

**THE LIVED CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES OF INCARCERATED MALE SEX
OFFENDERS**

by

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DECLARATION

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The submitted work has not previously, either in part or in its entirety, been submitted to the examiners.

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ABSTRACT

This study was motivated by the high rates and public outcry of gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa, particularly sexual violence. There have been policies and interventions by the government and other stakeholders to curb the rate of GBV in South Africa. The interventions mainly focus on protecting the victims of GBV, particularly women and children. However, the rates of GBV, predominantly sex offences, continue to increase. The perpetrators of GBV and sexual violence are mostly not included in the interventions and policies. Research also focuses on the victims of sexual violence and not the perpetrators, which is problematic as it does not provide a clear understanding of sexual violence in South Africa, resulting in the same and redundant strategies to curb sexual violence. Developmental psychological theories highlight that various childhood factors and experiences influence behaviour in adulthood. Males are identified as perpetrators and are incarcerated for sexual offences in South Africa. However, there is limited research on sex offenders and the influences of childhood experiences on sex offences amongst males. This research, therefore, aimed to understand the lived childhood experiences of incarcerated male sex offenders in South Africa. The study adopted a qualitative approach and was guided by the phenomenological and multiple case study approach to understand the lived childhood experiences of sex offenders. Purposive sampling was used to recruit 10 participants from the Mangaung and Grootvlei correctional centres. A semi-structured interview was used to collect data. The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the data. The findings of the study found that lived childhood experiences play a role in the perpetration of sexual offences later in life. The findings also found that sex offenders experience

negative experiences more than positive experiences during childhood, influencing the perpetration of sexual offences.

Keywords: Lived experience, childhood, positive childhood experience, negative/adverse childhood experience, gender-based violence, sexual violence, sex offence, sex offender, incarceration

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the background and motivation for conducting the study, highlighting gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa and sex violence and offence. It also highlights the lived childhood experiences of sex offenders, which comprise positive and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), as well as the relation between lived childhood experiences and sex offences among male sex offenders. It further presents the rationale, significance of the study, and the research aims, objectives, and questions. The chapter also provides a brief overview of the methodology, data collection and analysis adopted, and the ethical considerations applied in the study. The chapter concludes with clarifying the main concepts and an outline of the dissertation.

1.2 Background and Motivation of the Study

The motivation to conduct this study stems from the public outcry over GBV in South Africa on various media platforms. The public outcry was sparked by high-profile GBV cases of women and children who were victims of GBV. Awareness of GBV started in the 1990s and early 2000s in South Africa. Statistics South Africa used a crime survey to conduct research for the Department of Safety and Security in 1998 (Statistics South Africa, 2000). Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) reported that 55 000 women had been victims of rape in 1997. This figure translates into 134 women raped per 100 000 of the population in 1997. The cases of rape and attempted rape were also high among children; 120 cases per 100 000 of the population were attempted rape and rape of children.

Since then, there has been an increase in GBV cases in South Africa. The National GBV Command Centre reported an increase in GBV cases. They received an increase of 2 320

complaints during the first week of the global lockdown in 2020. This figure is 37% higher than the weekly average of 87 290 domestic violence cases reported to the police in 2019, according to the former Minister of Police Bheki Cele (Pikoli, 2020).

GBV cases have significantly come to the fore on social media and other media platforms. The most prominent cases, amongst others, were the murder of Reeva Steenkamp by renowned South African athlete Oscar Pistorius and the murder of Karabo Mokoena by boyfriend Sandile Manstoe in 2017 (Enaifoghe et al., 2021). The death of Karabo Mokoena sparked the #MeToo movement and was used to raise awareness about GBV in South Africa (Geldenhuys, 2018). The death of Karabo Mokoena also sparked the #MenAreTrash movement (Ananya, 2017). Other movements and protests, such as the #MeTo, #TimesUP, as well as the #EndRapeCulture followed thereafter. These movements were created on social media to draw attention to the prevalence of sexual assault and to critique the social norms that allow GBV, especially sexual assault, to continue (Orth et al., 2020). The 16 Days of Activism and the #TotalShutdown movements were also created to raise awareness or help eradicate GBV in South Africa. The 16 Days of Activism was started by the government in 1991 to address violence against women and children (Sibanda-Moyo et al., 2017).

Even though GBV is generally prevalent in South Africa, studies have shown that sexual violence is the most prevalent form of GBV (Enaifoghe et al., 2021; Govender, 2023). Sexual violence is any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act using coercion, unwanted sexual comments, harassment, or advances made towards a person, regardless of the nature of the relationship and setting (Astbury & Jewkes, 2011; Broban et al., 2020). There are different forms of sexual violence, which involve sex trafficking, genital mutilation, and all forms of unwanted sexual touching and harassment, with rape and attempted rape as the most severe forms of sexual violence (Astbury & Jewkes, 2011; Broban et al., 2020). South Africa has one of the highest levels of rape perpetration. Between 6% and 59% of women are

victims of rape or a form of sexual violence. Children are also vulnerable to sexual abuse; girl children are at greater risk compared to boy children at home and at school (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013).

Statistics South Africa reporting on statistics released by the South African Police Service revealed an increase in sex offences in South Africa. Sexual offences reported to the police between 2018 and 2019 increased by 4%. There was also an increase in the number of victims of sexual offences between 2015/16 and 2016/17. The number decreased between 2016/17 and 2018/19 and then increased again between 2018/19 and 2019/20; however, the change between 2015/16 and 2019/20 was not statistically significant (Statistics South Africa, 2020).

Furthermore, according to the South African police crime statistics, 64 419 sexual offence cases were reported in 2012, 62 226 in 2013, 66 197 in 2014 and 53 617 in 2015. An increase in overall GBV cases was reported between 01 April 2018 and 31 March 2019. Sexual offences increased from 50 108 in 2017/18 to 52 420 in 2018/19, most of these cases were rape cases (Oladimeji & Osunkule, 2023). An increase in sexual offence cases was reported again in 2019/2020, with 53 293 reported cases. From October to December 2021, 11 315 rape cases were reported, equating to 123 cases per day on average (Oladimeji & Osunkule, 2023). For the 2022/2023 fiscal year, almost 53 900 South Africans reported being victims of sexual offences, of which 42 780 were rape cases. This was higher than the previous year when over 52,600 individuals disclosed being affected by a sexual crime (Cowling, 2024).

These figures indicate that sexual offences are prevalent in South Africa despite the inconsistencies in the increase and decrease of the figures over the years. Statistics South

Africa and literature also revealed that women and children are often victims of sexual violence while men are the perpetrators (Egenasi et al., 2024; Statistics South Africa, 2019).

Children experience different events during the childhood period. These childhood experiences can be positive and/or negative (Daines et al., 2021). Positive childhood experiences are defined as experiences that occur within secure and nurturing social environments. These experiences are important for cognitive, social, and emotional development. Constructs related to positive childhood experiences are positive parenting, trusting and supporting relationships, supportive neighbourhoods and home learning environments, social engagements, and enjoyment (Guo et al., 2021).

Literature refers to negative childhood experiences as ACEs. ACEs are defined as traumatic events that can have enduring negative effects on health and overall well-being (Boullier & Blair, 2018). Different people regard different events as traumatic, and there are trends or changes in terms of what research highlights/regards as a traumatic event (Finkelhor, 2020). However, the following are ACEs that are mostly reported among sex offenders: Physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, household challenges, and emotional and physical neglect (Boullier & Blair, 2018). The household challenges include mental illness in the household, parental separation or divorce, the use of substances in the household and abuse of a mother figure (Boullier & Blair, 2018).

Research highlights the relationship between childhood experiences and sex offences. Marshall and Marshall (2000) found that the origin of sex offending lies in the offender's childhood experiences. Levenson and Grady (2016) added that incarcerated male sex offenders present with ACEs, such as childhood sexual abuse and emotional neglect and are raised by unmarried parents.

1.3 Problem Statement

The prevalence of GBV is a severe problem in the South African context. It harms women and children. Furthermore, it affects women's physical, mental, and sexual health. The physical complications include physical injuries, gastrointestinal disorders, HIV and AIDS, complications during pregnancy, chronic body pains as well as suicidality (Enaifoghe et al., 2021).

The GBV problem needs intervention from the government and other stakeholders. South Africa has made great strides in uplifting the victims of GBV, especially women. However, the GBV rates are still high (Enaifoghe et al., 2021). Different organisations and policies have been formulated and implemented to eradicate GBV. The recommendations include injecting more funds and resources into the Thuthuzela Care Centres and shelters that cater for the needs of GBV victims. (The National Strategic Plan on GBV & Femicide, 2020). Furthermore, a permanent relief scheme should be created to provide money for the most vulnerable and poor women, and constitutional mechanisms should be created to deal with the national response to GBV. Specific social behaviour change programme initiatives should address all the patriarchal norms, values, and structural drivers of GBV (The National Strategic Plan on GBV & Femicide, 2020). The National Strategic Plan on GBV and Femicide is a policy created by the South African government to combat GBV. (The National Strategic Plan on GBV & Femicide, 2020). The vision of this policy is to have a country that is free from GBV directed at women, children and LGBTQIA+ persons.

Furthermore, as highlighted above, it is evident that GBV is prevalent in South Africa. The victims of GBV, who are mostly women, suffer adverse effects such as health problems, homicides, suicides, AIDS-related deaths as well as gastrointestinal disorders, physical injuries, chronic pain syndrome, complications during pregnancy, miscarriage and low birthweight of children (Enaifoghe et al., 2021). The outlined strategies and recommendations

might effectively eradicate or decrease the statistics of GBV in South Africa. However, these recommendations and strategies are limited because they exclude men. This creates a problem because literature and statistics have highlighted that men are mostly perpetrators of GBV, specifically sexual offences. There were debates about engaging men and boys to prevent GBV, as well as policies and legislation that acknowledge the importance of including men and boys to prevent GBV. However, these policies view men as perpetrators and not as advocates of change (Colpitts, 2019; Meyiwa et al., 2017).

The exclusion of men in the GBV legislation and policies influences the interventions put in place to eradicate GBV. Ellsberg et al. (2015) found that interventions such as school-based interventions, high-level policy legislative reform, group-based training interventions to empower women and girls and community mobilisation effectively reduced sexual violence. On the other hand, the evidence suggests that some of these interventions and programmes reduce women's risks of victimisation, but there is less conclusive evidence for the preventative effects of programmes for perpetrators. The United Nations Population Fund reported that women and children/adolescents are the primary targets of GBV because they are at high risk, and they also suffer serious consequences compared to men (Enaifoghe et al., 2021). This is true; however, focusing solely on women and children is redundant as they are not perpetrators of sexual offences/violence. The exclusion of men in strategies and the understanding of behaviours amongst men related to GBV might influence the increasing statistics of sex offences in South Africa.

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007 protects victims of sexual offences. Section 3 of the act holds any person liable who unlawfully and intentionally commits an act of sexual penetration without consent (Criminal Law and Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act No. 32 of 2007). The amendment of this act also redefined, added, and combined all sexual offences into one law. It ensures that all

victims of sexual offences are protected, and victims of rape have access to post-exposure prophylaxis and increasing perpetrator penalties (Tompson & Simmons, 2012).

There are awareness campaigns about sexual violence/offence, research on how sexual violence/offence affects victims, laws on how long perpetrators of sexual violence/offence should be incarcerated, and how incarcerated offenders adjust in correctional centres. However, there is not enough research in South Africa that focuses on the perpetrators of GBV (i.e., the influences or childhood experiences of the perpetrators, particularly sex offenders). This leads to redundant interventions when dealing with sexual violence and offences in South Africa because the root cause of sexual offences is not understood (Naidoo & Van Hout, 202). It also results in the use of the same approaches and targets when dealing with sexual offences (Russell et al., 2020). The existing research focuses on victims of sexual offences and not much on the perpetrators of sexual offences, restricting the understanding of sexual offences in South Africa (Selepe et al., 2021).

Furthermore, research on sex offenders mostly highlights ACEs amongst sex offenders and not the general experience of the sex offenders. Most studies conducted use quantitative approaches. The ACEs questionnaire is mostly used in quantitative approaches. This measurement uses binary/dichotomous measures that fail to capture the complexity of lived childhood experiences. The measure uses single items to measure the 10 ACEs, which are complex and multifaced (MacLennan et al., 2020). The measure cannot capture the frequency of chronicity, complexity and severity experienced by the offenders in early childhood (DeLisi et al., 2021). The measure lacks contextual information because it avoids asking triggering questions. The measure also fails to capture other types of victimisations, such as peer and community violence. Furthermore, it does not capture the impact of factors such as poverty, which plays an important role in the well-being of children and youth (MacLennan et al., 2020). This widely used research approach makes it difficult to obtain a

comprehensive understanding of the lived childhood experiences of sex offenders and necessitated the current study.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

Interest in conducting a study on the lived childhood experiences of incarcerated male sex offenders was based on the history and assumptions of developmental psychology, literature, and statistics on perpetrators of sexual violence and offences in South Africa.

1. John Locke, the British philosopher of child/developmental psychology, was one of the first theorists to highlight that the environment influences what and who children become. He coined the concept of the “Tabula Rasa”, which means blank slate (Lerner, 2018; Louw & Louw, 2019). This concept does not suggest that children’s minds are formless but rather have a void of ideas generated through internal and external experiences (Duschinsky, 2012). Furthermore, developmental psychology has debates or arguments, such as the nature versus nurture debate (Louw & Louw, 2019). This debate questions whether a child's development is influenced by biological and genetic factors or environmental factors (Louw & Louw, 2019).

Developmental psychology theories are used to understand and predict behaviour. Different schools of thought or perspectives influence developmental theories. The first one is the biological perspective, which argues that biological factors determine behaviour. This perspective, however, does not disregard the influence of environmental factors; they acknowledge that environmental factors have a secondary role in human behaviour (Louw & Louw, 2019). The psychodynamic perspective understands behaviour through unconscious psychological motives such as drives and urges. Sigmund Freud, the pioneer of this perspective, was also one of the first theorists to acknowledge that early experiences establish patterns that

continue throughout a person's life (Louw & Louw, 2019; Newman & Newman, 2016). The learning theory acknowledges that the environment influences children's behaviour/development (Louw & Louw, 2012; Muro & Jeffery, 2006). Cognitive theories, on the other hand, highlight children's efforts to understand the world (Louw & Louw, 2019; Newman & Newman, 2016).

The last perspective is the contextual perspective, emphasising the importance of environmental factors. The environmental factors in this perspective differ from others because they include the child's culture, values, norms, and how different environments influence each other (Louw & Louw, 2019).

2. Literature on sexual violence and sexual offences has shown that women and children are mostly victims of sex offences while men are the perpetrators of sexual-related crimes in South Africa (Egenasi et al., 2024; Statistics South Africa, 2019). Between 6% and 56% of women reported having experienced sexual abuse from their partners. Sexual violence is also a common form of abuse against children reported in South Africa (Matthews & Benvenuti, 2014). Both girls and boys are victims of sexual violence (Ward et al., 2018). On the other hand, 28% and 38% of men, respectively, in South Africa are perpetrators of sexual offences/sexual violence such as rape (Dartnall & Jewke, 2013; Egenasi et al., 2024).

As discussed above, the different developmental psychology theories highlight different perspectives on understanding human behaviour and human development. Different factors contribute to behaviour during childhood and, therefore, form lived childhood experiences. It is also evident, as highlighted above, that men are the perpetrators of sexual violence/offences. Thus, it is imperative to understand the lived childhood experiences of male sex offenders and to understand the influences of these

lived experiences on their behaviour. It is also important to understand the lived childhood experiences from the sex offender's perspective to obtain a comprehensive understanding of their behaviour and experiences. In this regard, Naidoo and Sewpaul (2014) acknowledged the importance of understanding a sex offender's behaviour from their perspective. Therefore, this study aimed to address the existing gap in terms of fully understanding the lived childhood experiences of male sex offenders. Understanding the world through sex offenders' perspective could lead to behaviour change. Their motives or influences to offend might seem irrational and unacceptable, but it is the reality of their world. Understanding behaviour from the sex offender's perspective might also help reduce the risk of adopting inappropriate sex offender programmes (Naidoo & Van Hout, 2022).

1.5 Aim of the Study

This study aimed to explore themes of childhood lived experiences of incarcerated male sex offenders in South Africa.

1.6 Research Questions

Based on the research aim, the following research questions were formulated:

- What are the lived childhood experiences of male sex offenders?
- What is the role of childhood experiences in sex offences?

1.7 The Value of the Study

This study aims to add to the body of knowledge in understanding the lived childhood experiences of sexual offenders in the field of psychology within the South African context. The results of this study might highlight possible childhood experiences that predispose men to later sexual offences. Considering the GBV statistics in South Africa, these findings might inform early corrective interventions in childhood to reduce the prevalence of sexual offences in South Africa. The understanding of lived childhood

experiences amongst sex offenders might help with therapeutic intervention in correctional centres to avoid recidivism amongst offenders and the cycle of victimisation that might contribute to the high statistics of GBV in South Africa.

1.8 Research Approach and Design

This study adopted the qualitative approach, which is used to understand people's perceptions and experiences of the world (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The phenomenological design was used as an inquiry to understand the lived childhood experiences of the sex offenders, as phenomenological studies aim to understand people's lived experiences and how they make meaning of their experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith & Osborne, 2015). The multiple case study was used to understand the experiences of sex offenders incarcerated for different offences and in different correctional centres (Gustafsson, 2017).

1.9 Sampling

The population of interest was incarcerated male sex offenders aged between 26 and 60 from the Mangaung and Grootvlei correctional centres. A non-random purposive sampling technique was used to recruit participants. This sampling method allows researchers to deliberately select participants based on their suitability. It is typically used in qualitative research to select participants who are proficient and have experience with a phenomenon under study (Daniel, 2012; Etikan et al., 2016).

Furthermore, it requires participants to have the ability to articulate, express and reflect on their experiences (Etikan et al., 2016). Participants were also selected based on the study's inclusion and exclusion criteria (Daniel, 2012). Thus, the participants were chosen based on being male and incarcerated for any form of sexual offence committed. The participants were also selected based on their abilities to articulate their lived

experiences and themselves (i.e., they should not have any diagnosis of a psychological or psychiatric illness that affects their memory, insight, and articulation). Ten participants were recruited to reach data saturation, as recommended for phenomenological studies (Marshall et al., 2013).

1.10 Data Collection

The researcher conducted individual, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with the participants to collect data. Semi-structured interviews as a data collection method allow participants to share their experiences, perceptions, and thoughts (McIntosh & Morse, 2015; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). An interview schedule was used as a guideline throughout the interviews (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). All interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed into a full verbatim transcript after completion of the data collection process as stipulated by Busetto et al. (2020) and Jamshed (2014).

The interviews started with open-ended questions to ease the participants into the interview. Prompts, probes, and short periods of silence were used (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Robinson, 2023) to allow and encourage participants to share their experiences. Following the guidelines provided by Moser and Korstjens (2018), the duration of the interviews was between 30 and 90 minutes with each participant. The interviews were mostly conducted in English. However, other languages were also utilised to communicate participants' experiences. The interviews were transcribed, and interviews conducted in languages other than English were translated into English (Regmi et al., 2010).

1.11 Data Analysis

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the data. The data was transcribed, and the transcribed data was read multiple times. Notes were written

after reading the data multiple times. The notes focused on the language used, the context of the interview and aspects of personal reflexivity (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The written notes were then transformed into emerging themes, the relationship was identified, themes were clustered in each case, and patterns and relationships across the different cases were identified (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

1.12 Ethical Considerations

A research proposal was submitted to the Department of Psychology at the University of the Free State for critical review. Ethical clearance (UFSHSD2020/1950/20) was obtained from the General/Human Research Ethics Committee after approval by the Department of Psychology. The Department of Correctional Services then granted permission to collect data. The participants were provided with an information leaflet and informed consent document stipulating the purpose of the study and the potential risks and benefits. All participants gave written informed consent as stipulated by Dalen and Jones (2010). Following Klykken (2022) recommendations, continuous verbal consent was obtained throughout the interviews. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any time in line with Nijhawan et al.'s (2014) guidelines.

The ethical principles of beneficence and non-maleficence were upheld throughout the research process (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). The participants could make use of debriefing sessions after the research process to avoid harm. They were encouraged to report any cases of childhood sexual abuse to the management of the correctional centres. Pseudonyms were used to anonymise the data, protect participants' identities, and maintain confidentiality (Saunders et al., 2015). Data was kept in a locked cabinet, and the electronic data was stored on a password-protected laptop. All the documents were encrypted with a password to maintain confidentiality

(Department of Health, 2015).

1.13 Clarification of Concepts

The following section provides the definitions of the prominent concepts used in this study.

1.13.1 Lived Experience

Lived experience honours an individual's expression and considers how several constructs intersect to represent the individual's experience of a phenomenon (Prosek & Gibson, 2021). It is an individual's human experience involving how individuals respond and make sense of their own experiences (Boylorn, 2008).

1.13.2 Childhood

It is a developmental stage when an individual is a child. It is a period from birth to adolescence (Oxford English Dictionary, 2024).

1.13.3 Positive Childhood Experiences

Positive childhood experiences are experiences that occur within secure and nurturing social environments during childhood (Gau et al., 2021).

1.13.4 Negative/Adverse Childhood Experiences

Negative and ACEs are used interchangeably in this study. These experiences are traumatic events experienced during the childhood period that have enduring negative effects on health and overall well-being (Boullier & Blair, 2020).

1.13.5 Gender-Based Violence

GBV is any form of violence or abuse incited with the use of power against a minority population, which is mostly women and children, but not limited to women and children (Enaifoghe, 2019). It is also defined as physical, sexual, emotional, verbal and psychological violence towards another person of another gender, which can occur in the family and the overall community (Thobejane et al., 2018).

1.13.6 Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act using coercion, unwanted sexual comments, harassment or advances made towards a person, regardless of the nature of the relationship and setting (Asbury & Jewkes, 2011; Leemis et al., 2022).

1.13.7 Sex Offence

A sex offence is any unlawful sexual act punishable by law directed to another individual without their consent (Criminal Law Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act, 2007).

1.13.8 Sex Offender

A sex offender is an individual who has committed any type of sexual offence and has been sentenced for a sexual offence (Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006)

1.13.9 Incarceration

Incarceration is a long-term detention in a correctional centre after conviction by a court of law (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2024; Nester, 1993).

1.14 Dissertation Outline

This dissertation consists of six chapters.

Chapter 1 provided the overall orientation of the study, highlighting the background and motivation to conduct the study, the problem statement, and the rationale of the study. It also presented the aim, research questions, significance of the study, the methodology and ethical considerations adopted in the study, as well as definitions of prominent concepts in the study.

Chapter 2 provides extensive literature review on the childhood experiences of incarcerated male offenders and other related topics.

Chapter 3 presents the overall methodology adopted in this study, which includes the research approach and research design adopted, methods and procedures used to collect and analyse data, the quality criteria, as well as the ethical considerations adopted in the study.

Chapter 4 presents the study's findings, focusing on individual cases and clustering themes for each case.

Chapter 5 presents cross-analysis, which focuses on identifying similarities and differences across individual cases, as well as discussing the various themes.

Chapter 6 provides the overall conclusion, including the strengths, limitations and recommendations of the study.

1.15 Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted the general outline and overview of the study, including the background and motivation to conduct the study, the problem statement, and the rationale of the study. It also discussed the aim, research questions and the significance of the study. Furthermore, it provided a brief overview of the methodology of the study, ethical considerations and definition of prominent concepts in the study. Chapter 2 presents the literature reviewed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature reviewed about the lived childhood experiences of sex offenders. It highlights the childhood experiences of sex offenders. The second part explores the co-occurrence of ACEs. This is followed by an overview of the psychological impact of lived childhood experiences, the outcome of childhood experiences and the risk of offending later in life. Hereafter, an overview of childhood experiences and recidivism is provided. The last part explores the literature in the South African context, demonstrating the research gap on this topic and the general gap in sex offender research in the South African context.

2.2 Childhood Experiences

Children experience different events during the childhood period. These childhood experiences can be positive and/or negative (Daines et al., 2021). Positive childhood experiences are defined as experiences that occur within secure and nurturing social environments. These experiences are important for cognitive, social, and emotional development. Constructs related to positive childhood experiences are positive parenting, trusting and supporting relationships, supportive neighbourhoods and home learning environments, social engagements, and enjoyment (Guo et al., 2021).

Negative childhood experiences are typically referred to as ACEs in the literature. Since the seminal study by Felitti et al. (1998), a growing body of research has linked what they termed “ACEs” and defined them as traumatic events with enduring negative effects on health and overall well-being (Boullier & Blair, 2018). Kalmakis and Chandler (2014, p.1495) defined ACEs as “childhood events, varying in severity and often chronic, occurring

within a child's family or social environment that cause harm or distress, thereby disrupting the child's physical and psychological health and development".

Different people regard different events as traumatic, and there are trends or changes in terms of what research highlights or regards as a traumatic event (Finkelhor, 2020). However, examples of ACE include childhood abuse (emotional, psychological, physical, and sexual abuse) and dysfunction in the household (e.g., substance misuse, domestic violence, criminal behaviour or family members suffering from mental illness) (Anda et al., 2010; Dube et al., 2003). Researchers also highlighted the following: Physical and emotional neglect (Dube et al., 2003); witnessing family members' verbal, physical, and/or sexual abuse or maltreatment (Hamdullahpur et al., 2018); community violence (Almuneef et al., 2014); and having an incarcerated household member (Cronholm et al., 2015). Moreover, in their expansion of ACE, Cronholm et al. (2015) included children who lived in unsafe neighbourhoods or lived in foster care and who experienced bullying or discrimination. The attributes of ACE are that they are experienced by a child, vary in severity and harm, are often repeated over time and are self-reported (Cambron et al., 2014; Kalmakis & Chandler, 2014).

Furthermore, the following are ACEs that are mostly reported among sex offenders: Physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, household challenges, and emotional and physical neglect (Boullier & Blair, 2018). The household challenges include mental illness in the household, parental separation or divorce, the use of substances in the household and abuse of a mother figure (Boullier & Blair, 2018).

Moreover, research highlights the relationship between childhood experiences and sex offences. According to Marshall and Marshall (2000), the origin of sex offending lies in the offender's childhood experiences. Levenson and Grady (2016) found that incarcerated male

sex offenders present with ACEs, such as childhood sexual abuse and emotional neglect and are raised by unmarried parents. An expansion of the findings on the childhood experiences of sex offenders is covered in a subsequent section of this chapter.

2.3 Incarceration and Sexual Offences

Incarceration is defined as long-term detention in a correctional centre after conviction by a court of law (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2024; Nester, 1993). Furthermore, incarceration is defined as the state of being confined in prison or a similar institution as punishment for a crime. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, incarceration involves "the state of being imprisoned, especially in a jail or prison" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2022).

For Singh (2021), the correctional system is integral to criminal justice, referring to corrections as the administrative part of the criminal justice system based on its application of sentences and the enforcement of punishments. According to Peak (2012, p.205), the main objective of why offenders who break the law are sent to a correctional facility is “to protect society from crime by safely and securely handling criminal offenders while providing offenders some opportunities for self-improvement and increasing the chance that they will become productive and law-abiding citizens”. Therefore, correctional facilities detain incarcerated individuals in safe custody, enforce punishment handed down by courts and correct offending behaviour (Singh, 2021). Moreover, South Africa has the highest incarcerated population in correctional centres in Africa and the 12th highest in the world (Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services [JICS] Annual Report, 2019).

Sexual violence encompasses any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act using coercion, unwanted sexual comments, harassment, or advances made towards a person, regardless of the nature of the relationship and setting (Astbury & Jewkes, 2011). There are

different forms of sexual violence, which involve sex trafficking, genital mutilation, and all forms of unwanted sexual touching and harassment, with rape and attempted rape as the most severe forms of sexual violence (Astbury & Jewkes, 2011). South Africa has one of the highest levels of rape perpetration. Between 6% and 59% of women are victims of rape or a form of sexual violence. Children are also vulnerable to sexual abuse. The prevalence is significantly higher in females, except for being forced to perform a sexual act involving penetration, with equivalent rates in women and men, and being shown pornographic material, which was more commonly reported by males and girls are at greater risk compared to boys at home and school (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013; Ferragut et al., 2022).

Neither the Department of Correctional Services nor the Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services reports on the number of incarcerated sex offenders and therefore no statistics in this regard are available. However, statistics reported by the South African Police Service revealed a significant increase in sex offences in South Africa. Sexual offences reported to the police between 2018 and 2019 increased by 4%. There was also an increase in the number of victims of sexual offences between 2015/16 and 2016/17. The number decreased between 2016/17 and 2018/19 and then increased again between 2018/19 and 2019/20; however, the change between 2015/16 and 2019/20 was not statistically significant (Statistics South Africa, 2020).

Furthermore, the South African police crime statistics revealed that 64 419 sexual offence cases were reported in 2012, 62 226 in 2013, 66 197 in 2014 and 53 617 in 2015. An increase in overall GBV cases was reported between 01 April 2018 and 31 March 2019. Sexual offences increased from 50 108 in 2017/18 to 52 420 in 2018/19, most of these cases were rape cases (Oladimeji & Osunkule, 2023). An increase in sexual offence cases was reported again in 2019/2020, with 53 293 reported cases. From October to December 2021, 11 315 rape cases were reported, averaging 123 cases per day (Oladimeji & Osunkule, 2023).

Although all reported cases do not lead to conviction, these police statistics may serve as an indication of the extent of sex offences in South Africa.

These figures indicate that sexual offences are prevalent in South Africa despite the inconsistencies in the increase and decrease of the figures over the years. Statistics South Africa and literature also revealed that women and children are often victims of sexual violence while men are the perpetrators (Egenasi et al., 2024; Statistics South Africa, 2019).

2.4 Gender-based Violence, Sex Offences and Childhood Experiences

(GBV) statistics are high in South Africa, with sexual offences/violence being one of the highest forms of GBV (Enaifoghe et al., 2021; Govender, 2023; Statistics South Africa, 2020). It is reported that women and young girls are mostly affected by GBV and sexual offences/violence (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013; Egenasi et al., 2024; Statistics South Africa, 2019). However, men and young boys are also affected by GBV, but the experience of GBV by young boys and men is not well documented in the literature and legislation (Mphatheni & Mlama, 2022).

The experience and exposure to GBV have a negative impact during childhood, which continues into adulthood (Alho, 2023). The experience of violence in the household leads to unhealthy trauma responses and difficulties in interpersonal relationships, which include the perpetration of physical and emotional abuse in romantic relationships (Alho, 2023). Childhood exposure to domestic violence, community violence and childhood sexual victimisation are also associated with subsequent drug abuse (Collings, 2015).

It is difficult to separate GBV, childhood experience, and subsequent sexual offending later in life. This is because incarcerated sex offenders report being exposed to a form of GBV during childhood, such as exposure to physical abuse, sexual abuse, and violence in the family and community (Ngubane et al., 2022). The majority of sex

offenders report childhood experiences of sexual abuse, as highlighted above (Dury et al., 2019; Kahn et al., 2021). Furthermore, the experience of adversity, which involves an experience of a form of GBV during childhood, is associated with negative outcomes which include criminal behaviour and sexual offences later in life (Cuadra et al., 2014; Hughes et al., 2017; Kahn et al., 2021; Levenson et al., 2016; Satapathy et al., 2022; Tzouvara et al., 2023).

2.5 Childhood Experiences among Sex Offenders

There is a high prevalence of ACE amongst the offender population, irrespective of the type of offence. Research indicates that 84.1% of the population report experiencing at least one adversity during childhood, whilst some report being exposed to four or more different ACE (Ford et al., 2019; Levenson et al., 2016). However, ACEs are more prevalent among male sex offenders (Levenson & Socia, 2015). Different ACEs, such as emotional neglect, households with unmarried parents, and child sexual, verbal, and physical abuse, exist. Sex offenders are 13 times more likely to experience verbal abuse and more than four times more likely to experience emotional neglect or growing up in a household with unmarried parents (Levenson, 2014). Furthermore, they also have three times the chance of experiencing child sexual abuse and approximately twice the chance of experiencing physical abuse (Levenson, 2014). In addition, studies indicate that 38% of sex offenders report experiencing childhood sexual abuse (Dury et al., 2019; Levenson et al., 2016). Another study indicated that 56% of sex offenders experienced childhood sexual abuse (Kahn et al., 2021).

There is an increased possibility of most sex offenders experiencing ACEs, especially those related to child harm, such as physical abuse and physical neglect. The most reported ACE is verbal and physical abuse (Kahn et al., 2021). Moreover, other offenders present with a high prevalence and significant associations with other ACEs, such as

dissociative experiences, adverse family experiences and psychiatric problems (Altintas & Bilici, 2018; Puszkiewicz & Stinson, 2019). Furthermore, the majority of incarcerated male sex offenders present with a young age of onset of the first offence, previous convictions, substance use and previous sexual crimes, while incarcerated women present with a psychiatric background, childhood trauma caused by sexual abuse and other violent crimes (Altintas & Bilici, 2018). There are differences in exposure or prevalence of ACEs amongst different offender groups. Sexual offenders reported four times or more adversity during childhood than child abusers (Reavis et al., 2013). Domestic violence offenders are more likely to report no adversity during childhood compared to sex offenders. Sexual offenders and child abusers have higher than expected rates of childhood sexual abuse, while stalkers have lower than expected rates (Reavis et al., 2013).

2.6 The Co-Occurrence of Lived Childhood Experiences among Sex Offenders

Traumatic childhood experiences rarely occur in isolation, as sex offenders who are exposed to single adverse experiences are often at risk for exposure to other adverse experiences (Brown et al., 2019; Kahn et al., 2021). Sex offenders who experience childhood sexual abuse are twice as likely to have endured other forms of maltreatment or family dysfunctions (Levenson et al., 2016).

However, the co-occurrence of the experience of adversity is not limited to childhood sexual abuse. For example, it was found that if the sex offenders' parents were divorced, they were likely to experience emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional neglect; those who lived with someone who used substances were diagnosed with a mental illness, had a record of being incarcerated (Stensrud et al., 2019), were most likely emotionally and physically abused and have been witnesses to their mother's abuse. If they lived with someone who had been incarcerated before, they tend to report the abuse of a mother figure (Stensrud et al., 2019). Furthermore, other ACEs, such as child

maltreatment, co-occur with other family dysfunctions. This includes being raised in an environment where parents are not equipped to care for their children to prevent them from harm. These dysfunctional family environments are associated with the occurrence of maladaptive interpersonal patterns such as sexual criminal behaviour (Levenson & Socia, 2015).

Experiencing different types and combinations of adversities during childhood also results in different offence outcomes. Household dysfunction was associated with a more general pattern of offending behaviours (Puszkiewicz & Stinson, 2019). This includes early onset and continuous nonsexual offending and contact sexual offending. Sexual abuse and exposure to sexual boundary problems in the household were associated with an early onset of sexually abusive behaviour and indications of contact and versatile offending (Puszkiewicz & Stinson, 2019).

2.7 The Psychological Impact of Lived Childhood Experiences

Childhood experiences have a psychological impact on children. The experiences can be negative or positive. Adults growing up in two-parent families with close family relationships tend to have better physical health, and fewer chronic conditions and lower depressive symptoms than those who did not (Andersson, 2016; Chen & Harris, 2019; Chopik & Edelstein, 2019; Ferraro et al., 2016). Furthermore, there is a relationship between positive childhood experiences and better cognitive functioning as a child and in adulthood through a sense of control over life and the building of resilience which could provide an important pathway to successful cognitive aging (Lee & Schafer, 2021). On the other hand, ACEs have long-term effects on psychological well-being, the risk of being involved in risky behaviours, and poor physical health in adulthood (Parnes & Schwartz, 2022). ACEs impact mental well-being and are associated with depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation later in life (Silveria & Pereira, 2023).

ACEs also affect children's brain development and immune and endocrine systems (Boullier & Blair, 2018). Children who experience ACEs are more likely to develop dysfunctional habits and behaviours such as smoking, the use of alcohol as well as antisocial behaviour (Boullier & Blair, 2018; Bezuidenhout, 2018; Hesselink & Jordaan, 2018). These behaviours affect the children's overall well-being and disrupt neurological development (Boullier & Blair, 2018). Furthermore, the children's hippocampus, amygdala, and prefrontal cortex are vulnerable to the stress caused by ACEs. This leads to behavioural problems, concentration problems, memory problems, learning problems and poor overall executive functioning (Boullier & Blair, 2018). Exposure to ACEs such as abuse, neglect and other stressors during childhood affects the development and the functioning of the brain, including the neuroendocrine process that is related to the stress response and hyperarousal. This may lead to developing pathologies later in life (Kahn et al., 2021).

Moreover, ACEs affect children's ability to cope with stress throughout their lifespan (McLafferty et al., 2019). Exposure to prolonged adversity is linked to a dysregulated hypothalamic pituitary adrenal axis (HPA axis), predisposing children to psychological pathologies (Clemens et al., 2020; Dempster et al., 2021). Childhood adversity affects HPA regulation, as well as the ability to cope with the impact of the stress caused by childhood adversity (Cascino & Monteleone, 2023; Heim et al., 2001; Hulme, 2010). The dysregulation of the HPA axis is also related to hypersexuality problems found in some sex offenders (Chatzittofis et al., 2015; Knight & Ru, 2021).

As mentioned above, ACE impact children's psychological functioning and neurological development (Boullier & Blair, 2018; Kahn et al., 2021; Parnes & Schwartz, 2022). Exposure to adversity during childhood leads to the use of maladaptive coping mechanisms. General criminal and sexually abusive behaviour are some of the coping

responses that emerge from early traumatic experiences among sex offenders (Bezuidenhout, 2018; Hesselink & Jordaan, 2018; Levenson & Grady, 2016). They have a sexualised way of coping, which is a way of comforting or satisfying the need for intimacy, affection, and control. This is mostly found in sex offenders who were molested as children (Cortoni & Marshall, 2001; Levenson & Grady, 2016).

The exposure to adversity during childhood also contributes to social, emotional, and cognitive impairments. The impairments incite the adoption of high-risk behaviours as coping strategies (Feelgood et al., 2005; Levenson, 2014; Levenson & Grady, 2016). Early traumatic experiences lead to psychiatric conditions and negative emotional states. The absence of effective coping skills then leads to deviant sexual fantasies as a way to avoid the psychiatric and emotional states among sex offenders (Maniglio, 2011).

In addition, exposure to persistent harsh conditions as a child can cause anxiety, anger, depression, and a sense of helplessness. The chronic trauma caused by the adverse experiences lays the foundation for a range of interpersonal problems and maladaptive coping skills stemming from long-standing relational deficits and distorted cognitive schemas about oneself and others (Levenson et al., 2016). Early maladaptive schemas are formed due to unsatisfied core emotional needs in childhood (Zeynel & Uzer, 2020). Furthermore, abused children are likely to develop maladaptive schemas and cognitive distortions (Narimani, 2012). Early maladaptive schemas can also be inherited from one generation to the next through ACEs, especially in children with absent fathers (Zeynel & Uzer, 2020). Different forms of abuse, such as emotional and physical abuse and physical neglect, are associated with the development of different maladaptive groups of schemas. These include disconnection and rejection, impaired autonomy and performance, impaired limits, other directiveness, and over-vigilant and inhibition schemas (Narimani, 2012; Young et al., 2003). These schemas have a different impact depending on the type of

adversity and are associated with different types of sexual offences or offender groups (Carvalho & Nobre, 2014).

The experience of adversity also affects regulation, a developmental task that needs to be reached in childhood. Affect regulation has different components: Awareness, labelling, modulation of arousal and expression, acceptance, and reflection (Gunst et al., 2017). These components are learned during childhood through the mirroring process, which is disrupted in children who are exposed to adversity and present with poor attachment styles in childhood. Affect regulation problems, therefore, play a role in the onset of behavioural problems such as sexual abuse (Gunst et al., 2017; Howells et al., 2004).

Furthermore, the experience of adversity also disrupts the process of forming healthy attachments in childhood and these unhealthy forms of attachment progress into adulthood (Howard et al., 2023; Smith et al., 2016). The majority of sex offenders display attachment problems which stem from childhood, and they mostly present with an insecure attachment style (Grattaglione et al., 2015). Their relationships with both mothers and fathers are characterised by affectionless control, low parental care, high overprotection, and control (McKillop et al., 2012). Male sex offenders who experienced any type of child abuse in childhood present with a fearful or preoccupied attachment style. On the other hand, those who did not experience any type of abuse present with a more secure attachment and are less likely to engage in antisocial behaviours such as sex offences later in life (Grady et al., 2019).

In addition, offenders who sexually assaulted children were generally found to struggle with feelings of mistrust, which led to the development of certain attachment styles and personality disorders. Avoidant and anxious attachments are related to the

development of personality disorders among offenders who sexually assaulted children. The attachment problems and development of personality disorders are related to feelings of mistrust (Garafalo & Bogaerts, 2019). Lack of secure parental attachments leads to a lack of a positive psychological working model, making it difficult for offenders to form healthy relationships with other people. Their mode of thinking or the lack of a positive psychological working model influences the adoption of inappropriate ways of achieving goals. Violence is used to achieve autonomy, whereas sexual abuse is used to achieve intimacy goals (Simons et al., 2008).

2.8 The Outcome of Childhood Experiences and the Risk of Offending Later in Life

2.8.1 Positive and Adverse Childhood Experiences

Childhood experiences influence behaviour and health outcomes in adulthood. Bethall et al. (2019) found a relationship between positive childhood experiences and adult mental health. Positive childhood experiences influence the promotion of positive health, which includes receiving needed social and emotional support or flourishing as an adult (Bethall et al., 2019).

In addition, positive childhood experiences such as growing up in a happy family and socioeconomic status predict better adult cognitive functioning. Growing up in a nurturing family environment leads to developing a sense of control over life and building resilience that can build pathways to healthy cognitive functioning (Lee & Schafer, 2021). The family environment also reflects the emotional and psychosocial resources of caregivers as well as the quality of one's learning environment. A close link exists between parental education, family income and adult health. All these experiences in the family during childhood play an important role in shaping adult cognitive functioning (Barreto et al., 2017; Lee & Schafer, 2021).

Furthermore, it is argued that even though people with positive childhood experiences can experience negative outcomes in adulthood, like mental health issues such as depression, it is not as severe as for people who experienced traumatic events during childhood (Bethall et al., 2019). Positive childhood experiences are protective factors in the presence of ACEs (Almedia et al., 2023). They predict less risky behaviours, substance abuse, and mental health conditions such as depression and have a strong effect on the improved health of young adults (Crandall et al., 2020).

However, there is limited literature that highlights the relationship or the outcome of positive childhood experiences among male sex offenders. Nonetheless, there is an indication that positive childhood experiences can be mitigating factors in offenders exposed to ACEs. These have been identified as protective factors against reoffending among young sex offenders (Baglivio & Wolf, 2020).

It was also found that there is a correlation between ACEs and negative outcomes in adulthood (Cuadra et al., 2014; Hughes et al., 2017; Tzouvara et al., 2023). Children who are exposed to harsh living experiences develop problematic behaviours as adults, which are related to their childhood experiences. Sex offenders who experience traumatic childhood experiences can develop internalising and externalising psychopathology (McCallum et al., 2022; Reaivas et al., 2013). The negative outcomes in adulthood also include physical problems, the development of mental disorders, aggressive behaviour, and criminality (Reaivas et al., 2013; Stinson et al., 2021). The negative outcomes include substance use, depression, suicide attempts and problematic sexual behaviours, which could lead to sexual offences later in adulthood (Kahn et al., 2021). It is evident that sex offenders have increased odds of being diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, depressive disorder, alcohol use, antisocial personality disorder and paraphilia diagnoses in adulthood (Bismpa et al., 2020; Ether et al., 2019). However, it is not just the experience of the ACEs

that causes severe adult psychopathology but the unresolved childhood trauma due to the adverse events. The unresolved trauma contributes to offending patterns, which include sex-related crimes (Alitintas & Bilici, 2018).

Furthermore, as mentioned, experiencing adversity in childhood is associated with different negative outcomes in adulthood (Cuadra et al., 2014; Hughes et al., 2017; Tzouvara et al., 2023). The experience of childhood adversity increases the chances of criminal behaviour problems in adulthood for sex offenders (Levenson et al., 2016; Satapathy et al., 2022). The experience of any type of adversity during childhood has an impact. However, there are arguments about the severity or traumatic impact of the different adverse experiences amongst sex offences and sexual offences later in life. A history of neglect as a child was found to have an impact on sex offenders (Reaivas et al., 2013). Others argue that child sexual abuse has the most traumatic effect compared to other adverse experiences (Dowling et al., 2021). It is followed by emotional abuse, emotional neglect, physical abuse, household mental illness, physical neglect, incarcerated household members, household substance abuse, parental separation, divorce, and household physical violence (Ports et al., 2016).

Moreover, child sexual abusers have a heightened sexualised childhood compared to rapists. This is due to childhood experiences such as sexual abuse, early exposure to pornography, early and frequent masturbation, and sexual involvement with animals (Simons et al., 2008). Rapists' childhood experiences are characterised by physical abuse, emotional abuse, parental violence, and cruelty to animals. Both offender groups have reported experiences of insecure attachment and exposure to violent media. All these experiences are risk factors for sexual offences in adulthood (Simons et al., 2008).

It was also found that psychological abuse significantly impacts sex offenders compared to other ACEs, especially if the psychological abuse was perpetrated by a father figure (Davis & Knight, 2019). Psychological abuse predicts hypersexual thoughts and behaviours among sex offenders (Kingston et al., 2017). Male sex offenders who were exposed to this type of adversity tend to have sexual interest in children. Psychological abuse is not only related to sexual interest in children but also to the etiological bases of some paraphilias (Davis & Knight, 2019).

There are gender differences concerning the impact of ACEs and the perpetration of sexual offences in adulthood. Male child sex abuse victims are more likely to become child sex offenders compared to girls who experience child sex abuse. This happens if the abuse took place from age 12 onwards, if the offender experienced frequent sexual abuse, or has been abused by someone who is a father figure, and the child is dependent on him (Plummer & Cossins, 2018). Physically or sexually abused boys who witnessed their mother's abuse during childhood are also more likely to threaten or physically abuse their romantic partners as adults (Reaivas et al., 2013). In addition, ACEs such as child physical abuse, use of substances in the household, mental illness in the family and incarceration of a family member predict violent sexual offence. However, this was only found in offenders who commit other crimes, as opposed to those who only commit sexual-related crimes (Levenson & Grady, 2016). Exposure to violence and experience of other adverse experiences is also associated with sexual homicide (DeLisi & Beauregard, 2018).

2.8.2 Negative/Maladaptive Schemas

As mentioned earlier, experiencing ACEs can lead to the development of distorted cognitive schemas. There is an association between early maladaptive schemas, distorted cognitions, and vulnerability to offend (Carvalho & Nobre, 2014; Szumskiet et al., 2018).

Different sex offender groups present with different maladaptive schemas, which predispose them to commit different sexual-related crimes. Early maladaptive cognitive schemas are prevalent among all types of sexual offenders, but it is more prevalent among child sexual abusers and rapists (Carvalho & Nobre, 2014). Thus, child sexual abusers present with schemas of abandonment, mistrust, defectiveness, fear of rejection, pessimism, and disconnection and have self-depreciation thinking styles. These schemas influence the development and maintenance of emotional bonds between adult partners. Sex offenders are unable to secure and maintain healthy relationships in adulthood due to these early maladaptive schemas, which lead to the tendency to sexually offend (Carvalho & Nobre, 2014; Manesh et al., 2010).

Furthermore, early maladaptive schemas related to abandonment, social isolation, defectiveness/shame, self-sacrifice, and subjugation are more prevalent in child sexual offenders compared with non-sexual violent offenders. Comparing sexual offenders with adults, child offenders were found to have high scores on early maladaptive schemas related to social isolation (Chakhsi et al., 2013; Richardson, 2005). Child sexual abuse is associated with levels of difficulty recognising, expressing, and describing one's emotions and negative schemas about others. These are associated with an increased chance of committing a sexual offence later in life (Chakhsi et al., 2013; Unger, 2021).

In addition, early maladaptive schemas lead to sexual aggression. Sexual aggression is related to the inability of child sex abusers to form healthy sexual relationships (Carvalho & Nobre, 2014; Martin & Tardiff, 2014; Sigre-Leiros et al., 2016). Sex offenders also experience failed intimacy with adult partners, which leads to social isolation and fear of abandonment. It was found that searching for intimate partners outside normative adult relationships is an effective way of dealing with the fear of

rejection and overall deficit. Sex offenders, therefore, struggle with this due to early maladaptive schemas (Carvalho & Nobre, 2014; Farr, 2010; McKillop et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the impaired autonomy/performance domain of early maladaptive schemas was found to be significantly related to rape and child sexual abuse (Carvalho & Nobre, 2014; Sigré-Leiros et al., 2013). These schemas include dependence, incompleteness, vulnerability and enmeshment, undeveloped self, and failure schemas (Carvalho & Nobre, 2014). These schemas characterise people who are highly dependent on their parents. They perceive themselves as incompetent and unable to establish goals. Sex offenders present with a negative self-perception because of these schemas. The sense of incompetence schema may play a role in offenders' self-perception. The impaired autonomy schemas are generally associated with sexual problems and play a role in offenders' sexual functioning (Carvalho & Nobre, 2014).

Furthermore, the early maladaptive schemas indicate compulsive sexual severity and cognitive distortions. Sex offenders were found to have a high compulsive severity and more cognitive distortions (Efrati et al., 2021). Compulsive sexual severity is related to distorted expectations that basic social needs such as love, warmth, safety, and social belonging will not be met (Efrati et al., 2021). The cognitive distortions also influence sex offenders' decisions prior to the offence and help them function after the offence. The main function of these distortions is to help them with the negative reactions from other people after the offence. They adopt minimisations and denial, and the cognitive distortions also maintain their sexual offending behaviours (Szumskiet et al., 2018).

2.8.3 Attachment

As mentioned earlier, there is a relationship between poor attachment and sex offences in adulthood (Gunst et al., 2017). However, sexual offenders start with sexual

offending in early adolescence because of attachment problems or report parental attachment difficulties (Morias et al., 2018). The development of poor attachment problems is related to the experience of adversity during childhood (Tell, 2010). The majority of sex offenders report insecure attachment, and it is common in all sex offender groups (Stirpe et al., 2004). Furthermore, poor/insecure attachments lead to low self-esteem, poor social skills, and a lack of empathy (Loinaz et al., 2018; Marshall, 2010). These deficits make relating to peers difficult during the adolescent stage and lead to developing social messages to objectify other people, portray other people as instruments of sexual pleasure, and emphasise power and control over others. Poor attachments also correlated to loneliness as an adult and poor intimacy in relationships. These are all breeding grounds for sex offences (Marshall, 2010).

In addition, acute attachment problems precipitate behaviours related to sexual abuse. The offender's attachment problems reemerge in the context of intimate relationships and other life problems (McKillop et al., 2012). Sex offenders reported experiencing interpersonal problems months before their sexual offence and the use of maladaptive strategies such as substance use and isolation. The offender's insecure adult attachment becomes more prevalent in the period preceding the onset of sex offences. This was, however, found only among offenders who were in intimate relationships before their offences (McKillop et al., 2012).

Grady et al. (2017) acknowledged that ACEs lead to insecure attachment in individuals. Insecure attachments lead to psychological and social deficits that are consistent with criminogenic needs (Grady et al., 2017; Yoder et al., 2019). Criminogenic needs include factors such as deficits in or a lack of emotional regulation, arousal control, intimacy and relationship skills, problem-solving, self-monitoring, social skills and victims' awareness and empathy, as well as a lack of family networks, minimal offence

responsibility and unhealthy sexual attitudes (Grady et al., 2017). These criminological needs are a risk of sexual offending behaviours, and a person is most likely to offend if they present with more than one of these needs (Grady et al., 2017; Zeng et al., 2015).

However, Sigre-Leirós et al. (2016) found that sex offenders have problematic rearing practices from parents. Rapists, who refer to those who commit sexual offences against an adult victim in the context of this discussion, did not receive emotional warmth from their fathers compared to child molesters and non-sex offenders (Sigre-Leirós et al., 2016). Parental attitudes of affection, acceptance, support, and valuing characterise emotional warmth. On the other hand, paedophilic sex offenders report experiencing a lack of emotional warmth from their mothers (Sigre-Leirós et al., 2016).

It was found that developmental experiences with parents are associated with interpersonal problems and sex offending. In general, offenders' experiences and events in their childhood affect their orientation to intimate relationships and increase their chances of offending (Levenson & Socia, 2016; Martin & Tradiff, 2014). The perpetration of sexual offence-related crimes is mostly preceded by painful emotions, particularly feelings of abandonment (Keaulen de Vos et al., 2022). However, even though insecure attachment is associated with sex offending, insecure attachments do not always continue into adulthood and lead to a sex offence in adulthood (Mckillop et al., 2012; Ogilvie et al., 2014).

However, it should be noted that even though it is proven that there is a strong relationship between adverse experiences in childhood and the risk of offending later in life amongst sex offenders, not all individuals who have been subjected to childhood adversity will be adversely affected and progress to becoming offenders themselves (Lee et al., 2010).

It is always important to consider the influence and impact of positive childhood experiences (Lee et al., 2010).

2.9 Childhood Experiences and Recidivism

There is a risk of recidivism amongst male sex offenders and offenders convicted for other offences. This risk is associated with the experience of adversity during childhood among convicted offenders (Moore & Tatman, 2016). Convicted offenders who re-offend experienced either emotional abuse, lack of support from the family, neglect, divorce or separation of parents, abuse of the mother, suicide, and mental illness in the household, as well as incarceration in the family (Heirigs et al., 2020).

Juvenile sex offenders are less inclined to reoffend than adult sexual offenders; however, some of them progress to commit sexual crimes in adulthood (Lobanov-Rostovsky, 2015). There are reports of ACEs such as emotional and sexual abuse and neglect in childhood amongst the juvenile sex offender group. The early onset of offence amongst juvenile sex offenders is attributed to poor attachment and emotional dysregulation (Pammenter et al., 2022).

Moreover, neglect is not only associated with recidivism among juvenile sex offenders but juvenile offenders in general. The general association of ACEs and recidivism amongst juvenile sex offenders is mediated by other factors such as gender, social relationships, positive experiences, and empathy (Astridge et al., 2023). The lack of empathy plays a critical role in the chances of recidivism among juvenile sex offenders. The experience of an adverse childhood and lack of empathy predict recidivism, lead to a cycle of offence, and predict sexual offending behaviour later in life (Lobanov-Rostovsky, 2015; Narvey et al., 2021).

In adult male offenders, the majority of the offenders re-offend long-term. In a study by Hanson and colleagues, they found in the 20.5 average years follow-up period after release, 31.6% commit new sexual crimes, and 41% commit new violent crimes. The percentage is higher among high-risk sexual offenders; sexual crimes are 40.0%, 56.3% for violent crimes and 65.5% for any crime (Hanson et al., 2022). In a study of offenders completing a sexual offender rehabilitation programme during 18 months of incarceration, 40% reoffended in some way, including 6% sexual reoffence. Self-perceived protective strengths, such as self-perceived ability to control one's temper and anger, make better decisions, prosocial support from family and friends, and possess adequate education and training for employment may reduce the likelihood of sexual recidivism (Miller, 2015).

As mentioned above, recidivism is associated with the experience of adversity during childhood. This was also found among adult male sex offenders. Furthermore, neglect has been found to have the most impact, contributing to the risk of recidivism among male sex offenders (D'Urso et al., 2021). The effects of ACEs are particularly strong for domestic violence and sex offences among White female offenders and Black male sex offenders. Among Black males, exposure to ACEs increases the odds of recidivism for any violent crime, domestic violence, and sexual assault (Craig & Zettler, 2021; Heirigs et al., 2020). ACEs increase the likelihood of domestic violence recidivism for Black males. The exposure to domestic violence is related to domestic violence recidivism (Craig & Zettler, 2021). It is not only the exposure to domestic violence but the severity/frequency of the exposure that has the most impact (Craig & Zettler, 2021).

Furthermore, ACEs are not the only predictors of recidivism amongst sex offenders. Recidivist sexual offenders are characterised by sexual deviancy, early onset of sexual offence, diverse offences including general crimes, the use of substances, antisocial attitudes, a possible personality disorder diagnosis, history of sexual victimisation and

incomplete treatment during the incarceration period and after incarceration (Lievore, 2004). Psychopathy was found to be another predictor of recidivism among offenders. Psychopathy is associated with various forms of antisocial behaviour, including sexual assault. Lack of empathy characterising psychopathic offenders facilitates the perpetration of extreme violence and is associated with the risk of recidivism amongst adult male sex offenders (Moretti et al., 2023).

Moreover, other factors such as criminal history and the age of onset of offence were found to affect participation in education and employment and contribute to recidivism amongst the offender population, including sex offenders (Nally et al., 2014; Van Dain et al., 2021). An extensive offending history leads to frequent convictions, including imprisonment, resulting in lower educational achievement (Van Dain et al., 2021). In addition, these individuals are perceived as less trustworthy, valuable, or suitable for employment. Those convicted of rape and child-related sexual offences are perceived as more untrustworthy and rejected in job interviews (Porter et al., 2022). The rejection and stigma of offender employment make it difficult for offenders to be integrated into society and increase the risk of recidivism (Decker et al., 2015).

2.10 Literature in the South African Context

There is a research gap regarding the lived childhood experiences of male sex offenders in South Africa and research on sex offenders in general. In this regard, Londt and Roman (2014) acknowledged that research on sexual offenders is not well documented and published in South Africa. However, Naidoo and Sewpaul (2014) conducted a study on the lived childhood experiences of male adolescent sex offenders. They found that there is a relationship between family dynamics and sex offences. Poverty, problematic family relationships, domestic violence, exposure to pornography,

unresolved trauma, poor family and societal values and absent fathers are some of the issues experienced by youth sex offenders in South Africa (Naidoo & Sewpaul, 2014).

The sex offenders also experience helplessness, which is caused by unpredictable and uncontrollable life experiences. Sexual behaviours are then used as tension-reducing mechanisms, assisting with gaining power and control that was lost through the feeling of helplessness (Naidoo & Sewpaul, 2014). Sexual behaviours are also a source of nurturance, pleasure, and comfort. They also argue that adolescents in South Africa are generally exposed to violence; the reoccurrence of violence within the family, incorporated with the experience of sexual abuse, without a protective family environment and other protective factors, leads to the experience of traumatic feelings (Naidoo & Sewpaul, 2014). However, in some offenders, sexual behaviour was just normalised and not considered wrong. Others were socialised to perceive violence and sexual control as a way to express themselves (Naidoo & Sewpaul, 2014).

The research suggests that neglect of these issues may increase the likelihood of producing adults who repeat their own life experiences. It is argued that the neglect of the experiences encountered by sex offenders may increase the chances of repetition of their own life experiences in adulthood (Naidoo & Sewpaul, 2014). In addition, some studies show that sex offenders, such as serial rapists in South Africa, report having lost parents to harsh diseases like acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), experienced child sexual abuse, neglect by parents and an overall poor relationship with parents (Bougard & Hesselink, 2019; Meinck, 2016). They also reported not feeling supported by parents at the time of disclosing experiences of child sexual abuse. This then leads to the offender developing unresolved anger issues that can be deeply entrenched in underlying sexual paraphilias about relieving sexual fantasies (Bougard & Hesselink, 2019).

Furthermore, research in South Africa highlights that sex offenders reported being separated from their parents at an earlier age, had a poor relationship with their mother and had been raised by a single parent (Londt & Roman, 2014). This leads to developing a poor attachment, which contributes to emotional loneliness and reproduces aggression, and the individual becomes a self-centred person. Sex offenders then objectify people and use them as instruments of sexual pleasure, emphasising power and control over them because of their adverse experiences (Londt & Roman, 2014).

It was also found that offenders who were victims of child sexual abuse tend to sexually abuse children. Child sex offenders use sexual aggression against children to mend their brokenness and affirm their own power and control (Naidoo & Van Hout, 2021). The sex offenders' pathways to the perpetration of child abuse share commonalities in degrees of childhood exposure to physical and sexual violence, lack of parental affection, sibling, and parental and institutional sexual abuse during childhood (Naidoo & Van Hout, 2021).

Furthermore, some studies argue that some sex offenders use sexual violence as a way of achieving nonsexual needs such as power and dealing with anger problems (Bougard & Hesselink, 2019). Some acts of sexual offence can be classified as revenge motivated by unresolved anger. Sex offenders report having doubts about their sexuality. The doubts about one's sexuality related to masculinity affect most male sex offenders (Bougard & Hesselink, 2019).

Other studies argue that childhood socialisation plays an important role among some sex offenders, highlighting that a gendered power hierarchy and early childhood socialisation into social norms influence the exercise of gendered sexual power (Gqola, 2015; Jewkes et al., 2010). Male sex perpetrators hold certain ideas due to socialisation

during childhood, leading to different motivations for rape perpetration (Jewkes et al., 2010). One motivation includes the notion that women should be punished, and this is normally expressed through sex. The socialisation of boy children conveys norms and values of sexual entitlement, which leads to sexual offences (Jewkes et al., 2010).

ACEs are generally prevalent in lower-income countries like South Africa, compared to higher-income countries (Manyema & Ritcher, 2019; Naicker et al., 2017). Compared to other countries, the status of household and community factors in childhood in lower-income countries, is associated with the experience of an ACE and multiple other adversities during childhood (Manyema & Ritcher, 2019; Meinck et al., 2016). However, the prevalence of sex and physical abuse was lower compared to higher-income countries (Manyema & Ritcher, 2019; Meinck et al., 2016).

As mentioned above, children in lower-income countries report experiencing multiple adversities during childhood (Manyema & Ritcher, 2019). South African children report having experienced one childhood adversity or traumatic event in their lives, which includes sexual abuse, emotional abuse, emotional neglect, separation and/or divorce. It was further stated that childhood adversity plays a role in the development of deviant attitudes and behaviours, subsequently contributing to the high levels of violence and crimes in South Africa (Holtzhausen & Campbell, 2021).

Furthermore, it is argued that parental divorce and separation are more prevalent in lower-income countries like South Africa. Neighbourhood disadvantage and affluence also influence ACEs (Manyema & Ritcher, 2019). Neighbourhood factors correlate with maltreatment rates; the most consistent association was with indicators of economic status or the resources in the neighbourhood, including poverty and unemployment (Atmore et al., 2012; Manyema & Ritcher, 2019). Family structure and the absence of the father in the

home during childhood have a significant impact on the experience of ACEs. It was found that children who were raised by a single parent experience more adverse experiences compared to children with married mothers or if the mother had a partner (Manyema & Ritcher, 2019). It was highlighted that children with two parents in the home fare better. This relationship is mediated by economic resources, parental socialisation, and lower family stress, making them less likely to experience adversity during childhood (Manyema & Ritcher, 2019). It was generally found that there is lower family satisfaction among households with absent fathers, mainly due to limited economic resources in South African households (Manyema & Ritcher, 2019). In addition, almost all rape perpetrators are exposed to at least one type of adversity and family and community violence was found to be common among the South African population (Ngubane et al., 2022).

2.11 Chapter Summary

The literature review assisted with the understanding of the lived childhood experiences of incarcerated male sex offenders. The information reviewed indicated that sex offenders experience adversity during childhood. The ACEs co-occur and impact the psychological well-being of the sex offenders as children and adults. The literature highlighted that childhood experiences are linked to the risk of offending and recidivism. It also highlighted GBV, childhood experiences and subsequent sexual offence. The last part of the chapter discussed literature specifically in the South African context. The literature review provided insight into the overall research gap on sex offenders and the research gap in the South African context. Chapter 3 presents the methodology adopted in the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the overall methodology of the study. The first part discusses the rationale for adopting the qualitative research approach, as well as the advantages and disadvantages. It also presents the research design adopted and the importance of the role of the researcher in the study, which includes reflexivity and bracketing. The second part explores the data collection procedure, which includes the population of interest, the sampling techniques adopted to sample the population, the eligibility criteria, the sample size, and the importance of data saturation.

The last part provides a brief history of IPA, the method adopted to analyse the data, the rationale for utilising this method, and the steps followed to analyse the data. It also discusses the quality criteria of the study, and the ethical considerations adhered to in the study.

3.2 Aim of the Study

To address the lack of qualitative research studies on the lived experiences of incarcerated male sex offenders in South Africa, this study aimed to explore the lived childhood experiences of incarcerated male sex offenders in South Africa.

3.3 Research Questions

Based on the research aim of the study, the following research questions were formulated and explored:

- What are the lived childhood experiences of incarcerated male sex offenders in South Africa?

- What role do the lived childhood experiences play in the sex offences among male incarcerated sex offenders in South Africa?

3.4 Research Design and Methods

A research study design uses evidence-based procedures that provide the tools and structure for conducting a particular study. It is a methodological decision made during the proposal phase of research (Majid, 2017). The choice of a research design is based on a study's philosophical assumption. It is also influenced by a study's overall aim and objectives as well as the phenomenon of interest (Lopez & Willis, 2004; Majid, 2017). This study used a qualitative research approach and adopted a multiple case study and phenomenology design.

3.4.1 Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research is an approach that focuses on studying people's perception of reality; it studies people in their natural setting (Hancock et al., 2019). It is concerned with meaning, how people make sense of the world, their experiences, and the meaning they attach to the experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Sutton & Austin, 2015). This approach was used to understand the participants' lived experiences and the meaning they attach to their experiences. It allowed access to participants' thoughts and feelings, which enabled a clear understanding of the phenomenon under study and provided a detailed description of the phenomenon (Hancock et al., 2019; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

3.4.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Qualitative Research

The strengths and limitations of qualitative research were considered before choosing the approach. The qualitative research approach allows researchers to explore homogenous groups. It uses broad and comprehensive study methods and techniques to understand people's experiences, beliefs, assumptions, behaviours, and individual reasons

and motivations for behaviours (Bazen et al., 2021; Chay, 2014). As a result, it produces a detailed description of the participant's experiences and opinions and interprets the meaning of their actions (Bazen et al., 2021; Rahman, 2017).

Being a time-consuming data collection method and analysis, lack of objectivity and verifiability, and the need for skills to conduct interviews are some of the limitations of the qualitative approach (Chay, 2014). Even though qualitative research lacks objectivity and is verifiable, it can be valid and credible. Trustworthiness and generalisability were ensured by adopting appropriate approaches, tools, and data. Consistency was used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study (Leung, 2015).

3.4.3 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a philosophical investigation of experience, subjectivity, and the life world. It has been adapted as a paradigm for qualitative research in different schools of human and social sciences, such as psychology, nursing, anthropology, and education. Philosophical methods such as epoche and hermeneutics have been transformed into empirical methods to facilitate data collection and analysis in qualitative research (Køster & Fernandez, 2023).

Phenomenology was developed by Edmund Husserl, who focused on understanding how people's experiences occur to the unconscious. He argued that people's experiences are based on the information they provide and not influenced by pre-existing assumptions and beliefs. His research approach is descriptive and advocates bracketing pre-conceived ideas and assumptions in the research process (Finlay, 2011; Lisboa et al., 2016; Olmos-Vega et al., 2023; Smith & Osborn, 2015).

Martin Heidegger challenged Husserl's theory of phenomenology, arguing that it was mainly descriptive and focused more on consciousness. His theory, in contrast,

focused on the interpretation of experiences (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). He argued that data is influenced by or has philosophical, theoretical, and interpretive lenses, resulting in an aspect of human experience grounded on unrestricted imagination and metaphorical sensibility (Horrigan-Kelly, 2016; Lisboa et al., 2016; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009). According to him, everyone is part of or influenced by Daisen, which literally means “being there” (Heidegger, 1927/2011; Smith et al., 2009), encouraging reflexivity, which acknowledges researchers’ possible biases instead of bracketing the biases (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023).

Hermeneutics is also an important principle in phenomenology, which is about meaning. Double hermeneutics is used in phenomenology as it allows participants to make meaning of their experiences and for the researcher to make sense of participants' meaning-making (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith & Orsborne, 2015).

Phenomenological philosophy makes the approach both descriptive and interpretive (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). This study adopted both approaches to allow participants to share their experiences and the researcher to describe and interpret the participants' lived experiences.

3.4.4 Multiple Case Studies

A case study is a research design that allows an in-depth understanding of a complex phenomenon under study in its natural context. Case studies as a research design are used in different research disciplines but mostly in the social sciences discipline (Crowe et al., 2011). Multiple and single case studies are mostly used in social qualitative research for different reasons (Gustafsson, 2017). The multiple case study approach was used to understand the lived experiences of several participants to ensure that the findings are not limited to one case study (Yin, 2009). Therefore, even though the study aimed to

understand the lived childhood experiences of sex offenders, the offenders presented with different childhood experiences and sexual offences committed.

The multiple case study approach thus accommodated the differences and similarities across the different cases, allowing in-depth analysis of the individual cases and comparing the similarities and differences between the cases. This ensured an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2009).

3.4.5 The Role/Position of the Researcher

Qualitative research takes place in a context; it happens at a specific time, place and between two or more people. Researchers must highlight all these aspects to provide context, increase the credibility of the study findings and strengthen the understanding of the phenomenon under study (Dodgson, 2019). Researchers are seen as instruments in qualitative research. Thus, who the researcher is plays an important role in the research process and the findings of the study. It is also important to understand the researcher's position in terms of the phenomenon under study (Dodgson, 2019; Holmes, 2020). The personal characteristics of the researcher influence the researcher's positioning. These include gender, age, race, sexual orientation, personal experiences, theoretical, political, and ideological stances, and emotional responses to the participants (Berger, 2015; Olmos-Vega et al., 2023).

Reflexivity is a persistent and collective process that allows researchers to reflect on how their subjective experiences affect the research process and findings (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023). It makes researchers aware of their preconceived ideas and biases (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Reflexivity was used as a tool to neutralise subjectivity in the research process. It allowed the understanding and responsibility of one's position within the

research process, the research population, data collection, analysis and the study's findings (Berger, 2015; Holmes, 2020; Olmos-Vega et al., 2023).

The researcher was aware of how personal characteristics and experiences can influence the research process and position (Berger, 2015; Holmes, 2020). These characteristics and experiences include being a young female conducting research on sexual offenders in South Africa and interviewing male participants. These might have contributed to bias in the research process that the researcher was unaware of (Galdas, 2017; Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010).

The researcher's position as an intern clinical psychologist might have affected the research process due to possible preconceived ideas and beliefs influenced by training as a psychologist. This might also have led to biases due to the power dynamics created by the researcher's position (Berger, 2015; Karnieli-Miller, 2009; Olmos-Vega et al., 2023; Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010) as a psychologist and the participants' perceptions of the researcher.

These personal characteristics and experiences were bracketed to neutralise the impact of the researcher's subjectivity (Fischer, 2009; Olmos-Vega et al., 2023). The researcher also reflected on each participant's interview process, highlighting how the participants affected the researcher (Olmos-Vega et al., 2022).

3.5 Sampling and Data Collection Methods and Procedures

3.5.1 Sampling

Sampling is a selection of a subset of the population of interest (Etikan et al., 2016). Incarcerated male sex offenders were the population of interest in this study. The population was identified and recruited from Grootvlei, a state-owned medium security correctional centre and Mangaung correctional centre, a private maximum security

correctional centre. A non-random, purposive sampling technique was used to recruit participants from the population of interest (Johnson et al., 2020). Simple random sampling was chosen because it allowed researchers to select participants suitable to the phenomenon under study and maximised the chances of answering the study's research question (Johnson et al., 2020).

This sampling technique was appropriate for this study because it required participants to have experienced and be well-informed on the phenomenon under study, and who were available and willing to participate. It required participants to be able to articulate, express and reflect on their experiences (Etikan et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2020). The selected participants fulfilled the criteria of having experienced childhood experiences and the sexual offences they committed, and they were also able to articulate themselves and reflect on their experiences.

Purposive sampling was also chosen due to its cost-effective nature and low chances of sampling error, enabling the researcher to select participants best suited for the phenomenon under study (Obilor, 2023). This technique allowed the researcher to select participants based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study (Daniel, 2012). The sampling process was conducted with the assistance of gatekeepers from both correctional centres. Representatives of the correctional centres provided a list of 24 male sex offenders, and the researcher used the list to purposefully select participants based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria explained below.

Certain criteria were used to determine whether individuals qualified as participants in the study or not. This consisted of the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study. The inclusion criteria included the characteristics of the population of interest. The

exclusion criteria, on the other hand, included the characteristics of the population that would interfere with the appropriate collection of the data (Kamangar & Islami, 2013).

3.5.1.1 Inclusion Criteria. The following inclusion criteria formed part of this study:

- South African males between the ages of 26-50.
- Incarcerated for any form of sexual offence.
- Primarily conversant in English (other languages included Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, and isiZulu).

3.5.1.2 Exclusion Criteria. The following exclusion criteria were deemed necessary for the study:

- Individuals awaiting prosecution.
- Juveniles
- A psychological or medical diagnosis that affects general cognitive functioning, such as memory, attention, and insight.
- The psychological diagnosis includes Alzheimer's disease, other dementias and any psychotic symptoms.

3.5.2 Sample Size and Data Saturation

The guiding principle in qualitative research is a sample size that allows data saturation (Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Vasileiou et al., 2018). Data saturation is reached when no new information emerges about the phenomenon under study (Johnson et al., 2020; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Small sample sizes are usually used in qualitative research and still allow data saturation to be reached. However, this is not always the case, as data saturation depends on the quantity and quality of the data (Johnson et al., 2020). Data saturation involves a thick description of the data, a variety of participants, the

broadness of the research question and phenomenon under study and the data collection method (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

There are guiding principles or estimates of the number of participants needed in different studies to reach data saturation in qualitative research (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Six to 10 participants are recommended for phenomenological studies (Marshall et al., 2013). From the initial list of 24 participants, 14 were interviewed, and 10 were included in the final sample. Even though 10 participants are recommended to reach saturation in phenomenological research, the number was considered with precaution, and the focus was on reaching saturation through the depth of the data (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The sampling technique ensured data saturation, allowing the researcher to sample information-rich cases (Vasileiou et al., 2018).

3.5.3 Participant Selection and Demographics

A list with the demographic information of 24 male sex offenders was provided to the researcher by the gatekeepers from both correctional facilities, and 14 participants were selected and interviewed. However, only 10 participants were selected to be included in the study. This aligned with the recommendation of smaller sample sizes for IPA studies. This enabled the identification of a homogenous sample and identifying similarities and differences in the cases (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009).

The participants were selected using the inclusion and exclusion criteria as explained above. The 10 cases were selected based on the richness and the quality of the data they provided. This followed the emphasis on the quality of the data extracted in IPA studies, which enable detailed descriptions of the participants' lived experiences (Geertz, 1973; Smith et al., 2009). However, even though the sampled participants were homogenous in that they were all men incarcerated for sexual offences, it was important to

diversify the sample to obtain a clear understanding of the phenomenon under study (Allmark, 2004; Daines, 2012; Smith et al., 2009).

The sample was diversified (Allmark, 2004) by purposely selecting participants incarcerated for different sexual offences, the number of sexual offences committed, the race of the participants and the correctional centre's level of security. The final sample included five Black participants, four Coloured and two White participants. Their ages ranged from 31 to 49 years, and they were incarcerated in medium and maximum correctional facilities. The sample diversity was also influenced as much as possible by the statistics of the national offender population profile of the Department of Correctional Service. It highlights that most of the offenders are Black (79.0%), followed by Coloured (9,5%), White (9,4%), and Indian (2,9%) (Department of Correctional Services, 2008). Therefore, a slight majority of the participants were Black, followed by Coloured and White. Indian participants were not included in the study. Table 1 illustrates the participants' demographics.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics

Participant	Pseudonym	Race	Age	Counts of sexual offences	Security level
1	Sipho	Black	43	1 count	Medium
2	Daniel	Black	43	1 count	Medium
3	Calvin	Coloured	31	5 counts	Maximum
4	Thomas	White	37	4 counts	Maximum
6	Kganya	Black	32	6 counts	Maximum
9	Matome	Black	48	7 counts, 1 attempted	Medium
11	Jack	White	46	4 counts	Maximum
12	Albert	Coloured	34	3 counts	Maximum
13	Thapelo	Black	40	4 counts	Maximum
14	Patrick	Coloured	31	5 counts	Maximum

3.5.4 Gaining Access, Building Rapport and Informed Consent

Rapport building and establishing relationships are important in qualitative research (Guillemin & Heggen, 2009). Therefore, establishing rapport with each participant involved in the research process was critical. The first step before building rapport was to gain access to the participants and data collection setting/institution (Dempsey et al., 2016). Offenders are regarded as a vulnerable group in research, and gaining access to these participants can be difficult (Crowther & Lloyd-Williams, 2012). It was also important to build rapport with the gatekeepers. The process of gaining access to the participants and institutions in this study was done through gatekeeping, which is a process where a researcher is granted permission to access the research venue and the participants (Dempsey et al., 2016).

The Department of Correctional Services granted official permission to access the Mangaung and Grootvlei correctional centres. However, access was negotiated with the influential gatekeepers at the two correctional centres (Dempsey et al., 2016). The main gatekeepers/influential gatekeepers were the Head of Social Work at Mangaung Correctional Facility and the psychologists at Grootvlei Correctional Centre. The gatekeepers assisted with arranging meetings with other gatekeepers at different key points and the overall data collection process.

Face-to-face meetings were held with the different gatekeepers, which assisted with the transparent and open sharing of information. The meetings assisted with understanding the correctional centre's organisational cultures, rules, hierarchy and planning of the recruitment and data collection process (Dempsey et al., 2016; Singh & Wassenaar, 2016). Building honest and respectful researcher-gatekeeper relationships was also important, given the security risks and challenges of conducting research in a correctional centre (Blagden & Pemberton, 2010; Fitz, 2021; Kawulich, 2011).

Rapport was built with the participants during the recruitment phase (Horsfall et al., 2021). The recruitment phase was conducted using the ethical principle of informed consent. Informed consent is about providing information and obtaining consent based on the information provided (Klykken, 2022). A simplified summary of the nature of the study was provided to the participants before the interview. The summary involved expectations, the importance of the study, and the content of the interview (Manti & Licari, 2018). It also entailed the aim and the nature of the study, the absence of benefits, possible inconveniences of taking part in the study, autonomy, and confidentiality issues. The information provided gave the participants the freedom and autonomy to decide on participation (Klykken, 2022; Manti & Licari, 2018). The participants gave their written consent by signing an informed consent document after receiving more information about the study.

The principle of informed consent helped establish a researcher-participant relationship grounded in trust and integrity (Klykken, 2022). The rapport continued during the interview stage; the participants were approached with an open mind and curious attitude. Establishing rapport enabled the participants to provide rich and detailed information on their childhood experiences (McGrath et al., 2019)

3.5.5 Semi-structured Interview

The researcher collected data from the participants by conducting individual, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with all participants (Jamshed, 2014). A semi-structured interview was utilised because of the qualitative nature of the study and the research design. Semi-structured interviews allow participants to share their experiences, perceptions, and thoughts (Moser & Korstjens, 2017).

Interviews in an IPA study involve an in-depth interview with approximately 10 participants to describe the lived experiences of the individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Thus, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 sex offenders, which allowed them to share their experiences and to understand how they perceived their experiences. Only 10 of these interviews were included in the final study.

An interview schedule was used as a guide throughout the interviews. This assisted with the outline of the interview, but the participants' responses guided and determined the direction of the interview. The schedule provided a clear guideline for the interviews in case participants deviated from the main topic (Stuckey, 2013). The interviews started with an open-ended statement/question to encourage and allow the participants to share their experiences (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

In this study, "Tell me about your childhood experiences" was used as an open statement. These statements eased the participants into the interview and allowed them to narrate their experiences from their own perspective and openly share their experiences. Follow-up questions were used for further clarification as the participants narrated their experiences. Prompts, probes, and short periods of silence were used to encourage the participants to share their experiences (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Robinson, 2023).

Semi-structured interviews were appropriate for the offender population as they enabled participants to voice their experiences, concerns, frustrations, and fears. It was important to allow the participants to guide conversations during the interviews and share experiences that are important to them with the assistance of the interview guide and

interviewing techniques, such as probing to direct the participants to the main topic (Busetto et al., 2020; Klein et al., 2018; Robinson, 2023).

The recommended time for semi-structured interviews is 30 to 90 minutes. However, the duration of the interviews in this study was determined by the depth and content of the interview (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Some interviews were less than 30 minutes, with others lasting more than 90 minutes. The interviews were recorded with an electronic audio recording device. Recording the interview assisted with the accurate capturing of the data, focusing on the content of the interview, listening to the participant, and being able to provide verbal prompts. The audio-recorded data was then transcribed into a full verbatim transcript after completion of the data collection process (Busetto et al., 2020; Jamshed, 2014).

Semi-structured interviews and the sensitivity of the topics under investigation can evoke emotions (McGrath et al., 2019). The sensitivity of the topic and vulnerability of the participants can evoke negative emotions (Crowther & Lloyd-Williams, 2012; Grudzinskas & Clayfield, 2005), which happened in some participants. This was considered prior to the research process, and debriefing sessions were arranged with the psychologists at the two correctional centres to prevent harm. Participants were debriefed after the data collection interview, as Mack et al. (2005) and Varpio and McCarthy (2018) suggested.

As mentioned above, the sensitivity of some topics and the participants' vulnerability could evoke negative emotions (McGrath et al., 2019). The participants were allowed to experience negative emotions. Empathy, active listening and continuous consent were used to ensure the autonomy of the participants and ensure that they were

comfortable to continue with the interviews (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Klykken, 2022; Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022).

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 History and Rationale of Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Jonathan Smith and colleagues in the field of health psychology developed IPA. Since then, it has been widely used in qualitative research studies in psychology (Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2012; Smith & Osborne, 2015). IPA is concerned with understanding people's personal lived experiences and how they make meaning of their experiences. The participants are seen as self-interpreting beings who understand their lived experiences on their own terms and are not prescribed by any existing theoretical preconceptions (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith & Osborn, 2015). This method of analysis was therefore utilised in this study to understand the participant's lived experiences and how they make sense of their own experiences.

IPA was influenced by principles from phenomenology, hermeneutics and ideography (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Phenomenology is a principle initially developed by Edmund Husserl, who focused on understanding how people's experiences occur to the unconscious and believed that people's experiences are based on the information they provide and are not influenced by pre-existing or external theories. This was then known as the descriptive phenomenological approach (Finlay, 2011; Lisboa et al., 2016; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Thus, researchers must adopt a phenomenological approach and bracket or put aside past or pre-existing knowledge when conducting research (Dörfler & Stierand, 2020; Smith et al, 2009).

Martin Heidegger rejected and criticised Husserl's idea of phenomenology and coined the interpretative approach. This approach rejects the idea of researchers bracketing

or putting aside their past or pre-existing knowledge to interpret experiences. It also rejects the idea that pre-existing theories and knowledge cannot influence data, arguing that data is influenced by or has philosophical, theoretical, and interpretive lenses resulting in an aspect of human experience grounded on unrestricted imagination and metaphorical sensibility (Horrigan-Kelly, 2016; Lisboa et al., 2016; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009).

Heidegger suggested *Dasien*, literally meaning 'being there' (Heidegger, 1927/2011). He suggested this to represent the unique existence of human beings or literally being there in the world to express the interconnectedness of human experience (Heidegger, 1927/2011). He argued that the primary concern for researchers is to investigate and interpret existence as experienced by human beings. Researchers embark on studying *Dasien* by immersing themselves in the world of the participants through the cultural and socio-historical meanings (Finlay, 2011; Heidegger, 1927/2011).

Dasien cannot be detached from people; it is thrown into the pre-existing world of people and objects, language and culture. Researchers are encouraged to consider people's experiences, relationships, and languages. The use of reflexivity is encouraged in interpreting results, considering pre-assumptions related to the phenomenon under study (Heidegger, 1927/2011; Olmos-Vega et al., 2023; Smith et al., 2009).

Hermeneutics is another principle in IPA, which is an art and science of interpretation (Tuffour, 2017). Hermeneutics argue that one needs to understand a person's mindset and language, which helps one translate their experiences of the world (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The researcher engaged in double hermeneutics, in that the participants first made meaning of their world/experiences, and the researcher attempted to make sense of the participants' meaning-making (Smith & Orsborne, 2015). Both

interpretations make the IPA analysis comprehensive and rich (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

IPA further relies on ideography, which is a detailed analysis of single cases, then moves to other cases and determines the differences and similarities between the cases (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith & Osborn, 2015). All these concepts of IPA were adopted in the study and the data analysis process. The participants were allowed to share their experiences without judgment or influence. The researchers' pre-existing beliefs and assumptions were bracketed (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Reflexivity was also used to acknowledge the researcher's possible biases, as they cannot completely be bracketed (Berger, 2015; Holmes, 2020; Olmos-Vega et al., 2023).

The principle of hermeneutics was used to understand how the participants make sense of their lived childhood experiences (Smith & Orsborne, 2015). The analysis followed the idiographic approach; the cases were analysed individually, using cross-analysis to compare similarities and differences in the data (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith, 2004; Smith & Orsborne, 2015).

The ideas of phenomenology and hermeneutics influence the descriptive method of IPA. This method is concerned with how events appear and let events speak for themselves; however, the interpretative method is used because it is impossible to have an uninterpreted phenomenon (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). This analysis adopted both the interpretative and descriptive approaches of IPA.

3.6.2 Data Analysis Procedure

IPA provides flexible steps that allow researchers to be creative and flexible when analysing data. The steps are not a recipe but a guideline or illustration for analysing data.

They can be used based on each study's objective (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The aim and objective of this study are to understand the themes of the lived childhood experiences of incarcerated male sex offenders. The analysis was guided by steps suggested by Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014).

3.6.2.1 Step 1: First Encounter with the Text/Reading and Re-reading. The audio recordings were listened to multiple times, then transcribed and translated into transcripts. The transcripts were read and re-read multiple times (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014) to assist with recalling the setting of the interviews. Notes were taken during this process, this included notes about the interview process and the interview content. Notes about the interview process included observations and overall experience of the interview and other comments. On the other hand, notes about the content of the interview included the experiences narrated and the language used (symbols, metaphors, repetitions, and pauses) (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Some of the content of the notes is included in the researcher's reflection in each case in Chapter 4.

3.6.2.2 Step 2: Notes to Emergent Themes. After reading the transcripts multiple times and making notes, emergent themes were identified in all the cases (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The notes assisted with the identification of the themes rather than going back to the transcripts.

3.6.2.3 Step 3: Connect Emergent Themes and Clustering of Themes. Relationships between the themes were identified in each case and clustered in each case (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The themes were clustered in a table form; the themes in each case show the main themes, which are the participant's negative and positive childhood experiences, their neighbourhood, sexual offences committed and their overall reflections. This step is clearly described in Chapter 4.

3.6.2.4 Step 4: Moving to the Next Case. The idiographic approach was used in this stage and for all the cases (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). All the cases were analysed individually in detail before seeking patterns across all the cases. Bracketing was used in this step to bracket ideas from other cases (Fischer, 2009; Olmos-Vega et al., 2023).

3.6.2.5 Step 5: Looking for Patterns Across Cases and the Final Table. Cross-analysis was used in this stage to identify relationships, similarities, and differences across all the cases (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). A final table with all the themes across the cases was also used to describe more prominent themes across all the cases (Smith & Orsborne, 2015). This step is clearly described in Chapter 5 of the study.

3.7 Quality Criteria for Qualitative Research: Trustworthiness and Rigour

3.7.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in research is the extent of trust in the research process and methods (Polit & Beck, 2014). Qualitative research has a history of being criticised for a lack of scientific rigour compared to quantitative research (Mays & Pope, 1995). It was criticised for its subjective nature, exposure to possible researcher bias, lack of generalisability and overall reliability (Koch & Harrington, 1998). However, qualitative research is equally reliable as quantitative research. Qualitative research is subjective and contextual; quantitative research, on the other hand, is objective and generalisable. Both approaches use different data collection methods, and therefore, the quality criteria of both approaches are different (Pitney, 2004).

Qualitative researchers do not use statistical methods to establish the reliability and validity of a study. Qualitative researchers design methodological strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings. This includes the true value of research, ensuring consistency in the research process, and confirmability and applicability of the data (Noble & Smith, 2015). Even though trustworthiness is important in research, there has been a

lack of consensus in the literature about the criteria to use to determine trustworthiness (Leung, 2015). However, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria have been generally accepted in qualitative research. These include credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability; authenticity was added later to the criteria. Reflexivity is also considered an important criterion for trustworthiness (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The above-mentioned quality criteria were adopted in this study and are discussed below.

3.7.1.1 Credibility. Credibility is concerned with true value, which determines the extent to which the results of the study represent the truth. Triangulation and prolonged engagement were used in the study to ensure credibility (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Triangulation is the evaluation of the data collected through various methods to estimate valid and precise results of the phenomenon under study (Oliver-Hoyo & Allen, 2006).

Investigator triangulation was mostly used in this study, and various people were involved in the research process, addressing different aspects of the study (Forero et al., 2018; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The research supervisor and the gatekeepers were involved in the research process to assist with different aspects of the study. The research supervisor was responsible for providing support and assistance with the coding of themes and the overall completion of the study (Lessing, 2011). The gatekeepers mainly assisted with access to the correctional centre, sampling, and access to the participants (Dempsey et al., 2016). After assistance by the gatekeepers to get access to the participants, data was collected by the researcher. Thereafter, the researcher individually analysed the data. The supervisor provided feedback on identified themes, and the themes were changed or confirmed.

Prolonged engagement is about spending time in the field of research to understand the research context, the participants, and the phenomenon under study (Lincoln & Guba,

1985). The relationship developed with the gatekeepers, rapport built with the participants as well as the use of the in-depth data collection method ensured prolonged engagement and, as a result, assisted with the credibility of the study (Dado et al., 2023; Dempsey et al., 2016; Horsfall et al., 2021; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The data provided, and the prolonged engagement allowed the researcher to study the raw data until themes emerged to provide an understanding of the phenomenon under study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

3.7.1.2 Transferability. Transferability is the generalisability of a study and its results, and it is concerned with the degree to which the study's results can be transferred to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, a thick description was used to support transferability. This involves a thick description of the overall research process and results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A thick description of the research process, the data collection process and methods, and the sampling process, which includes the number of participants and the demographics of the participants, was provided by the researcher to ensure transferability (Johnson et al., 2020; Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

3.7.1.3 Dependability. Dependability in research is about the consistency and transparency of the research process (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). An audit trail was used to ensure dependability, and the research process was logically documented, ensuring that it could be clearly traced (De Klein & Van Leeuwen, 2018; Tobin & Begley, 2004). The process is outlined in chapters 1, 3 and 4 of this study and the attached documents. This provides readers insight into the researcher's decision-making process (Koch, 1994).

3.7.1.4 Confirmability. Confirmability encompasses the degree to which other researchers can confirm the results of the study. It is about ensuring that the findings of the study are derived from the data and not solely from the researcher's opinions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, confirmability and dependability are achieved through a clear audit trail (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In this study, dependability and confirmability were

achieved through clear and logical documentation of the research process (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Confirmability also involves ensuring that the results of the study are free from bias. Maintaining reflexivity throughout the research process assists with managing possible bias (Nyirenda et al., 2020). In qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument, as the researcher is responsible for collecting and analysing data. The data collection process and analysis can be biased (Florczak, 2022). In this study, bias was inevitable (Florczak, 2022) due to the nature of the research perspective and the sampling and data analysis strategies adopted.

3.7.1.5 Reflexivity. Research cannot completely rule out bias despite utilising reflexivity (Nyirenda et al., 2020). However, reflexivity was still practised in this study to foster awareness and acknowledgement of possible bias and to minimise bias and ensure the trustworthiness of the study (Johnson et al., 2020; Nyirenda et al., 2020). Reflexivity was discussed earlier in this study, addressing the influence and role of the researcher (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010) regarding demographics, such as age, gender, position in society in terms of GBV and predisposition to sexual offences and qualifications.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The history of research involving offenders highlights the abuse that offenders experienced in the Nazi concentration camps. They were used as research subjects in medical projects in the concentration camps. This gave rise to the Nuremberg codes, which are ethical principles followed in human research (Pont, 2008). The abuse was mainly caused by the defective philosophy that the needs of society are more important than those of an individual. Researchers viewed offenders as accessible research participants who did not have to receive incentives and were easy to motivate (Pont,

2008). Offenders are now regarded as vulnerable populations in research (Department of Health, 2015; Grudzinskas & Clayfield, 2005) because they are prone to exploitation, and their freedom to consent is often undermined (Pont, 2008). Furthermore, they are undermined due to learning difficulties, illiteracy, and language barriers (Morken et al., 2021; Pont, 2008). Therefore, conducting research in correctional facilities is difficult due to this history and the vulnerability factors (Dalen & Jones, 2010). These factors were considered in this study, and it was important to follow general ethical guidelines and to consider the population of interest in the study.

3.8.1 Permission to Conduct the Study

The research proposal was submitted to the Department of Psychology of the University of the Free State for quality control. Ethical clearance (Roberts & Indermaur, 2008) was obtained from the General/Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State after approval by the Department of Psychology. Permission to conduct the study and collect the data was granted by the Department of Correctional Services. All these research committees provided ethical guidelines to be followed when conducting human research. The ethical guidelines are discussed in the following sections.

3.8.2 Informed Consent and Autonomy

Informed consent is an important ethical and legal requirement in human research. The participants should be informed about the research and voluntarily decide to participate in the study based on the information provided (Manti & Licari, 2018; Nijhawan et al., 2013). The participants were provided with information about the study during the recruitment process. The information provided included the purpose of the study and the potential risks and benefits of the study. They were allowed adequate time to ask questions and to decide to voluntarily participate in the study (Grudzinskas & Clayfield, 2005; Nijhawan et al., 2013). All participants provided written consent (Dalen

& Jones, 2010) and signed the information and leaflet document. Adherence to informed consent was not only for participants to consent to participate in the study but also to avoid undue influence due to the participant's vulnerable nature (Department of Health, 2015). Continuous verbal consent was obtained throughout the interviews (Klykken, 2022).

3.8.3 Anonymity, Confidentiality and Privacy

The principle of confidentiality was explained to the participants during the recruitment phase when obtaining consent (Kaiser, 2009). The interviews were audio recorded, but the participants' personal information was protected (Coffelt, 2017). The information provided by the participants was kept confidential, and informed consent was obtained from participants for the information shared (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). Except for the researcher's personal interviews, anonymity was further used to protect participants and respect participants' privacy. All participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities (Saunders et al., 2015). All electronic data was saved on a password-protected laptop, and the recording was stored in a locked cabinet.

3.8.4 Beneficence and Non-maleficence

Beneficence is an ethical obligation to do good; non-maleficence is about avoiding harm (Akaranga & Makau, 2016; Tangwa, 2009). The purpose of the study and the benefits of the study were explained to the participants to ensure beneficence (Akaranga & Makau, 2016; Grudzinskas & Clayfield, 2005). The study did not have monetary, material, or direct benefits. However, the data obtained from the participants will contribute to the growing knowledge in psychology about the childhood experiences of incarcerated sex offenders. The participants could also benefit from the study by understanding their lived experiences and how they might have contributed to their behaviour later in life.

Potential risks of participation were also discussed with the participants. The study did not pose any physical risk, but there was a possible emotional risk due to the sensitivity of the research topic (Akaranga & Makau, 2016; Crowther & Lloyd-Williams, 2012; Grudzinskas & Clayfield, 2005; McGrath et al., 2019). Some participants experienced negative emotions after the interview. This was predicted, and arrangements for debriefing were made before the data collection process. Debriefing sessions were arranged with the psychologists at the two correctional centres. This was done to minimise harm and to protect participants (Akaranga & Makau, 2016; Mack et al., 2005; Varpio & McCarthy, 2018). No participants had to be debriefed for participating in the study.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research aims, objectives and questions, followed by the approaches and research designs adopted for the study. The rationale for choosing the adopted methodologies, data collection methods and the process of accessing the participants were provided. A brief history of the method of analysis, the rationale for the use of the method of analysis, and how it was applied in this study were also presented. The chapter concluded with a section on how trustworthiness was achieved in the study and the ethical guidelines considered. The next chapter discusses the findings of the study, with a focus on all individual cases in the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The data analysis followed the IPA idiographic approach; therefore, each participant was treated as a case, and the data were analysed moving from case to case. There were 10 participants in the study. The cases were categorised in alphabetical order, from case A to J. The researcher's reflection and participants' brief backgrounds are highlighted at the beginning of each case, followed by themes of participants' lived childhood experiences.

The themes of the participants' lived childhood experiences are presented. These include themes on positive and negative childhood experiences, the description of the neighbourhood during childhood, the sexual offences committed, actions leading to the offence and the contribution of their childhood experiences. The participants' reflections on the interview or experiences are also included in each case.

Extracts from original data were quoted after every theme, and the extracts are italicised in quotation marks with page numbers in brackets. This was done to ensure the dependability and credibility of the study and to highlight how participants made meaning of their own experiences. Themes in each case are clustered in a table to provide a clear description of the themes and similarities across cases. Themes across all cases were interpreted and linked to relevant literature in the next chapter.

4.2 Case A: Participant 1 (Sipho)

4.2.1 Researcher's Reflections

Although the researcher was nervous and unsure during this interview, as it was the first one for the study, it went well. The participant narrated his childhood experiences well

but struggled to share the sexual offences committed. Even though the participant was comfortable sharing his experiences, there were moments when he deviated; this was allowed, although the researcher guided the participant to the initial purpose of the study. Nonverbal language was evident in the interview; sighs highlighted the participant's emotions during the interview.

4.2.2 Sipho's Brief Background

Sipho, a Black male, was 43 years old at the time of the interview. He was incarcerated for one sexual offence and other offences like aggressive assault and economic crimes. He was first arrested in 1994 and after his release, he was later arrested for a sexual offence in 2001. He was moved from a maximum-security facility to a medium-security facility in 2019. He was in the medium facility at the time of the interview.

4.2.3 Sipho's Lived Childhood Experiences

Sipho described his childhood as difficult. *“Okay. Well, my childhood eh, I believe it was, it was a hard one”.*

His childhood was difficult because he and his siblings were raised by a single mother.

“It was hard, because, I was, I was raised by my mother alone, and we were five boys”.

His mother remarried, which resulted in him being exposed to alcohol abuse and

conflict between his mother and stepfather. *“So, well, my mother, eh, married another man, so we were all men. She raised us while living with that man. It was not nice, it was not good, because sometimes they were fighting; they were drinking people actually. So, they used to fight a lot and [sigh]...”.*

His biological father also remarried and was an absent father. *“He married another woman”. “Not always, because I think there was a time when he took about four or five*

years, and then he appears”. *“Having shoes, bringing shoes and clothes. And they were not fitting, they, they did not fit us those clothes and those shoes. And that's the first time when I confronted him about this thing of his absenteeism in our lives, and it, it did not go well”.*

He did not have a good relationship with his biological father due to his violent behaviour. *“And I did not have that good, good relationship; in fact, I was scared of him, we were scared, we were happy if he is not there because we knew that whatever you are doing here, if it's wrong, so little, he's not going- he's going to smack you, he's going to fight you, he's going that”.*

Efforts to repair the relationship between him and his father failed due to a strained relationship with his stepmother. *“Well, we went someday to live with him, some... it was maybe 1994”. “We went to live with him. But the, the woman that he was living with, no, no, no, she made us to decided that no, we're not going to stay here any longer because we saw in whatever she was doing, the way that she treated us like she doesn't like us”. “You must treat her as your mother.” “But when we tell him that she does not treat us as our mother, how can we treat her as our mother because she shows us that we are not her children. She showed us every day. Whatever she's doing, you can see there's no love in this”.*

He had a good relationship with his stepfather despite the conflict between his mother and stepfather. *“Mm. I loved him more than my real father because he was someone who was... The only fight that he had was with my mother. I'm not sure about what, but I always saw them fighting and those things but he did not even on one day, raise a voice towards us”.*

He was a victim of an attempted filicide-suicide by his mother with his siblings when he was 11 years old. *“There was some day where my mom decided that she was going to commit suicide with the three of us. It hurt me so much; up until today, I can't, I don't understand what was happening that day because she was ready to do that she was intending*

to do, of committing suicide with the three of us". "Maybe 10/11. Yeah, 11 years, 11 years old... Hay' [long pause] ... I'm not sure [sigh]".

His behaviour changed due to peer pressure and undermining his mother's advice. "I used to to love church. I always, every Sunday, I was going to church. I am not sure when and where it did change".

"[Sigh] Eh, firstly, I will say friends. Friends who maybe, all the time they, they, they, they were influencing me in a dysfunctional way, in a dysfunctional manner, and she saw that these friends are not good for me. But when she tried to tell me, 'Hey! Please, these friends of yours, I don't like them because they are not good'".

The peer pressure led to being involved in criminal activities and petty crimes such as theft, robbery, and the use of alcohol and drugs. "Anything from stealing, robbing, drinking, using drugs and so forth. That's the things that we did, and [sigh] ...". "There's no, I, I, I, there was no good in that friendships of ours because those were the people who are going to. Let's go steal this so that we can buy alcohol. Let's go steal this so that we can... Let's go rob. Things like that. So, it became normal, and it became something that I woke up every day looking forward to doing".

He struggled with assertiveness and guilt as a teenager. "I went along with those things, and then after that, is back to square one, whereby I'm going to sit and feel guilty and scared".

He believes that his childhood contributed to his anger problems. "Well, when I look at that thing, I think my anger stems from the fact that where I grew up, whatever happened there, there was nothing that I could do about it. There was this thing of maybe, this is what is happening, and it's going to happen; even though I didn't like this thing, I can do nothing about that". "I bottle things too much. That's when I realised that sometimes I don't act on

things that happened today. The things that I act up on was things that happened a long time ago because I saw that after five years, I was still angry with that guy, but I was not aware”.

The anger was also caused by bullying. *“And there was someone they by the name of Thabang; he was much older than us. We were playing dice game, and I was winning. One day, he decided that he’s going to take these winnings of mine by force, and he took them; and I promised that guy that hey, one day I’m going to grow up, and I am going to avenge myself. He didn’t believe that, and it happened that maybe after seven years, eight years; when I stand up, I see that we are the same size. I reminded him of that day. I told him I’m here now, we are the same size, so my money, or you are getting hurt, and he just laughed. I just took a knife out, and I stabbed him that some. [Exclamation] That’s some of the things that showed me that I’m not sure what causes this. I had a, I had a very, very, very wrong anger. I had it a lot”.*

4.2.4 Sipho’s Positive Childhood Experiences

His positive childhood experience was moments when his parents, particularly his mother, were sober and present. *“But yah, always when they were not using alcohol, it was loving, it was very good. But when they are drunk, it was not good because they were not saying good things. It was only fighting and all this, swearing at each other and ...it was not good”.*

4.2.5 Sipho’s Neighbourhood Experiences

Sipho grew up in Botshabelo, Free State Province. He explained that Botshabelo was a normal neighbourhood during his childhood. *“It, I’m not sure how to put it, but I think it was normal, and it was; that depended on how I perceive it, of how I see it because there was a chance of me becoming a better person. There was a chance of maybe finishing my schooling, my education. It was a good environment, it was, that depended on an individual.*

Like me, myself, I partly take the blame of me being, turning out like this because no one was against me doing good things. No one stopped me in doing good things. It was only me who was. I was a coward to, to, to, do what I felt was right for me, and to do what I felt was right for everybody who was maybe eh, in the environment that I am in”.

4.2.6 Sexual Offence/s Committed and Actions Leading to Offence/s

He was incarcerated for one sexual offence, but he was allegedly falsely accused of a sexual offence before and was punished using judicial corporal punishment. *“There are three records. One was a sexual offence case, the other one was a housebreaking. Like, this one where I, you, you had a... How can I say it? Okay, let me put it like this. The first case, we were arrested along with my twin brother. And we were accused of eh, eh, eh, raping [Deep sigh], and it was not like that. And the case found us guilty. We were sentenced to four lashes, uh, six lashes each”.*

4.2.7 Influence of Childhood Experiences on Sexual Offence/s Committed

Ambiguity about the influence of childhood experiences on the sexual offences committed. He acted out of anger and was under the influence of substances. *“Eh [sigh]... I think this thing of maybe, what happened was that after that case we, we met with those complainant and witnesses and what, but I begin to hate them because I knew I was right, there's nothing like that. I begin to have that hatred, and I drank a lot, used drugs, occasionally so. That's why I say, I thought maybe, when I commit this one, they are going to accuse the wrong people, because I was wrongly accused of that thing back... And I'm not sure how can I put this... but [sigh], I had anger in me, but I was not aware of that thing. I, I, I just resented people”.*

He also explained that the sexual offence he committed was a mistake. *“Even that, it was not intended to happen like that because it was, it was something that was not planned. For*

instance, we were drinking, and that place where we were drinking was closed at that time; maybe to 12 midnight, they were closing that place. Here comes four White people, one was a girl, they wanted to buy some eh, alcohol there”.

4.2.8 Siphos Final Reflections

Being a victim of attempted filicide-suicide by his mother was the theme of the final reflection. *“Actually, I... Like I said when we started, this experience of my mother trying to commit suicide with us...”.*

There is still no clarity about the mother's thought process at the time of the attempted filicide-suicide. *“I'm not exactly sure what was the reason, but what I saw was she and the, and the man that she was living with at that time, there was something that was happening between them, but I did not know what was happening there”.*

“And it made me think like [sigh], it's my, why is my mother being selfish?”. “Sometimes, I tried to understand from her point that we were children, and she thought that if she committed suicide, this family of hers, of we are going to have no one to raise us like our father is not there. Maybe that's some of her reasons. But why can she not just tell us, because I believe that she know that that thing is still in our minds. We know it, we can remember it, we... Why can't she just sit us down and show us and tell us why”.

There is still an expectation for the mother to clarify the incident. *“So, I think my mother has some explaining to do one day. Okay but, in a good, in a good way, not necessarily to think that I, I don't, I don't understand”.*

He struggles to find appropriate ways to discuss the incident because he does not want to hurt her feelings. *“Because I don't want to hurt her feelings or whatever. So, I don't know how to open that subject”.*

“But I feel like I have to one day. I have to fill her too, so she can tell us or tell me what was happening. Why was she thinking like that?”.

He would be relieved if the issue is addressed. *“If maybe the alcohol part or whatever, but coming from her, I think it will be good. I can take this away from me”.*

Table 2

Clustering of Sipho’s Themes

Positive experiences	Negative experiences	Neighbourhood	Sexual offences committed and influence of childhood experiences	Reflections
➤ Sober parents	➤ Separation of parents ➤ Conflict between parents ➤ Parents alcohol abuse ➤ Attempted filicide-suicide ➤ Peer pressure ➤ Absent biological father ➤ Anger	Province: Free State Town: Botshabelo ➤ Normal environment	➤ Denial of first offence • Wrongfully accused. ➤ 1 count of sexual offence • Use of substances prior to offence • Motivated by anger ➤ Ambiguity about the contribution of childhood experiences to sexual offences committed	➤ No closure regarding attempted filicide-suicide

4.3 Case B: Participant 2 (Daniel)

4.3.1 Researcher’s Reflections

The interview went well. The participant was comfortable sharing his experiences but was a bit guarded. Probing was used to assist the participant in narrating his experiences. The

interview was conducted in English, and he shared some of his experiences in Sesotho. This was allowed to make the participant more comfortable.

4.3.2 Daniel's Brief Background

Daniel, a Black male, was 43 years old at the time of the interview. He was incarcerated for one count of sexual offence. He was in a maximum-security prison for half of his sentence and was moved to a medium-security correctional facility. He was in the medium-security correctional facility at the time of the interview.

4.3.3 Daniel's Lived Childhood Experiences

Daniel explained that his childhood was fine. *"My childhood was fine, sister [crosstalk: 5:14], honestly speaking. And I was raised the right way".*

He explained that he was treated well and raised well by his caregivers. *"No, for me, they treat me nicely. I was the favourite one to my great-grandmother and to my grandmother because of the dreams that I used to have, and I was a spiritual kids. Let me say that, let me put it like that, I was a spiritual kids. So, the treatment I received was different from the other children got".*

He is the oldest of four children but did not have a relationship with his siblings because they grew up in different towns, and he was incarcerated early in his life. *"Uh, three of them. Yes, I am the oldest. Uh... I left them when they were young, to be honest; that time when I was young, it was my cousins around me. Uh... no, my siblings we, they grew up in front of me, but I left them when they still young. I came to prison".*

He was raised by his grandmother's mother and grandmother. *"My grandmother's mother and my grandmother".*

His father was absent and never had a relationship with him. *"Uh, my father was not there. I didn't know him til I was uh, I growed up, til I was old, yes".*

He was negatively affected by the absence of his father. *“It affected me a lot, especially when I was at school. Uh, sometimes we would maybe sometimes, we go out with the school, eh, we have a trip, then some other kids will say me, my father bought me this, no my father said I must do this, I must not do that; by that time I check, no, I don’t have a father. So, it affected me. Sometimes, we’re going out and play we as boys, and there’s some ladies around, then if some others they try to do something negative around, they say no, my father said that this one is not good, it’s not a good thing to do to a, to female children, you are not supposed to do 1,2,3, you mustn’t do 1,2,3”.*

His father’s absence affected him negatively because he needed his father’s guidance.

“So, I used to think that if my dad was maybe here, he will give me maybe the different story, maybe the story that this guy have it”.

His uncle and grandfather were the only present male figures in his life. *“My uncles, yes, my uncles, my uh, grandfather”.*

The absence of his father led to him adopting conflicting beliefs and opinions on how to treat women from other male figures. *“But now, by that time, it used to confuse me, but my uncle said this, and this guy said his father said this. Like, for example, uh, a woman, you do not listen to a woman. Say no, you don’t listen to a woman, you are the, you are the man”.*

These different opinions from male figures in his life led to mistreating and abusing women. *“Information from children at school and what your uncles were saying [crosstalk: 15:24]. Uh, you see that one, you are my woman. ‘No, I am not your woman!’ I would slap her. No, I didn’t care. Although, on the side, it used to hurt but because a woman is not supposed to see you feeling sorry for her like you are weak or you are crying; if she feels like you feel sorry for her, you must not look at her...”.*

Daniel was exposed to physical abuse in his immediate family. *“Eh, the negative things that I think I’ve been exposed to is to see the way that women, the way that our fathers, brothers, the way they used to handle womens. So, for me I, I, I, for me, by that time, it was, it was like normal to see, uh, women being beaten up”.*

His uncle intimidated and abused women in the immediate family and outside the family.

His mother was one of the victims of the abuse. *“Uh, also my uncle beat my mum and um, even to her mother too, the way he used to talk about, to talk with him, uh, it was, it was like, it was like I’m the man, you are the woman, you got nothing to say, whatever I am saying, it ends with me, not you. So, yeah”.*

The abuse of his mother affected him negatively. *“And it affect me a lot because, eh, some of the victim was my mother; by that time, I was still young, your mother would go out to the streets, getting beaten. It disturbed me for a long time”.*

He has never been a victim of any direct sexual or physical abuse as a child. *“No, it was only towards my mother and some other women in the streets and his girlfriends”.*

4.2.4 Daniel’s Neighbourhood Experiences

Daniel was born in Petrusburg on a farm in the Free State Province. He then moved between different towns in the Free State Province. He moved from Petrusburg to Botshabelo to Bloemfontein.

“We grew up here in Bloemfontein, but I was born, we were born at Petrusburg, around Free State”.

“Petrusburg. From Botshabelo to Bloemfontein”.

He moved from Botshabelo to Bloemfontein between the ages of eight and 10 years old.

“Uh... I left Botshabelo, 1990... 1997? Uh... 5-6...7... be kele 8 years... 8/9, between there. If I’m not mistaken, it was between 9 and 10”.

He described Botshabelo as a generally good place with good and bad aspects.

“Botshabelo [sigh] uh, the neighbourhood was good. Uh, uh, yeah, there was a side that was good, and the other side had problems”.

He also explained that Botshabelo was a good environment due to the available

extramural activities. *“Okay. To my childhood, Botshabelo it was a nice place because, uh it was, it was popular for entertainment. And activities, it was having those stars, soccer stars, choirs... It was like that Botshabelo those days. For me, it was good during those times and is the place that can I say uh, is the place that influenced me to be uh, uh, to love, uh singing, to love entertainments world”.*

There was also violence and abuse in Botshabelo during Daniel’s childhood. *“Hence, I’m saying, uh, you would find that... During the week everything is fine but, when it comes to Friday, Saturday and sometimes Sunday, then you will see the same people that you know, then you will see them different because they are drunk and they will start doing some other things that will shock you, uh, beating people, stabbing... all those kinds of things”.*

Women were often the victims of violence and abuse in the community. *“And then most of the time, during that time, the victims was always women”.*

He described Bloemfontein as a good place during his childhood, but there was

exposure to violence and gangsterism in Bloemfontein. *“Uh, for me, Bloemfontein was, was quite nice”. “And then even here in Bloemfontein, uh, here in Bloemfontein, then I started to experience the gangsterism the; where they stab people, robbing people...”. “The first groups that I noticed is gangsters because uh, there was a group from Freedom Square, and then there was a group from Namibia, they called themselves The Black Takkies and the*

what what Pointer Stars, I can't remember. Yes, so, the other group when they came to the club or were moving around the street, and then if others come, then they must give them space. And then we know, okay, The Black Takkies is the one who's the, they are the ones that are handling, who are strong. Yes. Sometimes they used to fight during the day in the streets, fire, rob uh, knives are taken out, people are getting stabbed – live”.

4.3.5 Sexual Offences Committed and Actions Leading to the Sexual Offence/s Committed

Daniel was incarcerated for one count of sexual offence with an underage woman and other criminal offences such as theft and robbery. *“Eh, then I was arrested; I got a case for rape. Because I left with her, I went and slept with her where I used to stay. The other ones are the ones that put me here today because that one, I'm 4-5 years in for rape, years. So, I got a further charge. I have 3 accused, we were 5, uh, but the other ones, they are not for rape”. “We went to the tavern to go and drink, and guys start robbing people inside the tavern, we shooting, and all those stuff; and we didn't plan it”.*

The sexual offence occurred during courtship. *“Okay. Uh [pause]... What I can say is... Eish [deep sigh]... Those days uh, we used to call uh... whereby I came to you, and I would flirt with you. You don't give me uh, the final answer, so, by that time, we used to say uh, I have half card at that person. Yes, but it means she promised, it means you promised, but we will come back at a later stage”.*

The courtship was characterised by jealousy, control, entitlement and violence. *“Yes. So, it started to threaten me, that thing. I say eish, I have cards there, and this lady, she's feeling this guy, and this guy, he can, he can do his thing! And me, I cannot dance. I'm really stiff. So, I called the lady, 'Let us go outside.' No, she does not want to hear my story. So, I start getting jealous, and I remember, no man, there is no need for me to wait for the final answer. She's mine. 'Hey! Let's go.' 'No, I don't want to go out.' I go out and took a brick,*

came back with the brick, I waited for the guy to hit him with the rock; when he came, I hit him with the brick. I beat this guy; this guy, he doesn't know anything. Beat this guy, I was looking at the lady. This guy fell down, I said 'I'm leaving, let's go'".

4.3.6 Influence of Childhood Experiences on Sexual Offence/s Committed

He shared that his actions were influenced by learned cultural beliefs about women. *Uh [sigh] ...uh [sigh] ...uh, that thing of a lady, she doesn't have a say, a no to you as a guy. And you are the head. I'm the head, so whatever you are saying, she must take it. So, uh, especially the one of... you don't ask him, you just tell him".*

4.3.7 Daniel's Final Reflections

His reflections were centred around pleading with the government to invest in reintroducing recreational activities for the youth. *"[Deep sigh] ...The only thing that I can say is that I wish that maybe our government right, they can bring back again at schools, entertainment and activities because those things they are the ones that used to keep youth safe. Uh, they're the ones that make sure that youth they don't join those negative things because now, these nowadays there's no such things at schools, even in the, in the um, areas that we live, there's no uh, uh, places to go and do some sports or entertainment".*

He suggested that the government should build entertainment and recreational facilities to reduce substance use, crime and violence. *"There are no community hall centre, there are no... So me, me, I would focus on those things. I would make sure that in the locations, we have those facilities so that our kids they can go and learn something and keep them busy with somethings, entertainment, activities; bring the constructive things to those kids because now the only thing that takes place in, in our society is gangsterism, drugs, uh, substance abuse; So, our kids they are being exposed to those things and they end up joining it because*

there's nothing that they can do. They would go to school and look at their books; after school, it's going home. There's nothing they can do when they get home".

He participated in extramural activities and played sports during his childhood but did not have support. *"Uh, yes, I used to play football, uh, I tried to join some dance group but uh, I was not good that side". "They were there but the support was not there by those days. But we'll go to schools. I remember around 4/5 we must go back to school; there's a karate class, there's a basketball, football with the guys, sometimes it's for bioscope, you would go look at the bioscope, and we are not just going to watch the bioscope, after that bioscope eh, there's a questions, what did you see? What did you learn? You see? All those things".*

Table 3

Clustering of Daniel's Themes

Positive experiences	Negative experiences	Neighbourhood experiences	Sexual offence committed, actions leading to offence and influence of childhood experiences	Final reflections
➤ Raised well by his grandmother's mother and grandmother ➤ The presence of other male figures	➤ Absent father ➤ Lack of guidance from father ➤ Different opinions and guidance from different male figures	Province: Free State Town: Petrusburg, Bloemfontein and Botshabelo ➤ Exposure to violence and abuse of women ➤ Gangsterism ➤ Exposure to sports and extramural activities	➤ 1 count of sexual offence • Cultural beliefs about women • Violence ➤ Other offences • Robbery and theft	➤ Reintroduction of recreational activities in the communities to reduce substance use, crime and violence

4.4 Case C: Participant 3 (Calvin)

4.4.1 Researcher's Reflection

The participant narrated his experiences well and was comfortable sharing his childhood experiences. The researcher facilitated the conversation and asked questions for clarity. However, the participant was somewhat uncomfortable sharing the experiences or actions that led to his sexual offence. The participant reflected on his experiences and current concerns, including his experiences in the correctional facility. Conducting this interview was less challenging because the participant was comfortable sharing his experiences, simplifying the role of the researcher.

4.4.2 Calvin's Brief Background

Calvin is a 31-year-old, Coloured Afrikaans-speaking male. He was incarcerated for five counts of sexual offences at a maximum-security facility at the time of the interview.

4.4.3 Calvin's Lived Childhood Experiences

Calvin described his upbringing as a good one. *"Uh, the way I grow up, for me, I can say I uh's a good one".*

His father and older brother were breadwinners in the family. *"My father was working by the municipality; my mother didn't work. He was the runner of, like, a handyman. He's building, making right, putting power for RDP houses, new building houses".*

His father lost his job, and his older brother became the sole provider. *"In 2001, he lost his job, then my mother, she don't have a job anymore. And so, it's only my brother, the one brother, who's children stay with us. He sends money from the SA for my mother, who support the children of him, mos ne. His brother also eventually started contributing less in the family because his children no longer lived in the house".*

His older brothers exposed him to drugs and alcohol from the age of nine. *“Say, plus-minus nine years, since from nine years. They took me like an... If they go to the club, that owners of that place of that people, the dog keepers, they will not tell them that child cannot be here. Sometimes, I get my beer, sometimes, I get everything I want. If they get a... they go with him home. And they are big by me. So, every time when they do something, they let me do it with them. Smoke, drink... Smoke not so too much because they are smoking weed, they are smoking tablets, smoking cigarettes. Cigarettes, somehow, they give me, not dagga and tablets like they are used to smoking. But they took me as we are on the same level, but I was not on the same level with them”.*

He started using alcohol and illicit drugs at the age of 14. *“Fourteen, say 14 couple of months. I used to drink from small age, wa bona”.*

His brothers also exposed him to sexual content. *“It’s my brother. You see, now I’m going to sleep with this woman now. So, I become uh, angry he’s going to sleep with that woman, aowa why can I not sleep with that woman? So, I go into the house livid, but I respect him. Tomorrow when I’m wake up, he’s going to come and tell me, that lady didn’t give me nice, or I didn’t give her nice, and then topic, topic, topic for that day, and then he’s gone. He’ll repeat it, repeat it until he goes back to work”.*

There was conflict between his parents; his father physically abused his mother. *“So there, it’s a conflict, my mother is between, wa bona? Instead, he didn’t get it right by me; he hit my mom wa bona. But he didn’t hit her the same time because she was in the middle. After... the very same day”. “So, if my mother didn’t make him coffee, akere when he come from work he wants a cup of coffee, he become angry on her. Akere, he get nothing by me right, on her, he want to fight with her. Me, I’m coming, because I already see, this guy, he’s my father, and*

he's afraid of me. And so, I must stand up now for my mother because he's going to fight with her".

His mother was hospitalised when he was 13 years old for eight months and developed a memory deficit. He described this event as life changing. *"Difference is she was not right in her mind. She didn't remember anything".*

"She did have a heart attack, and that heart attack of my mother changed my lifetime".

He cared for his sick mother due to his father's lack of support. He described this period as difficult. *"And after I go back to the home, I feel gore, no gore maan, I belong here, this is my mother, I'm going to look after her with that intention, and it become hard because she was having that...That catheter, she cannot pee mos ne? It become hard wa bona. Sometime she asked me, 'Calvin, it's burning here', and then I must open her legs, clean there, wa bona? Something like that wa bona? It become hard for me. The more I want to stay with her, the more she's do or ask me to do; push me away from her, wa bona? And sometimes, I can sometimes I cannot help her, wa bona?"*

Community members bullied him due to his mother's condition. *"So, my mother was like that ne, so, all the people in the location, you know, mos big people they speak. The children my age, they hear it. They start to blah blah blah blah, onse skool here in the location, wa bona? That hey his mother is like this and this and this, and they start to, how can I say it... they gwara me ne, like, [blabbing]"*

There was a serious violation of rules and challenging authority. He intimidated and challenged his father's authority from age 13, which affected his relationship with his father. *"My father, in the other hand, he's like that guy who wants to hold me strictly. He don't want smoking; he don't want anything that I do when my brothers are by the house. I cannot*

do it when they are away. There whereby we don't understand each other, me and him. Because he wants me to do right, mna, I want to do what my brothers do. I think I was, like, 13 years old. He wanted to hit me the way he used to hit me when I'm doing wrong. And then, I grabbed him back. I told him, 'Ha-a, you will not do it. From today, I'm the same as my brothers. If you choose to hit me, hit one of my brothers' children, not me'".

He was aggressive towards other people at the age of 13, committing crimes such as robbery and snatching other people's goods. *"I remember, I was robbing another woman ne, she was coming from the shop. So, I wanted a cigarette, and she was buying cigarettes for her, so I took it by her by force. That lady said 'no it's fine, I know you, your father is this and this, I'm going to him, I'm going to tell him'".*

He reported dropping out of school in Grade 10 due to a lack of resources. *"One school will go from Grade R to Grade 7, it's primary. When you pause, you go to high school now; you are going town from Grade 8 to Grade 12, so, out of location going to town you know 4/5 kilometres, I did not feel for it, nna I didn't. Maybe I was in Grade 7, re Grade 9, I start to realise that gore hay' hay' hay' I will not go, go this road every morning, every afternoon. I'd rather come come and go to town spinning town, go back and tell them I'm out of school, I wasn't in school".*

He was deceitful and committed crimes such as shoplifting and robbery. *"I say ne, give me R20 or R50. 'What! For what?' I need this and this and this on school I need this and this, and he feel me, wa bona, give me. So, instead of me going to use that money on school, I use it to buy drugs by my brother, or I send someone. I want to smoke, wa bona?". "So nna, I go there, I go with the intention, I only want the roof. I sleep there, tomorrow when I woke up, they will say I must prepare for school, hay' I don't go to school, I go and skarrel for me in the town whatever I want to get, if I can get it, I will get. In the morning, I wake up, I wash, they*

think, Calvin is going to school. Calvin is not going to school, Calvin is going to town and zama for me something. If I get something sometimes, grab some things from people, run away, wa bona... Steal, shoplifting, understand? ”.

He was arrested for robbery as a teenager but not incarcerated due to lack of criminal

responsibility. *“Calvin is not here. You see? Some of the times, they come find out that Calvin is not even in the location, Calvin in the police cell, Calvin did rob someone, Calvin did grab something from someone, then they come across that the social worker is phoning them, at that time my father is at that stage where he say ‘hay.’ I don’t want to do nothing with him you guys can go, then, there must be a family member who’s going to take me now. Nna, I don’t have a problem, they said ‘okay right, you are charged, the social worker will deal with this case; , because you are on school’. So, the social worker talk to the court, ‘No, you can put him to his aunt...’ Eh, how do you... ”.*

His personality was characterised by arrogance, entitlement, and control as a child.

“Uh, no, I’m the last born, but they say I’m the king. No one can touch me, no one can tell me, ‘Calvin, you did this wrong’ ”.

“Uh, nna I grow up, I like women ne? And there were not many women who can say no to me, even in our family ne? If I ask something from any women, or any specific human being, they cannot say no to me. And I don’t allow them to say no to me because when I ask something, I’m on it, and I don’t give you a time to think or a time to say no ”.

His life was characterised by an unstable family structure, which led to him moving around. He moved from his parent’s house to live with his brother due to bullying about his mother’s condition. His brother was a drug dealer. *“That hey his mother is like this and this and this, and they start to, how can I say it... they gwara me ne, like, [blabbing]. So, I start to think, man hai man, this thing is enough man. I’m going out, I don’t want to stay*

here anymore, wa bona? I go to my brother, the one who is the oldest one. So, he was doing business there ne, selling dagga, selling homemade beer, selling alcohol, selling this [physical movement]”. “Mandrax tablets, he was selling there, ne”.

He went back to live with his parents after a few months; there was a change in the dynamics of the family structure. “There, whereby I go home, I found out that my father is living with that woman; they live inside our home. Nna, I asked them, ‘how do you expect a child of 13 or 14 years old will grow up in a house with two parents’; one is his biological mother, one is his stepmother inside the home. His mother are mentally ill, his stepmother is right, wa bona”.

He moved to his grandmother’s house; the household had no stability and structure. He developed a sense of responsibility to provide for himself and his family. “Like that ne. So, I decided gore no, I’m going to stay by my grandmother’s home, and that’s whereby my problems starts because there, each and every one make his own food, and live his own way. So nna, I go there, I go with the intention, I only want the roof. I sleep there, tomorrow when I woke up, they will say I must prepare for school. Hay, I don’t go to school, I go and skarrel for me in the town whatever I want to get if I can get it, I will get. In the morning, I wake up, I wash, they think, ‘Calvin is going to school’”.

“Sometimes, when it’s tough here in this house, these people they depend mos now on me”.

4.4.4 Calvin’s Positive Life Experiences

He enjoyed everything about his childhood except losing his mother; his mother passed away in 2021. “Everything. The only thing that I don’t enjoy it’s the fact that I feel that that life took my mother away from me”.

4.4.5 Calvin's Neighbourhood Experiences

He grew up in Carnarvon in the Northern Cape Province. His neighbourhood was characterised by different types of violence and alcohol abuse. *"There are a lot of violence, man, like in maybe neighbours they are fighting, or you hear that this guy is caught for rape, he did rape mang mang there in that location or he did rape mang mang there but, in her house, or he was caught breaking in there by that man's house there in town, wa bona?". "Lot of, of, of, SAPS involved in the location 24/7, because 24/7 there are people drunk, 24/7 there are people drinking even that home-made beer that the people making, wa bona?".*

4.4.6 Sexual Offences Committed and Actions Leading to Sexual Offence/s Committed

Calvin was incarcerated for five counts of sexual offences. *"No. There are plenty. I have maybe, let me count it right, 2-3-4-5-, 5 rape cases".*

He committed his first sexual offence at the age of 16 years.

1. First sexual offence

His first girlfriend was his first victim; there were elements of power and dominance in this case. *"I end up with a girlfriend... we were in a relationship, ne, and she knows me very well because her father, her mother used to tell her that 'Hey! Leave that guy alone,' and that time, I was not raping anyone yet. I was just a naughty guy. You don't say no to me; I want what I want when I want it, even if water out of the sea. Hey, that woman's father says that that woman is going to school. So, I go there, by fire by force; I took a knife and knock on the door. When he open, he want to 'Hey leave M, she is going tomorrow to school'; it's on Sunday night, but they didn't want... I said 'Hey, it's my girlfriend. She choose to be my girlfriend. Every time I give her R10, she come back and give to you Tobacco that you can smoke; it's your child; you took her money,' because every time she tell me mos, if I give her money, no*

she shares with her brother and her sister, or her father took R2, he is going to buy that small tobacco or what what what what”.

Anger and force were also evident in the case. *“So, I force and say ‘hey, mona, I want to feel, I want to put my hand in, I want to feel how I want to feel the blood, I want to see the blood. If it did come out, yes or no’. She said, ‘No Calvin, please, you know mos I am going to give you pussy and blah blah blah blah. I am going to give it to you but not now because I am bleeding,’ and what what what not. So now I become angry, then I take her, I grab her, I took her to the hall, then I am on her, I feel, I feel, then I take out hand, and it was full of blood, but then still, I told her I want that thing now, I am going to have sex whether you like it, yes or no, I don’t have a problem”.*

He physically assaulted the victim during the sexual violation. *“I threaten her, I threaten her, I threaten her, what you gonna speak because I can see her eyes but I did not hit her, it was just here by the body, I see it that no these people are going to jump it here, so I looked, the one eye is like this, it is blue, her lip is like that, you can see, it is not so ugly, but here on her body, you can see how I hit her”.*

The case was not opened at the time because he threatened and intimidated the victim. *“Then I threaten her, I threaten her, then she keep quiet. I survive”.*

He was incarcerated at a later stage for an attempted rape against his girlfriend. There was a theme of power, entitlement, and control. *“There was a fifth one, the last one, also some kind of a girlfriend, ne? But for that lady, I was used... that one that I am telling you, they didn’t make a case. Then I hear that woman, she’s in town, and I know, nna, is my girl this one, I made her the way she is, or I think I have. She will not say no to me, and she won’t control her. So, I go to her with the intention hori, yeyi, let us go, you are mine, and she, she said with the day, no... Go back to that incident whereby we were together, that rape whereby*

the police he come across that this thing it come from far; so, its better to get a case here, me, she and him. We see where to from here. Then nna, I accept, yes, I did hit her, I did yesterday night, I did blah blah blah blah, so I accept, you can make the case of assault. For me to end up by the court, I hearing by the court that it's not assault, it is attempted rape. There also tsats me, they did charge me”.

2. Second sexual offence

The second sexual offence committed was a planned attempted rape. *“So, I plan to rape her also, you understand? Unfortunately, that rape, it didn’t turn out wabo? We get her, that lady, my girlfriend; I give her money, she must took that lady to the café, but when she see us, she told her friend that ‘Calvin said we must do that to you. I must take you to the café, here he comes with his two rands, they gonna grab you and rape you because you are talkative’”.*

There was also a theme of anger during the offence. *“Then that lady, she run. I didn’t grab her. I become angry, I hit that one”.*

3. Third sexual offence

He planned and attempted to rape his aunt. *“Then I go, sleep next to my aunt, but with the intention that this my girlfriend, I go there and have sex with her”.*

There was also the theme of anger and alcohol use in this case. *“So, as I was busy preparing myself to have sex with her, she woke up. ‘He Calvin, don’t do it. He Calvin!’, you understand? The same thing that was happening with my girlfriend; stopping me from doing it. I become angry, and I am under the influence of alcohol, so I didn’t check gore this is my aunty, this is my mother’s sister. I check we are drinking together, we smoke together, we eat together, how can I not have sex with them?”.*

He planned to intimidate and threaten his aunt after sexually assaulting her for her not to report the case. *“So, I force myself on her also, with the intention that no, this is my family, tomorrow it will all be cool. I will also threaten her; she mustn’t make a case. It was my mistake, she didn’t took it that way”.*

He was guilty of the crime, but his case was withdrawn, and he was sent to rehabilitation.

“She push up, go police station after, she make a case for rape; they took me social workers same time. They sent me away to the boarding school whereby there are people with cases in Kimberly. They took me there, after some time, I realise something is wrong here. What I am here? Rape. Who did I rape? I know that the police tsatsi-ing me, ‘we know that you rape you aunt, your mother’s sister’ Wabo? So, the magistrate, ne, he doesn’t want to continue with this case because he’s [inaudible: 62:44]. He said: ‘Okay. Hence you are underage. We gonna withdraw this case temporarily.’ So, it means there is no case against you, wabo? And that I time I was in Grade 10, there was no case against me. So, you are free to go; you can go back to school”.

4. Fourth sexual offence

There was an attempted sexual assault at the age of 17. This offence started with crimes:

Housebreaking and illegal use of substances. There was also a theme of anger in this

attempted offence. *“I mix with a, not a, not an old lady. That time I was 17. Maybe she was 28, 29. I meet with her, gets up nicely. She is having side of my glass, so I interact with her, and I took her home? She said yes; it's no problem, I can took home. She stay in another location, which is far from this location, so I reach my friend and say, ‘Hey mona, I am going to take this woman home. Please, can you come with me?’. ‘No, it's no problem, I will come with you.’ Us, we step out, I buy maybe 8 beers, I take 2, I give him 2, I give her 2 before. He drink one, I drink one, I give her. So, we walk to her location ne, after we come in a location,*

the road is like this, ne? A straight road, on that other side, there, on this side ne, so we go, then we go, then I ask her, 'Eh mona, now I come to you this far, I look, I even brought you beer, you can take this to you but what are you giving me in return? That lady wanted to give me sex, but she said, 'Mh-mm, Calvin, I cannot. Tomorrow I will be dirty because I have a child with your cousin,' and what what. So, I become angry; I wanted to rape her, ne, but instead I don't want my cousin and his, her family must be pointing fingers at me, so something said to my mind that a-ah, leave her. Wabona?'".

He committed the fourth sexual offence on the same night as the attempted rape. This offence also started with a crime (robbery). *"My friend, he comes to me and says, 'Hey Calvin, there's a place.' We normally use that road when we go to the tavern, and he says there is house with an open door, and there's a policeman there. We used that, that guest house, ne. So, he said we must go for a break-in there; I say it's no problem. Then my friend said let us rape her. I said, 'Ya, grab her, fast her'. I get on her, I rape her; afterwards, he gets on top of her".*

5. Fifth sexual offence

His victim for the fifth sexual offence victim rape was an elderly woman. This case was influenced by an association between rape and power. There was also the use of substances prior to the offence. *"And unluckily, that night, there was a victim that I love so much, and she love me 'til today. It's a old, old, old, old aunt. She is 81 years old at that time. We were drinking, we were drinking and smoking crystal, but it was not so so so wet. Some of the guys they used to come and sit with us, 'Ye monna, who did you rape? Who did you rape?' because rape was in that time, we make a group with young boys, we want to teach them how to rape women, and that thing is not right, but it used to happen. 'Eh monna, if you rape a woman you are age, it is not rape.' 'Eh monna, if you rape a woman eh younger than*

you, it is not rape. If you rape a woman older than you, it is rape.’ Yeah, whereby, guys, we used to rape in the location. That that mindset of this woman, or that lady, or this child is gonna tell me nothing with force; by fire by force. We go with that mindset, ne?’.

4.4.7 Influence of Childhood Experiences on Sexual Offence/s Committed

He believes that his childhood experiences contributed to the sexual offences he

committed but takes accountability for the decisions he made. *“Then I took myself back, ne, and then I said ‘no man, nna’, I blame my community man, because there are some things that as a child you grow up ne, people they do in front of you, or you want to follow or you want to see what he’s doing, how he’s doing, wa bona? Or, how did he end up, he was in the situation, how did he come out there, a lot of things that I see there on the street, wa bona. And then I realise no mos it’s the people that show me maybe a way or some of them they try to help me on the right way, but it’s me who goes this way because of the things that I see, the things that I heard, wa bona? But in the meantime, I said no man, it’s in every man, or it’s in every human. If you make a choice; if I take this pen, I throw it, it is lying there you come in, immediately you see it your mind speak to you, your mind speak to your eyes, telling you that there is a pen, it doesn’t belong there, you make that choice to pick it up. No one tells you to pick it up, you make that choice. So, it’s whereby I worked through it myself to see gore where did I go wrong; and now I did get it”.*

4.4.8 Calvin’s Final Reflections

His final reflections were about beliefs about the rehabilitation of sex offenders in correctional centres, the need for rehabilitation and concerns about the rehabilitation process in the correctional centres. *“Ah, I don’t think it involves specifically this interview, but nna, I am a sexual offender ne? And I believe in that a sexual offender cannot be rehabilitated. So nna, I said it’s up to a sexual offender if he wants to be rehabilitated or he can be rehabilitated. Now, they are busy with, with those programmes via DCS, the sexual*

offender programme, whereby they give you, it's a book ne, whereby the, the social work is going through sessions with you, us, an individual or a group of people to show that you come across that sexual offender thing of how can we set the history of sexual offender and he must be rehabilitated, or you must go through that programme to go out".

"Now, I, almost by in 10 years in prison. And for me, like the past say moba 4-5 months that I'm now in this prison, and for the longest year, I am here, it feels for me that this people they are trying to, now that my sentence is on the road ne. It's maybe, why did they put, say that they put psychologist to work whilst I am too deep in my sentence; why didn't they, akiri, they say sexual offenders cannot be rehabilitated? It's hard to be rehabilitated? Why didn't they start the process in the beginning of my sentence, to take me through this, this whole experience, this sexual, last, uh, experience in the earlier stage so that we can work through it as social workers, as psychologists, those who are in control, why didn't they do that for sexual offenders in prison? They come whenever they say there is an inmate that wants to see you, or must see you, or it depends if the inmate doesn't stand and say he need psychology or he need more advanced psychologist, or social worker. It depends, if you are, are, you feeling, akiri it's me who has a problem, so I must go and seek help. So, it depends, if I didn't seek that problem of me, so other people they sit, they don't talk, they don't do nothing. Hence, they tend to go out, repeat what he was doing; it is the system, there is no help".

Table 4

Clustering of Calvin's Themes

Positive experiences	Negative experiences	Neighbourhood	Sexual offences committed, actions leading to offences & influence of childhood experiences	Participants reflections
➤ Relationship with mother	➤ Unemployment ➤ Exposure to drugs and	Province: Northern Cape Town: Carnarvon	Charged with 5 sexual offences 1 st at the age of 16 ➤ Victim: Girlfriend	➤ Beliefs about the rehabilitation

alcohol from age 9	➤ Different types of violence	• Power and dominance • Anger and force • Physically assaulted the victim • Intimidation of victim	of sex offenders
➤ Exposure to sexual content	➤ Substance abuse	Failed planned attempted rape (not charged)	➤ Need for rehabilitation
➤ Sick mother and taking care of her		2 nd around age 16-17	➤ Concerns about the rehabilitation process in prison
➤ Bullying in the community due to mother's condition		➤ Victim: Maternal aunt • Anger • Plan to intimidate and threaten • Found guilty; case withdrawn due to criminal incapacity	
➤ Unstable household		3 rd at the age of 17: Sexual assault (found guilty)	
➤ Theft and robbery		➤ Victim: Stranger • Started with petty crime	
➤ Absconding and dropping out of school		4 th around the age of 17: Sexual assault	
➤ Poor relationship with parents		➤ Victim: Stranger • Same night as attempted rape • Started with a robbery	
➤ Physical abuse in the family and change in dynamics		5 th around the age of 17	
		➤ Victim: Known elderly woman • Power and control • Associated with substance abuse • Contribution of childhood experiences and accountability	

4.5 Case D: Participant 4 (Thomas)

4.5.1 Researcher's Reflection

This participant is more educated compared to the other participants. He was a correspondent marketing student at Unisa. As a result, he became interested in academics and started asking favours from the researcher since the researcher was a university student. The

favours included asking the researcher for old psychology textbooks; however, the researcher was able to stick to her role and explain it to the participant. Conducting this interview was difficult because the participant struggled to articulate his feelings. He was closed off and seemed not to want to share much about his childhood experiences.

The researcher constantly asked the participant if he was comfortable sharing his experiences, and he agreed to continue. The researcher had to probe a lot compared to other participants. The participant was emotional towards the end of the interview. The researcher had to maintain the role of the researcher and make sure that the participant was not distressed by the contents of the interview. The participant confided that he was well during the interview. However, the researcher ensured the participant received a debriefing session after the interview. The interview was conducted in English.

4.5.2 Thomas' Brief Background

Thomas, a White Afrikaans-speaking male, was 37 at the time of the interview. He was incarcerated for four counts of sexual offences, which included child abuse. Thomas was in a maximum-security centre at the time of the interview.

4.5.3 Thomas' Lived Childhood Experiences

Thomas was raised by his parents. *"We did visit grandparents, but I was raised by my parents".*

His father was absent due to his work commitments. *"He was focused on his work. So, there wasn't the typical father and son relationship where he would come and watch your, your sport or even care what sport you do. Um, he wasn't even interested in stuff like how did you do on your marks in your report card and anything; he was just doing his own thing and taking care of the family".*

His mother was present due to unemployment. *“Um, she was basically... She did give more love to us, but um also, there was no uh, going to sport events or those type of things. It was just carrying on with life”.*

His artwork was his only positive experience. *“Well, I’ve, I’ve enjoyed my artwork and so on, because basically from, my mom said that even before I could, could read or write, I was starting to do drawings and stuff”.*

His father physically abused him. *“Um, there’s one thing that stands out quite strong; where I was still about six or seven years old, and my father lost his temper. And you know, those uh, those rubbish drums, those bigger ones that go on the back of the trucks? Sometimes they put it on the ground and then um, they eventually come to, to fetch it and so on. One of those things were standing close to the rubbish dump site; and we went to throw away the rubbish. And my father lost his temper for something, I can’t remember what it was. He literally picked me up and threw me in”.*

Other things like the way that when we get a hiding, my father did take it a bit far. Like for example, only once ever, I got uh, a hiding with a sjambock, which there was actually blood flowing. Um, the other times, it was with a plastic pipe. It was also quite sore. But, instead of just being one or two hits, it might have been like, easily five or six hits”.

He explained that he was treated fairly normally by his significant others. *“Um, well, when we go to visit my grandma, everybody’s going on with their thing of uh, making the food, and keeping the house clean and having conversation and so on... Nothing out of the ordinary”.*

There was sibling rivalry between Thomas and his brother. *“There was times where it was very uncomfortable. Um, the times that I did get girlfriends, he always tried to, to get my girlfriends from me. There were times that we just didn’t get along; where he would, for*

example uh, say, for example I've got nice sunglasses, and he likes them, my sunglasses will just disappear, and a few months later, I might catch him with my sunglasses. Yah. It happened quite often that he took my things. I'm not sure what for, but that caused a bit of an uncomfortable relationship with my brother. It only started resolving during the last two years. While I'm actually here in prison, did we, we buried the hatchet, and all those past things is past".

4.5.4 Thomas' Positive Experiences

His artwork was his only positive experience. *"Well, I've, I've enjoyed my artwork and so on, because basically from, my mom said that even before I could, could read or write, I was starting to do drawings and stuff".*

4.5.5 Thomas' Neighbourhood Experiences

Thomas grew up in Gauteng Province, Vaal Triangle in Meyerton. *"In Vaal Triangle, mostly. It was a, a urban area".*

There was no violence, crime or drug use in the area during Thomas's childhood. *"Um, there are... It would be average middle class. It's quite a peaceful area, actually. There's not a lot of violence there. You could go on and play on the streets if you want and still be safe. It was quite a nice area".*

4.5.6 Sexual Offence/s Committed and Actions Leading to Offence/s Committed

Thomas was charged with four counts of sexual assault but declined to disclose three offences during the interview. Researcher: *"Okay. So, was that the only offence you committed?"*.

Thomas: *"Yes"*.

Researcher: *"The one with the child?"*.

Thomas: “Mm”.

He also denied the nature of the sexual assault. *“And even though I’m sentenced for rape of penetration, it did not actually happen that way. Um, the way the court case happened was very biased”. “There was literally only external touching and literally looking. There was no actual penetration at all; even though I’m sentenced as that”.*

His victim was a minor in primary school, and he was 20 years old. *“She was in primary school. Um, in my 20’s”.*

Thomas had the perception that he was in a romantic relationship with the victim. *“It was like, boyfriend and girlfriend relationship. I suppose you can call the person my victim, even though it wasn't a situation where I was making a victim, it was more a situation of it was just a kind of a relationship, but, but the person was underage”.*

He struggled to form and maintain romantic relationships. *“Well, one of the things that my father also did was, say, for example, I get a girlfriend, the time I was still in school, and I want to let her come to the house and introduce her to my mom and my dad, and just have a visit for the day and then she goes home and whatever; my father would always ask like, ‘What do you want a girlfriend for?’ Always like, a negative view of um, being in a relationship. So, I suppose that caused me to not maybe have developed on a way of relationships? If you take that of no developing normally um, in relationships, combined with that thing of seeking acceptance, the combination of that maybe distorted my normal way of being in a relationship”.*

He felt accepted by the victim compared to when he was in romantic relationships with women his age. *“Um, so, I felt accepted by the younger girl because it was like, she was unconditionally loving”. “Um, like, for example, if I come home after work, uh, at that stage I was, I was doing forklift driving, and I was still riding my bicycle; um, if come home from*

work, for example, I'm still wearing my overall, and I haven't shaved for that specific day, because I usually shave the day before going to church. Um, she wouldn't criticise me of, 'You still smelling a little bit sweaty after work,' or, 'You're still dusty of the air you did forklifting driving.' 'You didn't shave.' She accepted me unconditionally, and I felt loved by the way that she loved me. Um...The acceptance didn't happen at all from girls who were older, they were always critical on various things".

4.5.7 Influence of Childhood Experiences on Offence/s Committed

Lack of acceptance and not being seen by caregivers. *"Well, I think one of the things that had an influence from my childhood is the need of acceptance". "Because the fact that my, my, my parents, even my grandparents, they didn't actively have interest in my life. They were there, and they cared, but the fact that there was no actual interest, it felt like I always had to um, excel, and I was almost like they gave more attention to my brother. So, I always had to excel more and crave for their attention to, to feel a bit more appreciated, and I'm not sure if that could have had an effect".*

4.5.8 Thomas' Final Reflections

There were no reflections from Thomas; he presented with a sad affect towards the end of the interview.

Table 5

Clustering of Thomas' Themes

Positive experiences	Negative experiences	Neighbourhood experiences	Sexual offences committed, actions leading to offences and influence of childhood experience	Participant's reflections

➤ Painting/ artwork	➤ Absent father	Province: Gauteng	➤ 4 counts of sexual offence	➤ No reflections
	➤ Abusive father	Town: Vaal		
	➤ Not being seen and accepted by caregivers	Triangle (Meyerton)	➤ Denial of other offences	
	➤ Inability to form and maintain romantic relationships	➤ No experience of adversity	➤ 1 child abuse/statutory rape	
	➤ Sibling rivalry		• Romantic relationship with a child	
			• Lack of acceptance, struggling to form and maintain romantic relationships	

4.6 Case E: Participant 6 (Kganya)

4.6.1 Researcher's Reflection

The interview was conducted in English and Sesotho. This allowed the participant to share his lived childhood experiences. The role of the researcher was to probe to ensure the participant made sense of his experiences and shared his experiences. The participant was open during the interview and was able to share his past experiences as well as his current experiences.

4.6.2 Kganya's Brief Background

Kganya is a Black male participant. He was 37 years old and was in a maximum-security correctional centre at the time of the interview. He was incarcerated for six counts of sexual offences; he sexually assaulted six children (boys and girls).

4.6.3 Kganya's Lived Childhood Experiences

He described his childhood as normal. He was raised in a household with two present biological parents; he described his family as warm and loving. “*Eh... my childhood I'll*

say it was... normal. Eh, in a sense of eh... like... at home, I had eh both parents and my siblings, we were growing. It was a warm, a warm family”.

He was cared for by his grandmother in his early childhood and later moved in with his parents. *“Then... So, I, I was with them all the time, and I can say they both raised me, but before we relocate, they came first, right, there was a time where I stayed at Zastron while my grandma was raising me”.*

He had all the resources he needed as a child. *“You, see? [Inaudible: 1:13], family. Then... family background I can say it was... it was right, it was right, there was nothing that I can say I was lacking as a child”.*

He felt cared for by all his caregivers, grandparents and parents. *“Then... family, grandmother, grandfather they also, they treated us like all their grandchildren. We were, they treated us just fine...it was, it was fun”.*

Kganya was sexually abused by his father when he was 9 to 10 years old. *“Because of, that time... it happened that eh... my father, you see? He abused me sexually”.*

The sexual abuse happened once; he was confused by the sexual abuse because he had a good relationship with his father. *“My father is someone that is... he didn’t beat me, he never beat me, even my mom loved saying that my dad is spoiling me what what...”. “Fine, he did it to me, it happened once... I can believe so that maybe it was a mistake. When I tried to reason when I was alone, because he did not do it again, then I would say it was...”.*

He struggled to disclose the abuse to his family due to the sensitivity of sex topics in the household. *“Sharp, I knew that my father... the thing that he did, you see? But, I didn’t have that thing of... speaking up or speak at home and say, ‘mom’... one two, one two, one two, cause obviously growing up the sex topic was taboo, you do not just speak about it at home”.*

He internalised the negative feelings caused by the sexual abuse, which influenced his actions later in life. *“So, I think keeping quiet about it, making it a secret, internalising it for a long period of time. It ended up with me as a perpetrator...”*

His father passed away in 2003. *“No, he died in 2003”.*

Unfinished business/lack of closure due to the death of his father. *“But I think after my dad he, he died, that was when I started being... but now thinking about it when I am alone, I have that thing of... maybe I was... that is the thing of maybe... my way of taking this thing from the inside or to do what? Cause now, I felt that maybe ... if maybe we did take it to the police or wherever to open a case, he... just the two of us, like, if he sat me down and said, ‘my child so and so, what I did it was a mistake... so and so.’ He should apologise, and then... I think it would have been much better, you see? I think I wouldn’t have offended or did what I did cause, I look at the way I eh, I... the case that I committed... things I did, the way... I would say... the way this thing happened is the way I did things, even when it is not exactly the same action, but at the end of the day, it is the way... you see?”*

His father's passing led to economic hardship and financial distress in the family. *“I received basic needs. So, when my dad died, you see? My mom was left behind with credit bureau and whatever. It was no longer easy like before... Like, when I ask for something, ‘Mom, can I have...’ like, for example, I can say a laptop... and which is, before then, it was not like that, and I could see that it is difficult cause sometimes, electricity would run out before month end, and she will have to send me to go lend money wherever and what not. I could see... you see? Certain difficulties that were not there when I was growing up were there now. You see?”*

The financial distress led to conduct problems such as theft and robbery. *“So, I think this thing... because after he died... [Pause], that was the thing that made me to start... I started*

being naughty from there”. “Eh, that is where I can say I started doing crime, cause at home I grew up fine. During holidays growing up, we were bought clothes, we go out, on winter, they buy us winter clothes; basically, I grew up fine, not as eh, as in like a ‘cheese boy’ but fine”.

Housebreaking/theft was a method for him to provide for himself or close the financial gap left by the passing of his father. “House breakings, things like that, you, see? And if you look at why I am doing house breakings, I would go there, I would go where I know I will... there is eh, maybe a person who is the same size as me, and it is a guy who wear nice. I would go to break in and steal clothes. I did not do it for me to go steal a TV set and go sell it so that I can buy clothes. It was like that thing of if I want a certain thing, I want it, and I see that somebody has it, I would go there and break in and take it”.

He was sent for rehabilitation after the theft/housebreaking due to criminal incapacity. “It was only one that I was arrested for; it went to court, and then they ref, they referred me back to... [Pause]... what is it? Eh, to social workers at this thing... I forgot what they call this place... at the Vis, what? At Vista side, yes. One stop, they referred me there, and then I met with a psy, a social worker there and then we, we were attending there the things... The sessions till the case was.... I was attending with my mom because I could not; I was still a mino. I was not standing inside the box”.

He found it difficult to express himself or disclose the sexual abuse. “Then it was that thing of hey... as I was still visiting the social workers, I was, I was unable to speak up cause he/she would ask me what is wrong, what is happening, what is the problem. It was difficult to speak up...”.

Kganya fathered a child at a young age. *“Eh, cause... Now my child is 15 years. He is 15 years; he turned 15 years now on the 7th of July, Bonolo”. “I did not plan for him. I did not, I did not even thinking about making a baby... I was.... It did not come to mind”.*

4.6.4 Kganya’s Positive Experiences

He enjoyed growing up in the church and participating in church activities, such as Sunday school, singing, organising, and leading church conferences. *“I can say ... [Pause] ... as we were at church like I said at home we were church people. So, sometime there were home cells at home, at church, obvious we do go. But Sunday school and.... So, I grew up within a church, everything we enjoyed, practising, singing... you, see? MC-ing, to MC like other services when it is Sunday school services and so on. We would do festivals or conferences... It was things that I was enjoying as I was growing up”.*

4.6.5 Kganya’s Neighbourhood Experiences

Kganya was born in Zastron in the Free State Province. He later moved to Bloemfontein. *“It was my mom... eh cause actually my family we, we are from Zastron, it is here around Free State... Zastron when you go to Sterkspruit. Then, when my dad got a job at Trade Center, now they call it Jumbo... yah. Then, my mom also had to change. She went to teach at St Mary’s there at Botshabelo; then we had to move and relocate from Zastron to Bloemfontein”.*

He described both areas as good because of the sense of community. *“It was things I heard about, because the environment I would say it was conducive, it was fine because I could go next door when I was hungry and ask for food...”.*

He was indirectly exposed to gangsterism in Bloemfontein. *“Mm. Not much. I can’t say cause... at eh, cause me too when we moved from Zastron to here, the gangster things I heard about them when we were already living in Bloemfontein that they exist there” [p. 7].*

“Even in, when we were already at Bloem, then after I came for the trial and got arrested, those are the things I heard that there are petty case and what what... That is why I am saying during that, even though I wasn’t seeing or taking anything, these things actively existed around me”.

4.6.6 Sexual Offence/s Committed and Actions Leading to the Offence/s Committed

Kganya was incarcerated for six counts of sexual offences for sexually violating children (four girls and two boys). *“You see? Then, talking about this one of rape that brought me here... [Pause]... eh, it, it, it happened in 2008 ...Even though the case was opened two... three years later on, but it is something that happened earlier on... So, I was arrested for eh, rape, which is uh, about six accounts. On that six accounts, it was eh, four girls..... and two boys”.*

The offences include non-penetrative sex and exposure of genitals to children. *“But sometimes... you see, when it gets to those six victims and on those two boys, it, it did not happen like... it happened eh, I was saying, I was saying it was eh, a thigh sex”.*

“I then called Lethabo. He came ...[Pause]... then, I am like oh to him ... ‘hey man, eh, do you know how to eh... s... suck a lollipop?’ I asked him... eh, obvious he is a child right. And then, I was like... he said ‘yes’. Then, it was that thing of ‘no man’, eh, by the time I said he should come, I wanted him to suck me, it was that thing of doing... saying [imitates the child] ‘No...’ that means obvious, now I understand like, that means he is a child who grew up being told at home on how when an adult does a particular thing or whatever that is... I saw those signs on him. It became that thing of, it did not happen... you see? I was trying to do it, but it did not happen, but because of already I exposed a, a young child to, to me, and I am naked”.

All the victims are children from his neighbourhood. *“It happened at home and the way it happened... cause I remember the first time it happened with the first victim, it was this, it*

was Nomazi, which is, she is my neighbour. Where I can say I just saw it happen. They used to come and play this side even. Like I've have said, I have a younger brothers, so, they'd all play together then... I remember it was... I had this thing of.... I was already dating by that time".

The sexual violation of children was ongoing. "You see? It becomes something that I am doing every day... even when it was not every day, but it happened often, even when it was not consec, consecutive days".

An uncontrollable urge influenced his actions; there was a sense of moral understanding and guilt during the violation. "And I know that this thing that I am doing is wrong... you see? Yes. I knew it, but I had this thing of eh, what? That eh, that urge, like, that feeling, that feeling of let me do this, but after I had done it... right after I did it, I'll be like... I will feel that guilt and be... you see? I will see that what I did was wrong... but again the following day, I will do it again...".

He had sexual relationships with women his age and older than him. "At the time I was doing it, you see, I saw myself doing it, yes. Here I am doing it this thing but... [Pause]... to say, why am I doing it? Cause I had eh, girls that I was involved with, those who were at my age, others were older than me and they were sleeping with me, why would... cause I didn't... there was nothing I would lust for on a child and say maybe she is fit or whatever, there was nothing...".

4.6.7 Influence of Childhood Experiences on Offence/s Committed

He acknowledged the contribution of his childhood experiences to his sexual offences.

"Yes... I think... I can say, like I have said, I don't want to make my abuse a scapegoat for my bad behaviour. You see? But at the same time, I have to acknowledge where, where it all started... you see? Cause... first time, I didn't know... Fine, even when we were children

playing house, we didn't know eh, sex as in eh, how is it done. It is that thing of kids are kids, even when they are playing house play, they don't actually do sex".

He attributes his actions to the lack of sex education and sexual abuse by his father.

"You see? I think the experience from my dad... cause where I grew up, like I said, that matter of speaking about sex at home was something taboo. ... I got a bad start, a failed education when it comes to sex, cause you can see the way it started to happen, the way I experienced sex for the first time, and to the person that I looked up to. Whatever that he said, or did I believe it cause he is my father".

"So, I think that it played a part, and, and maybe unconsciously, you see? Even when I thought that I am staying with my secret, it has passed in me growing up... you see? I think that is the thing that somewhere... if ever I was sat down with... and taught like... hey Kganya, you know that there is sex, sex is something that is fine, but when you do it with consent, with consent and with the person that you are dating, who is somebody that you love it would be, it would be something fulfilling".

4.6.8 Kganyas' Final Reflections

There is a desire to disclose to his mother about his sexual abuse. *"Ah... not... I hope... regarding my childhood... I wish I could sit down with my mom when she comes for a visit, and even like last week they were here. I sometimes wish I could tell her about this thing because, like I told you, my mom does not know, even my sister, even my brothers... you see? So, I wish I could tell them, but... that thing, like I said hey... I do not want for them... it's like I am tainting that image of the father that we had at home. So, that is the thing of me... I just wish to take it out cause I can see somethings... there are things that you are not supposed to keep inside".*

He regrets internalising the emotional pain caused by sexual abuse. *“And so, those are the things that hurt me, to tell the truth; they hurt me. Now, as an adult, when I think about it, I can see that this thing was not fine. I was supposed to talk by that time I got a chance, when I was taken to a Pastor, Social Workers, where... I should have spoken, I would have received help, I wouldn't be in here”.*

He believes that opening up/externalising emotional pain is important for one's healing and the healing of other people with similar experiences. *“So, that's the thing that even with other people I just wish... even with the guys that I am attending a programme with, I tell them that sometimes guys it's better to speak up, cause you never know... the thing... your experience could help me, or I could assist you...”.*

He wants to take accountability for his actions and display remorse. *“You see? It's like that. I just wish that everyone... especially the victims of sexual eh, eh, eh offence... people who are victims of... of rape. Even those, those... my victims, although some I have not spoken with them as of yet, but some we are on speaking terms, we do speak just fine... but still, the damage that I saw happening to me is the very same I... I take the very same mirror to look at it...and face it their way... to them, what damage did I do... [Pause] cause... eh, it is something that it come to mind [Pause]...”.*

He wants to account for his actions by apologising to the victims. He believes that this will allow the victims to move on. *“So, that's why I wish I could... I could eh, apologise. Not just apologise, but to own up to them. They should know that Kganya, yes, as Kganya speaking, I did this so and so ... even them, I won't tell them about my past experience about what happened. But just for them, so that they can see... I should own up to them... so that when they have healed, they know... you know, at some time... even though it will not change what happened, but when a person hurts you and they come to apologise. Somehow it*

becomes that thing of being able to move on, even if it will not change the incident that happened, but just to say okay, let me apologise to them and even if they can... even if they can say I do not forgive you, what, what, I can even understand because I, I know, like I said, I understand that that thing is hurtful, it is not just something that comes and goes”.

He has emotional insight and understands the emotional impact of sexual violation.

“Cause of, I am only realising that when you rape a person, it’s not like it’s, it is an incident that happens that day and passes by. The other person can be left and stuck there. They cannot... they can never be normal. You see? So, that’s why I am saying, if I, in my own life, I saw that that thing disturbed me to what extent; how about with them, because they were young at that time? And which is that thing... such things I saw that they have a way of coming back... Even when you think you have moved on fine in life, there are things that you will come across, and then they trigger that thing”.

“And then it triggers and becomes... So, I think that even when they say that they are fine... yes [Pause], I don’t believe that they are fine because of... there’ll be something... cause... the thing is... maybe I am only understanding now... the effect of rape on a person, that is, what is it like, and the mind, you see? It is not just physical, also the mind, emotionally”.

Table 6*Clustering of Kganya's Themes*

Positive experiences	Negative experiences	Neighbourhood experiences	Sexual offences committed, actions leading to offences and influence of childhood experience	Final reflections
➤ Church members and participating in the activities	➤ Sexual abuse by father ➤ Death of father ➤ Unfinished business/lack of closure ➤ Internalising emotions caused by abuse. ➤ Difficulty expressing and disclosing sexual abuse ➤ Financial difficulties	Province: Free State Town: Born in Zastron; moved to Bloemfontein ➤ Indirectly exposed to gangsterism in Bloemfontein	➤ 6 counts of sexual assault involving minors • Influenced by an urge, accompanied by moral understanding and guilt ➤ Other offences: • Theft/house-breaking • Not incarcerated due to criminal incapacity ➤ Acknowledges the influence of sexual abuse, internalising emotions and lack of sex education on his actions	➤ Desire to disclose sexual abuse to mother ➤ Accountability and responsibility for his actions ➤ Remorse ➤ Emotional insight and understanding of the emotional impact of sexual violation

4.7 Case F: Participant 9 (Matome)**4.7.1 Researchers' Reflection**

The participant was very calm during the interview. He clearly narrated his childhood experiences, and the sexual offences committed. The participant's mood and tone of voice were sad during the interview. The participant was emotional after the interview. The researcher allowed the participant to experience his emotions. However, this was difficult as

the researcher had to keep to her role as a researcher and not a therapist. The participant was debriefed after the interview to minimise distress caused by the content of the interview.

4.7.2 Matome's Brief Background

Matome is a Black male participant. He was 48 years old and was in a medium-security correctional centre at the time of the interview. He was incarcerated for seven counts of sexual offences and one count of sexual assault of women.

4.7.3 Matome's Lived Childhood Experiences

Matome described his childhood as difficult. *"[Deep sigh] I grew up... I grew up living a very difficult life".*

"Yes, so, I did not have that thing. Actually, I did not grow up with that thing of family, that at home it is fun, I live nicely. I didn't grow up with such things. That is, I grew up very rough, rough down, rough and tumble. Life that is rough".

His grandmother was his caregiver. *"[Pause]... that is, actually, my grandmother is the one who raised me".*

His grandmother mistreated him. He reported cases of physical, verbal, and emotional abuse. *"My grandmother, the person who is... my mother's mother... the person who raised me up was the person who was not treating us right".*

"So, they just beat you. Without any reason. Even for my language... [Pause]... when I got there... my mom dropped us off at my grandmother's. We were people who were speaking Sotho. When I hear hearsay, it is said that my dad is Sotho".

He dropped out of school due to his grandmother's treatment. *"[Deep sigh] It was just a struggle, ma'am there... [Pause]... yes, it was just a struggle. I ended up not going to school.*

I dropped out and left everything because when I got home... that is, it was a job at that house to be abuse. We were not encouraged to focus on our education”.

He dropped out of school when he was in primary school; he did not have school resources. *“[Exclamation]... a long time ago. [Silence]... a long time ago. I left school when there was still A... what is it... Standard A and B. I left it when I was in B. Like I said, I did not have the things that... like the school uniform and the shoes. I was going to school with bare foot, ma’am. And when you look around, it is winter, it is cold, and the distance I travelled to go to school was the distance like from town... and I walk barefooted. I didn’t have food, lunch bag; I was not given money. I struggled with books”.*

His mother was an absent parent. *“My grandmother. My mom was not staying at home”.*

“Cause my mom was not staying at home. She was always away. We only got to see her maybe after two to three months. She’ll only come at once to come see us and then go back again”.

His father was an unknown and undisclosed. *“I do not know him, even his face. If he was to show up here, I would not be able to point him out. Up, up until now, I do not even know who he is”.*

He has been curious about his father’s identity and unsuccessful efforts to look for his father since childhood. *“And there is no single person who knows him at home, that is, among, among my siblings who will say they know him because we all complained about the same thing, that no, we want our mom to show us dad. She must... even if she shows us his family only. Maybe we will be able to find the direction to finding dad because of the bad that happened”.*

“Yes. This person refers me to this person. When I go looking for that person, they also refer me to another person. I end up leaving everything”.

His mother and family failed to provide information about the father's identity; the information provided was not enough for him to find his father. *"So, when I ask my mom about... about my dad, she tells me that my dad left us when we were young. He left us with her since he said he went to look for work. It is that thing. That is the answer I was getting. Who is my dad? She does not want to tell me. His name is Puki, that is what she said. She just said he is Puki. Yes. Even his surname now... I don't know it because there is no one who is telling me..."*.

The abuse of the grandmother also involved the father's undisclosed identity and Matome's paternity. *"[Sighs]... I don't... I can't understand actually, was she under... she was saying what is what... am I this woman's child or am I not this woman's child, because she was talking about your father what, he made you and then he left you and then your mom found you. Can you hear that there are different stories that are being told?"*.

"To me, too, they make me think. I can't understand.... but grandma and my mom, when I ask her, she also does not want to listen to... [Imitates his mom] 'Hey! Do not listen to the things that your grandmother says'; what what what...things like that. They say different things, but the fact is that this person... the thing that I want, she knows it".

His mother passed away in 2010. His mother passed on before she could disclose the identity of the father. *"She eventually died in 2010 [Pause]... we are still in the dark. So, I ask myself...why did she not want me to know my dad? She did not want me to know my dad. What was she expecting? That is, what was she thinking? If it was like no, the secret was hers... Do you get me, ma'am?"*.

The passing of his mother and failure to disclose the identity of the father led to resentment and unfinished business. *"[Sigh]... even now, I am not feeling fine... and with the fact that mom died without giving me the right answers. That is, I feel... that... she died*

while I was still in here. I feel like even if I was to come out of here, I do not want to see my mom's grave because now she hid things that were important for me. But like I am her child. It mean... even if she whispered to me just to tell me 'hey, your dad is this person who stays wherever'; even though she did not like him, they no longer get along, she does not want him what what. But I mean that I must know [Pause]... who is my father? [Pause]... what happened? I do not want to go in deep into their things, even as to how did they separated. But if only I could know who my dad is, I will be fine. But unfortunately, she died before we could get those answers. I still do not know my dad even now. So, I feel like she is also the person I cannot forgive for the secret that she created on me. At the end of the day, she said I am her child. How am I her child when there are things that she hid from me from way back?". "I would even ask her about my father. Up until she died, she has never said anything to us about who is our father."

The father's undisclosed identity caused conflict in the family. "Actually, when I look at it, it is as if it is causing conflict among them as a family, something like that, cause they were separated, my sister [Inaudible: 8:40]. So, it is a lot of stuff that I cannot make sense out of... I do not understand. The life that I am living, I do not even understand it".

There was perceived favouritism amongst his siblings, which made him feel less loved. "Because my mom had discrimination at home. That is, she would treat this one fine and the other she would not get along with, stuff like that. On the other side, there were talks that came up that no, actually it is like we are not children of the same person, I am coming from elsewhere or what".

"So, I could see the difference. Even when things were bought at home, I would see the difference... we were not treated equally...[Pause]... the same. So, these are the things that

happened towards me. I saw them facing me; they were not facing the others. Even when we made a mistake at home, I would be the one who was being oppressed more than the others”.

He left home at the age of 15 due to feelings of abandonment. *“No, I was leaving alone. Yes. I took it as if I do not have parents”. “Yes, I can’t get it. That means, in other words... And even at my grandmother’s, I moved when I was fifteen... fifteen years. I ended up saying no, man, let me rather do everything for me. I just left home. I did not inform anyone [Inaudible: 9:34]. I just left”.*

He worked and lived in an illegal residential area as a teenager. *“I just left and went to build myself a shack at the illegal squatters’ land”. “I ... looked for a shack for myself and stayed in that shack, looked for zinc and found myself piece jobs. Up until I found myself a job at Pick ‘n Pay... I made a life for myself”.*

He lost control of his life due to the lack of guidance of an elder. *“I thought that maybe a person who does not know me will be able to advise me and do what, especially if it is somebody old. Only to find out that my life was getting lost right, right there”.*

He started engaging in youth misbehaviour, such as theft and the use of alcohol and other substances. *“Mm. I started doing crime, I started doing house breakings, stealing, doing whatever, doing whatever up until I was doing the things that took me to jail”.*

His youth misbehaviour was motivated by peer pressure. *“That is when I started hanging around guys. I thought no man... people I thought they were good guys, they will become my friends, I saw good lives with where they were staying [Inaudible: 13:00]. Things like that. Yes. And then I started being with them. I made friendship with these people. Only to find out that no man, I met with wrong people, and I only realised that thing later, when I was already in here... yes”.*

4.7.4 Matome's Positive Experiences

No positive experience was shared.

4.7.5 Matome's Neighbourhood Experiences

He grew up in Bloemfontein in a township called Phelindaba. *"Cause already Phelindaba is... you know everywhere there are criminals all over man".*

He was exposed to gangsterism and alcohol abuse. *"It was things like that. Especially when there was a popular gangster known as El Padrino, at that time. Yes, the alcohol was something that was just drank".*

He also started using alcohol and cannabis. *"It was things like that. There was a lot of drinking. Even I started drinking when I was still young. And I would drink right, right there at Phelindaba. I started drinking alcohol at Phelindaba. I was using drugs, Marijuana. I started smoking".*

4.7.6 Sexual Offence/s Committed and Actions Leading to the Offence/s Committed

Matome admitted to committing seven sexual offences and one attempted sexual offence against women. *"Eight, yes eight". "Yes, they happened. And I won't say I was pushed by any person to do these things. I did them willingly by myself".*

All the offences were planned, involving the use of alcohol, deception and trust to lure his victims. *"I loved drinking there. [Pause]... and then I had this idea of saying no... actually I have to do one, two, three here, which is something like rape".*

"And then these people, I would attack them with lies. Yes. I promised them the things that were not there. I lied to them, ma'am. I promised them work... . Yes. Like jobs, stuff like that. And then you know that people are stranded for work, stuff like that. And then they... they would agree with me, but I took them one by one. On your left at the front, there is Coke, Coke

offices. On the other side, there are trees. Yes, I was... I was taking them there [Silence]... and then I would rape them”.

All the cases were revenge rape, motivated by being a victim of abuse by women. “I abuse a woman because I am being abused emotionally”. “I wanted to satisfy myself by doing one, two, three. Yes, it was revenge, ma’am [Inaudible: 28:10]”.

Sense of remorse and accountability. “I just realised now that the things that I did were things that weren’t right. I was supposed to stand up for myself and pushed my life alone, without doing things that were not right, such as abusing other people. The person who was wrong was my mom, even her family. So, people who are aside were not wrong”.

4.7.7 Matome’s Final Reflections

He was proud to have completed his matric in the correctional centre. “The school matter is... is that I am finishing off matric when I got here. I started at level one, L2, L3 and then level 4, until I did matric. I did my matric... I did it... and when you look around at home, there is no one who did matric. [Pause]... I will be the first person.... in my family... to do matric, and I am doing it in jail. That is the thing that I have achieved in my life as I saw that it was important”.

He also highlighted that he does not want to be in contact with his family anymore because of previous and continuous mistreatment. “I do not want to contact and consult these people. I tried with the social workers; it did not work for me. So that I can hear the reason as to what is happening; according to me, I do not want to consult them. I told them... these people abused me for a long time”.

“I don’t want nothing, please”.

Table 7*Clustering of Matome's Themes*

Positive experiences	Negative experiences	Neighbourhood experiences	Sexual offences committed, actions leading to offences and influence of childhood experiences	Final reflections
➤ None	➤ Raised by an abusive grandmother. ➤ Absent mother ➤ Undisclosed/unknown father ➤ Death of mother ➤ Resentment towards the mother and unfinished business ➤ Lack of school resources and dropping out of school ➤ Conflict in the family ➤ Questioning his identity and paternity ➤ Perceived sibling rivalry ➤ Feelings of abandonment ➤ Engaging in youth misbehaviour and multiple arrests	Province: Free State Town: Bloemfontein; Phelindaba ➤ Exposure to gangsterism and alcohol abuse ➤ Use of alcohol and cannabis at a young age	➤ 8 sexual offences (1 attempted, 7 committed) • All cases were planned • Use of deception and trust to lure victims • Use of alcohol • All cases were revenge rape • Sense of remorse and accountability • Petty crimes as a teenager	➤ Proud of completing matric in the correctional centre ➤ Continuous conflict /strained relationship with family

4.8 Case G: Participant 12 (Albert)**4.8.1 Researcher's Reflections**

This participant was classified as one of the most dangerous offenders in the correctional centre by the correctional officials. His presence was intimidating, and this made the researcher uncomfortable. The participant took accountability for the actions committed but displayed a lack of remorse in some instances while describing the sexual offences he committed. The contents of the interview also made the researcher uncomfortable, which

affected the researcher's emotional and psychological well-being. However, the interview generally went well; the participant articulated himself well. He clearly narrated his childhood experiences as well as the sexual offences he committed. The participant used nonverbal language in the interview; however, the participant was asked to explain if the researcher was unsure of the meaning.

4.8.2 Albert's Brief Background

Albert is a Coloured male participant. He was 34 years old and serving his sentence at the Mangaung maximum-security centre at the time of the interview. He was incarcerated for three counts of sexual offences; some of his sexual offences were committed during his sentence in the correctional centre.

4.8.3 Albert's Lived Childhood Experiences

He explained that his childhood was difficult. *"Yah... straight forward. It was not nice you, see?"*.

He witnessed the murder of his mother by his father between the ages of two to three years. *"My father, he murdered my mother, and he wanted to murder me and my sister also, you see? So, at that time when after that eh, that aunt of ours, they protect us, you see? They lock us in a, in a room, and then the police and then ambulance come, and then they took my father away"*.

He was raised by his maternal grandmother and then raised by his aunts after the passing of his grandmother. *"You see? And before I was ten, she passed away. Then I was left with two aunties of mine. You see? That aunties of mine, ah, they raised us fur, further on. Me and my sister and their children"*.

He did not have a good relationship with his father due to the father's incarceration for his mother's murder. *"Yes, he went to prison, you see. He stayed there for a long time when*

he come out eh, I don't know in which year, you see, when I was supposed to go because that aunt of mine, the other aunt, his sister, my father's sister, they came and Kenhardt to say nehmaan, he is out on medical parole. He is having cancer on his brain, you see so he won't. He says he won't be left for a long time; he wants to see the children. So, that night there was a lot of commotion there by the house, in fighting because this side now, this people of us they thinking this people is gonna take us now you see? Because Kenhardt is a small place, like I said, education is not all of the people who are educated to say no maan this was gonna temporary, the police was gonna coming, and at the end of the day, we went to my father. I only know my father for two days. We went on a Thursday, the Friday, the Saturday, the Sunday they come back, and then after a month, he passed away, and I could not attend the funeral due to the fact that this... aunts of mine didn't want us to go, you see. But I didn't worry because I do not care, not care, I don't know that guy [Inaudible: 7:30], you see?"

He was a foster child due to the passing of his mother and incarceration. *"That was the thing that was happening most of the time, the money that we would receive... You see? Especially now that time me and my sister were foster grants you see?"*

There was a misuse of his foster care funds by adults in the family. *"The money that we get, it went there to the, it just went to the alcohol"*

He felt a sense of responsibility, which led to his committing petty crimes to provide for himself and his younger sister. *"See? So, growing up was getting tougher and tougher at a stage whereby I needed to [Deep breath] break in, do crime to look after ourselves, you see?"*

"You, see? When I break into the house, I get what I want, I go. You see? And the here in the location, I am busy robbing the people, you see?"

The adults in the family enabled his behaviour. *“You see, even myself when I have broken, and I get money and I bring to my aunt, you see? My aunt was quite aware of that. Also, that money she does debt because every time it’s always debt”.*

He was mistreated by his caregivers /adults in the family. *“They do not fix the debt of them they were just... it was just not a nice. Sometime, me and my sister, we would get kicked out You see? Out of the house then, we sleep outside; those things was happening at that time. You see? Let me just say... it was not nice”.*

There was possible physical abuse that he perceived as discipline, abuse and exposure to alcohol in the family. *“Okay, the hitting was there, you see? It is not like now when you are not supposed to hit the child, you see? The that part was there, and I get exposed to this kind of alcohol and drugs at a younger stage because most of the time, it was me who was gonna buy for them these things when they at home, you see?”. “I would say my grandma... my grandmother, she do the great job, you see? It was the husband... of the one aunt that she took, you see? Because that guy when she wa... they were not married, but they... when they met, things was falling apart. Due to the fact that this guy was drinking and at that time in our house, we didn’t smoke or drink you see? So, when this drinking start to happen... it’s whereby now people was now only thinking... I will say about themselves, or let’s say about the drinking”.*

He was allegedly continually sexually abused by an older male neighbour. *“Yah, but not like eh, sodomised you see? It was just, it was the oldest, eh, guy that we used to play with him in our group, you see, so, we were a lot you see. It was me, it was Candice, it was Melo, and then it was this guy Joseph, you see. So usually, we go to his house, we play there, you see? So, Joseph usually... he did... eh ... make us do stupid things, you see, with his private part, you see? Yah, that time I was still very young, I was still on school also, you see? So, that ... I*

don't know this thing actually, I don't think that thing is an excuse, you see? But eh, at my home, you see, first we stayed at a two-room".

"No, I wasn't... that wasn't rape, man, you see, ma'am, it was... we were four, it's... we were three, and then there was this guy, he is the oldest one, his name was Joseph, you see?. Usually, he asks us to do him this... nasty things with his private part, you see? That is not rape, you see? Yah, then he would probably give us something, maybe a toy or whatever, you see? This is the things he was doing with us, you see? Yah...Yah. It was happening so continuously up until, I don't even know where did it stop; I think we just break up where somehow, I think he went to another school... I think so. His mother sent him to another school, then we didn't meet anymore".

The sexual abuse was not reported or disclosed. *"No, ma'am, I di... you're, honestly speaking, you are the first one. Even the psychologist before that I talk to them I never told them this. But... I never opened a case, but I wanted to do it the other time you see, but then I doubt myself to say that this thing is not gonna go forward in any way".*

He did not report or disclose the sexual abuse due to doubt about the success of the case.

"You see? But I never told them, but if you want really real clarity about this thing, you can. I don't even know how you can track this guys, but you can track if it was possible; then you could have asked them about this, then they would have confirmed to say 'yah, really this thing did happen to us so and so and so time ago.' You see? But I believed to say neh maan, this thing is not gonna go really forward, you see? But... I never opened a case, but I wanted to do it the other time, you see, but then I doubt myself to say that this thing is not gonna go forward in any way. Then I decided neh man, let me not continue with this thing".

His sexual offences discouraged him from opening the case. *"Sometime, to us mos, it feels like it is useless, you see? Because, ma'am, like now we do not want to go back into the past,*

you see? You see. When something is not good and is dead, just bury it and leave it there. For you to waking it up and go it is not a ncaa thing, you see, ma'am? Yah, that is the thing I am... just leaving it".

He dropped out of school in Grade 8 (Standard 6). *"That time it was Standard six, you see, but here by the school, by this school here, last of last year I made level three, I passed level three; I was supposed to go to level four Abet".*

He dropped out of school due to rumours of his first alleged sexual offence at the age of 11 at school. *"I think I was twelve or eleven during that time, you see? That woman other time, we were five in a case, you see, we wanted to rob that woman, you see? But while we were robbing that woman, other friends of mine, they starting to... grab this woman, you see, in her private parts, you see? And at the end of the day... me, I helped that woman; she even confessed to the, the, the court to say nee maan, Albert was helping me, but at that time I was having a knife with me. So, the lawyer said we do not want this knife to come out, you see. So, keep the knife; everybody just plead guilty you see? So... yah... Yah, and that happened when me and this girl because we are coming now at the end of the day, both of us are going to a next grade and to find out we are in the same class". "And this thing was already at school, and I decided neh maan I can't... continue listening to this people bullying and talk a lot of things, you see? Then I decided no maan let me... leave the school".*

He started using substances between the ages of 11 and 12 years while he was in school.

"Yho, it was, I was, maybe twelve... eleven... [uncertain] twelve... eleven around there because I remember I was still at school when we were starting to drink. You see? Yah when, when I started to drink, but after I left school; I, I don't want to do it anymore. It was boring, now we are just going on. When we get money, we do... we get money for this kind of things".

He used drugs more than alcohol due to the consequences of alcohol. *“You see? Eh, so that is the thing that was happening to me most of the time, drinking... and I couldn’t stop it at the end of the day. Yah, so that was the most drug that, ah, the only drug I was using a lot”.*

He was placed in a rehabilitation centre due to his aggressive tendencies and lack of criminal capacity at the age of 15. *“You see? You are having that aggression; you are having that anger, you see? Whereby even the tymba was there by that place of safety, you see... I did a psychologist there, and that was 2000. You see? That time I was 15 years old, you see, with this aggression of mine, you see? I was in treatment that time”.*

4.8.4 Albert’s Positive Childhood Experiences

He does not have any positive childhood experiences. *“[Sigh]... Then maybe I can’t remember them. I believe maybe there is some; I don’t think it’s gonna be bad all the time, you see? Yah, but I don’t think I remember something that is gonna make me... that I can say I am happy about it”.*

4.8.5 Albert’s Neighbourhood Experiences

He was born in the Western Cape Province in Strand and lived there for the first three years of his life. *“[Sniffs] Okay, ma’am, the thing is um... first I lived there in the Western Cape and then in Strand, you see, when I was still young, then my... at that time, I was three years old”.*

He has no clear memory or experience of his life in Strand. *“I won’t, I won’t be able to tell you. The only thing that I know that time was only that one of that horrified murder of my mother, you, see?”.*

He described Strand as a good neighbourhood. *“It’s a nice environment, you see, ma’am. It’s a big place. Let me put it like this: you have more freedom”.*

He moved to the Northern Cape in Kenhardt after the passing of his mother. *“So, from that side, we come, we stay there by Northern Cape. So, Northern Cape there in Kenhardt, it is a small community...”*

He described Kenhardt as a small community characterised by unemployment, poverty, substance use in the community and immediate family and gangsterism compared to Strand. *“You see you, you, everything you do people they see but that place is little bit bigger, it’s haaa... The people iyho, let me put it like this... you don’t have to stress today you see; what they gonna eat later, you see? They have those things there, you see, because all of them are working, you see? Now, this side in Kenhardt you can’t do that because people are not working”.*

He was exposed to gangsterism in Strand, but it did not affect him. *“No, there that side you see, ma’am the, the gangsterism is there. It would depends whether you are gonna go into that thing. Me, I was not involved with them because nobody knows me. I am only going there for a few weeks, then I am coming back you see?”.*

He started using substances and engaging in petty crimes in Kenhardt. *“Ma’am, yes actually, when, when I, when I, when I am in Kenhardt, you see? It’s where I started, when I left the school, you see? That’s when I start and do, start with glue, you see, smoking glue, then I go to dagga, and then I go to smoking, and then I go to drinking, you see?”.*

He did not enjoy growing up in Kenhardt. *“You see? Yah, I just hate that place. You know what I am saying? Maybe that is why my, my judgement towards the place is not ncaa. It’s not... I, I, I, I can’t have... I can’t say even now I have had a good memories or fond memories about that place, you see?nYah... I don’t think I will ever have some of them, you see. It was just a place to grow up because I had nowhere else to go”.*

4.8.6 Sexual Offence/s Committed and Actions Leading to the Offence/s Committed

He was incarcerated for three counts of sexual offences, but he admitted two offences.

“You see? That is the thing, ma’am, it’s only that two rape charges that I did”.

He was accused of sexual harassment, which co-occurred with robbery at the age of 11.

“I think I was twelve or eleven during that time, you see? That woman other time, we were five in a case, you see, we wanted to rob that woman, you see? But while we were robbing that woman, other friends of mine, they starting to... grab this woman, you see, in her private parts, you see? And at the end of the day... me, I helped that woman; she even confessed to the, the, the court to say nee maan, Albert was helping me, but at that time I was having a knife with me. So, the lawyer said we do not want this knife to come out, you see. So, keep the knife. Everybody just plead guilty you see? So... yah...”.

1. First sexual offence

His first charged sexual offence was against his cousin. There was assault involved in the sexual offence; he physically assaulted the victim’s parents. He used alcohol prior to committing the crime. *“Yah, I did rape somebody outside, and the person that I rape... it is my cousin, you see. You see? That is the thing, ma’am, it’s only that two rape charges that I did. Yah, I made it myself. The first one of my cousin, yes I was drunk you see, and we had a little bit of [Inaudible: 19:47]”.*

2. Second sexual offence

He is part of the 28 Gang in the Mangaung Correctional Centre. This association led to his second charged sexual offence, which was committed in the correctional centre. *“Like now, I’m a 28, you see? But my father before, my... that people there outside, they are all 26’s”. “This is the ca... this is the rape case that I did, you see? And then there is another one in Mangaung. I was staying there by Halls, daar by Barkely Hall, and then there was dispute*

between us guys, you see uh, gang guys, 26 and 28, then they decided that they gonna take me to Rahill; when I come to Rahill, that same night I rape another inmate, you see? And then they take me to another unit. It is the life sentence that I am doing now”.

4.8.7 Influence of Childhood Experiences on Offence/s Committed

He acknowledged the contribution of childhood experiences to his actions but also took responsibility for his decisions. *“For my side, I won’t be able to give you a 100% answer to say yah they did contribute because, at the end of the day, me, I had made the decisions, you see?”.*

He has been using sex as a coping mechanism since childhood. *“It is like... the best way to satisfy... the best way to make me calm down... it’s for me outside when I was now younger if I get... is for me to have [Clicks fingers] sex with somebody. You see? Then it’s the best way for me to calm down, you see? So, let us leave that one”.*

He reported that the environment he grew up in led to him developing anger and aggression. *“But what I will tell you, growing up to where I grow up, you see? It is leaving a anger”.*

4.8.8 Alberts Final Reflections

Understanding the difference between a psychologist and a social worker in the correctional centre. *“But where I am now, I understand in prison, in that place is where I understand, what is the meaning of psychologist, what is the difference between a psychologist and a social worker, you see ma’am?”.*

He believes that psychological services should focus on assisting children. *“You see, ma’am, from my part, to try to, just try to get kids from school. To start from a little stage from the kids from the school, the younger ones, you see? But when they still young, I believe you, you guys should reach out for them so they can have a better future. You see, ma’am?”.*

Current effectiveness of psychotherapy. *“But that thing to already by my stage now, now you gonna come, you gonna talk to me, believe me, you see? I am not gonna listen and talk those things; you not gonna go anyway with me anymore. You see? Now. You see? But it’s already late you see? Yah. But if you want to help, ma’am, I would really really really really ask you to start try to get the guys while they still young, while they still fresh and get to the root of that thing. Maybe they lives would be changed for the better”.*

Table 8

Clustering of Albert’s Themes

Positive experiences	Negative experiences	Neighbourhood experiences	Sexual offences committed, actions that led to offence and influence of childhood experiences	Final reflections
➤ None	➤ Witness of mother’s murder ➤ Incarceration of father ➤ The passing of caregiver (grandmother) ➤ Foster care child and misuse of foster care funds by adults in the family ➤ Petty crimes due to a sense of responsibility (parentification) ➤ Mistreated by caregivers ➤ Continuous sexual abuse ➤ Case not opened ➤ Dropped out of school ➤ Use of substances at age 11 (alcohol and drugs)	Province: Western Cape Town: Strand (Good environment) Moved to: Province: Northern Cape Town: Kenhardt ➤ Bad environment ➤ Small community ➤ Poverty, substance use and gangsterism ➤ Use of substances and criminal activities	➤ Incarcerated for 3 counts of sexual offences: Denial of some offences Victim-1 cousin - Physical assault of cousin’s mother during the offence - Use of alcohol prior to the offence Victim- 2 inmate - Offences committed in the correctional facility - Influenced by association with 28 <i>Gang</i> Other offences - Sexual harassment at age 11 - Petty crimes - Place of safety Influence of childhood experiences - Acknowledges the influence of childhood experiences - Accountability - Sex as a coping mechanism from a young age	➤ Understanding the difference between psychologist and social worker ➤ Effectiveness of psychotherapy

4.9 Case H: Participant 13 (Thapelo)

4.9.1 Researcher's Reflection

Thapelo narrated his lived experiences well. His experiences differed from those of other participants because his experiences centred on his spirituality. Therefore, he focused more on his spirituality and contribution to his experiences. The researcher's role was to allow him to narrate his experiences in his own way. Probing was used to structure the interview and for clarity. The participant predominantly speaks Sepedi, and it was difficult for him to narrate his experiences in English. Sepedi was then used as a form of communication to allow the participant to narrate his experiences, and the interview was then transcribed into English.

4.9.2 Thapelo's Brief Background

Thapelo is a Black Sepedi-speaking male participant. He was 40 years old and sentenced to a maximum-security correctional centre at the time of the interview. He was incarcerated for four counts of sexual offence.

4.9.3 Thapelo's Lived Childhood Experiences

He is the 10th child of 11 children; they grew up in the same tin house (shack made from iron and other materials).

"Eh, I ... I ...I grew up in Hebron, Hebron in a family where we were about 11; I was the 10th child at home. I was the 10th child, with my twin... twin sister who passed way after she was born. She only lived for three hours". "Yes, we stayed in... in our tin house [Inaudible:4:38]. How many rooms were there? Kitchen, there were 3 bedrooms".

He had a strained relationship with his father due to his alcohol abuse. He described his father as absent. *"Ah, it is the same as him being absent; even now, he is still alive. My father is still here. My father... any money that he gets, he goes to drink alcohol with it. Every time, he drinks alcohol, non-stop. When he has no money... [Silence] he plans things... plans*

things... he plans to do what and what once he gets it, he goes to drink alcohol. Since I was born. Even my brothers, I grew up with them, ended up laying a hand on him. Sometimes there would be ceremonies at ...at home, the was this other day where they ended up tying him to the tree”.

The strained relationship led to an attempted suicide at the age of 18. *“Hai.... My father, I love him, but to be honest, he was a distraction for me and my siblings, even for my mom. My father... And for me as well.... Even for me, my father, I tried to kill myself because of him. He promised me that I would go to School of Excellence and I would say my goodbyes... say my goodbyes at school. I took the remove and everything when he came. He came in drunk. I went and bought two litre of paraffin and chips and drank it. Until this day, my mother does not know I tried to kill myself. That Friday, we ate pap and gravy. Remofilwe told me my food is there, but I said I will eat in the kitchen. I won't eat with them. When I got there, I took a bite of the pap and took a bit of the wors. I could feel that [Inaudible: 34:21] I was feeling hot. When I went to the drain, I vomited a vomit that was covered by oil, and my nose was burning like a car engine. But they never knew that I tried to kill myself”.*

He was raised by his grandmother due to poverty and his parents' unemployment. *“So, I grew up in family where nobody was employed at that time... at home. So, my mother was a prophet for apostle”. “She did not have... have a choice other than watching us getting killed by hunger”. “We were... we were eating at my grandmother's place, late... always we would... we would go and milk the cows. They gave us milk, which we would take home and go home with. So that we could also eat”.*

“Hey.... They were.... They did not entertain anything at home. Each person who found a job they would find themselves a place to settle at. Just like that. We were decreasing at home. We kept on decreasing at home... up until I moved, I went to stay straight at... at my

grandmother's, Me and my brother Kaone who was acting on Isidingo they called him Sdudla [Inaudible: 4:25]. So, we left and went to stay with my grandmother. At my grandmother's, we went just for huge problems".

The grandmother was an apostolic church pastor and traditional healer, and his challenges started when he started living with his grandmother. *"My grandmother had an apostle church". "So, my grandmother was a person who was naughty. She had the Apostle church, but she disguised with a church, and she was a traditional healer. But people did not know her as a traditional healer; they knew her as a Pastor".*

He struggled to consistently attend school due to his parents' unemployment and taking care of his grandmother's livestock. *"Eh, working at... at my grandmother's... prophesying for my grandmother. My grandmother had an apostle church. So, as we were growing up in... in that manner, most times, I would not go to school. During the weekend, I would herd my grandmother's cows. No, I would go sometimes".*

His mother was then employed, but his aunt was responsible for his school attendance at the age of 14. *"So, my aunt [Pause] she... she took responsibility of taking us going to school herself. And she ensured we went to school. But clothes were things that were given to us by our aunt's children".*

He experienced learning difficulties in school. He failed three times in primary school. *"I ... I failed my primary school three times. No, I was doing my Standard 5. What is Standard 5? Is it Grade 7? When growing up, I was slow for learn... for grasping. But the thing that I came across as good in was numbers only.... Just numbers... numbers".*

He dropped out of school at the age of 18 due to scholastic difficulties and a soccer opportunity. *"I left school when I was 18. After I failed at... at, at Hebron Tech, I ended up leaving. For me to leave my school, there was a huge opportunity for me through soccer.*

There were sportatia trials. I was playing 9, they selected me, and after they selected me, my dad agreed saying that they will make a plan, and he will pay for everything. The registration fee was R3 500, and he would have to pay R1 500 every quarter provided there will be no one who is interested in me”.

He was sexually abused by a woman living at his grandmother’s house at the age of 16.

“When I slept with Sister Mary. When you speak up again, you are wrong; you get spanked. It was her, but when we raised it to my grandmother, [Sniffs] my grandmother would... would shout and even to beat you she would beat you, she would ask [Imitates his grandmother] ‘hey, what are the things that you are saying’ but still the very same thing you would go and share a bed with her...sister Mary. She is dark. She is a horrible person”.

The sexual abuse was continuous, and he started experiencing pleasure from the abuse.

“The sister Mary one happened when I was... I was about to be eighteen, sixteen... from sixteen to eighteen. It happened. I ... I stayed eight to nine months at my grandma’s. I stayed for eight to nine months. When she wanted to. When... when she wanted it, I also ended up... ended up not complaining [Chuckles] and enjoyed it”.

A case was not reported due to the grandmother’s threatening behaviour. *“My grandmother would hit me if I ever mentioned it”.*

There was sexual orientation confusion and experimentation at the age of 15. *“There was something that happened Ai even today, it still ask myself that a person almost became gay outside. You remember there was this day when there was this guy name X (pseudonym). Yes. But hey... Not at all. With X, I was still young I was siiii...fifteen, fifteen. Fourteen around that cause, around that time, I was still in primary, and he was still in primary”.*

His childhood was characterised by spiritual beliefs, and he reported that his grandmother was a witch doctor. *“There is that other day when I was sleeping at home; I was sleeping in the dining room. When she entered my grandma... it is at night, the door is closed. She entered holding something like...like she is holding a baby. She proceeded to open there by my legs. I want to scream, but I can’t. When she opened at the legs, she put them properly. When she turned, she turned and pointed at me with a finger. After she left by the door that was only when I managed to get up and run to my mom and dad’s room. When I got on top of the bed and fell there, I was crying and told them what was happening. When my dad wants to shout, my mom told him that no Thato, remember in 1970 something, I once told you about the very same thing, and you denied. I do not know if there are things that he goes along with or what”.*

He believes that he once succeeded in school due to a spiritual ritual that was performed. *“On my pillow, there was a rough stone, and on brother Mosimane, it was another stone that was just smooth; all of them are from under the water. Hey... I am scared now, brother Mosimane says to me do not worry, do not be scared. We are going to sleep in the morning. He will bathe me with the church water. That December, I was number two in class”.*

He believes that his first arrest was due to talking about seeing a mermaid

“mamogashwa” and the use of cannabis. *“So, after Hebron, there was an open veld. He used to be a priest for a Zion church. People placed themselves at the beginning, and he placed himself behind just at the end of the Vaal that transports water to Morula Sun. Brother Mosimane, when I came from school, I arrived at his place. When I got to him... we sat there as they were rolling a blunt with mm-mm... Boitumelo’s father and brother Oagile, there was a woman that came from the veld; she was not wearing shoes. She was just wearing “Maskitla” [12:19]. Made with... with flowers and a top that tightened her”.*

“When brother Mosimane explains it to me. They came to ask, and they... they asked me about that thing. Mr Maitshwarelo explained to them, but brother Mosimane is denying and said there was nothing like that. Mr Maitshwarelo, he... he turned into a rubbish person in a short time [Inaudible: 17:36]. He was walking on his knees; he is peeing on himself. He does what. Brother Mosimane reprimanded him not to talk to them, even if it is one bit at all. When I also started smoking weed now... hey, I could not handle it. I went around talking... talking... talking.... talking.... talking. When I got Gogontle pregnant, I was 21. When I got Mapaseka pregnant, that is around the time when I got arrested. When Mapaseka got pregnant like that, it was a Sunday”.

“At home, when they took me to this woman, they normally take us to, they had to find me that cloth that had verring-like [Inaudible: 20:09]. But they had to perform an ancestral ritual with a cow for me because we had already done one with a chicken at a river with flowing water”.

“Only the cow one was missing. I am crying when I moved to our rocks... where they at where the rocks are situated, there is a flower that has grown from the river. I only found my brother in-law’s rock, and mine was not there. I got up the next day in the morning when I was at home sleeping. I was with Gogontle, and I am wearing this cloth. She is the one who explained to me [Imitates Gogontle] ‘hey... you got here crying, and you were weak, and then we took you to the bedroom so that you can sleep.’ After a week, I got arrest; since 2006, 28 March”.

4.9.4 Thapelo’s Positive Experiences

His relationship with his mother was the highlight of his childhood. *“[Sighs] Eh, to tell the truth. The only thing I can say I enjoyed only was loving my mom; that is the only thing that made me happy. I was only happy when I was next to my mom. There.... There... there is nothing I can point out and say I enjoyed it only”.*

4.9.5 Thapelo's Neighbourhood Experiences

He was born and grew up in the Gauteng Province, Ga Rankuwa, in a small village called Hebron. *"Eh, I ... I ...I grew up in Hebron, Hebron, in a family where we were about 11; I was the 10th child at home".*

He moved to his grandmother's house in Hebron. *"It was not too far from my home. It was here in Hebron".*

He described Hebron as a rural area with no development due to the old population and their beliefs. *"Hai... Hebron is a place.... was a place of a rural area. It was full of grandma's scandals, witchcraft what. They did not want to apollo's saying they will disturb their cows. It's a place full of, in fact, it does not have any development. It does not have development. The people that succeeded from there you can count them. Those that are stand for themselves, those who can stand for themselves, and strengthen their families".*

The use of substances such as cannabis and alcohol also characterised it. Cannabis was the most used and normalised substance in the community. *"Alcohol.... alcohol and weed, especially weed. When I was arrested in 2006, it was then R2 for a scratch of a box of light. Weed, weed, that is, hai... we smoked it like nobody's business. Even... even parents had.... Had accepted it. So, it was... it was normal. It felt like it was just a hobby".*

He moved to Tembisa to attend boarding school for a short period of time. *"I lived in Hebron, even at my grandmother's was in Hebron. Me moving was the time I went to boarding school for Muslims in Tembisa, 844". "Not even a year, but close to a year. I also saw that I was going to struggle. I packed my bag on a Friday and left when they were still praying".*

4.9.6 Sexual Offence/s Committed and Actions Leading to the Offence/s Committed

His introduction to crime started with petty crimes at the age of 21. He committed his first petty crime to take care of his child. *"I started when Gogontle was... she was 3*

months. I started mugging when she was three months pregnant. I remember when the job was finished at [Inaudible: 42:44]. I was 21, I was 21. Because of, I was caught when I was about to be 22 years. When I ran out of a job when I wanted to mug somebody at Zone 15 in Ga-Rankuwa near the firms”.

His petty crimes led to serious substance abuse influenced by peers. *“There is distance, and on both sides there was bushes, there was an advantage of... when I pull out a knife and then I take a person’s belongings, I will be able to run through to the bushes, and I won’t be found. That if I were to mug somebody, I would be able to run there, and nobody would find me. I was tracing... there were this other two boys who came from the garage. Only to find there are boys who were coming from my hood, nearby my home; they came and mugged there. Luba and Bohang and this other guy, they called him Leano. When I pass by, I came across Leano. He said ...[Imitates Leano] ‘Hey bra Thaps, I am with Luba here, you see? We are also tracing those guys’. I started being friends with these people. I started being their friend that day”.*

He started being involved in petty crime and using substances (Nyaope) consistently with his peers. *“We mugged them fine. They were not stabbed, or nothing was done to them. We got few cents from them and a phone. I felt good for mugging. On that very same day, those two phones only to find they will get me into drugs. The phones were given to Lethabo. They said they would give the phone to Lethabo; went to sell them at town. I was not told that no those will be exchanged for nyaope instead of being sold. I did not know nyaope. When the bags of nyaope arrived, they were rolling, and the, I asked ‘hey guys, what is going on?’ They said ‘hai, this is the thing that gives us a plug, so, so, so’”.*

1. First two sexual offences

The first offence started with robbery; he raped two women with his peers. *“Tomorrow we are going to mug, when we are mugging, we found two women, they were raped same time; we rape them, we rape them, their phone were taken, same story. They are taking them to town”.*

2. Subsequent sexual offences

The petty crimes and substance use led to subsequent sexual offences. *“Eh, they are rolling, they are rolling... ai, but as we are smoking here, ai this thing, I am not feeling it. It is not hitting me like weed. I made a mistake by licking the tile they used. After I licked there, I vomited, vomited, vomited, and they laughed and said... ‘Hey man, you are not supposed to lick, but don’t worry, this is your first day’. Tomorrow we are going to mug when we are mugging, we found two women; they were raped same time, we rape them, we rape them, their phone were taken, same story. They are taking them to town. The third time, I went alone. That is when I started committing rape alone. It became a hobby, and you knew that hai now I am with them, we rob, we rape, it started like that ma’am. It started like that, and then it turned to be a normal thing. I left Gogontle sleeping so that I can go and rob and rape”.*

4.9.7 Influence of Childhood Experiences on Sexual Offence/s Committed

Acknowledges the impact of childhood experiences but also acknowledges free will.

“Cause of... [Silence] All these things that happened are not making sense, they are not making sense. Now I can blame my childhood, but when I look, it is all about choice in life”.

There was a sense of hopelessness. *“I do not have it. That is, for me, I see as if a person is just living because of God gave him life to tell the truth”.*

Lack of boundaries also contributed to his actions. *“Yes, on the day that I had shares on the phone that we... we mugged off from people only for us to buy drugs with them, but I had a choice of saying no you... I no longer want to be with you cause of the way you operate. I said*

that I came to look for money for Gogontle so that she does not go hungry but look at what we use our money on, but I also failed to do that, and it is still happening even now here in Mangaung. I satisfy people than I". "That is, I do not know; it is like I am an idiot. I can see that I am an idiot, but it is hard for a person to adjust... to adjust you will... when I am alone, I tell myself 'hai fok, I am no longer doing one, two, three, I will be like my father'".

4.9.8 Thapelo's Final Reflections

Suffering because of ancestral callings/beliefs imposed by elders in the family. *"I ... I I ... the only thing I want to tell you is that am I going to suffer because of the ancestral things. [Silence] cause sometimes it becomes hard to a point where you end up asking yourself, why don't I just die, or should I kill myself than to struggle for people who died a long time ago".*

Element of spirituality or beliefs about his incarceration. *"Hai.... It does not make sense... it does not make sense [Inaudible: 1:02:40]. Cause at... at a trial. My trial. I dreamt about my dad. I dreamt about him today while he was from the exercise, while we were at the exercise, where we exercise. My dad, when he got, he held me and said 'Thapelo'; I said 'dad'. He said I am coming to fetch you, but wait for your sister Semeng; she is coming now. Tuesday brother Otshepeng comes for the visit; brother Otshepeng said 'hey man, I went to Moria to search for an order for you to get out of here. At moria, they said I will not be able to do the request for you your sister Semeng will have to do it for you. [Reacts] [Inaudible: 1:03:23]. The dreams that I dream they come back to confirm them. Hai... the way I see my mom, on this matter of the cases for me to end up doing them, I do not have assurity that... I do not want to put blame on anybody but me".*

Accountability for his actions. *"Because all the responsibilities are mine, the choice is mine whether it can be drugs, whether it could be poverty, or what, but at the end of the day, I am the one who should decide what I want to do with my life".*

Eager to change his life but always struggles to finish what he started. *“There is no other person who will come and bring changes in my life. When I do not want to change, I want to change, but I do not know what is busy pulling me back, pulling me back, pulling me back. I also want to be like the other kids. I wrote my matric and passed three subjects, but as to what is the problem, what took me and flushed me to leave school, I do not know”.*

“But ... there is... there is something again that makes you to leave, always when we... people at home we cannot finish when they start something. We will start just fine, but to finish is a problem. You start something, but to finish it is a problem. I do not know... [Sighs]”.

There is resentment towards his family. *“[Silence] but those people at home, to tell the truth, God will forgive me [Pause]. They are also going to need my help. They are going to need it and then [Silence] Hai, I do not know if I will help them. It is not the matter of revenge or anything, but I doubt that I will help them. I do not trust”*

Table 9*Clustering of Thapelo's Themes*

Positive experiences	Negative experiences	Neighbourhood experiences	Sexual offences committed, actions leading to the offence and influence of childhood experiences	Final reflections
➤ Relationship with mother	➤ Poverty and unemployment in the family ➤ Absent father ➤ Father alcohol abuse ➤ Attempted suicide at the age of 18 ➤ Lack of resources and difficulties in school ➤ Continuous sexual abuse • Case not opened ➤ Use of illicit drugs ➤ Inheritance of spiritual beliefs	Province: Gauteng Town: Pretoria, Ga-Rankuwa (Hebron) • Rural area • Substance use Moved to Tembisa • Attended boarding school for a while	Incarcerated for 4 counts of sexual abuse. 1 st two offences • Started with a robbery • Raped two women with a friend Subsequent offences • Part of routine • Petty crime, substance use • Acknowledges the impact of childhood experiences and free will • Sense of hopelessness • Peer pressure	➤ Imposed spiritual beliefs ➤ Contribution of spiritual beliefs and incarceration ➤ Taking responsibility for his actions ➤ Feeling stuck in life ➤ Resentment towards family

4.10 Case I: Participant 11 (Jack)**4.10.1 Researcher's Reflection**

Jack was guarded during the interview but did not appear vulnerable. However, there was a sense of unwillingness to share his experiences despite providing full verbal and written consent to participate in the study. The interview was guided by the researcher's questions and not the participant's experiences, as in the case of the other participants. The participant managed to share his lived childhood experiences well despite the sense of unwillingness to share his experiences at the beginning of the interview.

4.10.2 Jack's Brief Background

Jack is a White Afrikaans-speaking male. He was 46 years old and incarcerated for four counts of rape at a maximum-security correctional centre at the time of the interview.

4.10.3 Jack's Childhood Experiences

Jack was raised by his mother, who had epilepsy. *"No. Um, my mother was a very sick person because she was, get epileptic a lot, and um, I'll always wanted to be there just to help her".*

He had a good relationship with his mother. *"Very, very nice. She's the beautifullest, um, she's small and lovable. She's... yoh, she's angel. She's... yah".*

His relationship with his father was good, but a strained relationship with his stepmother disrupted it. *"Um, me and my father get along very, very nice, um, from the start. There was a time that um, he was, he was um, engaged with another woman and me and that girl didn't get along. So, um, I didn't visit him very often, but if I can get him back now, yoh, it would, it would be so nice. I missed him every day".*

His father was incarcerated for allegedly sexually abusing Jack's sisters when he was between ages 9 and 11 years old. *"And um, and then when I was round about 9... no, 11, my two sisters they accuse my father of rape. So, my father was locked down until I was, I think 20, 20 years old. Um, I grow up without a father".*

Rape accusations by sisters and incarceration robbed him of his relationship with his father. *"In the beginning, yes, because they took my rock out of my life. I was always, my father play with me rugby, or I helped him in the garage with a car or something. Um, he was able to teach me something in life, but they took it away".*

Mother's illness and father's incarceration led to feeling a sense of responsibility to provide for himself and his family. *"Um, my mother was a very sick person because she*

was get epileptic a lot, and um, I'll always wanted to be there just to help her, and I didn't go to school very well, or very often, so that I can be with my mother. I'm very protective. So, my father was locked down until I was, I think 20, 20 years old. Um, I grow up without a father, and my mother got married to another guy. And um, he like his booze and stuff, so, I have to make a plan to get food in the house, but I actually enjoyed because it helped me a lot, um, for when I was bigger, to think bigger, and um uh...". "It was, it was not nice. It was, everybody have a father and um [sigh], I must fight my own battles".

The sense of responsibility started at the age of 13. *"[Sigh] 13 years old".*

He dropped out of school in Grade 10. *"Um, I was gra... Grade 10".*

His parents divorced at the age of 12, and both remarried due to the father's incarceration. *"Twelve. Um, I think... yeah, but um, my father was just sentenced, and then my mother sent him the divorce papers".*

He had a strained relationship with stepparents. *"And yeah, and my mother get married to that other guy, and he was a slapgat.*

There was a time that um, he was, he was um, engaged with another woman and me and that girl didn't get along". "Um, we get along but not very well because she want to... what you, what do you call it, she want to be everybody's boss. 'Don't do this. Do this like this...' She was... She even tried to teach me how to make a fire to have braaivleis. I thought listen, just step away. Yah, she'd go out of her, out of her way to, to mess up your day or something like that".

The stepfather abused alcohol. *"If he get paid, the first thing he can think of is, is um, alcohol. He don't worry about buying groceries and stuff, he just wastes his money on drunk; Grandpas, yoh, 25 Grandpas and a case of beer".*

4.10.4 Jack's Positive Experiences

Working and earning money were the highlights of his childhood. *"Um... Yah, to make money [laughing]". "Yah, we um, sometimes when the um, at, at Spoornet when the guys are striking, we get the... we were a bunch of laaities, then we go help them, we get money and... We worked there every weekend; it was lekker because, sometimes you see um, something nice in a, in a shop and you want it, and you save your money and you go buy that and stuff like that. I bought my first motorbike that. Jesou, that was nice [laughing]"*.

4.10.5 Jack's Neighbourhood Experiences

He was born and raised in the Free State, Navalsig in Bloemfontein. *"In Bloemfontein. Um, in, um, Navalsig"*.

He described the town as a good environment due to a sense of community. *"Um, um, um, it was actually nice because everybody knows each other and, and they can help each other or something like that. It was nothing... it was not bad"*.

The area was characterised by alcohol, drug abuse, prostitution, and no form of violence in the area. *"So, yah some days it was bad because um, there was my mother, who asked that guy, please stop to drink and stuff like that, and you [sigh], he just, 'It's my money, I work for it, you sit at home.' But that's, that's nitty things, but further on, it was really really nice". "Ne? I know there's guys that um, Nigerians and something that sell drugs and prostitution and stuff like that around there, but it was not near us"*.

He did not use any illicit drugs. He used cigarettes and used alcohol occasionally at the age of 16. *"Uh-uh, no. Mh-mm, just cigarettes, and now and then I smuggled beer into my, into my room; just to have a beer, and I'll drink my beer for the day [giggling] 16"*.

4.10.6 Sexual Offence/s Committed and Actions Leading to the Offence

He was incarcerated for four counts of sexual assault and denied all the charges. *“It's not very nice. I didn't commit this crime. I didn't rape anybody. Um, but um, yah, then I made my appeal, and my appeal came back, and they said there's no evidence that linked me with the case, but I'm extremely dangerous, I must stay in prison [giggling], I don't know why. Um, and I feel like the, the, the courts just sentence people just to keep everybody happy”.*

The sexual offence committed was against his sisters' children. *“And they said I raped my two sisters' daughters”.*

He accused the court of wrongful arrests and incarceration. *“They don't really look inside the people's cases and see, listen, this guy's not guilty or what what what, because um, it's not, it's not just me, it's, I think it's 800 and... 800 guys in this prison they were sentenced without any evidence against them. And I feel it's not right. Some people can... It's like me, I, I, I, love to help people and especially um, what do you call that people that are in wheelchairs, ongebruiklik or what what”.*

He had a close relationship characterised by trust with the alleged victims. *“But, it's not... they, they were sleeping in the living, in the living room, and we in the... because we stayed in the one-bedroom flat, they would sleep in the living room; we sleep in the bedroom. I didn't even touch them. Yeah, we played together and we used to stay in a place where there was a swimming pool so I would take them and I throw them around in the pool, and we play lekker. I didn't touch their um what you call it, their, their private parts. Ne?”.*

4.10.7 Influence of Childhood Experiences on Sexual Offences Committed

No response was provided.

4.10.8 Jack's Final Reflections

None were provided.

Table 10*Clustering of Jack's Themes*

Positive experiences	Negative experiences	Neighbourhood experiences	Sexual offences committed, actions leading to offence and influence of childhood experiences	Final reflections
➤ Working and earning an income	➤ Parentification ➤ Divorce ➤ Strained relationship with stepparents ➤ Fathers' incarceration; sexual offence ➤ Disrupted relationship with father ➤ School dropout ➤ Alcohol abuse in the family	Province: Free State Town: Navalsig, Bloemfontein • Good environment; a sense of community • Alcohol and drug abuse • Prostitution	➤ Incarcerated for 4 counts of sexual offences ➤ Denied all offences Victims: Girl children • Close relationship and trust with victims • Accuses court of lack of evidence and wrongful arrest • Offered no childhood experiences	➤ None

4.11 Case J: Participant 14 (Patrick)**4.11.1 Researcher's Reflection**

Patrick was open and engaging during the interview. He narrated his lived childhood experiences well. The interview was guided by the participant's narration of his experiences. The researcher's role was to probe for clarity and structure the interview. The participant is predominantly Afrikaans-speaking but managed to narrate his experiences in English.

4.11.2 Patrick's Brief Background

Patrick is a Coloured Afrikaans-speaking male. He was 31 years old and incarcerated for five counts of sexual offences at a maximum-security correctional centre at the time of the interview.

4.11.3 Patrick's Lived Childhood Experiences

His grandmother raised him for the first five years of his life. *"From birth to until, until, 5, 4-5".*

He started living with his parents at the age of 5. He had difficulties transitioning from living with his grandmother to living with his parents due to socioeconomic issues. *"By the age of 5 years to 6 years, so we have to leave now because my mother and father now have to stay together, so we have to leave and go look at other place whereby there must build a shack so they can have, one day, a four room. So, we live from ninety, ninety-five... I grew up actually, is my yard now that one, it will, it became a, a, location. Actually... my sister... how can I put it? From '95; you see that, that's that's places. I'm born here in the location you used to go... maybe this is my grandmother's house? Then we used to go to my mother's house, so we go out from my grand, whereby we were staying nice at my grandmother's house, whereby all our siblings and families is bigger you see?".*

There were financial difficulties and unemployment in the household. *"So, wherever we grew up... you see, the main point was the financial, the lack of financial because of my father didn't have a stable job, you see? And my mother didn't work, you see? My father was, was working a piece jobs. Like sometimes he go to clean the yards and all those things, whereby us when we grew up, also by our peers, the things that different maan, because our peers have everything; we even don't have bread to go to school with; even if we didn't eat that day; that things seems like for me it broke me down".*

There was alcohol abuse in the family. *"So, my mother and my father, they were all, all tw... both they were drinking".*

His father physically abused his mother. *“They were people who are drinking. So, whereby my father, it was, it was like, out with my mother; it was a, how can I put, he was a man of anger”.*

The abuse led to feelings of helplessness. *“Ya, he was hitting me, so the feeling that, with that this, I can’t help my mother”.*

He attributed his bullying behaviour at school to exposure to abuse in the house. *“Ya, you see, I can say I was bullied, but what I can say is, to be honest, I became to be a bully towards other persons. For the fact that I, I see these things happen; they give me anger. So, it seems that that anger that I get from the house, I take it out at school. For example... Ha ah, I bullied the peoples at school”.*

His bullying behaviour disrupted his school performance. *“Ya, ya, ya, at the end of a time, now what happened that bullied of mine, neglect at my school, work and all that things and all that things”.*

His bullying behaviour led to his association with a gang at the age of 17. *“Ya, I became like that, since now I adopting that style. There whereby we came to a place where I growing up to the stage a, I am a teenage skeem, so I became a leader of something, now I am thinking that I am leader of something...”. “You see, whereby a teenager, I am still a teenager now, see? You see now, to the gang sides, there is two part: you get the gang from outside, you get the gang from 26, the number gang, you understand? I was just a member”. “I joined about uh when I was 16 years old, 17 years old”.*

The dynamics of the gang were power- and control-orientated. *“It is those ones of the locations; maybe I can say we are the CNBs. We are CNBs; it is just of the locations, maybe everything in the territory belong to us, for example, or this is our corner, or there were there*

is a tavern, it is our tavern, the girls also we checked, we want to be known, we want to be talked about in the location, you see? We want to be the guys”.

He felt like a burden to his parents. *“Ya, ya, ya, at the end of a time, now what happened that bullied of mine, neglect at my school, work and all that things and all that things, but although I talk about die deng at home seems like it fall on deaf ears. Sometimes I couldn’t get the chance to talk, you see, to talk maybe with my father of mine or with my mother; my mother used to... I used to sukkel to talk to, with him you see? Sukkel is like maybe, I have fear with my father, so maybe I want talk something about school or things, and now it will seem like I am crying baby with my mother or father; they will be something like ‘Go away’ or something”.*

He dropped out of school in Grade 10 due to a lack of resources and his father’s absence.

“No, I didn’t finish school, I uh, finish in Grade 10. Then I go back, then I go back to the family sides of leaving the school. There was one day, or one year, uh two years; my father get another job in Cape Town, so no actually, my mother, my brother we were alone, so... about for 3 months, 4 months, my father did not send nothing since I was telling him this, what he do with the money and how things have gone”.

He felt responsible for providing for his family due to his father’s absence and his

mother's unemployment. *“I am older. I am the older one here. So, I think I must go and look for a job so I will be able to feed my 2 siblings; I was staying with them. So I realise, no man, even is like this, there must be a way we must live here because sometimes we go to bed hungry, sometimes I go to school hungry, sometimes I go even I don’t have properly shoes, you see, and by that time, by that time, the opportunity was starting to keep that new prison, I do not know what that prison in Kimberly, that they call Tswelopele? It’s my mother and my... sorry to say, my mother and my brother. So, it actually showed that my father is living nice life there in Cape Town because he is almost going to 6 months and I didn’t have made*

banking account, whereby transfer for us money, he made nothing so thereby I am still waiting for him, maybe one day he will be able to make his things all that things, and things”.

He worked as a general worker from age 16 to provide for his family and child. He had a child at the age of 19. *“So shap, I leave school, I go to look for a job thereby uhm, thereby Tswelopele Prison. I started at the age of 16, as a general worker. A general worker is you do everything besides working with machines, but everything any longer, how can I put it, a personal assistant, is go to the thing there, actually that man, do concrete and... I was 19 years old”.*

He also sold drugs as a teenager to provide for his family. *“Yes, you see, this child for a reason, you must check now my own family here and again my family here, starting to get hectic, but the time when it get hectic, God bless me with another job here with to cook at Spar, with a, with a, with a scale coats and cashier assistance”.*

“And sometimes trolleys and life became better, so I think I am on my small spirit to sell any fruit and veg and all that stuff and maybe even drugs you see, and drugs I also sell them, the money is coming fast you see, so I can make myself some money for my mother and my brother; so I was making something for myself you see, so I was living that life. It wasn't better better, but it was something that upgrade swipe, starting with”.

He started using illicit drugs at the age of 15. *“Ya, ya, I started, I started using drugs at the age of 15, ne? The drugs I started using was mandrax, deplin and ganja, you see? I didn't drink”.*

The need for power, protection and association with a gang led to the continued use of illicit drugs. *“It's the people who I am fighting with because we are gangs, mos? If I had one gang member, the other gang member will come back for me or my brother, you see? So, I must be very observant and very focused; sometimes you can see we can go to their territory*

or their tavern you see? So maan, very focused, so maan their things, make you realise, so I didn't use alcohol, but I did use drugs; mandrax and stuff?".

4.11.4 Patrick's Positive Experiences

He had no positive experiences during his childhood. *"Sister of mine, I can say I really enjoyed everything, anything positive in my childhood, sisi because of whereby you can see nothing could come out of my childhood sister. Unless it is negativity. If I was saying that I was enjoying something that come out positively, I wouldn't able to be talking to you. You see, sister? Now that I am here, here in prison during my time of prison, yeah, there are some things that come out positively".*

4.11.5 Patrick's Neighbourhood Experiences

He was born and raised in the Northern Cape, Galeshewe, in Kimberly. *"I am from Kimberly, I was born in Kimberly, I, I grew up in Kimberly". "But the, but the big location is Galeshewe. If I post my address, I will say Galeshewe and say 2000. Or I will say 2000 and say Galeshewe. So Galeshewe is the main area of Kimberly that... how can I say? Kimberly is a capital city, and Galeshewe is the, how can I say, the township area. So, I stay in 2thou. So, my grandmother stays in Galeshewe, stays in the first location of Galeshewe".*

He lived in two different areas in Galeshewe. *"So that location I am staying in is Club 2000. Yeah. We moved to another location, 2thou".*

He described it as a community with advanced activities. *"Okay, so Galeshewe is more advanced at the activities. The parks, the stadiums, the, the, the schools are near at the location; schools are near the, the, the complexes, even though it is busy than 2000".*

He was exposed to gangsterism and alcohol and drug abuse in Galeshewe. *"I was living in 2thou that time".*

4.11.6 Sexual Offences Committed and Actions Leading to the Offence

He was incarcerated for five counts of sexual offences but admitted to only committing three offences. *“See, it's three”.*

1. First offence

The first victim was his girlfriend and the mother of his child.

“So, the first one, the first one, it was with girlfriend of mine”.

He was on parole for a robbery case at the time of his first sexual offence. *“Yeah, so at that time, I was sentenced for another case ne? Another case which was robbery, so to make them, you must understand in the ross, one, two three. So, 2015, I come outside for that other matter of mine, I go on parole”. “So, on the... on the 30th of January, I was released on parole on the 30th of January, uh on parole. On the 14th of February, not 14, the 13th of February, I meet with my girl, which had a child with”.*

There was use of illicit drugs prior to the sexual offence. *“I was smoking Crystal Meth. See? So that one, I don't drink, I don't even drink because I can't use drugs and I drink. So, while we was sitting, that girl of mine, was approaching us because they saw me for the first time in so many years, so they were, ‘You are outside, you are outside, how smart are you...’ You know girls, ah, we were drinking cold drinks, please buy us some...”.*

There was a sense of denial of the sexual offence. *“Now this girls, puts down his pants, I take out a condom, is waar, I do the things, after ou nek out the things, I know that this is his mother's house”.*

He was incarcerated for murder prior to the first sexual offence influenced by substance use and gang association.

“I didn’t drink, not take one sip, but I used drugs, mandrax, deplin and ganja. Ya, you see the reason why, the reason why is that, you see, if you stay in the location and become a, as I told you before, you become angry and angry, making a murder here, you have come back and come and things like that? So, I did make murder the one day and...”. “My murder? I was 21-22 if I am all right. It’s the people who I am fighting with because we are gangs mos?”.

2. Second offence

There was also a sense of denial of the second sexual offence; he reported being an accomplice of the crime. *“Now this second one, hayi, my sister, you see that one, if I come think about it, the person who did that one is walking free outside, you see if I come to think about that one, the person is walking free outside, see? Was one day you see sister? This one day, this victim wasn’t honest at the, at the, at the, at the court. I was not alone; you see, sister because”. “We raped the girl when we were... yes. You see? You see?”.*

The sexual assault started with a robbery, and the robbery led to a sexual offence. *“The girl take out the phone, see this other guy of mine? You see, no maan, no maan. Ahyi, you see sister? So this guy is taking, kidnapping the girl, so we go now, you know what is, we are supposed to go like this, but we go there, they are closing us; it was winter, we had scarfs, and this person was seeing, so it is that time now where Bra T, let’s go to the field, we go to the field, we rape this girl, you see?”.*

There was a sense of remorse during the offence. *“... so it is that time now where Bra T, let’s go to the field, we go to the field, we rape this girl, you see? You see? But when I realise the thing that we are made, it is not right. So, what I made, I give the girl back his phone. Because of now, you see the thing; I was feeling nai maan, the thing we was doing is not right maan. We were able to just take his phone and go, not to rape and all these things”.*

3. Third offence

There was a sense of denial of the third offence; he reported that he was also an

accomplice. *“The other one is not a rape, you, see? The other one, we were smoking drugs.*

“All this people is girls. You see this one? How is it? Is like this, is interesting, is sex, is girls, is drugs. It's nice. We do it all, 24 hours. We come, we get caught, we don't know how to answer the question that are being asked to you. Because we were caught by his boyfriend. How? Is the time I bring him to his house, already see. You see? He made what; he made his boyfriend to have a case. Or so we must take his things and go? They were not able to get his things, boyfriend know this girl is a drug user and all this thing. You see? You see that one my sister. The three cases of the sex were with girls”.

There was use of illicit drugs prior to the offence. *“We were together, you, see? We were smoking drugs, you see? His boyfriend is a jump boy; he is hooking with the taxis. So, obvious, we did, we were 24 hours with him”.*

4.11.7 Influence of Childhood Experiences on Sexual Offence Committed

He attributed his actions and behaviour to his childhood experiences. *“So I like to ask my brother: ‘Where did we find this thing to become so angry, or to became so violent?’ You see? No, no, I don't know. Let us go back, remind ourselves, remind ourselves and think how did we grow up, to our roots... let us go... let us go to our roots; did we grow up like our netolabour or how? You see? You will think, ‘Father’ and I say no, it is the thing. Maybe we adopt too much of our father, that is the thing, too much of what our mother was doing, you see? Because truly speaking, my father and my mother were people who are drinking, all the things, so we couldn't adopt positive things easily”.*

He reported that exposure to adversity contributed to his thought process and content, affecting his behaviour later in life. *“From the people in the area. You see, where people were staying there, you know, shacks? Do you shack like that? In shacks, you see different*

kinds of things that is inappropriate towards children. So that things they became a stigma to you, they became a dop in your mind. Seems like when, it's that thing that makes most of us in the equation”.

Contribution of nature versus nurture. *“You, see? You don’t know what is it, is it a nature, or what can I say? Or must it be like this? Is some other people are lucky or is some others we don’t know. Or is it the rich people achieve their lives, and achieve their goals, and the other people must just go to prison, other ones go to the graveyard, you see? You come to us; we got lot of questions. In the meantime, it is not like that”.*

He attributed his actions to a lack of education and acknowledged the influence of drug use on criminal behaviour. *“The thing is, is the lack of the education and the lack of the recent capacity, reasoning things and how we approach things, maybe we don’t approach things with proper manner. You see? That education skill, the educational skill to approach, you see, sister? The drugs also, the drugs are also playing in these things of the crimes of us and the dropouts of the schools”.*

4.11.8 Patrick’s Final Reflection

No final reflection was offered.

Table 11*Clustering of Patrick's Themes*

Positive experiences	Negative experiences	Neighbourhood experiences	Sexual offences, actions leading to offence and influence on childhood	Final reflections
➤ No positive experiences	➤ Difficulties transitioning to living with parents ➤ Alcohol use in the family ➤ Exposure to domestic violence ➤ Bullying and disrupted scholastic progress ➤ School dropout ➤ Association with a gang as a teenager ➤ Fathering a child as a teenager ➤ Financial difficulties and unemployment ➤ Parentification ➤ Use of substances	Province: Northern Cape Town: Kimberly, Galeshewe • Activities in the community • Gangsterism, alcohol and drug use	Incarcerated for 5 counts. • Sense of denial in all cases • 1 st offence: Murder 1 st offence • Recidivism • Use of illicit drugs prior to the offence • Sense of denial, accomplice 2 nd offence • Sense of denial, accomplice • Robbery prior sexual offence • Remorse during offence 3 rd offence • Denial of offence, accomplice • Use of illicit drugs Influence of childhood experiences • Acknowledged contribution of childhood experience • Influence of exposure to adversity • Nature vs nurture • Lack of education • Influence of drug use on behaviour	➤ None

4.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a detailed analysis of the different cases. It provided the researcher's reflection on each case and a brief background on each case. It also provided an overview of the positive and negative lived childhood experiences, the participants' accounts of their neighbourhood, the sexual offences committed, the actions and the influence of the childhood experiences on the sexual offences committed. The chapter also

highlighted the participants' overall reflection on the interview and their life experiences.

The following chapter provides a cross-analysis of the cases and a discussion thereof.

CHAPTER 5

CROSS-ANALYSIS OF CASES AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The idiographic approach of IPA was used to provide a detailed analysis of the individual cases in the previous chapter, which provided an in-depth understanding of the participants' lived experiences. This chapter continues with the idiographic approach. However, it will present the common themes across all cases, highlighting their similarities and differences. The themes will be discussed in detail, incorporating literature reviewed in the study and new literature based on the theme. The themes include themes of the participants' positive and negative lived childhood experiences and neighbourhood experiences. It will also highlight themes of the patterns of the actions leading to the offence, the influence of childhood experiences, and their overall final reflections.

5.2 Common Themes Across the Cases

This section will highlight the most prominent themes across the cases in the study. The themes are divided into negative and positive lived childhood experiences, the experiences in the neighbourhood, the sexual offences committed and patterns leading to the sexual offences committed and final overall reflections.

5.2.1 Negative Lived Childhood Experiences.

5.2.1.1 Dysfunctional Families. Family dysfunction was the main theme across the cases in this study. In all the cases, experiences of adversity or challenges started with family dysfunction. However, family dysfunction was different across the different cases. In some cases, it was the death of a parent, exposure to abuse of a parent or being abused

by a parent, separation of parents or divorce, absence of a parent(s), or uninvolved parental figures. The participants across cases shared the following:

Daniel: *“Uh, my father was not there. I didn’t know him ‘til I was uh, I grewed up, ‘til I was old, yes”.*

Kganya: *“No, he died in 2003”.*

Sipho: *“It was hard because I was, I was raised by my mother alone, and we were five boys”.*

The absence of fathers was the most prominent theme among the family dysfunctions highlighted above. Most of the participants shared growing up without a father due to death, unknown or absence of the father and being raised by a single mother. They shared the following:

Daniel: *“Uh, my father was not there”.*

Sipho: *“It was hard because I was, I was raised by my mother alone, and we were five boys”.*

Matome: *“I do not know him, even his face. If he was to show up here, I would not be able to point him out. Up, up until now, I do not even know who he is”.*

As shown in the study, the absence of fathers is a big challenge in the South African context. It is a phenomenon surrounded by many debates and opinions (Matlakala et al., 2019; Ratele et al., 2019). The reasons for the absence of fathers differ, as highlighted above; in some cases, it was unknown fathers or undisclosed fathers, death of fathers or uninvolved fathers (East et al., 2006; Padi et al., 2014). Nonetheless, the absence of fathers negatively impacts children despite the type of absence. It has an emotional,

psychological, and socioeconomic impact on children (East et al., 2006; Matlakala et al., 2019). The findings of this study are thus supported by findings in the literature, especially in the South African context: Children generally experience adversity in the South African context, such as the separation or divorce of parents or losing their parents due to AIDS (Bourgard & Hesselink, 2022; Manyema & Ritcher, 2019).

Literature in the study also emphasised the relationship between dysfunctional family or dysfunctional family relations and sex offences, but this was found in adolescent offenders (Naidoo & Sewpaul, 2014). The literature also highlighted that poor relations with parents and being raised by single mothers lead to developing poor attachments and committing sex offences (Londt & Roman, 2014). Being raised by single mothers formed part of the theme of dysfunction in the family. Although being raised by single mothers is not always related to experiencing adversity in children's lives, being raised in a household with two biological married parents has more benefits for children than being raised by single parents. This differs for families based on family dynamics (Musick & Meier, 2010). Being raised by married parents is good for children's general well-being and development (Ribar, 2015).

Separation of parents and divorce was shared as an experience in the theme of dysfunctional families:

Sipho: *“So, well, my mother, eh, married another man, so we were all men. She raised us while living with that man. It was not nice, it was not good, because sometimes they were fighting; they were drinking people actually. So, they used to fight a lot and [sigh]...”. “He married another woman”.*

Jack: *“12. Um, I think... yeah, but um, my father was just sentenced, and then my mother sent him the divorce papers”.*

Separation of parents and divorce of parents negatively impact children, as indicated in the literature as well. Some children experience the separation or divorce of their parents negatively, subsequently developing conduct problems and youth misbehaviour (Boccio & Beaver, 2017; Schroeder et al., 2010; Stadelmann et al., 2010). This youth misbehaviour was found in some cases in this study in participants who experienced divorce and/or separation of parents.

5.2.1.2 Family Instability. Most of the participants shared transitioning to different households and families due to different factors such as the death of a parent, illness, incarceration of a parent, or poverty in the household:

Albert: *“[Sniffs] Okay, ma’am, the thing is, um... first I lived there in the Western Cape and then in Strand, you see; when I was still young, then my... at that time I was three years old”.*

Calvin: *“So, I start to think, man hai man, this thing is enough man; I’m going out, I don’t want to stay here anymore, wa bona? I go to my brother, the one who is the oldest one. So, he was doing business there ne, selling dagga, selling homemade beer, selling alcohol, selling this [physical movement]”. “Like that ne. So, I decided gore no, I’m going to stay by my grandmother’s home, and that’s whereby my problems starts because there, each and every one make his own food, and live his own way. So nna, I go there, I go with the intention, I only want the roof”.*

Thapelo: *“Hey.... They were.... They did not entertain anything at home. Each person who found a job, they would find themselves a place to settle at. Just like that. We were decreasing at home, we kept on decreasing at home... up until I moved, I went to stay straight at ... at my grandmother’s, Me and my brother Kaone who was acting on*

Isidingo; they called him Sdudla [Inaudible: 4:25]. So, we left and went to stay with my grandmother. At my grandmother's, we went just for huge problems”.

This theme is supported and is similar to the findings of the literature. Multiple transitions in the family structure have negative outcomes for children (Fomboy & Cherlin, 2007). This instability affects children's abilities to form healthy interpersonal relationships, and it is associated with generally poorer functioning in adulthood, including criminal offending (Bosick & Fomby, 2018; Fowler et al., 2015; Lee & McLanahan, 2015). This finding is further supported by South African literature as it is indicated that family factors, including family instability, contribute to sexual offending behaviour in South Africa (Naidoo & Sewpaul, 2014).

5.2.1.3 Socioeconomic Issues. Unemployment and poverty were prominent socioeconomic themes across the cases in the study. The participants shared the following:

Patrick: *“So, wherever we grew up, you see, the main point was the financial. The lack of financial because of my father didn't have a stable job, you see? And my mother didn't work, you see?”.*

Thapelo: *“So, I grew up in family where nobody was employed at that time... at home. So, my mother was a prophet for apostle”. “She did not have... have a choice other than watching us getting killed by hunger”. “We were... we were eating at my grandmother's place, late... always we would... we would go and milk the cows. They gave us milk which we would take home and go home with. So that we could also eat”.*

Calvin: *“In 2001, he lost his job, then my mother, she don't have a job anymore. And so, it's only my brother, the one brother, whose children stay with us. He sends money from the SA for my mother, who support the children of him, mos ne. His brother also*

eventually started contributing less in the family because his children no longer lived in the house”.

These findings are supported by the literature in this study. Manyema and Richer (2019) stated that the majority of children in the South African context are exposed to adversity in childhood. Poverty and unemployment are some of the adversities experienced by children in South Africa, with continuous progression of high levels of unemployment and poverty (Francis & Webster, 2019; Mabungazi & Mabungazi, 2006; Manyema & Richer, 2019). Poverty is also a shared lived experience amongst sex offenders in South Africa (Naidoo & Sewpaul, 2014).

Moreover, socioeconomic factors contribute to youth misbehaviour (Rekker et al., 2015). This was also found in this study; some of the participants engaged in criminal activities such as robbery and theft due to socioeconomic circumstances. The socioeconomic issues also affect other areas and contribute to other challenges, such as difficulty attending school due to a lack of resources, poverty as well as a lack of educational figures in the family (Fernández-Suárez et al., 2016; Nortjie, 2017). The youth misbehaviour in the study was also associated with socioeconomic issues and early school dropout. Early school dropout was influenced by a lack of resources and dysfunction in the family's structure. These findings support those found in the literature, stating that adversity in childhood rarely occurs in isolation among sex offenders. Sex offenders exposed to single experiences are often at risk for exposure to other ACEs (Brown et al., 2019; Kahn et al., 2021).

5.2.1.4 Parentification. Parentification was a prominent shared experience in the study. For example:

Albert: *“That was the thing that was happening most of the time, the money that we would receive... You see? Especially now that time me and my sister were foster grants, you see? The money that we get, it went there to the, it just went to the alcohol. See? So, growing up was getting tougher and tougher at a stage whereby I needed to [Deep breath] break in, do crime to look after ourselves, you see?”. “You, see? When I break into the house, I get what I want, I go. You, see? And the, here in the location, I am busy robbing the people, you see?”.*

Jack: *“Um, my mother was a very sick person because she was get epileptic a lot, and um, I'll always wanted to be there just to help her, and I didn't go to school very well or very often, so that I can be with my mother. I'm very protective. So, my father was locked down until I was, I think 20, 20 years old. Um, I grow up without a father, and my mother got married to another guy. And um, he like his booze and stuff, so, I have to make a plan to get food in the house, but I actually enjoyed because it helped me a lot, um, for when I was bigger, to think bigger, and um uh...”. “It was, it was not nice. It was, everybody have a father and um [sigh], I must fight my own battles”.*

Patrick: *“I am older. I am the older one here. So, I think I must go and look for a job so I will be able to feed my 2 siblings; I was staying with them. So shap, I leave school, I go to look for a job thereby uhm – thereby Tswelopele Prison. I started at the age of 16, as a general worker”.*

The theme of parentification is similar to the findings of the literature. Parentification is the assumption of children's developmentally inappropriate parent-like roles and responsibilities (Dariotis et al., 2023). This concept of parentification can be directly projected onto a child by parental figures or assumed due to the circumstances in the household that compel the child to assume adult-like responsibilities (Rana & Das,

2021). There are different types of parentification. In instrumental parentification, a child assumes roles to maintain a household (e.g., taking care of the finances and meals for the household) (Dariotis et al., 2023). The theme of parentification in this study was mainly circumstantial. Some of the participants assumed parental roles due to the circumstances in the household and socioeconomic issues. These include parents struggling to fulfil their parental roles and responsibilities due to discord in the family and other socioeconomic issues like poverty and unemployment in the family.

Parentification is associated with a different impact in childhood and adulthood (Higdon et al., 2022), including internalising and externalising problems, poor attachments, and poor school achievement (Borchet et al., 2021; Dariotis et al., 2023). This is because parentification disrupts the performance of developmental tasks or reaches certain developmental milestones (Borchet et al., 2021). Parentification can have a positive impact and outcome for children, but this depends on support, positive relationships with other family members, and age-appropriate roles (Masiran et al., 2023). However, this was not the case in the study; parentification in this study was not positive, as it disrupted the participants' development and contributed to them experiencing other adversities.

Teenage fatherhood and unplanned fatherhood also contributed to parentification in this study. This added to engaging in criminal activities in an effort to provide for their children. The participants shared the following:

Kganya: *“Now my child is 15 years. He is 15 years; he turned 15 years now on the 7th of July, Bonolo”. “I did not plan for him. I did not, I did not even thinking about making a baby... I was It did not come to mind”.*

Patrick: *“I was 19 years old. Yes, you see, this child for a reason, you must check now my own family here and again my family here, starting to get hectic, but the time when it get hectic, God bless me with another job here with to cook at Spar, with a, with a, with a scale coats and cashier assistance”.*

Teenage fathers struggle to transition into being fathers due to the developmental stage and the expected fatherhood roles to be fulfilled, such as financial dependency (Matlakala, 2020; Uengwongsapat et al., 2018). Teenage fathers are mostly raised by single parents with low socioeconomic status and low parental educational attainment (Bamishingbin et al., 2019). As highlighted in the literature, children in South Africa are affected by socioeconomic challenges (Manyema & Ritcher, 2019). These challenges make it more difficult for teenage fathers; some engage in criminal activities to fulfil their financial obligations (Chideya & William, 2013). Similar findings emerged from this study as participants indicated the challenges of fatherhood and resorting to criminal activities such as the selling of drugs to fulfil financial obligations.

5.2.1.5 Early School Dropout. Early school dropout is a multifaceted experience influenced by different factors globally and in the South African context (Branson et al., 2014; González-Rodríguez et al., 2019). This theme was also prominent in this study, and the participants across cases shared as follows:

Matome: *“[Exclamation]... a long time ago. [Silence]... a long time ago. I left school when there was still A... what is it... Standard A and B. I left it when I was in B”.*

Albert: *“That time it was Standard six, you see, but here by the school, by this school here, last of last year I made level three, I passed level three, I was supposed to go to level four Abet”.*

Patrick: *“No, I didn’t finish school, I uh, finish in Grade 10. Then I go back, then I go back to the family sides of leaving the school. There was one day, or one year, uh two years, my father get another job in Cape Town, so no actually, my mother, my brother we were alone, so... about for 3 months, 4 months, my father did not send nothing since I was telling him this, what he do with the money and how things have gone”.*

As stated above, early school dropout is a multifaceted experience. It is also an experience influenced by other ACEs (Morrow & Villodos, 2018). In this study, it was due to a lack of supervision in the family, socioeconomic difficulties, and parentification. As discussed above, the negative experiences are intertwined and influence the experience of other experiences, which was also found in this study. One of the participants shared:

Matome: *“Like I said, I did not have the things that... like the school uniform and the shoes. I was going to school with bare foot, ma’am. And when you look around, it is winter, it is cold, and the distance I travelled to go to school was the distance like from town... and I walk barefooted. I didn’t have food, lunch bag, I was not given money. I struggled with books”.*

Early school dropout leads to overall delinquency and criminal behaviour in childhood and adolescence (Bae, 2020; Rud et al., 2018). This was also evident in the study as early school dropouts led to engaging in delinquent and criminal behaviour, such as committing petty crimes like robbery and shoplifting. The participants further shared:

Calvin: *“Maybe I was in Grade 7, re, Grade 9, I start to realise that gore hay, hay, hay, I will not go, go this road every morning, every afternoon. I’d rather come come and go to town spinning town, go back and tell them I’m out of school, I wasn’t in school”. “So nna, I go there, I go with the intention, I only want the roof. I sleep there, tomorrow when I woke up, they will say I must prepare for school; hay, I don’t go to*

school, I go and skarrel for me in the town whatever I want to get, if I can get it, I will get. In the morning, I wake up, I wash, they think, Calvin is going to school. Calvin is not going to school. Calvin is going to town and zama for me something. If I get something sometimes, grab some things from people, run away, wa bona... Steal, shoplifting, understand? ”.

Matome: *“Mm. I started doing crime, I started doing house breakings, stealing, doing whatever, doing whatever up until I was doing the things that took me to jail.”*

Literature in the study did not highlight early school dropout as adversity in childhood amongst sex offenders, but it indicated that the age of onset of offence was found to have an impact on participation in education and lower educational achievement; this also contributes to recidivism amongst sex offenders (Van Duin et al., 2021).

5.2.1.6 Child Sexual Abuse. Child sexual abuse was prominent across most cases. The sexual abuse was mostly perpetrated by family members and caregivers. The participants shared the following:

Kganya: *“Because of that time... it happened that eh... my father, you see? He abused me sexually”.*

Thapelo: *“When I slept with Sister Mary. When you speak up again, you are wrong; you get spanked. It was her, but when we raised it to my grandmother, [Sniffs] my grandmother would... would shout and even to beat you, she would beat you, she would ask [Imitates his grandmother] ‘hey, what are the things that you are saying’ but still the very same thing you would go and share a bed with her...Sister Mary. She is dark. She is a horrible person”. The Sister Mary one happened when I was... I was about to be eighteen, sixteen... from sixteen to eighteen. It happened I ... I stayed eight to nine months at my*

grandma's. I stayed for eight to nine months. When she wanted to. When... when she wanted it, I also ended up... ended up not complaining [Chuckles] and enjoyed it".

Albert: *"No, I wasn't... that wasn't rape man, you see, ma'am, it was... we were four, it's, we were three and then there was this guy, he is the oldest one, his name was Joseph, you see? Usually, he asks us to do him this... nasty things with his private part, you see? That is not rape, you see? Yah, then he would probably give us something, maybe a toy or whatever, you see? This is the things he was doing with us, you see? Yah...Yah. It was happening so continuously up until, I don't even know where did it stop; I think we just break up where somehow, I think he went to another school... I think so. His mother sent him to another school, then we didn't meet anymore".*

As literature previously indicated, child sexual abuse is one of the most traumatic childhood experiences compared to other experiences (Downing et al., 2021). The experience of sexual abuse in childhood is also a risk factor for sexual offences later in life (Simons et al., 2008). The literature also highlighted sex differences in the experience of childhood sexual abuse and sex offences later in life. It showed that male child sexual abuse victims are more likely compared to females to become sexual abusers later in life. This is exacerbated if the abuse occurred from the age of 12 and above, the frequency of the abuse and if the sexual abuse was perpetrated by a father figure (Plummer & Cossins, 2018). This supports the findings of the study as it was reported in most cases that the sexual abuse experienced was frequent and, in some cases, was perpetrated by father figures.

In addition, participants shared non-disclosure of the child sexual abuse across cases:

Kganya: *“Sharp, I knew that my father... the thing that he did, you see? But, I didn’t have that thing of... speaking up or speak at home and say, ‘mom... one two, one two, one two’, cause obviously growing up, the sex topic was taboo; you do not just speak about it at home”.*

Albert: *“No, ma’am, I di... you’re, honestly speaking, you are the first one. Even the psychologist before that I talk to them, I never told them this. But... I never opened a case, but I wanted to do it the other time, you see, but then I doubt myself to say that this thing is not gonna go forward in anyway”.*

Thapelo: *“When I slept with Sister Mary. When you speak up again, you are wrong; you get spanked. It was her, but when we raised it to my grandmother, [Sniffs] my grandmother would... would shout and even to beat you, she would beat you, she would ask [Imitates his grandmother] ‘hey, what are the things that you are saying’ but still the very same thing you would go and share a bed with her...Sister Mary. She is dark. She is a horrible person”.*

The reasons for non-disclosure are different in each case in this study. As highlighted in the literature, child sexual abuse is one of the most traumatic childhood adversities (Downing et al., 2021). It also causes psychological distress, leads to behavioural problems and is a risk factor for sex offences later in life (Choi et al., 2023; Simons et al., 2008). The non-disclosure of the abuse might have deprived the participants of the opportunity to access relevant services, such as psychotherapy, to minimise the impact of the distress caused by the sexual abuse, as indicated by Tichelaar et al. (2020). This could potentially lead to the cycle of sexual offences, as unaddressed experiences of sex offenders, including experience of child sexual abuse, increase the chances of

repetition of their own life experiences in adulthood, as stated in the literature (Naidoo & Sewpaul, 2014).

5.2.1.7 Exposure to Domestic Violence. There was exposure to domestic violence in the study; some participants shared being victims of domestic violence or being exposed to domestic violence in the household and respective communities. The participants shared physical abuse as the most experienced form of domestic violence:

Albert: *“My father, he murdered my mother, and he wanted to murder me and my sister also, you see? So, at that time when after that eh, that aunt of ours, they protect us, you see? They lock us in a, in a room, and then the police and then ambulance come, and then they took my father away”.*

Patrick: *“They were people who are drinking. So, whereby my father, it was, it was like, out with my mother; it was a, how can I put, he was a man of anger. Ya, he was hitting me, so the feeling that, with that, this, I can’t help my mother”.*

Daniel: *“Uh, also my uncle beat my mum and um, even to her mother too, the way he used to talk about, to talk with him, uh, it was, it was like, it was like I’m the man, you are the woman, you got nothing to say, whatever I am saying, it ends with me, not you. So, yeah”. “And it affect me a lot because, eh, some of the victim was my mother by that time I was still young, your mother would go out to the streets, getting beaten. It disturbed me for a long time”.*

The literature confirms the participants’ experiences of domestic violence. Domestic violence is prevalent in the South African context, as highlighted in the background of the study (Enaifoghe et al., 2021; Govender, 2023). Exposure to domestic violence has an impact on children’s overall well-being, including psychological well-being (Doroudchi et al., 2023).

Literature in the study highlighted domestic violence as one of the adversities experienced by sex offenders in the South African context (Naidoo & Sewpaul, 2014).

5.2.1.8 Substance Use and Abuse. Substance use and abuse is a problem in the South African context and across the globe and is influenced by different factors (Gilvarry, 2000; Leslie, 2008; Narvey et al., 2021; Peltzer & Phaswana-Mafuya, 2018). The use and abuse of substances were also prominent in this study. The participants shared their experiences of exposure to substances in the family or the neighbourhood. Also, they started using substances in childhood and early adolescence:

Calvin: *“Say, plus-minus nine years, since from nine years. They took me like an... If they go to the club, that owners of that place of that people, the dog keepers, they will not tell them that child cannot be here. Sometimes, I get my beer; sometimes I get everything I want. If they get a, they go with him home”. “Fourteen, say 14 couple of months. I used to drink from small age, wa bona”.*

Matome: *“It was things like that. There was a lot of drinking. Even I started drinking when I was still young. And I would drink right, right there at Phel’indaba. I started drinking alcohol at Phel’indaba. I was using drugs, Marijuana. I started smoking”.*

Albert: *“Yoh, it was, I was, maybe twelve... eleven... [uncertain] twelve... eleven around there because I remember I was still at school when we were starting to drink”.*

Furthermore, most of the participants were raised in provinces/cities with prevalent substance use in South Africa, such as the Western Cape, Free State and Northern Cape (Pelzer & Phaswa-Mafuya, 2018). As stated above, in some of the cases, the participants started using substances from early adolescence. Different types of substances were used,

with Cannabis and alcohol being the most prominent, followed by other illicit substances, as confirmed by the literature in the study (Mokwena & Setshego, 2021).

The substance abuse in the study is associated with previous themes such as family dynamics, socioeconomic issues, and early school dropout. This was also found in a study in South Africa, where demographics and socioeconomic factors such as lower educational grades, coloured ethnicity, divorced parents, being male and fully employed and unemployed mothers are risk factors for substance use (Muchiri & Dos Santos, 2018). Furthermore, substance use affects life satisfaction and psychological well-being and increases the chances of delinquent and antisocial behaviours in adolescents (Carney et al., 2013; Visser & Routledge, 2007; Waller et al., 2014).

Delinquency, antisocial behaviours and substance use are related to criminal behaviours and mostly economic crimes (Nordfjærn et al., 2013; Phillips, 2022). This was also evident in some of the cases in the study, as the use of different substances was associated with criminal behaviours such as robbing and stealing to fund the substance use, which subsequently led to sexual offences later in life. Literature in the study also highlighted that male sex offenders present with an early onset of substance use (Altintas & Bilici, 2018).

5.2.1.9 Unfinished Business. The theme of unfinished business was prominent in this study. Unfinished business occurs typically when there is an unresolved issue or relationship with the deceased (Klingspon et al., 2015). The experience of unfinished business by participants in this study was also related to the death of parents. In addition, in this study, the unfinished business was associated with some of the adversities experienced in childhood, such as undisclosed paternal identity by the mother, child sexual

abuse by the father and attempted filicide-suicide caused by parents both deceased and alive. The participants shared the following:

Matome: *“I would even ask her about my father. Up until she died, she has never said anything to us about who is our father”. “But like I am her child. It mean... even if she whispered to me just to tell me ‘hey, your dad is this person who stays wherever’ even though she did not like him, they no longer get along, she does not want him what what. But I mean that I must know [Pause]... who is my father? [Pause]... what happened? I do not want to go in deep into their things, even as to how did they separated. But if only I could know who my dad is, I will be fine. But unfortunately, she died before we could get those answers. I still do not know my dad even now. So, I feel like she is also the person I cannot forgive for the secret that she created on me. At the end of the day, she said I am her child. How am I her child when there are things that she hid from me from way back?”.*

Kganya: *“But I think after my dad, he, he died, that was when I started being... but now thinking about it when I am alone, I have that thing of... maybe I was... that is the thing of maybe... my way of taking this thing from the inside or to do what? Cause now, I felt that maybe ...if maybe we did take it to the police or wherever to open a case, he... just the two of us, like, if he sat me down and said, my child so and so, what I did it was a mistake... so and so”.*

Sipho: *“I’m not exactly sure what was the reason, but what I saw was she and the, and the man that she was living with at that time. There was something that was happening between them, but I did not know what was happening there”.*

Children struggle with loss during childhood, not just loss due to death. This is due to multiple adversities that they experience throughout childhood. They, for instance,

struggle to process and accept loss due to their overall developmental phases (Alvis et al., 2023; Ferow & Intern, 2019; Stensrud et al., 2019). The participants in this study shared experiences of adversities and the death of parents. Some of the adversities were inflicted by deceased parents and, in some cases, living parents.

These experiences, including the death of their parents, led to confusion and lack of closure and caused intense unfinished business. The literature confirmed that unfinished business causes distress and may lead to severe grief reactions and other psychiatric difficulties (Holland et al., 2020; Klingspon et al., 2015). Unfinished business was not highlighted as an adversity amongst sex offenders in the literature. However, the literature in this study indicated that sex offenders struggle with certain psychiatric conditions that predispose them to sex offences (Bismpa et al., 2020; Eher et al., 2019). However, the literature did not account for unfinished business as the aetiology of the psychiatric conditions.

5.2.1.10 Peer Pressure. Adolescents experience changes in the different developmental domains, such as the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social domains (Louw & Louw, 2019). The changes make them vulnerable to peer pressure. There is also a gender difference in the vulnerability to peer pressure. Males are more vulnerable to experiencing peer pressure for different reasons, including conforming to masculine expectations (Ciranka & Van den Bos, 2021; McCoy et al., 2019). Peer pressure is associated with risk-taking behaviour in adolescence, such as substance use and risky sexual and criminal behaviours (Chan & Chan, 2011; Scott et al., 2014). This was confirmed by participants in this study and aligns with some studies. The peer pressure in the study was associated with risk-taking behaviours, such as substance use and criminal behaviours in adolescents, as most of the participants committed petty crimes and started

using substances in late childhood and adolescence. The participants confirmed the negative impact of peer pressure and shared the following:

Sipho: *“I used to, to love church. I always, every Sunday I was going to church. I am not sure when and where it did change. [Sigh] Eh, firstly, I will say friends. Friends who maybe, all the time they, they, they, they were influencing me in a dysfunctional way, in a dysfunctional manner, and she saw that these friends are not good for me. But when she tried to tell me, ‘Hey! Please, these friends of yours, I don't like them because they are not good’”. “There’s no, I, I, I, there was no good in that friendships of ours because, those were the people who are going to, ‘Let's go steal this so that we can buy alcohol. Let's go steal this so that we can... Let's go rob.’ Things like that. So, it became normal, and it became something that I woke up every day looking forward to doing”.*

Thapelo: *“Only to find there are boys who were coming from my hood, nearby my home, they came and mugged there. Luba and Bohang and this other guy, they called him Leano. When I pass by, I came across Leano. He said ...[Imitates Leano] ‘Hey bra Thaps, I am with Luba here, you see? We are also tracing those guys’. I started being friends with these people. I started being their friend that day”. “We mugged them fine. They were not stabbed, or nothing was done to them. We got few cents from them and a phone. I felt good for mugging. On that very same day, those two phones only to find they will get me into drugs”.*

Matome: *“Yes. And then I started being with them, I made friendship with these people. Only to find out that no man, I met with wrong people, and I only realised that thing later, when I was already in here... yes”.*

5.2.2 Positive Childhood Experiences

5.2.2.1 No Positive Experience, Relationship with Maternal Figures in the Family and Presence of Other Father Figures

The experience of positive experiences was not prominent in this study, as most participants across cases struggled to identify positive experiences or shared no positive experiences from their childhood. However, some of them shared relationships with maternal figures in the family and the presence of other male figures as positive experiences:

Patrick: *“Sister of mine, I can say I really enjoyed everything, anything positive in my childhood, sisi, because of whereby you can see nothing could come out of my childhood sister. Unless it is negativity. If I was saying that I was enjoying something that come out positively, I wouldn’t able to be talking to you. You see, sister? Now that I am here, here in prison during my time of prison, yeah there are some things that come out positively”.*

Albert: *“[Sigh]... Then maybe I can’t remember them. I believe maybe there is some; I don’t think it’s gonna be bad all the time, you see? Yah, but I don’t think I remember something that is gonna make me... that I can say I am happy about it”.*

Although one participant shared what seemed to be positive experiences, others had difficulty identifying positive experiences. Most of the participants across the cases shared experiences of living in a dysfunctional family, more especially absent fathers, but there are experiences of being raised by other father figures in the family. This is in line with the literature. Ratele et al. (2012) found that other paternal figures in the family and community play an important role in the upbringing of children. This was also found to a certain degree in this study. Even though most participants experienced growing up

without their fathers, some of them shared their experience of the presence of mothers and other father figures:

Thapelo: *“[Sighs] Eh, to tell the truth. The only thing I can say I enjoyed only was loving my mom, that is the only thing that made me happy. I was only happy when I was next to my mom. There.... There... there is nothing I can point out and say I enjoyed it only”.*

Daniel: *“My uncles, yes, my uncles, my uh, grandfather”.*

As stated in the literature, positive childhood experiences are associated with better functioning in childhood and in adulthood compared to the experience of adversity (Lee & Schafer, 2021; Parnes & Schwartz, 2022; Silveira & Pereira, 2023). However, negative experiences were more prominent than positive experiences in this study.

5.2.3 Neighbourhood Experiences

5.2.3.1 Township Upbringing, Substance Use, Violence and Gangsterism. The neighbourhood experiences impacted the participants’ lived childhood experiences in this study. Most participants grew up in townships or rural areas across South Africa. These include townships in and around Bloemfontein in the Free State Province, such as Phelindaba, Botshabelo, Zastron, Carnavon and Galeshewe in the Northern Cape, as well as Hebron Ga-Rankuwa in Gauteng Province. They shared the following:

Daniel: *“We grew up here in Bloemfontein, but I was born, we were born at Petrusburg, around Free State”. “Petrusburg. From Botshabelo to Bloemfontein”.*

Patrick: *“I am from Kimberly; I was born in Kimberly. I, I grew up in Kimberly”. “But the... but the big location is Galeshewe. If I post my address, I will say Galeshewe and say 2000. Or I will say 2000 and say Galeshewe. So Galeshewe is the main area of Kimberly that, how can I say? Kimberly is a capital city, and Galeshewe is the, how can I say, the township area”.*

Kganya: *“It was my mom... eh. cause actually my family we, we are from Zastron; it is here around Free State... Zastron when you go to Sterkspruit”.*

Thapelo: *“Eh, I ... I ...I grew up in Hebron, Hebron, in a family where we were about 11; I was the 10th child at home”.*

The prevalence of substance use, violence and gangsterism is high in these provinces (Leggett et al., 2004; Modise et al., 2022; Mokwena & Setshego, 2021; Pelzer & Phaswa-Mafuya, 2018; Petrus & Kinnes, 2018). Most of the participants shared the experience of exposure to substance use, violence and gangsterism in these neighbourhoods:

Daniel: *“And then even here in Bloemfontein, uh, here in Bloemfontein, then I started to experience the gangsterism the; where they stab people, robbing people...”.*

Thapelo: *“Alcohol.... alcohol and weed, especially weed. When I was arrested in 2006, it was then R2 for a scratch of a box of light. Weed, weed, that is, hai... we smoked it like nobody’s business. Even... even parents had.... Had accepted it. So, it was... it was normal. It felt like it was just a hobby”.*

Albert: *“Ma’am, yes actually, when, when I, when I, when I am in Kenhardt, you see? It’s where I started, when I left the school, you see? That’s when I start and do, start with glue, you see, smoking glue, then I go to dagga, and then I go to smoking, and then I go to drinking, you see?”.*

Calvin: *“There are a lot of violence, man, like in maybe neighbours they are fighting, or you hear that this guy is caught for rape, he did rape mang, mang there in that location or he did rape mang, mang there but, in her house, or he was caught breaking in there by that man’s house there in town, wa bona?”.*

The literature in the South African context indicated that children in South Africa generally experience individual adversity in childhood, although neighbourhood factors also contribute to the experiences during childhood (Gardner, 2015; Manyema & Ritcher, 2019; Naidoo & Sewpaul, 2014). However, this study found that experiences in the communities contributed to children's adverse experiences. The majority of sex offenders in South Africa report experiencing community violence (Ngubane et al., 2022). This was also the case in this study, as participants indicated involvement in gangs, experienced violence and abused drugs. The literature indicated that these experiences in the community contribute to the development of antisocial behaviours and substance use in South African youth (Gadner, 2015; Waller et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the youth in South Africa are involved in gangs in the townships due to multiple reasons, including lack of recreational resources, personal economic difficulties, lack of personal validation in families and lack of role models (Daniels & Adams, 2010; Ndlovu & Tanga, 2021). The use of substances and gang violence predict youth misconduct, and they are predictors of arrests among young men in South Africa (Christodoulou et al., 2019; Philips, 2020). Similar findings emerged from this study.

5.2.4 Actions Leading to Sexual Offence/s

5.2.4.1 Youth Misbehaviour, Crimes and Criminal Incapacity in Early

Adolescence. All the participants in the study were charged with sexual-related crimes. However, some behaviours were prominent prior to the offence committed. Most participants were involved in youth misbehaviour and criminal activities from a young age. They were involved in crimes such as robbery and theft. However, they were not arrested due to criminal incapacity due to age. Criminal incapacity in South Africa is implemented when a child, mostly from age 14 and below, is not found guilty of the crime committed due to age and rehabilitation programmes are then recommended by the child

justice system to ensure rehabilitation and reduce recidivism (Pillay, 2019; Young et al., 2017). Some participants shared that they were undergoing rehabilitation, but the outcome thereof did not emerge in this study. They shared the following:

Kganya: *“It was only one that I was arrested for. It went to court, and then they ref.. they referred me back to... [Pause]... what is it? Eh, to social workers at this thing... I forgot what they call this place... at the Vis.. what? At Vista side. Yes, One stop, they referred me there, and then I met with a psy, a social worker there, and then we, we were attending there the things...The sessions till the case was.... I was attending with my mom because I could not; I was still a minor. I was not standing inside the box”.*

Calvin: *“Nna, I don’t have a problem. They said, okay, right, you are charged. The social worker will deal with this case, he, because you are on school, so the social worker talk to the court. No, you can put him to his aunt... eh, how do you...”.*

Albert: *“You see? You are having that aggression; you are having that anger, you see? Whereby even the tyma was there by that place of safety, you see... I did a psychologist there, and that was 2000. You see? That time I was 15 years old, you see, with this aggression of mine, you see? I was in treatment that time”.*

These themes could be related to the literature on the neurological and psychological impact of experiencing adversity in childhood, as well as the impact of experiencing adversity in adulthood and the risk of offending later in life (Boullier & Blair, 2018; Lee & Schafter, 2021; Levenson & Grady, 2016; Parnes & Schwartz, 2022; Satapathy et al., 2022; Tzouvara et al., 2023). Furthermore, it was found that the experience of adversity in childhood is associated with sex offending later in life (Kahn et al., 2021; Satapathy et al., 2022; Testa & Semenza, 2020).

There is a trajectory of sex offenders from early adolescence to adulthood. However, the trajectory is different based on the age of onset of the sexual offence, frequency, and specialisation in different offence types (Lussein et al., 2010; Mathesius & Lussier, 2014). In this study, it was interesting that even though most participants engaged in criminal activities in childhood and adolescence, they only started sexually offending later in their criminal careers, which appears to differ from the literature findings.

5.2.4.2 Recidivism. The majority of the participants were incarcerated for multiple counts of criminal crimes, including sex offences. They shared as follows:

Albert: *“Like now, I’m a 28, you see? But my father before, my... that people there outside, they are all 26’s”]. “This is the ca... this is the rape case that I did, you see? And then there is another one in Mangaung. I was staying there by Halls, daar by Barkely Hall, and then there was dispute between us guys, you see uh, gang guys 26 and 28, then they decided that they gonna take me to Rahill. When I come to Rahill, that same night, I rape another inmate, you see? And then they take me to another unit. It is the life sentence that I am doing now”.*

Calvin: *“No! There are plenty. I have maybe, let me count it right, 2-3-4-5-, 5 rape cases”.*

Patrick: *“Yeah, so at that time, I was sentenced for another case, ne? Another case which was robbery, so to make them, you must understand in the ross, one, two three. So, 2015, I come outside for that other matter of mine, I go on parole” [p. 13]. “So, on the... on the 30th of January, I was released on parole on the 30th of January, uh on parole. On the 14th of February, not 14, the 13th of February, I meet with my girl, which had a child with”.*

The majority of this study's participants across cases committed petty crimes in their childhood that progressed into more serious crimes in adulthood. Furthermore, they reoffended after incarceration for sex offences or other criminal offences. The literature shows an association between some adverse experiences and recidivism (Astridge et al., 2023; Craig & Zettler, 2021; Heirigs et al., 2020), highlighting factors such as lack of education, stigma and lack of employment that influence recidivism in sex offenders (Decker et al., 2015; Porter et al., 2023; Van Duin et al., 2021). This might explain the trajectory of committing petty crimes initially to sex offences later in adulthood, as well as the re-offending among the participants in this study.

5.2.4.3 Use of Substances Prior to the Offence. The participants reported using substances prior to the offence in almost all the cases in the study. They shared:

Calvin: *"So, as I was busy preparing myself to have sex with her, she woke up. 'Hey Calvin, don't do it. Hey Calvin!' You understand? The same thing that was happening with my girlfriend; stopping me from doing it. I become angry, and I am under the influence of alcohol, so I didn't check gore this is my aunty, this is my mother's sister, I check we are drinking together, we smoke together, we eat together, how can I not have sex with them?"*

Albert: *"Yah, I did rape somebody outside, and the person that I rape... it is my cousin, you see. You see? That is the thing, ma'am, it's only that two rape charges that I did. Yah, I made it myself. The first one of my cousin, yes I was drunk, you see, and we had a little bit of [Inaudible: 19:47]"*

Patrick: *"I was smoking Crystal Meth. See? So that one, I don't drink, I don't even drink because I can't use drugs, and I drink. So, while we was sitting, that girl of mine was approaching us because they saw me for the first time in so many years, so they were... 'You*

are outside, you are outside, how smart are you... ' You know girls, ah we were drinking cold drinks, please buy us some... '".

From the findings, it is evident that most of the participants were exposed to substances in their neighbourhood and also started using substances from a young age. Most participants indicated that they used substances prior to the offence. The literature highlighted that the experience of adversity could lead to the use of substances found among sex offenders (Bismpa et al., 2020; Eher et al., 2019; Kahn et al., 2021).

5.2.4.4 Close Relationship with Victims. The literature revealed that sex offenders can offend against any victim, depending on the sexual and criminal experience, opportunity, and risk of each victim (Lussier, 2005). The participants' responses aligned with the literature; they had the opportunity, and their victims might have been at risk. In this study, most of the participants across cases had some form of close relationship with the victims. They reported as follows:

Albert: *"Yah, I did rape somebody outside, and the person that I rape... it is my cousin, you see. You see? That is the thing, ma'am, it's only that two rape charges that I did. Yah, I made it myself. The first one of my cousin, yes I was drunk, you see, and we had a little bit of [Inaudible: 19:47]"*.

Kganya: *"It happened at home and the way it happened... cause I remember the first time it happened with the first victim, it was this, it was Nomazi, which is, she is my neighbour"*.

Calvin: *"Then I go sleep next to my aunt, but with the intention that this my girlfriend, I go there and have sex with her"*.

5.2.4.5 Denial of Sex Offence/s Committed. Denial was prominent across the cases in the study; almost all the participants denied the sex offences committed. However,

some of them denied all the offences, while others denied some of the sex offences and the nature of the sexual offences committed. They shared the following:

Jack: *“It's not very nice. I didn't commit this crime. I didn't rape anybody. Um, but um, yah, then I made my appeal, and my appeal came back, and they said there's no evidence that linked me with the case, but I'm extremely dangerous, I must stay in prison [giggling], I don't know why. Um, and I feel like the, the, the courts just sentence people just to keep everybody happy”.*

Patrick: *“Now this second one, hayi, my sister, you see that one, if I come think about it, the person who did that one is walking free outside, you see if I come to think about that one, the person is walking free outside, see? Was one day, you see sister? This one day, this victim wasn't honest at the, at the, at the, at the court. I was not alone, you see, sister because”.*

Sipho: *“That's why I say, I thought maybe, when I commit this one, they are going to accuse the wrong people because I was wrongly accused of that thing back... And I'm not sure how can I put this ... but [sigh], I had anger in me, but I was not aware of that thing. I, I, I just resented people”.*

However, it was not clear in this study if the denial in this offender group was related to the experience of ACEs. Nonetheless, the literature does indicate that denial and minimisation are prevalent among sex offenders (Craissati, 2015; Dietz, 2020). It is also highlighted in the South African context that some of the sex offenders who deny their offences report experiences of domestic violence, substance use and lack of support from family in childhood (Davis et al., 2015). This supports the findings of the study because even though the findings of the study did not provide a clear link between childhood experiences and denial of a sexual offence committed, it was, however, evident in this

study that these sexual offenders experienced adversity in their childhood, such as domestic violence, substance use and lack of support from family in childhood.

5.2.4.6 Negative Emotional State and Emotional Dysregulation. The experience of negative emotions was shared across cases. The most prominent negative emotion was anger. In most cases, the anger was caused by the experience of adversities, and it continued into adulthood. Most of the participants shared experiencing anger prior to the offence and during the offence, which also motivated the type of sexual offence committed (e.g., revenge rape or sexual offence with physical abuse). They shared as follows:

Matome: *“I abuse a woman because I am being abused emotionally”. “I wanted to satisfy myself by doing one, two, three. Yes, it was revenge, ma’am [Inaudible: 28:10]”.*

Calvin: *“So, as I was busy preparing myself to have sex with her, she woke up. ‘Hey Calvin, don’t do it. Hey Calvin!’ y/ou understand? The same thing that was happening with my girlfriend; stopping me from doing it. I become angry, and I am under the influence of alcohol, so I didn’t check gore this is my aunty, this is my mother’s sister, I check we are drinking together, we smoke together, we eat together, how can I not have sex with them?”.*

In some cases, there were difficulties regulating negative emotions caused by adversities such as child sexual abuse. These included difficulties sharing the experience of abuse and, as a result, internalising the emotions:

Kganya: *“And so, those are the things that hurt me, to tell the truth, they hurt me. Now, as an adult, when I think about it, I can see that this thing was not fine. I was supposed to talk by that time I got a chance, when I was taken to a Pastor, Social Workers, where... I should have spoken, I would have received help, I wouldn’t be in here”.*

Other studies found similar findings to this study, namely that sex offenders use sexual violence as a way of achieving nonsexual needs such as power and dealing with anger problems. The acts associated with this type of sexual offence are classified as revenge motivated by unresolved anger (Bourgard & Hesselink, 2022). It is further indicated that difficulty regulating emotion is a risk factor for sexual offences (Grady et al., 2019). Early traumatic experiences influence the development of psychiatric conditions and negative emotional states, and the absence of effective coping leads to deviant sexual fantasies as a way to avoid psychiatric and negative emotional states (Maniglio, 2011). This theme seems similar to the findings of the literature, as participants' responses indicated anger, revenge, and apparent difficulty regulating emotions.

5.2.5 Influence of Childhood Experiences on Sexual Offence/s Committed

5.2.5.1 Acknowledgement of Contribution of Childhood Experiences, Free Will and Responsibility. There was a general acknowledgement of the contribution of childhood experiences on sexual offences committed and acknowledgement of free will across the cases, despite the denial of the offences committed, as discussed above:

Calvin: *“Then I took myself back, ne, and then I said, no man, nna; I blame my community man because there are some things that as a child you grow up ne, people they do in front of you, or you want to follow, or you want to see what he’s doing, how he’s doing, wa bona? Or, how did he end up, he was in the situation, how did he come out there, a lot of things that I see there on the street, wa bona. But in the meantime, I said, no man, it’s in every man, or it’s in every human; if you make a choice, if I take this pen, I throw it, it is lying there, you come in, immediately you see it, your mind speak to you, your mind speak to your eyes telling you that there is a pen, it doesn’t belong there, you make that choice to pick it up no one tells you to pick it up, you make that choice. So, it’s*

whereby I worked through it myself to see where I went wrong; and now I did get it” [p. 21].

Thapelo: *“Cause of... [Silence] All these things that happened are not making sense; they are not making sense. Now I can blame my childhood, but when I look, it is all about choice in life”* [p. 26].

Albert: *“For my side, I won’t be able to give you a 100% answer to say yeah they did contribute because, at the end of the day, me I had made the decisions, you see?”* [p. 13].

As discussed in the literature of the study, childhood experiences have an influence on sexual offences later in life (Kahn et al., 2021; Moore & Tatman et al., 2016; Testa et al., 2022). However, as indicated by the participants in the study, people have choices when committing offences despite their ACEs. This is an indication of free will. Free will is used to determine criminal responsibility; however, as indicated by the literature (Kois & Chauhan, 2018; Laurene et al., 2011; Nestor, 2019), other factors might affect free will and criminal responsibility at the time of the offence. In addition to acknowledging free will despite their experiences, there was also an indication of taking responsibility for their actions. This could be an indication of rehabilitation as a sense of responsibility, which is important for rehabilitation and recidivism in sex offenders (Hanson et al., 2009; Ware & Mann, 2012).

5.3 Differences in Themes Across the Cases

This section explores the less prominent themes that emerged in this study. The themes are divided into negative and positive lived childhood experiences, neighbourhood experiences and the patterns leading to the sexual offences committed.

5.3.1 Negative Lived Childhood Experiences

5.3.1.1 Undisclosed Father Figure, Questioning of Paternity and Identity

Formation. This theme is related to the theme of dysfunctional families as discussed previously. However, it differs from the prominent themes of dysfunctional families and was less prominent in the study. In support of this theme, undisclosed paternity by mothers is a problem in the South African context influenced by social, cultural, and economic factors (Nduna, 2014). Furthermore, it is one of the major stressors among young people in South Africa (Nduna & Jewkes, 2011). Children who grow up without fathers often blame and resent their mothers for the undisclosed paternal identity (Manyatshe & Nduna, 2014). This was also the case in this study; one participant resented his mother for the failure to disclose his paternal identity and generalised his anger towards women in general. He shared the following:

Matome: *“So, when I ask my mom about... about my dad, she tells me that my dad left us when we were young. He left us with her since he said he went to look for work. It is that thing. That is the answer I was getting. Who is my dad? She does not want to tell me. His name is Puki, that is what she said. She just said he is Puki. Yes. Even his surname now... I don’t know it because there is no one who is telling me...”. “So, I ask myself...why did she not want me to know my dad? She did not want me to know my dad; what was she expecting? That is, what was she thinking? If it was like no, the secret was hers... Do you get me, ma’am? [Sigh] ... even now I am not feeling fine... and with the fact that mom died without giving me the right answers. That is, I feel... that... she died while I was still in here. I feel like even if I was to come out of here, I do not want to see my mom’s grave because now she hid things that were important for me”.*

The absence of a father and the use of a maternal surname is associated with a poor view of self and identity development in males (Smith et al., 2014). This was also found in

the study as the participant was questioning his identity, had a negative view of himself, and resented his mother, which also influenced the type of sexual offence committed.

5.3.1.2 Sense of Feelings of Abandonment and Neglect. A sense of feeling of abandonment and neglect were shared lived experiences in the study, but less prominent:

Matome: *“No, I was living alone. Yes. I took it as if I do not have parents”.*

This finding was consistent with the literature of the study, indicating that sex offenders experience neglect during childhood, affecting the development and functioning of the brain (Kahn et al., 2021; Levenson et al., 2016). Neglect was found to have the most impact and increase the chances of reoffending among male sex offenders (D’Urso et al., 2021; Heirigs et al., 2020). Child sexual offenders have schemas of abandonment; this schema leads to an inability to maintain and secure healthy relationships in adulthood and leads to the tendency to sexually offend (Carvalho & Nobre, 2014; Manesh et al., 2010).

5.3.1.3 Transmission of Faith in the Family and Ancestral Calling.

Transmission of faith in families is normal in most religious families. Religion is important as it is associated with better family outcomes and better outcomes in adulthood in general (Jung, 2017; Regnerus & Burdette, 2006; Smith, 2020). People in South Africa experience ancestral calling; some people accept their calling and become traditional healers, while others choose not to accept the calling. However, whether the calling is accepted or answered, having an ancestral calling, being exposed to ancestral calling, and the process of becoming a traditional healer can be difficult (Van der Watt et al., 2021). It can lead to conflict within families due to different factors, such as a lack of understanding of the calling (Van der Watt et al., 2021). Moreover, accepting the ancestral calling and becoming a traditional healer has better mental health outcomes as it relieves some of the distress caused by the calling (Van der Zeijst et al., 2020).

However, in this study, both the transmission of faith in the family and ancestral calling were experienced as adversities in childhood despite the better outcomes explained by the literature. These two themes were associated with conflict in the family, and witchcraft exacerbated the experience of adversity in the participant's childhood:

Thapelo: *“My grandmother had an apostle church”. “So, my grandmother was a person who was naughty. She had the Apostle church, but she disguised with a church, and she was a traditional healer. But people did not know her as a traditional healer; they knew her as a Pastor”. I ... I I ... the only thing I want to tell you is that am I going to suffer because of the ancestral things. [Silence] cause sometimes it becomes hard to a point where you end up asking yourself, why don't I just die, or should I kill myself than to struggle for people who died a long time ago”.*

5.3.1.4 Sibling Rivalry and Perceived Parental Favouritism. Sibling relationships are lifelong relationships in which two people are physically and emotionally tied (Kaminsky & Dewey, 2001). However, there can be rivalry in these relationships. The rivalry can be caused directly or indirectly by factors within the family such as the size of the family, the gender, the age gap between the siblings, individual characteristics of the siblings, interaction between the siblings and parents' parenting style (Chanda, 2014; Liu & Rahman, 2022). The rivalry can also lead to poor psychological well-being (Liu & Rahman, 2022; Luo et al., 2020). In this study, the experience of sibling rivalry was shared as a negative childhood experience. The sibling rivalry in the study was influenced by the parents' parenting style and siblings' characteristics.

Thomas: *“There was times where it was very uncomfortable. Um, the times that I did get girlfriends, he always tried to, to get my girlfriends from me. There were times that we just didn't get along; where he would, for example, uh, say, for example, I've got nice sunglasses, and he likes them; my sunglasses will just disappear, and a few months later, I*

might catch him with my sunglasses. Yah. It happened quite often that he took my things. I'm not sure what for, but that caused a bit of an uncomfortable relationship with my brother. It only started resolving during the last two years. While I'm actually here in prison, did we, we buried the hatchet and all those past things is past".

The literature indicated that perceived parental favouritism occurs when parents exhibit continuous favouritism to one child in the family (Santos, 2021). This was evident in the study as, in some cases, some participants felt they were treated differently by their parents in the household:

Matome: *"Because my mom had discrimination at home. That is, she would treat this one fine and the other she would not get along with, stuff like that. On the other side, there were talks that came up that no, actually it is like we are not children of the same person, I am coming from elsewhere or what". "So, I could see the difference. Even when things were bought at home, I would see the difference... we were not treated equally...[Pause]... the same".*

Different factors influence perceived parental favouritism, negatively impacting sibling relationships and the overall well-being and development of the child who perceives themselves as the least favourite (Meunier et al., 2012; Salmon et al., 2012). As noted earlier in the study, internalisation and externalisation difficulties may contribute to delinquent and criminal behaviour. The themes of sibling rivalry and perceived parental favouritism reported by participants were, therefore, confirmed by the literature.

5.3.1.5 Incarceration of Family Member. Parental incarceration was a theme in some cases in the study. Fathers were mostly incarcerated in the cases; the participants shared the following:

Jack: *“And um, and then when I was round about 9... no, 11, my two sisters they accuse my father of rape. So, my father was locked down until I was, I think 20, 20 years old. Um, I grow up without a father”.*

Albert: *“Yes, he went to prison, you see. He stayed there for a long time. When he come out, eh, I don’t know in which year, you see, when I was supposed to go because that aunt of mine, the other aunt, his sister, my father’s sister, they came and Kenhardt to say neh maan, he is out on medical parole”.*

The incarceration of a family member is one of the experiences reported alongside other ACEs (Stensrud et al., 2019). Furthermore, children who experience parental incarceration are negatively impacted by the experience of this ACE (Parnes & Schwartz, 2022; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2018). Incarceration of a family member is associated with behavioural and emotional problems in children (Bradshaw et al., 2021). In this study, the behavioural and emotional problems cannot be accounted for by the experience of an incarcerated family member. One participant only alluded to growing up without a father. Instead, there was a development of emotional and behavioural problems from childhood in cases of participants who experienced the incarceration of a family member.

5.3.1.6 Attempted Filicide-Suicide by a Parent and Individual Suicidal

Ideations and Attempt. Attempted maternal filicide-suicide was not a prominent theme in the study. However, one participant shared that it was one of the main adversities that affected him in childhood and adulthood. Mental health challenges, such as suicidal ideations, were also a theme in the study. They shared:

Sipho: *“There was some day where my mom decided that she was going to commit suicide with the three of us. It hurt me so much; up until today, I can’t, I don’t understand what was happening that day because she was ready to do that she was intending to do, of*

committing suicide with the three of us”. “Maybe 10/11. Yeah, 11 years, 11 years old... Hey [long pause]... I’m not sure [sigh]”.

Thapelo: *“Hai.... My father, I love him, but to be honest, he was a distraction for me and my siblings, even for my mom. My father... And for me as well.... Even for me, my father, I tried to kill myself because of him. He promised me that I would go to School of Excellence and I would say my goodbyes... say my goodbyes at school. I took the remove and everything when he came, he came in drunk. I went and bought 2 litre of paraffin and chips and drank it. Until this day, my mother does not know I tried to kill myself. That Friday, we ate pap and gravy, Remofilwe told me my food is there, but I said I will eat in the kitchen; I won’t eat with them. When I got there, I took a bite of the pap and took a bit of the wors. I could feel that [Inaudible: 34:21] I was feeling hot. When I went to the drain, I vomited; a vomit that was covered by oil, and my nose was burning like a car engine. But they never knew that I tried to kill myself”.*

These two concepts are not well documented in literature, especially in literature discussing adversity in childhood among sex offenders. Literature in this study highlighted the impact of adversity in childhood on mental well-being, which includes depression and anxiety (Kahn et al., 2021; Levenson et al., 2016; Silveira & Pereira, 2023). It also highlights that sex offenders have a history of mental illness but do not specify the diagnosis (Altintas & Bilici, 2018). Maternal filicide happens when a mother kills their biological children (Ateriya et al., 2018). The motives of filicide-suicide are unknown, but the perpetrators tend to indicate their motives as related to different factors, such as the conflict in interpersonal relationships and mental health challenges (Friedman et al., 2005; Murfree et al., 2022). In the South African context, filicide is motivated by social issues such as unemployment, violence in the family, substance use and revenge-seeking in romantic relationships (Malherbe & Häefele, 2017; Moen & Bezuidenhout, 2022).

In this study, the motives were unknown but contributed to experiencing confusion and unfinished business for the participants. Literature indicates that surviving an attempted suicide harms children, the survival confuses them, and there is concern about their parents (Katz, 2013). Furthermore, the prevalence of suicidal ideations and attempts is high among the adolescent population, even in the South African context (Canbaz & Terzi, 2018; Goerge & Van Den Berg, 2012). The experience of suicide ideations or attempts can be related to recent experiences of adversity (Thomson et al., 2012). Although the experience of suicide ideations in adolescence was not a common theme in the study, as indicated by the literature, the experience of suicide ideations or attempts can be related to the experience of adversity, as expressed in this participant's case as well.

5.3.1.7 Gang Association. Most offenders are affiliated with gangs during the period of incarceration (Fitz et al., 2018; Hesselink & Bougard, 2020). There was also gang association during the period of incarceration of participants in this study. However, there was already an association with a gang during adolescence:

Patrick: *"You see, whereby a teenager, I am still a teenager now, see? You see now, to the gang sides, there is two part, you get the gang from outside, you get the gang from 26, the number gang, you understand? I was just a member". "I joined about uh when I was 16 years old, 17 years old".*

The literature indicates that gang association adds to the experience of adversity due to continuous exposure to violence (Quinn et al., 2017). As highlighted in the literature and findings of the study, the experience of adversity is associated with sex offence later in life (Levenson et al., 2016; Satapathy et al., 2022; Simons et al., 2008). It might, therefore, be possible that the participants' early involvement in a gang might have contributed to adversity and later sexual offences.

5.3.1.8 Bullying. Bullying is prominent among children, as many children experience bullying in childhood and adolescence (Armitage, 2021). This was also a shared adversity in this study, but it was less prominent across the cases.

Patrick: *“Ya, you see, I can say I was bullied, but what I can say is, to be honest, I became to be a bully towards other persons. For the fact that I, I see these things happen, they give me anger. So, it seems that that anger that I get from the house, I take it out at school. For example... Ha ah, I bullied the peoples at school”.*

Calvin: *“So, my mother was like that, ne, so, all the people in the location, you know mos big people they speak. The children my age, they hear it. They start to blah blah blah blah, onse skool here in the location, wa bona? That hey his mother is like this and this and this, and they start to, how can I say it... they gwara me ne, like, [blabbing]”.*

Bullying was not highlighted in the literature of this study. However, bullying has a significant impact on children, adolescents, and adults’ mental health (Armitage, 2021; Scott et al., 2014). Bullying is associated with youth misbehaviour in children and adolescents (Walters & Espelage, 2018). This youth misbehaviour was evident in the cases of this study’s participants who were bullied or who bullied others. Youth misbehaviour is associated with criminal behaviour and subsequent sexual offences in this study.

5.3.2 Positive Childhood Experiences

5.3.2.1 Participating in Extramural and Religious Activities. Participating in extramural activities such as painting and participating in religious activities was shared to be positive lived childhood experiences in this study.

Thomas: *“Well, I’ve, I’ve enjoyed my artwork and so on, because basically from, my mom said that even before I could, could read or write, I was starting to do drawings and stuff”.*

Kganya: *“I can say ... [Pause] ... as we were at church, like I said, at home, we were church people. So, sometime there were home cells at home, at church, obvious we do go. But Sunday school and.... So, I grew up within a church, everything we enjoyed, practising, singing... you see? MCing, to MC like other services when it is Sunday school services and so on. We would do festivals or conferences... It was things that I was enjoying as I was growing up”.*

Religion acts as a protective factor in cases of experiencing adversity in childhood. It reduces the severity of negative mental health outcomes in adulthood (Jung, 2017). Extramural activities enable belonging to a group and belonging to sports or artistic groups promotes high levels of emotional intelligence (Ruvalcaba et al., 2017). Extracurricular activities protect against mental health challenges and limit exposure to youth misbehaviour in adolescence and childhood (Baxter & Campel, 2022). However, even though these experiences are regarded as protective factors, it cannot be argued that they were long-term protective factors in this study.

5.3.3 Neighbourhood Experiences

5.3.3.1 Urban Upbringing. As discussed above, the majority of the participants were raised in townships across South Africa and were exposed to gangsterism, violence and substance abuse. In this current study, experiences such as violence, substance abuse and gangsterism were not shared adversities. One participant did not share any negative experience of growing up in an urban area. He shared the following:

Thomas: *“In Vaal Triangle, mostly. It was a, a urban area. Um, there are... It would be average middle class. It's quite a peaceful area, actually. There's not a lot of violence there. You could go on and play on the streets if you want and still be safe. It was quite a nice area”.*

5.3.4 Actions Leading to Sexual Offence/s Committed

5.3.4.1 Lack of Acceptance and Relationship with the Victim. In this case, there was an account of sexual offence in adulthood, which involved a romantic relationship with a minor. However, there was also the denial of the nature of the sexual offence:

Thomas: *“And even though I’m sentenced for rape of penetration, it did not actually happen that way. Um, the way the court case happened was very biased”. “There was literally only external touching and literally looking. There was no actual penetration at all, even though I’m sentenced as that”. “She was in primary school. Um, in my 20’s”.*

The experience of adversity in childhood could lead to sexual offences later in life (Kahn et al., 2021; Moore & Tatman, 2016; Testa et al., 2020). However, there are also different arguments in the literature about the severity of the various adversities experienced and the risk of sexual offences later in life (Cuadra et al., 2014; Drury et al., 2019; Jeperson et al., 2009; Reavis et al., 2013). As highlighted in the findings of this study, incarcerated offenders experienced different adversities in childhood. The difference in the trajectory and onset of offences might have been influenced by the experience of adversity in childhood. In this case, one participant expressed a need for acceptance:

Thomas: *“Well, I think one of the things that had an influence from my childhood is the need of acceptance”. “Because the fact that my, my, my parents, even my grandparents, they didn’t actively have interest in my life. They were there, and they cared, but the fact that there was no actual interest; it felt like I always had to um, excel, and I was almost like they gave more attention to my brother. So, I always had to excel*

more and crave for their attention to, to feel a bit more appreciated, and I'm not sure if that could have had an effect”.

As highlighted above, the participant was in a relationship with a minor. The majority of participants across the cases also had some form of close relationship with their victim. However, in this case, it differed in that the participant perceived the relationship to be a romantic one with a minor. The literature indicated that a lack of emotional warmth from parents is found in sex offenders (Sigre-Leirós et al., 2016). A similar finding emerged as the participant in this study expressed the need for acceptance from his parents and grandparents. Furthermore, the experience of adversity, such as a lack of secure attachment, may lead to a lack of a positive working model, making it difficult for offenders to form healthy relationships with other people and use sexual abuse to achieve intimacy goals (Howard et al., 2023; Simons et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2016).

5.3.5 Influence of Childhood Experiences on Offence/s Committed

As discussed above, most offenders acknowledged the influence of childhood experiences and took responsibility for their actions despite the possible influence of childhood experiences. In some cases, they acknowledged the influence of childhood experiences but shared specific individual influences they believed had a significant impact on the offences committed. The following section presents the individual factors.

5.3.5.1 Cultural Beliefs about Women. Lack of acceptance and cultural beliefs about women were shared as themes that have a significant impact on childhood and an influence on the sexual offence committed:

Daniel: *“Uh [sigh] ...uh [sigh] ...uh, that thing o, a lady, she doesn't have a say, a no to you as a guy. And you are the head. I'm the head, so whatever you are saying, she must take it. So uh, especially the one of... you don't ask him, you just tell him”.*

Literature indicates that cultural beliefs about women contribute to sex offences in the South African context (Selepe et al., 2021). As stated above, the expressed cultural belief of a patriarchal stance that views women as submissive and obedient in this study's findings follows the literature. The literature further indicates that the perpetration of sexual behaviour is normalised in the South African context and not perceived as wrong and contributes to the perpetration of sexual offences (Naidoo & Sewpaul, 2014).

5.3.5.2 Lack of Education and Early School Dropout. Lack of education and early school dropout were also shared as contributing childhood influences on sexual offences committed. Early school dropout was found to be a negative childhood experience in this study. However, it was not highlighted in the literature as an adversity. Literature indicates that the majority of offenders have low literacy and educational achievement (Morken et al., 2021; Snowling et al., 2006). Furthermore, this study found that the early onset of the offence affects participation in education and leads to lower education achievement (Nally et al., 2014; Van Duin et al., 2021), which might have been the case for one of the participants.

Patrick: *“The thing is, is the lack of the education and the lack of the recent capacity, reasoning things and how we approach things, maybe we don't approach things with proper manner, you see? That education skill, the educational skill to approach, you see, sister? The drugs also, the drugs are also playing in these things of the crimes of us and the dropouts of the schools”.*

5.3.5.3 Peer Pressure and Sex as a Coping Mechanism. Peer pressure was found to be an adverse experience in the findings of this study. It was also shared as a major factor in the influence of childhood experiences on offences committed:

Thapelo: *“Yes, on the day that I had shares on the phone that we... we mugged off from people only for us to buy drugs with them, but I had a choice of saying no you... I no*

longer want to be with you cause of the way you operate. I said that I came to look for money for Gogontle so that she does not go hungry but look at what we use our money on, but I also failed to do that, and it is still happening even now here in Mangaung. I satisfy people than I”.

Literature in this study highlighted that the experience of adversity leads to the use of maladaptive coping mechanisms during childhood. Sex offenders tend to use sex as a coping response, which leads to sexual offences later in life (Cortoni & Marshall, 2001; Levenson & Grady, 2016). This was also shared as a significant childhood influence on the sexual offences committed in this study:

Albert: *“It is like... the best way to satisfy... the best way to make me calm down... it’s for me outside when I was now younger if I get... is for me to have [Clicks fingers] sex with somebody. You see? Then it’s the best way for me to calm down, you see? So, let us leave that one”.*

5.4 Overall Participants' Reflections

Phenomenology was a guiding principle in this study; it was, therefore, important to allow participants to share their overall reflection of their experiences, including their lived childhood experiences, the experience of the interview as well as their experience in the correctional facility and how they made sense of their experiences (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith & Orsborne, 2015). In a few instances, some participants did not have any reflections. Below are individual themes of reflections identified in other cases.

5.4.1 Accountability, Remorse and Responsibility for Offences Committed

As discussed earlier, there was an indication of a sense of remorse, accountability and taking responsibility for the offences committed across cases. However, some

participants denied the offences committed.

Kganya: *“You see? It’s like that. I just wish that everyone... especially the victims of sexual eh, eh, eh offence... people who are victims of... of rape. Even those, those... my victims, although some I have not spoken with them as of yet, but some we are on speaking terms, we do speak just fine... but still, the damage that I saw happening to me is the very same I... I take the very same mirror to look at it...and face it their way... to them, what damage did I do... [Pause] cause... eh, it is something that it come to mind [Pause]...”*.

Matome: *“I just realised now that the things that I did were things that weren’t right. I was supposed to stand up for myself and pushed my life alone, without doing things that were not right, such as abusing other people. The person who was wrong was my mom, even her family. So, people who are aside were not wrong”*.

As highlighted in the study, there was an association between the experience of adversity and the lack of empathy. The lack of empathy leads to recidivism and a cycle of continuous offence (Astridge et al., 2023; Lobanov-Rostovsky, 2015; Narvey et al., 2021). Empathy and remorse are essential emotions for the rehabilitation of offenders (Proeve & Howells, 2006; Piquero, 2017). As highlighted above, the participants acknowledged the influence of childhood experiences on sexual offences committed but also accounted for their actions. Taking accountability and responsibility can be an indication of the process of rehabilitation and recidivism in sex offenders (Hanson et al., 2009; Ware & Mann, 2012), which might be the case for these participants.

5.4.2 Rehabilitation of Sex Offenders

There is a debate on the effectiveness of rehabilitation of sex offenders in correctional centres and the stigma around sex offenders that also affects the rehabilitation

of sex offenders (Blagden et al., 2014; Church et al., 2011; Przybylski, 2015). The participants shared their experience of their rehabilitation in the correctional centre:

Calvin: *“Ah, I don’t think it involves specifically this interview, but nna I am a sexual offender ne? And I believe in that a sexual offender cannot be rehabilitated. So nna, I said it’s up to a sexual offender; if he wants to be rehabilitated or he can be rehabilitated. Now, they are busy with, with those programmes via DCS, the sexual offender programme, whereby they give you, it’s a book ne, whereby the, the social work is going through sessions with you, us, an individual or a group of people to show that you come across that sexual offender thing of how can we set the history of sexual offender and he must be rehabilitated, or you must go through that programme to go out”.*

Albert: *“But where I am now, I understand in prison, in that place is where I understand, what is the meaning of psychologist, what is the difference between a psychologist and a social worker, you see, ma’am?”. “But that thing to already by my stage now, now you gonna come, you gonna talk to me, believe me, you see? I am not gonna listen and talk those things; you not gonna go anyway with me anymore. You see? Now. You see? But it’s already late, you see? Yah. But if you want to help, ma’am, I would really really really really ask you to start try to get the guys while they still young, while they still fresh and get to the root of that thing. Maybe they lives would be changed for the better”.*

The reflections highlight the beliefs about the rehabilitation of sex offenders and the belief about the effectiveness of psychological services. This could potentially impact the participation in the rehabilitation programmes in the correctional facilities and lead to recidivism.

5.4.3 Reintroduction of Recreational Activities in Communities

The reintroduction of recreational activities in communities to prevent youth from being involved in criminal activities was also a reflection of one participant in the study:

Daniel: *“[Deep sigh]... The only thing that I can say is that I wish that maybe our government right, they can bring back again at schools, entertainment and activities because those things are the ones that used to keep youth safe. Uh, they’re the ones that make sure that youth they don’t join those negative things because now, these nowadays there’s no such things at schools, even in the, in the um, areas that we live, there’s no uh, uh, places to go and do some sports or entertainment”.*

Previous literature indicated a decline in the participation in leisure and recreational activities in South Africa (Ziqubu, 2012). This might be due to social and economic difficulties affecting the country at large (Ziqubu, 2012). However, it is argued that participation in recreational activities can combat involvement in criminal activities among the youth in South Africa (Amtaika, 2010; Ndlovu & Tanga, 2021). The above participant also highlighted this.

5.4.4 Closure and Strained Relationships with Family Members

Lack of closure and strained relationships with family members were themes in the reflections. This lack of closure and strained relationships was caused by the adverse experiences experienced by some of the participants as a result of certain family members:

Matome: *“I do not want to contact and consult these people. I tried with the social workers, it did not work for me. So that I can hear the reason as to what is happening; according to me, I do not want to consult them. I told them... these people abused me for a long time”. “I don’t want nothing, please”.*

Thapelo: *“[Silence] but those people at home, to tell the truth, God will forgive me [Pause]; they are also going to need my help. They are going to need it and then [Silence] Hai, I do not know if I will help them. It is not the matter of revenge or anything, but I doubt that I will help them. I do not trust”.*

Sipho: *“So, I think my mother has some explaining to do one day. Okay but, in a good, in a good way, not necessarily to think that I, I don't, I don't understand”. “Because I don't want to hurt her feelings or whatever. So, I don't know how to open that subject”. “But I feel like I have to one day. I have to fill her too, so she can tell us or tell me what was happening. Why was she thinking like that?”.*

The findings of this study highlighted that offenders experienced unfinished business due to adversities experienced. The adversities experienced were mostly perpetrated by family members. As highlighted by participants, the experiences continue to cause a lack of closure and strain on relationships with family members. Literature found that these relationships with family members are important for the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration (Tasca et al., 2016). However, in this study, most participants have strained relationships with family members, which could potentially affect their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

5.4.5 Educational Advancement in the Correctional Facility

As indicated, the majority of offenders have low literacy and educational achievement (Morken et al., 2021; Snowling et al., 2006). As found in this study, early school dropout is one of the prominent adversities experienced in childhood. The literature of this study also highlighted that the early onset of an offence affects participation in education and leads to lower educational achievement (Nally et al., 2014; Van Duin et al.,

2021). Some offenders, therefore, advanced their literacy skills and educational levels while incarcerated. In this case, the participant obtained his National Senior Certificate:

Matome: *“The school matter is... is that I am finishing off matric when I got here.” I started at level one, L2, L3 and then level 4, until I did matric. I did my matric... I did it... and when you look around at home, there is no one who did matric. [Pause]... I will be the first person.... in my family... to do matric, and I am doing it in jail. That is the thing that I have achieved in my life as I saw that it was important”.*

Educational advancement is important during incarceration because it contributes to the rehabilitation and skills of offenders, as well as less recidivism (Bruyns & Nieuwenhuizen, 2003; Vandala, 2019).

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted the prominent and less prominent themes that emerged from the study. This allowed for the identification of similarities and differences across the cases, subsequently comparing their negative, positive, and neighbourhood experiences with previous literature findings. It also highlighted the influence of childhood experiences on the sexual offences committed from the participants’ perspective, as well as the patterns of the actions leading to sex offences. Furthermore, the chapter presented and highlighted the themes of the participants’ reflections. The next chapter presents the conclusion, the strengths and limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION, STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion of the study, summarising the overall findings and highlighting the strengths and achievements of the study. Furthermore, this chapter presents the limitations of the study, highlights the weaknesses of the study, and provides recommendations for future research to address the study's limitations.

6.2 Overall Findings of the Study

This study aimed to explore themes of childhood lived experiences of incarcerated male sex offenders in South Africa and to understand the role of childhood experiences in sex offences. It can be concluded from the 10 cases of incarcerated male sex offenders that childhood experiences play a role in the perpetration of sex offences. Male sex offenders experience negative and positive experiences during childhood.

However, negative experiences were more prominent in this study. The prominent themes included dysfunctional families, such as the death of parents, separation, and divorce of parents, as well as the absence of fathers. Family instability was another prominent theme in the study, involving the lack of structure in the household and moving to different households and neighbourhoods for various reasons. The participants were also affected by socioeconomic issues such as poverty and unemployment in their households. They also experienced parentification, early school dropout and substance use and abuse.

In addition, child sexual abuse and exposure to domestic violence were also shared as negative childhood experiences in the study. The child sexual abuse they experienced

was mostly perpetrated by family members and was not disclosed for different reasons. The exposure to domestic violence was mostly in the form of physical abuse. They shared either being victims of physical abuse or being exposed to the abuse in the immediate environment or the neighbourhood. They also struggled with peer pressure and unfinished business due to the adversities they experienced.

Furthermore, the study presented less prominent themes that highlighted differences in the individual cases. Some of the participants experienced negative childhood experiences such as an undisclosed father figure, questioning of paternity and identity formation, and a sense of feelings of abandonment and neglect. There were elements of spirituality in the study as some of the participants experienced adversity in childhood due to the transmission of faith in the family and ancestral calling. Sibling rivalry perceived parental favouritism, and incarceration of a family member were also negative experiences expressed in the study.

In addition, it was found that some participants suffered from mental health challenges such as suicidal ideations, which led to the attempt of suicide. There was also an experience of attempted filicide-suicide in the study. Gang association and bullying were other shared negative experiences in the study. Negative childhood experiences were prominent in the study. However, there were also positive experiences, such as having relationships with maternal figures, the presence of other paternal figures and participating in extramural and religious activities.

The neighbourhood also significantly influenced the participants' lived childhood experiences. Township upbringing, exposure to violence, substance use and gangsterism were prominent neighbourhood experiences in the study. There was only one case of urban upbringing, which was found to have experienced fewer negative experiences.

Furthermore, the negative childhood experiences in this study were intertwined in that the experience of one negative experience led to the experience of another negative experience. The negative experience mostly started with the dysfunction in the family and led to other experiences. There was a theme of denial of offences committed in the study; however, most participants took responsibility for their actions and offences committed. They also acknowledged the influence of their lived childhood experiences on the offences committed.

This study was motivated by the high levels of GBV in South Africa, particularly sexual violence. The themes provided a broader understanding of sexual offences in the South African context from the offenders' perspectives. It can be eluded that negative experiences in childhood influence sexual offences/violence in South Africa. It is mostly influenced by family and socioeconomic issues, impacting the development of other adversities, subsequently leading to psychological problems that lead to sexual offence perpetration later in life. It is evident that there is a need for intervention to manage the negative experiences of children and promote positive experiences to curb the high rates of GBV and the high rates of sexual violence/offences in South Africa.

6.3 Value of the Study

This study provided a comprehensive understanding of the lived childhood experiences of incarcerated sex offenders. The phenomenological qualitative approach and the use of semi-structured interviews allowed a comprehensive and descriptive understanding of the experiences of the participants. It allowed participants to share their lived childhood experiences in depth. Most of the findings of the study were supported by previous research on the lived childhood experiences of sex offenders. However, the findings of the study provided context for the lived childhood experiences of incarcerated male sex offenders in South Africa. These findings shed light on the possible factors that

contributed to the high rates of GBV in South Africa and can assist with future interventions of GBV and sexual violence in South Africa.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

The study used a phenomenological qualitative approach to understand the lived childhood experiences of incarcerated men in South Africa. The approach allowed participants to share their experiences and make meaning of their experiences. This means the findings are mainly participants' subjective experiences. The researcher also played an important role in the study, and there was acknowledgement and awareness of the possible biases that would influence the study process and its findings. Therefore, there might be a possible bias due to the methodology adopted in the study.

Furthermore, the study included 10 participants from different racial groups. It included five Black participants, three Coloured, two White participants and no Indian participants. The sample size and demographics were influenced by the methodological approach of the study and the national offender profile in the Department of Correctional Services. Therefore, the study did not have equal participants from the different racial groups, which compromised the study's generalisation. It also provided a broad understanding of the lived childhood experiences of sex offenders. However, it did not focus on specific types of sexual offences and specific lived childhood experiences. This also compromised the generalisation of the study because it did not provide an understanding of the specific sex offenders and their different lived childhood experiences.

6.5 Recommendations

Future research should focus on conducting research among sex offenders to understand sex offences in the South African context, the trajectory of sex offences in South Africa due to the high rates of GBV and specifically sexual violence/offences in

South Africa. The focus should also be on individual themes and the understanding of the influence of the childhood factors that influence different types of sexual offences to allow intervention to curb the high rates of sexual violence/offences. Future research should also focus on large samples with different racial groups, age groups and specific types of sexual offences to allow generalisation.

6.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted the overall conclusion of the study, the strengths and limitations of the study, and provided recommendations for future research.

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RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

June 2021 – December 2021

The lived childhood experiences of incarcerated sexual offenders.

Prudence Ntlatlane	2018710299	082 7935502
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Faculty of the Humanities
Department of Psychology

Mr. Henry Taylor 051 401 9322
taylorhw@ufs.ac.za

The study aims to explore the lived childhood experiences of incarcerated male sexual offenders.

This study is done by me, Prudence Ntlatlane, as part of my research-based master's degree in Psychology in the Department of Psychology of the University of Free State. Data obtained from the study will be presented in my master's dissertation and may be published in the form of journal articles and/or conference presentations.

This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the UFS. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher.

Approval number: *Insert approval number*

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?



Should you decide to participate in the study you will be one of approximately 6 to 10 incarcerated men who are between the ages of 26 and 50 years in the G4S Mangaung maximum security prison from different racial groups. Your role as a participant is to participate in a semi-structured interview which will take place in a private and interactive setting on the G4S Mangaung maximum security prison premises. During the interview, you will be expected to share your childhood experiences and questions will be asked for clarification. Sharing your childhood experiences requires your memory, particularly your long-term memory to be intact, it is then advisable that you do not participate in the study if you have memory problems, have a medical and or mental diagnosis that affects your memory. You should be fully conversant in English because the interview will be conducted in English. Pseudonyms will be allocated to you and all the other participants to protect your identity and to maintain confidentiality.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

I am interested in exploring the lived childhood experiences of sexual offenders and how their experiences may lead to sexual offences. Participation in the study will require you to attend one semi-structured interview recorded by me. Your role as a participant is to tell me about your childhood experiences and to answer questions as truthfully and honestly as possible. The interview will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The interview will be recorded, however, a pseudonym will be used to protect your identity and to maintain confidentiality.

CAN THE PARTICIPANT WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

Participation in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. Since participation in this study is voluntary there will be no penalty or loss of benefit for withdrawing from the study. If you do decide to participate, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to read and sign the informed consent form. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason and will not suffer any loss due to your decision to withdraw from participating in the study. If you want to withdraw and you already participated in the study and your information is already recorded and transcribed, all the information you provided will be removed and deleted from the set of data.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

This study does not involve monetary, material or any direct benefits. However, the data obtained from this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field of psychology on the influences of childhood experiences on sexual offenders. Should you request feedback on the results of the study, you will benefit in terms of understanding the influence of lived experiences on human behavior and how the experiences lead to behaviors such as sexual offences. As a researcher, I will ensure that your participation in the study is kept confidential.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation requires you to take part in a semi-structured interview that will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. However, this duration is subject to change in case you have some questions that you would like to ask me as the researcher and to also allow you all the time you need to share your childhood experiences. I, as the researcher, do not foresee any physical or emotional harm due to taking part in the study. However, sharing childhood experiences can be emotionally exhausting and may cause distress and if you feel the need to debrief after the interview, you will be referred to a counsellor or psychologist at the G4S maximum prison. If you disclose that you were sexually abused as a child, you can voluntarily open a case with the assistance of the management of the correctional service at the G4S maximum prison.

WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

The data obtained in this study will be treated with the utmost levels of confidentiality. Your name will be kept separately from information collected and a pseudonym will be assigned to you so that no one can link you to the information you provided. Your answers will be assigned a fictitious code number and you will be referred to in this way in the data, as well as the master's dissertation or other research reporting methods such as publications or conference proceedings. All the information that will be provided by you as a participant in this study will be kept private and confidential. However, your answers may be reviewed by the research auditor, as well as members of the Research Ethics Committee who are responsible to ensure the research is conducted professionally and ethically. These individuals will also not have access to any of your identifying information and they will sign a confidentiality agreement to ensure that any information that you share is protected. Your anonymous data may be used for a master's dissertation, journal articles or conference presentation purposes.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

As the researcher, I will ensure the safekeeping of all the electronic data by making sure that the computer used to store data is encrypted with a password only known by me and my research supervisor. A safe will be used to store the recording device and the hard copies with any information concerning participants. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Faculty Research Ethics Committee review and approval, if applicable. All information will be permanently deleted from electronic and audio devices and all the hard copies will be destroyed by using a shredding machine after five years to prevent unauthorized access to confidential information.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There will be no payment or incentive offered for being part of the study, nor will any force be used to recruit you to take part in this study. The feedback of the research findings will be provided to you on request, and this might benefit you in terms of a clear understanding of how childhood experiences

can influence a person's behavior. You will be provided with information and worksheets on moving towards self-forgiveness. There are no foreseeable risks of responses being linked to you. Only me, the researcher and my research supervisor will have access to the collected data.

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 of the study, you are welcome to communicate with the correctional facility contact person to contact me, Prudence Ntlatlane on 082 79 35502 or send me an email at prudacentlatlane@gmail.com or my research supervisor Mr. Henry Taylor on 051 401 9322 or send him an email at taylorhw@ufs.ac.za. Should you have concerns about how the research has been conducted, you may inform the contact person at the correctional facility and they will inform the administrator of the Faculty of the Humanities' Research Ethics Committee, Mrs. Charné Vercueil on VercueilCC@ufs.ac.za or 0514017083.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the researcher, Prudence Ntlatlane, asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and I am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable). I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the *Audio Recording of the Interview* ☐

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Full Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s): _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Informed Consent Form: (Audio Recording of Interview)

I _____ consent to the interview conducted by Ms.

Prudence Ntlatlane (student number: **2018710299**) on **The lived childhood experiences of incarcerated male sexual offenders**, being audio-recorded.

I understand that:

- All audio recordings will be kept in a safe or locked cupboard for the duration of the study.
- Only the researcher and the research supervisor will have access to the audio recordings.
- All audio recordings will be safely retained in a safe or locked cupboard for five years after which it will be permanently deleted or destroyed.
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

I agree to the *Audio Recording of the Interview* ☐

Full Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B: Interview Guide



Interview Schedule

The researcher will verify whether the information sheet is understood and if the consent form has been signed.

“Greetings, thank you for making time for this interview. Please note that everything we are going to discuss here will be strictly confidential. Your identity will not be exposed, this is not necessarily an interview but a conversation. I am going to ask you to share your childhood experiences with me and I might ask some follow-up questions for clarity. Please ask me to clarify if you are unsure of any of the questions and if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions also let me know.

- Tell me about your childhood experiences.
- Tell me about the neighbourhood you grew up in as a child.
- Did you experience any adverse, negative or difficult circumstances during your childhood?
- How were you treated as a child by significant others in your life?
- Did you experience any form of abuse as a child?
- Did you witness or observe any form of abuse as a child in your neighbourhood?
- Tell me about the journey that led to your sexual offence and arrest.
- Would you say that your childhood experiences contributed to your actions that led to the sexual offence you committed?
- Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your childhood experiences?

“Thank you very much for your time and contribution to my research study”



APPENDIX C: General/Human Research Ethics Committee Approval Letter



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

25-Oct-2021

Dear Ms Prudence Ntlatlane

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

The lived childhood experiences of incarcerated male sex offenders.

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2020/1950/21

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.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

**Dr Adri
du
Plessis**

Digitally signed
by Dr Adri du
Plessis
Date:
2021.10.26
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APPENDIX D: Permission from the Department of Correctional Services



correctional services

Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X136, PRETORIA, 0001 Poyntons Building, C/O WF Nkomo and Sophie De Bruyn Street, PRETORIA
Tel (012) 307 2770, Fax 086 539 2693

Dear Ms P K Ntlatlane

**RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES ON: THE LIVED CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES OF
INCARCERATED MALE SEX OFFENDERS**

I wish to inform you that your request to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services has been approved

- This ethical approval is valid from **13th July 2022 to 13th July 2023**
- The Area Commissioners where the research will be conducted will be informed of your proposed research project.
- You are requested to contact them before the commencement of your research
- It is your responsibility to make arrangements for your interviewing times
- Your identity document/passport and this letter should be in your possession when visiting the Correctional Centres
- You are required to use the terminology used in the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (February 2005) and Correctional Services Act (No.111 of 1998) e.g. "Offenders" not "Prisoners" and "Correctional Centres" not "Prisons".
- Comply with COVID-19 safety and hygiene procedures during data collection processes
- Ensure that all participants have been duly screened for Covid19 according to DCS screening protocols
- You are required to submit your final report to the Department for approval by the Commissioner of Correctional Services before publication (including presentation at workshops, conferences, seminars, etc) of the report.
- Should you have any enquiries regarding this process, please contact the REC Administration for assistance at telephone number (012) 3072894/95/0723271937

Thank you for your application and interest to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services.

Yours faithfully

ND MBULI
Chair: DCS REC
DATE: 13 /07/2022

Appendix E: Plagiarism Report

Edited Masters Dissertation PK Ntlatlane .docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

7 %	2 %	6 %	1 %
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to University of the Free State Student Paper	<1 %
2	Tameshnie Deane. "Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in South Africa", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2024 Publication	<1 %
3	vital.seals.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<1 %
4	"Women's Empowerment for a Sustainable Future", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2023 Publication	<1 %
5	scholarworks.waldenu.edu Internet Source	<1 %
6	Cholo, Fatima Abegail. "An Exploration of How Masculinity/Ies Is/Are Perceived to Influence the Help-Seeking Behaviours of Men Who Have Survived Rape: The Rape Counsellors' Perspectives", University of Pretoria (South Africa), 2023 Publication	<1 %