Integrating adolescent girls' voices on sexual decision making in the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this study project is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted at any other university in order to obtain a degree.

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Date: 16 November 2012

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Summary

Integrating adolescent girls' voices on sexual decision making in the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme

The aim of this research study was to find out how adolescent girls engage in the process of sexual decision making in order to make recommendations for the development and presentation of the current Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme in South African schools. As the results of this study are aimed at providing guidelines for the development and presentation of this specific programme, a qualitative interpretive descriptive research design was used, because this type of research design could have application implications. Purposive sampling was used where data were gathered by means of group work and individual interviews with 75 adolescent girls from three diverse high schools in the Western Cape. Naïve sketches and researcher's journaling were utilised to ensure triangulation and to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. Research results were analysed inductively to make sure that the results were truly a description of participants' responses on the topic of sexual decision making and sexuality education.

The results of this study indicated that adolescent girls' sexual health is complex and that sexual decision making is impacted by a variety of influences from different contexts. Relationships with parents, teachers, other significant adults, peers as well as boyfriends impact sexual decision making in ways which encourage either sexual activity or sexual abstinence. It was also reported that the influences of different contexts like poverty, alcohol abuse at social gatherings as well as the media encourage girls to engage sexually. Participants furthermore reported on ways in which the current sexuality education programme fails and succeeds to meet their needs. They made recommendations on how to improve the sexuality education programme to make it more applicable to their lives. In general it was reported that adults are reluctant to discuss sexuality with adolescent girls which could put them at risk to a greater extent.

This study recommends that teachers and prospective health promoting professionals can adapt a more positive approach to speaking about sexuality, as this could encourage girls to be proud of their sexuality and view it as an integral part of being human to take ownership of. When girls view their sexuality in this way, they might be less reluctant to allow their sexuality to be exploited. Furthermore it is recommended that girls' self-regulatory behaviour needs to be strengthened in order to be able to respond to the demands of different contexts by means of internal loci of control rather than the current tendency of behaviour to be directed by external

factors. By including adolescent girls' voices in the development and presentation of Life Orientation Sexuality Education, it could result in a more comprehensive programme which understands and meets the contemporary needs of girls which could promote their sexual and general health and well-being.

Opsomming

Die integrering van adolessente dogters se stemme rakende seksuele besluitneming in die Lewensoriëntering Seksualiteitsopvoeding Program

Die doel van hierdie navorsingsstudie was om uit te vind hoe adolessente dogters betrokke is in die proses van seksuele besluitneming om sodoende aanbevelings te kan maak vir die ontwikkeling en aanbieding van die huidige Lewensoriëring Seksualiteitsopvoeding Program in Suid-Afrikaanse skole. Aangesien die studie gerig is om riglyne te bied vir die ontwikkeling en aanbieding van hierdie spesifieke program, is 'n kwalitatiewe interpreterende beskrywende navorsingsontwerp gebruik, aangesien hierdie tipe navorsingsontwerp toepassingsmoontlikhede het. 'n Doelgerigte steekproeftrekking was gebruik waar data ingesamel is deur middel van groepwerk en individuele onderhoude met 75 adolessente dogters van drie diverse hoërskole in die Wes-Kaap. Naïewe sketse en refleksies van die navorser is gebruik om triangulering te verseker, asook om die vertrouenswaardigheid van die studie te verhoog. Die gevolgtrekkings van hierdie studie is induktiewelik ontleed om te verseker dat die gevolgtrekkings waarlik 'n beskrywing van die deelnemers se menings rakende seksuele besluitneming en seksualiteitsopvoeding was.

Die gevolgtrekkings van hierdie studie toon dat adolessente dogters se seksuele gesondheid kompleks is en dat seksuele besluitneming op versekeie maniere beïnvloed word vanuit veelvoudige kontekste. Verhoudings met ouers, onderwysers, ander betekenisvolle volwassenes, die portuurgroep sowel as seunsvriende het 'n invloed op seksuele besluitneming in die sin dat seksuele aktiwiteit óf bevorder óf voorkom word. Dit was ook bevind dat verskeie kontekste soos armoede, alkoholmisbruik by sosiale byeenkomste sowel as die media dogters aanmoedig om seksueel aktief te wees. Deelnemers het ook aangedui hoe die huidige seksualiteitsopvoeding program op verskeie maniere in hulle behoeftes voorsien, maar ook faal in hierdie opsig. Deelnemers het aanbevelings gemaak oor hoe om die seksualiteitsopvoeding program te bevorder ten einde dit meer van toepassing te maak op hulle lewens. Oor die algemeen was dit bevind dat grootmense huiwer om met adollesente dogters oor hulle seksualiteit te praat, wat dogters dan tot 'n groter mate kan blootstel aan risiko's.

Hierdie studie beveel aan dat onderwysers en voornemende professionele persone tot die bevordering van gesondheid 'n meer positiewe aanslag sal hê rakende die manier waarop daar oor seksualiteit gepraat word. Hierdie meer positiewe aanslag kan moontlik dogters aanmoedig om trots te wees op hulle seksualiteit en om hulle seksualiteit te sien as 'n integrale deel van mens-wees waaroor hulle eienaarskap kan neem. Wanneer dogters hulle seksualiteit op hierdie

manier benader, kan dit wees dat hulle minder geneig sal wees om toe te laat dat hulle seksualiteit uitgebuit word. Dit word ook aanbeveel dat dogters se self-regulerende gedrag versterk moet word om in staat te wees om te reageer op die eise van verskeie kontekste op grond van interne loci van kontrole, eerder as die huidige geneigdheid om gedrag te rig op grond van eksterne faktore. Deur adolessente dogters se stemme te integreer in die ontwikkeling en bevordering van Lewensoriëntering Seksualiteitsopvoeding, kan dit 'n meer omvattende program teweegbring wat dogters se hedendaagse behoeftes verstaan en bevredig, met die gevolg dat dogters se seksuele en algemene gesondheid en welstand bevorder kan word.

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Key terms

The following concepts are clarified as for the purpose of this study:

***Adolescence*:** Adolescence is the life phase between childhood and adulthood (Ernst *et al.*, 2009:2). For the purpose of this study, the researcher is particularly interested in the ages 15 to 17 years, seeing that this is the age of typical Grade 10 learners who will be the participants in this study. The researcher would like to point out that when adolescents are referred to as "young people", "learners" or "teenagers" it is because referred literary works used the terms as such. The term "learners" will be used when the researcher specifically refers to adolescents in the school context. Apart from these exceptions, the researcher will make use of the term "adolescents". This study is specifically focused on adolescent girls and the rationale behind this will be explained later.

Sexuality: When referring to sexuality in this study, it is seen as a central aspect of the human being that encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction (Loeber *et al.,* 2010:170).

Sexual decision making: For the purpose of this study, sexual decision making refers to the decisions that adolescents make with regards to all aspects of sexuality which could influence their personal health and well-being.

Agency: For the purpose of this study the researcher looks at adolescents from an 'agency' perspective. This entails children and young people being seen as active agents with inner capabilities, strengths and resources that influence their own lives and the society around them. In contrast with the agency perspective, children are primarily viewed as vulnerable and therefore as passive recipients of adults' care, protection, teaching and norms (Ansell, 2005:19-22, 226-254; Wall, 2006:523-548; Montgomery, 2003:215; Yates, 2010:165-166). The United Nations (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child embodies an idea of children as agents (e.g. articles on the right to free expression; the right to associate; the right to be heard (consulted) in matters affecting the child, i.e. the right to participate in the decision-making processes that affect them) while also making provision for the right of children to care and protection. The concept of agency is thus for the purposes of this study supported by a child right perspective, and more specifically the right of children to participate.

Sexuality education: In response to social problems of HIV/AIDS infection, teenage pregnancies and child rape, the Department of Education saw a need to introduce sexuality

education in schools. In 2002 sexuality education became compulsory and was incorporated into the Life Orientation learning area, which was then implemented in schools (Naidoo, 2006:20). Sexuality education can be defined as a process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs and values about identity, relationships and intimacy. It encompasses sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affections, intimacy, body image and gender roles (Bruess & Greenberg, 2009:18).

Life Orientation*:* In South African schools, Life Orientation is a learning area which is compulsory for all learners from Grades R to 12. The Department of Education (2007:7) defines Life Orientation as the study of the self in relation to others and to society. It applies a holistic approach to the personal, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, motor and physical growth and development of learners. This encourages the development of a balanced and confident learner who can contribute to a just and democratic society, a productive economy and an improved quality of life for all.

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1   INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Adolescence is the life phase between childhood and adulthood during which psychological, social and physical milestones are being reached (Louw *et al.,* 2001:390; Ernst *et al.*, 2009:2). Among the physical milestones, the two most conspicuous changes are physical growth and sexual maturation, which define puberty (Ernst *et al.*, 2009:2). Adolescents have various needs with respect to sexual development. They have a need to receive help in understanding the changes in their bodies and behaviour and how to cope with these (Naidoo, 2006:39). Unfortunately, while young people receive factual information regarding most aspects of their lives, sexuality is often left out (Massaut, 2004:12-13).

Reasons for leaving sexuality out may be due to the fact that many parents still hold on to cultural beliefs that it is disrespectful to discuss sexual matters with their children (Ncitakalo, 2011:76). Parents often avoid the topic and shift the responsibility of sexually educating their children to schools. In the school context educators often feel that they are not equipped to teach issues of sexuality as they have not been properly trained in this regard (Rooth, 2005:269). When teachers do not feel equipped to teach about sexuality, they often approach it from a physiological point of view (only dealing with basic anatomy) or guest speakers are invited to speak about sexuality as a once-off event (Rooth, 2005:271). The teachers then feel that the aspect of sexuality in the curriculum has been dealt with (Rooth, 2005:271). Some teachers feel their cultures or beliefs are in direct opposition to sexuality teachings (Rooth, 2005:269). The topic of sexuality education in South Africa is often ignored due to a general hesitancy to tackle this head on for fear of promoting some kind of immoral lifestyle (Rooth, 2005:214). From this moral context, abstinence is still promoted in sexuality education as an ideal (Francis, 2010:317).

When adolescents do not receive adequate guidance regarding all aspects of sexuality, it could influence how they engage in sexual decision-making processes. Adolescent decision making is described by Piaget as a shift that happens from adolescence to adulthood as a movement from concrete to formal operational thinking (Van Dyk, 2008:186). Most adolescents develop formal operational thinking between the ages of 12 and 15 years and this means that adolescents can think in abstract terms and think about possibilities and consequences of their actions (Van Dyk, 2008:186). In order to assist adolescents with decision making about their sexuality, the

researcher argues that it is important to know how adolescents engage in sexual decision-making processes. When referring to adolescent sexual decision making it does not imply that adolescents are sexually active. People who are not sexually active are still sexual beings. Sexuality can therefore include sexual activity, but is not restricted to this and whether an adolescent girl is sexually active or not, she will still have to make certain decisions regarding her sexuality.

Ncitakalo (2011:19-24) made mention of four main factors that could influence adolescent sexual decision making, namely personal, psychological, traditional or cultural and societal factors. Personal factors could be linked to personal relationships, like relations with peers and family (Ncitakalo, 2011:20). Good supervision from parents or family members as well as good communication and understanding are associated with delayed sexual activity in adolescents (Ncitakalo, 2011:20). Psychological factors that could influence adolescent sexual decision making involve self-esteem and self-knowledge out of which sexual responsibility flows (Fenton, 2003 cited by Naidoo, 2006:11). Traditional and cultural factors like gender inequalities and religion can also influence adolescent sexual decision making. Many religions promote abstinence from sex before marriage which plays a role in whether or not adolescents decide to have sexual relations or the regret of doing so (Osorio *et al.*, 2011:276). Societal factors deal with the environment in which children grow up that influences children's development and behaviour (Ncitakalo, 2011:24; Bandura, 2006:7). Social influences such as socio-economic status, substance use, lack of parental supervision and the influence of peers were also found to play a role in risky sexual behaviour of adolescents (Ncitakalo, 2011:8).

It is apparent from the above that many different aspects influence sexual decision making and that it is a multi-faceted process with many layers of influence. It reflects the complex world adolescents must navigate as they make decisions about their sexual behaviour (Collins, 2011:87). It is due to this complexity that adolescents are exposed to many different factors which could influence their sexual decision making. Irresponsible sexual decisions could result in physical (like the spreading of sexually transmitted infections), psychological (like the excessive preoccupation with sexuality and intimate relationships which could interfere with education and social responsibilities) and social problems (such as unwanted pregnancies, sexual abuse and exploitation) (Thom *et al.,* 2001:406; Ncitakalo, 2011:8,21; Naidoo, 2006:130; Osorio *et al.,* 2011:271).

Adolescent sexual and reproductive health is problematised by Phillips, Malcom and Ncitakalo (Phillips & Malcom, 2006:427; Ncitakalo, 2011:17). They described the high levels of sexual experience among youth at the hand of available statistics. It is estimated that half of all the young people in South Africa between the ages of 15 and19 years reported having had sex

(Ncitakalo, 2011:17). By age 19, close to 80 percent of women in South Africa have had sex, and about 37 percent have been pregnant (Ncitakalo, 2011:17-18). South Africa also has the highest number of children living with HIV in the world with an estimated 280 000 children below the age of 15 years living with the infection (UNAIDS, 2008 cited by Ncitakalo, 2011:13). Statistics like these emphasise the importance of addressing how adolescents manage their sexuality as well as the various risk factors they are exposed to.

It seems that girls are particularly exposed, vulnerable and at risk when it comes to their sexual and reproductive health status. Reports show that biologically, women are more likely to be infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) through unprotected heterosexual intercourse than men and are at especially high risk within four years of menarche (Sarigiani *et al.,* 1999 cited by Phillips & Malcom, 2006:426). The heightened adverse health effects of risk behaviours to female learners point to the need for gender-specific prevention efforts. Prevention efforts that do not target gender leave adolescent women at an even greater risk (Phillips & Malcom, 2006:436).

Threats to the well-being of the young people in South Africa like explained above, called for Government to intervene. In 2002 the National Department of Education embarked on a Sexuality Education Programme which formed part of the Life Orientation Learning Area (Naidoo, 2006:i). Since the implementation of Life Orientation, research has been done about the effectiveness of the learning area, as well as the ability of teachers to instruct it successfully. Due to the relevancy thereof the researcher would like to point out three specific studies which investigated Life Orientation and sexuality education in South Africa. In 2005, Edna Rooth completed a doctoral thesis at the Faculty of Education from the University of the Western Cape. In her research she investigated the status and practice of Life Orientation in South African schools, specifically in the Western Cape. Maynapathee Naidoo submitted a doctoral thesis in 2006 at the University of Zululand where the implementation of the sexuality education programme in South African schools was evaluated. Dennis Francis conducted a literature review in 2010 about sexual education programmes in the context of South Africa.

Rooth (2005:iii) argued that Life Orientation teaching methodologies disclose an overuse of transmission teaching with minimal use of group and experiential methods which appears to be most effective in promoting healthy sexual behaviour. Teaching methodologies used by most educators consisted primarily of transmission teaching or 'talk and chalk' methods where teachers have the knowledge and the students are passive receivers of the knowledge (Rooth, 2005:210). Student-teachers observed that educators in the Western Cape indicated that they used group work, facilitation and experiential methods, but in the reality of the classroom this did not happen (Rooth, 2005:210).

Naidoo (2006:154) commended the sexuality education programme currently implemented in schools for the positive impact it is having on the learners and acknowledges that the needs of learners and educators are met to some extent. However, she suggested that the programme could be improved by examining the unmet needs of learners and educators. She argued that sexuality education programmes are created based on content that adults think should be included but they ignore the input of adolescents (Rodriquez, 2000 cited by Naidoo, 2006:35). Most learners want to discuss issues which they regard as important, rather than have topics imposed on them, and would like to have the opportunity to ask questions (Bailie, 1991 cited by Naidoo, 2006:41). Naidoo (2006:161) is of opinion that it is imperative for the needs of the learners to be taken into consideration when implementing sexuality education programmes in schools.

Francis (2010:315) recommended that adolescents need to be seen as active role players or agents in their sexual decision making. He argued for an approach where youth are acknowledged as "knowers" who bring with them knowledge about sexuality and their own experiences. This approach has the implication of allowing learners a say in what needs to be discussed. Contrary to the view of adolescents as agents, youth is "often publicly referred to and visually constructed as children in need of protection, rather than as youth who have the right to relevant information about their own bodies and their sexuality" (Mitchell, 2004:36 cited by Francis, 2010:315). Francis (2010:315) reasoned that positive sex education that avoids blaming and shaming youth about their sexual feelings is needed. It must present a more balanced view of sex as both enjoyable and risky. An approach like this is more likely to meet the needs of youth (Francis, 2010:315). It can be concluded that Rooth, Naidoo and Francis agree in their recommendations that in order to teach curriculum content within the Life Orientation learning area effectively, views and opinions of children must be included (Rooth, 2005:294; Naidoo, 2006:161; Francis, 2010:315).

An important theory that corroborates with this discourse of child agency is adolescent girls' ability to self-regulate. According to Bandura (1982:129), self-regulatory capabilities require tools of personal agency and the self-assurance to use them effectively. Mastery of problem situations strengthens self-regulatory efficacy (Bandura, 1982:129). This means that due to girls' increased agency when being included in the presentation and development of sexuality education, they will get the opportunity to strengthen their self-regulation. Self-regulating behaviour thus builds upon the role of agency which adolescent girls could benefit from as self-regulation has an effect on the way in which sexual decisions will be made.

From the description of previous research conducted about sexuality education in the context of Life Orientation in South African schools, it seems as if there is a knowledge gap with regard to

learner participation in both the development of sexuality education programmes as well as in the classroom where teaching occurs. The findings of Rooth, Naidoo and Francis point out the successes that could be reached when learners are included in these processes.

If learners are not included in this process, it could be that the content of sexuality education might be based on assumptions about how adolescents engage in sexual decision making. This could result in curriculum content which adolescents find irrelevant. Therefore a need exists for in-depth descriptions of how adolescent girls engage in decision making processes with regard to their sexuality. The results of the study may lead to the formulation of guidelines on how to integrate the voices of adolescents in the development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme in South Africa (Ncitakalo, 2011:36). In this way an "insider perspective" of what adolescent girls need from and can contribute to sexuality education content and presentation could be provided which could empower girls in their sexual decision making.

Towards integrating adolescent girls' voices on sexual decision making in the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme the research question is how adolescent girls engage and are influenced in decision making processes with regard to their sexuality.

1.2   RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1   Aim

The aim of the research is to qualitatively explore and describe through an interpretive descriptive strategy how adolescent girls from three diverse high schools in the Western Cape engage in sexual decision making. This data will be used to make recommendations for the development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme.

1.2.2   Objectives

- To explore in literature how adolescent girls engage in the process of sexual decision making;

- To identify how adolescent girls are influenced in their sexual decision making;

- To formulate guidelines on the integration of adolescent girls' voices in the development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme in the Western Cape.

1.3   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This discussion on methodology is a broad overview and will be elaborated on in Chapter 3. To promote the integration of adolescent girls' voices in the development and presentation of sexuality education programmes the researcher will work from a social justice paradigm supported by an advocacy/participatory worldview (Creswell, 2009:9-10; Mertens, 2007:212). The chosen research design fits the purpose of setting an action agenda for transformation that could be to the benefit of the participants (adolescent girls), the institution (Department of Education), communities (schools and families) as well as the researcher (in terms of an appreciation for adolescent girls' agency in the context of sexual decision making) (Creswell, 2009:9).

1.3.1   Literature overview

Literature regarding adolescent sexuality, the way in which adolescent girls engage in sexual decision making, the efficacy of sexuality education programmes and using adolescent girls as agents in the development and presentation of sexuality education programmes, will be reviewed. National as well as international scientific resources will be referred to. Various search engines which are available through the NWU library services, such as EBSCO HOST, Proquest, Nexus, SACat, ISAP, Google Scholar and Psych Lit will be used.

1.3.2   Research approach and design

For the purpose of this study research will be conducted by a qualitative interpretive descriptive research design. Within the child participation and agency discourse, an inductive process is appropriate to ensure that the world (context and living realities) of adolescent girls, as described by themselves, is better understood in exploring sexual decision making. The researcher will thus make no assumptions on how adolescent girls engage in sexual decision-making processes. An inductive strategy allows the researcher to engage in the research process in an open way in order to learn from adolescent girls about the way in which they engage in sexual decision making.

The researcher begins with the well-defined subject of how adolescent girls make sexual decisions as outlined in the problem statement. An extensive examination of the deeper meaning and specific details of sexual decision making by adolescent girls will be provided, with the focus on 'how' and 'why' questions. This will be followed by a detailed description of adolescent girls' sexual decision making (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:96; Kreuger & Neuman, 2006:23 cited by Fouché & De Vos, 2011:96).

The research design is aimed not merely to describe the sexual decision making of adolescent girls, but to also consider how descriptions can be applied (Thorne *et al.,* 2004:7). By capturing themes and patterns within the perceptions of adolescent girls and to generate an interpretive description thereof, will lead to a fuller understanding of how adolescent girls engage in the making of sexual decisions (Thorne *et al.,* 2004:5). This comprehensive understanding links with the product of an interpretive description research design which has application potential. Generated data regarding the sexual decision making of adolescent girls could provide a backdrop for assessment, planning and interventional strategies within sexuality education programmes in South African schools (Thorne *et al.,* 2004:7).

1.3.3   Research method

For this study, focus groups and semi-structured interviews will be used as data gathering methods. The participants for the interviews and focus groups will be taken from the population by means of non-probability sampling. An interpretive descriptive design calls for purposive, theoretically (non-probable) generated sampling, reflecting an awareness of expected and emerging variations within the way adolescent girls make sexual decisions (Thorne *et al.,* 2004:6). Thus, a particular case will be chosen because it could illustrate features that are of interest to this study (Strydom & Delport, 2011:392). This concludes that the researcher will choose girls who would be able to best inform the researcher about the sexual decisions that adolescent girls typically would have to make.

1.3.3.1 Population

The selection will be made from all willing female participants in Grade 10 from three diverse high schools in the Western Cape. Criteria for inclusion in the sample are as follows:

- Age

The participant must be a school-going adolescent girl in Grade 10. The researcher decided on participants in Grade 10 (normally between 15 and 16 years of age) for two reasons. Firstly, the Western Cape Education Department disapproves of the fact that senior learners who are nearing their final exams take part in research studies. Seeing that interviewing will take place later in the year, (near the final exams), the researcher decided to exclude Grade 11 and 12 learners from the study. Secondly the Life Orientation Assessment Standards for Grade 10 (refer to Annexure A) links closely with aspects of sexual decision making by adolescent girls that the researcher is interested in.

- Gender

Only adolescent girls will be allowed in this study. The reason for this is because girls seem to be particularly at risk when it comes to their sexual and reproductive health status, as explained in the problem statement.

- Demographic area

The participant has to be an adolescent girl from one of the three chosen high schools in the Western Cape. The schools will be selected according to the following criteria:

o Schools where the researcher or staff of the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies (CCYFS) already have established a trustworthy working relationship.

o The three schools will need to be representative of the diverse school settings in the context of the Western Cape.

- Language

The participants should be able to communicate in either English or Afrikaans as these are the only languages that the researcher has command of.

1.3.3.2 Sampling method

The researcher proposes to ask permission from the principal and governing body of the school to convene all the Grade 10 girls at a convenient time. The researcher will provide the girls with information about the proposed research and forms will be made available where willing volunteers can sign up to participate in the research. From the list of all willing volunteers, girls will be selected to be interviewed until data saturation occurs. The method of sampling, together with the principle of data saturation, will be explained to the Grade 10 girls. To counter the possible feeling of social exclusion, the results will be shared with all the girls who were willing to participate in the research study. Their feedback on the results will be valuable.

1.3.3.3 Sample size

The size of samples will be determined in the following ways:

- Focus groups

The researcher will facilitate focus groups with no more than six to eight Grade 10 girls in a focus group. The participants will be interviewed at a time and venue that is most convenient for them. The number of focus groups will depend on data saturation.

- Interviews

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted until a point of saturation is reached.

1.4   PROCESS OF DATA GATHERING

Qualitative focus group discussions, semi-structured individual interviews, naïve sketches as well as researcher's journaling will be used to collect data.

1.4.1   Method of data collection

- Focus groups

Firstly, according to Greeff (2011:360) semi-structured focus groups can be used to ensure a better understanding of how adolescent girls think about sexual decision making. Due to the sensitivity of the topic of sexuality, participants for this research might be more comfortable to start off the interviewing process by being part of a group. They will be able to build on one another's ideas which might provide an in-depth view on sexual decision making which is not necessarily attainable from individual interviews (Maree, 2007:90). Seeing that adolescents might not be comfortable to share their own feelings or thoughts regarding sexual decision making, the topic will be discussed in general and not about their own lives. An interview schedule (refer to Annexure H) will be used.

Creative methods of data gathering will be part of the focus group discussions. Participants will be asked to creatively explain their thoughts and feelings regarding sexual decision making by drawing a "sexuality lifeline (refer to Annexure B). The "sexuality lifeline" has been used in workshops in the Netherlands where sexual experiences of youth were explored (Youth Incentives, 2007:3). The "sexuality lifeline" will be adapted to fit this specific study by focusing on the decisions that adolescent girls make regarding their sexuality. "Sexuality lifelines" will be photographed which could serve as data gathering of the "seen" and the observed. The possibility exists for this to lead to rich data gathering and ensure triangulation. After the completion of the focus group discussions, participants would be asked to indicate whether they would be willing to take part in individual interviews.

- Semi-structured individual interviews

The researcher will also conduct semi-structured individual interviews with participants who have already taken part in focus group discussions. This might help the participants to feel more at ease as they would by then already have had exposure to the interview process, the interviewer as well as the topic of discussion.

For a number of reasons semi-structured interviews could benefit this study. Semi-structured individual interviews could:

o   Ensure an even more detailed picture of beliefs about, perceptions or account of sexual decision making by adolescent girls (Greeff, 2011:351).

o   Provide more flexibility to be able to follow-up on particular interesting avenues that might emerge during interviews (Greeff, 2011:351).

o   Possibly produce information that the researcher had not thought of (Greeff, 2011:352).

o   Give the researcher the opportunity to further explore and build on data gathered during focus group discussions.

An interview schedule with open-ended questions will be used (refer to Annexure H). Seeing that sexuality is often a sensitive and private topic, the questions will be developed and evaluated by experts and then adapted to the data that emerged from focus group discussions. Questions will be asked about girls in general and these questions will be phrased so as not to intentionally violate the privacy of participants in any way. The researcher will ensure that all topics are covered in order to saturate data. Topics will be arranged from broad to more specific and in a logical order to ensure getting rich data regarding the interested topics linked with the literature review.

- Naïve sketches

Naïve sketches are a method of data collection where participants will be asked to reflect on the process of participation after taking part in process group discussions or individual interviews. For this research study participants will be asked to do so by answering four questions in written form (refer to Annexure H).

- Journaling of the researcher

Journaling as a method of data collection will be used in conjunction with the above explained data collection methods to enrich information gathered from interviews (Hayman *et al.,* 2012:28). Through journaling, the researcher's self-awareness and self-understanding could be enhanced and could become a means of caring for oneself as well as creating a heightened sense of responsibility in caring for others (Charles, 2010:181). Deep learning, problem solving and clinical reasoning are outcomes of journaling when used as a learning strategy (Hayman *et al.*, 2012:28).

By making use of focus group discussions, individual interviews, creative methods of data collection, naïve sketches as well as journaling, large amounts of concentrated data from multiple viewpoints regarding sexuality could be obtained.

1.4.2   Role of the researcher

It is important for the researcher to consider the following aspects which must be in place prior to obtaining access to data:

- Prior to research being conducted, the researcher will apply for *ethical approval* from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), the school principals, parents of the participants who are willing to volunteer, the Life Orientation educators as well as the participants of the study, through written consent. Written consent means that the person receives a written form that describes the research and then signs that form to document his or her consent to participate (Mack *et al.,* 2005:11) (refer to Appendices 3-7).

- The researcher will ask permission to make use of a *private room on school premises* which would be suitable for interview purposes.

- The researcher will *clear the connection* between the participants and researcher. During 2009-2010 the researcher used to be an educator in Life Orientation at one of the high schools where the proposed research will be done. There is still a standing relationship of trust between the researcher and the principal, teachers and some of the learners of the school. When the researcher last taught at the school, the learners who are now in Grade 10 were in Grade 8. In order to prevent confusion in roles, the researcher will address her new role as researcher as opposed to teacher.

- Participants will be interviewed on the school premises at a suitable time. This might ensured low drop-out rates and no costs will be involved for participants to take part in the study (such as transport). Prospective participants will beinformed about the date and time of interviews. Prospective participants, as well as their parents, will be requested to sign *informed consent* forms and will be informed about the voice recorder that will be used.

- The researcher will ensure technical aspects of the research. This will be done by making use of a voice recorder to capture data during interviews, which will be transcribed verbatim and translated to English (if not in English). The researcher will take precautions to secure that all data will be stored securely and that no unauthorised person will have access to the data.

1.5   DATA ANALYSIS

This is the research phase where data will be transformed into findings (Patton, 2002:432 cited by Schurink *et al.,* 2011:397). Raw information will be reduced and sifted and significant

patterns will be identified in order to communicate the essence of what the data about the sexual decision making by adolescent girls reveal (Schurink *et al.,* 2011:397).

Data gathered during focus group discussions and thereafter individual interviews is linked with the second objective of the study, namely to identify how adolescent girls are influenced in their sexual decision making. Data gathered by making use of naïve sketches links with the third objective of this study, namely to integrate adolescent girls' voices in the development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme. The data gathered by the researcher's journaling will be used in order to be true to the title of the research study and to reflect on why it is important to integrate the voices of adolescent girls in the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme.

When analysing the data of an interpretive descriptive design Thorne *et al.* (2004:14) advised researchers to constantly ask: "What is happening here"? By doing so, it respects the contextual nature of the data and the researcher is guided to focus on and engage in the intellectual processes of these girls regarding the sexual decisions they make. Thus, patterns and themes within the data are used to make sense of the most important ideas to be conveyed and to access their meaning in a new manner (Thorne *et al.*, 2004:15; Thorne *et al.,* 1997:174).

1.6   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical considerations which need to be adhered to, include:

- Avoidance of potential harm and risk to participants

Due to the sensitivity of the topic of sexuality, the researcher will make it her first priority to protect the participants against any possible physical or emotional discomfort that might emerge from the research project at all times. The researcher will inform participants beforehand about the potential impact that the investigation might have on them (Strydom, 2011:115). Should the researcher become aware of any physical or emotional harm that participants might endure, debriefing will be put in place in order to undo any discomfort of any kind. The researcher will refer the participant to a counsellor for emotional support.

- Voluntary participation

Participation is voluntary. No participant will be forced to take part in the proposed research study (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006:107). Participants will be informed that they could at any time discontinue their participation in the research if they felt the need to do so (Mitchell & Jolley, 2001:29).

- Informed consent

Participants will be provided with all possible and adequate information regarding the aim of the investigation (Strydom, 2011:117). Research will only start when the WCED, the principal, teachers, parents and participants give full consent after being fully informed about the study's procedures and potential risks (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008:521).

- Deception of participants

The researcher vows not to intentionally deceive or mislead participants by deliberately misrepresenting facts of by withholding information from them (Strydom, 2011:118-119). No information will be withheld from participants. Participants will not be given incorrect information in order to ensure their participation when they would have otherwise refused to participate.

- Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained throughout the research as no names of either participants or schools will be mentioned or published. The researcher commits to protect sensitive information as well as the identities of participants and schools (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008:515-517).

- Compensation

The researcher will offer participants refreshments during interviews. No further compensation will be offered to participants of this study seeing that interviews will take place at school and participants would not have to incur any costs to take part in this study. The researcher is aware that compensation might lead people to fabricate information in order to be included in a study which could result in the study being compromised (Strydom, 2011:121).

- Selection of participants

Participation is voluntary and participants are under no obligation to take part in the research study.

- Competence of researcher

Incompetency of a researcher can cause the research study to fail and may lead to invalid results, thus the researcher vows to be fully trained, competent and prepared while conducting this study (Strydom, 2011:123). Throughout the duration of the study the researcher will remain aware of this great ethical responsibility (Strydom, 2011:123).

- Publication of the findings

In order for the research to be worthy and to be viewed as research, the researcher proposed to introduce the study to the reading public in written form (Strydom, 2011:126). A summary of results and recommendations will be compiled in a report to the principles of the three diverse schools and to the Western Cape Education Department. The researcher furthermore proposes to prepare an article for publication in a peer reviewed academic journal.

1.7   TRUSTWORTHINESS

Four main constructs will reflect the reliability and validity of this qualitative research study: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Schurink *et al.,* 2011:419-421)*.*

- Credibility

The researcher proposes to make enquiries in such a way that the sexual decision making of the adolescent girls will be accurately identified and described. An in depth description of the sexual decision making by adolescent girls, showing the complexity of variables and interactions embedded with derived data, will ensure validity. To further ensure the validity, the researcher will place boundaries around the study by adequately stating parameters like setting and population (Schurink *et al.,* 2011:420).

- Transferability

A qualitative study's transferability may be problematic but this study will be designed by making use of multiple participants and more than one data-gathering method as described previously. This will ensure triangulation as well as strengthens the study's usefulness in other settings (Schurink *et al.,* 2011:420)*.*

- Dependability

The researcher will ensure that the research process is logical, well documented and audited (Schurink *et al.,* 2011:420)*.*

- Confirmability

The researcher proposes to find out whether the findings of the research could be confirmed by another. This will ensure that the focus of the evaluation of the research is squarely on the data and will remove the subjectivity of the researcher (Schurink *et al.,* 2011:421).

1.8 CHAPTER DIVISION

The research report will be presented in thesis format according to the following proposed structure:

Table 1.1: Chapter division

Chapter 1	Orientation to the research
Chapter 2	Theoretical perspectives
Chapter 3	Research methodology
Chapter 4	Report and discussion of results
Chapter 5	Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.9 CONCLUSION

This study is aimed to explore and describe how adolescent girls engage in the process of sexual decision making with the goal of including their voices in the development and presentation of the sexuality education programme for schools in the Western Cape.

In order to achieve this aim, the following chapter will serve as the first contribution to the literature review where female adolescent sexuality and sexual decision making, as well as the consequences thereof, will be discussed and explored against the backdrop of theoretical underpinnings.

CHAPTER 2

SEXUALITY AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN ADOLESCENCE: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

During the life phase of adolescence when sexual maturation begins, adolescents are confronted with having to make certain decisions regarding their sexuality. These decisions could have either a positive or negative impact on the health and well-being of an adolescent. Certain preventative decisions, like deciding to abstain from sexual activity, could protect adolescents from harmful sexual consequences. Other decisions that are associated with risky sexual behaviour, like having unprotected sexual intercourse, might put adolescents at risk of harmful sexual consequences. There lies a responsibility with sexuality education programmes to assist adolescents with the challenges of sexuality associated with this life phase to promote sexual and general health and well-being of adolescents.

The aim of this chapter is to offer an exploratory and descriptive perspective on the process of sexual decision making within the life phase of adolescence and how adolescents can be supported in making responsible sexual decisions through the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme. The chapter begins with a description of sexuality during adolescence. A gender perspective is utilised to indicate the necessity of gender specific interventions and how the focus of this study is on adolescent girls as they seem to be particularly at risk when it comes to the consequences of risky sexual decisions.

The concept of adolescent sexual decision making will be explored by looking at different sexual decision making models, as well as factors that could influence sexual decision making of adolescent girls, after which possible problematic consequences related to sexual decisions will be explained. Due to the complexity of sexual health, the researcher will point out the necessity of looking at multiple perspectives that could address this complexity. Sexuality education will be unpacked by looking at its importance and by explaining more about the Life Orientation learning area which is the vehicle of sexuality education in South African schools. There will specifically be referred to the Grade 10 curriculum outline as the learning outcomes of this grade links closest with sexual decision making. Results from previous studies regarding sexuality education within Life Orientation will be mentioned to point out possible strengths and limitations of this programme. The chapter will be concluded by motivating why the voices of

adolescent girls should be integrated in the development and presentation of the sexuality education programmes by employing them as agents in this process.

2.2   SEXUALITY WITHIN THE LIFE PHASE OF ADOLESCENCE: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Adolescence is the developmental stage between childhood and adulthood (Louw *et al.,* 2001:384; Gouws *et al.,* 2000:2; Louw *et al.,* 2010:278; Shefer, 2008:86). Adolescence covers the age groups 11 to 20 and distinction is made between early adolescence (11-14), middle adolescence (15-17) and late adolescence (18-20) (Ayers *et al.,* 2007:5). There is, however, no global consensus regarding the age boundaries of adolescence and it would therefore be more acceptable to demarcate the adolescent developmental stage on the basis of specific physical and psychological developmental characteristics and socio-cultural norms rather than on chronological age (Louw *et al.*, 2001:384; Gouws *et al.*, 2000:2; Louw *et al.,* 2010:279). During this developmental phase an adolescent goes through a process of becoming independent (Philotheou & Rosen, 2001:140; Gouws *et al.,* 2000:2). It is a time when cognitive maturation occurs, and when abstract thought becomes apparent (Philotheou & Rosen, 2001:140). It is also a period characterised by a rapid rate of physical growth with the development of secondary sexual characteristics occurring under the influence of sex hormones (Onyeonoro *et al.,* 2011:294; Shefer, 2008:86). From this viewpoint, adolescence begins at puberty when sexual maturation begins (Louw *et al.*, 2001:384). Sexual maturation (i.e. puberty) is one of the most dramatic events in human development (Louw *et al.,* 2001:390; Louw *et al.*, 2010:284). To satisfy their sexual needs in a socially acceptable way so that it contributes to the development of their identity, and becoming a sexually healthy adult, are two key developmental tasks for adolescents (Louw *et al.*, 2001:400; Louw *et al.,* 2010:288; Mayock *et al.,* 2007:16).

Sexuality is a healthy and natural part of a person (Bruess & Greenberg, 2009:4-5; WHO, 2002:6). Bruess and Greenberg (2009:4-5) defined sexuality as more than what one person does with another person sexually. Sexuality is not only about having sex, or taking part in sexual behaviours. It is also about who an individual feels he/she is, how the person feels about their body and their experience of being a boy or girl, man or woman. It involves the way in which a person dresses, moves, speaks; the way the person acts and feels about other people (Bruess & Greenberg, 2009:4-5). The World Health Organisation and Pan American Health Organisation (WHO, 2002:6; PAHO, 2000:6) defined sexuality as a core dimension of being human which includes sex, gender, sexual and gender identity, sexual orientation, eroticism, emotional attachment/love, and reproduction. It is experienced or expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, activities, practices, roles, relationships. Sexuality is a result of the interplay of biological, psychological, socio-economic, cultural, ethical and

religious/spiritual factors. While sexuality can include all of these aspects, not all of these dimensions need to be experienced or expressed. However, in sum, our sexuality is experienced and expressed in all that we are, what we feel, think and do (WHO, 2002:6; PAHO, 2000:6).

Sexuality seems to differ markedly between the two genders. The researcher therefore found it appropriate to add a gender perspective to the description of adolescent sexuality. Girls reach puberty earlier than boys and the sequence of events during the pubertal period is not the same for males and females (Coleman *et al.,* 2007:10; Enfield, 2003:9). There are also disparities between male and female adolescent sexual behaviour and consequently the risks and consequences that are related to their behaviour (Ncitakalo, 2011:16). Researchers have proposed more than 500 possible variable factors that influence adolescents' sexual behaviour (Jaccard, 2009 cited by Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2011:13). The most important reasons for engaging in sexual activity differ between genders. Some of the reported reasons why boys become sexually active are to prove their normality, because of peer pressure or to seek physical pleasure. Some of the reasons why girls become sexually active are because of peer pressure and because of being carried away by passion (Buga, 1996 cited by Louw *et al.,* 2001:405; Louw *et al.,* 2010:290).

Extensive research have been done about the effect of unequal gender relations on sexual behaviour. In communities that condone male authority, females are praised for sexual abstinence but labelled as loose and promiscuous when they have multiple sexual partners (Cleveland *et al.*, 2001 cited by Ncitakalo, 2011:24; WHO,2002:7). Females are expected to be loyal and must submit to their male counterparts. In contrast, loss of virginity for males may be an indication of manhood, and having multiple sexual partners may be an indication of sexual competence among their peers (Cleveland *et al.*, 2001 cited by Ncitakalo, 2011:24; Enfield, 2003:32; Lesch,2000:160). Unequal gender relations also tend to affect contraceptive use. Research shows that men are the ones who decide whether to use a condom or not (Ncitakalo, 2011:23). Females are put at risk because they are less likely to negotiate safe sex practices with their male counterparts (Ncitakalo, 2011:23; Ross & Deverell, 2004:210). The conditions and timing of sex are often defined by male partners, giving young women little or no opportunity to discuss or practise safer sex (Coombe, 2002:241).

In communities with a socio-economic disadvantage, sexual gender differences seem to present themselves in unique ways. Coombe (2002:240) mentions that violence and hostility towards gender equality are effects of unequal gender relations and township masculinity. It is boys who determine when and how sex occurs; girls commonly experience rape, violence and assault (Coombe, 2002:241). The 'sugar daddy' phenomenon is particularly common in these

communities. The 'sugar daddy' is an older man who uses younger girls for sex in exchange for financial incentives. Adolescent women feel unable to refuse sex or to discuss safe sex with their male peers or with older 'sugar daddies' for fear of violence, abandonment or loss of income. Financial or emotional need sustains these relationships (Coombe, 2002:241; Jewkes & Morrell, 2012:1729). A woman in a study regarding sex within the context of power relations between men and women said 'I wasn't forced to do it, but I didn't want to do it' (Ogden, 2007:194). Studies found that especially black girls have very little power in the negotiation of sex. A recurrent theme in these studies seems to be that girls perceive sexuality as a boy's need which the girls have to accept and accommodate (Louw *et al.,* 2001:407; Louw *et al.,* 2010:291; Shefer, 2008:92).

Females are furthermore found to be more affected by the HIV infection than males (Ncitakalo 2011:17). Adolescents and young adults account for the majority of new HIV infections, and females are disproportionately affected (Onyeonoro *et al.*, 2011:294; Pettifor *et al.,* 2005:1531). In South Africa young females have three to four times the prevalence of HIV than their same-age male peers (Shisana *et al.,* 2009:1). The Centre for the study of AIDS (2012) says that women are more susceptible to HIV for various physical, social and sexual reasons. This is why the fastest growing population infected by HIV/AIDS is women. Furthermore, it is reported that women often face the burden of caring for family members who are ill or dying, resulting in additional pressures placed on them. It is often the grandmothers who are left to take care of grandchildren on a small pension, when their children die of AIDS (Centre for the study of AIDS, 2012:9).

Due to the remarkable differences between the sexuality of the two genders, the researcher found it important to focus investigations on one gender at a time. Many of the above mentioned occurrences underline the need to provide timely and credible sexuality information to female adolescents (Onyeonoro *et al.*, 2011:294). Phillips and Malcom (2006:436) are of opinion that adolescent women are in need of gender-specific prevention efforts and if not targeted, they will be at even greater risk. The researcher by no means implies that boys are not at risk or in need of support, but girls seem to be particularly at risk and in need of protection when it comes to sexual health. For that reason, the focus of this research study was specifically on adolescent girls and how their sexual decision making could influence their sexual health.

2.3   ADOLESCENT SEXUAL DECISION MAKING

Cognitive development occurs during adolescence (WHO, 2002:7). Although there are marked individual differences in cognitive development among youth, it allows adolescents to engage in the kind of introspection and mature decision making that was previously beyond their cognitive

capacity (APA, 2002:11). Cognitive competence includes the ability to reason effectively, to solve problems, to think abstractly and reflect, and to plan for the future (APA, 2002:11). This suggests that an adolescent girl should have the cognitive capability to make decisions regarding, among others, her sexuality. Sexual decision-making processes were subsequently explored by looking firstly at different decision making models related to sexual behaviour. Secondly, different factors that could influence sexual decision making were analysed.

2.3.1   Decision-making models by which sexual decisions are made

According to Ogden (2007:178-180), the following decision-making models linked with sexuality:

- Edward's (1954) Subjective Expected Utility Theory

According to this theory, individuals make subjective estimates of the possible costs and benefits of any particular behaviour and will make a decision to which behaviour results in the least costs and the most benefits (material, social and/or psychological benefits). This theory suggests that adolescent girls might, when confronted with decisions about sex, consider the cost and benefits of the sexual experience. For instance, a girl might feel that the guilt or regret she would experience when being sexually active is not worth the pleasure of the sexual experience and might therefore abstain from sex. On the other hand, the benefit (like sexual gratification or expression of love for a partner) could outweigh the costs (like falling pregnant) and would therefore convince a girl to engage sexually.

- Rosenstock's (1966) Health Belief Model (HBM)

It is predicted by this model that behaviour is a result of a set of core beliefs, which have been redefined over the years. These core beliefs will predict the likelihood that behaviour will occur (Ogden, 2007:24). Lowe and Radius (1982, cited by Ogden, 2007:179) developed the HBM specifically to predict occurrences linked with sexual behaviour. They argued that the following variables would most likely influence a girl's decision making with regards to sexuality: self-esteem, interpersonal skills, knowledge about sex and contraception, attitudes towards sex and contraception, previous sexual experiences, peer norms, relationship status, as well as substance abuse prior to sex.

- Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

This theory predicts that personal beliefs about outcomes and the evaluations of these outcomes, create a certain attitude towards behaviour. The outcome of the sexual experience would thus convince an adolescent girl to engage in it or not. Furthermore it predicts that an individual's beliefs about important others' attitudes to the behaviour and a motivation to comply to the important others, create a subjective norm. This attitude towards behaviour and

subjective norm will lead to certain behaviour. An adolescent girl will, according to this theory, adopt an important other's belief about sex and act accordingly. This underlines the importance of positive role-models in an adolescent girl's life.

- Byrne's (1977) Sexual Behaviour Sequence Model

Sexual arousal and emotional responses to sex are added to the factors included in the above mentioned Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) model. Sexual arousal refers to how aroused the girl is at the time of making sexually related decisions. Emotional responses to sex refer to whether the girl finds sexual cues pleasurable or aversive.

- Herold and McNamee's (1982) Model

The following variables are believed to influence sexual decision making: an adolescent girl's parental and peer group norms of whether premarital intercourse is acceptable or not, the number of lifetime sexual partners, feelings of guilt that the girl might have about intercourse and attitudes towards contraception, the girl's involvement with a current partner, the partner's influence on the girl; and the frequency of intercourse. According to the model of Herold and McNamee all of these factors will influence whether an adolescent girl will engage in sexual activity or not.

2.3.2   Factors that could influence sexual decision making of adolescent girls

A study about socio-cultural influences on decision making involving sexual behaviour, found that adolescents are faced with a variety of dynamics that impact their thinking and reasoning and consequently their sexual decision making (Ncitakalo, 2011:75). Ncitakalo (2011:19-24) identified four main categories of factors that could influence adolescents' sexual decision making, namely personal-, psychological-, traditional or cultural- and societal factors. Supporting literature will be used to substantiate Ncitakalo's findings.

- Personal factors

Personal factors could be linked with personal relationships, like relations that the girl has with, among others, peers and family (Ncitakalo, 2011:20). Particularly during adolescence, peer groups' values and sexual practices have a very strong influence on the development of sexuality and patterns of sexual behaviour (Donald *et al.,* 2006:234). The peer group shapes how sexual drive will be patterned in very influential ways (Donald *et al.*, 2006:234). Socially and emotionally it is a period when an adolescent is in a process of separating from the family and identifying very strongly with the peer group (Donald *et al.*, 2006:234; Enfield, 2003:15). When learners do not get sufficient support from reliable sources, such as teachers or family, the concern is that they acquire knowledge and information from unreliable sources, like their peers

(Ncitakalo, 2011:76; Donald *et al.*, 2006:235; Enfield, 2003:16). Although more openness regarding sexuality currently exists, adolescents still find it difficult to make choices regarding sexual behaviour, mainly because of contradictory messages from various sources (Donald *et al.*, 2006:235; Louw *et al.,* 2010:289-290; Enfield, 2003:22). Parents and other authority figures discourage sexual activity, but generally do not provide them with adequate information and guidance regarding responsible sexual attitudes and behaviour (Louw *et al.,* 2010:290). The information from peers could be based on faulty information and half-truths and does not always reflect sound and responsible judgement (Donald *et al.*, 2006:235; Louw *et al.,* 2010:290; Ncitakalo, 2011:66). This insufficient knowledge could contribute to adolescent girls' involvement in risky sexual behaviour.

Family and other adults also influence the way in which adolescents engage in sexual decision making. Specific patterns of sexual behaviour and values attached to these are modelled to children in the family by the attitudes and practices of adult relatives around them. Family is the main vehicle through which community values are transmitted to children (Donald *et al.*, 2006:234). Good supervision from parents or family members, as well as good communication and understanding are associated with delayed sexual activity for adolescents (Ncitakalo, 2011:20). Other adults, like teachers can have an impact on adolescent girls' sexual decision making in that values and behaviour related to gender relationships are powerfully modelled by teachers in schools (Naidoo, 2006:34). It can be concluded that peers, family and other adults like teachers, can have an impact on the way in which adolescent girls engage in sexual decision making, which could be either positive or negative.

- Psychological factors

There are certain psychological factors related to the self, like self-esteem and self-knowledge, out of which sexual responsibility flows (Fenton, 2003 cited by Naidoo, 2006:11). Individual characteristics, such as low self-esteem, psychological distress and depression, place many adolescents at risk for engaging in risky sexual behaviours (Ncitakalo 2011:21). To provide adolescent girls merely with knowledge and factual information regarding sex is not enough. Adolescents must in addition to factual information be provided with opportunities to develop appropriate personal skills to make informed decisions on sexual matters (Naidoo, 2006:2; Fennie, 2011:14; Rooth, 2005:291). Learners must be assisted in order to develop an awareness of potential threats to their sexual safety and learn skills for preventing or coping with such situations (Naidoo, 2006:2). In the United Kingdom, research has proven that young people who felt good about themselves and who were knowledgeable and confident about sex and relationships were more likely to be more discerning (Naidoo, 2006:41).

Another psychological factor related to the self is self-regulating. Similar constructs in psychology developmental literature includes "self-restraint," "self-control," and/or "delay of gratification" (Raffaelli & Crockett, 2003:1037). Self-regulation is conceptualised as the ability to regulate emotions, attention and behaviour (Raffaelli & Crockett, 2003:1042; Crockett *et al.,* 2006:505). Research proves that self-regulation (and similar constructs) is an important psychological characteristic that will influence the way in which adolescent girls engage in sexual decision making. In a longitudinal analysis about adolescent sexual risk taking, Raffaelli and Crockett (2003:1036) examined the role of self-regulation. The results of this analysis indicated that self-regulation (and similar constructs) is a significant longitudinal predictor of whether young people will engage in sexual risk taking during their adolescent years. This might indicate a particular need for enhancing adolescent girls' self-regulation in a way that could promote sexual health.

- Traditional or cultural factors

Traditional or cultural factors refer to the world views of communities and their associated values and practices and the impact thereof on sexual decision making of adolescent girls. For example, strong religious and cultural values in relation to issues such as homosexuality, contraception and abortion could impact sexual decision making of an adolescent girl (Donald *et al.*, 2006:234). Other cultural factors like gender inequalities could also play a role. Gender inequalities, as explained previously, imply that women often have little control over sex and that sexual decisions are powered by men (Ncitakalo, 2011:22,23,24; Coombe, 2002:241; Ogden, 2007:194; Jewkes & Morrell 2012:1729; WHO, 2002:13; Phillips & Malcom, 2006:428; Lesch, 2000:160). Religion plays a role in that many religions promote abstinence from sex before marriage which might determine whether or not an adolescent decides to have sexual relations or the regret of doing so (Osorio *et al.*, 2011:276).

- Societal factors

Although sexual activity is a normal consequence of physical development, social factors play an important role in the expression of sexual activity (Louw *et al.,* 2010:289). The environment in which an adolescent girl grows up has an influence on her development as well as her behaviour (Ncitakalo, 2006:24; Bandura, 2006:7). Values held by society in general about the sexual roles of males and females will influence a girl's sexual decision making. The role of the mass media (television, radio, newspapers, films, magazines and books) has a significant influence here. With widespread access to the internet, casual sex with fleeting cyber-acquaintances who hook up through online chat rooms or singles' meeting sites has become common (Papalia *et al.,* 2009:474). Other societal influences, such as inadequate community resources, poor community supervision, and extreme poverty, are all likely to influence risky

sexual behaviour (Smith *et al.*, 2003 cited by Ncitakalo, 2011:25). As already mentioned, it is evident that poverty continues to motivate younger girls to seek older sexual partners for financial assistance (Ncitakalo, 2011:25).

Furthermore, the area in which an individual lives, whether urban, rural and/or informal settlement, impacts on one's behaviour (Ncitakalo, 2011:26). Research confirms that adolescents who grow up and reside in informal environments are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours than those in urban formal areas (Ncitakalo, 2011:26). Social issues such as alcohol abuse, school drop-outs, child sexual abuse, and adolescent pregnancy are common in informal areas, and they are expected to influence an adolescent girl's behaviour or decision making (Ncitakalo, 2011:26). It is clear that sexual decision making often has problematic consequences.

2.4   PROBLEMATIC CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUAL DECISION MAKING

Each culture is faced with the problem of how to channel sexual needs in a manner that allows for healthy development, but does not create physical problems (like the spreading of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)), psychological problems (such as excessive preoccupation with sexuality and intimate relationships that interfere with education and social responsibilities) and social problems (such as unwanted pregnancies or sexual abuse and exploitation) (Louw *et al.*, 2001:400; Louw *et al.,* 2010:289). Adolescence is a time of exploratory behaviour when fateful choices about sex are being made, sometimes with lifelong consequences (Philotheou, 2001:144; Fennie, 2011:63). Increasing sexual activity among the adolescents is a growing public health concern worldwide (Onyeonoro *et al.*, 2011:294). There is widespread evidence that adolescents are becoming sexually active at a younger age (Louw *et al.*, 2001: 403; Mayock *et al.*, 2007:18; Fennie, 2011:18; Gouws *et al.*, 2000:162; Kaplan, 2000:494). Globally, prevalence of premarital sex among adolescents is on the increase, even as the age of sexual initiation decreases (Onyeonoro *et al.*, 2011:294).

Despite efforts to discourage premarital sex among adolescents, their interest in sexual activity continues to increase (Onyeonoro *et al.*, 2011:294). Increasing involvement of female adolescents in sexual activity has resulted in rising prevalence of adverse health consequences such as sexually transmissible diseases (STDs) including HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancies, and abortion (Onyeonoro *et al.*, 2011:294). Adolescents often engage in risky sexual practices and most times do not take measures to protect themselves, because their risk perception is low (Onyeonoro *et al.*, 2011:298). Adolescent girls' early sexual activity, early pregnancy, induced abortions and the increase in HIV infections have become major concerns in Sub-Saharan Africa (Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001:1815; Rooth, 2005:4; Ncitakalo, 2011:17). This

poses a considerable threat to the health and well-being of learners. These concerns will now be discussed in more depth. (The aspect of rape and sexual abuse, which is also a problem related to sexuality, is omitted as it happens under force and is thus not directly related to decisions that adolescent girls make.)

2.4.1   Teenage pregnancy and abortion, HIV/AIDS and other STDs amongst adolescent girls

- Adolescent pregnancy and abortion

Worldwide, about 16 million girls aged 15 to 19 years and two million girls under the age of 15 give birth every year (WHO, 2012a). One in five girls worldwide has given birth by the age of 18 (WHO, 2012a). Furthermore, an estimated three million unsafe abortions occur globally every year among girls aged 15 to19 years. On the local front, the researcher found it difficult to report reliably on trends in pregnancy rates in South Africa, as they are not well known (Panday *et al.,* 2009:23). South Africa lacks vital statistics on fertility, pregnancy and abortion as it is not known whether pregnancies that were terminated early on are well captured in survey data and school record systems (Panday *et al.,* 2009:23). Another reason for a lack in statistics is that a comprehensive national register of abortion is not maintained in the country (Panday *et al.,* 2009:23). Therefore, data regarding fertility, pregnancy and abortion in South Africa is reported to be unreliable due to missing information. In the study by Panday *et al.* (2009:113) a strong recommendation was made for the annual collection of national vital statistics on fertility, pregnancy and abortion that are differentiated by age groups. What can be reported, though, is that adolescent pregnancy rates in South Africa remain unacceptably high (Panday *et al.,* 2009:12; Pettifor *et al.,* 2005:1531). With the above mentioned information kept in mind, the most recent statistics that could be found were by Pettifor *et al.* (2005:1531) who remarked that close to one-third of 15 to19 year olds and nearly two-thirds of 20 to 24 year olds in South Africa reported having been pregnant.

There are many reported reasons why adolescent pregnancy and abortion could hold a threat to the affected person's health and well-being. As far as mothering is concerned, adolescent girls may not be socially and personally mature enough to assume new roles imposed on them by parenthood (Gouws *et al.,* 2000:170). The young mothers often lack parenting skills. Few adolescent mothers report that they enjoy their children and they may easily become overwhelmed with their new burden (Gouws *et al.,* 2000:170; Papalia, 2009:482; Macleod, 1999a:1,7). Adolescent pregnancy also has negative educational consequences. The pregnant adolescent's education is likely to be ended by her pregnancy (Gouws *et al.,* 2000:171; Macleod, 1999a:1,7). Adolescent mothers often experience reduced educational and occupational attainment, as they often leave school at an early age (Phillips & Malcom,

2006:427; Papalia, 2009:482). The problem of adolescent pregnancy involves not only the personal, educational and social effects on the girls themselves, but also involves difficulties of being a single teenage parent, especially under conditions of poverty (Donald *et al.*, 2006:231). Adolescent mothers from low socio-economic spheres often have to rely on social services for support, either medically and/or financially. An increase in adolescent pregnancy will therefore place an increasing burden on social services (Gouws *et al.*, 2000:171). Abortions could also lead to short-term and long-term consequences related to the overall health and wellness of adolescents. Pregnant adolescents are more likely than adults to have unsafe abortions. Unsafe abortions contribute substantially to lasting health problems and maternal deaths (WHO, 2012a). Some pregnant adolescents are exposed to life-threatening 'back street' abortions. Many adolescents resort to abortion in unsafe or unhygienic conditions out of fear, shame or guilt about their socially unacceptable sexual activity (WHO, 2002:9).

- HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)

HIV/AIDS is having devastating effects on individual adults, children and youth, on families, communities and on society as a whole (Donald *et al.*, 2006:231). It is now widely recognised that HIV/AIDS is one of the biggest challenges facing South Africa (Shefer, 2008:92). Unsafe sexual behaviour is disturbingly common amongst South African youth and high percentages of HIV infection amongst the youth reflect this (Donald *et al.*, 2006:232). When it is considered that 40 percent of the South African population is less than 15 years of age and that 15.64 percent is infected with HIV, one recognises that HIV/AIDS represents a devastating pandemic among the youth of South Africa (Fennie, 2011:14). In South Africa it is estimated that 5.5 million are infected with HIV, and over 50 percent become infected before the age of 25 years (Bhana, 2012:352). HIV/AIDS has specifically exacerbated girls' vulnerability to death, disease and danger (Fennie, 2011:14). Of the 15 to 24 year age group, 10.2 percent are infected, and as mentioned previously, there are striking gender disparities. Estimates suggest that 15.5 percent of young women aged 15 to 24 years are infected, compared to 4.8 percent of men of the same age (Bhana, 2012:352). (In the context of this study it is important to note that young people with HIV/AIDS did not necessarily contract the virus due to a personal decision that they made and that it could have been transmitted from mother to child.)

Concerning other STDs, adolescents are the highest risk group for nearly all STDs (Rosenthal *et al.*, 1997 cited by Kaplan, 2000:498). Adolescent girls have the highest rates of STDs (except for HIV/AIDS) of any group of women or men, and their infections typically result in more severe complications (Straus, 2007:51-52). Given that STDs and HIV have significant adverse health and social consequences for adolescents and society, preventing infection represents one of the most urgent public health priorities (Ncitakalo, 2011:17; Donald *et al.*, 2006:232). It is evident from the discussion in this section that sexual decision making can lead to risky sexual

behaviour with negative sexual health consequences. It is therefore of particular concern that measures must be taken to promote sexual health in adolescence.

2.5   PROMOTING AND ACHIEVING SEXUAL HEALTH IN ADOLESCENCE

Throughout the 20th century, sexual behaviour has been researched by researchers such as Kinsey, Masters and Johnson, and Hite, who collectively started to move from the perspective of having sex for reproductive purposes to having sex for pleasure (Ogden, 2007:174-175). This movement lead to sex also being viewed as healthy and natural. However, due to the increasingly risky and dangerous consequences of sexual activity, sex is furthermore discussed by researchers in terms of self-protection, health education and health promotion (Ogden, 2007:176).

Being healthy refers to the following dimensions: physiological/physical (e.g. good energy, good condition); psychological (e.g. happy, energetic, feel good psychologically); behavioural (e.g. eat and sleep properly); future consequences (e.g. live longer); and the absence of sickness, disease and/or symptoms (Ogden, 2007:48). More specifically, the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2002:6) defines sexual health as a state of physical, emotional, social and mental well-being related to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Intervention that is focused merely on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases will therefore not be sufficient as there are many more dimensions of sexual health that also need to be addressed. In order to address all the dimensions of sexual health, intervention on multiple levels is needed.

Sexual health is influenced by various dimensions (physical, emotional, social and mental) and therefore interventions should be undertaken on multiple levels. A complex issue like sexual health cannot be solved by looking at it from one point-of-view. Combining the expertise of several fields of academic interests could be beneficial when addressing adolescent girls' sexual health. There is a need for bringing together more than one theoretical lens when attempting to alleviate the pressing problems facing sexual health (WHO, 2002:9). Critical elements of such a comprehensive theoretical framework which could promote sexual health of adolescent girls will now be briefly discussed.

- Gender perspective

It is recognised that both males and females are vulnerable to sexual risk behaviours, but when the context of women's and girls' lives are examined, the impact of individual health risks can become cumulative and are compounded by gender relations (Phillips & Malcom, 2006:436). The heightened adverse health effects of these risk behaviours for female learners and the

unique risk associated with being female point to the need for gender-specific prevention efforts (Phillips & Malcom, 2006:436). Prevention efforts that do not target gender leave adolescent women at even greater risk (Phillips & Malcom, 2006:437). Notwithstanding the debate that conceptually places gender within sexuality or gender and sexuality as part of one system, it is obvious that sexual health cannot be approached without due consideration to gender and its power implications (PAHO, 2000:26).

- Rights perspective

When it comes to sexual health promotion, adolescent girls have the right to information, agency and participation. Sexual rights are universal human rights based on the inherent freedom, dignity, and equality of all human beings (PAHO, 2000:37). Since health is a fundamental human right, so must sexual health be a basic human right. In order to assure that human beings and societies develop healthy sexuality, sexual rights must be recognised, promoted, respected, and defended by all societies through all means (PAHO, 2000:37). Young people have the right to sexuality education, partly because it is a means by which they are helped to protect themselves against abuse, exploitation, unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS (Mayock *et al.*, 2007:16). The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2002:5) stated that sexual rights include the right of all persons (free of coercion, discrimination and violence) to the highest attainable standard of sexual health. This includes access to sexual and reproductive health care services, to seek, receive and impart information related to sexuality, to receive sexuality education and respect for bodily integrity (WHO, 2002:5).

- Positive psychology

Viewing sexual health from the perspective of positive psychology could also be beneficial to sexual health promotion of adolescent girls. Positive psychology is the scientific study and promotion of the optimal functioning and well-being of individuals (Louw *et al.,* 2010:381). It studies the strengths, virtues and skills that enable individuals to thrive (Louw *et al.,* 2010:381). Recognising that there is more to mental health than the absence of mental illness, positive psychology is dedicated to the rigorous scientific study of "strengths, well-being, optimal functioning" and flourishing (Krentzman, 2012:2). The ability to bounce back from, or adjust effectively to risk factors is called resilience. Resilience is one of the major focus points of positive psychology and a characteristic of a resilient adolescent girl would be to have a sense of self-efficacy and positive self-esteem as well as a sense of control over her own life, which could promote sexual health (Louw *et al.,* 2010:381)*.*

The aim of positive psychology is to begin to catalyse a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities

(Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000:5). This means that by looking at sexuality education from a positive psychology approach, the focus must not merely be on cure, but also on promoting being healthy. It implies not only assisting adolescent girls who are experiencing problematic sexual health challenges, but also nurturing the sexual health of girls who enjoy sexual health.

- Health promotion

Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over and to improve their health (WHO, 2012b). To reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual must be able to identify aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment (WHO, 2012b). Approaching adolescent girls' sexuality from a health promotion perspective would mean that girls must be enabled to increase control over their sexuality. This could be linked with the previously discussed psychological characteristic of self-regulation. If adolescent girls could be enabled to regulate their emotions, attention, and behaviour regarding their sexuality, it could promote their sexual health.

It could be concluded that in order to grasp and respond to the dynamic and multi-faceted complexities of sexual health, an equally multi-faceted approach is required. The complex nature of sexual health in adolescence and the implications of how sexuality education needs to be addressed in a holistic, systemic manner guided the researcher throughout this research study. An integrated approach could contribute to the promotion of sexual health through sexuality education in South African schools.

2.6   SEXUALITY EDUCATION

2.6.1   The importance of sexuality education

As frequently discussed throughout this chapter, when considering the risk of irresponsible choices regarding sex, adolescent girls must receive guidance from others to make choices which would be to the benefit of their sexual health (Louw *et al.*, 2001:402-403). Without sufficient support, young people could be even more at risk (Benard, 2004:65). In order to promote sexual health, sufficient sexuality education is needed (Francis, 2010:315-316; Mayock *et al.*, 2007:21).

Donald *et al.* (2006:235) argued that although family has an important role in sexually educating their children, the reality is that many parents/caregivers are inadequately informed or feel unwilling to talk about these sensitive issues with their children. Coombe (2002:240) remarked that adolescents rarely communicate with their parents or other adults about sexual and reproductive health issues, and too many receive conflicting messages about sex and sexuality

from various sources. Seeing that virtually all young people attend school before engaging in sexual intercourse and due to the fact that parents in general seem to be unaccustomed to having conversations about sex with their children, schools are seen as the most appropriate environment for sexuality education (Francis, 2010:315-316; Mayock *et al.*, 2007:21). Schools can, especially in the absence of positive family relationships, provide an alternative source of protective, nurturing support (Benard, 2004:65). Research has shown that problem behaviours in youth declined more the longer learners were in nurturing schools and increased more the longer they were in non-nurturing schools (Rutter cited by Benard, 2004:65). This emphasises the constructive impact that schools can have on the sexual health of young people. Berk (2009:217) reported that many studies show that effective sex education can delay the initiation of sexual activity, increase contraceptive use, change attitudes and reduce pregnancy rates. A recent study reviewed sexuality programmes worldwide and found that two thirds led to healthier sexuality (Kirby *et al.,* 2007 cited by Wood, 2008:203). This must be encouraging for teachers and suggests that sexuality education can be positively life-altering (Wood, 2008:203).

However, too often sex education courses are given late (after sexual activity has begun), last only a few sessions and/or are limited to a catalogue of facts about anatomy and reproduction (Berk, 2009:216). Knowledge alone is not enough. Sex education must help teenagers build a bridge between what they know and what they do (Berk, 2009:216-217).

Empirical evidence exists for the hypothesised beneficial impact of life skills in reducing health risk behaviour (Pharaoh *et al.,* 2011:70-71). The object of sexuality education is to assist young people in understanding a positive view of sexuality, provide them with information and skills about taking care of their sexual health, and help them make sound decisions, both now and in the future (Naidoo, 2006:160). Education is essential for the development of skills that enable young people to cope with challenges they might have regarding their sexuality (Mayock *et al.*, 2007:16). Education is a proactive way of reducing current problems and preventing future problems (Naidoo, 2006:154). The researcher will now more specifically refer to sexuality education within South African schools.

2.6.2   Sexuality education within the context of Life Orientation

In 1995 South Africa ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This meant that South Africa agreed to implement sexuality education and to focus on issues like sexuality and HIV/AIDS (Naidoo, 2006:10). Sexuality education became compulsory in all government schools in South Africa from 1 January 1996 (Van Rooyen, 1997 cited by Naidoo, 2006:10). With the escalation of HIV/AIDS, the Minister of Education, Prof. Kader Asmal (in office 1999-2004), took a firm stance in ensuring the implementation of sexuality education in all schools

(Naidoo, 2006:10; Enfield,2003:1). Sexuality education became firmly entrenched in the Life Orientation learning area offered at all schools up to the General Education and Training (Grade R-9) level (Naidoo, 2006:11). Both Tirisano and the National Curriculum (Curriculum 2005 and Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)) mandated that information about HIV/AIDS and age-appropriate sexuality education must be integrated into all levels of the curriculum (Naidoo, 2006:11). Therefore, in 2006 sexuality education, as part of the Life Orientation learning area, was introduced for the first time in KwaZulu-Natal as a compulsory subject at the Further Education and Training level (Grade 10-12), beginning with Grade 10 learners (Naidoo, 2006:11). Currently, sexuality education does not exist as a separate subject, but is still part of the Life Orientation learning area which is compulsory for learners at all levels (Grade R-9) (Francis, 2010:315).

According to the Department of Education (2008:7), Life Orientation draws on the core of the non-examinable subjects previously known as Guidance, Family Guidance, Vocational Guidance, Religious or Bible Education, Civic Education, Health Education and Physical Education. It is also an interdisciplinary subject in that it integrates knowledge, values, skills and processes embedded in various disciplines such as Sociology, Psychology, Political Science and Human Movement Science.

The Department of Education (2008:7) defines Life Orientation as the study of the self in relation to others and to society. It is a unique subject in that it applies a holistic approach to the personal, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, motor and physical growth and development of learners (Department of Education, 2008:7). Life Orientation provides learners the opportunity to engage in the development and practice of a variety of life skills to solve problems, to make informed decisions and choices and to take appropriate actions to live meaningfully and successfully in a rapidly changing society (Department of Education, 2008:7). In the National Curriculum Statement (Grades 10-12: General), Life Orientation is expressed as a subject containing four focus areas. The four focus areas, called learning outcomes, are: Personal well-being, Citizenship education, Physical education, and Careers and career choices (Department of Education, 2008:7-8). Sexuality education mainly forms part of Learning Outcome 1, Personal well-being. Learning Outcome 1 aims to enable the learner to achieve and maintain personal well-being. Each learning outcome has assessment standards. The assessment standards for each learning outcome in the National Curriculum Statement (Grades 10-12: General) are designed at various levels of complexity and depth to provide for progression as learners move from the beginning to the end of a grade and from grade to grade (Department of Education, 2008:10).

This research study is specifically focused on the way in which adolescent girls engage in sexual decision making. In the Life Orientation curriculum, sexual decision making is dealt with in Grade 10, Learning Outcome 1 (Personal well-being): Assessment standard 3 (See Annexure A). This assessment standard expects of learners to be able to explain changes associated with growing towards adulthood and describes values and strategies to make responsible decisions regarding sexuality and lifestyle choices in order to optimise personal potential (Department of Education, 2008:27). Learners are taught about strategies for making informed decisions and to use personal values as decision-making filters. This includes considering the consequences (short-, medium- and long-term) of decisions (Department of Education, 2008:27).

Since the Department of Education embarked on the sexuality education programme that formed part of the Life Orientation Learning Area, numerous reports have been questioning the effectiveness of this programme (Naidoo, 2006:i). The researcher will now report on evaluative studies that have been done regarding this topic.

2.6.3   Evaluation studies regarding sexuality education within Life Orientation

Evaluative studies have been done regarding the success of the implementation and practice of Life Orientation, of which sexuality education forms part, in South African Schools. Specifically, the research of E. Rooth (2005), M. Naidoo (2006), C. Macleod (2009), D. Francis (2010) and A. Jacobs (2011) pointed out certain strengths and limitations regarding sexuality education which forms part of the Life Orientation Learning Area.

- Strengths

Rooth (2005:281) mentioned that youth risk behaviour, the HIV and AIDS pandemic and other health challenges, such as lack of physical exercise, underscore the necessity of Life Orientation. The study by Rooth (2005:281) indicated that curriculum content is relevant and generally meets learners' needs. In accordance with Rooth, Naidoo (2006:155-156) argued that teachers and learners reported that some of their needs were met by the Sexuality Education Programme. Teachers and learners found the Sexuality Education Programme was comprehensive and covered a wide range of topics (Naidoo, 2006:155-156). Naidoo (2006:156) pointed out a few strengths that teachers and/or learners mentioned: teachers reported accessibility to a variety of resources for planning their lessons, as well as receiving training about issues related to Sexuality Education. Teachers reported to be pleased with policy guidelines provided by the Department of Education and that they developed a more positive attitude towards teaching Sexuality Education. Learners perceived that their relationships with their sexuality education teachers were better, that the level of communication between teacher and learner increased and that the teacher had the characteristics which they expect a sexuality

education teacher to have. Learners reported that sexuality education within the Life Orientation learning area had a positive impact on their values, knowledge and attitudes. Overall both learners' and teachers' perceptions of sexuality education programmes were changing positively (Naidoo, 2006:156). Francis (2010:316) mentioned that a strong point is that sexuality education is taught in schools as it has the potential of reaching many learners. Even though schools are not unproblematic sites for sexuality education, they may well be the best available, and it is argued that their limitations can be addressed (Francis, 2010:316).

- Limitations

Several limitations are reported regarding Life Orientation as a learning area, the curriculum content, pedagogy and learners' perception of these. According to Rooth (2005:281) sexuality education is only a small part of the Life Orientation curriculum and is taught by teachers who are not necessarily comfortable or knowledgeable about the topic of sex. Specially trained Life Orientation teachers are not yet available and the allocation of teachers to teach Life Orientation is not necessarily grounded in educators' qualifications or expertise (Rooth, 2005:281). Schools and teachers are given a considerable amount of responsibility and autonomy in respect of implementation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme, which means that understanding of youth's needs and the approach to teaching it vary considerably (Francis, 2010:315). In contrast with what Naidoo (2006:155-156) reported, Francis (2010:318) reported that little guidance is offered to teachers regarding what to teach and on issues of pedagogy. Furthermore, Rooth (2005:282) reported that educators' values appear to affect their teaching of Life Orientation, specifically due to Life Orientation's value-laden content of HIV and AIDS and sexuality education.

Rooth (2005:281) indicated that Life Orientation is a learning area with not much status. Life Orientation is not always allocated the prescribed time allocation on many school timetables and Life Orientation periods are often usurped for other learning areas that are perceived to be more academic (Rooth, 2005:281). There also seems to be a consistently observed discrepancy between theory and practice (Jacobs, 2011:220). Learners do not always seem to believe that Life Orientation really does achieve the aims as set out in the National Curriculum Statement (Jacobs, 2011:220). In South Africa, the need for sexuality education has in many cases been largely reduced to mean the need for appropriate information about HIV and AIDS (Francis, 2010:315). Macleod (2009:4) argued that the concentration on danger and disease as motivating factors for responsible sexual behaviour has serious limitations. This is confirmed by learners who appear to have the perception that the focus in Life Orientation leans heavily toward Health Promotion and Personal Development, such as AIDS prevention and related topics. It appeared that learners perceived these topics to be "over taught" (Jacobs, 2011:221).

Special attention should be focused on the inclusion of more than just prevention and an awareness of HIV/AIDS in the secondary school curriculum (Naidoo, 2006:164).

Life Orientation is a learning area with several strong points. Research proves, however, that there is also room for improvement. As stated previously, when considering the importance of adolescents to be appropriately sexually educated, it would be a mistake to disregard the importance of attending to the mentioned limitations of sexuality education within Life Orientation. What the researcher deems to be missing from previous research is the inclusion of the voices of adolescent girls when looking at the development and presentation of sexuality education as part of Life Orientation. Research indicated the importance of employing youth as agents when developing sexuality education in South African schools (Francis, 2010:315; Jacobs, 2011:222; Benard, 2004:81).

2.6.4 Integrating adolescent girls' voices in Life Orientation's sexuality education programme

In previous discussions, the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of adolescent sexuality, sexual decision making and sexual health were mentioned. The previous discussion of disciplines like rights perspectives, positive psychology and health promotion indicated the importance of including and empowering adolescent girls in the process of promoting their own sexual health. Therefore, in order to develop sexuality education programmes which could be to their benefit, adolescent girls' voices must be integrated and they must be employed as agents in this process. Adolescent girls' participation in this way could strengthen their self-regulation in a way that could benefit their sexual health and agency. Self-regulation plays a central role in the exercise of personal agency by its strong impact on thought, affect, motivation, and action (Bandura, 1991:248). To further support the above mentioned statements, results from previous research which underlines the importance of the participation and agency of adolescent girls will be presented.

Jacobs (2011:222) did a qualitative study about learners' experience of Life Orientation. Even though the focus of this study is not on Life Orientation as a learning area, but on sexuality education within Life Orientation, the researcher considers Jacob's views to be very supportive of this argument. One of the recommendations was that learners' opinions should be taken into account when deciding on themes and that it seems to be important that the learners have a chance to let their voices be heard in this matter (Jacobs, 2011:222). It is reported that hardly any studies have been conducted with the aim of listening to the voices of the learners and their perceptions of and experiences within Life Orientation (Jacobs, 2011:213). Jacobs (2011:213) is of opinion that it is important to listen to the voices of the learners as sexuality education within

Life Orientation is directed towards them. They can provide unique insights and their opinions and experiences can shed light on the current practice and effectiveness of the programme (Jacobs, 2011:213).

The above goes hand in hand with Benard's (2004:81) outlook that adults must acknowledge the fact that young people must be viewed as resources when trying to develop interventions for their benefit. If young people were viewed and respected as resources in all that is done, it would create a new basis for shaping a shared vision and clear mission for youth opportunity systems (Lofquist, 1992:23 cited by Benard, 2004:113). Infusing the power to make choices and decisions into the life of the classroom does not necessarily require any special programmes, but it does require adults to let go of a control orientation, to see young people as valuable resources, to willingly share power with them, and to create a system based on reciprocity and collaboration rather than control and competition (Benard, 2004:81). This links with Francis's (2010:315) opinion that youth must be treated as agents in the development of sexuality education programmes. "Youth cannot act in empowered ways without being treated as agents" (Francis, 2010:315). Youth must be viewed as ''knowers'' as opposed to innocent, who can give input into what is taught (Francis, 2010:318).

Allen's (2005:390) study on school sexual health programmes in New Zealand argues that youth need to be positioned positively and legitimately within sexuality education programmes. Allen (2005:390) stated, ''If we are to empower young people to act in ways that support their sexual health and well being, then measures of programmes' success must be designed to acknowledge young people's sexual agency''. Content cannot be discussed without considering input from youth about their sexuality (Allen, 2005:390). To be effective, sexuality education must meet the needs and interests of young people as conceptualised by them (Francis, 2010:316).

There are different ways in which adolescent girls' voices could be integrated. Kirby and Woodhead (2003:245) are of opinion that listening to adolescents entails guiding and supporting their participation in a supportive way. Listening to adolescents does not necessarily mean accepting what they say, nor allowing them to take control over the decisions that affect them. It does entail, however, respecting the ways in which they communicate their understanding, feelings and wishes. This could be better explained on the basis of Roger Hart's 'participation ladder' (Kirby & Woodhead, 2003:242). Roger Hart proposed using the metaphor of a ladder as a conceptual framework for thinking about different ways in which children could participate (Kirby & Woodhead, 2003:242).
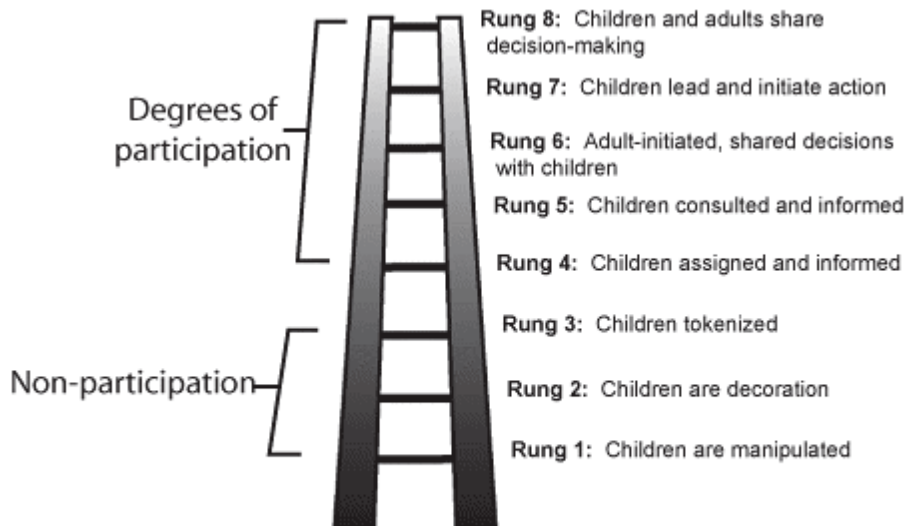
Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). Children's Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship.
Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Figure 2.1 The ladder of participation

Source: Hart, 1997 cited by Kirby & Woodhead, 2003:242.

The metaphorical ladder (refer to Figure 2.1) has eight steps where step one (at the bottom of the ladder) symbolises no child participation and manipulation of children, and step eight (at the top of the ladder) symbolises full child participation where children are the ones who have the ideas, come up with projects and adults are invited to join them in making decisions.

Ncitakalo (2011:75) advised that adolescent girls' participation is necessary as they would be able to explain more about what prevention methods or interventions could be acceptable and what could work best for them. Phillips and Malcom (2006:428) stated that it is of vital importance to understand the factors that place female youth sexually at risk in order to develop and to implement appropriate interventions. Adolescents' opinions and feedback are therefore essential to a good sexuality programme, because they are the ones who have specific knowledge about these factors that put them at risk as well as of the issues and fears that they live with (Naidoo, 2006:34). It therefore seems to be important to include the voices of adolescent girls in the development and presentation of a sexuality education programme in order to ensure that they would find the programme applicable and useful in dealing with these risks.

2.7   CONCLUSION

During the life phase of adolescence, adolescents are faced with situations where they have to make decisions regarding their sexuality. These decisions are influenced by many different factors and could be understood better when looking at different decision-making models. Statistics prove that adolescents often make sexual decisions which are to the detriment of their sexual and general health and that adolescent girls are particularly at risk in this regard. This does not only have a very negative impact on the individual, but also puts strain on the economy and society as a whole, seeing that intervention strategies need to be in place to deal with this negative impact. This indicates the necessity of having good sexuality education programmes in place. The South African government was very much aware of the need for sexuality education and the Department of Education incorporated a sexuality education programme within the Life Orientation learning area which is a compulsory learning area for all school-going learners in South Africa. Evaluative studies have proven that the sexuality education programme within Life Orientation has many strong points, but is at the same time not without mistakes and points out certain limitations. The sexuality education programme could be improved by viewing the complexity of adolescent girls' sexual health from different theoretical perspectives. Recommendations from previous research prove that there is a gap in research regarding adolescents' voices about what and how they would like to be taught in sexuality education programmes. Employing adolescent girls as agents in the development and presentation of sexuality education could be a proactive strategy to promote the sexual health of adolescent girls. Effective intervention could positively contribute to the general health and well-being of adolescents, which in turn could have a positive impact on schools, families, communities and society as a whole.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, the researcher already gave an introductory account of the methodology of this study. The objective of this chapter is to give a more detailed description of what has been presented in Chapter 1 in this regard and how the methodology was applied during the empirical investigation. There is a process involved - a systematic process of scientific inquiry or a standard sequence of steps that must be taken, irrespective of what a researcher wants to learn, discover or what facts he/she wants to acquire (Fouché & Delport, 2011:61). This chapter will explain every step that was taken in order to conduct research in a scientific and ethical way. The research approach and design that were used, how the sample was selected, the methods that were applied to gather data and how gathered data were analysed, will be described. The chapter will end of with proof of how ethical considerations were adhered to and how trustworthiness was assured in this study.

3.2   LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review in Chapter 2 provided an overview of the existing literature related to sexual decision making of adolescent girls and extended factors that flow from this topic (Eve, 2008:23). After extensive reading (of both national and international scientific resources), the researcher aimed to present material in a structured way, so that the reader could understand how the idea regarding this research was developed (Eve, 2008:23). Context for this topic was provided and it was indicated how this research study relates to theories, themes and issues in the specific field of adolescent girls' sexual decision making and sexuality education (Eve, 2008:23). This contributed to a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem that was identified (Fouché & Delport, 2011:134). In this way it was established that the researcher was aware of and understood the major issues in the field of adolescent girls' sexuality and how it is supported by sexuality education within the broader subject of Life Orientation (Eve, 2008:23).

The main topics that were reviewed, were: sexuality during adolescence, how sexuality differs between genders, different factors that could influence how adolescent girls engage in sexual decision making, the efficacy of current sexuality education programmes and how adolescent girls could be integrated as agents in the development and presentation of these sexuality education programmes. The researcher also identified what is perceived to be gaps in existing

research and these gaps served as the point of departure for deciding on a research approach and design that would be most suitable in addressing these gaps (Eve, 2008:23; Creswell, 2002:85 cited by Maree, 2007:82).

3.3   RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

3.3.1   The advocacy/participatory worldview

The advocacy/participatory worldview was historically developed in order to address issues of social justice which other assumptions failed to address (Creswell, 2009:9). Social justice requires giving stakeholders, particularly members of groups that were excluded historically, an effective voice in defining their own needs and negotiating benefits (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:1076). This approach was therefore viewed as most appropriate for this study, as research indicates that the voices of adolescent girls are limited and even excluded in the development and presentation of sexuality education programmes (Allen, 2005:390; Jacobs, 2011:222; Francis, 2010:318).

Research from an advocacy/participatory worldview holds that it contains an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of participants, institutions in which individuals work and the researcher's life (Creswell, 2009:9). The way in which the Western Cape Education Department develops and presents sexuality education in order to make it more effective could be altered. Support to adolescent girls could be enhanced as the research presented adolescent girls' voices on how girls engage in the process of sexual decision making and provided guidelines on how their voices can be heard in the development and presentation of sexuality education. Adolescent girls can be empowered to become agents of change, in having a say in what they are being taught. The researcher could also benefit from this "action agenda", seeing that the newfound knowledge gained from this research, might enable the researcher to initiate change and to facilitate ongoing processes to direct sexuality education in such a way that it can respond to adolescent girls' perceptions and experience of sexual decision making. The advocacy/participatory worldview is typically seen with qualitative research (Creswell, 2009:9).

3.3.2   Qualitative research approach

For the purpose of this study the researcher decided on a qualitative approach in order to answer questions about the complex nature of adolescent girls' sexual decision making, with the purpose of understanding and describing the phenomena from their point of view (Fouché & Delport, 2011:64). It enabled the researcher to study adolescent girls in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret sexual decision making in terms of the meanings the

girls brought to it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2004:3). Qualitative research was a useful way to conduct research with adolescent girls whose voices regarding the development and presentation of sexuality education are not often heard socially and in the available literature (Enfield, 2003:49). The strength of qualitative research was its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how adolescent girls experience sexual decision making (Mack *et al.*, 2005:1). In this way the first two objectives of the study, namely to explore in literature how adolescent girls engage in the process of sexual decision making, as well as to identify how adolescent girls are influenced in their sexual decision making, could be addressed.

3.3.3   Interpretive descriptive research design

The literature review in Chapter 2 pointed out that quite a few evaluative studies have been done regarding the effectiveness of sexuality education programmes in South Africa, but that there appears to be a lack of applications of these findings. This results in inefficient transformation or modification of sexuality education programmes. The researcher therefore decided to conduct research, by utilising a qualitative interpretive descriptive research design. Interpretive descriptive researchers are rarely satisfied with description alone and are interested in exploring meanings and explanations that may yield application implications (Thorne *et al.*, 2004:6). Interpretive description in this study is an inductive analytic approach designed to create ways of understanding adolescent girls' sexual decision making in a way that makes it possible for findings to be applied (Thorne *et al.*, 1997 cited by Thorne *et al.*, 2004:1). In this way the third objective could be addressed, which is to integrate adolescent girls' voices in the development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme in the Western Cape.

The fact that this research design was inductive in nature means that the researcher argues that no *a priori* theory could possibly encompass the multiple realities regarding the sexuality of adolescent girls that are likely to be encountered (Thorne *et al.,* 2004:5). Research findings could be allowed to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by a more structured theoretical orientation (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:99; Thorne *et al.,* 2004:5).

3.4   RESEARCH METHOD

After the research proposal of this study had been approved, the researcher applied for ethical approval from the North-West University's Faculty of Health Science's Ethics Committee. This research has been registered under the project: Developing sustainable support to enhance quality of life and well-being for children, youth and families in South Africa: a trans-disciplinary

approach. The ethics number is NWU-00060-12-A1. The researcher also adhered to the HPCSA Code of Ethics regulating professional conduct of counsellors. After ethical approval had been obtained, the researcher selected three schools where research was proposed to be done. The schools were selected according to the following criteria: a) schools where the researcher or staff of the Centre for Youth and Family Studies (CYFS) have already established a trustworthy working relationship, b) the schools had to be representative of the diverse school settings in the context of the Western Cape. To ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of these schools, the researcher will for the remainder of this document refer to School A, B and C (School A being where empirical research was conducted first, School B second, and School C third). After these processes had been finalised, the researcher organised meetings with school principals in order to ask permission to conduct research at the selected schools. At the meetings, the principals were briefed about the research study and were given a detailed information letter (refer to Annexure E). All three principals agreed provisionally, subordinate to the approval of the Western Cape Education Department (refer to Annexure F). As soon as the researcher's application had been approved by the Western Cape Education Department (refer to Annexure C & D), the principals were notified and the researcher was allowed to start with the empirical investigation. The researcher will now explain more about the sampling of this investigation.

3.4.1   Sampling

- Purposive sampling

The researcher decided that adolescent girls in Grade 10 would be the most suitable participants for this study, as their involvement could assist in providing guidelines (based on an understanding of how they engage in sexual decision making) which could contribute to the development and presentation of Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programmes. This indicates that the researcher used a purposive sampling technique (a type of non-probability sampling), as the researcher decided what needed to be known and set out to find people who would be willing to provide information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Bernard, 2002 cited by Dolores & Tongco, 2007:147). As in any qualitative study, the ultimate goal of purposeful sampling is to obtain cases deemed information-rich for the purposes of the study (Sandelowski, 2000:338). A more elaborate description on why the researcher anticipated that Grade 10 adolescent girls would be the most "information-rich" participants will be provided next.

3.4.1.1 Population

As explained above, the population of this study consisted of adolescent girls in Grade 10 from three selected diverse high schools in the Western Cape. Criteria for inclusion in the sample were:

- Age

There were quite a few reasons why the researcher decided on participants in Grade 10 (normally between 15 and 16 years of age). Firstly, the researcher decided not to include younger adolescent girls, as the researcher was interested to hear the opinions of girls who had already been exposed to high school sexuality education for a fair amount of time. The researcher could also not include learners older than Grade 10 because in the consent form by the Western Cape Education Department they stipulated their disapproval of senior learners, who are nearing their final exams, to take part in research studies (refer to Annexure D). Since interviewing only took place in September, (which is the time when Grade 12s write exams and a crucial time for Grade 11s whose marks determine further studies at tertiary institutions) the researcher had to exclude Grade 11 and 12 learners from the study. The most important reason for including Grade 10 adolescent girls in this study, is because the Life Orientation Assessment Standards for Grade 10 deals specifically with decision making regarding sexuality (refer Annexure A).

- Gender

As referred to previously, research proves that girls appear to be particularly at risk when it comes to their sexual and reproductive health status. Therefore, only adolescent girls were allowed in this study. The researcher is not implying that research regarding the development of sexuality education for boys is not important, but does believe that gender specific interventions are necessary because of the apparent differences between sexuality of boys and girls.

- Demographic area

In this research study, the researcher aimed to include a population of participants which would be as representative of the South African school contexts as possible. Therefore three diverse high schools within the Western Cape were included in this study. School A is situated in a high socio-economic community, School B in a low socio-economic community and School C in a community with extremely low socio-economic circumstances.

- Language

School A is an Afrikaans medium school and all the participants from this school were Afrikaans speaking. School B is also an Afrikaans medium school and all the participants were Afrikaans

speaking. School C is an English medium school, but once the researcher started the interviews, it became apparent that most of the participants' home language is Xhosa. Due to the fact that the researcher does not have command of the Xhosa language, interviews had to be conducted in English. Even though the participants are used to being instructed in English, the researcher found that most of them struggled to express themselves in English. To try and prevent this from influencing participation in focus groups, the researcher tried to implement a way in which to overcome the language barrier told participants that they were free to express themselves in Xhosa, as long as another participant in the group was willing to act as a translator. Participants sometimes made use of this suggestion and the researcher perceived that this seemed to set those who struggled to speak English more at ease to participate. The researcher is aware that sometimes meaning gets lost in translation, but decided that participation in Xhosa was better than no participation at all. In Chapter 4, when a quote from this school seemed to be unclear due to insufficient language use, the researcher added an explanation so that the reader might be able to better understand what the participant was trying to convey. During the interviews, when a comment seemed to be unclear or when comments were translated, the researcher reflected on the participant's comment by making use of clarification probes (Maree, 2007:89). Clarification probes were used in order to check whether the researcher had an accurate understanding of what was said. In this way the researcher is confident that there is no bias or interpretation in the translation or explanation of comments and that they are truly a reflection of the intended messages that participants were trying to communicate.

Table 3.1: Demographic variables of the population

Demographic variables		Number	Percentages
Age group	Grade 10	75	100%
Gender	Female	75	100%
Race	Black	27	36%
	Coloured	25	33%
	White	23	31%
Language	Afrikaans	49	65.3%
	Xhosa	26	34.6%

3.4.1.2 Sampling method

- Step 1: Initial meeting

The researcher requested permission from each school principal to address the Grade 10 girls at a convenient time. At school A the researcher addressed the group of girls as a whole, where the principals at School B and C advised the researcher to address the girls per class. During these gatherings, girls were provided with information about the researcher and the proposed research, after which they were given the opportunity to ask questions. The methods of sampling, together with the principle of data saturation were explained to the girls to ensure that they understood that not all willing participants would necessarily be interviewed. The researcher then handed out parental consent forms to those who indicated a willingness to participate.

- Step 2: Interviewing

On days and times that were approved by principals, teacher and learners, the researcher invited girls to focus group discussions, depending on whether they brought back signed parental consent forms. At the end of the focus group discussions, the researcher collected names of girls who were willing to take part in a follow-up individual interview.

- Step 3: Follow up

The researcher proposed to share the results of this study with all the girls who were willing to participate. This would hopefully counter any possible feelings of social exclusion of girls who were willing to be interviewed, but due to data saturation did not get the chance. Two of the principals also indicated that they would like to be informed regarding the outcomes of this study. The researcher proposed to give feedback to all three schools and agreed to organise a suitable time with the principal of each school in order to accomplish these goals. It was made clear that feedback from principals, teachers, as well as participants regarding the results, would be appreciated.

3.4.1.3 Sample size

Purposive sample sizes are often determined on the basis of theoretical saturation. That is the point in data collection when new data no longer bring additional insights to the research question (Mack *et al.,* 2005:5; Miles & Gilbert, 2005:151). Both focus group discussions and interviews were held up to the point where saturation of data occurred. Data saturation was indicated when the same responses started to emerge continuously. The number of people who took part in focus group discussions and individual interviews will now be discussed.

- Focus groups

The researcher facilitated focus groups with no more than six to eight girls per group. As mentioned, the number of focus groups depended on the willingness of girls to participate and on data saturation. A total of 13 focus groups were conducted at Schools A, B and C. A total of 75 girls took part in the focus groups.

- Semi-structured interviews

Altogether 18 girls who participated in the focus groups indicated a willingness to participate in individual interviews. The table below is a summary of the sample size of this study. This table enumerates the number of focus groups that were conducted at each school, the number of participants who took part in focus group discussions, as well as the number of participants who took part in individual interviews.

Table 3.2: Sample size

	Number of focus groups	Number of participants in focus groups	Number of individual interviews
School A	5	28	9
School B	4	21	4
School C	4	26	5
Total	13	75	18

3.5 PROCESS OF DATA GATHERING

As qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue under study, the interviews took place during school hours on the school premises (Creswell, 2007:37-39 cited by Fouché & Delport, 2011:65). At each school, the researcher asked permission to make use of a private room where interviews could be conducted in a location with no outsiders present and where participants could feel that their confidentiality was completely protected (Mack *et al.*, 2005:34).

3.5.1 Method of data gathering

Qualitative researchers gather multiple forms of data rather than rely on a single data source (Fouché & Delport, 2011:65). In order to articulate a coherent and meaningful account of the

experiential knowledge of adolescent girls, interpretive descriptive studies often use data collection methods such as interviews, participant observation and documentary analysis (Thorne *et al.*, 2004:5). Data collection in qualitative descriptive studies is typically directed toward discovering the who, what, and where of events or experiences and the techniques of data gathering usually include minimally to moderately structured open-ended individual and/or focus group interviews (Sandelowski, 2000:338; Miles & Gilbert, 2005:150). The researcher made use of qualitative semi-structured focus groups, semi-structured individual interviews, naïve sketches and journaling to collect data.

For the reason that in qualitative research researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behaviour and interviewing participants, the researcher of this study also acted as the interviewer (Creswell, 2007 cited by Fouché & Delport, 2011:65). As interviewer, the researcher aimed to be friendly, smile, make eye contact with participants, speak in a pleasant tone of voice, use relaxed body language, incorporate humour where appropriate and to be patient and not rush participants to respond (Mack *et al.*, 2005:60). The researcher decided to start the interview process with focus group discussions, seeing that it was anticipated that girls might be nervous or embarrassed to talk about sexuality. The researcher hoped that this would put girls at ease and encourage them to take part in individual interviews, seeing they would by then already have had exposure to the interviewer, the interview process, as well as the topic of discussion.

- Focus groups

Focus groups were chosen as a method of data collection because many researchers argue that focus group interviews can produce data rich in detail that is difficult to achieve with other research methods (Maree, 2007:118). Focus group discussions succeeded effectively in capturing information about the social norms of adolescent girls as well as a variety of opinions or views. In focus groups, participants could influence each other through their presence and their reactions to what others in the group had to say. Since not everyone in a group had the same views and experiences, it was possible to hear many different viewpoints expressed by participants (Mack *et al.*, 2005:52).

The researcher conducted interviews according to a well thought through interview schedule (refer to Annexure H). Originally, creative methods of data gathering were part of the interview schedule where participants would have been asked to creatively explain their perceptions regarding sexual decision making by drawing a "sexuality lifeline (refer to Annexure B). However, after the first two group sessions had been conducted, the researcher sensed that this activity seemed to counter the adolescent girls' process of sharing their perceptions regarding the topic of sexual decision making. The researcher perceived that the girls were more eager to

talk and that they seemed to be almost irritated for having to keep quiet and do an activity. As the focus of this study is to hearing the voice of the adolescent girl, the researcher considered the latter to be more important and decided to exclude the sexuality lifeline from the focus group discussions. According to Fouché and Delport (2011:64), it is quite normal for qualitative data collection methods to change along the way, seeing that the research process is more holistic and emergent. Fouché and Delport (2011:64) mentioned that the researcher must be open-minded and prepared to immerse in the complexity of the situation. The researcher is of opinion that this exclusion did not affect triangulation and crystallisation negatively, seeing that semi-structured interviews, naïve sketches and journaling were also used as methods of data-gathering (Shenton, 2004:65).

- Semi-structured individual interviews

The researcher conducted semi-structured individual interviews with participants who had already taken part in focus group discussions and indicated a willingness to come for a follow-up interview. Maree (2007:87) stated that the aim of qualitative interviews is to see the world through the eyes of the participant, which can be a valuable source of information. Semi-structured interviews were used to corroborate data that emerged from the focus group discussions (Maree, 2007:87). The researcher could also see how data that were gathered during focus group discussions compared with data collected from individual interviews.

An interview schedule was developed out of particularly interesting topics that emerged from focus group discussions which the researcher wanted to explore further. After careful consideration, a set of eight questions was developed (refer to Annexure H). To make participants feel more at ease during interviews, they were given a typed format of the questions. The researcher informed participants beforehand that they were under no obligation to answer questions that they did not want to. Although some of them did, girls were never pressurised to share any private experiences about their lives. The interviews did not span a long time period. Apart from one interview that lasted 45 minutes, interviews lasted until all eight questions had been covered, which on average took more or less 20 minutes.

- Naïve sketches

After the completion of interviews, participants were requested to reflect on the process of participation (Steyn, 2010:881). Naïve sketches were used by posing four questions on paper with space for participants to describe their experience (refer to Annexure H) (Klopper & Botha, 1996:17). The nature of descriptive naïve sketches is inductive and descriptive in order to investigate and describe phenomena and is therefore suitable as this research study is conducted inductively with an interpretive descriptive approach (Chabeli, 2008:53).

- Journaling of researcher

The main purpose of journaling was to document and reflect on experiences as a way of thinking, understanding and learning about sexual decision making of adolescent girls (Hayman *et al.*, 2012:28). After the completion of focus groups or individual interviews, the researcher often recorded private voice notes on a tape recorder about the main things that stood out in a specific interview. Seeing that interviews were sometimes scheduled close together, the recording of voice notes was faster than to make use of written notes. When there was more than one interview per day, voice notes also helped the researcher not to forget things by the time that interviews were transcribed and journaling were done. The researcher's journal was in the form of a private internet blog. Each day after interviews had taken place, the researcher self-reflected by adding the voice notes and other information to the blog. In this way new data were collected in order to enrich and confirm the data that had already been collected during focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews (Hayman *et al.*, 2012:28). The researcher could also in this way clarify data and seek responses to questions inadequately explored during the interviews (Hayman *et al.*, 2012:28). Readers are welcome to visit the blog at www.tumblr.com/blog/ronelkoch.

In conclusion, in this study data were gathered by multiple methods. This is a triangulation strategy that is often used in interpretive descriptive qualitative research. Triangulation could yield richer and a more balanced picture of the phenomenon of adolescent girls' sexual decision making and also served as a cross-validation method (Miles & Gilbert, 2005:151).

3.6   DATA ANALYSIS

Due to the fact that the empirical research was conducted at three schools with 75 participants, the researcher was faced with analysing a large amount of data. In order to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher was forced to approach the data analysis in a highly organised manner which will now be explained (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:104).

3.6.1   Preparation of data

As it is advised that the transcription process should begin as soon as possible after the data collection event, the researcher transcribed voice recordings on the same day that data that were collected (Mack *et al.*, 2005:84). The researcher made use of a four-column format where the first column contained the interviewer's questions or remarks, the second column contained the participants' responses, the third column was used for coding (which will be explained in the next section) and the last column was used to write additional notes. Since it is important for the researcher to get to know the data extremely well, the process of self-transcribing was beneficial

as it served as the first step of becoming more familiar with the data. Another advantage was that the researcher could include non-verbal cues (such as silences or emotional distress) in the transcript which is something that a person who was not present during the interviews would not be able to do (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:104). These non-verbal cues could also have significance when analysing the data. After the data had been transcribed, the researcher read and re-read the text, in order get an even better understanding of the data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:104; Miles & Gilbert, 2005:152-153).

3.6.2   Coding the data

After the process of transcribing and reading the text several times, the researcher started to read even more carefully through the data and it was divided into meaningful analytical units, line by line (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:105). Abbreviations or key words were written in the third column to code segments of data that were perceived to be important, thereby serving as collection points for significant data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:105). The researcher kept a master list which compiled together all the codes that were used in the study and explanations thereof. The same codes were applied to all transcribed texts where similar segments of data emerged (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:105-106). Seeing that this research study has an inductive research design, inductive coding was applied. Codes thus emerged from the data and the researcher did not work with a set of *a priori* codes, i.e. codes that were developed before examining the data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:107).

3.6.3   Establishing themes, sub-themes and supporting themes

In this phase codes were organised or combined into themes or categories (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:108). The product of an interpretive description is a coherent conceptual description that taps thematic patterns and commonalities believed to characterise the phenomenon that is being studied and also accounts for the inevitable individual variations within them (Thorne *et al.,* 2004:7). Some of the codes could be grouped together in order to form themes, sub-themes and supporting themes. The researcher continued to do this until no new themes, sub-themes or supporting themes could be identified (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:109). Themes will be discussed in depth in Chapter 4 with quotes from the transcribed text to illustrate the meaning of the themes (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:109).

3.6.4   Interpreting data

Seeing that data analysis was done inductively, what the researcher had in the end was, quite simply, descriptive summaries of what adolescent girls had said (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:111). Of

course, the process of coding and categorising involved some level of interpretation, but this was ultimately linked with the way in which the adolescent girls had described sexual decision making. The researcher aimed to move away from this level of interpretation to an analytic understanding that began to explain things the way they were (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:111). This means that the researcher brought analysed data in context with existing literature regarding adolescent girls' sexual decision making to reveal how it corroborated existing knowledge or how it brought new understanding to the body of knowledge (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:111). A more comprehensive description of data interpretation will be presented in Chapter 4.

3.7   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the following ways, the researcher ensured that research was undertaken in an ethically sound way:

- Avoidance of potential harm and risk to participants

As far as the researcher is concerned, no participants suffered any physical or emotional harm during the empirical investigation of this study. In fact, the naïve sketches prove that every single participant indicated that they enjoyed being part of the study. The researcher protected girls from experiencing discomfort during interviews, in that they were never forced to speak about their own experiences, but could speak about girls in general. The researcher did see the need to refer one of the participants to an educational psychologist for emotional support. The emotional distress that this particular participant experienced is not a result of the interview, but of difficult circumstances in her life.

- Voluntary participation

All participants in this study took part on a voluntary basis. No participant was forced to take part in the study.

- Informed consent

Each participant was provided with a letter which contained elaborate information regarding this study (refer to Annexure G). The researcher has a signed parental consent form for each participant who took part in the study. The overarching purpose of informed consent procedures was to ensure that participants understood that they were not for any reason obligated to participate in the research, nor were they required to answer any questions they did not wish to answer (Mack *et al.*, 2005:53).

- Deception of participants

As far as the researcher is concerned, no participant was ever deceived in any way or given incorrect information in order to ensure their participation in this study.

- Confidentiality and anonymity

The names of schools or participants have not been mentioned in this study. Throughout the process of data gathering, the researcher took precautionary actions to store data securely and will continue to do so. The researcher would like to stress that although participants were assured that everything they shared in the focus groups would be treated as confidential, the researcher cannot promise that other members of the focus groups will do the same. The researcher did ask all participants at the beginning of each session that they should respect other participants' privacy and anonymity (Mack *et al.*, 2005:53).

- Compensation

The researcher offered participants refreshments (coffee and biscuits) at the start of an interview. No further compensation was offered to participants of this study.

3.8   TRUSTWORTHINESS

The aim of trustworthiness in qualitative research is to support the argument that the researcher's findings are worth paying attention to (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290). Lincoln &Guba (1985:219) proposed four criteria that the researcher of this study considered in order to prove the trustworthiness of this study, i.e. credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

- Credibility

According to Merriam (cited by Shenton, 2004:64), credibility asks whether the findings of the research are congruent with reality. Shenton (2004:73) advised researchers to adopt the following strategies in order to ensure credibility:

o   *Appropriate, well recognised research methods*

Earlier in this chapter, the researcher elaborately explained the choice of methods and the reasons for these choices. Research methods were well thought through and researched in order to ensure that a research method was chosen that was most appropriate for this study and that would ensure the best results.

o   *Triangulation via use of different methods, different types of participants and different sites*

Data were gathered by making use of focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, naïve sketches, as well as self-reflection of the researcher. Data were gathered from diverse groups of girls from diverse school settings. In this way triangulation was ensured.

o   *Debriefing sessions between researcher and supervisors*

There were continuous discussions between the researcher, the supervisor, as well as the co-supervisor, regarding each step of this research study.

o   *The background, qualifications and experience of the researcher*

The researcher has a degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Stellenbosch. After graduating, the researcher's experience ranges from being a lecturer at the University of Western Cape in didactics of Life Orientation, as well as being a high school Life Orientation teacher. This was where a curiosity regarding this research topic started.

o   *Member checks of data collected and interpretations/theories formed*

As mentioned previously, naïve sketches were used as member checks, where participants reflected on the process of taking part in the study.

o   *Thick description of phenomenon under scrutiny*

Qualitative research was done, which allowed for thick descriptions regarding the topic of sexual decision making of adolescent girls.

o   *Examination of previous research to frame findings*

In Chapters 1 and 2 the researcher often referred to previous researches that have been done regarding this topic and a thorough literature review was done to frame the findings of this research.

- Transferability

Transferability refers to whether the results of the work at hand can be applied to a wider population (Shenton, 2004:69). This research project consisted of 75 participants from a diverse context. The researcher considers the size and diversity of the sample as a strength of the study, as it makes the study more representative of the population of South African schools and ensures that recommendations of this study are not merely directed at a limited audience. The researcher, however, relies on the thick description of adolescent girls' sexual decision making to allow readers to have a proper understanding of it, which might enable readers to compare the instances of the phenomenon described with those that they see emerge in their own situations (Shenton, 2004:70). It is therefore hoped that this study will enable audiences like the

Western Cape Education Department, parents of adolescent girls, sexuality education teachers, and others, to understand sexual decision making of adolescent girls in a way that enables them to apply what they have learnt as they see fit.

- Dependability

The researcher believes that this methodological process has been explained in a way that if the work were to be repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained (Shenton, 2004:71).

- Confirmability

The concept of confirmability is the qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity (Shenton, 2004:72). While analysing the data, the researcher made sure that the data and interpretations of the study were grounded in events rather than the researcher's personal constructions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:323). Steps were taken to ensure that the research findings were the result of the experiences and ideas of the adolescent girls, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. These steps were: the use of triangulation to reduce effects of investigator bias, a recognition of shortcomings in the study's methods and their potential effects (described in Chapter 5) and an in-depth methodological description to allow integrity of the research results to be scrutinised (Shenton, 2004:73). These four criteria of trustworthiness were addressed by the researcher in order to present a convincing case that the work of this research project is academically sound (Shenton, 2004:73).

3.9   CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview and elaborated on the methodological processes that were followed in this study. The research was approached qualitatively and an inductive interpretive descriptive research design was used. Typical of qualitative research, data were collected by means of multiple methods. These methods ensured triangulation and lead to gathering of rich, descriptive data. The gathered data were analysed in a way to better understand how adolescent girls engage in sexual decision making. The chapter ended off by proving that this systematic process of research was approached in an ethically sound and trustworthy manner. In the following chapter, the research results will be presented and discussed.

CHAPTER 4

REPORT AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The intention of this chapter is to report on the results of the empirical research of this study where data have been obtained qualitatively by means of focus group discussions, individual interviews, naïve sketches and reflective journaling by the researcher. Data that were gathered from focus groups and individual interviews were transcribed verbatim and different categories, themes, sub-themes evolved from this data. Direct quotations will be integrated throughout this chapter as a means of representing the participants' description of themes. A separate theme has been incorporated which reports on data gathered from naïve sketches. Verbatim quotations from the researcher's journal will also be added to serve as a method of triangulation. All of these results will be analysed and tested against existing literature to indicate in which ways the gathered data is unique, concurs with and differs from existing literature.

4.2   RESEARCH RESULTS

An important first step in data processing is to give a description of the participants of the study which should be as detailed as possible (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:130). A profile of the participants that took part in this study was presented in Chapter 3 and it is against this background that research results need to be viewed. As also explained in Chapter 3, the gathered data were analysed inductively. This means that the results reported in this chapter are descriptive summaries of what participants have said as it emerged from codes and categories out of the gathered data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:111). The researcher kept focus throughout the entire process on learning the meaning that participants hold about sexual decision making and not the meaning that the researcher or writers from literature brought to the research (Creswell, 2007 cited by Fouché & Delport, 2011:65). Even though coding and categorising of data does represent some level of interpretation, the researcher aimed in the presentation of results to move away from interpretation to an analytical understanding of adolescent girls' sexual decision making (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:111). As a result, raw transcribed data from each theme will be presented, after which the data will be brought into context with existing theory to reveal how it corroborates existing knowledge or brings new understanding to the body of knowledge (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:111). As also advised by Nieuwenhuis (2007:110-111), the researcher will

often make use of visual representations of data to assist the reader in following the interpretations of this study.

Two main categories were developed which could be linked with the three objectives of this study. The first category (sexual decision making) links with the first two objectives, namely to explore in literature how adolescent girls engage in the process of sexual decision making, to identify how adolescent girls are influenced in their sexual decision making. The second category (girls' voices on sexuality education) links with the third objective which is to formulate guidelines on the integration of adolescent girls' voices in the development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme in the Western Cape. The first category will now be discussed.[1]

CATEGORY 1: SEXUAL DECISION MAKING

Sexual decision making as a category refers to the reasons why adolescent girls choose to engage in or abstain from sexual activities. The table below is a summary of the main themes and sub-themes that emerged from transcribed data in relation to this category.

Table 4.1: Category 1: Themes and sub-themes

CATEGORY 1: SEXUAL DECISION MAKING		
Themes		**Sub-themes**
Theme 1 Relationship-based involvement in sexual activities	1	Compliant sexual behaviour
	2	Sexual involvement in intimate relationships
	3	The influence of peers
	4	The influence of parents
Theme 2 Context-based involvement in sexual activities	1	A need for money
	2	Abuse of alcohol at social gatherings
	3	The influence of media
Theme 3 Abstinence from sexual activity	1	Consequences of engaging in sexual activity
	2	The influence of significant others on sexual abstinence
	3	Protecting the self from harm

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[1]Many of the participants of this study were Afrikaans speaking and therefore their comments had to be translated. To prevent this chapter from being too lengthy, Afrikaans quotes were omitted. Please refer to Annexure I for an example of how quotes were translated.

The term '*this* study' will be used when referring to this particular research study. The term '*the* study' will be used when the researcher refers to studies that have been conducted by other researchers.

THEME 1: **RELATIONSHIP-BASED INVOLVEMENT IN SEXUAL ACITIVITIES**

Relationship-based involvement in sexual activities as a theme is relevant to the way in which girls' relationships with others, including members of the opposite sex, peers and parents might influence girls' sexual decision making.

Sub-theme 1: **Compliant sexual behaviour**

Compliant sexual behaviour indicates girls' agreement to have sex based on their relationships with boys. The participants mentioned various reasons why girls' sexual decision making is influenced by boys. Firstly participants revealed that girls often agree to have sex to satisfy or please boys. As the responses below indicate girls do not experience that they are forced to have sex, but rather perceive their willingness to have sex as a favour to the boys.

> *The girl is not forced, but she only does it to keep the peace. She does it with regret.* (Group 2)

> *Say you have a boyfriend, then you must also, as they say, satisfy him.* (Group 8)

> *You don't want to disappoint your boyfriend.* (Group 11)

> *Because we want to make our boyfriends happy.* (Group 13)

Another possible reason for complying to have sex is the fear that refusal to have sex could result in a girl losing her boyfriend, or a way in which a girl uses to get a boyfriend back after a break-up.

> *Very often it would happen that the guy would want to do it and the girl doesn't want to, but she cannot say no, because maybe she actually feels something for the guy and then she has to say no and then she loses him. Then he dumps her.* (Group 1)

> *"If you don't do it, I will leave you". Sometimes a lot of girls are unsure of whether they will ever find a boyfriend again so they say, "Okay, that's fine, you can kiss me, you can touch me". And then it moves on from there and they allow them to do whatever they want, just to keep the boyfriend.* (Group 2)

> *Most girls will then just do it, because they are scared to lose the guy.* (Group 4)

> *He will dump her and then he has a different girl. And she still loves him. Now he and his girl walk past and she sees it and then she feels a bit down. Now tonight he comes back to her again and then it is almost like, no, you saw what he will do, so I will give to him, because then it can be me who walk with him.* (Group 8)

If you don't have sex, you think your boyfriend is going to look outside for other girls. (Group 11)

The first thing that comes forth in almost every group is that the girl says yes to have sex, because she is scared that the boyfriend will dump her. (Journal)

A third reason reported by the participants is that girls feel pressured to have sex due to the expectations that boys seem to have about relationships with them.

I think literally the majority of girls feel they are being pressured to do it. (Group 1)

I think the guys play a big role and they pressurise the girls. (Group 5)

He was like all other guys, he expected me to have sex with him. And afterwards, I was so under his pressure that I ended up doing it after all. And that is actually something that I feel embarrassed about. (Participant 12)

The situation I am in is not right for me. Now I would actually like to get rid of him, but he doesn't want to leave me alone. Now I actually don't really know what to do. What I am concerned, he is not going to listen to me if I tell him to leave me alone, because that I have told him many times already. (Participant 12)

He does not take no for an answer. (Participant 14)

Some girls also reported to be caught up in a relationship where sex is expected of them and they don't know how to get out of it. Pressure from guys plays an enormous role. (Journal)

Another form of pressure mentioned by participants was the way in which boys suggest that when a girl loves them, she will have sex with them. The statement, "Boys would say, if you love me, you will have sex with me" came forth in the focus group discussions across the three contexts.

A guy puts pressure on you to do it and says, "If you really love me, you will do it". (Group 2)

A boyfriend will always say to you, "I love you, have sex with me". Then she will just say, "Yes, let's do it then". (Group 6)

He asks you whether you love him and then you say, "yes". And then he says, "Prove your love". Then she must prove it by having sex with him. She is too scared that he will leave her. (Group 8)

If I say to him "I love you" he will say, "Prove it to me". And by having sex you must prove it to him. (Group 9)

> *"If you don't want to have sex with me, it means you don't love me".*
> (Group 13)

> *Or girls say yes to 'prove their love' for boys. "Do you love me? Then prove it by having sex with me", is what they would often say.* (Journal)

An additional reason mentioned by the participants in this study for complying to have sex, was the use of 'sweet talk' or flattery words used by boys to persuade girls to have sex with them.

> *The guys always say the same things over and over, like, "You are my life" and such things. And many girls fall for it and then they just use you and leave you.* (Group 4)

> *He promises you everything, he promises he will always be there and all those things.* (Group 6)

> *When he comes to you and says, "I love you" and "I can do anything for you" and "my angel" and "you are my world", saying all those sweet words.* (Group 10)

> *The boy can lie to the girlfriend. He say, "I love you there is no one I love, it is only you. So we can have sex".* (Group 12)

The results of this sub-theme indicate that girls comply to have sex for various reasons that are associated with their relationships with boys. These results to a large extent confirm what has already been found in research on the role of gender in sexual behaviour, as also discussed in Chapter 2 of this study (refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.2). According to a report by PAHO (2007), gender, historically, cross-culturally, and in contemporary societies, reflects and perpetuates particular power relations between men and women. Sexual identity and gender identity are therefore intrinsically embedded in these notions of power, and the question becomes, who has power, for what purpose and how are they allowed or entitled to use that power (WHO, 2002:6)? The reasons presented by the girls in this study for complying to sexual activity clearly signify power relations between boys and girls.

Girls, seemingly, are of the opinion that they have an obligation to please boys. They therefore do not perceive the subtle expectation created by boys as forceful, but rather as part of their duty towards the boys and their role as a girl. How girls perceive their role in relationships will influence their decisions to comply with unwanted sex (Walker, 1997:160). Without necessarily wanting to do, girls tend to engage in sexual behaviour merely to keep a boyfriend happy. Girls may find it difficult to say ''no'' to early sexual episodes, especially out of desires to please or appease their male partners (Pearson *et al.,* 2012:15).

Not only do girls have sex with boys to please them, but in some instances girls also appear to engage in sexual activities to sustain a relationship with a boyfriend. It was reported that a refusal to have sex could result in loss of a boyfriend and therefore girls would comply to have sex to prevent this from happening. This result was verified by Naidoo (2006:42-43) who reported that girls often find it difficult to reject a boyfriend's request for sexual intercourse for fear of losing him.

Furthermore, it was reported that girls also give in to the persuasive language that boys tend to use to coerce them to have sex. A study by Seme and Wirtu (2009:170) found that one of the reasons why adolescent girls engage in sexual activity is due to the fact that boys mislead them by enticing them with sweet words. Boys were also reported in this study to use the term, "If you love me, you will have sex with me" as a way to manipulate girls to have sex with them.

In conclusion, Walker (1997:158) mentioned that the reasons why young women would engage in sexual activity are in response to continual arguments or non-verbal pressure to have sex, out of a desire to please a partner, or because it is "expected" that intercourse should happen, which is very similar to the findings of this study.

Sub-theme 2: **Sexual involvement in intimate relationships**

Sexual involvement in intimate relationships refers to sexual decision making that is associated with a deeper connection in the context of courting or dating. The decisions in these contexts seem to be based on experiences of intimacy. Participants reported that when girls have long-term relationships with boys they might begin to feel ready to have sex.

> *Originally you thought you would not, but say you and the guy love one another very much and have been together for a long time, then I think the girl will consider it more.* (Group 2)

> *Say you have been with the guy for a long time and the girl is using the pill, or what do you call it, contraception?* (Group 2)

Participants furthermore stated that feelings of being in love is the reason why some girls make the decision to have sex. They experience these feelings as true love and because of these feelings for the boy with whom they fell in love they might even disregard their own decisions regarding sex before marriage.

> *Yes, a person can say this your entire life, but if you meet that guy and that moment comes, then you don't worry anymore. And then afterwards you regret it.* (Group 3)

They will do it, because they think it is true love, and then they just do it, because they love that person very much. (Group 4)

I actually have many girlfriends who have been in a situation like this. They all said that they want to wait until they get married and then they fall in love with the guy and they love the guy so much and went from the one sexual thing to the other and that lead to sex and most of them regret it and now say they are done with that until they get married. (Group 5)

Participants pointed out that in some situations sexual desire is aroused in these closer relationships and girls give in to these desires.

Girls and guys get needs for that. So if you are a virgin and you don't want to sleep with the guy, you don't know what you're missing, but a girl who has had sex before, is attracted to that feeling.(Group 1)

You are horny, you want to do it. You don't think in that moment. (Group 3)

Teenagers have hormones and some of them just can't control it.(Participant 2)

According to the participants some girls get involved in sexual activities, because they want to experiment to know more about sex. It was also reported that some girls have the need to experiment to get ready for intimate relationships with boys.

I have heard of people who think that they need to practise before they enter a serious relationship, because otherwise they will not know what to do. (Group 4)

To experiment. To know how it is and feels. (Group 5)

Now I am a bit older than she is, then I would say last night this and this happened and then this younger girl finds it interesting and then she wants to know more. (Group 6)

It makes you curious, because in the end you do it to find out all those things, because there is nobody who tells you. (Participant 1)

The results indicated that girls often make sexual decisions based on feelings that they have for boys with whom they experience a deeper connection. Literature acknowledges that romantic relationships are a central part of most adolescents' social worlds (Papalia *et al.*, 2009:489). In the context of these romantic relationships, it was reported by participants in this study that the longer a relationship lasts, the more likely the couple is to engage sexually.

Even those who originally planned to abstain from sex would sometimes change their minds as a result of being in love with a boy. In a study by Osorio *et al.* (2012:273) the reason most frequently reported by females for having had first sex was "I was in love". Girls often report a need for intimacy, love and affection as motivations for seeking sexual activity (WHO, 2002:7).

It seemed as though girls' sexual decision making is also directed by their desire for sex. Despite love being quite commonly reported as a factor in adolescents' decision to engage in sex for the first time, getting carried away by sexual arousal was simultaneously present as reasons for sexual debut in most participants as confirmed by Osorio *et al.* (2012:277). Louw *et al.* (2001:405) verify these statements by mentioning that some of the reasons that adolescents give for engaging in sexual activity are: seeking physical pleasure, to prove their love for someone and getting carried away by passion.

Furthermore, research has shown adolescence is a life-phase where adolescents are inclined to "experiment" with risk-taking behaviour, which would therefore increase the chance of them participating in risky sexual behaviours (Fennie, 2011:10; Ncitakalo, 2011:72). Fennie (2011:10) stated that a previous study regarding sexual behaviour among young South Africans reported that 30 percent of the youth aged 15 to 24 had their sexual debut due to experimentation.

Sub-theme 3: **The influence of peers**

The influence of peers deals with the impact of peer relations on the sexual decisions of girls to have sex. Various ways in which peers influence the sexual decisions of adolescent girls were explained by the participants. Firstly it was evident that girls sometimes have sex to fit in with the crowd. The participants indicated that girls who are virgins are often excluded from the peer group.

> *There was a time, if you were in high school and you have had sex, you were the outcast. These days you are the outcast if you haven't had sex yet. It's kind of shocking to think of it that way.* (Group 1)

> *You don't want to fit in with your parents, you want to fit in with the world and what they think is right.* (Group 1)

> *If you are not willing to do these things you never get invited somewhere. You don't have that status of 'this I will do and I will drink this much' and then they will say, "Okay well, you are just so not part of this group".* (Group 1)

> *It's like your friends who are all doing it, and then you want to fit in, kind of, or you don't really want to do it, but they say to you, "Go try it".* (Group 2)

And even if they don't tell you to do it, but your entire group of friends have done it already, you will feel left out and inferior to them, because girls talk about everything. So they talk about this guy and that guy and how it happened and then you sit there and feel left out. Then you also just do it. (Group 5)

And you have to break your virginity to fit in, and if you are a virgin you can't fit in. Then you are excluded. (Group 8)

The participants also explained that some girls consider having sex with boys as it gives them status, particularly when the boys are popular with girls.

I think also that thing of wanting to be cool, because let's say you had the 'jock', the most handsome guy in school and he is interested in you, then you will do anything to keep him. Obviously he has slept with a lot of girls, but you will do it, just to keep him and to maintain that status. (Group 4)

You will give him what he wants, because everyone knows him and you want to be known by him. Because you want everyone to talk about you who are dating the handsome guy. (Group 7)

Some do it to be popular, to become popular. (Group 9)

Furthermore responses indicated that for some girls, sex is a way to get accepted by their peers. In order to be accepted, girls might repetitively engage in sex to stay part of the "in-group".

It comes back to self image, because if you feel bad about yourself you might think, I might as well do it. And then when it happens and people start noticing you, you will want to do it again and again. Because when you decided you will never do it, nobody noticed you or knew who or what you were. (Group 1)

Maybe it is new friends that you have and then they say to you, "But if you don't do it, you won't be part of us, so you have to do it to be part of us". (Group 5)

For example maybe I don't have sex and my friends have sex, they would look at you 'stupid girl' and why don't you have sex? And it is a cool thing. They will take you like an idiot. (Group 10)

You are influenced by your friends. Your friends do that and you don't do that. If you don't do it, they will say you are a child. Childish. (Group 13)

So I don't have a decision, if I want to be in the group, I have to do it. I don't have a choice. (Participant 9)

The results indicate that peers play a significant role in girls' sexual decision making as confirmed by Enfield (2003:16) who emphasised the crucial role of peers in the social development of the adolescent. In a study by Onyeonoro *et al.* (2011:297) many girls acknowledged that sex information received from peers increased their tendency to get involved in sexual activities. It is highlighted in studies that peers have a significant role as primary sources of sex information (Onyeonoro *et al.*, 2011:298).

Also among the older youth (i.e. those aged 16–19 years), an adolescent's best friend having had sex is a significant predictor of sexual debut (Abbott & Dalla, 2008:632). Like the participants in this study reported as well, young people, according to Papalia *et al.* (2009:476), often feel under pressure to engage in activities that they do not feel ready for. If adolescents perceive that their friends are having unprotected sex or engage in risky sex, they may be more likely to adopt their friends' behaviours (Ncitakalo 2011:24; Papalia *et al.*, 2009:476). Ncitakalo (2011:24) pointed out that because of certain attitudes of and pressures from the peer group, adolescents may be under the impression that they are not normal if they are not sexually active. Adolescent girls are therefore likely to become sexually active, to be accepted by the peer group. It is clear that girls are not only often encouraged by peers to be sexually active, but peers could also expose them to risky sexual behaviour.

Sub-theme 4: The influence of parents

The influence of parents points out the role that parents play in sexual decision making of girls. The participants in this study suggested that there is a link between a lack of parental supervision and sexual behaviour. The absence of parents may be due to work, evenings out, going away for weekends or holidays. The absence of parents is apparently experienced as an absence of protection from making a decision to have sex.

> *The parents are there or not there. It depends on who it is. Sometimes it's people whose parents just don't care, and then there are other times when parents are gone for the weekend and then everyone goes there.* (Group 1)

> *I think there are also many girls who unknowingly put themselves in such a situation. Say for example, you watch movies at the guy's house one night and they know that the parents will not be there and then they still go and put themselves unknowingly in a situation where they have to make that decision.* (Group 2)

> *The girl goes to visit the guy and they are alone, then it probably happens.* (Group 5)

> *It is not easy, because you don't have someone to protect you. Our mothers are always at work. They come late and they don't know what is going on. Maybe you stay alone at home.* (Group 10)

My parents are not at home and then he comes up and he wants to do it. It's almost like the guy just wants to get from you when you are alone at home. He wants it and you don't want to give it, then he gets angry. (Participant 13)

The participants also reported that it is not merely about parents being present. They clearly stated that girls need their parents to be actively involved in their lives in order for them to protect themselves from making decisions that involve sexual activities. It does seem that sexual engagement in this instance is not related to a desire to have sex, but rather that girls are looking for love and affection that they don't find from their parents, which then results in sex.

Your circumstances at home, your mom and them don't care about you a lot, or there is fighting at home and then the guy is the only place where you get attention and then you will do anything to make that relationship work, because it's the only place where you get attention and feel appreciated. Then you will do anything to keep the guy happy, just so that he will stay with you. (Group 2)

I think many teenagers are seeking that love, they don't get it from their parents. Say I have really bad problems, teacher doesn't want to talk to me, I can't talk to my parents so then you go speak to the guy. I think a lot of girls sleep with a guy to feel that closeness with someone. (Group 4)

That's why I feel the girls fall pregnant, because they feel 'my parents don't care so I'm going to'. Or it's the way in which they seek love and attention, because they feel inferior and they have low self-confidence. (Participant 11)

My mom doesn't worry, my dad isn't with us, nobody really cares. Then I thought no, I am a big girl, I am a big girl, I am a teenager, I can do what I want. Then I also actually did, I took a boyfriend. (Participant 12)

A very negative influence regarding parents is fathers who engage in sexual activities in front of their daughters or even worse, sexually abuse their daughters.

Or the girls that are sexually active at a young age. Maybe their father was doing it in front of them. Then they think maybe what my father is doing is cool and it's fine because my father does it in front of me so they think it is cool to do it like that. (Group 10)

And other fathers raped them when they were young, so when she is old, maybe when she is a teenager, she will think, what her father was doing to her was right. (Group 10)

The fathers, old people rape the child, maybe 8 years and then you rape and even boys are raped, not only girls. It happens most often in our communities. They rape boys and girls. They don't have faith. That is why sex is a very popular here in our communities, many black children are doing it. (Group 10)

The participants reported that adolescent girls sometimes engage in sexual behaviour as a result of inadequate parenting. Literature verifies that parenting impacts sexual behaviour of adolescents. According to Panday *et al.* (2009:62-63) family structure characteristics such as poor parental supervision place adolescents at an elevated risk of early pregnancy. No parental supervision was reported by participants as a factor that could put girls at risk as girls appear to find themselves in situations where they are not being protected by adults, which often leads to sexual engagement. Prior research proves that adolescents with poor or no parental supervision are more likely to engage in early onset of sexual intercourse, increasing their vulnerability to diseases and sexually transmitted infections (Fennie, 2011:19).

Limited or non-involvement of parents was also explained as a reason why girls would seek the love and affection that they did not find from parents, in relationships with boys which consequently places them at risk of getting involved in sexual activities. Macleod (1999b:8) reported that particularly parents in lower socio-economic groups tend to have little influence over or interest in their teenage daughters, thus leading to the higher rates of teenage pregnancy (Macleod,1999b:8).

It was furthermore reported in this study how incest could enhance involvement in sexual practices in other contexts of the abused girl's life. As far as incest is concerned, in Costa Rica an organisation working with adolescent mothers reported that 95 percent of its pregnant clients under the age of 15 were victims of incest (PAHO, 2000:16). The literature therefore confirms what has been reported by participants.

The figure below serves as a summary of Theme 1 with sub-themes as they emerged from transcribed interviews.
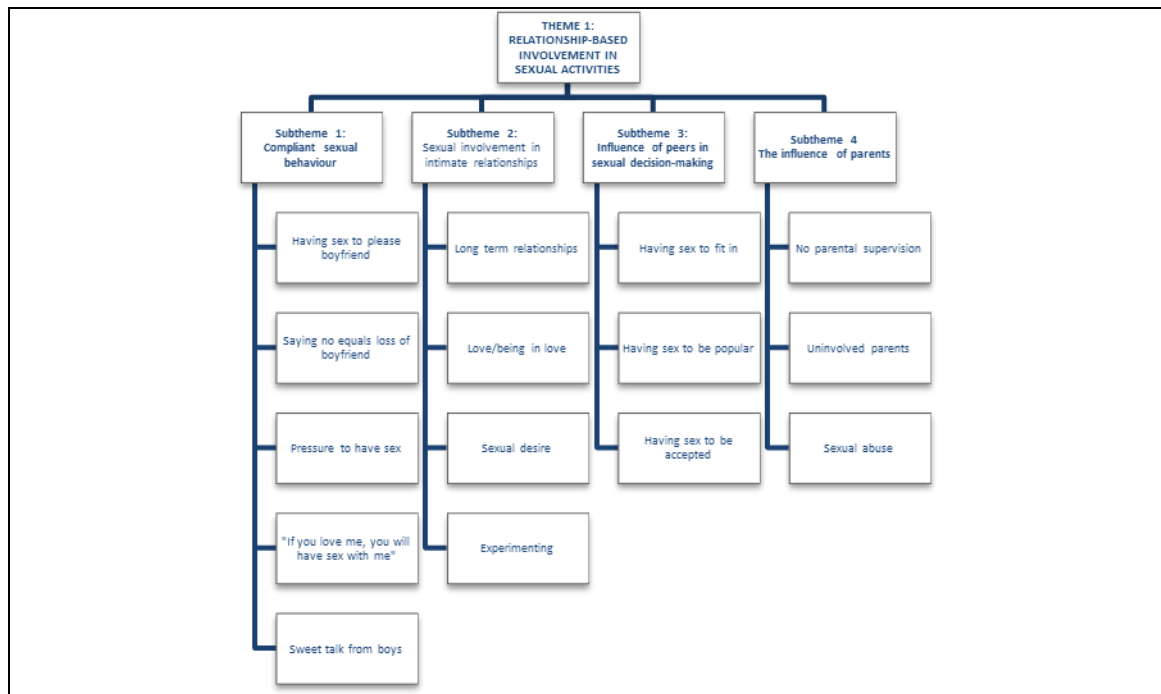
Figure 4.1: Category 1, Theme 1

THEME 2: CONTEXT-BASED INVOLVEMENT IN SEXUAL ACTIVITIES

Context-based involvement in sexual activities as a theme proposes the effects of poverty, substance abuse and social gatherings as well as the impact of the media on girls' sexual decision making.

Sub-theme 1: A need for money

A need for money as a sub-theme signifies unmet financial needs that are associated with poverty in the areas where girls reside and indicates how these circumstances influence their sexual decision making. The participants reported that girls apparently have sex with boys to earn some money to be able to buy food or clothes and other items that they would otherwise not be able to afford.

> *The saddest thing of all is our teenagers go sit with boyfriends for money. It happens often in the poor areas. Say the girl doesn't have money and her mom and them can't give money, then girls sleep with guys for money to buy something harmless like clothes. Not necessarily for drugs.* (Group 4)

> *The best solution to bring food into the house is to have sex with a stranger, an older person. Just to get hold of money.* (Group 7)

> *Some accept this as it is and they have to do it to have an income. I know a girl who lives with us and her mother had a baby, but the mother could not buy the baby's clothes, so she had to lie down with a*

Nigerian for the mother to have money to buy clothes and milk for the baby. (Group 8)

We do it because we are forced to do it. Our parents, we are forced by our situations, we are poor, so we, when my friend is rich, so I must do, I must sleep with men so I can get money so I can be where my friend is. Then I can wear what she wear, all those things. We do it because of the situation we are in. (Participant 16)

What also struck me today was the difference between a girl in a privileged area and an unprivileged area. It was the fact that girls often seem to be forced to have sex to get money, but it is different from prostitution. It seems to be a basic way of survival or of earning "pocket money". I often found myself, while listening to interviews or reading through transcribed data, literally shaking my head from side to side, asking myself, how can this be happening? (Journal)

The participants furthermore implied that there might be a link between sexual decision making and drug use. Once again girls wants to make money, but this time it is to be able to afford drugs and to feed their addiction. It also seems as though some men purposefully expose girls to addictive drugs. To satisfy their addiction girls then have sex with men in exchange for drugs.

Most of them are young ladies that use 'Tik' and drugs, then they have sex to get money to buy more drugs. It's not school boys, these are old men, men who work and have businesses and so on. Men that drive trucks. Old men. Old men who might have wife, but they have needs. (Group 9)

Maybe they are using drugs and the drug is making them do what is wrong. You don't know what you do when you are drugged so you do whatever. (Group 10)

I have a friend, but not in this school. She have sex with some man and he drugs her. The more she has sex with the man, he gives her drugs. He take Dagga, all those drugs. Cocaine. (Group 10)

They are in taverns and they are drugged, so they don't know what is happening to them. (Group 10)

Participants voiced their concern about the way in which the social grant from the government could influence sexual decision making of girls. Participants mentioned that some girls view the grant money as an incentive to fall pregnant.

Others do sex, because they are poor. Then they think maybe if I have a baby the grant money will help me to support my family. (Group 10)

Some girls when they get pregnant they get money, child grant. And then they take it to the tavern, drink it, without supporting the child. (Group 10)

They want social grant. Or they want to build a family. (Group 11)

Sometimes they take it by force. Or they shall share it. (This participant mentioned that the father of the baby will take the grant money from the mother by force or that the mother and the father of the baby will share the money). (Group 11)

No, it is not a lot. They think about their pocket money, they don't think about the baby. (This participant mentioned that the grant money is not a lot of money, but that girls view it as 'pocket money', without thinking of the added expenses of having to provide for a baby).(Group 11)

With regards to the need for money, the presence of what is called 'sugar daddies' was specifically mentioned by the girls. The 'sugar daddies' seemingly refer to older men who are in a position to buy girls various things that they might find useful. Girls who are involved in relationships with 'sugar daddies' often have possessions and a lifestyle that is much desired by peers. Participants also reported on the dangers associated with 'sugar daddies' and mentioned that girls cannot easily get out of these relationships and may even be threatened when they want out.

Sometimes you find that some girl date with the sugar daddies. The men who are older. Maybe he will promise to buy her whatever she want. Cell phone. Maybe the girl, you like it, he will buy them phone, clothes and things you want and need. At first he will buy you all the things you want, then you will see this man is loving me. Then you are going to do that, because you will see this man is really loving me. But he does not love you, he has his own wife. He just plays with your mind and use you as a sex slave. Some is infected with HIV and AIDS.(Group 10)

Some older girls who are older than us and dropped out of school, they also say to us it is cool to date an older man than you, because you get everything you want. Jewellery, nice clothes, sweet things, everything you want, you get it. Whenever you ask her, you see her parents are poor and then you see her, she is wearing necklaces, nice things, too expensive. And then you ask her and she say, "Go and find your own 'sugar daddy' so you can be where I am". (Group 10)

They are happy, at the moment she is happy, but then when it gets hot... Maybe this girl just started dating this kind of person. But then in the middle when they can say no, this guy is very abusive. And when you want to dump him, he will say, "No, I gave you everything you want. If you want to dump me, give me back my things". So it gets very tricky like that. You don't have money to buy all those things. So you have to pay back every cent. So which means, you have to pay him by sleeping with him, whether you like it or not. He will say, "Pay me". (Group 10)

Some of the 'sugar daddies', they take you to hotels. They spoil you. (Group 10)

Even though themes like peer pressure and experimenting did come up, the predominant themes were 'sugar daddies', sex for money, drugs and rape. They seemed to speak about that much more than any other theme that came out. (Journal)

Participants' remarks indicated that due to poverty, girls often have to face unique sexual challenges. Girls appear to be forced by their circumstances of poverty to have sex in exchange for money in order to be able to satisfy fundamental biological and physiological needs, even as basic as hunger. Literature confirms that poverty can have a negative effect on sexual health and well-being of adolescent girls. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2002:13) reported that a consequence of poverty is that girls might be encouraged to get involved in transactional sexual relationships, where girls exchange sex for money, food, school tuition, or housing. Girls may also use sex to secure financial or other support for themselves or extended family (WHO, 2002:8).

Participants made mention of the fact that some girls have sex for money to buy drugs, or have sex in exchange for drugs. It was mentioned that when under the influence of drugs, girls tend to engage sexually due to lowered inhibitions or control over their bodies. In this study there was a clear link between circumstances of poverty and drug use. Literature confirms that trading sex for drugs is a function of situational forces that are pertinent to a group of people in relatively powerless circumstances (Elwood *et al.,* 1997:273). Trading sex for drugs is closely related to conditions of poverty and homelessness, conditions that especially affect many drug users (Elwood *et al.*, 1997:273).

Another reason for engaging sexually which could be linked with a need for money, was how participants in School C, and occasionally in School B, remarked that some girls have sex in order to fall pregnant to be able to receive a social grant from the government. The researcher found it interesting that, when asked about the amount of money that an adolescent mother would receive from the government, all the girls in all the groups immediately knew the exact amount, which was reported to be R280. Participants made specific mention of how this grant money would typically be spent in ways that it is not intended for. A study conducted by The Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA) at the University of Johannesburg on the impact of South Africa's child support grants, found that no research evidence exists to support the belief that the grant encourages teenage pregnancies, even though some of the interviewees of this study strongly held this view (UJ, 2012; Williams, 2007:24). This means that there appears to be the perception that grant money encourages sexual behaviour to fall pregnant, but it could not be confirmed by literature of previous research and might be a phenomenon that needs to be researched further.

However, transactional sex is not always merely to satisfy basic needs. Silberschmidt and Rasch (2001:1821-1822) reported on research about adolescent girls who had illegal abortions in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It was reported that girls were very willing to offer their sexual services, not as a means of survival, but rather as a means to gain access to small 'luxuries',

not to mention prestige from peers. Many parents appear to be perfectly aware that their daughters barter their sexuality for economic gains, but due to poverty, they choose to close their eyes, as it relieves them of their financial responsibilities (Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001:1821). More literature about transactional sex shows that some girls have multiple sexual partners as a way of accessing services, goods and cash as well as prestige, in a context where having 'rich' boyfriends is the mark of success (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012:1730).

In this study these 'rich boyfriends' were referred to as 'sugar daddies', the name used to refer to older men who have sex with younger girls in exchange for money. It also seemed evident that having a 'sugar daddy' could become a symbol of status amongst the girls, since it is a way in which enables a girl to enjoy a more privileged lifestyle. Research acknowledges that having sex with 'sugar daddies' seems to be a widespread phenomenon in African cities (Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001:1816). Studies in Africa point to the routine propositioning of girls by older males, many of whom offer gifts and money in exchange for sex (Bhana, 2012:353). With increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS, these men are now increasingly blamed for luring younger, 'safer' girls who are hopefully too young to be infected by HIV, into sexual relations by promising them some degree of financial security (Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001:1816). A 'sugar daddy' gives prestige among peers since a girl's status within this group is often dependent on having nice clothes and other material possessions. Such things are acquired most easily by entering into a sexual relationship with a man who is willing to provide (Silberschmidt & Rasch, 2001:1821). It appears as though all the above mentioned results that were found by previous research are also apparent in the lives of the girls in this study. It did seem, however, as if participants seemed to be fully aware of the dangers associated with having a 'sugar daddy'.

Sub-theme 2: **Abuse of alcohol at social gatherings**

Alcohol abuse at social gatherings relates to the ways in which some girls' sexual decision making is influenced at social gatherings. Participants were of the opinion that girls tend to be more prone to engage sexually due to lowered inhibitions as a result of alcohol consumption.

> *Alcohol has a big influence on people who have sex, because when you think soberly about something it will be more difficult for you to make the decision than when you are drunk. Then you will just say yes.* (Group 1)

> *It depends who you go to the party with and whose party it is. You must know that if you go to a certain person's party, okay, there will be alcohol, certain people will smoke, there will be people kissing in the corners and then it will happen when you are drunk or even if you have consumed just enough alcohol, even if you are still sober. It will have an influence on your decisions and you will want to carry on.* (Group 1)

Especially at parties these things happen. It's the alcohol that confuses them and then they look at you with different eyes. All night you are sober and you do nothing. And then when you drink and get drunk, then the guy is attracted to you and you are beautiful to him. (Group 6)

Girls, as soon as they get drunk, they no longer care about themselves. Only the next day everything hits them and when everyone starts asking them questions and things like that. (Participant 1)

Every time there is a party, this happens... There is a party, people get drunk, they sleep together and from then on they are together. That's how people get together. (Participant 1)

Participants in this study remarked that the abuse of alcohol, which often takes place at social gatherings, is a factor that could put girls at risk of engaging sexually. Francis (2010:317) is of opinion that the role that drug and alcohol use plays in youth's sexual behaviour in South Africa has not been expansively explored. It has been reported, however, that girls may be at a higher risk of engaging in sexual behaviour if they are under the influence of drugs and alcohol (Fennie, 2011:66; Osorio *et al.*, 2012:277; Ncitakalo, 2011:26). As it was also reported in this study, studies worldwide clearly suggest a link between alcohol and drug use and adolescents who initiate sexual activity at an early age (Phillips & Malcom, 2006:427).

Sub-theme 3: **The influence of media**

The influence of the media as a sub-theme explains more about the role of the media in girls' sexual decision making. In many instances participants mentioned how the media exposes them to sexual content which influences their sexual decision making in various ways.

Media includes movies and television and the participants particularly referred to the way in which sex is presented to the audience in the media. These messages from the media are often in contrast to the way in which girls have been sexually educated by schools and parents.

I saw an advert on TV the other day that advertised condoms, but they did not advertise it in a way "it's there for your safety". They advertised it in a way that makes you curious, because it was of a man and a woman and it looked very passionate. It wasn't advertised for a good cause. (Participant 2)

If you watch American movies, all you see is how you have sex even if you aren't married. The media have a big influence, especially America. (Group 1)

The other day I watched a movie and I noticed how many people have sex before marriage and they are still so young and it's totally different to how we think about these things. (Group 1)

My dad still freaks out if I watch a 16 movie and I am not 16 yet, because for them it's a moral thing. So you get this thing from your father that says, "This is not how it should happen", but then you watch a movie and that is the only way it happens. (Group 1)

According to the participants in this study cell phones and social networking also have an influence on their sexual decision making. They specifically mentioned how, through social media, girls can be coerced into meeting with men that are older and who eventually force them to have sex.

It happens more often. You can see that everywhere they are talking about it. Blogging, tweeting, doing everything about that thing. (This participant refers to sex in social media.) (Group 10)

It can happen on Mxit and all social networks. You will chat with a man and you don't know it is an old man. He maybe put a picture of his son, so he looks 18. And then you see, you like him, he looks handsome. Maybe he can invite you to meet somewhere. It has happened here in South Africa, there is a girl, she got invited by a man. She does not know the man is old. And she is young. And then she went and met this man and then he ask her what she is wearing. And she tell him. And then the girl don't find that young man she expected to see. When she met this man, he said, "Wow, you look so beautiful". And then they went to hotel and he buy drinks and those nice things and then they sit and chat and chat. And afterward the man wanted to have sex with the girl. And the girl refused. And then the man forced the girl and they had sex just like that. And then the girl got infected by HIV/AIDS. Terrible like that. (Mxit is a free online instant messenger). (Group 10)

Participants furthermore indicated how adolescent girls' sexual behaviour is influenced by pornography. They stated that pornography is accessible to young people on the internet, cell phones as well as television and that it provides them with knowledge about sex that they want to apply in their own sexual activities, no matter how skewed. Participants also mentioned how some girls are part of the production of amateur pornography.

She made pornography with a learner who is now finished with school. Then his friends took it and they circulated the video. (Group 7)

On the cell phones, they download it from the web. Especially the guy friends. And then they show it to us on their cell phones. (Group 7)

Some say that they do it to learn more. They watch it because they feel that they have never had sex or have never done tricks like in the porn and then they want to try it. So that they know what is going on and what to do. (Group 7)

Some of them take videos of it and put it all over the internet so everyone can see it. So they think about that, so they start doing sex again and again and again. (Group 10)

> *Others see it on movies at night, porn videos, so that things is not right. Children don't sleep at night, so watching that and they see how to do sex and they think it is good, because you look there then you see how it is. Yes, it is on TV. On E-TV at 12 o'clock.*(Group 10)

It seems as though the media impacts adolescent girls' sexuality in various ways. Participants mentioned that the way in which specifically movies and television depicts sex is often different from how girls are being educated about sex. While their parents and teachers are arguing vociferously about the merits of abstinence-only sex education, teenagers are getting an eyeful and earful of sex education vicariously - through the media. What they are learning through the media is most decidedly not abstinence only (Strasburger, 2004:63). It is reported by Papalia *et al.* (2009:478) that teenagers get much of their "sex education" from the media, which present a distorted view of sexual activity, associating it with fun, excitement, competition, danger, or violence and rarely showing the risks of unprotected sex. In addition, Strasburger (2004:64) is of the opinion that mainstream media depict teenage sexual behaviours as being normative behaviour, which is one of the most powerful justifications that teenagers have for engaging in risky activities. Changed values, attitudes, the mass media and even sexual content in adolescents' music contribute to the fact that adolescents experience the world as sexually active and even sexually preoccupied (Gouws *et al.*, 2000:110). The message is coming from the media, loud and clear, that everyone is having sex (Carter, 2003:4).

Besides the role of television and movies, it was mentioned by participants how cell phones and social networking exposes adolescent girls to sexual content. The use of Mxit was specifically mentioned by participants in this regard. The website of Mxit (2012) states that it is Africa's biggest social network and that a total of 750 000 000 messages are being sent per day. Mxit is a free online instant messenger where people can chat and send each other video clips. Send photographs and video files via Mxit are the main ways in which this kind of sexual experimentation occurs (Bosch, 2008:62). Apart from a study done by Bosch (2008) about the way in which adolescent girls in Cape Town use Mxit, not much literature could be found specifically with regards to the influence of Mxit on sexual behaviour of adolescent girls. In 2006 and 2007, there was a storm of negative media publicity in South Africa around Mxit, highlighting cases of sexual predators attracting teenage girls via Mxit chat rooms (Bosch, 2008:55). Papalia *et al.* (2009:474) reported that cell phones, e-mail and instant messaging make it easy for adolescents to arrange hook-ups with disembodied strangers, insulated from adult scrutiny. Bosch (2008:59) mentioned in her study the largely undocumented 'taxi queen' phenomenon, which involves the purchase of cell phones and airtime for girls of school-going age by minibus taxi drivers, in exchange for sexual favours. This phenomenon was, in fact, confirmed by the participants of this study.

Participants also pointed out that adolescent girls get exposed to pornography and that it impacts their sexual behaviour. From participants' comments it could be gathered that adolescent girls are involved in the viewing and production of pornography. Even though viewing pornography is not necessarily directly linked to engaging in sexual activity, participants did mention how this could tempt adolescent girls to engage in sexual behaviour. Studies have reported on the increasing negative effect of media on adolescent sexuality due to unrestricted access and increase in sex content of the media (Onyeonoro *et al.*, 2011:297). The media can expose children and adolescents to harmful sexual images and sexual exploitation (Strasburger, 2004:96). In a 2001 survey of more than 1200 youth, 70 percent of all 15 to 17 year olds admitted to have "accidentally" stumbled across pornography online (Strasburger, 2004:85). Pornography has also been regarded in the United States as a source of sex information, since it has been found that students learn about the mechanics of sex from pornography (Rogola & Tydén, 2003:39). It was confirmed by participants in this study that girls view pornography to know how sex works and to learn new "tricks" to apply in their sexual relationships. In a Swedish study performed in 2001, among 650 high schools, 94 percent of the boys and 74 percent of the girls had seen a pornography film. An association between watching pornography and engaging in sexual behaviour was found in that study (Rogola & Tydén, 2003:39). In this same study by Rogola and Tydén (2003:42) participants reported that they believe that rough pornographic films can cause many young people with less experience to believe that all things performed in these films are acceptable to do.

The following figure serves as a summary of Theme 2.
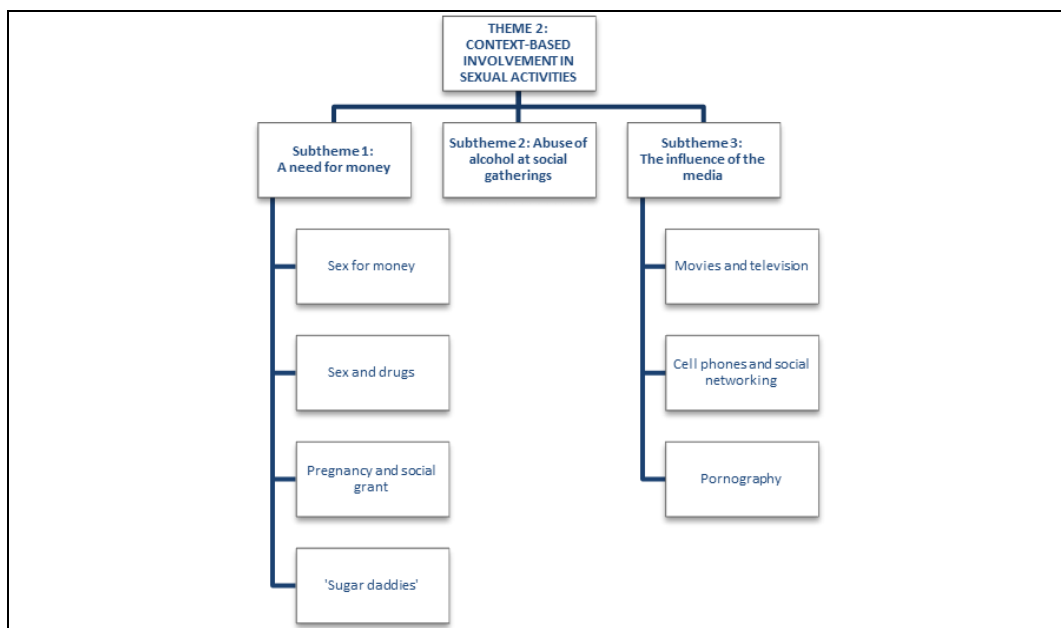
Figure 4.2: Category 1, Theme 2

THEME 3: **ABSTINENCE FROM SEXUAL ACTIVITY**

Abstinence from sexual activities as a theme entails the withholding from sexual activities for various reasons. The consideration of consequences of having sex, a focus on the future and the protection of the self emerged as sub-themes in relation to the abstinence from sexual behaviour.

Sub-theme 1: **Consequences of engaging in sexual activity**

Consequences of sexual activity as a sub-theme suggest that girls often consider the consequences of sex before deciding to engage in sexual activity and that these consequences could encourage them to abstain. Various consequences were revealed. Firstly participants revealed that some girls would consider the consequence of falling pregnant and having to take care of the baby as well as the possibility of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

> *I think that it's also because the girl always sits with the consequences of these things. And the guys can carry on and keep quiet about it, like when they have made a girl pregnant. But the girl will sit with the consequences.* (Group 1)

> *I think that it's very easy to fall pregnant, even if you use contraception. So I don't think that a girl of 16/17 will want to sit with a baby. So I think that also makes them think a bit about the consequences.* (Group 5)

> *One of my friends has a baby and they said that I must also get pregnant. Then I said I will never get a baby now, because the clothes are expensive, the child still needs to get teeth and become ill. Never!* (Group 6)

> *And you can contract AIDS and such things. You can pick up many diseases and you can fall pregnant and then you don't even know who your child's father is. And maybe a man cannot use a condom and you don't know where this man is from, then he comes and gives you a disease.* (Group 7)

Participants also mentioned how girls get a certain reputation when they engage in sexual activities and that this is something that encourages them to abstain from sex. They noted that this is quite contradictory to the reputations that boys get when they are involved in sexual behaviour.

> *For guys it's an achievement, for them it's like nothing. But girls immediately get a bad name. But we didn't really know any better because that guy says how good we are and that one says how important you are and in the end we sit with the bad reputation and they walk around and they only need to pull up their pants and then they are a man again.* (Group 4)

I don't know why, but the guy's friends will look at him and say, "Oh my word, you are so cool" and they will look at the girls and say, "You are a slut".(Group 1)

Say you are standing in a group of friends with guys and they are speaking about a girl that has sex, then that could also influence your decision that you don't want to do it.(Group 2)

Most girls will be careful, I think, because they don't want to throw away their name. But I think guys don't really care about that, they just move on. And the way guys talk too, then they will go and talk about the girl and then she gets a name. (Group 2)

You might decide 'look at what a bad name that girl has so I'm not going to do it'. And I would think that you should first think about what kind of girl do I want to be and what label do I want. (Group 3)

They don't want people to talk badly of them. They don't want to walk down the road and hear how the guy says to his friends, "That is an old girl walking there, I had sex with her". A girl doesn't expect that. She expects that a guy would say good things about her. Not bad things, everyone will then know her as a bad person. If you say no to sex then everyone will know you as a good person.) (Group 7)

On a more positive and preventative note, participants stated that girls' decision to rather abstain from sexual activities is facilitated by the anticipation of what their future would be like when they engage in sexual activities, as opposed to what it would be like if they abstain from sexual activities.

That's why I say that sex before marriage isn't right. I choose to rather wait and to focus on the future and life.(Group 6)

Yes, because it's not a good thing for a teenager to have sex. For a teenager it should be about finishing school and enjoying your life and not sex and falling pregnant. It's not a good thing for a teenage girl or boy to become involved in such things. It can have a big impact on your life when you are old and you sit with a child. It affects your life. When you are old you think back and think you could have still enjoyed your life and partied with your friends and now you have to sit at home and look after your child. And that's not nice. (Group 8)

We are too young to think about those things, babies, whatever, you are still young. First finish your school, then you can. (Group 10)

I just thought about my life ahead, what the next step is after he has finished touching me. I am not really able to have sex. How will it influence my life and what will happen? He is a boy, he can't fall pregnant or his life can't be destroyed like mine. (Participant 10)

The participants furthermore indicated how sexually related feelings of regret and guilt that are expressed by other girls and girls themselves, encourage sexual abstinence.

I think they regret it and they wanted their first time to be special.
(Group 5)

Most of them regret it and are finished with it until they marry, get married. (Group 5)

Many of my friends say I regret doing it so much and when I talk to my friend's dad's girlfriend. I asked her directly, because at that stage I didn't know what to do. So I asked her, "Do you regret having sex before getting married?" Then she said yes, she is very sorry that she did. She wishes that she'd waited and that's how most people feel when I talk to them and I ask them. Most of them regret it and I think it does stop me from having sex now already, because I feel like, okay, maybe I will also regret it. (Participant 5)

But many of my other girlfriends, they are a little more into it. And they always tell me that they regret it, because it is something of yours that you give away to someone and then you didn't even love that person. (Participant 7)

The results indicated that sexual abstinence is often encouraged when adolescent girls consider the consequences of engaging in sexual activity. The possibility of pregnancy together with the concern that they might contract sexually transmitted diseases, facilitate girls' decisions to rather abstain from sexual activities. The results confirm research, indicating that the fear of pregnancy and contracting a sexually transmitted disease were the most important reasons given by the youth for remaining abstinent and for not engaging in sexual activity (Abbott & Dalla, 2008:631).

Fear of getting a bad reputation was also mentioned by participants as a reason why girls would choose to abstain from sex. Participants remarked that adolescent girls are often labelled as promiscuous when engaging sexually. Boys on the other hand seem to be praised for engaging sexually and it appears as though being sexually active adds to their social status in a positive way. This contradiction between male and female reputations regarding sexual behaviour is confirmed by Walker (1997:162) who mentioned that teenagers often use one language when describing girls' sexual behaviour (e.g. "slut"') and a different language when describing the same behaviour in boys (e.g. "stud"). This was a very evident theme in this study and could once again be linked with unequal gender roles regarding sexuality.

From a positive perspective, it seemed as though girls who regard their future as important do not want to put themselves at risk of negative sexual consequences and therefore decide to abstain from sexual activities. The study of Abbott and Dalla (2008:645) confirm that youth who were committed to abstinence employed cognitive strategies by focusing on future goals and perceived rewards of abstinence, while simultaneously recognising and emphasising risks associated with sexual activity that could jeopardise long-term plans.

In addition to the above mentioned reasons, participants reported that girls often experience feelings of regret and guilt after engaging in sexual activity. A study by Osorio *et al.* (2012:273) indicated that among the participants who have had sexual relationships, approximately one-fifth agreed with the statement: "Deep down, I regret having already had sexual relationships." Regret was significantly more frequent among females. Several studies conducted in the United States and United Kingdom have shown that noteworthy percentages of sexually experienced youth wished they had waited longer to have sex for the first time, or had some other negative feelings because of having had sex too soon (Osorio *et al.*, 2012:271-272). These feelings of regret and guilt could encourage girls to abstain from sex in the future. It was mentioned by participants that girls' own feelings of regret and guilt after having sex, or feelings of regret and guilt that are experienced by peers after engaging sexually, encourage sexual abstinence.

Sub-theme 2: **The influence of significant others on sexual abstinence**

The influence of significant others on sexual decision making indicates how people who play an important role in girls' lives impact their decisions to abstain from sexual activities.

The participants in this study pointed out that girls' parents, family members and other significant adults who are involved in their lives and have sufficient knowledge and experience about sex, influence their decisions to abstain from sexual activities.

> *I hear it from people, my aunt is also a nurse and she talks to me as well as my mom and they say I mustn't do these things.* (Group 7)

> *Our mothers are telling us every day, "Please don't do sex, it is not the right thing, it has consequences".* (Group 10)

> *Here where I live, the neighbours often talk to me. They say to me, leave them alone, those things go to places where you don't want to go. Leave them alone, and then they talk to me about sex, sex is not on standard at our age. "You are still young, enjoy life while you still can".* (Participant 10)

> *It's always my aunt that talks to me about it. She always said, "Remember you are still a young lady, the chance of you falling pregnant is great and you must stay away from men and you have the right to say no and you are in charge of your own body".* (Participant 11)

> *My mom does not like sex when you are still young, because she say that the boys like to play with us, then they will have sex with us and then leave us. So when my boyfriend says I must do it, I first think what I have learnt from my adults.* (Participant 15)

Contrary to the experiences where peers encourage sexual activities as reported in Theme 1 (The influence of peers), participants made mention of the fact that some peers encourage sexual abstinence. They ascribe the positive influence of such friends to the fact that they do not base the acceptance of their friends on their sexual experiences.

> *A big influence is your friends, you need to have people who say, "Listen, that is not necessary". You need people who will support you. People that say, "It's not necessary for you to have sex, because it's not important for friendship.* (Group 1)

> *You get friends that will encourage you to say no and then you get friends that will encourage you to do it, so it depends... I think that your friends play a role, a big role, because when you are involved with people who don't do it, then you also won't feel like doing it, because you will be ashamed if they know that I have had sex and not one of them has yet.* (Group 4)

> *Like I have friends that impact me in a good way, they are against it and they will encourage me not to do it. Friends are a big influence, because if you have bad friends, then they will kind of expect it from you to stay in the group of friends and if you have good friends then they will be happy if you don't do it.* (Participant 1)

The participants indicated that they learn a great deal from the experiences of people in their immediate environment with whom they can identify and who care for them.

> *If you talk to someone who is experienced and how they feel afterwards and if you know how other people react... And especially if that person is almost like you, and you know that you and that person are very similar and I know I will also feel like that. And I think according to that you will make your decisions, according to someone else's experience... So it helps if you know about other people's experiences, it helps you to decide what you would do and won't do.* (Participant 5)

> *But you actually need someone to help you through that path, or who has maybe followed the wrong path, but wants you to follow the right path and can help you. "I want to save you from the mistake I made". Have someone that you know, 'I look up to you, you are my role model'.* (Participant 9)

> *She said she was still young when she did it. So she said that her boyfriend slept with her then he left her. So she told me that I must not do it, because boys like to break our virginity and then leave us with nothing.* (Participant 15)

Research confirms that significant others could encourage adolescent girls to sexually abstain. Girls firstly reported on the positive impact of parents, family members and other adults on their decisions to abstain from sex. It has been reported that girls who receive sex information from parents are more likely to discuss sexuality issues with a partner, have high efficacy of sex negotiation and are less likely to engage in sex or risky sexual behaviour (Onyeonoro *et al.*,

2011:297). Adolescents who can talk about sex with older siblings and parents are also more likely to have positive attitudes toward safer sexual practices (Kowal & Pike, 2004 cited by Papalia, 2009:477). Roche *et al.* (2005 cited by Fennie, 2011:19) suggested that the positive influence of parents can buffer adolescents against the influence of negative peer norms that could lead to risky sexual behaviour, including delaying early sexual intercourse. Specifically mothers seem to play a big role in their daughters' sexual decision making. Teenagers who have close, warm relationships with their mothers are more likely to delay sexual activity (Papalia, 2009:476). Lesch (2000:162) is of opinion that even though mothers may not always have a close relationship with their daughters, they can provide a safe space for daughters to talk about feelings and experiences around sex and men. In this way they can empower their daughters by giving them space for reflection, giving them words for experiences and facilitate ideas about what is beneficial for the girls (Lesch, 2000:162).

Secondly, participants mentioned that sexual abstinence can also be encouraged by peers. Research conducted by Oman *et al.* (2003:85) pointed out that of the 55 percent of 15 to 17 year old participants were abstinent, variables that were most significant in predicting abstinence for them included peer role models and future aspirations (Oman *et al.*, 2003:85).

The fact that participants mentioned how girls often learn from experiences of others, was also found in a study by Rich *et al.* (2004:155) where it was indicated that teenagers can learn from each other's mistakes. Participants in Rich *et al.*'s study suggested that peer counselling would be useful and mentioned that teenagers have problems believing, but once they hear it from their peers they will "wake up" (Rich *et al.*, 2004:155). The study further reported how participants perceived that the wisdom, experience and motivation of others who have had sexuality transmitted diseases or pregnancies must be considered as a resource for sexuality education (Rich *et al.*, 2004:155).

Sub-theme 3: **Protecting the self from harm**

Protecting the self from harm deals with the position that girls take based on their own inner strengths when it comes to involvement in sexual activities.

The participants suggested that self-confidence and self-control enable girls to make a conscious decision to abstain from involvement in sexual activities despite the pressure that they experience.

> *And when you make the decision beforehand that you are not going to do it, you have to stand by that decision when you are in that situation so that you can say, you know what, no or whatever, because you need to*

feel so strongly about your decision that you want to and will stand by it. (Group 1)

You need to start with yourself. I think it's the most difficult question miss has asked so far. And you must respect yourself. (Group 1)

You need to have restraint in order to say no. You have to be able to stand up for yourself, you need to be able to say no, I'm not going to do it.(Group 2)

But it is also about yourself, my friends can do what they want, but I will stick to my decision. (Group 5)

You need to have a lot of self-confidence. She must be able to stand by her beliefs, she must know what is yes and what is no and she must know her rights. (Group 8)

The participants indicated that some girls have a sense that they are not yet ready to have sex and therefore protect themselves by abstaining from sexual activities.

But I don't feel ready and I won't do it, no matter what. And if I feel pressure from a guy I will say to him, listen here, I am not ready for it. I am very straightforward with guys and I say no, and that's it. Sometimes a person feels, okay, why don't I just do it, it's not such a big thing, but still I believe I will not be able to do it now, because I'm not ready for it.(Group 5)

The participants remarked that some girls rely on their morals and values to protect themselves from harm. In some instances these morals and values were specifically based on a particular religion. However, personal morals and values used to protect the self were not necessarily associated with a religious conviction.

Or you will wait until your wedding, it might sound very old-fashioned, but with the person with whom you want to spend the rest of your life. (Group 3)

Morals, when to say stop, to make good decisions.(Group 3)

Your morals and values, you want to wait. (Group 3)

I think it's a disgrace. Sex before marriage isn't right. At our age it's not right. We have to focus on our future. We mustn't think about sex and those things, even if it crosses your path, avoid it, because sex before marriage is not right, because that's how my mother raised me. (Group 6)

What you learn from the Bible and your beliefs – all those things play a big role.(Participant 6)

> *I think it's important that children learn about it not just like most, yes the bad points, but also learn about first getting married according to the Bible which is right. I know in other religions it might be different, but we need to respect each other in this regard. But in our religion you must not have sex before marriage. I think it's much better, because then you have something big to look forward to. It's not just a normal thing, like "yes, we are now going to have sex again", it's more like WOW.* (Participant 2)

When asked how participants think girls could sexually abstain, it was mentioned in addition to the above mentioned themes, that psychological factors related to the self and how adolescent girls seem to consciously control themselves by means of self-talk, are influential. As was indicated by participants of this study, a study by Abbott and Dalla (2008:641) found that personal choice and commitment was the key to remaining abstinent. Participants of the study reported having strong beliefs in abstinence, making a choice to remain abstinent and standing firm in their decisions (Abbott & Dalla, 2008:641). Participants also made mention of the fact that some girls perceive themselves as not ready to engage sexually and that values and morals as well as religion encourages sexual abstinence. These comments are confirmed by Louw who reported that not being emotionally ready, a wish to wait until marriage and religious beliefs are some of the factors which seem to prevent many South African adolescents from engaging in early and irresponsible sexual activity (Louw *et al.*, 2010:292). Conservative sexual values and religiosity seem to be predictors of abstinence (Abbott & Dalla, 2008:631; Papalia, 2009:476). The impact that specifically religious beliefs have on sexual decision making is a topic which is often mentioned in literature. Studies have demonstrated a strong relationship between religiosity and positive adolescent sexual attitudes and suggested an increased role of religious leaders in mobilising their members towards reproductive health activities (Onyeonoro *et al.*, 2011:297). Research indicates that adolescents who have religion as an important part of their lives tend to engage in sexual risk-taking behaviours to a lesser extent (Enfield, 2003:18). The researcher can report, however, that even though the impact of religion on sexual decision making was mentioned in this study, it could not be seen as the most important variable predicting abstinence in this study as it was only mentioned by a small number of participants.

The following figure serves as a summary of Theme 3.
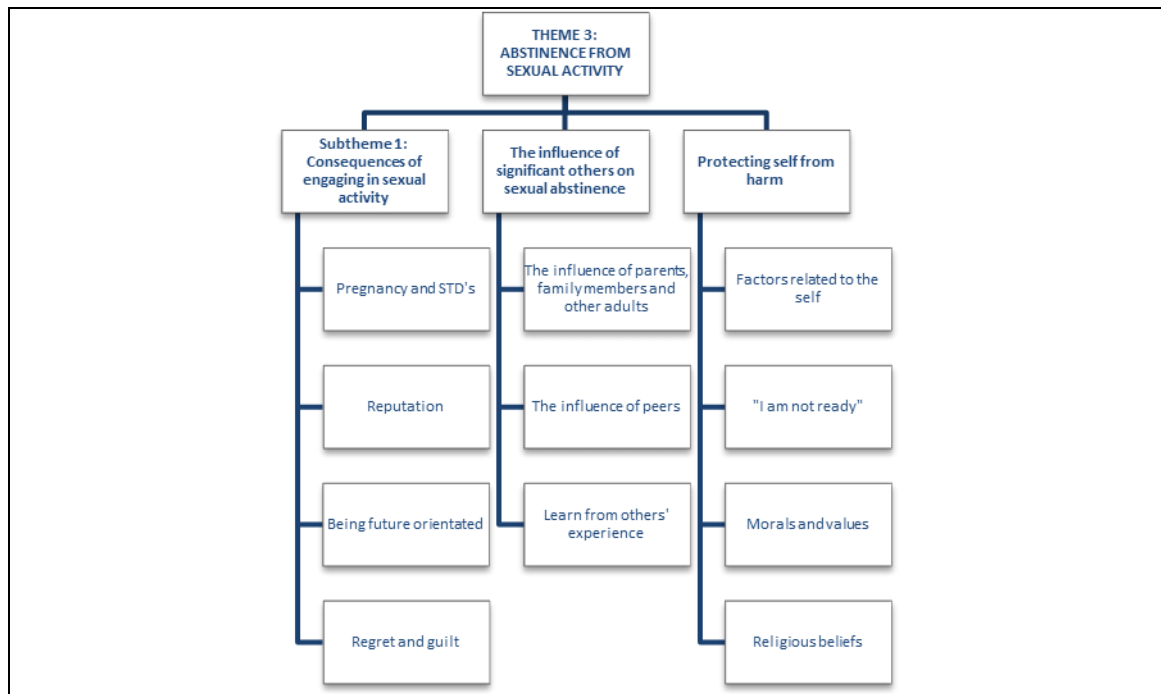
Figure 4.3: Category 1, Theme 3

CATEGORY 2: GIRLS' VOICES ON SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Girls' voices on sexuality education as a category refers to the suggestions made by the girls in this study regarding the way in which sexuality education has to be presented in schools.

The table below provides a summary of the main themes and sub-themes that evolved from transcribed interviews regarding this topic.

Table 4.2: Category 2: Themes and sub-themes

CATEGORY 2: GIRLS' VOICES ON SEXUALITY EDUCATION		
Themes		**Sub-themes**
Theme 1	1	Silence about sexuality
The role of adults in sexuality education	2	Attitudes about sexuality
	3	Ways adults could speak to adolescents about sexuality
Theme 2	1	Teachers' contributions to sexuality education
Sexuality education within Life Orientation	2	Reflections on current curriculum content
	3	Improving presentations of sexuality education in schools
	4	Gender and sexuality education

THEME 1: **THE ROLE OF ADULTS IN SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

The role of adults in sexuality education as a theme focuses on the way in which adults, in particular parents and teachers, should approach sexuality education of girls. The participants specifically reported on the silence about sexuality as well as the attitudes that adults display towards sexuality.

Sub-theme 1: **Silence about sexuality**

Silence about sexuality is about the way in which adults normally approach sexuality education and communicate with adolescent girls about sex. According to the participants adults tend to avoid talking about sex and apparently pass the responsibility onto one another. Participants mentioned that as a result of adults who did not inform girls about sex, they sometimes find themselves exposed to sexual experiences which they regret.

> *I think they are shy about it, for instance I have told my mom that I do it and then my mom kind of tries to avoid it. Many parents do not want to talk about it or want to talk about it in depth. Often when it comes to girls who start menstruating, they will talk to you about that, but they avoid sex. Like my mom didn't talk to me about sex and I knew nothing about it, I found out from my friends. And that's how I made my first mistake, because I didn't really know what leads to what.* (Participant 1)

> *The teachers expect the parents to teach you. The parents expect the teachers to teach you. So actually you learn nothing and nobody wants to talk about it.* (Participant 4)

> *The adults in our area don't actually talk much about sex. They will talk more about drugs, jail and gangs, but they don't talk a lot about sex. And that was what has put me in the situation I am in today. Because neither my mother, nor anybody in the community helped me and gave me the disadvantages of it. So actually I didn't get a message from any adult.* (Participant 12)

> *My parents talk about sex but they don't want to go into detail.* (Participant 4)

> *So if you were to fall pregnant that would be a disgrace, but I didn't know! My teachers don't talk to me, my parents don't talk to me, so how was I supposed to know?* (Participant 4)

> *The major lesson I have learnt is that talking with girls about sexuality is often very much neglected – they are left in the dark. Often adults seem surprised or disappointed when girls engage in sexual activity, but when the child is not informed about sex, who is then really to blame?* (Journal)

Participants indicated by means of naïve sketches whether they have ever had the opportunity to speak with adults about sex. In response to this question the majority of the participants reported that the focus group discussions were the first opportunity they have ever had to talk with an adult about their sexuality. The majority of participants, who had spoken to adults, indicated that it was a once-off discussion or that they only touched the subject briefly. The other participants respectively spoke to a cousin, brother or sister, an aunt in the neighbourhood, a sports coach or a teacher.

> *Yes, I speak with my mother. She is the only person who listens to me, but does not always give the answers that I am looking for.* (Sketch 11)

> *Not like we have done today. I have asked my parents certain things, but even then I have to find most of the information somewhere else.* (Sketch 12)

> *I think one will sometimes touch on the subject slightly, but it was the first time that I have spoken to an adult like this.* (Sketch 19)

> *No, many adults push you down. They will chase you away. I don't have the courage to speak with adults.* (Sketch 23)

> *Yes, my dad, he is very open about such things which is a good thing, because then I can speak to him when it is necessary. He is actually the only person.* (Sketch 27)

> *Yes, I've spoked to my mother, my aunt. But she did not go deeper in it, so I've got the other information here.* (Sketch 46)

> *I only speak to my brother, because he is the only one who is open to me.* (Sketch 48)

> *No, we only talk with our cousins, not adults, they don't want to talk about this things with us.* (Sketch 51)

> *Yes, because the time I get into menstruation time I talked with some adults at home.* (Sketch 52)

The results of this sub-theme strongly suggested that the participants perceive adults to be generally hesitant to discuss the matter of sexuality with them and that many adults avoid this topic completely or shift the responsibility of sexually educating adolescent girls onto others.

Literature reports that parents are reluctant to discuss matters of sexuality with their children, because of the discomfort related to talking about sex (Panday *et al.*, 2009:85). Onyeonoro *et al.* (2011:295) stated that in most communities and families, sex is seen as being sacred, hence talking about sex is considered wayward. Premarital sex is tagged as taboo and therefore not discussed in many homes (Onyeonoro *et al.*, 2011:295).

Sub-theme 2: Adults' attitudes towards talking about sexuality

Adults' attitudes towards talking about sexuality refer to the participants' perceptions of the stance that adults take when they talk about sexuality. They specifically refer to the tendency of adults to get upset when they are expected to talk about sexuality. This tendency is often coupled with a judgmental attitude. Participants mentioned that adults perceive inquiries about sex as a sign that girls are sexually active.

> *But everyone doesn't want to take part in those kinds of conversations, because often the teacher is judgmental, if you were to say something they would think that you do it.* (Participant 5)

> *Or you talk to them and then they think you do it. They think you have sex because you ask. I have the right to ask and to know what's going on. But people are scared to ask. That's why I don't talk to them at all. Or parents discuss it with an aunt or grandmother and I don't like that. And then everyone wonders why I am all of a sudden speaking to my mom about it and asking questions? Why now all of a sudden? That's why a person can't really speak to them. That's why a person would rather speak to someone else who approaches them, like teacher. Or if you were to talk to them, they would scream at you. Or they would just say to you, "Go!" They will ignore you because you are talking about these things.* (Participant 7)

> *A lot of adults think when you want to speak with them about sex, you are horny. You are too big for your shoes.* (Participant 9)

> *Our mothers don't want to talk about it, because then they think we are doing it.* (Participant 10)

> *I never heard my parents talking about sex. When I want to ask them about sex they will go mad, so I don't want to talk about it.* (Participant 14)

It is clear that participants reported often feeling judged, shamed or blamed for being sexually active when they enquire about sex. These attitudes of adults when confronted with having to talk with adolescent girls about sex could be explained according to relevant literature. Macleod (1999b:8) is of the opinion that parents are often reluctant to provide sexuality education, partially because of a fear that this may encourage early sexual engagement. Mothers tend to present sex as dangerous and sinful with the hope that such scare tactics would steer their children away from sex (Louw *et al.*, 2010:291). These messages, however, could contribute to daughters' inability to talk to their mothers about their own sexuality and prevent them from receiving the much needed support and guidance from their mothers (Louw *et al.*, 2010:291). Young women also face social pressure to maintain an image of innocence and having sexual knowledge is interpreted as an indication of sexual activity (Shefer, 2008:92). Consequently it is very difficult for girls to protect themselves against sexually transmitted infections such as

HIV/AIDS, since taking protective measures would be interpreted as them having an active sexual life (Shefer, 2008:92).

Sub-theme 3: Ways adults could speak to girls about sexuality

The ways adults could speak to girls about sexuality indicate the participants' suggestions regarding the ways in which girls would prefer adults to speak with them about their sexuality. The girls specifically indicated that talking about sexuality should be a gradual and ongoing process within the context of a trusting relationship. They also emphasised that adults should not be vague in their references to sexuality, but talk about it in a straightforward, honest manner.

But I think the mothers must talk to them from a young age about boyfriends and things like that. So that they can feel that my mother and I have a very close relationship. And I think they mustn't immediately just come down on the children, they must tell them about it slowly. And not in the company of other people. You want to feel comfortable with that person. (Participant 1)

When I have a problem, I can always talk to my mother. Then I will always ask her, what is this and that and what will happen if this... And then she talks to me openly about it. That is how I want her to talk to me. (Participant 7)

It is easy for us to understand her, because she is straightforward when she speaks to us. Don't think we are children, we are pupils, so you can't speak to us like this or like that. SPEAK. This way we can get it in our heads. Speak to us like we are your friend, we will understand you a lot better. (Participant 9)

They must be straight with us, they must get to the point, because children will find out afterwards that my parents hid things from me, why didn't they tell us about this, we didn't know. It can influence our lives. (Participant 10)

For me, I would prefer it if they speak openly to us, they mustn't come with twists and turns. I am getting older not younger, and I must prepare myself for the future ahead. (Participant 11)

This just showed me how much girls would actually like to speak about these things with adults. Where they seemed to be a little uncomfortable at first, it was as if later on, they could not get enough and there was not enough time to say all the things they wanted to say. (Journal)

They said that adults are uncomfortable and often do not want to speak with them about sex. They said that they would prefer it if adults speak straight and clear about sex and do not tone it down or tip-toe around the topic. (Journal)

It is clear from the above mentioned comments that adolescent girls do want adults to speak with adults about their sexuality and that they would prefer adults to speak about sex in an upfront and direct way. It seemed as if participants indicated that girls would be more comfortable discussing the topic of sex with someone with whom they have a relationship of trust and that topics of sex should be introduced gradually, over a period of time and not all at once. Pistella and Bonati (1999:312) mentioned that teenagers recognise a close relationship with parents as the foundation for dealing with difficult subjects such as teenage sexuality. The fact that adults should speak with adolescents about sex is well reported, but there appears to be a gap in literature on the way in which adults can approach adolescent girls when speaking with them about their sexuality, as not much could be found on this topic. A study by Onyeonoro *et al.* (2011:298) confirmed what participants reported in this study in stating that families must view it as an important responsibility to talk with children about sex and sexuality in an open way. The study also reported that it is best to start talking about sexuality before puberty and before the girls have established a pattern of behaviour (Onyeonoro *et al.*, 2011:298). What could be added to this suggestion by Onyeonoro *et al.* (2011) is that participants in this study indicated a preference towards talking about their sexuality over a period of time, as opposed to being bombarded with all the information about sex at once and never again thereafter.

The figure below serves as a summary of Theme 1.
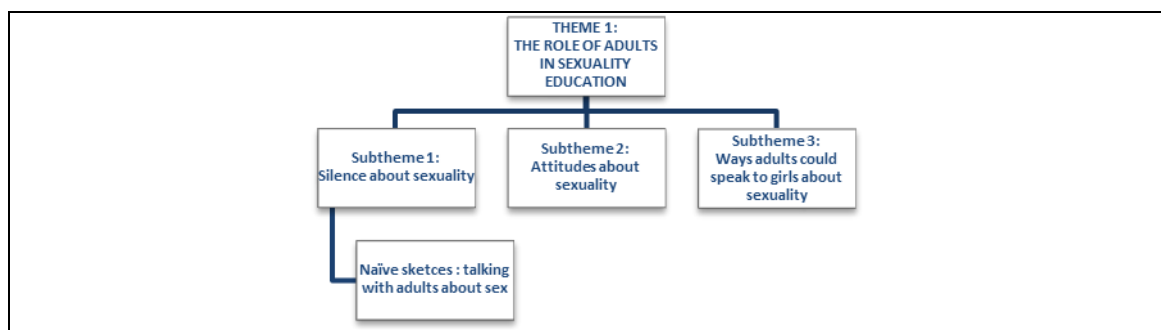
Figure 4.4: Category 2, Theme 1

THEME 2: SEXUALITY EDUCATION WITHIN LIFE ORIENTATION

Sexuality education within Life Orientation as a theme refers to the participants' voices on the ways in which the presentation of sexuality education of Life Orientation can be improved. The participants specifically referred to the contributions of teachers, ways to improve the curriculum content, ways to improve the presentation of sexuality education as well as how gender differences in the sexuality education should be dealt with.

Sub-theme 1: Teachers' contributions to sexuality education

Teachers' contributions to sexuality education convey more about the way in which teachers currently contribute to the sexuality education of girls. The participants clearly distinguished between positive and negative contributions of teachers. The participants commented that teachers' contributions to sexuality education are experienced as positive when teachers informed them properly about sex and the consequences of sexual involvement. Girls also like it when the teacher listens to their opinions and allows them to ask questions.

Our teacher listens to you, she is nice to talk to. (Participant 7)

To know that you can talk about it, it's not a stranger, it's your Life Orientation teacher, and it's Life Orientation you are talking about. You want to know more about what will happen if you do this or that, and then teacher helps us. And it's easier for us to understand her, because she doesn't talk in riddles, she is straightforward, she speaks openly to us. (Participant 9)

She allow us as learners to ask questions when we don't understand something. (Participant 15)

She is telling us, also the consequences of young girl who is having sex at this stage. Yes, she is telling us a lot of things about sex. (Participant 17)

The participants perceived the teachers' contributions to sexuality education negatively when the teachers avoid talking about sexuality or merely give information without allowing discussions.

It's like the teachers are scared to talk about it. It's like they just want to get it over and done with as soon as possible. They just say sex is bad, that, that, that. And then they haven't answered any questions yet. And if the children want to ask questions, the teachers say, "No, I don't want to talk about it", or something like that. (Participant 4)

Since I have been in high school nobody has spoken to us about sex. Just in primary school somebody came to talk to us about periods and sex. (Participant 6)

I don't know why teacher is scared to talk to us about it, she is allowed to talk to us after all, we are children. But she is probably also scared, because there are boys in the class too and if you say something wrong they laugh about it. That's why she doesn't talk to us about it a lot. (Participant 7)

Teacher doesn't talk to us about sex often in class and teacher must talk about it more with us. Yes, when she talks about it you can feel there is an atmosphere and a silence, you can even hear a pin drop, because they are so hungry for the talk. I would say that when the

teacher does talk about it, I can see the boys, they are so focused on it, they know it's something interesting, it's something they need to know. They sit there open-mouthed and watch her, but just as it gets interesting she stops the conversation. (Participant 11)

She only opens the book and we must read it ourself, but we do not understand what we read. (Participant 13)

The participants reported that girls sometimes perceive the way in which some teachers approach sexuality education as an indication that teachers are giving them the 'go-ahead' to be sexually active. Participants specifically mentioned that when teachers provide them with information about contraceptive-use, they are 'encouraging' girls to engage in sexual behaviour. Girls did not approve of this and mentioned that adults must rather warn them against sexual engagement than to 'promote' it.

All they say is that you need to use a condom. They actually encourage you to do it, because they are telling you to use a condom. (Group 4)

If the school tell us about it, they mustn't tell us how nice it is or that you can do it, you must just use a condom. They must tell us you can fall pregnant, you can get diseases. They must warn us against it and put in our thoughts that it's not something to do now. Because the school says to us, "As you know, there are condoms…" and it's like they use it as an excuse and many people use contraception, because they know nothing's going to happen to them. (Group 4)

This year, when we read something about sexuality, it was something small, but they said if you decide to have sex now, you must do this and this. They mustn't say things like that to you, because if they say that, "If you happen to decide", it makes you think that it's okay to do it now. So I was kind of shocked when I saw that, because they can't teach us that. (Participant 2)

The textbook actually tells you to use a condom if you have sex, tomorrow the person will use a condom when he has sex. They don't pull you away, they push you in. Yes. It's not that they keep you away from it. (Participant 9)

Participants of this study did in many ways acknowledge positive attributes of sexuality education teachers. However, the fact that sexuality education teachers did in many ways not meet the needs of learners was also evident. The learning outcomes and assessment standards of the Life Orientation curriculum for Grade 10 clearly indicates that sexuality education with a specific focus on sexual decision making should be addressed in this grade (refer to Annexure A). Despite this, it was clear from participants' comments that adolescent girls often receive no sexuality education at all and that some teachers ignore the topic of sexuality completely. Reasons why teachers might ignore the topic of sexuality education have been reported in literature. For teachers no less than for students, talking about sex provokes anxiety and embarrassment (Whitehead, 1994:5). In a study by Rooth (2005:243) and as mentioned in this

study, some educators felt that, particularly with regard to sexuality education and HIV and AIDS, parents should be primarily responsible. The same study reveals that religion and sexuality education are the most often cited issues with which some educators have problems as teachers' own values often influence the way in which content is dealt with (Rooth, 2005:262). This could mean that if a teacher is for instance in favour of abstinence before marriage, it would be against the values of the teacher to teach learners about sexuality. Francis (2010:316) indicated that the silence surrounding topics of sex could be attributed to inadequately trained teachers. As a result of being inadequately trained teachers might feel incompetent and prefer to avoid teaching about the topic of sexuality. This could add to the participants in this study being seemingly frustrated as a result of not receiving sufficient support and guidance regarding their sexuality. A lack of sexuality education could put young people in danger as a result of entering into sexual relations without the necessary knowledge or skills to negotiate for their own sexual health and welfare (WHO, 2002:7).

Some participants in this study also appeared to be frustrated with messages from adults which they perceived as 'encouragement' to have sex. These messages were specifically linked with sexuality education regarding contraception-use. Participants perceived instructions about contraception-use as adults giving them the 'green light' to have sex. Participants in this study clearly indicated that they would like adults to warn them about the negative consequences of sex and that adults must discourage, rather than 'encourage' them to have sex. There appears to be a contrast between this perception of participants and what is reported in literature. Research proves that sexuality education programmes that emphasise abstinence and also cover contraception-use do not increase sexual intercourse by hastening the onset of intercourse, the frequency of intercourse, or the number of sexual partners (Kirby, 2002:29).

Sub-theme 2: Reflections on current curriculum content

Reflections on current curriculum content points out participants' experiences of the contribution of the current curriculum content of the Life Orientation learning area to sexuality education. The participants discussed the content of the learning material currently used in the curriculum. They specifically indicated the over-emphasis of HIV/AIDS at the cost of sexuality education in general. Participants furthermore mentioned how the content of sexuality education within Life Orientation seems to repeat itself each year.

> *The other things too, it's not just sex, they must inform us better so that we understand better. And every year it's the same, nobody listens to it anymore. And everyone says you must wait until you are married. So they must perhaps find other ways to inform us, interesting ways. Or they must just provide more information.* (Group 5)

Not much is written in the textbooks. Just about AIDS which is said repeatedly and then they just say that you must use condoms and contraception. There is nothing about sex that the teacher covers. And nobody goes through their Life Orientation text books, Life Orientation is a subject nobody worries about. (Participant 1)

They only talk about TB and AIDS, but they don't show other diseases. They must show more diseases so that a person can get scared to do it. Yes, and in Life Orientation they say just the same thing every year. Like from Grade 7 until now they just say the same thing over and over. And then you don't know more than you knew before, you just hear it again. You learn more from your friends than what you learn in school. (Participant 4)

When teacher comes with the Life Orientation book and say that we are going to discuss sex nobody listens anymore, because everyone knows already what they think they should know. All of us know that if you do it you are going to get STDs and if you have unprotected sex you will fall pregnant or you can get AIDS or something. Everyone knows it already so nobody is interested and the children then make jokes. (Participant 5)

It only tells us we should use a condom and be careful and to trust a guy. That is not enough. (Participant 14)

Many participants expressed frustration regarding the repetitive nature of Life Orientation curriculum content. Participants' comments indicated that they often perceive content of sexuality education to be boring, focused on sickness prevention (specifically HIV/AIDS prevention and contraceptive use) and that the same topics are repeated year after year. These opinions of participants are confirmed by Jacobs (2011:221) in her study about learners' experience of Life Orientation which found that learners appear to have the perception that Life Orientation focuses a lot on AIDS and related topics and that these topics were "over-taught". Rooth's (2005:291) study made recommendations on how to prevent learner boredom and over-exposure to repetition as this was also reported in her study. In the study by Rooth (2005), it is apparent that teachers repeating the basic facts of HIV and AIDS too often can result in learners resisting the topic and "switching off" (Rooth, 2005:252).

Sub-theme 3: Improving the presentation of sexuality education in schools

This sub-theme voices the participants' suggestions for improving the presentation of sexuality education in schools. The participants' critique against the current scenario is presented, followed by their suggestions for the improvement of the curriculum content as well as suggestions for the inclusion of educational media. The participants critiqued the current scenario, with specific reference to the way in which sexuality education is presented. Strong resentment was expressed against the current teaching methods that are used, coupled with suggestions to implement a more learner-focused approach.

I think we should all just sit together like we have spoken to miss, so that she can give us a chance to ask questions and to say things. Then the teacher doesn't just stand there and say this, this, this, this and then, okay we are finished. I think she must ask something, like this, like, "Why do you think girls have sex?" and then we must talk amongst each other a bit. Because the more questions that are asked and the more the teacher answers, the more comfortable we feel. And the more we talk with one another, the more comfortable we feel. (Participant 1)

It would make it more interesting if we could give our opinions, and also, not like a debate thing, but then we are also more a part of it. Then it's no longer just done out of the book. So I think that would also make it better. (Participant 3)

I think that is the problem in the class, nobody really connects and talks. I think that will make the Life Orientation periods more fun and be more informative for the children. Because if you talk to your friends about something like this, nobody is shy, so you can laugh about it and learn, but with your friends you don't learn about everything and what you learn might be incorrect. So I think it's the teachers' duty to teach us the right things, because your friends aren't always right. (Participant 5)

They must go into more detail. And if I ask them questions, they must elaborate on it. Yes, a person understands it better if you take part in the discussion. (Participant 8)

We want to know more. Otherwise we could just open the book on that page, read through it, and then we would know. It's as simple as that, then we wouldn't have to sit through a Life Orientation lesson and listen to the repeat of the words written in the book. Teacher could give her own opinion about those things and be straight and say what is in her heart and not what the book tells her to say. (Participant 9)

The participants also suggested what content they would prefer to be covered by the Life Orientation sexuality education curriculum. Participants once again suggested that they would prefer to talk openly about sexuality, specifically regarding what could put them sexually at risk and that they would like to receive more guidance on how to make sexual decisions.

What to look out for and that whole thing of guys that say, yes, you are everything to them, and those things. Now that someone has said to me or now that I have been in that situation like, "I love you so much", now I know what to look out for. Now I know what it is about and what the type of things are that they will say. They must just tell us more about parties and those things, just to be on the lookout for it and to watch out for these things. (This participant implied that sexuality education content must warn girls about risky factors that could lead to irresponsible sexual behaviour). (Participant 1)

I would like if the teacher teaches us everything about sex and then telling us how do we, how should we do sex and how do a person reacts having sex and how should we protect ourselves. (Participant 14)

> *I want them to tell me what is sex first and then tell me what makes you to do sex, what is going to happen to you when you are having sex and what is going to happen to your future.* (This participant implied that she would like to know what leads to sexual behaviour and the consequences thereof). (Participant 17)

As opposed to merely talking about the possible scenarios, participants furthermore suggested that educational media should be applied to illustrate the consequences of sexual behaviour.

> *There are some videos outside that are about man that are old and girls that are young. So we can use them and then motivate them. So you see this is not good, because these men are playing with you.* (Group 10)

> *They always say things about sex and HIV and stuff, but they must show you more pictures and things.* (Participant 7)

> *I would say teacher needs to add other things. How she is giving it to us now is all right, but I would prefer it if she showed us more examples. She could show a picture of a girl and a boy and then show another picture of what would then happen afterwards, the consequences that they would have to bear. In that way they must motivate us, don't do it at this age.* (Participant 10)

> *I prefer pictures than speaking. So that we can see what is really going on.* (Participant 14)

The results regarding the presentation of sexuality education showed that the participants are in need of a more learner-focused and experiential approach rather than the current teacher-centred and information-focused approach. The participants emphasised the need for more active engagement in the process of being sexually educated and that girls would prefer it if they were not only presented by factual knowledge about sex, but were also given the opportunity to take part in discussions regarding sexuality. Rooth's (2005:251) study encourages experiential learning to take place as she reported that cognitive skills, life skills, emotional literacy skills and risk reductive behaviour cannot be learnt solely through transmission teaching. She stated that interactive techniques such as role plays, group discussions, brainstorming, creative activities, behaviour rehearsal, participatory activities and discussions are useful for acquiring life skills and learning from experience (Rooth, 2005:251). It thus appears as if the way in which learners would prefer to be taught, seems to also be the most effective way in which to transfer knowledge and skills about sexuality.

From participants' comments one could gather that apart from wanting to be active participants in their process of learning, adolescent girls also view the opinion of their teacher as important. This could link with Roger Hart's ladder of participation, as mentioned in Chapter 2, which suggests how children could be included in working together with adults towards a common goal and that both the adult and the child plays an important part in this process (Kirby &

Woodhead, 2003:242). Girls indicated how they would like their teacher to specifically warn and inform them about the risks of engaging in sexual behaviour in order to be better prepared for real-life situations which might expose them to these risks. Some participants indicated that the incorporation of more educational media, like pictures and videos, could also contribute to improvement of sexuality education by making it more interesting.

Sub-theme 4: Gender and sexuality education

Gender and sexuality education make mention of participants' recommendations regarding the way in which gender differences should be approached in sexuality education. Some participants noted that girls would prefer to be sexually educated separately from boys. The motivations for this suggestion seem to be the fact that the mixed group discussion might inhibit open, honest talk about certain aspects of sexuality.

I think they could take the girls apart and the guys apart and then talk to us a bit about it and tell us what could happen and these are the consequences of it and just tell us more about it and about contraception and things like that. Not encourage us to do it, but just tell us more about it. So that we are more informed about it. (Participant 1)

I don't think all the girls will want to say everything in front of the boys. I wouldn't want to say everything in front of the boys and talk about it, I don't know, because I... Like I said, miss, they go and tell everything to everyone. So you wouldn't feel you could say anything about it, even if you didn't say anything about yourself, even if you just asked a question. By break time, everyone would know that you asked that question. Boys also need different education from girls. You would have to tell the boy why he shouldn't do it to a girl and this is what could happen to the girl, to scare them in a sense. (Participant 1)

Yes, the things that you can say when you are together are actually few. Like if you talked in class about condoms and things like that, the girls will start to giggle in order to avoid it in a sense and the guys will make jokes about it. They actually need serious, individual education about the matter. I think the guys need more education than the girls, because boys don't actually know what can happen. For them it's just fun, fun and over. So boys don't know everything that can happen to girls and things that happen because of this and how girls feel about it. Girls become emotional. Boys don't know these things. That's why they just do it and get it over with. Boys also don't know what they are doing to the girls when they go and tell everyone about it. For them it's just, "wow", but boys don't know, do you understand, miss? So boys need to be spoken to more than girls, they need more education about it. (Participant 1)

I also think it will be cool if once a month in Life Orientation, we spoke about this and they divided the class, because we won't talk like this in front of the boys and boys won't talk like this in front of us. They will, because they will try and look cool, but you won't be able to talk like this. We will feel shy, because they are boys. If they

divide the class one will talk much more, there won't be that awkwardness inbetween. A man must go and talk to the boys, because boys won't speak to a female teacher. So if we had Life Orientation the female teacher can take the girls and a man can take the boys and just give up one lesson to talk about it. That would already help a lot. (Participant 4)

Maybe you need to get a male teacher to take the boys and a woman for the girls, because a woman will understand the girls better and a man will understand the boys better. But now it's confusing for the boys, because we get the lesson same together and then they laugh at what the teacher says when she speaks about the women's things, because they are thinking about other things. That is why I think teacher does not discuss it with us a lot. (Participant 7)

Contrary to the suggestions above, some participants mentioned that they would prefer to be sexually educated together with boys. Their preference seems to be motivated by the fact that they perceive mixed discussions as a way to facilitate a better understanding of the different gender perspectives on sexuality. This preference is evident in the responses below.

It's better together, because then they also understand how the girls feel and we understand how the boys feel. Then we can say how we feel and they can say how they feel. (Participant 6)

For me it is more together. So that both will be able to understand better, they sit in one class. So if the girls understand correctly then the guys can also see, okay, here I am sitting next to my girlfriend; that is how she reacts to those answers, to those questions. Now I will also react on it like that. So that both can understand better how to go through life in a relationship like that. (Participant 10)

If the girls and boys are together, the boys can also get more instruction on how to correctly treat the girls. The guys in our class too, they just talk about sex and how they have sex with the girls and I think it is wrong. They are also in school and they must have also thought no, we must wait until after school. Now like the girls too, they also don't really think that way, because most of them also talk about how they have sex and that's also not nice. So we must get our educated together, equally. But the girls must get more education, because it is us who gets hurt the most in that situation, it's our answers that are not accepted. So if we say no, then it is not regarded as a no. But if the men say no, then we must regard it as a no. (Participant 12)

The results of this sub-theme emphasise gender differences in the way that boys and girls respond towards sexuality education in the classroom. Girls seemed to have contrasting recommendations on how to deal with these differences. Some girls believed it would be best if boys and girls receive sexuality education together, where others showed a preference towards sexuality education for boys and girls separately. Research by Francis (2010:315) confirms the preference for separation of boys and girls in sexuality education, since the needs of boys and girls in sex education classes can differ as they are influenced by cultural and social norms.

Francis's research in particular indicated that when boys are present, girls tend to be very quiet during sexuality education classes and teachers usually do not attempt to engage them in discussions (Francis, 2010:315). Research by Naidoo (2006:34) also indicated, as suggested by some participants, that the teacher presenting the content should be the same gender as the group of pupils, as this would not only enable them to feel more comfortable and dare to participate, but would also help them to identify more readily with the teacher.

The figure below is a summary of Theme 2.
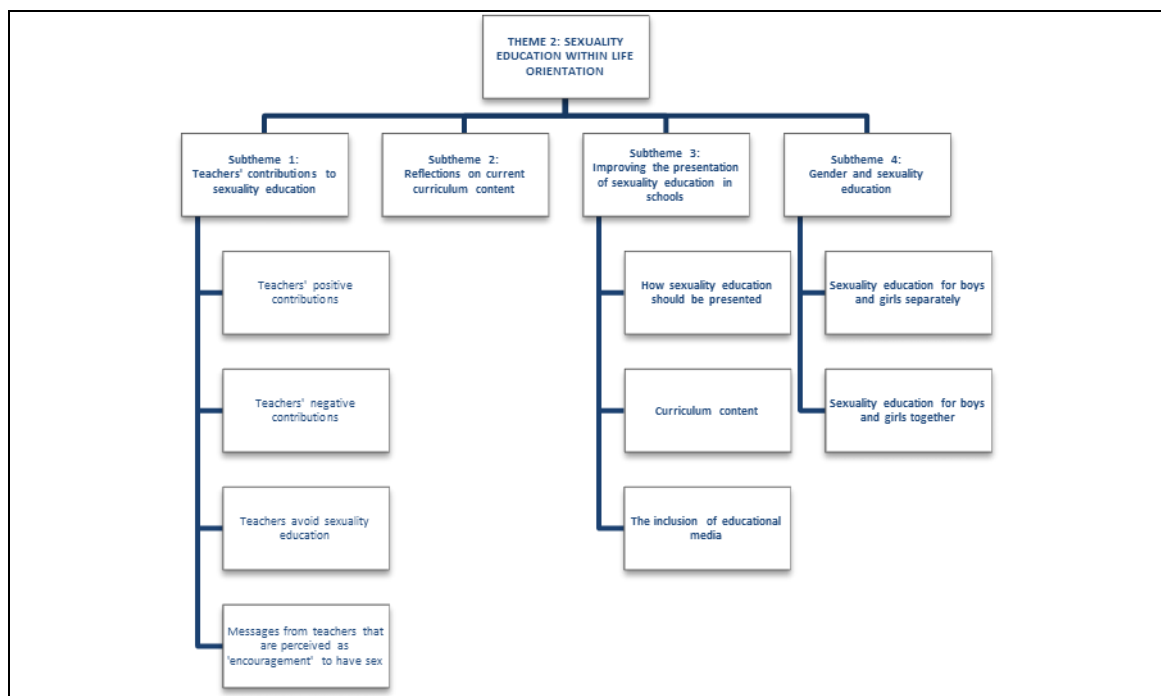
Figure 4.5: Category 2, Theme 2

4.3   DISCUSSION

The two identified categories shed light on two main topics: how adolescent girls tend to make decisions regarding their sexuality as well as their perceptions of sexuality education within the context of Life Orientation. These two topics have clearly indicated how relations with the self, relations with others as well as the context in which adolescent girls find themselves, impact sexual decision making. As Bronfenbrenner's ecological model serves as a contextual framework for understanding children within their contexts, the researcher sees it fit to discuss the results of this study on the basis of this model (Donald *et al.*, 2006:51).

Through the integrated discussion of the first category, it seemed as though relationships with others appear to have a direct impact on the sexuality of adolescent girls. This could link with what Bronfenbrenner describes as the microsystem; i.e. systems that have a direct impact on

the way in which girls make sexual decisions (Donald *et al.*, 2006:51). It was reported that girls' immediate relationships with boys appear to put certain demands on them. It seems as if girls perceive their gender role as having to comply with the sexual needs of boys/men, irrespective of girls' own needs towards sexuality*.* In the context of intimate relationships or dating, love or being in love and the length of a relationship tend to have an influence on sexual involvement and it appears as though the longer a relationship lasts, the more likely a girl is to engage sexually with her boyfriend. It is also these more long-term relationships where sexual involvement appears to be driven by a sexual desire and a need to experiment. Another microsystem which seems to have a strong impact on the sexual behaviour of adolescent girls, is peers. Pressure from the peer group will cause girls, even if it is against their will, to engage sexually as a result of wanting to fit in, to be popular or to be accepted by peers. Relations with parents as a microsystem indicate how poor parental supervision, parents' uninvolvement in their daughters' lives as well as sexual abuse within the family context, could increase the possibility of girls engaging sexually.

Sexual decision making also seems to be influenced by the context that an adolescent girl finds herself in. This could be linked with Bronfenbrenner's description of the exosystem, i.e. systems where the adolescent girl is not necessarily directly involved, but still impacts the sexual decisions that she makes*.* An example of this is that girls in poverty stricken areas face unique challenges regarding their sexuality which they would not necessarily have been exposed to if it were not for these circumstances*.* Girls are often victims of the effects of poverty, which puts them at risk of engaging in transactional sex in order to get hold of money to be able to buy what they need, which could be various things. Some need money to buy things as basic as food. Others need money to feed their addiction to drugs, or have sex in exchange for drugs. Some girls also use the money to buy more 'luxurious' items like clothing or other things that could ensure a higher status among friends. Another way to get hold of money appears to be the perception that girls consider a child support grant from the government as enough motivation to fall pregnant. The effects of poverty are also linked with the phenomenon of the 'sugar daddy', a reality in poverty stricken areas where young girls are sexually exploited by older men in exchange for financial gains.

Also within the context of substance abuse at social gatherings where it appears to be a social tendency for adolescents to abuse alcohol, girls seem to be more prone to engage sexually due to associated lowered levels of self-control. The media as a mesosystem, that links the different microsystems in which adolescent girls are involved, seems to also influence girls' sexual behaviour by exposing them to sexual content via television and cell phones which often send contradictory messages to what they are being taught by parents and in educational settings*.* These messages could lead girls to believe that what they see in the media regarding sexual

behaviour is normal and they start to model similar behaviour in their own lives. Girls are also encouraged to engage sexually through exposure to the viewing and production of pornography, which appears to be readily available and tends to circulate fast via social networks, like Mxit.

On the other hand, there also appears to be various reasons why girls would choose to abstain from sexual activity, which could also be explained according to Bronfenbrenner's model. On individual level, sexual abstinence seems to be linked with personal choices that the adolescent girl makes as well as internal thought processes which help the girl to regulate her behaviour. These internal thought processes entail considering the negative consequences of sex like pregnancy, contracting sexually transmitted diseases, getting a bad reputation or experiencing regret. In this way girls regulate themselves to abstain from sexual activity. Certain psychological factors related to the self, morals and values as well as religious beliefs often also encourage girls to abstain sexually. Significant others, as a microsystem, encourage adolescent girls to abstain from sex in various ways. Significant others' experiences, especially feelings of regret related to sexual behaviour, appear to be a valuable variable predicting sexual abstinence. It appears as if girls learn from the experience of others and apply it to their own lives.

The second category, which focused on girls' voices regarding sexuality education, could be read as a backdrop for setting up an action agenda regarding the development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme which will be discussed in Chapter 5. Sexuality education programmes are part of adolescent girls' exostystems, because even though girls do not have control over how they are being sexually educated, it does affect their sexual decision making in a significant way. What was evident in this category was that girls perceive adults to be generally unwilling to speak about sex and that girls are therefore often left ignorant regarding this topic. Enquiry about sex is sometimes wrongfully perceived by adults as a sign that girls are sexually active. For that reason, when enquiring about sex, adults often treat girls in a way which makes them feel shameful and judged for wanting to know more about sex.

In the context of sexuality education within the learning area of Life Orientation, some teachers do meet the needs of learners in various ways. On the other hand, just like the general tendency of parents and other adults, teachers also tend to ignore the topic of sex and those who do teach about sexuality approach it in a way which often fails to meet the needs of learners in this regard. Girls also tend to view instructions regarding contraception-use as adults' way of giving them the 'go-ahead' to have sex and would prefer adults to warn them about the consequences of sex and discourage them to engage sexually by informing them about sexual risks. Girls tend to think that Life Orientation content is preoccupied on HIV/AIDS prevention and they appear to

be bored with the repetitive nature of curriculum content. Girls communicated an aspiration to be active participants in the classroom as well as a need for more educational media to be incorporated into the presentation of sexuality education. It seems as though girls generally prefer adults to approach speaking about sex in an open, honest and gradual way within the context of a trustworthy relationship. Lastly, girls reasoned that boys are also in dire need of comprehensive sexuality education and suggestions were made for teachers to be able to deal more effectively with gender differences in the classroom.

The schematic presentation below has been adapted for the purposes of this study and serves as a summary of this discussion. It represents how the different systems in the life of an adolescent girl, as identified by Bronfenbrenner (1977), could be impacted (Donald *et al.*, 2006:51).
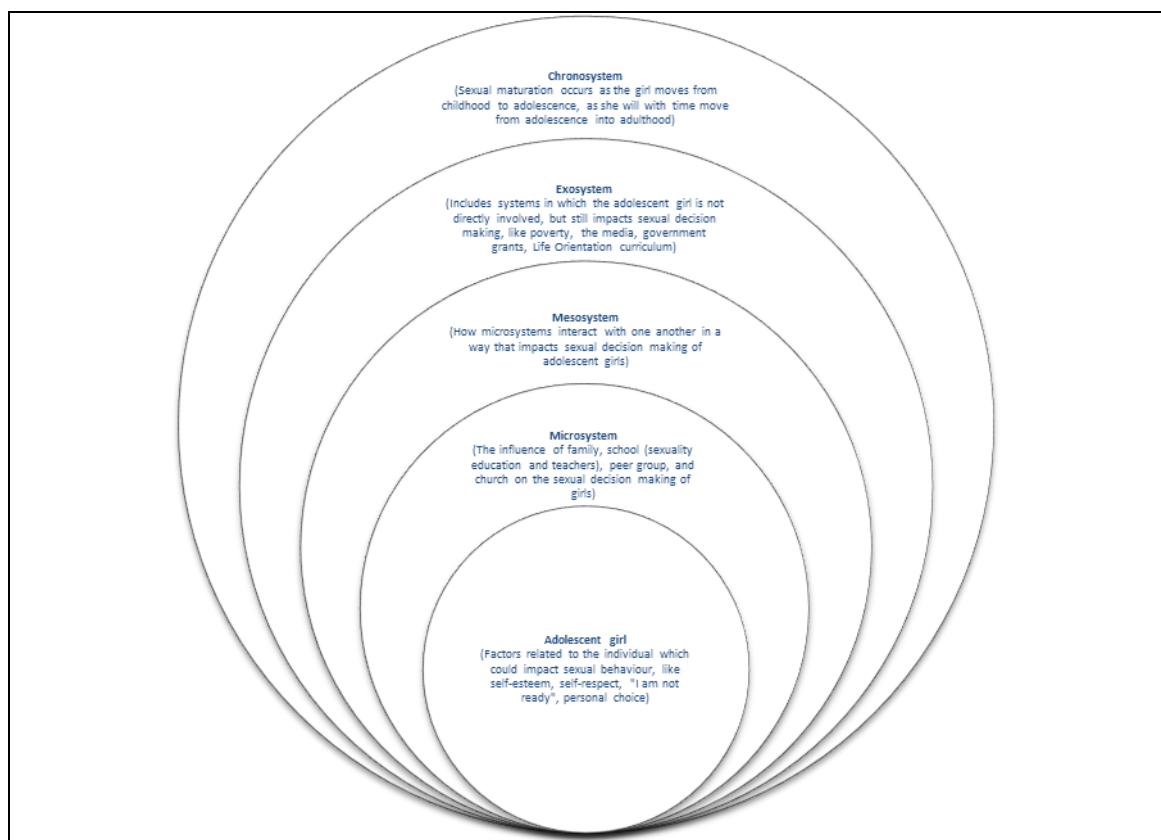
Figure 4.6: Bronfenbrenner's ecological model regarding sexual decision making

4.4   CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicated towards the complex and multi-dimensional nature of adolescent girls' sexual decision making and how adolescent girls are in need of sexuality education which could address the unique and contemporary challenges that they have to deal with regarding their sexuality. It is hoped that this study could serve as a 'metaphorical ear'

which listens to girls' voices as they are clearly in need of more support from sexuality education. The next chapter will make recommendations on how to attain this goal.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The primary point of departure of this study was to find out more about how adolescent girls are involved in the process of sexual decision making and how these findings may feed into the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme. The results of this study show that adolescent girls seem to be facing a multitude of challenges regarding their sexuality and it appears as though they are not efficiently equipped to deal with these challenges. As a consequence adolescent girls' health and well-being could be impacted in a negative way. Even though Life Orientation is considered a valuable and essential learning area, research referred to in Chapters 1 and 2 indicated that the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme does not necessarily provide girls with sufficient knowledge and skills on how to efficiently deal with contemporary challenges. Integrating learner voices regarding the process of sexual decision making was considered to be one avenue in contributing to address these challenges.

Based on the researcher's observations as a teacher in the practice field of Life Orientation and the review of literature related to the sexuality education programme it was necessary to comprehend what challenges regarding adolescent girls' sexuality entail. Therefore, how adolescent girls engage in the process of sexual decision making in response to these challenges was interrogated. It was anticipated that this information would assist in the development of guidelines for a Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme that meet girls' needs to a greater extent.

The remainder of this chapter is geared towards proposing guidelines for the development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme. To this end, the study will firstly be evaluated as a whole against the aims and objectives as they were originally set out. Secondly, proposed guidelinesfor training, practice and further research will be made to advise how the findings of this study could be applied in the development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme. The chapter will end off with limitations of this study and recommendations for future research in this regard.

5.2   EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH

In Chapter 1, the research question, aims and objectives of this study were set out. The general aims of this research study were twofold. Firstly, it was to qualitatively explore and describe

through an interpretive descriptive strategy how adolescent girls from three diverse high schools in the Western Cape engage in sexual decision making. Secondly, to use gathered data to propose guidelines for the development and presentation of Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programmes.

The first part of the aim was achieved making use of a qualitative interpretive descriptive research design to gain an in-depth understanding and provide rich descriptions of how adolescent girls engage in sexual decision making. The sample was selected from the population by means of non-probability purposeful sampling to ensure the inclusion of cases that were perceived to be information rich. In order to ensure in-depth, descriptive and triangulated data collection, multiple sources of information, including focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, naïve sketches, and the researcher's journaling were used. The focus group discussions as well as individual interviews were voice recorded, transcribed, and together with naïve sketches and the researcher's journal formed the data for this study. After the data had been analysed, it was discussed in Chapter 4 with a literature control. The process of data analysis helped the researcher gain an understanding, from the participants' perspective, of adolescent sexual decision making.

The second part of the aim will be achieved in this chapter, where results of the study will be used to propose guidelines for the development and presentation of Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programmes. In order to achieve these aims, certain objectives had to be in place. The researcher will now explain how each objective was achieved.

- **Objective 1**

To explore in literature how adolescent girls engage in the process of sexual decision making.

In Chapter 2 theoretical perspectives were explored to describe how adolescent girls engage in sexual decision making. The literature review indicated that the following elements can be utilised in developing an understanding of the process of adolescent girls' sexual decision making:

o   A gender perspective on adolescent sexuality

It was found that there are significant differences between the sexuality of the two genders, and thus a gender-specific description of adolescent sexuality was provided. In Chapter 2 the main differences between the sexuality of boys and girls were pointed out. Due to these differences between the two genders, the sexual decisions that boys and girls would typically make also

differ. This indicated the necessity for interventions and specifically sexuality education to be gender-specific.

o   Decision-making models and factors that could predict sexual decision making

As a result of prior research, decision-making models were developed with regards to the ways in which sexual decisions are likely to be made. Sexual behaviour could be predicted as explained by these models. Previous research furthermore reports that there are different factors that could impact sexual decision making. It was found that there are a variety of personal- , psychological- , traditional or cultural- and societal factors that could influence sexual decision making which indicated that adolescent sexuality is complex and influenced by multiple dimensions.

o   Problematic consequences of sexual decision making

It was found that risky sexual behaviour as a result of irresponsible sexual decision making could impact adolescent girls' physical, psychological, and social health and well-being negatively, emphasising the need for interventions to counter these harmful outcomes.

Together with the literature review, the empirical investigation of this study also contributed to a more extensive understanding of how adolescent girls engage in sexual decision making, as a variety of factors were identified by participants that impact on sexual decision making. Therefore, the first objective of this study was achieved as a result of the literature review which described adolescent sexual decision making on the basis of the above mentioned theoretical perspectives as well as the empirical investigation which identified how adolescent girls engage in the process of sexual decision making.

- **Objective 2**

To identify how adolescent girls are influenced in their sexual decision making.

The literature review as well as the empirical investigation of this study indicated that there are certain factors which make it difficult for girls to regulate their sexual decision making, where other factors make it easier for girls to regulate their sexual behaviour.

Some of the reported factors which make it difficult for girls to steer clear of sexual involvement are *relationship-based*, as girls' relations with boys, peers and parents impact their sexual behaviour. Specifically with regards to their relations with boys, it was found that gender inequalities impact adolescent girls' sexual decision making significantly. Even though South Africa has a constitution that promotes equal human rights and dignity of both men and women,

it is a reality that girls tend to see themselves and perceive their gender role as having to satisfy the sexual needs of men. As far as parents are concerned, it was reported that uninvolved parents and poor parental supervision seem to also put girls at risk of engaging sexually. Girls also tend to engage sexually as a result of pressure from peers, or to fit in with the peer group.

Sexual behaviour is also found to be *context-based*. Poverty, in particular, brings a new dimension of challenges that girls in affected circumstances have to face. Girls find their sexual decisions impacted by poverty where transactional sex is at the order of the day. Girls exchange sex for monetary benefits to relieve the effects of poverty. Another context that often leads to sexual involvement is social gatherings associated with alcohol abuse. It is claimed that alcohol lowers inhibitions to resist sexual temptation. Within the context of the media, distorted sexual messages are often portrayed by movies, social networking and pornographic material, causing girls to consider what they see in the media as 'normal sexual behaviour' and their sexual behaviour is likely to be directed accordingly.

On the other hand, the findings of the empirical study indicated that some adolescent girls decide to abstain sexually. Girls often regard the negative consequences of sex, like falling pregnant or contracting a sexual disease as reasons to avoid sexual activity. Girls consider their future to be more important than to engage in sexual behaviour which could put their future in jeopardy. Girls' relationships with significant others often encourage them to abstain from sex, where it is reported that girls tend to learn from the mistakes of others with whom they associate. Factors related to the self could also lead to sexual responsible behaviour as girls often make personal vows that they will not engage in risky or irresponsible sexual behaviour. Lastly it was found that girls often lack information about their sexuality and how to make responsible sexual decisions, due to the fact that adults and teachers seem to be hesitant to discuss sexuality with them. This silence around sexuality could further expose girls to making sexual decisions which could be detrimental to their health and well-being.

The comprehensive discussion of the literature review as well as the empirical findings of this study proves that the second objective was reached.

- **Objective 3**

To formulate guidelines on the integration of adolescent girls' voices in the development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme in the Western Cape.

Chapter 4 reported on the participants' descriptions of adolescent girls' sexual decision making as well as their voices regarding sexuality education within Life Orientation. Despite the

immense challenges that adolescent girls have to face regarding sexual decision making, it seems as though they get minimal assistance from adults, teachers and the educational system on how to deal with these challenges. Adults appear to be generally reluctant to speak with adolescent girls about their sexuality and it seems as if adults shift the responsibility onto others; teachers expect parents to educate their children sexually while parents expect the school to educate their children sexually. The result is that adolescent girls are often left uninformed. Girls who do receive sexuality education at school tend to view the content as boring and repetitive in nature. In the context of sexuality education, girls would prefer to be approached by adults in a direct, honest and open way and prefer these discussions to happen gradually and within the context of a solid relationship of trust. Participants reported a need to be actively part of discussions about sex in the classroom as well as a need for increased use of educational media. Girls also find it important for teachers to be able to deal with gender differences in the classroom in a way which addresses both the needs of girls and boys and that could encourage optimal sexuality education to happen.

The third objective was achieved as the participants of this study provided rich descriptions of how they engage in sexual decision making as well as their perceptions of the current sexuality education programme. The data of adolescent girls' voices is used in the last section of this chapter to formulate guidelines on how the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme could be developed and presented.

5.3   PROPOSED GUIDELINES

This section's guidelines are based on the voices of participants and directed towards an action agenda which could contribute to the development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme. Seeing that this research study was conducted from a advocacy/participatory worldview (Creswell, 2009:9-10) the guidelines are directed towards i) the development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme, and ii) training of professionals involved in supporting adolescent girls in their sexual decision-making processes. The fact that this research was conducted according to an interpretive descriptive research design implies that the results should have application implications. Therefore guidelines for improved practice are formulated on the basis of these results.

5.3.1 The development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme

- Development

When developing the sexuality education programme of Life Orientation the integration of adolescent girls' voices could provide curriculum planners/developers with valuable information on how to transform the programme in a way which could make it more applicable in the lives of the girls to whom this programme is directed. Concerning the content of the programme, curriculum planners could take note of the fact that participants objected to the recurrence of curriculum content year after year as learners tend to get bored with receiving the same information repetitively. Participants indicated that Life Orientation curriculum content seems to be preoccupied with HIV/AIDS prevention and contraception. Respondents expressed the desire for information on *all* aspects of their sexuality.

One aspect of sexuality which the participants in this study deemed to be particularly important is that the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme must provide adolescent girls with direction on how to construct a gender identity that is supportive of protecting themselves. As one participant mentioned,

> They must tell us what to look out for and that whole thing of guys that say you are everything to them, and those things. Now that someone has said to me, I know what to look out for. Now I know what it is about and what the type of things are that they will say (Participant 1).

A newly defined gender identity and role clarification could result in girls not acting according to pressure that boys place on them to satisfy their sexual needs, but rather view their sexuality as a healthy and natural part of who they are. When girls view their sexuality in this way, it could help them to realise that their sexuality is something of which they could be proud, have ownership of and of which they have the ability to self-regulate. If the programme could be developed to assist adolescent girls to view their sexuality through this positive lens, the result could be that girls will not allow members of the opposite gender to take advantage of or exploit their sexuality. One participant's comment could explain the abovementioned need for a more open, positive and comprehensive stance towards sexuality education, stating "I would like it if the teacher teaches us everything about sex..." (Participant 14).

Participants indicated that a programme which merely transmits knowledge is not enough and it is desirable that programme development will also focus on providing girls with valuable skills on how to deal with sexual decision making. As two participants remarked, "Then we could give

our opinions. Not a debate thing, but then we are also more a part of it. Then it's no longer just done out of the book" (Participant 3), and "I think we should all sit together so that teacher can give us a chance to ask questions and to say things. The teacher doesn't just stand there and say this and this and then, okay, we are finished" (Participant 1). Even though the current sexuality education programme of Life Orientation does encourage the strengthening of skills through experiential learning and by actively involving learners in the process of learning, Rooth's (2005:282) study indicated that in reality this does not happen. It is therefore advisable that the development of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme is aimed at ways in which active participation could be brought to fruition in practice.

- Presentation

Participants in this study indicated many ways in which the sexuality education programme should be presented. According to this, specific recommendations are made regarding the role of the teacher in the presentation of content, about the way in which content should be presented, as well as the context in which all of these could optimally take place.

Firstly, participants often mentioned the importance of the role of the teacher in the presentation of sexuality education content. The teacher's views on sexuality are deemed as important by learners and learners are likely to adopt the teacher's views. Participant 9 stated,

> I feel that you need someone who you know you look up to, you are my role model. I need you to show me the way. Teacher could give her own opinion about those things and be straight and say what is in her heart and not what the book tells her to say (Participant 9).

This emphasises the impact that the teacher's views could have on learners. Should the teacher view sexuality as a topic which is never to be discussed, as sinful, bad and/or something to be ashamed about, learners might consequently feel the same way about their own sexuality. On the contrary, as mentioned above, should a teacher use more positive language when talking about sexuality and portray sexuality as a natural part of who we are as human beings, adolescent girls might be encouraged to accept their sexuality as normal. Participants communicated a need for more positive and open dialogue to be encouraged in the classroom regarding sexuality which might also empower girls to be better able to enter in conversations regarding their sexual decisions with their partners. Teachers are therefore advised to use positive language regarding sexuality, and not refer to sex, for example, as a "disgrace" like one of the participants of this study did.

Together with the use of positive language, participants clearly indicated a need for teachers to take on a role of a facilitator who guides girls in the process of exploring their sexuality. This means that the teacher is moving away from transmission teaching and is not regarded as the one with all the knowledge telling learners what to do, but rather acknowledges that learners bring with them their own knowledge and experiences regarding their sexuality and that their participation could contribute to the lessons in valuable ways. Participants mentioned that they would like teachers to make room for discussions where questions could be asked, giving girls the opportunity to explore certain ideas. Group 6 expressed, "I think it (sex) is a disgrace. We mustn't think about sex and those things". The teacher might open up discussions and explore ideas like, "Is sex really a disgrace? Is it wrong to think about sex?" Questions like these might enable girls to strengthen their own opinions regarding sexuality which could have a lasting effect, rather than merely complying with what adults expect of them. The facilitator could make use of experiential learning where methods like case studies and role-play could be used to assist girls with sexual decision making. Case studies and role-play could act as simulation exercises which could equip girls with skills on how to avoid or deal with certain situations in the future, providing girls the opportunity to practise assertive sexual behaviour. This approach to learning could free the teacher from being the one who is supposed to come up with all the answers, as the teacher directs learners in finding the ability to regulate their own behaviour which could result in responsible sexual decision making.

Overall participants in this study suggested that sexuality education should occur within a context where there are guiding principles like mutual respect, confidentiality, non-judgemental attitudes, listening, no shaming or blaming and the use of constructive, honest, easy-to-understand language. "She (my mother) talks to me openly about it. That is how I want her to talk to me" (Participant 7). These guiding principles could counter feelings similar to what was mentioned by Participant 14, that "When I want to ask them (parents) about sex they will go mad".Moreover respondents imply that it would be beneficial if sexuality education occurs from an early age, and not only after the onset of puberty. In this way girls could be taught to view their sexuality in a positive light already from an early age. If conversations about sexuality are a normal part of education since a young age, it would also make it less 'exclusive' and learners might not be as uncomfortable to speak about it as they would be if they are rarely and unexpectedly confronted with the topic. Participant 1 explained that "Mothers must talk to girls from a young age about boyfriends and things like that. They mustn't immediately just come down on the children, they must tell them about it slowly". Participants in this study are thus in favour of content related to sexuality being revealed in a gradual and age-appropriate manner, not by sharing all the information at once and/or as part of a once-off discussion.

5.3.2 Training of professionals

As it was clearly reported by participants that teachers and other adults often tend to ignore the topic of sexuality, participants have a need for adults to enter into discussions about sexuality more comfortably and with more confidence. This could imply that specialised training is needed to equip professionals with dialogic and facilitating skills. Participant 1 explained, "I think they (adults) are shy about it (sex). Many adults do not want to talk about it or want to talk about it in depth". Participant 10 also advised that, "They must be straight with us. They must get to the point, because children will find out afterwards that my parents hid things from me. Why didn't they tell us about this? We didn't know. It can influence our lives".The guidelines in this chapter should also be directed towards academic institutions who prepare students as prospective teachers, counsellors, psychologists or social workers to enable them to sufficiently support adolescent girls in assertive sexual behaviour. It is recommended that the topic of sexuality and/or sexuality education be integrated in the curriculum in such a manner that students' competencies are enhanced on the levels of academic learning and professional development. Guidelines for improving the training curriculum of prospective professionals and continuous training of professionals already working in the practice field of sexuality guidance are thus directed towards teaching that stimulates professionals/students to acquire integrated competencies on the topic of sexuality and sexuality education.

- Academic learning

It is important that students become aware of the fact that, as participants indicated, there are a variety of factors from different contexts that impact adolescent sexual decision making and that sexuality is a phenomenon that is complex and multi-dimensional. It is thus not a homogeneous phenomenon that could be viewed from a one-sided approach, like for example a value based approach, seeing that a one-sided approach could be successful in addressing one or a few aspects, but not all aspects that impact adolescent sexual health. It is therefore recommended that students need to be provided with opportunities to make them aware of how they think about sexuality and how they lack an understanding of the topic/phenomenon in a comprehensive way. The active search for theoretical frameworks for understanding sexuality from multiple lenses can contribute to an in-depth understanding of what students could expect to find in practice and how to utilise theoretical frameworks to deal with that in the best ways possible. Thus a problem and practice based model of teaching and learning, specifically on the topic of sexuality education, is recommended. In this way teachers could be empowered to deal with the complexities of sexuality education and intervene on multiple levels by utilising theoretical frameworks in a contextual and critical manner.

Due to the fact that participants in this study predominantly referred to external factors that influence their sexual decision making, it is recommended that prospective teachers assist in strengthening adolescent girls' internal loci of control. This can be done by utilising the theory of self-regulation in relation to sexuality, as self-regulation will assist adolescent girls to develop the ability to regulate their emotions, attention and behaviour, to strengthen the self in terms of self-knowledge, to enhance self-awareness, as well as the importance of acting according to internal loci of control. All of these psychological aspects related to the self could influence sexual decision making in a way which could promote sexual health. Self-regulatory behaviour could be strengthened by allowing girls to be actively involved in the process of learning and students should be made aware of the importance of learner participation and creating an environment where learners are encouraged to voice their opinions. "If I ask them (teachers) questions, they must elaborate on it. A person understands it better if you take part in the discussion" (Participant 8). However, prospective professionals will not be able to teach about sexuality and facilitate learner participation by only having knowledge about it. It is recommended that teachers should be empowered on personal and professional levels to be more comfortable in teaching the topic of sexuality in an interactive manner. Personal and professional development can assist teachers in effectively utilising and applying theory in practice. Guidelines for how professional development of students can be approached will now be explained.

- Professional development

In academic training, students have opportunities to put their skills to practice in various ways. Professional development related to sexuality education can be enhanced either in class by means of simulated exercises which are aimed to promote their skills in teaching about sexuality, or when students get practical experience through internships and other practical work. Lecturers could encourage students to reflect on their sexuality by making use of experiential learning like asking students to bring a symbol to class which represents their sexuality and by sharing the meaning behind their symbol with other students in groups. Experiential work like this could enable students to reflect on their own sexuality and on active and interactive teaching and learning methodologies that can be used in sexuality education. When students have exposure to the utilisation of experiential and reflective teaching and learning methodologies in their training it can assist them in teaching sexuality education in a more comfortable and confident manner.

Should students be hesitant to discuss the topic of sexuality with others, it could indicate that they might also be hesitant to discuss sexuality in practice. Lecturers could make use of opportunities like these to engage in discussions with students about why there might be

awkwardness to speak about sex. This could make students aware of aspects regarding their sexuality which could impact the way they would approach sexuality education in practice. In this way opportunities are provided for students to develop their dialogic and facilitating skills with specific reference on how to deal with the topic of sexuality in practice. The lecturer should make students aware that this experiential way of dealing with sexuality could bring negative experiences from the past to the student's foreground. It might be beneficial for affected students to get professional support in order to work through hurts from the past, as this could also have an impact on the way in which they present sexuality education.

The use of experiential learning could furthermore be successful by using for example case studies that reflect the variety of systems that influence the sexuality and sexual decision making of adolescent girls. This contextual approach could make students aware of the complexity of teaching sexuality education and therefore the necessity to combine sexuality education with other strategies, for example counselling, parental guidance, creating community awareness and mobilising community action and intervention. In this way students could be guided to understand the importance of networking with other professionals to enable comprehensive support to adolescent girls' sexual decision-making processes in a systemic and integrated manner.

Students could furthermore be exposed to the practice of sexuality education by means of internships, or by being placed at schools to get practical experience. In this way students could get the opportunity to put to practice what they have learnt at academic institutions. As participants of this study indicated a need to be more actively involved, students could practice how to create democratic spaces where learners can be encouraged to participate and state their own opinions. Students could get the opportunity to utilise multiple learning and teaching techniques in practice, like case studies, role-play and group work.

5.4   LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1   Limitations

What could be regarded as limitations of this study, will now be discussed. These may also serve as further methodological recommendations for the improvement and adjustment of the findings and conclusions of this study.

- Language

Firstly, even though the researcher attempted to minimise the effects of the perceived language barrier at School C, participants might have been able to provide even richer descriptions of sexual decision making, had it not been for the gap in communication (as explained in Chapter 3). Secondly, some of the transcribed interviews had to be translated from Afrikaans to English (refer to Annexure I). As the interviews were transcribed verbatim, they did contain Afrikaans jargon, which occasionally made it challenging to translate accurately from Afrikaans to English.

- Age

This study only included learners in Grade 10 and therefore describes the sexual decision making of adolescent girls of that specific age. Even though there were clear reasons why adolescent girls of this age were chosen, this study does not give account on what influences the sexual decision making of older and younger adolescents and acknowledges that there might be other factors which impact the sexual decision making of girls of different ages.

- Gender

Even though the researcher clearly indicated the reasons why it was important for this study to be gender-specific, there was specifically focused on the sexual decision making of girls and the sexual decision making of boys was therefore not addressed in this study.

- Demographic area

This study included three schools in the Western Cape of South Africa and acknowledges that it would not necessarily be possible to generalise the findings of this study to the other South African provinces.

- Adolescents out of the context of school

The results of this study are focused on the development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme which would not be able to directly impact the sexuality of adolescent girls who are home schooled or who dropped out of school.

- Heterosexual relationships

The researcher is aware that due to the nature of the discussions in focus groups as well as individual interviews, girls with a homosexual preference might have felt excluded. The researcher assumed that when participants referred to relationships, it was within the context of

heterosexuality. This study did not take into account homosexual relationships, even though sexual decision making is apparent in any sexual relationship.

5.4.2   Recommendations for further research

Throughout the investigation the researcher came across different aspects which impact adolescent girls' sexual decision making and on the basis of this would like to make the following recommendations for further research:

- Seeing that this study specifically pointed out the impact of gender relations on sexual decision making and how boys also seem to be in need of comprehensive sexuality education, a similar study could be repeated with a specific focus on boys.

- This study proved that there is a link between girls' sexual behaviour and how they perceive their role as a girl. Further research might extend our understanding of how girls construct their gender role and identity and how they can be assisted in constructing and redefining it.

- As the results of this research study emphasised the impact of the 'sugar daddy', additional research could be conductedon how 'sugar daddies' impact the sexual decision making of adolescent girls.

- It was revealed in this study that parents and teachers play a significant role in supporting adolescent girls with sexual decision making. Especially due to the silence around sexuality and how it was reported that adults in general steer clear of having conversations with adolescent girls about sex, further research could be aimed to assist teachers, parents and other significant adults on how to develop more positive and constructive language when talking about sexuality.

- As this study has shown that the viewing and circulation of sexual content on cell phones appears to be common, it might be necessary to direct further research towards the impact that sexual content on cell phones could have on the sexual decision making of adolescent girls.

5.5   CONCLUSION

The general aim of this research study was to make a contribution towards the development and presentation of the current Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme. In order to achieve this aim it was first necessary to understand what is happening in the lives of

adolescent girls regarding the way in which they engage in sexual decision making. The participants of this study shared valuable insights regarding this topic and the integration of their voices has contributed to the way in which guidelines and recommendations have been constructed in this chapter on the development and presentation of this programme.

This study has revealed the tremendous challenges that girls often have to face related to their sexuality; a part of them which is supposed to be embraced, celebrated and responsibly enjoyed rather than exploited as is clearly often the case. If persons in positions of authority continue to be numb towards knowing that these things are happening and not trying to continuously find ways in which to minimise and even demolish these effects of exploitation, the vicious cycle will persist. It is evident how challenges regarding their sexuality appear to be on the foreground of girls' minds and how it impacts their lives extensively. In spite of this, the sexuality of adolescent girls appears to be utterly neglected all over the spectrum. Serious interventions are needed on multiple levels, from where academic institutions make decisions on how to educate prospective health promoting professionals, to where content is being presented in the classroom. The findings of this study indicated the importance of listening and integrating adolescent girls' voices on sexual decision making when planning and implementing interventions of support. It is fervently hoped that this study can contribute to the development and presentation of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme that will address the contemporary needs of adolescent girls in a comprehensive manner, enabling them to deal with sexual decision making in a way that could promote their sexual and ultimately general health and well-being.

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Young Pistella, C. & Bonati, F.A. 1999. Adolescent women's recommendations for enhanced parent-adolescent communication about sexual behavior. *Child and adolescent social work journal*, 16(4):305-315. http://web.ebscohost.com.nwulib.nwu.ac.za/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=1c711765-b69b-44c7-97a6-1a6261db99d4%40sessionmgr12&vid=4&hid=19 Date of access: 30 Oct. 2012.

Youth Incentives. 2007. The grey areas of sexual violence. Leiden: Studio 12.

Annexure A:

Life Orientation Learning Outcome 1: Assessment Standards

Life Orientation Grade 10 Learning Outcome 1 Assessment Standards

Personal Well-being:

Achieve and maintain personal well-being.

We know this when the learner is able to:

■ Apply various strategies to **enhance self awareness and self-esteem**, while acknowledging and respecting the uniqueness of self and others.

■ Explain different life roles, and how they change and affect **relationships**.

■ Explain changes associated with growing towards adulthood and describe values and strategies **to make responsible decisions regarding sexuality** and lifestyle choices in order to optimise personal potential.

■ Describe the concepts 'power' and '**power relations'** and their effect on relationships between and among **genders**.

(Department of Education National Curriculum Statement: Life Orientation, Grade 10-12, 2007:26-28).

Annexure B:
Sexuality lifeline

Examples of what a "sexuality lifeline" might look like (Youth Incentives, 2007:3-4):
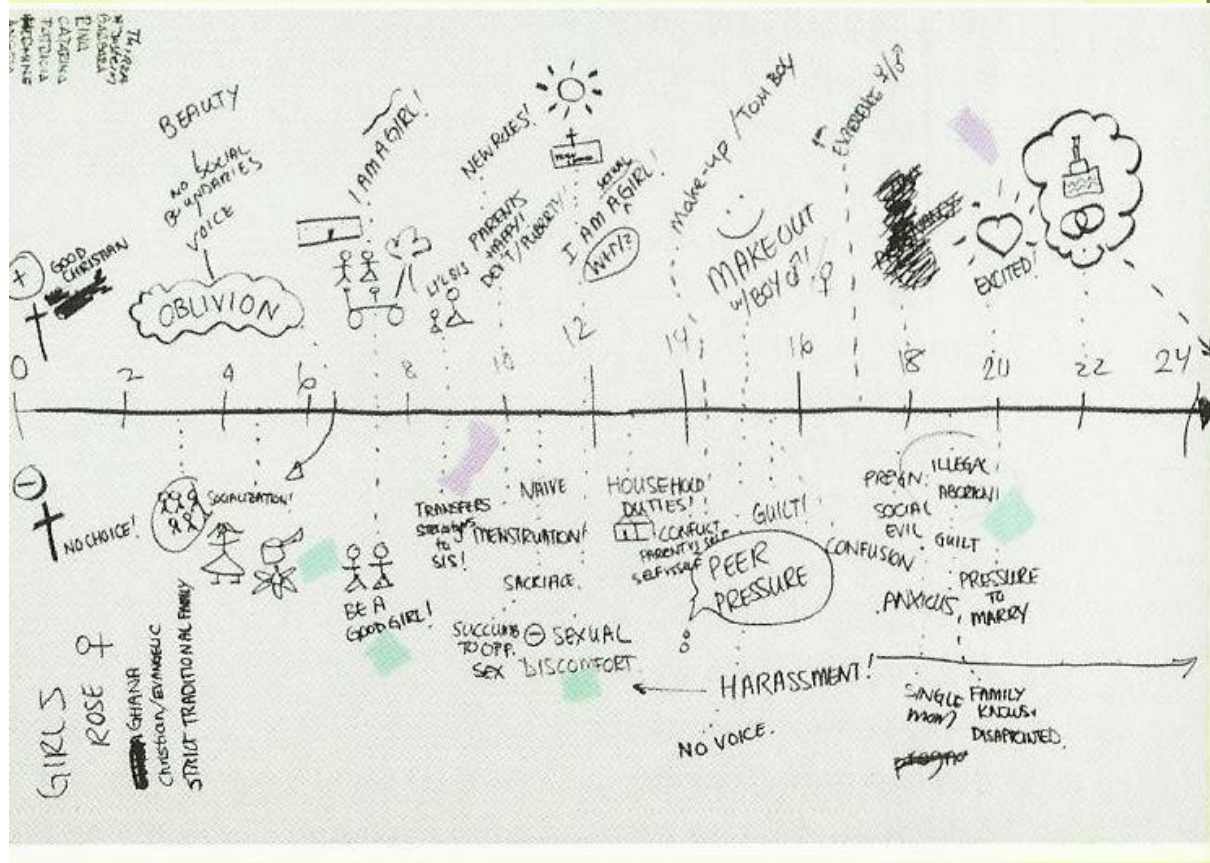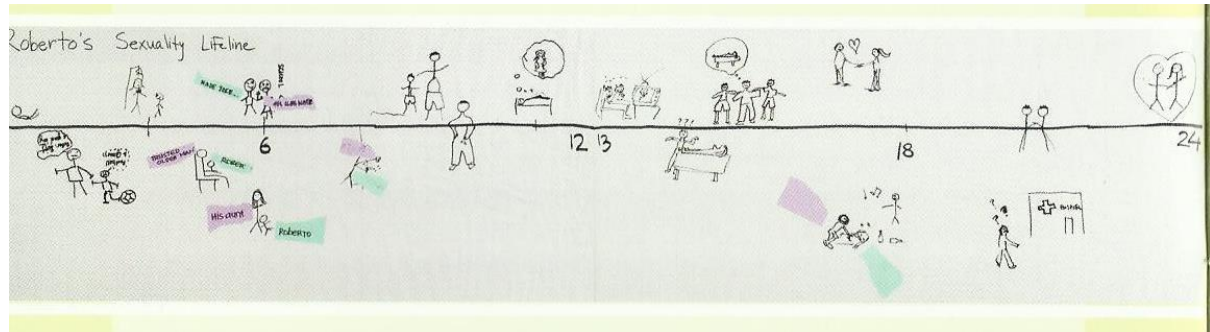
Annexure C:
Application for proposed research:
Western Cape Education Department

Western Cape Education Department

16 August 2012

FOR ATTENTION: Dr. Audrey Wyngaard

The Director: Research

Western Cape Education Department

Cape Town

APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED RESEARCH: Ronél Koch

TITLE: INTEGRATING ADOLESCENT GIRLS' VOICES ON SEXUAL DECISION-MAKING IN THE LIFE ORIENTATION SEXUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME.

I am currently a Magister student in Psychology at the North-West University.

I hereby request the permission of the Western Cape Education Department to conduct the proposed research at _____ High School. Data collection will entail a thorough literature review of relevant research as well as obtaining information by means of semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

I undertake to go about the research in an ethically sound manner, and under no circumstances will the identity of participants be made public.

Please find attached the formal research proposal which will enable you to determine the extent and focus of the study.

I trust that you will consider my application and I believe that this research will make a contribution to the lives of adolescent girls as well as the development of the learning area of Life Orientation.

You are requested to complete the written consent form below.

Yours sincerely

Ronél Koch

Annexure D:

Consent from Western Cape Education Department

Western Cape Government

Education

Audrey.wyngaard2@pgwc.gov.za

tel: +27 021 467 9272

Fax: 0865902282

Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000

wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20120820-0036

ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Miss Ronél Koch

Department of Health Sciences

North West University

Dear Miss Ronél Koch

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: IMPROVING ADOLESCENT GIRLS' VOICES ON SEXUAL DECISION-MAKING IN THE LIFE ORIENTATION SEXUALLY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1.   Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.

2.   Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.

3.   You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.

4.   Approval for projects should be conveyed to the District Director of the schools where the project will be conducted.

5.   Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.

6.   The Study is to be conducted from **01 September 2012 till 28 September 2012**

7.   No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).

8.   Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T. Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?

9.   A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.

10.   Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.

11.   A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.

12.   The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

The Director: Research Services

Western Cape Education Department

Private Bag X9114

CAPE TOWN

8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**

DATE: 21 August 2012

Annexure E:

Application for proposed research: High Schools

APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED RESEARCH: Miss Ronél Koch

Principal of _____ High School

August- September 2012

FOR ATTENTION: The Principal _____ High School

TITLE: INTEGRATING ADOLESCENT GIRLS' VOICES ON SEXUAL DECISION-MAKING IN THE LIFE ORIENTATION SEXUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

I am currently a Magister student in Psychology at the North-West University.

I hereby request the permission of the Governing Body to conduct the proposed research at _____ High School. Data collection will entail a thorough literature review of relevant research as well as obtaining information by means of semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

I undertake to go about the research in an ethically sound manner, and under no circumstances will the identity of participants be made public.

Please find attached the formal research proposal which will enable you to determine the extent and focus of the study.

I trust that you will consider my application and I believe that this research will make a contribution to the lives of adolescent girls as well as the development of the learning area of Life Orientation.

You are requested to complete the consent form below as it has to be presented to the Western Cape Education Department.

Yours sincerely

Miss Ronél Koch

Annexure F:

Consent from schools where research were conducted

Yours sincerely

Miss Ronél Koch

RKoch.

APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED RESEARCH: Miss Ronél Koch

The Governing Body hereby accepts and gives permission for the proposed study to be conducted at   High School, subject to the consent of the Western Cape Education Department.

With thanks

SIGNED:

HIGH SCHOOL: PRINCIPAL:

Mr N. J. ALLAH

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Yours sincerely

Miss Ronél Koch

RKah

APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED RESEARCH: Miss Ronél Koch

The Governing Body hereby accepts and gives permission for the proposed study to be conducted at _____ High School, subject to the consent of the Western Cape Education Department.

With thanks

SIGNED:

HIGH SCHOOL: PRINCIPAL: *G. L. Germishuys*

38

Yours sincerely

Miss Ronél Koch

RKoh .

APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED RESEARCH: **Miss Ronél Koch**

The Governing Body hereby accepts and gives permission for the proposed study to be conducted at _____ High School, subject to the consent of the Western Cape Education Department.

With thanks

SIGNED: *Thomas J. J. Kearns*

HIGH SCHOOL: PRINCIPAL:

JKearns
_____

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Annexure G:

Consent to participate in research: Parents and participants

RESEARCH TOPIC: INTEGRATING ADOLESCENT GIRLS' VOICES ON SEXUAL DECISION-MAKING IN THE LIFE ORIENTATION SEXUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Dear madam/sir.

Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Miss Ronél Koch, a Masters student in Psychology from the North-West University. Your child has been selected because she is currently a Grade 10 female learner at the school where the study will be conducted. This study has been approved by the principal of this school as well as the Western Cape Education Department. This document is to help you decide if you would like your child to participate. Before you agree to your child's participation in this study, the information below will explain fully what is involved.

1.   PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to describe how adolescent girls engage in the process of sexual decision-making. The factors and resources that influence the way adolescent girls engage in sexual decision-making will be explored. The descriptions of how adolescent girls engage in sexual decision-making and the interpretation thereof will be compared with the content of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme.

2.   PROCEDURES

If you give consent that your child may participate in this study, verbal consent will be obtained from your child before the commencement of any procedures. Should this be in place, she will be asked to do the following: take part in a small group discussion or interview. The interview will take approximately 50 minutes and will be conducted at a time that would suit your child best and as permitted by the school principal. **Please note:** When your child agrees to participate in the study and take part in interviews, **it does not mean** that she is sexually active, or that participation in the study is for those who are sexually active. Sexuality can include sexual activity, but is not restricted to this. People who are not sexually active are still sexual beings.

3.   POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

No risks are anticipated. Girls will be asked about sexual decision-making in general and **will not have to disclose any personal information**.

4.   POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

It is hoped that the findings and recommendations from this study will be used to integrate the voices of adolescent girls into the curriculum framework of the Life Orientation Sexuality Education Programme in South African schools. By doing so, adolescents might find sexuality education curriculum content much more relevant and applicable, which could benefit the general health and well-being of adolescents.

5.   PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Participants will not receive any incentives or financial compensation for participating in this study. They will receive refreshments after a focus group session. Please let me know if you do not approve of this or if your child has any food allergies.

6.   CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information obtained in connection with this study that can identify your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or if required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of anonymity. Data will be stored electronically and only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the information. Data will be recorded on video will be

stored safely and kept for a period of five years. Findings and conclusions will be published in the form of a dissertation and the **names of participants will not be made public.**

7.   PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your child can choose whether to be part of this study or not. If she consents to be in this study, **she may withdraw at any time without any consequences**. She may also refuse to answer any questions that she does not want to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw her from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8.   IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCHERS

Should you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher's supervisor, Mrs Hannelie Yates, at e-mail: 23919302@nwu.ac.za or landline: (021) 864 3593.

9.   RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I hereby consent that the participant may participate in this study.

Name of Participant (your child): _____

Signature of Participant (your child): _____

Name of Parent or Legal Representative: _____

Signature of Parent or Legal Representative: _____

Date:_____

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I hereby acknowledge that the above is true and correct.

Ronél Koch: _____

Date: September 2012

Consent to participate in research: Parents and participants (Afrikaans form)

NAVORSINGSONDERWERP: DIE INTEGRERING VAN ADOLESSENTE DOGTERS SE STEMME RAKENDE SEKSUELE BESLUITNEMING IN DIE LEWENSORIËNTERING SEKSUALITEITSONDERRIG PROGRAM

Geagte me./mnr.

U kind word uitgenooi om deel te neem aan 'n navorsingstudie wat uitgevoer word deur me. Ronél Koch, 'n Meesters student aan die Noord- Wes Universiteit. U kind is geselekteer aangesien sy 'n Graad 10 dogter is in die spesifieke skool waar die studie uitgevoer sal word. Hierdie studie is reeds goedgekeur deur die skoolhoof en die WKOD (Wes-Kaap Onderwys Departement). Die onderstaande inligting sal u help om te besluit of u goedkeuring wil gee vir u kind om deel te neem aan hierdie studie, al dan nie. Alvorens u hierdie besluit neem, sal die onderstaande inligting vir u deeglik verduidelik wat die studie en u kind se deelname sal behels.

1.   DOEL VAN DIE STUDIE

Die doel van die studie is om te beskryf hoe adolessente dogters besluite neem rondom hulle seksualiteit. Daar sal gekyk word na die verskillende faktore en bronne wat adolessente dogters se seksuele besluitneming moontlik kan beïnvloed. Laastens sal daar verduidelik word hoe adolessente dogters besluite neem rakende seksualiteit en die interpretasie daarvan sal vergelyk word met die inhoud van die seksualiteits opvoeding wat deel vorm van die leerarea, Lewensoriëntering.

2.   PROSEDURE

Sou u toestemming verleen dat u kind deelneem aan hierdie studie, sal verbale toestemming ook van u kind verkry word voor die aanvang van enige prosedures. Sou dit in orde wees sal sy gevra word om die volgende te doen: neem deel aan 'n groep bespreking of individuele onderhoud. Beide die groep bespreking sowel as die onderhoud sal ongeveer 50 minute duur en sal uitgevoer word op 'n tyd wat dit u kind die beste sou pas en wat goedgekeur is deur die skoolhoof. Let wel: indien u kind deelneem aan hierdie studie, is dit **geensins 'n aanduiding dat sy seksueel aktief is nie**, of dat deelname aan hierdie studie slegs vir dogters is wat seksueel aktief is nie. Seksualiteit sluit wel seksuele aktiwiteit in, maar is nie beperk daartoe nie. Mense wat nie seksueel aktief is nie, is steeds seksuele wesens.

3.   POTENSIËLE RISIKO'S OF ONGEMAK VERBONDE AAN HIERDIE STUDIE

Geen risiko's is verbonde aan hierdie studie nie. Dogters sal gevra word oor seksuele besluitneming van adolessente dogters in die algemeen en sal geensins verplig word om enige persoonlike inligting te onthul nie.

4.   VOORGENEME VOORDELE WAT DIE STUDIE MAG INHOU VIR DEELNEMERS OF DIE GEMEENSKAP

Die hoop is dat die bevindinge en aanbevelings rakende hierdie studie gebruik sal word om adolessente dogters se stemme te integreer in die ontwikkeling van die kurrikulum van Lewensoriëntering seksualiteits opvoeding in Suid-Afrikaanse skole. Sodoende is dit moontlik dat adolessente die inhoud van die seksualiteits opvoeding kurrikulum baie meer relevant mag sien wat om die beurt positief sal kan bydra tot die algemene welstand en gesondheid van adolessente dogters.

5.   KOMPENSASIE VIR DEELNAME

Geen vergoeding word aangebied vir deelnemers aan hierdie studie nie. Deelnemers sal egter verversings ontvang na afloop van 'n groepsessie. Stel asseblief die navorser in kennis indien u kind enige alergieë het of indien u nie gemaklik is hiermee nie.

6.   KONFIDENSIALITEIT/VERTROULIKHEID

Enige ingligting wat ingesamel word tydens hierdie studie wat moontlik kan lei tot identifikasie van u kind sal streng vertroulik hanteer word. Vertroulikheid word gehandhaaf deur middel van anonimiteit. Data word elektronies gestoor en slegs die navorser en

studieleier sal toegang hê tot hierdie data. Data sal ook vasgelê word op video en sal veilig gestoor word vir 'n periode van 5 jaar. Bevindinge van hierdie studie sal in 'n tesis gepubliseer word en name van deelnemers of skole sal onder geen omstandighede genoem word nie.

7.   DEELNAME EN ONTTREKKING

U kind het die reg om te kies of sy wil deel wees van hierdie studie, al dan nie. Indien sy instem tot deelname, het sy die reg om enige tyd te onttrek sonder enige gevolge. Sy het ook die reg om te weier om vrae te beantwoord wat sy nie wil antwoord nie en dan steeds deel te wees van die studie. Die navorser het die reg om u kind van die studie te onttrek indien omstandighede dit vereis.

8.   KONTAKBESONDERHEDE VAN NAVORSERS

Indien u enige vrae het rakende hierdie studie, kontak gerus die navorser se studieleier, me. Hannelie Yates. E-pos: 23919302@nwu.ac.za of landlyn: (021) 864 3593, of die navorser, Ronél Koch, E- pos: ronelkoch@yahoo.co.uk

9.   REGTE VAN DEELNEMERS

U het die reg om enige tyd u goedkeuring terug te trek sonder gevolge van enige aard. U kind is onder geen omstandighede verplig om aan hierdie studie deel te neem nie.

HANDTEKENING VAN DEELNEMER EN OUER/WETTIGE VOOG

Ek gee hiermee toestemming dat die deelnemer (my kind) mag deelneem aan die studie.

Naam van deelnemer (u kind): _____

Handtekening van deelnemer (u kind): _____

Naam van ouer/wettige voog: _____

Handtekening van ouer/wettige voog: _____

Datum: _____

HANDTEKENING VAN NAVORSER

Ek erken hiermee dat die bogenoemde inligting korrek is.

Ronél Koch: _____

Datum: _____

Annexure H:
Interview schedules

Semi-structured questions will be used for both individual interviews and focus group discussions. The interviewer will keep the interview skills in mind set out by Maree (2007:88) to ensure successful interviewing. Communication techniques that is required by the interviewer will also be utilised (Greeff, 2011:345-346).

Each focus group discussion and individual interview will begin where:
- The interviewer explains the research outline, research goals and what the data will be used for.
- Participants will be ensured that all of the information given is strictly confidential.
- Participants sign consent forms (if they have not yet done so).
- The participant is reminded that she could choose to refrain from the interview or focus group at any time without having to give any reason.

GUIDELINES AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FACILITATION FOCUS GROUPS
The following interview schedule, borrowed and adapted from RutgersWPF Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (2012:30), will be used. *(This document serves as a guideline).*

For focus group discussions: questions will be posed in a general way (e.g. the researcher will ask about 'young people' in general, 'peers' or 'friends'), so that the girls do not feel they have to disclose personal information or experiences if they do not want to.

Step 1: Creating a comfortable interview environment
Checking in. Ask each girl to share how she feels about being here. This might give the participants an opportunity to share their attitude towards the interview and create an opportunity for the researcher to acknowledge their feelings. If they are nervous, confirm that those feelings are normal.
By following the informed consent protocol, the topic of adolescent sexual decision-making will already have been introduced. Check with the participants that they understand what sexual decision-making means by asking the following question:

- Describe your understanding of the term "sexual decision-making".

(Participants can brainstorm and give their ideas which may create entry points for discussion).

Step 2: Explanation of what sexual decision-making is

Sexuality has to do with:

- **Changes** you experience when growing up during adolescence/puberty (the interviewer can provide examples of personal experiences).

- **Relationships** between people like feeling attracted to someone, falling in love.

- **Concerns** we may have or things we are curious about at the age of adolescence.

Emphasise that sexuality can include sexual activity, but is not restricted to this. People who are not sexually active are still sexual beings. This should put the participants at ease as it means that talking about sexuality does not necessarily mean that they are sexually active, or that participation in the research is only for those who are sexually active.

Sexual decision-making are all the choices made concerning sexuality (as explained above) which could influence a person's life in a negative or positive way.

Step 3: Brainstorm about different sexual decisions an adolescent girl might have to make

Girls will come up with different ideas about sexual decisions. If they are shy, examples will be given. This is done in preparation of drawing the "sexuality lifeline".

Step 4: Draw a "sexuality lifeline"

- Introduction

Due to the sensitivity of the topic of sexuality, girls might be shy especially in front of their peers to reveal private details about their own sexuality. The researcher believes that the "sexuality lifeline" might be particularly useful to overcome this barrier. The "sexuality lifeline" might serve as a way in which the adolescent girls can project their ideas and explanations about sexual decision-making onto works of art. Oaklander (2007:63) is of the opinion that whatever a person projects is a powerful metaphor for their own lives. The "sexuality lifeline" has been used in workshops in the Netherlands where youth's sexual experiences were explored (Youth Incentives, 2007:3-4). The "sexuality lifeline" will be adapted for this particular study and will focus on the description of how adolescent girls make decisions regarding their sexuality. It will not focus on the entire life of the adolescent girls, but only on their year in Grade 10.

- The "sexuality lifeline" drawing will be done according to the following steps:

1. Introduce participants to the drawing of the "sexuality lifeline" by showing them examples of what a "sexuality lifeline" could look like. (refer to Annexure B).

2. Divide the group into two or three smaller groups (depending on the wishes and size of the group) and provide each smaller group with a large sheet of paper and colouring pencils.

3. Draw a "sexuality lifeline" of an imaginary person that represents an adolescent girl's life during her year in Grade 10. The focus must be on decisions that this imaginary person makes regarding her sexuality as well as factors that could influence the process of sexual decision-making. Certain aspects such as names, relationships, religious and educational features could be added to this person's lifeline (Youth Incentives, 2007:3).

Step 5: Talk about the "sexuality lifeline" that was created

After completion, each group will have the opportunity to tell the other groups more about their "sexuality lifeline".

Step 6: Linking the "sexuality lifeline" to their own lives

- The sexuality lifeline was drawn with factors that influenced the process of sexual decision-making. Can you explain more about the way the imaginary adolescent girl engage in the process of sexual decision-making?

- How is that similar or different to the way in which adolescent girls make decisions with regard to their sexuality?

- What resources do adolescent girls have to assist them in the process of sexual decision-making and what resources are lacking?

Step 7: Reflection of participants

Ask participants to reflect on their participation by answering the following questions in writing:

Question 1: How would you describe the experience of taking part in the group discussions? / Hoe was dit vir jou om deel te wees van hierdie groep bespreking?

Question 2: Have you previously had the opportunity to talk with adults about the things we discussed today? / Het jy al ooit die geleentheid gehad om met volwassenes te gesels oor die dinge waaroor ons vandag gesels het? Indien ja, wie?

Question 3: What have you learnt from this experience today? / Wat het jy geleer uit hierdie ervaring vandag?

Question 4: Is there anything you wanted to say about adolescent girls' sexual decision-making, but didn't have the courage or get the chance to? / Is daar dalk iets wat jy nog wou sê oor dogters se seksuele besluitneming, maar nie die kans of moed gehad het nie?

Summary of questions that will be asked in focus group discussions:

Question 1: Describe your understanding of the term sexual decision-making. / Wat is jou verstaan van die term seksuele besluitneming?

Question 2: What are the different sexual decisions an adolescent girl might have to make? / Watter seksuele besluite sal 'n adolessente dogter moontlik moet maak?

Question 3: What resources do adolescent girls have to assist them in the process of sexual decision-making? / Watter bronne (hulpmiddels) sou jy sê het adolessente dogters om hulle by te staan in die proses van besluitneming rondom hulle seksualiteit?

Question 4: What resources are adolescent girls lacking when it comes to sexual decision-making? / Watter bronne (hulpmiddels) kom adolessente dogters kort wanneer dit kom by die maak van seksuele besluite?

Question 5: Do you ever get the opportunity to talk with adults about sex? / Kry jy ooit die geleentheid om met grootmense te praat oor seks?

Final step: Closing the interview

At the end of the interview or focus group discussion, thank the participants for their time. Ask them whether they have any questions or if there is anything they are not clear about. Reassure them about confidentiality. Ask participants to indicate whether they would be willing to take part in individual interviews. Offer the participants drinks and/or snacks.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The questions that will be asked during semi- structured interviews will be built upon data that were gathered during focus group discussions and will be finalised after completion thereof.

The interviewer will begin the interview by finding common ground. The interviewer will say that she is also a female and that even though she is in a different phase of her life, she also needs to make decisions regarding her sexuality. It will be added that she was also once an adolescent and can remember what it was like to be confronted with different decisions you have to make as an adolescent girl. The interviewer will explain that she is particularly interested in the way in which present-day adolescents engage in sexual decision-making, especially adolescent girls in Grade 10. A typed sheet will be handed out with questions of which the participant can choose the order in which she would prefer to answer.

Final questions for individual interviews that was finalised after completion of focus group discussions:

Question 1: What is the general message that you get from adults regarding sexuality and sexual decision-making? / Wat is die algehele boodskap wat jy vanaf grootmense kry rondom jou seksualiteit en seksuele besluitneming?

Question 2: Have you ever had the opportunity to speak with adults about sexuality and sexual decision-making? If yes, who? / Het jy al ooit die geleentheid gehad om met grootmense oor jou seksualiteit en besluitneming rondom jou seksualiteit te praat? Indien ja, wie?

Question 3: How do you want adults to speak with you about sexuality and sexual decision-making? / Hoe wil jy hê moet grootmense met jou praat oor seks en seksuele besluitneming?

Question 4: Is there a situation in your life regarding your sexuality where you would have behaved differently if only you knew then what you know now? / Is daar 'n situasie in jou lewe waar jy voel jy anders sou optree spesifiek ten opsigte van jou seksualiteit en die keuses wat jy daaromtrent maak as jy net beter geweet het?

Question 5: Do you get sufficient guidance in order to handle sexual decision-making? / Sou jy sê jy kry genoegsame leiding/hulp oor hoe om seksuele besluitneming as adolessente dogter te hanteer?

Question 6: What would you have preferred to hear more of or to speak about in the classroom regarding sexuality and sexual decision-making? / Wat sou jy wou hê daar meer/anders in die klaskamer oor gesels/behandel moet word rakende jou seksualiteit en besluitneming daaroor?

Question 7: Do you have any suggestions in terms of Life Orientation content about sexuality and sexual decision-making and the way it is being presented in class? / Het jy enige voorstelle in terme van die Lewensoriëntering se vakinhoud oor seksualteit en besluitneming daaroor en die wyse waarop dit aangebied word?

Question 8: What would help you to make good sexual decisions? / Wat sou jou help om goeie seksuele besluite te neem?

Annexure I:

An example of translated quotations from transcribed interviews

- Category 1:

Die meisies verkoop ook dan hulle aan grootmense vir geld. Ja, hulle gaan staan op plekke, daar is baie gevalle en baie kinders dan kom haal groot ouerige mans hulle dan ry hulle dan gaan seks hulle en dan kom hulle terug dan het hulle geld. Sommige kinders se ouers het dalk nou nie 'n werk nie dan is dit die geval dan moet hulle nou dit doen. (The girls then sell to adults for money. Yes, they stand in places, there are many incidents and many children that big, older men pick them up and drive off with and then they have sex and when they come back they have money. And some children's parents might not have a job at the moment and then they have to do this). (Group 7)

Baie van my vriende sê ek is so spyt ek het dit gedoen en as ek met my vriendin se pa se meisie praat. Ek het haar reguit gevra, want op daai tyd was ek soos, ek het nie geweet watter kant toe nie. Toe vra ek vir haar: "Is jy spyt jy het voor jou huwelik seks gehad?". Toe sê sy vir my ja, sy is vreeslik spyt daaroor. Sy wens sy het gewag en dis wat meeste van die mense voel wanneer ek met hulle praat en vir hulle vra. Meeste van hulle voel spyt en ek dink dit keer my ook om nie nou al seks te hê nie, want jy voel okay, dalk gaan ek ook spyt wees. (Many of my friends say I regret doing it so much and when I talk to my friend's dad's girlfriend. I asked her directly, because at that stage I didn't know what to do. So I asked her, "Do you regret having sex before getting married?". Then she said yes, she is very sorry that she did. She wishes that she'd waited and that's how most people feel when I talk to them and I ask them. Most of them regret it and I think it does stop me from having sex now already, because I feel like, okay, maybe I will also regret it). (Participant 5)

Maar jy het eintlik iemand nodig wat jy weet vir jou kan help deur daai paadjie, of wat miskien die verkeerde paadjie geloop het, maar wil hê jy moet die regte paadjie loop wat vir jou kan help. Ek probeer jou red van die 'mistake' wat ek gemaak het. Iemand hê wat jy weet ek sien op na jou, jy is my rolmodel. (But you actually need someone to help you through that path, or who has maybe followed the wrong path, but wants you to follow the right path and can help you. I want to save you from the mistake I made. Have someone that you know I look up to you, you are my rolemodel). (Participant 9)

- Category 2:

Ja, ons is 16, ons is op die piektyd van ons lewens en ons het die jaar nog NIKS oor seks gedoen nie. Ek het gedink soos ons nou in ons senior jare ingaan gaan hulle vir ons meer van dit vertel, ek het in Graad 7 meer gedoen

as nou. Ons het 'n hele toets gehad wat oor seks gegaan het. Op laerskool, graad 7 het ons prentjies gekry en ons moes die name invul en ons het alles gedoen, hier doen ons niks daarvan nie en dis juis nou wat ons dit nodig het, want dis nou wat die geleentheid daar is. (Yes, we are 16, we are in the peak time of our lives and we have not done anything about sex this year. I thought so as we go into our senior years they will tell us more about it, I did more in grade 7 than now. We had a whole test about sex. In primary school, grade 7 we got pictures and we had to fill in the names and we did everything, here we do nothing like that and it's precisely now that we need it, because now the opportunity is here). (Group 4)

Ek dink hulle is skaam daaroor, soos sê nou maar ek het al my ma vertel dat ek dit doen en dan probeer my ma dit half vermy. Baie ouers wil nie praat daaroor nie of wil nie uitbrei nie. Gewoonlik as dit kom by meisies wat hulle menstruasie kry, sal hulle met jou praat daaroor, maar hulle vermy seks. Soos my ma self het glad nie met my gepraat oor seks nie en ek het soos niks daarvan geweet nie, ek het by my vriende uitgevind. En dis hoe ek my eerste fout ook gemaak het, want ek het nie eintlik geweet wat lei tot wat nie. (I think they are shy about it, for instance I have told my mom that I do it and then my mom kind of tries to avoid it. Many parents do not want to talk about it or want to talk about it in depth. Often when it comes girls menstruating, they will talk to you about it, but they avoid sex. Like my mom didn't talk to me about sex and I knew nothing about it, I found out from my friends. And that's how I made my first mistake, because I didn't really know what leads to what). (Participant 1)

Ek dink dit sou baie vir die meisies gehelp het as seuns ook hulle 'input' gegee het wat hulle verwag van 'n meisie en wat hulle dink van 'n meisie wat al by soveel ouens was, en van 'n meisie wat nog 'n maagd is. Dit sal ook vreeslik baie help vir 'n meisie om te weet, jy weet nooit, meisies dink partykeer ouens verwag 'n sletterige meisie of hulle verwag 'n meisie wat nog 'n maagd is. Maar my ma sê vir my, 'n ou, almal hou van 'n meisie wat rondkuier, maar niemand wil so meisie trou nie. So dit laat mens wonder en as ons meer inligting kry daaroor en, soos, meer inligting en opsies wat gaan gebeur en hoe om dit te hanteer. (I think it would help the girls a lot if boys gave their input about what they expect from a girl and what they think of a girl that has been with so many guys, and about a girl that is still a virgin. That would also help an awful lot for a girl to know, you never know, girls sometimes think that guys expect a slutty girl or they expect a girl that is still a virgin. But my mother always says to me that a guy, everyone likes a girl that gets around, but nobody wants to marry that kind of girl. So that makes you wonder and if we had more information about it and, like, more information and options of what would happen and how to handle it). (Participant 5)