachers and parents, led to the conclusion that the participants were aware of comprehensive sexuality education. Despite not having a wholesome understanding of what CSE is, they all perceived it as important and that it should be implemented in schools. However, they cited the existence of some hindrances. Amongst the factors affecting CSE were; lack of proper CSE knowledge and understanding on the side of the key stakeholders (administrators, teachers and parents), unavailability of enough teaching and learning material, attitudes of the administrators, teachers and parents and some cultural practices against CSE principles were also mentioned among impingements to program fidelity. From the documents analysed, it was distressing to note that the main policy that guides teaching and learning (the syllabus) did not have much content on and never mentioned the phrase “comprehensive sexuality education”. Only two of the secondary policies the school health policy

and the child protection were able to outline CSE and it some of its content. Consequently, administrators and teachers lamented the absence of clear-cut policies on CSE.

- **How do these factors affect the implementation of CSE?**

The general positive attitudes from the participants was a step in the right direction helping to promote CSE program implementation. Effective program implementation was being obstructed by the absence of clear-cut policies pertaining to CSE, the program was being infused in other programs like the school health and the child protection. One other factors revealed by the participants was culture, most of the parents and some of the teachers and administrators pointed out that some of their cultural practices were opposed to CSE concepts and this in turn slows down program implementation. While the teachers pointed out that they do not have the exact content to teach the junior grades making the program not purely comprehensive, the administrators too did not have the proper knowledge making it difficult for them to supervise and lead staff development sessions on CSE. Additionally, effective program implementation was being marred by the absence of adequate teaching and learning material which made teaching and learning difficult.

- **Strategies can be adopted to promote effective implementation of CSE?**

Several strategies were outlined by both the literature and the participants as revealed through the data. The participants were able to spell out different strategies being used to promote the program. They were also in a position to make suggestions on what can be done to improve program implementation. Most of the strategies they revealed were in line with the ones noted during literature review. Predominantly, was collaboration with other stakeholders in all CSE programs prior to and during implementation. Both literature and the collected data opine that collaboration would promote program buy in from the various stakeholder. Of paramount importance was the idea of involving the learners when formulating CSE programs, this is line with what the theoretical framework suggested. Freire (1996) avers that the learners know the challenges they face better than anyone else and involving them would mean that the program addresses the real challenges they come across in life. Several other strategies like carrying out awareness campaigns targeting parents and the community at large were mentioned; these would help enlighten them on the eminence of CSE. In addition, the use of child-cantered methodologies has also been suggested as it make the learning process more interactive for that reason promoting understanding

## **6.4 Contribution to the body of knowledge**

Previous studies on comprehensive sexuality education largely focus on effectiveness of the program and the extent to which it is being implemented from secondary school level and beyond. The major contribution is the angle of ecosystemic factors affecting comprehensive sexuality education at primary school level. This study highlights the necessity to engage with a key stakeholder, the parent, to facilitate the holistic agency. Although the study had a bias towards the attitudes and perceptions of administrators, teachers and parents, it also explored other factors like CSE policies in place, cultural practices in relation to CSE, availability of resource, strategies to improve program implementation and so on.

In Zimbabwe, CSE is still new and program fidelity is facing a myriad of challenges. Available studies in Zimbabwe mainly focus on sex and sexuality which is not necessarily comprehensive in nature. This research points towards the contemporary comprehensive approach to sexuality which should be implemented well before sexual initiation, that is at primary school junior grade level. This study further reinforces the need, as espoused by Freire (1996), to continuously review the curricula so that it matches the needs in the ever-changing world as well as to include the children in formulating learning programs.

Another contribution is the awareness that some people have come to understand that CSE is now indispensable. This is alternative to the opinion that the older generations hold concerning sexuality education considering it a taboo and unfit for public discussion (Amnesty International, 2018) and a reservation for adults ready for marriage. There is compelling evidence that comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) that is scientifically exact, culturally and age-appropriate, gender-sensitive and life skills-based can provide young people with the knowledge, skills and efficacy to make knowledgeable choices about their sexuality and lifestyle (WHO,2022). This study underscored the momentousness of a collaboration between the child's two closest systems the home and the school, and the community at large including the different stakeholders as stipulated in Bronfenbrenner's Socio-Ecological model, when formulating and implementing curricula. What is significant is that, by making use of Bronfenbrenner's Socio-Ecological model, the breadth and width of the effects of various ecosystemic factors on the child's education are clearly understood.

## **6.5 Recommendations for Future Research**

I think possible areas for further research include:

- The area of sexuality education in relation to culture must be further explored in order to identify the relationship between the two. This study has presented culture as one of the major factors affecting CSE and this is in agreement with findings elsewhere within the continent of Africa and beyond. There is a need to explore the extent to which culture affects CSE implementation.
- Now that there was the general consensus among the participants that CSE is relevant to junior grade learners and that the program is still new, need is there now to examine on the effectiveness of CSE to these young learners
- Data has revealed that ICTs can help to improve CSE program implementation, therefore, there is need for further research on the extent to which the ICTs can be used and the degree to which it can help improve CSE program implementation;
- This study discovered the germaneness of collaboration with the key stakeholders during CSE program formulation and implementation. Research on the relevance of an all-stakeholder approach to comprehensive sexuality education is to be ventured into;
- Develop as many other strategies as possible to assist schools in their endeavour to implement proper comprehensive sexuality education.

## **6.6 Limitations of the Study**

It was unfortunate that the data-collection process did not go as initially planned. I was supposed to have carried out some face-to-face interviews with the participants but it was impossible because I was no longer in the country. The Zimbabwean government had seconded me to work in Rwanda, however, I carried out the interviews online via zoom and google meeting. The process was hectic and there were serious network interruptions compromising the quality of data collected. In some instance where the network could not support videos, I had to switch to the audio mode all in effort to make sure that data has been collected. For further validation purposes, I triangulated data obtained from the semi-structured interviews with that from documents. Time and financial

constraints also influenced against my operations, the limited time and financial resources made it difficult for me to travel far and wide hence focusing the study only three primary schools in Chikomba rural district of Mashonaland province, Zimbabwe. To counter the challenge, I used convenience sampling to select participants from schools close-by and within my reach. More so, I should stress that my study has been primarily concerned with ecosystemic factors affecting CSE. This however gives room for many other studies around comprehensive sexuality education in the country and beyond.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

This study has presented evidence to answer the questions on the ecosystemic factors affecting comprehensive sexuality education in junior grades in Zimbabwe. Several of these factors were outlined and some suggestions were made which can help promote and improve CSE program implementation. The study established that CSE is being affected by a multitude of ecosystemic factors including the perceptions and attitudes of administrators, teachers and parents, unavailability of enough resource material, lack of expertise on the part of the teachers and administrators, unsupportive cultural practices, lack of support from home and absence of clear-cut policies on CSE. To counter the negative effects of the factors, both data and literature have outlined a number of strategies which encompassed collaboration with all stakeholders in CSE related programs, in-service training of the staff, carrying out awareness campaigns on CSE, and making CSE a stand-alone and examinable learning area. Data showed that there are some junior grade girls falling pregnant, cases of child sexual abuse not being reported and some young boys and girls imitating sexual activities, all these point to the need for the introduction of comprehensive sexuality education to junior grades and even earlier than that. Conclusively, all the participants consented to the efficacy of comprehensive sexuality education to the junior grade learners, perceiving it as a vital component of their curriculum and that it is indispensable.

## REFERENCES

- Alharahsheh, H. H., & Pius, A. (2020). A review of key paradigms: Positivism VS Interpretivism. *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 39-43.
- Alvi, M. H. (2016). *A Manual for Selecting Sampling Techniques in Research*. Delhi: University of Karachi
- Amnesty International. (2018). *Zimbabwe: Inconsistent Laws and Sexual Taboos Put Adolescent Girls' Health and Future at Risk*. Harare: Amnesty International.
- Astra Networks. (2018). Network of Young Advocates for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights from Central and Eastern Balkan Countries. Available from [www.astra.org.pl/youth](http://www.astra.org.pl/youth).
- Badenhorst, N. (2018). *Comprehensive Sexuality Education in South African Schools-Sexuality*. Cape Town: Oxford University
- Banda, M. (2017). Sex Education: At Chipadze and Hermain Gmeiner Secondary School(S) In Bindura, Zimbabwe: In Sex Education, Contextualizing Gender Legal, Human Rights Framework and Social Realities. Harare: University of Zimbabwe.
- Bandura, A. (1979). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Barr, E., Goldfarb, E., Russell, S., Seabert, D., Wallen, M., Wilson, K. (2014). Improving Sexuality Education: The Development of Teacher-Preparation Standards. *Journal of School Health*. 84.10.1111/josh.12156.
- Bell, K. J. (2019). Wake Up and Smell the Condoms: An Analysis of Sex Education Programs in The United States, Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, France and Germany. *Inquiries Journal*,1(11)
- Beyers, C. (2017). Picture That: Support Sexuality Educators in Narrowing the Knowledge Practice Gap. *South African Journal of Education*, 32(4), 367-380.
- Bonache, J. & Festing, M. (2020). Research paradigms in international human resource management: An epistemological systematization of the field. *German Journal of Human Resource Management: Zeitschrift. Personal for schung* volume34, pages 123 – 99

- Bonjour, M. & Van der Vlugt, I. (2018). *Comprehensive sexuality education, knowledge file*. Utrecht: Rutgers.
- Braun V., & Clarke, V. (2020). Can I use TA? should I use TA? should I not use TA? comparing reflexive thematic analysis and other pattern-based qualitative analytic approaches. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 21(1), 37–47. <https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12360>
- Braun V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide [eBook version]*. SAGE
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). Conceptual and design thinking for thematic analysis. *Qualitative Psychology*, 9(1), 3–26. <https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000196>
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N., & Terry, G. (2019). Thematic analysis. In Liamputtong P. (Ed.), *Handbook of research methods in health social sciences* (pp. 843–860). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5251-4\\_103](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5251-4_103)
- Breznau, N. (2016). Secondary observer effects: idiosyncratic errors in idiosyncratic errors in small-n. Secondary data analysis. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 19(3):301-318.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1974). *Developmental research, public policy, and the ecology of childhood*. *Child development*, 45(1), 1-5.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). *Toward an experimental ecology of human development*. *American psychologist*, 32(7), 513.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological Models of Human Development. In *International Encyclopaedia of Education* (Vol.3,2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995). Developmental ecology through space and time: A future perspective.
- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Ceci, S. J. (1994). *Nature-nurture re-conceptualized: A bio-ecological model*. *Psychological Review*, 10(4), 568–586.
- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Evans, G. W. (2000). *Developmental science in the 21st century: Emerging questions, theoretical models, research designs and empirical findings*. *Social development*, 9(1), 115-125.

Browne, E. (2018). *Comprehensive Sexuality Education* (GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report 1226) Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.

Browes, N. (2018). *The Strategies of Teachers and Students in Sexuality Education: The Case of One School in Based Program in Ethiopia*. Doctoral Thesis. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam.

Bruner, J. (1960). *The Process of Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C. (2020). *How to use and assess qualitative research methods*. *Neurol. Res. Pract.* 2, 143 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42466-020-00059-z>

Caulfield, J. (2023). *How to Do Thematic Analysis | Step-by-Step Guide & Examples*. Scribbr. Retrieved July 15, 2023, from <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/thematic-analysis/>

Chau, K. *Scaling up sexuality education in Senegal: integrating family life education into the national curriculum*. *Sex Educ.* 2016;16(5):503–19.

Chavula, M.P. (2021). *Experiences of teachers and community health workers implementing sexuality and life skills education in youth clubs in Zambia*. *Glob Public.* <https://doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2021.1893371>.

Chavula, M.P, Zulu, J and Hurtig, A.K (2022). *Reproductive Health*. Accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-022-01504-9>

Cherry, K. (2022). <https://www.verywellmind.com/kendra-cherry-2794702> USC Libraries. “*Research Guides: Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: Writing a Case Study*,” USC Library Guides. Los Angeles: University of Southern California. <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/>

Chinyoka, K. (2016). *Psychosocial effects of child sexual abuse on the academic performance of grade seven learners in Gweru urban, Zimbabwe*. Masvingo: Great Zimbabwe University.

Chirwa-Kambole. *Acceptability of youth clubs focusing on comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education in rural Zambian schools: a case of Central Province*. *BMC Health Service Res.* 2020;20(1):1–9.

- Clarke, D. (2020). 100 learning theorists. Retrieved 02 October 2020, from <https://donaldclarkplanb.blogspot.com/2020/08/100-learning-theorists-2500-years-of.html>
- Cresswell, J., & Poth, C. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publication.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. ISBN 978-1-4522-2609-5.
- Crossman, A. (2020). *Understanding Purposive Sampling. An Overview of the Methods and Its Applications*. <https://www.thoughtco.com/purposive-sampling-3026727>
- Dawadi, S. (2020). Thematic Analysis Approach: A Step-by-Step Guide for ELT Research Practitioners. *Journal of NELTA*, 25(1-2), 62–71. <https://doi.org/10.3126/nelta.v25i1-2.49731>
- de Haas, B., & Hutter, I. Teachers' conflicting cultural schemas of teaching comprehensive school-based sexuality education in Kampala, Uganda. *Cult Health Sex*. 2019;21(2):233–47.
- De Witt, P. (2018). *Should Sex Education Be Taught in Schools?* Chicago: Illinois State.
- Donald, D., Lazarus, S. & Lolwana, P. (2010). *Educational Psychology in social context: Ecosystem applications in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Emambokus, W. B. S., & Oogarah-Pratap, B. Exploring parents' and teachers' perspectives about school-based sexuality education in a multicultural context: a case study in Mauritius. *Educ Process*. 2019;8(3):185–95.
- Ettekal, A., & Mahoney, J. L. (2017). *The SAGE Encyclopaedia of out-of-school learning*:
- Fairfield, T., & Charman, A. E. (2022). *Social Inquiry and Bayesian Inference*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-1-108-42164-5.
- Ford, D. R. (2017). *Education and the Production of Space: Political Pedagogy, Geography, and Urban Revolution*. New York: Routledge. p. 2. ISBN 978-0367194376.
- Freire, P. (1994). *Pedagogy of hope: Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed*. Trans. R. R. Barr. New York: Continuum.
- Freire, P. (2004). *Pedagogy of indignation*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Freire, P. (2007). *Daring to dream: Toward a pedagogy of the unfinished*. Trans. A. K. Oliveira. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

Freud, S. (1953). *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*. Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis.

Ganga, E. (2018). *The Effects of Double Orphan Hood On The Learning And Cognition Of Children Living Within Child-Headed Households In Zimbabwe*. Pretoria: UNISA.

Goldman, J. D. G. (2017). *Sexuality in Young People: A Theoretical Integrated Approach from Australia*. *Educational Research*,52(1),81-99.

Gudyanga, E., de Lange, N., & Khau M. *Zimbabwean secondary school guidance and counselling teachers teaching sexuality education in the HIV and AIDS education curriculum*. *Sahara J.* 2019;16(1):35–50.

Guttmacher Institute. (2020). *Adolescent Pregnancy and Its Outcomes Across Countries Fact Sheet*. New York, NY: The Guttmacher Institute.

Guy-Evans, O. (2020). *Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory*. *Simply Psychology*. [www.simplypsychology.org/Bronfenbrenner](http://www.simplypsychology.org/Bronfenbrenner)

Gwirayi, P. (2016). *Fighting child sexual abuse: perspectives of pupils from a developing country*. *Sage Journals*, 3(1):1-10.

Gwirayi, P. (2017). *Child sexual abuse among secondary school pupils in Gweru, Zimbabwe*. Gweru: Midlands State University.

Haberland, N. (2017). *Sexuality Education: Emerging Trends in Evidence and Practice*. *Journal Of Adolescent Health*,56(1): S22–S41.

Haralambos, M. & Holborn, M. (2016). *Sociology: Themes and perspectives*. London, UK: Collin Harper Educational.

Haralambos, M., & Holborn, M. (2022). *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives* 8<sup>TH</sup> ed. India: Collin Harper Educational.

Hassan, F., & Hashim, H. (2021). The Use of an Interactive Online Tool (Pickers) in Learning Vocabulary among Young Learners in ESL Setting. *Creative Education*, 12, 780-796. doi: 10.4236/ce.2021.124055.

Hayes, N., O'toole, L. & Halpemmy, A. M. (2017). *Introducing Bronfenbrenner: A Guide for Practitioners and Students in Early Years Education*. New York: Taylor and Francis.

Herald, The "President extends Zvobgo's tenure at GZU". *The Herald*. Retrieved 2021-10-31. effects of neighbourhood residence on child and adolescent outcomes. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(2), 309.

Hijmans, E., & Kuyper, M. (2020). The half open interview als onderzoeksmethode. In L. PLBJ & H. TCo (Eds.), *Kwalitatief onderzoek: Praktische methoden voor de medische praktijk*. [The half-open interview as research method (pp. 43–51). Houten: Bohn Stafleu van Loghum.

<https://www.talentlyft.com/en/blog/article/92/structured-unstructured-or-semi-structured-job-interviews>

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). 2017 (unpublished). *Toolkit Deliver Enable: Scaling-up comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)*. London, IPPF

Island, P. E. (2017). *Children's Sexual Behaviours*. Charlottetown, Canada: Child Protection Services.

Kassa, G. M. Prevalence and determinants of adolescent pregnancy in Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Reproductive Health*. 2018;15(1):1–17

Kellogg, N. D. (2016). Sexual Behaviours in Children; Evaluation and Management. *American family physicians*, 82(10) 1233-1238.

Kemigisha, E. Process evaluation of a comprehensive sexuality education intervention in primary schools in South Western Uganda. *Sex Reproductive Health*. 2019; 21:51–9.

Keog, S. C. Challenges to Implementing National Comprehensive Sexuality Education Curriculum in Low and Middle Income Countries. Case Study of Ghana, Kenya, Peru and Guatemala (2018) PLoS ONE13(7): e0200513 DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0200513

Kessing-Style, L., Nash, S., & Ayres, R. (2014). Managing curriculum change and 'ontological uncertainty' in tertiary education, Higher Education Research & Development, 10.1080/07294360.2013.841655

Ketting, E., & Ivanova, O. (2018). Sexuality education in Europe and Central Asia.

Kirby, D. (2017). A Way Forward: Recommendations to The South Africa DBE. To Design and Implement On Effective HIV Education Curriculum That Reduces Sexual Risk for HIV. New York, NY: Family Health International.

Kirby, D. (2020). The impact of sex education on the sexual behaviour of young people. New York, NY: United Nations.

Kirk, G. (2017). Women's Live: Multicultural Perspectives (5<sup>th</sup> Ed). Boston: McGraw Hill.

Kirylo, J. D. (2020). Reinventing pedagogy of the oppressed: Contemporary critical perspectives. London: Bloomsbury.

Kirylo, J. D. (2022). Paulo Freire: Philosophy, Pedagogy, and Practice. Post digit Sci Educ (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-022-00363-8>

Kitchen, J. A. (2019). Advancing the use of ecological system theory in college students research: The ecological system interview tool. Journal of College Students Development, 60 (4), 381-400.

Kivunja, C., & Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in education contexts. International journal of education. 6(5) 26-41.

Kunnuji, M. O, Robinson, R. S, Shawar, Y. R, & Shiffman, J. Variable implementation of sexuality education in three Nigerian states. Stud Family Plan. 2017;48(4):359

Lefrancois, G. R. (2019). Theories of human learning: Mrs Gribbin's cat (Seventh / Guy R. Lefrancois.) Cambridge University Press. [www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/subjects/](http://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/subjects/)

Leopando, I. (2017). A pedagogy of faith: The theological vision of Paulo Freire. London: Bloomsbury.

- Lippard, C. N., La Paro, K. M., Rouse, H. L., & Crosby, D. A. (2018). A closer look at teacher–child relationships and classroom emotional context in preschool. In *Child & Youth Care Forum* 47(1), 1-21.
- Machamire, F. (2018). *Lack Of Education Drives Teen Pregnancies*. Harare: United Nations Fund for Population Activities. WHO. 2017a. *Female Genital Mutilation Factsheet*. Geneva, WHO. <http://who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/> (Accessed 30 July 2022).
- Mahoso, T. (2020) *Ecosystemistic Factors Affecting Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Early Childhood Children in Zimbabwe*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria
- Malott, C. S. (2016). *History and education: engaging the global class war*. New York. ISBN 978-1-4331-3399-2. OCLC 945730106
- Malott, C. S. (2017). "In Defence of Communism Against Critical Pedagogy, Capitalism, and Trump". *Critical Education*. 8 (1). doi:10.14288/ce.v8i1.186173. ISSN 1920-4175.
- Manaham, T., & Fisher, J. A. (2016). *Benefits of observer effects: Lessons from the field*. New York: National Library of Medicine.
- Martic, K. (2018). "Structured, unstructured and semi-structured job interviews: The difference". Medium. Archived from the original on 12 November 2019. Retrieved 25 February 2020.
- Martinello, E. (2020). Applying the ecological system theory to better understanding and prevent child sexual abuse. *Sexuality and Culture*, 24, 326-344
- McCombes, S. (2020) *Descriptive research*. Scribbr. <http://www.scribbr.com/methodology/descriptive-research>
- McLeod, S. A. (2019, October 24). *Social identity theory*. Simply Psychology. [www.simplypsychology.org/social-identity-theory.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/social-identity-theory.html)
- McLeod, S. (2020). *Simply Psychology*. Accessed from <https://www.simplypsychology.co.za>
- Milstein, T., Pileggi, M., & Morgan, E. (Eds.) (2017). *Environmental Communication Pedagogy and Practice*. London, UK: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315562148>
- Mkombo, K. A. (2018). Teachers' Attitudes Towards Comfort About Teaching School-Based Sexuality Education in Urban and Rural Tanzania. *Global Journal of Healthscience*,4(4),149-158.

- Mocheche, P. C. (2018). Factors influencing sex education implementation in secondary schools in Kenya: A case of Kabete sub-county, Kiambu county. Unpublished document.
- Moore, B. K., & Parker, R. (2007). *Critical Thinking: Evaluating Claims and Arguments in Everyday Life*. Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield.
- Mukoro, J. (2017). *The Need for Culturally Sensitive Sexuality Education in A Pluralized Nigeria: But Which Kind?* Philadelphia: Taylor and Francis.
- Mulimbi, B., & Dryden-Peterson, S. (2018). "There is still peace. There are no wars.": Prioritizing unity over diversity in Botswana's social studies policies and practices and the implications for positive peace. *International Journal of Educational Development*. 61. 142-154. 10.1016/j.ijedudev.2017.12.009.
- Muridzo, N. G. (2017). *Child Sexual Abuse in Zimbabwe: An Agenda for Social Work*. *The Indian Journal of Social Work* 75(1),49-68.
- Nickerson, C. (2022). Interpretivism paradigm and research philosophy. *Simply sociology*. <https://simplysociology.com/intepretivism-paradigm.html>
- Nikolopoulou, K. (2022). What is convenience sampling? Definition and examples. Retrieved from <http://www.scribbr.com/methodology/convenience-sampling/>.
- Ngara, R. (2019). *A Reflection on Gender and Sexuality*. 10/1080/09720073.2019.11891455.
- Ofsted. (2017). *Ofsted Annual Report2012/13: Schools Report*. London, UK: Ofsted.
- Pham, L. (2018). A Review of key paradigms: positivism, interpretivism and critical inquiry. 10.13140/RG.2.2.13995.54569.
- Piaget, J. (1952). *The origins of intelligence in children*. New York: International Universities Press
- psychology/educational-psychology/theories-human-learning-mrs-gribbins-cat-7th-edition
- Rahi, S. (2017). *Research Design and Methods: A Systematic Review of Research Paradigms Sampling issues and Instruments Development*. *International Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, 6, Article No. 403.

- Ram S, Andajani S, Mohammadnezhad M. Parent's perception regarding the delivery of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education in secondary schools in Fiji: a qualitative study. *J Environ Public Health*. 2020; 2020:3675684.
- Rijsdijk, K (2018) *The World Starts With Me: Promoting Sexual Reproductive Health And Rights Of Adolescence In Uganda*: Kampala.
- Roberts, P. (2022). *Paulo Freire: philosophy, pedagogy, and practice*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Rutgers, R. (2015). *The World Starts With Me*. London, UK: Rudders International.
- Schunk, D. H. (2016). *Learning theory: An educational perspective*. Pearson.
- Schunk, D. H. (2020). *Learning Theories: An Educational Perspective, 8th Edition*. Pearson Education. [www.pearson.com/us/higher-education/program/Schunk-Learning-Theories-An-Educational-Perspective-8th-Edition/PGM1996609.html](http://www.pearson.com/us/higher-education/program/Schunk-Learning-Theories-An-Educational-Perspective-8th-Edition/PGM1996609.html)
- SIDA. (2016). *Health: Botha Prerequisite and an Outcome of Sustainable Development*. Stockholm: SIDA.
- Burundi Catholic Church Clashes With Government Over Sex Education (2023, March 14). *Taarifa*. <https://taarifa.rw/burundi-catholic-church-clashes-with-government-over-sex-education/>
- Tabong, P. T. Acceptability and stakeholders' perspectives on feasibility of using trained psychologists. and health workers to deliver school-based sexual and reproductive health services to adolescents in urban Accra, Ghana. *Reprod Health*. 2018;15(1):122.
- Tajfel, H., Turner, J. C., Austin, W. G., & Worchel, S. (1979). *An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. Organizational identity: A reader*, 56-65. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Taylor, R. D., & Gebre, A. (2016). Teacher–student relationships and personalized learning: Implications of person and contextual variables. In M. Murphy, S. Redding, & J. Twyman (Eds.), *Handbook on personalized learning for states, districts, and schools* (pp. 205–220). Temple University, Centre on Innovations in Learning.
- Thabela, T. (2018). *Zimbabwe 2018 primary and secondary education statistics report*. Harare: Ministry of Primary and Secondary education.

Thomas, B. (2022). The Role of Purposive Sampling Technique as a Tool for Informal Choices in a Social Sciences in Research Methods. Vol.2 (5) Accessed from <https://justagriculture.in/files/newsletter/2022/january>

Tshabalala, T., & Khosa, M. (2014). Awareness of Various Forms of Child Abuse: Pupils' Attributions – A Case Study of Gomadoda Cluster. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Management studies*,1(1),23-28.

Tshili, N. (2015, Aug 25). Vuzu parties: Who's to blame? *The chronicle*. <https://www.chronicle.co.zw/vuzu-parties-whos-to-blame/>

UNESCO, (2015) Comprehensive sexuality education in teacher training in Eastern and Southern Africa, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris.

UNESCO. (2018). International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education: An Evidence Informed Education. New York, NY: UNESCO.

UNESCO. (2019). Facing The Facts: The Case for Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Paris: UNESCO.

UNICEF. (2018). Hidden in Plain Sight: Child Sexual Abuse in Zimbabwe. Harare: UNICEF.

Venketsamy, T., (2018). 'Challenges experienced by Black teachers teaching Comprehensive Sexuality Education in schools', *Journal of Educational Studies* 17(1), 20–42.

Venketsamy, T., and Kinear, J., (2020). 'Strengthening comprehensive sexuality education in the curriculum for the early grades,' *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 10(1), a820. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v10i1.820>

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*. London: Harvard University Press.

Westby, C.; Burda, A.; & Mehta, Z. (2018). "Asking the Right Questions in the Right Ways". *The Asha Leader*. 8 (8): 4–17. doi: 10.1044/leader.ftr3.08082003.4. Archived from the original on 25 February 2020. Retrieved 25 February 2020.

WHO. (2023). Female Genital Mutilation. <http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation/>

Widner, J.; Woolcock, M., & Nieto, D. O. (2022). "Using Case Studies to Enhance the Quality of Explanation and Implementation: Integrating Scholarship and Development Practice", *The Case for Case Studies: Methods and Applications in International Development*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–26, ISBN 978-1-108-42727-2

Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case study research: design and methods* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, California, USA: SAGE Publications. ISBN 978-1-5063-3616-9.

Zojceska, A. (2018). Structured, Unstructured or Semi-Structured Job Interviews?  
<https://www.talentlyft.com/en/blog/topic/1/conducting-interviews/>

Zulu, J. M. Why teach sexuality education in school? Teacher discretion in implementing comprehensive sexuality education in rural Zambia. *Int J Equity Health*. 2019;18(1):116

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



### GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

29-May-2023

Dear Mr Kenneth Mukau

#### **Application Approved**

Research Project Title:

**ECOSYSTEMIC FACTORS AFFECTING COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN JUNIORS GRADES IN ZIMBABWE**

Ethical Clearance number:

**UFS-HSD2023/0408/3**

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency, furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Outcome: Approved

We require that all participants should again consent to participate, along with an apology to them for asking for their consent prior to ethical clearance.

Please note that the GHREC has amended the project's risk level to **LOW RISK**. If you do not agree with this amendment, please contact us within seven (7) days of the date of this letter.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Adri Du Plessis**

**Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee**

Adri  
Du  
Plessis

Digitally signed by Adri Du Plessis  
Date: 2023.05.29 08:57:50 +02'00'

205 Nelson Mandela Drive P.O. Box 339  
Park West Bloemfontein 9500  
Bloemfontein 9500  
South Africa Tel: +27 (0)51 401 9337  
www.ufs.ac.za



## APPENDIX 2: PERMISSION TO CARRY THE STUDY

*All communications should be addressed to  
"The District Schools Inspector  
Chikomba District"  
Email. moesacden.chikomba@gmail.com  
Telephone: 054-2122321*



**Ref/P: Mukau Kenneth  
EC No: 0196743D  
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education  
Mashonaland East Province  
Chikomba District.  
P.O. Box 162  
Marondera  
Zimbabwe**

**28 January 2023**

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: CLEARANCE LETTER TO CARRY OUT FURTHER STUDIES: MUKAU  
KENETH; EC NO: 0196743D; WARIKANDWA PRIMARY; CHIKOMBA DISTRICT  
MASH EAST PROINCE.**

The above subject matter refers,

This minute serves to confirm that Mr. Mukau Kenneth, Ec Number 0196743D has been cleared to further his education in line with the regulations of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Zimbabwe. The programme he is taking on will help the Ministry to achieve its goals and vision 2030 National Development Strategy 1.

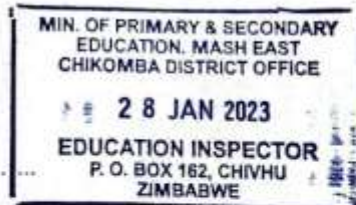
The member has no any pending misconduct hence there therefore I strongly recommend him to further his studies.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mikishoni T', written over a dotted line.

Mikishoni T

Principal Human Resources Officer  
**CHIKOMBA DISTRICT- MASHONALAND EAST PROVINCE  
MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**



## APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANTS CONSENT FORMS



### CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

**Date:** March 2021-November 2023

**Title of the research project:** ECOSYSTEMIC FACTORS AFFECTING COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN JUNIOR GRADES IN ZIMBABWE

**Principle investigator / researcher(s) name(s) and contact number(s):**

MUKAU KENNETH: 2020912933                      +263773553391/+2507912045491

**Faculty and Department:**

Name of Faculty: EDUCATION

Name of Department: FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION

**Study leader:** NICHOLS H.J      +27612069469

**What is the aim / purpose of the study?** The study aims to explore the ecosystemic factors affecting CSE in junior grades in Zimbabwean schools

The urge to conduct this study emanates from the fact that this research area has not been explored and is still new in Zimbabwe. Thus, this study will contribute to the knowledge base on CSE. It also stems from my experience as a qualified teacher. From my own experience as a teacher, in the area where I work, child marriages, sexual abuse, and early pregnancy cases are on the rise. Thus, introducing CSE from primary school levels could help curb this problem. However, there are several factors affecting the success of CSE and among other things are the Ecosystemic factors like the attitudes and perceptions of parents, teachers and school administrators, cultural beliefs, and religious beliefs. All these and many others have a strong bearing on whether CSE is successful or not.

**Who is doing the research?**

This research is being carried out by myself, MUKAU KENNETH. I am work for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Zimbabwe). The reason for doing this research project is to fulfil the academic requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with the University of the Free State, South Africa.

## **APPROVAL NUMBER: UFS-HSD2023/0408/3**

### **Why are you invited to take part in this research project?**

I have chosen you to participate in this research basing on your active involvement in the day to day activities at your school as a School Development Member (SDC) and also because you have at least one child within the junior grade level. Since your child or children are already learning CSE at their school, you are a valuable source of the data being sought and I have therefore chosen you purposefully. Furthermore, it is very convenient for me to reach out for you because of the nearness to my work place. I got your contact details from the principal of your school. Fifteen participants make up the sample for this study. There are going to be six Guidance and Counselling teachers, six parents and three administrators.

### **What is the nature of participation in this study?**

Your role in this research is to answer interview questions. The study involves audio recording of the interview session. The interview questions are semi-structured in nature. The session is expected to last not more than 40 minutes.

### **Can the participant withdraw from the study?**

Your participation in this study is voluntary and there is no penalty or loss of benefit for non-participation. Additionally, being in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

### **What are the potential benefits of taking part in this study?**

Your participation in this study will improve the way you view and understanding of CSE. It might help you become a better CSE teacher. The data collected in this study will be used for academic purposes only and it will be kept confidential.

### **What is the anticipated inconvenience of taking part in this study?**

Your participation into this study might result in loss of time; however, I will conduct the interview when you are not busy with your normal routines.

### **Will what I say be kept confidential?**

Your name will not be recorded, anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym, and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Nevertheless, your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as research report, journal articles, conference presentation, and so on. For instance, a report of the study may be

submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. Your participation in this research is voluntary and should you find that you wish to withdraw from the project, you may do so at any time without any repercussions.

**How will the information be stored and ultimately destroyed?**

I shall store hard copies of your answers for a period of five years under key and lock in safe in my office for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Otherwise when the outlined timeline has lapsed, the hard copies (transcripts) would be shredded and soft copies would be deleted.

**Will I receive payment or any incentives for participating in this study?**

No, you will not be paid for partaking in this study, the reason being that this study is purely for academic purposes and there are no financial benefits involved. However, your internet data and meal costs will be covered for the particular day of the interview. You will not incur into any cost for taking part into this research.

**How will the participant be informed of the findings / results of the study?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact MUKAU KENNETH on +263773553391/+250792045491 or email [kennymukau@gmail.com](mailto:kennymukau@gmail.com). The findings are accessible for a period of five years after which they will be destroyed. In the event that you have any concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you contact Dr H. J, NICHOLS on +27612069469 or email at NicholsHJ@ufs.ac.za

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.**

**The parents’ Consent to participate in this study**

I, the undersigned,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(participant’s full names to be included), (the “Participant”)

confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in the research study referred to as the “ECOSYSTEMIC FACTORS AFFECTING COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN JUNIOR GRADES IN ZIMBABWE” in relation to Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and which Study is being conducted by MUKAU KENNETH.

I, the undersigned Participant, further confirm that–

1. the Researcher has explained the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of my participation in the Study;

2. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the Study as explained in the attached information sheet;
3. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the Study;
4. I understand that my participation in the Study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable);
5. I voluntarily provide the UFS and the Researcher with my personal information and consent to the UFS and the Researcher collecting, disclosing and processing my personal information in order to conduct the Study and any related activities in relation thereto;
6. I hereby acknowledge and confirm that I understand the purpose for which the UFS and the Researcher may collect, store, use, delete, destroy, outsource, transfer or otherwise process, as the context and circumstances may require and as contemplated in terms of POPIA, my personal information as set out herein;
7. I am aware that the findings of the Study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings and that my personal information will be aggregated and deidentified at such stage;
8. I also give the UFS permission to share, without notification, the collected data with other researchers at the UFS or other Higher Education Institutions. This permission is dependent on the same principles of ethical research practices, anonymity/confidentiality, safekeeping of information, and other issues listed above applying.

I, the Participant, agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method>.

X

\_\_\_\_\_   
 MUKAU KENNETH

Full Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s): MUKAU KENNETH

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## CONSENT FORM FOR ADMINISTRATORS

**Date:** March 2021-November 2023

**Title of the research project:** ECOSYSTEMIC FACTORS AFFECTING COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN JUNIOR GRADES IN ZIMBABWE

**Principle investigator / researcher(s) name(s) and contact number(s):**

MUKAU KENNETH: 2020912933                      +263773553391/+2507912045491

**Faculty and Department:**

Name of Faculty: EDUCATION

Name of Department: FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION

**Study leader:** NICHOLS H.J      +27612069469

**What is the aim / purpose of the study?** The study aims to explore the ecosystemic factors affecting CSE in junior grades in Zimbabwean schools.

The urge to conduct this study emanates from the fact that this research area has not been explored and is still new in Zimbabwe. Thus, this study will contribute to the knowledge base on CSE. It also stems from my experience as a qualified teacher. From my own experience as a teacher, in the area where I work, child marriages, sexual abuse, and early pregnancy cases are on the rise. Thus, introducing CSE from primary school levels could help curb this problem. However, there are several factors affecting the success of CSE and among other things are the Eco systemic factors like the attitudes and perceptions of parents, teachers and school administrators, cultural beliefs, and religious beliefs. All these and many others have a strong bearing on whether CSE is successful or not.

**Who is doing the research?**

This research is being carried out by myself, MUKAU KENNETH. I am work for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Zimbabwe). The reason for doing this research project is to fulfil the academic requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with the University of the Free State, South Africa

**APPROVAL NUMBER: UFS-HSD2023/0408/3**

### **Why are you invited to take part in this research project?**

I have chosen you to participate in this research basing on your experience as an administrator and supervisor for the past five years or more. Since you have been supervising the teaching and learning of Guidance and Counselling, you are a valuable source of the data being sought and I have therefore chosen you purposefully. Additionally, it is very convenient for me to reach out for you because of the nearness of our work places. I got your contact details from the District Schools Inspector of Chikomba District. Fifteen participants make up the sample for this study. There are going to be six Guidance and Counselling teachers, six parents and three administrators.

### **What is the nature of participation in this study?**

Your role in this research is to answer interview questions. The study involves audio recording of the interview session. The interview questions are semi-structured in nature. The interview session is expected to last not more than 40 minutes. The following questions shall be asked:

### **Can the participant withdraw from the study?**

Your participation in this study is voluntary and there is no penalty or loss of benefit for non-participation. Additionally, being in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

### **What are the potential benefits of taking part in this study?**

Your participation in this study will improve the way you view and understanding of CSE. It might help you become a better CSE teacher. The data collected in this study will be used for academic purposes only and it will be kept confidential.

### **What is the anticipated inconvenience of taking part in this study?**

Your participation into this study might result in loss of time; however, I will conduct the interview when you are not busy with your normal routines.

### **Will what I say be kept confidential?**

Your name will not be recorded, anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym, and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. Nevertheless, your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as research report, journal articles, conference presentation, and so on. For instance, a report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and should you find that you wish to withdraw from the project, you may do so at any time without any repercussions.

**How will the information be stored and ultimately destroyed?**

I shall store hard copies of your answers for a period of five years under key and lock in safe in my office for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Otherwise when the outlined timeline has lapsed, the hard copies (transcripts) would be shredded and soft copies would be deleted.

**Will I receive payment or any incentives for participating in this study?**

No, you will not be paid for partaking in this study, the reason being that this study is purely for academic purposes and there are no financial benefits involved. However, your internet data and meal costs will be covered for the particular day of the interview. You will not incur into any cost for taking part into this research.

**How will the participant be informed of the findings / results of the study?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact MUKAU KENNETH on +263773553391/+250792045491 or email [kennymukau@gmail.com](mailto:kennymukau@gmail.com). The findings are accessible for a period of five years after which they will be destroyed. In the event that you have any concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you contact Dr H. J, NICHOLS on +27612069469 or email at NicholsHJ@ufs.ac.za

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.**

**The administrator’s Consent to participate in this study**

I, the undersigned,

---

(participant’s full names to be included), (the “Participant”)

confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in the research study referred to as the “ECOSYSTEMIC FACTORS AFFECTING COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN JUNIOR GRADES IN ZIMBABWE” in relation to Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and which Study is being conducted by MUKAU KENNETH.

I, the undersigned Participant, further confirm that–

9. the Researcher has explained the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of my participation in the Study;
10. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the Study as explained in the attached information sheet;
11. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the Study;
12. I understand that my participation in the Study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable);
13. I voluntarily provide the UFS and the Researcher with my personal information and consent to the UFS and the Researcher collecting, disclosing and processing my personal information in order to conduct the Study and any related activities in relation thereto;
14. I hereby acknowledge and confirm that I understand the purpose for which the UFS and the Researcher may collect, store, use, delete, destroy, outsource, transfer or otherwise process, as the context and circumstances may require and as contemplated in terms of POPIA, my personal information as set out herein;
15. I am aware that the findings of the Study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings and that my personal information will be aggregated and deidentified at such stage;
16. I also give the UFS permission to share, without notification, the collected data with other researchers at the UFS or other Higher Education Institutions. This permission is dependent on the same principles of ethical research practices, anonymity/confidentiality, safekeeping of information, and other issues listed above applying.

I, the Participant, agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method>.

Full Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s): MUKAU KENNETH

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

**Date:** March 2021-November 2023

**Title of the research project:** ECOSYSTEMIC FACTORS AFFECTING COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN JUNIOR GRADES IN ZIMBABWE

**Principle investigator / researcher(s) name(s) and contact number(s):**

MUKAU KENNETH: 2020912933                      +263773553391/+2507912045491

**Faculty and Department:**

Name of Faculty: EDUCATION

Name of Department: FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION

**Study leader:** NICHOLS H.J      +27612069469

**What is the aim / purpose of the study?** The study aims to explore the ecosystemic factors affecting CSE in junior grades in Zimbabwean schools.

The urge to conduct this study emanates from the fact that this research area has not been explored and is still new in Zimbabwe. Thus, this study will contribute to the knowledge base on CSE. It also stems from my experience as a qualified teacher. From my own experience as a teacher, in the area where I work, child marriages, sexual abuse, and early pregnancy cases are on the rise. Thus, introducing CSE from primary school levels could help curb this problem. However, there are several factors affecting the success of CSE and among other things are the Eco systemic factors like the attitudes and perceptions of parents, teachers and school administrators, cultural beliefs, and religious beliefs. All these and many others have a strong bearing on whether CSE is successful or not.

**Who is doing the research?**

This research is being carried out by myself, MUKAU KENNETH. I am work for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Zimbabwe). The reason for doing this research project is to fulfil the academic requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with the University of the Free State, South Africa

**APPROVAL NUMBER: UFS-HSD2023/0408/3**

**Why are you invited to take part in this research project?**

I have chosen you to participate in this research basing on your experience as a qualified Guidance and Counselling teacher for the past five years or more. Since you teach Guidance and Counselling, you are the valuable source of the data being sought and I have therefore chosen you purposefully. Additionally, it is very convenient for me to reach out for you because of the nearness of our work places. I got your contact details from your school administrators. Fifteen participants make up the sample for this study. There are going to be six Guidance and Counselling teachers, six parents and three administrators.

### **What is the nature of participation in this study?**

Your role in this research is to answer interview questions. The study involves audio recording of the interview session. The interview questions are semi-structured in nature. The interview session is expected to last not more than 40 minutes. The following questions shall be asked:

### **Can the participant withdraw from the study?**

Your participation in this study is voluntary and there is no penalty or loss of benefit for non-participation. Additionally, being in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

### **What are the potential benefits of taking part in this study?**

Your participation in this study will improve the way you view and understanding of CSE. It might help you become a better CSE teacher. The data collected in this study will be used for academic purposes only and it will be kept confidential.

### **What is the anticipated inconvenience of taking part in this study?**

Your participation into this study might result in loss of time; however, I will conduct the interview when you are not busy with your normal routines.

### **Will what I say be kept confidential?**

Your name will not be recorded, anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym, and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Nevertheless, your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as research report, journal articles, conference presentation, and so on. For instance, a report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. Your participation in this research is voluntary and should you find that you wish to withdraw from the project, you may do so at any time without any repercussions.

### **How will the information be stored and ultimately destroyed?**

I shall store hard copies of your answers for a period of five years under key and lock in safe in my office for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Otherwise when the outlined timeline has lapsed, the hard copies (transcripts) would be shredded and soft copies would be deleted.

### **Will I receive payment or any incentives for participating in this study?**

No, you will not be paid for partaking in this study, the reason being that this study is purely for academic purposes and there are no financial benefits involved. However, your internet data and meal costs will be covered for the particular day of the interview. You will not incur into any cost for taking part into this research.

### **How will the participant be informed of the findings / results of the study?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact MUKAU KENNETH on +263773553391/+250792045491 or email [kennymukau@gmail.com](mailto:kennymukau@gmail.com). The findings are accessible for a period of five years after which they will be destroyed. In the event that you have any concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you contact Dr H. J. NICHOLS on +27612069469 or email at NicholsHJ@ufs.ac.za

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.**

### **The administrator's Consent to participate in this study**

I, the undersigned,

---

(participant's full names to be included), (the "Participant")

confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in the research study referred to as the "ECOSYSTEMIC FACTORS AFFECTING COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN JUNIOR GRADES IN ZIMBABWE" in relation to Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and which Study is being conducted by MUKAU KENNETH.

I, the undersigned Participant, further confirm that–

1. the Researcher has explained the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of my participation in the Study;
2. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the Study as explained in the attached information sheet;

3. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the Study;
4. I understand that my participation in the Study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable);
5. I voluntarily provide the UFS and the Researcher with my personal information and consent to the UFS and the Researcher collecting, disclosing and processing my personal information in order to conduct the Study and any related activities in relation thereto;
6. I hereby acknowledge and confirm that I understand the purpose for which the UFS and the Researcher may collect, store, use, delete, destroy, outsource, transfer or otherwise process, as the context and circumstances may require and as contemplated in terms of POPIA, my personal information as set out herein;
7. I am aware that the findings of the Study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings and that my personal information will be aggregated and deidentified at such stage;
8. I also give the UFS permission to share, without notification, the collected data with other researchers at the UFS or other Higher Education Institutions. This permission is dependent on the same principles of ethical research practices, anonymity/confidentiality, safekeeping of information, and other issues listed above applying.

I, the Participant, agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method>.

Full Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s): MUKAU KENNETH

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS:**

1. Could you please tell me some things about yourself? (Just to put the participant at ease).
2. What is your understanding of Comprehensive Sexuality Education?
3. When did you first introduce CSE to the junior grades at your school?
4. What was your reaction when you first heard that you were supposed to introduce CSE at your school?
5. What influenced your reaction when came to know that you were supposed to introduce CSE at your school?
6. How did you feel like when you started supervising the teaching and learning of CSE to these junior grades?
7. Do you supervise CSE lessons? If yes, how often?
8. Do the teachers like to teach CSE and are they effective enough in delivering the lessons and why do you think so?
9. Are there enough resource materials for effecting teaching and learning of CSE at your station. Give reasons why things are the way they are at your school.
10. What other program do you have at your school that support CSE programs?
11. What is your general evaluation of the CSE program at your school? Where do you stand as a school with regards to CSE implementation?
12. What plans have you in place to promote effective CSE teaching and learning?
13. What other suggestions do you have on what schools can do to promote teaching and learning of CSE?

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR JUNIOR GRADE TEACHERS

1. Could you please tell me some things about yourself? (Just to put the participant at ease).
2. Which qualification do you have with regards to CSE or have you any form of training in CSE?
3. What is your understanding of Comprehensive Sexuality Education?
4. When did you first teach CSE to the junior grades?
5. What was your reaction when you first heard that you were going to teach CSE?
6. What influenced your reaction when came to know that you were going to teach CSE?
7. How did you feel like when you started teaching CSE to these junior grades?
8. Do you think it is necessary for junior grade learners to learn CSE at school?
9. Can you support your thoughts in the above question?
10. What do you think the life of these primary school grade learners would be like after acquiring CSE?
11. In what ways do you think your view of CSE can affect its implementation?
12. What programs are there at your school that are based on CSE?
13. Do you sometimes give home work on CSE? If yes, how often and why?
14. How is the quality of the feedback in CSE homework? Are there any signs of parental input?
15. What have you done as an individual to promote effective implementation of CSE?
16. What do you suggest schools can do to promote teaching and learning of CSE?

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

1. Could you please tell me some things about yourself? (Just to put the participant at ease).
2. What is your understanding of Comprehensive Sexuality Education?
3. When did you first become aware that your child is learning CSE at school?
4. How did you find out that your child is learning CSE?
5. What were your reaction upon hearing about your child was learning CSE?
6. What influenced your understanding and reaction when came to know your child was learning CSE?
7. Do you think it is necessary for primary school children to learn CSE at school?
8. Can you support your thoughts in the above question?
9. What do you think the life of these primary school grade learners would be like after acquiring CSE?
10. In what ways do you think your view of CSE can affect its implementation?
11. Are you aware of any programs at school that are based on CSE?
12. What do you suggest schools can do to promote teaching and learning of CSE?
13. Does your child sometimes bring home work on CSE? If yes, do you help him/her?

How do you feel like when you help your child in CSE homework?

## **APPENDIX 5: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE**

1. What cross-cutting issues in the document and their link to CSE?
2. What topics are covered in the document? Are they related to the suggestions provided in the ITGS document?
3. What methodologies does the document suggest should be used when teaching?
4. How should the document be used?
5. What is the document used for?
6. How much time does the document suggest should be allocated for CSE?

## APPENDIX 6: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE



Tel: 260464/260490/260525 260541/260566/260568 260554	<b>MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY</b>	P. BAG 9055 Gweru Zimbabwe
Fax: 260233/260311	<b>THE DYKE</b>	
The Editor-in-Chief (Dr U. Saidi) ☎ +263 779 957 993 ☎ +263 718 238 410 ✉ <a href="mailto:editorinchief@thedyke.msu.ac.zw">editorinchief@thedyke.msu.ac.zw</a> <a href="https://thedyke.msu.ac.zw/">https://thedyke.msu.ac.zw/</a>		The Editor (Dr H. Mangeya) ☎ +263 774 435 259 ✉ <a href="mailto:editor@thedyke.msu.ac.zw">editor@thedyke.msu.ac.zw</a> <a href="https://thedyke.msu.ac.zw/">https://thedyke.msu.ac.zw/</a>

---

---

### OFFICE OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

---

---

17 November 2023

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to certify that I have undertaken technical editing and proofing to Kenneth Mukau thesis titled *Ecosystemic factors affecting comprehensive sexuality education in junior grades in Zimbabwe*.

Notwithstanding editorial work undertaken as certified, Kenneth Mukau is fully held responsible for judiciously effecting the necessary revisions, double-checks on references and other touch-ups –technical or otherwise as per editorial notes given.

Should you need further information on the above, do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'U. Saidi'.

Dr U. Saidi (PhD)  
Editor-in-Chief –The Dyke Journal

**APPENDIX 7: RELEVANT PARAGRAPHS FROM INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS, INSTRUMENTS AND STANDARDS THAT ARE OF RELEVANCE TO COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION ARE QUOTED BELOW:**

1. The Programme of Action (PoA) of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Commission on Population and Development (CPD):

- PoA paragraph 7.41: “the response of societies to the reproductive health needs of adolescents should be based on information that helps them attain a level of maturity required to make responsible decisions” and “information and services should be made available to adolescents to help them understand their sexuality and protect them from unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases”.

- CPD resolution 2013/1 OP11: “ensuring the access of adolescents and youth to full and accurate information and education on sexual and reproductive health, including evidence- based comprehensive education on human sexuality”.

- CPD Resolution 2012/1, OP26 Calls upon Governments, with the full involvement of young people and with the support of the international community, to give full attention to meeting the reproductive health-service, information and education needs of young people, with full respect for their privacy and confidentiality, free of discrimination, and to provide them with evidence-based comprehensive education on human sexuality, sexual and reproductive health, human rights and gender equality to enable them to deal in a positive and responsible way with their sexuality’.

2. The 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development including the Sustainable Development Goals 4:

- SDG 3.7: “universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services, including for family planning, information and education”.

- SDG 4.7: “all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for human rights, gender equality...”

3. The 2016 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, paragraph 62.c5: “Commit to accelerating efforts to scale up scientifically accurate, age-appropriate comprehensive education, relevant to cultural contexts, that provides adolescent girls and boys and young women and men, in and out of school, consistent with their evolving capacities, with information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, gender equality and women’s empowerment, human rights, physical, psychological and pubertal development and power in relationships between women and men, to enable them to build self-esteem and informed decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills and develop respectful relationships, in full partnership with young persons,

parents, legal guardians, caregivers, educators and health-care providers, in order to enable them to protect themselves from HIV infection.”

4. Committee on the Rights of the Child, urges States that:

‘Age-appropriate, comprehensive and inclusive sexual and reproductive health education, based on scientific evidence and human rights standards and developed with adolescents, should be part of the mandatory school curriculum and reach out-of-school adolescents.’

5. Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, General Comment 22, paragraph

96: ‘...the right to sexual and reproductive health, combined with the right to education (articles 13 and 14) and the right to non-discrimination and equality between men and women (articles 2 (2) and 3), entails a right to education on sexuality and reproduction that is comprehensive, non-discriminatory, evidence-based, scientifically accurate and age appropriate.’

6. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, General Recommendation 24, paragraph 23 and 26: ‘states need to pay attention to the health education of adolescents, including information and counselling on all methods of family planning’ and that such education has to address “gender equality, violence, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and SRH’

7. Human Rights Council Resolution on Violence Against Women of 2016:

‘Implementing social and economic policies that guarantee women full and equal access to quality education, including CSE.’

8. Regional commitments to CSE:

a. Latin America and the Caribbean: Preventing through Education Declaration.

b. Eastern and Southern Africa: Ministerial Commitment on CSE and SRH services for Youths.

c. Europe: WHO European Regional Strategy on Sexual Reproductive Health (WHO, 1999) and Reference Guide to Policies and Practices in Sexuality Education in Europe (IPPF, 2017, 2007; WHO action plan SRHR of Europe (WHO, 2022).