

**The Relationship between Moral Reasoning and Sex  
Guilt to Premarital Sex in Adolescents in High Schools**

**By**

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**The Relationship between Moral Reasoning and Sex Guilt to  
Premarital Sex in adolescents in High Schools.**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Masters Degree in Clinical Psychology at the Department of Psychology at the  
University of Zululand**

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**Declaration.**

I hereby declare that this is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

**Name:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

## **DEDICATION**

**This is dedicated to my mother Philisiwe Dumani Nkonyane who passed away in 2011. We will forever be grateful for the time that God has given us to be with you. It could have been so sudden before you could see the fruits of your hard work that eventually paid off. We know that you are in a better place. We will always love and miss you so much.**

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*Some people are able to look beyond our faults and see the potential in us even on our lowest moments and darkest days...*

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To my mother for giving me a second chance and trusting I'll go out there and make you proud. Thank you for being a sister a friend and most of all my support structure..Words are not enough.

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Baba...Mgabadeli... Sishi...Ndabezitha. Wena ongayidli imbuzi usaba umsila obheke phezulu, ngiyabonga even when you're no longer around to appreciate this, I won't forget you I promise.

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## Resume

The field of moral reasoning has been surrounded by controversy. A lot of research has been done on the subject and a lot of theorists have differed much on thoughts, ideas and on how does an individual become a morally reasoning being. Our decisions pertaining certain issues are generally informed by our morals, values and beliefs. As we develop and grow in our respective societies, one discovers that how generally the society believes and views certain matters influence how one personally views the issue. Schools are especially one of the playgrounds that children enter into and form relationships with their peers. Inevitably they start to look at certain issues through the eyes of their peers. One may ask, what then happens to what the individual was raised to believe and know as wrong or right. This study seeks to understand the relationship between moral reasoning and sex guilt to premarital sex in adolescents in high schools. A sample of 40 participants was randomly selected for the study which comprised of 16 females and 24 males. The results indicated that there is no relationship between premarital sex and sex guilt to premarital sex in adolescents. The methodology used and the results found are interpreted and explained in the study.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Background and Outline of the Research Study**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Adolescence is the developmental stage between childhood and adulthood. As a result of individual differences the age at which adolescence begins varies between the ages of 11 to 13 and the age at which it ends are between the ages of 17 and 21. An adolescent is a person who can no longer be treated as a child although he or she is not yet fully grown. According to Brown and Propper (1986) guilt is defined as a generalized expectancy for self monitored punishment for violating or anticipating a violation of internalized standards of socially acceptable behaviors.

Loveliness as cited by Hook (2004) is of the view that what is happening in some other countries, indicates that our reluctance to talk about sex has had a negative impact. More specifically adolescence refers to the stage when one is able to reproduce children and the secondary sexual characteristics namely, the development of breast and the beginning of menstruation in girls and the appearance of pubic hair and ejaculation in boys start to develop. These pubertal changes take place during the first years of adolescence. The following pubertal changes, namely rapid growth, hormonal changes, increasing sexual desires, the development of secondary sexual characteristics and the ability to reproduce, occur universally in adolescents.

Hook, Watts and Cockcroft (2002) are of the notion that the central issue is the development of the identity that forms the basis for adulthood. The individual develops a sense of individuality since infancy. Adolescence becomes the first time that an effort out of awareness is made to

answer the now pressing question of who the individual truly is. The conflict defining stage is identity versus role confusion. Identity refers to the organization of the individual's drives, abilities, beliefs and history into a consistent image of self. It also involves informed choices and decisions, particularly, about work related issues, values and commitment to people and ideas (Hook et al 2002).

The most complicated of all developmental changes in adolescence is the increase in the sexual desire, highlighted by the new and mysterious feelings and thoughts associated with it. The successful integration of sexuality is a major task for young people. This in turn is accompanied by much anxiety and conflict (Greathead, Davenish & Gilligan, 1998).

## **1.2. Theoretical Background of the study**

The problems that are experienced by adolescents are different from those that were experienced by their parents (Mkhabela, 1985). According to Kohlberg's theory of moral development, as cited by Papalia, Olds and Feldman (2003), Kohlberg bears some similarities to Piaget's theory although his idea is more complex. On the basis of thought processes shown by responses to his dilemmas, Kohlberg describes the three levels of moral reasoning, and divides each into two stages or levels.

i) ***Preconvention morality***: where people act under external controls. They obey rules to avoid punishment or reap rewards, or act out of self interest. This level is typical of children from the ages of 4 to 10

ii) ***Conventional morality***: at this stage people have internalized the standards of authority figures. They are concerned about being 'good' pleasing to others and maintaining the social

order. This level is typically reached after the age of 10, and many individuals never move beyond it even in adulthood.

iii) *Post conventional level*: people now recognize the conflicts between moral standards and make their own judgment on the basis of principles of what is right, fair, and just. People generally do not reach this level of moral reasoning until at least early stages of adolescence or more commonly in young adulthood (Papalia, Olds and Feldman, 2003).

Development is influenced by a lot of different factors. According to Piaget as cited by Papalia, Olds & Feldman (2003), our thinking processes change radically though slowly, from birth to maturity because we constantly strive to make sense of the world. Piaget identifies four factors which are biological maturation, activity, social experiences and equilibrium. One of the most important influences of our choices and how we constantly strive to make sense of the world is maturation, which is the unfolding of biological changes which are genetically bound to some level to occur. Parents and teachers have little if no impacts at all in this part of cognitive development, except to make sure that children get the nourishment and care they need to be healthy. Activity is also another influence and with physical maturity comes the increasing awareness to act on the environment and to learn from it. This means that as adolescents grow they feel this pressure to explore with it comes with physical maturity.

Piaget states that moral reasoning develops in three stages. Children move slowly and sequentially from one stage to another, at varying stages. The first stage is based on obedience to authority. Young children think inflexibly about moral concepts because they are egocentric and cannot imagine one way of looking at a moral issue. The second stage is characterized by increasing flexibility and some degree of autonomy based on mutual respect and co-operation.

Around the age of 11 or 12, when children become capable of reasoning formally, the third stage of moral development begins. Now 'equality' takes on a different meaning to the child as the idea that everyone should be treated the same way gradually gives away the idea of equality, of taking specific circumstances in account (Papalia, et al. 2003).

Moore and Davidson (2006) argue that as the twenty first century begins, a high level of participation in premarital sexual intercourse by young women is well documented. But, in the research exploring how such behavior can be reduced, the relationship of cognitive abilities to responsible sexual behavior has been under- researched.

According to Hook as cited by Gwala (2007), cognitive development is considered as a necessary factor for the development of moral reasoning. Similarly, Hook (2004) recognizes this to be insufficient by itself and further argues that research supports the argument that cognitive abilities alone do not translate into moral reasoning capacities. Proficiency into cognitive tasks, for instance, does not translate into proficiency in moral reasoning. Cognitive development precedes moral development and allows for the subsequent development of moral reasoning.

A disproportionate number of today's generation of young women is unable to cope with their developing sexual maturity in a responsible manner. As a result they engage in unsafe sexual practices that encourages the risks of sexually transmitted diseases, unplanned and unwanted pregnancies and alcohol related rapes (Moore & Davidson, 2006).

### **1.3. Motivation of the study**

The researcher was motivated by the great number of pregnant schoolgirls. They are mostly under the age of 18 years. This affects their future and it is socially disruptive.

#### **1.4. Research questions**

(i) Do adolescents feel guilty after engaging in pre marital sex?

(ii)What is the understanding of morals in adolescents in relation to pre-marital sex?

#### **1.5. The Aim of the study**

The aim of the study was to establish the relationship between sex guilt and moral reasoning to pre-marital sex in high school adolescent learners.

#### **1.6. Significance of the study**

(i) It is hoped that research in this area will contribute towards extending existing knowledge in mental health by understanding issues that adolescents face which could help in treating them.

(ii)The study will also assist in promoting prevention strategies for unwanted pregnancies, the scourge of sexually transmitted infections, termination of pregnancies and the reduction of HIV and AIDS.

#### **1.7. Methodology and Design**

##### **1.7.1 Research Design**

The study followed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. According to Struwing and Stead (2004), qualitative research generally attempts to understand issues from the views of the participants, whereas quantitative method of data collection attempts to measure variables or

count occurrences of the phenomenon. It was also aimed at understanding the participants' thoughts, feelings and behaviors and these were examined along a developmental or temporal continuation.

## **1.8 Data Collection**

### **1.8.1. Sampling**

The research sample comprises the following characteristics

- (i) The researcher used a random sampling method to select participants.
- (ii) A sample of 40 learners from grade 8 to 12 was selected for the study, including both males and females.

### **1.8.2 Instrument for Data Collection**

Data was collected by means of questionnaires. The questionnaires were structured in close and open ended questions. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) close ended questions offer the respondent/participant a range of answers to choose from, either verbally or in writing, but in cases where there are too many possible responses to the list the researcher may include the category "other" or use open ended questions.

## **1.9 Data Analysis**

The researcher used qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyze the data. The data was analyzed using tables, summarized, and categorized according to particular themes. According to Welman et al (2005), theme identification is one of the fundamental tasks in qualitative research.

### **1.10 Ethical Considerations**

(i) The researcher asked for permission from the Department of Psychology, the ethics committee of the University of Zululand and from the principals of the schools via the Department of Education in the Empangeni district in KwaZulu Natal to conduct the research.

(ii) An accurate description of the research procedure and aims were spelt out clearly to the participants.

(iii) Participants could withdraw at any stage of the research had they felt uncomfortable.

(iv) The strictest levels of confidentiality and anonymity were maintained and the researcher was available to answer research related questions.

## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

How does one decide what one ought to do in circumstances of moral significance? Are there certain rules that one must obey: don't steal, cheat, or spend quality time with your neighbor's partner? (Hook et al, 2002). Different reasons can be advanced as to why people act in different ways on the same situation or circumstance. For an example in instances like pre marital sex, one individual may think differently about the issue and a lot of issues including morals, values and beliefs may come to play, although what is central is what the individual believes in. Universality in the stages of moral reasoning as perceived by Kohlberg does not accommodate each and every adolescent that has to decide whether to engage in the act or not.

According to Hook et al, (2002), Lawrence Kohlberg found that people offered different answers to similar questions like the Heinz dilemma. Gilligan (1982) in her experience of using Kohlberg's "Heinz" moral dilemma, observes that there is a period of time when responsible adults do have to address the importance of relationships which in turn have to give way to "principles". In Kohlberg's writings this is not acknowledged. The instance that defines the limit to simply follow the abstract principle arises after having established that the preservation of Heinz's wife's life was more important than the chemist's right to property, one is asked to determine whether he\she would steal to save a stranger's life.

## 2.2 The Development of Moral and Social Understandings

A controversial issue surrounding morality has to do with how morality is to be defined. Since generally what certain people may argue as morally acceptable other people may not. In everyday discourse morality refers simply to the norms of acceptable and unacceptable conduct. At hand, however, what is meant by morally right and wrong, and which criteria shall be used to judge the wrongness of actions. As it turns out, this diversity at the level of public opinion has a corollary in the underlying heterogeneity of the structures of the individual's social concepts. Within the individual, concepts of social right and wrong are not all of the same standard, but are organized within distinct conceptual and developmental frameworks. In research conducted over the past twenty years, it has been found that individuals treat some forms of social behavior as moral universals, other forms of social conduct are subject to determination by local cultural or social norms, and still others as matters of what the individual personally believes to be the right choice (Turiel, 1983 as cited by Nucci, 1997).

Essentially how individuals conceptualize these differences arises when formal criteria for morality are employed which define morality as those interpersonal behaviors that are stipulated to be acceptable or unacceptable independent of societal rules, and maintained as universally binding (Turiel, 1983). Accordingly, perspectives of morality have been found to be structured by underlying individual standards of justice and welfare (Turiel, 1983). Morality, then, may be defined as the individual's concepts, reasoning, and behaviors in relations to the welfare, rights and fair treatment of other persons.

Morality as defined above can be differentiated from concepts of social conventions, which are the consensually determined standards of conduct particular to a given social group. Standards

established by different cultures such as norms or standards of respect, how females should be submissive to their male counterparts, how children are expected not to look at adults while talking emanates from what that particular tribe or societal group deem as acceptable or unacceptable. Nucci (1997) argues that these standards could be put in place to achieve some symbolic function. The critical issue about these standards lies in the purpose they serve to coordinate interaction and discourse within social systems. From the above example they may serve a purpose of teaching children the importance of respect. Essentially societal conventions or standards one may argue that they serve a purpose and are transferred from one generation to the next even if their intention may be unclear at times.

(<http://tigger.uic.edu/~Inucci/MoralEd/articles/nuccimoraldev.html>)

### **2.3 Moral reasoning and the cognitive developmental approach**

Kohlberg's thesis is that moral reasoning may be variously conceived. He distinguishes six different modes of apprehending the moral course of conduct – Kohlberg's cognitive developmental theory. Although cognitive development is considered as a necessary factor for the development of moral reasoning, it is recognized in its self to be insufficient (Kohlberg and Kaufman 1987 as cited by Hook, Watts and Cockcroft (2002). Research supports the argument that cognitive abilities alone do not translate into moral reasoning capacities. According to Rest (1993) as cited by Hook, Watts and Foxcroft (2002), proficiency in cognitive tasks, for instance, does not translate into proficiency in moral reasoning. Which may in turn give a reason as to why people regarded to be reasonably well cognitively, may engage in acts that are deemed inappropriate for one particular society. Cognitive development *precedes* moral development and allows for the subsequent development of moral reasoning with the child's interaction in social

environments. It is only after the application of cognitive processes to social problems that moral development occurs (Hook, et al, 2002).

#### **2.4 Alternatives to the cognitive developmental approach**

There are different psychological perspectives which look at the cognitive and moral development issue differently as per their school of thought. Blasi (1993) considers learning theories and psychoanalysis as assuming in common (although otherwise being very different) that moral action is produced out of behavioral action tendencies and the interplay. By contrast he considers the cognitive developmental theories of Piaget and Kohlberg as assuming instead that moral action is cognitively mediated. According to behaviorism and cognitive –social theory, one learns what one ought to do by conditioning or modeling, that if a behavior is rewarded it is most likely to occur again in the future, and since children learn and explore the environment primarily from their caregivers actions and due to such they learn to engage in the same behavior because it was modeled as probably acceptable. Forbidden conduct becomes conditioned with emotions such as anxiety (Smith & Mackie, 1995). Cognitive-social theory gauges moral development as indicated in pro-social behavior. Psychodynamic theory postulates that an individual’s conscience (the superego) develops by identification and internalization (first as external rules and later as personal guides), and is enforced primarily by guilt avoidance.

## 2.5 Piaget's influence on Moral Reasoning

Piaget conceived his theory by observing children's treatment of rules when playing games such as marbles. Piaget theorized that moral development took a form of a progression from *heteronomous* (subject to external rules) to *autonomous* (internal) moral reasoning.

**Heteronomous moral reasoning** is the reasoning initially adopted by children and is characterized by adherence to rules and duties, and obedience to authority. Rules are regarded as fixed and absolute, deriving from supreme commandment (adults, parents, or a deity even). One cannot break or amend these commandments, regardless of whether they are inconvenient or unfair. This is the reasoning of a child younger than 10 years (it is also the reasoning of some servants; the rules are rules). This reasoning results from three factors. The first is due to a problem of "realism" (the difficulty the child experiences in distinguishing the rules from real objective phenomena). The second is due to the egocentric nature of the young child's cognitive structure in that she or he cannot take a different perspective. The third results from the power relationship between adults and children which are different in that they are subject to adult authority. The heteronomous orientation is characterized by the child's respect for the unquestionable authority of adults or parents (Hook, et al, 2002).

The **autonomous moral reasoning** orientation develops out of interaction with other children and is characterized by an ability to be considerate of rules critically, and selectively to apply them based on the goals of being mutually respectful and cooperative. Kohlberg elaborated Piaget's model into a six stage theory. In this he proposed a *heteronomous orientation* (marked by the first stage) as a child's initial morality and an *autonomous orientation* (marked by the later stages) as the ultimate development of moral reasoning (Watts, Duncan & Cockcroft, 2009).

## **2.6 The relationship between Moral Reasoning and Action**

One needs to be clear that Kohlberg was far less concerned with moral action (that is, action in a morally significant context) than with the individual's deliberations of what he or she ought to do in the circumstances and, more particularly, his or her reasons for this (Western 1996 as cited by Hook et al, 2002). Kohlberg's theory is but one possible perspective of one possible component (Hook, 2002). Nevertheless, Kohlberg's theory has attracted criticism for having no direct correlate with moral behavior. Other authors argue that he did not propose, however, that such correlation would exist. His assumption in this respect is not that moral judgment will match or be matched by behavior (Hook et al, 2002).

According to Hook et al (2002) research has demonstrated an impressive correlation between the degree of development of moral judgment and moral conduct when interpreted from Kohlberg's perspective: in that when the level of reasoning is higher, the stronger the link ought to become between what the individual considers to be the right course of action and his or her behavior (Blasi 1993; Kohlberg 1981).

According to Hook et al (2002) what might be argued is that the small positive correlation that Kohlberg claims, and that seem empirically supported, leaves much to be explained, so that its value may be questioned as being negligible. But this argument overlooks the complexity of the precedents of moral conduct in implying that one factor should offer a clear insight into the moral nature of conduct that is expected from individuals.

## 2.7 Kohlberg and Moral Development

In growing from Piaget's description of children's moral judgment to the moral judgment of adolescents and adults, Kohlberg (1981) distinguishes three perspectives of moral conflict and choice which will be explained shortly.

Tying moral development in adolescence to the growth of reflective thought at that time, Kohlberg terms these three views of morality **preconventional**: at this level, the child follows cultural rules and what is labeled as good or bad, right or wrong, but interprets these labels in terms of the physical consequences of action (punishment, reward, exchange of favors or in terms of the physical power of those who enunciate the rules and labels (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987). **Conventional**: at this level, maintaining the expectations of one's family, or nation is perceived as valuable, regardless of immediate and obvious consequences. The attitude is not only one of conformity to personal expectations and social order, but of loyalty to it, of actively maintaining, supporting and justifying the order and of identifying with the people or group involved in it." **Post conventional**: at this level there is an informed effort to clearly define moral values and principles that have validity and application apart from the authority of the groups or people holding these principles and apart from the individual's own identification with these groups." In this scheme, conventional morality, or the equation of right or good with the maintenance of existing social norms is always a point of departure. Whereas preconventional moral judgment denotes an ability to construct a shared or societal view, post conventional judgment transcends that vision (Gilligan, 1982).

Kohlberg claimed that development across childhood and adolescence is characterized by a sequential passage through stages. Research indicates that stages one and two are more symbolic of children, with stage 3 emerging among adolescents. Stage 4 increases in salience across adolescence, and stage 5 appears in adulthood, although even then it remains fairly rare. Generally, longitudinal research indicates that individuals move up a single stage at a time (that is, move from stage 1 to stage 2, not from stage 1 to 3) and that regression over time is rare (individuals who are characterized as being at stage 3 are unlikely to use stage 2 reasoning when tested years later). The evidence is compelling for development from lower stages to higher stages over the course of childhood and adolescence in western cultures, and consequently there is little debate about this claim (Hook, et al, 2002).

## **2.8 Different perspectives on moral reasoning**

Some people asked if ‘what they would say when asked what morality means to them and how they would they sum it up’.....well a college student answered..... when she think about morality she thinks of obligations (Grice, 1967). She further stated that she usually thinks of it as conflicts between what the individual personally desires and social things, social considerations or personal desires of one’s self versus personal desires of other or people. Morality is that whole realm of how one decides these conflicts. Moral persons are the ones who would decide by placing themselves more often than not as equals. Truly moral persons would always consider another person as equal to them. “In a situation of social interaction, something is morally wrong where the individual ends up screwing a lot of people. And it is morally right when everyone comes out better off” (Gilligan, 1982). According to Damon (1977) “no one could be in a position to call another person moral, wouldn’t people with different values make entirely

different determinations?” Unquestionably all through history, one person’s hero has been another person’s villain.

Even revered spiritual leaders such as Jesus or Mohammad were reviled by many of their contemporaries. Such phrases as “moral exemplar” will always provoke skepticism, because people do not only disagree about the nature of moral standards but also how to evaluate whether a particular individual’s behavior reflects such standards. Part of the inevitable controversy reflects social, cultural, and political differences among people (Gilligan, 1982).

According to Freud as cited by Grice (1967), ‘though living surrounded by women and otherwise seeing so much and so well, women’s relationships seemed increasingly mysterious, difficult to discern, and hard to describe’. While this mystery indicates how theory can blind observation, it also suggests that development in women is masked by a particular conception of human relationships. Since the imagery relationships shapes the narrative of human development and morality, the inclusion of women, by changing that imagery, implies a change in the whole account. The shift in imagery that creates the problem in interpreting women’s development is elucidated by the moral judgments of two individuals, a girl and a boy, who see in the same dilemma two very different moral problems (Gilligan, 1982).

While current theory brightly illuminates the line and the logic of the boy’s thought, it casts a can’t light on that of the girl. The choice of a girl whose moral judgments elude existing categories of developmental assessment is meant to highlight the issue of interpretation rather than to exemplify sex differences per se as suggested by Kohlberg. Adding another line of interpretation, based on the imagery of the girl’s thought, makes it possible not only to see development where previously development was not seen but also to consider the differences

that lie in the understanding of relationships without compromising these differences from better to worse. A nice example is made by Carol Gilligan in her writings, it was about two children who were in the same grade at school and were participants in the rights and responsibilities study, designed to explore different conceptions of morality and self. The sample selected for the study was chosen to focus the variables of gender and age while maximizing development potential by holding constant, at a high level, the factors of intelligence, education and social class that have been associated with moral development, at least measured by existing scales. The two children in question were both bright, at least in their eleven year old aspirations, resisted easy categories of sex role stereotyping, since the girl aspired to become a scientist while the boy preferred English to math. Moral judgments seem initially to confirm notions about differences between the sexes, suggesting that girls have on moral development since the early school years gives away at puberty with the ascendant of formal logical thought in boys (Gilligan, 1982).

Adolescents, children and adults respond to the same moral dilemma in different ways. Asked whether there is a right or wrong answer to moral problems, the boy responded that there can only be a right or wrong in judgment” since the parameters of action vary and become complex. explaining how actions undertaken with the best of intentions can result in the most disastrous of consequences, he says “like if you give an old lady your seat on the trolley, if you are in a trolley crash and that seat goes through the window, it might be that reason that seat goes through the window, it might be that reason that the old lady dies” (Gilligan, 1982).

According to Gilligan (1982), theories of developmental psychology describe well the position of this child, standing in the juncture of childhood and adolescence, at what Piaget describes as

the pinnacle of childhood intelligence, and beginning through thought to discover a wider universe of possibility. The moment of preadolescence is caught by the conjunction of formal operational thought with a description of self still anchored in the factual parameters of his childhood world his age, his town, his father's occupation, the substance of his likes, dislikes and beliefs. Yet as his self description radiates the self confidence of a child who has arrived in, at a favorable balance of industry and inferiority-competent in Erikson's terms, sure of himself, and knowing well the rules of the game so his emergent capacity for formal thought, his ability about thinking and reasoning things out in a logical way, frees him from dependence and authority and allows him to find solutions to problems on his own.

This emergent autonomy follows the trajectory that Kohlberg six stages of moral development trace, a three level progression from an egocentric understanding of fairness based on individual needs (stage one and two), to a conception of fairness anchored in the shared conceptions of societal agreement (stages three and four), and finally to a principled understanding of fairness that rests on the free standing logic of equality and reciprocity (stages five and six). While the boy's judgment at eleven are scored as conventional on Kohlberg's scale, a mixture of stages three and four, his ability to bring deductive logic and bear on the solution of moral dilemmas, to differentiate morality from law, and to see how laws can be considered to have mistake points towards the principled conception of justice that Kohlberg equates with moral maturity. In contrast the girl's response to Kohlberg's Heinz dilemma conveys a very different impression, an image of development stunted by a failure of logic, an inability to think for herself. When the girl was asked why Heinz should not steal the drug, she considers neither property nor law but rather the effect that theft could have on the relationship between Heinz and his wife. As the interviewer proceeds with the series of questions that follow from Kohlberg's construction of the

dilemma, Amy's answer still remain essentially unchanged, the various probes serving neither to elucidate nor to modify her initial response. Whether or not Heinz loves his wife he shouldn't steal or let her die; if it were a stranger instead the girl says that "if the stranger didn't have anybody near or anyone she knew" then Heinz should try and save her life, but he should not steal the drug. Failing to see the dilemma as a self contained problem in moral logic, she does not discern the internal structure of its resolution. As she constructs the problem differently herself, Kohlberg's conception completely evades her.

According to Gilligan (1982), the essence of moral decision is the exercise of choice and the willingness to accept responsibility for that choice. To the extent that women perceive themselves as having no choice, they correspondingly excuse themselves from the responsibility that decision entails. Childlike in the vulnerability of their independence and consequence, fear of abandonment, they claim to wish only to please, but in return to their goodness they expect to be loved and cared for.

Hook et al, (2002) argues that perhaps Gilligan is a little dated then in her reference to Nancy Chodorow who attempted to explain the "Nearly universal differences that characterise masculine and feminine personality and roles" by attributing them not to anatomy but that it was women who, universally, are largely responsible for early child care. The sharing of early nurture of children by both sexes is certainly more common today, than it previously was as children were a mother's responsibility, yet there appears to be no noticeable difference in the girl's behavior. Chodorow is probably correct however in that "feminine personality" comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than masculine personality does. According to Chodorow, (1974) as cited by Gilligan, (1982) boys are nurtured in such a way that such

relations are discouraged because historically they have been seen as having the role of defending those close to them, and of engaging in military combat when the State is threatened. For men to be in touch with their feelings as keenly as women they are and would be generally reputed to be a disadvantage in such circumstances.

Gilligan, in arguing for her ethic of responsibility, challenges other Lever's work. Lever accepted Piaget's assumption that the "legal sense" that boys develop through play is essential for moral development, to which Kohlberg adds that these lessons are most effectively learned through the opportunities for role taking that arise in the course of resolving conflicts, and as a model is better one and "given the realities of adult life, if a girl does not want to be left dependent on men, she will have to learn to play like a boy" (Hook, 2004)

The challenge that Gilligan faces is that if girls bypass in favor of maintaining relationships the "legal sense" that Kohlberg considers to be essential in moral development, what role does the ethic of responsibility possess to enable a girl to progress beyond heteronomy to autonomy?. The constraint to nurture relationships appears to be of a heteronomous nature as it makes a demand that is obviously endorsed by the girl's peer group.

Erikson's theory of development is also challenged by Gilligan, who claims that Erickson's observation of sex differences does not influence his chart of life-cycle changes which is based on male development. For Gilligan, it appears that Erickson views the optimal cycle of human separation and attachment for girls to be experienced as a fusing of intimacy with identity whereas for the male experience identity preceded intimacy. Adolescence for Erikson is experienced as the celebration of the autonomous, initiating and industrious self. This is accomplished through the forging of an identity based on an ideology that can support and justify

adult commitments. If Gilligan is correct in interpreting Erikson's view of the girls adolescent development and according to (Hook, 2004), she is.

However, Gilligan's concern that Erikson relegates to infancy the one acknowledgment in his life cycle chart of the importance of developing relationships needs to be addressed. In this, Gilligan is not being just toward Erikson, for surely the nature of the "intimacy" which both Gilligan and Erikson address, is vitally concerned with relationships. It is in intimacy that girls acquire an advantage over boys in adolescence, for normally, this intimacy is learnt in conversation with the mother, the very mother with whom girls identify and boys begin to separate from in their individuation. Yet for Erikson this intimacy is essential for full maturity (Hook, et al 2002).

## **2.9 Criticism of Kohlberg theory of moral development**

### *2.9.1 Moral Judgment and Action*

One very common criticism of Kohlberg and Piaget is that the sort of justifications offered for moral dilemmas are not associated with action. Most people can recall instances where they acted in ways they knew were morally inappropriate, and it is this awareness that gives considerable credence to claims that are reflective judgment tapped by questions concerning hypothetical dilemmas has little influence on conduct (Hook, et al, 2002). The relation of judgment to action is extremely complex and poorly understood. However, there is sufficient research to conclude that moral stage is related to behavior in moral contexts, although this relation is weak. In short, those who reason at higher stages are more likely to act prosocially than those who reason at lower stages.

The loose connection between moral judgment and action means that it is impossible to predict accurately a person's behavior in a specific situation from his or her moral stage. This is not altogether surprising: a person's behavior in any one situation is determined by many psychological factors (emotions, perceptions, memories as well as judgments) and by contextual factors (which people are present and the actor's relationships with those persons, home versus workplace, and so on). Damon (1977) further argues that the notion of morality is not entirely arbitrary or subjective. On the central question of what constitutes a moral act, there is a broad range of consensus within our culture, and perhaps beyond. For these reasons behavior is said to multiply determined, and no single factor- such as moral stage- can be expected to direct behavior.

Moreover, Blasi (1993) pointed out that moral stages represent ways of thinking about moral issues, not specific behavioral tendencies. Two people at the same moral stage may reach different decisions about an action. People at different stages can choose the same action, but for different reasons. While the individual at stage 3 wants to preserve the self's reputation.

### *2.9.2 Comprehensiveness of Moral Stages*

In much of Kohlberg's writing (1981, 1984) there is an assumption that the stages of logical cognition outlined by Piaget are sufficient for an account of the development of intelligence, and that the moral stages suffice for a broad understanding of social cognition. In other words, one can understand social intersections, moral emotions (guilt, shame), and attitudes, and so on as deriving in one way or another from the five stages of moral judgment. However, a lot of research in the past two decades has demonstrated that the stages outlined by Kohlberg cannot provide a comprehensive depiction of social-cognitive development.

### 2.9.3 *Distributive justice*

One line of investigation has demonstrated that young children's understanding of moral regulations is much more sophisticated than what is allowed in stage 1 in Kohlberg's theory. Damon (1977) was one of the first to demonstrate that young children, in peer contexts, at Kohlberg's stage 1, reasoned in thoughtful ways about sharing. Damon (1977) suggested that he was able to detect moral sophistication overlooked by Kohlberg and Piaget by questioning children about familiar issues involving peers.

A typical task used by Damon (1977) is referred to as distributive justice and goes something like this. Imagine that there is a school that desperately needs funds to purchase essential writing materials-pens and notebooks. The teachers organize an open day and fair at which there will be entertainments and stalls in order to raise the money. The art teacher asks her class to paint pictures so that they can be sold. The open day arrives and it is great success, and more money is raised than is needed. The art teacher is then given some money to give to her class. The problem now is how to distribute the money to the children? A little thought reveals that there are three ways in which this money could be distributed, each of them having some merit. These are equality- each child in the class is given the same amount of money; need- the poorer children given more; merit – those children who worked hardest and those whose paintings sold best are given more. Even a 4 year old recognizes the importance of sharing, and by age 8 years children can appreciate and discuss all three ways of sharing the money.

Gilligan (1982) further argues that Kohlberg ignores the feminine moral orientation of the *morality of care*, a morality of responsibility and care based on non-violence. Gilligan claimed

that Kohlberg focused more on the male orientation and forgets the “ethic of responsibility” which Gilligan considers as a female way of dealing with a dilemma. She proposes that this alternative of ‘morality of care’ predominates in women, whereas justice reasoning predominates in men, and that Kohlberg’s theory is therefore biased in terms of gender in a sense that the thinking of females is often classified with that of children (Gilligan, 1982). Kohlberg can be said to have brought this controversy against himself in that in his initial sample of the data which served as the basis of his theory-comprised of only boys aged between ten and sixteen years (Kohlberg, 1981). Children have considerable experience sharing food and toys with their friends, and this experience is translated into implicit principles. In sharp contrast, young children have little experience with the kinds of issues posed by Kohlberg. And if they don’t have them in childhood they also don’t have them in adulthood.

Gilligan (1982) argues that "Moral judgments of women differs from that of men in a greater extent to which women's judgments are tied to feelings of being empathetic and compassionate and are concerned with the resolution of real as opposed to hypothetical dilemmas"

Gilligan draws from observations by Janet Lever of children of ten years to eleven at play. It was noticed that boys were thrilled in the setting of rules of a game and enjoy arguing about whether or not rules were followed during the play, or needed to be reconstructed, as much as playing the game itself. Girls on the other hand were seen to spend less time at each game, and when a disagreement erupted, they resorted to finishing the game prematurely rather than entering into a situation that might damage the relationships. Apparently, because girls are more in touch with their feelings and concepts of intimacy than boys, they developed ways of circumventing conflict. This behavior could be due both to the nurturing received by girls from the significant

carers in their lives as well as biologically determined attitudes. There appears to be a growing consensus that the origins of behavior can, amongst other variables, be explained by reference to both "nurture; and "nature" theories of development.

#### *2.9.4 Universality*

One of Kohlberg's boldest claims (1981) was that the moral stages that he used to characterize moral judgment development in the United States could also be used to understand moral judgment in all the other cultures. We cannot conclude and say people from different cultures reason exactly the same way about moral issues. What another person does may be perceived morally inappropriate by his/her culture, and if another person does the same thing in the culture she /he belongs to may be perceived as morally appropriate. So each culture is different from the other and our actions and behaviors are grounded in our culture.

## **2.10 Sexuality in Adolescence**

Sexual experimentation in adolescence would usually start with fantasy and masturbation in early adolescence followed by noncoital genital touching with the opposite sex or, in some cases, same sex partners, oral sex with partners, and initiation of sexual intercourse at a later point in the development. By high school, most male adolescents report that they have experienced with masturbation, and a large number of adolescent girls report masturbation. To find the balance between healthy adolescent sexual experimentation and emotionally and physically safe sexual practices happens to be one of the major challenges society is battling with (Sadock & Sadock, 2007).

According to Sadock and Sadock, (2007), even though birth control and abortion does provide women with effective ways to control their fertility, the dilemma of choice enters a central arena of women's lives. Then the relationships that have traditionally defined women's identities and framed their moral judgment no longer flow from their reproductive capacity but become matters of decision over which they have control, Released from the passivity and reticence of sexuality that binds them independent

## **2.11 Religiousness and Sexuality in Adolescence**

One of religion's influences on adolescence development involves sexual activity. Although variability and change in church teachings make it difficult to characterize religious doctrine

simply, most churches discourage premarital sex. Thus, adolescence participation in religious organizations may be more important than religious affiliations as a determinant of premarital sexual attitudes and behavior. Adolescents who attend religious services frequently might hear messages about abstaining from sex. Involvement of adolescents in religious activities also enhances the probability that they will have friends who have restrictive attitudes towards premarital sex. According to Santrock (2005) one recent national study of 3,356 adolescents (mean age=16years) focused on four aspects of religiousness:

(1) Attendance at religious events

(2) Personal conservatism

(3) Personal devotion

(4) Religious denomination. It was indicated from the results that personal devotion was linked with fewer sexual partners outside a romantic relationship. Attending religious events was also related to a greater perception of risk of contracting HIV or pregnancy from unprotected intercourse and a reasonably responsible and planned use of birth control. Personal conservatism was linked with unprotected sex. In another study, links between religion and sexuality also occurred. In college students, guilt, prayer, organized religious activity, and religious wellbeing were associated with fewer sexual encounters (Santrock, 2005).

### ***1.11.1 The positive role of religion in adolescents lives***

Researchers have found that religion is linked with positive results for adolescents. Regnerus (2001) as cited by Santrock (2005) postulates that in one study of 9,700 adolescents, going to church was linked with better grades for students from low socio-

income backgrounds. Going to church may benefit students because religious communities encourage socially acceptable behaviors, which include doing religious studies in school. Churchgoing may also benefit students because churches often offer positive role models for students.

Many religious adolescents also internalize their religion's message about caring and being concerned about other people. For example, in one survey, religious youth were almost three times as likely to engage in community service as non-religious youth (Santrock, 2005).

### ***2.11.2 Developmental changes***

Adolescence can be an important stage in religious development. Even if children have been introduced into a religion by their parents, because of advances in their cognitive development they may begin to question what their own religious belief truly are.

## **2.12 Prosocial Behavior and Altruism**

Children's moral behavior can involve negative antisocial acts such as lying, cheating and stealing or it can involve their *Prosocial behavior* –the positive aspects of moral behavior, such as being compassionate to someone or behaving altruistically (Eisenberg, 2002; Hoffman, 2002 as cited by Santrock, 2005). While Kohlberg's and Gilligan's theories have focused primarily on the cognitive aspects of moral development, the study of prosocial moral behavior has placed more emphasis on its behavioral aspects. As children grow, they become more likely to engage in Prosocial behavior (Eisenberg, 2002&Wang, 2002 as cited by Santrock, 2005). Among the factors that are likely to contribute to this age-related increase in Prosocial behavior are advances

in perspective-taking, moral judgment, and self regulation (Eisenberg & Morris, 2004 as cited by Santrock, 2005). Altruism is an unselfish interest in helping someone else. Human acts of altruism are plenty i.e. the hard working laborer who places five dollars in a Salvation Army kettle; rock concerts to feed the hungry, help farmers and fund AIDS research and the child who takes care of a wounded cat. Damon (1977) described a developmental sequence of children's altruism, especially of sharing. Most sharing during the first three years of life is done not out of empathy reasons, but for the fun of social play ritual or out of mere imitation. At about the age of 4 years, a combination of empathetic awareness and adult encouragement produces a sense of obligation on the part of the child to share with others. This obligation forces the child to share, even though the child does not perceive this as the best way to have fun. Most 4 year olds are not selfless saints. However, children believe they have an obligation to share but not necessarily think they should be as generous to others as they are to themselves. By the start of elementary school years, children genuinely begin to express more objective ideas about being fair. It is common to hear a 6 year old child using the word *fair* synonymously with the word *equal* or *same*. By mid to late elementary school years, children also believe that equity means special treatment for those who deserve it. Missing from the factors that guide children's altruism is one that many adults might expect to be the most influential of all; the motivation to obey adult authority has only a small influence on children's sharing. Parental advice and prodding certainly foster standards of sharing, but the give-and-take of peer requests and arguments provide the most immediate stimulation of sharing.

## **2.13 Values**

Young people carry with them a set of values that influence how they think, feel and behave. Values are generally attitudes and beliefs about how things should be. Essentially they involve what seems to be mostly important to us. We attach them to almost everything more critically when we have to decide on a certain issue: politics, religion, money, education, helping others, families, friends, career, cheating and self-respect.

### ***2.13.1 Changing values***

Over the past century adolescents have signified being an increasingly concerned about their personal well-being and a limited concern in the welfare of others. Today university beginners are motivated towards becoming financially well off and less motivated to develop a meaningful philosophy of life than their counterparts were in 20 or even 10 years ago. Student commitment to becoming well off financially as a “very important” reason for attending college has been found to reach a record high in 2003 compared with 37percent in 1971. However, two aspects of values that increased during the 1960’s continue to characterize a large number of today’s young people: self fulfillment and self expression. As part of their motivation for self-fulfillment, many adolescents show great interest in their physical health and wellbeing. Greater self fulfillment and self expression can be laudable goals, but if they become the only goals, self destruction, loneliness, or alienation may result. Young people also need to develop a corresponding sense of commitment to the other’s welfare. Encouraging adolescents to have a strong commitment to others would develop a sense of appreciating the health and welfare of other people. However, there are some pointers that today’s high school learners are moving towards a stronger interest in the wellbeing of our society. For example, between 1986 and 1995, there was a small increase

in the number of college students who reported their willingness to participate in community empowerment programs and help promote racial understanding (Sax and others, 1998 as cited by Santrock, 2005).

For successful adjustment in life, it is critical to seek fulfillment in one's self and commit to others. Research on adolescents in seven different countries revealed that family values of compassion and social responsibility were the values that were most consistently linked with adolescent participation in providing service to the community, commitment to serving their societies, and empathy for disadvantaged groups (Bowes & Flanagan as cited by Santrock, 2005). In one recent analysis, it was revealed that middle school civics textbooks are far more likely to discuss an individual's rights rather than social responsibility. Thus, adolescents may benefit from a stronger emphasis on social responsibility in both family and school contexts. Other research on values found that adolescents who are involved in groups that connect themselves to others are in school, their communities, or faith based institutions, report higher levels of social trust, altruism, commitment to the common good of people, and endorsement of the rights of immigrants to be fully included in society (Flanagan, 2004; Flanagan, 2001 as cited by Santrock, 2005). In this research, adolescents who were not involved in such groups were more likely to be interested in themselves and their values were materialistic.

#### **2.14 Service learning**

Service learning is a type of education that enhances and enforces individuals into being socially responsible and to provide service to the community. In service learning, adolescents might be tutoring, helping old people, volunteering in a health care facility, assisting at a child care centre, or cleaning up a vacant space to make a place for children to play. According to Santrock (2005)

the importance of service learning is that it helps adolescents to become less selfish and more willing to help others. Pritchard and Whitehead (2004); Waterman, 1997 as cited by Santrock (2005), further argue that service learning takes education to the community. For example, some students would render tutoring to other children with low grades so their reading skills could be improved. From offering such services to the community adolescents do comment that before engaging in such a service they wouldn't have known how disadvantaged other people are. A special rewarding occurs in such practices as participants would appreciate and acknowledge the difference that has been brought into their lives. Participation in service learning benefits not only the adolescent offering the service but the people receiving the help as well. Researchers have found that service learning benefits students in a number of ways namely:

- Their grades improve and they become more motivated and set goals
- Their self-esteem improves
- They become less alienated
- They increasingly reflect on society's moral order and social concerns
- More high schools are now requiring community service.

In one survey, 15 percent of the nation's largest school district had such a requirement (National and community service coalition, 1995 as cited by Santrock, 2005). Regardless that such services have increased in the community, in one survey of 40,000 adolescents; two thirds said that they have never done any volunteer work to help other people. The benefits of service learning, for both the volunteer and the recipient, suggest that more adolescents should be required to participate in such programs.

## **2.15. The Hidden Curriculum**

More than 60 years ago, educator John Dewey (1933) recognized that even though schools do not have specific programs that teach moral education, they do somehow provide such education through what he calls the “hidden curriculum”. The hidden curriculum is conveyed through the moral atmosphere which is part of every school. This moral atmosphere is created by the school and rules set for classrooms, the moral stance of teachers and school administrators, and text materials. Teachers serve as models of ethical and unethical behavior. Classroom rules and peer relations at school transmit attitudes about cheating, lying, stealing, and consideration of others. And through its rules and regulations, the school administration infuses the school with a value system (Santrock, 2005).

## **2.16 Implications for Educational Practice**

Nucci (1989) summarized activities which concern academic or intellectual content and reflection, and school policies or practices which affect the school climate or activities that students engage in as below:

*The focus of moral education must be on students' concerns for and conceptions of fairness and the wellbeing of others.* Such issues are treated by children and adults as universal, and as independent of the specific norms and rules of their particular culture. Morality is different from social conventions which are entered into upon social norms specifically social or cultural groups.

*Educational practices should be consistent with the stage the student is in developmentally.*

While young children have an intuitive sense of knowing what is moral or not, somehow they

haven't fully mastered the concept of fairness. Nor do they have an awareness of the purpose of societal standards organizing systems within society. For educators programs to be effective in enhancing students' moral and societal growth, educational practices or syllabuses should be consistent with the developmental stage of the child.

***Educational practices must consider the fact that morality and convention is formed out of qualitatively different types of social experiences.*** Morality deals with justice and the welfare of people. As a result, ideas that children have about morals are enhanced by their experiences in schools that focus on such issues. Issues of convention, on the other hand, deal with concerns about social organization. Thus, children's conceptualization of what conventions mean and how important they are arises out of efforts to come to agreed upon norms for coordinating the actions of members of a group.

***Moral development is enhanced by moral discussion and solving moral problems.*** Moral reasoning comes to play when students recognize inconsistencies and inadequacies in their moral positions. One of the ways that has been found to be effective is to bring children in small groups and open a moral dilemma for discussion. From such discussions, students could be asked to arrive at a solution of a moral issue in such a way that it would be fair to everyone.

***Moral discussion may also make use of moral exemplars.*** Usually character education would include familiarizing students about people who have led morally acceptable or good lives. This was and is still believed to help young people develop their own sense of morality from having moral exemplars as role models. While over-reliance on this approach is unjustified, there is a place for providing students with opportunities to consider the thoughts and actions of exemplary figures such as Martin Luther King or Nelson Mandela in the South African context, and

situations that require students to look at moral issues from literature as a way of helping students form their own sense of character and be able to decide on moral issues. Students should be active in constructing a connection between who they are and their role model. Role plays and solving moral dilemmas can also stimulate learners into considering if the behavior is immoral or moral before engaging in it.

*Opportunities about self reflection can be used to enhance moral character.* According to Nucci (1997), students can be assisted in finding a balance or integrating their individuality and moral self with their identity through morally charged activities in the classroom that allows the students to focus on what they wish to become.

*Moral discussion is effective when it concerns actual student issues.* Student motivation and attention is enhanced when the moral problems they are asked to address concerns about issues happening in real life, and when the consequences of their decisions have real impact on subsequent policies or actions. This approach also engages students in role enactment related to their construction of a sense of self.

*Moral concerns are often within conventional practices.* Since moral actions take place within cultural contexts, many moral issues are part of cultural systems, or overlap with morality. This has the following educational ramification

*Concerns for Fostering Moral development Should Include Concerns for Fostering Moral Sensitivity.* Moral issues are usually intertwined with societal standards already existing within the society. If educational sectors do commit to moral education, such education should emphasize the importance that students

would know the results or consequences of engaging in morally unacceptable behaviors. According to Nucci (1997) presenting students with scenarios that engages both morality and societal standards, ask them to consider both the moral and conventional aspects of such issues this in turn helps them to be able to understand the relationship between the two..

***Moral Educators need to be prepared to Deal with Controversy.*** Since issues that overlap often involve established conventional practices, discrepancies occur when the potential unfairness or harm caused by such practices is overlooked by a large number of people from the society concerned, or may be important to the interests of particular social groups. A moral dilemma faced by educators and policy makers is whether and to what extent to engage students in consideration of such controversial matters. Generally it has been argued above that what one regards as morally acceptable from one society it may be a different issue all together in another society, so one may think to what extent do even policy makers make decisions on policies from their own moral stance which may not be same as the one for the individual on the receiving end. Balancing the educator's moral duty to enable students to deal with the contradictions inherent in any complex value system, with the educator's role as an agent of that very society defines the core moral dilemma faced by any teacher.

## **2. 17 Predictors of premarital sexual activity**

In general a person's value and attitudes are the best predictors of premarital sexual behavior. Teenagers, who engage in premarital sex at an early age place greater value on independence, express less concern about academic achievement, are less religious, and report that they happen to be influenced by the opinions of those who are friends to them than by those of their family (Craig & Kitcher-Strydom, 1983). Premarital activity is also more likely among teenagers who view dating as important in their lives and express strong desires for a partner.

In a study by Newcomb, Huba, and Bentler, (1986) as cited by Nucci (1989), the importance of dating was associated with:

- 1) Confidence about being popular with and attractive to the opposite sex.
- 2) A positive and accepting view of oneself and
- 3) More experiences involving stressful physical or family related events.

Thus the importance of dating, a predictor of premarital sexual activity, was correlated with both positive factors and negative experiences. According to Greathead, Davenish and Gilligan (1998), teenage mothers are a norm in many societies and countries now. Teenage pregnancy began to become as a problem to the society of United States of America around the 1970's. Although the number of overall births was declining, teenage pregnancy rates reached sky high as the new generation engaged more in sexual activity at younger ages and greater acceptance of premarital childbearing (Greathead, Devenish & Gilligan, 1998).

## **2.18 Proximal Social Influences**

Factors impacting on adolescent sexual behavior include personality make up, sex, cultural and religious background, racial factors, family attitudes, and sexual education and prevention programs (Sadock & Sadock 2007). Personality factors have been linked to sexual behavior, as well as sexual risk- taking. Individuals with higher levels of impulsivity are associated with younger age at first experience of sexual intercourse; higher number of sexual partners; sexual intercourse without the use of contraception, including condoms; and a history of sexually transmitted disease. Historically male adolescents have been found to have initiated sexual intercourse at a relatively younger age compared to female adolescents. The younger the teenage girl is when she first has sex, the more likely she is to have unwanted or nonvoluntary sex. Close to four of teenage girls who had first intercourse at 13 or 14 years of age report it was either not voluntary or unwanted (Sadock and Sadock ,2007).

### *2.18.1 Parents*

Education in sex hygiene is needed to establish better standards. The present unfortunate position, where so many gain their first misinformation about sex from some precious youngster and the furtiveness and indecency which surround the whole matter, should be forestalled. Parents may do much by answering truthfully and justifiable curiosity of the young child.

The psychological literature assures us of the profound influence that parents have on their children. When we turn to the domain of sexuality, we are dealing with an area of human functioning that has long been surrounded by guilt, mystery and controversy. For some parents

nakedness in the home is shameful, for others an acceptable natural event. According to Moore and Rosenthal (1993) parents can influence adolescent's sexual behavior in four unique ways. Firstly, caregiver's attitudes concerning adolescents' sexual related behaviors may influence the attitudes that adolescents have towards sexual issues. Learning theories explain the second one: the marital and child-bearing behavior of a parent, including experiences with divorce, remarriage, living arrangements and apparent behaviors toward the opposite sex may provide and support role models for young people. Third, the religious environment of the home may affect adolescent attitudes to sex and likely experiences of sexual guilt. According to Santrock, (2005) many parents want to live through their children's achievements, sort of to make up for the areas they lacked on, whereas, generally one cannot expect a child to act morally and appropriate to situations when the parent cannot model such. Finally the educational and work experience of the parents may influence attitudes and present opportunities for sexual experience while the parents are away from home should their respective work require (Moore & Rosenthal, 1993).

Parents usually find it difficult to communicate with their children about sex related issues, some from fear of how to answer the questions that their children may ask. Some feel they don't have the necessary information, are embarrassed by the topic, and often have misperceptions about their adolescent's behavior.

### *2.18.2 Peers*

According to Moore and Rosenthal (1993) while peer influence has minor impact, compared to that of parents, on young children, there is a marked shift at the adolescence stage, with friends becoming more significant in forming teenagers' beliefs and regulating their behaviors. Peer

influence and pressure is often acknowledged as one of the major influential factors contributing to adolescents' sexual decisions although there is little that has been documented on the extent of the influence and how it is exerted (Grice, 1967).

### **2.19 Aids and Adolescent sexual behavior**

Sub Saharan Africa is severely affected by the HIV and AIDS disease. Newer studies that of all people living with HIV, six out of every ten men, five out of every ten women, and nine out of every ten children live in sub Saharan Africa, these figures provide sufficient evidence to make HIV and AIDS both a sub-Saharan Africa and south African priority, (Shisana, Rehle, Simbayi, Parker, Zuma, Bhana, Colony, Jooste & Pillay, 2005). According to Moore & Rosenthal (1993), AIDS was initially regarded in the western world as a disease restricted to male homosexuals, it is now clear that the heterosexual community, and especially young people, are vulnerable to HIV infection and AIDS. Although the number of adolescents among diagnosed AIDS cases is low, more than 20% of AIDS sufferers are in their 20's (Gardner, Mulstein & Wilcox, 1990).

Given the long lead time from infection to diagnosis, the inescapable conclusion is that many were infected in their teens (Craig & Kitcher-Strydom, 1983). The fact is that high levels of sexual activity do not, in it, give cause for alarm. Coupled with this, however, is the finding that many sexually active adolescents have multiple partners and that unprotected intercourse or inconsistence use of condoms is common, especially with partners who are regarded as "steady" or long term (Moore & Rosenthal, 1993).

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Population**

According to Struwing and Stead (2004) sampling is part of our everyday lives. Scientific sampling aims to avoid the pitfalls of biased and unsystematic sampling. The key concept in sampling is representativeness. Unless the sample which we generalise “truthfully” or “faithfully” represents the population from which it was drawn, we have no reason to believe that the population has the same properties as those of the sample. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005), the selection of a sample is a very important stage. A population thus becomes a group of potential participants to whom as a researcher you want to generalise the results of the study. This aspect of generalisability is extremely important in that it is only when the results can be generalised from a sample to a population that the results of the research have meaning beyond the limited setting in which they were originally obtained.

The sample for the research study was drawn from registered learners at Ongoye High School from Grade 10 to Grade 12 in 2009. The sample consisted of forty (40) learners in total, ten (10) learners were randomly selected in grade 10, sixteen (16) learners were randomly selected also in grade 11 and fourteen (14) learners were selected in grade 12. The sample consisted of 24 male participants and 16 females participants. The participants were between the ages of 15 and 20 and in high school.

### **3.2 Sampling**

All participants in the study were registered students at Ongoye High School which was the high school chosen on grounds of access and convenience for the study. The number of participants chosen per class was chosen through random sampling. The participant's number dependant on how many learners were available in each class based on the list provided. Random sampling was used to select the participants for the study. According to Struwing and Stead (2004) although random sampling is regarded as the most accurate method of sampling, it is subject to error, that is the sample chosen will not always be the precise replica of the universe. The above mentioned signifies that all participants had an equal chance of being chosen and to be included in the sample.

### **3.3 Instrument for data collection**

The questionnaire was formulated using the likert scale, and participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire which comprised of closed and open ended questions.

### **3.4 Construction of the questionnaire**

If one decides to collect data by asking questions, a standardised form or questionnaire to record all the responses is needed. Questions are generally designed by interviewing people to determine the content area or by consulting literature. Welman et al, (2005) argues that getting more information on literature if the decided study has points of comparison with other studies helps the researcher to formulate questions based on ideas if the data may need to be collected in a similar fashion. Once the items are written it is important to conduct a pilot study and to select a small sample of respondents to complete the draft questionnaire (Welman et al, 2005).The

sample should indicate any problems respondents may have with the instructions or the questions (for example difficulty in understanding the meaning of the words or items) (Struwing & Stead, 2004). The questionnaire was designed and constructed following important themes of the study that could elicit information sought. Some parts of the questionnaire were extrapolated from previous research that had looked in this area. Final information was drawn from information found in the pilot study and recommendations made by the group that was piloted. The themes were basically on morality, moral dilemmas and sex related decision making. Before the questionnaire was distributed it was first piloted by the researcher to a group of ten first year university students. The reason for such a choice was based on that first year students were still fresh from high school and would probably give more or less similar responses as those given by the research population.

According to Struwing and Stead (2004) the questionnaire design is still considered more of an art than science and certain guidelines have been proposed. The guidelines are as follows;

- It is important to keep in mind that the response to a questionnaire is voluntary; therefore a questionnaire should be designed to maintain an interest of the respondent.
- The questionnaire should contain precise and clear instructions on how to answer the questions
- The questions should follow each other systematically, meaning that the questions that are easy to answer should be at the beginning of the questionnaire.

- For the researcher to get the relevant information from the respondents one should minimise the number of questions to avoid respondent fatigue and the vocabulary of the respondents should be employed.

### **3.5 Procedure**

The research proposal was presented to the University of Zululand Department of Psychology lecturers and permission to conduct the study was sought from the ethics committee of the University of Zululand. Permission was also sought in a written letter from the school principal of Ongoye high school.

The researcher self distributed questionnaires for the pilot study to ten (10) first year students from different faculties at the University of Zululand and the students (pilot sample) reported that the questions were comprehensible and clear. The rationale for using first year university students was based on that their way of thinking could somehow be in line with that of senior phase high school students. The researcher went on to distribute the questionnaires to the High School learners. The point of entry was through the school principal who gave permission to conduct the research. Although the learners appeared not to understand the questions at the beginning they eventually later were able to follow instructions. There were no difficulties faced during this phase of the research process.

### 3.6 Analysis

The choice of which statistical package to use in analysing the data which is eventually obtained should be made even before the data is collected. The results thus obtained provide feedback on the tenability or untenability of the originally formulated research hypothesis and, consequently, on the theory if deduced from one: either or is supported or refuted (Welman et al, 2005). Data collection produces new information or data about the world that requires further processing. Data processing involves at least two kinds of operations, namely data reduction, during which the quantitative and qualitative data are summarised, and data analysed (Struwing & Stead, 2004).

The researcher used qualitative and quantitative technique to analyze the data. The data was coded, summarized, and categorized according to particular themes. According to Welman et al (2005), theme identification is one of the fundamental tasks in qualitative research. Themes can be described as “umbrella” constructs which are usually identified by the researcher before, after and during the data collection. Themes can also be identified by reviewing the original field notes. According to Ryan and Bernard as cited by Welman et al (2005) the following techniques are usually used in identifying themes:

- Word analyses (word repetitions, keywords in context, and indigenous terms)
- Reading of larger units (for example comparing and contrasting material and searching of missing information)
- Intentional analysis of linguistic features (metaphors, transitions, and connectors)
- The physical manipulation of text (unmarked texts, pawing, and cut and sort procedures)

- Secondary data analysis

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

Ethical behavior is important in research as in any other field of human activity (Welman et al 2005). Conducting research is an ethical enterprise. The Chambers concise dictionary refers to ethics as a 'system of morals and rules of behavior'. Research ethics provide researchers with a code of moral guidelines on how to conduct research in a morally acceptable way. Such guidelines seek to prevent researchers from engaging in scientific misconduct, such as: distorting and inventing data, plagiarizing the work of others, republishing their data as an original contribution without proper acknowledgement. This may lead to failure to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of research participants and clients, forcing people against their will to be involved in research, not executing a study properly and deceiving people (Struwing & Stead, 2004). Ethical considerations also come to play at three stages of a research project, namely:

- When participants are selected
- During the intervention and/or the measurement procedure to which they are subjected
- In the release of the results obtained

In this research all the ethical guidelines were adhered to and the dignity and respect of the participants were taken into consideration in that the information provided was not used for any other purpose either than for research purposes. Participants were given the freedom to withdraw at any stage during the research in the event of them feeling uncomfortable. Informed consent

was given by the participants to freely participate in the research. Participants were also informed that confidentiality would be respected as they remained anonymous.

## Chapter Four

### Presentation of the Findings

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research. The results are interpreted both qualitatively and quantitatively

#### Biographical Inventory

**Table 4.2.1 Ages of the participants**

Ages	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
15-20	35	60%
Above 20	5	40%

The participants were all in their adolescent stage. According to Brown and Propper (1986), adolescence is the developmental stage between childhood and adulthood. As a result of individual differences the age at which adolescence begins varies between the ages of 11 to 13 and the age at which its ends are between the ages of 17 and 21. The most dramatic of all developmental events in adolescence is the increase in the sexual desire, highlighted by the new and mysterious feelings and thoughts associated with it. The successful integration of sexuality is a major task for young people. This in turn is accompanied by much anxiety and conflict (Greathead et al, 1998).

#### 4.2.3 Educational Level/ Grade of the participants

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
10	11	28%
11	15	37,5%
12	14	34,5%

#### 4.2.4 Race of the participants

<b>Race</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Africans	40	100%

### 4.3.1

#### Parents do not provide guidance to adolescents.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	16	40.0	40.0	40.0
No	24	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.1.** Indicates the participant's responses on whether parents provide guidance to adolescents or not. Forty percent (40%) of the participants agreed that parents do not provide guidance to adolescents whilst Sixty percent (60%) of the participants indicated that parents do provide adolescents with information.

### 4.3.2

#### Friends provide guidance to adolescents.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	20	50.0	50.0	50.0
No	20	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.2.** Indicates participant's responses regarding friends providing them with guidance.

Fifty percent (50%) of the participants agreed that friends do provide them with guidance whilst

Fifty percent (50%) of participants disagreed with the statement.

### 4.3.3

#### Engaging in premarital sexual intercourse is not against good morals

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	23	57.5	57.5	57.5
	No	17	42.5	42.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.3** Indicates participant's views on whether engaging in premarital sex is against good morals. Fifty Eight percent (58%) of the participants felt that engaging in premarital sex is against good morals whilst Forty Three (43%) of the participants felt that engaging in premarital sex is not against good morals.

#### 4.3.4

### Parents do approve of premarital sexual relations among adolescents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	20	50.0	50.0	50.0
No	20	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.4.** Indicates if participants feel that parents approve of premarital sexual relations among adolescents. Fifty percent (50%) of the participants indicated that parents do approve of premarital sexual relations among adolescents whilst Fifty percent (50%) of them disagreed.

### 4.3.5

#### Premarital sexual intercourse exposes people to STI'S and HIV/AIDS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	32	80.0	80.0	80.0
No	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.5.** Indicates the participant's perception on whether premarital sexual intercourse exposes people to STI's. Eighty percent (80%) of the participants agreed that engaging in premarital sexual intercourse does expose people to sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS whilst Twenty percent (20%) of them disagreed.

### 4.3.6

#### Friends provide adolescents with better information than their parents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	18	45.0	45.0	45.0
No	22	55.0	55.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.6.** Indicates participant's views on who provides them with better information between their parents and friends. Forty Five percent (45%) of the participants agreed that friends provide them with better information than their parents whilst Fifty Five percent (55%) of them disagreed.

### 4.3.7

#### Premarital sexual relations do not lead to pregnancy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	10	25.0	25.0	25.0
	No	30	75.0	75.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.7.** Indicates participant's views on whether premarital sexual relations do not lead to pregnancy. Twenty Five percent (25%) of the respondents agreed that premarital sexual relations do not lead to pregnancy whilst Seventy Five percent (75%) of the participants disagreed.

### 4.3.8

#### Premarital sexual relations do not lead to additional emotional problems in marriages

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
No	28	70.0	70.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.8.** Indicates participant's views on whether premarital sexual relations do not lead to additional problems in marriages. Thirty percent (30%) of the participants agreed that premarital sexual relations do not lead to additional problems in marriage whilst Seventy percent (70%) of the disagreed with the statement.

### 4.3.9

#### Adolescents should be allowed to indulge in sexual relations before marriage

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	16	40.0	40.0	40.0
No	24	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.9.** Indicates participant's views on the idea that they should be allowed to engage in sexual relations before marriage. Forty percent (40%) of the participants agreed that adolescents should be allowed to indulge in sexual relations before marriage whilst Sixty percent (60%) of them disagreed with the statement.

#### 4.3.10

##### Alcohol abuse in adolescents lead to premarital sexual intercourse

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	39	97.5	97.5	97.5
No	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.10.** Indicates participant's views on the statement that alcohol abuse in adolescents leads to premarital asexual intercourse. Ninety eight percent (98%) of the participants agreed that alcohol abuse in adolescents leads to premarital sexual intercourse whilst Three percent (3%) of them disagreed with the statement.

### 4.3.11

#### **Discipline is more important than people's feelings.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	35	87.5	87.5	87.5
No	5	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.11.** Indicates participants view on the importance of discipline in comparison with people's feelings. Eighty six percent (86%) of the participants agreed that discipline is important than other people's feelings whilst Thirteen percent (13%) of them participants disagreed with the statement.

#### 4.3.12

**Low levels of moral reasoning are responsible for adolescents' maladaptive behaviors**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	34	85.0	85.0	85.0
	No	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.12.** Indicates the participant's perception on whether low levels of moral reasoning are responsible for adolescents' maladaptive behaviors. Eighty Five percent (85%) of the participants agreed that low levels of moral reasoning are responsible for adolescent's maladaptive behaviors whilst Fifteen percent (15%) of the participants disagreed with the statement

#### 4.3.13

##### **A moral value makes one feel guilty after doing something wrong**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	32	80.0	80.0	80.0
	No	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.13.** Indicates the participants view on whether a moral value makes one feel guilty after doing something wrong. Eighty percent (80%) of the participants indicated that a moral value does make one feel guilty after engaging in something wrong whilst Twenty percent (20%) of the participants disagreed with the above statement.

#### 4.3.14

##### Sex before marriage no longer has meaning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	31	77.5	77.5	77.5
	No	9	22.5	22.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.14.** Indicated participant's beliefs on sex before marriage having meaning to them as individuals. Seventy Seven percent (77%) of the participants indicated that sex before marriage no longer has meaning whilst Twenty Three percent (23%) of the participants disagreed with the statement.

### 4.3.15

**Adolescents are faced with many challenges in relation to sexual relations**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	36	90.0	90.0	90.0
	No	4	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 4.3.15.** Indicates responses pertaining the idea that adolescents are faced with many challenges when it comes to sex related issues. Ninety percent (90%) of the participants agreed that adolescents are indeed faced with many challenges when it comes to sex related issues whilst Ten percent (10%) of the participants disagreed.

## 16. Adolescents and engaging in premarital sex.

Participants' responses in relation to engaging in premarital sex were seen as a reflection of what seemed to be the downfalls and dangers of engaging in premarital sex. Themes that emerged included, peer pressure, poverty, alcohol and drug abuse and experience.

- Peer pressure

Participants indicated that peer pressure is one of the most contributory factors of adolescents engaging in premarital sex. Some felt that if friends did not encourage them to try what they themselves had tried they wouldn't have engaged in premarital sex.

*“One biggest issue that contributes to premarital sex is peer pressure from our friends. Also not to have enough knowledge because if we did we would be brave and comfortable to tell our friends that we don't want to engage”*

From the above pronouncement it is clear that some adolescents feel that if they had sufficient knowledge about sex related issues they would be able to make informed sexual decisions. This indicates that some adolescents don't feel confident or assertive enough to tell their friends that they cannot engage in premarital sex.

*“We are usually influenced by our friends and other boys would promise us everything we want and as a result we engage in premarital sex”*

For the above participant engaging in premarital sex is perpetuated by the idea that some boys would promise them certain things and they would engage as a result of being promised things that one never had.

*“Sometimes friends will tell you that they have done it and encourage you to try it and they would tell it’s a nice experience, since we cannot talk openly about sex with our parents then you trust what your friends tell you”*

The above participant suggests that being able to confide in someone you trust and to actually share your adolescent experiences plays a crucial role in making decisions. To some extent this indicates that some adolescents feel they cannot talk to their parents about sex and thus they end up trying what their friends propose as right.

- Poverty

The participants indicated that poor socio economic status contributes to premarital sexual intercourse. Being raised in a poor environment forces the individual to seek out means of alleviating poverty. There are adaptive ways and maladaptive ones of doing so, and that entirely depends on the individual.

One participant responded that *“it is because of their backgrounds, maybe where they live. Sometimes you find that there is no leader at home or a breadwinner and as a result they try to save themselves from poverty. Some of them even become prostitutes so they could bring money and feed their siblings”*

Another one responded by saying that *“sometimes people don’t have money to buy food and then decide to involve themselves in “this””*.

Poverty has always been one crucial factor especially in countries like South Africa and as a result people resort to such means of getting what they need. From the statement below one can notice that for this participant engaging in premarital sex is somehow not immoral because it becomes the only way for her to get the necessities she needs.

*“Most of them are poor because they have lost their parents maybe due to HIV and AIDS and as a result are poor and they are supported by their boyfriends and the only way to get this support is through having sex with that person”*

*“Most girls have sex because they need money because they are poor and they usually do this with sugar daddies”*

- Alcohol and drug abuse

There is a high rate of young people experimenting with substances in society today. There are different reasons for such behaviour to take place and this often leads to addiction or school drop outs.

One participant responded by saying that *“sometimes adolescents would be intoxicated and find out that they engaged in premarital sex and they don’t feel guilty because they don’t know it happened”*

For this participant “what you don’t know won’t kill you” Evidently she feels that being intoxicated doesn’t make one guilty because one probably doesn’t remember what had happened, and she chose to ignore the consequences and the dangers involved.

*“sometimes people will attend parties and have alcohol or drugs in those parties and then engage in premarital sex when they didn’t plan to do so, but because mostly they cannot remember and the drug has taken control of their thoughts”*

- Experience

The participant’s perception of engaging in premarital sex was also influenced by experience. The participants indicated that adolescents engage in premarital sex because they want to gain experience in sex.

One participant responded by saying that *“ it is because many people especially the youth want to experience premarital sex so that if they get married they will have no problems when it comes to sex*

From the above statement or pronouncement it is clear that this participant is concerned about when he later gets married. As a result he feels it is better to engage in premarital sex to accumulate the experience so that when he gets married he knows to some extent what is expected of him.

Another participant responded by claiming that *“some adolescents engage in premarital sex because they want to know how it feels to have sex”*

## 17. Guilt and premarital sex

The participant's perceptions on premarital sex and the factors indicated to influence the behavior were judged to be more of external influences than internal.

One participant responded by saying that *“adolescents do not feel guilty after engaging in premarital sex because most of them need grants to survive and buy essentials like food and a lot of families survive on this money”*

From the above statement this participant indicated outside or external influences as contributing factors for premarital sex “grants”, issues that are more internal like guilt, values and beliefs were not considered as coming to play or informing the decision. Unlike the following claim where the participant feels that if someone had done something wrong one way of showing that they understand it was a mistake is through refraining from that behavior.

*“I don't think they feel guilty because if they did they are supposed to learn and not do it again, but they do it more than before”*

For the respondent of the statement below, since there is some form of reward guilt feelings are not in the picture, and there is also an emphasis on doing what is legally acceptable. This could mean that for this participant if something is still on the right side of the law then it can be done.

*“We don't feel guilty after engaging in pre marital sex because it is nice. It is legal to have sex and we don't feel guilty because we also use condoms”.*

*“They do feel guilty because some of them it was not in their plans to engage in the first place”*

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion of the Findings**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the interpretation of the results in relation to the literature that was reviewed. It focuses more on adolescents, moral reasoning and premarital sex.

#### **5.2 Adolescents, Moral Reasoning and Premarital Sex**

The results of the study indicate that there is no relationship between sex guilt and moral reasoning in adolescents in high schools. The crucial moral factors that one would think are supposed to play a huge determination when making such decisions were not considered much. In some cultures issues of morals, values and beliefs are fostered at an early age and as individuals reach adolescence they are guided by these, but what is happening today forces one to acknowledge that problems that are experienced by adolescents today are different to what other adolescents who grew up years ago experienced. The findings support Mkhabela's (1985) idea that the problems that are experienced by adolescents today are different from those that were experienced by their parents. The findings indicate that adolescents feel that they are faced with quite a number of challenges. Adolescents indicated that they do not get the guidance and support they need from their parents especially when it comes to sex related issues. This is in line with Moore and Rosenthal's, (1993) idea that parents can influence adolescents' sexual behavior through four different avenues. Firstly, parental attitudes regarding adolescents' sexual behaviors may influence adolescent attitudes. Second, the marital and child-bearing behavior of a parent, including experiences with divorce, remarriage, living arrangements and apparent behaviors

toward the opposite sex may provide and support role models for young people. Third, the religious environment of the home may affect adolescent attitudes to sex and likely experiences of sexual guilt. Santrock's, (2005) is of the idea that many parents want to live through their children's achievements, sort of to make up for the areas they lacked on, whereas, generally one cannot expect a child to act morally and appropriate to situations when the parent cannot model such. This supports the findings of this study that adolescents indicated that parents approve of premarital sex which could be verbally communicated or adolescents draw this from the behaviors exhibited by their own parents. It was indicated that adolescents resort to talking to friends and feel they get the support they need from friends more in comparison to parents. This could be worse for male adolescents if one follows Chodorow's, (1974) notion as cited by Gilligan, (1982) that boys are nurtured in such a way that such relations (being open and confiding to parents) are discouraged because historically they have been seen as having the role of defending those close to them. Some parents are still not comfortable talking to their children about sex related decisions/issues. As a result Moore and Rosenthal, (1993) cautions that when we turn to the domain of sexuality, we are dealing with an area of human functioning that has long been surrounded by guilt, mystery and controversy.

The findings of this study show that peer pressure is one of the contributory factors that cause adolescents to engage in premarital sex. These findings support Grice's, (1967) notion that at this stage peers become more important in forming teenagers' beliefs and regulating their behaviors. Peer influence and pressure is often cited as one of the most influential factors affecting adolescent sexual decisions and this notion is in line with the research findings which indicate that a lot of adolescents have or engage in premarital sex because their friends have encouraged them to try what they themselves have tried.

According to the findings of this study adolescents indicated that they feel if they had had sufficient knowledge about sexual related issues they would have been in a better position to make informed decisions on such. From the results it was also clear that adolescents could benefit from programs that could be implemented in schools. Even when there are no specific programs in some schools to equip adolescents with such information Santrock, (2005) confirms that even when schools do not have these specific programs in moral education, they somehow provide moral education through the “hidden curriculum” which is conveyed by the moral atmosphere that is a part of each and every school.

A study done by Nucci, (1989), demonstrated that teachers can impact on the ways in which students read social issues, and the tendencies of students to attempt to address both the moral and conventional aspects of complex social issues.

For most adolescents engaging in premarital sex is a way of accumulating experience and it is a stage where they feel the need to explore. Some adolescents indicated that premarital sex for them sort of paves their way to marriage since they would know what is expected of them then by their partners.

According to the findings of the study, adolescents base their reasons of engaging in premarital sex on external factors and as means of survival. From the findings most of them engage in premarital sex because of poverty and trying to survive, although a significant number of them are aware of the risks involved. It may then be that other adolescents engage in premarital sex so

they could alleviate poverty. On the other hand some adolescents feel that if they are doing something that is not illegal then whatever they are doing is acceptable. According to learning theorists notion of rewards and punishment, that if a behavior is rewarded it is likely to occur in the future this statement concurs with the findings of this study as adolescents indicated that they don't feel guilty after engaging in premarital sex because they get grants.

The findings of the study are also consistent with Hook's, (2004) argument, that adolescents attach different values, meanings and beliefs sometimes in the same issue, since some of them agreed that low levels of moral reasoning are responsible for adolescents engaging in maladaptive behaviors, while some of them didn't and this also concurs with Blasi's, (1993) argument, that moral stages represent ways of thinking about moral issues, not specific behavioral tendencies and that two people at the same moral stage may reach different decisions about an action, and that people at different stages can choose the same action, but for different reasons.

Based on the findings of this study it is evident that for adolescents sex before marriage no longer has meaning and is not immoral. This could be one of the reasons for high numbers of teenage pregnancies and school dropouts since it is indicated that adolescents feel that premarital sex is not immoral, Greathead, Davenish and Gilligan, (1998), concur that teenage childbearing is a normative in many societies and conditions.

According to the results of this study it was quite clear that some adolescents usually are under the influence of alcohol and as a result do not feel guilty after engaging in premarital sex because they would not remember what had happened while they were intoxicated. This concurs with

Moore and Davidson's, (2006) idea that adolescents indulge in alcohol and consequently engage in unsafe sexual practices that enhance the risks of sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies and alcohol related rapes

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion, Recommendations and Limitations of the Study**

#### **6.1 Conclusion**

The researcher concludes that there is no relationship between sex guilt and moral reasoning as participants do not consider their values and morals as being influential when they have to engage in sexual intercourse. Therefore, the research findings of this study have been influenced largely by the external factors that participants gave such as money, peer pressure and poverty. These factors did not appear to be morally related as these are factors that are not governed by societal, cultural or religious norms, whereas one would consider that these norms should one way or the other influence one's decision-making.

Drawing inferences from the results makes it clear that adolescents consider external factors rather than what the individual values as wrong or right. To some extent this does not concur with one of Kohlberg's boldest claims (1981) that the moral stages that he developed to understand moral reasoning in the United States could also be used to understand moral reasoning across cultures. We cannot conclude and say people from different cultures reason exactly the same way about moral issues.

## **5.2 Limitations**

- The sample size was relatively small. So results cannot be generalized on a larger sample size.
- One High School was targeted for the research study. So the results cannot be generalised for all high school.
- The study did not take into account backgrounds and beliefs of learners which could play a big role on how they responded to certain questions.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

The following is recommended:

- Learners need to be taught about their values and morals in schools so that this can play a role when they make decisions.
- Organizations where adolescents can always have someone to talk to when in need of such should be in place in communities and each individual should have access to them.
- Learners should involve themselves in activities like helping elders or mentoring a young person so that they can assume a sense of responsibility and know the importance and impact they can make in other people's lives.
- Parents need to support their children as most adolescents felt they cannot communicate sex related issues with their parents and they feel they don't get the support they need from them.

- Students should be given opportunities to assume roles that entail moral responsibility.

Much of school life requires little more of students than passive obedience. Opportunities for students to build a sense of themselves as moral beings, by actively participating in meeting the needs of their own school and local community if coupled with opportunities for meaningful reflection can provide content for students to construct a moral sense of self.

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Appendix A

**CONSENT FORM**

I am Simangele N Mathenjwa a Master’s student in Clinical Psychology. You are being asked to participate in my research that evaluates the relationship between sex guilt and moral reasoning to premarital sex in adolescents in high schools. This research is a requirement for my masters programme. If you agree to participate in this study, please take note of the following before giving your consent (by signing this form):

- I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any stage should I feel uncomfortable.
- I understand that this study will contribute to scientific knowledge that will be used to help others.
- I understand that all information collected will be confidential.

I have read the above and give my consent to participate in this study and also agree that I will fill in the questionnaire and hand it over to the researcher.

.....

Signature of the participant

.....

Date

.....

Place

## **APPENDIX B**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **The relationship between Sex Guilt and Moral Reasoning to Premarital Sex in Adolescents in High Schools**

##### **Instructions to participants**

1. Please read through each statement carefully before giving your opinion.
2. Please make sure you do not omit a question or skip a page. ones
3. Please be honest when giving your opinion.
4. Please return the questionnaire after completion.

**Kindly answer all the questions by supplying the requested information. In writing or by marking with this sign [(x)] in the appropriate alphabet in that question.**

**Thank you-for your cooperation**

**This research intends to seek for your views on The Relationship between Moral Reasoning  
and Sex Guilt to premarital sex in adolescents in High Schools.**

**Biographical Data**

Age.....

Grade .....

Gender.....

Home language.....

Please indicate your opinion on each of the following statements by marking with a cross on “Yes” if you agree, or by putting a cross to “No” to if you disagree.

<b>Parents do not provide guidance to adolescents.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Friends provide guidance to adolescents.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Engaging in premarital sexual intercourse is not against good morals.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Parents do approve of premarital sexual relations among adolescents.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>

<b>Premarital sexual intercourse exposes people to STI'S and HIV/AIDS</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Friends provide adolescents with better information than their parents.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Premarital sexual relations do not lead to pregnancies.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Premarital sexual relations do not lead to additional emotional problems in marriages.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Adolescents should be allowed to indulge in sexual relations before marriage.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Alcohol abuse in adolescents lead to premarital sexual intercourse</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Discipline is more important than people's feelings.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Low levels of moral reasoning are responsible for adolescent's maladaptive behaviours.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>A moral value makes one feel guilty after doing something wrong.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Sex before marriage no longer has meaning.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Adolescents are faced with many challenges in relation to sexual relations.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>

**Why do you think adolescents engage in premarital sex?**

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.....  
.....

**Do you think adolescents feel guilty after engaging in premarital sex, and if so what makes them feel guilty?**

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.....  
.....  
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**Thank you!**

