

**PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS REGARDING TRANSACTIONAL SEX AND ITS  
EFFECTS ON HEALTH AT A SELECTED UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH AFRICA.**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I Ntsieni Mmboniseni Worrieness, declare that this mini-dissertation titled: **“Perceptions of Students Regarding Transactional Sex and its Effects on Health at a Selected University in South Africa”** is my own work and that all the sources I used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references, and this work has not been submitted for a degree at this university or any other institution.

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NTSIENI M.W

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Date

## **DEDICATION**

This mini-dissertation is dedicated to my late father, Mr Mmbambedzeni Bernard Libago for bringing me into this world. My mother Ms Nokuthula Joyce Ntsieni for standing by me from the first day of my life until now. My partner Maphefo Mogane and my son Ompha Ntsieni for always bringing a smile to my face.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>AIDS</b>   | <b>Acquired Immuno- Deficiency Syndrome</b> |
| <b>HEAIDS</b> | <b>Higher Education AIDS Programme</b>      |
| <b>HIV</b>    | <b>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</b>         |
| <b>PLWH</b>   | <b>People Living With HIV</b>               |
| <b>STI</b>    | <b>Sexually-Transmitted Infections</b>      |
| <b>UNAIDS</b> | <b>United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS</b> |

## ABSTRACT

The exchange of money or gifts for sexual relationships, also called transactional sex, is considered a sexual risk behaviour worldwide and continues to pose sexually-transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies risks and other health complications among people engaging in these type of relationships. The aim of the study was to explore the perceptions of students regarding transactional sex and its effects on health at the University of Venda. The study utilized a qualitative, descriptive phenomenological design to understand the perceptions of students regarding transactional sex. The target populations of the study were registered students at the University of Venda. Purposive technique was used to recruit 18 participants. Data was collected using in-depth interviews and analyzed using using Tesch's thematic analysis. The study concluded that students at the University of Venda perceive transactional sex as a material-based relationship, prostitution, immoral behaviour and abusive relationship. Students perceived socio-economic status, social classes, behavioural aspects and peer pressure to be the driving factors pushing students to engage in transactional sex. Transactional sex is common among the University community and has far-reaching public health as well as social consequences. Students at the University of Venda perceive transactional sex an a bad behavior. This calls for the University to ensure that there are enough extra-mural activities for students to engage in, which could generate some pocket money, awarenesses and educate student not to engage in transactional sex and also provide health talks through printing of pamphlets communicating messages against this practice.

**Key words:** HIV, sex, sexually-transmitted infections, transactional sex.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction and background of the study.

#### 1.1 Introduction

The exchange of money or gifts for sexual relationships, also called transactional sex, is considered a risky sexual behaviour worldwide; and continues to pose risk of sexually-transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies. Transactional sex is having heterosexual intercourse in exchange for money and/or material goods. This section presents the introduction to the study, background of the study, problem statement, and rationale of the study, significance of the study, objectives of the study and definition of concepts.

#### 1.2 Background of the study

Transactional sex involves the exchange of sex for money, gifts, services or other favours. Transactional sex, also known as “sugar daddy” relationships (Adjei and Kyereme, 2014) relationships in sub-Saharan Africa, refers to sexual relationships between older (usually richer male) partners and younger (usually socially and/or economically lower status female) partners, including adolescents. In several important ways, transactional sex differs from the generic view of prostitution, which is non-marital and multiple-partnered and usually involves the exchange of sex for cash only. Although transactional sex is also non-marital and can be multi-partnered, its striking difference from prostitution is that “participants are constructed as ‘girlfriends’ and ‘boyfriends’ and not ‘prostitutes’ and ‘clients’”, and the exchange of gifts for sex is part of a broader set of obligations that might not involve a predetermined payment (Masvawure 2010). Transactional sex or the exchange of sex for money, goods, or services has long been identified as a key factor influencing the spread of HIV, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, 2010).

Conservatively, two broad perspectives; namely, agency and structuration, have informed discourses on transactional sex. While the agency perspective recognizes an individual’s power of choice, the second perspective centres on the structural forces that control individual decision-making, leading people to make decisions they might normally be expected to avoid (Gukurume, 2011; Luke, 2005). The agency perspective recognizes young women as reasonable people who may exploit their sexuality to extract economic and material gains from rich older men. For instance, in a Tanzanian study, young women described themselves as lucky to have been created women since they could exploit their sexuality for pleasure and material benefits, and described men as stupid for paying for goods (vaginas/sex) they could not take away (Wamoyi et al., 2011).

In Abidjan, older partners in transactional relationships have been described as old rich fools, only good for financial exploitation (Hunter, 2002).

In a quantitative study conducted by Wusu (2008) among Lagos State University students in Nigeria, the findings revealed that heterosexual activities thrive among undergraduates. Transactional sex appeared to be common and it was more prevalent among females. The interviews indicated that poverty, broken homes and desire to make easy money account for the high prevalence of risky sexual health behaviour. Measures of protection such as condoms are rarely used in transactional sex. According to a cross-sectional study conducted in July 2012 among 790 students in eight private colleges in Bahir Dar City, Ethiopia, the students reported to have exchanged sex for money (gifts). Respondents who reported unprotected sex were about 2 times more likely to exchange sex, compared to those who never had unprotected sex. The odds of exchanged sex were higher for students living in rented houses with no family, compared to those living with family (Alarem et al., 2013).

Furthermore, in another study a qualitative study conducted among female Ghanaian University students, the students reported that they were not simple victims; rather, these relationships were the result of complex and conscious choices. They did not want to marry their partners and these were short-term relationships primarily for material gain, which they nevertheless kept secret from family and most friends for fear of stigma, particularly in blighting their future marriage prospects. They protected themselves from emotional involvement, although they often saw their partners as loving, taking the provision of gifts as a sign of affection and sometimes a replacement for parental love. Their motivation was primarily economic, to fulfil “wants” not survival “needs” – the relationships enabled them to purchase the trappings of affluent society, such as clothes, hairstyles, fast food and gadgets. They were also motivated by the enhanced experiences these relationships allowed, such as feeling protected, respected, “high class”, part of a daring elite of women and being able to travel and continue their education (Adjei et al, 2014).

Recently in a survey at Mbarara University of Science and Technology in South-Western Uganda, which had an undergraduate population of 2870 students in 2014, the involvement of men and women differed regarding transactional sex. While more women than men reported being involved in receiving something valuable for sex (15.2% vs. 10.1%), a greater proportion of men reported paying for sex (22.7% vs. 6.2%) (Choudry, 2015)

In literature there is evidence of increasing transactional sex among young people in South Africa including university students. Most of the existing literature (Shefer et al, 2012;

Gukurume, 2011; Masvawure, 2010) suggests that transactional sex is particularly prevalent in Southern Africa.

In a qualitative study conducted among Great Zimbabwe University students by Gukurume (2011) the respondents highlighted that most students enter into transactional relationships for both basics such as food or clothes as well as luxuries such as jewellery and cosmetics. This study also revealed that money, gifts and other material benefits place young students at a higher risk of being infected with HIV as well as unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions, by lowering their likelihood of using protection in such sexual relationships.

Traditionally, transactional sex has frequently been conflated with having sex with “sugar daddies”, with gifts flowing uni-directionally from these sugar daddies to young women. Findings from this study however showed that transactional sex is more complex than it has been portrayed. This is because “sugar mummies” are also involved in these transactions and the flow of gifts and resources is more reciprocal, even though women tend to receive more material benefits than men. In this research it also emerged that being a recipient of money and gifts in these relationships is not as disempowering as it has traditionally been portrayed; instead, young students were seen to be exercising their agency by accruing benefits from their valued sexuality (Gukurume, 2011).

Another study was conducted by Govender and Mutinta (2013) at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal among 1,405 students. In general, 36% of the sexually-experienced students reported engaging in transactional sex in the previous three months. Among the sexually experienced males who reported having sex defined by the exchange of goods or money for sexual services in the past three months, 19.3% of those below the age of 20 years, and 24% of those in the 20–29 age group reported engaging in two or more casual sexual activities in the previous three months.

A qualitative research in Balaka district of Malawi, completed in 2004, conducted 54 in-depth interviews with young people aged 15-24, who had intimate sexual relationships mainly with their peers. This information is included here because it provides a useful reference point for comparing transactional behaviours in similar-age relationships vs. cross-generational sex. This study demonstrates that monetary transactions in sexual relations are standard in the study population and occur for symbolically meaningful and expressive reasons as well as economic purposes. The money exchange in the relationships is complex. The transfer of money means that sex will occur. For girls, money brings material benefits and social status. Girls buy luxury items, bringing them admiration from others. A man may encourage his girlfriend to purchase such items, as he wants the girl’s friends to admire her (Poulin, 2005).

A qualitative study of young women in Maputo, Mozambique, was undertaken by Population Service International on informed behaviour change interventions with a total of 60 women interviewed.

The young women, who had multiple sexual partners, were in agreement that the primary motivation for transactional sex is economic, not as a survival strategy meeting basic needs, but as a strategy that empowers them as upwardly mobile young women. These young women argued that their transactional sexual relationships with older men differ from prostitution because their transactions occur as part of an on-going relationship and not as a one-time sexual encounter. The young women said they do not see themselves as passive or coerced victims of sexual relations with older men but as persons defining their own social identity and making choices. For them, transactional sex is a strategy for challenging and reversing existing imbalances in gender and economic relations, and exerting power (Hawkins,2005).

A study undertaken in urban Botswana explored the prevalence and dynamics of transactional and cross-generational sexual relationships. A quantitative survey was conducted with 600 schoolgirls (ages 18-22 years) in all four public senior secondary schools in Gaborone to establish sexual practices and the prevalence of cross-generational sexual relationships. The results revealed that more than three-quarters of the girls had boyfriends within their peer age group. However fifty-two girls were in current sexual relationships with older men and another 178 had been approached by older men but declined to have sex with them. In-depth qualitative interviews conducted with a sample of 40 school girls from the 230 who were currently in or who had rejected cross- generational relationships, classified the girls into three groups: (1) those who enjoyed good loving, pleasurable relationships with their older boyfriends; (2) those in relationships with older boyfriends characterized by coercion and manipulation; (3) those who resisted approaches from older men (Nkosana,2006).

A small qualitative study of university students' health literacy in Zimbabwe provides useful information on condom use in transactional sex. The study showed that condom use with regular partners is low. Secondly, when female students have partners who are employed, the students find it hard to insist on condom use in the relationship. The researchers did not elaborate on this finding, but it may be related to the larger economic asymmetries between an employed male and young girl, compared with an unemployed male and young girl (Terry et al.,2005)

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Studies conducted in African countries have shown that young people, particularly women, practice transactional sex with older men for economic survival; to support their basic needs (Chatterji et al., 2005, Dunkle et al., 2004, Kaufman and Stavrou, 2004, Luke, 2005, Luke, 2003, Maganja et al., 2007). The older men, on the other hand, prefer young women in the mistaken belief that young women are unlikely to be infected with HIV and other STIs and it is therefore safe to have unprotected sex with (Langen, 2005, Nyanzi et al., 2001). These studies have demonstrated that the transaction aspect, which suggests economic benefit, combined with age and economic differences in transactional sexual relationships, compromise the power and ability of young people to negotiate for safer sex, which increases their risk for HIV infection, STIs and pregnancy.

There is limited evidence at South African Universities documenting the perceptions of students regarding transactional sex. Understanding the perceptions of students regarding transactional sex in a selected university will be important for HIV, STIs and unplanned pregnancies prevention efforts among this group, considering the heightened risk of HIV and STI infections, and the role of transactional sex in exacerbating the risk of HIV infection among students.

### **1.4 Rationale for the Study**

An attempt to study risk sexual practices at the University of Venda in South Africa concluded that students engage in risky sexual behaviour. For example, between 2008 and 2009, about 43 percent of female students visited the on-campus clinic to request emergency contraception (Mavhandu-Mudzusi, 2009). Of these, 30 percent had not used condoms at all because the sexual encounter was unplanned. However this study did not link these risk sexual behaviours to transactional sex, where young women and men may be less able to decide the timing and conditions of sex. Therefore this study focuses on unearthing transactional sex behaviours in the context in which they occur.

At the University of Venda in South Africa, forty-three percent of female students visited the on-campus clinic to request emergency contraception between 2006 and 2008 (Mavhandu-Mudzusi, 2009). Of these, thirty percent had not used condoms at all because the sexual encounter was unplanned, while many more students reported experiencing problems with actual condom use, such as breakage and slippage. It can be safely assumed that half of these risk behaviours were taken in the context of exchanging sex for goods. Hence these high figures of students who indulge in risky sexual practices which resulted into early unwanted pregnancy, abortion, STI and HIV, prompted the researcher to carry out this study.

### 1.5 Significance of the Study

This research was expected to inform the University, reproductive health services and other concerned health stakeholders about transactional sex and factors contributing to transactional sexual relationships among University students in South Africa.

The recommendations put forward may assist the University and relevant stakeholders in designing relevant services to support students in order to mitigate or alleviate transactional sexual engagement activities, and in turn curb the spread of STIs and HIV. The findings of the study might also improve specific education that is in place, to limit HIV transmission and risky sexual behaviour among youth. In addition to information, education and communication on HIV transmission, effective reproductive health services and HIV prevention strategies could be proposed in order to change the risk behaviours of youth.

### 1.6. Purpose of the study

To investigate the perceptions of University of Venda students regarding transactional sex behaviours.

### 1.7 Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- Explore the perceptions of student regarding transactional sex .
- Explore the perceptions of students regarding the causes of transactional sex.
- Explore the perception of students regarding the effects of transactional sex on health.
- Describe the perceived strategies to curb the transactional sex practice/behaviour.

### 1.8. Definition of concepts

**Transactional sex-** Transactional sex involves the exchange of sex for money, gifts, services or other favors. Transactional sex, also known as “sugar daddy” relationships (Adjei and Kyereme,2014) in sub-Saharan Africa, refers to sexual relationships between older (usually richer male) partners and younger (usually socially and/or economically lower status female) partners, including adolescents. In this study transactional sex means having heterosexual intercourse in exchange for money and/or material goods.

**Perceptions-** An individual and personal view, judgment, or interpretation and opinion (Free dictionary (2015)).In this study a perception is a way in which student describes transactional sex on campus.

## Summary

This chapter covers the overview of the study by giving the introduction and the background of the study, the problem statement, rationale for the study, significance of the study, purpose and the objectives of the study. The next chapter will focus on the literature review.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1. Introduction

This section is divided into two parts, namely, data-based literature and conceptual-based literature. This literature covers the concept of transactional sex, common forms of transactional sexual behaviours, factors influencing students to engage in transactional sex. The perceptions of students regarding the implications of transactional sex are also covered. Lastly, the conceptual framework which guides the study is discussed.

#### 2.2. Transactional Sex

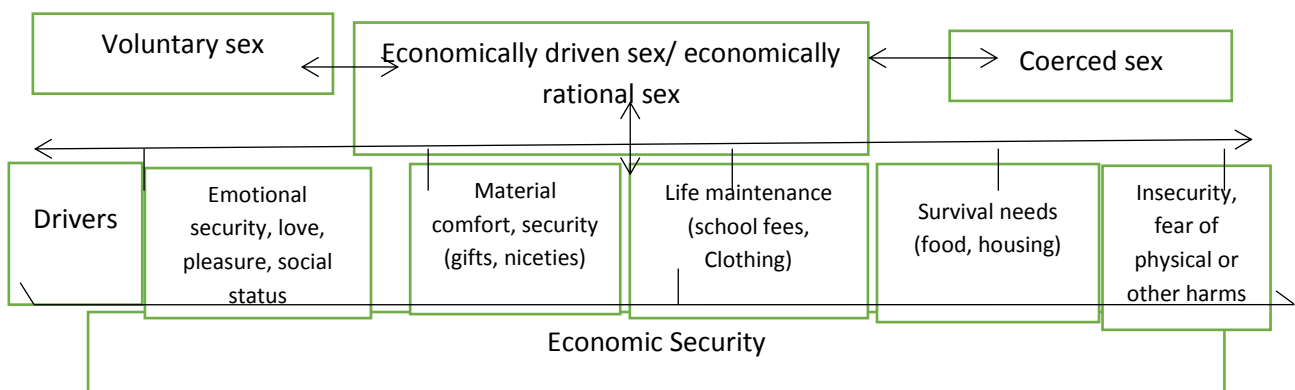
Transactional sex has been defined by Castle (1999) as the exchange of gifts, resources or money for sex and related sexual favours. The definitions of transactional sex have tended to be fluid, complex and amorphous, largely because transactional exchanges are customary between spouses. Schoepf (2004) noted that anecdotal evidence suggests that transactional sex is common among adolescents throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. The exchange of gifts or money for sex may signify 1) a committed relationship, 2) an acknowledgement of respect, 3) an expression of affection, 4) an obligation fulfilled, or perhaps 5) a display to impress other men (Chatterji et al.,2007; Dunkle et al.,2007 and Leclerc-Madlala,2003)

Reflecting economic and social roles within many-high-HIV prevalence countries, it is predominately men who provide the material benefits and women who receive these benefits in transactional sexual encounters. Although there has also been documentation of older women paying younger men for sex, often referred to as sugar mummies, this practice seems to be much less prevalent than men paying women for sex.

Luke and Kurz (2002) developed a conceptual framework for studying cross-generational and transactional sex, focusing on power asymmetries between partners. This conceptual framework recognizes that sexual activity is not just an individual attribute. Rather, it is a behaviour negotiated between the partners within a wider socio-cultural and economic context. Risk behaviours depend on the power asymmetries between sexual partners, as well as their individual characteristics and the sociocultural and economic distal determinants of behaviour. This conceptual framework suggests that African adolescent girls are highly vulnerable to engaging in risky sexual behaviour because (1) sexual activity can be exchanged for cash or material things; (2) older men have a preference for adolescent sexual partners who are perceived to be free from infection with HIV; and (3) with the decline in traditional societal structures, familial control over the behaviour of young people has

decreased but formal education has not fully replaced the traditional functions leaving a gap in young women’s knowledge of sexual and reproductive matters at a time when she is single and may be experimenting with sexual relations. Peers are the most important source of information on sexuality and reproductive health issues, and this may be inaccurate and misinformed.

To further understand the practice of transactional sex, it is helpful to conceptualize such relationships on a “continuum of volition”, from a balanced give-and-take to a coerced relationship that disrupts the ability of both partners to protect themselves and each other from abuses of power and increases HIV risk. The continuum of volition has been originally conceptualized by Save the Children, UK, to describe the cross-generational relationships among young women in South Africa. It has been used to design interventions based on different motivations for engaging in such relationships (Weissman et al.,2006).



**Figure 1: . Sexual Agency Continuum (Source: Weissman et al. 2006)**

### 2.2.1. Transactional sex and HIV risky sexual behaviours

Transactional sex was associated with HIV risky behaviours such as multiple concurrent sexual partners and sexual coercion among young people in Uganda. Multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships, and exchanging sex for gifts, favours, or money create a fertile ground for HIV transmission. Transactional sex appears to be an important driver of the HIV epidemic, especially among young men (Choudhry,2015).

- **Cross generation sex**

Several studies reveal significant relationships between transactional sex and cross-generational sex, unsafe behaviours, and HIV risk. The transactional aspect of many cross-generational sexual relationships are evident also. In a study conducted by Gukurume (2011), in Zimbabwe, the substantial age difference between female and male sexual partners has been identified as the major behavioral determinant of the more rapid rise in HIV prevalence in young women than in men. The Young Adult Reproductive Health Survey

for Zimbabwe found that two out of three young women (ages 17 – 24) reported that their most recent sexual partners were more than five years older and more than half of all young Zimbabwean women said that this was the case for their first sexual experience. Gender, age, and economic disparities may increase risky sexual behaviour and reduce a young woman's ability to negotiate safer sexual behaviours. Many authors report that girls and young women are unable to negotiate condom use in cross-generational sexual relations (Masvawure,2010).

- **Multiple and concurrent sexual partners**

Transactional sex may also play a key role in gender differences in HIV infection rates between women and men in sub-Saharan Africa. Women who engaged in transactional sex often abdicate decision-making power over sexual activities, such as condom use, making them more vulnerable to HIV infection. Since older men had much sexual experience than younger partner, probability of getting HIV infection in this group is high. Therefore, those older men who had sexual relation with young females can increase the chance of HIV infection among girls and even beyond them due to sexual network as a whole (Mitiku,2011).

- **Unprotected sex**

Research has also found that transactions of greater value have been associated with the non-use of condoms. Transactional sex often takes the form of sugar daddy relationships in which the male is older and in turn more economically stable and may be more likely to have HIV. Unprotected sexual intercourse is one of the major risk factor that predisposes individuals to HIV/AIDS (Mitiku,2011). A study conducted among over 8000 men in Botswana found that as the age of sexual partnership increases by a year, there was a 28% increase in the odds of having unprotected sex and HIV infection (Selowe,2007). A study from sub-Saharan Africa has also supported the results identified in Botswana (Luke,2003). The findings in urban Kenya indicated that partnerships involving age differences of 10 years and above were noted to be significantly less likely to have involved condom use at last sexual intercourse than for no-age difference or older female partners (odds ratio 0.5) (Luke,2005).

A qualitative study conducted in Ghana also among young girls who had transactional sex with older men were inconsistent on condom use(Ankomah,1996).

- **Sexual relation with gender-based violence**

One of the important points which should be addressed with regard to girls' sexual engagement with old men is the extent and occurrence of sexual violence. It is evident/clear from the studies conduted that sexual violence is prevalent and it could be sexual or physical abuse of young girls in transactional sexual relationships. There is also evidence throughout the world that young girls experience forced sexual relationships, which is often associated

with the 'sugar papas' practice (Kuate Defo,2004). Threats were generally made if the girls go back and break the promise/agreement to have sex in return for a gift. A qualitative study conducted in Tanzania found that 'sugar daddies' hit girls if they refuse sex when offered a small amount of money than agreed. An association between gender-based violence and transactional sex has also been documented in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (Maman et al.,2007).

### **2.3. Factors motivating people to engage in transactional sex.**

Transactional sexual relationships are influenced greatly by socio- cultural, economic, and political conditions. Many qualitative studies suggest that transactional sex is a normative practice of courting, dating, and partying amongst youth, rooted in economic and gender inequalities,peer pressure for material consumption, and sometimes pressing economic needs(Kuate Defo,2004).

#### **2.3.1. Social Norm**

Transactional sex can be seen as an assertion of power in cultures, where women's sexuality is highly valued. In a study conducted by Djara et al.,(2013) in Ghana, woman are expected to engage in transactional sex to improve their status and gain the support of men.Gender norms regarding women's sexuality as a commodity also influence and encourage this practice. However, other perspectives show that transactional sex leads to a decrease in negotiating power for the woman and in a university setting can lead to a decrease in women's academic engagement. The exchange of gifts or material goods for sex is sometimes expected as a sign of appreciation in sexual relationships among African youth, and such can be fittingly viewed in the ensuing context of a man's responsibility to provide for a woman(Djara et al.,2013)

#### **2.3.2. Desire for status above-subsistence living**

Studies cite conspicuous consumption on campus as a major motivating factor influencing women's involvement in transactional sex among sub-Saharan African university students. In a qualitative study conducted at the University of Zimbabwe, students reported receiving meals off-campus, gadgets, fashionable clothes, and beauty services from sugar daddies( Masvawure, 2010). In addition to the value of the items received, the high status associated with luxury items drove the transaction.

In a study of Nigerian university women, 18% reported ever receiving goods or money for sex and societal pressures for modernity, Leclerc and Madlala, (2003) shows that lack of economic opportunities for women independent of men are considered motivating factors for transactional sex among female post-secondary students in Ghana.

More recently, a counter discourse has also emerged that describes young women who are relatively well-off economically, but who also get involved in transactional sex for higher grades, employment opportunities, luxury consumables that raise their status in peer circles, and sometimes access to social networks. This is referred to as “consumption sex”. It has been identified in contexts of increasing capitalism, consumerism, globalization, and desire for modernity among contemporary societies in Sub Saharan Africa (Hunter,2002; Samara 2010 and Stoebenau et al.,2011).

### **2.3.3. Poverty**

Transactional sex has conventionally been linked to poverty: vulnerable women are forced into transactional sex to fulfill basic survival and subsistence needs, leading it to be often termed “survival sex” (Hunter,2002). More recently, a counter discourse has also emerged that describes young women who are relatively well-off economically, but who also get involved in transactional sex for higher grades, employment opportunities, luxury consumables that raise their status in peer circles, and sometimes access to social networks. Poverty and economic dependence push girls in Uganda into high-risk behaviours such as transactional sex and commercial sex work in exchange for money or other resources (Choudhry,2015). According to these studies, young girls’ sexual relationships with older men are a survival strategy: It is not uncommon for girls and young women to engage in sexual relationships with older men in order to finance their schooling and augment household income (Choudhry,2015).

Swidler and Watkins (2006) argue that sex for gifts is a way of life in societies where uncertainties and inequalities are pervasive. This observation suggests that transactional sex is predominant in poor regions of the world. A number of studies lend credence to the observation that sex for money or material gifts is highly prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia (Luke,2003; Wusu and Isiugo-Abanihe,2007; Moore, Biddlecom and Zulu, 2007, Nwokocha, 2007; Uzokwe, 2008). In a study in four African countries, Madise, Zulu and Ciera (2007) found that the wealthiest girls had later sexual debuts than their poorer colleagues in three countries. Rwenge (2003) reports that young people whose fathers were economically poor or who were living with parents who did not have sufficient means to meet their needs were likely to engage in poverty-driven risky sexual health behaviours.

To further understand the practice of transactional sex, it is helpful to conceptualize intimate relationships on a continuum from a balanced give and take to a disequilibrium that disrupts the ability of both partners to protect themselves and each other from abuses of power that lead to increased risk of transmitting sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

As economic dependence of one partner increases, the protective balance of a mutual relationship is disrupted, allowing for power imbalances that make it harder for the dependent partner to negotiate when, where, and how sex occurs. For university students, this can lead to relationships where sex is a commodity, used primarily for the purpose of acquiring material goods, financial support, and or grades (Choudhry,2015).

#### **2.3.4. Sex for academic achievement**

Studies at universities in Botswana, Ghana, and Tanzania show the exchange of sex for grades or school fees as another major form of transactional sex. Close to 70% of students at the University of Botswana reportedly engaged in sexual activity for good grades(Seloilwe, 2005). This is consistent with results of studies conducted in Ghana and Tanzania by Goparaju et al (2003 and Morley (2011). Faculty and administrators reportedly pressure young women for sex in return for academic favours, including high grades and answers on tests, Masvawure (2010) In addition, female students reported offering sexual favours to improve academic standing.

#### **2.3.5. Peer influences**

Negative peer pressure among young adolescents may promote high-risk sexual behaviour. Adolescents can be particularly susceptible to socially prescribed norms as they pay more attention to their peers' opinions than they do to those of adults. Qualitative studies conducted in Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Zimbabwe suggest that peer pressure to obtain luxury items, such as expensive clothing, jewellery, fashionable hairstyles, accessories, and makeup, motivates young women to engage in transactional sex (Chatterji et al., 2004). In a quantitative cross-sectional study conducted by Wusu (2012) among 30 students at Lagos State University, peer influence was also most frequently mentioned. In many studies of young people's sexuality the influence of friends has always been mentioned as a crucial factor. Parental pressure to engage in transactional sex is often implicit rather than explicit, and parents seek to obtain funds to finance their child's educational-related expenses, luxury items, and necessities for the house (Chatterji, et al., 2004).

#### **2.4. HIV among students in universities in South Africa**

A survey by HEAIDS (2010) of almost 24,000 students conducted at twenty-one of South Africa's twenty-three universities found a national HIV prevalence rate among university students of about 3%. The survey also found that prevalence rates were about three times higher in students more than 25 years in age and that female students were hardest hit,

exhibiting a prevalence rate of 4.7%, more than double the 2% rate found among their male peers. To some extent, the survey is reassuring that HIV among students and staff at higher education institutions is less common than in the general population (HEAIDS,2010).

The HEAIDS survey also revealed that about 60% of sexually-active students had been tested for HIV before, and a similar percentage reported using a condom the last time they had sex. The survey also found that 6% of male students had same-sex relationships. About 8% of all students reported engaging in anal sex and some participants mistakenly perceived anal sex as less risky than vaginal intercourse. The research found that 6.4% of Eastern Cape students were infected with the disease, followed by 6.1% in KwaZulu-Natal. The Free State had the third highest incidence, with 5.3%. In Gauteng, Limpopo and North West the incidence was 2.2%. Western Cape registered the lowest infection rate, 1.1%. The study reflected variations according to race, with the highest prevalence of HIV occurring among African students (5.6%) but only 0.1% of white students. Only 0.8% of coloured and 0.3% of Indian students were found to be HIV-positive (HEAIDS,2010).

Sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs), considered markers for HIV infection, are also prevalent among students. In 2010, students were about 18 times as less likely as young people in the general population to have gonorrhoea and about 10 times as likely to have syphilis (HEAIDS, 2010). Although students have an increased risk of being infected with HIV, compared with the general population, they do not manifest risk at the level that exists within their larger national community (Breier,2010).

## **2.5. Theoretical framework**

### **Bio-ecological Systems Theory framework**

The Bio-ecological Systems Theory (BST) framework (Bronfenbrenner 2005; Bronfenbrenner 1986; Bronfenbrenner 1977) conceptualizes sexual behaviours as a product of dynamic and reciprocal interplay of individual characteristics (ontological or intra-personal factors) as well as a range of systems such as microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems, and chronosystem. The use of BST enables an understanding of sexual behaviours of young people in their social context and explorations of various interactions between young people and their environment. Occurrences and attributes of one system can affect other systems, which in turn, affect the motivations, decision, behaviours, and outcomes of sexual interactions among youth.

Intra-personal or ontological characteristics refer to the biological, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral characteristics of an individual youth. Typical examples of such characteristics included in our analysis are age, socio-economic status, role of religion on one's life, marital and employment status, risky alcohol use and mental health status.

**A microsystem** is any immediate environment that contains the developing individual. A microsystem typically consists of family, peers, and partners (Bronfenbrenner 1977). Micro-systemic interactions promote the transmission of values about sexual behaviours. At the family level, the effect of young people growing up with single parents and the educational attainment of the head of the household were studied. The family approving transactional gifts.

**A mesosystem** is composed of the interactions that take place between the microsystems within an individual's life (Bronfenbrenner,1977). A typical example of a mesosystem interaction might be the pattern of sexual behaviour reinforced by experiences of peers at a university or the exposure to liberal urban environments, such as in universities, while growing up in a rural setting.

**An ecosystem** includes institutions that influence an individual's daily settings but are not part of that individual's immediate environment. Typical examples of such exosystems are university and school environments (analyzed in the study), media images and access to healthcare institutions.

**A macrosystem** is comprised of cultural and societal principles that create contexts and patterns within the outermost setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). It can influence the prevailing beliefs and messages regarding sexual behaviours. Macrosystems include gender norms, culture, ethnicity, and religion.

**A chronosystem** involves temporal changes or events in a lifespan that influence a person or their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). These temporal changes are related to the sexual and reproductive lifecycle, such as pubertal age, sexual initiation, or such events as being a victim of sexual coercion or physical violence that might influence the future sexual behaviour of an individual.

### **2.5.1. Application of the model to the study.**

In order to understand transactional sex behaviours Bronfenbrenner's model is a process-person-context-time model. In this model, in order to obtain an accurate understanding of sexual behaviours, one needs to understand the dynamic relationship of individual and context, the person with their biological, cognitive, emotional and behavioral characteristics, the context or systems and the time, which is defined as an ontogenetic, family and historical time (Bronfenbrenner, 2005a, 2005b). Thus, in this study, ontologenic characteristics as well as the five systems will be used as a framework to develop the an interview guide with broad questions to assist the researcher to focus on objectives during the interview which will identify the forms of transactional sex, factors influencing the transactional behaviour and perceived implications of the behaviour to ones health.

## Summary

This chapter explores the concept of transactional sex, as perceived by various literatures. It reveals the relationships between transactional sex and HIV, cross generational sex, concurrent partners, unprotected sex and sexual relation with gender based violence. The chapter also highlights some of the factors motivating people to engage in transactional sex and the application of the Bio-ecological systems theory framework to the study.

## CHAPTER: 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Introduction

This methodology section presents the methods used to collect data meant to achieve the set study objectives. The methods concerned include the type of study design used and the study setting, the population, the sampling method and the sample size, the method of data collection, and the data analysis conducted. The issues relating to trustworthiness and ethical considerations are also discussed.

#### 3.2. Study Design

A qualitative approach using explorative and descriptive designs was utilized. They are described as follows:

##### 3.2.1. Qualitative

According to Brink, Walt and Rensburg (2012) qualitative research approach refers to a broad range of designs and methods used to study phenomena of social action and of which we do not have proper understanding. Thus qualitative methodology is used when little is known about a phenomenon or when the nature, context and boundaries of a phenomenon are poorly understood and defined (Botma, Greef, Mulaudzi and Greef 2010). In this study, information about the perceptions of students regarding transactional sexual behaviours among students were elicited. The researcher wanted to obtain insider's perspective, needs to stand back and let the research participant's voice be heard. In this the perspective of the students about transactional sexual experiences was of priority. In this study prominence was given to qualitative research methodology due to its exploratory nature and its capacity to penetrate the frames of meaning with which transactional relationships are perceived. It should be noted that qualitative research embraces descriptions, which are consistent with the perspectives of the participants in that social activity, and has the ability to capture processual activities.

##### 3.2.2. Exploratory

Exploratory research searches for information about a topic in order to gain more knowledge about that specific topic (Neuman, 2011). The researcher sought to explore the students' perceptions regarding the transaction sex and its effects on health at the University of Venda.

This study sought to understand students' perceptions regarding transactional sex and it is exploratory in nature, which is appropriate, given that there is little research regarding this

phenomena. Exploratory research is most useful in situations where limited information is available and the researcher wishes to have the flexibility to future explore areas of research (Creswell,2009). The primary goal of exploratory research is to gain a better understanding of an issue or situation and it is appropriate way to provide groundwork for later more rigorous studies at a later stage (Brink et al.,2012)

### **3.2.3. Descriptive**

According to Polit and Hungler (2014) descriptive research describes what exists and may help to uncover new facts and meaning. The purpose of descriptive research is to describe, observe and document. The intention of such a design is to give an in-depth clarification of a specific individual, situation, group or organization (LoBiondo-Wood,2010). The use of the descriptive design will facilitate the description of the transactional sexual behaviours among students.

In this study the researcher used exploratory descriptive as a research method because it permits the researcher to explore and describe the phenomena (Burns and Grove,2009) and enable the researcher to provide a cohesive summary of issues or events as described by participants. Furthermore this research method is the most effective one for answering the research objectives at hand.

### **3.3 Study Setting**

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) is one of two rural institutions providing higher education for the people of the Limpopo Province. In 2002, the University of Venda was part of a government-led restructuring of the higher education system by which it was identified to become a comprehensive university; that is, a university offering general formative, professional and vocational qualifications(Council on Higher Education Quality,2011). The study focus area is the University of Venda campus. The University of Venda is an institution of higher learning located in the town of Thohoyandou. Thohoyandou is a small town located 160 km North of Polokwane city. Specifically, it is located in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province under Thulamela Municipality. Thohoyandou is a growing town with commercial businesses run by multi-racial communities from all over Africa. According to Statistics SA (2013), the population has doubled since 2010 and the majority of people are young unemployed youths. In 2015, the University had 13000 students registered at the institution with the majority from low socio-economic background and lacking financial aid.

The students reside in nine blocks of hostels divided into males and females blocks. However, due to relaxed hostel management, the residences are overcrowded and student cohabit with their partners. About half of students are 'squatting' in the university residence due to shortage of student accommodation. The residence wardens rarely monitor the students' living arrangements. Therefore, students engage in illegal activities such as selling

liquor and cigarettes in the university residence. These camp-like living conditions, in which students live, creates a fertile environment for large and open sexual networks such as transactional sex.

### **3.4. Population of the study**

A study population is an aggregate of elements sharing some common set of criteria (Burns & Grove,2009). The study focused on all registered full-time students at the University of Venda.The researcher chose postgraduate as the population of the study because the postgraduate students have more time and their daily itinerary is very flexible. Another reason is that most of the post-graduate students reside in university campus and they have been at the university for more than three years. Finally they are more aware of the issues happening on campus.

### **3.5. Sampling**

Sampling refers to the researcher`s process of selecting the sample from a population in order to obtain information regarding a phenomenon in a way that represents the population of interests (Burns and Grove,2009). The study used purposive sampling to recruit participants. According to Burns and Grove (2009) purposive sampling technique is based on the judgement of the researcher regarding participants or objects that are typical or representative of the study phenomenon or who are knowledgeable about the question at hand. In this study purposive sampling was used to select eighteen postgraduate students in order to explore the perceptions of University of Venda students regarding transactional sex behaviours and its effects on health.

Inclusion criteria

- Be a registered post-graduate student at University of Venda
- Be a resident in one of the six on campus university residences.
- Be willing to participate in the study.
- Be a female or a male post-graduate student.

#### **3.5.1 Sampling Procedure**

To select the participants, the researcher used purposive sampling to select students who match the inclusion criteria.Post-graduates students were selected because most of them had attended the University of Venda since their undergraduate years and they are familiar with campus dynamics. The researcher used the residence list from the hostel wardens to select the participants until the saturation point was reached. Saturation was reached after 18 participants were interviewed.

Saturation is defined by many as the point at which the data collection process no longer offers any new or relevant data. In this study the researcher stopped collecting data when the collection of new data did not shed any further light on the issue under investigation.

### **3.6. Data collection method**

Data collection is a method of gathering data which is done through social interaction with participants, field studies, participant observation and other sources of information (Neuman,2011). In this study, the researcher utilized an in-depth individual interviews in order to allow the participants to freely explain their perceptions regarding transactional sex at the University of Venda.

#### **3.6.1. In-depth individual interview**

An in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme, or situation (Evaluation Briefs,2008). The potential for in depth interviews is to fill in the gaps of the information and to clarify ideas and concepts gleaned from the focus groups in strengthening the findings of the study (De Vos et al.,2012). In depth interviews are justified in this study for the following reasons:

- In depth interviews seek to get the respondents to freely discuss the views or beliefs about the subject of interest and provide a more detailed response.
- It is helpful in exploratory research because it allows for discussing in great detail and provide the researcher with opportunity to clarify, expand and probe on issues arising from discussions.
- It also provides significant data for analysis.
- The benefits for using in depth interviews include the opportunity to discuss sensitive issues with participants (De Vos et al., 2012).

In in-depth interviewing, the purpose is to get answers to questions not to test the hypothesis and not to evaluate in the usual sense of the term. The root of in-depth interview is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. Prior to interviewing, the researcher must define the information required. The information supplied by the interviewees must clearly relate to specific questions that the researcher seeks to answer. In this study the pre-determined questions were prepared and reviewed by experts in the field and even with selected participants.

In this study,individual in-depth interviews were conducted with the participant to describe their perceptions regarding transactional sex among students at the University of Venda. Voice recordings were used to transcribe everything that was said for data analysis.Eighteen interviews were conducted,10 with female participants and 8 with male participants.The

numbers were determined by data saturation. Although the researcher had planned each interview to last 30 minutes, he was flexible in this regard and the duration of the interviews was determined by satisfaction of the researcher and the participant that the necessary information was shared. The researcher asked the following main question “ ***What are your perceptions regarding transactional sex***”. Afterwards the probing and follow up questions were asked in response to the answers provided by the participant. The researcher allowed the participant to do 90 percent of the talking. The reason is for the participant to tell the story. Single questions were asked at a time and the researcher asked open-ended questions to allow participants to respond in their own terms.

### **3.6.2. Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher personally recruited the participants of the study from their place of residences, according to the inclusion criteria, before the interviews. The researcher enlisted the services of postgraduate resident block representatives who assisted him to purposefully identify the appropriate candidates. Immediately after the suitability of a potential participant has been confirmed, the researcher and the research assistants provided him or her with a copy of participant information sheet and informed consent form, as well as a copy of the schedule for in depth-structured interviews, so that he or she would have a better understanding of what to expect. The researcher explained participation-related information in English and clarified any doubts. Prior to signing the consent form, potential participants were asked to summarize its content. The goal was to ensure that each participant fully understands what would be expected in the study as well as confidentiality, potential discomforts, and voluntary nature of participation.

The interviews were captured through a voice recorder. The use of a recorder allowed the researcher to concentrate on exploring the topic and noting the non-verbal cues. A recording of thoughts that emerged were also kept through note taking. The interviews were conducted in the participants' room. Each interview took 45 minutes to 1 hour.

To ensure privacy and independence of the responses given, the students were interviewed one at a time, not in a group. The investigator introduced himself before the interview.

### **3.7. Measures to Ensure Trustworthiness**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) have suggested four criteria for developing the trustworthiness of a qualitative inquiry: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. These four criteria represent parallels to the positivists criteria for internal validity reliability, objectivity, and external validity respectively (Polit and Beck, 2012)

### 3.7.1 Credibility

Refers to the extent to which those who read a research project can accept the findings to be true (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Credibility is also termed truth value which ask whether the researcher has established confidence in the truth of the findings of the participants and the context in which the study was undertaken (Lincoln and Guba,1985).This is the alternative to internal validity in which the goal is to demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject has been accurately identified and described. Lincoln and Guba (1999) in De Vos (2012) pointed out the following criteria for increasing the credibility of qualitative research:

- Prolonged engagement and persistent observation
- Triangulation of different methods
- Peer debriefing
- Member checks

In this study, table 01 provides the application of the credibility increasing strategies.

**Table 01: Credibility increasing criterias used.**

| Credibility                  | Method of application   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Prolonged engagement         | Data had been collected until data saturation occurred.<br>The researcher took 2 weeks to collect the data . This was done to ensure that the risk data of distortions as a function of the researcher’s limited time of engagement with participants was avoided.  |
| Triangulation                | Data collection methods: Individual interviews were conducted, observation and field notes were taken, and audio recordings were used to collect data from participants.This was done to adequetly shed light on the phenomenon amd help nfacilitate deeper understanding and clarity on the data collected.  |
| Participant group Debriefing | Audio-recorded interviews were played back to the participants for their comments. That gave participants the opportunity to correct misinterpretations and to confirm individual statements made.<br>The method aimed at cleaning the data and gather more information. The researcher maintained consultations with other researchers in order to refine the data and promote his own growing insight into research . |
| Member checks                | Results of interviews were checked with participants and participants were given an opportunity to confirm the data, correct misinterpretations, and provide additional information.  |

### 3.7.2 Dependability

The second criterion in the Lincoln-Guba framework is dependability. Dependability refers to the stability of data over time and conditions. Here the researcher asks whether the research process is logical, well documented and audited. Would the findings of an inquiry be repeated if it were replicated with the same or similar participants in the same or similar context. Credibility cannot be attained in the absence of dependability (Polit and Beck, 2012) In this study the criteria of dependability are presented in table 02.

**Table 02: Criteria for Dependability**

| Dependibility | Method of application   |
|---------------|---|
| Triangulation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research method was described in detail.</li> <li>• Open coding was used during data analysis to ensure reliability of the data.</li> <li>• Research experts were involved to ensure that the study adheres to protocols.</li> </ul> |

### 3.7.3 Transferability

It refers to the extent and potential for extrapolation; that is, the extent to which findings can be transferred to or have applicability in other settings or groups. Here the researcher asks whether the findings of the research can be transferred from a specific situation or case to another. Lincoln and Guba propose this as the alternative to external validity or generasibility, in which the burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context rests more with the investigator who would make the transfer than with the original investigator (De Vos et al., 2012).The strategies of transferability to ensure applicability of this study are presented in table 03.

**Table 03: Criterias of transferability.**

| Transferability            | Method of application  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Research design and method | The research design for this study was qualitative, exploratory and descriptive in nature. Applicability of transferability in this study was maintained through naturalistic inquiries, field research, and observations that were used during data collection to describe the perceptions of students' regarding transactional sex. The researcher obtained subjective information from participants and represented it in direct quotations and audio recordings to support the findings of the study. The study was conducted in the university setting. |
| Context                    | This study was conducted at the University of Venda only, therefore, the transferability of this study depended on the user as stated by (Gay <i>et al.</i> , 2009) that data is context relevant or identified with a specific setting that makes it context bound. On the other hand, findings of this study could be transferred to a situation of similar context as supported by (Morse, 1994).   |

### 3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability means obtaining direct and often repeated affirmations of what a researcher has heard, seen, or experienced with respect to the phenomena under study. Confirmability includes a researcher obtaining evidence from participants about findings or interpretations (Morse, 2005).

The researcher recorded the activities carried out in this research over time to ensure that another individual could follow the same sequence. The researcher demonstrated confirmability by clearly illustrating the evidence and thought processes that had led to the conclusion of this study (Kobus, 2007). Table 04 presents how the criteria of confirmability was ensured in this study.

**Table 04: Crireria of Confirmability**

| Criteria       | Method of application  |
|----------------|--|
| Confirmability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raw data was voice recorded, field notes were taken.</li> <li>• Data was reconstructed and synthesised.</li> <li>• The researcher kept the voice recordings and written documents and notes from the interview safely for referral, since they supported the research inquiries.</li> <li>• Coding of the data was performed.</li> <li>• Structuring of themes and sub-themes was developed.</li> </ul> |

### 3.8. Data analysis

Qualitative analysis is the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observation. For the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships (De Vos, 2012). He also argues that data collection and analysis are a simultaneous activity in qualitative research, as emerging insights in one phase of the data collection leads to refinement in the next phase. In this study qualitative data analysis was used. Data was collected using in-depth interviews and analyzed using the Tesch thematic analysis. The qualitative method of categorizing and coding information into themes was utilised to analyze data, since this process is systematic and allows for the interpretation of information to provide explanation of the phenomenon. The researcher assigned codes to the themes for the purpose of analysis, through the process of 'open-coding', which involves locating themes and assigning initial codes in a first attempt to condense the data into categories (Neuman, 2011:461). Data analysis was conducted based upon the six- phase thematic analysis approach, as cited in Creswell (2009), as outlined in Table 05.

**Table 05: Summary of the Six-Phase Thematic Analysis Process**

| <b>Phase</b>              | <b>Description of the process</b>   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1.Familiarize with data   | Raw data transcribed, transcripts read and re-read  |
| 2.Generate initial codes  | Segments were coded for as many features as necessary. Once all data was coded, data were collated by code. Final transcripts read and all segments of data were systematically coded for features. |
| 3.Search for Themes       | A list of codes was produced and related codes was gathered into potential themes.All data relevant to each theme was then collated   |
| 4.Review themes           | Data relating to each potential theme was considered in relation to other themes. The validity of themes was considered in relation to entire data set.   |
| 5. Define and name themes | A detailed analysis was conducted on each theme by organising data into a coherent account, with narrative. Constructs were given to each theme for the written account.                            |
| 6.Produce the report      | The final analysis of themes was conducted and presented in the report  |

### **3.9. Ethical Considerations**

According to Polit and Beck (2012), researchers must deal with ethical issues when their intended research involves human beings.The standard ethical consideration of anonymity and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research period.

#### **3.9.1. Permission to conduct research**

The permission to conduct the study was granted by the University's Research Ethics Comitte and Student Affairs section in form of an Ethical Clearence(**SHS/16/PH/07/2706**) (Appendix:4).The researcher also sought permission from the participants

#### **3.9.2. Informed consent**

Informed consent was ensured prior to the interviews. In securing consent, students were informed of the objectives of the study, the ethics to be afforded them, what shall be expected of them and the amount of time their participation was to entail. Participants were

given introductory-consent letters (Appendix no:3) bearing the contact details of the researcher, briefing them on the study.

### **3.9.3. Confidentiality**

This is a continuation of privacy in the sense that the researcher should respect the information that will be obtained from the respondents. It will be unethical to disclose such information to unauthorized individuals.

It will be made clear to the participants that the researcher and the supervisor will access this information. The issues of publication of the findings was discussed with the respondents in order to get their permission and they will be assured that all participants details in this study was kept confidential. Access to any identifying markers that could link observation to specific individuals was restricted to the researcher.

All the data was treated with confidentiality.

### **3.9.4. Privacy**

Privacy is defined as that which normally is not intended for others to observe or analyse. To ensure that the researcher protect respondents information so that unauthorized individuals would not get access to the information, the researcher kept the research outcomes and information related to the respondents' data in a safe place where no one can access them.

### **3.10. Dissemination of study findings.**

The research will be presented at national and international conferences as well as published in a peer-reviewed journals. A copy of the thesis will be bound and presented to University library in both softcopy and hardcopy.

### **3.11. Summary**

This chapter describes the research rationale, research design and method. The study setting together with the study population is included in this chapter. The sampling and sampling procedures are explained in details. This chapter also includes the data collection methods and procedure for the study and also include the measures to ensure trustworthiness and how data was analysed.

The next chapter will outline the results and discussion on findings.

## Chapter 4

### Results and Discussions

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study and the discussions. The researcher discusses and interprets data collected through the use of in-depth interviews. The study purpose was to describe the perceptions of University of Venda students regarding transactional sex, wherein the data was thematically analyzed. The participants were given anonym code names in form of numeric number (1.2.3.4.5....) for the purpose of ethical care. The identified themes and sub-themes are presented consecutively.

#### 4.2 Demographic information of participants

The study data was gathered from eighteen interviewed students. The initial twenty-five participants were not reached due to data saturation at eighteen participants. The respondents fairly and sufficiently represented the gender, wherein 10 females and 8 males were interviewed. The age of the participants ranged from 23-33 years, with all of them being postgraduate students from different faculties who indicated that they had been on campus for more than five years, which gave them a sufficient time to notice and study the trends of the subject matter (transactional sex).

#### 4.3. Presentation and discussion of the findings

In this study the researcher used the Tesch Model of Data Analysis as outlined in Creswell(2003).The participants were asked the following central question:’ **What are your perceptions regarding transactional sex?**’, Probing questions were asked as a follow up on the answers given by the participants.An interview guide (Appendix 4) was used to guide the researcher during data collection. Data was transcribed verbatim in order to record accurately the information provided by participants.

During the analysis of data from the participants in this study,the following themes emerged:

- 1) Students’ perceptions regarding transactional sex,
- 2) Perceived causes of transactional sex
- 3) Perceived health effects of transactional sex and
- 4) Perceived strategies to curb transactional sex. Each theme was divided into sub-themes.

The following table outlines the summary of the findings of the in-depth interview with the participants.

**Table 06: Summary of findings from participants**

| Main theme  | Sub theme   |
|---|---|
| Students' perceptions regarding transactional sex | Transactional sex is perceived as a relationship of material benefits.<br>Transactional sex is perceived as an immoral relationship.<br>Transactional sex is perceived as prostitution.<br>Transactional sex is perceived as an abusive relationship. |
| Perceived causes of transactional sex             | Socio-economic status<br>Social classes<br>Behavioral<br>Peer pressure  |
| Perceived health effects of transactional sex     | Health related problems   |
| Perceived strategies to curb transactional sex    | Provision educational awareness<br>Provision of entertainment and financial assistance  |

#### **4.4. Main Theme 1: Perceptions of students regarding transactional sex**

The study revealed that, to a large extent transactional sex is happening at the University of Venda between students and outsiders, particularly situations wherein the female students are the first victims. However a few male students are also involved in homosexual relationships. One of the main probing questions of the study was to examine the perceptions of the participants towards "transactional sex". The respondents perceived transactional sex in four sub-themes; namely,

- Transactional sex perceived as a relationship of material benefits.
- Transactional sex perceived as an immoral relationship.
- Transactional sex perceived as prostitution.

- Transactional sex perceived as an abusive relationship.

#### **4.4.1 Sub theme A: Transactional sex perceived as a relationship based on material benefits.**

In this study the majority of the participants perceived transactional sex as a relationship based on materials benefits. Ten participants alluded that transactional sex is common on campus, and they perceive it as a relationship based on materials such as money to buy meals, clothes and expensive cosmetics.

Participant 2 said:

*“In this relationships the older men provide material stuff, gifts and money whereas the girl returns the favour through sex and other related romantic activities, and in our own slang as students these men who practice transactional sex are called “blessers” because they have resources to win money-loving girls”.*

Participant 18 also said that:

*” In transactional sex exchanging items is the norm in the act, like there is exchange of money, some buy each other clothes, phones and cars sometimes, while others do so out of the need for fun and enjoyment ”.*

Two participants(4 and 7) said:

*“If I don't get an allowance from my partner, I won't be able to buy all the things, like lingerie, that are needed to impress him. He should pay for that”*

The above utterances clearly indicate that transactional sex is traded for material and financial benefits, as well as pleasure. Therefore, the relationship is based on the exchange of gifts, clothes and money in return of sex. In a related study, transactional sex was perceived similarly as occurring where the relationship is motivated by the provision and expectation of food, cosmetics, clothes, transportation, items for children or family, school fees, somewhere to sleep or a fun out (Jewkes, Dunkles & Shai, 2012).

One participant(10) said *“It is no use dating a person who will not even be able to take you out for a weekend, assist with school fees or even paying my rent, and I couldn't date anyone who can't assist me financially”.*

This study revealed that students at the University of Venda could not date any-one who could not afford to financially support the sexual partner, hence, they would be sexually connected with the partner provided they can financially support them.

In the study conducted by Shefer, T. et al.(2012), transactional relationships were represented by participants as exchanges built around a variety of currencies.

#### **4.4.2 Subtheme B: Transactional sex as an immoral relationship.**

Participants (2,5&9) brought a new perception on transactional sex as they said that, “*Transactional sex is one of the concerns that are challenging the world of Christianity, I see it as an act of immorality, how can someone have sex just because they want favours or any benefit? So I think transactional sex ignores moral conscience by engaging in sex for material reward. But the bottom line is that it is a culturally unacceptable sexual activity, a first class example of immorality*”.

With Christians being the majority of students at the University of Venda, in this study transactional sex was perceived as an immoral act.

Participant 15 said: “*As Christians we know that sex before marriage is a sin, What do you think will happen if you just have sex to have gifts? You end up committing adultery on top of sex before marriage*”

This study revealed that Christians perceived transactional sex as a sexual immorality based on their religious beliefs.

With participant 10 saying: “*This relationships are not acceptable in my culture. But, nowadays, you do whatever you want because there is freedom: you do what you want. But in our culture, it is not acceptable*”

One of the participants(9) spoke of others’ practices of transactional sex, and outlined these relationships as culturally immoral. “*She’s now dating older man. They give her money. This year she started her masters degree here at the University. She was my friend; my best friend. But now I have started to hate her since she started dating old guys, sugar daddies and that’s against my culture*”

Although acquiring fashionable clothing and material goods, indicating wealth was perceived as a positive marker for young women, respondents generally scorned the method of using sugar daddies to achieve these means based on their cultural beliefs.

#### **4.4.3 Subtheme C: Transactional sex as prostitution.**

Participant (11) perceived transactional sex as prostitution by saying, “*Mr. Researcher I don’t think there is any difference between transactional and prostitution, because in prostitution people exchange money for sex, so transactional sex is prostitution the only difference is*

*that the girls don't stand beside the road like prostitutes do, but that cannot separate the two acts. Their acts are more or less the same".*

The present study revealed and perceived transactional sex as prostitution. The perception of transactional sex in the present study has revealed confusion regarding the meaning of transactional sex and prostitution. However clarity was provided by a study conducted by Mc Phail (2011) where transactional sex was described as having a number of similarities to prostitution, wherein in both cases, non-marital sexual relationships, often with multiple partners, are underscored by the giving of gifts or cash. However transactional sex differs from prostitution in important ways, notably in that participants are constructed as girlfriends and boyfriends and not prostitutes and clients, and the exchange of gifts for sex is part of a broader set of obligations that might not involve a predetermined payment.

Wamoyi, Wight, Plummer, Mashana and Ross (2010) further distinguished transactional sex from prostitution saying that women in prostitution (or sex work) may actively solicit sex in a public area, brothel or embrace an identity as a prostitute or sex worker. In transactional sex there is generally an absence of prior negotiation of price, but price may be agreed. In transactional sex, a wide range of goods or services, such as transport or accommodation, may be received in exchange for sex, but most commonly, cash is given in prostitution. In a unique perspective transactional sex was a synonymy term used as sexual exploitation, a term widely accepted by professional society in labelling and interpreting young women's actions when engaging in sexual interaction for the exchange of goods and services (Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008).

#### **4.4.4 Subtheme D: Abusive transactional relationship**

The participants(12,10) perceived transactional sex as an abusive relationship by saying, *"lecturers use their positions of being in control of our academic success in terms of marking and setting exams. So students tend to submit themselves for sex in return of academic favours in terms of higher marks in exams and tests. Even students in governing bodies such as Student Represented Council (SRC) use their positions to sexually abuse-first entering students, as it is a common knowledge that first entering students experience problems in with accommodation during registration. So these SRC members give them rooms in exchange of sex".*

This study revealed that the perpetrators in this relationship are in control of the relationships and are abusive to the victim. Concurring with the findings, a study conducted by Njue(2011) revealed that young girls in Kenya are pushed into sexual activities with older

men for survival and to access material goods and have no power in the relationship and the one with money/power will want everything to be done his way.

A study in Uganda indicated similarities, wherein it was attested that in Sub-Saharan Africa, transactional sex is necessarily abusive or exploitative because adolescents are unable to fully comprehend the potential consequences and risks involved. The same study showed that, while transactional relationships are consensual, they may lead to rape or physical violence if girls are seen as not keeping their side of the bargain, for example withholding sex after expensive gifts have been made. Furthermore, girls have very little power to negotiate condom use in such relationships, putting them at significant risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other STIs.

In the study transactional sex is perceived as a relationship perpetrated by people in influential position and this can also extend to outside of varsity where people with power uses their power of their authority and have sex with students in return of their services.

#### **4.5. Main Theme 2: Perceived causes of transactional sex**

The probing questions on the above-mentioned theme was to explore the reasons why students engage in transactional sex and the consequences thereof. The study identified a reasons why students engage in transactional sex and the possible consequences of engaging in transactional sex. These are presented in the sub themes below.

##### **4.5.1 Subtheme A: Socio-economic Status**

The present study identified poverty as one of the major influencing factor in making students to engage in transactional sex. The majority of the respondents provided some reasons which clearly attested that poverty is a central cause of transactional sex among students.

The female participants(15 & 14) uttered that, *“As girls you know, we need to be forever looking good in terms of clothes, shoes make up as well as eating good food from expensive restaurants. However, our backgrounds are not privileged enough to provide these. As a results some women will not feel satisfied with their financial status and then they will opt for sex in exchange of money, goods and other related goodies”*. Participant (11&12) added uttered, *“ you know as students we do have wishes but if the wishes are far-fetched we opt for “easy go”, despite knowing how dangerous it is. Some men take girls for days in lavish hotels and after that take them to shopping sprees”*.

A pair of male participants(17&18) , added that, *“Most of us here at Univen, I think three quarters are from poor families and we are alsostill not yet working and things like expensive phones, clothes and pocket money, we can’t afford so many are left with the option of looking for the easy way of getting them. That results in transactional sex, with girls going for sugar daddies/blessers and boys to sugar mummies, but few males do that”*.

Previous studies have propounded that women and girls from low economic backgrounds are among the most vulnerable and at risk to engage into trabsactional sex. In the face of impoverishment, vulnerable social classes, low income, poverty and limited livelihood opportunities, a small body of literature testifies that women in humanitarian contexts engage in sexual relationships for material and financial gain as a survival mechanism in response to adverse shocks (Choudhry, Ostergren, Ambresin, Kyagaba, & Agardh, 2014). As such women’s engagement in transactional sex is significantly linked to the need to meet the basic needs of their families. The present study support the above sentiment wherein poverty was revealed to be the most prominent and central factor influencing and facilitating transactional sex at the University of Venda.

Jewkes et al (2012) found similar findings, that say transactional sex may be motivated by basic survival and subsistence needs but this is not always the case and young women may also use it to boost their self-esteem in the context of university life of competition. The findings of the present study were consistent with a study done in Nigeria wherein transactional was said to be motivated unintended consequence of perennial underdevelopment in Nigeria include significant socio-economic inequalities between regions in Nigeria, and between men and women from different societies (KPMG, 2012).

In addition to poverty as a driver behind transactional sex, similar evidence from the field confirmed that economic challenges, manifested in acute income and subsistence poverty and ill-being, in both rural and urban families in Uganda Kampala, were critical in pushing adolescent girls and boys into transactional, cross-generational sexual relationships (Amin, Austrian, Chau, Glazer, Green, Stewart & Stoner, 2013). Economic challenges in Uganda are typified by low agricultural income and subsistence poverty, characterized by inability to meet basic needs such as food, clothes, decent shelter, health care and school fees for children (ACFODE- Action for Development, 2009). This sentiment borrows some similarities to the University of Venda situation wherein students are said to be from underprivileged backgrounds wherein parents cannot afford their monthly stipends.

#### 4.5.2 Subtheme B: Social classes

The social divisions which are created by our economic and political state as well as religious status have also contributed students to partaking in transactional sex. The majority of participants concurred by saying, *“Some of people are using positions and authority to engage in sex with students; for example, lecturers can demand sex from a students and threaten her that if they don’t have sex with them they fail, and students in school council can also threaten students that if you don’t sleep with me, you will not get a room on campus or you will not go to the school trip and so on”*. Eight participants also explained that, *“as you know we can’t be equal in life these people who have opportunities to hold certain offices and powers they use that to have sex with students, promising them to give them a favour of any choice.*

Social classes which are created by politics and economy were reported to be responsible for transactional sex at the University of Venda, wherein those with influence have the power to negotiate transactional sex. A more complex cause of transactional was discovered in the Liberian context, wherein post war conflicts were found to be leading to transactional sex among the current generations of men and women. In a study conducted on family dynamics in post- war era found that young people attributed the emergence of transactional sex to the war. It was further found that in Haiti, women internally displaced by the 2010 earthquake and living in camps were engaging in transactional sex, which they had not done so before their displacement. In post-conflict Liberia, young people said that they were pushed into engaging in transactional sex by their parents in order to meet household needs.

Amin et al (2013) buttressed that girls in particular are pressured into this practice by parents, instead to advocate the discretion in order to preserve the family's social status as well as ensure that their daughters would be able to secure decent marriages in the future.

Although many factors determined whether young people engaged in transactional sex, including material gain and peer status, they often felt powerless to decline this type of relationship. In countries with peacekeeping forces, a more complex dynamic exists. Over the last two decades there have been allegations of peacekeeping troops engaging in transactional sex with refugees and internally displaced women and children (Beber, Gilligan, Guardado & Karim 2015).

The present study has revealed that University students, especially females engage in transactional sex for academic favours, so as to pass modules. In a study conducted in neighboring Botswana and Zimbabwe by Karim(2005) it was found that the majority of female students use sex for better grades. This is consistent with the results of a study

conducted in Zimbabwe which found that while faculty and administrators reportedly pressure young women into sex in return for academic favours, including high grades and answers on tests, female students report offering sexual favors to improve academic standing (Masvavure, 2010).

The above quotes show out that social class plays a vital role in facilitating transactional sex as those who are lower in the hierarchy of living have to bow down and worship to the rich and authorities, thus transactional sex.

#### **4.5.3 Subtheme C: Behavioral**

There are a number of behaviors that students in Universities engage in which makes them vulnerable to transactional sex. The study revealed that, *“A lot of male and female students have a habit of alcohol and drug abuse, and when they engage in these activities it is impossible for them to control themselves in transactional sex system. Also some are into excessive intimate relationship, which will consequently result in them losing self-control and becoming victims of transactional sex”*.

In the study conducted by Kuate-Defo(2004), it was found that sugar daddy/sugar mommy partners are not necessarily poor, because they sometimes just want to look fashioned and privileged among their peers or pride themselves in sleeping with the most influential (financially or administratively) men of their communities.

The above sentiment indicates that transactional sex is being exacerbated by recklessness on the part of students resulting from unruly behaviour of drinking, smoking and sexual activities, which make them prone to transactional sex.

#### **4.5.4 Subtheme D: Peer pressure and lack of entertainment**

The majority of participants attested that, *“ when students come to University it is a new environment to them, so in trying to conform to new things, they make new friends who sometimes are in transactional sex or they can afford good things, at the end the new comers are becoming victims of circumstances, and this also create unpleasant completion among students”*. Five respondents also pointed out that although peer pressure is mainly responsible for transactional sex, lack of entertainment is also making students to opt to look for other places of entertainment, which needs money and resolute to transactional sex.

Peer pressure and lack of entertainment were found as some of the factors that facilitate transactional sex at the University of Venda. The students are said to be influenced by their counter-parts. Further lack of entertainment during free time, results in students opting for transactional sex for fulfillment. Choudhry et al (2014) supported the present sentiment by indicating that peer pressure are cited as other factors behind why the youth exchange sex for material gain. The youth feel pressured to keep up with their peers with regard to 'luxury' items, such as expensive clothing, jewellery, fashionable hairstyles, accessories, and make-up. ACFODE (2009) suggested that in addition to economic and sociocultural drivers, youth in Kampala identified peer group pressure as an emerging push factor of both girls and boys into intergenerational sex. Adolescent girls and boys explained that girls, but also some boys, engaged in relationships with older men (or women) even if their basic needs were met, as it was seen as way to gain access to 'luxury' goods they would not otherwise have, but for which there is social pressure among peers to obtain from perfumes to clothing articles.

#### **4.6. Main Theme 3: Perceived health effects of transactional sex**

The study revealed a number of health effects of transactional sex to students in Universities, which includes health problems and their effects on the students academic progress. downfall.

##### **4.6.1 Subtheme A: Health related problems**

Transactional sexual activities was found to be responsible for all deadly diseases which are staring humanity in the eye particularly in Africa. The majority participants shared the similar perceptions and said, *"It is a common knowledge that transactional sex fast-tracks the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic with all other associated STIs and in most cases it results in death, I think this caused by the idea that the sex involves exchange of favors so people tend to try to please the blessers"*.

Apart from that, another respondent answered as follow: *"Look here most transactional relationship are imbalanced in decision-making, so the provider of money or materials is the dictator and therefore negotiation of safe sex is impossible and not consistent, further-more, unintended pregnancy is a result, and many of them ending in illegal abortion, which has adverse health effects to them"*.

Apart from health burden, this study discovered psychological distress as a consequence of transactional sex, wherein its effects encroaches also on health. Participants (1 and 3)

attested that, *“If people are engaging in transactional sex, there is a lot of disappointments in it, for example they might have disagreements in terms of the favours, to the extent that if discovered by the wife, if the man is married, the girl will be in a state of fear, which results in depression and stress. Also stress related to a girl being pregnant or being HIV positive, can sometimes lead to suicide”*.

The health burden is one of the most disastrous that university students are facing and since health is the backbone of success, student success are deemed due to health issues arising from transactional sex. The health issues are even an after school spirit that will forever haunt the student even in their future marriage life.

This study revealed adverse health problems are perceived as the results of transactional sex, particularly at the University of Venda and South Africa in general, wherein students were said to be losing power in terms of condom use negotiation. Women in prostitution often claim to have more independence and power, including insisting on condom use, than women in transactional relationships. As a result, they point to a particular type of vulnerability that financial or material need introduces into sexual relations. Where there is an absence of power to negotiate with the male partners entitled, men perceive that gifts or cash results in a woman accepting sex on their terms, which are often without condoms and without space to assert preferences for monogamy and so forth (KPMG, 2012).

A study conducted by Jewkes (2012) found similar findings, which includes heightened vulnerability to infection with HIV/AIDs and other STIs, which female respondents associated with old men, who tend to be more sexually active and to have had multiple partners; increased vulnerability to unwanted and risky early pregnancies; unsafe abortion and the associated higher risk of maternal morbidity; and injury or trauma of the reproductive system when young, physiologically immature and sexually inexperienced girls are initiated into penetrative sexual intercourse with older and sexually experienced men.

Most of these sexual and reproductive risks are attributed to the inability of young, naive and timid girls to demand or negotiate safe sex.

It was reiterated that girls who are abandoned while pregnant or soon after giving birth do not only drop out of school but also suffer considerable psychological trauma associated with the pain of rejection not only by their male partners but sometimes by their natal families as well (Glanz et al 2008). As a result, these girls suffer a loss in self-confidence and self-worth as well as depression and stress. Many, after engaging in single transactional sexual relationship with an older man, start to do this more frequently.

This study revealed that most of the students who engage in transactional sex tend to ruin their academic careers and have poor academic progress associated with low pass rate. The participants reinforced this assertion by saying, “ *most people who are in this type of relationship don’t have time to study, because the partner/ blessers is the provider and can call at any time, since there is an agreement of exchanging sexual favours. The student will drop all work and prioritises the transactional sex.* Some female participants added that, “*Apart from poor academic progress, when they happen to be infected with disease, they can drop out and some can even face death, hence their careers are doomed*”.

These sentiments clearly spell out that transactional sex takes much time of a student and it will then result in destroying academic success, hence prolonged if not eternal poverty to the student.

#### **4.7. Main Theme: Perceived strategies to curb transactional sex**

The study identified and suggested some probable solutions and counter actions to transactional sex considering the deadly consequences. The recommended solutions are presented in the below subthemes.

##### **4.7.1 Subtheme A: Educational awareness**

The majority of participants pointed out that, “*I think the university does have a clinic and other support groups like peer educators, as well as researcher; why can’t they team up and do an awareness campaign, especially targeting the new entering students*”.

This sentiment therefore suggests that the first years are the vulnerable group. Therefore, they should be given a lecture on the consequences of transactional sex and ways of getting alternative ways of raising finances. The education should be based on the well-researched activities, and define all possible forms of transactional sex so that, students are safe.

Furthermore one of the participants(16), said “*I think there should be a subject or events where people are taught about our cultural values, like aspects of marriage and payment of lobola, to keep it cultural than to just have sex casually*”.

In a study conducted by Bhana(2011), it was found that the provision of prevention programmes for young people must not only focus on social structures of power, gender norms and material inequalities, but also on young people’s ideologies of love and daily educational aspect, which are expressive of agency, constraint and enduring gender inequalities.

The above sentiment brings about the essence of healing the socio-cultural fabric which has been torn away by acts such as transactional sex, wherein people are engaging in sex for material gain rather to dignify the society of its marriage tradition.

#### **4.7.2 Subtheme B: Provision of entertainment and financial assistance**

The study identified the need for entertainment centres that will accommodate what might be missing in the lives of students. It was revealed that as most students are financially handicapped, it will be good if the university outsourced bursaries to subsidize students upkeep, like subsistences allowance and meals.

The participants concurred by saying, *“It is an open secret that the need for money is the pushing factor to transactional sex; why can’t the varsity come in by identifying the most underprivileged students and source out bursaries for them to help in meals and their general upkeep. Students must be assisted to find an alternative way of financial support by doing part-time jobs at the university”*.

A study conducted by Cockcroft (2010) supports the finding in the present study by adopting approaches helping young women to find alternative ways of supporting themselves and the self-worth needed to resist peer pressure .

#### **Summary**

This chapter represented the findings of the study. It summarised the demographic information of the participants and discussed how students at the University of Venda perceive transactional sex, its causes, the health effects of transactional sex and perceived strategies to curb the act. The next chapter will include the summary, conclusion and the recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The aim of the study was to explore the perceptions of University of Venda students regarding transactional sex and its effects on health. The study concludes that transactional sex is common among both female and male students and perceived as exchange of material for sex. Transactional sex among students occurs in the context of poverty, power imbalances and peer pressure. Further it was indicated that transactional sex has dire public health effects and therefore solutions are recommended. This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study regarding the perceptions of students towards transactional sex.

#### 5.2 Summary

The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of students regarding transactional sex and its effects on health. The study revealed that transactional sex is a common practice at the University of Venda and students perceived it in four interchanging ways such as a relationship based on material benefit, prostitution, immoral sexual relationship and it being an abusive relationship.

The objectives of the study were to: explore the perceptions of student regarding transactional sex, explore the perceptions of students regarding the causes of transactional sex, explore the perception of students regarding transactional sex effects on health and describe the perceived strategies to curb the behaviour of transactional sex.

In this study transactional sex was perceived in four different perspectives:

- Transactional sex as a relationship based on material benefits.
- Transactional sex is perceived as an immoral relationship.
- Transactional sex perceived as prostitution.

In this study four perceived causes of transactional sex were identified as:

- a) Socio-economic status.
- b) Social Classes
- c) Behaviour and
- d) Peer pressure

In this study provision of educational awarenesses for first entering students and provision of financial assistance were perceived as the strategies to curb the act of transactional sex among student at the University of Venda.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The engagement of students into transactional sexual activities is practiced by both male and female students, despite the females contributing the highest rate. Socio-economic status of students in transactional relationships was identified as the major driving and pushing factor for students to engage in transactional sex, with those from poor backgrounds being the most who engage in transactional relationships. The study also found that social class of people also attracts the opposite gender to be intimate and feel attracted to someone based on the authority or the power they possess at different settings and areas. However these does not close the gate to participating in transactional relationship because this study also revealed that some students are not driven by their economic status or social classes to engage into transactional sex, but willingly or choose to do so willingly or it is the behavior one practices without any external factor pushing one, and could be seen as normal by the perpetrator.

Despite having people engaging in transactional sex, peer pressure was also identified as the factor pushing students to engage in transactional sex. This was usually influenced by friends' who were looked up to and having what-ever they needed while at the university.

Public Health problems such as: HIV/AIDS, stress, depression abortion, unintended pregnancy and its associated adverse issue on health were perceived as some of the consequences of transactional sex. Furthermore, health problems have diminishing returns in a student's academic life as it cuts off academic progress; hence, results in career downfall. The said public health problems would not only affect the academic performance of the students, but may also have emotional effects leading to psychological problems and possible suicidal thoughts.

### **Recommendations**

The aim of the study aim was to explore the perceptions of students regarding transactional sex at the University of Venda. Given the results which revealed that students at University of Venda engage in transactional sex activities, the study therefore suggests several recommendations and solutions to curb the problem.

### **5.1 Behaviour change communication campaigns**

It was propounded that parental guidance may influence transactional sex, especially in the case of young women. Parents may not realize that they implicitly encourage transactional sexual behaviour by pressuring their children to be married or to support themselves. Conversely, a parent who fails to take an active part in his/her child's relationships may fail to prevent the child's risky sexual behavior. Behaviour change communication campaigns that are sensitive to strong social and cultural norms supporting the relationship between parent and child in Africa may make parents more aware of the risks of transactional sex and encourage them to be more involved in their children's decisions. In a health promotion perspective it will therefore need the use of behavior change model which include the Health belief model that can be used in the this intervention approach.

### **5.2 Health education talks**

Even if they are unwilling or unable to stop involvement in transactional sexual relationships, young women and young men may be willing to take measures that reduce the health risk of engaging in this behaviour, by using condoms. However, because young girls are less likely to be able to negotiate the use of condoms when there is transaction of money or gifts involved in the relationship, programmes should target men involved in transactional sex to persuade them to use condoms. Information, education, and communication campaigns should be mounted that acknowledge the existence of transactional sexual relationships and speak bluntly about the risks involved. Programmes should be designed to build up self-esteem and empower young women and young men to make healthy life decisions. Role playing and hands-on exercises may be effective tools for improving young women's negotiating skills. Similarly, messages and programmes should be crafted to help young men protect themselves and their current and future partners when they enter into transactional sexual relationships.

Furthermore being in varsity does not appear to provide protection against engaging in transactional sex. Therefore, campaigns to discourage transactional sex must be targeted to in-school and out-of-school young people alike. However, it is still important to examine the effects of education in other ways than this study has such as whether the total years of education reported by a young woman or young man affects the likelihood of engaging in transactional sex.

### **5.3 Policy formulation and poverty reduction**

Child protection policies and interventions should integrate well-defined poverty reduction and sociocultural components aiming to explicitly address the stultifying effects of income poverty and the regressive effects of discriminatory sociocultural institutions that increase

children's risk of suffering protection violations. Since family income poverty and sociocultural factors have emerged as key underlying issues creating or exacerbating several forms of child protection violations, including sexual abuse and physical violence, early marriage, unwanted pregnancy and other forms of exploitation, it is important to prioritize poverty reduction policy and programming as a way to reduce the abuse of children and adolescents. These interventions should ideally be both short and long term in nature, and preventative and responsive, while taking heed of the positive formal and informal coping mechanisms and limiting the negative coping mechanisms already used by girls.

Parallel public resources, focusing on broader youth (including students) employment and vocational training initiatives, could be tapped to ensure the most vulnerable are receiving both material and social awareness support on the core risks concerning transactional sex.

#### **5.4 Further research**

The present study was conducted at the University of Venda in Limpopo, which is a challenge in as far as generalizing the findings. However it is useful for comparison. Therefore, it is recommended that an investigation into transactional sex should be carried out on a large scale, to come up with a clear picture.

#### **Summary**

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study and gives recommendations to curb the challenging phenomenon. The study found that students engaging into transactional sex are mostly pushed by their socio-economic status, peer pressure with some just having

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## **APPENDIX 1: Request for permission to conduct a study**

To : Dean of Students

From: Ntsieni M.W: Masters' of Public Health (MPH) Student

**RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT UNIVEN**

**Dear Sir/Madam**

This serves to seek your approval and clearance with regards to my proposal to conduct a research within your premises. This research is towards my master`s study in the Department of Public Health and is entitled “**PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS REGARDING TRANSACTIONAL SEX AND IT’S EFFECTS ON HEALTH AT UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, LIMPOPO, SOUTH AFRICA**”. The primary purpose of this to describe students’ Views Regarding Transactional Sex at University of Venda, Limpopo, South Africa.

### **Possible Benefits, Risks and Discomforts**

There are no direct benefits to be gained from this study immediately, neither are there any risks associated with it. The data from this study will be used only for the purpose of the study. (Master Thesis)

### **Confidentiality**

Your identity and your participation in this study will be treated strictly confidential. The information that we obtain from you will not be shared with anybody, except the study investigators. Your identity remains secret since your personal information will only be designated by a unique participant number. Your name will not appear in any reports or publications resulting from this study. After the study is completed, you may request information about the study results.

### **Voluntary Participation and Right to Leave the Research**

You participate entirely voluntarily in this study. You have the right to refuse to participate in the study. You also have the right to stop your participation in the study at any time, even after you have signed this informed consent form. The withdrawal of your consent will not cause any disadvantage or loss of advantages/privileges.

### **Consent**

Ethical clearance will be obtained from the University of Venda Ethical Committee. Permission to carry out the study will be obtained from the University of Venda Higher Degree Committee.

The study, with its findings, will be made available to your institution when it is completed. In order to proceed with this study, I kindly request your permission to conduct the study in your premises. Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

## **APPENDIX 2: Information sheet for participants**

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### **Title: PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS REGARDING TRANSACTIONAL SEX AND IT'S EFFECTS ON HEALTH AT A SELECTED UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**Principal Investigator: Surname Ntsieni Initials M.W**

**Address:** University of Venda, X5050, Thohoyandou, And Tel: 0732861514

**Email:** ntsienimw@gmail.com

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#### **General Information about Research**

This study will explore Perceptions of Students Regarding Transactional Sex and it's Effects on Health at a Selected University of Venda in South Africa

#### **Possible Benefits, Risks and Discomforts**

There are no direct benefits to be gained from this study immediately, neither are there any risks associated with it. The data from this study will be used only for the purpose of the study. (Master Thesis)

#### **Confidentiality**

Your identity and your participation in this study will be treated strictly confidential. The information that we obtain from you will not be shared with anybody, except the study investigators. Your identity remains secret since your personal information will only be designated by a unique participant number. Your name will not appear in any reports or publications resulting from this study. After the study is completed, you may request information about the study results.

#### **Voluntary Participation and Right to Leave the Research**

You participate entirely voluntarily in this study. You have the right to refuse to participate in the study. You also have the right to stop your participation in the study at any time, even after you have signed this informed consent form. The withdrawal of your consent will not cause any disadvantage or loss of advantages/privileges.

#### **Consent**

Ethical clearance has been obtained from the University of Venda Ethical Committee. Permission to carry out the study has been obtained from the University of Venda Higher Degree Committee(See attached ethical Clearance)

Contacts for Additional Information

Any questions or any further clarifications concerning the study can be directed to:

Ntsieni Mmboniseni Worriness on 0732861514

### APPENDIX 3: Participant consent letter

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I have been given information sheet on the project above. I have read and understood the information sheet and all my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I understand it is up to me whether or not I would like to participate in the study and that there will be no penalties if I decide not to participate. I understand that I do not have to answer any questions that I am not comfortable with and that I can stop the interview at any time. Furthermore I can decide whether or not the information will be complemented by the use of voice recorder.

I understand that the information recorded by the voice recorder will be given codes and my name will not be used in the study reports, and that comments will not be shared by anybody else. The information gathered will be used for scientific and educational purpose. After the study is completed, you may request information about the study results. The study will be published in international journal. Copies of the study reports will be kept confidentially at the University of Venda library. I consent voluntarily to participate in the observations for this study. I have been given telephone number that I may call if having any questions or concern about the research.

The above document describing the benefits, risks and procedures for the research titled: **“PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS REGARDING TRANSACTIONAL SEX AND ITS EFFECTS ON HEALTH AT A SELECTED UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH AFRICA”** has been read and explained to me. I have been given an opportunity to have any questions about the research answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate voluntarily.

Researcher's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Participant

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read through the content of this form and hereby voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

Participants' signature \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 4: Interview guide

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Date:.....

### Section: A: Biographical Information

Age:.....

Gender:.....

Level of Study: Cross level of Study

|         |  |         |  |     |  |
|---------|--|---------|--|-----|--|
| Honours |  | Masters |  | PHD |  |
|---------|--|---------|--|-----|--|

### Section B: Main questions

1. Central question: What are your perceptions regarding transactional sex.

### Section C: Perceived causes of transactional sex.

-What do you think causes students to engage in transactional sex?

### Section D: Perceived effects of transactional sex on health.

-What do you think are the health effects of transactional sex?

### Section E: Perceived strategies to curb transactional sex.

-What do you think are the strategies to curb transactional sex.

**APPENDIX 5: Ethical Clearance**

**RESEARCH AND INNOVATION  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**

**NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:  
Mr MW Ntsieni**

**Student No:  
11572649**

**PROJECT TITLE: Perceptions of students regarding  
transactional sex and its effects on health at a  
selected University in South Africa.**

**PROJECT NO: SHS/16/PH/07/2706**

**SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS**

| NAME              | INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT | ROLE                   |
|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Dr NS Mashau      | University of Venda      | Supervisor             |
| Dr TG Tshitangano | University of Venda      | Co-Supervisor          |
| Mr MW Ntsieni     | University of Venda      | Investigator - Student |

**ISSUED BY:  
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

**Date Considered: June 2016**

**Decision by Ethical Clearance Committee Granted**

**Signature of Chairperson of the Committee: .....**

**Name of the Chairperson of the Committee: Prof. G.E. Ekosse**



University of Venda  
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"A quality driven financially sustainable, rural-based Comprehensive University"