SEXUALITY COMMUNICATION IN AFRICAN FAMILIES: THE DYNAMICS OF OPENNESS AND CLOSEDNESS

By

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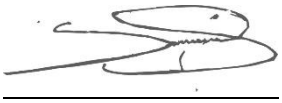

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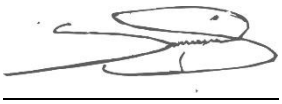

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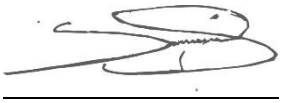

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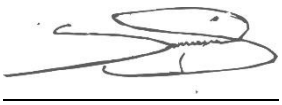

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Mami Regina Bimbong, my father, Pa Augustine Bale Shu, my brother, Jacob Ketchem, and my sister, Celine Kakon.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF APPENDICES

LISTS OF TABLES

LISTS OF ACRONYMS

CPM	Communication Privacy Management
YA	Young Adults
UFS	University of the Free State
PoAs	Parents of Adolescents
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
POPI	Section 19 of the Protection of Personal Information
KZN	KwaZulu Natal

ABSTRACT

Family conversations on sex and sexuality are often one of the most challenging conversations for parents and adolescents although there is proof that effective talks can reduce adolescents' sexual risk (Grossman, Jenkins & Richer, 2018; Rogers, 2017; Rogers, Ha, Stormshak & Dishion, 2015; Braithwaite, Schrodt & Carr, 2014). Research has presented adolescents as the most risk-taking population (United Nations (UN), 2016; United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 2011) and parents are aware of this. Parents' attitudes towards sex and sexuality shape adolescents' perception (UNICEF, 2019; Grossman et al., 2018) and their subsequent communication on sex and sexuality. Yet, many parents continue to evade sex-related communications with adolescents for many reasons including that they are waiting for adolescents to come of age (Blaisse, 2010). Similarly, research presents that adolescents do not want to engage in sex and sexuality talks with their parents either (Tilton-Weaver, Kerr, Pakalniskeine, Tokic, Salihovic & Stattin, 2010). It is not only because their parents have not talked to them. Adolescents avoid sex talks because they do not trust the quality of knowledge from their parents. Consequently, they would rather talk to their siblings and peers or learn from school. Haydon, Hill, Ward and Eggett (2023) shed more light on this by stating that they thrive to be different. As such, not revealing their private information means preserving what makes them unique.

This study fills the gap on how African family members in South Africa, with adolescents, communicate sex and sexuality with each other including how they decide on what to say and what not to say. Guided by the Communication Privacy Management theory (CPM), this qualitative design-based study explores how family members negotiate rule management, how they coordinate boundaries, how they handle privacy violations, and advice on how they should actually communicate these. This thesis is the result of 40 in-depth interviews with participants from African families residing within the borders of South Africa. 20 parents of adolescents share their experiences as adolescents, but mostly while parenting adolescents, and 20 young adults spoke in retrospect about their adolescence.

The main purpose of this study was to understand the role which sex and sexuality communication play in the lives of adolescents in African families in South Africa, and what influences the openness or closedness of their communication. In the process of exploring

these topics, responses were coded and presented to answer four research questions that guide this study. Topics discussed include the following: rules development, boundary coordination, boundaries turbulence, and advice to parents and adolescents. Findings indicate that due to existing rules that govern sex and sexuality communication, family members encounter known and unknown boundaries because they see sex and sexuality communication as intruding. At the same time, disclosure rules facilitate how information ownership and secrets are managed alongside encounters of privacy violations. I interpret the findings, provide the implications of the findings, present the study's limitations, and future directions.

Key terms: Adolescents; Adolescents' socialisation; Adolescents' sexual behaviours; family communication; African families; Sexual identity; Family sex and sexuality. Sex and sexuality; Communication privacy management.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Family communication, which is mostly not conscious or strategic, often reflects on family members and shapes them through identity building (Segrin & Flora, 2019). Family members are bonded by communication and they use communication to create and co-construct relationships (Galvin, Braithwaite, Schrodt & Bylund, 2018). From time immemorial, children's sexuality and identity have been greatly influenced by their immediate parents and adult caregivers' communication of theirs to them. While focusing on the importance of communication in forming adolescents' identities as opened and closed, this study seeks to understand whether or not parents regard their adolescents as sexual beings in the first place when they share sexual knowledge, attitudes, values of sex, and other aspects; if at all, they decide to do so. It attempts to understand the extent to which adolescents' sexuality is considered during family sex and sexuality communication. In this study, the researcher's definition of adolescents is similar to UNICEF (2011) which defines adolescents as persons between the ages of 10 and 19 who are transitioning between childhood and adulthood. According to UNICEF (2011), as they transition, they learn to negotiate and construct their sexualities. At the same time, they undergo significant changes in brain and physical maturation, gender, social relations and familial responsibilities.

Adolescents are the largest age group in the world with 85% of them living in developing countries (Richter, 2006:1902). They are also the most vulnerable group, seeing reports that 510,000 (300,000 to 740,000) young people, aged between 10 to 24, but precisely 190,000 (59,000 to 380,000) adolescents were newly infected with HIV in South Africa alone (UNICEF, 2019). At adolescence, children are losing their innocence. However, they still require adults and/or parental supervision and emotional support because many children in third world countries risk dropping out of school (Hill, Yeung and Duncan, 2000). They experience increased peer pressure; they are exposed to drugs, alcohol, sex, teenage pregnancy, mental illnesses, and many more risks (UN, 2016; UNICEF, 2011). Because of these risk factors, UNICEF reminds families of the central role of parents.

According to UNICEF (2019), open and positive parents-adolescents communication on sexual and reproductive health issues has many positive effects on adolescents, families and their societies. These positive effects include the reduction of risk-taking. More so, research findings have concurred that parents' attitudes towards sex are likely to shape their children's perception about sex (Grossman et al., 2018). Considering this research, parental involvement could have a strong correlation with how adolescents' sexuality develops, how it is communicated, including how they react to identity stereotyping. It is therefore important for research to determine how a healthy communication is conducted in families. Research has to be mindful of the fact that family communication about sex and sexuality could be in relation to, but not limited to, products, attitudes, values, and language. It has to be equally mindful of the fact that this influence has been in the way adults have spoken to children, treated, dressed and cultured them. Nevertheless, no matter how much they have communicated, sometimes family members either deliberately or unwittingly exclude certain details from each other (Segrin and Flora, 2019).

To be impactful, this study examines the type of issues (content) which African parents discuss when they talk about sex and their motivation for talking about sex. Enquiry is on how they talk about developmental changes like menstruation and masturbation, sexual intercourse, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancies and contraception. Their choice of words (context) or the lack thereof, why and how the words are selected or not, interests this study. Silence is examined and interpreted as a powerful type of communication. This research also considers that family sex and sexuality communication is greatly influenced by many factors, including gender differences of parents and children, the level of education, the occupation of parents, cultural and religious norms, the economic status, the geographic location, marital status, children's needs and the social circle of parents (Oros, 2012).

In this research, family is regarded as a unit that provides social structures for dependency to each individual. The term family is traced to have, first, been used by the Romans to represent a social unit, the head of which ruled over a wife, children and slaves (Firestone, 1972). Of the many definitions of family, the researcher picks one which says it is "a group, system, a communication network, and a tapestry of interdependent, interpersonal relationships" (Sieburg, 1985: x). This is because it presents a family relationship as created through biology, law or affection, with a long-term relationship of interdependence (Sieburg,

1985). Well-suited to my topic, this definition views a family as "a social group of two or more persons, characterised by ongoing interdependence with long term commitments that stem from blood, law and affection" (Braithwaite and Baxter, 2006:3).

A South African definition would have been appropriate, but it has been difficult to define 'family' in its context given that family life in South Africa is characterised by continuity and change (South African Government, 2021). Continuity and change have positioned the nuclear family as the biggest and fastest growing structure in the country (Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Amoateng, Heaton & Kalule-Sabiti, 2007; Amoateng and Richter, 2007; StatsSA, 2021; Department of Social Development Republic of South Africa, 2012). The extended family is the biggest and most stable family unit since it does not change so readily (StatsSA, 2021). For example, if a cousin becomes part of a nuclear family unit, the family structure becomes extended. However, if a grandmother takes on the role of an uncle in an extended family structure, the family unit remains an extended family.

The unique set up in South Africa defines its family as "a societal group that is related by blood (kinship), adoption, foster care or the ties of marriage (civil, customary or religious), civil union or cohabitation, and go beyond a particular physical residence" (South African Government, 2021). This is a global definition. Like elsewhere, the South African family is "responsible for shaping our children and influencing their values, skills, socialisation, and security during their childhood development stages" (StatsSA, 2021). To Amoateng and Richter (2007), the South African family is a social family which has both ideational and concrete dimensions. This study does consider South African cultures as fluid and varied (Moolman, 2015) in the same way that South African families are. At this point of defining the South African family, it is worth noting that the researcher's use of 'African families' in this research is not by accident. African families in South Africa may also refer to white and/or coloured people that are born in South Africa (Bray, Gooskens, Kahn, Moses & Seekings, 2010). However, this study excludes these groups. This study limits African families to major and minor groupings of black South Africans including the Khoikhoi, BaSotho, VhaVenda, Vatsonga, the Xhosa and the Zulu. They make up the majority of the families which were previously disenfranchised and disadvantaged by Apartheid. This research does not detail the cultures of any group. After all, the similar cultural practices amongst these groups are such that their culture and ethnicity are important in distinguishing black Africans from whiteness or Europeanness (Mthobeni, 2024:15). However, prominent

characteristics of the groups that would have influenced family sex and sexuality communication do come to the fore.

1.2 Rationale and justification of the study

Researchers have claimed that sex and sexuality communication does not seem like topics frequently discussed in African families for many different reasons including the subjects' taboo nature (Kuvalanka, Weiner and Russell, 2013; Shilumani, 2010; Jejeebhoy & Santhya, 2011; Chikovore & Sooryamoorthy, 2024). Also, while substantial research exists on parent-child communication with respect to adolescents' sexual health (Nambambi & Mufune, 2011; Oros, 2012; Coetzee, Dietrich, Otwombe, Nkala, Khunwane, van der Watt & Gray, 2014; Le Poire, 2006; Zimmerman, 2011; Phetla, Busza, Hargreaves, Pronyk, Kim, Morison, Watts & Porter, 2008; Bastien, Kajula & Muhwezi, 2011; Rogers, 2017; Vissing, 2018; Manzini-Matebula, Hinde, McGrath & Manda, 2015), very little has been based on Africa and related to sex, sexuality and identity formation (Lesch & Anthony, 2007; Peacock, Khumalo & McNab, 2006; Hunter, 2005). In fact, there is no detailed literature on parent-adolescent communication about sex and sexuality and how this impacts adolescents' sexual identity communication in South Africa. The need for responsible adolescents' sexual behaviours and attitudes is critical as adolescents' health is affected by their general knowledge and behaviours (UNICEF, 2019). The growing volume of sexuality information and confusion at adolescence calls for research. This research certainly includes many exciting variables that may expand the knowledge on how African adolescents' orientation and their closedness and openness to sex and sexuality have been impacted by family communication patterns.

The motivation of this study is to explore how sex and sexuality communication is conducted in African families and the dynamics that influence sexual identities to be communicated and of course seen as opened or closed. The primary objective of this study is threefold; to understand how sex and sexuality communication in African families impact the closedness and/or openness of Africans' sexual identities; to explore the nature of African adolescents' sexuality given the status of their families' communications about sex and sexuality; to describe how parental or adult sexual knowledge, attitudes, values of sex, or other values are communicated to adolescents in African families if at all they do. This study researches adolescents' sources of sexual information, sexual knowledge of family adult caregivers,

their attitudes, values and different aspects of communicating their sexual behaviours. With this understanding, this study describes the characteristics of parental influence on the closedness and openness of children's sexuality by understanding how adult family members engage in sexual communication. It explores parental values and attitudes towards sex and sexuality communication, and the content of communication between adolescents and parents or adult caregivers.

As relationships evolve, particularly as children grow, statuses change and membership continues to be negotiated as both nuclear and extended family members negotiate new roles (Braithwaite, Baxter and Harper, 1998). No matter how much family members have communicated (in the past), they may use disclosure to foster relations with each other and/or withhold information from each other as a way of showing commitment to themself, and to one another (Galvin, Braithwaite & Bylund, 2015). Galvin et al. (2015) argue that family members' relationships are built according to how they co-construct and share meaning through communication. The effect of expression and privacy on identity formation, or the need to be close and open when communicating sex and sexuality prompts this study to be informed by a distinct theoretical perspective: Communication Privacy Management (CPM) by Petronio (2000; 2002). This theory has distinct roots in communication. It posits that privacy serves a crucial function in information exchange in diverse relationships across the human lifespan. Petronio (2000; 2002) describes the processes by which communication, in this case, parent-adolescent sex and sexuality communication might influence adolescents' sexual identities. Also construed as "to tell or not to tell," CPM has two main components: disclosure and non-disclosure. CPM accounts for what is talked about (how and with whom?), alongside what is not talked about and why.

Supported by the literature and data of this study, the components in CPM are useful in that they can guide readers, policymakers, future researchers and even governments on how children's identities are influenced by communication and the role which communication plays to maintain these identities as children grow. The theory may explain adolescents' communication of sexual orientations, intentions and behaviours. These same components may help this research to explore the characteristics of African families' sex and sexuality communication that are more or less persuasive over communication of adolescents' sexual identity formation and of their sexual reactions. As will be expanded in chapter two, CPM

emerges from relevant literature and frames the problem statement, the research questions, methodologies and the data analysis of this research.

1.3 Research questions

This study addresses the following research questions (RQs);

- What influences South African parents and their adolescent children to discuss, or not discuss, issues of sex and sexuality?
- What boundary rules are observed and negotiated by South African parents and their adolescent children when they talk sex and sexuality?
- How do South African parents and their adolescents handle personal or family boundary turbulences during sex and sexuality communication?
- What do African parents and adolescents think needs to happen for more effective communication on sex and sexuality in South African families?

1.4 Original contribution and value of research

This study seeks answers to challenges faced by African parents of adolescents, and adolescents in South Africa on how sex and sexuality communication influences their shifting identities in different spaces. Its outcome hopes to empower African families with knowledge on how to begin, and/or continue to effectively communicate about sex and sexuality at different stages and settings. It hopes to contribute largely to this field where existing research (on family sex and sexuality communication, identity formation and how adolescents in African families in South Africa are communicating their formed sexual identities) is scarce. Two sets of people who are very critical to the wellbeing of family units were interviewed separately in order to explore issues of familial communication and to understand how together with religion and culture, adolescents are socialised to form, but notably, communicate aspects of family and sexual identities that they take into adulthood. The interviewees are parents of adolescents (PoAs) who share their experiences as adolescents, but mostly on communicating sex and sexuality with their adolescent children and young adults (YAs) who share their experiences of communicating with their parents and adult caregivers in retrospect of when they were adolescents. The researcher has mentioned that this area of study is under-researched. The researcher, therefore, is hopeful that the contribution of this study fills the knowledge gaps considering that the chosen theory

of communication gives clarity to the topic of sex and sexuality communication in African families with adolescents and the dynamics of privacy that influence identity formation and communication.

1.5 Structure of the study

This study has five chapters. Chapter one introduces the study and offers its background. It details the rationale behind the study of sex and sexuality communication with adolescents in African families in South Africa and further presents the research questions of the study. It states the original contribution and value of this research to the field of family research. Chapter two reviews previous literature on studies related to sex and sexuality communication in family settings. It assesses key terms of this study like the following:

1. Parenting; where the researcher explores factors influencing parenting in South Africa;
2. Family and family communication: where the researcher details past works on family communication, on identity formation, on family communication and identity in South Africa, and
3. Adolescents' sexual socialisation: where the researcher breaks down socialisation agents.

The researcher further discusses family sex and sexuality communication, narrowing this research to the literature on sex and sexuality communication in Africa and South Africa. The researcher then presents the theoretical rationale and gives greater detail on the CPM theory. In chapter three, the researcher explains the research methodology. The data collection and data analysis methods employed for this study are laid out. The researcher gives reasons for the chosen research method and provides details on how data was collected. The data analysis process and the ethical considerations employed for this study are also explained. In chapter four, the researcher presents the coded data and its findings by aligning this data to the above four research questions. Chapter five discusses the findings of this study as presented in Chapter four. It gives the implications of the findings and explores its limitations and future directions.

Conclusion

The interest of this research is the influence that parents and adult caregivers have on how adolescents negotiate closedness and openness in their sex and sexuality communication. In this chapter, the researcher's focus was to give a background to the study. Families are presented as key to adolescents' formation. A brief explanation is given on how the inquisitive nature of adolescence, coupled with the fact that adolescents are at the riskiest stage of development, warrants studies that empower stake holders on how to handle this stage of growth. The researcher states that a study of this nature is important because research has a great role to play in normalising sex and sexuality communication with adolescents in families, particularly in African families in South Africa. To further enhance this study, the researcher will now turn to the literature that gives an understanding of family communication about sex and sexuality, but particularly on how African families in South Africa have communicated sex and sexuality with adolescents.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This research explores the communication with adolescents about sex and sexuality in African families in South Africa and influences on parents' and adolescents' willingness to openly discuss these issues. This study is grounded in that communication about sex and sexuality is instrumental to the dynamics at play in both the openness and closedness of adolescents' communication about sex and sexuality. Put simply, the overarching aim of this study as mentioned in chapter one is to explore the impact of sex and sexuality communication in African families with adolescents and the dynamics that influence family members' willingness to communicate their sexual behaviours and identities openly or not. To achieve this aim, CPM theory of Petronio (2000) is used. As mentioned earlier, CPM is based on the well-known saying; "to tell, or not to tell." Petronio's conceptualisation of the CPM theory in fact describes the processes by which parents-adolescents communication about sex and sexuality might influence the development of adolescents' willingness to conceal or reveal private information on their sexual identities (Petronio, 2000; 2002).

Using previous research and CPM to investigate the foundations of sex and sexuality communication and its influence on identity communication in African families, this study pays attention to adolescents' sources of sexual information and how adolescents and parents communicate sex and sex-related issues with each other. It considers their attitudes, values and the different aspects of their sexual behaviours. This study also describes the role that parental communication plays in influencing the closedness and openness of adolescents' communication of sex and sexuality. This is done by understanding rules and boundaries that guide how adult family members, consciously or not, communicate sex and sexuality. A more detailed discussion of CPM will be given later.

This chapter builds on the previous chapter by situating the stated topic within previous literature on sex and sexuality communication. A summary of this chapter is necessary in laying the foundation for this study. It starts by reviewing the history of family communication internationally and in South Africa. It looks at the global concept of parenting before focusing on factors influencing parenting in South Africa. It then introduces

family and family communication. Within this, it explores family communication and identity, with attention to gender, sex and sexuality. Subsequently, the literature looks at South African adolescents' sexual socialisation, which then allows for more focused discussions on African views on sex and sexuality communication and on sex and sexuality communication in South Africa. Specifically, the researcher pays attention to how the source, content, word choice and timing of sex and sexuality communication within families has been perceived. A discussion on privacy boundaries in family sexuality communication presents how culture, identity and privacy and disclosure in sex and sexuality communication play out in families. Finally, greater detail is provided on the selected theory; CPM theory, its role on privacy and on disclosure in sex and sexuality communication just before the chapter concludes.

2.1 History of family communication

A community's historical context shapes the perceptions of the nature of its families. The importance of knowing a people when studying family and family communication is that the knowledge gives insights into to how they express their needs, their wants and of course their concerns. Segrin and Flora (2011) present communication as an interactive process where people create, share and regulate meaning with each other. Approaching communication from their perspective enables this study to conceptualise family communication as a way of communicating to construct and regulate shared meaning with people considered family (Hall & Scharp, 2019). This, while bearing in mind that family communication can be impacted by factors such as individual characteristics or preferences, living environment of family members or family size (Hall & Scharp, 2019). Before an in-depth discussion of family communication and how it contributes to identity formation can continue, it is important to trace the evolution of family communication as a field of study.

In sketching the roots of family communication, Galvin and Braithwaite (2014) found that by the 21st century, communication scholars had begun to study diverse family forms with increased focus on family interaction. Braithwaite, Suter and Floyd (2018) detail that before communication scholars adopted the study of families as a discipline, communication was long a part of a number of disciplines like psychology, sociology, education, political science, counselling, gerontology and human sciences/family studies. However, Braithwaite et al. (2018) explain that social changes that emerged after World War II, including the need

to promote democracy and to understand interpersonal influences or how people communicate persuasively, birthed other social sciences disciplines. This led to scholars in communication showing interest in family studies as they researched communication between marital couples, parents and children (2014:3).

By the late 1960s, and early 1970s, communication researchers like Baumrind (1967; 1971) were developing theoretical frameworks that would assist with understanding the communication that occurs in the family. The 1970s saw family communication emerging as a discipline in academia (Galvin & Braithwaite, 2014). However, at this time, studies focused on family communication as being essential to enhancing parent-child relationships (Petronio, 1994). Research was on topics such as family functioning (Jackson, Bijstra, Oostra & Bosma, 1998), family cohesion and adaptability (Barnes & Olson, 1985; Masselam, Marcus & Stunkard, 1990) and family satisfaction and child development (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986). Research on family communication expanded by the 1990s to focus on how families communicate about family values and how family communication facilitates conversations within family structures (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). Concurrently, family communication was also positioned as a conceptual framework that defined communicative behaviours and directed communication goals within families (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994; Ritchie, 1991).

In the case of South Africa, although research on family communication had emerged by the 1960s, the field is yet to be fully established. Research on family communication has been positioned by some (Family Studies, Psychology and Sociology) scholars in South Africa within humanities and not in the field of communication studies; precisely, family communication. Even so, few research works have explored family functioning. For instance, researchers like Nilsson, Edin, Kinsman, Khan and Norris (2020) explore obstacles to intergenerational communication in caregivers' narratives regarding young people's sexual and reproductive health and lifestyle in rural South Africa. Breshears (2019) researches transracial adoption in South Africa. Roman, Makwakwa, Lacante, and Tidwell (2016) explore the link between family functioning and family satisfaction, while Roman, Schenck, Ryan, Brey, Henderson, Lukelelo, Minnaar-McDonald and Saville (2015), and Sooryamoorthy and Makhoba (2016) examine how family structures within South African families have changed. Chikovore and Sooryamoorthy (2024) research family influence on adolescent sexual behaviour in South Africa. Townsend, Madhavan and Garey (2006),

Siqwana-Ndulo (1998) and Sooryamoorthy and Makhoba (2016) explore traditional family structures from psychological and sociological perspectives. Focus on family functioning means that research on African (nuclear) family communication in South Africa has been on households and excluded families. (Amoateng & Richter, 2007; Hall & Sambu, 2018; Mkhwanazi & Manderson, 2020; Amoateng et al., 2007; Breshears, 2019; Roman et al., 2016; Roman et al., 2015; Sooryamoorthy & Makhoba, 2016). This reality begs a study like this, which adds to the development of family communication as a discipline in South Africa.

Highlighting the history of family communication research, outside and within South Africa, is vital in that irrespective of the field in which research on family communication is situated, it seems that for family communication to function properly, there is need for continuous research on family communication and how it influences unspoken realities that may have a direct impact on identity formation and communication (Temple-Smith, Moore & Rosenthal, 2016; Richter Mabaso, Ramjith & Norris, 2015). This is especially true if one considers family communication as "the central process by which families are literally talked into being. That is, how families are co-constructed, negotiated and legitimated in discourse" (Braithwaite et al., 2018:1985). As outlined above, family communication can influence individual identity formations and communication. More so, through the act of parenting.

2.2 Factors influencing parenting in South Africa

The world over, raising children is generally the role of adults. Nevertheless, an important aspect of understanding family communication is how parenting works. Expanding on the impact of parenting is beyond the scope of this research, but it is necessary to briefly point out the role of family communication in parenting. Although there are various factors in adults' lives that may impact parental responsibilities as will be mentioned below, families and parents remain key to children's well-being (StatsSA, 2021) and "parental ambitions are powerful influences in determining appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in their children and in providing them with physical, emotional and psychological well-being" (Louw, 2009:77).

Chapter one highlights a parent as an adult-caregiver on whom an adolescent is (or has at one point, in every way) physically, economically, and emotionally depended, because the adult-caregiver has given birth to, adopted, or is raising the adolescent (Firestone, 1972:48).

Parents' core duty is to transmit values and their practices (Mary & Dindigul, 2016) to teach children positive self-identity, self-awareness, sensitivity to others, understanding of life, intercultural and religious communication and more. The parenting style, or the parent's demeanour in raising their child (Sooriya, 2017) brings about emotional, spiritual, physical and mental changes and continuously leads to new experiences and growth for the family. But parental ambitions are affected by residence patterns, as will be mentioned, that are in turn influenced by living arrangements like marriage, divorce, re-marriage and the living arrangements of children (Sooryamoorthy & Makhoba, 2016:311).

Research stipulates that the reality of working parents who live with their children becomes different from its definition. For instance, when parents work long hours amidst finding ways to balance their work responsibilities with family-care demands (Haddock, Zimmerman, Ziemba & Lyness, 2006:207), no matter how they try, global statistics show that such families do not spend enough time together anymore (Daly, 2001). Such is true in South Africa where, as will be detailed below, one-fifth or 21,3% of children under 17 years do not live with their parents (StatsSA, 2024). This explains why findings indicate that most men and women who migrate for work drift from their cultures and seem to forget how to parent (Smit, 2001), while less educated parents seem challenged to parent in new or blended ways. Adolescents who grow up with parents who give them emotional and practical support are said to excel academically and socially (Bray et al., 2010; Louw 2009; Holborn & Eddy, 2011), leading to less risky behaviours (Louw 2009). Many factors do influence parenting, including circular logic that parenting is well enjoyed when families live in environments that support good parenting (Sanders & Turner, 2018).

Exploring the dynamics of African families and the question of parenting requires a general review of literature on South African families and how this would have affected communication to be dominant with specific set of adult-caregivers like grandparents, siblings, uncles and aunts, as opposed to biological parents. Family structures in South Africa, as in the rest of the world, still vary significantly (Gavazzi, 2013). This is why the definition of a family also continues to be modified such that from the conceptual stage of this research, extended family members were anticipated to be included in the data collection. Alongside family members, this study also recognises that in both the absence and presence of parents and caregivers, there could be other sources of communication such

as siblings, peers, media, institutions and community members that play independent or even interdependent social roles in how adolescents' forming identities are communicated.

If living arrangements and family compositions are to be considered, then it is safe to state that parenting practices are influenced by individual family cultures and other factors that go beyond the influence of homes. When they are present, parents are their children's primary role models (Poggenpoel, Jacobs, Myburgh & Temane, 2016; Fulcher, 2014). Unfortunately, insights into the absentee parents will be cited below as one of the most long-term aspects of parent-child relationships in African families in South Africa. Research confirms the absence of parents, alongside diverse and varied composition of African families in South Africa, as leading to low parental communication (Bonell, Allen, Strange, Copas, Oakley, Johnson & Stephenson, 2006). The varied composition also poses challenges to family communication (Posel, Casale & Vermark, 2004) and living arrangements, since family communication undoubtedly takes place in the presence of members with whom family spaces are shared. However, as the new African child enjoys the demise of Apartheid, communication in families is increasingly being altered by other variables, including fathers physically moving towards their children just as mothers are becoming bigger earners (Smit, 2002). Father-child bonding in South Africa where fathers have predominantly been absent, may help to reclaim men's positions, seeing that the absence of African fathers meant they have long lost their place in family communication.

Understanding the dynamics of communicating identities can be facilitated by acknowledging that by its nature, family communication is often intense and complicated (Le Poire, 2006) partly due to the changing nature of families. Of course, research details that the difficulty and diversity of family communication is enhanced in that family communication is influenced by factors such as family characteristics, family structures, parental involvement and marital statuses (Oros, 2012). Oros explains that parental messaging or nonverbal cues, and the gender differences between parents and children, number of children living in a household, the level of education of the parents and children, their ages and age gaps between parents and children enhance this gap and do influence communication. According to Oros (2012), communication is also influenced by the occupation of parents, traditional and religious norms, cultural and socio-economic statuses, geographic location, children's needs, parents' needs, the level of exposure to media and the social circles of parents and children. These factors will be unpacked in detail later in this

chapter. These influencing factors are mentioned because they are vital to the data collection process for this research.

It is important to note that at this point this researcher uses 'parent-child communication' and 'family communication' interchangeably. This is because by default, African families in South Africa often include extended family members like aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins. As such, in many families, parents may never communicate with their biological children. This inclusion tempts parental communication to be classified as bridged by a generational gap (Bray et al., 2010) in South Africa where parenting or childcare responsibilities in many African families continue to be shared with, or shifted to, relatives, neighbours, government institutions and paid caregivers (Jimmyns & Meyer-Weitz, 2019) who live and operate in diverse setups (Amoateng et al., 2007). South Africa's unique labour migration patterns have led to disrupted family setups that have had great implications on how African families both communicate and parent so much that researchers claim these disenfranchised setups have produced African parents who lack confidence, feel incompetent (Mudhovozi, Ramarumo & Tholene, 2012; Wamoyi Fenwick, Urassa, Zaba & Stones, 2010; Jimmyns & Meyer-Weitz, 2019; Magezi, 2018), are gender-segregated and powerless (https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202107/44799gon586t.pdf) to communicate certain topics, including sex.

The lack of motivation to talk sex and sexuality has left many family members in uncomfortable positions when pursuing communication, actions and behaviours on a variety of sensitive topics (Wood, Maepa & Jewkes, 1997). The ensuing outcome provokes a study of this nature. Hence, this researcher's urge for research on this topic is to improve communication on sensitive topics, not to undermine the roles of extended family members like aunts, uncles and grandparents who research says continue to provide children with continuity and familiarity that contribute to family unity (May, Witten & Lake, 2020; Namisi, Flisher, Overland, Bastien, Onya, Kaaya & Aarø, 2008; Shilumani, 2010; Kajula, Sheon, De Vries, Kaaya & Aarø, 2014; Velcoff, 2010; Jejeebhoy & Santhya, 2011; Poggenpoel et al., 2016; Smit, 2001; StatsSA, 2021).

Parent-adolescent relationships in South Africa, just like family unity, are difficult to describe seeing that many pairs have not and do not live together. About 58,000 children

live in a total of 32,000 child-only households, with more than half of the heads of these homes aged 15 years and older (Hall & Sambu, 2018; StatsSA, 2019a). While most children in South Africa live with at least one adult in households where there are two or more co-resident adults (Hall & Sambu, 2018; May et al., 2020), mostly with grandmothers and extended family members (Hall & Mokomane, 2018; Amato, 2019; Bray et al., 2010), some children have never lived with either of their parents as indicated above. Details are that fathers, and sometimes mothers, are increasingly absent as circumstances such as work migration, separation or delayed marriages caused by cultural or religious beliefs do not allow co-habitation (Bray et al., 2010; StasSA, 2024).

The co-habitation challenge is traced to the Apartheid regime when South Africa enacted a dualistic family policy that differentiated how and where White and "non-White" (African, Coloured and Indian) families lived and socialised (Morrall, 1994; Sooryamoorthy & Makhoba, 2016). Sooryamoorthy and Makhoba (2016) explain that these differentiation policies affected the size of families, the presence of children in families, family structures, family culture, race and gender dynamics within families, who heads families, generational gaps in families, perceptions of parenting, earning powers of parents and, who plays what role in families. The impact of leaving children in the care of non-biological parents resulted in multiple family members living together, which means that generational gaps continued to widen (Sooryamoorthy & Makhoba, 2016; Bray et al., 2010).

Although this researcher may argue that more mothers stay with children, Bray et al. (2010) found that female migration continues to peak. Posel and van der Stoep report that only about 46% of mothers and 68% of non-mothers aged 20 to 49 in South Africa live in households with dependent children, while some mothers do not live with their biological children (2008:5). Approximately 64% of children do not live with their biological fathers (Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018). Even if they are likely to live with mothers or female primary caregivers, only one third of children in South Africa has the presence of adult men (Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018; Statistical release (psu.edu), 2012) who could be fathers, grown sons, mothers' lovers or other relatives. About 62% live with extended family members (Hall & Mokomane, 2018:34-35) with many living in overcrowded homes (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). A fraction of absent fathers is lost in piece jobs in mines, factories, and other sectors, while others are engulfed in drugs, alcohol, crime (Bray et al., 2010) and sex. The historically absent-father family structure justifiably leaves fathers absent as socialising agents for

children (Smit, 2001). Research explains that "living with two parents is the privilege to a minority" (Holborn & Eddy, 2011:7) rigged by poverty and extreme inequality, including Covid-19 related structural unemployment, high mobility and low paying jobs (South African Government, 2021). The quality of connectedness by adult caregivers to each other has an impact on parenting. Hence, Bray and her colleagues present South African adolescents, many whose parents have been snatched by death, as desiring the presence of their parents in homes (2010).

With such data, parenting in South Africa is bound to be different from parts of the world with different contexts and it is likely to experience substantial socio-economic strains. This is specifically because broken homes mean broken communication between parents, and between parents and their children. This affects how parenting is implemented (Hadzikapetanovic, Babic & Bjelosvic, 2017). For fathers who are actively present in their children's lives, Bray et al. (2010) state that fatherhood loses its value as soon as fathers struggle to provide financial support or depend on women (Hunter, 2005) who are often burdened with the weight of parenting. One may argue that "the skills and processes involved in good parenting do not depend on parents' gender or sexual orientation" (Fulcher, 2014:101). However, since the labour of men is needed to support families, absent fatherhood impoverishes women who reproduce without men's resources (Department of Social Development Republic of South Africa, 2012). These and other setups have meant parenting is often accompanied by anxiety and poverty.

Little research depicts parenting styles of Africans in South Africa and how this affects parents-adolescents' relationships. Such research reflects South African parents as resilient. It describes physically present parents as parenting to cope, while focusing on providing support, warmth and care aimed at shielding their children from the socio-economic fragments of apartheid (Simon & Elegbe, 2023). Agreeing with Magezi's view-point below on the effect of merging families, Simon and Elegbe's research adds that family values and beliefs are transferred through "cultural traditions, intertwined with socio-economic status and religion" (2023:135). Roman et al. (2016) have described black fathers as the least authoritarian, since they are strict and do place high expectations on children and least authoritative, because these same fathers set firm limits, yet are nurturing, responsive and supportive of their children. Roman and colleagues pin these qualities to black fathers' reluctance or absence in parenting which is further deepened by mothers and children who

label fathers as ‘mere providers’ (Bray et al., 2010). Of course, other researchers agree that the inability therefore to be involved in raising their own children has further alienated most African men from caregiving roles (Freeks, 2017; Makusha & Richter 2018; Salami & Okeke, 2018) and nullified the role by both parents and adult-caregivers in culturally and religiously bridging the past and present for their children (Nsamenang, 1999).

This study is based in South Africa where researchers have noticed that alongside nuclear families, grandparents and children head many homes (Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Amoateng et al., 2007; Amoateng & Richter, 2007). Also, parents are parenting children who are victims of rape (Machisa, Jina, Labuschagne, Vetten, Loots, Swemmer, Meyersfeld & Jewkes, 2017). In South Africa, a high level of unemployment and lack of recreational centres have prompted adolescents to be dependent on caregivers longer, while lucky and educated ones get jobs and become financially independent too soon (Magezi, 2018; Department of Social Development Republic of South Africa, 2013). Earning their own income empowers adolescents and creates a new kind of adolescents with new ways of doing things for themselves with their own money (Magezi, 2018:3). This is problematic because the new concept of working adolescents in South Africa deepens the already weakened kinship. It impacts communication, diminishes the power and authority of parents and prioritises the economic needs of children (Magezi, 2018). The empowered adolescents and the destruction of parents’ capital increases urban freedoms and the enticements that come with being in the city. This is a South Africa where at the same time, parents’ ability is fractured by low wages, increasing unemployment and educational drop-out. In South Africa, families are faced with an upsurge in migration by adults and children, single parenting, divorce and employment (Magezi, 2018; Amato, 2019; Hall, Ebrahim, De Lannoy & Makiwane, 2015). This is a South Africa where sadly, children head families (Hall & Sambu, 2018; StatsSA, 2019a).

This research benefits from knowledge of how parents-adolescents communication takes place in modern South Africa where reports state that as parents physically reunite with children, either as children move to the cities for work or studies or as parents retire, more inter-generational tension is emerging from parenting attitudes (Magezi, 2018; Bray et al., 2010). The good news is that parents who had left behind their children, for socio-economic or urban migration, are increasingly reuniting with their adolescents for the many reasons mentioned above (Bray et al., 2010; Magezi, 2018). This reunification impacts parenting in

that families are mending, merging and practicing each other's norms (Magezi, 2018) together, but also individually (Amato, 2019). By each other's norms, this researcher is referring to habits that they each picked up while apart. For example, a person from the city would have acquired and is applying ways of dressing not practiced in rural areas. This new way of dressing may mean their expressive sexuality is interpreted differently from cultural definitions.

Reuniting is a dream come true for many. Unfortunately, the merging of multiple cultural and religious practices does not make parenting easier. The differences each brings to the union may make bonding difficult and may obscure parents' success to model adolescents if their children have come to the urban regions for education or for work (Magezi, 2018), or if parents go back home, due to hardship in the city. Bray et al. capture this challenge in their research in the Western Cape. They encountered an adolescent (Victoria) who before adolescence lived with her extended family. They report Victoria's expression of anger and frustration to maternal submission after she moved to live with her mother in quest of a better school (2010:85). As presented above, family setups mean that South African parents may have certain parenting-deficits not experienced in many other countries. Victoria's challenge to submit to a 'stranger, turned mother' represents one of those deficits. Similarly, a global rise in unmarried families, varying family structures and child poverty, especially in low-income families (Brown, 2010) mean that challenges to parenting are not unique to South Africa.

An overview of parenting in South Africa shows that extended families blur the dynamic of parenting to both mothers and fathers as these relatives play substantial roles in child-rearing (Hall, 2019; Bray et al., 2010). Extended families' good gesture relegates parents' cultural and religious roles of nurturing and providing. In addition, research on living arrangements has found that the variety in family setups, continued modification of home environments and the diversification of its communities have led to various modes of parenting and childcare in South Africa (Sooryamoorthy & Makhoba, 2016). There is an outcry that these family setups and living arrangements coexist with a breakdown or degeneration of parenting that depicts the absence of discipline (Louw, 2009). The impact of South Africa's dynamics to sex and sexuality communication in its families is explained when Louw (2009) puts it that parenting is further fractured because the South African government pays more attention to seeing children's rights implemented with less attention to family functioning.

In other words, the amount of emphasis which the government places on upholding children's rights are undermined by its lack of regulatory attention to how family members live with children. For instance, working conditions continue to be such that both male and female domestic and/or mine workers often live far away from their children. To Louw, this has led to a lack of self-discipline, increased violence, poverty and unemployment, crime, promiscuity, substance abuse, corruption and general lawlessness (2009:ii). Louw continues that these living arrangements have contributed to reasons why South African parents are cited as having failed to communicate effectively in certain instances (2009). An example befitting this current research is that apart from overhearing adults' conversations, parents share sleeping spaces with children who may notice what they say and do at night. Alongside teenage pregnancies, joblessness (Department of Social Development Republic of South Africa, 2013), fatherlessness (Holborn & Eddy, 2011) and Covid-19 (Department of Social Development Republic of South Africa, 2021), these exposures increasingly diminish parents' ability to monitor and control children coupled with the lack of family adults; especially in instances where caregivers find it difficult to engage in sex and sexuality communication.

It is important to repeat that more and more South African families; mother, father and children, are living together as South African fathers are becoming involved in raising their children (Rabe, 2018). Mother, father and children are mentioned instead of nuclear families because these households are most likely to continue to include other family members. Back in 2010, Bray and her colleagues found families with involved parents and stable incomes. Physically present fathers are providers and disciplinarians and mothers are nurturers who assist fathers financially and with implementing family rules (2010). Bray et al (2010) detail how these parents raised happy adolescents who excelled in school, extra-mural activities and enjoyed chores. Both parents and older siblings helped adolescents with homework. These adolescents communicated freely and openly with trusted parents who listened and negotiated (2010). Recent trends may be helping to reinforce involved parenting. For example, parents-children communication in South Africa was recently impacted by Covid-19 in that the lockdown implemented by the government during the pandemic compelled parents to spend time with their children. This created opportunities for parents and children to communicate more. Talking more builds stronger relationships although families were, arguably, to encounter more feuds (October, Petersen, Adebiyi, Rich & Roman, 2022) as they were likely to be 'forced' to encroach on each other's spaces.

It is crucial for this study to understand the role played by parents-adolescents' relationship dynamics, their attitudes and beliefs, their communication styles and how socio-cultural and religious factors are shaping parents-adolescents communication about sex and sexuality. Thus, literature in this section underpins supportive, open, and non-judgmental environments as likely to facilitate positive and effective discussions about sex and sexuality within families. So, as families use communication to build bonds, parents have to understand that adolescence is a time when children try to claim their voices. That adolescents want to be heard and to make decisions beyond what they choose to eat, but include how they should spend their time, with whom and where. Hence, Noller and Atkin (2014) warn parents to adjust parenting styles to suit each stage in children's lives. Such adjustments should be in parental involvement. In the case of South Africa, such adjustments should come from the general family through family communication which is critical at this stage when, according to Bray et al. (2010), their adolescents are even more emotionally distant to absent parents.

2.3 Family and family communication

By nature, the family is a social unit in which many children and adolescents receive their earliest and most consistent socialisation. In essence, families which are hierarchal and small units of a whole social system (Candelario, 2021) are children's first community and main institutions that teach them about behaviour through parental behaviour or actions in the consumption of products, and in attitudes, values and languages (Vissing, 2018; UNICEF, 2019; Louw, 2009). Family members communicate things, ideas and feelings to enhance family relations and children learn how to communicate by observing what goes on in families (Fulcher, 2014). This especially if communication is open, mutually empathic, and expressive. Family relations and communication is also enhanced when decision-making is negotiated, and families are proactive in handling crises (Chairani, Palestin & Nuraeni, 2022: 96) and resolving conflicts.

Research suggests that language used in communicating can preserve, organise and transmit cultural values and norms between generations (Shmuel, 2023). How family members respond to children's needs and how children in turn respond to family members is valuable to families, given that family members most often influence each other mutually. Studying

and observing communication patterns within the family means that researchers can better understand how and why communication occurs (Segrin & Flora, 2011). This knowledge is particularly needed in setups where families use obscured languages, or what they deem as 'decent' words, but where they also rely on triggers to start talking (Duby, Verwoer, Isaksen, Jonas, Maruping, Dietrich, Lovette, Kuo & Mathews, 2022). Needing triggers means that family communication is reactive to particular events like television scenes, or children's reactions to 'societal norms,' before related conversations can take place. Triggered or planned, family communication takes different formats. It could be socialising in values, grooming by gender or execution of rituals (Koilybayeva, Zhunis, Kusmanova, Mirov & Missyachenko, 2022). It could also be by sharing stories, secrets or by practicing rituals (Segrin & Flora, 2019). Whatever the format, family communication aims at creating senses of belonging and connection (Amason, 2020; Segrin & Flora, 2019). Of the many benefits of family communication, I cite Deivita's assertion that when parents exchange words and stories with children, they gain insights into their children's character. According to Deivita (2023), communication provokes thinking but facilitates both the occurrence and resolution of conflicts. Through communication, families create attachments. This explains why parenting impacts so much on family communication and vice versa.

In effect, Deivita's (2023) findings correlate with discussions above in this section in confirming that one of the most effective ways of raising adolescents who are considered functional is by effective family communication (Chairani et al., 2022). Effective means that adolescents are provided opportunities to express personal feelings. It means they are actively listened to and encouraged to ask questions. Effective family communication will make adolescents feel accepted and valued, thereby forming positive self-concepts (Chairani et al., 2022). Adolescents have been described as both open and empathetic in their communication style (Sahertian, Sahertian & Wajabula, 2020) although they are often regarded as being too young or too old for many topics in conversation with parents.

Age may be considered but, in fact, values, norms and expectations are revealed during family communication (Amason, 2020). It is during communication that adult-caregivers hand down rules, roles and values to children who in turn start exhibiting these at adolescence. Deivita (2023) explains this better using the transactional effect of communication. In her research on the effect of communication between single fathers and daughters, she states that when people communicate, they have mutual impact on each other.

She shares that communication gives and teaches appreciation when parents are "giving appropriate praise and gratitude and sometimes giving gifts to support children's school activities, … give children responsible freedom, give directions to children, listen to children's opinions, always spending time with children … having deep talks" (Deivita, 2023:119). This researcher uses Deivita's example deliberately because adolescents with present fathers are likely to be involved in less risky ventures (Noller & Atkin, 2014) and fathers' influence could persist into adulthood. This, in spite of the fact that African fathers are presented as communicating with their adolescents indirectly through mothers (Sagnia, Gharoro & Isara 2020).

Added to its transactional function, the bonding role of communication in family relationships empowers researchers to call upon adult caregivers to enable unconditionally loving, open and sensitive environments where children can talk to them and ask questions without reservations (Chen, 2022). Deivita's example on the transactional effect of communication does not take away assumptions that mothers communicate more and openly (Noller & Atkin, 2014) on certain topics (Sagnia et al., 2020). It actually enhances and expands Noller and Atkin's findings that full-functioning nuclear families with both parents who support their children may provide the best environment in which to raise children. Noller and Atkin's feedback includes grandparents' support. They say alongside chores that may include babysitting and house care, the presence of extended family members is encouraging to adolescents as parents go to school or work (Noller & Atkin, 2014). This explains, the mentioned role of families as key to children's well-being, and increasingly enhances the role of family as the main communicator (Bray et al., 2010).

This research questions if circumstances through which Africans conduct family communication are unique and if this may lead to unique ways through which adolescents communicate their forming identities. This question is vital because living like teams enriches families with shared beliefs, values and goals (Driver, Tabares, Shapiro & Gottman, 2012). Besides, Noller and Atkin's (2014) claim seem to endorse Koilybayeva et al.'s (2022) recommendation for families to stick together and continue to share values of family identities needed to be kept.

2.3.1 Family communication and identity

For many, their family (or what will become family) is the first site of belonging from where they get a secure attachment and positive self-identity (Burns, Jobson & Zuma, 2015). It is hard to point out which social agent plays the biggest role in socialising a child, but research admits that family communication could easily influence a child's behaviour (Fulcher, 2014) and that discourse among family members can preserve family identity (Koilybayeva et al., 2022). This could be so because, since family members define their identities in relation to their family identities, they tend to communicate strategies to maintain members' sense of family identity and ties (Galvin & Braithwaite, 2014:103).

Koerner and Fitzpatrick demarcate two forms that family communication takes in identity construction;

a) Conformity orientation, where families encourage consistency in the communication of family members' attitudes, values and beliefs. Family members' interactions are high and they are encouraged to adopt the same attitudes and beliefs. When they talk, members conform to each other. There is respect to older family members during conversations. Members depend on each other and avoid conflicts. They are referred to as traditional because members are loyal to each other against outsiders (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a:4). Authoritarian parents practice conformity the style; a communication pattern which limits freedom (Simon & Elegbe, 2023).

b) Koerner and Fitzpatrick continue with conversation dimension, a communication form where family members partake in open, frequent and spontaneous conversations on every topic. In this setting, family members talk a lot and share personal thoughts, experiences and feelings. For parents, these conversations educate and socialise their children (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2002a:4). Conversational dimension mediates authoritative parenting; a pattern which encourages independence (Simon & Elegbe, 2023).

There are families that do not adhere to any of these two forms of communication and parenting practices (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a). But because communication scholars state that communication is central in the negotiation of relationships and group membership or identities (de la Serna, 2022) every family communicates in a way or another. For example, communication of identity formation occurs during different incidents. One such is inter-generational storytelling; when parents tell children about their own childhood

(Merrill, Booker & Fivush, 2018; Galvin et al., 2018). Storytelling by family members serves different functions in different cultures including bonding, or linking children to their parents. Research finds that family members who tell stories establish and perform their individual identities and, at the same time, create their families' collective identity (Amason, 2020). In the process, storytelling and rituals or rites use communication to merge individual identities with family members' identities (Amason, 2020; Segrin & Flora, 2019). An added emphasis to the communicative roles of storytelling and family rituals is that children bond better with parents who tell them about their past (Merrill et al., 2018) and who spend time with them. Children who are linked to parents, begin to understand their identity alongside their parents' (Merrill et al., 2018).

At adolescence, children embark on searches for their individual identities (Ramadhana, Karsidi, Utari & Kartono, 2019). They begin to develop their individual values, principles and roles (Steensma, Kreukels, deVries & Cohen-Kettenis, 2013) alongside, or deviant from their parents' or family identity (Noller & Atkin, 2014). Noller, Atkin and Amason are amongst researchers who took time to prove that when family members spend time together, they communicate well. To them, when there exist bonds, adolescents are self-aware and aware of others (Noller & Atkin, 2014; 2020). Another strategy that families use to create, own and communicate family identities is internal rites or rituals (Kanu, 2018; Segrin & Flora, 2019) which could be cultural (like ancestral worship), religious (like praying routines) or social (like what to wear).

Self-awareness and awareness of others means identities are forming when adolescents start knowing that they are different from their parents (Haydon et al., 2023). During this time, they use communication to link their identity to their families' (Ramadhana et al., 2019) because as individuals, adolescents experience self, but they experience how to extend the self to correspond with others; in this case, family members (Branje, de Moor, Spitzer & Becht, 2021; Branje, 2022) or to reject them. It is therefore common place to assume that at this stage (through communication), children learn and add to the definition of their family communication in the way they interact with older adults (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). In so doing, they learn and form their identities alongside those of their parents, siblings, peers, neighbours, and those of the social and mainstream media, schooling and worshipping cultures.

It is through family education that children's morals, characters, spiritualities, cognitive abilities, attitudes and values begin to shape in various ways, particularly about issues of gender identity (Chen, 2022). During this process, adolescents who receive supportive feedbacks from family and friends on how they communicate their identities may easily explore identity options (Branje et al., 2021). This basically means that the feedback which adolescents receive from the information they communicate on their identity, contributes to self-discovery and self-concept through reciprocity (Haydon et al., 2023). Behavioural growth explains that before maturing fully, adolescents start off by questioning their identities. This research therefore inquires how this quest for self-discovery affects how adolescents and parents of adolescents communicate sex and sexuality.

Scholars signal that questioning begins during early adolescence when identity development is mostly a process of making new identity commitments. At this stage, findings hint mostly on the exploration of new identity choices and commitment to particular options (de Moor, Van der Graaff, Van Dijk, Meeus & Branje, 2019). The next stage is when adolescents explore identity alternatives before they form identity commitments (Branje et al., 2021). Branje (2022) states that identity develops over time, during which adolescents receive feedback on their self-perceptions. This feedback could be from everyone, but this study limits it to parents and adult caregivers. Widening it to include extended family members is simply the researcher's effort to appropriate this literature to real-life family compositions that are unique to Africans in South Africa as elaborated in the above sections on parenting and family communication.

Evidence on behavioural development indicates that by the time they are certain of which identity to take on, or when they reach identity maintenance cycle, adolescents begin to strengthen. Strengthening means they switch between identity commitment and in-depth exploration of current encounters. Researchers (Branje, 2022; Branje et al., 2021; Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx & Meeus, 2007) claim that identity matures slowly at adolescence through to young adulthood, during which time adolescents try to maintain balances between their individual and family identities. This means that adolescents do not only learn from behaviours and actions, but also from culture, and religion. Family members' views towards behaviours and values are established and transmitted through communication (Noller & Atkin, 2014). What is important to family communication research is that before they exit adolescence, many undergo the process of separation individuation. They begin to claim

autonomy from parents by renegotiating roles, making their relationship to drift towards being reciprocal (Branje et al., 2021), to indicating independence before maturity to adulthood (Noller & Atkin, 2014).

Research has positioned the forming of identity as one of the most important developmental facets of adolescence because adolescents are confronted with the responsibility of 'finding themselves' and making decisions regarding which role they will fulfil in society (Beyers, 2011:200). Yet, influenced by race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, nationality, religion and disability, adolescents' identities development involves a desire for both a connection to, and independence from their parents. Although parents are influencers, they are simultaneously expected to monitor children's activities as well as identify, sift and package information for them, including information on gender, sex and sexual identities.

Communicating gender, sex and sexual identity. In most communities, humans are given genders as males or females even before birth and they grow up with such knowledge (Warber & Emmers-Sommer, 2012; Siann, 2013; Soh, 2020). Sex at birth or the biology of being, by chromosomes (Warber & Emmers-Sommer, 2012) is used to determine the biological difference between males and females (Siann, 2013:3). Gendering is seen in how children are dressed and appreciated. How social choices are made for them, and what play activities they are introduced to and allowed to embark on by parents, enhances their masculine and feminine roles (Khudyakova, Gridyaeva & Klepacha, 2016; Chen, 2022). Boys and girls become aware of their gender and gender roles as toddlers. By adolescence, they display overt gender socialisation as projected by parents and societal members. Growth entails understanding gender identity since families reinforce identities (Khudyakova et al., 2016; Steensma et al., 2013; Amason, 2020) to the points where claims are that adolescents with clearer identities might differentiate themselves from others as separate, autonomous and may mark and respect their own boundaries (Branje, 2022) as well as others'.

By definition, "gender is an overarching category that deals with social demographic variables such as race, class, age, religion, and physical ability" (Fiaveh & Mensah, 2023:9). It is the "internal sense of oneself as male, female, both or neither" (James, 2023: xii) constructed by society and based on birth sex. Gender identity, therefore, is an internal sense of one's sense of oneself as male, female or transgender (American Psychological Association, 2011). In most cases, gender identities like sex are initially labelled on children

at birth (Agustin, 2022) and develop alongside their physical beings (Steensma et al., 2013) or their sex. Noller and Atkin (2014:71) argue that although gender roles are learnt from many other sources, children whose parents exhibit gender-related characteristics are likely to believe in, or exhibit the same. They assert that parents can allow themselves to be empowered on how to accept their children's identities; which could be genetic (Noller and Atkin 2014) through family discourse, that have evolved to now include sexually-related terms that were previously omitted (Koilybayeva et al., 2022).

The use of sex in this research refers to sexual intercourse. At this stage where adolescents understand identity, one of the needs they may desire from parents would be on how to initiate intimate relationships that may form important contexts and may go hand in hand with identity changes (Branje et al., 2021). Their internal feelings, therefore, determine their sexuality, or who they are attracted to sexually (Soh, 2020). Sexuality relates to their feelings, identities, practices, and behaviours vis-a-vis sex (Fiaveh & Mensah, 2023:9). Since sexuality is the act of having sexual feelings and to whom they feel sexually attracted, sexual identity is "a cultural pattern by which people understand their sexuality" (Paris, 2011:4). This pattern may differ in content according to where people are located in terms of place and time. Hence, Montemayor (2019) states that sexual identity is a psychological and social process that unfolds over the years and is communicated through knowledge, acceptance and meanings that individuals attach to themselves. Sexuality varies in patterns, but remains central in negotiating transition from childhood to adulthood (Moore & Rosenthal, 2007).

Sexual identity stems from the beliefs about how people think, act and feel, as influenced by their gender, which remains a huge reference to how people are groomed and are treated as biologically male or female; a system of constructed beliefs with heterosexuality seen as socially accepted (Swanepoel & Beyers, 2015; Siann, 2013). Gender exposure may involve many role changes, including who adolescents are, or what is their personal identity. "Personal identity refers to one's sense of the person one genuinely is, including a subjective feeling of selfsameness and continuity over contexts and time" (Branje et al., 2021:908). Self is internal. The internal does not seem to be considered in many cultures when sex and identity are assigned to children through different types of socialisations rather than being defined by the children's real sense of self.

A type of socialisation unavoidably instrumental to this study is sexual socialisation, since it is closely tied to the bridge between sex and sexuality or gender socialisation; a form of teaching which socialises children according to their gender (Shtarkshall, Santelli & Hirsch, 2007). The researcher stated above, while discussing family communication on identity, that adolescence is a time when children face either acceptance or rejection. In sexual identities, acceptance or rejection is portrayed through parents or family members' influence on how adolescents communicate their sexual identities (Agustin, 2022). This is to say, how parents communicate gender expectations affect how their adolescents conceptualise gender and gender roles (Nedombeloni & Oyedemi, 2014) seeing that gender is more influential to how people behave socially than is sex (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

Where children live with extended adult family members, these adults' roles go beyond those mentioned by Noller and Atkin, above, to include modelling (Amos, 2013). Amos adds that alongside parents and other external influences, family members influence children's ideas about gender and the behaviours that are appropriately associated with being female or male, whether stereotypical or not (Amos, 2013). They use language (James, 2023). For example, socialising children as 'he' or 'she' is generally acceptable but could be troublesome for a child whose gender is deviant from these pronouns. Another example which will feature in the section on family communication and identity in South Africa is that most current-day cultures position boys as free to be more expressive and girls as more dependent (Lesch & Anthony, 2007; Basson, 2018), meanwhile both males and females today simply wish to express selves. Focus in breaking down the concepts of gender, sex and sexual identity is important to this research in that in order to prepare adolescents for adulthood, parents need to be understanding of adolescents' emotional and psychological developments at the time of their most visible development, the growth spurts (McNeely & Blanchard, 2009).

Adolescence is challenging to both children and parents because adolescents become more private. They communicate less with, or drift away from, their parents (Grossman et al., 2018; Duby et al., 2022). However, they become closer to, more open, and more communicative with peers with whom they spend more time (Selikow, Ahmed, Flisher, Mathews, & Mukoma, 2009; UNESCO, 2018) and towards siblings and subsequently romantic partners, as they seek autonomy. This challenge means that adolescent identity is influenced by numerous interrelating meanings (norms and aspects of sexuality, gender, myths, styles, values and interests) that promote adolescents' sexual well-being, impact their

sexuality and shape their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours on sex (Varga, 2003). This silence towards their parents could leave adolescents really confused or feeling alienated, although research argues that external influence could mean that "many adolescents enter adulthood with gender roles, behaviours and preferences in line with the breadwinner/caregiver family model they envision for their own future families" (Fulcher, 2014:108).

To strengthen arguments that prospective confused adulthood might be influenced by exposures at adolescents, this researcher shares the outcome of Lesch and Anthony's research. They found that female adolescent interviewees who were not heterosexual could not assert their sexuality because their sexual identities did not align with their mothers' and grandmothers' (Lesch & Anthony, 2007). These interviewees' experience is not unique in that every culture embraces consistent systems of sexual socialisation and rites of passage from adolescence to adulthood through rituals and initiations (Fiaveh & Mensah, 2023:9) that are gender-sensitive. A previous study found that adolescents' initiation ceremonies in Africa specifically introduce the world of dependence enacted to girls in the form of folktales, dances, songs and roles unique to females (Kanu, 2023). In another research, girls are encouraged to conform such that they remain longer in diffused stages of identity than boys would (Basson, 2018:69). The latter are endorsed as heads of homes. Boys are encouraged from young ages to explore alternatives and make informed decisions as they commit to identities (Kanu, 2023). The impact of gender segregation to parent-adolescent communication is that although it may shape adolescents' exposure to diverse perspectives, it also reinforces gender norms and stereotypes, amplifies peer influence, and presents gender-related challenges in times when gender may not matter.

Gendered concerns are enacted by participants in Nedombeloni & Oyedemi's research in South Africa when they gave examples of men who are superior to women and exerting authority as leaders in every sphere, including politics, religion and culture. To them, men should be respected and honoured because they are supposed to be the main breadwinners to females who they say are weak and emotional (Nedombeloni & Oyedemi, 2014). In Kenya, Maina Sikweyiya, Ferguson & Kabiru (2020) confirm findings of male superiority from participants who are adamant that violence, crime, sexual dominance are not masculine. They added that amongst males, a real man records the physical growth of the penis and beard, of strength, education, circumcision, emotional and behavioural maturity, of sex and is faithful to a lover.

During traditional initiation ceremonies, boys and girls both gain profound insights that reinforce riddles, masks, songs, stories, rituals, legends and genealogies which they have heard of from their parents or family elders (Kanu, 2018). This is why effective parental involvement and education on gender awareness may guide the child's development at this stage and reduce conflict within the family (Chen, 2022). Unfortunately, these examples, have no provisions for socialisation that suits those who are likely 'confused'; males and females who do not identify as boys and girls, who may be prone to delinquent behaviours.

This section has presented family communication's crucial role in shaping the parent-adolescent communication as facilitated by family compositions. It positions effective family communication through openness, trust, support and respect that are maintained through rituals and story-telling. The above literature sets this study to look forward to how African parents in South Africa create environments that encourage open dialogue and provide accurate and timeous information that leave adolescents feeling supported and more comfortable to communicate important aspects of their lives. The next section will discuss how family dynamics contribute to how African adolescents in South Africa socialise sexually.

2.4 South African adolescents' sexual socialisation

Like their global counterparts, the identity communication of African adolescents in South Africa are influenced by cultural norms and other factors like peer pressures. South African adolescents are growing up in cultures where sex informs everything from the type of clothes they wear, the music they listen to and the images and messages they consume. Such messages are often covered in mystery, partiality, or in misinformation. In discussing family sex and sexuality communication below, the researcher will detail how adolescents are receiving confusing messages at a time when they are simultaneously drifting away from parents from whom they need much guidance at this stage. These confusing, if not contradictory, messages (Vissing, 2018; Lesch & Kruger, 2005; Mmari, Kalamar, Brahmbhatt & Venables, 2016; Oros, 2012), the drift, external exposure, type of information and need to socialise and still belong to families come with the dynamics of what to disclose and what to conceal (Branje, Laursen & Collins, 2008).

The disclosure, concealment dynamics will be explored below. But the impact of this dynamic is such that adolescents' sexual socialisation presents adolescents whose parents are always present as more likely to, and continue to, pick up both verbal and non-verbal clues from their parents than those whose parents are always absent. In fact, the role of parents is such that "the manner in which adults speak to their young about dating and sex, as well as the silences that they keep, are central to the meaning and value that young people attach to dating and sex, and their practices in these areas" (Bray et al., 2010:260). South African adolescents, for instance, have noted that "a man or woman is defined in conjunction with the expectations of the society … A man assumes a powerful role in society because growing up in the village boys observe that their fathers go to work, while mothers stay at home. This invariably allocates power and authority to men as the breadwinners" (Nedombeloni & Oyedemi, 2014:183). Both parents and children have regarded fathers as providers, just like adolescent males and females see females as financially dependent on their male sexual partners (Bray et al., 2010). Examples are provided above, including examples from other African counties under the subtitle on communicating gender, sex and sexual identity.

Apart from mapping out gender roles, South African adolescents' socialisation reports exposure to less monitoring and absent supervision by adults and more exposure to other sources like the media (Richter, 2006; Magezi, 2018; Bray et al., 2010). It is easy for its adolescents to learn from the media, given that the majority of South Africans are addicted to the media. About 83.9% of South Africans watch television, 66.6% listen to the radio at least once a week and over half (59%) access social media (Simbayi, Zuma, Zungu, Moyo, Marinda, Jooste, Mabaso, Ramlagan, North, van Zyl, Mohlabane, Dietrich, Naidoo & the SABSSM V Team (2019:105). The outcomes are that its adolescents are using the media for entertainment but they have also depended on devices for many decisions including entry into, survival in and exit from, social circles (Nilsson et al., 2020; Bray et al., 2010) and searching answers. They consume sexual content via technological devices. Schools and learning centres have supported adolescents by encouraging technology use on campuses (Bray *et al.*, 2010; Mbong Shu, 2014).

Without parents' approval of who they are, African adolescents in South Africa have risked expressing how they experience themselves as individuals who are not wholly dependent on their parents' views. Reviews disclose that they communicate attitudes that reveal them as

being competitive and jealous about how they look, what they wear, who they date and about the looks and accessories of who they socialise with or date. These adolescents worry about "being sexy or attractive, catching the attention of the opposite sex, and displaying success in the world of dating and sex are symbols of personal success" (Bray et al., 2010:269). To females, "the dominant idea of successful young womanhood is one where success is proven through being desirable to men" (Jewkes & Morell, 2010:6).

South African adolescents are more concerned with what people think of them than with who they actually are (Bray et al., 2010:270). They then look after their self-image and may fear pregnancy more than sexually transmitted illnesses. They may lose their virginity in order to please their friends. By mid-adolescence, they have started dating overtly (Zuma, Setswe, Ketye, Mzolo, 2010; Richter et al., 2015). They are communicating that they are reliant on close friends to communicate about sex, sexuality and sexual relationships. They are also communicating that they are open to expressing their sexuality, while simultaneously dealing with their parents who may not necessarily be so open to sexual fluidities (Duby et al., 2022; Bray et al., 2010; Nilsson et al., 2020). South African adolescents are not different from their global counterparts who play central roles in each other's sexual identity development and their formation of intimate friendships as described in Oros' study of 6,527 American college students. Conducted from 1990 to 2006, this study found that more students, irrespective of gender, ethnic and socio-economic groups, used informal sources of sex education, like peers, more commonly than they used formal sources like teachers (Oros, 2012:68). This affirms adolescents' source of sex education as peers, to whom they are often exposed to intense pressure (Holman & Kellas, 2015; Bastien, Leshabari & Klepp, 2009; Delius & Glaser, 2002; Tolla, Essop, Fluks, Lynch, Makoae & Moolman, 2018; Bray et al., 2010).

Adolescents' socialisation through interactions with peers, family, media, school, and community, influences their attitudes, values, beliefs, principles and behaviours and shapes their communication patterns. In sharing information together, adolescents unfortunately fall into risky behaviours such as early or promiscuous sex, drugs and alcohol. So, in order to socialise safely, adolescent males have been advised to seek alternative masculinity that is void of violence (Peacock et al., 2006). Furthermore, young people should be treated respectfully by adult caregivers (Hunter, 2005). It is worth reiterating that although sex and sexuality communication may seem absent in African homes, most African cultures have

historically rooted sexuality as normal and healthy features not only for adults but also for adolescents (Delius & Glaser, 2002) who experiment with sex in homes, bushes and buses, amidst severe repression of expressive sexuality (Niehaus, 2006). How South African adolescents have navigated these circumstances and how they have heeded calls to socialise safely, are of value to this research amidst the contradiction that rules and roles often have parents exposing children to sex and sexuality communication from when they are young.

2.5 Family sex and sexuality communication

The internal conflict experienced by adolescents, and the risk of failure at resolving identity conflicts also apply to adolescents' development and communication of sexual identities. Family sex and sexuality communication can thus, play an important role in helping adolescents to navigate through this internal conflict, specifically with reference to the development of sexual identities. You would have noted above that parents play pivotal roles as primary communicative agents for children's knowledge and their subsequent identity formation and communication at adolescence. Sex and sexuality communication takes place when people are "exchanging verbal and non-verbal messages in a mutual effort to co-create meaning about sexual beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviour" (Warren & Warren, 2014:186). Warren and Warren (2014) are adamant that the home becomes a primary source for sexual learning if sufficient (sex) communication takes place in it. They caution parents to talk sex early, openly and interactively. To them, parents should talk with their children about sex from when children are young and continue these discussions as children grow. They state that in families with two parents, both parents should talk to all children. They should establish mutual dialogues with their children and create enabling environments for children to communicate sex (Warren & Warren, 2014:190-191).

Regardless of parents' positions, in order for family communication about sex and sexuality to assist adolescents in effectively communicating sexual identities formation, researchers such as Miller-Day, Pezalla and Chesnut (2013) insist that children's voices need to be prioritised in research on how sex is conducted around them. Other scholars put it that adolescents' health is affected by their general knowledge and behaviours, which is often directly or indirectly influenced by family members (Goodnight, Salama, Grim, Anthony, Armistead, Cook, Skinner & Toefy, 2014). This prompts responsible sex and sexuality communication at adolescence to be critical since most "adolescents want to be less cohesive

and more separate from the family unit as they struggle with identity formation and separation from the family of origin" (Hetherington, Henderson, Reiss, Anderson, Bridges, Chan, Insabella, Jodl, Kim, Mitchell, O'Connor, Skaggs & Taylor, 1999:214).

During family communications, family members provide adolescents with much information on the risks, consequences and responsibilities related to sexual behaviour (Bray et al., 2010). Warren and Warren (2014) argue that there are suggestions that family members do not frequently and effectively communicate about sex and sexuality. However, multiple researchers have found that parental communication with adolescents about sex and sexuality can influence the sexual behaviours of adolescents positively, just as parental practices do (Vilanculos & Nduna, 2017; Williamson & Henderson, 2006; Nambambi & Mufune, 2011; Oros, 2012; Coetzee et al., 2014; Temple-Smith et al., 2016; Le Poire, 2006; Zimmerman, 2011; Phetla et al., 2008; Bhana, 2004; Zuma et al., 2010; Mmari et al, 2016; Bonafide, 2015; Mpondo, Robert, Ruiter, Schaafsma, van den Borne & Reddy, 2018; Holman, 2014; Rogers, 2017; Bastien et al., 2011; Vissing, 2018; Manzini-Matebula et al., 2015; Grossman et al., 2018; Nilsson et al., 2020; Santa Maria, Markham, Engebretson, Baumler & McCurdy, 2014; Bray et al., 2010). This influence is heightened if communication by the mother is more since they tend to spend more time with children (Nilsson et al., 2020; Noller & Atkin, 2014). The influence is also heightened if communication is by both parents (Warren & Warren, 2014).

Detractors of early sex and sexuality communication are against the concept of starting this communication with children early as they cling on to religious and cultural barriers. These detractors of early sex and sexuality communication claim that adolescents whose parents expose them to sex-related communication earlier may practice sex earlier than normal (Sagnia et al., 2020; Bastien et al., 2011; Jejeebhoy & Santhya, 2011; Phetla et al., 2008). Despite these detractors, it is clear that family communication helps adolescents to observe sexual behaviours around them, starting with their parents and adult-caregivers. Through this observation, adolescents consciously or subconsciously manage their own sexual identities (McNeely & Blanchard, 2009). Apart from observation, parents-adolescents sexual communication informs adolescents' sexual perceptions in attitudes, perceived norms and self-efficacy that could influence adolescents' sexual intentions and/or behaviours (Rogers, 2017).

2.5.1 African views on sex and sexuality communication

Sex communication researchers, Warren and Warren (2014) observe that the focus on sex education studies overshadowed research on sex communication. Although Warren and Warren agree on shortage of research on family sex communication, their reasoning is different. They submit that there was less need for sex communication research because such communication was absent in families until an increase in sex communication was facilitated by media, societal openness, concerns on sexual health and parents' willingness to talk (2014). Warren and Warren aptly describe the context of sex communication in Africa where according to another researcher, "most researchers and scholars shied away from this taboo area of study, focusing only on what are considered safe topics, such as reproductive health and violence. Conspicuously missing from the mainstream sexuality research repertoire prior to the 1990s, were studies on positive aspects of African sexualities, such as pleasure, eroticism and desire." (Tamale, 2011:35). Tamale (2011) adds that researchers shied away from studying African sexuality even though the controversial foundations of sexual rights like right to sexual pleasure, or condemnation of sexual violence in marriages, have their roots in African traditional values.

Tamale argues that although there is increased interest to researching African sexuality, theories used to formulate research on African sexuality are not often defined by African cultures. At the same time, she justifies why these theories need to be adopted and adapted to African studies. Firstly, many contemporary codes of sexual morality and most laws relating to sex contained in the statute books of post-colonial countries are rooted in the histories and traditions of Africa's former colonising European nations. Secondly, these theories need to be adopted and adapted to African studies to save time and resources needed in developing theories that would not be completely new. Thirdly, whether it is in a foreign or African context, sexuality is linked by forces of gender to labour, authority and performance, and they are guided by capitalism and patriarchy (Tamale, 2011:40-42).

Researching sex and sexuality communication across the world, but particularly in Africa, has been hindered by other factors that go beyond those indicated by Warren and Warren (2014), and Tamale (2011). These include the secretive views to sex and sexuality that entice parents to wait for children to come of age, or become sexually active before such communication takes place (Blaisse, 2010). There are other hindrances to sex

communication that impact research, like family hierarchal structures, cultural and religious beliefs, shame, shyness, fear and hope to preserve children's ignorance (Kuvalanka et al., 2013; Shilumani, 2010; Jejeebhoy & Santhya, 2011; Bastien et al., 2009; Holman & Kellas, 2015; Phetla et al., 2008). Stigmatisation is also a hindrance that impacts research on sex communication (Wood & Jewkes, 2006). In addition, African parents and caregivers view sex-related content as immoral, inappropriate and sensitive (Bastien et al., 2009; Mpondo et al., 2018). Another challenge for researchers is that the African society does not directly place the burden of discussing sex and sexuality on adult-caregivers.

The indirect role makes it possible for parents to assume that adolescents have been exposed to sex and sexuality by peers, books, schools, grandparents, relatives or community leaders, meanwhile they know little or nothing. This assumption of prior knowledge possibly adds to why parents talk in one-direction, spontaneously and often prompted (Jordan, Price & Fitzgerald, 2000). Alongside like-minded scholars, Robinson, Thomas, Aveyard, and Higgs (2014) highlight the role of context in shaping family interactions on sex and sexuality. They decry the fact that when they occur, many such unplanned discussions often take place infrequently, and briefly as mentioned above (Wamoyi et al., 2010; Bastien et al., 2011). When these discussions occur, they are general and filled with warnings and threats (Agbeve, 2020; Mpondo et al., 2018). This will be elaborated below. Even when they decide to conduct research, scholars may find it difficult to get information from a people whose way of sharing such information has been through gossip (Wamoyi et al., 2010; Bastien et al., 2011). Regardless of parents' reluctance, studies indicate that adolescents prefer to receive information about sex, sexuality and reproductive health from parents (Kuvalanka et al., 2013; Bastein et al., 2011; Velcoff, 2010).

In reality, few adolescents have this privilege since many physically present parents and adult-caregivers do not openly entertain talks about sex-related topics with their children (Kuvalanka et al., 2013; Shilumani, 2010; Jejeebhoy & Santhya, 2011). Some parents merely lack knowledge about this taboo subject. Family communication flows according to family connectedness, their regulations, decision-making, gender role expectations and level of tolerance (Wamoyi et al., 2010; Sagnia et al., 2020; Duby et al., 2022; Shilumani, 2010; Medora & Wilson, 1992; Mmari et al., 2016; Nambambi & Mufune, 2011; Manzini-Matebula et al., 2015; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1999; Oros, 2012; Phetla et al., 2008; Bastien et al., 2011). There are many more factors, like education level, religion and gender of

parents. Reference can be made to studies by Kuvalanka et al. (2013) in America, Warren and Warren (2014), Jejeebhoy and Santhya (2011) in India. Reference can also be made to studies in Africa by Bastien et al. (2009), Velcoff (2010), Wamoyi et al. (2010), Mkhwanazi (2006), Varga (2003), Buga, Amoko and Ncayiyana (1996), Kunnuji (2012), and Manu, Mba, Asare, Odoi-Agyarko and Asante (2015).

It appears as though adult-caregivers and parents are more likely to consciously engage in sex and sexuality communication with their adolescents if they talked with their own parents in similar ways (Wamoyi et al., 2010; Bastien et al., 2009). At the same time, parents who modify their ways of life will modify how sex is presented and perceived in their families. For instance, new-age "positive parenting practices such as being available, spending time with teens outside the home, forming strong relationships, and communicating about sexual matters are important ways in which parents influence sexual behaviour, through predicted effects, depending on adolescents' gender and racial/ethnic identity" (Pearson, Muller & Frisco, 2006:84). In order to completely understand sex and sexuality communication in African families and the dynamics of closedness and openness that influence identity formation and communication, it is necessary to understand that some parents are more permissive than others when it comes to such communication with children.

Wamoyi et al.'s (2010) study in Uganda found that adolescents blame their parents' laxity in how their sexual identities are being formed (2010) and communicated. These adolescents' stance enhances claims that having parents' support and trust can be powerful tools in developing adolescents' sexual identity at this stage of rapid and pervasive health, and physical development (Holman, 2014; Smith, 1999; Seidman, 2009). McNeely and Blanchard (2009) add to this by calling for the recognition of all aspects of sexual development as that will encourage adolescents to make informed and healthy decisions about sexual matters; making parental or adult-caregiver communication an important binding factor in family relationships.

Although adolescence is highly conceptualised as meaning independence, adolescents keep facing warnings, threats, confused messaging and incomplete information (Maina et al., 2020; Lesch & Anthony, 2007). Children from families with less open communication may have thin support in gaining the knowledge that will affect how they experience sex and sexuality. This could explain why the presence of family communication about sex and

sexuality, or lack thereof, has given African adolescents an understanding about sex that is confusing, contradictory, or conflict-producing (Mmari et al., 2016; Oros, 2012; Vissing, 2018).

Veksler and Meyer (2014) note that most sex and sexuality scholarships in Africa place communication as an afterthought to larger issues of life stage and transition. Furthermore, Robinson et al. (2014) emphasise the role of context in shaping family interactions on sex and sexuality. This researcher also stated above that parents focus on issues of sexual development when they talk intentionally on sex and sexuality. Other findings place focus on physical development, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, sex, sexual orientation, sexual practices, safety, condoms, homosexuality, approval and disapproval, when to have sex, consequences of having sex earlier and of having unprotected sex at any stage except in marriage (Jordan et al., 2000; Santa Maria et al., 2014). These findings correlate with those of other studies conducted by Wamoyi et al. (2010) in Tanzania and Sagnia et al. (2020) in the Gambia, where parents focused on warnings on HIV and Aids and pregnancies. Other researchers have focused on how peer group norms influence adolescents' sexual behaviour (Adegboyega, Ayoola & Muhammed, 2019), on adolescent-parent communication on sexual and reproductive health issues (Sagnia et al., 2020), and in understanding the role played by parents, culture and the school curriculum in socialising young women on sexual health issues in rural South African communities (Mpondo et al., 2018). This includes communication about HIV and Aids and the use of contraceptives. It is worth noting that research has focused less on feelings, oral contraceptives, abortion, sexual pleasures like masturbation, sexual arousal, orgasm, sexual performance, body image and body dysmorphia (Duby et al., 2022).

Both parents and researchers are ignoring sexual values, sexual beliefs, sexual behaviours, sexual self-efficacy and sexual communication. Leaving these topics out means that adolescents remain ignorant. To fill this vacuum, Santa Maria et al.'s (2014) research on the consequences of having sex earlier and of having unprotected sex at any stage, except in marriage aims to empower adolescents, but invites conversations about approval and disapproval on when to have sex. Tolla et al. (2018) solicit talks about relationships and sexual pleasure. Zimmermann (2011) desires talk on the reduction of sex and the risk of violence at a time when Collins and Stadler (2000) and van der Merwe, Dawes and Ward (2012) think that many adolescents live, and are growing up, in climates of violence and

broken families. Barriers that Sagnia et al. (2020) claim deter parents from initiating sex talks.

In considering calls for contextual research, the following are relevant to this research:
1) What do families discuss when talking about sex and sexuality?
2) Who initiates topics?
3) Who leads discussions?
4) What themes do they talk about?
5) The age at which they start conversations, and
6) How they consciously, or not, use specific terms and words.
It is imperative that society remain mindful of the role which identity plays in sex because a young person who is not sure of their identity may withdraw completely from sex, or throw himself/herself into promiscuous sex without understanding that they are abandoning themselves. Understanding how Africans communicate sexuality may require a comprehensive understanding of African sexualities, with observation through several lenses that take in history, politics, economics, art, law, philosophy, literature and sociology (Tamale, 2011:48). Sexuality researchers in Africa should therefore anticipate that the concepts of sexuality and gender may denote both power and dominance (Tamale, 2011).

2.5.2 Sex and sexuality communication in South Africa

Bastien et al. (2011) have expressed positive concerns at increased interest in research about sex and sexuality communication in sub-Saharan Africa where researchers have explored this communication by parents and children (Emelumadu, Ezeama, Ifeadike, Ubajaka, Adogu, Umeh, Nwamoh, Ukegbu & Onyeonoro, 2014; Yadeta, Bedane & Tura, 2014; Mabunda & Madiba, 2017; Kamangu, Magata, & Nyakoki, 2017; Kunnuji, 2012; Wamoyi et al., 2010; Manu et al., 2015; Bastien et al., 2009). Unfortunately, as mentioned in the case of South Africa, studies on parent-child communication with respect to adolescents' sexual health have neglected studies about adolescents' sexual behaviour, love, sex, sexual feelings or pleasures, physical and emotional experiences of sex and on how sex and sexual health is communicated by African family members (Coetzee et al., 2014). This negligence has undercut the overall importance of sex and sexuality communication in families.

The availability of a variety of research highlighting how African adolescents in South Africa have spent their whole lives picking-up clues on how they are expected to comport themselves sexually with different people in different settings would have been empowering for this study. In the same light, knowledge on how African parents in South Africa have communicated on topics like body development, menstruation, erection, ejaculation, penetrative sex before marriage, choice of dating partners, contraceptives and preventatives, gay and lesbians, rape, sexual violence, masturbation, pregnancy and abortion, with adolescents will encourage flexible approaches to sex and sexuality communication. Research cautions that "adolescents' sexual knowledge and behaviours change throughout adolescence, therefore parents' approach to discussing sex with their adolescents must change as well" (Akers, Holland & Bost, 2011:507).

An important part of research on sex and sexuality communication in families is that which addresses parental and adult-caregivers' attitudes towards sex. This may be influenced by perceptions about sex and sexuality communication which differ between African families in South Africa due to differences in culture, religion race and ethnicity. The difference is such that some parents and adult-caregivers may not be aware of the fact that issues of sex and sexuality can be communicated effectively if they are age-appropriate, while respecting their family cultures and values. This makes it safe from the embarrassment of self-disclosure and tailors it according to the level of understanding of their children (Oros, 2012; Medora & Wilson, 1992; Grossman et al., 2018; Zuma et al., 2010; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Dunkle, 2009; Zimmerman, 2011; Wood et al., 1997; Vilanculos & Nduna, 2017; Holman, 2014).

The focus of this research is families with adolescents in a South Africa where most data do not indicate the exact age at which parents start speaking to their children about sex and sexuality (Jama-Shai & Mdanda, 2016; Namisi et al., 2008; Phetla et al., 2008; Rehle, Shisana, Simbayi, Zuma, Jooste, Zungu, Labadarios and Onoya, 2014; Jewkes et al., 2009; Mpondo et al., 2018; Bray et al., 2010). In South Africa parents, largely, tend to think that adolescents are over-inquisitive and culturally, children are 'seen and not heard' (Bastien et al., 2011). This study is conducted in a South Africa where about half of sex offence complainants are ('quiet') children (Machisa et al., 2017) and where there are warnings for new ways of parenting that still realise the importance of the current ways that African parents communicate about sex but do not alienate cultural and religious attitudes and beliefs

of parents and African communities in general (Bray et al., 2010). Ineffective communication in South Africa causes fear in communicating sexualities (Lesch & Anthony, 2007). This is worse with regard to disclosing sexually-related occurrences (Wood et al., 1997; Zimmerman, 2011). Adolescents' fears (but mostly, they lack interest in communicating about sex) reportedly play out in their lived testimonies of sexual violence, or fear thereof (Niehaus, 2006; Wood, Maepa & Jewkes, 1997).

Most recent findings indicate that African parents and adolescents in South Africa still would not freely talk on sex and sexuality (Duby et al., 2022). In adolescents' reports of little or no sexual information and communication from parents, they cite friends as their primary source of sexual information (Lesch & Anthony, 2007). Of course, similar to parents in the rest of Africa mentioned already, arguments are that African parents in South Africa's approach to sex-related communication is clouded with stigmatisation, shame, and fear (Bray et al., 2010; Wood & Jewkes, 2006). Their approach is also clouded by limited knowledge access, socio-cultural taboos, and misconceptions (Jewkes et al., 2009; Zimmerman, 2011; Zuma et al., 2010; Swart-Kruger & Richter, 1997). The approach of African parents in South Africa, to sex-related communication is laden with cultural idioms that are not well explained (Mpondo et al., 2018) to adolescents as parents claim that they are too young and innocent. They also claim that sex talks are cultural or religious taboos. Insecurities about their own pasts creep in. On their parts, adolescents evade sex talks from parents in order to save embarrassment or shame evoked by their age gaps (Duby et al., 2022; Mudhovozi et al., 2012; Bray et al., 2010). These attitudes from both parties have left non-communicative families in a situation where, when adults attempt to talk, they hugely send out incomplete messages that mislead and confuse children (Duby et al., 2022).

Researchers have concluded that many African parents of adolescents do know about the concept of sexuality, but are unable to express it due to the prior limitation of knowledge on topics. For example, Lesch and Anthony (2007) in the already mentioned research, interviewed mothers who talked with their adolescents on the biological aspects of sexuality; body development, penetrative sex and adolescents who detailed how their mothers delivered this through one-way lectures and threats. On her part, Lubinga (2015) found that adolescents who talked to their parents on peer pressure and HIV/Aids would communicate sex with their parents only if they needed advice or solutions to problems.

This silence has been long. This researcher could trace research from the early 1990s through to 2019 all confirming sex and sexuality as topics not frequently discussed in African families in general (Rosenthal & Feldman, 1999; Mudhovozi et al., 2012; Vilanculos & Nduna, 2017; Bray et al., 2010; Holman & Kellas, 2015; Jemmott, Jemmott, Ngwane, Icard, O'Leary, Gueits & Brawner, 2013; Shilumani, 2010; Medora & Wilson, 1992; Mmari et al., 2016; Nambambi & Mufune, 2011; Manzini-Matebula et al., 2015; Kamangu et al., 2017; Bastien et al., 2009; Jimmyns & Meyer-Weitz, 2019). The good news is that in research aimed at actively promoting sexual communication between adults and young people, Phetla et al. (2008) found that when adults challenge cultural norms and taboos, they are likely to communicate more openly and more effectively.

Keeping a habit of open and positive parent-child communication on sexual and reproductive health issues alive has many positive effects for the entire family and the benefits increase when children reach adolescence. Looking back in South Africa, like with other African countries, sex and sexual activities were considered natural at adolescence (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). This researcher has cited studies that depict African adolescents who have effective sexual communication with their parents as more likely to make healthy decisions on sex (Seloilwe, Magowe, Dithole & Lawrence, 2015; Jejeebhoy & Santhya 2011; Velcoff, 2010; Hindin & Fatusi, 2009; Jewkes et al., 2011). It is important to recap that in many African families in South Africa, talks about sex and sexuality are assumedly held by grandparents, uncles, aunts, custodians of traditions (Shilumani, 2010; Kajula et al., 2014; Velcoff, 2010; Jejeebhoy & Santhya, 2011). These talks are also held by schools and religious bodies (Bastien et al., 2009; Holman, 2014). This is because traditional and religious norms long positioned parents to play minimal roles (Soon, Kaida, Nkala, Dietrich, Cescon, Gray, Miller & Cari, 2013). In addition to those mentioned above as desiring talks from their parents, some adolescents have, in fact, shown preference to talk sex and sexuality with their religious or cultural leaders like ministers, priests, youth leaders and cultural leaders through initiation centres (Soon et al., 2013; Afifi, Joseph & Aldeis, 2008; Shilumani, 2010; Wood et al., 1997; Delius & Glaser 2002).

Presenting sex-education to adolescents in South Africa as sensitive, leaves many to underestimate sexual risks through denial and ignorance (Mudhovozi et al., 2012; Eaton, Flisher, & Aarø 2003). The relevance of the outcome of this research is indisputable considering the very high poverty rates amongst South Africans, 40% of whom are black

Africans (StatsSA, 2019c). The high demand for basic needs such as housing and food may have limited the capacity for families to communicate. Where young and unoccupied children go for hours, and sometimes days, with no direct supervision, sexual risk-taking is easily normalised by peers (Holman & Sillars, 2011). Lack of parents' and children's education and the ineffectiveness, or absence of communication impacts the health of adolescents and may play out in their lifelong ways of life (Grossman et al., 2018). As such, adolescents have to properly communicate sex and sexuality-related information, encourage decent decision-making and model behaviours, while acknowledging that each individual socialises in different ways as per their biological and psychological predisposition (Namisi et al., 2008; Oluyemi, Yinusa, Abdullateef, Kehinde & Adejoke, 2017; Kinsman, Nyanzi & Pool, 2000).

Parents and adolescents all concede that discussing sex and sexuality is vital, although they find it difficult to talk given that "youth sexuality is still perceived as a taboo" in South Africa; one of the countries that presents high sex-risk statistics (Chainok, Kongvattananon & Somprasert, 2018; Blaisse, 2010:47). A report from Statistics South Africa reveals that 106,408 births in 2019 were to mothers aged 10 to 19 (StatsSA, 2019). In October 2019, *The Citizen* Newspaper reported that there were 34 pregnant teenagers in one school (Sokutu, 2019). That same year, the *Saturday Star* captured the story of "a pregnant 17-year-old matric pupil" who "braved 'excruciating' labour pains to complete her maths literacy exam at a Gauteng school" (Mlambo, 2019). In addition to these, there are reports related to non-consensual sex in the country where unsolicited sex reportedly accounts for high rates of early sexual debut (van Niekerk & Mathews, 2019; Richter, Mabaso, Ramjith & Norris, 2015). There are also reports of high rates of sexually transmitted infections and the possibility of unplanned pregnancies (Zimmerman, 2011).

Reports of rape and sexual assault have increased by 8.2% since 2003, placing 27% of men as having raped a woman (StatsSA, 2019b; Jewkes et al., 2009). Further, statistics places birth rates outside marriage at 47.6%, with 45.6% of children born out of marriage living with their mothers and only 2% with their fathers (StatsSA, 2019b). The level of sexual risk is further reflected in that more than 95% of South African HIV infections are sexually transmitted (Zimmerman, 2011). In 2018, South Africa had the highest HIV and AIDS prevalence in the world, at 13.1%. Of this, 5.5% were aged 15 to 24. This evidence suggests

that there is growing need for more open communication about sex and sexuality, especially, given that the adolescent population across the world has been on the rise.

Adolescents make up a rather large proportion of the world's population. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2018), of the 7.2 billion people worldwide, around 1.2 billion, or about 16% are adolescents. In addition, WHO places the current youth population as the largest in history, and locates 20% of all adolescents and youths in Sub-Sahara Africa, with South Africa accounting for more than 35% of the total population aged 10 to 24 years (WHO, 2018). In 2016, 18.5%, or 10 294 894 of South Africa's total population were adolescents (StatsSA, 2019a). Of these, 9.3% constituted 10 to 14-year-olds and 9.1% were 15 to 19-year-olds. In addition, 5 160 084, or 18.9%, were males and 5 134 202, or 18.1%, were females. The majority of South African adolescents are black Africans at 19.3% (StatsSA, 2019a: x). Since the future of nations relies on this growing population's wellbeing, it is well worth doing further research into how adolescents form and communicate sexual identities.

South African adolescents are highly, sexually active (Panday et al., 2009; Amoateng, Kalule-Sabiti & Arkaah, 2014). Yet, information reaching them on sex and sexuality "remains predominantly guided by a 'danger, damage and disease' narrative, focusing on the need for adolescents to avoid sex, which is projected as risky" (Tolla et al., 2018:34). Non-traditional sexual orientations may not be culturally and religiously acceptable and adolescents are not allowed to express their sexual-self to parents, else they'll be disrespectful (Lubinga, 2015). In addition, females are restricted from expressing their capacities to explore their sexuality actively and confidently by the danger they are exposed to (Lesch & Anthony, 2007).

Adolescent pregnancy, school dropout, curtailed personal development and increased vulnerability to exploitative sexual relationships, higher rates of maternal mortality and greater risks of clandestine abortion reflect patterns of sexual activities that put African adolescents in South Africa at risk of expressive sexuality, alongside gang activity, coercion, substance abuse and other social pressures (Dickson, Jewkes, Brown, Levin, Rees & Mavuya, 2004). These all have major social and health implications in that either by choice, force, or a combination of both, these adolescents' sexual debut is influenced by the messages they have acquired from parents and caregivers (Temple-Smith et al., 2016;

Richter *et al.*, 2015). Their exposure to a variety of sexual socialisation sources introduces diversity of sexual behaviours, including homosexuality or same sex orientation that show up at adolescence (Temple-Smith et al., 2016).

To balance their self-esteems, these factors have to be talked about in South Africa where transgender adolescents are socially relegated by both friends and family (Kody, 2008). Adolescents experience a high prevalence of violence, a lifetime of repeated victimisation, repeated sexual assault, rape and murder, both from strangers and known others. Parents who live with adolescents have to know the variants of sex and sexuality that adolescents are exposed to in order to understand their sexual journeys. The theoretical framework of this study expands on how family communication about sex and sexuality can be followed by high levels of respect and confidentiality as adolescents continue to openly define and explain their sexual preferences and to experiment with both sex and sexuality. This, at a time when the lack of South African studies to benchmark family sex and sexuality communication with other countries necessitates urgent research, including this one. This researcher is hopeful that the outcome of this research will create comfortable and safe environments for families to communicate openly at personal and collective levels, without tensions, fears and embarrassment. This study now seeks to validate why people who did not grow up talking sex with their parents may likely not talk sex with their own children and to explain how privacy in sex and sexuality communication plays out within family setups.

2.6 Privacy boundaries in family sex and sexuality communication

Researchers have presented adolescence as a human developmental phase that creates both identity fluidity and relationship problems with parents. A stage where children have learnt about, and are focused on, self-image or self-identity building that become the philosophies of their lives (Kerr & Stattin, 2003). At this stage, they desire autonomy in decision-making as they challenge family rules and roles while pushing family boundaries (Beyers, 2011). They are understanding and defining the meaning of privacy. The desire to distant themselves from parents and connect with peers has prompted adolescents to be private with parents, but expressive with peers (Nduna & Jewkes, 2011). Their right to own their private information and, at the same time, their parents' right to know this information determine how family members consider, initiate, maintain and regulate communication, especially

because most of what parents know about their adolescents' actions is told to them by their adolescents. This means in reverse of the adolescents who may socialise wrongly because their parents do not communicate with them, parents have limited access to information held by adolescents if they are not communicating with their adolescents.

Consciously or not, humans keep aspects of themselves private from others for different reasons including shame, rejection, harassment, or loss of acceptance. Reality projects humans to be more private on substance abuse, sex and sexuality, alcoholism, sexual abuse, pornography addiction and other topics regarded as taboos. Privacy and keeping secrets help people, including adolescents to feel separate from others. Hence, scholars articulate that family members may use privacy to protect family integrity or to avoid unprecedented hindrances like 'family secrets' (Kanu, 2018:36). In a study with interest on how identities are communicated, it will be interesting to understand how privacy helps people to feel separate from others, but at the same time how it helps them to belong. After all, research situates secrecy as giving identity, creating bonds and enhancing communication (Kanu, 2018). Paradoxically, secrecy can lead to lost identities because the more people exhibit fear or anxiety to communication, the lesser they speak and the lesser they speak, the lesser they share information and the less honest they are when they share (Wheeless, Nesser & Mccroskey, 1986).

Privacy boundaries in communication are what is allowed and what is not allowed (Jenings & Malcak, 2004:80). Decisions on disclosure and concealment in families revolve around sex and sexuality as well (Petronio, 2010). Disclosure on its part occurs when people grant "access to private things and to secrets" (Rosenfeld, 2014:6). Disclosure can be viewed as emotional, in that information owners always link private information to their emotions, self-esteems and self-identities (Petronio, 2018). The role of emotions in disclosure is such that "family members who disclose more should be more satisfied with their relationships, family members should disclose more to specific family members with whom they have good relationships, and family members should be more satisfied with relationships with other family members who disclose more" (Finkenauer, Rutger, Branje & Meeus, 2004:197). Although it is alleged that parents who self-disclose consider their children as equal partners, it should be noted that before they share information, family members evaluate what they stand to lose and gain (Finkenauer et al., 2004; Petronio, 2002).

Disclosure, intimacy, expressiveness (openness) and distance, privacy, non-disclosure (closedness) form the dialectical tensions of connection and autonomy expanded on in this study to help readers to "understand how and why we reveal or conceal private information" (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008). The terms, closedness and openness are used to relate to the concepts of revealing and concealing details of sex and sexuality. These terms make the management of boundaries around private information complex. Hence, this study uses them to describe respect for one's right to either disclose sexually-related information or to keep this information private (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008). In other words, the terms 'openness' and 'closedness' are used to refer to the dynamics of privacy that influence communication about sex and sexuality. The researcher presents privacy and concealment as people's expectation and experience of control over access to their information, spaces, or property (Petronio, 2010).

'Openness' refers to one's willingness 'to tell' other people or to be open about their sexual exploits or sexuality. 'Closedness' on the other hand, refers to one's unwillingness to talk about their sexuality. For example, 'closedness' could be used to describe someone who is not willing to disclose their desire for a same-sex partner nor to talk about the act of sex. While someone's expression about their sexual preferences or their desire to have sex may be described as 'openness', in this research, both terms insinuate that family members attempt to maintain privacy while simultaneously wanting others to know and possibly understand their sexual preferences and orientations or their sexual identities. The preference for 'openness' and 'closedness' is dependent on context. The above literature gives a sense that silence and secrecy on sex and sexuality may lead to mistrust, mis-communication, denial, silence and even fear between generations (Bray et al., 2010). These terms fit the patterns of secrecy and revelation in conversations between adolescents and family members.

This study's approach to privacy and disclosure theorises communicative issues, faced on a daily basis, that guide how individuals make decisions about balancing disclosure and privacy (Cunill, 2015). Although it is common that by default older caregivers know certain information about children than children themselves could, adolescents want greater independence and responsibility as they are developing and consolidating their sense of self. They wish to own and control information on their communication in the form of disclosure, especially on information they consider personal (Branje et al., 2008). They want

independence and control on decisions, emotions and actions and they want to disengage from parental control (Kreppner, 2000). Research finds that adolescents would disclose, or not disclose, in attempts to maintain their personal (or family) identity while not disconnecting from family members (Harris & Gonzalez, 2015). Such research validates the claims above that story-telling on personal information may be intended to create and/or maintain bonds (Amason, 2020; Merrill et al., 2018; Galvin et al., 2018; Petronio, 2002).

While bonding, people learn and share values, beliefs and behaviours that control the flow of information (Harris & Gonzalez, 2015). Yet, adolescents are cutting off parents' knowledge of theirs to protect their privacy boundaries or simply to keep private (Dietvorst, Hiemstra, Hillegers & Keijsers, 2017; Darling, Cumsille, Caldwell & Dowdy, 2006). Privacy, simultaneously, provides autonomy and influences how adolescents disclose, what they disclose and to whom they disclose. The more children seek autonomy by being private, the more parents seek to know about them in order to maintain connectedness and the more parents' judgments about the degrees of privacy which adolescents may wish to experience increase (Kennedy-Lightsey & Frisby, 2016). Hence, the concept of "openness and closedness" poses particularly important challenges for adolescents-parents communication (Petronio, 2010; Petronio & Caughlin, 2006).

This challenge thrives on privacy ownership or boundaries surrounding information, often set by controlling whom information is shared with and where it is shared (Petronio, 2004). Petronio alludes to personal boundaries as those that manage private information about the self, while collective boundaries represent many different privacy boundary types shared with other people like siblings, parents or friends (Petronio, 2002:85). To Petronio, collective boundaries occur when individuals grant ownership of their private information to others, through disclosure (Petronio, 2002). She claims that "privacy has importance for us because it lets us feel separate from others. It gives us a sense that we are the rightful owners of information about us" (Petronio 2002:1). This claim is of critical value to the identity formation, maintenance and communication journey of adolescents. This is more so because researchers found that the more sensitive privacy is assumed to be, the tighter the boundaries and vice versa (Petronio, 2002; Venetis, Greene, Magsamen-Conrad, Banerjee, Checton & Bagdasarov, 2012). This is why during disclosure, information owners set revealing rules that notify information co-owners on how attached they are to their information (Petronio, 2002; Venetis et al., 2012).

Privacy researchers do suggest that adolescents have become private. They often withhold information to avoid worrying their parents and guardians and would provide information to keep their parents' trust (Tilton-Weaver et al., 2010). Without undermining adolescents' intention for privacy, it would appear as if keeping secrets is meeting with mixed reactions, as some parents have become more intrusive, just as they could choose to become less intrusive (Dietvorst et al., 2017). Intrusive parents who would have owned and co-owned the space and the information with their growing children may not be aware of being invasive (Hawk, Keijsers, Hale III & Meeus, 2009).

Invasion of privacy may be seen as undermining adolescent's quest for autonomy. But as relationships develop, or as children grow, in the case of this study, families co-create rules and norms on discussion topics, the depth of their discussions and their degree of vulnerability (Petronio, 2002). When information owners control access to information on personal levels, managing private information belongs to them as the said information is singularly owned. Unfortunately, even with rules, it remains easy for someone's privacy to be infringed upon in family relationships where both adolescents and parents can be invasive knowingly and unknowingly (Hawk et al., 2009). Whether recipients want to hear information or not, once they have access to it, they are expected to help manage the information as co-owners through the process of boundaries coordination (Afifi, 2003; Petronio, 2012). This study will discuss the three steps through which privacy is maintained below when the chosen theory's stipulations on information ownership is elaborated. This is because these steps position privacy as helping in shaping individual, as well as family, identities.

Culture, identity and privacy. The desire for privacy is universal. Privacy rules are often influenced by culture and religion within and outside family settings where traditionally, people strive to present a positive version of themselves while concealing what they deem as private and somehow damaging (Petronio, 1994). Culture determines boundaries within family settings. Culture has encouraged parents to sometimes, conceal in order to protect their children from potential risks. For example, this study indicated above that many parents in Africa think that if they reveal sexual details, they would be educating their adolescents on what they would rather their adolescents do not know or do. Researchers like Petronio

and Reierson (2009) refer to such cultures as having erected think boundaries which, hopefully, aspects of this study's chosen theory will explain.

There is no conversation on identity without reference to privacy. So, as this study theorises how identities play out in private and public spaces, it has to consider that identity helps family members to feel separate from others; except considering that parents-children's relationships by default make parents know more of children's private lives (Poggenpoel et al., 2016; Petronio, 2002:129). This research seeks cultural and religious values and beliefs that challenge effective communication. Duly so because it is important for research on family communication to understand how members manage information within culturally embedded parents-children relationship processes, while considering age, generational status, education of children, but mostly of parents.

Parents maintain a sense of family by helping children to understand family identity (Breshears, 2011). As such, whether within the family or outside, the practice of privacy facilitates people being differentiated from each other through their behaviours and actions. A person, therefore, desires people to enact specific behaviours to generate the desired response needed to maintain their identity. For instance, although the majority of communication does not seem to be conscious, that of sensitive topics is because people want to present the best of their identities (Petronio, 2002).

2.7 Theoretical Rationale: Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory

This study focuses on how parents and adult caregivers' communication about sex and sexuality influences how adolescents communicate their sexual identities. To understand the theoretical underpinnings that guide the communication of sex and sexuality, and to contextualise the above literature such that it better explains the communication of sexual identities, this discourse recognises sex and sexuality communication as generating multidisciplinary interests. Therefore, Petronio's Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory is grounded in communication discipline (Petronio, 1991; 2000; 2002; 2004; 2007; Caughlin & Petronio, 2004; Petronio & Caughlin, 2006; Petronio & Durham, 2008; Petronio & Reierson, 2009). CPM hypothesises privacy as crucial in information exchange across a lifespan and stems from the principle of "to tell or not to tell" (Petronio, 2000). CPM initially grew from exploring family privacy when it was introduced as Communication

Boundary Management theory in 1991 (Petronio, 1991; Petronio, 2018). CPM is based on how people make decisions about disclosing and withholding personal information and how they "manage the relationship between revealing and concealing" (Petronio, 2002:2). It stipulates that individuals decide what private or personal information to share, who to share it with and how much of it (Littlejohn, Foss & Oetzel, 2017). Designed to inform how people decide whether they should reveal or conceal theirs or others' private information, this theory does influence the parent-child dyad's communication decisions by providing clear guidelines on how each individual manages private information.

2.7.1 Navigating privacy and disclosure

The paradox of privacy and the desire of wanting to tell, and wishing to preserve certain information, makes it difficult to think disclosure without thinking privacy. Hence Petronio cautions that "neither privacy nor disclosure stands separate from each other" (Petronio, 2002:18). To her, "underpinning this theoretical proposal is the fundamental belief that privacy and disclosure are dialectical tensions" where the absence of privacy means disclosure and the absence of disclosure means privacy (Petronio, 2002:33; Petronio, 2018). Petronio's CPM theory values the privacy of communication and acknowledges the power that disclosure, or lack of disclosure, may have over the quality of communication, and communication's influence on formation and communication of identities. CPM is essentially about personal and interpersonal information, particularly private information and how it is handled (Bello, Brandau-Brown & Ragsdale, 2016). It explains private information as; "that which individuals revealed", and which they perceive as being owned and controlled by them (Petronio, 2002: xvii). CPM's understanding of how people make decisions about concealing and revealing private information includes its assumptions "that others are also central to discerning the tension between being public and private" (Petronio, 2002:2). Such understanding plays a great role in this research which explores why parents and adolescents may use key criteria such as cultural expectations, gender, motivation, context and risk-benefit ratio to establish privacy rules (Petronio, 2002:23).

This theory is well situated for this research because, firstly, it explains communicative matters about privacy that individuals face in their everyday worlds (Petronio, 2002: xvii). Petronio focuses on how to use CPM to explain how family members navigate the tension between privacy and disclosure during communication. Secondly, it can be used to

understand how these issues help in forming identities (Petronio, 2002). The CPM theory is used in this study to find out how family communication about sex and sexuality has played out in how adolescents present information on themselves to adult family members. Thirdly, it emerges from relevant literature and frames the problem statement, research questions, methodologies and data analysis of this research. This study has presented scholars who found sex and sexuality communication secretive for both adolescents and parents, although every form of communication is in fact communication of identities or, at least, communication itself shapes identities (Baxter, 2011).

While CPM is on privacy and disclosure in family communication, this research focuses on sex and sexuality communication in African families in South Africa with adolescents. The researcher's intention in this study is to provide insights into adolescents-parents communication vis-a-via Petronio's referral as sender and confidant's personal relationship (Petronio, 2000; 2002; Petronio & Durham, 2008). In order to underpin rule management in privacy and disclosure within a such relationship, Petronio suggests the five core elements of the CPM theory that enhance this study's findings on how privacy boundaries are coordinated between family members;

- Firstly, the theory concentrates on private information.
- Secondly, a boundary metaphor is used to demarcate boundaries between private information and private relationships.
- Thirdly, control is an issue for two reasons; people believe that private information is owned or co-owned with others, thus they desire control over boundaries and revealing or concealing private information that may lead to feeling vulnerable. Consequently, control is important to ward off vulnerability.
- Fourthly, the theory uses a rule-based management system to aid in decisions in the way boundaries are regulated.
- Fifthly, the notion of privacy management is predicted on treating privacy and disclosure as dialectical in nature (Petronio, 2002:3).

2.7.2 Information ownership and control

A part of identity construction is knowing what is personal and what is not or knowing what information to tell and what not to tell. Ownership according to CPM, occurs when individuals create personal and collective boundaries to mark their ownership lines for

information (Petronio, 2002:7). During this time, family members are expected to utilise the following three processes involved in boundaries coordination that this study promised to present when it discussed privacy boundaries in the section above on family sex and sexuality communication:

1) Regulation of boundary linkages; which are alliances formed between discloser and recipient,
2) Boundary ownership rights; where information is shared either to intended or unintended recipients, and
3) Boundary permeability; the amount of access to, or within a privacy boundary (Petronio, 2002:30-32).

These information ownership boundaries can be relatively impenetrable (easily crossed) or relatively impregnable (strict and difficult to cross) (Petronio, 2002).

As expanded below, Petronio (2002) and Petronio and Caughlin (2006) note that individuals are certain that they can control how they analyse, conceal and disclose their privately owned information through boundary rules. Petronio (2002) furthers argues that by adolescence, children have developed a separate identity from their parents and have developed their own sets of privacy rules that are separate from their family. This means that they control the information which when shared, new owners have two responsibilities; to own the information and to know disclosure rules. But Petronio also warns that there are other times "when the rules for managing the tensions between privacy and disclosure somehow fail to be coordinated among the boundary members" (Petronio, 2002:19). She adds that boundaries turbulence occurs when co-owners mismanage private information or when they have conflicting expectations with information owners (Petronio, 2002). Reflect on the case of a parent who shares information with adolescents who may not fully understand privacy management rules. If the rules are not well set on how to use the information, or are misunderstood, turbulence could be eminent. This means that the rule-based management system regulates the process of personal information disclosure and concealment on three privacy rule managements namely; privacy rule characteristics, boundary adjustment and boundary turbulence (Petronio, 2002). This study seeks to contribute to what adolescents are saying to parents; specifically, how privacy management influences what they are sharing with their parents and how they are making parents co-owners, rather than what they are keeping from their parents.

2.7.3 CPM in the family

Communicating with children often prompts the withholding of certain details in the hope of protecting children either because they are underage or because the details are socially, religiously and/or culturally limited to adults. In fact, as much as the importance of privacy depends on the age of the boundary holder, revealing information to anyone is risky and "many people might feel embarrassed, uncomfortable and somehow exposed" (Petronio, 2000; 2002:1). In spite of that, people communicate. Petrie (1989) notes that the person they communicate with might have gained their trust, they may simply like them, they are the only ones who listen, or they are a family member. In the same light, some people do not communicate sex and sexuality information within their families because they feel like it was not the appropriate time to do so, or that family members are not the appropriate people to hear the information.

To evade risks of disclosing to the wrong people, at a bad time, or too much, Petronio suggests "two distinctive privacy boundaries, external boundaries that protect private information belonging to the whole family and internal privacy boundaries within the family" (Petronio, 2002:152). She further states that although information sharing, especially with members outside families, depends on permeability levels of families, it is easier for privacy to be kept on taboo and risky themes since family members (especially children) fear being judged or punished (Petronio, 2002; 2018). To Petronio (2018), dealing with privacy within the family is important because although high risk secrets could be "problematic in both revealing and concealing", both keeping and sharing information can be helpful or detrimental to both the information holder and the listener (Petronio & Caughlin, 2006; Petronio, 2002:67-68; 2018). Petronio (2002) states that this makes revealing too much information at one time (or when the recipient; adolescent in this case, is not ready to hear), costly. To Petronio, the risk continues when disclosure is done at a bad time and when a lot more or even too little information is disclosed. The same risk applies when such information compromises other people (Petronio, 2002).

Petronio (2002:26) explains that although each human has a mental calculus used to decide whether to tell or keep private information, the younger a child is, the less likely they are to know and own their identity. As such children know less about privacy and when to reveal,

or not to reveal messages, until family members begin to teach them members' expectations for how their family privacy relevance is regulated. They simultaneously teach children ways to manage personal information. In order to evade risks, Petronio (2018) recommends that adults should train children on how to manage and apply privacy rules as they grow.

2.7.4 CPM and rules

Petronio's CPM theory revolves around rule development, boundary coordination and boundary turbulence. These aspects of the theory need adoption to explain parents' and adult caregivers' influence on how family communication informs children's identities. To Petronio, pre-existing rules are acquired through the socialisation process (Petronio, 2002). Petronio (2010; 2002:23) argues that privacy shows up in disclosure and concealment, but "revealing and concealing is regulated through rule management processes". This explains why people control their privacy boundaries by revealing or concealing personally or collectively. Through the act of self-disclosure, a parent in this study may, for example, tell their adolescent at what age they lost their virginity but add that the adolescent does not share this information with anyone. Self-disclosure is a risky but important act in family relationships, of telling someone highly personal or private information (Braithwaite et al., 2015:136). The above parent's instruction to their adolescent is a rule that forms the personal boundary on the shared information. However, if the parent tells two or more of his children with the same instruction, the boundary becomes collective.

Petronio (1991; 2002) has referred to privacy rules as helping to maintain privacy boundaries between individuals. This mean that these rules may help coordinate the privacy boundary and facilitate the concealing of information. In addition, rules protect both information and the information holder whom in the case of this study's example is the parent. These rule, which Petronio says are pre-existing within families, must be taught, managed and coordinated. To be observant, Petronio advices people to regulate the limits of what they wish to share using different communication patterns that depend on their perceived costs and benefits of information withheld or disclosed (Petronio, 2002). She corroborates that during adolescence "children begin to develop their own set of privacy rules that may differ from those that their parents taught them. During this stage, the children's boundaries begin to increase significantly in size. Adolescents have more information, space, and possessions to control and actively work to increase their ownership during this phase" (Petronio,

2002:74). In this light, researchers have warned that negotiating privacy boundaries can be challenging for adolescents and their parents at this stage where adolescents are striving for independence, but hoping to remain close to parents (Braithwaite et al., 2014).

Privacy rules are influenced by the information holder's criteria on what to disclose, to who, when, why and how. Individuals often base this decision on specific situations or topics, although Anderson, Kunkel and Dennis (2010) agree with Petronio that individuals avoid specific topics considered taboo, primarily as mechanisms to protect the self and avoid risks to their reputation. Petronio's rule-based guidelines are individual-based as various diversities that surround both daily interactions and individualities make it impossible to give prescribed privacy rules to protect every owner's private information (Petronio, 1991; 2002).

Although they are individual-based, five universal criteria implied above do guide CPM privacy rules:

1) Risk-benefit ratio, where information holders evaluate potential risks of disclosing information alongside benefits of concealing, like considering what a 10-year-old will do with information on when their parent lost his virginity.

2) Culture, where information holders consider cultural norms that guide both disclosure and concealing decisions. In the above example, is it culturally accepted for a parent to talk to their 10-year-old adolescent about when they lost their virginity?

3) Contextual constraints, where the circumstances under which people find themselves, the appropriateness of the content and their physical locations may influence disclosure and concealing decisions; like the case of the parent who shared when he lost his virginity, was he forced to disclose or did the adolescent overhear some details that prompted the conversation?

4) Gendered criteria, where men and women disclose differently and have different rules guiding their disclosure; would the adolescent's parent of the opposite gender disclose information to the same child, or would the above parent disclose to boys and girls equally?

5) Motivations for privacy, based on attraction, liking, reciprocity, or expected rewards; did the parent talk because their adolescent had disclosed their own private information, or because they were hoping that their adolescent would disclose in return? (Petronio, 2002). These rules guide scholars on researching privacy management (Petronio, 2000; 2002; 2007).

Petronio (2002:73) claims that members do enact sanctions to reinforce the importance of implementing privacy rules for collective boundaries. This, despite repeating that most children are ignorant of privacy until they "are socialized into family privacy rules by members" as they grow. As relationships develop, individuals co-create rules and norms about appropriate topics to discuss, depth at which to discuss them and how to deal with vulnerability. Petronio (2002) notes that although by adolescence, children are developing their own sets of privacy rules, they tend to learn about privacy mostly from adults' needs than from children's own immediate privacy concerns. In order for adolescents' individual identities to be fully developed (irrespective of cultural expectations, motivation, context of the situation, risk-benefit ratios, gender orientations, relational contexts and function, like everyone else), they have to develop boundaries to serve moderate privacy rules as influenced by family settings (Petronio, 2002). It is worth noting that apart from not being defined, privacy rules are often inexplicit. This means that when owners share information, confidants may not know (or interpret well) the privacy rules until these rules have been violated (Petronio, 2002). The individual criteria, that information holders consider when they make rules for and with their confidants, enhance this study's search for privacy management processes that African families with adolescent children encounter when they communicate sex and sexuality.

2.7.5 Privacy and disclosure in sex and sexuality communication

This research is concerned with understanding how adolescents battle with the decision of whether to disclose or not to disclose information about their sexual acts and their sexuality. Since identity is both private and public, it will seem easier to understand the dynamics of how privacy is influencing sexual identity formation from the perspective that family members discuss sex and sexuality in the form of disclosure much more than as in their day-to-day communication. As children grow, families feel shifts on privacy levels and parents begin to teach children privacy rules established for the family's private information (Ledbetter, 2019; Petronio, 2002). Research shows that parents continue to present sex as sensitive, negative and mostly in a top-down communication to children (Grossman et al., 2018; Bastien et al., 2011). Such a stigma, for example, imposes huge barriers to family communication on sex (Lebese, Davhana-Maselesele & Obi, 2010). Ironically, this communication or its absence is needed to build adolescents' identities.

For parents to continuously socialise their children and appropriately so, this researcher has argued that they need information from their adolescents on what their adolescents know already and what their doubts are. The researcher's argument favours Holman and Kellas' (2015) warning that families could encounter profound consequences on sexual decisions on adolescents in cases where parents are not properly updated. This is not a call on parents to disclose inappropriately to children. In fact, the findings above on the benefits of appropriate sex talks that include sexual risk evasion, knowledge and associated sexual identity formation and communication is also helpful here. Adolescents have to decide whether or not their parents should know if they are sexually active and parents need to decide how much about the act of sex they want to share with their adolescents. After all, most African families or their cultures simultaneously validate keeping family secrets and gossiping.

It may seem like holding on to private information amidst such conflicting tolerance is challenging but not so particularly amongst many Africans in South Africa to whom sex and sexuality communication remain taboo topics and whose cultures consider sexual experiences to be personal and private (Cohen, Vandello, Puente & Rantilla, 1999; Niehaus, 2006). For many African adolescents in South Africa, it is not difficult to master the lines between telling and not telling since their parents who are mostly physically absent, are not clearly communicating what they would like to hear or not (Lesch & Anthony, 2007). This means that parents do not make it easy for adolescents to disclose to them. They remain less intrusive (Dietvorst et al., 2017). So, their adolescents are developing ownership, putting down boundaries and deciding whether to share or not share information which they view as private (Keijsers, Frijns, Branje & Meeus, 2009). The importance of this study is that it searches how sex-related communication has influenced adolescents' communication of characters towards sex and sexuality in South African settings where apart from research on disclosure to sexual partners and on disclosure and concealment in inter-racial romantic relationships, the researcher could hardly find research on how family members disclose to adolescents on sex and sexuality (Simbayi, Kalichman, Strebel, Cloete, Henda & Mqeketo, 2017; Vu, Andrinopoulos, Mathews, Chopra, Kendall & Eisele, 2012; Ngcongo, 2018).

This discussion on CPM has examined the ownership and management of private information during family sex and sexuality communication and how this affects identity communication. It positions how family members, who interpret privacy as part of the

dynamics of family relationships, understand how to better deal with both challenges and tensions brought about by communication or lack of communication. This research seeks to understand whether or not African family members recognise the components of CPM like disclosure and non-disclosure and how they handle these during communication about sex and sexuality. It is certainly of extra benefit to the scholarly community that the results of this study examine associations between family communication and CPM, as parents and adolescents in African families talk on sex and sexuality.

Conclusion

Adults remain essential caregivers, role models, educators and mentors, but parents are particularly the most important influence on adolescents' decision-making (Aspy, Vesely, Oman, Rodine, Marshall & McLeroy, 2007; Chen, 2022). Parental communication, primarily on sex-related issues has been a key but neglected measure of family involvement in adolescents' lives. Yet, adolescents develop attitudes towards sex and sexuality following memorable messages that they receive, or perhaps did not, from family members and other sources (Sooriya, 2017). Thus, reinforcing parents' roles as children's first teachers and their life-long sources of guidance and also reinforcing adolescents' expectations to express themselves to their parents.

This literature indicates that positive and greater levels of family involvement encourage open communication in families, thereby encouraging communicative attitudes between parents and their adolescents (Mmari et al., 2016). This leads to positive outcomes like delayed sexual debut, less risky sexual habits, less frequent sexual activities and fewer sexual partners (Mmari et al., 2016; Oros, 2012; Mpondo et al., 2018). Sex and sexuality may not be adequately addressed independently with communication but by using effective communication, parents and adult caregivers are in excellent positions to reduce adolescents' behavioural deficits. If parents foster and facilitate on-going parent-child dialogues, parents-adolescents communication will serve as a guiding force for adolescents who navigate sexual changes (Kody, 2008; Holman, 2014). This chapter presented the notion that sex and sexuality communication in families is required to address African adolescents' sexual wellbeing but further research needs to explain this.

This researcher noticed that literature on South African family communication on sex-related topics is skewed more towards risk than the simple transactional and bonding roles of family sex and sexuality communication. The absence of literature on how Africans in South Africa discuss sex and sexuality, particularly with focus on identities, wellbeing, privacy and ultimately mental health and the scarce literature on the role of family communication in adolescents' sexual identity communication all invite further research. Increasing reference to parents and adolescents' sex and sexuality communication leaves this study to hypothesise the content and tone of sexuality communication in African families that influence identity formation in adolescence. In conclusion, for cultural, religious, social and other reasons, African adolescents may tend to use strategic disclosure and/or secrecy as adaptive strategies for gaining more autonomy. The above literature has paved the way to understanding the chosen method in which this research data is conducted. So, before this study pins this literature to the South African reality through collected data it is necessary to understand its research method.

Chapter Three

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

A research methodology is the way in which researchers make sense of their objects of enquiry (Sarantakos, 2013:65). Creswell (2009:18) projects three research methods as being quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method research. This study employed a qualitative research method. The choice of a qualitative method for this study is because it is exploratory and provides a valuable source of evidence that enhances social science research and allows focus on meaning, context and culture (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004; O'Dwyer & Bernaue, 2014; Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013; Hoffmann, 2007). Alongside the literature, CPM informs the qualitative in-depth interview method used by qualitative researchers in that it "affords a system that accounts for context and culture as critical dimensions in effective privacy management processes" (Child & Petronio, 2017:206). Meaning-making, context conversations and cultural appropriateness are vital variants in this research.

Using CPM, in fact, enabled the researcher to pin the literature to the South African reality by focusing on the rules which African families with adolescents use in discussing matters that concern how families actively influence adolescents' communication of their developing identities. This researcher acknowledges that no area of study is more intrusive or more prone to misinterpretation than that of individual attitudes and behaviours. The researcher leaned on Child and Petronio's (2017) recommendation for researchers to use interviews for research that employ the CPM theory. Aligning CPM to qualitative in-depth interviews allows this study to seek direct contributions to the research field of privacy management within the context of sex and sexuality communication.

This chapter begins with a discussion on the rationale of this study. It details the data collection procedures by explaining that in-depth interviews were used to collect data before it details the data collection procedures. It discusses the sample size, talks more about participants, recruiting procedures and explains the role of the researcher in qualitative research. It explains the data analysis procedure and provides hints on how each research question will be answered in the next chapter. This chapter elaborates the ethical issues as they pertain specifically to this research and to qualitative research in general. It situates

credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as the four criteria implemented to ensure the trustworthiness of this research, before concluding the chapter.

3.1 Rationale

Qualitative research is a method best suited to pick up the differences in attitudes of family members (Guest et al., 2013). It is more so, in this research where noticing attitudes, employed as family members discuss sexuality issues, is essential. Even better is that qualitative method inquiries focus on the participants own perspectives, views and experiences, including what the researcher seeks and the kind of data they hope to collect (Curtin and Fossey, 2007). Data and setting are the main instruments of this method which is suited for research that seeks depth of understanding and not quantity of understanding (Henning et al., 2004). In this research, the evidence is participants' accounts of their experiences. The study uses this evidence to clarify the data and to give in-depth descriptions of participants' experiences.

Like other qualitative inquiries, this study's data is first-person accounts or self-reports of participants' knowledge, experiences and exposures. After all, a qualitative researcher "draws excerpts from the data to illustrate the findings and to show the reader how the findings were derived from the evidential data" (Polkinghorne, 2005:138). The researcher hopes that this study will enhance her capacity as a family researcher to understand and play a role in giving voices to the voiceless given that this topic can easily be aligned with what Guest et al. (2013) term complex, intruding, novel, or under-researched that may discover new or unexpected outcome(s). In concurrence with this study, researchers argue that a qualitative method "seeks to discover new knowledge by retaining complexities as they exist in natural settings" (O'Dwyer & Bernaue, 2014:5). Their claim is in agreement with this research given that sex and sexuality are of private or individual lives. They are sensitive and taboo subjects that are not easily discussed. Communicating them means exposing decisions, feelings, motives, responses, experiences and meanings that are personal and cannot be easily understood without exploration. At the conclusion of chapter two it would have been noted that this research is original to exploring South Africa.

Qualitative research methods such as interviews respect African value systems and African philosophies, through its consideration that reality may be constructed through being-ness

(Guest et al., 2013). Added to that, the interpretive nature of qualitative research privileges the affective-cognitive philosophy innate to African belief systems (Stenbacka, 2001). This method made it possible for the researcher to capture YAs and PoAs perspectives and motives for their engagement in sex and sexuality communication in conversational manners. Although sex and sexuality communication in the context of this study takes place within the confines of families, communication is a social process with influences beyond immediate environments.

The above discussion on qualitative research meets the aim of this study. In a rapidly changing South Africa with its diversity of societies and communities, it should be a priority to gain greater insights and understanding into the real-life communicative experiences that facilitate adolescents' formation of sexual identities. The following research questions guide both the data collection and interpretation;

RQ1: What influences South African parents and their adolescent children to discuss or not discuss issues of sex and sexuality?

RQ2: What boundaries rules are observed and negotiated by South African parents and their adolescent children when they talk sex and sexuality?

RQ3: How do South African parents and their adolescents handle personal or family boundaries turbulence during sex and sexuality communication?

RQ4: What do African parents and adolescents think needs to happen for more effective communication on sex and sexuality in South African families?

3.2 Data collection procedures

3.2.1 Participants

As represented in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 below, the majority of PoAs in this study's sample are married, while all YAs are single. More YA participants were adolescent parents than were the PoAs population. All PoA participants, except the 28-year-old heading his siblings, have children while only four YAs participants, all four of whom were adolescent parents, have children. No male was an adolescent parent. All adolescent parents in this sample are mothers. More PoAs than YAs have siblings, mirroring a drop in the number of births in the African population in South Africa. Every participant of this study is employed, self-employed or studying. Impressively, only one PoAs does not have a post matric qualification and more YAs have been to university than those who have not. Coincidentally, the total

sample has five fathers and six young adult males, fifteen mothers and fourteen young adult females in both sets of participants.

Table 3. 1. Demographic representation of parents of adolescents

Name	In a Relationship ?	Teenage parent	Has children	Has siblings	Work ing	Not working	Tertiary educatio n	Gender	Cultural grouping
Dian	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Male	Xhosa
Dzee	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Tsonga
Nevi	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Male	Sotho
Taa	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Male	African
Casi	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	African
Swa	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Xhosa
Mia	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Zulu
Mas	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	African
Neb	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Zulu
Ako	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Venda
Ivo	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Male	Sotho
Mobi	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Zulu
Leli	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Zulu
Noni	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Xhosa
Lum	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Zulu
Vera	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Pedi
Veni	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Zulu
Zev	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Xhosa
Beh	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Female	Tsonga
Favi	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Male	Sepedi

Table 3. 2. Demographic representation of young adults

Name	In a Relationship?	Teenage parent	Has children	Has siblings	Working	Studying	Tertiary education	Gender	Cultural grouping
Ciya	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Female	Swati
Gabi	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Female	Tswana
Ria	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Male	Swati
Zas	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Female	Tswana
Zam	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Male	Pedi
Ovis	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Male	Pedi
Lari	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Female	Sotho
Jix	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Male	Sotho
Pitt	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Male	African
Gale	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Male	Zulu
Leti	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Tswana

Celi	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Swati
Tana	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Sotho
Tiny	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Xitsonga
Lori	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Female	Sotho
Tani	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Female	Tsonga
Khal	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Female	African
Mere	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Female	Sepedi
Tiku	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Female	Swati
Mica	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Female	African

All YA participants were aged 19 to 26 as guided by the ethics clearance for this research. Four YAs were 19. This sample had a 26-year-old (Mere), who headed a family made up of her three siblings who were adolescents. The youngest PoA was the 28-year-old Favi who also headed his siblings. Many PoAs are over 50. This makes sense because this study's sample places the median age for child bearing in this group at 27.

3.2.2 Recruiting procedures

Purposive sampling was used to find participants. To secure participants for this research, the researcher advertised it on their WhatsApp (status), Facebook personal wall and Twitter. The researcher encouraged people who came across the messages to spread the request. The researcher did not include people whom they know personally in this research by the design of the study. The mode of advertisement made the volunteering process open to anyone who met the criteria to participate. Interested participants contacted the researcher through text messages and telephone calls. The researcher then sent recruitment details, or call for participants (see Appendix A), to those who showed interest and who were eligible to participate in this study on sex and sexuality communication. Thereafter, informed consent and information sheets were sent to all those who indicated acceptance to participate via email and WhatsApp. They were each instructed to sign and return the consent form as confirmation of their interest, before the commencement of interviews.

In the end, 40 participants were recruited; 20 YAs, individuals aged between 18 and 25 (Committee on Improving the Health, Safety, and Well-Being of Young Adults; Board on Children, Youth, and Families; Institute of Medicine; National Research Council, 2015), who spoke in retrospect of how they remembered their sex and sexuality communication with their parents when they were adolescents, and 20 PoAs, or adult caregivers, who not

only shared their experiences as adolescents, but also on communicating sex and sexuality with their adolescent children. Interestingly, each group of interviewees had 15 females and 5 males. Although the researcher uses PoAs as an acronym for parents of adolescent children and YAs for young adults in the discussions, all participants' names were changed for anonymity. No participant was paid for participating, but interviewees were offered R100.00 data bundle vouchers to assist them in the cost of Internet, given that many, especially YAs struggled with affordability. However, a handful of participants rejected the offer on grounds that they would respond using their work or home Internet connections, not mobile data.

Purposive sampling was used because the researcher needed to interview only desirable participants (Henning et al., 2004) who could "purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon of the study" (Creswell, 2009:125). The researcher could control the interviewees as it was important that they be strictly Africans living in South Africa. Non-exclusive criteria were used, so the participants were from black African families in South Africa. Purposively, participants had to be owners of/or have access to communication devices and to speak English. For each participant who responded after the researcher sent the informed consent, there was further contact to set appointments via voice calls and text messages sent on WhatsApp or via SMS. All in-depth interviews were conducted on voice calls made either directly or by WhatsApp. Their exact locations were not captured since they were recruited and interviewed telephonically. There was no travel inconvenience and meeting venues. One of the advantages of interviewing on voice communication devices was that the researcher could contact participants from across the country, hence a wider reach which was at times flexible for both parties. This wider reach allowed the possibility to yield rich insights that allowed the study to make significant scholarly contributions. Added to the widespread nature of the participants, the study exceeded its targeted saturated level of twelve participants as will be clarified below. All participants opted in voluntarily. This is in accordance with the recruitment criteria dictated by the sampling choice.

This sample method gives a good understanding of how African families across South Africa communicate about sex and sexuality and how this communication affects how adolescents' identities are both formed and communicated. Data saturation or participants' size, in research that uses purposive samples, is typically determined at saturation (Guest et al., 2006). This knowledge was crucial in designing this CPM-related research. At the

conceptual phase, the theoretical saturation was projected at 12 participants. However, 20 participants were interviewed in each group. Bryant and Charmaz (2010) request researchers to explain what or how they arrived at data saturation. In the case of this study, the researcher proceeded to 40 interviewees because talking about personal and sensitive experiences is highly based on individual exposure and lessons. The researcher needed this research to be rich and diverse. The number of participants yielded a huge amount of data that made the data collection, transcription, coding and analysis processes both tedious and time consuming. At the same time, the availability of rich data allowed the researcher to choose the most prominent and relevant themes to analysis and interpret, as aligned with sex and sexuality communication in African families in South Africa. Although plenty, all the data was transcribed and coded before selecting the most relevant themes for interpretation and analysis as aligned with the research questions.

3.2.3 Interview procedures

Data was collected between October 2021 and February 2022, by the researcher through semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Due to the Covid19 situation at the time this research was being designed, interviews were conducted via voice calls. Each lasted between 90 and 120 minutes. The lengths of conversations were determined by participants' attention span and level of willingness to talk. All participants were interviewed telephonically which, at times, was convenient for both parties. Research notes that telephone interviews are often shorter than face-to-face interviews (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). Consent was sought to record each interview session. All interviews were audio recorded. Each interview started with an in-depth introduction of both the researcher and the research. The interview format was explained. The overall recording quality was very good, with very few short, unclear segments.

Prior research indicates that one of the reasons for African parents in South Africa communicating less or ineffectively on sex and sexuality with adolescents is that African cultures often position sex talk as a taboo (Manzini-Matebula et al., 2015; Phetla et al., 2008). Culture includes language, so, plain language orstraight-forward English words were used when conversing with participants and the use of coded words was discouraged in order not to enhance the use of disguised words and phrases.

Open-ended interviewing was used. This allows for simple, straightforward structures of predetermined set of questions used with each interviewee to ensure that targeted topics are covered with every interviewee to obtain intricate knowledge on their thoughts, experiences, behaviours and observations (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). The introductory questions before the start of the conversation about the subject under discussion were helpful in that by the time of enquiry on sex and sexuality, most participants felt comfortable. Participants were told that should they feel embarrassed or uncomfortable talking about sex and sexuality communication, they could stop the interview at any time. The researcher started by asking participants to share general, personal information as well as specific personal information like age, qualifications, occupation, gender, relationship status, language or ethnic group, and family size. Although their names were not taken, Section 19 of the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act (2020) in South Africa, requires personal information of participants to be kept safe from unauthorised access and protected from loss and damage. Data on personal information enhanced the credibility of this study and helped in the transcription process. However, this information will not be used for anything other than private research. The researcher was the only one who transcribed the interviews.

Recording the interviews was necessary because it allowed the researcher to concentrate on how an interview was proceeding and to write down important pointers to the research questions. Appendices B and C indicate the initial interview protocols with questions designed to get in-depth narratives. Questions were very similar with little alterations to suite the stage, age and roles. For example, questions to PoAs were on how they have or have not communicated sex and sexuality with their adolescents. Questions to YAs addressed how they spoke sex and sexuality, or did not speak with their parents, when they were adolescents. Follow-up questions, some of which were predetermined but mostly based on each interviewee's responses, were asked to expand responses. This flexibility brought with it the liberty to develop the interview productively. They also helped in yielding dynamic but fruitful feedback from participants. The depth of information that a researcher collects during in-depth interviews helps with transparency and understanding during and after the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). After all, the individual in-depth interview aims to combine structure with flexibility, while remaining interactive in nature (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

During interviews, the researcher found that some questions were confusing, some sounded like duplicates and some were unclear. They were either reworded, deleted or modified in

order to enhance the quality of the data collected. Research scholars make provision for adjustments and detail that during individual in-depth interviews it is possible to reflect on opinions with individual respondents, enabling more precise interpretation of their lived experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The participants' in-depth feelings and perspectives on the subject enabled the researcher to interpret what each of them said. One of the shortfalls of telephone interviews, however, is that the interviewer cannot link participants' non-verbal expressions to what they are saying (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). This was true in this study, except for the fact that interviewing on the phone might have worked to this study's advantage in that interviewees might have spoken more expressively, owing to the fact that they could not be seen and possibly judged.

Interviews. The interviews for this study were informed by the literature and theory; CPM. The interview guides were divided into sections as informed by the above four research questions. The guide consisted of open-ended questions and open-ended sub-questions drawn from the CPM theory. For reasons given above, questions began seeking demographic information. The rest were on communication, sex and sexuality, identity formation, information ownership, boundaries, privacy and disclosure. Advice was sought for South African PoAs and for Adolescents.

Sample questions asked to YAs on privacy are;

- How open were your family discussions about sex in particular and how much details did your parents discuss about their past and other adult members' past?
- How did you learn when to share and when not to share personal information?
    - How did you determine why or why not to share and with who to share?

And samples asked to PoAs on disclosure are:

- At what stage did your adolescent decide on what to share and what not to share with you?
    - How did they do it and how did they know what they were supposed to tell or not tell about themself and others?
    - Tell me how you feel when sharing (or keeping) your adolescents' sexual secrets.

3.2.4 The role of the researcher

Guest et al. (2013) state that qualitative research locates the observer in the world. They claim that data collected can be interpreted by a person who did not live the shared experiences of the participants. The researcher, otherwise referred to as the key instrument in social and educational qualitative research, is required to assist in the collection of in-depth explanations and understandings as allowed by the research questions (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Of course, the researcher was the most active participant in this research process as described by Rubin and Rubin (2012). The results which will be presented in the next chapter are influenced by the researcher's understanding of the data. The researcher will comment on how sensitivity to sex and sexuality affect responses.

It has been argued that, based on researchers' personal background, they can never be totally objective as their biases and preconceptions like beliefs, knowledge, experiences, values and prior assumptions can be transmitted to their research through data collection, analysis and reporting (Finlay, 2002; Merriam, 2009). However, Adu (2019) argues that what researchers have are unique and diverse experiences, background, biases and lenses that impact how each sees the same thing, how they interpret and how they present them.

3.3 Data analysis procedures

Baxter and Jack (2008), and Guest et al., (2013) suggest that qualitative researchers adhere to an inductive approach since this method is descriptive, explanatory and entails analysing large amounts of textual data. The approach also provides a set of measures for analysing qualitative data, ensuring that reliable and valid findings are produced (Thomas, 2006). The inductive approach permits research findings to emerge from recurrent, central and important themes as they occur in the raw data (Thomas, 2006). Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-step guideline for thematic analysis was used to identify themes and categories. First, during data collection, the researcher jotted down ideas and potential coding schemes. This means she familiarised herself with the data. Voice recorded data were transcribed verbatim and reviewed by the researcher for accuracy and easier analysis, before identifying the initial descriptive and interpretive codes. In order to obtain accurate transcriptions, areas where recordings were unclear were noted to help the researcher to remember to go back and follow the original recordings. The researcher did so. This helped to clarify what was said in line

with the notes taken by the researcher during interviews. All quotations in the next chapter are direct from the coded data. As Braun and Clarke recommend, the researcher placed no emphasis on cleaning the data grammatically, although she removed other emphasis like guggles (2012). The researcher explored the world of details by repeatedly reading through transcribed data to find meanings, patterns and ideas or identification of possible patterns that could shape them (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The researcher was also taking notes or marking ideas for coding as per their recommendation.

Second, at this point, initial codes that emerged through repetition throughout the data were identified. Because a computer software was used, coding was done by tagging and naming selections of text within each data item (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The purpose of coding is to choose relevant information from the data, label and group the label so that they make sense by reducing the quantity of text (Adu, 2019). In actual fact, it is the process of linking selected texts to make sense (Saldana, 2013). Coding helps the researcher to present data as was collected, rather than as they think (Adu, 2019). Through coding, the raw data was reduced into parts that are relevant to the research questions. It is worth noting that the codes are theory driven. Third, the different codes were sorted into potential themes, and the relevant coded data extracts were collated within the identified themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012). At this point, the researcher was analysing codes, and considering how different codes may combine to form themes. This kind of focused coding allows a researcher to identify and examine their relationship with the remaining codes (Adu, 2019). Focused coding was employed as it is less open-ended and more directed than line-by-line coding. This process allowed the researcher to create and try out categories for synthesising data. A category is an organised group of similarly coded data (Saldana, 2013).

Fourth, the researcher had broken down the data into manageable sections, and transformed the data such that some new codes emerged while others were merged as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2012). This means that when the researcher was categorising, certain codes were selected as having an overriding significance in clarifying processes in the data. Fifth, the findings were arranged by determining aspects of the data for each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2012). At this point, the researcher also considered and identified sub-themes in order to reduce the complexity of themes. The researcher had code groups or categories of themes that included common themes and patterns in 47 sub-groups or sub-categories. These categories were linked to 240 portions of texts. After primary identification, all themes

developed were checked against transcripts for appropriateness. Coding definitions were revised as needed to conduct reliability checks and resolve any discrepancies or inconsistencies between individual analyses. In the sixth and final step, the researcher started writing the findings using thematic analysis to categorise whether and how South African YAs in retrospect of when they were adolescents talked with their parents and how PoAs share their experiences as adolescents, but mostly talk with their adolescents on sex and sexuality.

Thematic analysis is a method for data analysis that helps to clarify the purpose of research (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). It enables the researcher to systematically process data and develop themes through the coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Thematic analysis was used since it allows researchers to search across data sets. It "offers an accessible and theoretically-flexible approach to analysing qualitative data … reports experiences, meanings and the reality of participants". It reflects reality and allows for a replicable and valid inference from data for the analysis of verbal material as indicated in Braun and Clarke's seminal work of 2006 (2006:2-8; Krippendorff, 2004). The themes are presented logically and coherently as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2012). Transcribed data was massive as the interviews were long and many. To be efficient, the researcher used a qualitative analysis software that is good for mechanical research tasks, such as storing and organising data, coding, searching, retrieving, annotating data and displaying it in a variety of formats, including graphs (Friese, 2014). The ATLAS.ti™ (23.0.8.0) software assisted the researcher to analyse data by creating a coding system and applying it to the data. All quotations used in the next chapter were imported from ATLAS.ti.

3.4 Answering the research questions

Data analysis offered the opportunity to pay attention to responses for each research question. RQ1 asks; what influences South African parents and their adolescent children to discuss or not discuss issues of sex and sexuality? The researcher's attention is particularly on CPM's five criteria that govern rules which family members consider when they decide to talk or not to talk on sex and sexuality. RQ2 asks; what boundaries rules are observed and negotiated by South African parents and their adolescent children when they talk sex and sexuality? CPM's guidelines that family members use to co-ordinate communication boundaries on sex and sexuality communication are discussed. For instance, what is said?

How is it said? Who sets these boundaries and how are they maintained? RQ3 enquires; how do South African parents and their adolescents handle personal or family boundaries turbulence during sex and sexuality communication? The researcher encounters CPM's reasoning on the presence or absence of boundary turbulence as influenced by how boundaries are treated. Lastly, RQ4 questions; what do African parents and adolescents think needs to happen for more effective communication on sex and sexuality in South African families? Participants pin responses on tips on what can be talked about, how, why, when, by who and for what benefits.

3.5 Ethical considerations

This study's protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State (UFS), on the 26th of October 2021 (See Appendix D), in accordance with the POPI Act, 2020 of South Africa. The chosen criteria for the selection of participants purposely discriminated against any potential participants based on the grounds of ownership to a voice communication device, race, language and age. No discrimination applied to gender, sexual orientation, level of education, or any other status like relationship, class, ethnic group, medical condition, beliefs, religion or culture. The researcher's sensitivity to inclusive practices, enabled respectful communication without marginalising participants. A standardised interview protocol considers participants' right to have their dignity. As explained above, the researcher recruited participants via social media. The information sheets and informed consent were sent for each of them to sign and return to the researcher before the commencement of their interview. Unfortunately, participants could not sign due to lack of electronic signatures and access to printers. However, their verbal consents were recorded just before each interview began. The researcher assisted participants in making informed and knowledgeable decisions about participating in a study of this nature by giving each of them an opportunity to ask questions about their participation before the interview began. Anonymity was guaranteed. Throughout each interview, the researcher was aware of the intrusive nature of this research. While the researcher had control over who participated in the interviews, interviewees had power in how they responded to the open-ended questions. They controlled the decision to either respond to a question, skip it, or "speak for themselves in their own way" (Hoffmann, 2007:319).

3.6 Trustworthiness

The researcher's supervisor was very thorough. From the inception of this research, she emphasised credibility as a key concept in qualitative research. Of course, Silverman (2005) notes that credibility establishes the truth and authenticity of research results as explained in the following four criteria:

1) Credibility as defined in qualitative research describes whether the intended phenomenon is truly measured. In this study, the researcher allowed all participants to express themselves freely during interviews. Trustworthiness was enhanced by conducting in-depth interviews, until the point of saturation. At the end of each interview, the researcher checked with participants if they wanted to add some points. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. All transcripts were independently checked and re-checked, by the researcher before use. A detailed description of the participants is also provided. Substantial narratives from the participants together with an interpretive commentary is also given. Credibility in qualitative research entails how well groups and themes cover data such that data are not carelessly or systematically excluded or so that irrelevant data is not included (Patton, 2002). This researcher did well to make sure that the data for this study was well inclusive as shown in the next chapter. The researcher's supervisor checked the work and ensured that the findings provide much needed resources for family sex and sexuality communication and identity formation in an African context. This is so because scientific research should be built on the foundation of trust (Whitebeck, 2001). At the same time, trust and rigour make research significant and valuable (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson & Spiers, 2008). As agreed by (Shenton, 2004), in terms of giving a thick description that will convey the actual situations that was researched and to explain the contexts that surround them, this chapter and the previous chapter give a clear rationale for the use of theory and methodology in exploring sex and sexuality communication in African families in South Africa.

2) Transferability in qualitative research is the extent to which a study's outcome can apply and be transferred beyond the study participants to apply to other settings or groups (Patton, 2002; Shenton 2004). This researcher argues that the findings of this study may apply to many African families with adolescents in South Africa given that apart from collecting data from diverse participants, the researcher has presented rich and dynamic findings accompanied by appropriate and detailed quotations as stated by Patton (2002). Shenton explains that "ultimately, the results of a qualitative study must be understood within the

context of the particular characteristics … and, perhaps, geographical area in which the fieldwork was carried out" (Shenton, 2004:70). Hence, throughout the results sections of this study, the researcher makes sure that all findings are accompanied by suitable quotations. The researcher further took steps and described how the findings from the study reflect the result of the experiences of participants and not the researcher's predispositions. The researcher's predispositions as well as theoretical predispositions, if stated, are clarified to ensure trustworthiness. For instance, the researcher would provide information about themself in the form of self-reflections or observations. Descriptions of the research context, its processes and the participants would enable another researcher not necessarily to replicate the study, but to review in detail what this researcher did, why they did it and how they arrived at the conclusions. Trustworthiness was achieved through a fair representation of all the data, accepting its complex nature. The researcher further took steps and described how the findings from the study reflect the result of the experiences of participants and not the researcher's predispositions. The researcher's predispositions as well as theoretical predispositions, if stated, are clarified to ensure trustworthiness. For instance, the researcher would provide information about themself in the form of self-reflections or observations. Descriptions of the research context, its processes and the participants would enable another researcher not necessarily to replicate the study, but to review in detail what this researcher did, why they did it and how they arrived at the conclusions. Trustworthiness was achieved through a fair representation of all the data, accepting its complex nature.

3) Dependability refers to the degree to which data change over time and adjustments are made in the researcher's decisions during the analysis process (Patton, 2002). It was achieved in this study's detailed description above as well as the stepwise replication of the research method. The researcher's appropriation enables a future researcher to repeat a similar work, if not necessarily to gain the same results as recommended by Shenton (2004). Additionally, a phase of continuous inspection was conducted, self-reflection and re-phrasing of themes was done numerous times to ensure an in-depth analysis of the transcripts. Merriam (2009) referred to dependability as auditability, given that it is an appraisal of the combined processes of data collection, data analysis and theory creation. The researcher has provided an account of the dynamic environment within which this research occurred and how the findings were developed through emerging themes and categories (Gasson, 2004).

4) The replicable nature of this research ensures confirmability in the verbatim transcripts of data which remain available for inspection of the record-keeping procedures. Confirmability involves the extent to which research findings are true and accurate to the purpose of the study and the current reality studied (Patton, 2002). Gasson (2004) states that confirmability is based on the perspective that the integrity of findings can be in the data; that the researcher has adequately connected the data analytic processes and findings such that the reader can confirm the appropriateness of the findings. The above detailed methodological description enables the reader to determine how far the data and constructs emerging from it may be accepted. Furthermore, quotations in this study's findings aid confirmability. Gasson (2004) and Shenton's (2004) suggestion, for researchers to prove that findings develop from data and not from their personal biases, is complied with through the voices of participants. Every decision made, methods, theories and limitations are all clarified (Shenton, 2004).

The selected participants for this study had knowledge, and some were experienced, in the topics of sex and sexuality communication. With a choice to opt out of the interview if it felt intrusive, participants were encouraged to provide as accurate and complete information as possible. The use of a larger sample size minimised limitations. A degree of reliability and credibility is required to ensure that the results in research are trustworthy and to enhance the quality of results since the accuracy of research is reflected in the trustworthiness, which is an important consideration in performing ethical research (Silverman, 2005; Merriam, 2009). Ethics clearance from the university committee made sure that this research passed this stage.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research methodology and explained the rationale for this CPM-guided study. The aim of this research is to explore how sex and sexuality communication in African families with adolescents' impact adolescents' willingness to communicate openly or not, regarding their developing sexual behaviours and identities. To achieve this aim, qualitative research implored a purposive sampling to recruit YAs and PoAs from within South Africa. The data collection methods were described as responding to each research question. Individual in-depth interviews provided a clearer understanding of the lived experiences related to the identity of black Africans. The chapter also explained the ethical considerations implored. The qualitative research method may enhance

understanding in the voices of participants but what the results show will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

FINDINGS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

Introduction

This study set out to explore the impact of sex and sexuality communication with adolescents in African families in South Africa and the dynamics that influence adolescents' willingness to communicate openly or not, regarding their sexual behaviours and identities. The researcher's intention is to, amongst other things, understand how participants approach conversations in their families on sex and sexuality, what they talk about, how they react to these conversations, how these conversations evolve, how they own, share and manage information and how parents' (gendered) communication influences children's sexual identities. Adopting the CPM theory to guide this study, the researcher posited the following four research questions (RQs) to accomplish these goals:

RQ1: What influences South African parents and their adolescent children to discuss or not discuss issues of sex and sexuality?

RQ2: What boundaries rules are observed and negotiated by South African parents and their adolescent children when they talk sex and sexuality?

RQ3: How do South African parents and their adolescents handle personal or family boundaries turbulence during sex and sexuality communication?

RQ4: What do African parents and adolescents think needs to happen for more effective communication on sex and sexuality in South African families?

The researcher uses the CPM theory to describe the processes by which parents-adolescents communication about sex and sexuality might influence the development and subsequent communication of adolescents' identities from an understanding of how people decide to conceal or reveal private information (Petronio, 2002). Chapter three focuses on the study methodology. This chapter presents and discusses results of findings from the data collected from 40 semi-structured in-depth interviews that were conducted. As detailed in chapter three, the findings have been arranged into code groups that are linked to 240 codes and 47 common themes and patterns. The researcher provides a background to contextualise participants' experiences, then discusses their understandings of family members' conversations. This researcher will quote participants to support the presentation of the

findings on each RQ. These quotes will be analysed by sometimes referring to the questions they answered. For purposes of anonymity, the name assigned to each participant is not their real name.

4.1 Rules development

Findings of RQ1, which asks what influences South African parents and adolescent children when they discuss issues of sex and sexuality. The following are required from participants:
1) Rules that influence how they discuss or do not discuss sex and sexuality with each adolescent or each parent.
2) How their current families' religion and/or culture, gender composition, context of communication and considerations or impact of these conversations influence the way their families talk about sex and sexuality.
Below, the researcher presents themes that emerged from the data as organised into five categories of data; 1), cultural and religious criteria, 2), gendered criteria, 3), motivational criteria, 4), contextual criteria, 5), risk-benefit ratio criteria, drawn from CPM's guidelines, and 6), other criteria, on how people manage private information.

Table 4. 1: Rules development

Rules development	
Cultural and religious criteria	**Contextual criteria**
Cultural criteria	Appropriateness of topics
Nuclear family	Accidental and involuntary exposure
Extended family	Responding to what is learned at school
Religious criteria	**Risk-benefit ratio criteria**
Gendered criteria	Risks
Gender of parents	*Privacy risks*
Talks on sexual orientation	Benefits
Motivational criteria	**Other criteria**
Disclosing for bonding	Influence of self and of others
Reciprocal disclosure	*Influence of self*
Biological or physiological experiences	*Influence of family members*
Discomfort of disclosing	*Influence of family relationships*
Thrive for independence	Modelling behaviour
Empowered adolescent	
Disempowered adolescents	

4.1.1 Cultural and religious criteria

The data below is largely attributed both to individual and family beliefs, norms and values on what CPM considers private during sex and sexuality communication, who is permitted to share this information with who, and under what circumstances. The findings below are organised into two themes; cultural and religious criteria.

Cultural criteria

Twelve participants' families practice African cultures. All who mention the presence of grandparents say, particularly, grandmothers are custodians of cultural practices on sex and sexuality communication. Here the findings are presented in two sections; nuclear and extended families.

Nuclear family. Although locations were not inquired, most participants who live with mothers, fathers and siblings hinted urban lives.

> Tiny: 'Culture really influenced how I communicate with my parents and how I communicate with my grandparents because culture says respect your elderly. So, even though there were certain things that I would like to say, I was not gonna say to them because it would seem like I'm disrespectful. So, culture really had an impact on how I had to communicate with my adults and some words are abomination. You can't say them. Like the word sex. You can't say the word sex in front of my mom, my father, my grandparents.'

Some participants including Tiny singled out the role which culture plays in the minimal communication on sex and sexuality that took place between her parents and herself when she was an adolescent. She explains that culture creates very little room for adolescents to talk and when adolescents keep quiet, their silence gets interpreted as a show of respect to adults. It is out of such respect that Tiny and others who commented in this section say they have not attempted to talk about specific topics with adult family members despite desiring to do so. Tiny shares how culture defines sex-talks so much that typically, talks are one-directional where if culture permits, adult caregivers prompt discussions and talk to adolescents. Tiny clarifies that when adolescents attempt to speak to mothers, or fathers, pronouncing sex-related words in context is unheard of in her culture.

> Casi: ‘I don’t remember having sexual communication with my mother. … I don’t remember talking sex things with my dad at all. I don’t remember, although he could caution you against boys. Then, I remember we used to wear these shorts; they were called adidas. Now they call it bum shorts. So, he could buy them, but then he’d tell you like a woman must not always show their body. You could wear them, but not to show your body because when they show their body, they can be raped. They would put it in you that you’d remember that oh, as much as I wear this like I can wear it within the yard, but it was not something that I could wear when we were visiting.’

While Tiny and others with similar comments were silenced by culture, other participants’ parents did not discuss these topics with them because culture demands that extended family members like grandmothers do so. Casi is one such who had no sex talks with both her mother and father, even though she says her father would ‘caution you against boys.’ Concerned with how his adolescents looked, Casi’s father guided on dressing, saying ‘a woman must not always show their body,’ lest they are raped. As Casi concludes, her parents were so discreet about her looks at adolescence, she only wore shorts at home.

> Casi: ‘I think my granny was the one who took us through sex as girls and even with boys. When we are having that bonding sessions with her, she would just talk about sex. What would happen when you sleep with boys. What would happen when you play with boys inappropriately. Even your own cousins who are boys, you don’t play in a certain way. … I remember very well when we started having the topic with her, that she will tell you there is a time you will see blood coming out. You must make sure you are clean, and no one sees it.’

Referring to her exposure to sex and sexuality communication, Casi further adds that they went to the village to learn culture from their grandmother whom she ironically presents as very religious. Before puberty, Casi says her grandmother did prepare her for menstruation by hinting that she’ll ‘see blood,’ and for the possibility of falling pregnant if she ‘plays with boys inappropriately’ at that stage, even if these boys were their relatives.

Extended family. Many participants who live with grandparents mention the presence of other relatives like uncles, aunties and cousins.

> Swa: ‘I think culture is one factor that I can put in. Culture is. It has made it seem like do not question things. Do not question anything. What the adults say is what

> you should do without any questions, without any thinking about it. You know, what I'm saying because with my dad's side, we are Xhosa. Things like traditions that they do. When you know, when you ask why are you slaughtering a cow, why are you doing that? No, that's not for you. You know, it's that type of thing that it's out of question like; 'Don't question that,' you know. And it also makes you have like a disrespectful tone when you question it. So, I think culture is one big, big factor that has made sex conversations and communications literally not extended. It's just cut off.'

A suitable response by other participants that is appropriate for Casi's experience with her grandmother is reflected by explanations of how culture impacts adolescents communicate with parents, grandparents and other older relatives. Swa agrees with others who share her views that culture is a silencer. She is correlating thoughts that children's silence on sex-related communication has been taken as adolescents' show of respect because children are not allowed to question 'things like traditions that they practise,' or make them practise. She says when adolescents would ask why rites were performed, parents tell adolescents never to seek answers. Note that like others, when Swa says that according to culture children ought to listen and implement what adults say, she does not say parents discourage adolescents from asking questions. Rather, she says that culture does. Denoting the way adults act and react, leads to conclusions that culturally, they have no control.

> Mia: 'It was like there were things that the way you should do them, the way you should say them because a black young girl from KZN, whatever that they would relate. Because my grandmother was from KZN, that is how they would explain to you. Culture was like you cannot carry yourself like that. You cannot dress like that. … So, communication has, you won't say things like that, you won't do things like that. You will always be reprimanded should you say things that are not right. It was always like that or not like that.'

Aligning with Swa are participants who say in cases where adolescents attempt to talk, culture dictates what sex-related contents are discussed. The researcher cites Mia who extends her explanation to include the influence which culture has on how adolescents should behave and physically present themselves. She says the cultural definition of communication between adults and children is well demarcated, such that adults constantly correct and redirect adolescents on what they could, or could not say and do. In her case, she says her behaviour and communication were influenced by her grandmother's. Explaining

how she was expected to present herself as a 'black young girl' almost fixes this researcher's thoughts to wonder if her culture had the same expectations from males.

Religious criteria

Like with culture, the most common response from 25 of the 40 participants is that their families completely exhibit conservative religious attitudes through conversations that resist certain topics on sex and sexuality.

> Gabi: 'They would refer you to the bible, like; God created a man and a woman, not the in-between. … We just live by the bible, there is no other external factor. Culturally so, no. We are not too deep into culture at all. … Christianity, they say sex before marriage is a sin, but then you find people like my auntie who doesn't believe in marriage. For me I feel like the bible is saying this but your own belief and what you want as a person, you can't crucify yourself because you did it [sex], you know. I don't think it had much of an influence.'

Gabi reports that the bible rejects any sexuality that is not heterogeneous. As such, she says her family's conversations did not consider gender diversity because to their adult family members, 'God created a man and a woman' and 'sex before marriage is a sin.' Gabi negatively criticises her family's religious beliefs and reiterates how Christianity denounces sex before marriage without considering that not all humans desire to be married. Unfortunately, instead of saying how religion impacts their communication, many participants including Gabi explains how religion influences their day-to-day living.

> Ako: 'There was this saying to say because you are a Christian, you don't have to do those kinds of things [sex]. So, me starting to be a Christian, I stopped. … Religion makes us to focus on one thing; ... You focus on Christ. Christ and Christ only, so you feel like if you are talking about these things, you are not holy. You get my point? If you are talking about sex and sexuality, you are not holy.'

For Ako, who became a Christian later in life, it is not just the aspect of practice. Like other participants, Ako reports that simple talks on sex and sexuality as with culture-adhering individuals, are seen as unholy for Christian families. Just like others, Ako says Christians are expected to talk about Jesus Christ in order to be viewed as holy. They do not 'do that kind of things.' What Christians do not do according to Ako could be; 1), talk about sex and sexuality, or 2), be sexually active. She regrets that her new belief brainwashes her and interferes with her being overtly sexually expressive.

> Favi: ‘Religion definitely influenced a lot of how I was spoken to. I would say not so much of culture because we were not really a cultural house but more the religious influence would come from how the taboo or influence the ignorance of really having a more open discussion when it comes to why should you not, why should you do that? Where? Other disparities that come into place is the fact that you're not supposed to discuss your sexual life as a Christian child when you were told that sex before marriage is a sin.’

The absence of sex and sexuality communication in African families cause discomfort and internal conflicts that hinder members of some families from openly and honestly communicating on these topics. The possibility of discomfort and family conflicts makes it impossible for religiously inclined parents of adolescents, including Favi (who were raised to understand that people’s sexual lives are so private, they cannot be talked about sex) to talk sex. More so, because they could not indulge in sex before marriage. That is how Favi, who is a YA parent, is raising his siblings as well.

4.1.2 Gendered criteria

CPM presents gender socialisation or how men and women manage private information as a set of cultural expectations that serve as bases for disclosure rules. Data in these criteria respond to the question on how parents and their adolescents interact when discussing sex and sexuality in two sections; gender of parents and talks on sexual orientation.

Gender of parents. A large portion of the participants indicate that traditional gender roles are considered when their family members discuss sex and sexuality.

> Lori: “‘With my parents including my dad, very limited conversation could occur. Like I said, he is a provider. Like when he has to deal with other things. That’s why I can’t see him in any other light than that. I think him and my brothers, they will only bond like watching sports. I don’t see him like talking about what’s happening in my brother’s life or how he feels about things or just anything. … The dynamics of open channels of communication, was always either you speak with my mum. Like I said, she would always open the doors and say like, ‘come talk to me if you are uncomfortable. Come to me directly. Write me a letter. Express yourself how you feel best suits you’.’”

Responses place mothers as either expected, or compelled by circumstances to have sex-related conversations with their adolescents, while fathers somehow escaped. Lori is a female who, by nature of her father's reaction to sex conversations, wished a male role model for her younger adolescent brother like was her mother to both of them. According to her, her brother has no taste of a father talking sex with him, like she had from her mother. The tight rule her father had compared to her mother on discussing sex-related topics may have a negative impact on his children, regarding gender-modelling. Her mother's request for them to write down what is too challenging for them to tell her in person made Lori's mother's approach to talking sex with her adolescents to overpower possible barriers that come with face-to-face communication.

> Neb: "My mother would tell us about rape. About people touching us and we must not allow people touching us on our private part and she never spoke about masturbation. She would stress that a lot. … Yes, like you will never talk about sex with my dad. As a result, my mother would always ask my dad to talk with the boys. My dad would not sit down with even the boys to say 'you must not drink alcohol or what, what.' So, my mom had to do that with us and the boys. Sex was a no-go area with my dad. He would never discuss that with us… even the sexual conversations. I normally have those sexual conversations with my kids when he is not around.'"

The dynamics of open channels of communication, referred to by Lori seem so deep-rooted, other participants report that when requested to address risky behaviours in sons, fathers like Neb's, who was a pastor, would not. Neb shares that like was the case with her mother, she too is the only parent who speaks sex and sexuality with her adolescents. In her words, her husband's rules around talking sex are so tight that she prefers to have sex-related conversations with her adolescents in his absence.

> Khal: "'My mom was very like, yeah, she was just open. She was like, 'listen, okay, this is what's gonna happen' and stuff like that. … First of all, my dad, because that is a short story, I never spoke to him about that stuff. It was always sort of like mom's thing. It was never dad's thing. So, I never spoke to my dad. I don't remember ever, ever sitting down and hearing him say the word sex. I don't think he had even ever said the word. I don't recall and with my mom was very blunt about it and I think I still remember the day she spoke to us about sex like I think I was like eight. So, she

spoke to us. She sat us down and said this is a human body and this is where human babies come from. And they look like mom.'"

The situation in Neb's current family presents parents as role models for their children's understanding of the role of gender in communication about sex and sexuality, including their comfort level, openness and attitudes. It was exciting to hear many participants; more YAs than PoAs who identify their mothers as positive models for communication about sex and sexual identity. Adding her voice, Khal commends her mother as an educator whose discussed contents were comprehensive, impactful and firm. Khal says her mother started such talks when they were young; that her mother hinted on what to expect at adolescence. She applauds her mother for embracing sex and sexuality conversations as opposed to her father who she says never pronounced the word 'sex.' With emphasis in her tone, 'I don't remember ever, ever sitting down,' and her choice of words 'I never spoke,' Khal declares no memory of her father discussing these topics. On the other hand, her tone, 'It was always sort of like mom's thing' and choice of words, 'very not fluid' describes sex and sexuality conversations with her mother.

Talks on sexual orientation. Many participants say their family discussions on sexuality was influenced by denials of the variety of sexual orientations, or by ignorant points-of-views on the same topic.

> Mobi: 'There was absolutely no talk. When it comes to sexuality, you grew up knowing that there is only male or female. Anyone who is not male or female, is going against God's creation. You know like always when you see gay people, it was always like, they are doing the wrong thing, don't associate with them and so forth. You know like you don't even mention the word gay. You know like, you just make signs, like that person is gay, you must stay away from them. There was no talk about the details of sexuality. So, there was no need to really say ok you are heterosexual you know, because talking about sex. Not even sex but attraction, you know. Before you even get to sex, attraction between boys and girls. … Those are things you find out from your friends at school. They tell you about this. And sometimes they themselves they don't even know how to pronounce it, it just something. We watched soapies. We were forbidden to watch. But we watched, so some of the things you find them out from soapies.'

Mobi claims that in her family, talks on sexual orientations were not entertained. She says beliefs were that humans are 'only male or female.' According to Mobi, her family refrained from and did caution children not to talk about or associate with homosexuals who are living against God's commands. She said in essence, they were often confused and misled by content from peers and the media.

> Leli: 'No. When I was young remember in my days. We did not have a lot of lesbians and gays. It was not something that was popular as like today. At that stage I think it was a taboo. We were never exposed to those conditions where they will talk about that where we will have those topics because it, I will say never existed. The environment that I grew up in, is that the gay and the lesbian never existed.'

The research participants reported in the cultural and religious criteria that talking sex was prohibited. In the gendered criteria, some, including Mobi above and now Leli says talking or practising sexual diversity was 'going against God's creation.' To Mobi, sexuality conversations were inconsequential since they 'were never exposed to those conditions.'

> Mere: 'She will think I am crazy or something like that. She won't insult me. But I don't feel like [telling her]. But maybe if my mom was still alive, I would tell her. But she passed on before I could come out about my sexuality. Like I was hiding myself.'

Mobi and Leli make ignorance seem blissful, like do most participants of this study. Meanwhile, Mere who is a lesbian conceded that her conversations with her family members suited gender acceptable norms. Although not a part of the researcher's enquiry, Mere was asked if she has discussed her sexual orientation with other family members. She responded that even though she communicates a lot with her grandmother, she cannot tell her that she is not attracted to men because her grandmother will not understand. She clarifies that it is not the fear of rejection. Rather, her grandmother is not familiar with the concept of deviated sexuality. Thus, in her view, her grandmother may not understand other non-verbal cues that Mere is letting out.

4.1.3 Motivational criteria

Guided by the CPM theory, the study participants exhibit motives for seeking and sharing or not seeking and sharing content related to sex and sexuality in five themes; disclosing for bonding, reciprocal disclosure, discomfort of disclosing, biological or physiological experiences and thrive for independence.

Disclosing for bonding

Participants who decided to communicate sex and sexuality say conversations do enhance parent-adolescents' relationships.

> Mia: 'Very much so. Very much so. I told her things that some of my family members don't know about. I told her about how I got the actual pregnancy. I told her everything, because she is like my sister. We talk about everything.'

In Mia's case, she does not struggle with sex-related communication with her adolescent as their communication bond is so close. Mia regards her child as a 'sister' not a friend.

> Noni: 'So, like the sex talk that we were debating about, she came back and told me that they had this sex talk. I was so relived and I said, ok. It is was easier for me to just add my feelings about sex and the things that she should be doing to protect herself, and just to understand it further and then other things. We watch movies. … Or things like that. Things that would be happening in the news as well. Because we watch the news together.'

Participants in this sub-category explain who initiated topics and why. Noni, who was motivated when she found out that her daughter has had external exposure to the topics, says expanding on subject matters by breaking down 'things that would be happening in the news' helps them in bonding, engaging and educating.

> Ria: 'Like I said dating and such. But now, we openly just talk about dating as a family, you know. Like, my brother. He's only 17, but my parents are able to joke with him and ask him if he's dating and things like that.'

Of course, adolescents are acknowledging that talking together further exhibits the bonding effect when parents are light-hearted and 'joke' about topics as Ria and other participants explain. In fact, Ria's description of her family bonding when she says her parents ask her brother 'if he is dating'. This exposes the argument that African parents are more lenient to sons than daughters when it comes to how adolescents sexually express themselves. Another

value-add in 23-year-old Ria's statement is that it subtly describes how their family talks or bonds better through sex and sexuality communication now that she and her brother are much older; a stage that could tolerate reciprocity.

Reciprocal disclosure

Many YAs, most of whom could not disclose to their parents at adolescence because they were considered too young, have started asserting themselves just like Ria explained above.

> Zas: 'For me if you are able to share something with me, then I will be able to share with you, so that I know that I can trust you with whatever that I will be telling you. So, If I feel that I am not comfortable talking about something, I will just keep it to myself. Unless you ask. But then it depends if you ask me. It depends if I want to answer the question or not … talking about sex it's going to be uncomfortable or what.'

As Zas elaborates, at adolescence, she would trust family members enough to share sex-related information with them only after they share theirs with her, or if they show interest in hers. Both sharing and interest are signs of formed bonds that eliminate discomfort. This researcher interprets Zas as saying reciprocity to sex talks is influenced by both trust and timing.

> Mica: 'Around about the time when my dad become more open with me like in terms of being able to mention it without any censoring or whatever and that is when I began to be open and sharing certain things with Gertrude (sister) and my half-brother. … I wouldn't just share because I'm a person who first like to deal with things with myself before I share.'

A large majority of participants confirm roles played by mood or comfort levels on sex and sexuality talks in families as huge, precisely in cases where sharing information has not been habitual. Participants like Mica contends once others share, it is easy to share with them too without 'censoring.' She hints that her father's introduction of sex-related content to their talks gave hints that she could talk about the same. But instead of detailing how she reciprocated, Mica explains how her father's openness motivated her to start talking sex and sexuality with her older siblings.

> Mas: ‘I haven’t. I think I’m waiting for her to come and say, ‘you know what, this is what I discovered today’ and then I will start the conversation. … I want the moment to happen when we can have the conversation. So, the questions haven’t come yet, like I said the last time when we were doing life skills, and we had conversation about girl and boy and as long as I keep it real and as long as I am honest and I don’t sugar coat it.’

Even parents who have not yet had sex talks with their adolescents are strategising on how they will reciprocate, should their children start disclosing to them. To this effect, Noni plans to be reciprocal as soon as her daughter indicates knowledge of related concepts. That as soon as her daughter becomes inquisitive, she will start ‘the conversation.’ It is likely that sex and sexuality communication is what she refers to as ‘this.’ Mas is fully aware that to sustain reciprocal communication on these topics with her daughter she has to be realistic, honest and open.

Biological or physiological experiences

Although this data emerged from adolescents’ experiences of growth, the most common responses refer to menstruation.

> Lori: ‘Like when I woke up, I was like, ‘Oh my god, there is blood everywhere!!’ She was like, ‘You are on your period,’ and then we moved on from there. The conversation was how to now carry yourself that you are on your period. She was like, ‘Now that you started your period, understand that you are a lady and then we moved on from there. She has told me. My mom’s paranoia towards me going out stems from her experiences through sexual assault when she was younger. The relationship with sex talk with my mom, there are certain things that I know she is not ready to hear because she has her own trauma. As I grow up, I am learning to respect that. So, it is more a case of understand that she told me her story and her story is her interpretation of it in general. So, you can’t challenge the things you haven’t experienced.’

Participants say when they announced their first menses, girls were warned against spending time with boys else they fall pregnant, much faster than they were told what exactly was happening with their bodies. Lori is one of those who believe their mothers did not fully tell them what they experienced as adolescent girls. Lori further discloses that her mother gave insight into what made Lori conclude was the reason her mother reacted to sex talks the way she did and this insight, is why Lori is ‘learning to respect’ silence and to understand her

failed attempts to make her mother talk on the topics. She has concluded that her interpretation of sex and sexuality communication are limited to her mother's 'story,' or to knowledge gained from her mother.

> Ria: 'I got my period. And luckily, I had a pad because we had had a talk from school about periods and stuff. They came to us and they gave us pads, like, okay, in case you guys, you're at the ages of getting a period. This is a pad. This is what you do. So, I had a Pad that I always kept, because I knew that the time was coming. And then one day, it just happened that I got my period. I was like; 'Oh, snap, this is the time now.' I was like I already knew. I already had the education in school. Then I went home. And then the first thing I did when I got home is that I told the maid, but then she didn't want to tell me anything about what's happening. I told her that; 'Oh my god, I'm bleeding, I got my periods today.' She was like, 'No! You must talk to your mom.' Yoo. I was so nervous that I got to tell mom and then I had to tell her that 'listen, I got my period today.' What? Yeah. The only thing that she said is that I mustn't sleep around. I'm going to get pregnant, what, what. It wasn't like a clear talk on what's actually happening because they expect to learn that from school.'

Just like Lori, who yearns to gain insights from her mother, Ria who had prior talks on what to expect as she grows outside their family environment says her first menses was not enough motivation for her mother to introduce sex talks. When she announced her first menses, she says her mother simply warned her not to 'sleep around' with boys, else she falls pregnant. She says even her female adult caregiver, could not utter a word to her. But like many others, Ria employed her knowledge from school on how to care for her body at this stage of maturation.

> Tani: 'I was in Grade 7. That time when I began my menstruation cycle and it was like 2 days before school when I started my cycle and I was so scared, I was in a panic mode. I told her and she sat me down and we talked about it. She used to scare me a lot because her first words were, 'this is a time you should start running away from boys. Whenever you see boys, run away' and she was like, 'the moment you are menstruating, that is when you are highly to get pregnant.' I was like oooh, having a baby at a young age? I was like, I am not going to stand next to a boy because I did not want to get pregnant at a young age. It was funny. But when I got to grade 10, I

started understanding what she was indirectly telling me that I am becoming a woman right now, she may not have directly said it.'

It would appear as though this basic talk on the day of her first menses was Ria's first exposure to sex communication with her mother like it was for Tani who initially did not understand the content from her mother when told to 'start running away from boys.' A gross exaggeration of telling an adolescent girl not to have sex with boys. Adding that 'the moment you are menstruating, that is when you are highly likely to get pregnant'., This warning, without explaining that she can only be pregnant in a case where there has been unprotected sex, is likely to leave Tani confused. Tani indeed ran away from boys. It took her about three more years to understand what her mother was insinuating.

Most participants of this research say they came to understand what exactly their parents implied in schools during sex education lessons, when they had fallen pregnant, or from words of mouth as they sought knowledge. At the same time, many participants here represented by Ria and Tani confirm that at adolescence, this misinformed or incomplete messages on sex-related topics were knowledge that guided the discomfort with which they came to know sex and sexuality.

Discomfort of disclosing

The lack of bonding, reciprocity and denial of adolescents' biological evolution influence talks on sex and sexuality to be uncomfortable as found in this study's data.

> Mere: 'No. She just told me oree [that], if I am at that stage of dating, before I could date, I must tell her first. I was like, 'Yoo, Yoo.' But because that now, I am not into boys. I am into girls. I was like ok, 'I will tell you.' … Well, I haven't discussed it with my grandmother. But she's the person that she would ask me why I don't have a boyfriend or something. So, then I will tell her, just because of respect, that 'Ah mina I am very young.' Again, she'd ask me, am I dating boys or girls? What? What? I won't answer. Mainly because of my appearance.'

Some open-minded parents invited their adolescents to inform them when they become sexually active. The researcher presented how Lori's mother encouraged openness in asking them to write to her. Mere said her mother urged her to tell her, 'If I am at that stage of dating' assuming Mere would date males. When the time came, Mere says the fear of disclosing her sexual identity made her maintain her assumed sexual orientation. She was not comfortable to tell her mother that 'I am not into boys.' She 'won't answer' her

grandmother who suspected that she dates other girls. The reason for the top part of Mere's quotation talking about her mother and the bottom part talking about her grandmother is that her mother passed away in her adolescence.

Many are uncomfortable disclosing what they know, or wish to know about sex and sexuality, while others like Mere are not comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation. Her case indicates that children may find it almost impossible to practice open sexuality should their parents not project acceptance to sexual diversity. Mere's mother's request might have been genuine. But children can only openly disclose in family settings where prior communication on sex and sexuality is practical, open, sincere, ongoing and flexible; not families like hers where sex communication was almost absent and based on stereotypes.

> Lori: 'When I lost my virginity. That was something I couldn't tell my parents like I felt like whenever they talk, I could tell them I was still a virgin. So, telling my parents about that was no factor. So, me saying I have contraceptive was a way of implying. It was a thing of no factor but otherwise, I am an open book and that's what made my parents comfortably uncomfortable. They are learning that I have no reason to lie and that I will be honest even if it makes them uncomfortable.'

Experiences were different in cases where parents have tried all they can to be transparent, but their adolescents are still not comfortable to open up as was the case with participants like Lori whose family has been cited by this researcher as having encouraging communication rules. Although her mother would allow her boyfriends to sleep at her house, she says telling 'my parents about' lost virginity 'was no factor.' Instead, 'saying I have contraceptives' was her subtle disclosure of her sexual life to her parents. Lori keeps repeating how she is an 'open book.' However, she has just said that she will not use her voice to tell her parents that she is sexually active, or maybe her silence results from society's intolerance of children talking sex to parents.

> Mica: 'I don't know and it's not something I can tangible say, like I can't put my finger on why I couldn't speak, but it just feels like a general thing that was created particularly with my mom. I remember one time like I said that they would check in every day when I come back from the seminar when I was in grade 7 and at the end of it all my mom said, give me a brief summary of the things that were discussed and I did. And she asked how long did it take. I think she had the same fear like teenage

pregnancy. Something that her sister went through. She had comments that I know that no this topic is not to be spoken about and I think like if I were to be asking questions, I would almost seem like oh you are involved with someone now.'

Other participants think that their level of discomfort is inherent. For instance, Mica has no explanation as to why she finds sex talks with her parents uncomfortable, except that silence 'was created particularly with my mom,' whose comments on sex communication led her to think that 'this topic is not to be spoken about.' It is difficult to reconcile this comment with the previous narration on how open Mica's parents communicated the various topics on sex and sexuality with her, without suggesting that those could have been one-way talks. Their fears that she could get pregnant once she gains knowledge of sex leaves Mica disappointed. Even after attending lessons, her mother neither talked to her nor let her talk. Her case informs others' including examples below where Taa and his adolescents could not talk sex even after the school started doing so.

Thrive for independence

The level of talking to bond, the degree of reciprocity, acceptance of adolescent's biological changes and comfort levels determine how empowered or disempowered many adolescents are, or are perceived during sex and sexuality communication.

Empowered adolescent, represented in this sub-theme are those who have had sex talks in their families to their best details and have been empowered enough to face adulthood.

> Lum: "We talked about HIV. We talked about everything. So, now that he is 18, and leading toward 19, we don't talk much, he knows everything now. I even asked him before that you know everything now, is there something that I need to tell you? He said, 'I think I am fine. Should there be something that I need to know, I will ask you'."

Many such individuals are revealed by this study's data. However, it is important not to ignore Lum who reports that her 18-year-old son now 'knows everything' and is well empowered to thrive in the realms of sex and sexuality communication since he has reached information saturation in relation to talking on other's experiences, questions and challenges on sex and sexuality.

> Ria: 'Well, I have very open parents. They are very, very. I think they covered everything I wanted to speak about, anything they wanted to speak about. There was nothing I wish they had covered that they didn't cover by the time I was 18.'

It could be argued that communication on these topics is inexhaustive but the researcher considers that sex and sexuality communication can be personal. This means that where there is nothing personal to talk about, communication can be dormant. Added to this study's conclusion, are YAs who attest to be thriving in the knowledge gained on sex and sexuality communication from parents because, like Ria, all doubts were clarified to a point where there is no urge for further enquiries from her parents.

Disempowered adolescents. The cases of Lum and Ria's families may be far-fetched in some African families with adolescents in South Africa where parents' attitudes discourage adolescents from either responding to, or introducing conversations on sex and sexuality.

> Zam: 'No. I know for certain that I didn't try to raise these conversations. From their side let me think, no. Actually, the one thing that reenforces me knowing that we didn't really have this specific conversation around sex, okay around sexuality, like I said, all the values are from all the messaging, but with sex, there was a moment in grade 9 or 10 where we were learning about conversation of having that conversation of sex with your parents and I do remember feeling somehow left out because I had never had that conversation with my parents before, and that feeling is something that resonated inside in me and it just kind of reenforced that I never had that conversation with my parents even in one way or the other way was never us talking about penetrated sex or sex in general.'

A participant like Zam has been so invalidated that he has never had these talks with his parents. He laments that it was in a mid-adolescence conversation with peers and their teacher that he awkwardly realised such talks have not taken place, or that others do talk about sex and sexuality with their parents.

> Vera: 'The big boy, I don't remember speaking about sex perse. But I remember speaking to him about alcohol, because that is the thing that they displayed. Alcohol and drugs. Sex? My son got girlfriends later, then he told me about girlfriends. We didn't discuss about sex issues with the girlfriend.'

Some PoAs concede that their adolescents are among those who started dating before their parents realised; they had not talked with them on sex and sexuality. Even when her son had

a sex partner, Vera claims to ‘not remember’ talking sex with her son. In fact, she did not. Context may matter.

4.1.4 Contextual criteria

Three themes respond to situational and environmental factors in which African families in South Africa with adolescents discuss sex and sexuality as guided by CPM; appropriateness of topics, accidental and involuntary exposure and responding to what is learned at school.

Appropriateness of topics

Many participants whose family members communicated, or attempted to, say sex and sexuality communication was often limited to certain topics.

> Tiku: ‘My mother was a very open person, so I had conversation before I was even 16. She would say condomise. Like if you have a boyfriend and you think you are sexually active. Condomise so that you can be protected from HIV, pregnancy because those things are real and those are the things you don’t wish to live with for the rest of your life. Sexuality was, you don’t have optional things but to be straight and it is still the conversation with everybody. But being gay, I know it’s not going to be accepted easily … because I would have a conversation and ask my mom, ‘mom, what if I get attracted to girls?’ She would go like, ‘you can’t’.’

It is to this effect that Tiku speaks pleasantly about her mother’s communication. She is one of those who say in addition to being aptly conversational, talks in the form of warnings and threats, did well to point out reasons for which sex should be protective. Tiku’s mother was however not flexible to imagine that she could be sexually attracted to other females. Her reference to both illnesses and pregnancy when she asked her adolescent to ‘condomise’ means Tiku’s mother was both deliberate and specific in her communication. It is a pity that Tiku could not openly declare her sexual orientation in fear of her mother, and because people in her society could only ‘be straight and it is still the conversation with everybody.’

> Leli: ‘Explain why they must keep themselves as virgins. What does it mean for your husband to find you as a virgin? Same to the guys they were told why do you have to keep yourself? Why do you have to circumcise and be clean?’

For many parents like quoted above, Leli’s exactness on sex and sexuality communication educated adolescents girls to preserve ‘themselves as virgins,’ and boys ‘to circumcise and be clean.’

Accidental and involuntary exposure

Away from families where appropriate sex-related talks take place, are many in which such talks remained challenging. Luckily for such families, members do not have to be involved directly in conversations for them to learn a thing or two.

> Ria: 'A couple of years ago, but at this point I was a teenager, but one of a couple of years ago, when we were having family Christmas and we were having a conversation about the LGBTQI community, yeah and they walked in, we explained everything, pan sexual, asexual, what, what, my cousins and I. And they sat, listened to us and asked us questions. At the end of it all, they were like, as far as they are concerned, Men, women, men, men mate with women, that's it. The rest doesn't involve them, pan sexual, asexual they said that they just don't care about that.'

Ria's quotation gives an indication of how adult family members like those in his family learnt about different sexual orientations and gender identities from adolescents' knowledge on sex and sexuality through conversations not intended for their ears; which could have otherwise not featured in family conversations. Ria's encounter brings to the fore the interplay of gossip and secrets in African cultures that will feature in the discussion chapter, but may also help to challenge stereotypes and promote understanding within discourse on the impact of listening adults. Learning does not mean that adults in these families became more receptive of other sexualities. It means they became conscious that other sexualities do exist and that people do talk about them.

> Ovis: 'The communication was fine but, she never, but I was not talking with her, but I was not talking to her about sex. Because she did not want to worry me about the topic of sex and what, what and she was thinking that she was protecting me by not talking to me about it. I found out when I was 12. I was staying with a cousin. So, my cousin just had sex with the other lady. Our parents knew about it. My grann was worried very worried about me when she knew that I know about it.'

Ovis's report suggests that at 12, he saw his cousin have 'sex with the other lady,' in their shared living space. His exposure disturbed his grandmother who had thought he was too young for sex talks, to the point where she introduced sex talks to him. Ovis does not say if it was an open conversation but at least, the talk took place.

> Nevi: I wish there wasn't so much porn. To be honest, like we were still in the stone ages like there was no online. I think internet has confused everything like there is

so much happening and these kids are online all the time and I think it forces me as parent to have these conversations and also encourages him to speak to anyone but not just me about these things and be able to say if he needs assistance on the subjects.'

While every other participant has been exposed by, or through, fellow humans, in Nevi's case like other PoAs in his situation, his 13-year-old has been exposed to grown-up content not because he chose to, but because such content is available online. Nevi's concluding statement may be unclear to the reader, but he mentions during the conversation that his adolescent is in therapy for what he refers to as online pornographic addiction. Some children get structurally facilitated exposure.

Responding to what is learned at school

It has been presented above that in many cases, parents-adolescents communication only takes place after parents realise that adolescents have had some insight on the topics.

Casi: 'She got more on sex and everything from school. And then for me now, because I realised that she knew, I had to open up and try just to add something. I wanted to add. Just like you are watching TV, and then people start kissing passionately, you will see facial expression in her. You will see her being like uncomfortable. You ask her what is wrong and she'd say no, nothing. But at the end of the day, you know that she knows sexual happenings, and with time, we could open up and talk about it. … Mommy was pregnant. So, I had to tell her what happened. So, I was a case study. But abortion, no. I haven't touched on abortion. … I think when it comes to sex… the school has already done. … Sexuality, she sees on social media. She sees gays and lesbians on TV, technology. … On menstruation, the school started before me, when she was doing grade four. I don't even know where I was going to start myself. … Rape and sexual violence, we have touched on that one.'

Similar to what Tim said above, Casi's adolescent's school taught her the basics of sex and sexuality from grade four although she says her adolescent was already reacting to TV content, which hinted that she could interpret sexual expressions. Casi understood the need to start sex talks but confessed that she was unable to introduce the said conversation before her daughter learnt from school. The extract below indicates that Casi was gratefully unburdened when school taught most of the topics she would have discussed with her

adolescent. Hence, like other parents, Casi says school and 'TV, technology,' gave some great relief. She responded to sex-talks comfortably thereafter.

> Lari: 'It was very push and go. At our school we had a sex retreat. So, my mom was like how was it and what did they tell you? I was probably like 13. They did in class, then on a weekend retreat when I was 16. … Essentially, we only spoke about it [menstruation] when it happened. Cos at school they prep us about it when in grade three. When it happened, it became a conversation.'

Casi was motivated by these outlets to introduce her 12-year-old to sex-related talks as were other parents. But Lori gained access to content on sex and sexuality at the time when her parents were 'very push and go,' or teasing her readiness. Although her mother took advantage of the lessons from school to initiate talks, much was not said. When the researcher enquires about details on how the talks unfolded, Lori stresses their lack of readiness. She adds, 'essentially, we only spoke about it when it happened;' after she menstruated.

> Mica: From a younger age, I don't think that was a topic that was really up for discussion. … They let the school to take the reins on that. … In grade 7, we had a free summer break sex-talk … So, every day when I come back from the seminar, they will ask how was it and what did you learn and so forth. But it was never a conversation that I had with either of them. No conversation was dedicated to that.'

Almost every participant including Mica says apart from giving feedbacks to inquiries on what she would have learnt from school, 'no conversation was dedicated to' sex and sexuality within her family until they were over sixteen. Or maybe until risk-benefit criteria were considered.

4.1.5 Risk-benefit ratio criteria

CPM's guide on eminent gains and losses when contemplating discussions on sex and sexuality emerged in two themes; risks and benefits.

Risks

Many participants say they, and their family members, are aware of the potential risks connected with their choices to communicate sex and sexuality within family settings.

> Ria: ‘I knew I’ll get into trouble for it. Cos, I knew like, if, because I knew that it was not up for discussion. So, I’ll just get myself into trouble, if I tell them about what is happening sexuality and in my sexual life. It’s not that I did not want to. I would love to actually have that openness of being able to discuss my sexuality with my parents, but you don’t discuss it because you know, you’re going to get into trouble. … First of all, I figure out what is the risk that’s going to come from the secrets coming out and keeping the secret? How is it going to hurt myself and that person in the secret, then I decide if it should be something that I should take out.’

Amongst how they evade this risk is to keep ‘the secret’ as Ria, who previously made it clear that sex and sexuality was not a topic for discussion in her family until her first menses, explains. In her opinion, neither her sex-life nor that of any person could be discussed free of fear. Ria says during superficial cautions on abstinence, she did not respond for fear of getting ‘into trouble for it’ since ‘it was not up for discussion.’ Her tone signals the yearning for expression on life stage experiences.

> Ako: ‘It is not comfortable because sometimes you feel like you must know the truth, though sometimes you feel like it is not gonna sit well with you, but sometimes I feel like they are still young and you can see the route they are taking. … Talk everything, everything about sex. … The Africans they used to say if you sleep with a boy, but that, is not the definition of sex. They don’t know that to sleep is sex. They think it is just to sleep. We are supposed to say don’t have sex and what is sex. They are supposed to be taught, so, yeah. We need to teach our children how you can enjoy sex and all the stuff, in the right ways.’

Some PoAs claim that while respecting how their adolescents negotiate their existing information rule boundaries, they unfortunately rely on information that may be uncomfortable from children to be better parents. Ako is a parent who would rather risk and ‘talk everything, everything about sex’ using proper terminologies and avoiding a commonly cited term like ‘sleep’ to mean sex. To her, information from adolescents helps PoAs to properly guard them. The risk of exposing adolescents to active sex is why parents in this research would not talk. Ako does not advocate this risk.

> Nevi: ‘It depends on what I am keeping away, because if it’s for his protection, or something that he necessarily doesn’t need to know. I think I don’t have any feeling attached to that.’

Disclosure comes with some risks that could make the message owner vulnerable to the message recipient. A group of participants including Nevi divulge being conscious of this like the YAs in this sub-section, and will weigh the risk. They will keep information from adolescents 'if it's for his protection,' or if the adolescent 'doesn't need to know.'

***Privacy risks*.** Content coded in privacy risk responds to the question that asked YAs at what stage they decided on what to share and what not to share with their parents.

> Ria: 'Like, if it's a big and it is hard to keep it to yourself, I think the other way of managing it is telling someone else. But it's not really a secret now, is it? But you can't keep the burden to yourself. You feel a relief when you are sharing. … If it's small, I can keep it to myself. But please keep this as a secret. But what you don't realise is that that person is also going to be burdened, and now they're going to have to go and tell someone else, eventually the truth is out. So, it depends on how big or small the secret is but if it's small, I can keep it to myself. Yeah, but if it's something that is so big, that is going to affect yoo, I think I'll have to see who I can trust and share it. And generally, when it comes to secrets, first of all, I figure out what is the risk that's going to come from the secrets coming out and keeping the secret? How is it going to hurt myself and that person in the secret, then I decide if it should be something that I should take out. … I guess you just figure out the risk of the truth coming out, then you keep the secret. … I don't discuss anything that has to do with my relationships. … I guess I have not done that because I don't want to be that person who brings one person then the next day another person, but at the same time, I just feel like respect.'

According to the research participants, information is guided by anticipating the potential owner's reaction to it. They say they minimised the possibility of being punished, for acting or behaving in certain ways, by always concealing what they said or did. Speaking, like others would, Ria continues from the above statements saying if what she has to say is impactful and 'hard to keep,' she will be mindful of 'the risk of the truth coming out' by telling someone, and not her parents. She says she does not discuss any romantic or sexual relationships with her parents.

> Celi: 'I think you already know when you do something bad, the repercussions. So, when you do something wrong, you want to hide it. … And that's how I could keep it because they were not involved directly. Maybe indirectly, but if they're not

involved directly, then you can keep or I could keep it to myself because there's no other way that they could get a source of information. Just don't talk about it. … Because of how they looked at sex in general and sexuality. So, if it's not spoken about, I wouldn't be the one to bring it. So, I will just keep it to myself.'

Although Ria classifies herself as respectful, the researcher found that fear was a robust contributor to rules around communicating sex and sexuality. Of course, considering the risk makes sense in a community where sex-talk is filled with messages of warnings and threats. For many participants, including Celi, they mostly understood the risk of disclosing after parents' reactions to prior disclosure.

Zas: 'It happened during my high school years I was a lesbian. So, I would hide it. Yoo, it was really we would fight a lot and I would lie and say this is my friend so the girl and the mother of the girl would come to my house and say I understand these kids are friends but to me they seem more than that.'

Like Zas, and previously mentioned YAs, many conceal when they had lovers. They tell lies to make sure that PoAs do not find out. It is more so for Zas who was dating a female.

Benefits

Many participants are aware of the potential benefits of both discussing and listening to sex and sexuality communication as a family.

Nevi: 'That's how I communicate with my kid as well about sex and sexuality, I normalise it but not making it into something different or you know, just make it a regular thing like we are all people and we have different sexual orientations and it is perfectly normal. It's absolutely normal to have an erection. I did the scientific thing by saying what an erection is you know, but I also made him know that an erection is normal. Erection was our first conversation. He starts realising that there are feelings to an erection. The feeling of excitement. What's going on? You know. So, masturbation conversation started later when he started to grow older and exposed to females in a way that he gets excited.'

Including other PoAs, Nevi is one of many participants maximising these benefits in different ways. He says sex-talks are held in stages to match his adolescent's experience or interest and to ensure that the content is understood. For example, telling his adolescent that 'there are feelings to an erection' means sharing knowledge that is instrumental at a stage of inquiries on why and how their body parts respond the way they do. But doing so long after

speaking on erection and sexual orientation, for example, makes Nevi's explanation of how he communicates content in fact remarkable. This researcher has the feeling that Nevi might have gone deeper in the talks than he explains because he since revealed his son gets sexually aroused by girls.

> Noni: 'Because her friends started before her, she told me about them, so we browsed the topic and I said because it happened to her friends, it is going to come to her any time and one thing that I would want is to make sure that she feels comfortable to come to me when it happens because I will like to share that moment with her and make her comfortable.'

Parents like Nevi comfortably speak about developmental aspects with their adolescents at the time they are experiencing them. Meanwhile, there are other parents who say they prepare their adolescents for when they will experience this growth changes. Noni knows the benefits of her transparency and willingness to talk. She prepares to 'make her comfortable' either as her body evolves, or with communicating her experiences and doubts when the time does come; all because of inclusion to her adolescent's age-related experience and her growth. It is comforting to hear a parent inviting such talks from their adolescent, and that both of them in fact engage in talks.

4.1.6 Other criteria

Three themes emerged from data not drawn from CPM; influence of self and of others and modelling behaviour criteria.

Influence of self and of others

During data analysis, the presentation of this theme was split into three sections; influence of self, influence of family members and influence of family relationships.

Influence of self, responds to how participants' personalities influence family communication.

> Noni: 'I matured very late because I played a lot when I was older. Even when I was in high school, I still played with younger kids. I enjoyed that more than doing anything else that everyone was doing. Because teenage days everyone was drinking and partying because my home was so strict and I stayed at home most of the time. I'd focus on school and play with kids because the ones at my age were already doing

things that teenagers were doing; which I was not ready for. … I know that with my grandmother sex was definitely out of the question. With my mom, she was a nurse. She used to talk to us freely about those things because she was used to dealing with such. So, she used to have the conversations with us. She used to tell us beforehand what will happen if we had sex too early and she will explain the processes of period when it started and the impact of you having sex after your period that you will get pregnant and that was the most severe result that will come out from that act at the time, because there were not these other diseases that we have now.'

Insights on how and when Noni experienced maturity credits how she 'matured very late' to little sex-related exposures. Of course, like age, female maturity which to Noni is her first menses, has a lot to do with how parents speak sex and sexuality with adolescents as portrayed above. Noni's reference that she grew up in a strict home, is confusing on whether she is revealing her 'strict upbringing' as what restricted her from mingling with others at adolescence or it was that she 'matured' late. It could be both. Whichever is the reason, her statements insinuate that maturity elevates children from playing, to 'drinking and partying.' She also implies that at maturity, many adolescents in her community socialised free of parents and did 'things that teenagers were doing,' like dating, alcohol consumption and staying out late at night for various reasons. Her grandmother did not flexibly communicate sex, while her mother held one-directional talks. Her mothers' role is of lesser impact to how this communication influenced Noni who was raised by her grandmother.

Lori: 'When I started dating… he would sleepover at my place but my mom would remind me that she is not a white parent, and my mom was very appreciative because I wouldn't hide things and I would be open and ask her things no matter how uncomfortable it made her. So, she would be like the fact that you told me that you are dating. The fact that you are even dating under my eyes, I prefer it like this. there had to be compromise, to the level of communication, acceptance and so forth. So, she would come to us and she would be like; no sex, no sex no sex. We would say yes, definitely. … I was scared to try a lot of things, especially because my mom made it so open for me to understand. … I didn't feel compelled to join, which I think was great on my part.'

PoAs who were open to a certain extent, groom adolescents who communicate sex and sexuality to their best. Contrary to Noni's mother who worked away from home and would come home on certain weekends, Lori is amongst those whose ever-present mothers were

engaging, liberal, tolerant and guiding not just to her communication, but to her actions and behaviours towards sex and sexuality. Lori who 'wouldn't hide things' was inquisitive and cautious, making sure she adhered to 'no sex' instructions when her boyfriend slept over. Lori's confession of avoiding risks in order not to disappoint her mother who trusted and guided in her sex-related exposures, helps in positioning the influence of family members such that if adult caregivers treat their adolescents like younger children, adolescents may not freely speak with them on any topics.

***Influence of family members*.** Participants say their family members were friendly, voiceless, positive, negative, neutral and gender-biased.

> Nevi: 'Fun. I would say fun loving. I grew up in a loving family. You know, travelling … It is a family that is supportive of one another. The kind of family that is involved in each other's activities and we openly communication about our emotions, school, work, anything and everything. So open communication. … It [sex] was not a subject that was very openly spoken about.'

In the motivational criteria, the researcher illustrated that those who grew up in fun-loving families share close bonds. Nevi's childhood family members cared for, and supported, each other. However, there were some limitations. Sex was not 'openly spoken about,' as he says.

> Jix: 'Back in the days when I was going to school, or when I was younger, your parents don't tell you things. And obviously you are shielded from a lot of things. But now as you are older, your parents start talking to you more about things like finance and stuff in the house. … You start having grown conversations like we have to buy this in the house, instead of school. … There was no ways we could speak about sex or sexuality. We never speak about sex or sexuality and I never asked anything.'

At least Nevi's family interacted on other topics. On the contrary, many other participants like Jix report that they lived in environments where adolescents were talked to by adult family members most of the times, with no expectation for them to respond because parents claimed to be shielding and protecting adolescents from 'a lot of things.' Adolescents were seen as both innocent and passive participants until at YAs when many are talked to on household needs only as detailed by Jix 'there was no way we could speak about sex or sexuality,' when asked if his household evolution included how they talked about sex and

sexuality. His excerpt is included here because, like many adolescents, Jix views the absence of communication as an act of protection.

> Tana: 'He [dad], sees me as adult now. Like I can make my own decision and if I disagree on something I tell him and he would say, 'I understand where you are coming from, and I know this is not coming from a place of being disrespectful'. … Not talking about sex is a general thing, but when you get married you and your husband will know what to do.'

Like Jix many other participants, whose childhood environments silenced adolescents, now let YAs talk and also extend curfews because at this stage, their parents have come to acknowledge that expressiveness is not synonymous with disrespect. However, like Jix, parents are still not receptive to sex talks. Tana sarcastically says young people are not allowed to talk sex, but are likely to understand what exactly sex is when they get married.

Influence of family relationships. The intricacies of internal family relationships impact adolescents' communicative rules as seen in this study's data. Siblings' influence was isolated by a question inquiring how participants' relationships with siblings were, if they had siblings, and if they enjoyed growing up with their siblings when they were aged 10 and 19.

> Nevi: 'I'd say pretty decent. I'd say it is pretty cool. We communicated very well and we spend time together as much as we can. ... So, I'd say pretty good. ... Not set on stone. Not that we were told not to talk about sex or about girls but we just knew that fundamentally from respect point of view, me and my siblings could have this conversation, but not with my parents.'

Many participants, including Nevi, spent a lot of time with their siblings. Their relationship was flexible and 'pretty good.' When asked about how communication on sex and sexuality unfolded, Nevi explains, 'me and my siblings could have this conversation.' His parents never asked them not to speak about sex. But they chose to speak amongst themselves as children.

> Pitt: 'It was good because we were all in the same situation like, not to say suffering, but we were all like going through the same thing. Like we were all being denied lot of freedom in life so and whatever so …. We would talk to each other and share how

> we feel and if it happened that we did need to go out, we would have to coordinate with each other on how everything is gonna happen, what story to make up or whatever. … It was a lot more two ways (with siblings). We would tell each other stories. It was just like back and forth and we would ask each other advise, like I have a problem, can you help? We talked a lot. I am close to my immediate brother. The younger of the two. So, I talk a lot with him. … Not even my brother. I go like oh. I am feeling like this. I don't know what to do. Let me just like go to the bathroom and relax, until it goes away.'

Some participants, including Pitt, detail how their siblings' bond was strong because they identified themselves as victims who 'were all in the same situation.' Like others, Pitt and his siblings were unable to talk with their parents, nor leave their house; not for dates. They resorted to telling lies about each other's whereabouts when they went on dates, for instance. Because Pitt kept reiterating how he had learnt a lot from his brother, the researcher questioned if they have talked about sex and sexuality. His response was, 'not even my brother.' Pitt concludes that no sex-related wisdom from family members meant that he elected to self-manage episodes of erection, over seeking help.

> Veni: 'It does hey. … They've got that expectation you know. It's a thing of expectations of what people have about you. … It's the fact that they have to keep to the perceptions people have about your family. … I am the one who started these conversations, so I cannot run for ever because one way or the other, I will face them. So, I don't have boundaries, because immediately you start boundaries you gonna create that thing for them to shelve things and to be reserved. Which is something I am trying to avoid by all means, you know.'

Veni says her adolescents would manage their identities while fully aware of onlookers and family members for whom they have to 'keep to the perceptions people have about your family.' Veni refers to how they communicate sex in manners that aligned with their extended family values. She hopes for open communication with her adolescents. But as if regretting the level of inquisitiveness of her adolescents even to outsiders, she adds, 'I will face them.' Veni reports her communication of self has made her adolescents belief how they express themselves is being judged by extended family members. Although she makes it sound like it is her adolescents' choice to communicate the way they do, one can notice that through the messaging they have received, her adolescents are almost pressured to

behave and act in the model of their extended family members; or at least to match their socio-cultural and religious statuses.

Modelling behaviour

In cultural criteria, Mia said she modelled her grandmother to be a 'black girl' from KwaZulu Natal (KZN). Ven just said family members influence adolescents' expression of selves.

> Neb: 'I think it is the way it is. Like for instance, as they are always with me. You can see that I am their role model. I am the only woman in the house. So, I am their role model. I wash at night and they are like Mia, you know. When I drive the car, they say ok, 'When did you start driving?' … When I change the globe at home, they are like, 'Mommy you are changing the globe?' You know. So definitely, I would say they would get some influence. For now, I haven't seen that when they look at their dad, they see themselves but when they look at mommy, they see. … For us not talking about sex it is leading to a situation where even our kids and our daughters, they think it's an embarrassment to talk about sex. … If as African parents we start talking about sex freely, even our kids they will be free and sex shouldn't be treated like a private thing.'

More involved parents including Neb are aware that their adolescents are modelling their sexual identities on their parents'. Neb takes pride in being 'their role model.' Although one may argue that her daughters have no exposure to another mother whom they can compare her to, it is likely that her spouse has attracted little admiration from their girls. Whereas it is easy for Neb to explain that her girls' admiration for her is defaulted by gender, her reference to how parental attitude to sex and sexuality communication influences adolescents' attitudes make it possible that her adolescents' attitudes towards their father is rather regarding his unavailability to communicate and interact with them.

Neb, who previously accused her husband of not entertaining sex and sexuality communications with his daughters, calls on African parents, no doubt including her husband, to create enabling environments where children can accept sex and sexuality communication as normal communication.

> Noni: 'I think she is probably mimicking me in a way. … When I started dating [after losing spouse], the first thing that I was worried about was protecting her, and not bringing other men in front of her. … I was surrounded by strong women that are

hard workers and I just followed the same path and she also wants to do the same thing. … I told her that there is nothing wrong with sex. Because then, it was made as if it was a sin for you to have sex.'

Like the above parents, Noni is one of those who articulates modelling to their adolescents. Noni divulges details of how her attitude, as a single mother, towards sex has played out in her daughter's attitude towards sex and sexuality communication. She says her daughter is being modelled by other family females whom her daughter aspires to be like. In a practical example of how parents' attitudes influence adolescents, Noni mentions telling 'her that there is nothing wrong with sex', although sex and sexuality talks are influenced by many different communication boundaries.

4.2 Boundary coordination

Once the researcher understood what rules influence conversations in African families with adolescents in South Africa, the researcher explored what their communication looks like. Findings in RQ2 were on what boundaries rules are observed and negotiated by South African parents and adolescent children when they talk sex and sexuality. The main questions asked were; 1), how open were their family discussions about sex in particular and how much detail did their parents discuss about their past? 2), how did their families generally talk on specific contents like; menstruation and ejaculation, erection and masturbation, sex and sexuality, rape and sexual violence, pregnancies and abortion? 3), how did they negotiate information about their sexual lives? Two of the four categories emerged from CPM's guidelines on how people set and manage boundaries on information sharing as shown below; 1), boundary permeability, 2), boundary ownership, 3), content of sex talks, and 4), others boundaries.

Table 4. 2: Boundary Coordination

BOUNDARY COORDINATION	
Boundary permeability	**The content of sex talks**
Completely open	Talking to clarify
Selective openness	Body development
Open with some, but not with others	Sexual orientation
Partial openness	Erection and ejaculation
Completely closed	Masturbation

One-way communication
Modelling boundaries

From boundary permeability to coordination
Personal boundaries coordination
Pervasive rules
Topic avoidance rules
Topic protection rules
Shared co-ordination
Parent-owned boundaries
Adolescent-owned boundaries
Anticipated future boundaries coordination
Collective boundaries
Internal boundaries
Nuclear family boundaries
Extended family boundaries

Abstinence and sex
Abstinence.
Sex.
Pregnancy and abortion
Preventatives and contraceptives
Rape and sexual violence

Other boundaries

4.2.1 Boundary permeability

Five themes emerged from participants' feedback on the access types which family members give to personal privacy boundaries or family's boundaries as guided by CPM; completely open, selective openness, completely closed, one-way communication and modelling boundaries.

Completely open

Some participants say their families have always had open communication on sex and sexuality.

> Gabi: 'She's very open. Always been. Because even when I told her I am pregnant, she was like, 'Ok', to show that that's how open we are. She's just one of the coolest persons I know.'

One such participant who claims their family communications on sex and sexuality were free of barriers and biases, so much that her mother responded with an 'Ok' when she announced her pregnancy at adolescence, is Gabi. Ok to pregnancy has been an uncommon reaction, hence, Gabi names her mother 'one of the coolest persons.' Gabi's feedback gives clarity to why she is caught in theme one stating that her family is religious, but their communication is based on individual values.

> Mica: ‘We were quite close and we're still close. We created an environment where I was able to be open about things and ask support when I need it. He has been always around to support me and he encourages open communication. My mom did speak to me about rape, masturbation and sexual violence. Sexual violence, I think it’s also covered when talking about rape but masturbation not at all. Sexual violence and rape my mom basically recalled a story of someone she knew. A friend from school something that happened to her. obviously not through her own world but she just narrated the situation to show like sometimes you should be careful about who you hang around with and if you are in certain places, you should tell people and just be very aware of your company. … So, when you are in danger, it’s important to let those around you know.’

Gabi’s response does not detail what content they freely communicated on beyond the reaction to her pregnancy. Other participants, like Mica, generously describe how much sex-related education they gained from both parents. Mica’s close relationship with her father is illustrated when she adds that there is nothing more which she yearns to know on sex and sexuality as both of her parents elaborated and simplified every detail with the exception of masturbation, giving real life examples before she was 18. It is important to mention that Mica is female. The researcher applauds her parents’ attention to detail, although they left out masturbation.

> Vera: ‘This white one is not easier, because he does not know about descent ways of saying things. Like he will say, ‘every morning my penis will go up’ [erection]. Then I will say yeah. The last time I saw it [penis], it was very small. I wonder how big it is now. We will laugh about it. And with the girl, she came from boarding school, and we talked about it [sex], many things. For me we needed to be open to address the issue in a rational way.’

While Gabi and Mica claim to have comfortably spoken sex and sexuality with their parents as adolescents, other open-minded PoAs like Vera who is clearly a conservative parent, has nicknamed her open-minded and inquisitive 16-year-old son a ‘white one’, further accusing him of not knowing ‘descent ways of saying things’. Vera grew up in a family with absolutely no communication, meaning no sex-related communication as well. Other feedback indicates that Vera and her now adult daughter spoke sex and sexuality in her adolescence years, but the girl was less dramatic. Hence, Vera’s selective openness makes it

hard for her to flow with her son's complete openness towards discussing the topics, including his liberal sex-related vocabulary.

Selective openness

This theme presents participants as selective with who and with what information they share.

Open with some, but not with others. Both PoAs and YAs report that as adolescents get older, family communication evolves at many levels including who they talk sex and sexuality with.

> Mere: 'With my mom, 'Yes.' You know in religion or in cultural thing you just have to remember or know that this person she or he is older to me, so I need to show him or her a respect as much as I can. We were just best friends. It [not talking sex] was all about respect. Yes. But with my father, he was the type of person who would keep quiet like he doesn't talk too much.'

Hailing a parent as a best friend may mean many things but relating to communication, Mere's mother is an ideal communicator who is interactive, comedic and treats her like a partner, not a dependent. Already mentioned above, Mere is one of those who restrain from talking sex with her liberal mother out of 'respect'. This is a signal that in her family, as with many African families, respect is qualified in terms of a child's inquisitiveness. Of course, her father also 'didn't talk much.'

> Pitt: 'It [talking to siblings] was kind of an escape from the lack of freedom because if I am not like spending time with my friends when I am at school, I chill at home with my brothers and sister having fun and making jokes. Like most of the fun we had it was like unsupervised mom is out and dad is at work. Everyone is busy, it's just the 4 of us chilling and enjoying.'

It is not surprising that participants whose parents have completely shut the doors of communication say as adolescents, they spoke to their siblings rather. Pitt's emotional description relates speaking to his siblings as a 'kind of an escape from the lack of freedom' in a home where they were not allowed to go anywhere but to school. It seems clear that these siblings were not bonded by communication but because they 'covered' each other's mischiefs like going out on dates. In his previous declaration, Pitt specifies that they did not communicate sex and sexuality as siblings. He seems oblivious that advising each other on how to date is in fact talking sex and sexuality.

Mere justifies why communication in her family was open with some, but not with others to their fathers' quiet nature. While Pitt says they were just four unsupervised and tightly controlled adolescents who did not communicate with both parents.

Partial openness for participants was when PoAs or dedicated sex communicators in their families withheld certain content when discussing sex and sexuality.

> Taa: 'No. Not explicitly. I probably had a chickened out. Then followed my father's example. I went to the end result supposed to process. What I do know is that I know they know. How I do know they know is that they told me that they were taught about that at school. So, at some point I tried talking to them and one of them said daddy but we know these things we were taught about it at school. Heyyyy, alright. So, it almost demobilised me, but, in a way, I was like… okay I don't have to do it myself. So, I do know that they know, but I don't know how much they know. I think it's also the comfortability level of me as a parent as an African parent you know, saying these things because we were not taught like that. So, I can't say at least this is how it was done for me and let me follow that because I had never had that.'

PoAs say they were not open because, like Taa, many 'had to chicken out' of sex talks in mimic of their own parents, for instance. They never had such conversations with their own parents and never issued warnings and threats on premarital sex, but they were often convincing themselves that their adolescents were knowledgeable on sex because 'they were taught about that at school'. One would expect Taa to be relieved of the school's role as he almost expressed, or as were PoAs presented in RQ1, but he says he was uncomfortable because culturally, the school has 'almost demobilised me' in acting like a parent. However, he is inquisitive on how much his adolescents know on the said topics. Mind you, by saying that he went for the end rather than starting from the beginning, and in concluding that he knows better, Taa is aware that his tardiness in discussing sex and sexuality with his adolescents is incorrect. His inability to pronounce necessary words like sex, may be proof of that.

> Casi: 'I think it was more just to make us aware that sex existed. Not necessarily to go deeper because remember we also had relatives who were getting pregnant, so she will use these as examples, 'You see, so and so, they are naughty.' I remember I had a cousin who was pregnant. She [grandmother] talked to us about girls who

> exchanged money for sex, got pregnant and had abortions. People can use you for money. These were talks just to warn us about what was happening. I don't remember it being open to the extent that she said you shouldn't have sex because no, you shouldn't have sex. But it was not like open but we could get the memo. We would understand what she was trying to say. Don't do it, you are still young. I mean every parent obviously dreamt of their child getting married and having a wedding. Those were things that we could advise them to be safe, keep yourself for your wedding day. This was similar to things that we were told in church. … I think with me, sex was discussed partially, it was up to me to go deeper and find out more through influence through people, friends, whatever. Given the opportunity, like now, there is no limit. I'm sure if my granny was to go deeper, I would be shy. I don't think I was going to ask more questions because remember granny is talking taboo. We were brought up to say there are things (sex), which were very taboo.'

Religion encourages parents to engage their adolescents with leaders to discuss sex, while culture discourages immediate parents from having such conversations with their adolescents. Of the many responses, from many culturally inclined families where grandparents were dedicated to talk sex, the researcher presents Casi whose family conversations were to 'make us aware that sex existed'. 'Although with real life examples that explained consequences, talks were basic, lacked depth and not educational', she adds. An example was her grandmother's reference to a pregnant cousin when explaining pregnancy, abortion and 'girls who exchanged money for sex,' or prostitution. When asked if they just listened and asked no questions, Casi replied: 'It was up to me to go deeper and find out more through influence, through people, friends, whatever.' But like other participants, Casi says given the opportunity, she was likely not going to talk. To her, the vague phrases and coded words did not deter them from understanding the main message more because her doubts were clarified by 'people, friends, whatever.'

Completely closed

Many participants articulate tight invisible boundaries that kept them from sharing private information with family members.

> Zam: 'Very traditional ma'an. Very old school. I would say very, very old school. … Openness wasn't really encouraged. We talked about certain things, right? When I say openness, I mean me kissing a girl at school and going like I say; 'Mommy, I kissed a girl today.' Something like wasn't encouraged. So, there were certain

> boundaries of the things you can talk about at home. Not that you couldn't bring life at home, but there was always a sense of things you can talk about and things you cannot talk about in the household. So, I would say communication at home was very limited. … I wouldn't say past sexual life. Romantic life, sure. Like previous partners or previous interests sure. There were stories behind there but sex, their sex life, no. I guess now that I think about it, it was only my mother that has spoken about these things. My dad, he was really never the one for conversations that make you a bit uncomfortable. He is a good conversationalist very direct and he is quite open-minded for his age but he is never for those awkward types of kind of embarrassing conversations.'

Unfortunately for most participants, the most basic communication on diverse topics was met with warnings and threats. In addition, Zam confirms that when he was an adolescent, communication in his family was very closed as his parents were 'very old school'. Mere could never tell his parents that he had 'kissed a girl'. Boundaries to discussing affections are not new to this study's data, just like on personal expressions of perceived or actual sexual acts mentioned above. Zam says his mother would not talk about her 'past sexual life,' as well, but would talk about her 'romantic life'. This is because nothing sex-related came out of both of his parents' mouths. Moreover, his father was 'never for those awkward types or kind of embarrassing conversations.'

> Neb: 'So, topics about boys were completely off limit and also, topics about let's say a woman got her periods, nobody talked about options like using a tampon that was not a thing to know you can and that those were options that you actually have. I guess even feelings we just never. It was not a rule but we just never talked about feelings; how I feel today I am not happy, I'm upset.'

Having noted how Zam maps out untold demarcations in his family regarding sex and sexuality communication, the researcher presents PoAs who endorse the unspoken but well-demarcated boundaries. Neb is among those who say they have been expressive and encouraging expressiveness for their adolescents although as adolescents, they were well-acquainted with family rules that encouraged children to listen and not comment on every topic, including 'about feelings', and 'about boys'. Neb is an unhappy adult because unlike others who explain how they were helped during menstruation, Neb is amongst adolescents of her time who had to keep quiet about 'her periods'.

> Ivo: ‘It was a difficult topic to discuss. Especially initially. But I remember because I was discussing law and order in the family, my first born ended up having to justify why when I said he should not come back late. So, now I have a girlfriend. Then I said no, no, no, it is fine. Let’s talk now. Now that you have, then we said, ok. But do you think you are emotionally ok. Do you think you are mentally ok? I know financially you are not. So, err, are you aware that you are going to contribute time which is meant to be for your studies? And how are you going to manage that? Are you able to plan time? So that it can balance them, and sacrifice the other one. Then I will say ok, that is for you. But how are we going to sacrifice with your younger siblings? Why are you now coming back late and it is OK for you to come back late not for them? You can come up with some help, so that I am able to justify to them. Then eish, it was a difficult task.’

One of the most intriguing responses from a PoAs that could not be left out describes not just how communication was completely closed, but why. Sex was a ‘difficult topic to discuss’ with Ivo’s adolescents. He clearly details a talk he had with his first son. Ivo says it took a disagreement on his parenting skills for his son to tell him that he had ‘a girlfriend’. When that happened, Ivo explains how he interrogated his son to establish if he was ‘emotionally’ and ‘mentally’ ready to date. He says he was aware that his son was financially decapacitated but further questioned how he intended to ‘manage time’ between dating, studies and interacting with, or managing his siblings. Unfortunately, this narration indicates no response from his adolescent son, suggesting that he did shut up his son with these one-way questions.

One-way communication

Many participants who indeed acknowledge that their parents did talk on sex and sexuality, added that parents did so while adolescents listened.

> Taa: ‘Well, except for what I told you, which was provided. I think my father, he just assumed that we knew these things. Which is a dangerous thing to assume because he would have taught us. But he just said, ‘You don't do this.’ I suppose he saw something. He wouldn't just lash out like that without seeing something. This young boy is starting to notice girls. Now, it’s gonna be a problem.’

This study’s data reflect these one-way communications from parents to adolescents as unclear, as encouraging abstinence and of warnings and threats. Such attitudes may leave adolescent children who desire sex and sexuality communication in family environments

wanting. Taa's response that his parents did not talk on the topic when he was an adolescent because they thought their children knew about sex and sexuality is hilarious and does correlates his above declarations that he is aware that his children are knowledgeable on sex and sexuality. Taa who hands out minimal one-way warnings to his adolescents, like his father did to him, thinks his father's choice of communication 'was a dangerous' one. However, he surprisingly replicates it. Maybe, viewing both their acts as dangerous is why he earlier expressed regret about his inability to dismantle the current communication barrier he has with his adolescents. Indicating that his father somewhat spoke to him because 'he saw something.' He signals that it was when he started dating that his father talked.

> Tiku: "With my mom, we would talk about it [sex] but not me talking about it. Actually, her telling me, 'You shouldn't have sex cos once you have sex you will be pregnant.' She doesn't give me other options of saying that, 'If you have sex the chances of you being pregnant or if you have sex, there are chances of you getting HIV and AIDS if you don't use protection.' So, it was, 'If you have sex, you will be pregnant.' Straightforward like that."

What this group of participants through Taa articulate is that in their days, one-way communication between parents and adolescents were in fact censors from parents. Another dimension to one-directional and unexplained communication from parents to adolescents is cited by some YAs who received warnings and threats encouraging abstinence, for instance. As mentioned, Tiku confirms that she was warned of sexually transmissible diseases and pregnancy, and told to refrain from sex as a result. No warnings and threats were accompanied by how to prevent these diseases and pregnancy if adolescents become sexually active, she says. Tiku says 'we never had a conversation about abortion because for them, I'm not allowed to have sex, which means I wouldn't be pregnant'. In examples where sex was equated to sicknesses and pregnancies, both delayed and indirect messaging were dangerous.

Modelling boundaries

Whether boundaries are completely open with some but not with others, completely closed, selectively open or one-way, many PoAs specify that they continue to communicate with their adolescents such that they position themselves as role models.

> Neb: 'I think for me it's going right in the sense of, the fact that I am like strong. Like they see me embrace myself and I think moreover, now that mom has been single for 7 years. I've literally been embracing who I am. Embracing my sexuality. And then think literary that, you know, and just being comfortable in my own skin and they can see that and they also got their own identity that they are building. I just keep on reenforcing it basically being a cheerleader for them, their own identity that is completely different from each other. They know that whatever it is that they have chosen they are right and they must own it.'

Neb is a PoAs who narrates how her open expression of her sexuality has built trust and her communication of her sexual orientation influences how her adolescent daughters communicate theirs. As a divorced mother, she says being comfortable in her sexuality is important to her. It is also important to her that she excel in modelling her daughters towards a positive communication of sexual identities that include encouraging them to be mindful of 'their own identity that they are building'; especially as she urges them to seek their individuality and not necessarily replicate her. Neb's practice to embrace her sexuality is also important to this study in that it presents African parents as adapting to the reality of expressive sexuality for self, but also for their children, irrespective of gender and sexual orientations.

> Beh: 'Learned behaviour. When you are seeing how things are done. … How I carry myself as a mother in the house, how your father carries himself, that on its own is a very, very important role, because in most cases, girls will always want to be like their mothers, and boys will always want to be like their fathers. So, everything that their parents are doing is what they are learning as well. … We are more like their mirrors. When they look at us, they actually see themselves.'

It is through physical presence that parents with Neb's views are able to confirm that their adolescents are embracing their identities. Other PoAs participants like Beh add that sexuality is modelled through 'learned behaviour', not assumed by birth gender. Because Beh thinks adolescents live by family teachings, she claims that her daughter will always consider her values, including 'how I carry myself as a mother in the house', since parents are the 'mirrors' that reflect who children become. She is conscious that her adolescents' attitudes to communicating their sexuality are modelled through their gender-related parenting.

4.2.2 From boundary permeability to coordination

This category presents how information deemed private flows within families and the process by which members in African families with adolescents negotiate and manage boundaries with each other. Data for this category was collected from questions, one of which asked if participants think parents have the right to adolescents' private information on sex and sexuality. Three themes emerged as guided by CPM; personal boundaries, shared co-ordination and collective boundaries.

Personal boundaries coordination

Pervasive rules, topic avoidance rules and topic protection rules emerged from CPM to explain how family members individually manage the flow of information in family settings.

Pervasive rules. Almost all participants in this section say some boundaries resulted from rules that were like doctrines ingrained and consistently applied as they grew up.

> Casi: 'Just from the way we were brought up, you know boundaries. … They are norms. They are set. Not that you were not allowed to talk about it [sex].'

Like Casi, most participants were brief to say they replicated boundaries with little discomfort. By adolescence, they knew what to do and say, and did or said what they knew they had to, since they were 'brought up' such that the normal silence on sex and sexuality communication was 'set'. Regrettably, most of those who grew up then are parents to current-day adolescents who need to be talked to.

> Swa: 'Not necessarily rules, but there are boundaries where you can see that this is not an open discussion. No! Yeah. I don't think I would say it's a rule because we never talked about it [rule].'

The researcher found that YA participants are indifferent to the possibility that their parents' devastating silence is coming from long journeys of silence which they experienced. Swa, reprimanded the researcher for using the word boundaries, instead of rules in their questions because guidelines on communication were never discussed, rather they mimic into 'boundaries' that discourage 'open discussion'.

> Zam: 'Oh man rules. I grow up with rules. I grew up with very, very strict rules. So, it was a combination of strict parenting and over-protectiveness. My mother was very strict and even my dad was strict. Rules of communication, I guess we didn't

have rules in place, except the obvious one like no disrespect to your parents. Like generally don't disrespect elders in the house. But no rules that were generally written, but you know the stuff.'

Almost all participants agree with Swa that communication barriers were never talked about, but they existed and were observed. These participants say the default rules were too many sometimes and too stringent. Zam describes his parents above as detached and too traditional. To him, 'strict parenting and over-protectiveness' at adolescence made rules inescapable for him. In past quotations, Zam has explained how little his family could communicate on sex.

Topic avoidance rules. Some individuals indicate what attempts they made, or did not make, to hide information they regard as private.

> Leti: 'I avoid talks on that topic. For example, if a friend just told me a secret today about maybe she had an intercourse with someone or she told me she felt like she is pregnant or she felt like she is sick, I avoid talking about pregnancy or sexual intercourse for the next few days, until I am ok because sometimes, I know that I will say a thing or two. So, I just avoid that topic for a few days until I'm ok then we will start talking.'

All YAs entirely avoided talking about their personal experiences related to sexual intercourse, but were quick to talk about their co-ownership of other's private information as can be noticed in Leti's narrative that she avoided 'talking about pregnancy or sexual intercourse' with her mother and did not disclose her friend's pregnancy. She was quiet because she was more likely than not to disclose the information if she engaged in such conversation.

> Tani: "You don't tell whether I succeed. Like a friend of mine told me that she was pregnant and my mom was talking about pregnancy and I said she is pregnant so my mom asked who, so I just spilt the beans. And I was like oh my gosh, I just told you something I shouldn't have told you. But it's fine, it's fine'. … I always try to avoid her, cos I know she would be like say, 'no, no, no, why are you indulging in such behaviours? You should not be doing such'."

Similarly, Tani reports that in the course of their conversation, she mistakenly let it out to her mother that a friend was pregnant, despite not wanting to. It is quite easy as illustrated by Tani to let out information in a communicative environment because as shown in the motivation criteria, reciprocity lures disclosure.

Jix: ‘Hear no evil, see no evil, is my go-to.’

While Leti narrated how she kept information private, Tani reports how she failed to. In fact, Leti and Tani worry about disclosing information on their friends because they come from families where conversations occur. Some YAs did not worry about withholding private information because there was no communication in their families to the direction of sex-related topics anyway. For Jix, and such YAs, he just had to keep quiet to avoid and protect topics.

Topic protection rules. While avoiding talks on topics works well for others, some participants protected topics under discussion by telling lies or sharing bits.

Tiku: ‘It doesn’t become comfortable because one you can get caught. And there is going to be even more precautions. But those little lies I feel bad about them.’

Tiku does not seem to have mastered topic protection because she says lying ‘doesn’t become comfortable’ and she fears getting ‘caught’. She says she would share important information or smaller secrets which she claims are easier to manage.

Lori: ‘I had no reason to feel like uncomfortable, because my sexuality is what society perceives as norm. So, it would be a different matter if I would say maybe I am gay, or transgender or something like that.’

On the other hand, we have participants who claim to have no reason to protect topics. Citing Lori is significant for two reasons:

1) Her statement reiterates that she is from a family that tolerates sexual expressions, and 2) She thinks if one’s sexuality is traditionally aligned, they have no reason ‘to feel like uncomfortable’ with sex talks within families.

Of course there is some degree of truth in her statement, but there are other reasons people are mute on sex and sexuality communication.

Shared co-ordination

This theme emerged from CPM’s explanation to collaborative processes used by family members to negotiate and agree upon privacy boundaries on information. The researcher will discuss parent-owned boundaries, adolescent-owned boundaries and anticipated future coordination below.

***Parent-owned boundaries*.** Overwhelmingly, participants claim that parents define what information could be talked about.

> Swa: 'My dad, I don't think we've ever discussed anything about sexuality, except the fact that he does not believe in any sexual orientation besides being straight, you know. That's like the only topic we've touched on. But in terms of like, sexual activities and stuff like that, we haven't really discussed that with my dad. And then with my mom, we have like open conversations about sex, sexual orientation, you know, so many, like, everything, every aspect of it, marriage. So, mom, yes, we've had conversation. My dad, very limited.'

Determining did not necessarily mean such boundaries were communicated to children. Parents give children cues on what can be entertained during discussions, and they expect children to respect these as some like Swa says. In describing how she talks sex and sexuality with each parent, Swa inadvertently shares two different boundaries with two parents. With her father, talking sex and sexuality was impossible given his thick communication boundaries around this, meanwhile with her mother Swa had no boundaries.

> Ria: 'In terms of communication, most of the times when I was young, first, I would have to talk to my mom and my mom can talk to my dad. … I don't think it was a rule, but I just think that is how things are. I'm not trying to assume, but in most African households, children don't address their fathers. … But that was when I was still like those ages 10 to whatever. And I think it was not fear but respect for your father; when you need to go to your mom, and then mom can take it to the father.'

Some fathers in African families have even tighter communication boundaries with their children. The researcher shares Ria's case who says she had no direct communication with her father whatsoever, from when she was young through adolescence. Every message she had for her father would have to be communicated to her mother who would in turn pass it on. In Ria's view, this is a normal chain of communication in African families. We may say so because others, including Lori made mention of same practice in her family in gendered criteria. It is almost obvious that adolescents in such families become silent for fear of causing conflicts.

***Adolescent-owned boundaries*.** Most children say they have leant silence and avoidance from parents, and parents are not oblivious that adolescents too do have boundaries.

> Ako: ‘Not to be open when we are on that issue, they will start protective like they will protect themselves and their decisions. So, being protective like to be like don’t judge anyone. My daughter keeps on saying it is this thing of being Christian. That Christians are too judgmental [on sex and sexuality]. She will give all the reasons why they are too judgmental.’

This study’s data shows that whether or not parents respect adolescents’ boundaries, in many cases, participants report parents as viewing children as not old enough to own personal information. Ako is one such PoAs who says both her adolescents get ‘protective like they will protect themselves and their decisions’ in her attempts to pry. Cued by the above section, the researcher would argue that Ako’s adolescent daughter has learnt from her parent’s reactions to sex talks that her mother is judgmental. Being judgmental automatically shuts down adolescents. As this study’s highlighted sample of PoAs whose lack of communication has been blamed on the absence of communication in their childhood families, this researcher is happy that Ako endures her willingness to communicate with her adolescents. Although she is not entirely open, she has not replicated the very tight boundaries on sex and sexuality communication which she grew up with.

> Mia: ‘I don’t think they are things that can harm me or even be bad for her. One thing I know, she cannot go through the worst without me knowing. But there is for instance, there is so much of me in her … She is not going to tell me all the times when she meets someone else because someone else has dumped her or whatever. Although we will talk about it like; ok mama, leave me alone. So, those are the things that she won’t talk about. Yeah.’

Another set of parents say their children became silent, disrespectful, uncontrollable ‘rude, unruly and things’, in early adolescence even though they were strict, as Mia explains.

> Mia: ‘I think there are things that she is keeping from me. … In her early teen years. I lost my child that time. I lost her. I did not know who I was dealing with. I lost her. I was ready for anything that I would be told about her that time. She was rude, unruly and things. … I am very strict.’

Mia was asked if she could guess what private information her daughter kept from her. She responded that the said information was not capable of causing harm as it related to boyfriends. Mia explained that there is so much of her in her adolescent and this kept Mia

both afraid and inquisitive. She feared that like what happened to her, her daughter could become an adolescent mother. She did become.

> Celi: 'It was a very, very embarrassing conversation. Like, I didn't want to hear it. I didn't want to be around that. It sounded so gross. I don't even think, I don't remember the conversation. The words she said, because I just remember I wanted to leave. I wanted to leave and for her, she was having so much fun but it was worse for me, because I was so uncomfortable.… I never found stuff like that comfortable. I could never talk about these things to anyone in general though openly. It was just a very awkward topic.'

In some families, adolescents' boundaries contradicted their parents in that while parents opted to talk on sex and sexuality, their adolescents did not. Celi is one of those who did not show interest when her mother endeavoured to talk on sex-related topics. She says she felt so embarrassed, and she does not remember the conversation they had. Adolescents like Celi are surely making talking difficult or impossible for the set of parents who believe in talking with their adolescents. The researcher is glad that like Ako, Celi's mother did not keep quiet. Asked why she felt uncomfortable talking about these topics with everyone, not just her adult-caregivers, Celi said: "knowing that this is what's actually happening to me and I have to walk around while this is happening, act like nothing is happening". The researcher thought she would tell say she feared that her mother could be tricking her to venture into topics that were out of bounds as she will say in the section on abstinence.

Anticipated future boundaries coordination. Conscious PoAs are anticipating how they will manage boundaries in future as they have been in conscious control of when and how to talk sex with their adolescents whom they deemed to be young.

> Noni: 'I talked to myself that there are certain things that I feel I'll be more comfortable to talk to her about in her matric year, preparing her to be on her own.'

An example of such parents is Noni who is convinced that if she self-discloses certain information at the right time to her now 16-year-old, she would be giving her child the power to claim her own identity. Using the word 'certain' in her statement means that Noni is mitigating the effect of sharing too much personal, or what she regards as adults', content with her adolescent to whom she in fact promises to disclose more in preparing 'her to be on her own'. Noni and her adolescent do talk. Her stance therefore reminds parents that telling

adolescent information that may enhance their identities could be one of their roles to prepare their adolescents for adulthood.

> Nevi: 'That is a very tough question because I would like to think that I kinda talk to him about anything. I really, I do, look; I think for a long time, I struggled with communicating my emotions. … I need him to understand that we have emotions as men and it's okay to communicate your emotions. I don't know if there is anything that I won't like to talk about with him. … Those are my cues because you don't want to sit down like this in a meeting and you go; masturbation is da, da, da.'

With so much attention away from fathers, it is important to cite Nevi, who alongside other participants, represent families that have evolved to have little or no communication boundaries with their adolescents. Disclosure is about emotions, right? Although Nevi claims no boundaries with his adolescent, he concedes to have 'struggled with communicating' his emotions at a stage. Hence, he is preparing his adolescent son that men do 'have emotions', and these emotions can influence their wellbeing. Nevis past struggles, perhaps, included how he is raising his son alone. It is significant that he has acknowledged his vulnerability, but better that he has made known his coping ability to his adolescent son. In the hope of talks with his son, Nevi adds, 'you don't want to sit down like this in a meeting and you go; masturbation is ...' Fathers who are open to general communication, are pertinent to this research. Once fathers address uncomfortable topics, there is hope that more communication will take place.

> Mobi: 'I don't have off limit topics, but I think you know, it is more of uncomfortable and uncomfortable conversations, and that's why I am saying sex and sexuality conversations I am most definitely uncomfortable with the conversations. But when they come up and I do want to bring them up. I will talk about them. But I don't think they will be comfortable conversations, but I will try and deal with my own issues about sex and sexuality because I think that is what made it uncomfortable.'

Like Noni and Nevi, many parents whose adolescents are under 13 say they will disclose when the time is right. They are adamant that their children are still young. Mobi who is a mother of an 11-year-old says she is not prepared for the 'uncomfortable conversations'. Her stance can be attributed to her adolescents' age, but her admission to her 'own issues about sex and sexuality' are not excluded.

Collective boundaries

This category emerged from the question that asked if participants would have conversations about their sex-lives with family members. Participants in this research respect and implement boundaries according to how they serve them or family members. Two themes that emerged to explain how information is both co-owned and co-managed by family members are; internal boundaries and external boundaries.

Internal boundaries

Two sections; personal privacy management and nuclear family boundaries emerged to align internal boundaries with CPM.

Personal privacy management. Participants have individual boundaries on what information to keep entirely private and what to selectively disclose to others.

> Nevi: 'Not very openly. Again, I think it an age thing, you know. I think as he grows older these things will come up but it [sex] hasn't come up. But also, I wouldn't like to give him my version of … even though I think it will teach him a thing or two, but I think for me it's about the future and going forward and making sure we curve a good way. My past sexual experiences, we haven't really gone there.'

The researcher has included Nevi's feedback which reports that his 13-year-old son does not openly talk with him because he has begun establishing communication boundaries. Nevi says he reciprocates particularly in relation to his 'past sexual experiences', because his desire is to preserve what would become his son's version of sex. Nevi's response came as a surprise because the expectation was that he would complain that his 13-year-old is young, as have other parents of even older adolescents.

> Favi: 'I think it's because they don't feel comfortable as yet. They still have that element of just that fear of hierarchy that still exists within them. It's just never been open about that. Yeah, like maybe the eldest of the sisters, she would know. … I'm okay, I have my girlfriend. Or I'm not ok I have my girlfriend. But nothing really in detail. We don't really break down sex.'

While Nevi does not want his personal attitude to encroach on his son's personal perspective of what sex would become, other participants blame their family situations for how they are negotiating their individual privacy boundaries on sex and sexuality. Favi is a parent to two

adolescents and two YAs. According to him, since they all do not yet feel comfortable in their parent-children's roles, it is challenging for them to smoothly establish family communication boundaries such that he is the parent. He says his siblings keep regarding him as an older brother, making it difficult for him to tell his 18 and 15-year-old siblings that he has a girlfriend, yet, he would not entertain such disclosure from them. It must be a difficult situation for Favi but, like the many parents who battle to handle smooth sex talks, Favi promises to encroach on the topic with his adolescent siblings.

> Taa: 'We did have a little bit of discussion. This one, I've just fallen back to the fact that they are not my friends. They're my children. So, there are certain things I don't have to disclose to them, that I haven't disclosed to anybody to that effect. But, I mean, you know, there are parts that they've come to know because their mother told them even without me, about my affairs she thought they were interesting. No, I was just saying they do know a little bit, but maybe one of these days when I'm very excited, I may share, but maybe let them grow up a bit'.

It is typical of African parents like Taa, to assume that not talking to, or concealing from adolescents means PoAs are demarcating that their adolescents 'are not my friends, they're my children'. He says any information his adolescents know about him would be disclosed to their mother without his consent. Taa does not entirely dismiss future talks with his adolescents. He anticipates some level of discomfort if and when he does choose to disclose when his adolescents are grown-ups.

Nuclear family boundaries occur when parents have boundaries about what information they share with each other, not their adolescents, and when siblings share with each other, not parents.

> Ako: 'I think I need to do the investigation. … I even asked to say; 'Were you once raped, did you have sex with somebody? Somebody touched you somewhere somehow?' She said no. 'Did you have sex with your father?' She laughed. She said no. 'Are you planning to kill your mom?' … They are holding back information. Like that thing of sexuality. I think when they are two of them, they are talking more deeper than they are telling me.'

Within Ako's family for example, adolescents excluded parents from their talks with each other. Ako shares various humorous questions which she had asked in attempts to negotiate disclosure from her daughter, who earlier warned that Ako was too judgmental.

> Ria: 'If my mom is dating someone and they didn't want my brother to know, don't talk about it. That is the only strategy. Yeah, so if my mom is dating someone and they didn't want my brother to know. Don't talk about dating around my brother. ... Don't bring up a topic that leads to the direct question.'

Ria is one of the participants who confirms parent-adolescent dual secrets. In their situations where, his younger brother does not have to know something, he and his mother did not talk about the topic in his brother's presence. As examined above, topic avoidance is a strategy commonly used to exclude people from certain topics. When a topic is avoided as described by Ria, it becomes difficult for an uninvited person to share such information specially if they are age-inappropriate. In a case like this, where parents are divorced, concealing could mean preserving his mother's other life.

> Tiku: 'My mom is quite open. She is very open to a point I that interact with them and my grandmother. I don't know anyone else, except for my grandfather, so we don't have much of a conversation with my grandfather.'

We did not have many families in which every information was freely shared between adults and children, but such families do exist. The researcher's enthusiasm in meeting such families has a drop of discomfort in that all parents who were completely open with their adolescents are female caregivers who talked to daughters. Like other participants, Tiku has mentioned her mother and grandmother as quite open. Tiku is raised in her maternal grandparents' home. Her grandmother is part of their nuclear family and acts like her mother. Her mother acts like her sister and her grandfather acts like her father. Referencing her grandmother means that Tiku empowers this research to comment on the current state of inter-generational gaps on privacy in sex-talks in African families in South Africa with adolescents. Because Tiku previously acknowledged her current family as more interactive, it makes sense when she says she gets to speak about her sex life. Tiku declaration is central to this research which seeks adolescents' voices in sex and sexuality communication.

Extended family boundaries follow CPM's guidelines on boundaries to govern how nuclear family members negotiate information with extended family members.

> Zas: 'Actually, my grandfather used to say, 'Yoo wena, you are like a boy. Every time I do men stuff you are always here. Why are you making me suspect?' But then, I don't know, he didn't know that I was a lesbian. He was just talking.'

By nature of African families in South Africa, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins are among people who are reflected in this research as sharing privacy with participants for varying reasons. Conversations with Zas' grandfather with whom she spent plenty of time changed to include sexual orientation-related inquiries, for example. At one point, she says her grandfather questioned why she hung around when he performed male-related tasks. Without revealing her response to her grandfather, one could assume that it was a one-sided response, which remains valuable to this research in that Zas reveals that her grandfather was vigilant to delving into her private sex life; something her own mother and older sister had not.

> Neb: 'We've got some family secrets between me, my mom and my sister that needs to stay there. So, they are young and I don't think they are strong enough to understand why the family took some of the decision that we took.'

Culture could rightfully be the reason why parents particularly do not communicate sex and sexuality with their adolescent children in many families whereas in other families, privacy access is determined by age. Participants who commented on age explain what adults can keep between themselves and what they can share with adolescents, mostly for the sake of protecting the subject matters or protecting various individuals who are subjects. An example is when Neb reports information in her external family stay between her mother, her sister and herself since her adolescents are not 'strong enough to understand why the family took some of the decisions that we took'. Strength in this case, possibly, refers to emotional maturity, or age.

4.2.3 Content of sex talks

Although the content of sex talks may not be a category of theme that emerged from the CPM rules for boundaries management, it is important to present it at this point because most discussions around boundaries are centred around the themes that emerged from it. The following nine categories emerged on how African families with adolescents talk sex and sexuality; talking to clarify, body development, sexual orientation, erection and ejaculation,

masturbation, abstinence and sex, pregnancy and abortion, preventatives and contraceptives, rape and sexual violence.

Talking to clarify

Clarity is the goal of effective communication and understanding. It requires active listening, questioning, explaining and using non-verbal cues as seen in this study's data.

> Neb: 'I started when they grew pubic hair. I started there, and they will ask. Remember they don't know and it is growing. So, I would tell them what is this and what to expect after this. So, it is boobs, after boobs it is menstruation, after menstruation is pregnancy. … I tried to unpack so much that they should expect that from girls, or from boys. And also, at school my older daughter the other time came up [spoke] with a girl who wants to be a boy; who is a boy-like, behaves like a boy, like kind of a lesbian. So, I had to talk about that because she was the one who came up with this thing. So, I started talking about that and also, she likes those big pants, big t-shirts and all that, so I would ask why are you wearing like that, you know, because it starts there. When someone behaves that way, she wants to have a certain look, because I remember in my school, once you have menses, you know, we started to behave like a lady.'

Alongside the many participants, who responded to this section, is Neb who says she talks in order to explain certain details and to respond to specific questions on developmental expectations. Thus, preparing her children for what to expect during various growth-related phases. Neb delightfully explains that after her daughters talked about 'a girl who wants to be a boy' in their school, she made sure her daughters understood how appearances get interpreted. Neb positions herself as a parent who talks about body development, emotional development, physical appearance and diverse sexuality.

> Gale: 'She [mother] started asking me who is my girlfriend, then I told her. ... She gave me advice and she said OK, now that I am being honest with her, I mustn't do things [sex] which concern the women because now I don't have my own house, where am I going to do this thing with the person. … Now I need to be open for the day that I am going to do this [sex], because my friends always tell me it is time bra. And then my father. He just said hai [caution] man, I must not play with girls. This person is just giving a command, he is not expecting me to say something about it. He claims that authority as a father and he knows that he is supposed to tell me, not

ask me. … He never told me anything about sex and girlfriends or what. He just tells me to not play with girls.'

A group of YAs acknowledge that as soon as they started showing signs of maturity, the content discussed with their parents evolved to include dating tips. In Gale's case, his mother asked upfront if he had a 'girlfriend'. He did not disclose the response he gave even when asked but he said his mother cautioned him not to 'do things which concern the women because now I don't have my own house'. This implies that he replied no but his mother was convinced that he does have. Gale's father warned him not to 'play with girls'. Both his parents were referring to engaging in sex. Gale grumbles that when topics are so crucial, his father just gives orders instead of engaging in talks. When both parents talk, how they say things and what they say do matter. As seen in Gale's context, both his parents talk to him in one-way on body development but he reports his father as only instructing while his mother clarified through questions and subsequent advice.

Body development

Clarification is well needed at this point to detail children's experience to developmental changes. Both sets of participants project their voice as having talked on this same subject.

> Savi: 'Lengthily and that when it happens, they mustn't feel that there is something wrong. It's a process of growth. It's something that has to happen. Like you will grow pubic hair. There's nothing wrong with that. It's a natural process that needs to happen. … I would start the conversations and when it started … I was always starting but then as we go, they will always bring the conversation back to me. … Like, 'Daddy, you know. Every time I am realising my menstruation, it's painful. I can't do anything' ... So, I tried to unpack it.'

Specific prompts are inevitable when children attain adolescence. Like did Neb above, Savi explains how he had lengthy talks with his adolescents in preparing them so that they 'mustn't feel that there is something wrong' when they encounter body changes. Savi did well to always start these talks. Taking the lead to explain concepts in detail and in steps, even when it was uncomfortable, is exactly why his adolescents would bring 'the conversation back' to him when they got older. Saying he 'unpacks', means that Savi admirably responds to his adolescents' needs and challenges.

> Taa: ‘The girls, they just tell me when they're in their periods. No, I'm saying I don’t know how we originally started talking about it. Now, so, for instance, they'll tell me, ‘Daddy, I am on my cycle.’ But I think because they can tell me it's because they feel open enough to come talk to me about anything. So, all of them come and speak with me and the boy is turning 12 now, so we are starting to talk about these things.’

Other parents including Taa detail what they talked about. For instance, Taa says his girls ‘just tell me when they're in their periods’. He has no records on what developmental stages these talks started but he is almost certain that his record dates back to when his adolescents started menstruating. Taa’s inability to document talks on the topics may mean that such talks did not take place, aligning with his earlier admission that he inherited his father’s attitude which discourages sex-related talks with adolescents. This inference is as a result of Taa’s account of his daughters, requesting pads from him. Request is not necessarily talking. Since Taa cited unreservedly that he is not flexible on sex-related talks, his girls’ request for pads from him could mean that he is their only source of supply for such materials since his wife is their stepmother.

> Tani: ‘Indirectly, she was telling me, you are a woman now, at this age right now, because of whatever you are going through, ‘you could become pregnant.’ That is what she was indirectly telling me. But she just couldn't say it like that.’

Tani has had her share of sex talks with her mother. She reports that when she told her mother that she was menstruating, her talkative mother told her that she was developing into a woman and was of childbearing age. From Tani and other participants’ feedback, it looks like even when they talk body development, pronouncing sex-related terms did seem easy.

Sexual orientation

With body development comes the idea of attraction. It is at adolescence that children start understanding that their emotions could draw them towards loving particular persons.

> Tiku: ‘On sexuality, I think let’s say it’s a very same. It’s not an option to be, to a point that I don’t even have extended family who would say I am, I am not a straight person, I am bisexual. We don’t have that in my family. It’s not an option. It may be possible that they are hiding it, but when I am with the boys, you hear what’s their interaction with sex very much like how reckless you are about it but with girls, the better you are. So, they all push that agenda. But we won’t have that conversation with the parents, the adults. It’s always amongst us.’

I have presented how members of African families in South Africa react to talks on, or to displays of sexuality by self and by others. Many participants report that as with sex talks, those on sexuality were not very dynamic. Speaking about such talks, Tiku reiterates the degree to which this theme is not talked about saying talks are always about heterosexual sex because no one in her family is 'not a straight person', although they may be 'hiding it'.

> Khal: "So, she's [mother] very Christian. So, she's very not fluid. She is like, 'You got to be hetero. I am not raising a lesbian. We heterosexuals, we like men. We don't like girls.' She was like there is no choice about that. 'So, you just got to like a man. I liked your dad. You've got to like a man. I didn't like another mom for you'."

Talks were held in Tiku's family meanwhile in other families, no talks on sexuality took place. Khal is one of those who blame Christianity for the silence in their families. Khal says her mother talked about sex and sexuality but 'she's very not fluid'. This means that hers is one of the many African adults who are expressive on, but not tolerant of, divergent sexualities. Homosexual children from such homes are likely to hide their sexuality for fear of rejection, but mostly of prosecution.

> Neb: 'One of my daughter's friends has come over and said one of her friends in school has come out to be a lesbian and we started a conversation in terms of how she feels about it and she explained how her friend feels and the parents are supportive and stuff like that. I was very open to them like if any of them feel like maybe they are favoured to live a specific lifestyle like they are gay or lesbian, I will be more than welcoming, so they should never ever feel afraid because my life is bigger than they are or their preferences in life.'

It was interesting to hear parents describing how sexuality talks unfold on topics brought up by their adolescents as they listen and react. In Neb's family, communication on her daughter's sexuality revolved around her daughter's view on sexuality. Neb says she promised her adolescents that she 'will be more than welcoming' to their sexual orientation because in her opinion, there is more in life to worry about, including erection and ejaculation.

Erection and ejaculation

No matter their sexual orientation, most adolescent boys certainly begin to experience erection and ejaculation and PoAs and adolescents in African families in South Africa are interacting on these.

> Gale: 'The issue of ejaculation came when she started telling me that because now, I have started having sex. … About going for circumcision. Then I started asking, 'Ok, if I go for circumcision, what happens if it happens that my genital can erect during the process of cutting, I feel more pain, what would happen?' … I wasn't comfortable in telling her that I am having sex and I am having erections and all of that and I am even masturbating. No, I wouldn't say that to my mom. Even today, I am not comfortable to say. I don't talk to her about that. I feel like I would be disrespecting her.'

Like others, Gale explains that out of respect, he did not really talk ejaculation and erection with his mother. Gale says he will not disclose his sexual activities either, including masturbation. He is the one who is not comfortable to further such talks with his mother.

> Ovis: 'My granny used to tell me that when you are 12, you start having hormones and my private part will start realising things like when I see people kissing, it can get hard. So, when you see those kissing, you must not watch. Yes. Things like that. And that when you are 12, you can be able to have a kid, at the age of 12. … Prevention of some diseases and to respect your body. Also, to ask before having intercourse.'

Ovis like others was privy to conversations on ejaculation and erection before experience. He says his grandmother told him there will come a time when his penis will 'start realising things'. She also told him that at this stage, Ovis would be 'able to have kids'. His grandmother educated him on the 'prevention of some diseases and to respect your body', including how to seek consent. The lessons from Mica's grandmother are in-depth, targeted and crucial in a country like South Africa where many children are both violated and violating.

> Casi: 'And then another thing, she will tell you, when a man looks at you, sometimes he would just get this feeling. She does not put it in words, but you get it somehow.'

Casi's description of her grandmother saying 'when a man looks at you, sometimes he would just get this feeling', suits how other PoAs were spoken to about erection and ejaculation

when they were adolescents. Like she claims, words were not used in context, they understood 'this feeling' to mean erection. Casi is one of the few females who were spoken to about erection. Ejaculation was never defined as a concept of its own in any family interviews.

Masturbation

For the majority of participants, masturbation was not discussed even though it is another experience that adolescent boys and girls encounter at this stage of growth.

> Tiku: 'No. They never talked to me about any of those things.'

> Savi: 'Masturbation I didn't because I didn't go deeper into masturbation and how negative it can affect them and how positively it can affect them.'

If it was discussed, masturbation like ejaculation was an added value to another content in discussion. Tiku was concise in saying that they did not talk about 'those things.' Equally, Savi refers to the fact that they did not 'go deeper'. A reason for these brief responses could be that Tiku is female while Savi is raising three adolescent girls. Savi's own parents did not entertain sex talks at all, and he earlier stated that he has not started sex talks with his 12-year-old son who is intellectually retarded.

> Noni: 'No, we didn't go as far as masturbation. No, we wouldn't talk about such things. … We didn't go as far as masturbation. No. no. no. Aiiy, no. There was no way. We couldn't go that far. Yoo, yoh, they were too conservative to talk about such. I wouldn't bring up the topic as well.'

Like many parents, even Noni who is raising a 16-year-old boy would not talk about 'such things'. She acknowledges having skipped talks on masturbation, but disassociates with the reason by blaming her 'very conservative' parents for not discussing the same topics with her. Her tone makes it clear that she is not ready for such a talk including on sex and abstinence.

Abstinence and sex

This theme had to be presented in two sections due to the frequency of the occurrences of both abstinence and sex in family communication.

Abstinence is likely the most talked about topic as it is the easiest pronunciation which helps adult family members to escape from talking sex. Adolescents are simply told to wait until they are older, precisely until marriage for girls, to start having sex.

> Celi: 'I think boys. They weren't really off limits, but they were limited. Like, 'don't talk to me about boys.' And then there'll be some days where it's like, is there any boys? But then you'd be confused as in; 'Is this a trick question. Are you genuine? Why are you asking me about boys now? You told me we can't talk about boys and you can't talk about dating until when I am 18 or whatever.' So, there should be no reason for me to talk about this, now. … No boys that I would maybe like have a crush on. Can't talk about crushes. Like what do you know about liking boys? You don't, you're a child. So that scenario, you know. Boys like in classmates or friends, that was okay. … They made it known. They were very open about. 'You can have male friends, there's nothing wrong with having male friends.' My mom even told me like she used to have male friends and used to be really close to her male friends. She encouraged me having male friends, but that's it. That's it.'

Like others, Celi was asked to stay away from and not talk about boys. She says on every attempt to talk, her mother responded, 'don't talk to me about boys'. In contradiction to her reaction, Celi says her mother would ask if she loved any boys. Celi says her mother's mixed messaging got her confused on how to approach a topic which she has often been told not to talk about. As much as she wished to, Celi could not 'talk about crushes', because she was a child who should know nothing about boys until 18. Celi, however, says her mother 'encouraged me having male friends'.

Many participants, who capture a similar dilemma to Celi, say they often wondered what exactly their parents wanted to hear from them. Their feedbacks reflect unclear and confusing messages when exploring themes on issues of sex and sexuality in general. If a child is instructed not to talk about something, it basically means that the child may not disclose any related occurrence. It means that when such a child gets asked questions on a topic they have not been allowed to talk on, the child finds it difficult to break the promise made to self not to talk on the said topic. They fear to be judged, maybe punished meanwhile parents' questions may just be attempts to weaken existing boundaries. Regardless of that, it is important for parents to know that whether subtle or not, existing communication boundaries do influence how their adolescents disclose.

> Zas: ‘It’s not much. They just gave a glimpse of what they actually tell us about their experiences, like please don’t fall on the trap that I went through. That was the only thing like stay away from boys, boys will hurt you they will just take your dignity and leave you like that. They will just get you frustrated. So those are the only things they will go in-depth with.’

For many more participants who responded to this topic, abstinence was discussed in the form of threats and warnings. Zas’ case is significant. Her two aunties, her mother and her older sister are single mothers raising children born when they were adolescents without the labour of fathers. They told Zas and other female adolescents in her extended family to avoid boys because boys would hurt them. This generalised hurt could be understood as taking their virginity, until one reads that the boys ‘will just take your dignity and leave you like that’. Coming from a onetime adolescent mother, it could mean that boys could impregnate and leave girls with babies. In fact, adolescent mothers are likely to raise their children without fathers, as seen in this research data.

> Ovis: ‘Sex. I usually ask them about it. They give me advice, like if you do not protect yourself, you give yourself a sickness while you are still young. You will regret yourself while you are old. They say don’t engage because I am still young. Stuff like that. … That sex will never leave. It will always be there. If I do impregnant someone. The kid will suffer.’

Boys particularly had different kinds of talks, comprising also of threats and warnings. Of course, they could not fall pregnant. Ovis is an inquisitive young man who was lucky to have a grandmother who had sex talks with him even before his adolescence. He says he would ask the meaning of terminologies from his grandmother, mother and older siblings who often tell him to protect himself by being patient and not engaging in sex at a young and ignorant age because should he impregnate a girl, ‘the kid will suffer’.

Sex. Surprisingly sex was not overtly, and often, talked about if not in relation to threats, warnings and abstinence. Hence little data was new to this research; if not that approaches are unique.

> Casi: ‘Girls would cover. And she would shout; ‘why would you want people to see you naked?’ Remember she’d tell us [girls], you cover yourself. No one is allowed to see you before you even have breasts. She’d say breast will come. Let no one touch them. She is the one who felt them. It was just meat. No breasts, but she’d be like,

you remember what time whereby she had to check. And with my elder cousins, there was a way they checked virginity, although I did not go through that. Two of my cousins went through it. Elders checked their virginity. Although I was younger, and they wouldn't tell you what happened. But we knew they were being checked if they suspected that they were having boyfriends.'

Casi has explained how her father told them at adolescence not to expose their bodies, lest they attracted rapists. Like most participants, Casi says before adolescence, her grandmother cautioned girls to hide their nakedness and not let anyone touch them. Once again 'touch' may refer to both voluntary and involuntary sex. To ensure that her talks were appropriate, Casi's grandmother monitored their breasts' development by touching, and 'checked their virginity'. Typical of many participants, Casi reports happenings to other adolescents in her family, presenting as a young observer. Maybe by her adolescence, they no longer visited their grandmother, or cultural practices changed.

Gale: 'Ok. I will start with my mom. Because she is a nurse. Because most of the times I was on the phone, she started noticing that this guy is on chatting with girls or so. She would ask me, 'Who are you chatting with?' … Then she'd keep asking me what are you talking about? … So, in the evening when she is from work, she will show me pictures from internet and say, 'If in fact you've started dating, don't give me stress like this kind of stress.' She would show me pictures of say male genitals having those problems, let's say I must not start having sex with these people I am chatting with at night and all what not.'

Other participants say their parents' concerns about their behaviours compelled one-directional threats that explained sex-related concepts to an extent. Gale's mother assumed that he was 'chatting with girls', and perhaps they are talking sex. She gave him no chance to explain but decided to scare him with pictures of infected male genitals. Her job as a nurse probably added value to their sex-related communication but in this researcher's opinion, the single most important skill she employed before she could talk to her son was the observation or monitoring of his device usage. This act easily changed the content of their communication. The telephone has undeniably become the most common access to sex information for adolescents.

Tiku: 'She [mother] doesn't give me other options of saying that; if you have sex the chances of you being pregnant, or if you have sex, there are chances of you getting

HIV and AIDS if you don't use protection. So, it was, 'if you have sex, you will be pregnant.' Straightforward like that.'

Using scare tactics without any explanation to adolescents is good in cases where they are successful, just like speaking in codes is. Imagine how much data was coded, of participants, saying that in most of their adolescence, they received sex-related messages that made little or no sense. In many cases, participants complain of parents telling them; 'if you have sex, you will be pregnant' or get infected as reported by Tiku, without giving them any other option other than not having sex or having protected sex.

Pregnancy and abortion

Some participants say warnings to abstain from sex were often accompanied by those of risks of contracting sexually transmissible diseases, becoming pregnant or impregnating.

Leti: 'Honestly, sex talk in my family, we really don't talk about sex, you know. What they do is; 'if you get pregnant, we're kicking you out of this house.' That's the only thing they will tell you. They don't talk about how to protect yourself and do this and that because I think being pregnant at an early age is because I never had an introduction to sexuality. Only at school that I would get that conversation. But at home, it wasn't there. They will tell you don't date a guy and if you fall pregnant just know we don't want you in this house because now you did something wrong and you need to be punished. That's the only thing I knew when I was growing up. … I can't say how they felt because they never talk to me, the only thing I know is that they were disappointed that I was pregnant that's the time they showed a reaction to what I do, instead of them supporting me, they neglected me. No, you shouldn't have done that.'

As seen in the discussion on sex, adolescents were unfortunately not often told that they will be pregnant or impregnate should sex occur. In this section, they say they came to realise that the threats were insubstantial in that some, like Leti, indeed fell pregnant at adolescence and referring to her parents, Leti says: 'the only thing I know is that they were disappointed'. Her family never kicked her 'out of this house' as per the threats. Warnings and threats simply create communication restrictions that have let many adolescents learn from mistakes such as actual pregnancies.

Tiku: 'Abortion is a bigger no. So, I just knew that you can't do abortion. Abortion is horrible. So, my mom is very open with that. So, yeah, abortion is a very big no.

> Don't fall pregnant. But then again, whatever happens, don't abort the baby. So, I remember being pregnant. I was like abortion is not an option, so my only option is to be pregnant.'

By this stage, it has become obvious that in homes where sex was not discussed, pregnancy was barely mentioned and sometimes abortion could not even surface in talks. Tiku is another adolescent mother who says the only information she had was that she did not have to fall pregnant and that if she did, she could not commit abortion. However, conception happened, and she kept her baby.

> Vera: 'We talked about many things. For me we needed to be open to address the issue in a rational way. I am not sure about penetration. I am not sure if we ever spoke about penetration perse, or how do they have sex and how they penetrate. That level, no! But when you open your thighs and the boy push the stuff in, you are going to fall pregnant, or you are going to have AIDS.'

Some PoAs like Vera acknowledge that they spoke pregnancy overtly but did not explain what penetrative sex was to adolescents, neither did she detail the process of falling pregnant, beyond warning them: 'when you open your thighs and the boy push the stuff in…'. The stuff that goes in could either make you pregnant or sick. What Vera told her daughter is indeed true. Unfortunately for Vera, her daughter also became an adolescent mother like was Vera herself. It is interesting how parents can play with words during sex talks; 'Stuff' obviously refers to the penis.

Preventatives and contraceptives

The narrative which is emerging so far from this study's data is that African parents of adolescents in South Africa tell their adolescents that after sex, if pregnancy is evaded, they could get sick.

> Ria: 'When I was 14 my mom decided to have the talk, my dad and I said it was pointless because she would ask me questions that I actually knew. But the open conversations. The first time I went out, my mom bought me condoms. Like teenagers there was, we talked about sex like we talk about soccer.'

Parents, including Ria's, encourage safe sex but unfortunately for Ria's mother, by the time she initiated talks on the implications of sex, Ria already knew much more about sex than his mother anticipated. Probably with the help of his father. Ria's feedback to this shows that children are exposed to sex much earlier and in much more detail than most parents

anticipate. From this study's data, it is clear that more parents are becoming aware of the unavoidable visibility of sex-related content and that as Ria concludes, their adolescents talk sex like they would talk soccer.

> Gabi: 'She [mother] was like, again remember that contraceptives don't stop sickness, so you must always think about that. That when you are active, and then you take contraceptives, it doesn't protect you from becoming sick. So that is the angle that you must consider. So, then I don't prevent, I would choose to use protection.'

Gabi is among those whose parents advised them in context when they were adolescents. Gabi was told that in addition to using contraceptives, she needed preventatives since 'contraceptives don't stop sicknesses'. Her mother's light-hearted differentiation between contraception and preventative adds much value to this research in that the researcher was almost entirely convinced that sex talks with adolescents in African families in South Africa continue to be unambiguous. Their emphasis on preventatives may signal that parents fear sicknesses more than pregnancy. It also justifies why they said 'ok' when Gabi announced her pregnancy at adolescence.

> Zam: 'The only time I remember talking about sex with my parents, right? Was this one evening when I came back from a date and I was staying with my mom then right? So, I come back on a date with a girl that she's seen before, so she could see in person. So, the only thing she said to me was; 'Lebo, remember to use a condom.' That was it. I don't remember having sex talk with my parents.'

This researcher did come across a set of parents who have not discussed sex with their adolescents but when they found that their adolescents could be sexually active, they at once communicated the need to take precaution saying 'remember to use a condom', like did Zam's mother. She worried for her adolescent's health to a point where, like those who talked on rape and sexual violence only, she was brave to urge him to have safe sex even after she had resisted talking sex and sexuality thus far.

Rape and sexual violence

Adolescent children in African homes are certainly being sensitised to the fact that sex is not always a voluntary occurrence.

> Khal: ‘About rape, she told us as a concept. Of cause, most of the stuff life lessons she told us about … a lot of that you don’t speak about back home. You just kind of like shut it off. But she wanted us to know because she didn’t want us to grow up like that. She wanted us to have information she always wants. ‘It’s not your fault. If this ever happened to you, come home immediately, don’t hide it. Let’s talk about it. And then she would like give us examples of girls in our area that had kept quiet, got in trouble so she was like ‘I don’t want that to happen to you. It’s never ever your fault.

One such adolescent is Khal who acknowledges that in her mother’s times, rape and sexual violence were not talked about but her mother was courageous to share these ‘life lessons’ with her children by telling her adolescents that if they happen to be raped, they must rush home immediately and disclose this to their family. Her mother put herself in a position to help her children both psychologically and emotionally in case of a mishap. Khal’s mother has alerted her adolescents to the reality of rape and sexual violence but like many parents who participated in this study reported, she did not draw their attention to understand that rape could occur in their own house.

> Casi: ‘When it comes to rape issues, she’d talk but it was about an incident that had happened. Something circulating in the village. Something which police are aware of, or maybe so and so has been arrested for rape. We would talk, but not necessarily going deeper. It was usually like examples to say so and so, you see what happened or maybe he raped.’

Not many adolescents were lucky to be invited for talks should they experience rape or sexual violence. Alongside Casi, others were threatened that rape is punishable by the law, instead of being told what exactly rape is and what its impacts are.

> Gabi: ‘I don’t know. I don’t think I ever had a rape conversation, besides reading it from somewhere as I said. If you don’t know, you will read it from the books.’

While rape and sexual violence were full-blown one-way conversations with promises of support in the above families, or presented as criminal acts in others, some African families in South Africa like Gabi’s have had absolutely no such communication. Despite how tolerant her family was to communication on other concepts around sex and sexuality, or how accepting they are to her sexual self; she says she only read it from somewhere. It is not easy to present Gabi’s comment except to say, probably, her parents thought as a female, she

did not have to rape. But again, in a country where rape and sexual violence seem so rampant, other boundaries can be blamed. Otherwise, it is unimaginable that a family so open to communicating sex and sexuality will not discuss these.

4.2.4 Other boundaries

Other boundaries emerged from data not drawn from CPM to indicate what influences communication boundaries on sex and sexuality in African families in South Africa.

> Neb: 'I think she's got like a group of friends and within the group of friends they are confidant, because she has confidence that they are cool and they are friends and I think there is a lot of sharing that happens over there. It is not necessarily peer pressure but sharing of like this guy likes me this and that and I am too cool for her. Like we never gonna understand.'

Adolescents are talking to friends and peers instead of their family members, and in some cases, they do so simultaneously. Neb thinks that her adolescent and her friends are sharing information about their lovers and she does not sound concerned that her adolescent has drifted towards peers even though her daughter's disclosure to friends concurrently strengthens her none-disclosure boundaries with Neb. In fact, she positively identifies her adolescents' choice to renegotiate boundaries with her as a show of confidence in her friends.

> Casi: 'Sex life, I never really had anyone in the family discuss about it because even when I had my first encounter [sex], I didn't share with anybody except friends. And you don't even know if Mia can tell, if Mia can sense it. Of course, with time, grandma would put those funny stories like I see you people have started.'

The excuse of 'I never really had anyone in the family to discuss about it' by Casi is given by many other PoAs to support why they are unable to disclose to their adolescents. According to Casi and others who share her sentiment, they were not taught to share their own experiences with family members when they were adolescents. In that regard, when she lost her virginity, she did not share with anybody despite being prompted by her grandmother although she feared getting caught for having had sex. However, she told her friends.

> Casi: 'She has her moments of secret. We are too busy sometimes and she might not have had the opportunity to speak. … I think it depends with mommy's mood as well. It [keeping secrets] started when you can tell that something is wrong and you ask what's wrong, she says nothing, yet you can see that something is wrong.'

This researcher was curious to know about Casi's adolescent discloses although Casi does not disclose. Casi, however, rebuffs and explains her perceived boundary, adding that they are too busy sometimes to talk. Casi explains how her daughter watches her mood as well, meaning that Casi is not inviting to sex talks. The researcher agrees with Casi that mood influences how communication occurs, like do time and opportunity.

> Jix: 'When I was 17 or 1., when there was like Google. I would stop asking and go to Google and just google. … I only lost my virginity when I was probably 19. So, no, don't do it. Obviously, looking at girls was a thing. But I didn't have the urge to have sex even though everyone around me was like having sex. When I told them [he was a virgin], everyone was like, you are lying, you are lying. And I was like 'ok guys, if you think I am lying, then that is fine.' So, I started making up stories of me having sex with girls. Then when they asked, I said you guys don't know her, she is from another school. Soon, I was like ok. I am already 18, let me just get this done with. So, it was a lot of pressure and it wasn't a good look, you know. At 18? As a guy especially. So, when I had that opportunity, I went for it. It was merely so I could speak. Even on the same day, after I lost my virginity, one of my friends came to me and said, 'Hey, bro, I thought you were a virgin.' They were there, they were in the same house.'

Unlike Neb who denounced peer pressure as the reason for her daughter's affiliation to friends, other participants acknowledge that through peer pressure, they did or said something. You would remember reading throughout how Jix has had no communication on sex and sexuality with either his parents or siblings. Jix turned to Google whenever he got curious. He was also having these talks with friends. Jix says before he heeded to the pressure of having penetrative sex, he initially shared fictitious stories about numerous sexual experiences with girls. He eventually had sex in a vicinity with his friends, 'merely so I could speak' about sex with them.

4.3 Boundary turbulence

CPM states that when private information is disclosed without the owner's consent, if boundary rules are misjudged or ignored, boundary turbulence occurs. Two categories emerged: intentional rule violations, and boundary rule mistakes. These two categories are as per the CPM guidelines. These categories respond to the RQ inquiring how South African

parents and their adolescents handle personal or family boundaries turbulence during sex and sexuality communication. The data is scanty because, in addition to children's deference to their parents, many participants say these conversations have been one way, indirect, infrequent, or in the form of responses to questions.

Table 4. 3: Boundary turbulence

BOUNDARY TURBULENCE
Intentional rule violations
Lying
Snooping
Gossip and betrayal
Boundary rule mistakes
Unsolicited disclosure
Not respecting boundaries

4.3.1 Intentional rule violations

Three themes emerged from CPM to explain breaches to boundaries that cause conflicts and mistrust in African families with adolescents; lying, snooping, gossip and betrayal.

Lying

Participants whose privacies have been violated, or who have watched siblings suffer because their private information fell in the ears of their parents, say they intentionally lie to keep their information private.

> Gabi: 'I kept the secret yes, that I am not dating, but then someone else saw me, and went to tell my mom. That is when the beating happened. I was like ok. I can't keep lying now. I can't keep lying. And then I told them that 'ok fine, whatever they told you, I am dating this person.' And they were like you gonna leave the person, I was like I would not, that's my decision. But that's my decision at the end of the day. So, they kept on beating me all the times up until they just said you know what, we are done.'

The study participants say parents can only react to lies if they either know, or suspect that there is no truth. Gabi agrees since her parents resorted to beating her in hopes that she would say her irregular schedules and late nights meant she had a lover. Beating is a sign of

turbulence that could probably have been avoided had Gabi told the truth. Gabi reports that 'they kept on beating me all the times' because she neither disclosed nor stopped dating. In this case, turbulence emerged from a lie and got exacerbated in that Gabi's parents knew that there was some truth which she withheld. She got pregnant at adolescence.

> Khal: 'Oh gosh. Very anxious cause I'll be like, 'Gosh she gonna find out because my mom, she would literally like if I made a mistake and then she would like call my name and be like, 'How did she find out, who told her? So, every time I made a mistake, I would like be very anxious. Just like really quiet in the house. Sometimes she'll get up and ask what did you, you do and then I would start open up. That's what actually like helped me to not make so many mistakes and the feeling that you just feel after, we just feel so much anxiety.'

In the case of other adolescents, turbulence in their family relationships was displayed in the form of sudden silence evoked more by the fear of being caught doing something against their families' norms. Khal who has been caught out severally, explains that she would exhibit anxiety by keeping quiet.

> Khal: 'No need to be so quick to just like, now your kid is like 20 years old, they've never told you about anything because they're like 'she's going to pick up the belt.' I don't want to do that.'

Khal's response does not fully serve as turbulence until her mention of 'pick up the belt', meaning that she was often beaten for concealing. Like with the case of Gabi, lying was a survival strategy for Khal and her siblings, whose mother would snoop because she expected to know their truth.

Snooping

PoAs represented in this theme confess to intentionally violating their adolescents' privacy in their quest to know how much their children knew on sex and sexuality.

> Noni: 'So, there is an instant that I was hurt, because I found out that she didn't tell me. It was the year she was doing grade 8. She was in boarding school. She had her first boyfriend, and she didn't tell me about him. I was never so hurt hey. And I think that is when I actually realized that I am actually losing her. I needed to do something to bring her back because these are things that I should be comfortable for her to tell me about when they happen. For her to tell me about when I was scared that what is she hearing? … What is she exposed to? What is she discussing with people during

> the two weeks [holidays], that she is not discussing with me? You know, it felt like she was moving away from me as the days were going.'

Noni's turmoil started when she found out from her 14-year-old daughter's journal that she had a boyfriend. Her hurt was so deep that she had to detach her adolescent from the people she had been talking to. If Noni did not read this journal, she would not know her daughter's concealed truth.

> Lori: 'My mom used to push this notion of being honest with me. She was always open and would say if you wanna try something, tell me, we will try together, don't go snooping outside, just like I am not allowing you to have these conversations. … But if I would bring a guy, she will say, 'but it's a guy.' Then I would say you said we must be open and you said I should bring a friend, now I bring a friend and you don't trust what I am saying. You wanna find out from him. There was a lot of restrains. I feel like literally my adolescent age, I was challenging my mother. And because I was the first born and I was a girl, I feel like I was always treated differently from my brothers, so I knew which fights to have with my mom and not to. She wouldn't want me to like go out to like clubs and what not. Even if they were under 18, she was like you are young and there will be time for those things. But then, my younger brother was 3yrs younger than me, as he was getting older, he would be allowed to go to those events, and I was like why you allowed him, but you didn't allow me. But I will fight you tooth and nail to go.'

For adolescents who were transparent, their parents' improper inquiries caused turbulence and left these adolescents feeling betrayed by their parents' broken promises. Such happened to Lori whose mother was always open-minded and encouraged disclosure. Lori says their relationship suffered a lot of restrains because her mother failed to trust her. She did not disclose whether her mother in fact asked her male friend if their relationship was sexual, but her mother's attempt to do so did hurt Lori who admits that her communication style at adolescence was challenging to her mother. Lori's comparison of how her mother treated her brother with how she treated her is not new to this literature but the researcher coded it here to validate how this furthered the turbulence they would have experienced.

Gossip and betrayal

Gossip is an intentional act that could lead to betrayal as explained by some of the study participants to be reasons for them shutting up to proactively evade violations.

Leti: ‘Remember I used to stay with different people? So, sometimes you will feel like you tell them something close to you, come Monday some other person knows about that. You were confiding in that person but now everybody knows about your problems. So, I learned on that time that let me just keep things to myself and just not say anything I will deal with them by myself. … I am a good listener. I listen to people when they talk to me. I think that’s the character that I have. My friends they tell me that I’m a good listener. I listen to what you tell me. Even if it’s not a secret I won’t go around talking about it. it's a safe haven for me and it stays there. So, what happened in Vegas stays in Vegas. … There was this one time when I shared my uncle’s secret with this kid. It got me in trouble and I knew in that point that you know what, it was a mistake. A first and a last I did. Yoo like it was a bad situation. I felt so ashamed. Like how can I do this to one person that I consider a family member because. Like felt so ashamed. I felt bad. I wasn't supposed to do that.’

Participants who report that they disclosed private information to someone, and instead of keeping quiet the person told another person, say in the most part of their adolescence, they feared disclosing information on sex and sexuality. Leti worried about disclosing to someone who may not observe her call to keep such information private. She too betrayed her uncle by revealing his information to someone outside their communication boundaries. Leti’s expression of betrayal and having betrayed links gossip, beyond being silent, to turbulence in family communication.

Beh: ‘Here I am as a parent and I have children who are going to private schools and they are being taught about sex and all that. And now, he has to come back to me and say; ‘Mummy, I have got this homework. They want us to speak about so, so, on sexuality’. And now, I am thinking, ‘Oh, nooo, where do I start? What am I supposed to say?’ And to be honest with you, I am not entirely honest to them because I am still struggling myself. As much as I would talk about it, and as much as my profession will push me to talk about it, but a part of me tells me that you are not supposed to be discussing this with children, and at the same time, I am saying, I am the one who is supposed to discuss this with my children because they might not get the right information out there. It’s very difficult to a point where after speaking to my own children, I need my own space so I can think about what I have just discussed with my kids because you know, it is not making sense to me at all. Sometimes, I go like, ‘Oh my God, my grandmother will wake up where ever she is if she hears this,

she is not going to be happy with me, because this is not something that you are supposed to speak with the kids'. But otherwise, times are changing, so I try.'

Like many others, Beh is tortured by the inner conflict of to tell or not to tell asking, 'where do I start?' or 'what am I supposed to say?' and saying 'you are not supposed to be discussing this with children'. Her conscience is obliging her to talk but, simultaneously, to withhold content in the wish of either preserving her adolescents' innocence, or not bringing herself to fully disclose on the said topics. She says her turbulence is suffered within herself.

4.3.2 Boundary rule mistakes

The following two themes emerged from CPM to explain conflicts and mistrust that occur when information is shared or obtained in error; unsolicited disclosure, not respecting boundaries.

Unsolicited disclosure

There were times when participants were mistakenly caught off-guard on acts that they would otherwise not disclose.

> Zam: "Funny enough, I do remember; this is embarrassing. This is all confidential right? One moment, I think I was 14-15, my mom caught me masturbating and I was in my sheets doing my business and she walked into my room. I think to check if I was asleep so she said; 'Eiy wena [oh, you], Lebo do you want me to tell your father?' I said 'No mom' and she said, 'OKAY.' I don't quite remember what she said after that, but I think she said something in the lines of 'stop this behaviour it's not healthy'."

YA participants, including Zam were caught masturbating in their mid-adolescence. The researcher could not pry further on this in fear of being too intrusive, but it can be assumed that Zam's mother was shocked to see her son in a compromising situation.

> Gale: 'This one time she was doing washing, she found a condom in my pocket then she was like to me, 'Oh so now you've started having sex?' and we talked about that. My mom knows what is happening.'

Gale's mother would have been surprised, but she was more convinced by her discovery that her son was possibly sexually active. When Gale says they 'talked about that', he probably refers to the one-way lecture he received. This provides a link to his previous descriptions

of the one-directional manner in which his mother has approached sex talks with him. Like Zam, Gale did not explain further how this turbulent disclosure affected their sex and sexuality communication.

Not respecting boundaries

Data emerged where disregard for boundaries, particularly by PoAs, led to turbulence in parents-adolescents' relationships.

> Mia: 'I would get so angry and slap her because the more I knew what was happening the more she pushed and I realised that that's not working. Because every time I beat her, I am the one who feels bad after more than she does. I am hurt when I think of my words, you know and I would go to her and say give mommy a hug because you know I didn't wanna do what I am doing.'

In most cases, this disrespect occurs because parents like Mia were hungry for insights into their children's personal lives. They would beat their adolescents in the hope that adolescents would disclose the required information. It is helpful to reflect on Mia in the section on adolescent-owned boundaries when her 'uncontrollable adolescent' obliged her to solicit details of her adolescent's activities, in the hope to better understand their circumstance.

> Taa: 'I think it's not necessarily just that they are secrets, but there are just those things that you don't tell them that I think their mother would know more than I do. I suspects she may know more about what I don't know. I think if I were to ask, someone will tell me. But the other thing is also, I just don't want to accuse people because then that's another way of shutting yourself out of even potential relationships.'

In a different light, some parents are aware that their adolescents have been privy to their personal information, although they did not give their adolescents such information. Like Taa, they concede the impending conflict resulting from their information being disclosed to their adolescent by their partners without their consent. Thus, disrespecting original owners' boundaries.

> Gale: "When she came back from work and just talked about the calls thing, having me chatting on the phone, she just went; 'I hope you are not doing that with a person you are chatting with the whole night'?"

Overhearing someone's telephone conversation, like did Gale's mother and other parents reported under this sub-category, does lead to turbulence. In the above section on unsolicited

disclosure, it is presented that Gale's mother found evidence to suspect that her son is sexually active. In this presentation, she convinced herself by the words she uttered that her son is sexually active.

4.4 Advice for African parents and adolescents

RQ4 drifted outside the designated theory for this research to seek advice for African parents and adolescents about discussing sex and sexuality. Questions intended to deduce how sex and sexuality can be talked about, why is it not being practiced as such and what advice participants have for when future families engage in such talks. Nine categories emerged from the data: adolescents as sexual beings, adolescents are exposed to sex, anticipated context, attitudes to family communication on sex, handling privacy management, content of communication, wishes for unlearning, final words to parents of adolescents and final words to adolescents.

Table 4. 4: Advice for parents and adolescents

ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND ADOLESCENTS
Acknowledge adolescents as sexual beings
Adolescents are exposed to sex
Anticipated context of sex communication
Attitudes to family communication on sex
Content of sex communication
Handling privacy management
Wishes for unlearning sex communication
Final words to parents of adolescents
Final words to adolescents

Adolescents as sexual beings

Participants reason that physical, emotional, social or psychological changes at adolescence means that children explore sexual feelings, sexual attractions and sexual behaviours.

> Taa: 'Accept that the children, or these little people are people and being people that will have sexual desires like all of us and not to make it taboo to speak about it. And

by making it not be a taboo, I just mean that they must just feel that at ease to speak to their children about, but also not make it uncomfortable because when it becomes uncomfortable, you're not gonna get anything anyway. Learning from my own children, when it is uncomfortable, they're not gonna talk. They don't talk. So, if I don't make it comfortable, I have a greater chance of getting a conversation going in one direction or the other.'

It is therefore vital, Taa says, that PoAs understand that speaking to adolescents on sex and sexuality means recognising that adolescents 'have sexual desires'; that they can have sex and can do so with specific persons. Taa says only when parents achieve this will adolescents warm up to topical communication, adding that when children feel some degree of discomfort they cease to talk.

Gabi: 'They should be open. They should stop hiding. They should stop hiding this sex thing because it is real. It's gonna happen. It does not matter that you love your child so much that you don't want him or her to do it. It's gonna happen at the end of the day. Naturally so. The body changes and there are gonna be questions. Everything changes, so rather give information. Teach your kids that this is what's gonna happen, so that they are safe when they go out there.'

Concurring with Taa, Gabi reminds parents that conversations around sex and penetrative intercourse are eminent as sex is a natural phenomenon that can be delayed but not stopped. In essence, she cautions parents to embrace growth as natural and enable safety for their adolescents by both responding to their enquiries and enhancing their knowledge.

Adolescents are exposed to sex

Developing sexual identity coincides with many adolescents being exposed to sex-related content at the time when they begin to experience sexual attraction and to react sexually.

Neb: 'From my personal view, the reality is that the world is screaming about sex and it is very, very, very loud and for us not talking about sex, it is leading to a situation where even our kids and our daughters, they think it's an embarrassment to talk about sex. Where a daughter will be raped or have a sexual violence and keep quiet because it is something that was never talked about freely.'

This study's participants urge parents to normalise sex talks in order to prepare their children to talk on the same topics at adolescence. Neb says adolescents from communicative families

are able to report violations like rape, fully aware that conversations on such wrong-doings are entertained in their families.

> Tani: 'African parent will always be African parents. I feel like the only time we can change this is with us the young generation and any older parent in Africa who is African who is willing to understand as a human being will have to adapt to the current changes of the world. I wish they were able to, for example, even if it is telling a child at the age of 8 or at the age of 9 what sex is by the moment, they start teaching them about it at school in grade 4. When they start teaching your child about certain stuff, you should be able to sit them down and I mean they need to sit them down and communicate with them step by step. Do not now wait for them until they are 16 to talk to them about sex because you get those who are intimate at grade 7. So, you telling them at grade 4 immediately it starts, I just think that is the best way of helping them with everything.'

Tani, who has never had explicit sex and sexuality communication with her parents, concurs with the above viewpoints but remains convinced that such talks may never be held by current-day African parents of adolescents because she assumes it is late, or maybe she has simply lost faith. She says 16 is too late to introduce sex talks. Tani joins the call on PoAs to get cues from schools and start sex talks with children concurrently given that adolescents' age of sexual debut is becoming younger and schools are introducing sex talks earlier.

In many ways, those who call on the introduction of sex talks by puberty could be in order as devices like television sets, computers, hand-held laptops, phones and tablets fall in the hands of younger children who indeed do stumble on such content. Without devices, young adolescents do get exposed to sex in their living environment as has been presented in this study's data.

> Mobi: 'I will just encourage parents to be open as much as possible and not go into a shell when these topics come out. They should say this is my opportunity to send a message of protection. That this is my number one priority is just to protect the child. If they know that no one must touch my penis, it is the first step towards protecting them, and then you explain to them about other body parts you know. That the person may not touch your penis, but they can touch you somewhere else and they may even

try to put their body part on to you and things like that you know. I think the era of being shy and being taboos is over. Explain to them that it (rape) may not be violent.'

Parents like Mobi attempt to use appropriate terminology to describe how parents should tell their adolescents that 'no one must touch my penis' as she debunks Tani's assumption that current-day parents cannot be reformed. She urges talks on how exactly to identify rape in cases where it is not violent and urges parents to teach adolescents protective sex, even if adolescents do not inquire about that.

Anticipated context

In concurring with the recommendation that parents need to be open and have sex-talks with their adolescents, participants call on African parents in South Africa to handle sex talks in the ways of their forefathers.

> Beh: 'We should definitely open up and speak to our children about sex. … So, if we can go back from how we were told these African stories, folktales and take girls, sit down with our elders and we start talking about that and the boys, when they go to the initiation schools, speak about it. … We do have platforms, but we are not using them because it's a taboo to talk about sex with kids. … We have got churches. … But there are churches that says no, we don't want to corrupt our children. How are you corrupting children when you are going to still send them to school where they are still going to be taught about sex because we have books syllabus that are strictly talking to them about sex? … What is happening to other children who don't have mothers or fathers to talk to about these things? So, who is going to talk to them about these things because the churches are supposed to?'

Participants, including Beh urges the restoration of traditional initiation centres; mainly for urban adolescents and use of folktales for sex and sexuality communication. Like some participants above, Beh calls for synergy in content reaching adolescents from all organs that partake in raising them. Beh concurrently pleads that parents do not outsource sex talks with their adolescents as schools and churches have not filled the vacuum formed by the absence of initiation centres. A critical value-add to this research, by Beh's inputs, asks who possibly talks sex to parentless children.

> Ria: 'So, I feel like with Africans when they approach sex, it is more about the woman pleasing the men. So, you do everything. … You're told to stretch yourself, to do all these things as a child, only for you to be able to stay in a home, and only

for you to be able to please the man rather than them telling you how you should be pleased. You know. So, I just wish that that could change. That the center is not just on pleasing the men, but also, women also need to be pleased. And that that is not a bad thing in how Africans approach and treat sex. It's for the men, it's not for you [women].'

As if Ria and others read Zas' aunt's description in the section on abstinence that boys take girls' dignities away, they give this as their reason for girls not being mostly cautioned to preserve themselves for marriage. Ria advocates balanced narratives that say 'women also need to be pleased'.

Attitudes to family communication on sex

Parents of adolescents in African families in South Africa are urged to recognise that their aging children need to learn from their knowledge and experiences in order not to repeat their mistakes.

Tana: 'I feel like our parents they don't know as much as we do. As much as they are older than us by age and maturity, but there are some things that they just don't know. They have seen us as we were kids, saying our first word, taking first steps, go to varsity but today they only see us in a specific point in time from the beginning and where you are now, and the judgment is clouded because there have been years of raising you so you are still seen as a child.'

Positive attitudes for this research participants indicate that parents who accept their ignorance, and admit that as their children grow, their appetite for knowledge increases to either catch up or surpass that of their parents; signifying that parents may be ignorant. Tana therefore advises parents to seek and share this knowledge without fear but that parents have to emerge from both denial and ignorance to most importantly, acknowledge that their children have evolved into adolescence.

Khal: 'I think that parents need to educate themselves first. I say this because it is so closed off about the sex topic, and they think that let's not talk about it, otherwise, the kids will get sort of a liking for it. I think maybe they need to get educated first, before they talk about it to the kid. They need to have a class or something like that. They need to know that talking about sex is okay for them to address the kids because African parents were unfortunately raised by African parents as well. All parents,

grandparents and great grandparents, they are African parents. Those guys need to unlearn certain things first, and then they can properly address it with the kids.'

A group of participants concur with Tana and reckon PoAs have to reject their old habits that position sex and sexuality as taboo topics and their fears that knowledge of sex will lure adolescents into having sex. Khal almost duplicates Tana's views but adds that grand-parents and great grand-parents, should all 'unlearn certain things first' and avoid replicating their own parents. Khal is not requesting that PoAs seek knowledge that would solely be divulged to their adolescents. Rather, they need to learn that they have to talk with their adolescents on these topics.

Ako: 'Knowing yourself is first thing that you have to do. You need to know yourself. We need to not feel guilty about ourselves. We need to be open minded. We need to talk about this sex thing. We need to be free, and not be shy. Thank you very much, you opened my eyes. I will do things better now.'

In order to teach, learn or just talk, participants say PoAs must appreciate and embrace their own sexualities and eradicate the guilt of sex talks. To Ako, this interview has been so empowering. She has unlearnt enough to embark on sex and sexuality communication with her two adolescents.

Content of communication

It is noticeable that participants' responses under this sub-theme reveal that they anticipate talking about different contents at different stages of adolescence.

Tiku: 'I'd talk to my children about everything. I will educate my children about sex. I will teach my children about menstruation before they experience their menstruation. I will teach my children at a very young age that if someone forces themselves on you, that is rape and that is abuse. And I will also open that room for my children to come and talk to me. It doesn't matter whether that thing is stupid or what. I will want them to communicate everything with me. I will want every detail of what is happening in their lives.'

They will talk about the act of sex and its consequences because the way information on sex and sexuality is shared (its exact format and details, how concepts are explained, if communication flows well, two-way communication and how children share information with their parents), positively impacts communication. As a PoA, Tiku will make sure that every concept of sex and sexuality is broken down when talking to her children. Wanting to

know every detail of her adolescents' lives may mean that Tiku does not anticipate her adolescents' right to own private information.

> Mica: 'Basics and fundamentals of understanding it. Implications of it and understand that at the end of the day, having sex with someone is a very big thing and I think it's a decision that you have to think about thoroughly and wisely. But I don't want to think that I would want them to think sex is taboo. You make a choice and identity shapes us to like whether they will be sexually liberal or not that they will be having sex a lot but maybe for them it won't be a big thing but it's definitely a big decision and I don't think it's just anything but I think I will try and equip them with the right information so that they become their own people and I would never want them to be sexual shameful of others because they are unable to talk about sex.'

Some participants recommend slightly different approaches to appropriating content in sex and sexuality communication, including calls for open-mindedness. Mica joins this call to urge families to talk about the need to give sex talk prior thoughts while accepting that it shapes identities without negating who adolescents are becoming. Mica pledges support for adolescents to be educated to refrain from shaming other's sex-related habits and choices.

> Tiku: 'There is absolutely nothing that I plan not to talk to her [daughter] about. I want to talk to her about everything. … Definitely emotional maturity. I want to have conversations that allows them to grow and understand their person. Definitely vulnerability. Conversations about the future like, 'What do you want to be in the future and when do you plan on doing that? How do I help you? … Setting goals that you will achieve, not goals that you think you are expected to achieve. … How do we do that? and also the conversations that we scared to have and things that I feel like are abandon to my family. I want to have conversations with them about rape … How she feels about certain boundaries and interaction with family and friends. … I am not sure how, because they are heavy, heavy content, but I will try. ... She'll be able to tell me about the bullying. She will be able to tell me about things that I am not ready to hear. So those are the conversations and I am hoping she will be able to tell me like when she is dealing with things like depression, if she gets it. … So, we can have a clear line of communication. ... Menstruation. I think we will have that discussion. It's not as heavy as my family made it seem to be. … Definitely sex.'

Like many others, Tiku will share information with her adolescents aimed at making them better individuals and great communicators. She thinks her childhood family exaggerated the level of privacy which sex deserves. For her, emotional state and self-identity make adolescents vulnerable. By measure of her current exposure, Tiku is unsure if sex talks will be comfortable topics to discuss with her adolescents. Admitting that some contents could be shocking, she furthers her anticipation to what private information her adolescents will reveal to her.

Handling privacy management

Some participants acknowledge that recognising different comfort levels for different family members, when discussing sex and sexuality, will add value to privacy.

> Ria: 'Approach the children openly about the topic of sex. Rather than wait for something to happen first before they address the topic. They shouldn't wait for someone to land in trouble first, or for someone to get their period first. I think it should be something that you should know beforehand. Just because some children are already having sex before they even get their periods. So, it makes no benefits living it for the period, because what you're doing, you're just waiting to only say then because you know that you could get pregnant. but people, kids could still get STD. They could still get raped things like that. So, I don't think you should wait until someone gets the period or something happens first, for you to discuss the topic with your children. Be the one to bring it up to them because it makes it easier. … Adolescents should research. They should be smarter about these things. Obviously, you cannot entirely depend on your parents to teach you certain things about life. They should honestly go online to learn most of the stuff. Learn as much as they can and also reach out to friends, … other relatives or your siblings about certain questions. … Take the initiative to learn. Know the content first before you get into it. … Know all the safety measures. Yeah, and you should know all the safety measures, everything like from A to Z. … I think it would be interesting for the researcher to find out the African perspective of things and how that affects our relationship with sex. I would like to find out specifically; why is it that sex is almost designed for men in the African culture? Why is it that everything that we do like going for the genital mutilations or when they talk to you, you know, before you get married or what not, they talk to you about pleasing a man and they give you all the

> lectures and stuff. Why is everything about the men? Why is sex a weapon for men? That's what I want to know.'

As much as they would love these conversations to take place early in children's lives, Ria joins other participants seeking adolescents' autonomy to plead with PoAs not to pry unless there are genuine concerns. Ria adds to warnings that children are becoming sexually active even before puberty and hopes that parents speak to adolescents early, transparently and do introduce topics. Ria calls on adolescents to make inquiries. To acquire knowledge from parents and sources like online, friends, relatives, or siblings on what exactly is privacy, so as to properly acquire and protect their own content without necessarily exposing their susceptibility.

Interestingly, Ria whose message is predominantly focused on safety, has some assignment for researchers. She urges an African only focus on why the act of sex and the display of sexuality are coined to lure and pleasure men.

> Celi: 'I think it breeds freedom and it breeds trust and the reason why those two are really important is because in this day and age, where everything can just be publicised, and just take it out of context. It really is nice to have like a safe space where you know, you can talk about these things [sex], and you don't have to go outside where people can use and like abuse, the fact that you told them this or that you identify as this [sexuality]. Whereas if you're at home, and you can be comfortable in your sexuality. When you go out there, there's a certain confidence you have in a certain area that people find it harder to shake.'

Participants are alert that privacy in sex and sexuality communication indeed attracts freedom and trust, and creates what Celi calls 'a safe space'. According to Celi, adolescents from families that protect their sex and sexuality information present themselves with greater degrees of confidence as they are aware that what they do (sex), and who they are (sexuality), is protected in their families.

Wishes for unlearning

Participants concur that PoAs' respect for rules of communication is the reason they are sluggish to talk on sex and sexuality.

> Mere: ‘To our African parents, let’s not fear our children. Let’s continue to guide them. To tell them about this sexuality because if it is not, you guys talking to us, who is gonna tell us what is what?’

Mere and others invite parents to eliminate the possibility of withholding vital information needed by adolescents because PoAs are the main sources of information to adolescents.

> Swa: ‘Parents and adults are there to guide you. And yes, you should listen to them. But some things you don't always have to take them. Like as it is, some things also have to change because they also have a lot of unlearning, they have to do as much as we also have some learning that we need to do from them because we are moving at different times, different generations. I think that's what I would say that you are your own person and definitely just be who you are.’

To Swa, and those who agree with her, as much as adolescents have to learn from parents, both parties have to accept possible impacts of their generational gaps on sex and sexuality communication. Swa does well to advise adolescents to learn from parents while at the same time remain open to evolution which is imminent with changing times. She reminds adolescents that as they evolve, they should recognise their uniqueness and that being unique may mean that their identities are developing differently from their families’.

> Tiku: ‘It’s the 21st century and things have been changing. They will keep changing. It’s time now to care about yourself enough to open up. Not even with others, but to yourself. Those difficult conversations with yourself. Because African parents, they don’t even own diaries. they don’t, like they don’t even write down those trials and tribulations. They've been through all, but they can’t write it down.’

Many calls urge adolescents to genuinely embrace themselves and accept that they are different from adults in their families as they each live in different times. Tiku’s last statement, saying African parents do not document their experiences, draws attention to the need for documented evidence of past experiences.

Final words to parents of adolescents

Data in this, and the next sub-theme, although similar to the rest of the literature theme four, its impact is more targeted to each group within families.

> Pitt: ‘Foster open and better environment in your household. As much as you want to have control, know that you can only have as much control as they allow you to

> think you have. Because now, my parents probably think they are in full, control but how many stuff that they don't know? Allowing your children to feel at home when they are at home, and feel heard when they want to talk, you know. Feel like they have a friend in you, a counsellor in you or a therapist in you. … Just making, allowing a lot of things in your household, it is not just, 'I am your parent, and the one who is going to feed and beat you.' It should be 'I am your parent; I am the one who is going to talk you through this problem. I am the one who is going to help you. I am the one who is going to advice you when you are going through that and I am the one you are going to talk to when you are feeling down.' … I am not just your son, the guy that is gonna ask you for money when I want to go out, or make you breakfast. ... I am somebody you can talk to when you need to. I am someone you can come to with your problems and not go to someone else and then from there, we can figure out how to deal with the problem, how to solve it. … You're scared of what your child's gonna do or say. ... You're scared of giving them the bad advice. Or you're coming from a place of low self-esteem. You're like, 'Oh, I have made so many mistakes in my life so who am I to give my child advice. … So, as a parent don't be scared. Take the first step talking to your children.'

In advising African parents on how to better talk on sex and sexuality with their adolescents, many participants join Pitt's call for parents (who are confident, willing to talk sex effectively, in detail, using the correct vocabulary, exposing adolescents to the pros and cons of having sex, genuinely responding to adolescents' questions) to be aware that their silence may push adolescents to look for alternative sources of information. They say conducive spaces where adolescents are expressive may deter them from getting incorrect information from other sources. Pitt reminds parents of the power of disclosure. He says it is nearly impossible for parents to force information from adolescents. He cautions parents to act as instructors, advisors, therapists, helpers, problem-solvers, friends and motivators because adolescents too can be listeners, helpers and confidants. He adds that parents should not outsource sex talks. Pitt reminds parents that their past mistakes should not trapped them with narrow self-esteems and less confidence to share educative sex contents, neither should they have fears that their adolescents may mimic their pasts.

> Ako: 'We adults, we Africans, we need to talk about sex with our kids. And very important, we need to talk everything, everything about sex. … That is why I say you

> see the way you react is how your children will not tell you some of the stuff and will keep secrets from you. I am ready to tell them everything after this interview.'

Agreeing with Pitt, Ako focuses on discouraging the use of coded words. In discussing risks in RQ1, Ako said African parents must not use words such as 'sleep' to mean sex. In an already recommended choice of vocabulary in sex and sexuality communication, or recommended depth of such talks, participants like Ako continue to encourage PoAs to communicate more and to do so focusing on the emotions of sex and how to 'enjoy sex'. She pledges to lead by example and start talking to avoid grooming an adolescent who also shies away. Ako concludes that children would talk or not talk to parents, depending on how parents react to what they are told.

> Jix: 'Just to be open and honest with their kids. Especially as they develop. Just tell them about your personal experiences, what happened. If your kids ask you something, never like say why are you asking me this? This is because the kid will go out. As a mom or dad, you probably say to your 10-year-old, why are you asking that? Then that 10-year-old will sit with the question and will never ask you about sex until when he turns like 18 or 16 or something like that. So, what I am saying is, never sit down on a question. Two things that parents do not talk about, sex and finances. That is why kids get lost. The black kids I'd say, in finances and sexual problems.'

A handful of participants concede that not being open-minded and communicative, not responding to questions in non-judgmental ways, and not being genuine, groom adolescents who 'go out' and speak to strangers, or who go quiet and explore the topic in other ways. Jix advises parents to share personal pasts in order to ease children into talks, for young children do have doubts too.

Final words to adolescents

The words below are focused on adolescents.

> Celi: 'If your parents aren't talking to you about it, you're going to have to broach that subject and if you don't want to broach that subject, it could be a burden that you carry for a really long time. And your parents will always forgive you [for talking sex].'

Assuming that most parents may not always talk, participants encourage adolescents to introduce sex and sexuality talks in their families because according to Celi, no matter how resistant non-talking parents are, they would eventually forgive a curious adolescent.

> Mobi: 'We all have choices and we must understand that our choices have consequences. Whether it's good or bad, but I think we must understand the responsibility of our choices.'

Supporting Celi's stance, Bobi cautions adolescents to understand that choices come with costs and adolescents should 'understand the responsibility of our choices' before they engage in any acts.

> Mere: 'That we are protected and protect ourselves as well. Yeah, always support each other and say no to child and women abuse. And if you see something that is not good on the streets, don't support that thing. Just shout and say, 'No'. So, let's stay positive all the times, and with love all the time.'

According to Mere, choices present themselves in many ways including abuse and bullying. She calls on positivity and love in adolescence. She is one of those who urge adolescents to distant themselves from, and try to put a stop to and report, 'child and women abuse', and bullying. In a way, she is asking adolescents to identify and stay away from peer pressure. To Mere, adolescents have to protect others as they protect themselves. This is a very important caution to adolescents who are at a stage of distancing themselves from family members while drifting towards peers.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of sex and sexuality communication in African families with adolescents and the dynamics that influence the communication of adolescents' identities as opened or closed. This chapter analysed specific categories of themes that emerged from data coded from interviewing 20 YAs aged 19 to 25 and 20 PoAs, all Africans in South Africa. Participants in this research hope that members of African families in South Africa with adolescents will experience effective two-way discussions on sex and sexuality where parents of adolescents and their adolescents manage communication rules, where information ownership is well managed, where rules boundaries are effective, where privacy is considered, and turbulence is managed. Participants shared communicative

matters about privacy on sex and sexuality that individuals face in their everyday lives and how these issues help in forming sexual identities. They share parental values and attitudes towards sex and sexuality communication, and the quality of communication between adolescents and parents or adult caregivers. The question of communicating sex and sexuality is very important for the future of African adolescents in South Africa whose communication of their own identity has been influenced by both their families' and communities' perspectives of how identities should be communicated. Participants are aware that in communication, the concepts of closedness and openness are aligned to how privacy and disclosure are managed. Sadly, some adolescents have never been spoken to about sex and sexuality. Adolescents who may never communicate sexually classified risks because they have no idea of how exactly to communicate their sexual desires and how they identify themselves sexually. These are sexually active, but particularly homosexual adolescents who fear that their encounters could deter or end their future plans. This is not good for a country whose future depends on the fate of its adolescent population. Below, the researcher interprets and concludes this study.

Chapter Five

INTERPRETATION AND STUDY CONCLUSION

Overview

The importance of studying sex and sexuality communication in African families in SA is that researchers get to understand the nature of dialogues that occur within the family, the person who talks, what is said, and why. The main purpose of this study was to understand the role which sex and sexuality communication play in African families in South Africa with adolescents and whether or not the communication is open or closed. Scholars have argued that research which highlights how adolescents have communicated their sexual identities will empower parents and adult-caregivers on how issues of sex and sexuality can be communicated effectively within age and stage limits, respecting cultures, norms and values, and safe from the discomfort of self-disclosure (Mturi, 2013; Grossman et al., 2018; Zuma et al., 2010; Zimmerman, 2011; Vilanculos & Nduna, 2017; Holman, 2014).

Past research has focused on whether or not communication about sex and sexuality takes place in families, with little focus on specific themes that African families with adolescents in South Africa talk about and how each party feels during these talks. Soon et al. (2013), for instance, found practical examples where parents, caregivers and adolescents communicate on sex-related content in Soweto and Ekurhuleni. Coetzee et al. (2014) found that risky sexual behaviours amongst adolescents can be reduced through effective communication with parents while Holman (2012) reports that the overall family communication climate was not directly related to adolescents' sexual risk. Adolescents' sexual behaviours (love, penetrative sex, sexual feelings or pleasures, physical and emotional experiences of sex and how sex and sexual health are communicated at a time when the UN (2016) presents adolescents as the most risk-taking population) demand enquiry.

To understand the main aim of this research meant that the researcher had to first explore the nature of African adolescents' sex and sexuality by talking to young adults (YAs) who spoke in retrospect of when they were adolescents. The researcher also had to talk to parents of adolescent children (PoAs) who shared their experiences as adolescents. Both groups of

participants shared their experiences mostly on communicating sex and sexuality with their adolescents, and mostly on how parental or adult sexual knowledge, attitudes, values of sex, and others are communicated to adolescents in African families; if at all that takes place. Secondly, the researcher inquired about the foundations of sex and sexuality communication by focusing on adolescents' sources of sexual information, the sexual knowledge of family adult caregivers, their attitudes, values and different aspects of their sexual behaviours. This knowledge helps to describe the characteristics of parental influence on the closedness and openness of adolescents' sexuality. Finally, this researcher had explored the quality of sex and sexuality communication between adolescents and parents or adult caregivers, focusing on their values and attitudes in order to understand how adult family members engage in sexual communication.

In this chapter, the major findings of the study that contributes to the understanding of sex and sexuality communication in African families will be discussed. The researcher will contextualise findings and discuss the unique contributions of this study to the field. The developing themes are revealing and stimulating discoveries which will contribute a variety of insights to the field of sex and sexuality communication research and open rich opportunities for future research. There were serious "disclosures" about myths and realities on "talking", or mostly listening to both appropriate and inappropriate communication by parents and adolescents. Openness or closedness was often based on parents-adolescents' attitudes to expressing both family and individual identities. The reports of this research help to paint the circumstantial canvas of family sex and sexuality communication. Open communication, closed communication and the variances in-between play distinct roles in rule management, boundaries coordination, boundaries turbulence and they do affect perceptions of family sex and sexuality communication patterns which are unique to African families with adolescents in South Africa. Included under rule and boundaries are general attitudes that serve as deterrents or sometimes motivations to discussing these 'taboo' subjects (sex and sexuality) with this vulnerable population; adolescents. Below, the main contributions of the analysis in chapter four are summarised. The broader implications of this research's findings are then discussed before concluding with the limitations of this study and directions for future researchers.

5.1 Interpretation of findings

Rules development

Through the analysis of the interview data, this study found that some members of African families in South Africa are guided by various guidelines as they attempt to develop, observe and renegotiate rules and build trust in the process of sex and sexuality communication to accommodate their developing adolescents. One of the best ways to present these findings was to first recognise Africans in South Africa as socio-cultural and religious beings. This study found that traditional gender roles influence who takes the lead in discussing sex and sexuality, no matter how uncomfortable it may be for the person. For instance, many participants confirm, with the literature in chapter two (Bray et al., 2010; Hunter, 2010), that mothers by virtue of being nurturers are both expected and compelled to have diverse conversations with adolescents, including conversations on sensitive topics, while fathers somehow escape by nature of how culture and religion position them. However, this escape by fathers is mostly due to their provider statuses. The high level of absent fathers presented by Bray et al. (2010) and Hunter (2010) is validated by the study participants' words, but also by the fact that only five fathers accepted to be interviewed in a sample of 20 parents of adolescents.

Of the many factors that prevent fathers from communicating with their children, particularly on sex and sexuality, the research participants like those in Sagnia et al.'s (2020) research pin their responses to the role which culture plays in requiring mothers to serve as middle persons in communication. Implementing the above roles of parents in some families means that adolescents have no direct communication with their fathers. Messages for fathers are told to mothers who in turn pass them on to them. When children are older and start communicating with fathers, in describing how each parent manages their individual boundaries, this research reveals that adolescents classify fathers as frugal communicators and mothers as frequently open when talking on sex, sexual orientation, and through to marriage. They present two parents with two different communication rules on the same subjects without considering socio-cultural and religious influences that have taught fathers to be silent, more private or sensitive even to addressing risky behaviours in their sons compared to communicative mothers. The gender effect, the study participants say, means that mothers who are the main communicating parents prefer to talk sex with adolescents in the absence of fathers whom they fear may shut down conversations.

Many family members say mothers introduce sex talks when adolescents are young and mothers talk according to adolescents' age and gender. Mothers in this research, like in previous research, are reported to be embracing, conversational, protective, giving warnings and threats and are gender-modelling (Poggenpoel et al., 2016; Fulcher, 2014). African fathers in this research, who are involved in raising children, do attempt to talk to their sons in one-way warnings and threats on the risks of impregnating or of contracting sexually transmissible diseases. CPM reveals that gender disclosure rules have "the potential to influence the way men and women define the nature of their privacy. … Revealing and concealing from different vantage points" (Petronio, 2002:42). This is why, like mothers, fathers in this research who talk sex are gender sensitive. This is similar to both parents in previous findings (Smit, 2002; Kanu 2023; Nedombeloni & Oyedemi, 2014; Maina et al., 2020; Basson, 2018).

Participants say the current mothers are making improved efforts as educators and as positive models for communication about sex and sexual identity compared to their own mothers. The researcher refers to a mother who, for example, acknowledges her adolescents' discomfort regarding face-to-face talks on these sensitive topics by calling on her adolescent to write notes to her if her adolescent wished to talk. In accordance with the reasoning of researchers like Moore and Rosenthal (2007), this mother is seen as one with knowledge that expressive sexuality is central to her negotiation of her adolescents' transition to adulthood. The implication of this finding on mothers and fathers' roles on communicating sex and sexuality in African families with adolescents is that silence by fathers and limited content from mothers do lead to low volumes of sex and sexuality communication by members in African families in South Africa.

Many participants' identification of religion as an aspect of their culture that influences discussions on sex and sexuality is another finding on how rules are managed in African families with adolescents in South Africa. CPM says in family settings, the choice of granting accessibility or disclosing private information may be essential to cultural values (Petronio, 2002). Participants report that religion mutes certain discussions on sex and sexuality within family settings. This study has reported above that beliefs and expectations have positioned families to have both explicit and implicit rules on who can discuss sex and sexuality, why, when and how much information can be shared. In addition, participants say

religion demands that they live by the bible, focus on Christ and not discuss their sexual lives. The little sex talks that take place in such families emphasise abstinence before marriage while pushing the agenda that sex is private and sensitive. They say their religious beliefs do not consider gender diversity. Previous research validates traditional and religious norms that do not advocate parents-adolescents sex and sexuality communication on grounds that sex is a dirty act and various sexualities do not exist (Bastien et al., 2011; Soon et al., 2013; Mabunda & Madiba, 2017). As such, the participants of this study clarify that guided by cultural practices, grandparents, aunties and uncles do the talks as stated in previous research (Zimmermann, 2011; Delius & Glaser, 2002). The research participants concur that some designated religious and cultural leaders are favoured to do these talks. They join Grossman et al. (2018) to detail how African adolescents are comfortably learning about sex and sexuality from schools, peers and media. PoAs say they enjoy distancing themselves from such talks with adolescents who have acquired knowledge from outside their families. Learning about sex and sexuality from outside nuclear family settings may seem like a better option to ignorant adolescents, but the research participants say both perceived and anticipated knowledge from these sources are too basic, vague, underdeveloped and needing explanation from parents.

The impact of cultural practices that require parents not to talk on sex and sexuality with adolescents is that getting little detail means that adolescents have to make sense of sexual information on their own. As will be detailed in the explanation of boundaries rules, the consequence of miscommunication in sex and sexuality is that the majority of this research participants' understanding of communication rules indicate that they are attributing practices directly to culture. This means that PoAs do not acknowledge that how they observe cultural criteria is the reason for adolescents being quiet. Rather, they say adolescents have to be silent in order to be viewed as respectful. Similarly, no participant blames parents for discouraging adolescents from both talking and asking questions. They blame this on cultural practices. So, instead of saying how culture has impacted their communication, participants explain how it influences their day-to-day living. They are all suggesting that they have no control over culture as mentioned in Kumi-Kyereme, Awusabo-Asare and Darteh's (2014) research on attitudes of gatekeepers towards adolescent sexual and reproductive health in Ghana.

As indicated by past research (Bray et al. 2010; Posel et al., 2004), sex and sexuality communication are challenging for some African families with adolescents in South Africa who do not have living spaces where discussions can take place safe from eavesdropping. A third finding is that the advantage of crowded living spaces, as detailed in the research data which has not received scholarly attention, is that eavesdropping (though uncomfortable) may provide opportunities for in-depth communication on sex-related topics. Take this family situation where an adult member overhears adolescents' conversation on diverse sexualities. The adult could have chosen to remain silent, in line with the culture of gossip or due to the taboo nature of the topic in Africa. However, in this case, he engaged his family adolescents further on the topic. His talk with these adolescents taught him about various sexualities but from explanation, it created an avenue where adolescents and adults of this family engaged in an open and inviting talk. The implication of both eavesdropping and the adult family members' willingness to engage in further talks with adolescents give adolescents hope of future talks with adult caregivers on sex and sexuality. It adds to African adolescents' presentation in this research data as managing their identities while being fully aware of onlookers who include extended family members like the above uncle. Circumstances through which Africans conduct family communication are unique and do lead to unique ways through which adolescents' identities are formed and communicated. These circumstances may mean that African adolescents communicate in line with their family identities if they communicate in manners that align with their larger family values.

The researcher observed that PoAs pay attention to rules governing sex and sexuality communication more than they do to the importance of sex and sexuality talks, whereas how adolescents talk with their parents is guided by how their parents view and react to concepts within sex and sexuality. In the case where parents pay attention to content, adolescents' understanding may improve. This may enhance how they communicate their own identities. This study's findings portray the increased efforts which parents and caregivers are making to communicate sex and sexuality. As they continue to improve in communication, parents in fact have to note the impact of their gender expressiveness, including the fact that mothers talking more than fathers means that fathers continue to be reported as voiceless. Reference to the case of silent fathers, and more receptive and more advising mothers, means that the ignorance, fear, mistrust, shame and stereotypes to this taboo subject continue to deepen. Of course, positioning mothers as channels of communication between children and fathers defaults some fathers to directly impact little as far as adolescents' identity development is

concerned. Continuing this practice means continuously widening fathers-adolescents communication gaps in favour of mothers-adolescents' gaps. Thus, presenting communication on sex and sexuality to adolescents as gender-sensitive.

With the increase in the number of women pursuing work, children are generally left in environments where they have to communicate with extended family members and with teachers and strangers, exposing them to confusion and risks. Desirable environments are those where both parents in African families with adolescents in South Africa see themselves as communicators by giving out clear rules with explained consequences and benefits alike, without worry that adolescents may regard them as peers; where adolescents will respond without fear of being punished, where they talk amicably, ask sex-related questions, listen, but observe already existing and new boundaries rules.

Boundary coordination

Boundary coordination, takes place when parents, adolescents, nuclear and extended family members negotiate both existing and new rules boundaries that guide how they reveal or conceal private and personal information. How family members communicate what they deem as private or personal information plays a significant role in forming their identities and Petronio (2002:85) states that it is the reason for which they form and manage multiple boundaries through privacy coordination. To her, information ownership is a sign of identity ownership. This is insinuating that disclosure choices which people make shape their identities. Petronio (2000) states that humans manage two kinds of boundaries: about self through personal boundaries, and about many kinds of different information through collective boundaries. Jenings and Malcak (2004) clarify that privacy boundaries information sharing is what can be told and what cannot (or 'to tell or not tell') when people communicate identities. As stated above, rules on sex and sexuality communication within African families in South Africa do, and will continue to, vary according to the boundaries below that guide individual and family beliefs, values, principles and other considerations.

The first finding on boundary coordination present varieties of practices ranging from:
1) Families which Petronio (2002) describes as having extremely open or highly permeable communication boundaries. Both PoAs and YAs from these families in South Africa say they have discarded rules that interfere with sex and sexuality communication and have

discussed every sex-related topic with the exception of masturbation. Parents in these families say adolescents have embraced open, frequent, spontaneous and inquisitive communication, although they add that their adolescents do not seem to know descent ways to express their sexualities in their 'western' way of talking. They have termed their adolescents 'whites' for their verbal expressiveness on sex and sexuality.

2) In other families, members control information ownership both internally and externally. Petronio (2002) argues that in these families, members decide who has access and who does not. YA participants report that mothers in these families are ideal, interactive and comic communicators just as indicated in previous findings (Noller & Atkin, 2014; Sagnia et al., 2020). Like with other findings, adolescents of families with tight information boundaries are escaping from intolerant parents to communicate with siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunts, teachers, peers or they depend on Internet searches (Shilumani, 2010; Kajula et al., 2014; Velcoff, 2010; Jejeebhoy & Santhya, 2011; Bastien et al., 2009). Adolescents from such families may desire communication with parents but have been told 'never' to ask questions as revealed by this study's data.

Descriptions of open boundaries in this study's data mean that family communication on sex and sexuality is indeed finding its place in African families with adolescents. The participants' confirmation of talks on individual sex lives is central to this research which, alongside that of Miller-Day et al., (2013), seeks children's voices in family sex and sexuality communication. It is more so because participants say when adolescents are older, PoAs begin to speak with them more. At that stage, the talks are flexible, engaging, liberal, tolerant, guiding, encouraging, open, but remain one-directional, warning and threatening. To these parents, adolescents who express themselves are not synonymous with being disrespectful. They present adolescents whose parents are receptive of their evolution as transparent, inquisitive, adhering to no sex instructions and cautious not to disappoint or betray their parents' trust. They do this by heeding to their mothers' instructions as examples.

An instance where an adolescent is told that they could bring a lover home for sleepovers, but not attempt penetrative sex, adds to previous research in portraying how mother-daughter communication builds a positive self-esteem and delays sexual intercourse at adolescence (Lesch & Kruger, 2005; Nilsson et al., 2020; Kirby, 2003). The research participants use positive words like, good, inspirational and excellent to describe relationships, but particularly their parents. Meanwhile, family environments are described as often fun-

loving, fostering close bonds, caring, voiceless but positive, negative, neutral and gender-biased, with little open talks on sex and sexuality compared to other topics. On the other hand, negative relationships are qualified with adjectives like, difficult, strict and absent. The frequent reference to grandparents' active roles in sex and sexuality talks by both PoAs and YAs may mean that no matter how open nuclear family communications try to be, PoAs do not and may never talk sex and sexuality with their adolescents. This, despite the fact that every other source including grandparents are simply creating awareness without giving adolescents details intended to educate them.

A second finding is that the participants say they willingly, or not, practise both topic avoidance and topic protection on both personal and high-risk information. They say adolescents in African families in South Africa set communication boundaries such that if no one asks, they do not talk. This means that, apart from those who tell lies, adolescents keep their information private at this stage not because they do not want to share their private information, but because adults do not prompt them to talk. These adolescents, they say, would only disclose private information to curtail the burden of keeping secrets. In fact, they add that adolescents desire to be talked to and are indifferent to the possibility that their parents' devastating silence is coming from long journeys of silence which they experienced while growing up. Whether they are concealing to protect information or revealing for sanity, both sets of participants say keeping secrets is emotionally and psychologically taxing. They say both anticipated and actual fears control communication on topics regarded as private or personal. In CPM, Petronio (2002) acknowledges the role which communication plays on how people protect or share private information.

In her previous submission, Petronio (2000) stated that holding on to private information makes sense if information owners consider that rules around information are guided by the risk of sharing. Given that literature highlights the fact that children bond or communicate better with parents who talk (Merrill et al., 2018), participants say adolescents from communicative family environments keep quiet when topics which they wish to protect and avoid come up during discussions. They fear that the imminent urge for reciprocity may motivates disclosure. Participant clarify that adolescents keep quiet or tell lies to protect topics and protect information owners from becoming vulnerable to message recipients or from exposing both owners and recipients. In fact, during interviews, the researcher experienced the application of these boundaries, when apart from the YA who explained

how he lost his virginity, no YA participant spoke about their personal experiences related to sexual intercourse. However, many YAs were quick to talk about others. Like South African adolescents, who participants say would share if parents either share or ask them to share, PoAs say they only share if their adolescents ask to know. This feedback confirms Simon and Elegbe's (2023) stance that South African parents are reactive as they parent to cope and to shield their children from socio-economic fragments of apartheid much more than focusing on talking.

By the participants' accounts, it can be concluded that parents of younger adolescents are respecting adolescents' boundaries much more than those of older adolescents. This distinction results from the fact that as parents start to disclose to adolescents, they expect adolescents to reciprocate. Unfortunately for parents, their timing coincides with when older children start to look after their identities through the content of conversations as Anderson et al., (2011) explain. The research participants report that adolescents have formed boundaries in response to parents' boundaries and are co-creating and preserving paths to their new identities alongside their siblings and peers. On their parts, PoAs have lessened boundaries. They anticipate to prepare adolescents for adulthood by revealing information. The impact is that parents in African families with adolescents in South Africa are aware of the role they play in building adolescents' identities. Such awareness is clear when single fathers who struggle with communicating emotions say they are preparing their adolescent sons to recognise that men 'have emotions' that can influence their wellbeing. These fathers discourage classroom-like or one-way scripted talks. Fathers who are open to general communication, are pertinent to this research in that once fathers address uncomfortable topics, there is hope that more communication will take place. Also, fathers' presence debunks the gender sensitivity projected in discussions above on rule management.

A third finding is on the content of sex and sexuality communication. At the slightest sign of puberty, every South African adolescent has been warned against pregnancy, yet, almost all female participants were adolescent parents. The study participants reveal that the many warnings and threats they receive focus on the consequences of pregnancies rather than explanations on how not to get pregnant. They say leaving no room for adolescents to make inquiries, creates communication boundaries that have left many adolescents learning from mistakes of actual pregnancies in environments where talks on abortion are not tolerated. Abortion is only mentioned when adolescents are threatened or warned not to fall pregnant.

They are told that if they do get pregnant, abortion is not an option. Two things from this study's data may explain the many adolescent mothers in the sample: talks give no clarity on how exactly pregnancies come about, and abortion is not an option. The rampant cases of pregnancies in this study's sample leaves the researcher wondering why so many parents in African homes in South Africa wait to introduce preventatives and contraceptives when their adolescents already know much and are possibly practicing sex. This thought led the researcher to add the late introduction of preventatives and contraceptives as a third reason for the surge in adolescent pregnancies. Participants' revealed attention to contraceptives in favour of preventatives correlates findings in the Western Cape by Bray et al. (2010) that South African parents fear diseases more than pregnancies. Interestingly, the increased use of preventatives by YAs when they were adolescents indicates that South African adolescents are equally beginning to fear sexually transmitted diseases. In this research, the outcome that PoAs fear diseases for their adolescents more than they do pregnancies may validate why they say parents would in fact not throw out adolescents who fall pregnant before marriage or before financial independence as per their threats.

One of the targeted messages to adolescents via a one-way communication is that rape and sexual violence occur when sex is involuntary. This is correct, except that such talks many limit the definition of rape to the penis penetrating the vagina. They ignore other methods like the use of fingers and sex toys, or penetrating mouths and anuses. Many PoAs who have only been prompted to talk rape and sexual violence due to a family member's involvement, either as a victim or as a perpetrator, tell adolescents that rape occurs outside families' homes. They do not alert adolescents that they can be raped in their homes by friends and relatives. Parents, particularly mothers who talk, call on their daughters to report rape in exchange for psychological and emotional support while fathers tell boys that rape is punishable by law. Parents who participated in this research prioritise the well-being of their adolescents, and every other person with whom their adolescents are involved, in case of rape.

Only one out of all 40 participants specified that he has had penetrative sex, while others spoke generally on sex and pregnancy. Apart from those were caught, no one has masturbated. None of them has raped or been a victim of rape. This feedback is critical to this research as it highlights what, why, and how people talk. For instance, some YAs complained that parents used coded words when talking to them. Ironically, they too used

the same system in conversations with the researcher on claims that real words can be harsh. Coded terminologies, according to YAs (for example when parents tell adolescents, 'Don't talk about boys,' and boundaries where parents ask if these same adolescents have lovers), is what leads adolescents to keep private. But they say such confusing and misleading messaging subsequently lead to high rates of adolescent pregnancies mentioned above where adolescents easily misinterpreted inappropriate warnings and threats. The researcher found that discomfort was more on talking in context than on particular topics. For instance, participants were dismissive, indirect or abstract on sex and pregnancy. This means that participants would not talk about identifying as lesbians or having been pregnant, although in the course of the conversations, they explained their escapades on diverse sexualities, masturbation, pregnancies and others. Children heading homes say they address these topics, especially if they are brought up or if siblings' bodies respond. This research projects that whether subtle or not, how parents manoeuvre new and existing communication boundaries do hint on how their adolescents trust them, and has influence on how their adolescents communicate.

The findings of this study contradict claims that sex and sexuality communication in African families in South Africa do not cover sexual pleasures (Tolla et al., 2018). The new generation of PoAs are introducing feelings to their sex conversation that their parents never shared with them. They are sharing important knowledge with their adolescents on why and how their body parts respond in certain ways. They say in explaining concepts like erection, they find time to tell their adolescent boys that sexual arousal may be provoked by feelings. Following their calls, Tolla et al. (2018) and Santa Maria et al. (2014) will be pleased that this research includes how participants speak about feelings, use of contraceptives and preventatives, body development, emotional development, diverse sexuality, dating tips including partner choice, penetrative sex, masturbation, pregnancy, abortion, body respect, consent, sexual arousal, ejaculation, body image issues, physical appearance, sexual values, sexual beliefs and sexual behaviours. Africans in South Africans are found to be fluent more in communicating menstruation and abstinence than any other topic. Erection, pregnancy, ejaculation, contraceptives, preventatives and abortion are the least spoken about. Sexual orientations, penetrative sex, rape and sexual violence are only spoken about because they have, or are suspected to have occurred within other family. Masturbation is only spoken about because people are caught in action. Hence, pregnancy, rape and abstinence were more discussed than abortion, masturbation, and ejaculation. Family communication on sexuality

is more sensitive than on sex. Sensitivity is more on sexuality, ejaculation and masturbation than any other topics referred to in the content on sex and sexuality communication in chapter four. Masturbation is a taboo to the point where participants articulated both verbal and none-verbal reactions when responding on the topic. PoAs and YAs alike mostly used coded words and phrases, including on penetrative sex, pregnancy and abortion, when they spoke as the researcher will share when discussing limitations to this study.

Adolescents who project parents as too stringent, too detached, too traditional, too strict and over-protective in implementing the inescapable rules continue to 'respect' family disclosure rules. Respect is put in inverted commas because the same adolescents have been reported as much more explicit in sex and sexuality communication with their parents than their parents desired. The importance of coordinating boundaries that guide family information has been addressed while indicating that parents-adolescents communication is governed by trust. How people communicate influences how they are perceived. This study found that adolescents' understanding and communication of forming identities lean on learned and shared values, beliefs norms and behaviours from within nuclear and extended families, as well as from others like friends, schools and media. CPM's explanation of how boundaries slide open or close to varying degrees, depending on the rule management criteria, made sense during these discussions. PoAs in this study say they have lesser communication boundaries on sex and sexuality than did their own parents. Their adolescents are more flexible in communicating sex and sexuality than them. Although participants say parents determine boundaries while PoAs say their adolescents respect boundaries, family members all have boundaries. Disrespecting someone's boundaries leads to turbulence.

Boundary turbulence

The study's data has more information on boundaries turbulence than anticipated in the sense that the researcher thought, due to the many rules and various boundaries on communicating sex and sexuality in African families, there will be little turbulence. However, the many communication rules mean many boundaries to coordinate which increases possibilities to break both rules and boundaries. Petronio (2002) theorises that conflicting expectations with information owners do lead to real or anticipated turbulence within families. Additionally, revealing information to anyone is risky, and leaves those who reveal to feel "embarrassed, uncomfortable and somehow exposed" (Petronio, 2000; 2002). This study's data has

confirmed all these. From the above discussions, parents of adolescents have to understand that not giving adolescents the opportunity to talk may leave adolescents thinking that their parents are not ready to listen to their private sex lives. Talking with each other is why CPM positions disclosing private information as often easy when communication is reciprocal and when the listener's attitude is encouraging (Petronio, 2002).

This study's data reveal that African adolescents in South Africa and their parents experience a variety of tensions and even conflicts that challenge their individual and family norms as adolescents assert their identities. PoAs say at adolescence distrust, unclear and confusing messages on existing rules boundaries, inexplicit communication of existing and changing rules, all coerce adolescents to be private and make PoAs pry. Basically, the research participants explain that, first, turbulence occurs when adolescents who are instructed not to talk about sex and sexuality within families may cease to disclose any sex-related occurrence. This means that when such adolescents' parents ask them if they have boyfriends, for example, they interpret their parents' question as seeking to break their privacy management agreements. The adolescents remain silent, tell lies, or avoid the topic. Participants say adolescents whose privacies have been violated before or who have watched others, often older siblings, being violated, would rather suffer the consequence of lying or of silence, than face the impact of their parents knowing the truth. They say adolescents who are silent or who tell lies have in the past felt violated when the information they shared reached unintended recipients. Some adolescents are violating by sharing information about family members not intended for others. By saying adolescents often find themselves in positions of 'to tell or not to tell' due to past experiences, the participants are reacting to Petronio's stance that gossip and betrayal affect how people trust each other with information deemed private (Petronio, 2002). Participants say African adolescents are aware that although lies and silence may evade turbulence, they mostly exacerbate turbulence when the truth comes out. Thus, adolescents who suspect that the truth may eventually come out, tell lies or keep quiet to adjust, or delay the time of revelation. Participants say when parents later find out what adolescents were concealing, some resort to beating while others forgive.

Children do not want to be judged, or punished. Although PoAs and YAs say by adolescence, South African children are mature, educated, independent and ready to maintain their statuses as they search freedom, they add that adolescents do not talk because they are respectful. In reality, these adolescents are silent, avoid topics or tell lies because they fear

they might get into trouble for telling the truth. This means that adolescents' fears arose from how their parents have managed disclosure in the past. African PoAs are therefore urged to be aware that whether subtle or not, existing rule boundaries which they put in place may influence how their adolescents disclose for a long time.

Second, the unique living environments in African families in South Africa and parents' curiosity to adolescents' lies, topic avoidance or silence, mean communication rules are easily broken through information leakage, unsolicited disclosure, or disrespect. Participants report some PoAs who snoop by, for instance, intentionally reading from adolescents' journals. Others seek to validate truths which their adolescents told them about their sexual lives from adolescents' lovers. Yet, others beat their adolescents to make them disclose information which they are holding back. Such parents have aligned themselves with research that says instead of staying away, PoAs seek their adolescents' secrets (Dietvorst et al., 2017). Such are parents who feel that they have always either owned or co-owned their children's spaces and information (Hawk et al., 2009). Finding out that adolescents are keeping secrets have caused hurt to African PoAs to the point where some report changing living environments in efforts to mend turbulent relationships caused because their adolescents disclosed to individuals outside family boundaries. PoAs whose adolescents conceal from them say they are disappointed. They said when they violate their adolescents, they become hurt and bitter. Their adolescents also become distrustful. They clarified that families with intrusive parents breed defensive and uncomfortable adolescents.

This research seeks to encourage family discussions that are prompted by all parties alike, since silence has devastating implications on families and family research; especially if children are the silent ones. The aim of this research seemed to be a high but doable one as PoAs reported their continuous struggle to weaken their grip on adolescents at a stage when adolescents' quest for autonomy peaks. They are aware that healthy communication rules need consistent negotiation. By this age, YAs say adolescents have learnt about the power of disclosure from parents although PoAs say adolescents learnt from peers and the media. They might have learnt from all parties because the research participants highlight African adolescents in South Africa who are asserting how important trust is to them in how they communicate private information with their parents and adult caregivers. Their fear for trouble, harmonises with impending boundaries turbulence which CPM says could occur once information co-owners do not treat people's information as private (Petronio, 2002). In

this researcher's opinion it is important that, whether leaked or deliberately acquired, family members know how to manage information that was not originally theirs. This means that if private information on sex and sexuality goes out accidentally, for instance, such information is used to share knowledge, encourage open communication, improve attitudes and narrow privacy boundaries, not to punish the original owner. In so doing, communication will be about parents teaching their adolescents through lessons which they have acquired. Teachings will start early enough to progress with content as adolescents develop.

In conclusion, managing information by defining and setting privacy rules and boundaries while simultaneously adhering to others' privacy rules and boundaries can be challenging. This is so because there comes a time when everyone, including adolescents, desire to control information which they consider private or personal. Boundary turbulence which is not necessarily disruptive, is obvious in families where there is free flow of communication and not so in families where people do not talk. In every case, the researcher found that with active advice, the future of sex and sexuality communication in African families in South Africa may be influenced by balances in the above rules, boundaries and turbulence.

Advice to parents and adolescents

Responding to the call for advice to members of African families with adolescents, participants say physical, emotional, social or psychological changes experienced at adolescence means that children are forming their sexual identities. This research found that interactions with parents, siblings and other family members mean that adolescents share family values, beliefs, principles, norms and other attributes. When talking about sex and sexuality, family members say adolescents and adult caregivers all communicate anxiety, embarrassment, anger, fear, abandonment, concern and/or guilt. They also communicate needs for comfort, security and exploration in hopes that positive and supportive relationships between parents and adolescents may mean effective communication. It is therefore important, participants say, for PoAs to understand that speaking to adolescents on sex and sexuality means recognising that they can have sex and can have sex with specific individuals. Consequently, in cases where parents are open to sharing their own experiences, participants think adolescents both learn and talk better. This researcher found that when current PoAs were adolescents, many topics about sex and sexuality were considered a taboo so much such that they relied on sources outside family settings for information that often

misguided and confused them. But participants affirm that this did not stop them at adolescence from becoming sexually active. Similarly, PoAs say they give their adolescents instructions to abstain from sex, yet external pressures from peers and the media have their adolescents expressing open sexualities.

Participants caution that adolescents are sexual beings who are also exposed to sex. As such, they say PoAs have to positively influence adolescents' communication on sex and sexuality, but also nurture them on privacy management. The best way, participants recommend, is for PoAs to unlearn current rules and barriers and for adolescents to learn to communicate what they know and feel with their parents. Two points were noted in the unrelenting call for parents to give adolescents chances to be sexually expressive:

1) The first is the need for PoAs to use figures projecting sexually transmissible diseases and infections, as well as adolescence pregnancies as motivation for open two-ways communication with adolescents.

2) The second is the presence of the devastating silence on both talking and acknowledging different sexualities in a country where adolescents are identifying as gay, lesbian, or others. Parents need to minimise losing children to mental illnesses caused because of rejection and prosecution. The implication of these CPM guided qualitative findings further suggests that communication within the family is in fact communication of identities. It also implies that although adolescent children may have boundaries, they cannot claim autonomy of personal identities as adult caregivers have always controlled what content adolescents are exposed to and how they disseminate information.

Saying children are seen, not heard, means children could not disclose and they could not be disclosed to. This finding is of a huge implication to this research where in some families, adolescents speak more to siblings and peers and are turning to the Internet. This researcher echoes theparticipants' worry that silence and delayed communication are signs to deny that adolescents are sexual beings. On the realisation that their adolescents want to talk and be listened to, the participants encourage open and positive talks that are void of warnings and threats, but focused on educating adolescents. They urge parents to talk to, and listen to, adolescents whose self-concepts need validation. The quotation below summarises this call and emphasises the shift in family communication on sex and sexuality in African families in South Africa:

> Nevi: ‘Be open. Be open-minded and be open. Educate yourself as a parent and always be close to your child. Know your child. …We are there to guide them on this and this and this. … I just encourage parents to be involved. To be part of these things. To just know what is going on. ... Involve, involve, involve. Be open minded. Communicate. Be open to everything. Sexuality and sex is a big thing in African families that we don’t discuss.’

Unfortunately, for the most part, participants say adolescents hope to avoid both their privacy violations and anticipated turbulence by telling parents what parents wish to hear.

5.2 Implications of findings

5.2.1 Theoretical implications

CPM is an exemplary theory for this research, although it is not without challenges. The researcher hopes that this study will help in the formulation of this theory to suit the African reality, where family members interact whether they are close to each other or not. In the case of this research, the researcher wishes that CPM’s rule management would account for how family members manage the emotional or intellectual gap that comes with separation and lack of bonding through communication. Also, the various suggestions from CPM on how to handle information leak and violations should consider the different definitions of privacy management in South Africa where in most African families, parents and their adolescents hardly own private spaces. For those who have their own spaces, not considering adolescents in particular as sexual beings, means adolescents cannot have their own private sex-related information. This means that even though CPM is a great theory for this study, its attention to privacy management does not account for the definition of privacy in the African context where family members share spaces with different people at different times. It will also be good if CPM defines privacy guidelines such that family members who do not share the same living environments both conduct and view privacy management in the same light when they face gaps in distances.

The rule criteria presented by the theory does not cover all aspects of what influences disclosure. This may include other factors influencing sex and sexuality communication in African contexts like access to health care that are not related to communication. I suggest a ‘personality’ motivation that accounts for inherent characteristics on disclosure, considering

that there are introverts who may not disclose because of their nature, not because they are adhering to any of the disclosure-concealment terms of the theory.

CPM acknowledges that even in disclosure within families, members also do select who they disclose to and who they withhold from. This study's data proves this to be true, linking to all CPM's five rules management criteria. Because family relationships are built on emotions, such selection in disclosure could lead individuals to feel rejection or discrimination, thus creating tension. Such behaviour and its impact could be seen as a consequence of privacy that could have a serious bearing on this research in that the act of withdrawal affects identity communication.

The risk associated with family members' disclosure of information to each other has led researchers like Schmeeckle and Sprecher (2004) to confirm that family members who disclose hoping for support may end up getting none. Looking at Petronio's explanation of different levels of confidants within the same family, it can be argued that participants in Schmeeckle and Sprecher's (2004) research possibly disclosed to the wrong family members. But if that is so, Schmeeckle and Sprecher noted and criticised CPM by stating that it does not focus on how family members would react after revelation by another. Additionally, an affiliated shortfall is that CPM does not address how the power struggle that may appear (visible or not) within families during communication like between fathers and adolescents in this research, might influence openness and closedness.

Family members are likely to disclose because of the proximity with each other. Look at siblings for instance, sharing private information with each other because a sibling was perhaps the only one present at the time they had the urge to speak out. Although it is important to practice disclosure, CPM does not cover the consequences of non-disclosure. It treats all disclosures as equal, which might not be the case. It does not indicate at what age or stage people should let others know their privacy and when to let private lives stay confidential. In instances where parents disclose their past in a bid to teach their adolescents, or to gain their adolescents' trust for example, this act of disclosure might steal the limelight from adolescents who may feel like such disclosure changes the focus of communication from them to their parents. Because disclosure is emotional, this thought may discourage adolescents from talking further in the future and may encourage them to listen rather than talking.

The CPM theory is certain that control over deciding whether or not to disclose relies on the owner of the information. This statement is true of family communication and has added to the strength of this research as indicated above. But its limitation that could affect the outcome of this research and that is entirely true of adolescents is that children do give incorrect judgements to boundaries. This is because CPM's core concepts of managing privacy and disclosure is challenged by some cultural and religious understandings unique to Africa that are not easily understood by children as seen in their complaints that adolescents get told to perform certain rites although they do not understand the impact of the rites.

Given that identity communication is necessary, trust becomes another important concept for this CPM guided research. CPM gives out guidelines on how to handle trust. In this study, adolescents and parents have demonstrated that they disclose more if they trust each other. The question is that; how do they develop and maintain trust in an African context where in most families, cultures simultaneously validate keeping family secrets and gossiping? Except for those families where communication does not take place, tolerance to gossiping may challenge disclosure rules as foreseen by Cohen et al. (1999). A variety of family forms means evident variety of cultures. This means that secrets and gossip would have different connotations in different families. Leti and other participants termed gossip 'betrayal.' This view impacts this research in that these participants feel judged or they are judging others. Hence, further research should discuss how members in African families with adolescents address boundary turbulence collaboratively; how they communicate what happens, why it happens, how to prevent future violations, re-negotiated boundaries, reinstate trust and re-establish open discussion and their preparedness to correct earlier promises.

In her recent work, Petronio (2018) does well to concentrate on families. She cautions adult caregivers to train children on family's privacy rules boundaries in anticipation of effective privacy management. But researchers have noted that boundaries remain ambiguous and confusing to family members on who to talk to and who to leave out (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). This is completely true if you reflect on the first limitation above. The researcher has presented examples of confusion on deciphering who is 'mother' and who is 'grandmother' in this research data, where participants noted grandparents acting as parents although parents live in the same settings. Adolescents in these settings are confused on

whether to disclose to grandparents or to parents. When these adolescents disclose to grandparents, the disclosures do not take the same form as when they disclose to biological parents. Likewise, boundary management is not easy where children may misunderstand messages because they are not clearly communicated.

Finally, Petronio's warnings on boundaries turbulence does not clarify how turbulence can be dealt with by adults if children encounter the dilemma to talk with insights on topics which they are not supposed to speak on, like captured here:

> Nevi: 'My parents were people of their time and children were heard but not seen or seen and not heard. So, unless you're bleeding and you're about to die, you will shut up. … You're not really encouraged to be talking back because that's talking back. So, you'd say when you get asked. If they don't need your opinion, you don't volunteer it. It wasn't like it's cold and you can't speak you know. You could speak. It's like; I would not say it was like a prison or jail camp or something like that. It was just that when mom and dad spoke that was mom and dad to speak. So, if you know what's good for you, you allow mom and dad to speak, and you do as they want.'

If we ignore the limitations, CPM is the best theory for this study. It provided a window into communication privacy dynamics on sex and sexuality by allowing this research to move beyond focus on individuals and dyads to relationship dynamics that bear within family systems. Using CPM, this study has shown that in African families in South Africa, openness and closedness in communicating sexual identities may be significantly more important than non-dialectical tensions in relational development. This researcher hopes for new theoretical insights that re-imagine relational disclosure practices as parents and adolescents talk on sex and sexuality. For example, it would help if CPM includes religion. Especially for application to African context where culture and religion are cohabiting. I join Tamale (2011) to call on CPM and other theories to be adopted and adapted to African studies because in Tamale's words, many contemporary codes of sexual morality and some laws relating to sex in books of post-colonial countries link to the history and tradition of Africa's former colonising European nations.

5.2.2 Research Implications

In the literature chapter, the researcher mentioned that one of the challenges for researchers is to understand family members' communication of sex and sexuality. Family members often mutually influence each other through the choice of words used to describe people, places, events and things. But the already noted impact of silence to sex and sexuality communication does impact this research in that the researcher lacks what to report on in topics like masturbation and sexual orientation which make up sexual expressions.

Regarding communication on sex and sexuality as a taboo, the concept of 'to tell or not to tell' on matters of sex and sexuality to adolescents and the dilemma of concealing and disclosing is better explained by rules development and boundaries management. Parents in African families in South Africa may learn from this research how such talks, specifically on the biological aspects, expand adolescents' capacity to explore their sexuality actively and confidently. On their parts, adolescents have to trust their parents and communicate genuinely with them. Strategies that facilitated limited communication like telling lies, avoiding topics, being silent or busy have served to promote not telling much more than telling. This research proves that not telling may leave adolescents unexposed to the information and skills necessary to manage their sexual selves effectively. It may affect how parents support adolescents in communicating their real sexualities. When PoAs are cautioned to "talk to your kids with whatever that is considered dangerous before it's too late," Ovis and adolescents are told to listen to learn without being "afraid to ask about sex and know the consequences of sex and their decisions".

An implication of the content of sex and sexuality communication is that when this research started, the researcher thought that current-day parents do explain in detail what sex means and that in their talks, sexuality was just another topic. The researcher thought, alongside PoAs, that YAs completely avoided using coded words, or phrases that are unclear. However, the researcher was surprised to find the reverse. Although all participants voluntarily agreed to be interviewed, almost all of them were not comfortable using appropriate terminologies during the conversations. Some giggled or dropped their tones when they pronounced words in context, insinuating discomfort. The research participants enhanced Lesch and Anthony's (2007) narrative that Africans in South Africa avoid communication on sexual identity because they often lack the vocabulary to express their

sexual selves. In this line, this research partially disagrees with prior findings that sexually-related terms that were previously omitted are now included in family conversations on sex and sexuality (Koilybayeva et al., 2022).

Choice of words are important in interpreting research, but not so in the case of this study where the participants' choices of words mostly left the researcher guessing what exactly they meant. Inferences can be made that guessing is likely to be how family sex and sexuality conversations leave family members in African families in South Africa. Perhaps it could be helpful to share a few such words alongside the study's assumed meanings;

'Blood,' means menses.

'Do,' 'sleep,' 'play with,' 'touch,' 'do it,' 'play,' 'it' and 'do things,' may refer to both voluntary and involuntary sex.

'Stuff,' and 'things,' mean penis.

'Private part,' means penis or vulva.

'That,' means rape, masturbation, or sex.

'Woman,' means adolescence.

Some vague and obscured phrases;

'Do that,' means date, sex, rape, masturbation, or kiss.

'This feeling,' means erection.

'Money for cash,' means prostitution.

'Those kinds of things,' mean any activities related to sex and sexuality.

'Went out,' means go on a date.

'Run away,' means refuse sex.

'Able to have kids,' means pregnant or impregnate.

'Strong enough to understand,' means emotional maturity, or old enough.

'Not going that far,' means detailed conversation.

'Not to sleep around,' abstain.

These words and phrases have both literal and concealed meanings that may either not make sense, or be misconstrued. But they all refer to how adolescents either behave, feel, may be treated, can respond to, or should treat others. Many participants say they understood these terms later when they have experienced or noticed others experience, from words of mouths, or from schools. This researcher thinks that for adolescents who are initially exposed to sex in schools, the media, peers, or English language, this confusion or misunderstanding may mean they are unable to reconcile the challenges of their environment with the expectations

that parents and family members have for their developing identities. It means that this may fracture adolescents' efforts to link cultural values and modern ways. Hence, their vulnerability to risky behaviours.

Few participants used penis and sex, including full sentences like 'let no one touch your penis,' contextually. Even those who complained that their parents used coded words, when they were adolescents, similarly used coded words when talking to the researcher. Discussions plus phrases where boys are told that by adolescence, their penis will 'start realising things' when informing them of impending erection are the reason for which the category talking to clarify in chapter four made sense. This is more so, in research dealing with adolescents who are at the stage where they begin to understand how appearances and behaviours get interpreted. Focus on body development, emotional development, physical appearance, diverse sexuality, contraceptives, dating tips, including partner choices, are highlighted by participants.

The impact of using coded language when talking to the researcher on sex and sexuality communication is hinted in the literature chapter. The participants have proven that family members' misunderstanding and confusion on using sex related terminology is unhealthy for research in that participants may report incorrect or confused content. Incorrect feedback may lead to incorrect research outcomes.

Sexual orientation is one of the least discussed topics that cannot entirely be escaped in research on how sex and sexuality is communicated with adolescents because body development introduces the idea of attraction to adolescents who start understanding their emotions. First, during the conversations, the researcher noticed that many participants, especially PoAs could hardly differentiate between sex and sexuality. For example, when responding if they do talk on sexual orientations as a family, many PoAs said yes, they have hinted their children not to have lovers. The researcher found themself redefining sexual orientation many times than expected. This lack of understanding could be why many PoAs say they dodge questions from their adolescents on sexuality while those who understand, denounce homosexuality saying no one in their families is homosexual. It is worth mentioning research which states that how parents communicate gender expectations affect how their adolescents conceptualise gender and gender roles (Nedombeloni & Oyedemi, 2014). The researcher also reminds parents in African families in South Africa that research

situates gender to be more influential to how people behave socially than sex is (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). The above is cited at this stage to explain how homosexual YAs in this research have kept their sexuality secret for fear of rejection, but mostly of prosecution. Keeping silent does skew both data and content of the research.

Finally, of the 40 participants interviewed. There were only five fathers of adolescents and only six male YAs. It has been mentioned above that the implication of fewer men in this research sample reflects both the absence of fathers in raising children and fathers' little communication on sex and sexuality with adolescents. Hopefully, fathers and males will step forward for future research on families in South Africa. This researcher also calls on researchers to exercise more patience in recruiting men who, from this study's experience, struggle with time.

5.3 Potential application of findings

The findings in this study do contribute greatly to the literature on family sex and sexuality communication. One of the greatest strengths of this study is the potential tool which its findings provide for members of families with adolescents on communicating sex and sexuality. Definitely, PoAs and adolescents can learn from the reflections of the participants and from their advice. In fact, this researcher desires that these findings provide much needed resources for parents wanting to create positive familial identity for themselves, but precisely for their adolescent children. The researcher argues four ways in which their findings should be applied.

One, the information provided by participants on their knowledge and experiences will be very useful to groups of PoAs and to adolescents or other family members with whom adolescents and their parents interact for daily conversations or for advice on sex and sexuality. Suggestions from the participants on how to communicate the various content broken down in chapter four may be valuable to PoAs and their adolescents. Knowledge of how to communicate these contents might enhance both their wellbeing and parents-adolescents' relationships and add to why they should observe the types of rules that govern such communications. Knowing how pleasant or not it has been when rules are implemented means that parents and adolescents may focus on the benefits of having rules and therefore willingly instill positive and beneficial aspects that enhance and maintain individual and

family identities regardless of external pressures intended to subdue their willingness to evolve. Given that this researcher is an involved parenting activist, one of their goals is to collaborate with individual families, learning institutions, governments, non-governmental organizations, media and perhaps policymakers, to not only give out advice on how parents and adolescents can successfully communicate sex and sexuality, but to also interpret the theoretical concepts and findings from this study. This researcher will do so by writing books on the subject matter. Books will leave lasting references for generations to learn how the chosen theory for this study can be implemented to successfully guide sex and sexuality communication in family settings within African contexts. Emulating scholars like Brashear (2011), the researcher intends to create a website with the same information to make the findings of this study easily and widely assessable.

Two, the researcher believes that the findings should be applied to reposition cultural discourses and religious guidelines on how sex and sexuality communication take place in African homes in South Africa. Chapter 4 outlined the discomfort which every family member, even those who attempt to open talks on these topics encounter within their family settings. For example, it is stated that although fathers would speak, not one participant reported their father as completely open to talking on sex and sexuality with their adolescent children. If the case of silent fathers has to be considered, it is important that parents of adolescents understand, and in turn share with their adolescents how developing rules on sex and sexuality helps to manage family communication on the same topic. Family members, particularly fathers who do not talk to children because of existing rules, have to understand that the CPM rules are flexible for the purpose of managing the concealing and revealing of information; thus, permitting fathers not to be completely silent when it comes to talking issues of sex and sexuality with children. Fathers are, and will remain figures of authorities in families. That is why adolescents whose fathers are involved in family sex and sexuality communication have been portrayed in the literature of this research as engaging in less risky sex.

Third, professionals on family communication, but specifically on sex and sexuality communication need to find ways to overlook the beliefs that talking on this subject is a taboo. One such ways is for teachers in schools and churches to encourage children that it is ok to talk with parents and trusted adult caregivers on these subjects. This is not an impossible call to make in South Africa where public schools do offer comprehensive

sexuality education from grade four; a stage when most children enter puberty. Because the curriculum does not facilitate communication in family settings, it is imperative to encourage both private and public schools of the importance of emphasising such talks in family settings. This researcher will encourage parent bodies to find ways to incorporate discourses on the importance of sex and sexuality communication in their parents' sessions. This will not be challenging for this researcher given that they are already giving radio and television interviews as well as delivering talks to parents' bodies on various topics that encourage involved parenting. They have also written both newspaper and conference papers on the subject.

Lastly, PoAs and adolescents in African families in South Africa need the encouragement of research to enhance how they talk sex and sexuality in family settings. This researcher will actively encourage younger scholars and projects-based researchers to use the findings of this study as a starting point for larger studies that may provide initial suggestions for race-specific sexual health projects and programmes exploring who parents of adolescent children and adolescents communicate their sexual identity with, why they communicate their sexual identities with specific individuals and how they react to people's response to their communicated identities. One important point is that this research found the role of electronic devices in sex and sexuality communication to be prominent in how boundaries are managed and how turbulence is reported in African families with adolescents. Reports of available content online and mention of adolescents' addiction to pornography, means this researcher recommends adults, parents, caregivers, teachers, policymakers, governments, non-governmental organisations, media and many more organs to help educate adolescents on the usage of devices. Importantly, such organs should empower PoAs on how to expose adolescents to devices and to help adolescents manage their devices' usage when it comes to both voluntary and accidental exposure to sexual content.

5.4 Limitations and future directions

This study yields new and interesting results on how African parents of adolescents and adolescents in South Africa approach communication about sex and sexuality and how they navigate openness and closedness. This study's findings should be used to inform larger studies, as well as to provide initial suggestions for family-specific sex and sexual health programmes. While interpreting the results of this study, the researcher found three

limitations. First, a study on adolescents will make more sense if the voices of adolescents are captured. This study was initially conceived to interview adolescents. It anticipated to interview them in learning environments with permission from authorities. However, the advent of Covid-19 and the closure of schools at the time of study design defaulted that young adults be interviewed telephonically to talk in retrospect of when they were adolescents. This limited the capacity of this study to capture adolescents' knowledge and experiences in real time.

Second, recruiting YAs for this study was more challenging than it was to recruit PoAs. Many of them declined after receiving the confirmation documents. It was found that YAs (even those referred by their parents), although they are at the stage where they should be autonomous in decision-making, when they declined to participate, almost all of them said their mother or father is against them participating in research on the topics of sex and sexuality, because they were not yet sexually active, or because they have no experience to share. Similarly, the few PoAs who declined to participate and even some who accepted, notified the researcher that their adolescents were not yet sexually active and as such, they had no contribution to make to this study. The researcher got such responses even though they mentioned that they are not talking about sexual encounters or personal sex exposures and experiences. Nevertheless, the researcher noticed that the title of the research mentions sex and sexuality, which in itself is limited in the African groupings in South Africa, as far as talking in concerned.

Third, data to this qualitative study was conducted telephonically. Although the study surpassed its saturation, it is hardly representative of the African population in South Africa. Telephonic data collection included selected individuals who owned mobile phones and could speak English. This is a limitation as the result could vary in a face-to-face collection method and if participants speak their languages of choice. In addition, the perception that sex and sexuality are sensitive and/or difficult topics leaves the researcher thinking that participants might have withheld some details that would have been empowering to this research especially because pronouncing certain words made them uncomfortable. Not seeing participants' body language was a downside to these telephonic interviews as well. But the researcher is confident of having gained more insights during these interviews than it would have been the case in face-to-face interviews, in that talking to on the telephone means that participants breached certain barriers by the social undesirability of the topics.

For example, they might have found comfort in that their body languages could not be seen. The researcher did not struggle with confidentiality and informed consent as much as with the sensitivity of the topic. Still on methodology, this researcher recommends that researchers, perhaps, develop standardised measures of communication as research instruments that could be integrated in qualitative approaches.

In addition to responding to the limitations of this study, the researcher suggests four directions for future researchers examining sex and sexuality communication in African families with adolescents. The first recommendation is to highlight the fact that research on sex and sexuality communication in African families in South Africa is still limited and possibly unpublished, making it difficult for researcher to have rich data on subjects under research. Such scarcity necessitates race-specific data that inform sexual health communication. Although race was deliberately considered in this research, it is likely that race-free research may give different results. Furthermore, such recommended research can be on, or be followed by longitudinal designs that examine how parents-adolescents sex and sexuality communication vary over time.

Second, the researcher observed that most research on sex and sexuality communication in African families in South Africa are on the negative aspects like what is not said and what is said wrongly. Negativity is one of the challenges for solution seekers in that although they may easily be aided by research on what is not right, researchers are not highlighting what is right. What is right may encourage people to mimic. The researcher, therefore, recommends research on sex and sexuality in African families in South Africa with adolescents that focus on positive aspects like frequency of good, open-minded, non-judgmental, and smooth communication. This will mean paying attention to normalising content and context of sex talks as well. This means shifting languages in family settings to suit current day vocabulary.

Third, sexuality is key to this research. Given the lack of literature on sexual orientation as part of parents-adolescents communication about sex and sexuality, further research is recommended. Both in studies and this study's data, the researcher found that heterosexual orientation is still projected as the norm. Motivated by the findings, the researcher asks how parents-adolescents communication about sex and sexuality might differ or remain similar if one of the homosexual YA participants' parents or caregivers had known their sexual

orientation. Research is needed on how parents-adolescents communication about sex and sexuality may be impacted by the sexual orientation of parents, but mostly adolescents who are expressing their fluid selves. In fact, based on this study's outcome, the researcher recommends research on how same-sex parents communicate sex and sexuality with their adolescents and how this communication reflects on their adolescents' own communication of self. Research should find out if there are unique experiences and challenges not encountered in heterosexual families like those in this study's data. Such studies will inform the case of the YA in this study whose grandfather teased her on presenting masculine features. She never confirmed that she was lesbian. Off-record, she told the researcher how she consistently invited male friends to their house. She said she presented a particular male to her mother as her boyfriend, meanwhile her female lover was presented as her best friend. Even as a young adult, she still maintains this storyline. This participant is particularly concerned about openness in expressing sexuality that is not acceptable both to her family and her community. It is important that research tells how this affects her future.

Finally, for adolescents' voices to be unswerving, interviews should be conducted with adolescents. Interviewing YAs to speak in retrospect like this study did, means that subjects who spoke in the past and present were interviewed, which is a very rich addition to the scholarly works. But their realities at adolescence might have been blurred by the passage of time. The researcher previously recommended that interviewing adolescents on the current experiences means that data is current, fresh, and connects the subject to time, and space in their contexts. Conducting research with minors means researchers have to do so in specific settings after receiving informed consent from their guardians. This is a method which this researcher is familiar with as reflected in their previous research (Mbong Shu, 2014). Unfortunately, conceptualising and designing this study during the national lockdown when the researcher was not sure of human interaction laws by the time of data collection made this study settle on young adults because they could both sign consent for themselves, and talk on the telephones with unguided.

As this thesis concludes, the key recommendations are aimed at providing the groundwork for developing policies and educational materials that can better support African families with adolescents in communicating sexual identities. The recommendations do not overlook the fact that general communication with adolescents is uncomfortable. The researcher, therefore, recommends that parents and adult caregivers note this of adolescents, and of

themselves, one of the research participants' words are used to remind parents that "If you only give your children … the outside of your hand and hide others in the palm of your hands, they gonna decide how they wanna go about it and it might not be the right way of going about it", Ria. This quotation summarises that by staying away from sex and sexuality communication, parents of adolescents deprive themselves of their own learnings.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Call for Participants: Sex and sexuality communication in African families in South Africa: the dynamics of openness and closedness

Hello, my name is Victorine Mbong Shu and I am a PhD student at the University of the Free State. I am conducting research on **sex and sexuality communication** in South African families. The focus of my research is to find out from parents and young adults how African families talk or don't talk about sex and sexuality.

Please consider to participate in the study if you meet the following criteria:

1) Identify as South African; and

2) Are an African parent of at least one child aged 10 to 19 years; or

3) Are African Young Adult, between the ages of 19 and 25.

4) Own or have access to communication devices (phone, laptop, iPad or computer).

If you would like to participate, please email, WhatsApp or call me to set up a time and place to be interviewed. I will first provide you and other prospective participants with the Research Information Leaflet and obtain your signed consent before I arrange for the interviews. During the interview you will be asked to answer a number of open-ended questions related to your experiences as a member of an African family, and particularly, how your family discusses (or does not discuss) issues of sex and sexuality. Due to the current COVID-19 situations, participants will be invited via Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp and interviews will be conducted via Zoom, Skype or Telephone. The sessions will be recorded but all your responses to the interview questions will be kept confidential and your identity will not be revealed in the analysis and/or reporting of research results. The semi-structured interviews will be conducted in English. Participation in this study will require approximately 30-45 minutes of your time. Your participation is completely voluntary, but you may be given R100.00 data voucher, to assist in the costs of Internet by the researcher. At any time throughout the interview, you may choose not to answer any question(s) and you are free to stop the interview at any time that you do not feel comfortable.

If you are interested, please send me a *Please Call Me* or any text on 0825486385 or an email to mbongshu@yahoo.com

Thank you,

Victorine Mbong Shu,

PhD Student, Communications,

University of the Free State.

Appendix B

Interview Protocol – Parents

Demographic Information:

Female: _____ Male: _____ Other _____ Age: _____ Birth position _____

Cultural group: _____ Highest level of education: _____

Occupation: _____ Marital status: _____

Age at which you had your first child? _____ Length of marriage/relationship: ____

Number of children and their ages: _____ Number of siblings and their ages: _____

Gender of teenager(s)/young adult: _____

Family background:

- Who did you live with between ages 10 and 19 and why?
- Describe your relationship with your parents.
    - What was the most important factor in your relationship?
- How was your relationship with your siblings?
    - Did you enjoy growing up with them between ages 10 and 19? Why or why not?

Childhood family communication:

- How was communication like in your family when you were between ages 10 and 19?
    - How did you interact with your parents, siblings, other adults in your household?
- Did your childhood family talk a lot? Please explain.
    - What rules, explicit or implied, were there about communication in your family?
- What topics (if any) were never discussed in your family and why?

Current family communication:

- How is communication like in your current family?
    - How do you interact with your adolescent children?
- Does your family talk a lot compared to the family you grew up in? Please explain.
    - What obvious or indirect rules are there about communication in your family?
- What topics (if any) are never discussed in your family and why?

Extended family communication:

- How did communication occur with your extended family members like grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins between ages 10 and 19?
- How did culture influence communication within your extended family?
- Explain how religion influenced your extended family communication. Why was it so?

Childhood family conversations about sex/sexuality:

- Describe how your childhood family generally talked about sex and sexuality.
    - When did these conversations begin and who started them?
    - What did you talk about and what topics were off limits if at all?
- How did your childhood family talk about; menstruation and ejaculation, erection and masturbation, sex and sexuality, rape and sexual violence, pregnancies and abortion, etc.?
- How did your family communication (or lack of it) influence your sex life?

Current family conversations about sex/sexuality:

- How exactly were your current family conversations about; menstruation and erection, ejaculation and masturbation, sex, rape and sexual violence, pregnancies and abortion, etc.?
    - Who normally started these conversations?
- How would you say your current family's religion and/or culture influenced the way your family talked about sex and sexuality?
    - What do you wish you told your adolescents about your sex life and your sexuality?

Parent-adolescent conversations about sex/sexuality:

- Please tell me how you discussed sex and sexuality with each of your adolescents.
    - How old were they during the first sex-talk and what was said?
    - Who started the talk and how did they start it?
- Describe how you feel about sex and sexuality communication with your adolescents.
    - How would you describe your adolescents' participation levels in sex talks and why?
    - What topics were off limits if at all, who placed the limits and how did you manage that?

Sexual identity:

- How did conversations with your adolescents about sex and sexuality change as they grew, if at all?
    - How would you say these changes (or the lack of), impact them later in life?
    - How did you respond to your adolescents' questions on sex? Did you enjoy the conversations? Why or why not?
- Describe how these conversations have shaped your adolescent children.
- What do you wish was different about these conversations?
- How similar were your views and your adolescents' views on sexual orientation?
    - If sexual orientation was an issue for debate, what were your family conversations like?
    - How did these views shape your adolescent as a sexual being, if at all?

Privacy:

- How open were your family discussions about sex in particular and how much details did you discuss about your past and other adult members' past with your adolescents?
- How do you think your adolescents would have learnt when to share and when not to share personal information?
    - How do you think that your adolescents determined why or why not to share and with who to share?

Disclosure:

- At what stage do you think that your adolescent decided on what to share and what not to share with you?
    - Tell me how they do it and how did they know what they were supposed to tell or not tell about themself and others?
    - Tell me how you feel when sharing (or keeping) your adolescents' sexual secrets.

Information ownership:

- Do you think that your adolescent feels like their family has a right to know about their sexuality? Why or why not?
    - What did your adolescents share with you, and what did they think was private?
    - Was there a point where you felt uncomfortable about this? Why, why not?
    - What strategies did your adolescents use to keep you out of their private life, if at all? How did you or they feel about that?

- How did you make sure that you keep information about your sexual life from your adolescents?
    - How did you decide to do so? Did you succeed?

Identity ownership/boundaries:

- Explain what you think is the importance of communicating sexual identity within a family.
    - Explain what rights, if any, you have to know about your adolescents' sexuality? That is, describe the boundaries you have, or wish to have with your adolescents regarding sex and sexuality.

Parental experiences:

- What in your parenting do you think influenced your adolescents' sexuality or sexual identity?

Appendix C

Interview Protocol - Young Adults

Demographic Information:

Female: _____ Male: _____ Other _____ Age: _____ Birth position _____

Cultural group: _____ Highest level of education: _____

Occupation: _____ Marital status: _____

Age at which you had your first child? _____ Length of marriage/relationship: ___

Number of children and their ages: _____ Number of siblings and their ages: _____

Gender of teenager(s)/young adult: _____

Family background:

- Who did you live with an adolescent; ages 10 to 18 and why?
- Describe your relationship with your parents at that time.
    - What was the most important factor in your relationship?
- How was your relationship with your siblings?
    - Did you enjoy growing up with them? Why or why not?

Family structure:

- Tell me about the family you grew up in and the family you are in now?
    - How are these two families similar and how are they different?

Family communication:

- How was communication like in your family?
    - How did/do you interact with your parents, siblings, other adults in your household?
    - Did your family talk a lot? Please explain.
    - What rules, explicit or implied, were there about communication in your family?
- What topics (if any) were never discussed in your family and why?

Extended family communication:

- How did communication occur with your extended family members like grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins?
- How did culture influence communication within your extended family?
- Explain how religion influenced your extended family communication. Why was it so?

Conversations about sex/sexuality:

- Please tell me how you discussed sex and sexuality with each parent.
    - How old were you during the first sex-talk and what was said?
    - Who started the talk and how did they start it?
- Describe how your family generally talked about sex and sexuality.
    - When did these conversations begin, what was said?
    - Who did you talk to and what topics were off limits if at all?
- How exactly were your family conversations about; menstruation and erection, ejaculation and masturbation, sex, rape and sexual violence, pregnancies and abortion, etc.?
    - Who normally started these conversations?
    - Who took part in the conversations (and who did not take part)? Why?
- How would you say your family's religion and/or culture influenced the way your family talked about sex and sexuality?
    - How did your family communication (or lack of it) influence your sex life?
    - What do you wish you told your parents about your sex life and your sexuality?

Sexual identity:

- How did conversations with your parents about sex and sexuality change as you grew, if at all?
    - How did these changes (or the lack of), impact you later in life?
    - How did your parents respond to your questions on sex? Did you enjoy the conversations? Why or why not?
- Describe how these conversations have shaped you.
- What do you wish was different about these conversations?
- How similar were your views and your family's on sexual orientation?
    - If sexual orientation was an issue for debate, what were the family conversations like?
    - How did these views shape you as a sexual being, if at all?

Privacy:

- How open were your family discussions about sex in particular and how much details did your parents discuss about their past and other adult members' past?
- How did you learn when to share and when not to share personal information?
    - How did you determine why or why not to share and with who to share?

Disclosure:

- At what stage did you decide on what to share and what not to share with your parents?
    - How did you do it and how did you know what you were supposed to tell or not tell about yourself and others?
    - Tell me how you feel when sharing (or keeping) other people's sexual secrets.

Information ownership:

- During adolescence, did you feel like your family had a right to know about your sexuality? Why or why not?
    - Was there a point where you felt uncomfortable about this? Why, why not?
    - What strategies did you use to keep your parents out of your private life, if at all? How did you or they feel about that?
- How did you make sure that you keep information about your sexual life from your parents and siblings?
    - How did you decide to do so? Did you succeed?

Identity ownership/boundaries:

- Please tell me how your family identity influences your current identity in how you act and behave.
    - How much effort do you make to be like, or different from your parents and siblings? Explain.
- Explain what you think is the importance of communicating sexual identity within a family.
    - Let's talk how you plan to communicate identity in your future family, compared to communication in the one you grew up in.
    - What will you or will you not talk about with your children?
    - Explain what rights, if any, you will have to know about your children's sexuality? That is, describe the boundaries you wish to have with your children regarding sex and sexuality.

General:

- What kind of sex-related information will you discuss differently with your own children? Why?
    - What impact do you think discussing will have on your child/children?

How do you think sex and sexuality should be talked about by African parents in general?

- Why do you think that the ideal isn't being practiced?

- What advice would you give to parents on talking sex and sexuality with their children?

Kindly share any final words please!

Appendix D

Ethics Clearance Approval

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

UFS UV

GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

26-Oct-2021

Dear Ms Victorine Shu

Application Approved

Research Project Title:
Sexuality communication in African families in South Africa: the dynamics of openness and closedness

Ethical Clearance number:
UFS-HSD2021/0386/21

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: 2021.10.27 10:15:20 +02'00'

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