STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE

BY

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SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
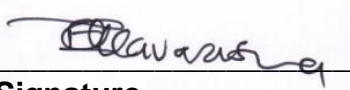
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AUGUST 2021

DECLARATION

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I, *Eugenia Takavarasha* declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

_____   **AUGUST 2021**
Signature   **Date**

DEDICATION

To my mother Veronica Munyongani (VaChinjanja), my late father Ignasio Semende Munyongani (Mhofuyemukono) and my four children, Clement Ngonidzashe, Tanatswa Lucy, Welly Tinevimbonashe and Anotida Basil Tawanda.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

With Zimbabwe's commitment towards the attainment of inclusive and equitable quality education and empowerment of girls and women by 2030, it becomes necessary to deepen the understanding of sexual harassment in educational institutions and even more so because evidence suggests it as an impediment factor. The current study focuses on students' responses to encounters of sexual harassment at Colleges of education in Zimbabwe. The study will add to scholarship, policy and practice.

A qualitative case study design was adopted to investigate the problem of students' responses to sexual harassment at Colleges of education in Zimbabwe. The method was selected specifically for its advantage of providing an in-depth explanation on the phenomenon. A total of 20 participants (16 students, 2 lecturers and 2 SAYWHAT staff) were purposively selected following ethical clearance by UNISA and permission and the institution's permission to conduct the study. Data was collected by means of individual face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions guided by a set of semi-structured questions. Data was analysed thematically following steps of familiarisation, coding and searching for themes. The study was approached from the critical theory as it adopted a liberal feminist perspective, whose tenets are empowerment, transformation and emancipation of women.

The findings were presented under the following themes: understanding of sexual harassment, experiences of sexual harassment, contributing factors to the occurrences of sexual harassment, students' reactions to encounters of sexual harassment and suggestions for empowering students' responses. Findings revealed that sexual harassment was narrowly understood and highly prevalent in various forms. Male students were found to be the major perpetrators of sexual harassment while female students were considered the most likely to be victimised. Although students engaged in varied responses to encounters of sexual harassment, silence was the most common response, but not their ideal one.

The study concludes that gender mainstreaming in the teacher education curriculum is a means to empower students' responses. This would in turn cause the realisation of the country's Heritage Based Education 5.0, which contributes to the achievement of the United Nations SDGs 4 and 5 of Vision 2030. The findings recommend gender mainstreaming of the teacher education curriculum to enable the curbing of sexual harassment through empowering students' responses, ultimately resulting in their emancipation.

Key Terms: College of education, experiences, gender harassment, response, reaction, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, sexual aggression, sexual coercion, sexual harassment, unwanted sexual attention.

OPSOMMING

Met die nasie se verbintenis tot die bereiking van inklusiewe en billike gehalte-onderwys en bemagtiging van meisies en vroue teen 2030, word dit nodig om die begrip van seksuele teistering in onderwysinstellings te verdiep, meer omdat getuienis dit as 'n belemmeringsfaktor voorstel. Hierdie studie fokus op studente se ervarings en hul antwoorde op ontmoetings met seksuele teistering by onderwyskolleges in Zimbabwe. Die studie sal bydra tot wetenskap, beleid en bemagtiging. 'N Kwalitatiewe gevallestudie-ontwerp is aanvaar om die probleem te ondersoek. Die metode is spesifiek gekies vir die voordeel dat dit 'n diepgaande uiteensetting van die verskynsel bied. Altesaam 20 deelnemers (16 studente, 2 dosente en 2 SAYWHAT-personeel) is doelgerig gekies na etiese goedkeuring deur UNISA en toestemming om die studie deur die instelling te doen. Data is ingesamel deur middel van individuele onderhoude van aangesig tot aangesig en fokusgroepbesprekings gelei deur 'n stel semi-gestruktureerde vrae. Data is tematies geanaliseer volgens stappe van vertroudheid, kodering en soek na temas. Die studie is benader vanuit die kritiese teorie en feministiese perspektief van bemagtiging, transformasie en emansipasie van die marginalisering van vroue. Die bevindings is aangebied onder die volgende temas: ervarings van seksuele teistering, bydraende faktore tot die voorkoms van seksuele teistering en voorstelle om studente se antwoorde te bemagtig. Bevindinge het aan die lig gebring dat seksuele teistering in verskillende vorme eng verstaan word en baie algemeen voorkom. Daar is bevind dat mansstudente die belangrikste oortreders van seksuele teistering is, terwyl vrouestudente as die grootste kans gesien word om geviktimiseer te word. Alhoewel studente uiteenlopend reageer op ontmoetings met seksuele teistering, was stilte die algemeenste, maar nie hul ideale nie. Die studie het tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat geslagsinstroming in die kurrikulum vir onderwysersopleiding 'n middel is om studente se antwoorde te bemagtig. Dit sou op sy beurt die verwesenliking van die land se Erfenisgebaseerde Onderwys 5.0 veroorsaak, wat bydra tot die bereiking van die Verenigde Nasies se SDG 4 en 5 van Visie 2030. Die bevindinge beveel aan dat geslagsinstroming in die leerplan vir onderwysersopleiding ten einde die beperking van seksuele teistering deur

bemagtiging van studente se reaksies, wat uiteindelik hul emansipasie van die situasie tot gevolg het**.**

Sleutelterme: Seksuele teistering, ervarings met seksuele teistering, seksuele misbruik, seksuele wangedrag, geslags teistering, seksuele aggressie, seksuele dwang, ongewenste seksuele aandag, seksuele viktimisering, reaksies op seksuele teistering.

Okufingqiwe

Ngokuzibophezela kwamazwe ekufinyeleleni ekutholeni imfundo esezingeni ebandakanya bonke nokulingana nokufukulwa kwamantombazane nabesifazane ngonyaka ka-2030, kuba nesidingo sokujulisa ukuqonda kokuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi ezikhungweni zemfundo, ikakhulu ngoba ubufakazi bukhombisa ukuthi buyisithiyo. Lolu cwaningo lugxile kokuhlangenwe nakho kwabafundi kanye nezimpendulo zabo lapho behlangabezana nokuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi emakolishi emfundo eZimbabwe. Ucwaningo luzokwengeza ekufundiseni, kwinqubomgomo nasekufukuleni. Kwamukelwa idizayini esezingeni elifanele yokuphenya le nkinga. Le ndlela yakhethwa ngokukhethekile ukuze kusizakale ukunikezela ngencazelo ejulile ngale nto. Bangu-20 ababambiqhaza (abafundi abayi-16, abafundisi ababili kanye nabasebenzi be-2 SAYWHAT) abakhethwe ngenhloso kulandela imvume ye-UNISA kanye nemvume yokwenza ucwaningo yisikhungo. Idatha yaqoqwa ngokusebenzisa izingxoxo zomuntu ngamunye ubuso nobuso nezingxoxo zamaqembu okugxila kuwo ziholwa isethi yemibuzo ehlelekile. Idatha yahlaziywa ngokulandelana kulandela izinyathelo zokujwayela, ukufaka amakhodi nokusesha izingqikithi. Ucwaningo lwasuselwa kumcabango obucayi kanye nombono wabesifazane wokufukulwa, ukuguqulwa kanye nokukhululwa kokucwaswa kwabesifazane. Okutholakele kwethulwe ngaphansi kwalezi zingqikithi ezilandelayo: okuhlangenwe nakho kokuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi, izinto ezinomthelela ezenzakalweni zokuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi kanye neziphakamiso zokunika amandla izimpendulo zabafundi. Okutholakele kuveze ukuthi ukuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi bekuqondwa kancane futhi kudlange kakhulu ngezindlela ezahlukahlukene. Abafundi besilisa kutholakale ukuthi yibo abenza kakhulu ukuhlukumeza ngokocansi kuthi abafundi besifazane babhekwe njengabahlukumezeka kakhulu. Yize abafundi bebenza izimpendulo ezahlukahlukene lapho behlangabezana nokuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi, ukuthula bekuyinto ejwayelekile, kepha hayi eyabo ekahle. Ucwaningo luphetha ngokuthi ukufakwa kobulili kwikharikhulamu yemfundo yothisha kuyindlela yokunika amandla izimpendulo zabafundi. Lokhu kuzodala ukuthi kufezeke iMfundo 5.0 yezwe eyigugu, ebambe iqhaza ekufinyeleleni kwe-United Nations SDG 4 no-5 Yombono 2030. Lokhu okutholakele kuncoma ukugcizelelwa kobulili

kwikharikhulamu yezemfundo yothisha ukuze kuvinjelwe ukuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi ukunika amandla izimpendulo zabafundi, ekugcineni okuholele ekukhululweni kwabo kulesi simo.

Amagama Asemqoka: Ukuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi, okuhlangenwe nakho kokuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi, ukuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi, ukungaziphathi kahle ngokocansi, ukuhlukumeza ngokobulili, ukuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi, ukuphoqelelwa ngokocansi, ukunakekelwa ngokocansi okungafuneki, ukuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi, izimpendulo zokuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi, ukuphendula.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AU   African Union

CEDAW   United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Violence against Women

EEOC   Equal Employment   Opportunity Commission

GBV   Gender-Based Violence

UNGREZ   United Nations Gender Review of Education in Zimbabwe

HTC   Hillside Teachers College

ILO   International Labour Organisation

MHTEISTD   Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development

NGP   National Gender Policy

PCIET   Report on the Presidential Commission into Education and Training

SADC   Southern African Development Community

SAYWHAT   Students and Youths Working on Reproductive Health Team

SDG   Sustainable Development Goal

UNCRC   United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNESCO   United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNHRC   United Nations Human Rights Commission

WHO   World Health Organisation

ZHRC   Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission

ZimStat   Zimbabwe National Statistical Agency

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter one introduces the study by outlining the background to the problem as well as clarifying the research questions and objectives. It also provides an explanation of the significance of the study and the rationale for undertaking this research. It further discusses the theoretical framework to enable the reader to understand the lens through which the problem will be investigated. The final section explains the key words and gives a brief description of the thesis structure.

1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The current study focuses on the responses of students to sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe. It is inspired by the belief that students' assertive responses to sexual harassment is a means to their emancipation and a driving force for institutional efforts in mainstreaming gender, ultimately preventing further occurrences of such incidents.

Sexual harassment is a human rights violation and a form of gender-based violence (GBV) that negatively affect the lives of societies, individuals and institutions (ILO 2019; UN 1993). It is reported to be widespread across the globe, including Zimbabwe, although the exact rates are hard to establish due to competing definitions, non-reporting and the subtlety of the phenomenon (Elton, Malcom, Pruscino and Svejka 2019). Sexual harassment affects people of all genders although the majority of cases are reported to be the weakest members of the society such as women and girls (UNFPA 2008). The United Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, known as UN Women, estimated that, estimated that, one in every three women internationally has been exposed to sexual violence (UN Women, 2019). Sexual harassment is more prevalent in institutions of higher learning when compared to non-educational work places (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). It is estimated at an

average of 1 out of 4 female students being exposed to sexual violence (Bondestam and Lundqvist 2020a).

The term sexual harassment first grew in the United States (US), out of activist movements such as the National Organisation for Women claiming human rights for women by intending to end discrimination based on sex (Brannon 2011). It emerged as a legal issue in the 1960's and was described as sex discrimination and an attempt was made to prohibit it by passing Title VII in 1964 and Title IX in 1972 of the Civil Rights Act (Chafetz 2006; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, EEOC 2006). This resulted in the banning of discrimination on the basis of sex under any educational programme and activity receiving federal funds (Germain 2016). This was with the aim of attaining equal opportunities for men and women at the workplace and in education as part of the Educational Reform Amendment in the US (Samieri 2015). Before this, women were not admitted as students to many colleges and universities (Dziech and Hawkins 2012). The legal doctrine of sexual harassment and its administration was also shaped by the rise of feminist scholars such as Lin Farley and Catherine MacKinnon (MacKinnon 1979; Ritzer 2008).

In response to the global existence of sexual harassment and the resultant pressure from feminist movements and scholars, the United Nations enacted directives compelling countries to protect women from GBV (Paludi and Paludi 2005). This was in order to improve and uphold women's status in communities, at the workplace and in education (UN Woman 2019). Since then, many international countries have adopted legal approaches to combat sexual harassment in the workplace and in education spheres (Bondestam and Lundqvist 2020a; Paludi and Barickman 1998). However, inadequate laws and policies on sexual harassment still exist particularly in higher education institutions (UN Woman 2019).

Internationally, a number of studies have been conducted on sexual harassment. Studies have covered the workplace sexual harassment (MacKinnon 1979; Latcheva 2017; Jacobson 2018; Paludi and Barickman 1998; Britz 2007), whilst others have investigated the problem in relation to human rights and the law (Dorota 2002: Coetzee 2012; Beckett 2007; Henry 2002). Some studies have been conducted in certain areas of higher education such as medicine (WHO 2010, 2013; Schoen et al. 2020) and on

females on university campuses (Abe 2012: Fedina, Holmes and Baker 2018; Costa 2020; Gartner 2019). Yet other studies have conducted specific investigations into observing marginalised groups such as children with disabilities (Phasha 2009; Pasha and Nyokangi 2015) whilst some have looked at students in primary and secondary schools (Smit and Du Plessis 2011; Ntuli 2006). There have also been studies conducted on education in general (Dziech and Hawkins 2012; Dromm 2012; Dziech and Weiner 1990; Brannon 2011; Jackman 2006) as well as on higher education workers in particular (Mudau, Mudau and Ncube 2018; Hebert 1994). These studies have contributed to the development of sexual harassment preventive efforts, though most of them have used quantitative surveys to collect data which is not suitable since it involves disclosure of sensitive information about sexual harassment (Bryman 2016). Surveys also do not do enough to elicit the perceptions and experiences of participants (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011).

Within the Zimbabwean context, the study that breaks grounds on sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning was carried out by, Zindi in 1994. The study revealed a high prevalence of sexual harassment of female learners by male lecturers and students. The findings were confirmed by the Report of the Presidential Commission into Education and Training (PCIET 1999), Shumba (2000), Shumba and Matina (2002), Katsande (2008), Muchena, Dhlomo and Mapfumo (2013), Dhlomo et al. (2012), SAYWHAT (2012, 2019) and Zireva and Makura (2013) among others. These studies focused primarily on exposing the prevalence of the problem, but left the dimension of students' responses. Furthermore, in the studies that looked at the problem amongst primary and secondary school learners, did not pay attention to students' responses. These included studies conducted by, Museka and Kaguda (2013), Chireshe and Chireshe (2009), Gwirayi and Shumba (2011), and Makaudze and Gudhlanga (2014).

Other studies which were generally on sexual harassment in the Zimbabwe education sector includes those by Chimombe (2012), Mawere (2014) and Zvobgo (2014). Similarly, there were studies on education and law in Zimbabwe, conducted by Matsikidze (2017), Dzimiri (2014) and Kabaya (2018). Some studies focused on university students, such as those by Kanyemba and Naidu (2019) and Matsikidze (2017). Thus, while these studies have focused on education in general and some on

education and the law, they have strongly   informed the current study. This is because the studies were conducted within education domains with similar contexts. The only marked difference between these studies and the present one is that the former makes some generalisations about responses to sexual harassment. Thus, the fact that university contexts are different from colleges of education justifies the current study with its specific focus on students' responses at a college of education in Zimbabwe. However, although done within slightly different contexts, the studies were also focused on sexual harassment of adult students at higher education institutions closely similar to colleges of education. This allows them to remain relevant and informative to the current study. Furthermore, previous studies did not theorise their studies from a transformative perspective and therefore lack the element of liberating women, particularly female students.

The current study aims to capture female students' experiences of sexual harassment and their responses to it, specifically in colleges of education in Zimbabwe. This study should be understood as an attempt to give a voice to female students on an issue which mostly affects them and to bring about preventive strategies. Such an approach is empowering and emancipatory.

1.2.1. SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN COLLEGES OF ZIMBABWE

In this section, a brief historical overview of the development of colleges of education in Zimbabwe is provided to demonstrate how sexual harassment emanated and evolved in the teacher education system.

Sexual harassment in the Zimbabwean education system could be fuelled by the marginalised status of women in society emanating from the socialisation of males and females in a patriarchy that gives man power over women (Makaudze and Gudhlanga 2014). This render females unable to resist sexual harassment due to some harmful practices that force them to submit to men's sexually harassing behaviours (Makaudze and Gudhlanga 2014). The practice also restricts women from discussions about their sexuality, causing them to suffer in silence (Chireshe and Chireshe 2009). Such restrictions contribute to female students' ignorance regarding sexual content which in turn results in inappropriate responses in the face of sexual

harassment (Shumba 2000). Such ignorance may affect students' sexual and reproductive health outcomes (UNFPA 2019). Ignorance also prevents victims from identifying sexually harassing behaviours, causing it to continue to occur (Francoise 2002).

Furthermore, lack of a clear definition of sexual harassment in the Zimbabwean Constitution (No. 20: 2013), the Labour (Act 28: 01) and the Public Service Disciplinary Regulations and Grievance Procedures, Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000 (SI 1 of 2000), have contributed to its occurrence (Matsikidze 2017; Dzimiri 2014). It weakens the student's understanding of the topic, ultimately rendering them unassertive in the face of sexual harassment (Dzimiri 2014). Additionally, this makes it difficult for victims to respond appropriately to incidents of sexual harassment that have no legal reference, consequently perpetuating its occurrence (Coetzee 2012).

The lack of a clear definition also leads to ignorance of the law which may influence institutions to not consider sexual harassment as key and to lag behind in enacting sexual harassment policies to address the problem, thereby negatively impacting their practice (Bennet 2009). As a consequence, some institutions would 'shoot in the dark' when handling sexual harassment cases by either ignoring, dismissing or failing to complete investigating cases amongst other things (Smit and Du Plessis 2011). This is a malpractice that derails efforts to engage in proper responses after seeing the futility of disclosure (Gwirayi and Shumba 2011).

1.3.   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Sexual harassment continues to be highly prevalent at colleges of education in Zimbabwe yet the problem is underreported (Kanyemba and Naidu 2019). Cases of sexual harassment in Zimbabwe were reported to be on the increase between 2012 and 2017 (ZimStat 2019). The same study reported that a third of females aged 18-24 years and 9% of males experience sexual violence prior to the age of 18. Further to that, there is the worrying statistical evidence that suggests that, 31% of students in colleges of education in Zimbabwe acknowledged having been sexually harassed and that, of these, only 9% were reported to the authorities (Katsande 2008).

Sexual harassment has severe consequences for students and staff in terms of psychological, physical and professional factors. It hinders women from full advancement in social, political and economic sectors of life (UNESCO 2012). It strips female students of their human rights to respect and dignity, and prevents them from full participation in academic and professional advancement (Akpotor 2013). It also undermines their equal opportunities, confidence and full participation in the country's development initiatives (McMullen 2019). A victimised student may experience psychological disorders causing changes in study habits, reduced performance, low self-esteem, isolation and sexually transmitted infections such as HIV and AIDS (WHO 2013). As a consequence, students could engage in truancy, skipping and quitting classes or forced changes of tutors, ultimately resulting in silence towards the problem (Bondestam and Lundqvist 2020b). Such reactions negatively impact the development of the country so long as sexual harassment continues to occur unchecked (WHO 2013; Dziech and Hawkins 2012).

Existing gaps in legislation and policies to do with sexual harassment coupled with harmful patriarchal cultural practices at institutions of higher learning marginalise female students by forcing them to conform, negatively impacting on their responses to the harassment (Sithole and Dziva 2019).

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions:

Main question
How do students respond to encounters of sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe?

Sub-questions
To clarify the main question, the following sub- questions were considered:

1.   What are students' experiences of sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe?

2.	What contributes to the occurrences of sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe?

3.	How do students respond to encounters of sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe?

4.	What strategies can be suggested to empower students in responding to encounters of sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe?

## 1.5.	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were to;

1.	Describe students' experiences of sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe.

2.	Explain factors contributing to the occurrences of sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe.

3.	Describe students' responses to encounters of sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe.

4.	Suggest ways to empower students' responses to encounters of sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe.

## 1.6.	RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Strengthening responses to sexual harassment is crucial for the achievement of Zimbabwe's Doctrine of Education 5.0 for the Modernisation and Industrialisation of Zimbabwe through Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development. This may in turn contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5 on inclusivity in education and addressing gender disparities in education respectively.

The teacher education system in Zimbabwe is reported to continue maintaining and reproducing discriminatory gender patterns in its curriculum (Zvobgo 2014). This practice perpetuates sexual harassment by keeping students particularly females, in subordinate positions that renders them unable to resist such incidents (Tanyanyiwa

2015). Colleges of education are therefore crucial in the curbing of sexual harassment as they form the bed rock of all learning systems by empowering students' responses.

1.7   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The current study is important in that it aims to develop alternative research on sexual harassment prevention in Zimbabwean colleges. This is in the context of reports of them being hardest hit by sexual harassment and of the non-reporting of incidents (Zindi 1994; Zireva and Makura 2013). The current study was intended to give the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development (MHTEISTD) a real picture regarding the prevalence of sexual harassment as well as students' experiences and responses to the problem in colleges of education. This could in turn possibly influence the law and policy makers to reassess the current national Constitution (No. 20: 2013), the Labour (Act 28: 01) and the S1 1 of 2000 with regards to the prevention of sexual harassment at institutions of higher and tertiary education. It is also hoped that the current study could influence the MHTEISTD to develop a parent sexual harassment policy. The Ministry's sexual harassment policy could help to enforce compliance, and help to monitor and evaluate progress in preventive measures, particularly policy development and implementation at its institutions. This may in turn reduce the sexual harassment policy implementation challenges currently faced by colleges of education in the country and contributing to the realisation of gender mainstreaming.

Gender mainstreaming in colleges of education could enable female students' empowerment, transformation and emancipation from sexual harassment. When emancipated, students may become change agents by sensitising their counterparts, those already in service, their learners in schools and communities, ultimately achieving sexual harassment free environments. Gender mainstreaming of the teacher education curriculum has the potential of changing the teaching and learning approaches at higher and tertiary level, leading to empowerment.

The curriculum planners stand to benefit from the study recommendations by mainstreaming gender in the teacher education curriculum. This could enable colleges of education to engage in international best practices of the management of sexual

harassment. The current study's findings may also contribute to the body of knowledge on sexual harassment and act as a springboard for future researchers to approach the topic from another dimension which could lead to the realisation of a lasting solution to the problem in institutions of higher and tertiary education, particularly colleges of education. This study is also important in that if the issue of students' responses is not addressed, female students who are the major victims of sexual harassment will be perpetual victims.

The current study also sought to address the gap in knowledge about students' responses to sexual harassment, as research on this topic remains scant. This was achieved by adding to literature on students' responses to sexual harassment as an alternative solution to its prevention at colleges of education. Thus, studying students' responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe is unique and makes a significant contribution to knowledge, policy and practice. It is against this background of an ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming in teacher education that, this research is conducted and therefore justifiable.

1.8   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The current study adopts critical theory with a liberal feminist lens as its theoretical framework.

1.8.1 Critical theory

Critical theory as a school of thought emerged from the institute of social research in Germany known as the Frankfurt school, in the 1920's and 30's (Calhoun 2001; Farganis 2011). The theory stemmed from the need to defend the legacy of Marxism and spreading it beyond the school of Frankfurt (Farganis 2011). Some of its leading members were Theodor Ardono (1903-1969), Max Horkeimer (1895-1973), Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), Jurgen Habermas (1929-) and Axel Honneth (1949-).

Critical theory has an emancipatory and transformative intent. Its major characteristics could be summed up as: transformation, empowerment, voice, emancipation, equality, advocacy and representation of traditionally marginalised groups such as women (Farganis 2011). The transformative intent of critical theory is concerned with eradicating oppression and inequality, and creating justice, equity and equality in

society (Calhoun 2001). In other words, it addresses power issues, social justice and cultural complexity (Bohman 2020). The theory also acknowledges the sense of frustration and powerlessness felt by the marginalised people when their personal destinies are in the hands of others and they have no control (Farganis 2011). The critical theory emphasises that empowerment improves people's lives through the process of emancipation, the deconstruction of some harmful concepts and the creation of new concepts in people's cultural histories so as to liberate them (Farganis 2011). Emancipation according to the critical theory is achieved by ensuring that the voices of marginalised groups are heard (Farganis 2011; Gibson 1986). This enables them, particularly women, to take control and direction over their own lives leading to their liberation from harmful cultural oppression in a patriarchal society (Kottak 2009). Critical theory therefore considers cultural domination in a patriarchy as the main source of women's oppression in society because it propagates their subordination and marginalisation emanating from their powerlessness (Van Rensburg 2010). The re-examination of the cultural factors enables women, who in this case are female students, to be independent, reflective and critical, thus, leading to their emancipation from sexual harassment (Farganis 2011).

The guiding principle of the emancipatory interest of critical theory is that it considers all knowledge claims as tentative and open to revision through critical analysis (Agger 2006). It also believes that knowledge is influenced by the power relations within society (Chafetz 2006). Thus, the critical theory seeks to advance knowledge by identifying the factors that limit or distort the ways in which reality is obtained (Calhoun 2001). This is done through providing the marginalised people with knowledge, understanding and actions intended to free them from oppressive power relations in patriarchy, thus, leading to the use of appropriate responses (Moyo, Modiba and Simwa 2015). Such knowledge acquisition by the marginalised helps to exert control over one's life, leading to their emancipation (Farganis 2011).

The major epistemological assumption of critical theory is that knowledge always reflects the interests of those in power, who in this case are males by virtue of their positions in patriarchal society (Hodgson and Watts 2017). The assumption seeks to interrogate the socio-cultural factors that influence the ways in which knowledge is produced (Farganis 2011). It considers knowledge as culture-specific (Calhoun 2001).

The ontological assumptions of critical theory are that the beliefs and interests of a phenomenon are socially constructed, resulting in keeping the empowered in their powered positions and the disempowered in their powerlessness (Ritzer 2008). The social construction is believed to stem from socio-cultural and gender values of people through their interactions in a patriarchy (Ritzer 2008). Thus, the ontological assumptions of critical theory suggests that, reality is continuously shaped and made by people as they interact in their day-to-day lives (Calhoun 2001).

1.8.2. Liberal feminism

Liberal feminism can be traced to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's in the United States mainly focusing on suffrage, equal rights, political rights, democracy and the liberation of women (Chafetz 2006; MacKinnon 1979). Liberal feminists focus on women's empowerment as well as on issues of equal access to resources especially in education and at work. Liberal feminists include Mary Astell (1666-1731), Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1799) and Harriet Taylor (1807-1858) among others. The liberal feminist theory is developed from a women-centred perspective (Ritzer 2008). It seeks to describe the social world from the distinctive vantage points of women and sexual harassment is one of the most important issues at this time. It documents women's lives and activities that were largely seen as marginal and subsidiary to those of men's (Farganis 2011). The liberal feminists, like critical theorists believe in gender as a social construct and that, it is not fixed but fluid (Chafetz 2006). Liberal feminists believe that power as a resource is unequally and unjustly distributed between men and women in society (Ritzer 2008). They also believe that it is by redistributing the resources and opportunities in more equitable ways using laws that are not discriminative that justice can be achieved (Farganis 2011). Liberal feminism also believes that gender equality can be produced by transforming the division of labour through the re-patterning of key institutions such as family and education among others (Ritzer 2008). Such re-patterning of institutions according to liberal feminists will enable policies and programmes to change (Ritzer 2008).

Like the critical theory, liberal feminism believes in women's ability to show and maintain equality through their own actions and choices, which is emancipatory. Liberal feminist seeks to rekindle women to liberate themselves from their oppressed

state (Strunk and Betties 2019). Women are understood from their perspectives so that the tendency to trivialise their activities and thoughts, and interpreting them from the standpoint of men in society is mitigated (Mills and Mullany 2012). Like critical theory, liberal feminism considers patriarchy as a political system ruled by men in which women have an inferior social and political status (Kottak 2009). This, according to Christie (2000) leads to liberal feminists regarding the society's view of women as indicative of society's attitudes, values, and human rights. In this respect, patriarchy is regarded as a tradition that violates women's rights, thus, resulting in sexual harassment.

The inclusion of critical theory with liberal feminist lens as an underpinning of this study was based on the idea that it is a powerful analytical framework for understanding educational disparities of injustice, domination and exploitation (Strunk and Betties 2019). The theories addresses power issues that are considered one of the root causes of sexual harassment at institutions of higher and tertiary learning (Morley 2011). From this, it then follows that, the critical theory with a feminist lens seeks to attack the root causes of why students' response mechanisms are failing to reduce the prevalence of sexual harassment in colleges of education.

Also, the fact that the critical and the liberal theories are emancipatory in the lives of the traditionally marginalised groups such as women, allows them to dove-tail with this study. This is because the emancipation of woman from sexual harassment, who in this case are female students, could be accomplished by empowering their responses. In this case, female students should be emancipated from harmful cultural practices that expose them to sexual harassment (Hebert 1994). Some such harmful practices are gender socialisation in a patriarchy which continue to be practiced at colleges of education, creating uneven ground between males and females (Henry 2002). Such socialisation leads to female students becoming inferior and powerless when compared to their male counterparts and lecturers (Esterberg 2002). Since the ontological and epistemological view is that culturally, sexual harassment is rarely discussed in communities particularly by women, this makes it difficult for female students to either report their experiences or respond appropriately (Bohman 2020). In this respect, one can argue that, the use of critical theory with a liberal feminist lens in this study might provide a more accurate account of students' experiences and

responses to sexual harassment in colleges of education in Zimbabwe and other higher and tertiary institutions internationally.

Furthermore, informed by the critical and feminist theories' empowerment and transformation drive of considering women to be responsible for their emancipation from oppression, the current study sought to empower female students with information about appropriate responses to sexual harassment. Empowerment could have been achieved through the participants' interaction with interview questions and the researcher during the probing processes (Cohen et al. 2011). This helps in militating against the tendency for trivialising the thoughts of females and interpreting them from the standpoint of men in society (Van Rensburg 2010).

The current study believes that the reality of emancipation from sexual harassment could also come from the students' changed ways of viewing their responses in the context of their cultural socialisation (Moyo et al. 2015). The transformation could occur in participants when they have deconstructed and redefined some inhibiting cultural practices that continue to expose them to sexual harassment during and after the interviews (Henry 2002). This was expected to happen when participants were asked to indicate their responses. Therefore, the critical theory aligns well with the current study because it aims to transform and empower female students to withstand sexual harassment.

Furthermore, empowerment and emancipation could be achieved when the study findings are made accessible to the participants, the college, other education institutions in the country and beyond. To this end, in using critical theory with a feminist lens, the study strives to explore ways in which participants can exhibit appropriate response skills to sexual harassment. Thus, informed by critical theory with a feminist lens, the study findings, conclusions and recommendations are hinged on gender mainstreaming of the teacher education curriculum.

Even though critical theory aligns well with the current study, it is broad in meaning (Farganis 2011). The theory has been influenced by a number of generations of critical scholars with many pronouncements limited to the specific argument of the Frankfurt school (Calhoun 2001). It does not explain what is wrong with the current social reality

and fails to provide any practical goals for social transformation (Chafetz 2006). Similarly, the liberal feminist theory, despite generating the understanding that woman's vulnerability, and powerlessness is permanently rooted in unequal distribution of ascribed power stemming from patriarchy, regards patriarchy as unchanging, which is not always the case (Chafetz 2006). This is not always the case because there are other factors to women's sexual harassment besides that of ascribed power from the patriarchy (Farganis 2011).

Also, in as much as patriarchy has been regarded as a social system which operates in the interests of men and to their benefit, rather than women, it is questionable whether it remains the root cause of women's exploitation, leading to sexual harassment (Chafetz 2006). There seems to be many situations in everyday life in which people appear to have loss of control and which does not emanate from patriarchy. In addition, according to Chafetz (2006), manifestations of gender stratifications have decreased in wealthy nations over the recent decades, witnessing the relinquishing of some patriarchal power in tandem with changing environments and legal frameworks. Thus, if patriarchal power is considered changing and not fixed, so, too is the marginalisation and powerlessness of women. However, despite these weaknesses, the critical theory with a feminist lens remains wholly specific and the most relevant underpinning theory to this topic of students' responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe.

1.9.   DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

To put the study into context, it is important to define key terms contained in the topic. The key terms are sexual harassment, colleges of education and responses. In defining these concepts, the focus will fall on students' responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe.

a)   Sexual harassment

The earliest definition of sexual harassment was coined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) through Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, 1964 on the workplace and it later became the framework for definitions in academic environments. It defines sexual harassment at the workplace as constituting unwelcome sexual

advances or requests for sexual favours, and other verbal and physical contacts of a sexual nature when a condition for employment or employment decision is made or when it creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment that seriously affects an employee's work performance. This definition regards sexual harassment as a power issue exerted by an employer or supervisor on a subordinate. In this regard, sexual harassment can be perpetrated by different individuals.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO 2019) defines sexual harassment as any physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature and other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men, which is unwelcome unreasonable and offensive to the recipient, and a person's rejection to such conduct used explicitly or implicitly as a basis for a decision which affects that person's job. It may occur between persons of the opposite sex or the same sex and both males and females can either be victims or offenders. The definition describes sexual harassment as unwelcome, offensive, humiliating and unwelcome behaviour towards the next person of any gender to the extent of interfering with their work, whether it happens one time or more frequently.

The above two definitions show that the term sexual harassment comprises various interpretations. The term is largely described as a sex-based behaviour that is unwelcome, unsolicited and offensive to its recipients which largely manifests due to the misuse of power over the next person. In addition, it is described as negatively affecting the dignity of women and men ultimately decreasing their work performance. The forms that sexual harassment takes are indicated as verbal, non-verbal and physical conduct which are to be discussed in detail later (see section 2.3.3). Sexual harassment in academic contexts occurs when a person with power such as a teacher, professor/lecturer or supervisor coerce or humiliates someone because of their sex (Paludi and Barickman 1998). In this case, it involves the use of authority to emphasise the sexuality and sexual identity of the student in a manner that prevents or impairs the student's full enjoyment of educational benefits, climate and opportunities (Dziech and Weiner 1990). To this end, the current study regards sexual harassment as unwelcome verbal, nonverbal and physical sexual behaviours passed on to the next person, particularly students by perpetrators such as their peers, lecturing and non-

lecturing staff which prevents them from peaceful learning and reaching their full potential.

b) College of education

Colleges of education are institutions that offer theory-based and professional skills training for teachers (UNESCO 2012). In this study, colleges of education are primary and secondary tertiary institutions under the MHTEISTD. They offer diploma certificates to students. In Zimbabwe, colleges of education are also referred to as teacher training colleges.

c) Response

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, a response is a reaction. Response, in the context of this study, is the action taken by victims or witnesses of sexual harassment in trying to communicate their interest or lack thereof, when they encounter or witness sexual harassment. The action can either be in passive or active form (Dromm 2012).

1.10. ORGANISATION OF RESEARCH CHAPTERS

The thesis comprises of seven chapters as follows.

Chapter One: Introduces the context of the research, the research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework and operational definitions of key terms.

Chapter Two: Identifies and discusses key themes of the study from relevant international and local literature. The key themes include:

a) Students' experiences of sexual harassment.
b) Contributing factors to the occurrences of sexual harassment.
c) Students' reactions to sexual harassment.
d) Suggestions for empowering students' responses to sexual harassment.

Chapter Three: Discusses in detail the methodology employed in the present study. This includes the overall research design, data collection methods and data analysis

procedures. A discussion of ethical considerations is also provided in order to guide this research.

Chapter Four: The chapter displays the findings thematically in participants' voices.

Chapter Five: Presents the discussion of the findings against literature reviewed.

Chapter Six: Discusses recommendations arrived at.

Chapter Seven: Presents the study summary, conclusions, limitations and recommendations for further research.

1.11. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Chapter One has presented the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, rationale for the study and the theoretical framework**.** The chapter concludes by providing the functional definitions of the concepts used in this study. The next chapter reviews relevant literature which gives insight into students' experiences and responses to sexual harassment at international, regional and local education institutions.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter One introduced the study and dealt with the background to the problem, objectives, statement of the problem, rationale for the study and the theoretical framework adopted. The current chapter positions the problem within the debates related to students' responses to sexual harassment. The literature is reviewed under the following themes derived from the research questions: (a) experiences of sexual harassment, (b) contributing factors to the occurrences of sexual harassment, (c) students' responses to encounters of sexual harassment and (d) suggestions for empowering students' responses to sexual harassment.

2.2. EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Experiences of sexual harassment are presented in terms of International frameworks, how it is understood, prevalence, the forms it takes as well as perpetrators and victims. This is in order to build a holistic picture of students' responses to sexual harassment in education contexts, particularly in higher and tertiary education institutions.

2.2.1 FRAMEWORKS ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The development of International frameworks on sexual harassment in academia can be traced to the passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Title IX (1972) as well as pressure from feminist movements and scholars in the US as earlier discussed (EEOC 2006). The frameworks can also be traced to the United Nations' declaration of human rights (1948) and the enactment of directives compelling countries to protect women from GBV in order to improve and uphold their status in communities, at the workplace and in education (UN 1993. 1995). However, studies have revealed that the ratification of international agreements is not sufficient on its own without their implementation and domestication in national laws and policies (Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, ZHRC 2015; UNFPA 2008).

2.2.1.1.   Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

This was the first United Nations human rights declaration that all human beings have the same rights necessary for survival, dignified living, freedom and security (UN 1948). Although the declaration has been criticised for the provision of a broad definition of human rights by not defining violence against women, it became the yardstick to measure wright or wrong and an empowerment tool in fighting against violence (UN Women 2019; Alston and Goodman 2013). The generalised definition of human rights may lead to lack of knowledge about the human rights of women and a poor understanding of their experiences (UNESCO 2018). The UN declaration witnessed the subsequent enactment of human rights frameworks that affirmed the equality of men and women before the law. It managed to establish a foundation that has become a cornerstone of global education programmes and policies (UNESCO 2008, 2018). To this effect, there is a zero-tolerance policy on GBV and sexual harassment included within the United Nations system, leading to the expansion of human right internationally. Thus, although the human rights violations did not end with the Universal declaration, it became an empowering tool for people, particularly women to demand their rights.

2.2.1.2.   United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Violence against Women (CEDAW), 1979

Although the CEDAW is criticised for providing a general definition of what constitutes discrimination against women, it managed to set up an agenda to stop it. CEDAW marked the transformation of human rights to a feminist perspective that were crucial to addressing global challenges to the human rights of women in all sectors, education included, in Article 4 (d-f). The Convention also established the basis for realising equality between men and women through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in political and public life. It also targeted culture and traditions as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations.

In 2017, the CEDAW Committee's General Recommendation No. 35 recognised that the prohibition of GBV against women has evolved into a principle of customary

international law binding all states. However, the discriminatory traditions and culture manifesting in the form of gender role stereotypes remains the most difficult for institutions to deal with (Shin 2004). The Committee also acknowledged that some cultural practices are harmful and subordinates women, rendering them unable to resist violence (Alston and Goodman 2013). Although such acknowledgement strengthened the protection of the human rights of women and was crucial for empowering the vulnerable groups such as women and girls internationally it lacked comprehensiveness (Shin 2004). This is because CEDAW does not automatically guarantee women's rights at domestic level, leading to the rights of women commonly considered as 'secondary' to human rights (Shin 2004). This could be the reason why discrimination against women still receives inadequate legal attention internationally, even in countries that ratified the Convention. Thus, despite the CEDAW human rights declaration, the Convention has not drastically changed the status of women as some acts of violence against women, particularly sexual harassment, continue to be practiced and tolerated.

2.2.1.3. United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women,1993

The United Nations General Assembly made a declaration on the elimination of violence against women at the Vienna Conference in 1993. The conference recognised that women and girl-child rights are an integral and indivisible part of human rights (UN Women 2019). The conference also enabled the human rights declarations to expand women's rights to gender-specific violations such as sexual abuse (UN 1993). The same declarations challenged the traditional qualification of human rights of women as private and called for the elimination of all forms of sexual harassment. The declarations also called for the elimination of the exploitation of women resulting from cultural prejudice. The conference therefore managed to place the issue of the human rights of women on the international government agenda (Brannon 2011). This led to the UN Assembly adopting the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Resolution 48/104, to be discussed later (see section 2.2.1.6), recognising that violence against women violates human rights and calling for states to eradicate and prevent such behaviour.

2.2.1.4.   United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women Platform for Action, 1995

The conference was held in Beijing, China as a global strategy to abolish violence against women thereby going beyond the UN 1993 human rights declaration discussed earlier. The platform adopted a strategy for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women everywhere by bringing gender issues into the eye of mainstream society, thus asserting the dramatic expansion of women's rights (UN 1995).

Despite efforts made to achieve gender equality at the Beijing Conference, studies reveal that global progress on the implementation of the platform has been slow, uneven and limited (UN Women 2019; UNFPA 2008). This is because women and girls are still at a disadvantage in terms of the human rights of women due to the traditional patriarchal gender norms and women stereotypes (UNFPA 2008). Such delays continues to expose women and girls to sexual harassment.

However, the conference took a stronger stand by recognising sexual harassment as a form of violence against women in paragraph 178 and called for action against it (UN 1995). The conference made the equality of men and women in society an issue of concern throughout the world and urged nations to formulate gender policies directing matters of equity and equality. This became an important step towards efforts to end violence against women globally, particularly gender mainstreaming in education (Bhatia 2014). This has given rise to comprehensive policies and legal frameworks on GBV against women (Alston and Goodman 2013).

2.2.1.5. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030

GBV against women lie at the heart of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which recognises it as a human rights issue and crucial to development in all sectors. Ending violence against women and girls is articulated in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 that declares education as a human right and a force for sustainable development and peace. It requires education to empower people with

knowledge, skills and values, to live in dignity, build their lives and contribute to their societies. It also aims to ensure an equitable education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030 (UN Women 2019). Furthermore, SDG 5 is for the elimination of all forms of violence against women girls and boys in public and private places, sexual harassment included. This leads violence against women to be considered a critical hindrance to sustainable development (UNFPA 2019). Hence, ending GBV against women, particularly sexual harassment at institutions of higher learning is crucial in accelerating sustainable development and achieving the Vision 2030 goals.

2.2.1.6. International Labour Organisation (ILO), Violence and Harassment Convention 2019, No.190

The ILO Convention 2019, No.190, provides the first international definition of violence and harassment in the field of work. It is also the first international treaty to recognise the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment. It addresses sexual harassment as a prohibited form of violence against women and submits that it is an obstacle to development (ILO 2019). Even though the ILO (2019) covers a wide range of behaviours in its description of sexual harassment, its scope may be limited to those in employment contracts, thus excluding students. Also, the Act does not cover sexual harassment in student-to-supervisor relationships despite the fact that they have greater exposure to the problem (Costa 2020). This leads to a narrow understanding of the topic and non-reporting of sexual harassment incidents by students on training, causing the problem to continue to occur. This is disempowering in that such students may not know how to respond to behaviours they are unaware of. This might also lead education institutions to not protect students on training as they are not covered by the Labour Act.

However, despite its limitations, the Convention considers workplace sexual harassment a barrier towards its primary goal of promoting decent working conditions for all workers. On 25 June 2019, at its centenary Convention, the Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) and its accompanying recommendation (No. 206) were adopted declaring non-tolerance to sexual harassment in the world of work.

The Convention recognised that violence and harassment constitutes human rights violations and that, it is a threat to equal opportunities (ILO 2019). It also recognises that violence and harassment affects the person's psychological and physical health as well as his/her dignity, family and social environment. It also recognises that violence prevents persons, particularly women from accessing and advancing in the labour market. Furthermore, the Convention recognises that an inclusive, integrated and responsive approach which tackles underlying causes and risk factors, including unequal GBV power relations is essential in ending violence and harassment in the world of work.

The governments that ratify C190 will be required to put in place the necessary laws and policy measures to prevent and address violence and harassment in the world of work. It is interesting to note that the Convention applies to all sectors, including education, which is a step in the right direction for gender mainstreaming in education. Thus, since the adoption of the Convention, many forms of harassment are being reported across countries (ILO 2019). Despite efforts made to ratify the Violence and Harassment Convention, as at 2019, only six countries have ratified it (ILO 2019). This suggests the need for global countries to ratify the Convention as a transformative approach to the field of work and in education (ILO 2019).

2.2.2. REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In response to international calls to end GBV against women, particularly sexual harassment at the workplace and in education, regional bodies and countries have instituted policies to attain this goal. The following are some of the regional frameworks addressing GBV against women.

2.2.2.1.   The African Union (AU), 2003 Protocol

The African Union, in line with global trends on upholding human rights developed a protocol on the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights to uphold the protection of women and girls. The 2003 protocol obligates State parties to take appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, including combating sexual harassment at the workplace and in education (AU protocol 2003). Sexual

harassment was then addressed in the AU Gender policy. The AU therefore represents the continent's efforts to provide a regional mechanism to protect the human rights of women and girls, particularly sexual harassment.

2.2.2.2. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), Protocol on Gender and Development (1997, 2008)

The SADC member states in line with international human rights declarations signed a treaty committing to uphold the principles of human rights democracy and the rule of law in Act 22. The SADC protocol on gender and development acknowledges the importance of women's contributions to development and required member states to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in all spheres (SADC protocol on Gender, 1997). In the same year, the heads of states signed the declaration on gender and development in Blantyre, Malawi, committing to remove gender disparities in education. Article H of the declaration committed heads of states and their respective countries to, among others, enhance equal access to quality education for both men and women to remove stereotypes in career choices and professions.

Similarly, the SADC member states adopted a Protocol on Gender and Development in 2008, obligating member states to include women's equality in their constitutions in order to counter religious and customary laws which undermine women's equality with men (SADC Protocol on Gender 2008). This according to Zvobgo (2014), resulted in the creation of the Ministry of Gender and Women Development in many post-independence African states, Zimbabwe included.

Even though international and regional laws have been in place to protect women and girls from GBV, studies indicate that the prevalence of sexual harassment has not changed much across the globe (Costa 2020; Mawere 2014). This is because the rate at which sexual harassment is managed internationally is reported to be slow and at differing levels (Plan International 2019). This has been attributed to a global lack of understanding of the human rights of women as a basic human right, leading to few governments being committed to women's protection from GBV, particularly sexual harassment.

2.2.3. FRAMEWORKS ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN ZIMBABWE

In response to international and regional calls for upholding women's rights, Zimbabwe guarantees women's rights in its legal frameworks. The Zimbabwe government acknowledges the universality of human rights by ratifying several of the international and regional human rights agreements discussed earlier. However, studies indicate that the legal frameworks lacks clarity on what sexual harassment really is and the mechanism to deal with the prevalence of sexual harassment in the country (Dzimiri 2014; Matsikidze 2017).

2.2.3.1. The Zimbabwe Constitution (No 20 of 2013)

The Zimbabwe Constitution (No. 20: 2013) obliges the country to promote gender balance and the full participation of women in all spheres of society in Section 14 (Constitution of Zimbabwe No. 20: 2013). It provides that the State should take all measures needed to ensure that both genders are equally represented in all institutions and agencies of government. Section 80 of the Constitution provides for equal rights and opportunities between men and women. It also outlaws all laws, customs, traditions and cultural practices that infringe on the rights of women. This reveals a provision for the elimination of sexual harassment although it is not specifically mentioned (Matsikidze 2017).

However, the Constitution does not expressly provide for the right to be protected against sexual harassment as there are no provisions for complaint procedures, remedies for victims of sexual harassment and sanctions for perpetrators (Matsikidze 2017). Such an omission causes sexual harassment to be treated as a civil and not a criminal offence except for rape and physical assault (Dzimiri 2014). This in turn leads sexual harassment in the Zimbabwean legal system to be treated as a light offence, resulting in leniency sentencing that discourages victims from reporting. From this perspective, as long as the country's Constitution is not strengthened by a review in terms of addressing sexual harassment, women and girls may continue to be exposed to such behaviour.

2.2.3.2. The Labour Act (No 28:01)

Like the country Constitution, the Zimbabwe Labour Act (No. 28:01), that covers employer-employee relationships loosely defines sexual harassment under section 8 as an unfair labour practice. The definition is too general for cases of sexual harassment, particularly in education contexts (Kabaya 2018). This is so because the unfair labour practice concept is an umbrella term that does not cover relationships in non-employment contexts such as the lecturer-to-female students or student-to-student relationships (Matsikidze 2017). The Labour Act is therefore not explicit about what entails sexual harassment. Such a general description trivialises the gravity of the offence on women and girls (Katsande 2008).

Furthermore, although Section 6 (1) of the Act provides for penalties of the unfair labour practice as cessation of labour, compensation and criminal sanction, it is too generalised for cases of sexual harassment (Matsikidze 2017). There is also no clear policy and special procedure for detecting and resolving sexual harassment cases (Matsikidze 2017). Further to that, the Act fails to provide for any counselling or other support services for the victim, including protection from further victimisation (Dzimiri 2014). Such inadequacy indicates that the Act might be lagging behind the laws of other jurisdictions internationally, leading to non-reporting of cases and inappropriate responses by victims. Given this, if the Labour Act is not amended to provide a wider definition and mechanisms to prevent and detect cases efficiently and promptly, sexual harassment may continue to occur (Matsikidze 2017).

2.2.3.3. The Public Service Disciplinary Regulations and Grievance Procedures, Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000 (S1 1 of 2000)

The Public Service Disciplinary Regulations and Grievance Procedures, Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000 (S1 1 of 2000), is a labour Act that guides all civil servants including colleges of education staff but not students. The Act is yet to be aligned to the country's Constitution (No. 20:2013), (Matsikidze 2017). Although the Act guides

all civil servants, it does not have a provision for sexual harassment, but instead, describes it as misconduct by teachers at primary and secondary schools with respect to learners who are minors, where they are expected to act *in loco parentis* (i.e. representing a parent). Under the Regulations, misconduct is described as improper, threatening, insubordinate or discourteous behaviour, including sexual harassment, during the course of duty towards any member of the public service or any member of the public. Such description demeans the gravity of sexual harassment by expressing it as improper behaviour, but it is way more serious (Matsikidze 2017).

In addition, SI 1 of 2000, like the Labour Act (No. 28:01), is not applicable to Colleges of education students who are considered consenting adults by virtue of being over 18 years of age (Mawere 2014). Also, the S1 1 of 2000 as a labour law only applies to government employees and not student-to-student and staff-to-student relationships because they engage in non-employment relationships (Mawere 2014). This indicates that the S1 1 of 2000 is not sufficient in addressing sexual harassment in institutions of higher and tertiary learning, particularly colleges of education. This leaves education college students with no legal instrument that is specific to them, further exposing them to sexual harassment.

The procedures to be followed after sexual harassment acts are vague and cumbersome (Katsande 2008). There is no time-frame given for the investigation period, resulting in some disciplinary procedures taking months if not years to be completed, even continuing until after the student graduates (Dzimiri 2014). The specific procedures for investigations and hearings that one should take when sexually harassed are not provided (Dzimiri 2014). It also fails to provide for counselling or other support services for victims of sexual harassment (Matsikidze 2017). Further to that, qualified teachers have never had sight of the SI 1 of 2000, depriving them of knowledge of their rights and those of the pupils they teach (Dzimiri 2014). In this regard, the SI 1 of 2000 could be exposing students to sexual harassment and disempowering their responses at Colleges of education.

2.2.3.4. The National Gender Policy (2004)

Sexual harassment in Zimbabwe is also addressed through the enactment of the National Gender Policy (NGP) in 2004, resulting in the establishment of the Ministry of Gender, Women's Affairs and Development in 2007. The Ministry was established to eradicate gender imbalances in recognition of the role women play in the development of the country (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru 2014). The NGP also resulted in the enactment of the Domestic Violence Bill in 2007 aimed at the prevention and elimination of harmful traditional practices. It also witnessed the enactment of the Sexual Offences Act in 2001, stipulating the maximum sentence of sex offenders. In this perspective, although broad in terms of addressing GBV issues in education, the NGP provides a framework for gender mainstreaming.

The current discussion has shown that, despite ratifying most of the fundamental conventions designed to achieve gender equality and equity in all sectors, sexual harassment is reported to remain strongly prevalent in Zimbabwean colleges of education (Tanyanyiwa 2015). Also, Zimbabwe still ranks quite lowly in GBV issues across the globe despite being a signatory to most international frameworks (NGP 2014). The prevalence of sexual harassment has been attributed to a lack of a universal definition of the concept internationally, as well as inadequate content, handling and reporting procedures. The current study was curious to get to the root causes of the problem which may in turn strengthen students' responses and lead to the formulation of institutional preventive measures. It could therefore be argued that adherence to international frameworks and legal requirements is necessary, but not sufficient to drive the change needed to fully address sexual harassment, particularly at higher and tertiary education level in Zimbabwe. This demonstrates the importance of studying students' responses in order to find an alternative route to solving the problem of sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe and elsewhere.

2.3.1. Understanding of sexual harassment

Studies indicate that sexual harassment is understood differently and narrowly across the globe due to various dimensions (Jackman 2006; Latcheva 2017). This is despite international descriptions of what sexual harassment entails (UN 1993, 1995; ILO 2019). Even though the ILO (2019) defines sexual harassment as a sex-based behaviour that is unwelcome and offensive to its recipient, it is inadequate in terms of content and clarity in as far as influencing states to successfully curb the practice (Matsikidze 2017). This may lead to a lack of understanding of the topic, thereby influencing member states and their institutions to use broad terms when describing sexual harassment. As such, Piccirillo's (2019) comparative study of the epidemic of sexual assault on female students in universities of the United States and Australia revealed participants' use of broad language in their descriptions of sexual harassment.

Furthermore, studies in South Africa acknowledge students' challenges in understanding sexual harassment at institutions of higher learning. One such study by Omar (2019) on the staff-student relationships at university campuses in South Africa revealed participants' differences in understanding what constitutes sexual harassment. The study found that students' descriptions tended to be narrow by emphasising power imbalance as a cause of sexual harassment. In their study about sexual harassment among general workers at a university in South Africa, Mudau, Mudau and Ncube (2018) revealed that participants had challenges in describing sexual harassment due to ignorance about the topic. Although this study was conducted amongst general workers, it is relevant because it was conducted in a higher education domain whose contexts could be informative to the current study.

Further to that, in their study of the nature and perception of sexist humour at Great Zimbabwe University using mixed methods, Kanyemba and Naidu (2019) found differences in students' perception of sexual harassment. The study attributed the silence about sexual harassment by victimised women to the normalisation of verbal harassment. Thus, the current study is different from that of Kanyemba and Naidu

(2019) in that it used qualitative methods when collecting data to gain in-depth understanding of students' responses to sexual harassment (Bryman 2016). Such in-depth understanding helps in getting to the root causes of the problem, leading to appropriate preventive measures by education institutions. Furthermore, the current research focuses on colleges of education students whilst Kanyemba and Naidu (2019) studied university students whose context might be different.

Silence about sexual harassment may lead to different understandings and contextual meanings that are mostly inadequate (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). Such inadequate understanding hinders the production of a universal definition which could enable a common understanding of the topic. A common understanding might enable a universal approach in handling the problem whilst a lack of it negatively impacts the victims' responses, ultimately leading to the perpetuation sexual harassment.

Differences in understandings of sexual harassment could be a sign of ignorance of what it entails through of lack of a universal definition as discussed earlier. Such ignorance, may result in ambiguous institutional descriptions of the topic (Bondestam and Lundqvist 2020a). The definitional ambiguity about sexual harassment is problematic in that it could cause the problem to be viewed differently in different contexts (Omar 2019). Such ambiguity gives room for institutional justification for mishandling cases after claiming ignorance of the topic (Mawere 2014).

Ignorance about sexual harassment may also cause victims to exclude a range of abuses they experience, causing the problem to occur unchecked (Germain 2016). This may also lead some victims not to know who and where to report sexual harassment, the procedures to take and available support systems (Germain 2016). Thus, although the present study deals with students' responses and is situated at a college of education in Zimbabwe, it gains valuable information from studies done in universities because the campus settings of a college of education and university contexts are largely similar.

Ignorance regarding sexual harassment was also revealed in Zindi's (1994) ground-breaking study of higher learning institutions in Zimbabwe. The study exposed the reigning confusion about what constitutes sexual harassment among students and

staff leading to its prevalence. However, although the study managed to expose the prevalence of sexual harassment in higher learning institutions in the country, such as in universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and vocational training centres. It was not particularly aimed at colleges of education. Also, the study used a survey method when collecting data which has limitations in eliciting information for in-depth understanding. Zindi's study has a sample coverage that may lead to generalised findings and recommendations. This might lead some institutions to fail to implement study recommendations claiming a lack of specificity to them, causing sexual harassment to continue to occur. On the other hand, the current study is specifically on students' responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe with the hope that this will lead to contextual findings and recommendations. Furthermore, the current study differs from that of Zindi (1994) in that it looks at one particular college of education in-depth, instead of through an overall survey of all the country's universities, colleges, polytechnics and vocational colleges. This makes the current study specific to the college of education and able to elicit in-depth information about the topic using semi-structured interview questions (Bryman 2016). Furthermore, Zindi's study did not dwell much on the students' responses to sexual harassment, which the current study focuses on, in-depth, yielding fertile ground.

A similar study by Katsande (2008) to the current research but on the management of sexual harassment against trainee teachers at teacher training colleges in Harare, Zimbabwe, has also revealed valuable information. Even though the study found a low level of understanding of sexual harassment amongst students, it differs from the current one in that it used a survey method in collecting data which has limitations as discussed earlier. It also differs with the current study in terms of theoretical underpinnings. Even though both studies used a feminist perspective, they are different in that the current study was informed by critical theory with a feminist lens, whilst that of Katsande (2008) adopted social construction theory. The two are different in that critical theory enables the interrogation of factors leading to in-depth understanding. Thus, both the studies of Zindi (1994) and Katsande (2008) did not have a strong focus on student's responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education which the current study is about. Furthermore, the current research differs from earlier studies in that data was collected through hearing participants' voices whilst the earlier studies did not. In this perspective, the current study could be more

empowering to participants as data was collected through listening to what they had to say. Giving a voice to participants may lead to in-depth understanding of the topic.

Furthermore, a study on sexual harassment among female students at a Zimbabwean institution of higher learning by Dhlomo et al. (2012) attributed students' failure to identify sexually harassing behaviour toward them to ignorance of the topic. Although the study was on adult female students at a higher learning institution, the contexts may be different from those of college of education students. This is because college and university students may exhibit different responses towards sexual harassment, thus justifying the current study (SAYWHAT 2019).

Similarly, a study on the sexual harassment of female students in selected high schools in urban Masvingo by Chireshe and Chireshe (2009) revealed that the term was narrowly understood in terms of victim-initiated, perpetrator-related and mystical factors. Although this study is relevant because it was conducted in education domains, the contexts may be different from the college settings. The contexts are different because high school students are legally considered minors whilst those at colleges of education are regarded as consenting adults (Mawere 2014). This makes the current study different in that it looks specifically at adult students' responses to sexual harassment at a college of education to gain in-depth understanding of the problem.

The loose understanding of sexual harassment internationally could emanate from the lack of specificity on what constitutes it as defined in the International Labour Organisation's ILO Act No, 190. The lack of understanding of what sexual harassment really is at international level could be the reason why the college under investigation provides two definitions in its policy document. One of the college definitions of sexual harassment is directly copied from the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, 1964 on the workplace as discussed earlier (see section 1.9.a). The direct copying from the Act might indicate institutional ignorance of what sexual harassment really is. This workplace definition, like the ILO Act, has different contexts to education, causing it to be generalised (Matsikidze 2017). Generalised definitions are disempowering in that they are not specific, consequently exercising a negative impact on victims' knowledge levels, leading to inappropriate responses.

The other college definition is directly copied from the University of Michigan and describes sexual harassment as sexual favours, sexual advances or other conduct when: 1) submission is explicitly or implicitly a condition affecting academic or employment decisions; 2) the behaviour is sufficiently severe or pervasive as to create an intimidating, hostile or repugnant (offensive) environment; or 3) the behaviour persists despite objection by the person to whom the conduct is directed (HTC sexual harassment document 2016). Given this, in as much as the definition is contextual to education, it is not specific to Zimbabwean higher and tertiary education contexts. The lack of context in the definition of sexual harassment deprives college students of adequate information about the problem which is specific to them. The creation of a single college-specific definition could help in eradicating students' ignorance about sexual harassment experiences specific to them, while at the same time being crucial in the empowerment of their responses, thus, resulting in the reduction of incidents.

The narrow understanding of sexual harassment could also be attributed to differing cultural backgrounds people are socialised in (Paludi and Barickman 1998). This could emanate from patriarchal traditional gender roles and stereotypes of how men and women should act, leading to the use of sexual harassment as a form of punishment for 'inappropriate' behaviour (ILO 2019). Some cultures have harmful practices that lack a boundary line between sexual harassment and harmless flirting (European Commission 1998). There are also cultural myths and misconceptions that negatively influence the understanding of sexual harassment (Plan International 2019). For example, some myths suggest that 'real' sexual harassment involves the use of physical force and penetrative sexual violation (Dziech and Weiner 1990). This leads victims and authorities to dismiss other forms of sexual harassment as minor or trivial (Dziech and Weiner 1990). Such arguments, like critical theory, regards the understanding of sexual harassment as culture-specific (Ritzer 2008). The cultural understanding of the problem may result in different descriptions of sexual harassment (Henry 2002). The differences in understanding sexual harassment is disempowering in that it leads to lack of a common approach in responding to and handling such cases, thus resulting in the continued prevalence of the problem.

The inadequate understanding of sexual harassment could also be attributed to scant research on the topic. The argument is made against the background that considerable research has been done on the topic internationally despite its late recognition (Zvobgo 2014). It is also made against the point that international and regional frameworks on sexual harassment provides room for research on the topic (ILO 2019; SADC 1997). Kayuni's (2009) study of the challenges of researching sexual harassment in higher education at a university in Malawi attributed ignorance about sexual harassment to inadequate research. Similarly, Phasha's (2009) study on responses to sexual violence by children with intellectual disabilities in South African schools attributed ignorance to scant research in the area. Although Phasha's study was conducted on minors in special schools, its findings are valuable to the current research because it looks at responses to sexual harassment within the education domain. The argument about scant research on sexual harassment indicates the importance of further research on the topic to contribute to a deep understanding, which the current study is about.

The inadequate understanding of sexual harassment could also be attributed to students' lack of awareness of the law and the protection it offers. Dzimiri's (2014) study of education and the law in Zimbabwe attributes people's lack of understanding of sexual harassment to ignorance of the law and their rights. Attributing lack of understanding to ignorance of the law is contrary to the fact that, international bodies commit themselves to uphold the human rights of women through CEDAW (1979), the UN Fourth World Conference (1995) and ILO (2019)'s Convention 190 as discussed earlier. The lack of awareness of the law could emanate from the non-criminalisation of most forms of sexual harassment except rape and physical assault (Matsikidze 2017). Such non-criminalisation of most forms of sexual harassment might lead to normalisation of some sexual harassment incidents, leading to non-reporting (ILO 2019). This may in turn prevent institutional staff and management from knowing the GBV laws that pertains to them and the rights of the students at the institution (Dzimiri 2014).

 The lack of awareness of the law pertaining to sexual harassment may also compromise the victims' responses as they could be uncertain of the appropriate reactions to sexual harassment incidents. Compromised reactions perpetuates the

occurrence of sexual harassment because institutions could mishandle cases by managing them 'in the dark' (Coetzee 2012). Victims may be discouraged from reporting such incidents after seeing the futility of doing so. In this perspective, it is clear that ignorance of the law leads to a lack of understanding of sexual harassment and negatively impacts on victims' responses.

The inadequate understanding of sexual harassment across the globe could emanate from a lack of training on the topic. The lack of training on sexual harassment may cause institutional insensitivity to such issues (Dziech and Hawkins 2012). Institutional insensitivity about sexual harassment may lead to the creation of a climate of tolerance of such incidents, further exposing victims to the problem (Elton et al. 2019).

The current section has shown that sexual harassment is narrowly understood across the globe due to socio-cultural, legislative and institutional factors. Such factors negatively impact victims' responses leading to the prevalence of sexual harassment, a gap which this study seeks to fill.

2.3.2. Prevalence of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is reported to be prevalent in all sectors of life internationally (WHO 2013; UNCRC 2016). However, ratings of the global prevalence of sexual harassment have been conducted in the absence of reliable data for ascertaining its extent (Latcheva 2017). Sexual harassment has been reported to be prevalent first, at the workplace, and later in education, although figures vary greatly (Morley 2011). Despite these limitations in actual figures, estimates by UN Women (2019) revealed that almost one in three women of 15 years and older have been subjected to workplace sexual harassment in their life. Furthermore, there are claims that, 40-75% of women and 13-31% of men in the US have been sexually harassed (Aggarwal and Gupta 2000). Similar studies in the European Union (EU) member states revealed that approximately 50% of women in their working life have experienced sexual harassment (Latcheva 2017). Further to that, a review of 74 European countries in relation to sexual harassment prevalence revealed varying figures of between 17 and 81 % women having experiences of the problem (Bondestam and Lundqvist (2020b).

The education sector is not spared when it comes to the prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace. The prevalence of sexual harassment of women in US universities was suggested to be at 22% (Fedina et al. 2018). A similar study by Piccirillo (2019) on some US and Australian universities revealed that sexual harassment was highly prevalent such that it was regarded as an epidemic. The study further revealed that one in five women had been sexually assaulted on campuses. Similarly, a study by Costa (2020) in Brazil, Portugal and the UK on the sexual harassment of female students indicated that one in seven females in the UK have experienced sexual assault during their time as a student.

Like their international counterparts, regional countries also suffer from the prevalence of sexual harassment in education, particularly institutions of higher learning. In Nigeria, Onoyase's (2019) study on the sexual harassment experiences by women in tertiary institutions found that the majority of their respondents had been sexually harassed. In addition, studies in the Middle East and North Africa revealed that 40-60% of women have experienced sexual harassment (UN Women 2019).

Further to that, in South Africa, Smit and Du Plessis' (2011) study on sexual harassment in Schools acknowledged that it is a burning issue. The same study indicated that 30% of girls are raped in schools by male learners and teachers. Although Smit and Du Plessis' (2011) study was done in schools, it is relevant to the current study because it was conducted in the education domains. Also, in their study on sexual harassment and victimisation of students at a higher education institution in South Africa, Oni, Tshangano and Aknsola (2019) revealed that 17.3% of males and 25.5 % of females had experienced sexual touching while 2.7 % of the females admitted that they had been raped. Furthermore, Wanyane's (2012) study of students' perceptions of sexual harassment at a university in South Africa revealed that it was rampant. Thus, the international and regional countries agree on the prevalence of sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning, which lays a strong foundation for the present study since they were performed in education domains with similar contexts.

International and regional study findings do not differ from that of Zimbabwe in respect to the prevalence of sexual harassment in institutions of higher education. GBV is

considered to be highly prevalent in Zimbabwe, as evidenced by high rates of crimes of a sexual nature involving women and children (Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, ZHRC 2015). In addition, ZimStat (2019) and UNFPA Zimbabwe (2019) revealed that about one in three women aged 15 to 49 have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. However ZimStat (2019) reported a decrease in sexual harassment reports from 18% in 2011 to 6% in 2019.

The sharp decrease could be attributed to increased awareness of the negative effects of violence against women in the country (NGP 2014). Such awareness could have been brought about by non-governmental organisations that include, FAWEZI, SAYWHAT, the Girl Child Network, the Musasa project, Matabeleland AIDS council and CAMFED among others. These organisations spearheaded the implementation of various activities earmarked for improving the status of women and girls, and raising GBV awareness (Kapfunde and Zengeya 2010). The awareness could also have resulted in the national campaign of 16 days of activism against GBV campaign and the commemorations of the women's month to be discussed later. Thus, although the sexual harassment prevalence figures have shown a sharp drop in statistics, the issue of non-reporting might mean that cases are not necessarily decreasing. The reduction in the number of reports could be attributed to the fact that victims regard it as futile, especially when cases are mishandled (Buluma 2009).

Studies indicate a high prevalence of sexual harassment in institutions of higher and tertiary learning in Zimbabwe by lecturers directed towards female students (Zindi 1994; Dhlomo et al. 2012). Zindi's (1994) study reveals that 99% of the students agreed that there was sexual harassment at their institutions of learning and of these, 18% indicated that they have been asked for sexual favours. A similar study by Dhlomo et al. (2012), indicates that 31% of the students acknowledged having been sexually harassed and about 69% of these appeared not to be aware of the sexual harassment incidents they had been subjected to. In a baseline survey of universities, polytechnics and teachers' colleges by Munando (2015), it was revealed that 98% of female students reported having encountered sexual harassment and that 94% of these would not report this to the authorities. Furthermore, surveys conducted by SAYWHAT (2012, 2019) on sexual harassment in tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe, although they did not provide exact rates, confirms that colleges of education were harder hit by

sexual harassment when compared to their counterparts in polytechnics, vocational colleges and universities. Likewise, studies by Zireva and Makura (2013) and Katsande (2008) on sexual harassment among student teachers completing their teaching practice exposed its high prevalence. In this regard, the high prevalence of sexual harassment might indicate that victims could be using inappropriate responses towards such cases. It is from this perspective that the present study was keen to explore students' experiences and responses to sexual harassment in the context of its global prevalence to get to the root causes of the problem.

2.3.3. Forms of sexual harassment

Studies have revealed that sexual harassment manifests in various forms in institutions of higher learning internationally (ILO 2019; Costa 2020). Sexual harassment manifests as quid pro quo and hostile environment (EEOC 1964; ILO 2019). Quid pro quo is any physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature and other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of men and women and which is unwelcome, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient, and the person's rejection or submission to such conduct is used explicitly or implicitly as a basis of decision which affects that person's job (ILO 2019). A hostile work environment constitutes conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or humiliating working environment for the recipient (ILO 2019).

From the major categories of sexual harassment, verbal forms were considered the most common while physical harassment was least common (Finchilescu and Dugard 2018; Museka and Kaguda 2013). Verbal forms include sexual comments about someone's body appearance and attire, sexual jokes, unwanted compliments, cat-calling, whistling, propositioning, obscene language, threats, intimidation, insinuations, repeated asking for dates, pressure for sex and greater scrutiny of work performance (Plan International 2019). Furthermore, derogatory remarks about men or women's sexual abilities, being overly criticised and demeaned, insults of a sexual nature, referring to an adult as a girl/boy are among the verbal forms of sexual harassment (Nyokangi and Phasha 2015).

The reason why physical forms of sexual harassment were considered to be the least common type could be due to the fact that physical assault and rape are listed under the criminal law (Dzimiri 2014). The listing of rape and physical assault only is problematic in that, a wide range of unacceptable sexual behaviours and practices are not included. Such omission leads to unsuccessful prosecution of sexual harassment offenders using forms that are not listed (ILO 2019). The other physical forms of sexual harassment include unwelcome touching, such as grabbing, patting, pinching, fondling, kissing, and brushing up against the body, ogling and consensual relationships (Brannon 2011; Germain 2016).

The prevalence of consensual relationships between students and lecturers/staff in Zimbabwe's higher and tertiary education institutions was attributed to ignorance, power imbalance, affect and students' need for financial support (Makaudze and Gudhlanga 2014). They are also done in exchange for grades (Zindi 1994). However, consensual relationships create a power dynamic in which mutual consent is impossible, eventually turning into coercion (Dromm 2012). Consensual relationships may lead victims to suffer academic harm, particularly when the relationship breaks down (Paludi 2016). From this perspective, it is possible that mutual consent could be impossible in students-to-lecturer and staff-to-student relationships because of the power imbalance and the magnitude of the role disparity (Smit and Du Plessis 2011). Some such consensual relationships may result in conflicts that disturb learning and teaching (Jackman 2006). The conflicts might cause unfair grading, absenteeism from classes, changing courses and the victimised student's dropping out of the institution (Dromm 2012).

Studies also indicated that the non-verbal forms of sexual harassment include sexually suggestive gestures, the display of pornographic materials such as drawings, photographs and cartoons, sexual gifts, showing up uninvited in hostels, being stalked, chased, blocked and unwelcome phone calls/messages (Mills and Mullany 2012; Museka and Kaguda 2013). An indecent style of dressing among female students such as tight and transparent clothing worn specifically to entice male lecturers, is also a form of sexual harassment (Onoyase 2019).

The exposure of various forms of sexual harassment by earlier studies is valuable to the current study as the researcher was keen to discover whether the experiences are similar to those of the college of education under investigation and for the purposes of gaining in-depth understanding. The current study was also motivated to find out whether the forms of sexual harassment experienced elicited similar responses in students in Zimbabwe compared to international students.

2.3.4. Perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment

Studies indicate that sexual harassment occurs to all genders and that anyone can be a perpetrator or recipient of sexual harassment or even both at the same time (Finchilescu and Dugard 2018; Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). The perpetrators of sexual harassment are indicated as male teachers/lecturers, non-teaching staff, male students and female students (Rintaugu et al. 2014; Akpotor 2013). In their study on establishing the level of sexual harassment on female college athletes in Zimbabwe, Muchena et al. (2013) found that it was mainly perpetrated by male coaches, peers and administrators. Also, media reports from the Chronicle (2017) and Herald (2019) exposed disturbing forms of sexual harassment of female students by their male lecturers in colleges of education across Zimbabwe. This suggests that female students suffer more sexual harassment than their male counterparts although they are also capable of harassing males and other female peers (McMullen 2019).

Considering sexual harassment to occur to all genders is against the critical theory which tends to regard males as permanent perpetrators and females perpetual victims (Chafetz 2006). The argument is attributed to females' already marginalised status, emanating from patriarchal socialisation (Farganis 2011). Socialisation in a patriarchy may lead males to perpetrate sexual harassment more often than females by virtue of their ascribed power (Museka and Kaguda 2013). Such male dominance of females may create the false perception that sexual harassment is a women's issue because it affects all genders, although women are most affected (Wanyane 2012).

The false perception that sexual harassment is a women's issue may perpetuate the sexual harassment of men in that it forces them to suppress their feelings causing them to suffer in silence (Dziech and Weiner 2012). The argument that female

students are the major victims of sexual harassment overshadows the point that male students are also sexually harassed by female students (ILO 2019). The implication of this could be that male students might be forgotten victims of sexual harassment in institutions of learning, causing them to suffer in silence (Dziech and Weiner 1990).

The point that regards females as perpetrators is contrary to critical and feminist theories that tend to regard males as the sole perpetrators of sexual harassment (Calhoun 2001; Farganis 2011). The argument is in tandem with Wanyane's (2012) findings that revealed that 20% of the students who had been sexually harassed at the university under study, had been harassed by a female. The same finding revealed that female-to-female sexual harassment amounted to less than 10%. The finding indicates that not all women are passive victims of sexual harassment and that not all men are perpetrators. Thus, although men are considered major perpetrators of sexual harassment, it does not solely rest with men.

Studies vary on the major perpetrators of sexual harassment at institutions of higher learning. Zindi's (1994) study of institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe indicates male lecturers as the major perpetrators of sexual harassment on female students. Contrary to Zindi's (1994) study is that of Wanyane (2012) within Nigerian universities. The study revealed male student-to-female student (peer) sexual harassment as most common on campus, while that of lecturer-to-student was less. The prevalence of peer sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning has been attributed to institutional cultures which tolerate such harassment, leading to its normalisation (Chireshe and Chireshe 2009). Such institutions fail to take action against student perpetrators, leading victims to see no reason to report their experiences (Muchena et al. 2013). The prevalence of male-to-female students was also indicated and attributed to institutional tolerance of peer sexual harassment. The institutional tolerance was attributed to the SI 1 of 2000 that only sanction lecturers when they engage in such acts by virtue of them being workers, leaving out students who are considered non-employees (Tanyanyiwa 2015). On the other hand, lecturer-to-female student sexual harassment was considered to result from the female students' lack of power, emanating from their already marginalised status in a patriarchal society. The prevalence of sexual harassment was also attributed to the Zimbabwe Constitution (No 20:2013) and the Labour Act (28:01) and the SI 1 of 2000 which are not explicit

on what sexual harassment entails. Such sanctions could deter lecturers from further sexually harassing of their students while leaving male students to continue undeterred, due to lack of legislation that is specific to them. In this regard, the issue of the major perpetrators at institutions of higher learning might be dependent on factors that include the countries' legal frameworks and the culture of the people there.

There is, however, a contrasting perspective maintaining that, it is mere defence to regard female students as perpetrators of sexual harassment (Smit and Du Plessis 2011; Paludi 2016). The argument is that they are capable of a sexual attention but not sexual harassment due to the absence of power in them emanating from their already marginalised status in patriarchal society that inhibits them from engaging in appropriate responses (Paludi and Barickman 1998). Similarly, Gwirayi and Shumba's (2011) study revealed the powerlessness of female students towards their lecturers in that, they fall victim to sexual harassment in instances where their grades are poor and when they are offered a chance to redeem themselves by becoming sexually involved with the lecturer. However, in as much as this argument is valid, some female students may make sexual advances that ultimately results in sexual harassment (Onoyase 2019). This indicates that, despite female students also being perpetrators of sexual harassment, they remain the most likely victims whilst males are the major perpetrators.

The argument that regards women as perpetual victims of sexual harassment could be problematic in that it portrays patriarchal power as fixed when in actual fact it is fluid (Chafetz 2006). This is evidenced by some women being the perpetrators of sexual harassment. This is also shown by some women occupying higher positions of responsibility in all sectors, indicating that they have power (Mawere 2014).

The discussion in this section has revealed beyond doubt that studies regard sexual harassment on female students by male lecturers as prevalent in institutions of higher and tertiary learning internationally. However, even though lecturers are considered to be the major perpetrators due to their power and positions, male students were also found to harass female students due to their socialisation and ascribed power in the patriarchy. Interestingly, female students are not spared from this issue either,

although on rare occasions, they are considered as the perpetrators of sexual harassment despite their already marginalised status in the patriarchy.

2.4. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE OCCURRENCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Studies have attributed the occurrences of sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning to social-cultural, legislative and institutional factors.

2.4.1. Socio-cultural factors

Studies have considered that some socio-cultural factors stemming from the patriarchy leads to the occurrences of sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning internationally (Costa 2020; Elton et al. 2019). This is in line with critical theory that considers socialisation in the patriarchy as one of the major causes of GBV (Farganis 2011). The critical theory argues that the power imbalance in patriarchal societies subordinates women (Ritzer 2008). This perspective compromises women's response strategies, rendering them unable to fight back against the perpetrator, to turn down the sexual demands or to seek help (Paludi 2016). This also makes women silent victims of sexual harassment as it limits their response options. The argument also indicates that, patriarchal power structures that are practised in institutions of learning exposes female students to sexual harassment from their male lecturers given their already marginalised status (Farganis 2011). This argument is made against the background of Karugahe's (2016) study on gender roles in personality, coping styles, and attitudes in Uganda that revealed an overreliance on cultural explanations for the problem at the expense of exploring other factors. In a similar vein, Chafetz (2006) argues that, despite the patriarchal society disadvantaging women, the structures are not static but fluid, considering the existing socio-economic and political changes in the world (Chafetz 2006). In this perspective, the fluid nature of the socio-cultural factors may in turn alter the socialisation process of males and females and the power structures of institutions. Therefore, the argument that does not regard patriarchy as the root cause of the sexual harassment of women by men challenges the critical theory's perspective, indicating the possibility of other factors being at play, which the current research is about.

Some harmful cultural values passed from generation to generation stemming from the patriarchy have been considered to legitimise the sexual harassment of females by males in society. The cultural values are considered harmful because they trap women into conformity with community behaviour expectations, leading to the perpetuation of sexual harassment (Gwirayi and Shumba 2011; Oni et al. 2019). Some such cultural practices include regarding sexual discussions as a private matter thereby keeping them taboo particularly for women, teaching women to overlook the sexual behaviours of men and practising sexual child play on women and girls (Eme and Omalara 2011; Henry 2002). Shrouding such topics in secrecy could lead women to lack appropriate language when describing sexual harassment as they are prevented from discussing or sharing their experiences (Ntuli 2006). The women's lack of appropriate language to express themselves in describing the problem may result in a narrow description of sexual harassment by the victims (Coetzee 2012). Such restrictions about sexual harassment might obstruct its identification and understanding, resulting in improper responses and non-reporting in the face of a serious problem.

The traditional gender roles stemming from the patriarchy that are disproportionally and passively occupied by women in society also continue to expose them to sexual harassment (Hodgson and Watts 2017). The practice leads to the stereotyping of female duties and behaviours (Okeke 2011). Stereotyping of male and female duties perpetuates ideas and beliefs about the worth of women in society, rendering them unassertive in the face of sexual harassment (Kottak 2009). This indicates that traditional gender roles negatively impact the way sexual harassment is interpreted and responded to by victims, causing the problem to continue.

Differences in the perceived severity of sexual harassment incidents may also arise due to patriarchal socio-cultural influences (Rotundo, Nguyeni and Sackett 2001). Socialisation in patriarchy leads most men not to perceive their sexually harassing behaviours as constituting sexual harassment (Wanyane 2012). Such perceptions might cause some societies to regard sexual harassment as normal men's behaviour (Rintaugu et al. 2014). The socio-cultural influences may lead some men to sexually harass women so as not to appear weak in the eyes of other males (Paludi 2016).

Thus, although socio-cultural factors in the patriarchy are not solely responsible for the occurrences of sexual harassment at institutions of higher learning, particularly colleges of education, they play a role in influencing both perpetrators and victims to behave in conformity to social or group norms, ultimately exposing victims and perpetuating sexual harassment.

2.4.2. Legislative factors

Despite the fact that international and national frameworks makes a commitment to curb sexual harassment in all sectors of life, there are existing legislative gaps which promote its prevalence. The argument of existing legal gaps as a contributing factor to sexual harassment prevalence disregards the fact that the elimination of sexual harassment is a priority issue for international, regional and national governments' constitutions (ILO 2019). It also disregards efforts of the international and regional legal frameworks on gender, which mandates sexual harassment policy implementation by member States as discussed earlier (UN 1993, 1995).

Studies reveal that legislative gaps in the field of sexual harassment internationally have contributed to the occurrences of sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning. One of these gaps is the use of generalised definitions and terms covering sexual harassment internationally (UN 1948, 1993; ILO 2019). Generalised definitions and terms are a problem in that they may act as a weak reference by institutions when developing and implementing sexual harassment policies. Similarly, Coetzee's (2012) study on law and policy in regulating educator-on-learner sexual misconduct at a university in South Africa attributed the existence of legislative gaps on sexual harassment in that country to the use of various umbrella concepts in the law and in policy.

The generalised country definitions of sexual harassment may lead to mishandling of cases by courts of law and institutions, causing institutional sanctions for sexual misconducts not to be in line with the criminal law (Knapp et al. 1997). Lenience sentencing may arise, leading to high dismissal rates, low prosecution and conviction rates among others (Elton et al. 2019). Thus, inadequate legislation about sexual

harassment may lead to a lack of legal reference point by institutions when handling such cases, rendering victims unable to respond appropriately.

Legislative gaps on sexual harassment also renders sexual harassment policies in institutions of higher learning weak (Bennet 2009). In their study on the effectiveness of sexual harassment policies and procedures at higher education institutions in South Africa, Jourbert, Van Wyk and Rhothmann (2011), found that policies were generally in place but were not effective. One of the reasons for this is that some policies did not seem to demonstrate the reduction of sexual harassment prevalence as had been expected. Furthermore, some institutional policies had inadequate content and lacked widespread distribution, rendering them ineffective (Bennet 2002). The lack of a widespread policy distribution could emanate from inadequate resources and mechanisms to develop and distribute the sexual harassment policies, further exposing victims to sexual abuse (Piccirillo 2019).

Even though some higher education institutions have weak sexual harassment policies in place that exposed students to sexual harassment, studies have also revealed the absence of such policies in some institutions, causing the problem to continue to occur (Bennet 2009; Jourbert et al. 2011). Policy absence could be attributed to a lack of a clear definition of sexual harassment at international and national levels, depriving institutions of the information necessary for policy development and implementation (Katsande 2008). Policy presence provides guidelines on how sexual harassment cases should be handled, thus protecting the victims (Bennet et al. 2007). Policy also provides a broad framework within which responses can manifest (UNESCO 2012). Therefore, the absence of policy at institutions of higher learning undermines students' appropriate responses to sexual harassment, leading to the prevalence of the phenomenon.

Similarly, the Zimbabwean higher education system is not spared from policy implementation challenges particularly within the colleges of education. Although the framework for protecting women from sexual harassment and its elimination is contained in the Zimbabwean Constitution (No. 20: 2013), the Labour Act (28:01) and SI 1 of 2000, they lack procedures for reporting and handling cases, as well as remedies and sanctions for perpetrators as discussed earlier (Matsikidze 2017). The

Zimbabwean labour laws are inadequate in terms of the definition of sexual harassment and content as discussed earlier (Dzimiri 2014; Matsikidze 2017). Such legislative gaps presents fertile ground for sexual harassment prevalence as this may lead institutions to have inadequate content in their policies (Bennet 2002). Similarly, Kabaya's (2018) study on sexual harassment in the workplace and the law attributed unclear policy and procedure for detecting and resolving sexual harassment cases to inadequate understanding of the concept emanating from a lack of content on the topic itself. The lack of content in the policy could also be a fertile ground for the incidence of sexual harassment when legislation is not explicit on sexual harassment. This may cause women and girls to bear the burden of proof when sexual harassment occurs, thus deterring them from reporting (ILO 2019). Such generalisations about sexual harassment may weaken institutional responses to policy implementation and further expose victims to abuse. This could be the reason why by the end of 2018, only six out of 16 colleges of education had sexual harassment policies in place (SAYWHAT 2019).

Policy absence at some institutions of higher and tertiary learning in Zimbabwe could have caused them to formulate disciplinary codes that are not standard in dealing with sexual harassment cases (Dhlomo et al. 2012). It could also be possible that the presence of disciplinary codes in institutions might be the cause of policy absence. Institutions could be refusing to replace their disciplinary codes with policies. However, the use of disciplinary codes that are not standard creates variations in institutional procedures when handling incidents of sexual harassment (Dzimiri 2014). Such variations cause disharmony which may result in the creation of a scapegoat for colleges to use their own discretion when dealing with cases of sexual harassment.

In other words, both policy implementation challenges and policy absence encourage the mishandling of cases by institutions, leading to the proliferation of sexual harassment. Thus, the observations about policy implementation challenges and policy absence in institutions of higher learning are crucial to the present study in that they are indeed a factor in the prevalence of sexual harassment.

2.4.3. Institutional factors

Studies indicate institutional mishandling of cases as a cause for the prevalence of sexual harassment (Latcheva 2017; Beckett 2007). The institutional mishandling of cases could be attributed to the socio-cultural and legislative factors discussed earlier. The institutional mishandling of cases goes against the need for institutions to properly handle such incidents to maintain sexual harassment free institutions through proper handling of cases and enabling students to participate in educational activities without fear of retaliation (NGP 2014). Therefore, sexual harassment free institutions help students to have confidence and realise their full potential (Gartner 2019). Such sexual harassment free institutions may be spared from the burden of litigations and disciplinary hearings that in mostly tarnish their image.

The institutional mishandling of sexual harassment cases may occur in various ways. A study by Costa (2020) on violence against university women in Brazil, Portugal and the UK revealed that management in these institutions mishandles sexual harassment in various ways. These include ignoring or dismissing complaints, concealing cases and delaying investigations (Costa 2020). This also involves refusing to investigate cases and adequately discipline offenders, such as instituting expulsions or suspensions (Finchilescu and Dugard 2019). This implies that the mishandling of cases could either be intentional or unintentional. Unintentional mishandling of cases could be attributed to a lack of awareness about sexual harassment and the law pertaining to it. Such ignorance may lead management to fail to label some reported cases as sexual harassment but instead refers to it as a 'love affair that has gone sour' (Beckett 2007). Ignorance about sexual harassment might also lead perpetrators to fail to label their sexually harassing behaviours correctly, resulting in an arena of silence which causes most cases to go unreported.

On the other hand, the intentional mishandling of sexual harassment is what Mawere (2014) refers to as the authorities 'sweeping the matter under the carpet.' The mishandling of cases could stem from the management's tendencies to feel they are not responsible for sexual harassment incidences at their institutions (Latcheva 2017).

This could also be management's attempts to avoid liability and preserve their reputation (Muchena et al. 2013).

The institutional mishandling of cases might cause victims to think that management was powerless and not responsive to their complaints thereby forcing them to remain silent (Brannon 2011). Victims may also think that authorities believe their staff over them, thereby discouraging further action to be taken against sexual harassment (Finchilescu and Dugard 2018). Victims could also believe that the perpetrator may go unpunished, leading them to lack trust in the system and thereby discouraging further reporting (Germain 2016). Thus, proper institutional handling of sexual harassment cases is vital for the future likelihood of appropriate students' reactions to the problem, leading to the reduction in the number of incidents.

Therefore, institutional mishandling of sexual harassment cases may result in victims' lack of trust in the system, the addressing of which is vital in increasing the likelihood of appropriate responses by victims.

2.5.   RESPONSES TO ENCOUNTERS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The current section sought to uncover what studies have revealed about students' reactions to incidents of sexual harassment at institutions of higher learning. Research has shown that victims display different responses to sexual harassment depending on their situations and options available (Jackman 2006; Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). The responses that students were found to use against sexual harassment were silence, avoidance, ignoring, resisting, reporting and downplaying the problem (Brannon 2011; UN Women 2019). The responses that victims of sexual harassment used were contextual to socio-cultural, institutional, financial and legislative factors.

2.5.1. Silence

Studies revealed silence as victims' most common but least effective and not ideal response to sexual harassment (Britz 2007). Silence is an internally focused reaction which involves concentrating on managing one's emotions and mentally coping with the situation for various reasons (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). This involves not

talking to someone or doing anything about the incident and not reporting it (Dromm 2012). The point considering silence as the least effective response disregards Vohlídalová and Praha's (2015) assertion that it could be the victims' survival strategy. It also disregards that silence could be an expression of being in a dilemma due to lack of response alternatives (Ntuli 2006). This shows that victims' silence about sexual harassment could be due to factors beyond their control, making non-compliance risky or futile. This may in turn leads to an under-reporting of cases on campuses, thus allowing sexual harassment to remain a hidden issue.

Silence could also be attributed to a lack of knowledge about what sexual harassment entails. According to Vohlídalová and Praha (2015), a lack of knowledge about what sexual harassment really is, causes victims to be unsure of whether their cases are worth reporting or if they are serious enough to constitute a crime under the law. This could also emanate from students' lack of awareness of other earlier incidents of sexual harassment on campus forcing them to resort to concealing their experiences and making it a hidden problem (Dziech and Weiner 1990; Gartner 2019). Lack of awareness could develop into uncertainty about how to handle sexual harassment incidents on the part of the victims, which compromises their response strategies. The victims may in turn be influenced to reinterpret their sexual harassment experience as not being harassment causing them to suffer in silence.

Restricting sexual harassment victims from accessing adequate information on the topic may cause unawareness in victims of whether some incidents are serious enough to report (Bhatia 2014). This may lead to ignorance on whether some once-off incidents should be considered as sexual harassment or not (Bhatia 2014). This may also cause victims to fail to report what they label as milder forms of sexual harassment, such as verbal and non-verbal forms (Dziech and Weiner 1990). In this view, the non-reporting of some forms of sexual harassment is disempowering to victims because they may be unable to respond appropriately to incidents that they are unaware of. This ignorance causes them to continue to occur unchecked.

Some victims resort to silence after failing to gather enough evidence against the perpetrator (Ntuli 2006). The lack of evidence could stem from the fact that most sexual harassment incidents occur behind closed doors with no witnesses, making the

experience frightening, stressful and confusing (Schoen et al. 2020). Lacking evidence after sexual harassment encounters could also stem from the fact that in a patriarchy, such discussions and practices are shrouded in taboos that obstruct their direct observation as discussed earlier. Such restrictions trap victims into silence due to the circumstances beyond their control. Thus, victims of sexual harassment could be bound to engage in silence when restricted in terms of their knowledge about the topic.

The non-reporting of cases could also emanate from unclear reporting procedures at institutions of higher learning. A study conducted by Wanyane (2012) found that the majority of students at a university in South Africa were not aware of the procedures to follow after a sexual harassment encounter. Similarly, in their study, Jourbert et al. (2011) attributed students' ignorance of reporting procedures to a lack of utilisation of the campus sexual harassment policy contents. In this case, policy contents could have provided clear reporting procedures to victims, ultimately enabling disclosure. The lack of knowledge about reporting procedures is disempowering to students because they may be deprived of the information needed to resist sexual harassment.

Furthermore, unclear reporting procedures could be fragmented in the form of clear rules and regulations guiding students on how to identify and report cases (Katsande 2008). The point is made against the fact that complaint procedures should encourage victims to come forth with their sexual harassment concerns (Dziech and Hawkins 2012). Fragmented complaint procedures disempowers victims in their efforts to properly respond to sexual harassment as they may not believe that the structures were set up to protect them (Brannon 2011). Such procedures are unfriendly to victims in that they may discourage them from using formal reporting systems. Victims might also fear a lack of confidentiality by authorities when the reporting system is fragmented, leading to silence about the problem.

Students' silence about sexual harassment could also be attributed to power differences that exist between lecturers and students that limits students' response options (Paludi and Barickman 1998). The victim may find it difficult to complain when the perpetrator has power and status over them (Paludi and Barickman 1998). Also, lecturers have authority over their students by virtue of their profession as well as through the awarding of grades and recommendations (Dziech and Weiner 1990). The

victims' lack of power might cause them to prefer to move on by going along with the problem through silently complying (Piccirillo 2019).

Compliance towards sexual harassment could stem from victims' fear of reprisals after the perpetrators' threats and intimidations. The threats could involve failing marks and unspecified action, forcing them into silence (Okeke 2011; Morley 2011). This could be the reason for the existence of a common myth among students that 'lecturers are untouchable', leading them to view reporting as harmful to them (Zireva and Makura 2013). Compliance in this case does not help reduce sexual harassment as victims may continue to suffer in silence. In this perspective, power imbalances between students and their lecturers restricts them from responding adequately to incidents of sexual harassment. This implies that silence is not the students' ideal reaction towards encounters of sexual harassment.

Students' silence about sexual harassment could also be attributed to negative institutional responses they receive from management during and after reporting cases (Kanyemba and Naidu 2019). Victims may resort to silence when their complaints are either mistrusted, dismissed or ignored (European Commission 1998). Some victims might be unsure of what authorities would say after making a report and end up in fear of not being believed, resulting in blame for their sexual harassment (Paludi 2016). This instils a feeling of embarrassment in victims when blamed for having consented, causing them to prefer not to disclose their experiences in order to preserve their self-respect (Akpotor 2013). The feeling of embarrassment by victims after experiencing sexual harassment might stem from patriarchal cultural myths which justify sexual harassment as discussed earlier (Museka and Kaguda 2013). From this perspective, it could be argued that, some socio-cultural patriarchal norms discourages victims from disclosing their sexual harassment experiences.

The victims of sexual harassment may keep silent about sexual harassment in order to protect the perpetrator. The victim may not be prepared to get the perpetrator into trouble by either getting them punished or ruining their career (Gwirayi and Shumba 2011). Some victims could remain silent in order to protect their reputation and that of their families (Kapfunde and Zengeya 2010). Others may remain silent after facing discouragement from peers (Elton et al. 2019). Discouragement from peers could be

attributed to socialisation in the patriarchy where there are tendencies to blame victims for their sexual harassment (Kanyemba and Naidu 2019). It could also emanate from victims' past experiences of reporting where cases were mishandled, leading to them regarding reporting as futile and causing the problem to persist.

The protection of the perpetrator could be necessitated by the fact that the victim and the perpetrator may have known each other for a relatively long time (Plan International 2019). The long-standing relationship may in turn cause some victims to fail to properly label their sexual harassment experiences after consenting previously (Dziech and Weiner 1990). Such long-standing relationship might influence victims to want to protect the perpetrator from harm by taking responsibility for their harassment and keeping silent. Victims could also remain silent in order to preserve their relationship with the perpetrator (Beckett 2007). However, the victims' protection of the perpetrator does not prevent the recurrence of sexual harassment because the perpetrator might continue with their abusive behaviours whilst enjoying protection and anonymity.

Students' silence could also be attributed to financial challenges, forcing them to comply with lecturers' sexual demands (Zindi 1994; Matsikidze 2014). Poverty and a high level of unemployment might be breeding grounds for sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning (Matsikidze 2017). Students' financial challenges could be the reason why some students engage in consensual relationships for financial gains (Dhlomo et al. 2012). Perpetrators could be taking advantage of this to pounce on women, especially students, and in so doing perpetuate sexual harassment.

The current discussion has shown that, as much as silence is regarded as a victim's most common response, it does not seem to be an ideal reaction. Rather, it is for survival due to a lack of alternatives. This suggests that victims want better protection through legislature and policy so that they feel safer coming forward to report their sexual harassment experiences.

2.5.2. Ignoring

Studies indicate that some victims of sexual harassment ignore their perpetrator (Knapp et al. 1997; Piccirillo 2019). Ignoring the perpetrator involves deleting messages, treating the behaviour as a joke and attempting to forget about it in the hope that the sexual harassment will stop (Plan International 2019). Responding by ignoring is against the need to resist sexual harassment in order to reduce its prevalence (Brannon 2011). It is also against Vohlídalová and Praha's (2015) point that ignoring the perpetrator does not help in reducing the prevalence of sexual harassment because when behaviour is ignored, it tends to worsen. Ignoring might cause the perpetrator to continue with their sexually harassing behaviour without knowing that it is unwanted (Mills and Mullany 2012). Ignoring therefore perpetuates sexual harassment as the victim might continue to suffer in silence by not resisting or reporting such incidents.

Ignoring the perpetrator could stem from women's patriarchal socialisation to avoid conflict and overlook the behaviours of men (Sithole and Dziva 2019). Victims may also ignore the sexually harassing behaviour in the hope that it will go away (UN Women 2019). Some victims may ignore incidents of sexual harassment out of ignorance of the next step to take after a sexual harassment encounter (Fedina et al. 2018). There are also instances whereby victims may ignore the sexually harassing behaviour in an attempt to avoid being associated with such behaviours (Finchilescu and Dugard 2018). Such attempts could be emanating from patriarchal socialisation where victims are sometimes blamed for being sexually harassed (Latcheva 2017). In this regard, the present discussion has shown that the strategy of ignoring the perpetrator and their sexually harassing incidents may complicate students' responses as the problem may continue to occur undetected.

2.5.3. Avoiding

The other response that students engage in against sexual harassment is avoiding the perpetrator. Avoiding could be when the victim stays away from the perpetrator to avoid being sexually abused (Rintaugu et al. 2014). The victim may also drop out of the course shared with the perpetrator, avoids enrolling in a course presented by the perpetrator, absconds or quits lectures and stops all communication with the perpetrator (Jackman 2006; Latcheva 2017). Such a response could be made in order to avoid direct contact with the perpetrator in anticipation that the harassment will go away (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). Such a response may derail careers, lower grades and decrease self-esteem, among other negative effects (UNCRC 2016).

Like silence, avoidance could be a sign of the victim being in a dilemma especially after losing confidence in getting help from the system and seeing the futility of either resisting or reporting (Bondestam and Lundqvist 2020b). Avoidance strategy could emanate from patriarchal socialisation where there are tendencies for normalising sexually harassing behaviours, causing victims to avoid the perpetrators (Ekore 2012). Additionally, in patriarchy, women are taught to submit to men, forcing them into avoidance as a survival strategy (Abe 2012). This could also emanate from ignorance of the law which intimidates victims from engaging in resistance to sexual harassment as their first option (Kabaya 2018). Avoidance in this case could be regarded as relatively easy and less risky (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). This points to the fact that avoidance is not an assertive response because it does not confront the problem head on, but instead, side-steps it, causing it to continue. Avoidance may also limit students' access to courses and lecturers, leading to a decrease in their academic performance.

2.5.4. Reporting

The other response strategy used by students against sexual harassment, albeit on rare occasions is reporting the incidents. The rare incidences of reporting sexual harassment disregards the fact that reporting enables early identification of the problem, ultimately leading to its possible resolution (Costa 2020). Reports may either be formal or informal, depending on the situation and severity of the offence

(Finchilescu and Dugard 2018). Formal reporting involves telling institutional management, asking other people to intervene, reporting to the police or seeking legal remedy through court actions (Fedina et al. 2018; Katsande 2008).

However, few students use formal channels to report sexual harassment (Mawere 2014). The few students who utilise formal channels could either be in possession of some other form of powers or were in the same situation that they knew that the system could protect them (European Commission 1998). In a SAYWHAT (2019) study on higher and tertiary institutions' responses to sexual harassment in Zimbabwe, it was found that students who were able to report such incidents were married women, members of the Student Representative Council (SRC), peer educators, university and polytechnic/ vocational college graduates, students from other professions such as the police, prisons and the army. In this regard, the fact that such students were former graduates elsewhere indicates that they may be mature in age. The implication of this could be that maturity is a factor in reporting incidents of sexual harassment at institutions of higher learning. However, maturity in this case could be in terms of having knowledge about the topic. Thus, knowledge about sexual harassment is empowering in that it may increase students' maturity, giving them courage to report such incidents using formal channels. Such a scenario leads to the continued prevalence of sexual harassment as students without institutional support and knowledge about sexual harassment may fail to utilise formal reporting channels.

Furthermore, formal reporting could be taken in most extreme cases and only when there is no other option (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). Failure to report incidents of sexual harassment could be attributed to the victims' fear of retaliation from the perpetrator (Sithole and Dziva 2019). This could also be attributed to a power imbalance between students and their lecturers that limits their option to use formal reporting channels (Jackman 2006).

On the other hand, some victimised students use informal reporting channels and support systems such as sympathetic others, friends and family to address the problem (Fedina et al. 2018). Informal channels are used because students assume that dealing with the problem through formal channels might be unpleasant, leading to further victimisation (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). They may also fear that nobody

will trust them and that the perpetrator will go unpunished (Elton et al. 2019). The victims may also fear being blamed for making false accusations (Dromm 2012). Such fears indicates a lack of trust in institutional management and its willingness to address the problem, leading to informal reporting.

This discussion has shown that even though reporting sexual harassment incidents is used on rare occasions, it is an assertive and effective reaction of addressing the problem. This is because it exposes the perpetrator, thereby discouraging possible other perpetrators. Reporting also has the potential of leading to the sentencing and shaming of the perpetrator which may prevent future occurrences of a similar nature.

2.5.5. Resisting

Research has also shown that some students resist the perpetrator in order to stop the harassing behaviour (Paludi 2016; Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). Resisting sexual harassment could be done either individually or by using organisational support (Rintaugu et al. 2014). This may involve directly confronting the harasser and telling them to stop their harassing behaviour (Katsande 2008). It may also involve the victim seeking the support of the institution to intervene between them and the perpetrator in order to end the problem (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). Such a response strategy has been proven to be the victim's last option when all other peaceful alternatives have failed (Knapp et al. 1997). As such, very few victimised students resist sexual harassment due to lack of courage to confront the perpetrator directly (Kanyemba and Naidu 2019). Some students may fear retaliation after direct confrontation, leading them to use less risky options (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). The victims' failure to resist sexual harassment may be attributed to a lack of knowledge about the topic that intimidates victims from resisting such incidents. From this perspective, although resisting sexual harassment is an effective response that may stop the harassing behaviour, very few victims use such a response due to factors beyond their control. This implies that, resisting the perpetrator may not be the victims' ideal reaction but their last resort.

2.5.6. Denial, downplaying and normalisation

Studies have shown that some victims of sexual harassment either downplay or deny their experiences for fear of stigma associated with the problem, leading to the normalisation of such occurrences (Plan International 2019; Dhlomo et al. 2012). Victims could interpret, reinterpret or relabel the event so that it is not defined as sexual harassment so as not to appear a victim (Elton et al. 2019). Downplaying involves seeing the positive side of the situation rather than concentrating on the negative (Elton et al. 2019). Such a response strategy could be attributed to a lack of support from mainstream society (Karugahe 2016). The response strategy could be attributed to the fact that sexual harassment is justified in some patriarchal societies where women and girls are blamed for sexual crimes committed against them, forcing victims to regard their experiences as normal (Hodgson and Watts 2017).

Downplaying may also involve reacting to the sexual harassment behaviour with laughter and treating it as a joke to lighten the gravity of the problem (Plan international 2019). Victims may also reframe the sexual harassment act as an unintended incident (Brannon 2011). From this perspective, downplaying as a strategy for sexual harassment may lead such cases to be considered as natural and given, resulting in its normalisation. This may also cause such incidents to be legitimised, leading to non-reporting of the problem. From this, one can submit that as long as stigma associated with sexual harassment is not addressed, victims could continue to engage in unassertive responses, thereby perpetuating the problem.

The discussion in the current section has shown that, although silence was students' most common response to sexual harassment, it was not their ideal reaction and not effective in preventing the further occurrence of such incidents. Also, while reporting and resisting sexual harassment could have been the students' ideal responses, such reactions were rarely used due to socio-cultural, institutional, legislative and financial factors beyond their control. This points to the need to empower students' responses in order to enable them to resist and report sexual harassment, thus, resulting in their emancipation from the problem.

2. 6.   SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPOWERING STUDENTS' RESPONSES

The current section presents suggestions for empowering students' responses to sexual harassment from earlier local and international studies.

2.6.1. Training

Awareness training workshops by non-governmental organisations and the responsible Ministry on sexual harassment was recommended for students, staff and management (NGP 2014; Mawere 2014). According to the United Nations Gender Review of Education in Zimbabwe (UNGREZ), such workshops were considered important in equipping institutional members with adequate information about the topic. The workshops could be conducted by non-governmental organisations such as SAYWHAT, ECOZI and the Musasa project among others (SAYWHAT 2012). The training should describe what sexual harassment entails and the behaviour which constitutes it (Gwirayi and Shumba 2011). It should also include laws that pertain to sexual harassment and how to respond to such incidents (Mawere 2014). Clear referral paths and social support for victims should also be provided to trainees (Dziech and Hawkins 2012).

Life skills training on sexual harassment by institutions and non-governmental organisations could be provided for both male and females. Female students could be trained in self-defence (Finchilescu and Dugard 2018). Male students could be encouraged to join men's forums to discuss their sexuality, dreams and how to become responsible, and take part in the elimination of sexual harassment (SAYWHAT 2019). The training may equip them with skills on how to become change agents in the eradication of sexual harassment at institutions of higher learning.

 Training on sexual harassment helps to tackle the underlying root causes of GBV that continue to expose female students to sexual harassment. Training also raises consciousness about sexual harassment, ultimately causing students, particularly females, to realise and assert their rights (Piccirillo 2019). Such realisation helps to transform female students from being silent into assertive victims, prepared to defend their dignity (Gwirayi and Shumba 2011). Thus, sensitisation on sexual harassment is

crucial for the empowerment of students' responses, leading to their emancipation from the problem.

2.6.2. Gender mainstreaming

Studies recommended gender mainstreaming in institutions of higher learning in order to promote awareness and behaviour change among students (UN 1995; Mawere 2014). Gender mainstreaming is an international best practice recommended by the United Nations Fourth World Conference on women in Beijing, China, 1995 (UN 1995). The concept later became Zimbabwe's National Gender Policy recommendation on education in 2014 (NGP 2014). Gender mainstreaming is necessary because colleges of education in Zimbabwe do not pay much attention to such issues in their curricular (Mawere 2014). The concept is an equal opportunity strategy to address subtle forms of disadvantage or discrimination among men and women in education (Tanyanyiwa 2015). It is also an inclusive concept embracing cultural ideas and interpretations about their maleness and femaleness as well as structural inequalities that emanate from these differences (Tanyanyiwa 2015).

A gender responsive pedagogy involving the whole Ministry of MHEISTD is needed as a means to achieve gender mainstreaming (NGP 2014). This may be done through the introduction of a compulsory gender studies course at institutions of higher learning (NGP 2014). This view helps in sensitising students about sexual harassment, thus empowering them with appropriate responses. Once gender mainstreaming is achieved, campuses may benefit from an environment of cooperation, respect and dignity (Dziech and Weiner 1990). In other words, gender mainstreaming is the means to ending GBV, particularly sexual harassment in the country's higher education institutions and beyond. In this perspective, gender mainstreaming has the potential to lead to behaviour change in most students, resulting in the prevention of sexual harassment.

2.6.3. Promotion of research

Studies recommend the promotion of research on sexual harassment by the responsible Ministry, institutions and stakeholders in order to get to the root causes of

the problem (Pasha 2009; Kayuni 2009). Research also enables the proper documentation of evidence which is essential to curriculum planning and policy making (NGP 2014). Promoting research helps in creating awareness about sexual harassment and increases access to information. Such an undertaking is empowering in that, it results in sexual harassment best management practices, ultimately leading to decrease in the phenomenon.

2.6.4. Multi-sector/stakeholder partnerships

Research has revealed that institutions alone cannot succeed in combating sexual harassment except when in partnership with civil society stakeholders (Dorota 2002; Tanyanyiwa 2015). A coordinated approach to GBV might efficiently address sexual harassment issues (Mawere 2014). The approach may enable training, policy implementation and monitoring programmes (NGP 2014). In this perspective, multi-sector coordinated approaches are empowering in that they facilitate programmes and efforts in curbing sexual harassment.

2.6.5. Legislative and policy gaps

Studies suggest an amendment of the Zimbabwean Labour Act 28:01 and SI 1 of 2000 to provide for a wider definition of sexual harassment as well as a mechanism to prevent, detect, and resolve cases of sexual harassment (Matsikidze 2017; Dzimiri 2014). Such amendment might result in a clear government policy on combating sexual harassment in higher education institutions, leading to the development and implementation of sexual harassment policies (Bennet et al. 2007).

Research suggest that all forms of sexual harassment should be criminalised to reduce its prevalence in institutions of learning (Chimombe 2012; Dzimiri 2014). If criminalised, institutions may be able to take strong disciplinary measures against the perpetrators of such incidents (Zindi 1994). Stiffer penalties such as arrests, a jail sentence, dismissals and suspensions should be instituted against perpetrators (Phasha and Nyokangi 2015; Matsikidze 2017). Shaming of offenders should be done to act as a deterrent to possible offenders (Paludi 2016). From this, it might be

submitted that legislative and policy reviews in higher education institutions are necessary for the realisation of sexual harassment free institutions internationally.

There is need for all higher education institutions to develop and implement sexual harassment policies (Mawere 2014; Abe 2012). The policies should clearly define what sexual harassment is and spell out reporting procedures (Jourbert 2011). Institutions should prohibit consensual relationships between students and lecturers in their policies (Omar 2019). Policy implementation may deter possible perpetrators from engaging in sexually harassing behaviours, thereby protecting students from the problem (Jourbert et al. 2011). Policy implementation is also crucial for the successful handling of cases, leading to the reduction of cases. Thus, policy provides formulae on how to deal with sexual harassment cases and their absence impedes efforts to curb the problem.

2.6.6. Confidential reporting

The institutional creation of confidential, friendly, clear, accessible and transparent complaint structures for dealing with sexual harassment are important for curbing the incidence of sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning (Hebert 1994). The institutional reporting structure should be clear, simple, should provide feedback, with a referral pathway to ensure the safety of survivors and the provision of psychological, legal and medical support to victims (Morley 2005). Such support helps in bringing healing to victims (WHO 2013). A 24-hour hotline for reporting sexual harassment could also be adopted by institutions through phone calls, web links and the use of emails (Plan International 2019). This helps in creating victims' confidence in the system, resulting in disclosure and reporting. Such responses are empowered in that they contribute to the curbing of sexual harassment.

2.7. CONCLUSION

In summary, the literature reviewed in Chapter Two has demonstrated that sexual harassment is a global problem and that countries are struggling to manage it. Most of the reviewed studies have generally highlighted that sexual harassment is prevalent in various forms and loosely understood globally. Studies attribute the prevalence of

sexual harassment to factors that are socio-cultural, institutional, financial and legislative. These are considered to be beyond students' control, ultimately compromising their response strategies. As a consequence of this lack of control, their situation and lack of alternatives, students resort to silence as a survival strategy. It also emerged from the literature that the ideal reaction of resisting and reporting sexual harassment was rare in victims due to factors beyond their control. The suggestions for empowering students against sexual harassment point towards the gender mainstreaming of education, promotion of research on sexual harassment, multi-sector partnerships, confidential reporting as well as legislative and policy reviews. This therefore suggests that, if sexual harassment is not mainstreamed in all sectors, including teacher education, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development's Education 5.0 Agenda which contributes to the achievement of SDGs 4 and 5 could remain undone. It is from this background that the present study builds upon. Thus, while acknowledging the contribution made by the above-mentioned researchers to the debate on the prevention of sexual harassment, the scholars have not considered how students' responses in colleges of education can be empowered, leading to the reduction in the incidence of sexual harassment. The current research is significant in that it considers how empowering students' responses is essential for the eradication of sexual harassment at institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe and internationally. Thus, while related studies were conducted by early researchers, the current study was unique as it focuses on students' responses and coping mechanisms. There is a dearth of literature in this area within the Zimbabwean context. The next chapter will describe the research methods used in the current study.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two reviewed relevant literature in themes derived from the study's research questions on students' responses to sexual harassment. The current chapter discusses the methodology employed to carry out this study. Guided by the critical theory with a feminist lens, an account of how the research design, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis procedures and discussion are achieved is provided. The trustworthiness, truthfulness, transferability, conformability and dependability of the research is also given.

3.2. POSITIONING THE RESEARCHER IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

There is a need to make the reader aware of the place of the researcher in this study. This is in order to unpack her influence in the construction of her research knowledge in the study. This also helps to show that she is not value-free and that the research is influenced by her values and beliefs of understanding the phenomenon from the lens of a female lecturer. The researcher teaches Psychology of Education in the Theory of Education (ToE) department at a college of education under study. She holds an administrative responsibility of Lecturer in Charge (LiC) of the department. She is a counsellor by virtue of her administrative position of handling the department's marks profile. The researchers' counselling sessions with students, particularly after failing the ToE examination gave her the first-hand experience of their challenges at the college. Chief among the challenges were female students' sexual harassment encounters with male lecturers, non-teaching staff and male students. Most female students attributed their weak performance to victimisation by their male lecturers after refusing to comply with their sexual demands. However, it is disheartening to note that the victimised students would prefer to remain silent about their experiences for fear of failing the course. The students would continue in silence even when their safety

had been assured. This motivated the researcher to want to find out why, in spite of the assurances of safety after reporting, victims remained silent. The indications were that there was something amiss with the victimised students' responses to sexual harassment.

The other motivation came from the researchers' attendance of GBV workshops and research conferences in various parts of the country where the sexual harassment of female students at colleges of education remained a topical issue. Media reports and academic literature on the topic in the country also stimulated the researcher's interest to contribute knowledge to the topic that could possibly minimise its occurrence. The researcher's interest was in understanding how students described their experiences of sexual harassment and the justification of their responses to the problem. This was intended to identify and empower the responses that continue to expose students to sexual harassment. When this is achieved, students' perception and responses towards sexual harassment could be transformed, resulting in their self- emancipation from the problem and leading to a reduction of such cases at colleges of education in Zimbabwe and internationally.

3.3. RESEARCH PARADIGM

In trying to make sense of research information and transforming it into data, researchers draw from epistemological and ontological assumptions called paradigms (Kuhn 1962). A paradigm informs the nature of the social world (ontology) and the nature of the social knowledge (epistemology), (Kuhn 1962). These constitutes traditions about understanding, patterning, reasoning and compiling research evidence (Lincoln and Guba 2005).

Ontology is about how reality can be known (Strauss and Corbin 1990) while epistemology concerns how one goes about extracting meaning from reality (Lincoln and Guba 2005). The assumption is that even if reality is not seen, it can be felt and interpreted (Jones 2015). This makes the underlying assumptions of qualitative research reality as context bound (Cohen et al. 2011). This means that, although individual contexts are different, they are all important and some can be deemed correct or incorrect (Lincoln and Guba 1985). This makes the realities of the participants, the researcher and the readers important (Bryman and Bell 2011). The

current paradigm's ontological assumptions are that multiple realities are shaped by socio-cultural, economic and gender values (Ritzer 2008). This stance has thus influenced this research's study methodology of using semi-structured questions in face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions to achieve an in-depth understanding of participants' realities (Bryman and Bell 2011). Semi-structured questions are in line with the transformative drive of critical theory in that they give voice to participants (Lin 2016). This is because participants are allowed to freely express their thoughts as the questions are open-ended, which is empowering. This also helps to reduce the distance between the researcher and participants, ultimately influencing them to open up with their evidence (Watling and James 2012). The researcher's closeness with the participants might have helped in avoiding the Hawthorne effect (Litchman 2013).

The current study adopts a transformative paradigm of the critical theory discussed earlier (See section 1.8.1). The major aim of this paradigm is to destroy cultural myths and empower people to change society. A transformative paradigm is compatible with this study in that it aims to empower participants to engage in proper responses to sexual harassment and to be able to take control of their lives leading to their ultimate emancipation (Farganis 2011).

In order to gain an in-depth understanding, the researcher had to present the findings in the participants' own words to give them a voice. Also, in interpreting the findings, the researcher used themes that emerged from the participants' data rather than ones set by the researcher.

3.4. THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study adopts a qualitative research methodology. The approach seeks to study phenomena in naturalistic settings (Cohen et al. 2011). It attempts to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them, leading to an in-depth exploration of their experiences of a particular situation (Creswell 2003). Although the approach has been criticised for being too subjective, difficult to replicate and to generalise in other settings, it helps in gaining a richer, contextual understanding of the nature of the phenomena being studied (Jones, Brown and Holloway 2013). This

is why students' responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education were explored in-depth to understand the explanation they give for their reactions (Jones 2015). Thus, the qualitative methods allowed the researcher to answer questions about how and why people attempt to make sense of their world. It also helped to address dimensions of human actions and behaviour through interaction at a particular time (Creswell 2003). The chosen approach also enhances the researchers' knowledge of students' experiences such as their situation, feelings, values, or cultural beliefs (Roberts-Holmes 2014). To this effect, the qualitative approach helped in achieving an in-depth understanding of students' justification of their responses to sexual harassment incidents. Such an understanding helped in giving insights into possible suggestions to empower students to engage in appropriate responses that could help minimise sexual harassment incidents at Zimbabwean colleges of education and elsewhere. However, the choice of a qualitative research approach was adopted with its weaknesses in mind.

3.4.1 Research Design: The case study

Informed by the transformative paradigm of critical theory with a feminist lens that underpins this research, a case study design of a college of education was chosen to generate evidence (Waring 2012; Ashely 2012). The case study was chosen from a population of 16 colleges of education in Zimbabwe. The method was chosen for strategic reasons in that the researcher works at the institution in question. If a college from outside the workplace were to be chosen, this would have placed financial strain on the researcher, in that the researcher would have to pay for travel and accommodation when collecting data. As such, it cuts transport costs and other logistical issues of data collection (Bassey 2012). It was also possible to balance the fieldwork, work place demands and family commitments.

A case study was used to generate evidence to explore students' responses to sexual harassment through an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences with the problem (Scott 2012). This was done in order to obtain an insight into why students respond the way they do to their sexual harassment experiences (Ma 2016). The selection of a case study approach, besides being largely influenced by the critical theory, was based on the pre-existing data in the reviewed literature and the quest to

answer the research questions at hand. The study considered the choice of a single case sensible, given the size of the research and time available to complete it (Gravetter and Forzano 2012).

A case study method helped to gain an in-depth understanding of students' experiences and responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe given reports of its high prevalence and under reporting (Zindi 1994; Muchena et al. 2013). This was done to produce rich, holistic, particularised and contextualised information (Bryman and Bell 2011). Such knowledge might in turn help to make suggestions concerning the empowerment of students in their responses to sexual harassment, leading to their emancipation from the problem. Thus, the case study design is relevant in that it has the ability to answer the research questions, which leads to credible and trustworthy research findings. This means that a case study approach has the potential of informing our understanding of the wider group of other institutions of learning.

However, the researcher was aware of some possible challenges in using case study design. One such challenge is that it involves a lot of forced recollection of negative events by participants, which might lead to reactivity and motivated forgetting (Cohen et al. 2011). Furthermore, people may distort their memories to match their current beliefs (Coleman 2012). However, to combat these weaknesses, the researcher developed an explicit focus on the research questions at the outset by engaging in the collection of in-depth information to facilitate the adoption of a more open- minded approach to the study.

3.5.   SAMPLING

It is not possible to deal with a whole population in a study, which is where sampling is critical. Sampling is done in order to achieve research specifications and not generalisations (Cohen et al. 2011).

3.5.1. Population

A population is the entire sum total 'aggregate' of cases in which the researcher is interested (Busher and James 2012). In the current study, the population was made up of every student and staff member at the 16 Colleges of education in Zimbabwe, making it the largest subset the study wanted to analyse. The colleges of education comprise of those owned by the government, churches and private organisations. The student population in Zimbabwean colleges of education are 76% females and 34% males (MHTEISTD 2020). Although the study population constituted all students and staff at the 16 colleges of education, due to study delimitations, the target population was defined as the third-year Post Ordinary level (P 'O') class of 2016, lecturers and SAYWHAT staff from the one particular college of education under study due to their accessibility to the researcher (Bryman 2016). The student enrolment at the college of education under study as at 2020 was 1500 (1140 were females and 360 males), (HTC registry office; HTC Strategic Plan 2020-2024). The staff complement at the college was 120 in January 2020 (HTC Strategic Plan 2020-2024). Of these, 60 are lecturers (27 females, 33 males) whilst 60 (15 females, 45 males) were non-lecturing staff. This indicates that the college comprised of 35% females and 65% male staff, and 76% females and 34% male students. Thus, even though the college of education is largely comprised of female students, there are more male staff than females.

3.5.2. Research Location

This study was conducted at a government owned secondary college of education in Bulawayo Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe. The college is situated in an urban area, training Post Ordinary and Advanced Diploma level teachers. The college enrols students from all the country's urban and rural provinces. Currently, the college student enrolment stands at 1500.

3.5.3. Purposive sampling

The present study employed purposive sampling in selecting the 20 research participants (16 students: 2 lecturers: 2 SAYWHAT staff). Purposive sampling allowed

the researcher to deliberately choose participants for various reasons feasible to this research (Busher and James 2012; Jones 2015). In this case, the researcher wanted to investigate the people she specifically wanted to hear from, which means that she was unable to reach everybody. The selected participants had the attributes and knowledge about students' experiences and responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education required for this study. The students were sampled for having attributes of being information-rich about the topic in question, by virtue of either being trained peer educators or showing attributes of assertiveness, being outgoing and being a member of student social groups at the college.

The lecturers (male and female) were chosen for their offices of a dean of students and warden/counsellor respectively. They were very senior members at the college and have been working with students for the past decade, making them information-rich about students' experiences and responses to sexual harassment. In addition, the two SAYWHAT staff (male and female), where chosen for their office which is stationed at the college and for having expert knowledge about GBV issues among college students in the country. SAYWHAT has been working with students in almost all higher and tertiary institutions in the country for the past two decades, rendering them information-rich on this topic.

Sampling in this study was not a once-off process. It continued until the researcher reached data saturation in order to gain in-depth understanding of some issues that had arisen during the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. (Rubin and Barbie 2013). This helped in focusing on a workable number of participants in order to gain a deeper understanding for this study. The researcher formulated a sampling list of all the Post 'O' level class of 2016 students, lecturers and staff which she wished to study, basing on their attributes. The list helped the researcher to acquire the specific research participants. Thus, purposive sampling allowed for participants who could provide information which had greater depth (Mujis 2012).

With regards to how the researcher purposively sampled 20 participants, initially, she had intended to select 13 (ten students: two lecturers and one SAYWHAT member). Furthermore, the researcher also, initially wanted to hold one focus group discussion and one face-to-face interview session with each participant. However, the findings

from the initial focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews needed other sessions to gain in-depth understanding. This lead to the addition of another six students, (three males and three females), for a second focus group discussion and one SAYWHAT staff member for in-depth information. Instead of conducting one face-to-face interviews with the selected participants, a minimum of two sessions were held to gain in-depth understanding of the problem, resulting in data saturation.

Cost implications, time, feasibility and accessibility all guided the researcher in choosing the sample choice for the study. This included the consideration that the study population is never stagnant (Saldana 2011). Thus in this case, the College has two student intakes (Post Ordinary level (P 'O') and the Post Advanced (P 'A') level. The P 'A' level class course training is two years and the P 'O' level one is three years. The researcher took consideration of this and made sure to select a third-year P 'O' level class that had been at college a year longer than their P 'A' counterparts to enable her to collect in-depth data. The third-year P 'O' level class' longer stay at the college gives them a sense of the pulse of the college life experiences when compared to their P 'A' level counterparts. Purposive sampling helped the researcher to get in-depth information about students' experiences and responses to sexual harassment than would have been possible from an entire group at the college (Monotte and Sullivan 2011). Purposive sampling was therefore used to delimit the study (Waring 2012).

3.5.4 Pilot Study

Piloting was conducted soon after gaining permission to collect data from the college principal. It was conducted as a means of pre-testing the main study through gathering methods and processes, to ensure its feasibility (Gumbo 2015). Convenience sampling was used in choosing a total of six participants. Of these, five were students from the class of study participants, Post 'O' level class of 2016 (three females; two males) and one lecturer. Convenience sampling was suited for the pilot study because it made it easy to reach out and contact the participants (Bryman 2016). Pre-testing the main study also helped in understanding oneself as a researcher (Gibbs 2008). It was also important for testing the time taken to complete the interview, assessing whether the questions could give a range of responses and editing where possible

(Lincoln and Guba 1985). This helped in identifying any unanticipated problems could arise, thereby saving time and effort later (Litchman 2013).

The pre-testing of instruments on students was done in the lecture theatre, the same venue for the focus group discussions, whilst that for the lecturer was conducted in their office. This was in order to test the instruments in the most realistic setting possible (Polansky and Waller 2010). Furthermore, pilot study participants were consulted to suggest improvements to the research instruments (Bryman 2016). Member checking was also done with colleagues at the researchers' workplace for accuracy and completeness of the interview questions (Connolly 2016).

The pilot study found that some of the questions were ambiguous, repetitive and not well positioned. It was also found out that the voice recorder needed to be adjusted to make it audible and placed closer to the participants for better recording. Furthermore, it revealed that the researcher had skipped some interview protocols such as explaining the research aim and issues of anonymity. The probing process was also found to be inadequate as far as eliciting information for in-depth understanding was concerned. Further to that, the time spent on the focus groups and face-to-face interviews was found to be less than the expected minimum one hour. This could have been caused by inadequate probing skills and failure to adhere to the interview protocol. As such, time taken to complete the interviews and focus groups was adjusted beforehand. The findings of the pilot study led to the reworking of probes whereby a list of probing cues was made to act as a reminder to the researcher during the interview process and in order to arrive at in-depth understanding. Furthermore, there was reworking of the phraseology of questions on the interview guide and fine tuning of the voice recorder, which was barely audible. The articulation of the study purpose, issues of confidentiality and anonymity were also rehearsed. Thus, piloting minimised potential data collection issues.

3.5.5. The sample

A sample is a sub-set of the population (Bassey 2012). This is done so that inferences about the population can be made (Gravetter and Forzano 2012). A sample was conducted to delimit the study to specific people with knowledge and attributes about

the topic as discussed earlier (Gibbs 2012). The study purposefully selected 20 participants. The following table shows how the participants were represented.

Table 1: Participant distribution by sex (21-35 years for students, 30-65 for staff)

Participant	Male	Female	Total
Student	6	10	16
Lecturer	1	1	2
SAYWHAT	1	1	2
Totals	8	12	20

Source: Primary data

The gender distribution of 16 students (ten males; six males) was arrived at by considering that there are more female students than males at the college of education under study as discussed earlier (see section 3.5.1). The involvement of both males and females was intended for the purposes of acquiring their views and affording them the opportunity to participate, leading them to become change agents against sexual harassment and ultimately reducing such incidents (Strunk and Betties 2019). Also, the lecturers and SAYWHAT staff were chosen for their office as discussed earlier.

3.5.6. Recruitment of participants

The University of South Africa requires students to obtain an ethical clearance certificate before field work data generation. The researcher sought a UNISA institutional research clearance certificate before collecting data from the College (see Appendix A). The researcher also sought permission from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development (MHTEISTD) to conduct a study at its institution (see Appendix B). This was done using the UNISA clearance certificate as proof of permission to collect data. It took the researcher three weeks to obtain approval from head office of the Ministry.

The researcher then sought permission from the college by writing a letter requesting to be cleared to conduct research at the institution. The letter was delivered by the researcher to the college principal and granted permission the following day (see Appendix C). It is noteworthy that the researcher presented the study aims, methods, and research ethics at all clearing levels.

It is also important to note that all the study participants were extended individual verbally invitations and were given invitation letters containing the study information. The letters contained the title of the study, its purpose and benefits as well as the details about the researcher and that of the supervisor (See Appendix D). Furthermore, during the invitation session, the researcher negotiated for participants' free time, a venue and date for the interview. All participants preferred to be interviewed after lectures, which in this case, was in the afternoon. The timing of the interviews gave the participants ample time to reflect after the lectures of the day and did not interfere with college business. Interview times, venues and contact numbers of participants were diarised and participants were reminded of the interview appointment a day before through WhatsApp messages or phone calls.

3.6. DATA GATHERING METHODS

Informed by the transformative paradigm of critical theory, focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews were employed as data gathering methods (Lincoln and Guba 1985). The study used semi-structured interview guides as instruments to generate data from both the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions (see Appendixes F and G). The interview guides were constructed in alignment with the research questions (Chapter one) theoretical framework (Chapter one) and literature review (Chapter two).

Semi-structured questions gave room for diversity and allowed for further probing when the need arose (Litchman 2013).This made them ideal for the purposes of gaining in-depth understanding (Watling and James 2012). Semi-structured questions also allowed the participants to respond from their own perspective or worldviews and in the context of their cultural socialisation (Jones 2015). The semi-structured

questions were suited to the transformative intent of the marginalised groups such as the female students (Cohen et al. 2011).

3.6.1. Focus group discussions

The researcher conducted two focus group discussion sessions with 12 students (six in each group, total of seven females and five males). The major aim of the focus group discussion was to garner an in-depth understanding of students' experiences and responses to sexual harassment in their own words and perspectives. The researcher also sought to understand the motivation of students in choosing certain response strategies over others. Even though the focus group discussions were limited in that they could cause discomfort among participants when sensitive or personal information needed to be revealed, they were well suited for this study. They allowed participants, particularly the traditionally marginalised females, to express their voices and opinions about students' experiences and responses to sexual harassment. (Gumbo and Maphalala 2015). Scaffolding was expected amongst participants, leading to reflections about whether or not their responses to sexual harassment were effective enough to reduce such behaviour (Cohen et al. 2011). This may have enabled the articulation of students' experiences and the sharpening of their thinking, causing them to open up on such issues (Bryman 2016).

 In addition, focus groups may have stimulated a change of opinion in participants about their responses when facing sexual harassment after comparing them with those of others (Lin 2016). Also, this could have provoked the development of new ideas about how to properly respond to sexual harassment, leading to empowerment that may not have occurred in face-to-face interviews. Empowerment could also have been achieved through the participants' interaction with the semi-structured interview questions and the researcher during the probing processes (Cohen et al. 2011). Thus, sharing ideas about sexual harassment in a focus group discussion might have been empowering, particularly to female students and acted as a means of breaking the traditional silence of women in a patriarchy (Punch 2011). In this regard, focus groups gave female students a voice about issues to do with their sexuality which would not have happened prior, given their restrictions with regards on discussing of such topics in patriarchy, thus leading to their emancipation. This is in line with critical theory's

transformative intent which believes that knowledge sharing is empowering (Calhoun 2001). To this end, focus groups were valuable where in-depth information was needed.

The focus group discussions took an average of one and a half hours each (Gravetter and Forzano 2012). One focus group discussion was held before the initial face-to-face interviews whilst the second one was conducted between the first and second level face-to-face interviews sessions for further probing and in-depth understanding. This was because the researcher wanted to probe further in the face-to-face interviews and reshape the questioning techniques for in-depth understanding (Bryman 2016). Focus group discussions were held in a lecture theatre, which was a neutral venue, 500 metres away from the rest of the lecture rooms. It was free from noise and possible interruptions. On the day of focus group discussion and face-to-face interviews, the researcher usually arrived 20 minutes earlier in order to set up the audio equipment and become acquainted with the venue and the participants. This gave the researcher ample time to build rapport with the participants and give them time to fill in the consent forms (see Appendix E). The researcher also had enough time to read out the invitation letter and explained the purpose of the study, issues of anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation and asking for their consent to audio record them (see Appendix D).

3.6.2. Face-to-face interviews

The current study used face-to-face individual interviews to complement the focus group discussions. At least two face-to-face interview sessions were held with 2 lecturers, 2 students and 2 SAYWHAT staff members. More than three sessions were held with only 1 SAYWHAT staff member for in-depth understanding and finalisation of clarifications. The interviews for lecturers and SAYWHAT staff member were held in their offices while those with students were conducted in vacant lecture rooms for their privacy and comfort (Bryman and Bell 2011). The researcher spent an average of one hour with each participant in the first interview and about 25-30 minutes on follow-up interviews (Mears 2012).

Face-to-face interviews served to address grey areas which would have arisen particularly during the focus group discussions and data analysis (Bryman 2016). The interviews were also conducted to deepen the understanding of the participants' perspective on the topic (Waring 2012). This is because they may permit participants to describe detailed information (Lin 2016). The interviews format was hoped to build a strong relationship between the researcher and participants in order to explore the phenomenon together and in-depth (Coleman 2012). Although interviews could be deceptive and provide the perspective the researcher wants to hear, they were a good method to study female students who are considered a marginalised group. This is because historically, women have been silenced and have not always had the opportunity to tell their own stories (Dakwa 2015). Face-to-face interviews also enabled self-disclosure in participants, where they discussed their experiences about sexual harassment in their own voices and language, which is emancipatory (Lin 2016).

3. 7.   AUDIO RECORDING OF DATA

The face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded and handwritten concurrently with the permission of the participants. This was done in order to capture the richness of the discussions (Male 2016. The researcher used pseudonyms when identifying study participants for issues of confidentiality (Scott 2012). The audio recording allowed for the retaining of all nuances of the answers as well as the richness of individual statements (Coleman 2012). Audio recording also enabled downloading of the data onto computer hard drives for later transcriptions and analysis (Saldana 2011).

3.8.   THEMATIC DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis ran concurrently with data collection in alignment with the critical theory employed with a feminist lens (Miles and Huberman 1994). This was to enable the researcher to go back and ask clarifying questions in the next interview (Lin 2016). This helped to trail the researcher's observations in the subsequent interviews (Briggs 2012). Given the transformative nature of this study, the analysis involved making sense out of data in terms of the participants' definition of the situation (Kirkham 2016).

Data collected from face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions were thematically analysed (Feraday and Muir-Cochrane 2006). The researcher used the developmental approach in analysis in which each interview had to build upon ideas derived from previous interviews (Jones et al. 2015), i.e. the next interview was held after coding and analysing the earlier one. This approach held the advantage of achieving a cumulative effect rather than a rigid repetition of the interview protocol (Esternburg 2002). In other words, analysis was driven by the data collected. The research questions, the theoretical framework and literature served as a guiding framework for data analysis up to the study conclusions (Miles and Huberman 1994). The following section describes the manner in which the collected data was managed.

3.8.1. Transcription of data

The researcher transcribed the collected data onto a computer within 24 hours of recording and shared it with participants for their approval in order to ensure accuracy (Fisher 2010). This was essential for establishing trustworthiness and transparency of the research by having a complete account of the series of exchanges in the interviews (Busher and James 2012). The transcription of data brought the researcher closer to the sought after knowledge, leading to in-depth understanding (Mears 2012). Data transcription also helped in identifying key themes through a thorough examination of the interviewee's answers (Bryman 2016).

3.8.2. Familiarisation with the data

Familiarisation with the data started with its recording and transcription (Gibbs, 2008). The data corpus was read and listened to repeatedly during and after transcriptions, resulting in data intimacy. Familiarisation was also achieved by making preliminary notations directly on the hard copies and highlighting using a marker to note the salient portions (Hewitt-Taylor 2011). In addition, analytic memos were composed which included the researcher's first impression and reminders for follow-up issues among others (Jones 2015).

3.8.3. **Coding**

The first step of the data analysis was coding. This was in order to make some sense of it, by focusing on the potential meanings of data in relation to the research questions, theoretical framework and literature (Esternburg 2002). This was done by listening to the audio and repeated reading of the transcribed data. Codes were generated from the participants response phrases through their repetitions of topics based on their experiences with sexual harassment (Bazeley 2013). Coding was done on a printed hard copy of the transcribed interviews using pens of different colours. Pieces of data repeating similar ideas were given the same colour.

3.8.4. **Searching for themes**

Themes were developed from similar codes that were regrouped relating to the research questions along with the researcher's notes and memos which had developed during the interview sessions. The themes that emerged were, (a) understanding of sexual harassment, b) prevalence of sexual harassment, (c) forms of sexual harassment, (d) perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment, (e) contributing factors to occurrences of sexual harassment, (f) students' reactions to sexual harassment and, (g) suggestions for empowering students in responding to encounters of sexual harassment. The emergence of these themes were important in that they were suitable for answering the research questions.

3.9. **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The researcher continued with ethical thinking and practice in the recruitment of participants (see section 3.5.4), and in data collection (see section 3.9.1), and in the storage, analysis and reporting of the findings. As a college of education lecturer, the researcher had to balance the role of a change agent while also protecting staff, students and the institution. This was achieved by developing an elaborate system to protect their anonymity so that they were not traceable.

The researcher tried to avoid research misconduct such as plagiarism, data misinterpretation or influencing the participants' data contribution (Bassey 2012). The participants in this research, were informed of the nature of study, the use of the data supplied, the study time frame and the measures taken to protect them. Furthermore, all participants who agreed to be interviewed were asked to voluntarily sign a consent form after a thorough explanation about the aims of the aims of the study, the data collection methods, the likely outcomes, potential harm that could arise from participation, research ethics (see Appendix 2) and after being given the opportunity to ask any question they may have had (Coleman 2012).

Furthermore, the sensitive nature of this topic made purposive sampling appropriate to this study because of the potential of posing uncomfortable questions when talking about sexual harassment, which is considered a private issue (Cohen et al. 2011). Furthermore, face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions had the potential of causing discomfort because the participants were not sure of the reaction of group members or of the researcher to their responses (Saldana 2011). This could have evoked negative emotions such as sadness and embarrassment. Because of the sensitive nature of this study, the researcher had to abide by ethical considerations. This was achieved by acknowledging the possible negative aspects to participants and clarifying all research ethics, particularly volunteer participation, anonymity and confidentiality (Coleman 2012).

3.9.1. Credibility and trustworthiness

The researcher considered issues of credibility and trustworthiness when collecting, analysing and presenting data (Lincoln and Guba 1985).
Moreover, no undue pressure was put upon the participants or could have caused them to feel obligated to take part. In addition, no coercion, intense persuasion or deception was used on the participants. The researcher avoided making personal judgements about participants and the information they provided.

The current study also holds credibility and trustworthiness through the triangulation of data as well as by using appropriate qualitative procedures. In addition, the study's use of a total of 20 participants, (16 students, two lectures and two SAYWHAT staff)

contributed to its credibility. This is because these participants constituted the specific people needed for the study as they were information-rich about the topic under study, leading to in-depth understanding. More so, the researcher conducted two focus group discussions and more than one face-to-face interview with each participant to ensure the credibility of the study. Also, the researcher understood the students' experiences and responses to sexual harassment from the participants' own perspectives. In addition, the thematic analysis was rigorous which led to conclusions that are sound and thus resulting in a credible study.

Member checking was done with colleagues at the researchers' workplace to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. This was conducted for confirming the accuracy and completeness of the interview transcripts before analysis, resulting in transparency (Connolly 2016). Member checking was also conducted to seek corroboration or to account for what the researcher has arrived at (Lincoln and Guba 2000). More so, member checking was undertaken to ensure that there was good correspondence between the researchers' findings, and the perspectives and the experiences of the research participants (Kumar 2011; Boudah 2011). Thus, member checking helped in establishing the credibility of the research findings.

3.9.2. Transferability

The current study was done at a secondary school teacher training College of education in Zimbabwe. It is situated in an urban area although most of its students come from rural across the country. The college has more females than males as discussed earlier (see section 3.5.3). There are two programmes offered at the college, i.e. the Post Ordinary level (P 'O') training for three years and the Post Advanced level (P 'A') which trains for two years. A qualitative case study design was adopted. The student target sample was the P 'O' level class of 2016 because of their longer stay at college which means that they have a stronger sense of the pulse of college. The participants were also selected for their attributes and information they had about students' experiences and responses to sexual harassment. Thus, informed by the transformative intent of the critical theory with a feminist lens, the study made use of face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions with semi-structured interview guides.

A pilot study was conducted before data collection to ensure rigour and accuracy of the research methods. The methods were transformative in that they were meant to empower the participants by giving them a voice through semi-structured interviews, where they were allowed to discuss their views about the topic freely, leading to the generation of in-depth information. The transformative intent was also maintained in the presentation and analysis of the findings based on the research questions, literature and theoretical framework. This was transformative in that the findings were presented in participants' own words to avoid distortion of meanings. The findings were also analysed following the themes that emerged from the participants' information. Given the corroborations discussed above, it is likely that the study's findings could be transferable to other contexts. However, the researcher warns that the study may not be entirely be applicable to education institutions with different contexts from the current study. This is because some of the research findings are contextually bound and not intended to be representative of all colleges of education in the country. It is therefore up to the reader to make an informed decision on whether or not to apply this study to other contexts.

3.9.3. Dependability

The current study followed proper research procedures in order to ensure its dependability. Changes in the initial research phases occurred soon after piloting. The researcher adjusted some question phraseology in order to enhance their meaning to participants resulting in the gaining of maximal information. The initial interview protocols of introducing the research purpose and procedures to participants were continually refined for clarity and steps adhered to at each research phase to maintain consistency. The same research instruments and devices were used throughout the data collection process for consistency. The data collection process was also expanded when the face-to-face interviews were conducted more than once with each participant for greater in-depth understanding. This included the use of six more participants than was initially planned, resulting in a second focus group discussion. The thematic analysis procedures of data familiarisation, coding and searching for themes were strictly followed at all times. This was in order to achieve in-depth

collection of information. The data collection memos were used to corroborate information obtained from participants, resulting in greater consistency.

3.9.4. Conformability

The researcher maintained honesty by providing a transparent description of the research steps from the start of data collection to the findings, as discussed in the earlier section. This enabled other readers to have an audit trail of the researcher's steps to see how data was collected, analysed, presented and how findings were arrived at. Peer debriefing of the research steps and findings was also done as a way of checking conformability. Also, the use of multiple data collection techniques such as individual interviews and focus group discussions enhanced the conformability of the research findings. The researcher also documented the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study.

3.9.5. Data storage

Data was collected and safely stored following proper procedures before, during and after analysis (Palaiologou 2016). The researcher took every precaution to protect the confidentiality of the data generated. In order to avoid any data loss and distortion, the researcher stored the electronic information on a computer protected by a password, on a hard drive, in a cloud-based archive, in the researchers' own email account and in hard copies locked in the researcher's office and which were to be destroyed after five years (Cohen et al. 2011).

3.10. CONCLUSION

The current chapter has discussed how the paradigm, research design and methods of data gathering helped to solicit views from participants on students' responses to sexual harassment at a Zimbabwean college of education. The qualitative data collection methods of focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews used in this study were discussed in detail. The justification for the choice of the paradigm, design and the methods has been provided in detail. In addition, the epistemological,

ontological and methodological position of this study was elaborated upon. The next chapter presents the data findings as constructed with the emerging themes.

CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS

4.1.   INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three discussed and justified in detail the qualitative data collection methods adopted in soliciting views from participants about students' responses to sexual harassment at a college of education. The current chapter presents findings in themes derived from the data collected by means of focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews.

The study posed the following questions:

1.   What are students' experiences of sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe?

2.   What contributes to the occurrences of sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe?

3.   How do students respond to encounters of sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe?

4.   What strategies can be suggested to empower students' responses to encounters of sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe?

The themes from the data findings are as follows, (a) understanding of sexual harassment, (b) experiences of sexual harassment, (c) contributing factors to the occurrences of sexual harassment, (d) students' responses to encounters of sexual harassment and (e) suggestions for empowering students' responses to sexual harassment.

4.2.   UNDERSTANDING OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The current sub-section section covers participants' understanding of sexual harassment through their descriptions of what it entails. From the responses of ten participants (six females: four males), it was evident that sexual harassment was described in terms of verbal, physical and non-verbal forms. Participants' descriptions

highlighted that for the act to qualify as sexual harassment, it has to: (a) be directed at a sexual part of the body by a person of the opposite sex, (b) be non-consensual, (c) repeated, (d) involves a power imbalance. Participants' descriptions are presented in the following excerpts.

Table 2: Participants' descriptions of sexual harassment

Participant	Gender	Response
Gina	Male	'Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that is physical or verbal done to gain favours like a pass for a thigh.'
Tatenda	Male	'It is any unwarranted sexual advances to someone without their consent, in form of touching, verbal or some form of sexual exploitation.'
Sarah	Female	'Sexual harassment is any sexual action or remark that is unwelcome to the person of an opposite sex, be it verbal or physical. If it is repeated it becomes sexual harassment.'
Tingadini	Female	'I understand sexual harassment as whereby a member of an opposite sex, who has got an upper hand verbally and physically, harasses the other person.'
Tendai	Female	'I think it is whereby a person of an opposite sex forces himself on you, touching, especially your private parts or passing a comment about your body shape.'
Peter	Male	'It is whereby someone is being abused on his or her body without consenting. Some female students can violate your rights by posting nude pictures on face book or WhatsApp just to harass you.'
Grace	Female	'I think sexual harassment is whereby someone of an opposite sex infringes on my rights by touching any of my private parts without my permission.'
Molly	Female	'I think it is any action that is sexual in nature that happens with no agreement and makes me

		uncomfortable. Maybe a male student or male lecturer forces themselves on me by touching my private parts.'
Sam	Male	'It is touching someone's body that is unwanted. As long as the other person is not happy, it is sexual harassment.'
Fadzai	Female	'Sexual harassment is any form of abuse by a member of an opposite sex. It can even be the abuse of social media.'

Source: Primary data

Although descriptions encompassed verbal, nonverbal and physical forms, it was notable that only four participants provided a description which reflected both physical and non-physical forms, another four narrowly focused on physical forms, whereas two gave descriptions that were nonverbal. Gender differences in participants' perceptions were noticeable whereby female participants tended to emphasise that sexual harassment is largely physical and caused by a person of the opposite sex whilst males gave generalised descriptions. Also, there were notable differences in focus group responses and face-to-face interviews in terms of talking about issues to do with the touching of private parts. The issue of the touching of private parts by perpetrators only came out during face-to-face interviews whilst there were tendencies to use broad language in focus group discussions. This could be attributed to socialisation in patriarchy were women are not allowed to discuss their sexuality in public and it is thus considered a taboo.

4.3. EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The present sub-section covers participants' experiences of sexual harassment in terms of its (a) prevalence (b) the forms in which it manifests (c) its frequency and (d) perpetrator–victim relationships.

4.3.1. Prevalence of sexual harassment

The high prevalence of sexual harassment was confirmed by ten participants (six females: four males). About seven participants indicated that despite its high prevalence, the incidences of sexual harassment is not increasing whilst three maintained that sexual harassment was increasingly high at the college. The evidence for the high prevalence was given as follows: (a) there are cases that are currently being investigated at the college (b) reports and stories/dialogues reveals its prevalence (c) it is encountered and witnessed at college on a daily basis and (d) and a cartel of lecturer perpetrators are found to exists at every intake.

Table 3: Prevalence of sexual harassment

Participant	Gender	Response
Sarah	Female	'Yes, sexual harassment is prevalent, but no longer increasing, especially after the formulation of the sexual harassment policy at this College.'
Gina	Female	'The dialogues and interaction we hold shows that sexual harassment is prevalent because of cases that are burning. I would not say the prevalence is rising but considering the emotional and mental health issues, it is highly prevalent.'
Tingadini	Male	'Reports and corridor talks shows that it is prevalent and that it is a daily experience at this College.'
Tracy	Female	'Sexual harassment is prevalent because there is a cartel of lecturer- perpetrators in every intake. We know that lecturer X always want to prey on female students.'
Tatenda	Male	'Sexual harassment is prevalent in many subtle ways but not increasing. This is because it is from the same people for every intake.'
Peter	Male	'It is there because some of my female friends complain that they are experiencing sexual harassment from certain lecturers.'

Sam	Male	'We have seen sexual harassment happening to others in and out of campus. It is prevalent but people are not very open about it.'
Molly	Female	'Yes, sexual harassment occurs a lot here, but due to lack of reporting, it would seem it is not there. We hear about lecturers harassing female students in their office.'
Lucy	Female	'It exists because there are some lecturers who are known sexual harassers for years.'
Tendai	Female	'I think sexual harassment is very prevalent especially if you listen to stories about female students being sexually harassed by male students and staff.'

Source: Primary data

The excerpts indicate that despite its subtlety and non-reporting, sexual harassment prevalence was perceived to be high but 'stable' due to the existence of a sexual harassment policy, yet there is the notable mention of a known 'cartel' of lecturer-perpetrators. The prevalence of sexual harassment was confirmed by both males and females in focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews. This could be attributed to the fact that sexual harassment is prevalent in all college spaces.

4.3.2. Forms of sexual harassment

The types of sexual harassment reported by participants are categorised into contact and non-contact forms. Contact forms are those actions that are physical and happen on the body whilst the non-contact is non-physical and includes verbal and nonverbal forms of sexual harassment.

4.3.2.1. Contact forms

The findings indicated that the students experienced the following forms of contact at the college: (a) sexual touching, hugging and kissing, (b) physical assault, and (c) rape or attempted rape.

a)   Sexual touching

From the responses of six participants, it was indicated that sexual touching can take the form of hugging, kissing or the fondling/grabbing of breasts, touching of buttocks and sexual organs as well as scratching. This was reported to happen, (a) when greeting and crossing each other, (b) during discussions, (c) in overcrowded buses and queues, (d) in lecturers' offices, (e) in lecture rooms, (f) at college functions, and (g) during sports.

Lucy: 'Sexual harassment happens through touching or scratching the palm in a handshake or when crossing each other. Some male students put their hand over your shoulder in a lecture room. Others hug and kiss you during a discussion from nowhere.'

Tendai: 'It happens especially at College functions from male students in the form of touching the whole body. They touch sexual organs, fondle breasts, kiss, they do tight hugging and pressing of their bodies on us such that you feel their manhood.'

Fadzai: 'Some students tight hold our bums when hugging. They also kiss, press their bodies on us and grab our breasts especially when travelling in overcrowded buses. Some would pretend to bump on you by mistake.'

Sam: 'Lady Students harass us males by giving hugs that arouse our feelings. When drunk at discos, they just come and touch us all over the body and dragging us to dance with them.'

Tingadini: 'Male students push and brush themselves on female bodies when queuing for buses and when at the dining hall.'

Ano: 'Some male lecturers forcibly touch, rub, hold and kiss female students during project consultations in their offices. Even during sports, some coaches sexually touch female athletes.'

The findings show that sexual touching can occur within all college spaces. They also reveal that although both male and female students experience contact forms of sexual harassment, females appear to be the major victims. Considering female students as the likely major victims could be attributed to their already marginalised

status in a patriarchy which renders them unassertive in the face of sexual harassment.

b)   Rape and attempted rape

It was revealed by three participants that female students experience rape and attempted rape from male students, mentors and lecturers as indicated in the following excerpts.

Sarah: 'Some female students when intoxicated with alcohol at college functions are gang raped but they do not report their experiences. There is also a disturbing case where a lecturer invited a student to consult a project at his home and raped her.'

Lucy: 'At times male students would bring alcohol at college functions to intoxicate ladies, so that they will lose their right mind and assertiveness in order to force themselves on them sexually.'

Fadzai: 'I once experienced an attempted rape from my mentor during teaching practice. It happened in his storeroom. The College administration is aware of my case because I made a report although nothing was done up to now.'

The findings revealed that female students encounter rape and attempted rape on and off campus especially when intoxicated and in their perpetrators' space of influence. It is notable that the confession of attempted rape came from face-to-face interviews whilst there were tendencies to generalise such incidents in the focus group discussions. The attribution of this could be that, when females are given a voice in face-to face interaction, they open up about their sexual experiences unlike when they are in focus group discussions.

c)   Physical assault

Two participants revealed that female students experience physical assault from their male partners on and off campus.

Tatenda:	'Some female students get beaten by their male lovers after quarrelling. One incident was when a female student's spectacles were broken by her boyfriend during a quarrel. The other incident happened at home when a lady came for help at college after having been assaulted by her spouse.'
Tingadini:	'There is physical assault of female students by male peers when the relationship goes sour.'

The excerpts above highlight that female students fall victim to physical assault from their spouses or partners especially during a quarrel. The perspective suggests the powerlessness of females towards males. This could be attributed to the power imbalance between males and females in patriarchal societies, forcing them to submit to men.

4.3.2.2. Non-contact forms

The findings indicate that students experience the following non-contact forms of sexual harassment: (a) sexual comments/jokes/songs/whistles about body and dressing, (b) threats and intimidations about failing the course, (c) pressure for sex, (d) cyber bullying (e) sexual advances, (f) sexual gifts and (g) spreading sexual rumours/lies.

   a) **Comments, songs and jokes about body and dressing**

The passing of sexual comments, jokes and songs at female students' dressing and body appearance was reported by four participants in the following excerpts.

Tingadini:	'Male students and lecturers pass comments in the form of jokes, describing females' stature, especially the big bodied ones. Like saying, 'these people are good in bed' or that 'they are carrying sofas' when admiring their behind. Some lecturers use female students' stature as examples during lecture sessions in a demeaning manner or pass comments when they walk past them.'

Grace: 'Some lecturer coaches and male students pass comments like 'you have good bums', 'your body is very nice' and it would continue every day. This happens especially during physical education gym and swimming practical lessons. They sexually comment about how our swimming and gym costumes fit us. When at the pool, our swimming coach gets into our changing bathroom when we are naked and shouts at us using obscenities about our sexual organs. We end up breaking the pool rule of not swimming when on a menstrual to avoid embarrassment because he tells the whole class that you are on a period. Even when we report him, the college administration does nothing to him.'

Tingadini: 'There are songs that buttress on sexual harassment when put in a form of comedy by male students and lecturers on female students. This happens especially when they walk past them or when travelling for sports in a bus, causing discomfort to females.'

Chipo: 'Male students whistle when female students walk past them when putting on tights, revealing clothes or if they are big bodied.'

The excerpts above highlight that female students are the major recipients of verbal harassment from male students and lecturers. This could be attributed to the non-criminalisation of verbal harassment, causing it to continue to occur without uncontrolled.

b) **Sexual invitations**

A total of six participants (five females and one male) indicated that female students experience sexual invitations from lecturers during: (a) teaching practice, (b) project consultation, (c) assignment submission, (d) examinations and (e) sports.

Grace: 'Some lecturers invite us to consult projects at a restaurant in town where they would ask for sexual favours.'

Sarah: 'Some lecturers demand sexual favours from female students in order to accept their late assignments or to proceed to the next project chapter.'

Tracy: 'When out on sports, coaches ask us out. It starts from saying, 'you played very well today, when is your next game?', then asks for another level which you cannot provide.'

Chipo: 'At times lecturers invites you for dinner at their home or restaurant. Some would continue proposing to you even if you indicate that you are not interested.'

Lucy: 'Some lecturers take female students out and book them in lodges for sex in return for passing marks. One student on teaching practice's assessment form was destroyed by a lecturer, threatening to fail her if she rejected his sexual demands.'

Fadzai: 'Some lecturers ask you out for a braai and drinks where they would ask for sexual favours. Others would even invite you to cook for them at their home when their wives are away.'

The indications from the findings above are that, sexual invitations and demands from lecturers are a common experience of female students. This implies that sexual invitations might be caused by the financial situation in the country which may lead lecturers to lure students with goods they could not afford in return for sex.

c) **Sexual advances from female students**

The findings reveal that female students make sexual advances to male students and lecturers through: (a) sexually suggestive actions like dancing, sitting legs apart, language, indecent dressing and attention seeking or by (b) visiting lecturers' offices after hours soliciting for sexual favours. About five participants (one female: four males) revealed this in the following excerpts.

Ano: 'Some lady students sit legs apart, exposing their thighs to seduce male students and lecturers. Others dance in a suggestive manner. This invites us to try our luck and have the sexual satisfaction to arrive at its finality.'

Tatenda: 'There are cases of female students not completing their project on time and when you warn them as their supervisor, they cry. I feel they want to get sexual favours by way of crying.'

Peter: 'Some female students corner you into sexual harassment by the statements they pass, such as, 'you are a small boy, what can you do to me?' I would now want to prove that I am a real man.'

Tendai: 'Some female students when visiting lecturer's offices put on tights that are revealing wanting to attract them. This then makes lecturers to ask for sexual favours because they are man.'

Gina: 'Female students put on mini-skirts/dresses to seduce lecturers and male students. During discos, when drunk, they come to male students and start dancing in a suggestive manner asking for money and beer.'

The findings show that female students can also perpetrate sexual harassment towards male students and lecturers by making sexual advances. Such findings are contrary to critical theory that considers female students as perpetual victims of sexual harassment due to their already marginalised status in a patriarchy. This implies that like male students, female students could be victims and perpetrators at the same time.

d) Cyber bullying

Two participants (male and female) indicated that unwelcome phone calls, messages and pornographic pictures on social media and face book were perpetrated by lecturers, as well as male and female students.

Fadzai: 'Lecturers and male students sent proposing messages and pornographic pictures to female students. Some male students during lectures would circulate pornographic pictures.'

Gina: 'Some male students would move around in a lecture room showing females pornographic pictures from their cell phones. Female students

also sent sexual messages to lecturers like 'what are you doing? Where is your wife?'

The findings revealed that lecturers, male and female students are victims and perpetrators of cyber bullying. This could be emanating from a legal gap in the country's Telecommunication Act.

e) **Threats, intimidations and victimisations**

The findings allege that female students experience threats and intimidations from lecturers, security guards and kitchen staff. About six participants revealed this in the following excerpts.

Tendai: 'Lecturers are our 'gods' here at college. If you mess up with them, you mess up with your diploma. Some lecturers during teaching practice would say, 'you have failed dismally but unless you do something for me, I can give you 80%. If you reject, you actually fail.'

Fadzai: 'When you reject a lecturer's proposal, he would always shout at you and make you redo some project chapters or assignments. Female students are also threatened with failing marks before examinations if they deny lectures' sexual request.'

Ano: 'When female students come back to campus late at night, some security guards holds them up and start asking for sexual favours in return for their release. This is also in order to avoid getting their names listed for fines payment.'

Lucy: 'One of my lecturers continues to award me failing marks after I rejected his sexual demands. He continues to say that my work is very weak.'

Grace: 'I have been experiencing victimisation from kitchen staff for some time due to my special diet. One of the cooks responsible for preparing my meal stopped doing so for two days as a punishment to me for refusing his love proposal.'

Peter: 'The kitchen staff would give big pieces of meat to ladies they are interested in and little food to those who do not comply just to fix them. Some female students would just get soup with a bone each time they visit the dining hall as punishment for rejecting cooks' proposals.'

The excerpts reveal that threats, intimidations and victimisation of failing the course breeds fear in female students. This could be attributed to a lack of close monitoring of college activities.

f) **Sexual gifts**

Two participants revealed that female students are offered money, food, toiletries, clothes and hairdos by lecturers in return for sexual favours.

Tendai: 'Things being expensive now and the economic problems currently prevailing in the country, lecturers offer female students gifts like food, hairdos, clothes and toiletries for sexual favours.'

Gina: 'We have seen female students cornered with gifts and end up agreeing to some sexual acts even if they are not interested. Some are offered printing services in lecturers' offices for sex.'

The findings indicate that the economic conditions in the country exposes female students to sexual harassment. The implication of this is that, the economic situation the country is experiencing could be forcing female students into compliance with incidents of sexual harassment.

g) **Spreading lies/rumours**

Two participants, one male and one female, indicated that both male and female students spread rumours about their partners' sexual life, particularly after the relationship breaks down.

Ano: 'Some female students after breaking up in a relationship, exposes their ex-partner' sex life. They would even reveal to people the size of their

ex-partner's sexual organ as well as demeaning their sexual performance.'

Molly: 'Some male students spread lies about a female's sexual life after breaking up. Like saying this is what we did with this person.'

The indications from the findings are that both male and female students are capable of sexually harassing each other verbally, particularly after breaking up.

h) Consensual relationships

Two participants, one male and one female, reported the existence of consensual relationship between lecturers, non-lecturing staff and female students in the following excerpts.

Tatenda: 'Female students are sexually harassed unknowingly in consensual relations with their lecturers. Most students come to complain when the relationship has broken down. The student has no bargaining power in consensual relationships, she is a subordinate and this is not permissible.'

Tingadini: 'I have seen consensual relationships between lecturers and female students at this College but my understanding is that students will be exploited. We have also seen lecturers and non-teaching staff getting married to students but then we wonder if that relationship would have not taken place in the confines of where it is prohibited?'

The excerpts above have shown that consensual relationships between students and lecturers as well as non-lecturing staff are a form of exploitation that female students do not seem to be aware of. This could be attributed to the powerlessness of females in patriarchal societies and ignorance of what sexual harassment entails on the part of female students.

The findings from the current sub-section have shown that non-contact forms of sexual harassment are more widespread than contact ones. It was also revealed that although female students are the major victims, they are perpetrators of sexual

harassment towards male students and lecturers at the same time. Both male and female participants agreed that females also perpetrate against their male counterparts and lecturers. The finding challenges the critical theory that portrays females as permanent victims of sexual harassment.

4.3.2.3. Frequency of sexual harassment

The actual frequency of sexual harassment could not be confirmed by three participants due to: (a) a lack of reliable statistical evidence and (b) a lack of formal reporting.

Tingadini: 'With sexual harassment, numbers are not important. We have no figures to qualify it. On average, you would get 15 or so cases coming in a term depending on the period of the year due to lack of reporting.'

Sarah: 'I have handled quite a number of reports but numbers have decreased to an average of five per term. We do not have the actual figures because some students do not report cases.'

Gina: 'I do not know how to quantify the frequency of sexual harassment, figures are as low as two per term. Victims do not make reports formally. However, low as it maybe, sexual harassment is prevalent.'

Although the frequency of sexual harassment seems to be low due to non-reporting, participants maintain that the numbers could be higher when considering the culture of silence that surrounds the topic.

4.3.2.4. Perpetrator-victim relationship

The perpetrators of sexual harassment at the College were indicated by six participants as the following; (a) male lecturers, (b) male students, (c) female students, (d) college security, (e) kitchen staff, (f) coaches, (g) management, (h) senior teachers, (i) mentors and (j) spouses/partners of female students.

Tingadini: 'Recipients of sexual harassment applies to all at College, it could be male and female students, teaching or non-teaching staff, but the most affected are big bodied female students whilst male students are the

most perpetrators. Male students mostly do the verbal while male lectures physically abuse female students because they have got office space and authority.'

Chipo: 'Sexual harassment occurs between male and female students, lecturers, coaches and kitchen staff. In most cases, it's the female student who is on the receiving end.'

Grace: 'Some mentors and senior teachers sexually harass female students when on teaching practice. Female students are the most victims and every man at College is a perpetrator especially lecturers, non-teaching staff and male students. The most perpetrators are male students.'

Gina: 'Male students and lecturers are the perpetrators of younger and attractive females at College. In most cases, the administration teams up with perpetrators to victimise those who report. Some female students are sexually harassed by their spouses or partners off campus but male students harass female students most.'

Tracy: 'The poor performing female students are sexually harassed because they are desperate to pass the course. They have no confidence to even challenge their grades when victimised with failing marks as they are aware of their poor performance. Such people give in and never report sexual harassment.'

Ano: 'The young female students and well to do presentable female students experience sexual harassment most. Their young age causes them to fail to deny sexual demands from lecturers.'

The findings reveal that although everyone at college is both a potential perpetrator and victim of sexual harassment, male students were singled out as the major perpetrators against female students. This could be attributed to patriarchy that gives men power over women, exposing them to sexual harassment. The most female victims of sexual harassment were found to be the young, big-bodied and those under-performing academically.

Overall, the current theme's findings have revealed participants' narrow understanding of sexual harassment through their descriptions. The descriptions were mostly incomplete and generalised. This could be attributed to ignorance about sexual harassment emanating from socialisation in a patriarchy that imposes restrictions on such topics, depriving them of the information needed to fight sexual harassment. It also emerged that despite unreliable statistical evidence and non-reporting, sexual harassment was prevalent but not on the increase. This was attributed to the existence of the sexual harassment policy at the college. Contrary to this finding is the fact that. despite there being no increase, sexual harassment was reported to be prevalent in verbal, non-verbal and physical forms. The prevalence of sexual harassment was attributed to the non-criminalisation of non-physical forms of sexual harassment, particularly verbal harassment, resulting in its normalisation. The verbal forms were singled out as the most widespread whilst the physical forms were experienced least. Participants attributed this to a lack of knowledge about sexual harassment, its subtlety, non- reporting and the culture of silence that surrounds the topic. Further still, the perpetrators of sexual harassment were indicated as lecturers, male students, SRC students, management, kitchen staff, security guards, senior teachers, spouses or partners, coaches, mentors and female students. Of these, male students were singled out as the major perpetrators against female students. This is in line with critical theory that regards women in patriarchal society as the most vulnerable to sexual harassment due to their already marginalised status at institutions of learning (Farganis 2011; Agger 2006).

4.4. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE OCCURRENCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The current section covers factors that contribute to the occurrences of sexual harassment at the college of education. The factors were presented under the following subheadings: (a) socialisation of males and females in patriarchy, (b) legal and policy gaps, (c) institutional factors and (d) financial factors.

4.4.1. Socialisation of males and females in patriarchy

The findings indicated that the socialisation of males and females in patriarchy exposes female students to sexual harassment in the following ways: (a) men having power over women, (b) women seen as submissive (c) normalisation of men's sexually harassing behaviours and (d) restrictions of discussions relating to sex.

a) Men having power over women

Two female participants attributed the occurrences of sexual harassment to power that men have over women.

Molly: 'Men in our society have power over women because they were raised to be aggressive and to demonstrate their manhood.'

Tingadini: 'Men have advantage over women in our society in terms of privileges and power which they use to abuse them.'

These excerpts show that men's power over women in society leaves students powerless to resist sexual harassment. This could be attributed to men's socialisation in a patriarchy that renders women powerless before men.

b) Women as submissive

Two participants revealed that the imposed submission of women to men stemming from patriarchy renders them unassertive.

Gina: 'In most African cultures including Zimbabwe, women have been socialised not to override the decisions of men. They are taught to say men are always right. Assertiveness in women is not acceptable. This gives men the advantage to abuse them.'

Peter: 'In our culture, even when proposing, women are taught to be hesitant to talk about sex issues. They are taught to take long to accept men's love proposals, which is not good at all. Men can violate women's rights in the name of proposing love. Also, boys are the ones expected to propose love to girls and not the other way round.'

Ano: 'The long period of persistence when the boys are proposing love to girls has no boundary line, such that if the lady is not interested, the boy ends up sexually harassing her thinking that she will agree one day.'

A notable trend from these responses is that some harmful cultural socialisation emanating from patriarchy perpetuates the sexual harassment of women by men.

c) Restrictions on discussions relating to sexuality

Two other participants revealed that society's restrictions of women discussions about sexual issues exposes them to sexual harassment.

Fadzai: 'Females in our society are not allowed to talk about vulgar things such as sexual harassment. Women end up not open on pushing such agendas of sex like men do. Female students keep quiet when sexually harassed or else that are considered prostitutes or outcast.'

Tingadini: 'Women are not expected to talk about sex in public because it is regarded a taboo. If they do so, they are labelled loose. When it comes to issues of intimacy, men need to start and ladies accept or reject. It is taboo for a lady to act sexually to a man. If that happens, the lady will be labelled a prostitute.'

It can be noted from these excerpts that restrictions on women discussions about sexuality breeds silence and ultimately perpetuates sexual harassment.

d) Normalisation of sexual harassment

The findings attributed the manifestation of sexual harassment to its normalisation. This was indicated by three participants in the following excerpts.

Tatenda: 'Sometimes when victims share their sexual harassment experiences with friends, they are told that it is normal of men to do that and should not report. Like saying, 'After all you are a woman and that is expected to happen.'

Gina: 'In our community, older men are allowed to do child play with young girls, such as touching their breasts. The similar touching is taken as normal at this institution.'

Grace: 'It is normal for a man to demean a female because of how we were taught in our culture. The men who do it are rarely questioned or warned against doing so.'

The findings highlighted that some harmful patriarchal cultural practices expose women to sexual harassment.

e) **Dressing issues**

Three participants indicated that female students' 'inappropriate' dressing invites sexual harassment.

Sarah: 'Some students invite sexual harassment by the way they dress. They put on mini dresses to seduce males at College. As much as there is freedom to dress the way we like, we should uphold our culture.'

Sam: 'The ways some female students dress and behave towards males at times tend to seduce them. When men are given sex on the table, weaknesses do happen. A lady may cry foul after exposing themselves, but they initiate sexual harassment.'

Fadzai: 'Some students do not dress properly when visiting lecturers in their offices especially after hours. You see them putting on dresses that are revealing and if the lecturer sees that, it encourages them to come to them sexually because they are men.'

The excerpts illustrate that, in some cases, women are blamed for their sexual harassment directed at them. This may justify men's sexual behaviour towards women. However, the finding may indicate an issue of sexual invitations by females towards men.

A notable trend from excerpts in the current section is that some harmful patriarchal cultural practices at the institution of learning disempower female students when they face sexual harassment.

4.4.2. Institutional factors

The findings of this section indicate that the college lacks protective measures for students from sexual harassment in the following manner: (a) lack of training for members on sexual harassment, (b) lack of a comprehensive sexual harassment policy, (c) lack of close monitoring of college activities, (d) mishandling of sexual harassment cases, (e) inadequate staffing and (f) lack of confidentiality.

a) Lack of training on sexual harassment

About nine participants, (five females and four males) revealed that students have little knowledge about sexual harassment which stems from a lack of training on the topic in terms of: (a) what it entails, (b) to whom and where to report it, and (c) laws pertaining to it.'

Gina: 'Students lack information about sexual harassment. Like, male students do not see themselves as potential perpetrators of sexual harassment because they think it pertains to females.'

Tingadini: 'Some students do not know that they are harassing each other and that sexual harassment is an offence. Some lecturers engage in sexual harassment out of admiration of young students. Just saying, 'this lady is beautiful, I want her, not knowing that it is not allowed.'

Ano: 'Students who get here at first year do not get enough training about sexual harassment especially when going on teaching practice because that is where they experience it most.'

Tatenda: 'People at this college only get to understand it after you have engaged them to say what they are doing is sexual harassment. Students are not really aware of where to go after experiencing sexual harassment and

the counsellors available at college. Some men at college take sexual harassment issues for granted, even if you talk to them.'

Chipo: 'We do not know who to approach for help, how and where to report sexual harassment. Female students especially those doing Physical Education are sexually harassed due to myths that if someone is flexible in sports, they are also good in bed.'

Molly: 'As ladies, we are too relaxed about sexual harassment such that men think they can do whatever they want with us. Sometimes we also look very desperate and seek a lot of attention from lecturers. We believe that if you are close to a lecturer, you pass.'

Sam: 'Some male students practice sexual harassment unknowingly. They do not know that when they pass some sexual comments, they are harassing their colleagues. Even some female students are comfortable with consensual relationships not knowing that they are being exploited'

Fadzai: 'There is the issue of ignorance of saying 'I was just passing a comment or appreciating the way you look', not knowing that it hurts. When caught, they would always say, 'I was not aware that I was offending her.'

Peter: 'As a male, I may want to express myself to a lady but she would not take the situation as I do. I would try by all means possible to win her and, in the process end up harassing her without knowing.'

Tendai: 'Students do not really know what they are expected to do when sexually harassed. They are just left to discover on their own and sometimes they get to know of it after falling victim.'

From these excerpts, it can be noted that a lack of training on sexual harassment results in ignorance that exposes students to the problem. This could be attributed to institutional lack of information about what sexual harassment entails, leading them not to consider training as important.

b) **Lack of close monitoring**

About nine participants (five females: four males), revealed that the College's lack of monitoring of all College activities was exposing students to: (a) threats and victimisations, (b) sexual demands from lecturers, (c) abuse of alcohol, (d) peer pressure, and (e) rape.

Sarah: 'Female students are threatened with failing marks by lecturers during teaching practice. Some lecturers would asses them as punishment for rejecting their sexual demands and award them failing marks. One incident was when one lecturer booked a place to spend a night with a student in order to award her a passing mark.'

Grace: 'After assessing a student during teaching practice, lecturers are given private space to discuss on one-on-one with a student which I think is not safe. This is when the lecturer takes advantage of the closed space to threaten and intimidate the student with a failing mark to corner them to accept their sexual demands.'

Tingadini: 'Some female students are drugged by their male friends and boyfriends at all-night discos and beauty pageants. They then get raped at blind spots when going back to hostels. Security here is not enough for such functions. Both male and female students abuse alcohol in the name of entertainment.'

Gina: 'Although there is a project consultation timetable, students are allowed to visit their lecturers at any time of the day causing some lecturers to abuse them. Some lecturers refuse or delay marking project chapters for female students as punishment for turning down their sexual demands. Sometimes you are made to redo a chapter three to four times until you end up asking how best to go about the topic. The lecturer would say 'What do you think you can do? Then after, you are told what to do and fail to defend yourself. A friend told me that her lecturer asked

her to go to bed with him in order to mark her research project. Some lecturers write the project for female students who they are interested in.'

Lucy: 'During the all-night college gigs, some male students bring in alcohol to intoxicate ladies so that they will be drunk and then force themselves onto them sexually. Female students when drunk also sexually harass male students by touching their bodies, kissing and hugging them. Also, male students think that every female student who attends such functions is of loose morals. They touch them at places they are not comfortable with.'

Tatenda: 'The College set up is such that the same lecturer who is your perpetrator could be the one responsible for your final academic assessment. We are aware as a student body that the Department of Teacher Education cuts corners and will not look at every script but instead, samples them. This forces victimised students to keep quiet to avoid further victimisation. There are also possibilities of meeting the same perpetrators more than once in college life.'

Peter: 'Sometimes I engage in sexual harassment because of peer pressure. When all my friends have girlfriends, I use all means possible to win the girl, like trying to be closer and touching her. My intention will be to prove to others that I can do it and end up harassing them.'

Ano: 'There is also mob psychology that encourages sexual harassment at this college. You hardly find an individual passing sexual remarks on their own. There is always a group of people around when such comments are passed.'

Sam: 'Female students are being intimidated to say that, 'you should know that I am the one in control of your diploma, and if you turn down my request, you will fail' Now if you ask the students to take the matter through relevant channels, they are really scared.'

The findings reveal that the institution's failure to closely monitor all college activities gives room for further victimisation. A lack of close monitoring could be attributed to inadequate knowledge about what sexual harassment as well as the non-existence of a mechanism to do so.

c) Mishandling of cases

From the findings, eight participants (two males and six females) attributed the manifestation of sexual harassment to the College's failure to handle cases through the following: (a) not taking action on reports, (b) not completing investigations, (c) dismissing cases, and (d) protecting perpetrators.

Tingadini: 'Sometimes investigations on reported cases at this college are not completed until the student graduates. No action has ever been taken on reported cases at this college, even if I report, nothing will be done.'

Tendai: 'Without college support, victims see reporting as futile. We have a case of a system where the people within the reporting structure are failing you. The students believe that the system protects its own.'

Fadzai: 'You find that I am not the only person being harassed. Do I have to report if nothing happened to those who reported before me? In the history of my stay here at college, I have never heard of a staff member who has been suspended or fired for sexual harassment. Some known sexual harassers are still employed at this college and others have even been promoted. There is no need of reporting someone who enjoys protection.'

Grace: 'Like my situation, I recorded my mentor attempting to rape me during teaching practice, but the case was dismissed by the college administration for lack of enough evidence. They said that the voice was not clear. I still have got the recordings on my phone. The college knows my story but they pushed me away.'

Lucy: We are still seeing the lecturers who were reported for sexually harassing students at college. This means that there is nothing done after reporting them because they could be friends of college authorities.'

Tracy: 'Lack of feedback from the administration after reporting cases is very discouraging. There was a sexual harassment incident I referred to the administration but now I do not know whether a disciplinary hearing was done or not. I just guess.'

Gina: 'The disciplinary committees at college are not friendly to female students at all. Some hearings are done in the presence of the perpetrator which is very intimidating and traumatising. The victim will be feeling like being exposed to sexual harassment again. I think there is image management where the college would always want to protect itself from media coverage and other stakeholders. The administration is trying to protect their image by pretending as if there is no sexual harassment.'

Ano: 'As of now, no precedence has been set by the college authorities to say if you do this, this is what will happen to you and these are the results. If the college does not give any protection and assurances to students, the abuse continues.'

It can be noted from these excerpts that the institutional mishandling of cases results in a lack of trust in the system by students leading to non-reporting. The mishandling of cases could be attributed from ignorance about how to handle cases emanating from legislative gaps on the topic.

d) **Inadequate staffing**

Two participants revealed that the three counsellors and a nurse allowed to counsel students at the college were inadequate in handling sexual harassment issues for all students.

Lucy: 'There are only three counsellors at this college and how would I report if I have a bad record with them? Also, not all the three lecturers have

counselling skills besides having undergone training. We do not trust some of them.'

Grace: 'There is only one nurse at this college and some students are not comfortable with her, such that they do not go for treatment or counselling.'

It is notable from these responses that the inadequate number of staff to counsel students at the college results in students' silence about sexual harassment.

e) Lack of confidentiality

Three participants revealed that a lack of confidentiality by college counsellors discourages disclosure by victims.

Sam: 'Counsellors leak our information to other lecturers. You then end up seeing that reporting is a waste of time as you get exposed to the whole college.'

Grace: 'Reporting through the HLS counsellors does not work because some are colleagues to the perpetrators. It is like reporting a friend to their friend. I prefer reporting to a trusted lecturer or friend than to use the college counsellors.'

Sarah: 'Students prefer keeping quiet than to report because they believe that counselors will divulge the information to colleagues and they will end up failing the course after victimisation.'

The findings reveal that lack of confidentiality by college counsellors results in students' lack of trust in the system which in turn leads to victims' silence about their sexual harassment experiences. This suggests a gap in the way the counselling of students is handled at the college.

A notable trend from the above excerpts in this theme has shown that inappropriate institutional responses to sexual harassment causes students to lose trust in the system, leading to silence and continued perpetuation of the problem.

4.4.3. Sexual harassment legal and policy gaps

A total of seven participants (five females: two males) revealed that, despite developing a sexual harassment policy in 2016, it is not comprehensive and it requires a wider distribution and full implementation. The policy was failing to protect students in sectors such as teaching practice, project consultation, late submissions and payment of fines. The legal gaps highlighted were the non-criminalisation of some forms of sexual harassment, particularly the verbal, leading to ignorance, normalisation and lack of action on such forms and finding it difficult to prove the cases.

Tingadini: 'It is in the background that this college has a sexual harassment policy developed in 2016 but it has not been fully implemented. The so-called policy protection is not really there. Students do not even know the contents of this sexual harassment policy except for some few lecturers and peer educators. There is no form of sensitisation about such a policy.'

Molly: 'Sexual harassment is no longer increasing because of the formulation of the sexual harassment policy at this College. Lecturers are now afraid that they will be arrested if they abuse students'

Sam: 'In as much as we have a sexual harassment policy, it is not well publicised. Students were not given the document. The policy document was distributed to students once in 2018 since its development in 2016. It was only distributed to students during a Health and Life Skills lecture but some students did not get it as some have a tendency for skipping this mass lecture.'

Lucy: 'The College is not strict on the project supervision timetable of research projects. If you go to the lecturer's office for project consultation, some tell you that they are very busy during the day and that you should come after hours so as to sexually harass you. There are spaces that allow one-to-one sessions which lecturers take advantage of to demand sexual favours like offices and storerooms whose doors get closed

during project consultations This also makes the same supervisor that supervises your project examines it.'

Sarah: 'Some students when they fail to pay late submission fines for assignments would plead for mercy from their lecturers who then request for sexual favours in return. The other scenario is when College security guards catch a student on the wrong, they would demand sexual favours in return for releasing them.'

Gina: 'There is ignorance that sexual harassment is a crime. It is easy for someone to do verbal than physical because it happens in open spaces with no restrictions. Society has normalised vulgar language, people just laugh because it is difficult to control what people say when it is not considered a crime. Verbal harassment has become part of life and most people see no need to report or resist it. People also do not understand the penalties and legal parameters that go with sexual harassment, like getting arrested and jailed.'

Grace: 'Society has normalised verbal forms to the extent that people think it is not harassment. Nothing has been done to verbal perpetrators in terms of the law. This makes people not afraid to hurt the next person verbally and difficult to build evidence against the perpetrator.'

The above excerpts reveal that sexual harassment is widespread when due to its non-criminalisation. The findings have also shown that despite the existence of a sexual harassment policy at the college, it is not exhaustive about all sectors of life at the institution and lacks full implementation.

4.4.4. Financial factors

The findings from this section indicate that students' financial challenges create a desperate atmosphere in them to pass the course by all means, rendering them unable to resist sexual harassment. This was reported by five participants in the following excerpts.

Tatenda: 'Most female students are desperate to leave the college with a diploma. This forces them to sleep with lecturers for pass marks. Most of them want to have more than enough money, food and toiletries causing them to fall into traps and oblige to lecturers' sexual demands.'

Tatenda: 'Students want to finish the course at all costs. They are ready to give anything that comes their way. The only weapon they have is their body. Also, if a lecturer touches a lady after giving her some gifts and passing marks, she will keep quiet because it has some economic advantages.'

Gina: 'Some female students are cornered into sexual relationships by their lecturers for promises of bus fare, hairdos and expensive clothing. They want to live above their means in exchange for sex. The relationship would be centred on provisions and sexual favours.'

Grace: 'The economic situation makes us to go to male lecturers for printing services. When this happens, one thing leads to another because we come from poor backgrounds.'

From these excerpts, it can be concluded that the financial constraints on female students influences them to give in to sexual harassment.

In a nutshell, the findings from this section have shown the interconnectedness of socialisation in patriarchy as well as the role of institutional and economic factors in causing sexual harassment to be perpetuated at the college of education.

4.5. STUDENTS' REACTIONS TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The current theme presents students' reactions to sexual harassment in order to understand the context of their responses. The findings indicate that students respond in the following manner: (a) through silence, (b) through ignoring and avoiding, (c) through resisting, (d) through reporting.

4.5.1. Silence

The findings from 13 participants (nine females, four males) reveal that silence was the most common response used by students against incidents of sexual harassment. Silence took the form of either (a) not sharing the incident with others or (b) complying with the harassing behaviours. Silence was found to emanate from threats and intimidations of failing the course, not knowing where and who to report to, discouragement from peers and management, lack of alternatives, fear of not being believed, fear of blame, avoiding creating bad relations with lecturers and getting them in to trouble, not wanting to expose one self, hoping to get married to the lecturer, and as payback for favours earlier received due to a lack of assertiveness.

Lucy: 'Victims keep quiet and not divulge names or share their experiences with anyone fearing victimisation. Some keep silent because they do not know what to do after a sexual harassment encounter. They do not know who to approach for more information and how protected they are after reporting. They also do not know what will happen to their harasser or whether they will lose their job or not.'

Chipo: 'I want to finish the course and graduate like others and the only way to go is to keep quiet instead of reporting. Sometimes you have to weigh the advantages and disadvantages so as to avoid failing that lecturer's subject. If you report a lecturer, you can be asked questions like, 'So, you are the one who reports lecturers? Sometimes in lecture rooms, we hear lecturers saying that, 'There are those of you who think you are better and clever by reporting us.' So, we end up keeping quiet. Everyone at this college knows that I am an assertive person but because I want to be secure and pass my course, I keep quiet.'

Fadzai: 'I know of a lady who is suffering silently because she is refusing to alert the administrators about her sexual harassment experiences with a lecturer. She says the situation will be worse for her as staff members will team up to fail her and that nothing will be done to them. Some

students keep quiet in order to avoid creating bad relations with lecturers. It becomes difficult to report and win against a lecturer who has already told you that they are in control of the system. Students keep quiet after being told by their harassers not to say anything or share their experiences with anyone.'

Sarah: 'Most students lack a reporting culture. Some keep silent about sexual harassment for fear of being labeled a trouble causer or loose person. Like, "Why did you go to that office? What did you do that pushed him to do that to you?" Or "she acts as if she does not know about sex". Others would keep quiet because of the favours they will be receiving.'

Tendai: 'I would rather get sexually harassed than failing my course. I would rather die than coming back to repeat the course. I can't look for money again from my struggling parents?'

Fadzai: 'Some students keep silent because they would not be sure if they are safe from further victimization after reporting sexual harassment. Instead, they end up keeping silent as there is no assurance of their safety from the authorities.'

Ano: 'I prefer to remain silent because I fear being discussed. This is an embarrassing experience and I would not want people to see me as a victim. I also keep quiet in case the lecturer turns the story around and wins the case.'

Sam: 'When you report sexual harassment to administration or the counsellors, they start telling us the consequences of reporting a lecturer. Like, 'Do you know what is going to happen to you? What if this lecturer is going to be fired from his job?' It will be clear that they are more worried about the lecturer than the student. This causes the students to drop the case and keep quiet.'

Tingadini: 'I keep silent about my sexual harassment experiences because if I tell my friends that I am being harassed, they discourage me from reporting.

They tell me that if I do so, the lecturers will influence each other to fail me. Some students would become excited that a lecturer has proposed to them and fall in love hoping to be married by the young and single lecturers.'

Tracy: 'New students are discouraged from reporting sexual harassment by older peers. They say, 'If you do not do this to Mr. X, he will make you fail. So, they just comply and keep quiet for fear of failing the course.'

Gina: 'Silence is the most common as students are afraid to fail the course and leave college without a diploma. They also fear the authority of lecturers and the repercussions attached to reporting especially if the outcome turns out to be not what you expected. Some students agree to whatever is done to them after falling into a trap. I saw a lady who could not respond negatively but to give in because it was a lecturer. There is also fear of the unknown.'

Molly: 'We tolerate sexual harassment despite being uncomfortable just for that time and then, leave College with your certificate. Sometimes I would not want anyone outside to know that there is something happening inside. I would not want to be seen and get exposed.'

Peter: 'Some students end up giving in because it's their lecturers doing it but end up regretting afterwards and feeling abused. This is also caused by lack of survival skills and they up end up just saying 'let me just do it.'

Grace: 'My lecturer has failed me in my coursework for refusing his proposal. Now if he is going to come back with the same request, I will definitely do it because my marks are below average.'

The findings reveal that students' silence as a response to sexual harassment were contextual and largely stems from a lack of alternatives. This indicates that the response strategy could not be the victims' ideal reaction.

4.5.2. Ignoring and avoiding

Three participants revealed that students either ignore or avoid the perpetrator in the following manner: (a) not acknowledging the harassing behaviour, (b) laughing it off, or (c) bringing someone along.

Gina: 'Most students tend to ignore cases of sexual harassment. Sometimes we just laugh at the behaviour and act as if nothing bad is happening, saying like "Did you hear what he said?"

Molly: 'I experienced sexual harassment by being denied food for two days by a kitchen staff for rejecting his sexual demands. I could not report him because I felt unsafe as he was the one preparing my food. The problem only ended when I brought in a warden on duty to monitor him.'

Tendai: 'In terms of messages, I just delete and keep quiet and try to avoid the harasser by stopping to go to his office. Sometimes when there is need, I go with friends to avoid getting into trouble. I also block him from phoning me.'

The findings reveal that ignoring and avoiding sexual harassment as a strategy side-steps the perpetrator, causing the incidents to go ahead undetected.

4.5.3. Resisting

Three participants revealed that some students resist the perpetrator's demands for sexual favours.

Peter: Some ladies are very assertive although they are few. They put it clear that, "I do not want what you are doing to me and may you please stop and this should not happen again".

Molly: 'I tell the harasser to leave me alone and that I am not interested even if it is a lecturer. I tell him that I am not interested. Also, some students

when the consensual relationship goes sour start to disallow it regretting to say I was harassed and start to resist.'

Chipo: 'If it is a lecturer doing what I do not want, I just reject and stand my ground to say no.'

These responses highlight that few students resist sexual harassment due to lack of options and assertiveness. The ability to resist sexual harassment by some victims is contrary to critical theory that considers females as powerless towards sexual harassment.

4.5.4. Attempting suicide

A participant indicated that there were two cases of attempted suicide in a year by female students out of frustration with sexual harassment.

Tatenda: 'We have two attempted suicide cases as a result of sexual harassment at this college. There was an incident of a female student who wanted to commit suicide after complaining of being victimised by a lecturer for refusing to give in to his sexual demands in one of the departments. The other one is when a male lecturer made continued unwelcome sexual advances on a female student to the extent that she felt frustrated and wanted to take her own life'.

The findings have shown that sexual harassment can be so frustrating and distressing to students that some may attempt suicide. This could be attributed to the fact that sexual harassment is regarded an embarrassing incident in some societies, leading to self-blame by the victims.

4.5.5. Reporting

The findings indicated that although rare among students, some report sexual harassment to college authorities, their departments, lecturers, friends and counsellors. This was done through the following: (a) confessions at GBV workshops (b) when collecting results, (c) during counseling sessions, (d) recording and forwarding the incident to authorities and other WhatsApp groups and (e) writing

anonymous letters to management. This was indicated by five participants as is evident in the following excerpts.

Sarah: 'Some students report their experiences during counselling sessions so that they would be helped to cope. Others report on behalf of their friends. Some write anonymous letters to the administration or record the incident using cellphones.'

Tatenda: 'Students report sexual harassment so that perpetrators would be put to task. Some students come and complain of threats of failing the course from lecturers after rejecting their sexual demands.'

Tingadini: 'Reporting is not very common although some students make complaints through their departments. We believe that those who report have backup from lecturers and would have been assured of their safety. You cannot just report without the system's support.'

Gina: 'Other students come to GBV workshops and disclose their sexual harassment encounters. Also, when students are collecting final results, they tend to divulge their sexual harassment experiences and name their perpetrators.'

Lucy: 'There are students who report on behalf of their friends, like, this is what this guy or lecturer did/said to my friend. Some when they get messages, they forwards them to different WhatsApp platforms for it to go viral in order to report and expose the harasser.'

It can be noted from these excerpts that although reports are not a common response among students, they help in exposing incidents of sexual harassment.

The findings from the current theme have shown that although students' reactions to sexual harassment vary by context, the responses were practiced by the same students in different contexts. It has also been shown that students have a tendency to conceal their experiences due to feelings of embarrassment. It emerged that, of the responses used by participants, silence was listed as the most common one. This was

largely attributed to reasons associated with socio-cultural factors in a patriarchy that continue to expose students to sexual harassment. On the other hand, although rarely employed and attributed to only those students with external support, resistance to and reporting of sexual harassment was considered an assertive response. The findings imply that although students' ideal reaction was to resist incidents of sexual harassment, they were not assertive enough to confront such incidents.

4.6. SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPOWERING STUDENTS' RESPONSES

The current theme presents findings on suggestions for empowering students' responses towards sexual harassment. This is in order to equip them with proper reactions and strategies approach the problem. Participants made the following suggestions in terms of what was needed to ameliorate the problem: (a) training programmes on sexual harassment, (b) review and full implementation of the sexual harassment policy, (c) confidential reporting structures, d) adequate staffing, (e) poverty alleviation, (g) action on reported cases and (h) increasing security at the college.

4.6.1. Training

From the findings, it was suggested that, training workshops be held at the beginning of each year and before teaching practice is initiated for the following groups: (a) everyone at college, (b) males only and (c) females only. This is in order to equip students with adequate information about sexual harassment and proper responses to this behaviour. These interventions were suggested by about nine participants (five females: four males) to cover what sexual harassment entails. This includes how it manifests, reporting channels, life skills building, assurance of victim safety, how to respond to sexual harassment, referral paths and handling of cases as well as about the Public Service code of conduct.

4.6.1.1. Institution-wide interventions

Molly: 'I think there should be a workshop to educate all people at college about sexual harassment at the beginning of each year. To say this is sexual harassment and how it manifests. They should also be taught about referral paths available so that they will be able to refer students when such services are needed. Lecturers as possible perpetrators of sexual harassment should be capacitated on sexual harassment issues. This is to make them understand that 'if I do this, I will be sexually harassing my students.'

Tingadini: 'Lecturers, students and other staff should be work shopped on what sexual harassment is. They should be sensitised on how to assist students when they present themselves to them. They should also be sensitised to avoid sexually harassing female students and instead, protect them.'

Gina: 'Workshops about sexual harassment should take everyone on board and not only peer educators. Students should have enough information on what sexual harassment is and the forms that are there. There is also need to sensitise the college administration on how to prioritise issues. Lecturers should be taught to desist from having sexual relationships with students as it is harassment.'

Grace: 'Everyone should be taught about where they are supposed to go when they face sexual harassment. Like, who to approach and how you should report. They should be made aware of how to access relevant facilities after a sexual harassment encounter.'

Tracy: 'College members should be made aware of their safety after making a report with no further victimisation and dispelling myths that the system is not protecting them. They should not work on assumptions and be assured that they are safe. Students should be empowered to open up and talk about such issues freely.'

Sam: 'The workshop should be about how sexual harassment can be addressed and how to prioritise and document cases when reported. There should be thorough training for students before going on TP because this is where sexual harassment happens most. Students should also be taught about the Public Service code of conduct.'

Tendai: 'We require training about how to react to sexual harassment and learning to say no. We need to be made aware of the laws that pertain to sexual harassment and the sentencing. This helps in making us aware of what is/not expected of us.'

Peter: 'The College authorities should be taught to document and deal with cases as they come and see them to completion, not to 'sweep them under the carpet'. They should always refer students with cases which they fail to solve.'

Fadzai: 'There is need to educate the authorities to set the record straight on perpetrators of sexual harassment. Precedence should be set, like say 'In 2020, a lecturer was jailed for sexually harassing female students.'

The findings indicate the need to train college members on sexual harassment in order to empower them with adequate information about sexual harassment. The implication of this is that, training could provide adequate knowledge about sexual harassment that is empowering and a lack of it may lead to silence about the problem, leading to its prevalence.

4.6.1.2. Mentorship for males and females

Mentorship workshops for both males and females were suggested in order to empower them to resist and avoid engaging in behaviours involving sexual harassment.

a) Females

Females-only mentorship workshops were suggested by five participants in order to groom them on (a) life skills, (b) assertiveness, (c) deportment and (e) dress code.

Tingadini: 'I recommend the creation of safe spaces for mentorship for female students by wardens and lecturers especially the new students. Wardens and female lecturers should act as guardians and hold hostel talks about their challenges and redefining their gender roles.'

Sam: 'Training of female students should be about assertiveness and life skills building. The sessions with female students should train them about their rights, independence, bravery and openness about sexual harassment. They should be taught proper dressing when visiting lecturers' offices to avoid falling into a trap and get themselves abused.'

Fadzai: 'The workshop should empower us to be independent, not to rely on favours and be able to refuse sexual demands. Also, proper dressing and deportment should be taught to them.'

Molly: 'Ladies should be taught to open up and report sexual harassment. There should be sessions to teach them life skills and be made aware of some harmful societal practices that prevent them from fighting sexual harassment.'

Tatenda: 'Workshops should be held so that students can be empowered to open up about such issues. There is need to empower ladies to be independent and not to rely on favours.'

It can be noted from these excerpts that mentorship of female students could empower them with appropriate responses to the problem. This is important given their already marginalised status that continue to expose them to sexual harassment.

b) Males

Mentorship workshops for males only were suggested by two participants in order to groom them to be initiators in fighting sexual harassment.

Gina: 'I encourage all male students to join the Ixhiba/Mugota men's forum program recently created by SAYWHAT to mobilise young men to take up sexual and reproductive health seriously. This helps them to take part in ending violence against women.'

Tingadini: 'We should engage male students through Gender Violence Workshops and dialogues. I suggest that male students be taught to consider themselves as equal individuals to women and to respect them. They should be trained to be problem solvers, initiators and leaders in eliminating sexual harassment.'

These findings indicate that male grooming on sexual harassment may lead to behaviour change and contribute to the reduction of its occurrence.

c) How the workshops could help to cultivate appropriate responses

Three participants indicated that workshops help with imparting appropriate responses to sexual harassment.

Sarah: 'Such workshops help reduce sexual harassment because students will be made aware of what they are expected of doing if it occurs. They will be in a position to respond accordingly to sexual harassment even when they see it happening to others.'

| **Tendai:** | 'Female students will be empowered not to be taken advantage of by men and about their rights. This makes them to be able to resist sexual harassment when it happens.' |

| **Gina:** | 'Workshops empower students with the requisite information to deal with sexual harassment. It increases documentation skills as there are currently no proper statistics about sexual harassment cases. This will also enable the identification of sexual harassment and how to act accordingly.' |

These findings show that workshops are empowering to all members at the college, leading to the curbing of sexual harassment.

4.6.2. Promoting research on sexual harassment

The encouragement of further research on sexual harassment was recommended by three participants in order to: (a) identify gaps and standardise its management (b) share ideas, and (c) reduce the practice.

| **Gina:** | 'Research on sexual harassment for students and lecturers should be encouraged or sponsored if possible. Sexual harassment should be made a research agenda through the research department at some selected platforms where researchers present papers and share ideas.' |

| **Tingadini**: | 'Considering that this institution is an academic space, the college should try to improve sexual harassment management by promoting localised research presentations. This helps to identify and evaluate gaps that are there in the management of sexual harassment. It also brings in good standards to college when researchers compare studies, learning from others resulting in the improvement of the college system and students' responses. Research helps in good practice, proper reactions to sexual harassment and findings can be shared even with other colleges.' |

The suggestion indicates that research on sexual harassment, if encouraged, may lead to best practices in handling such incidents, leading to the closing of the current gaps in knowledge on the topic. This is in tandem with critical theory that consider knowledge sharing as empowering and transformative.

4.6.3. Reviewing and distribution of sexual harassment policy

The findings indicated the need to review the sexual harassment policy that was developed in 2016 and to cover the following in detail: (a) what sexual harassment entails, (b) project consultation, (c) fines payment and (d) late submissions of coursework. The findings also suggested that it should be distributed in hard copy and electronically. Again, it should look at the following:

a) What sexual harassment entails

It emerged that the sexual harassment policy review should (a) define sexual harassment, be clear about where to report it and the referral paths available, as well as provide the budget, time frame and a review date for any cases, (b) prohibit consensual relationships between students and lecturers/staff, and (c) combat cyber bullying. This was recommended by two participants, one male and one female as is evident from the following excerpts.

Tingadini: 'The sexual harassment policy formulated three years ago has not been fully implemented. The College should make efforts to review that document to include all issues that cause sexual harassment at college because the current sexual harassment policy is just a general kind of policy. Like there is no budget, no time frame for review dates, does not address other activities at college such as sports, teaching practice and social media.'

Gina: 'The policy should reflect what is on the ground like what one is expected to do and not expected during project consultations and late submissions. It should prohibit consensual relationships between students and staff. Referral pathways should be stated. Everyone at

college should be allowed to give input into the contents of the sexual harassment policy during its review in order to improve its effectiveness.'

b) Project consultation

Two participants suggested that project consultation should be covered in the policy.

Gina: 'The policy should cover consultation stating that the doors of lecturers' offices should remain open during project consultations so that lecturers will be afraid to sexually harass female students. Consultation days and hours should be on the College calendar where students come to consult at stipulated times to avoid being taken advantage of by their male lecturers. Students should come to consult for projects in pairs or as a group not as individuals. This makes lecturers not to take advantage of the situation.'

Fadzai: 'Students should avoid visiting lecturers' office alone for projects. Where necessary, students should be allowed to choose their supervisors. If you know that lecturer X has been harassing you, it is better to avoid him by choosing a supervisor you feel safe with.'

c) Teaching Practice supervision

One participant suggested the need for the policy to cover teaching practice supervision.

Sarah: 'There should be policy on teaching practice. Funds permitting, lecturers should be allowed to supervise students in pairs to avoid taking advantage of them. Also, if the structures allow, discussions after a lesson supervision should be done in open spaces for example in a staff room instead of storerooms or offices where lecturers end up demanding sexual favours from students.'

d) **Late submission of coursework**

Two participants indicated the need to have a policy that covers the late submission of assignments.

Lucy: 'Students should avoid submitting their assignment late or going to lecturer's offices alone especially after hours. They should make use of their class representatives to submit the assignment for transparency sake and also for their safety.'

Molly: 'Students should be told to avoid visiting lecturers in their offices alone when making late submissions. They can go either as a group or with a friend in order to deter would be sexual harassers.'

e) **Payment of fines and typing services**

One participant suggested that fines and typing charges be credited on student's fees accounts.

Tendai: 'Costs that are supposed to be paid by students such as typing services and fines should be paid as advance fees in order to avoid students being taken advantage of by harassers.'

f) Spell out how to access counselling services and addressing queuing issues

About five participants recommended a clear demarcation of (a) counsellors' doors for easy access as well as (b) the need to separate male and female queues.

Sarah: 'When queuing at the dining hall and when boarding buses, male and female students should have separate queues because there is a lot of sexual harassment that happens when male students are behind ladies.'

Peter: 'During sports camping, male and female students should be given the separate hostels in order to avoid male students sexually harassing the ladies in rooms.'

Gina: 'If possible, lecturer/counsellors' offices should have a signage on their doors for easy access and just walking in by students when in need of counselling assistance at any time.'

g) Distribution of the sexual harassment policy

It was suggested that the policy document should be distributed both in (a) hard copy and (b) electronically.

Tingadini: 'The availability of the sexual harassment policy can be made easy to access by making abridged versions of the sexual harassment policy at open spaces such as student common rooms, notice boards, at the library, at the dining hall and at the foyer. The policy should also be posted on the student portal, college website and accessed online. This helps in empowering the students with information about how to contain sexual harassment.'

Gina: 'The document should be made part of the orientation package for new students. Instead of making the sexual harassment policy available in

hardcopy only, this can be digitised by sending the policy in soft copy to student email addresses and even through WhatsApp messages.'

The excerpts have shown that the topic of sexual harassment should have adequate content covering all sectors of college life and should be widely distributed using varied methods. This implies that a well-developed and widely distributed policy is empowering to students' responses to sexual harassment.

4.6.4. Confidential reporting

Four participants suggested the establishment of confidential reporting to help protect victims and to encourage the reporting of incidents of sexual harassment.

Gina: 'There should be confidential reporting platforms that will enable students to talk about sexual harassment anonymously to neutral people. There should also be a toll -free line accessible 24 hours with an automatic response for quick reporting.'

Sarah: 'There should be the establishment of toll free lines manned by counsellors at college to enable students to report any time. This helps in giving confidence to the survivor to report secretly.'

Tingadini: 'There should be a resource centre minder to deal specifically with issues to do with sexual harassment. Even having an external platform of reporting such as Head office in order to protect the victims and monitored how cases are managed.'

Tendai: 'We want counsellors who have a good reputation. Not just they are there but what have they done so far? We do not trust them because they have not done much in the past.'

Ano: 'The College should have sexual harassment ambassadors and give them ambassadorial roles to talk about sexual harassment at any available platform. This also helps in putting a human face into the issue and bringing consciousness in people.'

Peter: 'There should be an independent and impartial entity that should come to sit on sexual harassment hearings. This will be like a lawyer of the students.'

Tingadini: 'Exit interviews should be held with graduating students in order to get truthful information about sexual harassment now that students will be done with their course and have nothing to fear. Students should be given anonymous questionnaires where they can fill in their answers at graduation.'

The findings indicate that confidential reporting is necessary for building institutional confidence in victims which may in turn encourage disclosure.

4.6.5. Support for victims

Another two participants suggested the need for individual and group support system such as counselling for victims of sexual harassment for the restoration of confidence enabling them to live a normal life after sexual harassment.

Tingadini: 'Those who would have encountered sexual harassment should be helped to access support systems. They should access counselling services in order for them to regain confidence and be able to walk out at high and continue to live a normal life after sexual harassment incidents.'

Tatenda: 'Sexually harassed students should be counselled and helped to join support groups where they will share lived experiences as peers and empower each other. This allows the survivor to learn what others went through and starts to see that she is not the only one.'

The excerpts above indicate that support for victims of sexual harassment could be empowering and transforming, leading to healing as well as their emancipation from the problem.

4.6.6. Poverty alleviation initiatives

Two participants suggested the need to assist students to engage in income generating projects such as (a) growing vegetables for sale and (b) working for the college to get money for fees and self-reliance.

Sarah: 'Students can be financed to start some projects such as cultivation of vegetables for sale. They can be allowed to rent some vegetable beds and use the money for their upkeep.'

Tingadini: 'Needy students can be allowed to work at College grounds over the weekends or holidays in order to raise their fees and for other necessities'.

The excerpts reveal that poverty alleviation initiatives are viewed to potentially empower and protect needy students from sexual harassment. This could transform students' experience so that they need not be dependent on lectures' favours.

4.6.7. Staffing issues

Two participants suggested the need to recruit adequate counsellors and nurses to deal with sexual harassment.

Peter: 'We need more than one nurse here because some students would not be comfortable with the only one available and would not go for counselling or treatment.'

Tingadini: 'The College should allow all lecturers to provide counselling to students. Students should be allowed to approach any lecturer they trust for counselling services.'

These excerpts indicate that adequate staffing might aid in encouraging disclosure and reporting, thus, minimising the incidence of sexual harassment.

4.6.8. Taking action on perpetrators

It was proposed by two participants that the college should publish the names and outcomes of hearings of perpetrators in order to shame them and deter possible offenders.

Tingadini: 'The name and shame strategy can be used to help set a precedence in order to deter would be perpetrators from engaging in such behaviour.'

Sarah: 'Action should be taken on perpetrators by exposing them through publishing their names and sentences in order to deter others. There should also be transparency on how earlier cases had been handled'

From these responses, it can be noted that the taking of action against perpetrators reduces the incidence of sexual harassment. The failure to take action against perpetrators could be attributed to the fact that sexual harassment is not criminalised in the country.

4.6.9. Increasing security

One participant suggested an increase in security services during the evenings at college functions and in dark spaces.

Tingadini: 'I think the college should increase security during college night functions to avoid female students being dragged into dark spaces. It would also help if some willing lecturers are involved during such functions to be present and monitor students.'

The excerpt above highlights that an increase in security at the college would reduce incidents of sexual harassment by scaring off possible perpetrators.

The study's current findings have suggested the empowerment of students' responses through projects, confidential reporting, monitoring of College activities, policy review and implementation. Consistent with the critical theory, the empowerment of students

is vital in changing their behaviour, attitudes and response strategies to sexual harassment, thus, leading to the reduction of such incidents and ultimately victims' emancipation.

4.7 CRITICAL FINDINGS

The current section presents critical findings of the study under the following headings:

a) Understanding of sexual harassment

The findings have shown that participants have a narrow understanding of sexual harassment despite the fact that it is considered highly prevalent. Participants could not properly express themselves as they described sexual harassment using broad language that was gender-based and lacking appropriate terminology, leading to a sort of namelessness of some forms of the forms of abuses they experienced. Participants also displayed tendencies of describing sexual harassment as being caused by a person of the opposite sex and directed to a sexual part of the body. Some participants considered that for an act to be considered sexual harassment, it has to happen more than once.

b) Experiences of sexual harassment

The experiences of sexual harassment at the college as perceived by the participants was that the prevalence is high, but stable, despite its lack of reliable statistical evidence, its subtlety and non-reporting of the phenomenon. The participants revealed that sexual harassment was most frequently experienced during teaching practice, at sports, during project consultations, at the dining hall and nearer towards the examination period. The frequency of 2-15 cases per quota was considered unreliable given the patriarchal culture of silence on the topic.

c) Prevalence of sexual harassment

i) Forms of sexual harassment

The findings indicated that the major types of sexual harassment experienced at the college were found in contact and non-contact forms. The contact forms include sexual touching, hugging and kissing, physical assault, and rape or attempted rape. The non-contact forms of sexual harassment were indicated as sexual comments/jokes/songs/whistles about the body and dressing, threats and intimidations about failing the course, pressure for sex, cyber bullying, sexual advances, sexual gifts and spreading sexual rumours/lies. Of these forms, verbal harassment was singled out as the most common experience of students while physical harassment was indicated as the least common. This was attributed to the non-criminalisation of verbal harassment resulting in its normalisation and in the non-reporting of such cases which negatively impacts institutional ability to control its prevalence.

ii) Perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment

The findings show that male students are the major perpetrators of sexual harassment against female students at the college. This is from a list including lecturers, female students, kitchen staff, management, security guards, coaches, senior teachers and student mentors in schools. Even though female students were considered the most likely victims, they also perpetrate sexual harassment against male students and male lecturers by making sexual advances through their inappropriate dressing, language and sitting postures. The female victims most frequently exposed to sexual harassment were found to be the young, big-bodied and those who are under-performing academically.

d) Contributing factors to the occurrences of sexual harassment:

i) Socialisation of males and females in a patriarchal system

The findings indicated that some patriarchal practices at the institution of learning disempower female students when they face sexual harassment. The practices include, socialisation of males and females in a patriarchal system that gives men power over women, causing them to regard women as submissive and leading them to think that they can control them. The patriarchal culture has also led to the normalisation of men's sexually harassing behaviours and victim blaming. Restrictions of women's discussions of sex also causes them to suffer in silence.

ii)   A weak college sexual harassment policy

Despite the fact that the college has had a sexual harassment policy in place since 2016, making it one of the 6 out of 16 colleges of education in Zimbabwe with such a policy, participants were not aware of the policy's existence. The policy is not comprehensive enough to cover all sectors of life at the institution, such as teaching practice, project consultation, sports, dining hall practices, payment of fines and assignment submissions. Also, the policy has inadequate content, lacks a wider distribution and requires full implementation.

iii)   Institutional mishandling of cases

It emerged that the college management mishandles sexual harassment cases through not applying close monitoring of institutional activities, not taking action on reports, not completing investigations, dismissing cases, disrespecting confidentiality and protecting perpetrators. The institutional mishandling of cases cause members to lack trust in the system, leading to non-reporting. This could be attributed to ignorance about what sexual harassment entails and the laws governing it. This could also emanate from a lack of training on sexual harassment, a general lack of a clear and universal definition of the phenomenon and the generalised descriptions of the concept in Zimbabwe Such ignorance could also be emanating from a global lack of a

clear and universal definition of sexual harassment as well as the generalised descriptions of the concept in Zimbabwe through the Constitution (No 20: 2013), the Labour Act (28:01) and SI 1 of 2000.

iv) Students' financial constraints

The financial constraints on female students influences them to give in to sexual harassment. The situation creates a desperate atmosphere amongst female students to pass the course by all means, rendering them unable to resist sexual harassment. The desperate atmosphere may lead lecturers and non-teaching staff to prey on them through sexual invitations in exchange for food, money and other necessities. Students also receive threats and intimidations particularly of failing the course and getting less food from the kitchen if they reject the sexual demands from lecturers and kitchen staff, forcing them to comply.

v) The non-criminalisation of sexual harassment

The participants attributed the occurrence of sexual harassment at the College to the non-criminalisation of sexual harassment, particularly the non-physical forms, causing verbal harassment to be the most wide spread as it was considered as normal. On the other hand, the physical forms were considered the least prevalent because some such forms were criminalised and easy to use as evidence against the harasser thereby deterring possible perpetrators. In cases of verbal harassment, it was also reported be difficult to build evidence against the perpetrator, leading to silence about such incidents and causing their perpetuation.

vi) Students' reaction to sexual harassment

The findings have shown that students' reactions to sexual harassment were varied, contextual and not out of their own choice. Although not an ideal reaction, silence was considered to be the students' most common response out of a list that include ignoring, avoiding, resisting, reporting and downplaying incidents. Even though resisting and reporting were considered the more assertive responses, they were used as a last resort when other 'peaceful' strategies had failed. The findings also show

that victims used different types of responses in a single incident, influenced by factors beyond students' control.

4.8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Chapter Four presented themes derived from the data findings which involved the nature of sexual harassment, experiences of sexual harassment, contributing factors to the occurrences of sexual harassment and student's reactions to sexual harassment. The main findings are that participants described sexual harassment using broad language. This finding is in line with critical theory which blames the sexual harassment of women on a patriarchal system that continues to marginalise females (Farganis 2011). The same practice continues to occur at institutions of higher learning where the already marginalised female students are exposed to sexual harassment.

It also emerged that despite the non-availability of reliable statistical evidence, due to its subtlety and non-reporting, the participants maintained that sexual harassment was highly prevalent at the college in all its forms. Of these forms, verbal harassment was singled out as the most common while physical harassment was indicated as the least common form. This was attributed to the non-criminalisation of harassment resulting in its normalisation and institutional inability to control its prevalence.

The perpetrators of sexual harassment were indicated as male and female students, lecturers, kitchen staff, management, senior teachers and student mentors in schools, security guards and coaches. Of these, male students were considered the major perpetrators of sexual harassment towards female students. This is in line with critical theory which regards females as the most likely victims of sexual harassment due to their marginalised status stemming from a patriarchal society (Ritzer 2008).

The contributing factors to the manifestation of sexual harassment at the college was found to be the socialisation of males and females in a patriarchy system, legislative and policy gaps, institutional mishandling of cases, staffing issues and financial challenges.

It also emerged that students' responses to sexual harassment were situational and not their ideal reactions. The responses were silence, ignoring, avoidance, resistance, reporting and downplaying incidents. Silence was considered the most common whilst

reporting and resisting were regarded as assertive but rare due to fear of threats and intimidations related to failing the course, cultural socialisation in a patriarchal system, institutional and financial factors, as well as a lack of alternatives. Suggestions for empowering students' responses included institution-wide sensitisation and training of members, gender mainstreaming in the college curriculum, promotion of research by the college, institutional proper handling of cases and sexual harassment policy review and full implementation. This is in order to help empower and transform students, particularly females, with adequate information about sexual harassment, resulting in appropriate responses and self-emancipation.

The pattern that emerges from the findings is that students' responses were failing to prevent the incidence of sexual harassment due to a lack of knowledge of what it entails. The implication of this pattern is that there is a need to get to the root cause of the problem in order to gender mainstream the teacher education curriculum and empower students with a proper understanding of what sexual harassment is, which could enable them to respond appropriately to sexual harassment incidents and could lead to self-emancipation. This may lead to the creation of sexual harassment free institutions, ultimately contributing to the country's Heritage Based Education 5.0 for the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four presented the findings of the study in themes derived from focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews about students' experiences and responses to sexual harassment at a college of education in Zimbabwe. The themes were as follows: (a) experiences of sexual harassment, (c) contributing factors to the occurrences of sexual harassment, (d) students' reactions to encounters of sexual harassment, and (e) suggestions for empowering students in their responses to sexual harassment, to be discussed separately in the next chapter.

The findings revealed participants' narrow understanding of sexual harassment through describing what it entails. Participants revealed gender differences in their perceptions about the issue and the findings also indicated a high prevalence of sexual harassment at the college though with claims that it is not on the increase, but remains stable, claims that could be attributed to the existence of a sexual harassment policy and few reported cases. It emerged that students have tendency to hide their experiences of sexual harassment due to fear, confusion, stress and embarrassment. Verbal forms of sexual harassment were singled out as the most widespread form. Also, male students were regarded as the major perpetrators of sexual harassment against female students. The various contributing factors to the occurrences of sexual harassment at the college included, (a) the socialisation of males and females in a patriarchal system, such as that, men have power over women, that women are submissive, that women may not discuss sexuality, restrictions on discussion relating to sexuality, and the issue of normalisation of sexual harassment and issues related to attire, (b) institutional factors such as lack of close monitoring, mishandling of cases, inadequate staffing and lack of confidentiality, (c) sexual harassment legal and policy gaps, and (d) financial factors. This reflects that sexual harassment is not an isolated problem but arises due to a combination of factors. The findings revealed that the

contributing factors to the occurrences of sexual harassment may have influenced students to react to sexual harassment through: (a) silence, (b) ignoring, (c) avoiding, (d) resisting, (e) reporting and f) downplaying incidents.

Guided by critical theory's element of emancipation of marginalised groups such as female students, the current chapter discusses the findings from the data against the literature reviewed. The chapter is organised as follows; (a) understanding of sexual harassment, (b) sexual harassment legal and policy gaps, (c) prevalence of sexual harassment, (d) perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment, and (e) students' reactions to sexual harassment.

5.2.   UNDERSTANDING OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The findings revealed participants' tendencies to describe sexual harassment narrowly as, verbal and physical forms, as taking physical forms only and in general. Such descriptions indicate participants' lack of a common understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment. The description of sexual harassment as taking a physical form directed to the sexual part of the body is too narrow. The description is a misconception in that it disregards the fact that other forms of sexual harassment, such as verbal and non-verbal harassment can also be used by perpetrators when targeting sexual parts of the body (Shumba and Matina 2002). Such misconceptions might lead to the categorisations of the forms of sexual harassment into severe and non-severe forms (Brannon 2011). Such categorisation may result in victims only reporting cases they consider 'severe', leaving the 'less severe' to continue to occur (Boss 2006).

The misconceptions about what constitutes sexual harassment may also result in the normalisation of the cases considered less severe, leading to non-reporting (Ntuli 2006; Kanyemba and Naidu 2019). This is problematic because it creates confusion concerning the best response strategy to take in dealing with sexual harassment incidents, preventing the identification of all sexually harassing behaviours (Fitzgerald, Swan and Magley 1997). The confusion may in turn breed unassertive responses to cases which are perceived less severe by victims, causing them to continue to manifest.

The description of sexual harassment as being directed to persons of the opposite sex, particularly women, is also narrow. The description ignores the existence of same-sex harassment by both males and females (WHO 2013). Such a description may result in tendencies of failing to identify, resist and report same sex sexual harassment (Morley 2011). This may lead victims of same-sex sexual harassment to fail to appropriately respond to such incidents, causing them to suffer in silence (Beckett 2007). The description also ignores that females can sexually harass their male counterparts (Paludi and Barickman 1998). It disregards the fact that some female students use sexual advances on males in order to entice them (Jackman 2006). The description is in contradiction with the fact that sexual harassment can be perpetrated on all genders and anyone can be a perpetrator or recipient, or even both at the same time (Brannon 2011). It perpetuates the sexual harassment of men by women because men in patriarchal African societies are brought up not to appear sexually weak before women, resulting in them keeping silent about sexual harassment they may have experienced.

The description of sexual harassment as being directed to persons of the opposite sex, particularly women could be attributed to a patriarchal society which gives men power over women, causing their subordination and marginalisation (Agger 2006). This, according to critical theory with a feminist lens, leaves female students powerless in the face of sexual harassment (Farganis 2011). The description of the powerlessness of women in the face of patriarchy promotes male dominance because it maintains the inferior roles of women in society (Hodgson and Watts 2017). Such descriptions of women as perpetual victims of sexual harassment may generate in them an understanding that their vulnerability and powerlessness is rooted in unequal distribution of ascribed power in higher education stemming from a patriarchal system (Chafetz 2006). The practice perpetuates sexual harassment as it is carried over to institutions of higher learning, further exposing students to the problem (Costa 2020).

However, the description of sexual harassment as being directed to persons of the opposite sex, particularly women might seem as if patriarchal influence on sexual harassment is regarded as fixed, while in actual fact it is fluid (Christie 2000). This is because there are other factors involved in women's sexual harassment besides that of ascribed power from patriarchy that include legal and policy gaps, institutional

factors and financial factors to be discussed later (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). The descriptions indicate an overreliance on patriarchal socialisation as a cause of sexual harassment, particularly of women, at the expense of other factors, obstructing the recognition of some sexually harassing behaviour that do not stem from socialisation (Karugahe 2016). Like the critical theory, this description tends to stereotype females as perpetual victims of sexual harassment in society, causing the problem to continue to exist, which is not always the case (Van Rensburg 2010). Such a description might prevent female students from resisting sexual harassment as they might consider their already marginalised status permanent.

The descriptions of sexual harassment that included the point that the act should happen more than once for it to be regarded as sexual harassment is also narrow. It disregards that sexual harassment can be a one-time incident or can occur more than once (ILO 2019). The description disregards the fact that some once-off sexual harassment incidents such as rape, physical assault and cybercrime are criminalised in the country by the Sexual Offences Act (2001) and the Postal Telecommunications Act (2000). This implies that a single offensive act is enough to constitute sexual harassment. Thus, a lack of awareness about once-off sexual harassment incidents might cause victims not to perceive that sexual harassment had indeed taken place, negatively compromising their responses and leading to non-reporting.

The participants' descriptions that the act should happen more than once for it to be regarded as sexual harassment could emanate from the fact that, most once-off incidents occur behind closed doors with no witnesses (Paludi and Barickman 1998). The lack of witnesses on sexual harassment incidents renders victims unable to provide adequate proof given the culture of silence that surrounds the topic (Okeke 2011). Also, some such once-time incidents occur at periodic institutional events like teaching practice, sporting and examination seasons which are repeated year after year (Muchena et al. 2013; Sithole and Dziva 2019). The second time such periodic events could occur would be the following year involving a different class of college students, making it rare for students to experience sexual harassment more than once at a single periodic event. This makes waiting for a second occurrence of similar incidents impossible because the victimised student may be exposed to an event once in their college life, leading to it happening only once. Such narrow descriptions of

sexual harassment could be attributed to the patriarchy which denies females from accessing information about the topic due to their gender (Dorota 2002). The restrictions may create uncertainty in victimised students on how to identify and react to sexual harassment incidents (Morley 2005). Patriarchal restrictions therefore weakens female students' communication options when describing sexual harassment, causing it to be described using narrow descriptions.

The participants' idea that sexual harassment should be non-consensual disregards the fact that a victim can surrender to the perpetrator after being overpowered (Zireva and Makura 2013). The idea is made against the background that some consent is forced, especially where there is a power difference (Chireshe and Chireshe 2009). In this case, female students may surrender to their lecturers and non-teaching staff due to their powerlessness, given their already marginalised status (Bondestam and Lundqvist 2020b). The female students' powerlessness could be the reason why some with poor grades give in to lecturers' sexual demands when offered a chance to redeem themselves by receiving passing marks in exchange (Dhlomo et al. 2012; Finchilescu and Dugard 2018).

Furthermore, the narrow understanding of sexual harassment could be attributed to the Zimbabwean constitution's broad description of the topic to be discussed later (see section 5.3). Broad descriptions could lead to the absence of a standardised national definition of sexual harassment by its related legal Instruments. This perspective is arrived at against the backdrop that standardised definitions facilitate understanding of the actual prevalence of sexual harassment at institutions (Fedina et al. 2018). It also disregards the fact that a standardised definitions may lead to the design of suitable preventive measures such as policy development and implementation (Fedina et al. 2018).

Lacking a standardised national definition of sexual harassment may lead to the use of generalised language by victims when describing their experiences (Akpotor 2013). This could also deprive institutions of a proper terminology to use when communicating about sexual harassment (Germain 2016). Institutions may in turn produce generalised sexual harassment policies with inadequate content. The use of broad language about sexual harassment could cause a certain namelessness of some forms of sexual harassment in victims when describing their experiences,

causing them to leave out a range of abuses they may have experienced (Bondestam and Lundqvist 2020b). This perspective makes language an essential tool used in communicating victims' sexual harassment experiences (Germain 2016). Language is therefore an essential response tool because the current study considers an expression as a response to sexual harassment. It also considers that failure to express oneself against sexual harassment might mean an inability to respond to the problem, thus perpetuating its occurrence. The lack of a proper language to express oneself towards sexual harassment may instil a feeling of inferiority which weakens students' responses. This makes it possible for the participants to fail to fully describe their sexual harassment experiences at the college due a lack of appropriate vocabulary, leading to broad and vague descriptions. They may even conceal some of their experiences due to a lack of appropriate terminology. Such broad descriptions may give a wrong picture of students' experiences and the state of the sexual harassment prevalence at the college, compromising the tracking and monitoring of the problem.

The broad descriptions of sexual harassment may also cause gender differences in the perception of what it entails (Abe 2012). Such differences may emanate from one's cultural and gender socialisation in a patriarchy (Chege 2006). The lack of proper terminology could emanate from cultural restrictions about the topic, especially related to women (Brannon 2011). This may also influence men and women to read the degree of sexual harassment severity differently (Morrison, Bourke and Kelly 2005). Differences in understanding the severity of sexual harassment incidents may escalate the problem as some cases may go unnoticed due to non-reporting of those classified non-severe.

The broad descriptions of sexual harassment could cause the understanding of the topic to be culturally and contextually derived instead of being nationally recognised (Akpotor 2013). The inadequate national recognition of sexual harassment may lead to its lack of alignment with the country laws, causing the problem to continue to occur (Dzimiri 2014). The cultures are considered to include submission of women to men, not to discuss sexual issues in public and overlooking men's sexually harassing behaviours such as child play and prolonged courtship (Gutek 1985; Fedina et al. 2018). Some such cultural practices lack a boundary line between sexual harassment

and harmless flirting, leading to confusion about what sexual harassment really is (European Commission 1998). The confusion about the meaning of sexual harassment, according to critical theory, traps women into conformity with cultural norms that continue to marginalise them in society (Farganis 2011). Hence, cultural barriers compromise female students' access to information and knowledge levels, thereby creating double vulnerability to sexual harassment (Morrison, Bourke and Kelly 2005). From this perspective, it could be submitted that students' understanding of sexual harassment continues to be narrow because it is culturally linked, legitimising the sexual abuse of females.

The narrow understanding of sexual harassment could also be attributed to lack of institution-wide sensitisation about the topic, leading to ignorance of the issue. Participants indicated that they did not know whether they were harassing others or being harassed. They also revealed the institutional mishandling of cases through either, dismissing or ignoring reports and not taking action on cases. The mishandling of cases could be due to management's limited knowledge about how to handle such incidents, emanating from a lack of sensitisation and causing sexual harassment to prevail (Fedina et al. 2018; Britz 2007). The institutional mishandling of sexual harassment cases could be a symptom of the patriarchy which aims to maintain the status quo (Ritzer 2008). The practice prevents female students from reacting to something that they can neither define nor understand (Ritzer 2008). From this perspective, a lack of sensitisation about sexual harassment disempowers students from accessing information which enables them to respond appropriately to such incidents.

Institutional failure to initiate sensitisation about sexual harassment for members could stem from scant research in the area (Phasha 2009; Kayuni 2009). A lack of further research about sexual harassment may breed ignorance about the topic, influencing management not to consider it an important issue (Jackman 2006). This point disregards the argument that adequate research on sexual harassment helps in creating awareness and increases access to information (UNCRC 2016). In contrast, inadequate research causes a narrow understanding of the topic, resulting in the production of unreliable evidence that in turn negatively affects the response mechanism of victimised students (McMullen 2019). Such unreliable evidence may

misinform those interested in preventive measures, causing sexual harassment to continue to occur.

The current theme has revealed that when descriptions about sexual harassment are narrow, so too is people's understanding, ultimately negatively compromising their responses. Therefore, as long as the description of sexual harassment remains broad in the constitution and its related Instruments, its understanding remains unclear, and thus they create a chain reaction of generalisations on the topic. This then continues to negatively impact female students' performance and educational attainment. Thus, creating a chain reaction of generalisations about the topic. This then continues to negatively impact female students' performance and educational attainment. Thus, the way a situation is understood is crucial to how the person decides to respond to it,

5.3. SEXUAL HARASSMENT LEGAL AND POLICY GAPS

The study established the interconnectedness of the participants' loose understanding of sexual harassment to the legal and policy gaps in the country. The college is one of the six colleges of education from a total of 16 in Zimbabwe with a sexual harassment policy in place as of 2018 despite participants' narrow understanding of the topic (SAYWHAT 2019). This points to legal and policy gaps that may exist, causing sexual harassment to continue to be prevalent at the college of education. Thus, the participants' narrow understanding of sexual harassment could be linked to the country's legal system.

The provision of two different definitions of sexual harassment in the college policy is problematic in that it confuses its users as to which one is more appropriate, causing them to selectively use or refer to it. The copying of the two definitions from Title VII of the Civil Rights Act 1964 and the University of Michigan without modifications indicates the college's failure to formulate one which is contextual to the institution as the US education system is dissimilar to Zimbabwean education settings. The workplace definition from Title VII of the Civil Rights Act 1964 is not specific to students because they are not employees and their situations are also different (Mawere 2014). Also, the University of Michigan definition lacks specificity to the Zimbabwean colleges of education contexts. Such a lack of context may create a loose understanding of sexual harassment in students (Coetzee 2012). Thus, from the critical theory with a feminist

lens perspective, the current study considers adequate knowledge about sexual harassment to be empowering to students (Farganis 2011) and a lack of it is disempowering (Strunk and Betties 2019). Therefore, students' lack of knowledge about sexual harassment may cause them to lose the power necessary to respond appropriately to such incidents.

The point that sexual harassment was prevalent at a College with a policy in place contradicts earlier studies which attributes its occurrence to policy absence (Katsande 2008; Bennet et al. 2007). The argument also contradicts McMullan's (2019) point that a lack of policy results in increased civil liability claims to management. The point also disregards Paludi's (2016) argument that policy absence deprives students of the broad framework of appropriate responses needed to empower them in the face of sexual harassment. It also disregards the fact that sexual harassment policy implementation is an aspect of gender mainstreaming that informs policy and practice in education (Tsvere and Nyaruwata 2012). This is because sexual harassment policies help protect and empower students by spelling out effective responses and procedures for handling sexual harassment incidents (Buluma 2009). Policy also protects administrators from incurring legal liability after mishandling cases in its absence (Paludi and Barickman 1998).

The reason why sexual harassment existed at an institution with a policy in place could be that the policy might be too weak to prevent sexual harassment. A weak policy might face an implementation challenge which causes sexual harassment to remain widespread (Elton et al. 2019). A victimised student might be unaware of the appropriate responses to take against sexual harassment in the presence of a weak policy. It could be possible that some policies may have been put in place for adherence purposes (Jourbert et al. 2011). Policy could have been there to silence those advocating for it and for appeasement purposes, causing the continuation of sexual harassment (Bennet 2009).

The fact that policy presence at the college did not bring about reductions in the prevalence of sexual harassment incidents could be that it was merely lip service, giving a wrong picture of what was happening on the ground when in actual fact it was only implemented on paper (Gartner 2019). The sexual harassment policy's presence

for adherence purposes may imply that it was malfunctional and could just as well have not been in place. A malfunctional policy deprives college students and staff of a reference point when taking action against incidents of sexual harassment (Dromm 2012). A malfunctional policy perpetuates sexual harassment as the state of the prevalence of sexual harassment might remain the same as at other colleges of education in the country with no policies in place. This may discourage other institutions without policies not to have them, thinking that they might as well be non-functional. This practice becomes an impediment to the prevention of sexual harassment in colleges of education as the status quo may remain the same despite policy presence, causing the problem to persist.

The policy's lack of a wider distributions could mean that it was not fully implemented. Inadequate policy implementation causes ignorance about the topic in members, thereby further exposing students to such incidents (Dziech and Hawkins 2012). The point disregards the fact that a fully implemented policy provides formulae for appropriate reporting structures and spells out procedure for how to deal with sexual harassment cases (Bennet 2002). It also contradicts UNESCO's (2012) point that policy provides a broad framework within which responses can manifest. The point also disregards the fact that policies that lack full implementation cause students to fail to access relevant services and discourage them from reporting their sexual harassment experiences (Fedina et al. 2018). Thus, it might be difficult for an institution to successfully implement a policy which they do not adequately understand. Policy therefore, has the potential to lead to the self-emancipation of students from sexual harassment.

The policy implementation challenges experienced by the college could also stem from a lack of institution-wide training of members about how it is supposed to be formulated and implemented. This could be why there were claims by participants of the policy document having been distributed to only those that underwent training, particularly peer educators, which is problematic (Piccirillo 2019). This leaves the majority of the college members unaware of what sexual harassment is, their rights and those of their counterparts which negatively impacts on their responses to the problem (Alston and Goodman 2013). Such ignorance of one's rights and that of others may result in either, non-reporting of sexual harassment incidents by victims or a continued abuse of others

by perpetrators. Thus, when members are trained, they may become fully aware of how policies are developed, the contents, implementation procedures and distribution.

The lack of a full implementation of the college sexual harassment policy could be due to the fact that it was not comprehensive. The policy did not cover all sectors of college life and activities, such as teaching practice, sports, project consultation, assignment submissions and payment of fines. The finding disregards the point that, a comprehensive policy provides management with a better understanding of the consequences of their responses to students' sexual harassment claims (McMullen 2019). Such an omission of some college activities in the policy contents creates a gap in knowledge about sexual harassment in areas not covered by the policy (Bennet 2009). This may cause victims to fail to report cases of sexual harassment in areas omitted by the policy (Jourbert et al. 2011). Leaving out some college activities in the policy may lead to a lack of institutional close monitoring and tracking of sexual harassment incidents in the omitted sectors. Such sectors could in turn experience sexual harassment more strongly when compared to those covered by the policy (Britz 2007). The omission of other spaces of sexual harassment is against the fact that a policy should be based on the experiences of victims and perpetrators (Fitzgerald et al.1997). It is also against the point that policy development should be bottom-up rather than top-down (Bennet et al. 2009). The bottom-up approach may result in members disowning its implementation. Thus, the institutions' lack of a comprehensive policy may compromise its implementation. Lacking policy comprehensiveness is problematic in that an institution may lack a mechanism to detect and resolve all cases as per international expectations, resulting in the high prevalence of sexual harassment.

The policy implementation challenges experienced by the college could stem from the absence of a sexual harassment policy at the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development which colleges of education fall under (SAYWHAT 2019). Policy absence at the Ministry is against the principle of gender mainstreaming in education (NGP 2014). It is against the ILO 2019's (No. 190) recommendation that governments should put in place policy measures to address the issue. It is also a reflection of the disregard of the principle for good governance (Tanyanyiwa 2015). The point is also against calls for a national

sexual harassment policy formulation and implementation (Zindi 1994). The idea does not take consideration the fact that policy formulation and implementation is an aspect of gender mainstreaming best practices (Tanyanyiwa 2015). The policy may then be used as a guideline and reference point by higher and tertiary education institutions in the country.

Ministry policy helps to support and evaluate steps taken by institutions when investigating GBV violations (NGP 2014). This helps in determining the principal direction of the handling of sexual harassment by institutions (Sithole and Dziva 2019). The absence of a sexual harassment policy at Ministry level is contrary to the fact that it leads to weak monitoring mechanisms (UN 2010). This makes it difficult for the Ministry to assess the impact of institutional policies and programmes with nothing to refer to. The absence of the Ministry-wide sexual harassment policy could be attributed to ignorance of international law that prevents members from regarding its formulation and implementation as key (ILO 2019). Policy absence at this level could cause the Ministry not to assume sexual harassment incidents at institutions as her responsibility, resulting in institutional management using their own discretion when handling such cases (Mawere 2014). Such policy absence at Ministry level may influence institutions without policies in place to be reluctant to develop their own. This is because the policy presence at the Ministry could have been used to enforce institutions to develop and implement similar policies. The absence of a Ministry sexual harassment policy creates a scapegoat for colleges of education to use their personal discretion when dealing with sexual harassment (Mawere 2014). Such a practice causes disharmony in the handling of sexual harassment incidents by institutions of learning under the same Ministry (Costa 2020). This also causes institutions without policies to rely on college-based disciplinary codes that are not standard when dealing with sexual harassment (Mawere 2014). Treating sexual harassment as a disciplinary issue trivialises the problem. The use of personal discretion in dealing with sexual harassment cases increases institutional chances of mishandling such incidents, discouraging victims from reporting.

Policy absence at Ministry level could be attributed to a lack of gender mainstreaming in the education sector. Gender mainstreaming is crucial in achieving gender equality in all sectors of development, particularly in higher and tertiary education by

understanding the diverse needs of men and women (Mawere 2014). It is an equal opportunity strategy that has serious positive implications on the quality of the teaching and learning in institutions of higher learning (Tanyanyiwa 2015). It is also a strategy to address subtle forms of disadvantage or discrimination such as sexual harassment (Tanyanyiwa 2015). Gender mainstreaming is an inclusive concept that also embraces cultural ideas and interpretations about maleness and femaleness as well as structural inequalities that emanate from these differences (NGP 2014). It aims to minimise obstacles for women's participation in higher education (Mawere 2014) and aims to make gender dimensions explicit while considering the concerns and constraints of male and female students' experiences, resulting in quality outcomes (Tanyanyiwa 2015). In this perspective, gender mainstreaming enables a more systematic approach to sexual harassment at higher education institutions, resulting in best practices in the handling of cases and giving room for students' empowered responses.

The failure to mainstream gender at the institution could be attributed to the fact that such issues remain peripheral in institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe (Tanyanyiwa 2015). This could explain why most teacher training colleges' curricula do not include gender in terms of pedagogy (Mawere 2014). The failure to mainstream gender could lead to a lack of budgetary allocations for gender responsive pedagogy, which may result in the initiative to be donor-driven (Tanyanyiwa 2015). The lack of a budgetary allocation for gender issues may make it difficult for colleges of education to initiate such activities, leading to a possible dependency syndrome on donor funding by the Ministry and its institutions (UNGREZ). An over dependency on donor funding might slowdown implementation strategies by institutions, in case of delayed or withdrawn funding (Tanyanyiwa 2015).

Institutional failure to mainstream gender could also be attributed to the underlying patriarchal ideology which interferes with implementation strategies (UN 2010). The patriarchal ideology of keeping women in subordinate positions in society continues to socialise men and women to maintain the status quo (Ritzer 2008). This results in viewing issues of gender equality, particularly gender mainstreaming as attempts to challenge the status quo (Mawere 2014). The proper legal and policy intentions may not be followed because of the interface of patriarchal ideology and attempts to

mainstream gender in colleges of education. This could be a reason why the national legal frameworks such as the constitution (No. 20: 2013), Labour Act (28: 01) and the SI 1 of 2000 are not specific about sexual harassment in higher education institutions. The lack of specificity about sexual harassment could be derived from the interference of the patriarchal ideology into the legal system, leading to institutional resistance to mainstreaming gender, either consciously or subconsciously (Matsikidze 2017). This in turn influences institutional management to have tendencies for treating sexual harassment as a private matter due to negative attitudes and perceptions about the problem (NGP 2014). Some such perceptions involve the thinking that when people talk about gender, they imply women or radical western feminism (Tanyanyiwa 2015). Such negative perceptions cause management to fail to mainstream gender, negatively impacting on students' responses.

It is also possible that the failure to mainstream gender at the college could be out of a lack of knowledge about how to go about implementing the concept (Sithole and Dziva 2019). Such lack of knowledge could result in some institutions having prohibitive structures for curbing sexual harassment (Bennet 2002). The lack of knowledge about gender mainstreaming could also be because the concept is defined and interpreted differently (Costa 2020). Such differences in the interpretation of gender mainstreaming could lead to some institutions regarding the concept as important, while others may not, resulting in a lack of interest on the issue.

The sexual harassment policy implementation challenges experienced at the college could also stem from the Zimbabwean constitution (No. 20: 2013)'s vague description of what constitutes sexual harassment. Although it is clear that the framework for protecting people from GBV, particularly women from sexual harassment is covered in the constitution, it is very broad (Matsikidze 2017). This is despite the fact that the constitution obligates Zimbabwe to promote gender balance and the full participation of women in all spheres of society in Section 14. It also provides that the state should take all measures necessary to ensure that both genders are equally represented in all institutions and agencies of government. Furthermore, Section 80 of the constitution provides for equal rights and opportunities between men and women and outlaws all laws, customs, traditions and cultural practices that infringe on the rights of women. Thus, despite having a framework for the protection of women, the constitution does

not clearly provide for the right to be protected against sexual harassment. The generalised description leads to a poor understanding of the topic (Mawere 2014). A lay definition of sexual harassment may arise, varying from person to person, compromising on responses to the problem (Fitzgerald et al.1997).

The Zimbabwe Constitution has no provisions for complaint procedures, remedies for victims of sexual harassment or sanctions for perpetrators (Matsikidze 2017). Sexual harassment is not regarded as a criminal offence except for rape, severe cyber bullying and physical assault (Matsikidze 2017). The selective criminalisation of sexual harassment may lead to some cases to be treated as a light offence (Kanyemba and Naidu 2019). Some such cases might be regarded as misbehaviour and not as a criminal offence (McMullen 2019). The non-criminalisation of cases might result in the passing of lenient sentencing to perpetrators by the courts of law (Mawere 2014). This may also result in a high case dismissal rate and low persecution and conviction rats for offenders that discourages victims from reporting after noticing that it was futile, causing high prevalence of sexual harassment (Beckett 2007). Such lenience makes the drawing of proper conclusions about sexual harassment challenging, which may cause cases to persist unchecked. Thus, the sanctioning of sexual harassment in alignment with the country's criminal law might become difficult (Museka and Kaguda 2013). The provision of reliable statistical evidence on sexual harassment cases may be compromised, which has a negative impact on preventive efforts at institutional and national levels, thus negatively affecting students' responses.

The failure to criminalise all forms of sexual harassment may render victims incapable of knowing whether some incidents are serious enough to report, causing such incidents to continue (Bhatia 2014). Institutions may be uncertain about how best to resolve incidents of sexual harassment, leading to the mishandling of cases as discussed earlier (Henry 2002). Such selective criminalisation of some forms of sexual harassment breeds confusion that may result in cases being managed 'in the dark' by college authorities (Smit and Du Plessis 2011). The non-criminalisation of some forms of sexual harassment might have created a scapegoat for colleges to use their discretion when handling sexual harassment resulting in its continued prevalence. Management could fail to label some cases as sexual harassment, but instead regard them as a "love affair that has gone sour" (Beckett 2007). Institutions may fail to form

a disciplinary committee that is neutral, thus perpetuating sexual harassment (Brannon 2011). Management might also feel that they are not responsible for sexual harassment that happens at their institutions especially when the forms are not listed as criminal (Germain 2016). They might also treat sexual harassment as a private matter when attempting to avoid liability on such issues (Smit and Du Plessis 2011).

The fact that sexual harassment is considered a civil and not criminal offence in Zimbabwe is problematic because it may be difficult for victims to build evidence against the perpetrator based on incidents that have no legal reference and backing (Matsikidze 2011; Piccirillo 2019). The lack of a legal reference for sexual harassment leads it to not to be regarded as key, ultimately increasing the chances of its occurrence. This in turn causes perpetrators to go unpunished, resulting in victims resorting in using inappropriate words loosely, especially towards females (Henry 2002). Thus, the non-criminalisation of some forms of sexual harassment, particularly the verbal form, negatively impacts on students' responses and perpetuates sexual harassment.

However, it is worth noting that even though the Zimbabwean law criminalises some sexual offences such as rape and physical assault as earlier discussed, the same crimes remain widespread (Tanyanyiwa 2015). This could be attributed to the fact that although some sexual offences are punishable by prison sentence, the sentences are not consistent (Tanyanyiwa 2015). Such inconsistence when sentencing crimes of sexual harassment might continue to inhibit the reporting of cases.

The provision of an unclear description of sexual harassment by the country's Constitution is problematic in that it acts as a weak springboard into which all other Acts tap. Thus, when the constitution is unclear about sexual harassment, so are its Acts/Instruments, causing the problem to continue to exist in the country despite the enactment of the National Gender Policy (2007), the Domestic Violence Bill (2007) and the Sexual Offences Act (2001) discussed earlier. Another problem which might emanate from the unclear description of sexual harassment could be the lack of alignment with the constitution of the Acts covering the topic (Matsikidze 2017). The lack of alignment may cause disharmony in the way sexual harassment is handled nationally (Dzimiri 2014). The lack of awareness of the law by both the perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment may arise, leading perpetrators not to fear engaging

in such behaviour as there could be nothing to deter them from doing so (Alston and Goodman 2013). Hence, when the understanding of sexual harassment is narrow, so are the responses because victims might find it difficult to appropriately respond to a phenomenon they do not understand (Chege 2006). In other words, a proper description of sexual harassment is an expression of adequate understanding which in turn results in empowered responses and case reduction.

Like the constitution, the Zimbabwe Labour Act (28:01) that covers employer-employee relationships narrowly defines sexual harassment under section 8 as an unfair labour practice. This definition is too general for cases of sexual harassment in education contexts because the concept of an unfair labour practice is an umbrella term that does not cover relationships in non- employment contexts such as student-to-student and lecturer-to-student relationships (Matsikidze 2017). In addition, for the act to treat sexual harassment as an unfair labour practice is to trivialise the gravity of the offence in as far as it degrades women (Katsande 2008). Furthermore, Section 6 (1) of the Act provides penalties of the unfair labour practice as cessation of labour, compensation and criminal sanction, which again is too generalised for sexual harassment incidents, particularly those involving adult students at higher education institutions (Tanyanyiwa 2015).

The Labour Act also lacks clear policy and special procedure for detecting and resolving sexual harassment cases (Dzimiri 2014). The Act provides for compensation of the victim but does not provide formulae for calculating the amount of compensation in relation to the harm done to the victim (Matsikidze 2017). Also, the cessation remedy does not address injuries or trauma that the victim may have undergone (Matsikidze 2017). The Act also fails to put mechanism in place to ensure that there is no further sexual harassment towards the victim by the perpetrator and sympathetic others (Katsande 2008). Further to that, it fails to provide for any counselling and other support services for the victim (Tanyanyiwa 2015). The Labour Act's lack of a full application in Colleges of education contexts may cause institutions to manage cases in the dark, thus causing them to mishandle incidents (Coetzee 2012). This suggests that when the Labour Act 28:01 is not specific about sexual harassment, its remedies may become insufficient, leading to institutional mismanagement of cases and discouraging victims from disclosure.

The college of education's sexual harassment policy implementation challenges could stem from the SI 1 of 2000 which also lacks a clear provision of what sexual harassment entails. The Instrument describes sexual harassment as a misconduct in Section 4 (SI 1 of 2000). Although section 4 defines misconduct as improper, threatening, insubordinate, or discourteous behaviour, including sexual harassment during the course of duty towards any member of the public, it does not specifically define sexual harassment, but instead places it in association with prohibited and unacceptable conduct (Katsande 2008; Dzimiri 2014). It also does not list the actual types of behaviour which amount to sexual harassment (Chimombe 2012). Such descriptions of sexual harassment as mere misconduct are too general for colleges of education, leading it to be demeaned and not treated with the gravity it deserves, leading to non-reporting of cases (Matsikidze 2017).

In addition, the SI 1 of 2000 besides being a labour law covering government employees, only pertains to the sexual harassment of minors at primary and secondary schools where teachers are expected to act *in loco parentis* toward the learners they teach (Makaudze and Gudhlanga 2014). Education college students are not covered by this Instrument because they are considered consenting adults by virtue of their being above the age of 18 (Dzimiri 2014). The Instrument covers employee relationships but does not cover lecturer-to-students and student-to-student (peer) relationships in higher and tertiary education institutions which colleges of education resort under (Matsikidze 2017). Also, the SI 1 of 2000 does not cover lecturer-to-student and non-lecturing staff-to-student consensual relationships (Kanyemba and Naidu 2019). The Instrument is disempowering to students' response strategies because it causes them to remain silent when in relationships they do not know are forbidden. Therefore, the college students engage in non-employment relationships that are not covered by the SI 1 of 2000, leaving them with no legal Act that is specific to them (Kabaya 2018). This could be the reason why peer-to-peer sexual harassment has overtaken the lecturer-to-student one at Colleges of education as will be discussed later (see section 5.5). The lack of the S1 1 of 2000 Act's specificity to colleges of education may result in most qualified teachers remaining unaware of their rights and the rights of those they teach (Dzimiri 2014). This could in turn creates a cycle of sexual abuse at secondary and at higher and tertiary education institutions which might be difficult to curb.

Furthermore, the disciplinary procedures to be followed in the SI 1 of 2000 after a sexual harassment encounter are cumbersome and there is no time-frame given for the investigation period (Katsande 2008). The disciplinary procedures are supposed to take 14 days from one stage to another, causing it to take many months if not years, sometimes until after the victimised student graduates (Katsande 2008). This discourages reporting as victims regard it as a long and winding process (Mawere 2014). The instrument is also inadequate in terms of addressing sexual harassment cases because it is yet to be aligned with the Zimbabwean constitution (Matsikidze 2017). This creates fertile ground for lenient sentencing of perpetrators of sexual harassment by courts of law (Coetzee 2012). Thus, so long as the constitution (No.20: 2013), the Labour Act (28:01) and the SI 1 of 2000 continues to have insufficient content, lacks clarity and relevance about sexual harassment particularly in colleges of education, institutions may continue to experience policy implementation challenges and negatively impacting students' responses.

5.4. PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The point that the prevalence of sexual harassment was high but stable at the college could be reliable to some extent. This could be so, given the passage of time influencing the Zimbabwean government to establish the National Gender Policy (2004), Ministry of Gender, Women's Affairs and Development (2007), Domestic Violence Bill (2007), the Sexual Offences Act (2001) and the Telecommunications Act (2001) among other developments to curb GBV. The acts could have contributed to a stable prevalence of sexual harassment in the country, including Colleges of education. The introduction of these acts could have stabilised the incidence of sexual harassment in the country including colleges of education. The acts could also have facilitated the sentencing and litigation of perpetrators of rape and sexual assault, resulting in changes in behaviour and deterring possible perpetrators. Furthermore, the handling of sexual harassment at higher and tertiary institutions could have improved, leading to the reduction of such incidents.

The non-governmental organisations working on GBV in Zimbabwe and pressure groups such as the Musasa project, SAYWHAT, Matabeleland Aids Council and

Female Student Network Trust, among others, whose aim is to further expose the issue could have contributed to the stable prevalence of sexual harassment. Also, the pressure groups' lobbying for the end of violence against women through the country's yearly 16 days of activism against GBV campaign could have sensitised the nation about the evils brought about by the practice (ZHRC 2015). Similarly, the yearly International Women's Day commemorations on the 8th of March in the country which encourages the nation to desist from engaging in violence against women among other issues could also have encouraged the respect for women in all sectors of life.

Currently, SAYWHAT has been raising awareness about sexual harassment and the training peer educators as well as educating male students at colleges on Sexual and Reproductive Health issues since 2013. SAYWHAT has also been involved in policy advocacy and formulation which has the potential to increase awareness and improve knowledge levels of the college community on sexual harassment. An ongoing SAYWHAT male student cultural grooming programme at colleges of education called Mugota/Ixhiba men's forum could be extended to female students. This cultural phenomenon could help shape the behaviour and character of most students at the college and nationally (SAYWHAT 2019). Through its edutainment activities, SAYWHAT has managed to reach out to more than 5000 students with the various reading materials it produces and distributes to about 36 tertiary institutions in the country (SAYWHAT 2019). This civil society is also involved in the One Guy campaign where male students were each encouraged to recruit one male peer for the program (SAYWHAT 2019). The education of students can be achieved through giving support and allowing them to share their stories (Museka and Kaguda 2013). This can have a positive effect on how students view themselves and the world around them, enabling appropriate responses to sexual harassment (Jacobson 2018). Thus, with more knowledge, female students can avoid being victimised. Given this, it is possible that the high prevalence of sexual harassment reported by earlier studies since 1994 could have stabilised due to campaigns that could have conscientised members about the problem, contributing to behavioural changes towards sexual harassment in colleges of education.

The civil society organisations help to advice and support policy formulation, implementation and legislative reviews, as well as evaluating and monitoring GBV

violations at institutions (NGP 2014). Some engage in lobbying the government to end sexual harassment through advocacy, workshops and funding of GBV-focused activities (Tanyanyiwa 2015). Civil society coordinated approaches help to raise awareness and empower institutions in dealing with sexual harassment, transforming their responses to the problem. Civil society organisations also encourage open platforms for GBV platforms for males and females to help eliminate attitudes that restrain them from open discussions and reporting sexual harassment as discussed earlier (NGP 2014). Thus, colleges of education cannot equip students with appropriate responses towards sexual harassment alone without the help of multi-sectoral coordinated approaches.

However, the insistence by some participants that the prevalence of sexual harassment was low at the college, citing formal reports that came forth, estimated at two to 15 in a quarter, could be misleading. This is because sexual harassment is reported to be prevalent in all forms at the college, i.e. verbal, physical and non-verbal. Sexual harassment was also reported to be found in almost all college spaces, such as during teaching practice, at sports events, during evening functions, in lecture rooms, during physical education practical lessons, particularly at the gym and swimming pool, when queuing to enter the dining hall and boarding overcrowded buses particularly for sports, when submitting late assignments, at research project consultations and when walking along corridors. This widespread incidence of sexual harassment within all college spaces constitutes could be enough evidence for the high prevalence.

The argument of a low prevalence of sexual harassment at the college is made against the fact that it is considered prevalent in most institutions of higher learning globally (UNCRC 2016; Costa 2020). The point also disregards the point that the rate at which sexual harassment is managed is low internationally (Elton et al. 2019). It also disregards the point that colleges of education are hard hit by sexual harassment when compared to vocational colleges, polytechnics and universities in Zimbabwe (Kapfunde and Zengeya 2010; Hillside Teachers' College sexual harassment Policy 2016). This also contradicts the point that a lack of clarity on what sexual harassment entails emanating from the legal and policy gaps might be contributing to its high prevalence in higher and tertiary education institutions in Zimbabwe (Matsikidze 2017).

This point is also contradictory in that it is against the fact that most sexual harassment cases in institutions of higher and tertiary learning internationally go unreported (Gartner 2019). The argument also goes against the NGP's (2014) point that most institutions do not attempt to quantify the number of informal complaints they receive, leading to inaccurate statistical evidence. This causes some members to naively assume that low complaint rates imply low incidences of sexual harassment (Abe 2012). This causes those responsible for ascertaining sexual harassment prevalence to wonder what the real state of its prevalence on campus was (Gouws and Kritzinger 1992).

The argument that sexual harassment was of low prevalence at the college is made against the point that some colleges of education in the country are facing policy implementation challenges which may perpetuate its prevalence (Tanyanyiwa 2015; Sithole and Dziva 2019). It also disregards that the college sexual harassment policy is not comprehensive enough to cover all sectors of college life, rendering it unable to contribute to the reduction of incidents as discussed earlier. This implies that the presence of the sexual harassment policy at the college could not have reduced the prevalence of incidents, given its limitations of lacking specificity concerning teacher education in Zimbabwe among other gaps (Tanyanyiwa 2015). The earlier suggestion that the policy could have been put in place as lip service indicates that no change could be expected from it in so far as the reduction of sexual harassment is concerned.

In addition, low rates of reporting cases of sexual harassment do not suggest that 'all is well'. Rather, low reporting demonstrates that the majority of victims deliberately avoid going through the institution (NGP 2014). When considering Dhlomo et al.'s (2012) words that "one act of sexual harassment is too many", the indications are that, sexual harassment is highly prevalent at the college. This implies that, what may be important is the experience of sexual harassment, not big percentages (Dziech and Weiner 1990). The argument also does not take into consideration that there is the tendency for victims to report incidents of sexual harassment more often if they have the assurances of confidentiality, safety and promises that the incidents will be thoroughly investigated (Buluma 2008). The argument also disregards the statistical evidence by ZimStat (2019) that almost one woman is abused every hour in Zimbabwe, indicating the high prevalence nature of sexual harassment.

The finding that sexual harassment is considered less prevalent at the college also disregards Sithole and Dziva's (2019) findings that the rate of sexual harassment prevalence has not changed in Zimbabwe since Zindi's (1994) ground-breaking study. The point is made against the background that studies indicate a high prevalence of sexual harassment of female students in institutions of higher and tertiary learning by lecturers, non-teaching staff and their own male counterparts (Zindi 1994; SAYWHAT 2019). Zindi's (1994) study reveals that 99% of the students agreed that there was sexual harassment at their institutions of learning and of these, 18% indicated that they have been asked for sexual favours. In addition, a baseline survey of universities, polytechnics and teachers' colleges by Munando (2015) revealed that 98% of female students reported having encountered sexual harassment and that 94% of these would not report it to the authorities. Thus, there could be smaller likelihood of lowered prevalence of cases at the college when other higher and tertiary institutions in the country are considered to be experiencing a high prevalence of sexual harassment.

The African region, like in Zimbabwe, considers sexual harassment as highly prevalent at higher education institutions. South Africa is regarded as a nucleus of violence against women and girls (Smit and Du Plessis 2011). Sexual harassment is also reported as being prevalent at institutions of higher learning in Nigeria (Akpotor 2013; Abe 2012). Additionally, Buluma (2009) and Rintaugu et al. (2014) revealed the prevalence of sexual harassment in Kenya whilst Kayuni's (2009) considered that it was rife in Malawi. This, again, indicates a smaller likelihood that the college of education under study could be experiencing a lower prevalence of sexual harassment than her regional counterparts.

Similarly, internationally, studies confirm that institutions of higher learning are struggling with the high prevalence of sexual harassment (Elton et al. 2019; Schoen et al. 2020). Costa (2020) confirms that sexual harassment was prevalent in the UK, Brazil and Portugal whilst Piccirillo (2019) regards it as an epidemic in the US and Australian universities, where one in five women on university campuses is sexually assaulted. This indicates that sexual harassment has not significantly decreased regionally or internationally over the past decades.

Furthermore, the fact that participants attributed the high prevalence of sexual harassment at the college to management's tendencies to mishandle cases

contradicts the point that the incidents are prevalent but stable. It emerged that management was not taking action on sexual harassment reports by failing to discipline perpetrators, suspend or expel perpetrators. It also dismisses cases, fails to investigate cases on time, blame victims for their sexual harassment, protects perpetrators, allows some perpetrators to constitute disciplinary hearing committees and fails to comply with confidentiality. This indicates that the institutional mishandling of cases gives room for a high prevalence of sexual harassment at the college (Gwirayi and Shumba 2011). In Dzimiri's (2014) terms, the lack of action on sexual harassment cases is 'sweeping the matter under the carpet' by management, resulting in a high prevalence of cases. Such practice creates an impression in victims that management believes perpetrators over them and that they might go unpunished, thereby discouraging reporting (Plan International 2019). The institutional mishandling of cases also leads victims to think that management is powerless by not being responsive to their complaints (Germain 2016). This also creates a lack of faith in the system by victims, resulting in non-disclosure and causing the problem to persist (Buluma 2008). Given this argument, one can submit that sexual harassment could be highly prevalent at the college of education.

In addition, the argument which regards sexual harassment as of low prevalence at the college is against Mawere's (2014) point of a lack of gender mainstreaming in the teacher education curriculum. The fact that gender is not a compulsory course module at colleges of education in Zimbabwe may lead to a high prevalence of sexual harassment due to a lack of sensitisation on the topic (Zvobgo 2014). Thus, the failure to mainstream gender may lead institutions to fail to tackle the underlying root causes of sexual harassment, causing its high prevalence.

The finding attributing scant research on sexual harassment to its prevalence in colleges of education could be true. Disregarding this point could come from a lack of knowledge that research should be promoted for the realisation of gender mainstreaming at the college and nationally (Zvobgo 2014). It is also against the fact that research dispels ignorance about sexual harassment and improves its management (Mawere 2014). The lack of research on sexual harassment may lead to inaccurate documentation of evidence, making it difficult to learn either from the mistakes or successes of any of the earlier intervention strategies (UN 2010). With the

absence of accurate evidence, it may be convenient for institutional management to deny or ignore the issue. From this perspective, research on sexual harassment enables the dissemination of findings to stakeholders that would in turn contribute to evidence-based gender legislations, policy reviews and programmes as well as enabling proper monitoring and evaluation of such incidents.

Also, the sexual harassment policy absence at Ministry level may indicate a possible high prevalence of the problem within its institutions. The Ministerial policy if present, could have given formulae on the handling of sexual harassment by institutions (Bennet 2002). This could have provided the proper and crucial guidance for the handling and monitoring of sexual harassment incidents (Jourbert et al. 2011). The absence of a sexual harassment policy at the Ministry level causes institutions to manage the problem independently and could in turn have caused a lack of enforcement measures from above, thereby perpetuating sexual harassment.

The argument that sexual harassment at the college remains highly prevalent could be true given the economic situation Zimbabwe is currently facing. This has caused many families to fall below the poverty line (Shumba 2000). Students from such families are likely to come to the college hungry or with little money to buy food (Shumba 2000). Kitchen staff can take advantage of this situation to sexually harass female students for extra food. This is disempowering to female students' responses as they fear being denied food if they reject or report the sexual demands from kitchen staff. This poverty could also influence female students to make advances on males for favours or financial gain (Knapp et al. 1997). The need for financial gain in consensual relationships creates a desperate atmosphere in students who cannot afford to fail their course (Matsikidze 2017). Perpetrators are taking advantage of this to pounce on women particularly female students (Matsikidze 2017). The indications are that students' lack of understanding about sexual harassment largely causes them to misconstrue consensual relationships as being rich in benefits, making them unable to resist or report incidents of sexual harassment. Thus, the financial situation the country is experiencing has become fertile ground for sexual harassment. It could be true that poverty remains one of the causes of students' desperation to pass the course by all means in order to avoid incurring extra fees or other costs after being given a repeat (Makaudze and Gudhlanga 2014). The desperation to pass exposes female

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students to sexual harassment by their lecturers in return for pass marks, food and other financial gains (Muchena et al. 2013). This is in tandem with the critical theory that considers the marginalised status of women in society as exposing them to sexual harassment by men, thus rendering them unassertive to resist the abuse (Farganis 2011).

The manifestation of sexual harassment in verbal, non-verbal and physical forms also confirms its high prevalence at the college. It became evident that the forms of sexual harassment which include sexual touching, rape, attempted rape, sexual comments, jokes, songs about the body and attire, sexual invitations, advances, cyber bullying, threats and intimidations, victimisations, sexual gifts, spreading of sexual lies/rumours and consensual relationships are widespread at the college. Of these forms, verbal harassment was listed as the most common experience followed by cyber bullying with physical harassment being the least common.

The reason why verbal harassment was listed as a common experience by victims could be that the behaviour is not criminalised (Chimombe 2012). This suggests that, when behaviour is not questioned, the likelihood of its repetition becomes high (Dorota 2002). The recurrence of verbal harassment might cause a tendency to trivialise its impact on victims (Germain 2016). Verbal harassment is difficult for victims to build evidence against the perpetrator thereby discouraging them from disclosure (Brannon 2011). This causes non-reporting from victims, resulting in verbal harassment to continue to manifest unchecked as few people could recognise the damage brought about by such incidents leading to under-reporting (NGP 2014). This perpetuates sexual harassment by letting perpetrators continue with their harassment unabated and preventing victims from reacting appropriately as the behaviour could be regarded normal and not fit for reporting and prosecution.

The study also established that cyber bullying in the form of unwelcome WhatsApp messages, phone calls and pornographic content is the second most common form of harassment experienced at the college. This second rating could be attributed to the country's Postal and Telecommunications Act (2000) which criminalises the sending of serious and abusive messages electronically. However, the consideration of some forms of sexual harassment as being the most serious is problematic in that the context

and perceived severity of an offence could differ amongst individuals culturally and religiously (Beckett 2007). This is despite the fact that cyber bullying takes similar forms and shows similar prevalence patterns internationally due to the common nature of technological advancements (Costa 2020). The rating of cyber bullying as the second most experienced form of sexual harassment could be attributed to ignorance about cybercrime laws (NGP 2014). Such ignorance causes victims to regard cyber bullying as normal and leads perpetrators to continue with their sexually harassing behaviours, causing victims to fail to respond appropriately.

The revelations that physical forms of sexual harassment are the least commonly experienced at the college and that the incidents occur in offices/storerooms and during teaching practice are indications of its prevalence. Rape cases were considered common after evening functions when students are drunk, in the offices of lecturers/mentors, at lecturers' homes and during project consultations. The consideration of physical harassment as the least common form of sexual harassment could be attributed to the criminalisation of physical assault and rape through the Sexual Offences Act (2001) and the Gender Based Violence Act (2007). The sentencing and litigation attached to the offences deters possible perpetrators from engaging in the forbidden sexual harassment acts (Morley 2005). With physical harassment, it is also easier for victims to build evidence against the perpetrator, thereby encouraging them to disclose their experiences (Brannon 2011).

The idea that sexual harassment should be non-consensual disregards the fact that a non-performing student can surrender to the perpetrator to acquire pass marks for their course (Makaudze and Gudhlanga 2014). This suggests a relationship between student's academic performance and sexual harassment (Shumba 2000). The argument is that students who are performing poorly are more likely to be taken advantage of by lecturers for passing grades when they become desperate to pass, while it is less likely for well-performing students to comply with sexual demands because they are already passing their courses and are not in need of an intervention.

The discussion in the current section has proved beyond doubt that despite the adoption of the international legal frameworks on GBV in Zimbabwe through amendments to the constitution, through GBV advocacy campaigns and through the

development of sexual harassment policies in some institutions of higher learning, sexual harassment remains highly prevalent at the college in various forms within all its domains. The discussion has also shown that the prevalence of sexual harassment was regarded to be low because of participants' tendencies to conceal their experiences. This is also because global, regional and national trends on sexual harassment prevention have not changed much over the past decades (Tanyanyiwa 2015). Thus, given the global prevalence of sexual harassment, it is highly unlikely that the college of education under study could be the only one experiencing a drop in the number of sexual harassment incidences. There is therefore a higher likelihood of an increase of sexual harassment at the college than a decrease.

5.5. PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The current study has established that female students were frequently abused at the college and males, who are the minority, tends to be the perpetrators. The male perpetrators were listed as lecturers, male students, coaches, kitchen staff, security guards, mentors and senior teachers in schools. Of these, male students were singled out as the major perpetrators of sexual harassment of female students at the college. However, there were incidences which involved female-to-male sexual harassment.

The argument considering female students as the most likely major victims of sexual harassment at the college is in contrast with the point that women's abuse status is not permanent but can change with empowerment, leading to their emancipation from the problem (Chafetz 2006). The finding also disregards the fact that female students can also perpetrate sexual harassment against males (Zindi 1994). The argument is contrary to the fact that males are also victims of sexual harassment yet they rarely report it due to their socialisation of not wanting to appear sexually weak (Buluma 2009). This could be the reason why women, who are considered sexually weak in a patriarchy, have higher reporting rates than those of men (Chafetz 2006). Such non-reporting could have given rise to the false belief that males are not sexually harassed by females.

Considering female students as the most likely victims of sexual harassment is against the transformative intent of critical theory which is concerned about moving people from oppression to emancipation (Farganis 2011; Ritzer 2008). The vulnerability of

female students to sexual harassment, according to critical theory, could stem from women's traditional gender roles they passively occupy in patriarchal society (Kottak 2009). This then compromises their fundamental rights and leaves women unable to resist sexual harassment (Sithole and Dziva 2019). This makes sexual harassment a principle of patriarchy transmitted culturally along gender lines, causing female students to continue with their marginalised status at education institutions that exposes them to sexual harassment by men (Strunk and Betties 2019; Karugahe 2016).

However, considering female students as the most likely victims of sexual harassment disregards the fact that there is same sex harassment of men-on -men and women-on-women (Okeke 2011). This could emanate from the fact that sexual harassment is not sufficiently reported (Finchilescu and Dugard 2018). The non-reporting could also be due ignorance about what sexual harassment entails as discussed earlier (Mudau et al. 2018). Thus, although this argument is against that of Paludi (2016) indicating that female students are highly unlikely to initiate sexual relationships with their professors, it has been shown that they are capable of sexually harassing others, be it of people from the same sex or of the opposite sex.

The finding that female students were frequently abused at an institution where they are the majority is contrary to findings by Mawere's (2014) and Paludi's (2016) that female students in male dominated colleges are frequently victimised. This is contrary to the fact that female students at the college are considered the major victims even though they are the majority when compared to their male counterparts. This is because, the student enrolment at the college of education under study was 1500 in 2020 (1140 females: 360 males), (HTC registry office; HTC Strategic Plan 2020-2024). This shows that there are more female students than males at the colleges of education. The staff complement at the college was 120 in January 2020 (HTC Strategic Plan 2020-2024). Of these, 60 are lecturers (27 females: 33 males) whilst 60 (15 females: 45 males) were non-lecturing staff. This indicates that even though the college of education has more female students, there are more male staff members than females. Similarly, the student population in Zimbabwean colleges of education as at 2020 was 34% males and 76% females (MHTEISTD 2020). This shows that even though there are more female students than males at the college, females experience sexual harassment more often than men.

The determination that male-to-female student sexual harassment was topping the list is in contradiction with earlier findings in Zimbabwe which singled out lecturer-to-female students as the major category (Chireshe and Chireshe 2009; Kanyemba and Naidu 2019). The change in major perpetrators could be attributed to the SI 1 of 2000 which does not cover student-to-student relationships as discussed earlier (Matsikidze 2017). This leaves college of education students without a legal Instrument to protect them, causing peer sexual harassment to continue (Katsande 2008). The male-to-female sexual harassment at the college could also be attributed to a lack of a comprehensive policy which could have empowered students about what sexual harassment entail as well as the steps to take after experiencing such incidents (Jourbert et al. 2011). The consideration of male students as the major perpetrators of sexual harassment could also stem from a lack of punishment on student perpetrators, such as instituting expulsions, warnings and suspensions (Katsande 2008). This leaves male perpetrators without anything to deter them from committing such acts, causing them to be considered the most frequent perpetrators of sexual harassment when compared to lecturers and other members of staff.

However, the fact that sexual harassment was reported to continue to exist despite the higher female enrolment figures at colleges of education in Zimbabwe suggests the possibility of other factors at play, chief among them being a gap in appropriate responses to such incidents. This could point to the fact that increasing female enrolments without appropriate responses, may not succeed in combating sexual harassment in higher and tertiary education institutions (Mawere 2014). It is also interesting to note that the attempts to balance gender at higher and tertiary level for staff may fail to reach out to the students. It is possible that this exercise may only help to empower female staff but not female students. In as much as this initiative of gender balancing at staffing level is appreciated, it may be true that a small section is benefiting, leaving out the majority, who, in this case are female students who are thus further exposed to sexual harassment. This calls for institutions of higher learning, particularly colleges of education, to embark on a sexual harassment empowerment drive for all members.

The determination that regards female students as the most likely major victims of sexual harassment could be attributed to the socialisation of males and females in a patriarchy where men are given more power than women, which they continue to take advantage of at institutions of learning (Gwirayi and Shumba 2011). In a patriarchy, women are taught to submit to men and overlook their sexually harassing behaviours (European Commission 1998). The finding is in line with the point that the patriarchal nature of Zimbabwean society renders women to be more strongly affected by GBV than men due to societal norms concerning sexual rights and a socialisation process that condones abuse (Tanyanyiwa 2015). Such socialisation prevents female students from appropriately resisting sexual harassment, making them perpetual victims (Brannon 2011). The finding is consistent with studies conducted by Gwirayi and Shumba (2011) and Kanyemba and Naidu (2019) which revealed sexual harassment as an instrument of gender discrimination mostly applied against women in Zimbabwe. The finding also confirms studies conducted by Henry (2002) that found that female students are the major recipients of sexual harassment from their lecturers, peers and college staff. This is attributed to the maintaining of the patriarchy by MacKinnon (1979), while Karugahe (2016) considers it a manifestation of gender power targeted predominantly at women. The point is in line with the feminist theory which regards females as perpetual victims of sexual abuse in a patriarchy (Ritzer 2008).

The finding that female students perpetrate sexual harassment against their male counterparts and lecturers goes against earlier assertions that it is a women-specific issue (Schoen et al. 2020). It disregards the point that female students at higher and tertiary education institutions in Zimbabwe are the most likely victims of sexual harassment (Kanyemba and Naidu 2019). The finding is also against critical theory which attributes the sexual harassment of female students to their powerlessness in a patriarchal society (Farganis 2011). The finding also disregards that cultural socialisation in patriarchy forces women into submission to men's demands, especially sexually, even in abusive situations (Sithole and Dziva 2019). The point is contrary to the fact that some harmful cultural socialisation of women in a patriarchy prevents them from discussing sexual issues in public and sharing their experiences, rendering them unassertive in the face of sexual harassment (Shumba 2000; Ntuli 2006).

Although some female students are not innocent victims of sexual harassment, it is the professional responsibility of lecturers to reject female students' sexual advances. This is because some female students get involved in consensual relationships with lecturers out of confusion through intimidation and threats (NGP 2014). The point supporting consensual relationships disregards the fact that it is a breach of trust and professional ethics (Zindi 1994). It also disregards the fact that lecturers' sexual intimacy with students has never been acceptable in academia (NGP 2014). Supporting consensual relationships between lecturers and students could be attributed to ignorance of what sexual harassment entails (Fedina et al. 2018). The point disregards that some female students get involved in consensual relationships out of a lack of awareness of the law that pertains to sexual harassment and the protection it offers (Omar 2019). It is also against Paludi and Barickman's (1998) point that consensual relationships between students and their lecturers might lead to the rise of conflict if the relationship breaks down, causing the victim to suffer academic harm. This results in victims skipping classes, dropping out of the course, avoiding enrolling in a course taught by the perpetrator, lowered grades, failing the course, and decreased self-esteem among other negative effects (Muchena et al. 2013). This may also lead to claims of favouritism and complaints of unfair grading from other students (Paludi and Barickman 1998).

On the contrary, Smit and Du Plessis (2011) regard the consideration of females as perpetrators of sexual harassment against their lecturers as mere defence. They argued that females are not capable of sexually harassing males considering their relative lack of power in patriarchy that socialises them to submit to men. The female students may find it difficult to resist sexual harassment, particularly when the perpetrator has power, status and authority over them (Paludi and Barickman 1998; Hodgson and Watts 2017). The female students' lack of power, according to Paludi and Barickman (1998), makes them only capable of a sexual attention and not sexual harassment. However, given the fact that some female students make sexual advances on male students and lecturers, it could be true that they are also perpetrators. This then serves to challenge the critical theory's point that women are permanent victims of sexual harassment because not all females are submissive, powerless and unassertive (Strunk and Betties 2019). This also serves to suggest that the socialisation of females is not the same across patriarchal cultures.

It is possible that some females are either born assertive or are nurtured to be assertive to resist gender-based violence. It is also possible that there are some females who are born aggressive to the extent of perpetrating harassment against other women, male students and their lecturers (McMullen 2019). Given this, it could be submitted that, in as much as patriarchal socialisation has marginalised females in society and exposed them to sexual harassment, it has not been static but instead is fluid and is weakening over time (Chafetz 2006). The argument suggests that although the issue of power imbalance deriving from the patriarchy has a hand in causing sexual harassment, the power has now been diluted, ultimately leading to gender balance. The patriarchal transformation could explain why currently in Zimbabwe, out of a total of 16 colleges of education, there are nine males and seven female principals. This is a marked improvement from the previous 14 colleges with 11 males and three female principals in 2013 (Mawere 2014). The fact that the current colleges of education's male-to-female principal ratios has a difference of two males, indicates a near gender balance. This indicates that women are increasingly being included in decision-making positions at higher and tertiary education level.

Given the current argument, it goes without question that female students experience sexual harassment more than males at the college of education. Furthermore, although women also sexually harass males, such incidents are rare compared to the magnitude of the sexual harassment of women by men given their lack of power in patriarchal society. It has also been proven that peer-to-peer student sexual harassment is more prevalent at the college of education when compared to the lecturer-to-student incidents. Female students thus remain the most frequent victims of sexual harassment, given the critical theory with feminist lens' consideration that they already have a marginalised status in society which leaves them powerless to resist sexual harassment.

5.6.   STUDENTS' REACTIONS TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The findings revealed that students' responses to sexual harassment were weak, inconsistent, contextual and not ideal leading them to not help in reducing its prevalence at the college of education. A range of students' responses was revealed to include silence, avoidance, ignoring, resisting, reporting and downplaying the sexual harassment encounters. Of these, all except reporting and resisting were considered

assertive by the participants. It emerged that more than one response can be used in a single sexual harassment encounter depending on the victim's context. Thus, students' responses were not fixed as they reflected a careful consideration of other strategies in terms of available alternatives, consequences, costs and benefits. The non-assertive responses could be restricted by socio-cultural, legislative, institutional and financial factors beyond their control. This suggests that the reactions employed could have been the student's best available option at that time because of other underlying factors at play, in view of the study's underpinning critical theory with a liberal feminist lens.

5.6.1. Silence

The findings revealed that although silence towards sexual harassment is regarded as the most common strategy, it is seen by participants as the worst response at first glance because it may lead to compliance and escalates the problem. The findings revealed that, silence involved victims not telling anyone about their experiences, not taking any action and complying with the perpetrators' sexually harassing behaviour. Participants indicated that silence as a survival strategy had to be employed by students in order for them to avoid victimisation and in order for them to complete their course

The argument considering silence as a weak response disregards the point that sexual harassment is enshrined in harmful patriarchal cultural taboos that are carried over to education institutions, obstructing appropriate responses (Gwirayi and Shumba 2011). Thus, harmful patriarchal practices at education institutions traps female students into powerlessness and ultimately into consenting to their own oppression (Hodgson and Watts 2017). It emerged that the cultural practices include child play by older men on young girls, forced submission of women to men and making women's discussions about sexual issues taboo, among others. Therefore, patriarchy has tendencies to socialise women to avoid conflict through keeping silent (Knapp et al. 1997). This causes silence to be beyond the women's control whereas it should be considered as a response given by society (Hebert 1994). Such a practice perpetuates sexual harassment by limiting women's response options to silence when in sexually threatening positions (Morley 2005). This is disempowering because it results in a lack

of confidence by female students which in turn leads in their failure to speaking out about their sexual harassment encounters, resulting in silence (Beckett 2007). This leads to males gaining more power than their female counterparts, who in this case are female students, resulting in their sexual harassment (Farganis 2011). Thus, the subordination of women in patriarchy could be leaving female students trapped into silence as their only option towards sexual harassment. However, such responses do not make anyone safer at the institution and within higher education as a whole because it does not address the problem and thus causes it to persist (Finchilescu and Dugard 2018).

However, the point of attributing silence about sexual harassment to socialisation of males and females in a patriarchy is problematic. It disregards the fact that the socialisation of an individual continues throughout their life span and is not static (Chafetz 2006). This suggests that childhood socialisation in patriarchy does not always continue affecting an individual, possibly due to learning and relearning (Chafetz 2006). Thus, there are other agents of socialisation from childhood to adulthood which can either empower or disempower an individual besides the patriarchy (Stockard 2006). This suggests that not all victims of sexual harassment could be in a powerless position to resist incidences of sexual harassment, but instead, there could be other factors at play that might be situational for them to resort to silence. Given this, it can be submitted that even though silence about sexual harassment could be situational, it causes a poor self-concept in students which continues to expose them to sexual harassment.

Gender differences in perception about sexual harassment may arise due to some harmful patriarchal cultural practices, causing silence in male victims because of their socialisation of not wanting to appear weak sexually (Dziech and Weiner 1990; Dorota 2002). This may also cause males to regard sexual harassment as a 'woman's issue' that would result in male students to experiencing difficulties in acknowledging their victimhood and seeking help (Karugahe 2016). Such experiences limit male students' potential to make decisions over their own lives and to pursue further education (Costa 2020). This is in agreement with the critical theory that knowledge is culture specific and is accessed through socialisation (Agger 2006).

The interrogation of the subordination of women in patriarchal society is in tandem with critical theory's epistemological assumption that seeks to interrogate the patriarchal cultural factors influencing the ways in which knowledge is produced (Farganis 2011). This is because the emancipatory intent of critical theory considers that all knowledge claims are tentative and open to revision through critical analysis (Agger 2006). Such an analysis helps to identify factors that limit or distort students' acquisition of knowledge about sexual harassment, ultimately exposing them to such incidents (Calhoun 2001). When such factors are identified, students could then be provided with knowledge and understanding about sexual harassment which would lead to appropriate responses intended to free them from the problem.

The finding regarding silence as a weak response causing the further manifestation of sexual harassment at the college is against the fact that students are intimidated and threatened not to speak out about their experiences by perpetrators, particularly lecturers, or else they will fail the course (Dhlomo et al. 2012). Such threats and intimidations influence students to think that lecturers who have control over their course outcome are 'untouchables' (SAYWHAT 2019). This in turn makes the students want the problem to end in silence without negative consequences in terms of their course of study (Abe 2012). The finding also ignores the fact that students lack power to refuse lecturers' demands (Shumba and Matina 2002). Silence in this case could be the victimised students' attempt to avoid worsening their situation when lecturers team up to fail those who report them to the authorities (Morley 2011). This leads students to think that reporting a sexual harassment incident could harm them more than the incident itself (Piccirillo 2019).

Victims find it difficult to complain about or report their sexual harassment experiences when the perpetrator has power, status and authority over their educational attainment (Smit and Du Plessis 2011). The lack of power by students may instil fear of expressing themselves against a lecturer, resulting in failing to respond appropriately (Oni et al. 2019). This suggests that if the perpetrator has power over the victim, it is less likely that they would report the incident, but instead comply due to powerlessness (Herbert 1994).

Also, to the contrary, the finding disregards that some students keep silent about sexual harassment out of ignorance (Elton et al. 2019). It emerged that participants

had a narrow understanding of what sexual harassment entails and that they did not know to who and where to report the incidents. Participants were also not aware of the possible sentences and outcomes of their cases if they chose to report the incident. Such ignorance is disempowering in that it decreases the likelihood of reporting sexual harassment incidents by students as they cannot report something they do not know is against the rules (Bhatia 2014). For example, students might not know whether to report once-off incidents or not (Bhatia 2014). Ignorance breeds timidity in students that may result in victims wanting to protect the perpetrator by keeping silent (Alston and Goodman 2013). Such a reaction does not help in resolving the problem as it might cause the victim to remain a perpetual victim and the perpetrator continuing with their behaviour unpunished (Germain 2016). When this happens, sexual harassment could continue to manifest in educational institutions, tearing down the fabric of learning.

The finding that the participants keep silent about sexual harassment because they did not know where to report such incidents is in contrast to the fact that the college had a sexual harassment policy in place since 2016. The sexual harassment policy could have given students guidance on the procedures to take after a sexual harassment experience (Piccirillo 2019). This suggests that the sexual harassment policy at the college was failing to provide members with the information needed to empower them to report such incidents. It could be possible that the reporting structures were not spelt out in the policy document (Coetzee 2012). It could also be possible that the reporting structures were not even practically available at the college (Elton et al. 2019). The absence of a reporting structure at the college is problematic because it reflects a centralised decision-making system with one entry point. This is contrary to the need for institutions to have fragmented multiple entry points on the handling of sexual harassment cases to encourage reporting (Bennet et al. 2007). This also disregards Knapp et al. (1997)'s point that organisations which adopt decentralised decision-making structures appear to have fewer incidences of sexual harassment than those with more centralised ones. For Knapp et al. (1997), power and authority is supposed to be officially dispersed among many individuals in an organisation, enabling expert members to handle different sexual harassment incidents effectively. The centralised decision-making structures leave students in a position where they do not knowing the proper procedures to follow in filing a complaint

in the absence of a policy document (Jacobson 2018). The lack of information may result in students' inability to access available support services such as counselling (Knapp et al. 1997). The policy inadequacy in terms of a lack of appropriate procedures to follow could have lead students to think that the policy was not set up to protect them (Chimombe 2012). Such policy inadequacy makes tracking and the punishment of offenders difficult (Dhlomo et al. 2012). This may result in inappropriate handling of cases, discouraging victims from coming forward to use the system and forcing them to either resort to informal reporting channels or to silence (Paludi 2016; McMullen 2019).

The centralised decision-making structures also create differences in students' perception when interpreting the gravity of sexual harassment offences, resulting in some students, particularly females by virtue of their already marginalised status, keeping silent (Gutek 1985). Confusion about whether an incident should happen more than once or not for it to be considered sexual harassment may also arise (Paludi and Barickman 1998). This also includes a lack of commonality in rating the severity of the sexual harassment offences by students (Abe 2012). Such differences lead to the lack of a common response approach, which weakens assertive efforts against sexual harassment (Rintaugu et al. 2014). Thus, the different response actions by students towards sexual harassment could stem from different degrees of severity they attach to similar cases (Bondestam and Lundqvist 2020b). This implies that when a victim perceives an incident as having an increased severity there is a higher likelihood of them reporting the behaviour, while a behaviour that is considered harmless has less likelihood of being reported (Abe 2012). From this, it can be argued that structures with multiple entry points presents a variety of reporting options to victims and encourages reporting.

The absence of adequate reporting structures at the college could be attributed to a lack of the Ministry-level sexual harassment policy that could have provided formulae on proper procedures (Jacobson 2018). This causes some cases to continue to remain unresolved, even after the student graduates (Mawere 2014). This in turn discourages victimised students from pursuing their cases if the same incident occurs again, causing them to be in a situation where they never find healing (Kanyemba and Naidu 2019). Such a practice derails the empowerment and transformation of students

that could have contributed to the attainment of sexual harassment free institutions in the country and beyond.

The college's failure to have a comprehensive policy might be an indication of a lack of its support for victims, discouraging them from disclosure and self-emancipation (Costa 2020). The college sexual harassment policy's inadequacy is against the critical theory's transformation and emancipation drive which believes in providing knowledge and understanding intended to the marginalised groups such as female students from oppressive power structures within society (Van Rensburg 2010). This is because the theory considers people, particularly the marginalised, who in this case are the female students to be responsible for their emancipation (Van Rensburg 2010). A comprehensive sexual harassment policy could help with information to scaffold students' way of viewing sexual harassment, leading to a reflection of appropriate responses to reduce the problem (Bennet 2002). This also helps in sharpening their thinking about sexual harassment, causing them to report such incidents. Given this, it can be submitted that, clear organisational procedures in addressing incidents of sexual harassment through policy, influence victims to resist the incidents whilst those that are not clear, forces them into silence.

Some students are trapped into remaining silent as the experience is frightening, embarrassing and confusing (Piccirillo 2018). The findings revealed that students end up regretting having entered the lecturer's space of control and being raped, a situation which results in two attempted suicide cases at the college. This could be attributed to the fact that most sexual harassment cases happen behind closed doors with no other witnesses present (Katsande 2008). This makes it difficult for victims to gather enough evidence to present as proof of a sexual harassment incident (Morrison et al. 2005). Lacking evidence by the victim may lead to self-doubt, blame, shame, distress and isolation resulting in self-harming behaviours such as suicidality (Gartner 2019). Suicide attempts reported at the college could have stemmed from the students' fear of the perpetrators' intimidations and threats of further victimisation which might lead to failing the course (Piccirillo 2019). Suicidal feelings could also have stemmed from victimised students' attempts to avoid the stigma associated with sexual harassment, causing victims to either fear exposing their families or getting shunned (Finchilescu and Dugard 2018). It is possible that the affected students would have avoided

counselling services given the participants' claims of a breach of confidentiality by college counsellors. It is also possible that counselling services for victimised students could be too weak to empower students against their experiences with sexual harassment (Germain 2016). This could in turn influence victims to believe that the risks of reporting are too great, thus resorting in silence (Dziech and Hawkins 2012).

The findings indicated that some students resort to silence about their experiences of sexual harassment due to institutional factors beyond their control. It emerged from the findings that the college has a tendency to dismiss cases, to fail to take action on reports, to fail to investigate cases on time, to fail to provide feedback on reported cases and to protect perpetrators. This reveals that the college management downplays reports of sexual harassment consequently allowing perpetrators go unpunished (Alston and Goodman 2013). The lack of punishment of offenders causes a loss of students' confidence in the system that their matter will be responded to appropriately (Omar 2019). The students may believe that management protects its own staff instead of them (Ostri 2020). This causes students to consider disclosure to be futile as nothing will be done or will change after a report has been made (Gartner 2019). Lacking punishment of offenders influences peers to discourage each other from reporting sexual harassment, citing its futility as their concerns will not be addressed (Knapp et al. 1997). Such discouragement might force victims to resort to coping strategies considered unassertive such as silence (Brannon 2011). Thus, institutions that mishandle cases of sexual harassment deter students from future reporting (Finchilescu and Dugard 2018). This is because such institutions may continue to maintain a hostile environment which diminishes their expectations of receiving a positive outcome after reporting an incident.

The victimised students' silence towards sexual harassment could stem from wanting to avoid bad relations with the perpetrator when they lose their job or when they receives a jail sentence (Herbert 1994). The victims may attempt to protect the perpetrator by hiding their identity in order to protect them from physical harm by their loved ones (Brannon 2011). The victim's concealment of the perpetrators' identity could be attributed to a lack of awareness about the possible outcomes of reported cases emanating from the unclear reporting procedures discussed earlier (Herbert 1994). The lack of awareness about sexual harassment reporting procedures is

disempowering to students' responses, forcing them to protect perpetrators. This indicates that the victims' knowledge of the procedures when reporting and handling cases of sexual harassment is empowering and increases their likelihood of reporting. However, a lack of knowledge about reporting procedures may lead victims to comply with the problem (Museka and Kaguda 2013). This explains why some participants revealed that they would rather comply with the lecturer's demands than to continue to expose her struggling parents to further expenses of paying fees. Thus, a lack of awareness about procedures to follow after a sexual harassment encounter creates a desperate atmosphere in students which weakens their responses and further exposes them to the problem through complying with the perpetrator's sexual demands.

However, compliance could be arrived at after weighting up potential losses and benefits of engaging in assertive responses (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). It emerged that depending on the alternatives available, reporting may be risky or futile, and instead, silence and compliance may be the victims' best survival strategy (Jackman 2006). In this case, students may risk failing the course if they refuse to comply with sexual harassment. This suggests that students may resort to silence because of their awareness that they are subordinate to their lecturers, resulting in them seeing no point of protesting (NGP 2014).

Students' compliance towards sexual harassment could emanate from the fact that they are used to taking orders from their lecturers due to their lack of power (Paludi 2016). The female students' powerlessness towards their lecturers is against the critical theory's belief that people should be empowered to have control over their own lives through engaging in appropriate responses to sexual harassment (Farganis 2011; Ritzer 2008).   It also believes that people should have the power to liberate themselves from harmful patriarchal practices that disempowers them (Kottak 2009). This suggests that when students lack power, so too their response action will be powerless. It emerged that compliance with sexual harassment could possibly be a victim's survival strategy in order to complete their course, particularly by poorly performing female students (Gwirayi and Shumba 2011). The point disregards the fact that some victims comply with sexual harassment even when they are good performers (Paludi 2016; WHO 2013). Hence poor performance by female students

may create in them a sense of desperation to pass the course which makes them vulnerable to sexual harassment, forcing them into compliance (Muchena et al. 2013). This implies that a well or poor performing student might resort to compliance due to other underlying factors behind students' silence.

It also emerged that some students comply with sexual harassment out of fear of being labelled a trouble causer, a loose person or for inviting trouble. According to Paludi and Barickman (1998), this practice is victim blaming encroached from a traditional mode of thinking which renders students docile and perpetual victims of sexual harassment (Sithole and Dziva 2019). This could stem from the African culture that, rather than punishing the perpetrator, stigmatises the victim (Morley 2005). Victim blaming by fellow females could emanate from the fact that some women regard themselves in the patriarchal perspective, whereby, they confirm, legitimate and enact men's domination (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). This shows a lack of support for victims of sexual harassment which may cause them to prefer moving on by going along with the problem (Jackman 2006). Such a resolution could stem from the victim's loss of hope in getting help from either the system or the significant others (Morley 2005).

The institutional lack of support for victims could be attributed to a lack of training about sexual harassment. The lack of training is contrary to the fact that training is a transformative process that seeks to systematically engage and benefit men and women by integrating explicit attention to issues of gender in all its aspects (Tanyanyiwa 2015). Training may enable students to teach the sexual harassment concepts with clarity to their learners in schools during teaching practice and after graduating. Teaching sexual harassment issues could lead teachers to become a bridge between those already in the service and the community in terms of promoting knowledge and behavioural change about sexual harassment (Dzimiri 2014). Teachers may become change agents that could prevent sexual harassment from occurring. Training also helps to reduce gaps in perception differences about sexual harassment, stemming from patriarchal socialisation (Mudau et al. 2018). It also increases awareness and a better understanding about what sexual harassment really is, leading to adequate descriptions of the topic and experiences (McMullen 2019). In

this regard, training is a means for providing the skills needed to respond appropriately to sexual harassment, ultimately leading to behaviour change.

Training on sexual harassment is transformative in that it brings empowerment to students on institutional life and activities (UNCRC 2016). It encourages appropriate responses to sexual harassment particularly by female students, enabling them to fully participate in all sectors of the country's development and beyond (UNESCO 2015). Training helps to dispel students' beliefs that lecturers are capable of failing them (Matina and Shumba 2002). Training might also lead to proper handling of cases by management that could end up giving credence to the institution (Sithole and Dziva 2019). It is also essential for empowering students with information on sexual harassment which they could use to resist such incidents (Makaudze and Gudhlanga 2014). The acquisition of adequate information about sexual harassment through training is empowering in that it increases students' knowledge and confidence about the topic, leading to assertive responses. The training of college members could be facilitated by civil society groups as they have been successful in ensuring the elimination of GBV in institutions of higher and tertiary learning as discussed earlier.

The current discussion has revealed that students' silence in the face of sexual harassment does not seem to be a sign of cowardice, but instead, a trap and a restriction dictated to them (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). The students' lack of choices in their reactions could be due to factors beyond their control. A restricted response's likelihood of becoming unassertive is high, thereby causing the problem to continue to persist. This is because instead of addressing the problem, it engages in side-stepping. Such a strategy blocks open resistance that has the potential to address the problem, leading to the reduction of its prevalence. They may also risk shunning and blaming if they speak out about their sexual harassment experiences. Such a scenario traps students into silence. Thus, although silence is not a sign of students' cowardice, but a survival strategy, it contributes to the invisibility of the problem and makes it difficult to determine the forms of sexual harassment experienced by victims and its prevalence.

5.6.2. Ignoring

The study established that ignoring the perpetrator's sexually harassing behaviour could be an expression of one's silence and therefore unassertive. It was established that although ignoring the perpetrator, like silence, was a common response among students, it also does not help reduce the prevalence of sexual harassment (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). It emerged that students' efforts to ignore the perpetrator by, not answering their phone calls, not acknowledging or replying to messages, treating the behaviour as a joke, deleting messages and blocking communication failed to reduce the incidents of sexual harassment at the college. Ignoring the perpetrator could be an attempt to forget about the incident in the hope that the sexual harassment will stop (Plan International 2019). Such a response may indicate a lack of effort by victims in addressing the problem head on (Dromm 2012). From this perspective, it can argued that when the behaviour is ignored, it tends to worsen and become more prevalent.

The finding that considers female students' responses of ignoring the perpetrator as unassertive disregards the point that patriarchy socialises women to overlook the sexual behaviours of men (Dromm 2012). Ignoring the perpetrator in this case could be a way of conforming to societal expectations. Failure to conform could result in societal blame and shunning as outcasts (Fedina et al. 2018). This could be the reason why society may fail to believe the victim, resulting in them experiencing shame and ridicule (Strunk and Betties 2019). The victim may then be forced to resort to ignoring the perpetrator in a bid to preserve their reputation (Buluma 2009). Ignoring may cause the perpetrator to continue with their sexual harassing behaviour without knowing that it is unwanted (Mills and Mullany 2012). The victim's response of ignoring the perpetrator could have been arrived at after seeing that they would not succeed against the ascribed societal norms (Ekore 2012). This implies that, like silence, students ignore the perpetrator not out of choice but as a survival strategy.

Ignoring the perpetrator could also be attributed to the students' awareness of the futility of disclosure given the institutional mishandling of cases (Beckett 2007). The fact that the college was failing to take action on reported cases could have made

students regard reporting as a futile activity (Germain 2016). This is an indication of a lack of institutional support that may have caused the victim to consider resisting sexual harassment as a waste of time (Jackman 2006). Thus, when management does not support victims, it means that perpetrators could justify their behaviour, causing the problem to continue to occur (Onoyase 2019). This type of response lacks power in that it does not address the problem of sexual harassment but instead side-steps it (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015)

Also, the awareness of the courts of law's lenient sentencing of sexual harassment offenders emanating from legislative and policy gaps in the country could influence the students to ignore the sexually harassing behaviours (Matsikidze 2017). The point disregards Mawere's (2014) argument that ignorance of the law could be the reason why students engage in weak responses towards sexual harassment. In this case, the awareness of the law could be a cause for students' use of inappropriate responses towards sexual harassment. The difference between the arguments of Matsikidze (2017) and Mawere (2014) is that the former reveals that ignorance of the law weakens students' responses whilst the later argues that awareness of the legal gaps renders students' reactions weak. The implication of this could be that when legislative gaps about sexual harassment are addressed, the victims' awareness of the law may be empowering, leading to the reduction of such incidents.

The lenient sentencing of perpetrators could also be attributed to the fact that sexual harassment is regarded as a civil and not a criminal matter in Zimbabwe as earlier discussed (Tanyanyiwa 2015). This may influence students to regard sexual harassment as a normal practice that will go away (Rintaugu et al. 2014). Thus, the way in which sexual harassment cases are trivialised makes the taking of action seem a waste of time to institutions. Such a low regard of sexual harassment by institutions discourages students from acting against something they know is trivialised and is treated as a joke. The low regard indicates that tendencies for ignoring sexual harassment by institutions have a strong bearing on the response strategy of its students. This causes students to also ignore their perpetrators and continue to suffer in silence (Okeke 2011). When this happens, sexual harassment continues to exist unfettered.

It is also possible that ignoring the perpetrator could be stemming from the victim's change of mind of initially trying to resists and resorting to maintain good relations (Karugahe 2016). This could cause the victim to interpret and reinterpret the situation so that it is not defined as sexual harassment (Elton et al. 2019). Victims may end up seeing the positive side of the situation rather than concentrating on the negative, leading them to ignore the behaviour (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). This shows that ignoring the perpetrator could be a result of a reconsideration of the loss and benefits of the initially intended response, leading the victims to settle for a less assertive response (Finchilescu and Dugard 2018). In this regard, ignoring sexual harassment may not be the victim's first response choice, but a second thought which comes as a change of mind as well as after weighting up many possible alternatives. It could be possible that the strategy of ignoring is used by victims when they are trapped into letting go of some behaviour due to factors beyond their control (Jackman 2006). From this perspective, it can be submitted that although the victims' ignoring of the sexually harassing behaviour appears to be one of the worst responses, a closer scrutiny of the underlying factors points to the fact that it is almost impossible to engage in assertive responses unless students' responses are empowered.

5.6.3 Avoiding

The study found that some students responded to sexual harassment by avoiding the perpetrator when an attempt to keep silent and ignore the sexually harassing behaviour has failed. Avoiding, according to the findings, involved victims not meeting the perpetrator when they are alone, stopping going to their office, deleting their messages, blocking their calls and not communicating with them. This response, according to participants, was equal to silence and ignoring. Avoiding was regarded as one of students' worst options and unassertive. However, a closer analysis of the factors behind such a response, seem to reveal that it was one of their last considerations, after trying other options. This suggests that, like silence and ignoring, avoiding was not the victim's preferred response.

The point that considers avoiding the perpetrators to be one of the worst response options is against the fact that it is regarded as a strategy of hidden resistance (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). This is because the victim could be trying to run away from sexual harassment through resisting it silently and not giving in. The point also

disregards the fact that in some cases, victims skip lessons, change tutors and withdraw from the course as a way of resisting the perpetrator and waiting for the problem to go away (Jackman 2006). The waiting for the sexual harassment to go away derails the victim's career and lowers their grades (UNESCO 2012). Avoiding the perpetrator also continues to expose victims to sexual harassment, leading them to drop out of the course or skip classes. Thus, avoiding, like silence, is engaged into, with the hope that the harassment will go away (Bondestam and Lundqvist 2020b). Avoiding the perpetrator is therefore a self-focused response whereby the victim does not address the perpetrator and neither do they involve outside support (Knapp et al. 1997). This according to Rintaugu et al. (2014), constitutes side-stepping the issue.

Avoidance causes victims not to give in to the sexual harassment, but, instead runs away from it (UNCRC 2016). In this case, there seems to be no likelihood of complying with the perpetrator's sexual demands in avoidance whilst the likelihood of compliance is high when victims resort to silence (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). However, this type of resistance does not advantage the victim because it is hidden and not open or clear. This implies that, avoidance may only benefit the victim by avoiding the sexual harassment but does not stop the behaviour. Thus, like silence and ignoring, avoiding could also be a sign of being in a dilemma after weighing the available alternatives.

Avoiding the perpetrator could stem from the victims' lack of institutional support, when wanting to report the behaviour (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015**)**. This may also stem from the victims' awareness of the futility of reporting such incidents (Rintaugu et al. 2014). Avoiding could be attributed to patriarchal society's tendency to justify sexual harassment and particularly to blame women for crimes committed against them (Rotundo et al. 2001). The practice influences the victim to prefer to move away from the perpetrator by resisting in a subversive way, rather than to comply with the sexual harassment (Brannon 2011).

The response of avoiding the perpetrator could also be attributed to the fact that women in a patriarchal society are socialised to avoid conflict as earlier discussed (Rotundo et al. 2001). This could be the reason why students try by all means to avoid negative outcomes which ultimately leads to their failing of the course (Chireshe and Chireshe 2009). However, there seems to be a trace of assertiveness in this response type, although not explicit. This is so because the victims could have declared never

to give in to sexual harassment but to avoid it, which is a good step in the direction of attempts to resist the problem. However, such a move is problematic in that, avoiding does not clearly tackle the problem head on (Finchilescu and Dugard 2018). Avoiding makes it difficult for the perpetrator to recognise that there is a problem, causing them to continue with their unwanted behaviour the next time they meet the same victim or towards other victims (Elton et al. 2019). Avoidance also makes it difficult for institutions to fail to identify some cases of sexual harassment if victims do not come out in the open when resisting such behaviour.

The strategy of avoidance could stem from the victim's attempt to disassociate themselves from embarrassing incidents such as sexual harassment (Akpotor 2013). The response could also be attributed to the fact that sexual harassment is regarded as a hidden or silent problem in most societies internationally (Elton et al. 2019). This could be why sexual harassment in some patriarchal societies is considered an embarrassment, which results in victim blame, ridicule and shame (Shumba 2000). This could stem from the fact that most sexual harassment incidents occur behind closed doors with no other witnesses, thereby making it difficult for a victim to build evidence against the perpetrator (Morley 2011). This could be the reason why victims attempt to resist sexual harassment in a hidden manner to a subversive manner.

 Avoidance could also stem from female students' powerlessness particularly towards their male lecturers (Kanyemba and Naidu 2019). The female students' position of less power intimidates them from engaging in open resistance against their perpetrators (Costa 2020). Victims could then consider open resistance futile, forcing them into an avoidance strategy (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). Thus, although avoiding sexually harassing behaviours is common among students, it is a less focused response that neither addresses the problem nor helps reduce the occurrence of such incidents (Morley 2005).

The current discussion has proved beyond doubt that although avoidance could be considered a more assertive response when compared to silence and ignoring, it is a passive resistance. It could be as good as keeping silent or ignoring the perpetrator because it does not confront the problem, thereby leaving it to continue unhindered. This, point to a gap in students' responses which need to be addressed. When addressed, students may be empowered to confront sexual harassment, resulting in

the reduction of such cases. What does become clear is that if students continue avoiding the perpetrator, they may continue experiencing sexual harassment. This could lead them to continue to suffer academic harm that may prevent them from equal participation in the development of the country and contributing to the attainment of SDGs 4 and 5 of Vision 2030. What is lacking therefore, are empowered and appropriate responses to the problem of sexual harassment. Such responses will bring about a reduction of such incidents and the emancipation of students particularly females.

5.6.4 Resisting and reporting

The current study established that besides engaging in responses that are considered by participants to be unassertive, such as silence, ignoring and avoiding the perpetrator, some students have been assertive enough to resist and report sexual harassment to college authorities, their departments, to lecturers and the friends they trust. Some students confronts the perpetrator to tell them to stop their behaviour. Some students could bring a friend along when going to meet the perpetrator. Reporting was done through confessions at GBV workshops, when collecting results, during counseling sessions and the writing of anonymous letters. It also emerged that some students recorded incidences of sexual harassment when they visited their perpetrators whilst others forwarded the perpetrators' phone messages to their friends to expose them and yet others wrote anonymous letters to management. The findings suggest that reporting was either done after silence, ignoring and avoidance had failed.

The finding that considers reporting and resistance to sexual harassment as the students' best response option disregards the fact that this reaction was practiced by the same students who would have attempted less assertive options first (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). The two strategies could have been the victim's last resort after having employed a sequence of coping strategies such as silence, ignoring and avoiding the perpetrator (Knapp et al. 1997). This suggests that students resist and report sexual harassment only in the most extreme cases when there is no other resort (Vohlídalová and Praha 2015). The perspective also suggests that students' resistance to sexual harassment is difficult to achieve, particularly by female students,

given their already marginalized status in the patriarchy. The point that considers resistance and reporting as the victim's last resort implies that they could not be the victim's ideal reaction. In this regard, there seems to be no prescribed ideal reaction to sexual harassment encounters by students but that instead, it is situational. The absence of an ideal reaction could be problematic in that responses based on situations might not help reduce sexual harassment. Therefore, there should be a known ideal assertive reaction to sexual harassment by students in all situations for a downward trend in the behaviour.

The point that regards reporting and resistance to sexual harassment as students' last resort seems to suggest that even those who do not do so could also be assertive. This is because the same students may engage in other responses as a survival strategy to a particular problem and then revert to resistance when earlier 'peaceful' attempts have failed (Knapp et al. 1997). In this regard, failing to resist or report sexual harassment is not a sign of weakness by the victim given socio-cultural, institutional and legislative factors which are beyond the students' control.

It emerged that the same students who could have engaged in silence, ignoring or avoidance are likely to be able to resist and report sexual harassment in contexts that are different from earlier ones. Such vacillating responses could be a sign that their reactions are inconsistent (Hodgson and Watts 2017) and these inconsistencies are problematic as some of the responses are neither predictable nor can be relied upon. This does not help to inform institutional preventive measures as a response to incidents of sexual harassment at colleges of education.

The point considering resisting and reporting sexual harassment as students' rare response could stem from the fact that some institutions lack reporting channels which leave victims stranded with their intention of reporting (Katsande 2008). It is possible that some institutions may be having unclear or unknown reporting channels to students (Jourbert et al. 2011). It is also possible that some reporting channels could be difficult to follow causing victims to revert to silence instead of resisting or reporting (Finchilescu and Dugard 2018). This could be the reason for the seldom use of the resistance and reporting strategies. This implies that students' failure to resist sexual harassment could be a result of factors beyond their control. Thus, a clear institutional

reporting structure for sexual harassment encourages reporting and resistance against such incidents. This is because the presence of a clear reporting structure instills confidence in victims as well as a feeling that they have institutional support and protection.

The current study also established that some students resist sexual harassment through reporting to college management. It emerged that students related to some staff members at the college were able to resist sexual harassment. Also, those who had undergone life skills training in peer education and members of the Student Representative Council (SRC) could resist and report sexual harassment. This finding is in line with SAYWHAT's (2019) point that students with other professional qualifications such as the former Zimbabwe Republic Police, the Zimbabwe Prison Services, university graduates and those from vocational colleges were assertive enough to resist and report sexual harassment. The ability to resist sexual harassment by other professionally qualified students, who in this case are the minority at the college, could explain why colleges of education are considered hardest hit by sexual harassment when compared to other tertiary institutions (Zindi 1994; Zireva and Makura 2013). However, the fact that students with other professional qualifications are able to resist sexual harassment might indicate an issue of immaturity and disempowerment which they may have got through their earlier professional practice. The rarely used resistance strategy towards sexual harassment by students could be due to a lack of institutional support, where cases are ignored and dismissed as discussed earlier (Dhlomo et al. 2012).

The argument that shows that some female students are able to resist sexual harassment disapproves the belief by the critical theory with a feminist lens that women's powerlessness and marginalization is permanent (Kottak 2009). It is also against the idea of regarding women as perpetual victims of sexual harassment (Farganis 2011). The argument could be challenged given the fact that some students were assertive enough to resist sexual harassment and thus not all females are powerless (Chafetz 2006). This is an indication that it is possible to empower female students with proper responses to sexual harassment in order to transform them and enable their self-liberation from the problem.

The discussion in this section has shown that although students' responses could be categorized into assertive and non-assertive, the reactions were practiced by the same students in different contexts. This suggests that students' responses towards sexual harassment are not fixed but contextual. Resistance and reporting of sexual harassment cases was considered an empowered response because it is a strategy used for tackling the actual problem and its possible elimination and helps in reducing such incidents by deterring possible perpetrators (Boudah 2011). Such responses also facilitates positive behaviour change in victims and perpetrators when they interact and challenge each other (Costa 2020). This type of response is emancipatory in that it empowers the victims to liberate themselves from sexual harassment by either resisting or reporting. It also brings awareness to the perpetrator that their behaviour is unwanted and should stop, thus leading to a decreasing number of sexual harassment cases. Given this, one can argue that resistance to sexual harassment and reporting are an assertive and constitutes the most ideal responses although these are rarely used by students. This calls for the need to equip students with such assertive responses to sexual harassment in order to realise its successful prevention at the college of education and in other higher education institutions in the country and abroad.

5.7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Chapter Five has discussed the research findings based on the themes that emerged from the data and literature. The themes were understanding of sexual harassment, experiences of sexual harassment, sexual harassment legal and policy gaps, prevalence of sexual harassment, perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment and students' reactions to encounters of sexual harassment. The data was obtained from face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions and related literature. The findings point to the fact that sexual harassment was loosely understood at the college due to factors such as, socio-cultural, legal and policy gaps, institutional and financial factors, as well as scant research in that area, leading to its prevalence. These factors lead to ignorance about the topic, causing participants to fail to fully describe their sexual harassment experiences and responding appropriately to such incidents. Although male and female socialisation in patriarchal society was considered as the root cause of the sexual harassment occurrences and students'

unassertive responses, it has been proven that it is not the sole contributing factor. This is true, given the changing times of the emergence of decentralised societies and families globally. The legal frameworks in the country such as the constitution (No. 20: 2013), the Labour Act (28:01) and the SI 1 of 2000 are not specific on what sexual harassment really is. This in turn leads to the courts of law to consider sexual harassment a civil and not a criminal offence. The non-criminalisation of sexual harassment may lead to the institutional mishandling of cases and the failure to implement sexual harassment policy.

It also emerged that sexual harassment is highly prevalent at the college and that the male students were considered to be the major perpetrators against their female counterparts. This was attributed to the legal and policy gaps that do not cover student-to-student relationships. It was found that students' narrow understanding of sexual harassment negatively impacted on the female students by virtue of their already marginalised status in the patriarchy.

The current discussion has shown that reactions towards sexual harassment such as silence might be both ideal and not ideal at the same time, depending on the contexts. It was revealed that although students used varying responses against sexual harassment, silence was the most common one. This was attributed to victims' weighting up of available alternatives and the context of the sexual harassment incident. This leads to response inconsistencies demonstrated by students, indicating that they were not fixed but fluid. It was also established that resistance and reporting were the students' last resort arrived at after other responses had failed to prevent the sexual harassment. In other words, one person could be assertive at one point and unassertive at another depending on the context. Thus, informed by the critical theory's transformative and emancipatory intent, one can submit that the college of education students' responses to sexual harassment lack power, causing the problem to continue to exist. However, students have the potential to be transformed through empowerment, leading to appropriate responses to sexual harassment and resulting in their emancipation from the problem. The next chapter covers recommendations arrived at on how to empower students' responses to sexual harassment.

CHAPTER SIX
RECOMMENDATIONS ARRIVED AT

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter Five presented the discussion on students' responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe based on themes derived from the findings. The themes were as follows: a) understanding of sexual harassment, b) experiences of sexual harassment, c) sexual harassment legal and policy gaps, d) prevalence of sexual harassment, e) perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment and f) students' reactions to encounters of sexual harassment. The discussion highlighted that although sexual harassment was considered highly prevalent in various forms, students had a narrow understanding of it. This is because they could not fully describe what sexual harassment is, and also lacked the means to describe their experiences of it. This narrow understanding was speculated to stem from socio-cultural factors, national legislative and policy gaps, scant research in the area as well as institutional factors. Such factors results in the sexual harassment policy implementation challenges at the college and in the mishandling of cases, leading to the persistence of the problem.

It emerged that although both males and females were possible perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment, contrary to expectations, the category of male students surpassed that of lecturers as the major perpetrators against female students in Zimbabwean colleges of education. This could be attributed to legislative and policy gaps that lack specificity on student-to-student sexual harassment and a lack of alignment of patriarchal cultural definitions to the country's law. Such gaps causes student-to-student sexual harassment to continue to manifest uncontrolled because they are not covered by the SI1 of 2000. The powerlessness and the marginalised status of women in society has been proven not to be fixed but rather to vacillate, depending on the context with context. Also, given the changing times that have witnessed the emergence of decentralised societies and families, the marginalisation

of women could be decreasing. The argument challenges critical theory and liberal feminism's assertion of the marginalisation of women as permanent. Such a challenge presents an opportunity to empower female students' responses in order to transform them, resulting in their emancipation.

It emerged from the discussion that although students' responses could be categorised into assertive and non-assertive, the reactions were practiced by the same students in different contexts. It emerged that although students' responses such as silence, avoidance and ignoring the perpetrator where the most common, they are not fixed but are inconsistent, contextual and not ideal. It was also illustrated that the responses used by the students are restricted because of the socio-cultural, institutional, legislative gaps and policy, and financial factors beyond their control. This causes them to arrive at those responses due to a lack of alternatives and for survival purposes.

The current chapter discusses recommendations for improving students' responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe and beyond. Influenced by the critical and liberal feminist theories that have informed this study, the current research has made recommendations hinged on legislative and policy review covering sexual harassment for the achievement of gender mainstreaming of the teacher education curriculum.

6.2. NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

The study established the need by the Zimbabwe legislative system to strengthen the constitution (No. 20: 2013), the Labour Act (28:01) and the SI 1 of 2000 through an amendment so as to explicitly deal with the topic of sexual harassment. The amendment should be standardised in alignment with the ILO 2019 No. 190 Convention and incorporating the patriarchal cultural definitions. The Constitution and its related acts should be clear on what sexual harassment really is, through contextualising and standardising its definition to Zimbabwean experiences. The SI 1 of 2000 needs to be strengthened through an amendment so that it is explicit about sexual harassment, particularly prohibiting student-to-student (peer sexual harassment), lecturer-to-student or non-lecturing staff-to-student harassment. Consensual relationships between students and lecturers and, between non-lecturing

staff and students should be prohibited. The act should criminalise all forms of sexual harassment and be punitive towards perpetrators in order to discourage the practice. The reporting and handling procedures of cases, penalties and remedies should be spelt out clearly and the penalties should include a jail sentence, suspensions and expulsions to deter possible perpetrators, and ultimately to lead to the reduction in incidences of sexual harassment.

6.3. MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION, INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT TO DEVELOP A SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

The study recommends that the policy makers in the MHTEISTD should develop and implement a sexual harassment policy in line with the country's legislative system as a matter of urgency for the realisation of sexual harassment free institutions in Zimbabwe. The Ministry should take the lead in providing a comprehensive and contextual definition of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment policy implementation should be made mandatory for all higher and tertiary education institutions in the country. Such an approach may enable the Ministry to get government funding for its institutions, as well as monitor, enforce and evaluate such programmes. A Ministerial policy also enhances value and effectiveness in addressing sexual harassment within institutions by providing formulae and ultimately leading to a gender mainstreamed education system.

6.4. THE COLLEGE TO REVIEW AND FULLY IMPLEMENT THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

The study recommends that the college should strengthen its sexual harassment policy through periodic reviews, involving all institution members, in line with the Ministry policy and should implement it fully. Policy enhances knowledge on the topic and the proper handling of cases leading to an amelioration of the problem. A bottom-up instead of a top-down approach in reviewing and implementing the policy should be adopted to enable members to claim ownership of the policy. The reviewed policy should have adequate content and it should consider the possible victims and perpetrators' views on sexual harassment. There should be a college-specific

definition of sexual harassment derived from the Ministerial one and it should be based on the experiences of institution members. The policy should be reviewed to cover all college spaces that include teaching practice, project consultation, fines payment, sports, the dining hall and college functions. The policy should provide clear procedures on how to handle sexual harassment claims. It should provide some assurance that the cases reported will be dealt with in order to give victims the confidence to either report or resist sexual harassment. It should also spell out the assurances of victim safety after reporting as well as to dispel uncertainty about case outcome. The consequences for perpetrators of sexual harassment should be clearly communicated as well as the referral paths for victims. When reviewed, the policy should be distributed to all institution members and then after, be made part of the orientation package for the new students and staff. The policy document should be distributed in varied forms, such as digital and in abridged versions. It should be posted within open spaces on the campus and on the college website. This helps in making the policy accessible to all college stakeholders.

6.5.   GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The Zimbabwe higher and tertiary education institution curriculum planners should gender mainstream the teacher education curriculum as a matter of urgency. This is essential because the prospects of the future development of any country are easily predicted by its education system in terms of the curriculum offered. Gender mainstreaming is the strategy of promoting excellence in the handling of sexual harassment cases and instilling appropriate responses. It is a contemporary globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality especially in institutions of higher learning, leading to a reduction in the number of sexual harassment incidents. The concept is also a means to achieve the MHTEISTD's Education 5.0 that contributes to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals of gender equality, particularly SDG's 4 and 5 on inclusivity in education and addressing gender disparity in education respectively.

6.5.1. Gender responsive curriculum

The study recommends the introduction of gender studies as a compulsory course module at entry point to all students at colleges of education in the country. A compulsory course module helps to entrench awareness of sexual harassment in the teacher education curriculum. It also helps to enforce full student attendance and participation that might result in behaviour change and in eliciting assertive responses to sexual harassment. A gender responsive curriculum has the potential to lead to a common understanding of sexual harassment.

6.5.2. Sensitisation and training on sexual harassment

There is need for an institution-wide sensitisation and training of all college members on sexual harassment at the beginning of each year by the Ministry and college stakeholders. In-service training workshops for qualified teachers in schools are also recommended to equip them with adequate information about sexual harassment. The sensitisation and training should entail the laws and rights that pertain to it as well as the sentencing attached to the offences. It should also be about what sexual harassment entails, how it manifests, its identification, reporting and handling procedures, appropriate responses and assurances of victims' safety after having reported it. The policy should have a budget and a review date. Training could lead to increased knowledge of legal rights in members, particularly students, leading them to regard assertive responses as their constitutional right, ultimately reducing incidents of sexual harassment.

6.6. A MULTI-SECTORAL COORDINATED APPROACH

The study suggests institutional collaboration with its parent Ministry, the sister Ministry of primary and secondary education, civil society and the private sector in addressing sexual harassment. A multi-sectoral coordinated approach helps in tackling underlying root causes of sexual harassment, ultimately contributing to a reduction in the number of cases. Some such sectors are SAYWHAT, the Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZ), UNICEF, the National AIDS Council, the Matabeleland

AIDS Council and Plan International among others. Multi-sectoral approaches also helps to strengthen institutional capacity in enforcing policy development and implementation towards zero tolerance for sexual harassment.

6.7.   PROMOTION OF RESEARCH

The study recommends that the Ministry, its institutions and stakeholders should promote research on sexual harassment in the country. Promoting research on the topic is an international best practice that helps in providing evidence to national policy makers and curriculum planners, leading to the achievement of a gender mainstreamed teacher education curriculum and ultimately the country's development. This is because the level of development of any country is a reflection of its research skills. In this regard, a nation with a higher research skill may develop faster than the one with lower or no skills at all. Research could be promoted if the Ministry allocates resources for activities such as research conferences, production of position papers and publishing. Research conferences on gender issues may enable researchers to share knowledge that could lead to accurate documentation, a common understanding and approach to the problem, and a shift from gender neutral types of research to gender-specific ones. Hence the promotion of research on gender is inescapable empowerment and transformative practice in the achievement of gender mainstreaming in higher and tertiary education institutions.

6.8.   PROPER HANDLING OF CASES

The college should handle sexual harassment cases properly by taking action on all reports, in time, and passing appropriate sentences in line with the Zimbabwean law, particularly the SI 1 of 2000. The proper handling of cases may include establishing confidential, clear and decentralised reporting structures to encourage victims' trust in the system, leading to disclosure. Students should be allowed to disclose their sexual harassment experiences to people they trust. The counselling of students should be extended to all lecturers by virtue of the basic counselling skills they received from their training as educators and acting in *loco parentis* as aunts, mothers, fathers and uncles in communities. Decentralising the reporting and counselling structures at the institution besides increasing reports may solve the staff shortages in handling sexual

harassment cases. This may also lead to the reduction in time spent investigating and solving such cases at the institution.

6.9. SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS

The college is advised to support victims of sexual harassment through offering individual and group counselling services. Group counselling helps victims to know other survivors' lived experiences and realities, resulting in the realisation that they are not the only ones with such problems. Counselling sessions could possibly restore their confidence to live a normal life after sexual harassment by learning from others. Victims may also be referred to specialists for further help.

The college is also encouraged to financially support needy students through allowing such students to work on the grounds and in the gardens during holidays to raise tuition fees and money for other necessities. Such support empowers students to be self-reliant and puts them in a position where they can refuse financial offers by perpetrators. This ultimately enables them to resist sexual harassment and to engage in empowered responses.

6.9.   CONCLUSION

In summary, the current chapter has given recommendations based on empowering students' responses to sexual harassment. The recommendations are hinged on the strengthening of the country's legal and policy system related to sexual harassment for the achievement of gender mainstreaming in the Zimbabwean teacher education curriculum and beyond.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

7.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter Six discussed the recommendations for empowering students' responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe and beyond. The recommendations are hinged on strengthening the legal and policy system for the achievement of gender mainstreaming in the teacher education curriculum. The current chapter presents the study summary, conclusions and makes recommendations for further research. It restates the research questions and themes that the researcher had in mind when conducting this study. This is guided by the critical theory and the liberal feminist theory's emancipation intent of marginalised groups such as the female students at the mentioned college.

The conclusion to this study is drawn against the literature review, focus group discussions and the face-to-face interviews with participants. There has been corroboration of different data gathering techniques for confirming that students' responses to sexual harassment at a college of education are failing to reduce its prevalence, causing the problem to continue to persist. The conclusion to the present study is made in order to provide a starting point for further research in the area.

The current study found that students' responses are a complex and fluid concept influenced by a multiplicity of contextual factors beyond their control. This makes the study's findings almost infinite in that issue can arise due to varying situations.

7.2   SUMMARY FINDINGS

7.2.1. Understanding of sexual harassment

The findings from the focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews revealed that students have a narrow understanding of sexual harassment despite the fact that it is considered highly prevalent at the college of education. This was evident from participants' loose descriptions of what sexual harassment entails. Participants displayed tendencies to describe sexual harassment using broad language, rendering them unable to properly express themselves. The lack of appropriate vocabulary on the topic weakens the victims' communication options when describing sexual harassment experiences, causing a certain namelessness of some forms, leading them to omit a range of abuses experienced. Participants also displayed tendencies to describing sexual harassment as only being caused by a person of an opposite sex, directed to a sexual part of the body. This is contrary to the fact that sexual harassment can be caused by persons of the same sex. Some participants also regarded that for an act to be considered sexual harassment, it has to happen more than once when in actual fact it can be once-off.

Participants' narrow understanding of sexual harassment could be attributed to a lack of adequate knowledge about what it entails, emanating from the culture of silence that surrounds the topic in a patriarchy. It could also be attributed to some harmful practices in patriarchal cultural socialisations. The harmful practices include restricting women's discussions of sexuality as taboo, prolonged courtships, victim blaming, men's controlling of women's behaviour and attire and forced submission to men's sexual demands, trapping female students into submission to sexual harassment. The restrictions may lead to culturally contextual and gender differences in victims' descriptions of what sexual harassment entails, negatively affecting their responses to such incidents. The narrow understanding could lead to misconceptions about sexual harassment that may continue to expose female students to the problem. Thus, ignorance about sexual harassment may deter female students from engaging in

appropriate responses to something they do not adequately understand. The narrow understanding of sexual harassment could also be attributed to scant research in the area, creating a lack of evidence-based understanding of the topic. This implies that as long as students' knowledge levels about sexual harassment are narrow, it may be impossible for them to engage in proper responses, causing the problem to proliferate.

7.2.2. Sexual harassment legislative and policy gaps

The findings reflect that legislative gaps particularly the unclear definition of sexual harassment in the country's Constitution (No. 20: 2013), the Labour Act (28:01) and the SI 1 of 2000, leads to ignorance about what it really is. The country's laws does not criminalise all forms of sexual harassment but instead, regards it as a civil matter, contributing to the narrow understanding of the topic. In as much the Labour Act (28:01) recognises sexual harassment by describing it as an unfair labour practice, this does not apply to students in non-employment contexts, particularly in higher and tertiary education institutions such as colleges of education. Similarly, the SI 1 of 2000 is not specific regarding student-to-student sexual harassment, lecturer–to-student and non-lecturing staff-to-students sexual harassment at higher and tertiary education institutions. The *in loco parentis* role mentioned in the S1 1 of 2000 refers to teachers at primary and secondary schools as employees in charge of minors. This scenario does not apply to adult students who are not employees and are regarded as consenting adults. In this regard, currently, there is no legal instrument on sexual harassment that pertains to higher and tertiary education institutions in the country, colleges of education included.

The lack of a clear national definition of sexual harassment may negatively affect the way it is addressed at the Ministry and its institutions countrywide. Vague definitions might lead to institutional mishandling of cases and non- reporting by victims. Thus, the country's legislative gaps on sexual harassment could be the reason for the absence of a principal policy at Ministry level. A Ministry policy could provide guidelines on the handling of cases, on the monitoring of compliance, and could provide advice, support and make sexual harassment policy implementation mandatory for institutions. A Ministry policy could enhance the value and effectiveness of institutions in addressing incidents of sexual harassment.

It emerged that despite the fact that the college has a sexual harassment policy in place since 2016, making it one of the 6 out of 16 colleges of education in the country with a policy in place, participants were not aware of its existence. This implies that the policy may lack a wider distribution and full implementation, implying that it could be weak.

The current sexual harassment policy does not cover all sectors of college life, such as teaching practice, sports events, research project consultation, the dining hall, assignment submissions and payment of fines. The explanation for this could be that policy formulation at the college may have been a top-down approach instead of a bottom-up one, leading to a lack of awareness of its existence. This could be the reason why the policy content coverage is inadequate, leading participants to profess ignorance of its presence. The sexual harassment policy's failure to cover all sectors of college life makes it difficult for management to properly monitor and handle cases ultimately discouraging reporting and perpetuating the prevalence of sexual harassment.

A weak policy may lead to a lack of monitoring in omitted areas, causing the problem to continue to occur undetected. This is because a comprehensive policy may lead to an awareness of its presence and increases the likelihood of reporting. From this perspective, the current research has established that without specific legislation and policy on sexual harassment covering higher and tertiary education institutions in Zimbabwe, students' proper responses cannot be realised, causing the problem to continue to occur.

7.2.3. Prevalence of sexual harassment

The current study established a high prevalence of sexual harassment at the college despite the lack of reliable statistical evidence, non-reporting and its subtlety. It emerged that the frequency of sexual harassment reports of two to 15 in a quarter was not reliable. This is because low reporting rates do not suggest that 'all is well'. Low reporting rates could be suggesting that victims are not using the system due to a lack of knowledge about sexual harassment, lack of assurance of victim safety and confidentiality after reporting and fear of victimisation among others.

The incidence of sexual harassment in verbal, physical and nonverbal forms at the college could constitute sufficient proof of its high prevalence. The verbal forms of sexual harassment were singled out as the most prevalent whilst the physical forms were considered to be the least occurrence. The explanation for this was that verbal forms are not criminalised whilst some physical forms such as assault, rape and the most serious forms of cybercrime are considered criminal offences, thereby deterring possible perpetrators and reducing the number of cases. The lack of legal reference on most sexual harassment cases may cause victims to see the futility of reporting, resulting in their normalisation. Such gaps do not deter possible perpetrators, but instead, causes them to continue with their sexually harassing behaviour and increasing the prevalence of cases.

7.2.4. Perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment

Evidence from the interviews and focus group discussions confirms that male students are the major perpetrators of sexual harassment of female students at the college. This is from a list including lecturers, female students, kitchen staff, security guards, management, coaches, senior teachers in schools and student mentors. Female students were picked as the most likely victims by virtue of their already marginalised status in patriarchal society, rendering them powerless in the face of sexual harassment. The determination of male students as the major perpetrators of sexual harassment is contrary to earlier study findings considering male lectures as the most prominent sexual offenders. The determination could be stemming from the country's lack of a specific legal instrument covering student-to-student sexual harassment. The female victims who were found to be harassed most frequently were found to be the young, big-bodied and those who were under-performing academically. The big-bodied suffer from a lot of verbal harassment whilst the young and the underperforming are taken advantage of. The finding is in line with the critical theory that attributes sexual harassment to the carrying over of the practice of patriarchal marginalisation of women to education institutions.

It is also crucial to highlight that, although female students were singled out as the major victims of sexual harassment, they can also be considered perpetrators against male students and lecturers through their sexual advances. In this regard, the study established that although patriarchal socialisations have marginalised and stigmatised

sexually assertive women ultimately disempowering them, some female students also perpetrate sexual harassment against their male counterparts and lecturers. This finding challenges the point by the critical theory that tends to view marginalisation as fixed and resulting in powerlessness in all women. The implication of this is that, cultural socialisation could be changing, given the global development trends that have witnessed tendencies towards the relinquishing of power by patriarchal traditions.

7.2.5. Students' reactions to encounters of sexual harassment

The current study found that although students' responses to encounters of sexual harassment were varied and situational, the majority of the reactions were not made out of choice or because it was the best thing to do, but for survival. This was attributed to socio-cultural, legislative, institutional and financial factors, which are beyond their control. Students' responses include silence, avoidance, ignoring, resisting, reporting and downplaying the incidents. It is noteworthy that although reporting and resisting were considered the only 'assertive' responses, they were used by the same victims as a last resort when the 'unassertive' ones had failed. This explains why silence was considered to be students' most common response due to it being their first option before considering other alternatives. The use of silence as the victims' first reaction to sexual harassment could be attributed to the socialisation in patriarchal traditions of peaceful resolution to conflicts. Patriarchy has tendency to socialise women in order to avoid conflict and overlook men's sexually harassing behaviours. In other words, it was possible for an individual to use all the responses in a single incident depending on the victim's context. This implies that students' responses to sexual harassment are not fixed but fluid, reflecting a careful consideration of other strategies in terms of available alternatives, expected cultural norms, consequences, costs and benefits.

Students' silent reaction to sexual harassment could be attributed to victims' lack of awareness of who to report and when to report such incidents. Silence about sexual harassment could also be attributed to victims' fear of victimisation, retaliation, blame and embarrassment, leading to failing the course. It could also be attributed to the subordination of women in patriarchy which renders them unable to resist sexual harassment incidents. It is also enshrined in harmful practices and cultural taboos, causing society to legitimate sexual harassment incidents. Legitimating sexual harassment may lead victims to remain silent and conform to societal expectations as

well as avoiding being blamed for inviting their sexual harassment. Silence about sexual harassment could also be attributed to the fact that it is considered a civil and not a criminal matter. The non-criminalisation of sexual harassment might lead to lenience sentencing and a lack of punishment on offenders that discourage assertive responses.

7.2.6. Recommendations arrived at

The current study's recommendations are hinged on the strengthening of the country's legal and policy system through amendments to achieve gender mainstreaming in institutions of higher and tertiary learning, particularly at colleges of education. An amendment of the legal system may help to reduce existing gaps in the handling of sexual harassment in institutions of higher and tertiary learning. A national legislative review of the constitution (No. 20: 2013), Labour Act (20:01) and the SI 1 of 2000 are recommended to clearly cover the topic of sexual harassment at higher and tertiary institutions. The SI 1 of 2000 should be explicit about sexual harassment, particularly, student-to-student, lecturer-to-student and non-lecturing staff-to-student relationships. It should prohibit consensual relationships between students and lecturers and between non-lecturing staff and students. The constitution should be clear about what sexual harassment really is through standardising and aligning all cultural definitions to the constitution. Reporting procedures, penalties and remedies of sexual harassment incidents should be clear. All forms of sexual harassment should be criminalised and the law should be punish offenders.

The development and implementation of a sexual harassment policy at Ministry level in alignment with the country's legislative system is also suggested. Policy development and implementation is in line with the principle of good governance. Policy implementation at this level could enable the Ministry to advise, support, fund, monitor and evaluate sexual harassment programmes in its institutions. The college sexual harassment policy should be updated to cover all sectors of college life, widely distributed and fully implemented. There is need to host sensitisation and training workshops about sexual harassment to students, staff and qualified teachers in order to attain adequate understanding of the topic and proper institutional handling of cases. This helps to reduce gaps in perception differences about sexual harassment. There is also need by the college to create decentralised confidential reporting and

counselling structures to enable victims to approach people they trust. Research on sexual harassment should be promoted and funded by the Ministry and civil society organisations to provide evidence-based information to policy makers and planners, enabling them to arrive at informed decisions.

Gender mainstreaming of the teacher education curriculum through the introduction of a compulsory course module is crucial for the empowerment of students' responses and it is in line with international best practices. It is also crucial in giving female students a voice, transforming them, leading to their self-emancipation from the problem and to the reduction the reduction in the number of cases of sexual harassment. The concept promotes gender equality in institutions of higher learning and is a means to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly the SDGs 4 and 5 on inclusivity in education and addressing gender disparity in education respectively.

7.3.   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The current study was carried out at one College of education in Zimbabwe, and as such similar studies can be conducted in other higher and tertiary institutions in and out of the country. A study can also be conducted on sexual harassment policy implementation challenges Zimbabwean colleges of education. This is in order to break barriers in policy development and implementation, leading to international best practices on the handling of sexual harassment. Also, not much is known about students' attitudes towards sexual harassment in higher and tertiary institutions. The findings on these topics could provide much needed knowledge that could result in the eradication of inappropriate responses to sexual harassment currently experienced particularly by female students in the country's institutions of higher learning.

7.4.   LIMITATIONS OF THE FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THEORY AND METHOD

The current study's recommendations are emancipatory and largely in relation with the transformative intent of critical and feminist theories. This is because the recommendations are hinged on strengthening the legal system covering sexual harassment for the achievement of gender mainstreaming in the teacher education curriculum as a means to students' empowerment, transformation and emancipation from sexual harassment. Also, the use of focus group discussions and face-to-face

interviews with semi-structured questions is emancipatory to the previously marginalised female students by giving them a voice. This enables the study's recommendations to be transformative particularly for female students, who are considered the major victims of sexual harassment.

However, the current study established that, although the findings and critical theory with a feminist lens agree to a larger extent in terms of attributing sexual harassment to socio-cultural factors in a patriarchy, they also show some differences. The two agree on the empowerment, transformation and emancipation of the traditionally marginalised groups who in this case are female students (Calhoun 2001). However, in as much as the female students have been traditionally marginalised, the findings reveal that it is not fixed, but fluid. This suggests that the marginalisation of women is an undergoing transforming given the changing nature of the patriarchy in societies (Chafetz 2006). Furthermore, with modernisation, changing trends in socialisation, international and local legislative reforms on gender equality, women's marginalisation and powerlessness could have also changed, leading to some females sexually harassing men and occupying high decision making positions of power. This perspective renders the critical theory to be broad in meaning and limited to the specific arguments of the Frankfurt School (Calhoun 2001).

Also, contrary to expectation, in line with critical theory with a feminist lens, men have been regarded as the sole perpetrators of GBV by virtue of their acquisition of ascribed power in patriarchal society, but women who have been considered permanently powerless have also been found to be perpetrators of sexual harassment. This could be testimony to the fact that the socio-cultural, legislative and economic trends have changed women's status in societies globally. The current study therefore challenges the critical theory's attribution of women's permanent oppression to cultural domination in patriarchy (Van Rensburg 2010).

The study's findings have proven that, in as much as power and culture are fluid, so too is the marginalisation and powerlessness of women in society. Further to that, in as much as patriarchy has been regarded as a social system which operates in the interest of men and to their benefit, it is questionable whether it remains the root cause of GBV, particularly sexual harassment. The situation has changed because patriarchal power is not fixed and has been decreasing over the past decades due to

changing global environments of socialisation. This suggests that there are other factors at play besides patriarchy as the root causes of sexual harassment, which this study believes could influence responses to the problem.

7.5.   CONCLUSIONS

The findings from the current research have sharpened the understanding of students' responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education in Zimbabwe. The current study has affirmed the findings of earlier studies that sexual harassment is highly prevalent at colleges of education in Zimbabwe (Zindi 1994; Kanyemba and Naidu 2019). The study also validates and challenges the critical theory with a feminist lens' transformative and emancipation intent concerning marginalised groups, particularly female students. It reaffirms that a sexual harassment free teacher education curriculum is a crucial element in the country's development process leading to the realisation of the MHTEISTD's Education 5.0 Agenda which contributes to the achievement of SDGs 4 and 5 of Vision 2030. The findings of this study have concluded that gender mainstreaming in the teacher education curriculum is a means to empower students' responses towards sexual harassment. Mainstreaming gender requires legal and gender responsive actions at national and Ministerial level backed by adequate resource allocation from the government and its partners. With gender mainstreaming, everyone is taken on-board and no one is left behind, resulting in the full participation of students particularly females, and thus the realisation of their full potential, ultimately contributing to the development of the nation (ILO 2019). The current study also believes that gender mainstreaming cannot be achieved in colleges of education alone because, currently, most sexual harassment behaviour affecting male and female students originated outside the education sector. This implies that, when gender is mainstreamed at higher education institutions in the country, particularly colleges of education, communities, other government and private organisations in the country and beyond stand to benefit from the practice. Therefore, it goes without saying that empowered responses towards sexual harassment that are achieved through gender mainstreaming of the teacher education curriculum have the potential to drive the transformation and emancipation of female students in Zimbabwean colleges of education.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A:

UNISA ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2019/04/17

Ref: 2019/04/17/57656894/23/MC

Name: Mrs E Takavarasha

Student no: 57656894

Dear Mrs Takavarasha

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2019/04/17 to 2024/04/17

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs E Takavarasha
E-mail address: eugtakavarasha@gmail.com
Telephone: +263 77 235 4802

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof TN Phasha
E-mail address: phashnt@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +27 12 481 2810

Title of research:

Students' responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education institution in Zimbabwe

Qualification: PhD in Inclusive Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2019/04/14 to 2024/04/17.

The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2019/04/14 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

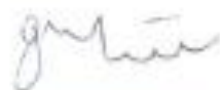The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2024/04/17**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2019/04/17/57656894/23/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,

Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za

Prof PM Sebate
ACTING EXECUTIVE DEAN
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX B:

MINISTRY CLEARANCE LETTER

"The Secretary for Higher & Tertiary Education
Telephones: 795891-5, 796441-9, 730055-9
Fax Numbers: 792109, 728730, 703957
E-mail: thesecretary@mhet.ac.zw
Telegraphic address: "EDUCATION"

ZIMBABWE

Reference:

MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY
EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
DEVELOPMENT

P. BAG CY 7732
CAUSEWAY

Ms. E. Takavarasha
1363 Nketa 8
P. O Box Nkulumane
BULAWAYO

24 May 2019

Ms Takavarasha

REQUEST FOR AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH ON "STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT COLLEGES OF EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY OF HILLSIDE TEACHERS' COLLEGE: MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

Reference is made to your letter in which you requested for permission to carry out a research on **"students' responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education institution in Zimbabwe; a case study of Hillside Teachers' College."** as partial fulfillment of your studies.

Accordingly, please be advised that the Head of Ministry has granted you permission to carry-out the research.

It is hoped that your research will benefit the Ministry and it would be appreciated if you could supply the office of the Permanent Secretary with a final copy of your study, as the findings would be relevant to the Ministry's strategic planning process.

Nhenjana S. (Mr.)
Deputy Director Human Resources
FOR: Permanent Secretary

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APPENDIX C:

COLLEGE LETTER OF PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

APPENDIX C: Request for Permission to Conduct Research at a College of Education

UNISA

1362 Nketa 8
P.O. Nkulumane
Nkulumane
Bulawayo

H∂ A.
Research pleas
arist

28 May 2019
The Principal
Private Bag 2
Hillside
Bulawayo

Dear Madam

RE: Request for permission to conduct research at Hillside Teachers' College

I, Eugenia Takavarasha am studying towards a doctoral degree at the University of South Africa. My supervisor is Phasha TN, a professor in the Department of Inclusive Education. Her contact details are (phashnt@unisa.ac.za and 012 481 2810).

I kindly request permission to carry out a research study at your college. The title of my research: **Students' responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education institution in Zimbabwe**. The study will entail capturing the perspectives of students, college teachers/lecturers, Health and Life skills peer educators and SAYWHAT staff members about the topic studied. Data will be gathered by means of focus group discussions and face to face interviews at the identified college of Education. The findings of the study will be used to design strategies that will empower female student teachers in responding to encounters of sexual harassment.

The identity of participants and all information provided will remain anonymous, private and strictly confidential. There will be no disruption of the institutions' activities, as I will carry out the interviews in the afternoons when academic activities are over. Participation in the study will be voluntary, participants will be entitled to withdraw from the study at any time, which suits them, and there would be no negative consequence for doing so. The interviews will be audio recorded with participants' permission. The ethical clearance certificate of the study has been by the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Education at the University of South Africa. The certificate's reference number is 2019/04/17/57656894/23/MC. Please find attached a copy of the ethics clearance certificate.

Yours sincerely
Eugenia Takavarasha

Doctoral student in Inclusive Education

APPENDIX D:

IVITATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

APPENDIX D: REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS DISCUSSION/INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

1362 Nketa 8
P.O. Nkulumane
Nkulumane
Bulawayo
May 2019

Hillside Teachers' College
Private Bag 2
Hillside
Bulawayo

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Eugenia Takavarasha and I am doing research under the supervision of T.N Phasha, a professor in the Department of Inclusive Education towards a PHD in Education at the University of South Africa. I wish to invite you to participate in a study entitled: **Students' responses to sexual harassment at colleges of education institution in Zimbabwe.** This study is expected to collect important information that could empower female students in responding to sexual harassment at college. It also aims to come up with appropriate response strategies that will possibly contribute towards the curbing of sexual harassment at college.

This letter serves to invite you to participate in focus discussion and/or individual interview on the study topic. The interviews will take place in a face-to-face manner at your institution on the date to be confirmed with you, your institution and other participants. During the interview, I will ask you several questions related to the research topic. Please know that you are free to refuse to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable to answer. You may say that you do not know if you do not have an answer to a question. Many of the questions are about your opinions, so there is no right or wrong answer. I will facilitate the discussion using English. The interview will last for about 45 minutes to an hour. The information you share in the interview will not be shared with anyone. Your name will remain anonymous and will not appear in the final thesis. Participation in this study is voluntary and there is no payment for it.

Should you have a question about your rights as a study participant, or questions or concerns about any aspect of the study, you may contact my supervisor at 012 481 2810 or phashnt@unisa.ac.za. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Eugenia Takavarasha at: +263-0772354802 or eugtakavarasha@gmail.com. My ethics clearance number is 2019/04/17/57656894/23/MC

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you

Mrs Eugenia Takavarasha
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APPENDIX E:

CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM

UNISA

(Return slip)

I, _____ (Participant Name), wish to confirm that I have voluntarily agreed to participate in this study. The researcher has disclosed the following information to me: (a) his/her identity; (b) purpose of the study; (c) and data collection methods. The researcher has explained my rights to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. S/he has promised not to disclose my identity when reporting the research findings.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant's name and surname (Please print)   _____

_____   _____

Participant's signature   Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (Please print)   _____

_____   _____

Researcher's Signature   Date

APPENDIX F:

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

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APPENDIX F: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Would you please share with me your understanding of sexual harassment?

2. Do sexual harassment occur at your institution?

3. Have you ever witnessed or encounter such a behaviour?

4. In what forms do such behaviour manifest?

5. What could be encouraging such types of behaviour?

6. How widespread is sexual harassment at this institution?

7. Of the types you have mentioned, tell me about those which you consider as frequent?

8. What makes such behaviour frequent?

9. Which ones would you consider as less frequent, and what could be the reason?

10. Who are recipients of sexual harassment at this college, and what could be the reason?

11. Who would you say are the perpetrators of sexual harassment at this college, and what could be the reason?

12. Can you share with me how students respond to encounters of sexual harassment at this college?

13. Of the responses you have mentioned above, which ones do you consider to be the most common responses among students at this college?

14. In your opinion, what do you think causes such response?

15. What do you think are the reasons students respond the way they do to sexual harassment at this college?

16. How can students be empowered to respond to encounters of sexual harassment at colleges of education.

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APPENDIX G: FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE

- Would you please share with me your understanding of sexual harassment?

- Do sexual harassment occur at your institution?

- Have you ever witnessed or encountered such a behaviour?

- In what forms do such behaviour manifest?

- What could be encouraging such types of behaviour?

- How widespread is sexual harassment at this institution?

- Of the types you have mentioned, tell me about those which you consider as frequent?

- What makes such behaviour frequent?

- Which ones would you consider as less frequent, and what could be the reason?

- Who are recipients of sexual harassment at this college, and what could be the reason?

- Who would you say are the perpetrators of sexual harassment at this college, and what could be the reason?

- Can you share with me how students respond to encounters of sexual harassment at this college?

- Of the responses you have mentioned above, which ones do you consider to be the most common responses among students at this college?

- In your opinion, what do you think causes such response?

- What do you think are the reasons students respond the way they do to sexual harassment at this college?

- How can students be empowered to respond to encounters of sexual harassment at colleges of education.

APPENDIX H:

TURNITIN REPORT

STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES AND RESPONSES TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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APPENDIX I:

EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE

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"Perfection is our DNA"

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07 March 2021

To whom it may concern

This letter is to confirm that I, Keegan Bruce Schmidt, freelance copy-editor, have edited and proofread degree for Doctor of **Doctor Of Inclusive Education: STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES AND RESPONSES TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE BY EUGENIA TAKAVARASHA** for grammar and spelling. I have not changed any of the ideas presented in this paper and only the grammar and spelling has been altered for the purposes of clarity. This is to confirm that I have edited the document to a level I deem satisfactory.

Keegan Schmidt
Qualifications:
- BIS (University of Pretoria)
- BIS Hons (University of Pretoria)