Addressing Sexual Violence in Schools:
Perspectives from Teachers and Students in a Secondary School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Research Master Educational Sciences Thesis 2
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Abstract

It has been increasingly recognized that sexual violence in schools is one of the major concerns with regard to promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This research explores the views of teachers and students on sexual violence: how do they define, experience, and interpret sexual violence in a secondary school in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and from their perspectives, how can sexual violence be addressed effectively in formal educational settings? Twenty-nine in-depth interviews and four focus group discussions revealed how these views differ between boys, girls, and teachers: boys typically sharing a more theoretical and instrumental view on sexual violence, as opposed to girls’ practical, emotional, and intrinsic views based on their experiences. Teachers express their concern about young people finding themselves pulled between conflicting messages of 'traditional life' and 'modern' temptations, often creating confusion, and a clash of values. At the same time, they express feelings of incapability in how to solve such problems. The contrasts in views suggest that there are misunderstandings between and among teachers and students, complicating relevant and comprehensive interaction in sex education. Moreover, it leaves room for manifestations of sexual violence to remain tolerated in schools.

Keywords: sexual violence, gender, sexual and reproductive health and rights, comprehensive sex education, teachers, students, Ethiopia, Sub-Saharan Africa.
1. Introduction

1.1 Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Education

It has been increasingly recognized that sexual violence in schools is one of the major problems with regard to promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights. Sexual violence in schools is a worldwide phenomenon, yet with the HIV/AIDS pandemic it has gained increased attention in Sub-Saharan African context. This is because sexual violence plays a crucial role in the spread of HIV/AIDS, increasing the likelihood of infections and spread of the virus through unsafe contact with multiple partners. For women in particular, the chance of infections are higher because they commonly have less agency in deciding about for instance condom use in sexual intercourse, particularly true in the case of sexual violence (Mane & Aggleton, 2001; Wood, Mafarah & Jewkes, 1998; WHO, 2002). Moreover, sexual violence can lead to devastating physical and psychological consequences such as unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), fear, low self-esteem and depression, often resulting in early drop out from schooling (Bott, 2010; Gelaye et al, 2009; Gossaye et al, 2003). Nevertheless, in many schools situated in Sub-Saharan African contexts, it seems to be highly normalised and tolerated (Dunne, Humphreys & Leach, 2006; Leach, 2003; Leach & Humphreys, 2007; Mirembe & Davies, 2001).

This research aims to gain more insight into sexual violence through a case study conducted at a secondary school in Ethiopia. Although it is not only girls who are subjected to sexual violence, they are often the major target group (Leach & Humphreys, 2007; Mirembe & Davies, 2001; WHO, 2002). In order to improve our understanding about the context and manifestations of sexual violence, it is crucial to investigate views of those who experience, witness, and/or perpetuate sexual violence in and around secondary school, namely girls, boys and teachers. It deepens our understanding about sexual violence and socialization in peer groups (Leach, 2003; Mirembe & Davies, 2001), gendered dimensions in negotiations of romantic and sexual relationships (Luke & Kurz, 2002; Nyanzi, Pool, & Kinsman, 2001), the role of teachers in perpetuating sexual violence in school (Leach, 2003; Omaar & de Waal, 1994), as well as the challenge they face in relating to their students’ lives, experiences and perceptions while promoting sexual health in the classroom (Iyer & Aggleton, 2013). This will lead to further insights in the gendered power and authority relations in school, and deepened our understanding of why sexual violence is such a pervasive and continuously tolerated phenomenon in secondary school.
In addition, the insights based on this study seek to inform policy and practice that aims reduce the prevalence of this highly sensitive and controversial phenomenon. Until now, it has proven challenging to achieve the intended results in sex education programs, let alone successfully addressing sexual violence in formal education (Iyer & Aggleton, 2013; WHO, 2002). Because sexual violence against girls has wide-ranging negative consequences, it is essential to increase our understanding on how to prevent and address this issue. Knowledge about the perspectives of teachers and students are critical in developing educational programmes and other intervention mechanisms.

1.2 Research Question

As described above, sexual violence in schools in Sub-Saharan African countries appears to be normalised and tolerated, and little action is taken in schools to address gender-based discrimination. In fact, sexual violence is often ignored in schools and male dominance seems to be the norm in relationships (Leach, 2003; Mirembe & Davies, 2001). However, it is crucial to address this issue to promote SRHR. Given this, the current research project aims to investigate both the context of sexual violence in schools and how this should be addressed. The main research question addressed in this study is as follows:

How do students and teachers define, experience, and interpret sexual violence against girls in secondary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and from their perspectives, how can sexual violence be addressed effectively in formal educational settings?

The following sub-questions are developed in order to respond to the main research question:

1) How do students and teachers define sexual violence against girls in secondary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia?

2) How do students and teachers experience sexual violence in secondary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia?

3) How do students and teachers interpret sexual violence against girls in secondary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia? In other words, how do students and teachers discuss the root causes and consequences of sexual violence against girls?

4) From the perspectives of teachers and students, how can sexual violence be addressed effectively in formal educational settings?
1.3 Structure of the Thesis

In the chapters that follow, sexual violence will firstly be placed in a frame of reference based on earlier research on gender-based violence in Sub-Saharan Africa. Secondly, an overview of relevant studies related to sexual violence in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia will provide a contextual framework. The method chapter gives information about the procedures and techniques of this interpretative qualitative investigation. In the results chapter, the division of the four separate research questions mentioned above will be followed to represent, contrast, and interpret the views of students and teachers on sexual violence. Finally, the conclusion chapter reflects on how sexual violence is resistant to change, which is why a solid, comprehensive, and active approach is needed to address the phenomenon.
2. Theoretical Background

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), sexual violence is defined as:

“any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work” (WHO, 2002, p. 149).

Previous research on sexual violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, often discusses sexual violence within the context of gender violence (e.g. Leach & Humphreys, 2007). From this perspective, gender violence includes sexual violence, but also relates to physical, verbal, psychological and emotional violence, and fear. This can happen between and among boys and girls (Leach & Humphreys, 2007). It is crucial here to note the difference between viewing sexual violence as a sexual act involving coercion, or placing it in the context of gender relations. This is because recognizing its context in terms of power and gender relations is essential in understanding and explaining the phenomenon.

Since definitions vary widely among researchers, professionals, and organizations, it is difficult to estimate the extent of the problem. Moreover, since it is such a sensitive topic, exact numbers of prevalence are hard to determine. However, for Ethiopia, it is estimated that 59% of all women have experienced sexual violence in their life time (WHO, 2005). To address this, it is crucial to understand the context of sexual violence, and the views of young people in school that experience it in their environment. This research therefore focuses on the perceptions of students and teachers in high school, and professionals working in the field, in order to gain more insight in this.

2.1 Causes of Sexual Violence

It has been argued by many scholars that the root cause of gender-based violence, and with that sexual violence, can be found in the male dominance of societies. Gender-based violence refers to violence against a person based on his/her gender. It manifests in all sites of society: at work, on the street, at school, in the home and so forth, mostly directed from a man unto a woman. In Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, many societies are patriarchal, meaning that male dominance is a highly present characteristic in its culture. Because of this, women commonly have less agency over their lives and in their relationships, and lower status in society (Jewkes, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). Gender unequal norms thus translate into low
education, low social and legal support for women, and lack of economic power (Jewkes, 2002). This makes women vulnerable to sexual violence.

In addition, ideologies in some societies of male sexual entitlement can promote the idea that men’s sexual advances cannot be refused, and participating in sex is an obligation for a woman (WHO, 2010). This means that women are less protected from rape, feel they cannot speak up for themselves, or even consider it to be justified to be “disciplined” by violent manners (Jewkes, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; WHO, 2005). When sanctions for sexual violence are weak, this ideology might be reinforced at the community level (WHO, 2010).

Alongside these values in some societies and communities, the importance of the law system and enforcement should not be overlooked in explaining the prevalence of sexual violence. Globally, approaches to sexual violence legislations vary tremendously. They can differ from countries with strict laws in which convictions and related processes and punishments are clearly defined, to countries with much weaker approaches to cases, where certain forms of sexual violence are excluded from legal definition (e.g. rape to be defined as forced sex outside marriage, which excludes marital rape or intimate partner violence from conviction by law) (Cherinet & Mulugeta, 2002). Moreover, in some countries, the evidence of a woman alone is not considered to be sufficient for convicting the perpetrator, and victims fear reporting because they do not want their case to go “unproven” (Jewkes, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002).

Furthermore, in addition to societal values, ideologies, and law systems, there are individual factors that might pose a higher risk for individuals to become victims of sexual violence, or for people to perpetrate sexual violence. For instance a lower socio-economic status, lower education, earlier experienced sexual abuse, mental disorders and substance abuse can be risk factors for perpetration and/or victimization of sexual violence (WHO, 2010). In addition, having multiple partners and being sensitive to peer and family pressures are risk factors at the relationship level. These influences should be considered when aiming to explain or interpret manifestations of sexual violence in any society.

So, risk factors and causes for sexual violence can be found at the individual, relationship, community and society level (WHO, 2010). Efforts have long been made to change these unequal gender relationships. However, in doing so, a solid approach is required in which historical and social context is taken into account. For Sub-Saharan African societies,
this includes taking into account existing power relations that can be complex in terms of histories of colonialism and imperialism, as well as other constructs such as class, age and race that influence gendered social relations (Adomako Ampofo, Beoku-Betts, Ngaruiya Njambi, & Osirim, 2004). It is from this perspective that this research is conducted.

2.2 Consequences of Sexual Violence

Not only does sexual violence violate one’s rights, but sexual violence can also have devastating consequences physically, emotionally and socially. Physically, girls may have to cope with unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, STDs, and/or HIV/AIDS. For instance, in Ethiopia, 17% of women who were raped, were pregnant because of this (Mulugeta, Kassaya, & Berhane, 1998). In many countries, including Ethiopia, women dealing with such pregnancies as a result of rape are forced to bear the child, or undergo risky unsafe abortions (Jewkes, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). In addition, depending on their age and bodily development, giving birth at too young age can directly affect girls’ reproductive health. Moreover, victims of sexual violence are often more vulnerable to STDs and HIV/AIDS infections because of a lack of agency to negotiate condom use.

Emotionally, sexual violence often leads to feelings of insecurity, shame and low self-esteem, and this puts victims at higher risk to suffer from mental health problems, post-traumatic stress disorder, and depression (Jewkes, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). As a result, victims of sexual violence can consider or attempt suicide. Moreover, girls report to fear men and not feel free. In fact, they experience a constant fear of rape which applies to their boyfriends, teachers, their neighbourhoods and homes (Bhana, 2012).

In addition, sexual violence and their physical and psychological consequences can disrupt the education of students because it can lead to absenteeism, change of schools, diminished school performance because of trauma, or early drop out (Bott, 2010; Human Rights Watch, 2001). As a result, these will have social and economic consequences: victims of sexual violence having less opportunity to be (economically) independent and lack hope and prosperity for future. Since it mostly concerns women who are victims of sexual violence, this perpetuates gender inequalities, translating into generally lower social and economic prosperity.
2.3 Schooling and Sexual Violence

In order to change gendered norms, relations, and ideals that relate to or can translate into sexual violence, schools in particular are considered to be a site of intervention (Stromquist & Fischman, 2009). With the HIV/AIDS epidemic, particularly relevant in Sub-Saharan African context, and the increasing attention for gender equality and sex education, promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) has gained importance on the international agenda. Schools are vital in the promotion of SRHR, as they are educational institutions whose role is to teach young people knowledge, skills and values. Moreover, education stimulates student agency and critical inquiry, by which educational institutions can be seen as a transformative agent (Bajaj, 2009). For instance, by addressing sexual violence in school, awareness is raised about the topic and victims, by which victims feel freer to stand up (Paludi 2007). As such, the school can thus be seen as an institution that can help to transform people’s minds and promotes SRHR.

2.3.1 Schooling for transformation?

However, despite the potential of schools to transform society’s gendered values and ideas, more often it is found that schools reflect the very same gendered unequal ways of thinking and acting. Despite the intentions of the MDGs to have gender equal education in terms of enrolment rates, a more substantive form of gender equality is still in need of improvement (Holmarsdottir, Ekne & Augestad, 2011; Subrahmanian, 2005). For instance, boys and girls have the same rights to go to school, yet within and after their education they often lack the same opportunities. This is in terms of socio-economic opportunities, but it is also due to the socialized gender roles within school that girls more often lack opportunities as compared to boys (Subrahmanian, 2005, Thompson, 2003). Moreover, girls’ participation in school does not necessarily mean that gender relations are transformed (Chisamya, DeJaeghere, Kendall, & Khan, 2012). Instead, educational institutions can contribute to the perpetuation of sexual violence themselves, in both implicit and explicit manners (Dunne, Humphreys & Leach, 2006). For instance, a case study in Uganda has shown how male dominance and power imbalances socialize girls and boys into particular gender roles, girls being ‘victims’ of the ‘dominant’ boys and male teachers (Mirembe & Davies, 2001). The study reveals how boys tend to treat girls as ‘sex objects’, how female teachers can suffer from imposed male dominance in a similar fashion (including that of male students) and how sexual harassment is generally ignored in school. Similarly, Leach (2003) reports a “worrying sexual socialization process” in schools in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Ghana. Boys and girls are socialized according
to gender norms in the school, with the girls expected to be obedient to aggressive
behaviour of boys. Similar accounts have been reported by Wood, Mafarah and Jewkes
(1998) who emphasize how young women have little agency in making choices concerning
sexual intercourse, and with that, protecting themselves from possible STDs and unwanted
pregnancies. So, educational institutions are not only promoters of equality, but can at the
same time be sites of perpetuation and high tolerance of sexual violence, disseminating a
contradictory message (Dunne, Humphreys & Leach, 2006; Leach, 2003; Leach &
Humphreys, 2007; Mirembe & Davies, 2001).

2.3.2 Socialization (or sexualisation) processes in school.

Sexual violence occurs in schools all over the world, and is thus not distinctive for any society
in particular. However, it has been reported that in educational institutions in Sub-Saharan
African societies, these forms of violence seem to be largely normalized and tolerated.
Addressing sexual violence in school can therefore be a complex activity, in which power
relations between teachers and students, and within peer group cultures, play crucial roles.

One fundamental dimension of the school being a gendered institution relates to the
age/authority relation between teachers and students. Leach (2003) points to the authoritarian
school culture, found in many African societies, as one explanation for the toleration of
sexual violence. Most African cultures teach that children cannot question or doubt their
parents or elders, in particular if they are male. In the same vein, children should not question
their teachers, who are seen as authority figures. So, even if the behaviour of teachers is
abusive or intolerable, this cannot be questioned by pupils. Rather, it can be seen as a
punishment for something the student has done wrong (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, & Rose-Junius,
2005). Indeed, accounts of abusive behaviour or sexual violence, directed by teachers to their
students, have been observed in many Sub-Saharan African schools (Omaar & Waal, 1994;
Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002). This can be in the form of forced sex (rape), or manipulation for
sex through students’ marks (e.g. teachers give their students a low mark, and tell them they
can solve this “problem” by sleeping with them). The fact that teachers cannot be questioned
openly, due to their authority, explains why such forms of sexual violence against girls
perpetrated by teachers or in schools are so much tolerated (Leach, 2003).

Secondly, the peer group culture is another influence in the socialization process of
young girls and boys. Leach (2003) describes how pressure to conform to the peer group is
another factor in forming masculinity and femininity. As a boy, one has to conform to the
‘boy standard’. If not, he might fear bullying, intimidation or exclusion from the group. Girls likewise encourage each other to have a boyfriend, sometimes for economic security. Therefore, such peer pressure should be understood as a context in which young identities develop, but also can complicate the already sexually charged nature in schools. In fact, sexual violence between peers is a major worry (Leach, 2003; Mirembe & Davies, 2001), which often leaves girls to fear boys in and around school because they are more powerful (Bhana, 2012).

Not only does sexual violence occur between peers, but also the lines along which negotiations about sexual relationships are formed are interesting in this context. Research on transactional sexual relationships among youth are interesting here. Transactional sexual relationships refer to sexual relationships in which one of the partners expects money, presents, or valuables in exchange. It has been pointed out that also negotiation in these kinds of relationships reflect gendered roles. Girls are, for example, often the ones who negotiate for and expect money or presents from their sexual relationship with a boy. Boys, on the contrary, are considered to be able to make money and therefore girls are thought to depend on them (Maganja, Maman, Groues, & Mkwambo, 2007; Nyanzi, Pool, & Kinsman, 2001). Moreover, boys are the ones who want sex, take the initiative, and are therefore willing to pay for the ‘goods’ girls demand (Wamoyi, Fenwick, Urassa, Zaba, & Stones, 2011). At the same time, when a girl declines the offer during the negotiations, some boys feel it is legitimate to make sure they get their sexual contact with the girl, despite her refusal, because he has already given her some money (Nyanzi, Pool, & Kinsman, 2001). However, it is also shown that girls do have a considerable amount of agency in negotiating about whether and when to initiate sexual interaction, but experience less decision making power within their relationships (Luke & Kurz, 2002).

In explaining the phenomenon of transactional sexual relationships, the notion of modernity can also be seen as an explanatory factor for why girls and boys would engage in transactional sex. For instance, Leclerc-Madlala (2003) argues that women use sexual exchange as a means to pursue modern ideals and needs – created by media and globalisation. Modernity should be understood here, as a ‘new’ lifestyle that is glamorous and materially prosperous. When taking this further, it might also give a framework for understanding why young girls would decide to become a sex worker, because they chase after modernity (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). However, at the same time this can be questioned because it has been established that most female sex workers are forced into their job because of economic
hardships (Van Blerk, 2008). What is clear though, is that the peer group culture in school is another influence in forming sexualities. This can be by sexual violence, but also by other types of (transactional) relationships that show gendered patterns in negotiations.

In sum, the school is in many ways a site where pupils are socialized according to gendered patterns. Sexual (gender-based) violence is an alarming part of this socialization process. Yet at the same time, schools are seen as a site of change, promoting SRHR. The crucial question is thus how to address sexual violence in formal education. This has proven difficult because the curriculum is contradicting the coexisting socialization processes in school.

2.4 Addressing Sexual Violence at Schools

WHO (2002) calls for interventions to prevent sexual violence. These can be targeting both men and women, supporting the victims and increasing the likelihood that perpetrators will be brought to justice, and changing the status of women. This includes changing school policies where necessary, and educating teachers about gender relations in school (Jewkes, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). Certain life skills educational programs in Africa, designed for peer groups of men and women to participate and discuss in several workshops about sexual violence, proved effective in reducing violence against women. Their comprehensive approaches were crucial in this (Jewkes, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002).

Within school, educational programs concerning sexuality have typically been placed in the context of HIV/AIDS. However, what is questionable is to what extent these programs are comprehensive, such as the successful interventions mentioned by WHO (2002). As a framework for understanding, Miedema, Maxwell, and Aggleton (2011) reveal that HIV/AIDS focused sex education can be categorised among three lines: scientifically informed, rights-informed and moralistically informed approaches. The central difference between these approaches is how the education is conceptualized: is it aimed at changing risky behaviours, enabling young people to know and think about their rights, or instilling certain (conservative) moral values? These differences in educational approaches are crucial as they bring to light underlying assumptions of the programs, and its intended outcomes. By categorizing educational programs in such a framework, it can be identified to what extent critical inquiry, a vital aspect of HIV/AIDS and SRHR awareness, can be expected in educational programs.
Reasoning from this perspective, Braeken and Cardinal (2008) argue for a rights-based, comprehensive approach in sexuality education. They point out that too often, sexuality education is based on abstinence-only approaches, and fail to recognize young people as sexual beings. In order to improve this, sexuality education should comprehend health, values, development and rights, and adopt a positive approach towards sexuality (Braeken & Cardinal, 2008). A definition of comprehensive sexuality education should include a strong gender perspective, and should promote knowledge, skills, and value free education (Braeken & Cardinal, 2008). This way, young people are given the possibility for critical inquiry, crucial for thinking about sexuality, and sexual violence (Bajaj, 2009; Paludi, 2007).

Similar to providing education on HIV/AIDS, addressing sexual violence in formal education remains extremely challenging. Even though it can be addressed in sex education programs, it has not proven to be very helpful in acknowledging sexual violence, given the sexually charged environment in a school. Previous research has provided some implications in order to improve this. Firstly, teachers play a crucial factor in this. Leach (2002) argues that teachers should listen more. Secondly, guiding and counselling as well as sex education should create more positive notions of masculinity and femininity. Accordingly, teachers’ attitudes towards sexual activity of their students play a vital role in how SRHR education is communicated and should not be underestimeted in addressing SRHR. For instance, they do not necessarily act neutrally (Iyer & Aggleton, 2013), and despite their high level of knowledge on for instance HIV/AIDS, teachers do not pass this on because of cultural and social restraints. In addition, teachers lack adequate training for sex education (Oshi, Nakalema, & Oshi, 2005). Moreover, including boys and young men is a less common manner of addressing gender equality and gender-based violence, yet they can be considered agents of change (Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Varga, 2001). Additionally, outside teachers and creative awareness raising programs (e.g. workshops) could be more helpful on the short term (Benell et al, 2002).

In sum, it has been revealed that schools can give contradictory messages concerning sexuality and SRHR. Although formally educating their pupils about sexual health and gender equality, in practice schools commonly tolerate and even perpetuate acts of sexual violence. In other words, giving (comprehensive) sex education has proven to be a challenge by itself. Therefore, given this context and recommendations based on scientific research, it is not only interesting but even more so of crucial importance to investigate how students and teachers perceive this, and how they think the topic should be addressed.
3. Contextual Background

Currently, Ethiopia is among the 20 poorest countries of the world (based on GDP statistics from World Bank (2013) and IMF (2013)). According to the World Bank, in 2011 the GDP was $30.25 billion, and population 84.73 million (World Bank, 2013). The rapidly growing population in the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, is estimated to be around four million people (UN-HABITAT, 2008). The proportion of children in the country is very high. In 2010, the population below the age of 18 years old was 42,384,000, being over 50% of the total population (UNICEF, 2010). Unemployment in general and youth unemployment in particular is a very serious problem in the country. This situation has contributed to worsening household level poverty, forcing parents to send their children to other areas to sell their labour power and a girl child to early marriage instead of schooling. Ethiopia is the only Sub-Saharan African country that has never been colonized. The only time of occupation was during that of the Italians in 1936-1941.

The country is extremely diverse in terms of ethnicity and language, with eighty different languages present in the country (GoE, 2013). The HIV prevalence rate is 1.5% (Ethiopia Central Statistical Agency and ICF International, 2011), being higher in urban areas with 4.2% as compared to rural areas with 0.6%. The prevalence rate among women is higher compared to men, with 1.9% and 1.0%, respectively (Ethiopia Central Statistical Agency and ICF International, 2011). With respect to education, 47.3% finish primary education, 16.3% are enrolled in general secondary, and 4.2% in preparatory secondary. Of the students in secondary schools, 44.8% are girls (in 2010/2011). At the tertiary level, gender differences are higher with more boys enrolled than girls (Ethiopia Central Statistical Agency and ICF International, 2011). From total government expenditure, 27% goes to education (Ethiopia Central Statistical Agency and ICF International, 2011), which is higher than the Sub-Saharan African or World average (World Bank, 2013).

Women in Ethiopia’s society are often in a lower position compared to men. With respect to their rights, according to the latest report of Human Rights Watch (2013), the human rights situation in Ethiopia is deteriorating. For instance, the government of Ethiopia regulates to what extent NGO’s are allowed to speak about or encourage human rights. That is why many NGO’s work not in the field of SRHR, but in the field of sexual and reproductive health (SRH), and lack the additional R that stands for rights. Accordingly, this affects the
rights and positions of women too. Many of their lives are marked by early marriages, female genital mutilation (FGM), domestic violence, fewer education and fewer work opportunities than men (UN-HABITAT, 2008). When it concerns sexual violence, Ethiopia’s prevalence rate of intimate partner violence is one of the highest among countries included in the WHO Multi Country Study of Violence Against Women (WHO, 2005). Results from numerous community-based studies indicate that 50% to 60% of Ethiopian women experience gender-based violence in their lifetime (Deyessa, Kassaye, Demeke, & Taffa, 1998; Gossaye et al., 2003; Yigzaw, Yibrie, & Kebede, 2004). Gossaye et al (2003) reveal that in rural Ethiopia, 59% of women suffer from sexual violence, and 49% from physical violence by a partner at some point in their lives. The majority of violence is inflicted by intimate partners. In addition, 14% of the currently married women are in polygamous marriages, a source of psychological and social problems for them (Berhane 1999 & 2001). Physical punishment of women is considered normal, starts during childhood and adolescence by family members to “discipline” girls (Gossaye et al, 2003). Girls and women thus grow up in a society in which gender-based violence is widespread, fostered by a culture that reinforces men’s superiority to women (Berhane, 2001). However, because of the difficulty and sensitivity of the topic, there has only been little research on gender-based violence in Ethiopia (Gossaye et al, 2003).

In secondary schools, there is serious concern that the prevalence of sexual violence is high. One doctoral study on sexual violence in secondary schools in the East of Ethiopia, reports that 70% of the young men and 68% of the young women had respectively offended or become a victim of sexual violence (Bekele, 2012). It should be noted though, that concerning the measures of sexual violence, there is a continuum between sexual violent behaviours, from intimidation to forced intercourse. With regard to sexual force, 38% of the men reported to be an offender, and 25% of the young women to be a victim of forced sexual intercourse (Bekele, 2012). These numbers are higher than those in other studies in Ethiopia (e.g. Mulugeta, Kassaya, & Berhane, 1998). In one Ethiopian study among 1401 female high school students in Addis Ababa and Western Shoa, 74% had reported sexual harassment, with consequences such as physical problems, unwanted pregnancies and social isolation, fear and phobia, hopelessness and suicide attempt (Mulugeta, Kassaye, & Berhane, 1998). Moreover, students who have experienced gender-based violence are more likely to show depressive symptoms (Gelaye, Arnold, Williams, Goshu, & Behane, 2009). Because in Ethiopian society, talking about rape or sexual harassment is a taboo (it is considered shameful to disclose family matters/personal humiliation), it is rarely brought to justice (Gossaye et al, 2003).
Another reason for sexual violence not being brought to justice is weaknesses in the law enforcement system (Gossaye et al, 2003).

It should be noted that in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, one of the major problems facing women concerns female sex workers. This is often resulting from migration, job seeking, and economic challenges (Van Blerk, 2008). Yet, it is also because they are forced to, this could as well be by their families, that young girls start working as a sex worker (Hoot, Tadesse, & Abdella, 2006; Van Blerk, 2008; WHO, 2002). This can make them very vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. Moreover, many female sex workers are victims of sexual violence from one of her male clients (Scorgie, Chersich, Ntaganira, Gerbase, Lule, & Lo, 2012; WHO, 2002). It is important to take this development into consideration when investigating sexual violence in high schools, because it is part of the living environment of many students. Moreover, what should not be overlooked either is that it can be girl students themselves too who work as female sex workers, often forced by family and/or financial needs, and consequently encounter several hardships.
4. Method

The nature of this study is qualitative and interpretative. Thirty-one interviews and four focus group discussions were held with local teachers, students and SRH professionals to discover how they define, experience, and interpret sexual violence against girls in secondary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and from their perspectives, how sexual violence can be addressed effectively in formal educational settings. Content analysis with a pre-defined coding scheme and an additional open coding phase, resulted in construct-specific displays (Miles and Huberman, 1994). These have given profound insight in the expressed views.

4.1 School Site

As a case study, one secondary school is chosen in order to gain in depth understanding about the views of teachers and students on how they define, experience, interpret, and would address sexual violence. Grades 9 and 10 are present in the school, after which students who continue their education either go to vocational training, or preparatory school before entering university. The secondary school is located in the centre of Addis Ababa, in an area where typically migrants from rural areas settle in order to gain better income. This public school has adopted a co-curricular program to teach about sexual and reproductive health in Sub-Saharan African context. In this program, students learn about and are encouraged to discuss relevant sexual and reproductive health issues. This school characteristic is relevant because SRH education is not compulsory in Ethiopia, and it is therefore a special feature of the school. Because of that, although not all students participate in the program, students as well as teachers were expected to be more likely to talk about their opinions and experiences, as this would not be unfamiliar for them. However, this does not necessarily mean this applies to all students, because only few of them attend the co-curricular programs. First contact with the school was established through Development Expertise Centre (DEC), a local NGO, connected to the Dutch NGO Edukans. Edukans and DEC have been the facilitators in this research in establishing contacts and relations in the field.

The fact that the school is located in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia and the fourth largest city of Africa is a vital feature too. It has been well established that city life differs very much from that in rural areas, being thought of as more developed and values being less traditional. Although this research project does not aim to compare the two, the site of the school being in the centre of a large capital city is nonetheless crucial. Therefore,
participants should be situated with this city life, which by definition influences their views and interpretations of sexual violence.

4.2. Participants

The majority of the participants consist of teachers and students from the case study school. In addition, four SRH professionals were interviewed in order to contextualize the interviews with teachers and students. The SRH professionals include three people from DEC, and one representative from the Dutch government working in the field of SRH. In total, 29 in-depth semi-structured interviews were held, of which seven were with girl students, six with boy students, six with female teachers, six with male teachers and four with SRH professionals. Two interviews were held with two people at the same time, as this was preferred by the participants. Both concern girl students, who felt more comfortable speaking to the researcher when supported by their close friend. In addition to the interviews, four focus groups discussions were held. One with five girl students, one with five boy students, one with three female teachers and one with five male teachers. Two of the male teachers who participated in the focus group discussion, were interviewed again afterwards to elaborate on their ideas. This means that, in total, 46 people, consisting of 14 girls, 11 boys, nine female teachers, eight male teachers and four SRH professionals participated in the research (see Table 1). Students were in grades 9 and 10, aged between 15 and 19. Teachers were between 25 and 40 years old.

Table 1
Number of interviews, focus group discussions and participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Focus Group Discussions</th>
<th>Total (N=46)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>9 participants</td>
<td>5 participants</td>
<td>14 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>6 participants</td>
<td>5 participants</td>
<td>11 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers</td>
<td>6 participants</td>
<td>3 participants</td>
<td>9 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male teachers</td>
<td>5 participants*</td>
<td>5 participants</td>
<td>8 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRH professionals</td>
<td>4 participants</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *of which two participated in the FGD, of which one was interviewed twice
4.3 Procedure

Interviews and focus group discussions were designed in a semi-structured fashion, as to allow the participants the freedom to share their stories. For the interviews, an “active” approach was taken, which means that the interview is seen as a process of collaboratively constructing meaning, in which the interviewer activates different subject positions in order to understand the participants’ narratives (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). The interviews and the focus group discussions started with general questions such as “How is school life for you?” or “What do you like in school?”. Afterwards, more specific questions followed, aiming to cover all subthemes of ‘definition’, ‘experience’, ‘causes’, ‘consequences’ and ‘address’. The researcher used small concept cards to make sure all themes were covered. However, depending on the course of the conversation, it was possible to elaborate on the one or the other topic if the participant or the researcher felt some ideas needed to be elaborated.

In the focus group discussions, one focus group exercise was used before starting to talk about sexual violence specifically. To be precise, after the introductory questions, participants were instructed to take two pieces of paper: one on which the word “men” was written down, the other one with the word “women” written down. Then, a discussion followed about what characteristics for men and women are according to their culture, and this was written down by a volunteer in the group. This exercise was then used as a starting point for the rest of the discussion (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001).

Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in English. Since this is not the first language of the participants, this would sometimes lead to confusion. English is the language of instruction in secondary schools in Ethiopia, however, for some teachers and students conversing in English was challenging. For instance, the term “sexual violence” could be confusing, especially for students. Some would ask what it means, to repeat the question or ask for an explanation. Others confused the term “sexual violence” with “sexual intercourse” (although some considered this to be the same thing, see results). Yet, most of the times in the conversation, it was clear to participants what was meant by sexual violence and they would elaborate on their thoughts. At the same time, this language barrier is important to consider in terms of interpretation. Participants were explicitly asked whether they were willing and volunteering to speak to the researcher. In doing that, participants were told that the conversation would be in English. In this manner, a small selection bias was created by itself. For instance, it is likely that the participants who were willing to volunteer, are those students in school who are less shy or have less difficulties in expressing themselves.
in English, compared to their peers. However, at the same time, some students clearly faced difficulties in English, but were brave enough to speak to the researcher. As an additional possibly selection bias, participants were asked to stay in school for a little bit longer to speak to the researcher, since the conversations should of course not take away instruction time. Because of this, it is likely that the students who have the highest work burdens at home or outside the school, were not included in the sample. Despite these biases, though, the conversations serve as a strong basis for interpretation. Participants shared their views and experiences, reflect their interpretation of the current situation in their school environment. In doing that, most students had stories to share about sexual violence, or how this was experienced by their friends or other people in the school.

As a place of venue, a quiet classroom was chosen in which no one would enter, since it is important that participants would feel free to share and not fear being overheard by others (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001; Brady, 2005). The focus group discussions were conducted in same gender compositions, because this makes sharing ideas easier, especially given the sensitive topic (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001). Because of ethical considerations, confidentiality was ensured and emphasized before starting the interview and focus group discussion (Save the Children, 2004). Permission was asked to record the conversation, and it was explained to them how to switch off the recorder in case they would start to feel uncomfortable with it. The recorder was always within reach of all participants, so that they had the freedom and possibility to switch it off if they felt uncomfortable with the recording (Save the Children, 2004; Robson, 2001). After the interviews and focus group discussions, the researcher shared her telephone number with the participants, to make sure that follow up of the interview was possible (Leach, 2006; Robson, 2001; Save the Children, 2004). If the participant(s) agreed, conversations were recorded. Initially, all participants agreed upon the recording. Three girls switched off the recorder during the interview. In these cases, notes were taken immediately after the interviews. Recordings of the interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim. Focus group discussions lasted between one hour and one hour and a half, and interviews took between 20 and 40 minutes.

4.4 Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to analyse the transcriptions and ethnographic notes. This means that a pre-defined coding scheme was developed in order to analyse how people define, experience, interpret sexual violence and how it should be addressed. After this initial coding phase with the pre-defined coding scheme, ‘open coding’ was used to develop more detailed
insights. Construct-specific displays were developed according to the method of Miles and Huberman (1994) to organize the data and get a full view of its contents.

The initial codes that were used are based on the research questions, and they are: ‘define’, ‘experience’, ‘causes’, ‘consequences’ and ‘address’. It should be noted here, that the codes ‘causes’ and ‘consequences’ are both part of the research question how sexual violence is interpreted. These will thus be described in the chapter concerning interpretation in the results section. By using these pre-defined codes, parts of the texts could be selected depending on what they are informative of. When certain parts were informative of two or three sub codes, for instance a participant would mention experiences, causes, and consequences at the same time, these were coded with all the three relevant codes.

After that, more detailed ‘open codes’ were developed for each initial sub code. For instance, all text that was coded as ‘definition’, was selected and closely examined. After this close examination, it appeared that participants would define sexual violence in different manners. First, some would say there is no such thing in their school. Second, other participants found the terminology confusing, probably due to difficulties in language (see discussion) and would speak about for instance sexual intercourse. Many, however, would speak about their society and culture that view men as superior to women, yet others felt free to give examples of acts of sexual violence. Prostitution was also mentioned in relation to defining sexual violence. Therefore, during the open coding phase, codes such as ‘not in this school’, ‘confused by terminology’, ‘culture’, ‘acts’, and ‘prostitution’ were given to selected phrases from the ‘definition’ parts of the analysis. This was done for ‘experience’, ‘causes’, ‘consequences’ and ‘address’ in a similar fashion.

Finally, construct-specific displays following Miles and Huberman (1994) were created in order to analyse what was said by whom for specific constructs. This means that one display was made for ‘definition’, one for ‘experience’, one for ‘causes’, one for ‘consequences’ and a last one for ‘address’. Participants were categorised based on whether they were a boy student, girl students, male teacher, female teacher or SRH professional. Their views were summarized within the displays, which gave a clear overview of the contents of the participants’ views per construct, allowing to compare between the categories of participants. If so, differences in views between these categories could be compared by these displays. Most of the time, however, views did not contradict. For the views that were contradicting, these are described in the text.
In the results section, quotes are given occasionally to illustrate and clarify statements. It should be noted that some quotes are adapted for clarity reasons, given the challenges some participants had in expressing themselves in English. This only concerns grammar constructions, and by these adaptations no different meanings were given to the views of the respondents. For the analysis, the raw data were used, i.e. the literally transcribed interviews, to ensure no misinterpretations could be made.

4.5 Limitations

As with any study, there are some limitations that should be recognized. Firstly, English was not the first language for participants as well as the researcher. Students in particular found it often challenging to express their ideas in English, which sometimes led to confusion. Therefore, it is the more reason to keep this in mind and to interpret with care. Secondly, the students who participated were pre-selected since they confirmed to feel confident enough to speak in English, and did not have many obligations outside of school. Moreover, only relatively few people participated in the research. Also the geographic focus is limited to a very specific area in the city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Therefore, generalizations cannot be made based on this study alone, and insights only apply to this particular site of investigation. Nevertheless, the aim of this study was not to generalize or to be representative, but to gain in depth insights and more understanding about different views of sexual violence in and around school.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

As a last and crucial note, carrying out this research cannot avoid complex power relations and its related notions of representation. This means that the researcher, being a young white female from the West, who investigates and later represents views and reflections of people in the Sub-Saharan African Addis Ababa, by definition has her own subjective framework of reference. Therefore, it is crucial to take care in interpretations and representations, as in all qualitative research. This is done through for instance paraphrasing and checking whether it was correctly understood what the participant meant during the interviews, as well as discussing about interpretations with colleagues in the field of SRH in Ethiopia. In addition, the interviews and focus group discussions are complex in their power relations, both from an Orientalist perspective, as well as in gender, age, occupancy and SES construction (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001; Said, 1979). Despite the care that is taken in the interpretation as well as in conducting the interviews, these influences should be recognized.
5. Results

In this section, findings of this study are presented by focusing on definition, experiences, causes and consequences of sexual violence at schools, and how it can be addressed in formal educational settings. The chapter will discuss these issues from the perspectives of teachers, students and SRH professionals. In doing so, the aim is to give voice to participants by representing their views and to compare and contrast the opinions of girls and boys, and teachers and students.

5.1 Defining Sexual Violence

This section attempts to respond to the first research question: how do teachers and students define sexual violence? Views and comments about what should be considered as sexual violence vary among participants. Concerning their definitions of sexual violence, some participants preferred using general terms or mentioned only a cultural context of sexual violence, whereas others gave examples of what acts of sexual violence could be in their opinion.

Culturally, sexual violence was typically associated with harmful traditional practices such as abduction, early marriage and FGM. Moreover, many participants immediately related sexual violence to a general culture of viewing men as superior to women. In the same vein, participants pointed towards the typical jobs of men and women such as working in construction sites versus doing jobs in the home. According to them, these values of society are related to sexual violence, because it reflects norms specific for men and women. While explaining this, boys mentioned these cultural backgrounds as their definition of sexual violence. In doing so, they seemed to repeat the factual knowledge they had learned in school about gender discrimination and cultural practices. In fact, some boys literally said that they had learned about this in civics class, and started explaining what they had been taught about it. Boys would therefore more often refer to general terms of sexual violence, referring to the “bad habits” of society to discriminate or violate women. In contrast, though, girls and teachers also put forward these cultural backgrounds of sexual violence, but saw it as a context that explained the acts they associated sexual violence with, which they continued to elaborate on.

What is also striking is that boys, as compared to girls and teachers, were also more often convinced there is no sexual violence, nor gender discrimination, in their school. Most of the boys explained that there is a school rule which states that everybody is equal in the
school, as well as a new constitution which states that everybody is equal in the society too, which is why, according to them, the prevalence of sexual violence is this low:

“All persons are equal before the constitution’s article 25. So, girls and boys are equal. (...) Because in nature, boys and girls are formed in nature by God. So no one is inferior or no one is superior. Before God or in the constitution. (...) Gender discrimination means it is inferiority and superiority of males and females. That means the female is, by misunderstanding, females are not able to any things. This is a misunderstanding. Both male and females are equal”. (Boy, grade 10)

Coming closer to examples of sexual violence, participants used phrases such as men to “prove their powers” and therefore “give the girls an order to make something”, to “attack” the girls and “being aggressive”, in order to describe what sexual violence means. Acts of sexual violence are described as “forceful”, “without her consent” or “without her interest”. It were mainly the teachers and girls who named very precise acts of violence, including saying “silly words” or insults, watching and commenting to the way girls dress or walk on the street, teasing them (e.g. saying “why don’t you have big breasts”), shouting, unwanted kisses, unwanted touches, throwing rocks at her, kicking, forced love relationships, and rape. These acts lead to fear, and some participants argued this is also one aspect of sexual violence. This notion of fear as being part of sexual violence is crucial for understanding its meaning. Bhana (2012) describes how fear is a major part of girls’ emotional lives in South Africa. Also Leach and Humphreys (2007) mention fear as essential part of defining and understanding sexual violence. It is in line with these definitions that students and teachers confirm that fear should be included in defining sexual violence. For instance, girls and teachers pointed out that sometimes, girls would stay in the house as they fear the street. They fear saying no to boys or teachers, and they feel they have no power or confidence, which keeps them in silence.

Teachers mentioned that they observed manipulation and frightening of girls. They considered this being part of sexual violence, done through offering money, but also by taking their property. By manipulating girls in such manners, girls go into certain actions they otherwise would not have done. In pointing this out, teachers refer to the lack of negotiational power in relationships, that could involve transactional sex. Indeed, also in transactional sex, boys feel they need to prove their power, by which girls can become victims of sexual violence (Nyanzi, Pool, & Kinsman, (2001).

Even though their emphasis in explaining what sexual violence means varies, both boys and girls, male and female teachers, shared a general agreement on how sexual violence could be defined, i.e. a range between unwanted comments to a forced sexual relationship,
without the consent of one of the parties, placed in a context of gender unequal norms. Likewise, they both mentioned that these acts would not be necessarily against girls only, although most of the times this is the case, but they have heard or witnessed stories of violations against men too. When comparing this to the definition of WHO (2002), the definitions and views of sexual violence of teachers and students add a strong gender dimension mentioning the cultural backgrounds of their country. In addition, students (particularly girls) and teachers mentioned manipulation as part of being sexual violence too, stressing the significance of power influences. The fact that participants mention this broader view and point towards the cruciality of gender and power dimensions, is informative of the context of sexual violence and points towards the importance of existing power relations (in line with Leach and Humphreys (2007)). In fact, most participants mentioned the cultural background of gender unequal norms as a framework for understanding what sexual violence means. This cannot be overlooked in understanding the phenomenon in Ethiopian school life and society.

Finally, one topic that was a concern of many teachers in particular, was the large amount of sex workers present around the school. Two teachers considered prostitution to be sexual violence too because, as one teacher explains, “they are doing that because they are forced by their economic dependency”. And it reflects that “most of the time, they (women) only rely on the men to have money, so in order to obtain or get money they may have to do sexual works”. However, whether this could really be considered as sexual violence was questioned by one SRH worker: “it’s the interest and the consent of the girl, so it’s not sexual violence”.

5.1.1 Concluding remarks

From these findings, it can thus be concluded that when defining sexual violence, participants mention Ethiopia’s cultural context of the traditional harmful practices in the rural areas, as well as certain “misunderstandings” of society and “bad habits” of the culture. It is agreed that sexual violence is an act in which one of the parties, which can be the girl but could also be the boy, has not given consent or shown interest. Furthermore, it is crucial to understand sexual violence in the context of power relations between men and women. However, it is vital to recognize that, when defining sexual violence, most of the boys seem to reproduce the knowledge they have learned in school. In doing so, they argue that because there is a school rule and a constitution, sexual violence does not occur so much. Girls and teachers, on the other hand, recognize the existence of sexual violence more easily and mention several
examples of sexual violence. These acts of sexual violence can vary between implicit forms such as unwanted comments on the streets, to more overt or explicit forms of sexual violence such as forced sexual relationships. Girls directly pointed out that these actions affect their confidence and make them fearful. Teachers also express their worries about the agency of girls in transactional relationships, as well as the influence of sex workers.

These differences in how participants define sexual violence are interesting, because all of them consider themselves to be aware of what sexual violence is. However, for boys this awareness equals knowledge about sexual violence, whereas girls and teachers immediately relate it to a deeper understanding of its various expressions, causes, and consequences. In addition, the concern of teachers about the large influence of manipulation, transactional sex and the many sex workers in the school areas, reveals concern about the sexualized environment students grow up in. Teachers view this not only as one form of violence and a worry for the sex workers, but also as a major cause for their students’ misunderstandings about sexuality (see the section on causes of sexual violence).

5.2 Experiences In and Around School

When asked about how they experience sexual violence, participants would again share about cultural backgrounds of sexual violence, but surely mentioned various examples of sexual violence in their school and environment. First of all, home challenges for girls were often brought up, as well as challenges in their direct living environment (kebeles). Almost all participants shared how girls faced high workloads, tiredness, and less learning opportunities because of their family responsibilities. In school, some students (both boys and girls) are positive about the interaction among and between teachers and students in school. They interact freely with each other, help, and give advice. However, most participants shared experiences with sexual violence in school too. Two ways of sexual violence against girls were raised: between boys and girls, and between teachers and students. Thirdly, another important influence that was regularly brought up by teachers is that of sex workers. These expressions of sexual violence will be described in further detail below.

All participants but one had ideas and examples to share about sexual violence in their environment. Most participants stated that in the current days, the prevalence of sexual violence is decreasing in their country, and that it is uncommon in Addis Ababa in particular (as illustrated in the previous chapter also). Sexual violence was associated with the past, and the rural parts of the country and its harmful traditional practices, more than it occurring in current times in Addis Ababa.
However, a convincing number of examples of challenges concerning sexual violence were discussed in the interviews, which reveals that, although the environment is changing, sexual violence still remains a major problem in the lives of many. This also applies to the conversations with participants who argued that the prevalence and expressions of sexual violence is only minimal. In fact, the school psychologist was convinced that “almost all, most girls come in this situation [of experiencing sexual violence]”. This, and the various stories of boys, girls, and teachers in school, thus contradicts the statements of many participants suggesting that sexual violence does not happen so often in their school. Rather, it is something all girls experience on a regular basis. Keeping this in mind, participants’ reflections on their experiences and challenges concerning sexual violence in and around school are given below.

5.2.1 Boy and girl

First, sexual violence is experienced between boys and girls in school. Boys are said to “push” girls to do something, to “influence” them and to “show their force” on girls. This occurs implicitly as well as in more explicit or overt manners.

These experiences include boys making unwanted comments on the way girls look or dress. Boys have observed this happening in the school, by other boys and by male teachers. Girls and teachers point out that such comments, or insults, (e.g. “you are unnecessary” or “you are just a woman”) makes girls feel less confident. Another girl describes how boys touch her without her permission and how this makes her shy and tense in the class. Teachers observe that boys like to “use their power” by, for instance, making girls do their academic work: “(…) The boys use their power to violate the girls, to do anything. To do exercises, to give correct answers, to hold their bags, their properties…” (female teacher)

A more explicit form of sexual violence, is that boys can force girls to have sex with them. This was brought up by girls as well as boys, and teachers. Girls find it difficult to negotiate with boys if they do not want to have sexual intercourse, as one girl in the focus group discussion explains:

“If one boy loves any girl, he pleases them. He really really pleases them. So she can’t stop him. Not by advice, by saying that I want to learn, that I want to be good in my country. So, she can tell him, but she doesn’t do that… He doesn’t stop. To stop him, it’s difficult. For her, it’s difficult. So, if one boy pleased her or anything, or do anything for her, she can advise him, but she can’t stop this.” (Focus group discussion with girls)

At the same time, boys have their ways of “pushing” girls to have sex with them:
“In school, some boys have bad behaviour. Boys, you know, as high school students, boys want different things. We want to have a girlfriend. And they decide something for the girls. (...) If she is not decide to do sex, boys push it.” (Boy, Grade 10)

When asked how they “push” girls, one of the boys shares how he has heard stories from friends from another school, who took a girl away for the weekend, gave her too much alcohol and then convinced her to have sex with him. This reveals that when it concerns negotiations about sexual intercourse, it is typically experienced that it is the boy who takes the decision, despite girls’ refusals.

Not only in negotiations about sexual intercourse girls face these challenges. Similar difficulties are also encountered in negotiations about relationships. For instance, if a girl refuses to be a boy’s girlfriend, boys would not accept this: “For example, if a boy asks a girl to be his girlfriend, and she says no, the boy attacks her.” One teacher, who is doing counselling sessions in the school besides her teaching job, describes one incident she has encountered in the school when a girl refused to be the girlfriend of one of her peers. She illustrates how the school had to be involved in the situation, because the boy would even visit the girl in her home:

Female teacher: “Next to this (verbal violence) there is also, there are also some students who, you know… they go into their action. For instance, they wait for students outside the school, they’re kicking them, just to accept their own feeling. Even, for raping, there is. Not in this school, but outside the class, they’re staying. They wait for her and then, they go to their own actions. So there is sexual violence in the school.”

Interviewer: “Do the girls share these stories, talk about it?”

Female Teacher: “Yep. Girls, where I said earlier, there is somehow counseling session. Because I studied psychology… So there are a number, almost all, most girls come in this situation. They came to me and some, let me talk to you. She was my student, grade 10. A group of boys, one of these boys loved her, and he has friends. So she might not want to be with him, she didn’t want to be with him. So what he was doing is that he told to his friends, and he made a group. When she passed them… he insults her in the class, even in the school in break time, tea time. And outside the class even he was going to her home and he was fighting with her older brother. You see? So, what I can say, what I did is that I was contacting the group, and her, then I was a lot of counselling sessions. That takes almost a month and so on.”

These stories are in line with earlier research that suggested that girls often lack negotiation power, and boys use their power to force girls to have sex with them (Bhana, 2012; Leach, 2003). This gendered dimension of negotiations about sex can also apply to transactional
sexual relationships, (Luke, & Kurz, 2002; Nyanzi, Pool, & Kinsman, 2001), increasing girls’ vulnerability to HIV/AIDS because they lack the agency to negotiate about condom use (Maganja, Maman, Groues, & Mkwambo, 2007). Both boys and girls recognize that boys use their powers or force girls to do something. Almost all girls maintain that they fear boys, they do not feel free to do or to wear what they like, and feel psychologically “decreased” or not confident. There are three out of 11 boys that explicitly state boys can use their force on girls. This is exceptional since most of them said to not be familiar with such things in school. Teachers though, confirmed the lack of confidence and assertiveness they observed in the girl students. They agreed with girls that boys use their force on girls.

In addition, teachers more often referred to the aspect of manipulation in relationships between boys and girls. For instance, boys can “influence” girls with money, and by this way make her have sex with him, sometimes without her willingness. It was mostly male teachers that pointed towards the transactional relationships, some mentioning that girls were actively looking for boyfriend themselves in order to gain money through transactional sexual relationships. This last comment is interesting, because it suggests that girls have more agency or negotiational power than it seems at first instance. This is in line with other research on transactional sex, revealing how girls can negotiate about when to start the relationship, or how much money it should concern (Nyanzi, Pool, & Kinsman, 2001). However, as mentioned by girls in this as well as in earlier research, within the relationship girls lack negotiation power (Luke & Kurz, 2002).

5.2.2 Teacher and student

Another challenge for girls may come from some teachers in school. These challenges include discrimination and various forms of verbal and physical violence, but is mostly associated with sexual corruption: a sexual relationship between a teacher and a student, that is manipulated through marks.

First, when it concerns discrimination, girls in the focus group discussion report that a teacher refused to correct a girl’s mark when he was mistaken, but that he did correct it when it concerned a boy student in the same class. This is in line with earlier findings that teachers do not appreciate being questioned by their girl student (Leach, 2003). Girls also shared how male teachers would watch and comment on girls when they were doing sports, and how this makes them feel uncomfortable. Female teachers too, realise that they discriminate between
boys and girls in the classroom. In the focus group discussion they discussed about how they themselves reflect cultural beliefs as well:

Teacher 1: “… Whenever the boy shouldn’t disturb in the class, the same as for female student. But we focus on female, because of the culture.”

Teacher 2: “On the female rather than the boys.”

Interviewer: “So if the girls misbehave its worse?”

Teacher 2: “Worse than the boys. Because we are living in this society. So we act like our society’s thinking.”

Teacher 1: “So we like the female to behave like…”

Teacher 2: “Good, proper way.”

To take this further, this difference between girls and boys also comes to expression in more physical ways:

“Sometimes, if we show in the school the teacher can hit the girls. Because they are physically thin or physically not well developed. But when he hits the boy, the boy will come to hit him. So he doesn’t hit him. So this is the difference. (…) In physically, the teacher can fear the boy, and the teacher cannot fear the girl.” (Boy, Grade 10)

The most common association with regard to sexual violence and teacher-student relationships, however, is without a doubt sexual corruption in schools. Although the prevalence of it is thought to be very low, most teachers and students had some thoughts and stories to share about this. All male teachers are aware of the fact that there are sexual relationships between some teachers and girl students. For the female teachers, however, some of them said they were not aware of such kinds of relationships, others have the idea it does not happen anymore these days, or happens only in universities. Nevertheless, 14 out of 18 participants who mentioned teacher-student relationships, shared stories and experiences of sexual corruption.

This sexual corruption can take place in two ways. Both involve corrupting through marks: either beforehand by giving a girl a low grade intentionally, as a first step to approach the girl, or afterwards, as a way of threatening her or pushing her to agree to have sexual intercourse. For instance, girls shared how teachers approached girls to be their girlfriend. If she refuses, he threatens to lower her marks. Another example concerns a teacher giving a girl very low marks, and after that approaching her to “solve” the issue by inviting her to dinner,
which means having sexual intercourse. The following conversation with a girl student, who, despite her challenges in English language, was determined to share her story, illustrates the experience one of her close friends had with a teacher:

“The teachers are sometimes bad. For example when you are a girl, you can get sexual intercourse (...) sometimes when students get a mark, low mark, mark decrease. Then, the teachers speak about sexual intercourse (...) The students are very, (hesitates) yeferalu [afraid]. When the marks are zero, or incomplete, the students are very angry. Yes, therefore, the teachers ask the students for sexual intercourse.

(…)

When my friend, she got a small mark. In Maths. In this time, the teacher asked my friend to get in sexual intercourse.” (Girl, Grade 10)

She explains that the teacher had invited the girl for dinner at a hotel, which would result in having sexual intercourse. But, because the girl did not want this, she and her friends thought of a trick: the teacher assumed the girl would agree to have sexual intercourse with him, but she appeared in the restaurant with all her girl friends. Then, the teacher was very embarrassed and increased her marks after all. She continued to explain that she, as well as her friends, is still very sad and very angry when she sees the teacher. She shared that when she sees him, she feels that she wants to beat him. The girls had reported the story to the administration of the school. However, because the sexual intercourse did not actually happen, the teacher was given only a warning. If the sexual intercourse had happened, the girl thinks the administration would have fired him.

What is striking though, is the way boys, girls, and teachers, approach this type of teacher – student relationship differently. Girls feel the intimidation of the teacher who approach them. They share how they question themselves what they have done wrong that their teacher acts like this. This reflects and is in line with the age/authority relations between teachers and students, that make girl vulnerable to such kinds of violence (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Rose-Junius, 2005; Leach, 2003). Boys, though, view this relation as a love relationship, in which sometimes girls involve in order to get some material gains (similar to transactional sexual relationships). Three boys had different views on this though. One of them for instance, has heard a story of one of his girl friends who was approached by a teacher and thought of it as a bad thing. His view is clearly different from the other boys, and he explicitly condemns such behaviour of a teacher. Seeing his friend being affected by that,
had made a huge impact on him, and seemingly increased his understanding about challenges for girls in school. In fact, he went to the director’s office to address the issue. However, from a somewhat different angle, male teachers argued that they had also experienced that some girls themselves approach teachers for sexual intercourse, expecting he will increase her marks or provide her with books or some materials. By this, they put the teacher in a position that some participants (SRH professionals) consider as violation too. One teacher confirmed this idea, and strongly argued that it is unethical for a teacher to agree on these approaches. Other teachers explained that it depends on the teacher whether he affirms or denies the approach. Nevertheless, the fact that girls might also take up an active role in approaching teachers reveals that, in line with Leach and Humpreys (2007), girls are not only victims of sexual violence. In fact, other investigations reveal how girls can often intentionally look for older men to start a sexual relationship with them, in order to gain more money and economic benefits (Luke & Kurz, 2002). Therefore, they can play an active role in other aspects related to the sexually charged nature of schooling as well.

It is thus clear that girls face several challenges concerning sexual violence in school, coming from boys or teachers, in various manners. However, what is just as worrying, is that despite the official attempts in the school to have gender equal education, sexual violence still seems to be tolerated. For instance, the girl who reported in the director’s office about the approaches of her Maths teacher (mentioned earlier in this paragraph), was left disappointed and afraid when she learned that the teacher was given only a warning. In the same vein, many teachers shared that they did not feel capable of handling all the challenges in the school, and often felt they did not know, or were not educated, for solving all the problems of their students, including those related to sexual violence. Moreover, some female teachers who did try to defend girls in class, by telling off boys who violated girls in class, faced hardships by their male students who replied that she was a woman herself, so why should they listen to her. For girls themselves too, it seems that they also feel they have to accept and cope up with the challenges they face:

“There are many difficult things, but for explaining, we will get difficulties from students, from boys. Or from male teachers. Whatever it is, we will get more difficulties when we learn in school in Ethiopia. But, if we think that, we are learning for knowledge, we have to accept whatever it is that happens to us. So, there are difficult things for females, more than for males. But we have to know that if we get trouble, doesn’t matter, we’ll get a better life if we are trying to know or if we are trying to get the knowledge that we want.” (Focus group discussion with girls).
5.2.3 Sex workers

In addition to these challenges in school, another influence concerns the many sex workers around the school. According to some teachers, this has a big effect on their students, because they see it in their area and is part of their socialisation environment. However, it is not only an influence of the school environment, some girl students actually are sex workers during or after school time.

Students only shared about this when asked about it, and did not bring up the topic by themselves. However, the students that were asked about it were aware of the high level of sex workers in the area. One girl knows about her classmate that she works as a sex worker in the night time:

“One day, my sister goes to work and she sees some girl, my classmate. She sees her on the street. She is really sorry, really sad by that thing. (…) My sister asked “what happened to you?” – “my family is not good, they don’t want me, they don’t want me to be with them”. She thinks just like that. (…) She doesn’t want the help of anybody. (…) My sister feels really sorry. She tells me. I wanted to talk to her. But, my sister says no, don’t go that way. And, I ‘m really sorry these things happen.” (Girl, grade 9)

Teachers believe that students engage in sex work because of economic hardships. They observe that some girls fall asleep during class hours because they work at night. Moreover, teachers feel powerless to help them because their own salary is low and they don’t know what to do. Some teachers, however, would approach the students of whom they know they work as a sex worker and advise them to stop with this kind of work. But due to the economical problem, this is not enough most of the time. Moreover, teachers explain how girls feel ashamed, deny the fact that they are sex workers, or do not accept teachers’ help.

One teacher, though, shared how he has approached the administration of the school, and how they, together with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) made a successful plan for one girl to help her. This plan included cooperating with organizations to economically support the girl, and finding her a family that could take care of her, as she could not live with her own family.

Another problem raised by teachers is that they see that students “overact” (imitate) these sex workers in the school: girls search for boyfriends and expect them to provide phones, clothes and jewellery for them. The number of girls who are enrolled at this school and working as sex workers remains unclear. Some teachers estimate the amount to be at least one
girl a class, others expect sex workers to be something that happens in universities only (“because they need matured women”). One of the direction members of the school estimates that at least 20%-30% of the mothers of their students works as a sex worker. What is clear though, is that all participants who mentioned this topic, experience a large influence of the sex worker industry, in terms of girls’ engagement in sex work as an income generating activity, as well as the way they relate to their peers, and the messages they receive about sexuality that they have to interpret.

**5.2.4 Girls as victims?**

It should be noted that sexual violence is not only directed towards girls, but boys and teachers (male and female) also face challenges based on their gender or appearance. This is pointed out by Leach and Humphreys (2007) who argue that in doing research about gender-based violence (including sexual violence), there is need for more research on its manifestations than only within the ‘girls-as-victims’ discourse. On the one hand because girls often experience more agency than seeing them as victims only would suggest (Bhana, 2012), and on the other hand because there are other directions of sexual violence than towards girls only. In fact, other expressions of violence such as homophobic, girl-on-girl, and student-on-teacher violence are also gender-based. Moreover, it is not only gender-based, but other dimensions such as social status, ethnicity, age, and authority play a role in manifestations of violence too (Leach & Humphreys, 2007). Therefore, it is crucial to take into account these dimensions and other directions of sexual violence too.

Also in this sample, participants shared stories about boys and teachers experiencing violence or discrimination, influenced by their gender, age or authority. Participants did not bring up any ideas about homophobic violence (most likely because of the sensitivity and controversiality of the topic in Ethiopia), or girl-on-girl violence. However, there were stories about boy-on-boy violence and, in line with the reviews of Leach and Humphreys (2007), student-on-teacher violence.

For instance, one boy shared how he and other “small boys” were teased by the bigger boys in school, because they want to prove they are stronger than he is. Similarly, one male teacher shares how he was challenged in his profession when he just started, because compared to some of his own students, he does not look very matured:

“(…) as you can see, me, they don’t recognize me as a matured person. When they see me, they treat me like a child. (…) Students are much aged than me. They are more…”
they have some beards, they are much grown, much bigger than me. When I enter to the class they start to laugh: “is he a teacher?!” (Male teacher)

Other examples include that of female teachers having to respond to unwanted comments and approaches of their male students. Boys mentioned that one girl student had hit a teacher because she didn’t agree with his ideas, by which they point out that girls are not only victims of sexual violence, but have ‘bad behaviour’ too. Although, strictly speaking, this would not classify as sexual violence, it is informative of the context of power relations that are present in the school.

In taking the ‘girls-as-victims’ discourse further, what should also be recognized is the agency of girls. As was pointed out in the previous, girls often feel they suffer from a lack of agency in negotiating about sexual or romantic relationships. At the same time, however, it has been argued that girls do have agency when it concerns transactional sexual relationships (Luke & Kurz, 2002; Nyanzi, Pool, & Kinsman, 2001). It has been reported that they have their means for negotiating about whether and when to start a sexual (transactional) relationship with boys (Nyanzi, Pool, & Kinsman, 2001). However, at the same time, her refusal is not always accepted by boys. Also in this sample, girls and boys point out that indeed, boys will prove their manhood, or girls will not be successful in their negotiations. Moreover, it is questionable to what extent girls experience agency and negotiational power within such kinds of relationships (Luke & Kurz, 2002). In fact, they are as well affected by gendered patterns, in both initiation, negotiation and agency. It is thus questionable to what extent girls feel free and can be agents of their own desires. Nevertheless, it is clear girls cannot only be seen as victims, but have their parts in reinforcing the sexually charged nature in schools.

Having said this, it should be recognised that despite the fact that sexual violence is thus not something purely directed against girls, it is a phenomenon, that manifests along lines of gender, age, and authority. This explains why ‘big’ boys can tease the younger ones, question their younger teacher, or approach their female teacher. Girls can play a role themselves in tolerating and reinforcing the sexually charged nature of schools. However, it should be noted that despite this, most girls feel victims of sexual violence from boys or teachers in school, and most of the violence is directed against them. This is not only something that girl students shared, but that almost all teachers and students were openly aware of.
5.2.5 Concluding remarks

Taken together, all participants agree that sexual violence is typically experienced by and directed towards girls. Girls can experience sexual violence from boys and teachers. Teachers mention the influence of sex workers around the school, as well as modern influences in the media, and transactional sexual relationships as dangerous messages that affect their students. Moreover, also within these influences, in particular within transactional sexual relationships, girls experience a lack of agency and negotiation power.

In line with what was revealed in the ‘Definition’ chapter, views of girls, boys, and teacher vary among them. Again, girls speak from their experiences, which are often highly emotional. Boys on the contrary, seem to be factual about sexual violence in school. In fact, most boys think this is not a problem in their school. What is interesting is that there were three boys who seemed to relate more emotionally to the topic. They had heard stories from close girl friends who experienced sexual violence, and this made them angry. It seems thus that the factual knowledge about gender inequalities and sexual violence students learn in school, remain factual, until they learn from or hear about others’ experiences. Teachers confirmed girls’ stories and were mostly aware of the manifestations of sexual violence in school. It is interesting that there were some female teachers that said not to be aware of this. In addition, teachers were often worried about their students and the sexually charged environment they grow up in.

Participants felt that sexual violence should be seen within the context of gender inequalities. However, their experiences reveal that not only are there gender dimensions that explain the context of sexual violence, but it also follows patterns of age and authority. This is in line with the argument of Leach and Humphreys (2007), who argue that gender violence can also apply to other expressions of gender violence, such as homophobic, girl-on-girl, and student-on-teacher violence. Participants indeed shared examples of student-on-teacher violence, and also of boy-on-boy violence. Although most of the violence is without a doubt directed towards girls, these dimensions and manifestations should not be overlooked.

5.3 Causes of Sexual Violence

In this section, the views of teachers and students on causes of sexual violence is discussed. These include societal influences, explanations for specific acts and directions of sexual violence, but also reasons for why the prevalence of sexual violence is still so high, despite participants believing it is changing. Again, views of girls, boys and teachers are compared. .
5.3.1 Reasons to start a relationship

To start with, participants pointed to some very specific causes for certain instances of sexual violence. What is interesting is that these explanations seem to be justifications for the actions of boys and teachers. To be precise, they point towards the idea that it is because a man likes a woman, and therefore needs to ‘satisfy’ his needs. Interpreting this in line with notions of male sexual entitlement, these views thus reflect the ideology that men should not be refused of their sexual advances (Jewkes, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). For instance, boys explain that basically, when a boy loves a girl, he wants a romantic (sexual) relationship with her, and therefore they make sure they get it. In addition, both students (especially boys) and teachers (both male and female) point out that high school students are teenagers and they are thus in their “fire age”. This means they want to try and discover what they see and hear in their environment. Combined with the influence of traditional cultural backgrounds and ideologies of male sexual entitlement, this gives explanation for why boys “attack” girls, and force them to love. Or, as one female teacher phrased it: “it’s nature”. Girls, on the other hand, more often used the word “aggressive” to describe such kind of behaviour.

Similarly, explanations for why teachers start a romantic relationship with their student are that either he wants sex and sees the situation as a “win-win”, a relationship both parties benefit from (brought up by both male and female teachers). Another explanation is that he likes the girl and falls in love with her (as argued by by boys and male teachers). The latter one is very likely, as male teachers explain, given the small age gap by which teachers and students can easily develop romantic feelings for each other and have a close relationship. However, male teachers also describe this type of relationship as “insane” and condemn it because the teacher does not conform to his professional ethics. One girl thought that teachers are lonely and therefore want to start a romantic relationship with their students (and does this by manipulating her marks).

What is striking from these precise explanations, is that they mention why a boy or male teacher would involve himself in a sexual relationship. As mentioned earlier, girls experience that even though they try to negotiate, they are not heard. By ignoring the voices of girls, these explanations confirm that girls often have little to say in this. It is therefore crucial to place these explanations in a cultural context and the power position of men being the one who decides. Most participants indeed pointed towards cultural and societal explanations for understanding these manifestations of sexual violence.
5.3.2 Cultural explanations

Traditionally, Ethiopia’s culture views men as superior to women. In this context, men are dominant, and women are submissive. Not only is this associated with traditional harmful practices in rural areas such as FGM and abduction, but also in Addis Ababa these values are still reflected in daily life, including homes and schools. In fact, this means that gender inequality is central to sexual violence. Because boys are viewed as superior, more value is added to what they want and need. On the contrary, girls are expected to be submissive, which is why they have less agency to decide about what they want and do, or to speak up for themselves. Students confirm this and they explain that because of this male dominance, boys feel they have to “prove their powers”. Girls feel shy and not free to speak, and moreover, some girls find it difficult to have respect for themselves because they feel inferior. They are not aware that they can, or fear to speak up for their rights. Therefore, it is difficult for them to be assertive in their (sexual) encounters with boys and men.

These traditional values are reflected in the homes of students. Students explain that, although they believe their school is formally promoting gender equality and promoting the position of girls by special tutorials and co-curricular programs, their home situation often does not allow this to become a reality. First, girls are expected to do household works in their homes, which gives them fewer opportunities. Second, because “there is no awareness” in their homes, students might not fully understand the idea of girls being equal to boys, resulting into different forms of sexual violence. Lastly, as one SRH professional points out, what should not be ignored is the amount of sexual violence within family households which without a doubt influences young people in their behaviours and attitudes. So, sexual violence in school is closely related to what happens in the broader society and intertwined with expressions of gender inequality.

What is interesting is that almost all participants say that times are changing. They observe that nowadays, gender unequal ideas are disappearing from their society, particularly in Addis Ababa. According to them, this is mainly because more and more people are educated, by which they have gained the awareness about gender equality and sexual violence. This applies to men and boys, but also some girls literally report that they feel free: “by the way, I want to say I am free. I am free to speak, to do anything. When I want to speak, I speak”. However, even though they say they feel free, these girls too encounter instances that make them tense and lose their confidence. So, even though these are said to have been changing over time, deeply rooted gender unequal values still have their remaining influence.
As described in the previous chapter about experiences, these persistent values are reflected in for example boy-girl relationships in which boys sometimes force girls to have sex with them, and girls feel too shy or find it difficult -if not impossible- to negotiate with them. Similarly, concerning student-teacher relationships, girls feel too shy or are afraid to refuse the advances of their teacher, resulting in some cases unwanted sexual relationships.

5.3.3 Between tradition and modernity

As described in the previous section, many of the causes of sexual violence can be explained by referring to traditional values. However, modernity and the influence of globalization nowadays, are also brought forward as influences in the lives of young people that should be recognized. According to participants, this helps to explain the involvement in transactional sexual relationships and sex work, and interpreting messages about sexuality.

With regard to transactional sexual relationships and sex workers, they are both traditional values as well as a desire for being modern that can be of influence. Traditionally, women are seen as economically dependent on men. This not only makes women less self-reliant, but can also be taken as an explanation for the mindset that women expect money or goods from a relationship with men. Some teachers argued that economic dependence of women on men explains why some girls approach boys and teachers to engage in transactional relationships. Similarly, in the focus group discussion with boys, it was put forward that because women cannot do the type of works that men can do, girls are somehow forced to work as a sex worker. At the same time, as teachers and SRH professionals point out that, it is thought that these girls have a desire for modern things and therefore feel the need to make money fairly easily in such a manner. In fact, this has been argued for in previous research as well, revealing how women intentionally started a sexual relationship with a man to fulfil their ‘modern’ desires (Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). Moreover, being modern can mean sexual freedom, by which it is legitimate to start (various) transactional sexual relationships. For girls being involved in sex work, however, this is more controversial. Teachers did see an influence of a desire for being modern that might attract girls to doing sex work, but even more so it is thought to be out of poverty that girls are forced to do so. This is confirmed by research that investigated why girls work as a sex worker (Van Blerk, 2008). It should be noted however, that these explanations are views given by teachers and students, and could not have been confirmed by any girls involving themselves in this (because none of them said to be involved in this). These views are nevertheless informative and insightful of how such
relationships are viewed, and illustrates the nexus between tradition and modernity that people are finding themselves in nowadays.

In addition, peer groups are important to young people, and teachers observe the pressure peers can put on girls, also when it concerns appearance and sexuality. Teachers explained that by initiating transactional sexual relationships, boys could “influence” the girls by manipulating her with money or other valuables. Teachers observe girls being a victim of this, by not knowing how to refuse or negotiate. However, girls too, can pressure other girls by showing off with their jewellery, and making other girls want to have those things too. This behaviour influences their friends and this attitude is becoming a big problem, as explained by one teacher below:

“They get money, they wear better than others, because they get much bigger money than other students. Due to that they have their own, you can easily see that they have big influence on their friends. That’s why I called it peer influence. When you see one friend of them, when she gets money from a guy, and when she spends it on buying clothes and wearing shoes something like that, there it’s easy to understand how her friend could be influenced. So, they have high influential power.” (Male teacher)

In such a manner, next to a desire for modernity, peer pressure can also play a role in why these girls could involve themselves in transactional sex. Teachers expected it is the fear of boys, the pressure of their peers, and a lack of negotiation power, that makes the girls involve in such kinds of relationships. Therefore, transactional sexual relationships can be closely linked, or part of sexual violence too.

It is interesting that it is only teachers who mention these types of relationships, and view it as problematic. Students did not bring up this topic, which could mean they view such relationships as normal, or not relevant in the context of sexual violence. Rather, boys and girls emphasized negotiation aspects of relationships between boys and girls, not mentioning transaction of money or other gifts.

What is striking in terms of messages about sexuality, is that some girls point out their perception that sexual violence only happens towards girls whose bodies are already “well developed”, or to girls who wear make-up and have interesting (modern) hair styles, because they are inviting to boys. Teachers and SRH professionals confirm that in society there is the idea that when a girl wears make up or jewellery, she is asking for something. They explain that this is somewhat a traditional way of thinking and that in reality, however, these girls are
not always interested. Rather, they want to look pretty, just like their friends. This reflects the confusion that finding a balance between traditional values and modern messages might lead to. For instance, girls want to be modern by wearing pretty bracelets, but at the same time this can be interpreted from a more traditional perspective that she is inviting boys to have sex with her. It seems thus a misinterpretation to think that well developed girls who wear make-up are ready to be involved in a sexual relationship. Let alone it being justified to sexually approach her without her consent. Moreover, it is well known that sexual violence happens to young (“less developed”) girls too. It is striking that girls who brought forward this view, because it could be expected that they would be the ones arguing against this idea. However, it is likely that some girls are taught that they should not be modern because by that, they are inviting boys, and that they reflect this in the conversations.

Messages in the media and the influence of modernization were also discussed and emphasized by male teachers in the focus group discussion. Its influence was confirmed by students, female teachers and SRH professionals. Because of globalization and modernization, students are now exposed to films that contain sexual scenes, internet, and videoclips on TV. This is new for them, and if they don’t know how to treat this kind of information, it may lead them to adopt different attitudes:

“In the media now, like internet is accessible, you can get internet on your mobile, or tv, video, and all these things are very accessible (...) you can easily get internet or you can easily get information. So those informations are very biased, for example like the music we see, this Western American music, all naked girls, it gives them the wrong impression about growing up. You have to be like… show your boobs or your ass and all these sexual messages are biased, very biased. So young people easily have access to porno, or any other wrong… I cannot say those … are wrong, but the way young people perceive it, is in a wrong way. So, then the information about sex is biased. If you don’t know how to use the information, then you can use it easily in a very wrong way”. (SRH professional)

She continues to explain that these modern influences are not necessarily bad. The problem is, however, that because young people are not educated about this, and talking about sexuality is still a taboo, it leads them to misunderstandings. Teachers confirm this idea. According to the participants who mentioned the influence of globalization, this is one of the causes of sexual violence and of adopting unhealthy attitudes towards sexuality.
5.3.4 Silence about sexuality

Not speaking about sexuality does not only lead to misunderstandings, but also it is the reason why people do not speak about their experiences, and do not take action against sexual violence. In the focus group discussion, girls illustrate how they do not feel free to share their struggles with their family members:

Girl 1: “By the way, mostly, our lives are affected by the backgrounds or the cultures of Ethiopia. This means when the girls tell about “why do you harass me”, the mothers or the fathers say: “don’t tell your brother”, but don’t give her answers. They tell her. Then after, she feels they don’t listen at any conditions. So her attitude: so why tell them. They don’t listen to me. And she is afraid. By this condition she doesn’t tell or she is not listened to and she is afraid”.

Girl 2: “The other problem or cause is, in one family they don’t have internal relation. They don’t talk “what’s happened to you today, how is your day”, something like that. So, they don’t talk together. Under that condition, the girls they think that they should hold this secret for themselves. So they will be so hurt. Their relation is not well developed in this country. That’s why.”

In the same vein, girls will not go to the police station to report a case of sexual violence. Rather, they hide their problem because they have learned not to speak about it. Moreover, as one teacher explains, traditionally, girls are neglected, which makes it even more difficult for them to get their ideas accepted:

“When they get some problems, they don’t talk to their family and they don’t go to the police station. They hide them. They hide their problems. So they get some problem in this case. Sexual violence. And also, the culture. When she talks about these things, the culture neglects her. They don’t accept. So she has to hide this kind of thing. So, this is… can be the cause.” (Female teacher)

5.3.5 Concluding remarks

Traditional values of seeing men as superior to women, combined with desires for being modern, can be the cause of worrying misinterpretations about sexuality. As shown above, causes of sexual violence are deeply embedded within society. At the heart of sexual violence is gender inequality, that can take up various forms within the home, work and school life of women of all ages. Girls are expected to be submissive, talking about sexuality is seen as a taboo and shameful, and with boys and teachers often proving themselves to be dominant, it is therefore extremely difficult and scary for girls to be assertive and negotiate.

At the same time, Ethiopia’s society faces influences of modernity and globalization. First, the notion of modernity can influence ideas about what it means to be modern,
translating into for instance transactional sexual relationships, in which girls can still experience a lack of agency and negotiation power. Second, globalization is also bringing new films, internet access and (sexualized) videoclips to the country. Due to the fact that participants still experience a taboo in their culture, people do not speak about sexuality. Therefore young people are left alone in finding a balance between traditional and modern influences. Interpreting these various messages mostly leads to confusion and possibly unhealthy ideas about sexuality.

Lastly, it should be noted here that some causes are at the same time consequences of sexual violence. For instance, shyness or fear are both explanations for why sexual violence can happen between boys and girls or teachers and students. But also, they are a consequence of sexual violence since they affect a girl’s psychology and can make her fear more, increase her shyness, and as a consequence, keep her silent. By not talking about it, the prevalence and expressions of sexual violence find themselves in, what one female teacher calls it, a “vicious circle”.

5.4 Consequences of Sexual Violence

Sexual violence can have devastating consequences for victims. Concerning the consequences of sexual violence, students, teachers and SRH workers discuss physical and psychological health problems on individuals concerned, as well as societal and nationwide implications of the phenomenon. In this sections, their views on consequences will be presented and contrasted.

Physical health problems include HIV/AIDS, STDs, and unwanted pregnancies, sometimes leading to unsafe abortions. Indeed, these can be consequences of sexual violence, as for instance negotiating condom use is difficult in such occasions (Jewkes, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). In fact, this is a major reason for why abstinence has been promoted in sex education: sexual intercourse itself can be considered dangerous, especially when it concerns pre-marital sex or sexual relationships with multiple partners (Braeken & Cardinal, 2008; Miedema, Maxwell, & Aggleton, 2011). The boys in the focus group discussion, as well as most teachers, mentioned this as dangerous consequences. For many students, the danger of HIV/AIDS was one reason for not wanting to involve themselves in sexual activity.

It is well known that sexual violence can have severe psychological consequences too for victims. Bhana (2012) describes how girls live in constant fear, and do not feel free to go where they want. Girls in this research also described these feelings, adding that they do not
feel free what they want to wear either, as a result of unwanted sexualized comments. In addition, in line with earlier research in Ethiopia on sexual violence, girls in this sample also report to feel lonely and rejected from society (Mulugeta, Kassaye, & Berhane, 1998), and depressed (Gelaye, Arnold, Williams, Goshu, & Berhane, 2009). Other words girls used to describe their psychological health problems as a consequence of sexual violence are shyness, losing self-confidence, feeling bad about yourself, always feeling inferior to and dependent on men, becoming less self-reliant. They also pointed out that it affected their education: they would not be able to concentrate in class, and out of fear they would skip classes from a certain teacher.

It is not surprising that it were the girls who elaborated on these feelings, given their experiences that often testified of high emotional turbulence. Teachers also were aware of these consequences, and most of them showed sympathy for girls. Boys, on the other hand, did not mention psychological consequences. Rather, they emphasized physical health aspects and consequences for their country’s development. What is important to note here, is that girls and teachers thus not only pointed towards consequences of sexual violence in the form of rape, but also shared how unwanted comments or fear of harassment can lead to similar disruptive consequences for them. Boys, although they mentioned these forms of sexual violence in how they would define the phenomenon, did not consider consequences of such acts. Rather, they focused on the consequences of forced sex or rape only.

Both physical and psychological problems can have wide-ranging societal consequences, by negatively influencing the status and participation of girls. For instance, an unwanted pregnancy is a taboo and a shame for girls and their family. Because of that, girls (especially sex workers) face possible discrimination or suffer from judgements. Moreover, their family might refuse them and in some cases they become street children. Furthermore, unwanted pregnancy often means drop out from school. Psychologically, consequences of sexual violence can influence the girls’ social lives because their low self-esteem and feelings of inferiority and dependency might isolate them, or make them refrain from social and economic participation.

At the country level, sexual violence is also thought to be a negative influence for its development. As mentioned above, it were most often the boys who would point towards this consequence. One boy states in the focus group discussion: “I feel that, without girl participation, there is no development”. Indeed, sexual violence reinforces gender unequal norms, which might hinder country development because of for instance lack of social and
economic participation of women. Surely, this is one reason why sexual violence, and gender inequality, should be addressed. Yet, while giving these arguments, boys again seemed to repeat what they have learned in school about gender inequality. Many of the boys used similar phrases and lines of thoughts to make their point. They explained that by continuing to see girls as inferior, as having to do other works and having fewer responsibilities, they will never be able to participate in their country socially and economically. That is why, according to them, it is crucial to include women in all aspects of life, and sexual violence is a negative influence for changing and developing their country. The contrast with the girls’ emotionally coloured lines of thought are again interesting here. Boys seem to have been made aware of the crucial importance of appreciating girls and women, but it looks like girls’ understanding of sexual violence, relating it to individual and emotional consequences, is still completely different from boys’ thoughts on this.

5.4.1 Concluding remarks

Sexual violence directly influences physical and psychological health. Both of these health aspects can lead to social consequences as well, because of taboo, shame or fear. These have its effect on the country level also. Moreover, sexual violence can lead to drop out from school. Not only as a result of HIV/AIDS or unwanted pregnancy, but also manifestations of sexual violence that seem less dramatic, such as unwanted comments, can make girls fear and avoid these instances by skipping classes. The difference between the views of boys as opposed to girls and teachers is interesting, as it seems boys have a more pragmatic and narrow view of what sexual violence can lead to – physical consequences, and as a result of that, school drop out and fewer economic participation of girls. Girls and teachers, however, mention that the seemingly minor acts of sexual violence can lead to serious consequences as well: they live in constant fear, skip classes, and suffer from psychological problems. The contrast in emphasis from boys as opposed to girls and teachers leads to questions about what it means to be aware of sexual violence, and whether boys have been able to fully understand from school lessons what consequences of various acts, ranging from sexualized unwanted comments to sexual harassment and rape, can have on girls.

5.5 Addressing Sexual Violence

When asked how they would address the problem of sexual violence in school, participants pointed towards both opportunities within the school environment and the need of the whole society to be educated on sexual violence. Participants were also asked what they see as challenges and good practices in the way sexual violence is currently addressed in the school.
Students mostly mentioned specific programs and ideas for addressing sexual violence in school. Teachers and professionals referred to these too, as well as opportunities on a policy and organizational level. These ideas are discussed below.

**5.5.1 A comprehensive approach to sex education**

In line with the argument of Beaker and Cardinal (2008), most participants mentioned means of addressing sexual violence that fit a comprehensive approach. SRH professionals literally used this term. Teachers and students more often preferred language such as “conscious”, “reflect” and “discuss freely”. As SRH professionals point out, first of all, the message that is given should move away from a problem focused HIV-preventive message, and rather include a comprehensive message about positive and negative aspects of sexuality. Instead of only advising students about what is good and what is not good, students should learn how to consciously reflect on and interpret information, and be able to make informed decisions by themselves. This is in line with the recommendations of WHO (2002) and fits a right based, comprehensive approach to HIV/AIDS or sex education (Beaker & Cardinal, 2008; Miedema, Maxwell, & Aggleton, 2001).

One example of what this means is to educate pupils on how to interpret messages from the media. In the focus group discussion with the male teachers, a discussion started on the effects of globalization, including the accessibility of pornography for the students now. This was considered a negative effect for the minds of the students, and teachers discussed what the right solution for this problem would be: to either forbid, or to teach about it. One teacher suggested that the government should forbid pornography to enter the country. Another teacher disagreed, and reacted that it would be more meaningful for students if “we allow them to watch, but consciously”. Likewise, students should be taught to reflect on what their views and opinions are on all aspects of sexuality, and on that basis, make an informed decision. Most teachers share the opinion that through such an approach, by making students think about sexuality consciously and with the right information, it would also influence the way they handle sexual violence.

Coming closer to what and how to teach precisely about sexuality, SRH professionals and the school psychologist added that it is crucial to not only give students the right information and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, but also life skills, communication skills, and negotiation skills. Specifically, teachers and SRH professionals put forward that young people needed to learn about the causes and consequences of sexual violence, to reflect on how to interpret sexual messages from their environment and the media,
and how to have a positive and healthy attitude towards sexuality. Some teachers realised that transferring knowledge (or: ‘advising’ them) is not enough, and that students will only understand questions about sexuality through discussing and reflecting. For instance, SRH professionals and teachers pointed out that for boys in particular, it was felt they need to be made aware of the consequences of their actions, and that they need to change their minds. For girls, they need to learn how to negotiate, and how to be assertive and self-confident. Girls themselves confirmed this in expressing the need for e.g. learning skills about how to negotiate with their male peers (increasing assertiveness), and hearing from their teachers what they are doing well (which develops their self-confidence).

Participants explained that currently, sexual violence is addressed in the existing curriculum of civics and ethical education. However, some teachers and students felt that the topic deserved more attention. One teacher believed that it should be taught as a separate subject in school. In addition to the existing curriculum, students and teachers found the co-curricular clubs and programs as useful means of addressing the issue. For the co-curricular activities, one challenge is that not all students (can) attend because it is not within the compulsory program. Nevertheless, both girls and boys suggested that in these clubs, they get awareness about and get to know what sexual violence means and that it is a bad thing.

Both the use of media and discussions were considered to be vital means of how to address sexual violence in school. Students considered media, or minimedia in school such as flyers, brochures, and flag ceremonies, to be the best tool to teach about such topics. This is because media create awareness and reach people. Discussion was put forward by teachers and SRH professionals as the most crucial means of addressing sexual violence in a school setting. Students confirmed its use. In the classroom, discussion serves to make students conscious of their actions and attitudes by sharing ideas, as well as solving their problems collectively. Moreover, these discussions serve to break the taboo of not talking about sexuality, encourage girls to speak, and raise awareness. Girls confirm their desire of sharing stories and breaking this taboo. What is vital though, is that students and teachers speak in confidence in such discussions. Some teachers shared that gossips would go around the school about what had been said in the co-curricular programs, which had negative effects and they find it not right. In addition, in such a discussion, it is important to use clear language instead of being vague about e.g. body change, sexual organs, or symptoms of STDs. Only by that way, students will understand correctly what is meant, and it contributes to speaking freely. However, not only in the classroom these discussions are a vital means, but also discussions
between students and teachers, teachers and management, and students and management should contribute to addressing sexual violence.

It is striking to note here the discrepancy between how students and teachers say they would ideally teach or get taught about sexuality, and how students seem to receive lessons about this under the current curriculum. From the conversations with them (especially with boys), they sometimes word-by-word repeat the knowledge they had learned in school. Their knowledge about sexual violence seems factual, practical and instrumental (as opposed to the girls’ emotional reflections, based on their experiences). They clearly stated that sexual violence is a bad thing, and most students also found sexual intercourse itself “dangerous”, and “not for students of our age”. Possible negative consequences of sexual intercourse, such as HIV/AIDS or unwanted pregnancies, were directly put forward as an argument of why students should not get involved in sex. Moreover, one boy had the opinion that sexual intercourse is sexual violence too, because of these dangers. It seems thus that students found it morally a bad thing to be sexually active at their age, repeating what they had heard in class. So, although programs in schools are said to be in forms of discussions, similar to a rights-based approach, and promote comprehensive sex education (Beaker & Cardinal, 2008; Miedema, Maxwell, & Aggleton, 2001), students still seemed to lack the critical inquiry that is necessary to get a grasp on the problem and change their way of thinking and acting. Rather, their opinions seem to reflect an abstinence-only approach (Beaker & Cardinal, 2008). However, this critical thinking would be crucial as to develop attitudes and change behaviour that are favourable of sexual health (Bajaj, 2009; Beaker & Cardinal, 2008).

5.5.2 Codes of ethics

In addition to their views on what and how should be taught about sexual violence, students and teachers argued that a “school rule” (codes of ethics) should be developed and enforced. Sexual violence should be forbidden, and measures should be taken when students or teachers violate the code. Students in particular felt a great need of enforcing and acting upon this more strictly in school. In their opinion, perpetrators in school need to be punished. SRH professionals confirmed that this is crucial, although they believed that awareness raising programs should take priority and are more effective.

Some students, both boys and girls, expressed their disappointment in the management of the school, because they felt more could have been done to solve problems of sexual violence. For instance, the girl who shared her story about the Math teacher who approached
her friend, mentioned in the chapter ‘Experiences’, pointed out how she felt that the management should have acted more strongly on that teacher. He was given only a warning, but she was so upset by the event that she still fears and would have wished to see him fired or at least suspended from the school. More students shared similar feelings. Most participants felt that any inappropriate behaviour of teachers towards their students should be condemned and therefore, adequate measures should be taken.

At the same time, participants sometimes had different opinions on what is inappropriate. Concerning boys who have misbehaved, students and teachers shared the same opinion and felt the school management should also act more strongly, for example by contacting their parents, or discussing with them in the director’s office. With regard to teacher-student relationships however, ideas differed. For instance, one female teacher did not view it as problematic when a teacher is in a relationship with a student on the basis of mutual consent. Yet other teachers perceived this as unethical. In focus group discussions, it was also revealed that questions about when such a relationship can and cannot be appropriate, are difficult and lead to disagreements. Therefore, it is even more important to discuss about and develop a codes of ethics for what behaviour can and cannot be tolerated.

It is interesting and a crucial finding that students and teachers felt punishment and “school rule” are such important instruments of addressing sexual violence. Mostly topics concerning sexuality are placed in a context of how to educate, and how to give comprehensive education on this. At the same time, however, it seems to be crucial for teachers and students to have formal laws and policies next to this. This is thus not only important at national level (e.g. Gossaye et al, 2003), but also at school level. Therefore, in addressing sexual violence, not only the “whats” and “hows” of educating students should be considered, but also the importance of formal rules and policies should be emphasized.

5.5.3 The role of teachers

Teachers play a crucial role in addressing sexual violence. The first aspect is their role as a guide and a role model in the school, advising their students about how to live their life. Students and teachers both recognized and view the role of the teacher as an advisor. At the same time, however, students experienced that the required sense of trust or feeling comfortable were often lacking. This can be due to the teachers’ position of authority, or their approach to teaching. Moreover, some teachers are part of the problem themselves, by commenting on their girl students, disadvantaging them in the classroom, or even by
approaching them for a sexual relationship. Exactly this contradiction is what makes addressing sexual violence in school so complex. Therefore, it is even more important that clear rules and policies are present in the school and acted upon, and that teachers are well prepared for this in their teacher training.

Another challenge in the student teacher interaction concerns their interaction in class discussions. As mentioned before, discussion was considered to be one vital means of creating consciousness in students about sexual violence, and sexuality related issues. Yet, in achieving this, some students point out that they need to be able to speak freely with the teacher. This means the teacher should be open for their ideas, and thus be able to act in a neutral way with regard to sexuality concerned topics (Iyer & Aggleton, 2013). Especially boys, but also girls, found that teachers need a more open mind to understand them. At the same time, teachers expressed experiencing struggles to change the minds of their students, but also recognized it was difficult for them to understand the perceptions of their students due to generation differences.

It is thus clear that teachers should not be overlooked as important agents in school that can promote change. Some teachers who pledged for more emphasis on addressing the topic of sexual violence in school, also felt that all teachers of any subject are responsible to address it in their classes when acts of sexual violence occur. Some expressed frustration about their colleagues in not correcting students when they violate girls, or even involving in it themselves. They thus fully recognized their role as an agent of change. However, at the same time, even though these teachers felt the desire to change sexually unhealthy attitudes and behaviours in school, most teachers themselves sometimes felt they had not been prepared enough in their own education to take care of all the problems of teenagers in school. Despite their goodwill, they often felt powerless, or did not know how to help their students and deal with difficult situations, that can be related to sexual violence. This is in line with other investigations that reveal the importance of teachers, and that they should get the right training (e.g. Iyer, P., & Aggleton, 2013; Leach, 2003).

5.5.4 An active approach

Addressing sexual violence in school is not, and should not, be restricted to teaching within the classroom walls, and having a code of ethics. Rather, it should be a school-wide policy. All participants shared ideas about such school broad active approaches, by pointing towards policy possibilities and preferred attitudes from school staff.
Specific attention for girls in particular was mentioned by few teachers and students as a means of addressing sexual violence. For instance, one girl in the focus group discussion suggested special tutorials for girls. However, another girl reacted to this, and stated that this would not touch upon the deeper issue of awareness about sexual violence. She would rather see awareness raising programs in the school. Another way of giving special attention to girls is by approaching them. As one male teacher explains:

“Many problems happen for female students. If they are… the boys don’t have any problem of explaining problems, they have no problem of speaking out what they want and what they need. But, we have a problem of female students, because they are too shy because of the culture. If we don’t approach them we may not understand their problems and we may not give the right solution. So, this is one method of normalising relationship and giving solutions for every problem of the kids. (…) If we are supposed to advise the kids, we have to approach them. We have to identify their problems, and to understand what they want.”

Peers, friends and class mates are a good opportunity to identify and know what girls need to be approached for help. As clearly comes forward, the peer group is a large influence and a source of knowledge for many young people. For instance, one club teacher mentioned she decided to appoint one girl in every class to be the class leader for the club, and by such a way helping the club teacher in identifying problems. In other examples, teachers also heard stories from peers or friends when girls had problems, and by this way could identify the girls who were in need of advice. It is thus crucial to consider peers, and the peer culture, when addressing sexual violence in school.

When it concerns sex workers in and around the school, teachers often felt worried about this and had the opinion that it should also be addressed more actively. The first and most obvious way of helping the girls who work as sex workers is advising them. However, the problem is that it is generally not known by the teachers or school management who the girls are that work as sex workers. Therefore, teachers suggested they should be active in identifying the girls in the first place. They mention that through stories from their friends, teachers hear which girls are working as sex workers. One teacher has once seen a girl working on the street, and decided to approach her afterwards to ask her how he could help her. One of the challenges is that girls sometimes cannot take the advice because their economic situation does not enable them to stop with their activities. Therefore, in addition to advising, some teachers suggest cooperation with PTAs and relevant NGOs or similar organizations to find solutions and support for the girls, economically, psychologically or in
physical health. This does not only apply to girls who work as sex workers, but to the most vulnerable girls in school generally. The school itself can find such economical solutions by having charity clubs, in order to support the most vulnerable girls. But cooperation with NGOs would enable the school, and teachers, to be of more assistance to the students who are most vulnerable.

It is interesting that teachers do suggest this active approach, yet only one example of actually following this idea was given in the interviews. It seems that teachers do find it important to help their students in such manners, but lack the power or opportunities (many of the teachers reported high work load, and not knowing what to do) to get involved in this. Therefore, it is crucial to have more organisations involved to realise these aims.

5.5.5 Involve society

In addition, as students and teachers mentioned, in order to address sexual violence, families and society outside the school should be involved too. First of all, the law should be enforced countrywide, and policies should be formed and acted upon. In other words, the law and policies are present now, yet teachers expressed their concern, or sometimes even frustration, about the lack of action and results of government intended programs to change the prevalence of sexual violence in their country. By some teachers and SRH professionals, it was felt that the government of Ethiopia keeps people silent, by not informing girls and women on their rights. As a consequence, this not only affects the lives of many girls and women, but also this negatively affects their country’s development. They suggested that not only schools, but also organisations and NGOs in Ethiopia should cooperate more to address the issue. Second, it is not only the young people that should be aware of what sexual violence means, and what its causes and consequences are, but also families and communities should be educated about this. Participants pledged for more awareness-rasing programs, and more cooperation among several parties for policy making and program development. Moreover, students and teachers considered themselves as responsible too to spread the message that everybody is equal. More precisely, they share the opinion that every person who know about equality or sexual violence, should feel responsible to share these ideas and act accordingly.

5.5.6 Concluding remarks

Hence in order to address sexual violence, schools need to actively promote and provide comprehensive education. Girls need to be taught negotiation skills and how to be assertive. Boys need to be encouraged to reflect and think critically about the causes and consequences
of sexual violence. Young people ought to be provided with relevant information, and their views should be taken seriously. The best means of addressing sexual violence is thought to be by discussion and media.

Providing comprehensive sex education can be challenging, given the sensitivity of the topic, cultural taboo, and generation differences between teachers and students. Especially in classroom discussions, this can be difficult. Therefore, teachers should be well prepared for this. Moreover, teachers are important agents of change in school, and this position should be recognized, as well as acted upon. Teachers ought to act according to their professional ethics, be close to the students to understand them and create a sense of trust. Yet, because teachers can be part of the problem of sexual violence in school themselves, it is important to create a codes of conduct, that will take measures against inappropriate behaviour.

It is interesting that generally, teachers and students share agreement on how sexual violence should be addressed in school, but that at the same time there seems to be a large gap of misunderstanding between them (and between boys and girls). For instance, teachers find it difficult to relate to their students’ perceptions on sexuality, whereas students do not feel understood and taken seriously by their teachers. Similarly, boys seem to be unaware of the emotional turbulence girls often face because of sexual violence. It were only few boys who could relate to these, by having heard stories form their close girl friends. Therefore, sharing stories in mixed groups would be one means to enhance understanding between boys, girls, and teachers.

Because sexual violence is resistant to change, school needs to be active in creating and acting upon the school policies. This means for instance, approaching girls and their friends to help them with their problems, club leaders to be active in promotion, and assigning classroom leaders for the club. There is a need to actively search for solutions by contacting family members, and/or cooperating with other institutions such as NGOs. Sexual violence cannot be addressed by saying it is a bad thing and forbidding it in school, but needs a solid, active, and comprehensive approach.
6. Conclusion

This interpretative and qualitative study was designed to explore how students and teachers define, experience, and interpret sexual violence against girls in secondary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and from their perspectives, how sexual violence can be addressed effectively in formal educational settings. The study offers profound insights into how students, teachers, and SRH professionals in Addis Ababa view and interpret the context and manifestations of sexual violence, and how these views and interpretations differ between them.

What is most striking is that most participants feel the prevalence of sexual violence is decreasing these days, and that their society is changing. Sexual violence is perceived to be a rural thing, and not so much present in the more developed Addis Ababa. Moreover, many students and teachers started by saying that sexual violence does not happen in their school. However, the reason why these statements are striking is because they can be seriously questioned. In fact, they contradict the many stories about sexual violence that students, teachers, and SRH professionals shared further on in the conversations. Indeed, some girls report that they feel free to do what they want, and act assertively. Some boys too, have a deep understanding about the negative effects of sexual violence and strongly act against it. And it is likely that sexual violence is more prevalent in the rural areas of the country. Yet, at the same time, all but one of the participants had (sometimes highly emotional) experiences to share concerning sexual violence, and the school psychologist is convinced that almost all girls are affected by it. This leads to the question why participants felt the need to emphasize that sexual violence does not happen so much in their environment. Is that what they want it to be like, want other people to believe, or is that what they really believe?

The differences in views and emphasis throughout the conversations and discussions between boys, girls, teachers, and SRH professionals are interesting. They reveal how sexual violence is interpreted differently along lines of gender and position. These differences are of course not strictly limited to these boundaries, as all participants had different experiences and perspectives to share. Yet, it shows a certain tendency that for instance, girls emphasize the emotional experiences and sense of fear as opposed to boys who generally approach the topic of sexual violence from a more pragmatic and instrumental view. Similar differences are found between teachers and students, with teachers far more often relating sexual violence to a larger context of sexualized environment in which peer influence, transactional sex, and sex
workers have an enormous influence on the lives of young people. It is important to note that concerning these differences, there is no value added to what is more true or important, and what is not. What is crucial to realise is that these views reveal a lot about the interpretations of people whom it concerns to address sexual violence in formal educational settings. The expressed views are highly insightful and provide a framework for understanding the complexity of the issue.

6.1 Defining Sexual Violence

According to the definitions of boys, girls, teachers and SRH professionals, sexual violence should be placed in a context of gendered power relations. This is in line with earlier research studying sexual violence in a Sub-Saharan African context (e.g. Leach & Humphreys, 2007). In fact, gender inequality is at the heart of sexual violence against girls. It is therefore crucial to, when addressing sexual violence, consider this larger influence and to mention not only the factual acts of sexual violence, but the much more deeply rooted causes of it. Sexual violence is not only an issue of health, it is embedded with in a society and its culture of gender inequality.

What is remarkable is the difference in views between boys, girls and teachers. They all shared similar examples and definitions of sexual violence. However, while sharing their views, girls generally had highly emotional stories to share, based on experience. They added that fear plays a major part in defining and experiencing sexual violence. Boys, on the contrary, were very rational in their lines of thoughts: gender equality was ensured by the law, and promoted in school, and therefore they did not expect sexual violence to be an issue in and around school. With respect to the teachers, most of them confirmed the girls’ stories and experiences of sexual violence to be a problem in and around school. They recognized the fear girls live with, and its effect on their freedom and confidence. At the same time, teachers observed a highly sexualized environment young people grow up in, refering to manipulation, transactional sexual relationships and female sex workers around the school as being major influences for their students.

6.2 Experiences In and Around School

Experiences of participants confirm earlier research that revealed that within schools, power relations along lines of gender, age, and authority are reflected (Dunne, Humphreys & Leach, 2006; Leach, 2003; Leach & Humphreys, 2007; Mirembe & Davies, 2001; Wood, Maforah and Jewkes, 1998). Participants in this research, however, pointed out and emphasized that gendered norms are changing. Instead of being submissive, signs of assertiveness are shown
by for instance girls who perform a trick to mislead a teacher who had requested sexual intercourse from one of his students. Other girls, and boys, feel free to speak their minds, or go to the administrator’s office when they feel injustices have occurred in school. Students feel that people are aware about the bad consequences of gender equality and sexual violence, and therefore it is decreasing in their country. These developments are of course very positive and students, teachers, and SRH professionals feel hopeful about the future of their country concerning this topic.

However, despite these positive developments, even girls who say they are free, admit to feel silenced too at times. They experience various acts of sexual violence, ranging from unwanted sexually charged comments, touches, kisses to forced sex, frightening and manipulation for sex. These can be between boys and girls, and between teachers and girls. The most common associations for sexual violence between boys and girls was forced sex and manipulation. For teachers it was corruption through grades. Other influences that relate to sexual violence are transactional sex (between boys and girls, and between teachers and students), and that of female sex workers in and around the school.

Many participants were aware of these types of sexual violence. It is worrying that its manifestations seem to be common knowledge in the school. However, what is even more alarming is that it seems to be tolerated by students as well as teachers and the directing board of the school. Some students and teachers expressed their frustration about the lack of action taken against these injustices. At the same time, girls themselves seem to tolerate its presence in the school as well, stating that they have to accept their fate as a girl in school, while being grateful they can learn and believing they will lead a better life in future when they finish their education.

It is fascinating how boys, girls and teachers view these experiences differently between and among them. Almost all girls had experienced some form of sexual violence from either boys or teachers, or both. Boys mostly reported though to not know much about occurrences of sexual violence in the school. Some mentioned observations of how other boys harassed girls in school. Three boys were aware of (and angry about) manipulation and forced sex from boys or teachers directed towards girls. Teachers also confirmed the experiences that girls and boys mentioned. However, what is striking is that even though male teachers recognized the sexual violence that can occur between teachers and students, the majority of the female teachers said to be ignorant about this. If it happens, they would expect this to be
This research shows though, that sexual corruption can happen in secondary schools too.

6.3 Causes of Sexual Violence

In order to explain why sexual violence is so prevalent in their school and society, all participants pointed towards deeply rooted values in Ethiopian society about gender roles. This is in line with earlier research and gender theories that have argued girls are taught to be submissive and boys to be dominant in Sub-Saharan African societies (Adomako Ampofo, Beoku-Betts, Ngaruiya Njambi, & Osirim, 2004; Dunne, Humphreys & Leach, 2006; Leach, 2003; Leach & Humphreys, 2007; Mirembe & Davies, 2001). There is general agreement among boys, girls, teachers and SRH professionals that gender inequality is at heart of sexual violence. Gender unequal norms and values are reflected in traditional ideas about what is appropriate behaviour for boys and girls. According to these views, men are superior to women, and this translates into behaviour that can result in sexual violence. However, because nowadays, an increasing amount of people are educated, participants believe that times are changing. According to them, awareness raising programs have contributed to a decrease of gender violence in their country. Nevertheless, even though times are changing, it is clear that sexual violence remains an alarming reality in Ethiopian society.

With regard to sexual violence from boys and teachers towards girls, this can be explained by the aggressiveness of boys, according to girls, boys, and teachers. At the same time, their sexual desires are considered to be natural, since they are young men growing up. Boys explain that it is their pride too, whenever they want to be with a girl, by whatever means make sure they get it. This is closely in line with ideologies of male sexual entitlement, values offering explanation for causes of sexual violence (Jewkes, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). When it concerns teachers, however, similar notions play a role: boys, girls, and teachers explain that the teacher must be interested in the girl. What is outstanding in terms of different views on sexual violence, is that neither boys nor girls question the appropriateness and intentions of teachers’ actions. It seems they do not feel comfortable judging their teachers, which is in line with Leach’s (2003) interpretation of African authoritarian school culture. Two female teachers state that it must be only a desire for sex with the girl that drives teachers to involve in such relationships, whereas other female teachers refrain from saying anything about it, or do not condemn it when it is based on mutual consent. Most male teachers though, do judge such kinds of relationships and view it as unethical. What becomes
clear from these explanations is that sexual violence is not only a power display, but the judgement of it is also affected by status of authority.

Especially the lack of agency and unsuccessful negotiations about sexual relations have a crucial influence on girls’ experiences. In fact, it is because of these challenges that girls feel not able to prevent sexual violence to happen to them. Moreover, sexual violence still seems to be normal and tolerated in the school environment. This is reinforced for the reason that speaking about sexuality related issues is still taboo, considered shameful, and often shadowed by fear. The disappointment in the school management to take action against sexual violence, provides even less encouragement to break taboos and report about it.

One of the major influences and challenges in addressing sexuality related topics in Ethiopia with young people is balancing between tradition and modernity. Based on their culture that goes back ages in time, it is difficult for some Ethiopians to accept the influences globalization brings to their country in these modern times. At the same time, teachers observe how these influences have its effect on their students, for instance in their negotiations and agency in (transactional) sexual relationships. Teachers and students believe that transactional sexual relationships (and girls working as sex workers) can be initiated because of a desire for a ‘modern’ life style, or according needs. This is in line with the argument of Leclerc-Madlala (2003), arguing that women can initiate such relationships as a means to fulfil their ‘modern’ desires. It has also been reported that girls do have a considerable amount of agency in deciding about whether and when to involve in such a sexual relationship (Nyanzi, Pool, & Kinsman, 2001, Luke & Kurz, 2002). However, at the same time, within such a relationship, girls are found to have less agency and are more vulnerable to violence (Luke & Kurz, 2002). In addition, gendered roles as found in traditional culture are still reflected (Nyanzi, Pool, & Kinsman, 2001). Teachers confirmed that the initiation of transactional relationships can as well be based on traditional notions that girls need to depend on men economically, instead of it being solely a pursuit of modernity.

Hence, the nexus between modernity and tradition should not be overlooked. This applies to transactional sexual relationships, as well as taking into account a wider framework of understanding messages and influences that affect young peoples’ ideas about sexuality. Moreover, the confusion these various and sometimes contradicting messages might cause for young people should be recognized. Teachers confirm the struggle of their students to make sense of both messages. The fact that young people do not know how to deal with modern
messages (e.g. through media), teachers view as an explanation for why students sometimes have difficulties in developing healthy and positive ideas about sexuality.

6.4 Consequences of Sexual Violence

In line with their experiences of sexual violence, perceptions of girls, boys and teachers differed along similar lines concerning consequences of sexual violence. To be precise, girls’ comments were mostly emotional, emphasizing how sexual violence makes them fearful, lose self-confidence, and could lead to stigma if girls experienced HIV/AIDS or unwanted pregnancy as a result. Boys, from a different angle, pragmatically saw HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancy as consequences of sexual violence. These were considered to be bad things, as well as the lower economic participation of women and its according negative influences on country development sexual violence can cause. This is interesting, because in contrast to their definition of sexual violence that include manifestations ranging from unwanted comments to forced sex, the consequences boys mention of sexual violence only refer to the latter form of it. This leads to the question to what extent boys are aware of the (emotional) consequences of seemingly less serious forms of violence. Because, in fact, girls experience serious social and psychological problems from unwanted comments or fear of harassment.

Teachers agreed on both the emotional as well as the physical and socially negative consequences of sexual violence. Mostly, they recognized and sympathized with the girls’ feelings, but would at the same time feel powerless and sometimes frustrated in not being able to succeed in making a change. Moreover, as a result of not speaking about sexual violence, and it too often being tolerated by both men and women in society, it is even harder to combat sexual violence. In fact, it can result in a vicious circle that reinforces girls to be more submissive, and sexual violence to remain tolerated.

6.5 Addressing Sexual Violence

Awareness about gender equality and sexual violence is seen as key to change this. All participants, boys, girls, teachers and SRH professionals, brought this up, and thought it to be a crucial point. For instance, sexual violence was often related to the uneducated segments of the society, because they do not have the awareness. Boy students in particular felt that because they are educated, there is no sexual violence in their school environment. However, the reality of many stories points out that even though they are educated, sexual violence is still highly present in their school environment. Therefore, it can be questioned what it means to be aware. Does awareness mean factually knowing about sexual violence, or should it
contain a deeper layer? Moreover, there seems to be a huge gap of understanding between boys and girls. This particularly applies to the boys in school, who were mostly not aware of the fear and feelings of insecurity the girls carried with them. It is crucial to consider this in forming educational programs and thinking about what and how to teach about sexuality related topics.

Comprehensive sexuality education is critical in teaching about sexuality and addressing sexual violence (Braeken & Cardinal, 2008). As opposed to transferring knowledge, students, teachers, and SRH professionals pointed towards the need of comprehensive sex education. This means a type of education in which there is room for discussion, and attention is paid towards developing skills, reflection and values. However, because students also emphasized the need for a code of conduct, i.e. strict regulations to punish perpetrators (teachers, boys) of sexual violence, comprehensive sexuality education cannot be viewed as the one and only means to address this issue. The majority of research about sexuality education concerns how to educate, and focuses on comprehensive education. However, as participants emphasize, it is crucial to have policies and measurements that are acted upon next to these awareness raising educational programs. This applies to the school environment, but also to the broader society (Gossaye et al., 2003).

With the HIV/AIDS pandemic, increasing attention has been paid on the international agenda to teach about this in schools, in order to minimize its spread. However, too often, sexuality education is taught in such a manner that it leaves students to know only the dangers of being sexually active, especially bringing it into relation with HIV/AIDS (Braeken & Cardinal, 2008; Miedema, Maxwell, & Aggleton, 2001). As SRH professionals point out, in order to address sexuality issues from a broader perspective than only health, it is crucial to move away from HIV/AIDS focus in educational programs. Students indeed shared that they regarded (or had learned) having sexual intercourse as a bad thing, because of the same reason of HIV/AIDS risk. SRH professionals considered it vital to also bring forward the positive sides of sexuality, in order to promote a healthy and informed development. Hence, although sexual violence should indeed be seen as a cause for higher risk for HIV/AIDS, it is crucial to move away from that narrow notion, and view it from a broader perspective that touches upon people’s identity, values, and rights (Braeken & Cardinal, 2008; Miedema, Maxwell, & Aggleton, 2001).

One challenge in communicating about sexuality and sexual violence in the classroom concerns the different perceptions of teachers and students. Students often feel not understood
or taken seriously by their teachers. Teachers, on the other hand, feel they have not been prepared well enough to respond to the needs of their students with regard to sexuality related issues. These findings support other research that recognize the crucial role of teachers, and the according challenges, in speaking value free about sexuality (Iyer & Aggleton, 2013; Leach, 2003). In addition, the balance of tradition and modernity explains why some teachers might find it difficult to connect to their students: it is a difference of generation and opinions about what is good and what is not. Again, in finding a balance and a healthy way of interpreting the various messages about sexuality that society brings to young people, it is crucial to break taboos, discuss and reflect about it in confidence in an environment free from judgement.

Lastly, although schools can be considered as one of the places to address sexual violence and transform ideas about gender inequality (Chisamya, De Jaeghere, Kendall, Khan, 2010; Stromquist & Fischman, 2009), schools cannot be tasked with transformation only, but strengths should be combined (Chisamya, De Jaeghere, Kendall, Khan, 2012). Teachers confirm and bring up this same idea. Particularly in the context of helping the most vulnerable girls, at high risk of violence in their family or occupancy as a sex worker. In order to successfully address violent injustices against these girls, teachers feel the school needs assistance in terms of expertise and finances. Therefore, it is crucial to cooperate with NGOs, CSOs and government organisations in the same field. At the same time, the broader society such as families and communities should be involved in awareness raising programs.

6.6 Policy Recommendations

From both a policy perspective as well as with regard to theoretical understanding, sexual violence in school should be understood in a context of power relations along lines of gender, age and authority. This context is crucial for understanding such phenomena, and therefore to be able to develop relevant policies. The findings of this study inform the following recommendations:

- Provide comprehensive education that is holistic and promotes positive ideas about sexuality, instead of focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention and behaviour change only. In doing this:
  - Promote critical thinking skills in the classroom. Use media and discussions as a means of raising awareness in school.
  - Teach boys on the causes and consequences of sexual violence.
- Teach girls how to negotiate and be assertive.
- Have discussions in mixed groups of boys and girls, to share views, stories, and experiences.
- Take into account and pay attention to the contradicting and confusing messages of traditional culture and modernity.

- In view of the difficulties encountered by teachers in dealing with problems in school related to sexual violence, provide adequate training for them that will prepare them to better meet the needs of their teenage students. Teachers need to be trained in understanding the context of problems and questions of their students, how to respond to these in a way that meets young people’s needs, and how to create a safe environment in the classroom to take care of issues regarding sexuality.
- Develop, enforce, and act upon codes of ethics in the school.
- Take up an active approach to minimize and combat sexual violence:
  - Actively approach the most vulnerable students in school.
  - Collaborate with other actors in the fields (such as NGOs, CSOs and government organizations), to strengthen the aid provision that can be given to young people in secondary schools, and realise the aims of co-curricular activities. This could be in the form of identifying the girls, financial aid, or expertise in how to approach such problems.

- Include boys, families, and society in raising awareness about sexual violence, its causes, and consequences. For instance, parents need to be included in addressing sexuality related issues in school, possibly through PTAs or contacting them when problems have occurred. Moreover, awareness raising programs should reach wider communities of students, by a holistic approach that could include the assistance of for instance NGOs and CSOs.

**6.7 Future Research Suggestions**

In terms of further investigations, the insights from this research has deepend our understanding of the contexts of sexual violence and how to address this, but has also provided ground for further research needs. In line with Leach and Humphreys (2007), sexual violence should clearly be placed in a context of power relations, along dimensions of gender, age, and authority. This research confirms that, and has revealed that also views on and interpretations of sexual violence can differ long these lines. However, it also reveals that
interpretations of sexual violence differ not only based on gender, but also on experiences and stories that are shared by for instance peers. It is thus important to consider and further investigate other notions in addition to gender to interpret views on sexual violence.

Another finding that is worth investigating further is related to the complexity of many Sub-Saharan African societies. In order to understand gender notions in Sub-Saharan African context, it is crucial to take into account historical and social context, including existing power relations that can be complex in terms of histories of colonialism and imperialism, as well as constructs such as class, age, and race that influence gendered social relations (Adomako Ampofo, Beoku-Betts, Ngaruiya Njambi, & Osirim, 2004). With regard to sexuality and sexual violence, another influence that should be included in the Sub-Saharan African context of discovery, is that of modernity and globalization. This had already been pointed out by research on transactional sex (e.g. Leclerc-Madlala, 2003; Nyanzi, Pool, & Kinsman, 2001). However, notions of modernity and globalization seem to play dominant roles in a wider context related to sexuality, and sexual violence. Therefore, more research should investigate how these notions are defined by young people, and how they play a role in forming attitudes and values about sexuality, and sexual violence in particular. However, at the same time, the link to sex workers and transactional sex seems important. It is therefore recommended to also further investigate this link, and investigate its magnitude, relations, and how they have an influence on young people’s sexuality.

One crucial aspect in explaining and experiencing sexual violence is girls’ perceived lack of agency, or unsuccessful negotiation skills of girls. This had been well established before by several studies on both sexual violence and transactional sex in Sub-Saharan African context (e.g. Bhana, 2012; Leach, 2003; Luke & Kurz, 2002; Mirembe & Davies, 2001). This study thus confirms the importance of these notions and skills for explaining and addressing sexual violence. Therefore, more understanding is needed about how girls negotiate, how boys receive and interpret negotiations, why they are unsuccessful, and what can be done to make them successful. In other words, the processes, intentions, and interpretations of negotiations should be further unfolded, not only in the context of transactional sex, but more importantly in the case of sexual violence.

Lastly, the differences in views among but even more so between boys, girls, and teachers are fascinating. In fact, there seems to be a serious gap and misunderstandings between those groups. At the same time, they all seem to have a similar need when it concerns learning about sexual violence or sexuality: to enjoy comprehensive sex education that
respects others’ values and opinions, and promotes critical thinking skills. It is not surprising that previous research has shown this is rather challenging (Braeken & Cardinal, 2008; Iyer & Aggleton, 2013). Findings in this study confirm that, and at the same time emphasize the importance to give voice to those whom it concerns: girls, boys, and teachers. Hearing these leads to profound insights on the topic, and should be continued in further research aiming to address sexual violence in schools.

6.8 Final Thoughts

Sexual violence is a worldwide phenomenon that has devastating consequences in the lives of many. Also in Ethiopia, it is a societal problem that should be actively addressed by all kinds of actors, including schools. Ironically, schools have been found a place where sexual violence is tolerated and perpetrated by teachers as well as students. This research has aimed to give voice to boys, girls, and teachers, and by that get insight in their views on sexual violence in school.

Despite various awareness raising programs and policies, girls often become victim of unwanted actions from their male students or teachers. Moreover, because sexual violence has been tolerated for so long, it has become a phenomenon that is resistant to change. This is reinforced by taboo, shame, and fear that resist speaking openly about it. That is why active and solid measures are needed to address, and act against these injustices. Comprehensive sex education plays a major role in that. Even more so, measures should go beyond the school building and include relevant actors from the whole society and international community. The findings in this research therefore confirm the need for emphasis in the international community and agenda (e.g. MDGs and other globalized initiatives), for promoting gender equality and SRHR. The voices of young people and teachers cannot be overlooked in those discussions.
References


APPENDIX I: Focus Groups and Interviews – Guide

This guide is developed for my research project in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: “Addressing sexual violence in secondary schools”. The main question that is to be answered in this project is: How do students and teachers define, experience, and interpret sexual violence against girls in secondary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and from their perspectives, how can sexual violence be addressed effectively in formal educational settings? The focus group sessions will serve as a basis for further investigation through interviews. The aim of the focus group discussions is to gain understanding about group meanings and interpretation about masculinity and femininity, and more particularly about sexual violence within schools. A dynamic interaction in the group is therefore vital for the focus group sessions. The interviews will give more in-depth insight in the processes, interpretations, causes and consequences of the people in school. The are semi-structured, and therefore the topic list is only a guideline and might not be strictly followed.

The topic lists for both the focus groups and the interviews begin with some general questions, after that addressing the real topic of sexual violence. This is based on the notion presented by TAASA that sequence of topics generally moves in that direction, as it helps to ease the participants into the issues. Attention is also paid to different subject positions of the respondents (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). For instance, one is a teacher, a woman, a mother, a former secondary school student, and an Ethiopian at the same time. In the formulation of the questions, these subject positions can be activated by using phrases such as “as a women, how do you...” Another crucial part of the focus groups concerns confidentiality and trust. One way of ensuring this is by creating safe places for the discussion partners so they can share freely without having to worry (Brady, 2005). This is essential in the preparing and conduct.

Below are described four topic lists for four focus groups: one for the male teachers, one for the female teachers, one for the boys and one for the girls. Then, topic lists for the interviews with individuals are given. After that follow reflections on preparation and conduct. It should be noted that these questions and topic lists were developed for preparation purposes. For reasons of confidence, trust, and comfort of participants, I brought only a small note with listed topics to the interviews, instead of elaborated versions like below.
1. Focus Groups

Focus groups will consist of four to five members. In total, four focus group sessions will be held (i.e. one for the girl students, one for the boy students, one for the female teachers and one for the male teachers). Selection of teachers is a matter of recruitment, meaning that teachers who are willing to participate are included. For the students, they will also be selected based on their willingness to participate. Preferably a consisting group (e.g. a group of friends) will participate in the focus group, because this makes the talking more comfortable (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001). The aim of the focus groups is to find out how teachers and students define and think about sexual violence in school and what they think should be done about it.

1.1 Focus group with male teachers:

Introduction: greeting, offer something to drink and eat (soda and biscuits), introducing myself and each other, introducing the topic. Emphasize confidentiality.

Any questions beforehand?

General questions:

How is school life for you?

How have you become a teacher?

How do you like teaching?

What are the main issues in this school? (problems, challenges)

Gender differences

Start with exercise: word spin of how to define masculinity and femininity. Two pieces of paper will be used. One to make a word spin of what is masculinity and one to make a word spin of what is femininity (an example might have to be given first, to show how to make a word spin if people are not familiar with this). Making a word spin will encourage discussion and is a good general start for the focus group discussion. After the brainstorming, the five most important traits of masculinity as well as femininity will be listed, as to further push discussion.
1. How do these differences relate to school life?

2. As a teacher, how do you experience differences between men and women, boys and girls? What are challenges? For whom (for you as a male teacher, and for women, for boys and for girls)?

**Sexual violence in schools**

3. In some schools (I am not blaming anybody here, don’t know anything about this school, I am posing a general question), there have been accounts of sexual violence. What is violence to you? Can you give me some examples?

4. What would you consider as sexual violence? E.g. what are examples of it?

5. Do you remember any experience or story that has really influenced how you think about this? What was that?

6. How often does that happen? Is it an issue in school?

7. What do you think are the causes for sexual violence?

8. And the consequences? (maybe 5 and 6 can be drawn)

9. How should we interpret this?

10. How about sexual violence outside schools, for example in families or communities? What is going on there?

11. As an Ethiopian, how do you think people in your country view sexual violence? In and outside school?

12. We talked about men/women; boys/girls. Yet, how do other aspects apart from gender relate to sexual violence? E.g. race, ethnicity, history, culture?

13. What do you feel is the role of a teacher in this (or should be)?

**Addressing sexual violence in schools**

14. Is sexual violence a problem in school? If so, how is it currently addressed?

15. How should it be addressed, according to you?

16. Sometimes, people say one thing and yet they do the other. How does this relate to what we have been talking about? How can we explain this contradiction?

17. How do you see the role of education in society? How does this apply to sexual violence?

18. Exercise: imagine there are no constraints. In money, in government, management or curriculum. Design an action plan to address problems of sexual violence. It has to be a plan that can be performed in school. Think of who is responsible, who will be involved, what will be done precisely. Why is this the best option? (The aim is that all
participating teachers work together on one action plan. So again, a piece of paper is distributed. One person will be appointed to write down the results. I will serve as the chairperson, as this has been my role throughout the focus group session).

Closing: many thanks. Are there any questions? Exchange numbers for further information. I will remain there in case there are questions or things people feel they want to talk about.

1.2 Focus group with female teachers:

Introduction: greeting, offer something to drink and eat (soda and biscuits), introducing myself and each other, introducing the topic. Emphasize confidentiality.

Any questions beforehand?

General questions:

How is school life for you?

How have you become a teacher?

How do you like teaching?

What are the main issues in this school?

Gender differences:

Start with exercise: word spin of how to define masculinity and femininity. Two pieces of paper will be used. One to make a word spin of what is masculinity and one to make a word spin of what is femininity (an example might have to be given first, to show how to make a word spin if people are not familiar with this). Making a word spin will encourage discussion and is a good general start for the focus group discussion. After the brainstorming, the five most important traits of masculinity as well as femininity will be listed, as to further push discussion. This exercise will take 15 minutes, including discussion.

19. How do these differences relate to school life?

20. As a teacher, how do you experience differences between men and women, boys and girls? What are challenges? For who (for you as a female teacher, and for men, for boys and for girls)?

Sexual violence in schools:

21. In some schools (I am not blaming anybody here, don’t know anything about this school, I am posing a general question), there have been accounts of sexual violence. What is violence to you? Can you give examples?
22. What would you consider as sexual violence? Examples?

23. Do you remember any experience or story that has really influenced how you think about this? What was that?

24. How often does this happen in schools? Is it an issue at school?

25. What do you think are the causes for this?

26. And the consequences?

27. How should we interpret this? (explain this, make sense of it)

28. How about sexual violence outside schools, for example in families or communities? What is going on there?

29. As an Ethiopian, how do you think people in your country view this?

30. We talked about men/women; boys/girls. Yet, how do other aspects apart from gender relate to sexual violence? E.g. race, ethnicity, history, culture?

31. What do you feel is the role of a teacher in this (or: should be)?

**Addressing sexual violence**

32. Is sexual violence a problem in school? If so, how is it currently addressed?

33. How should it be addressed, according to you?

34. Sometimes, people say one thing and yet they do the other. How does this relate to what we have been talking about? How can we explain this contradiction?

35. How do you see the role of education in society? How does this apply to sexual violence?

36. Exercise: imagine there are no constraints. In money, in government, management or curriculum. Design an action plan to address problems of sexual violence. It has to be a plan that can be performed in school. Think of who is responsible, who will be involved, what will be done precisely. Why is this the best option? (The aim is that all participating teachers work together on one action plan. So again, a piece of paper is distributed. One person will be appointed to write down the results. I will serve as the chairperson, as this has been my role throughout the focus group session).

Closing: many thanks. Are there any questions? Exchange numbers for further information.

**1.3 Focus group discussion with boys:**

Introduction: greeting, offer something to drink and eat (soda and biscuits), introducing myself and each other, introducing the topic. Emphasize confidentiality.

Any questions beforehand?
General questions:

How is school life for you?

What is good and what is not very good in school?

Do you like going to school?

What about girls, do you like girls?

How do you interact with them, e.g. during break time?

Gender differences:

1. Exercise: word spin for characteristics of boys vs characteristics of girls.
2. How do you see this in your school? Can you give examples?
3. What are problems that relate to differences between girls and boys in school? Gender based violence:

4. In some schools, there have been accounts of sexual violence. Can you think of any?
5. What is sexual violence? Can you give examples?
6. How do you feel about that, as a boy?
7. Do you remember any experience or story that has really influenced how you think about this? What was that?
8. What are the causes of sexual violence?
10. What are the consequences of it?
12. How should we interpret this? What does it mean for students in school that these things happen?
13. What about outside school? What’s going on there?
14. As a boy from Ethiopia, how do you think people in your country view this?
15. As you grow up in this environment, how do these things influence you? How has it made you think of boys and girls? E.g. think back about a moment that was very influential. What happened? How did you feel about it? How has it shaped you/your opinion?
16. What is your opinion about that?
Addressing sexual violence:

17. Is sexual violence a problem in school? If so, how is it currently addressed?
18. How should it be addressed, according to you?
19. Imagine there were lessons in school about problems between boys and girls, and sexual violence. What would you like to learn in those lessons? Who would teach them? Why?
20. Exercise: imagine you are the boss of the school. Your aim is to do something against sexual violence. Design a plan. Who would you teach? How? Why? How many hours a week? Who will be the teacher? Why? (One boy will write on the piece of paper, I will serve as a chairperson)

Closing: many thanks. Are there any questions? Exchange numbers for further information.

1.4 Focus group discussion with girls:
Introduction: greeting, offer something to drink and eat (soda and biscuits), introducing myself and each other, introducing the topic. Emphasize confidentiality.
Any questions beforehand?

General questions:

How is school life for you?

What is good and what is not very good in school?

Do you like going to school?

What do you think about boys?

How do you interact with them, e.g. during break time?

Gender differences:

21. Exercise: word spin for characteristics of boys vs characteristics of girls.
22. How do you see this in your school? Can you give examples?
23. What are problems that relate to differences between girls and boys in school? Gender based violence:

24. In some schools, there have been accounts of sexual violence. Can you think of examples?
25. What is sexual violence, according to you? Can you give examples?
26. Do you remember any experience or story that has really influenced how you think about this? What was that?
27. What are the causes of sexual violence?
29. What are the consequences of it?
31. How should we interpret this? What does it mean for students in school that these things happen? And for girls?
32. What about outside school? What’s going on there?
33. As a girl from Ethiopia, how do you think people in your country view this?
34. Do people talk about it? Why, why not? What do they say?
35. As you grow up in this environment, how do these things influence you? How has it made you think of boys and girls? E.g. think back about a moment that was very influential. What happened? How did you feel about it? How has it shaped you/your opinion?
36. What is your opinion about that?

Addressing sexual violence:

37. Is sexual violence a problem in school? If so, how is it currently addressed?
38. How should it be addressed, according to you?
39. Are there any classes about this in your school? If so, what do you think of them? If not, why not do you think and would you like there to be any?
40. Imagine there were lessons in school about problems between boys and girls. What would you like to learn in those lessons? Who would teach them? Why?
41. Exercise: imagine you are the head teacher of the school. Your aim is to do something against sexual violence. Design a plan. Who would you teach? How? Why? How many hours a week? Who will be the teacher? Why? (One girl will write on the piece of paper, I will serve as the chair person)

Closing: many thanks. Are there any questions? Exchange numbers for further information.
2. Interviews

The one-to-one semi-structured interviews serve to gain deeper insights and personal narratives of how teachers and students define, experience and interpret sexual violence in their school. Similar to the focus group sessions, these interviews all share a focus on the theme of gender based violence in school. However, instead of investigating group meanings, the focus is now on personal experiences and interpretations. So, the aim of the individual interviews is to find out what experiences teachers and students have with gender based violence, how they interpret it and what they think should be done about it.

2.1 Interviews with male teachers:
1. Introduction
2. General questions: how is school life? How do you like teaching?
4. Sexual violence: What would you define is sexual violence? As a teacher, how have you come across sexual violence in schools? Have you heard of stories or experiences and how do you interpret that? How do these things happen? Who is responsible, when does it happen, etc.? What is your opinion of it? Is it a problem, why?
5. How are the causes of sexual violence against girls and what are the consequences?
6. How about sexual violence outside the school? What is going on there?
7. Addressing sexual violence: how is sexual violence currently addressed in schools? What do you think of it?
8. Sometimes, people say one thing and yet they do the other. How does this relate to what we have been talking about? How can we explain this contradiction?
9. What are the causes and the consequences? For people, for education, for society?
10. Is there anything else you want to share?
2.2 Interviews with female teachers:

11. Introduction

12. General questions: how is school life? How do you like teaching?

13. Gender differences: what are differences between men and women/boys and girls. How do they come to expression in schools?
   What are your views on gender equality? Are men/women equal? Why, why not?

14. Sexual violence: How would you define sexual violence, what is sexual violence? As a teacher, how have you come across sexual violence in schools? Have you heard of stories or experiences and how do you interpret that?
   Being a woman, what does it do with you to be aware of sexual violence?
   How do these things happen? Who is responsible, when does it happen, etc.?
   What is your opinion of it? Is it a problem, why?
   What are the causes of sexual violence against girls and what are the consequences?

15. How about sexual violence outside the school? E.g. family community. What is going on there?

16. Addressing sexual violence: how is sexual violence currently addressed in schools? What do you think of it?
   How should it be addressed in schools? Who is responsible? What would be the best manner? Why?

17. Sometimes, people say one thing and yet they do the other. How does this relate to what we have been talking about? How can we explain this contradiction?

18. What are the causes and the consequences for people, education, and society?

19. Is there anything else you want to share?


2.3 Interviews with boys:

21. Introduction

22. General questions: how is school life? How do you like going to school? What do you think of girls? Do you interact with them?

23. Gender differences: what are differences between boys and girls? How do they come to expression in schools?
   What are your views on gender equality? Are boys/girls equal? Why, why not?

24. Sexual violence: What do you see as sexual violence?
   As a boy, how have you come across sexual violence in schools? Have you heard of
stories or experiences and how do you interpret that?

How do these things happen? Who is responsible, when does it happen, etc.?
What is your opinion of it? Is it a problem, why?
What are the causes of sexual violence and what are the consequences?

25. How about sexual violence outside the school? E.g. family community. What is going on there?

26. Addressing sexual violence: how is sexual violence currently addressed in schools? What do you think of it?

How should it be addressed in schools? Who is responsible? What would be the best manner? Why?

If there were lessons or programs about sexual violence in your school, what would you like to learn?
What would be good about those lessons and programs? What would be challenges?

27. Is there anything else you want to share?


2.4 Interviews with girls:

29. Introduction

30. General questions: how is school life? How do you like going to school? What do you think of boys? Do you interact with them?

31. Gender differences: what are differences between boys and girls? How do they come to expression in schools?
What are your views on gender equality? Are boys/girls equal? Why, why not?

32. Sexual violence: what do you see as sexual violence? As a girl, how have you come across sexual violence in schools? Have you heard of stories or experiences?
What were they?
What do they mean to you? How do you interpret these stories/experiences?
How do these things happen? Who is responsible, when does it happen, etc.?
What is your opinion of it? Is it a problem, why?

What are the causes of sexual violence? What were the causes in that story or experience, and what are the consequences?

How do girls cope with that, when they are a victim of sexual violence? Do they seek help? Why, why not? Who do they seek help by?

33. How about sexual violence outside the school? E.g. family community. What is going on there?
34. Addressing sexual violence: how is sexual violence currently addressed in schools? What do you think of it?

How should it be addressed in schools? Who is responsible? What would be the best manner? Why?

If there were lessons or programs about sexual violence in your school, what would you like to learn?

What would be good about those lessons and programs? What would be challenges?

35. Is there anything else you want to share?


3. Preparation and Conduct

The focus groups and interviews will take place in a private area outside the main school building, a place in which it is sure that no-one can hear the conversation. Neither students nor teachers would want others to hear the private information or concerns that are discussed in the interviews. Either because they can be emotionally difficult to talk about, or because of reputation issues and social pressure.

Before starting the focus group session and/or an interview, a significant amount of time and attention is spent on the introduction. The introduction is in this case crucial for two reasons. The first reason is that an atmosphere of trust and confidence needs to be created. Being the interviewer, I will ask many questions to the interviewee. Therefore, the interviewee needs to know who I am, whether I can be trusted and why I want to know all these things. I will therefore introduce myself and the aims of my research projects as investigating boy and girl problems in schools. Even more so, I will emphasize that all conversations are confidential; that they are not held to check upon anybody and that all that is said will be treated privately. The second reason for spending time to the introduction is related to cultural habits. In many African cultures, it is a manner of politeness to spend time asking after the conversation partner. It would be rude to start the interview without sharing about how my day was, how my family is and how my home is, or asking after that of the conversation partner. By introducing ourselves this way, an atmosphere of politeness, friendliness, trust and confidence will be created.

The introduction of the interview reflects how I will act throughout the rest of the interview. I am interested in what the interviewee thinks. I want to know their thoughts,
without judgment. Regardless of whether I agree or disagree on their opinions, I would want to know why they think that and why it is important. Moreover, I will act as a person that can be trusted. By showing that I understand what they say, sympathizing when appropriate and having an open attitude, I will let the interviewees know that their stories are safe with me and important to me. However, I would also feel obliged to make clear at the beginning of the interview that I will not be able to help financially or otherwise expected. My only help will be writing a report with policy implications.

After the focus group sessions and the interviews, I will give my telephone number to my discussion partners. That way, they have the opportunity to contact me in case they have further questions or something to share they feel I might be interested in. I will also ask for their numbers for the very same reason, but of course they are free to refrain from giving that.

Resources


TAASA (Texas Association Against Sexual Assault). Focus Groups and Interviews – Supplemental Informatio Gathering. [retrieved from http://www.taasa.org/prevention/pdfs/FocusGroupAndInterviewGuide.pdf]

APPENDIX II: Code list

Definition
1. "Positive" sounds
1. Acts
1. Confused by terminology
1. Cultural background
1. General terms
1. Prostitution

Experience
2. "Positive" sounds
2. Boy – Girl
2. Cultural/societal context
2. Home
2. Involvement school board
2. Other direction of SV
2. Prostitution
2. Teacher - Student

Causes
3.1 Awareness
3.1 Boy – Girl
3.1 Changing
3.1 Female participation
3.1 Home
3.1 Sex workers
3.1 Soc - don't speak
3.1 Soc – Globalization
3.1 Soc – tradition
3.1 Teacher - Student

Consequences
3.2 Country development
3.2 Drop out from school
3.2 Physical health
3.2 Psychological health
3.2 Social status and participation
Address
4. Awareness
4. Law, rules, measurements
4. Practice what you preach
4. School - (co)curricular
4. School - active approach
4. School - cooperate with other organisations
4. School – discussion
4. School – girls
4. School - holistic/comprehensive approach
4. School – teachers
4. School rule
4. Sex workers

Context - Student

Country context

FGD Exercise

Girl shyness/confidence/assertiveness
APPENDIX III: Map of Ethiopia
**Abstract (summary):**

It has been increasingly recognized that sexual violence in schools is one of the major concerns with regard to promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This research explores the views of teachers and students on sexual violence: how do they define, experience, and interpret sexual violence in a secondary school in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and from their perspectives, how can sexual violence be addressed effectively in formal educational settings? Twenty-nine in-depth interviews and four focus group discussions revealed how these views differ between boys, girls, and teachers: boys typically sharing a more theoretical and instrumental view on sexual violence, as opposed to girls’ practical, emotional, and intrinsic views based on their experiences. Teachers express their concern about young people finding themselves pulled between conflicting messages of 'traditional life' and 'modern' temptations, often creating confusion, and a clash of values. At the same time, they express feelings of incapability in how to solve such problems. The contrasts in views suggest that there are misunderstandings between and among teachers and students, complicating relevant and comprehensive interaction in sex education. Moreover, it leaves room for manifestations of sexual violence to remain tolerated in schools.

*Keywords*: sexual violence, gender, sexual and reproductive health and rights, comprehensive sex education, teachers, students, Ethiopia, Sub-Saharan Africa.