

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**

**PREVENTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE
AND
COUNSELLING PROGRAM IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE LA
NKWANTANANG MADINA MUNICIPALITY**

BY



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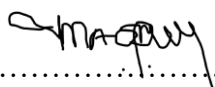
**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,
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DECLARATION

I, Hannah Aimee Adzei, do hereby declare that this thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies is my research work conducted under the supervision of Dr. Kingsley Saa-Touh Mort and Dr. Doris Akyere Boateng, both at the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana, Legon, and that this thesis, has not been submitted either in part or whole for the award of any degree elsewhere. All other sources of information used have been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Rev. Mrs. Mabel Anku-Morny, and Mrs. Millicent Nyarko, the immediate past Head of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, in the La Nkwantanang Madina Municipal Assembly. Your encouragement gave me strength when things became tough. I appreciate every piece of advice you offer. Thank you!



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Through all the changing scenes of life, in trouble and joy, the praises of my God shall still, my heart and tongue employ! (MHB 427)

I am most grateful to God for his protection and good health for my life through my course of study. Indeed, his Faithfulness endures forever!

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God bless us all!



ABSTRACT

Over the years, the prevalence of child sexual abuse of students has been a concern to governments and stakeholders. A UNICEF (2020) report states that the prevalence rate of child sexual abuse of students around the world ranges between 15 to 25% for girls and 5 to 17% for boys. In recent years, there have been alarming concerns following an upsurge of reported cases of child sexual abuse of students within the La Nkwantanang Madina Municipality. This phenomenon has become an enormous problem for parents, teachers, and policymakers within the Municipality. Considering the above, this research explores the role of guidance and counselling in Junior High Schools established to prevent child sexual abuse in schools in the La Nkwantanang Madina Municipality. Following the ecological systems theory propounded by Urie Brofenbrenner (1979), this research explored child sexual abuse prevention based on the interconnectedness of human development and its environment. The study employed a phenomenological qualitative research design in exploring students' knowledge based on sexual abuse and guidance and counselling. In addition, the study investigated the support services available to the guidance and counselling unit, factors militating against the use of the guidance and counselling program in preventing child sexual abuse, and strategies that they adopt to prevent child sexual abuse particularly in schools. A sample size of 26 participants comprising 15 Junior High School students and 11 key informants were utilised for the study. An interview guide was designed for data collection. Using a thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke, the findings revealed that students' level of knowledge on child sexual abuse is limited to unconsented sexual activity by adults. Many of the students had little knowledge of guidance and counselling units in their various schools. The findings further revealed that the guidance and counselling program receives support from other stakeholders such as NGOs and Health Practitioners in the form of collaborations to organize sensitization programs on preventing child sexual abuse in schools. The study also identified lack of financial support,

parental neglect, negative social media content on sexual and the non-allocation of guidance and counselling activities as a subject on the timetable of Junior High Schools in the La Nkwantanang Municipality as some of the factors militating against the use of guidance and counselling as a strategy of preventing child sexual abuse. The study, recommends that the Ghana Education

Service directorate in the La Nkwantanang Municipality should direct schools to capture Guidance and Counselling on the timetable of schools, require in-school guidance and counselling facilitators to possess relevant professional qualifications, direct in-school guidance and counselling facilitators to have regular engagements with students, appoint school social workers to work in the guidance and counselling units of schools and overall provide the in school guidance and counselling facilitators with the financial resources and logistics to enable them provide students the requisite education in order to nib child sexual abuse in the bud among Junior High Schools in the La Nkwantanang Municipality.

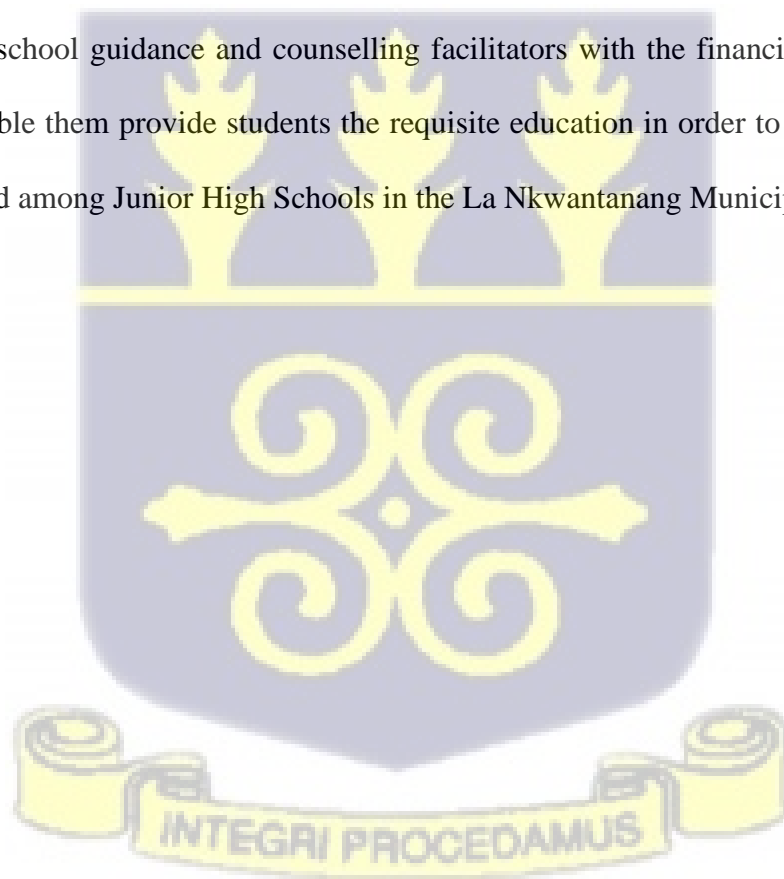


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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit
EFA	Education for All
EST	Ecological System Theory
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
FGMSA	Federation of Ghana Medical Association
G&C	Guidance and Counselling
GES	Ghana Education Service
JHS	Junior High School
LaNMMA	La Nkwantanang Madina Municipal Assembly
MMDAs	Municipal Metropolitan and District Assemblies
MHB	Methodist Hymn Book
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PRESEC	Presbyterian Boys Senior High School
SCORP	Standing Committee on Human Rights and Peace
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMC	School Management Committee
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations International Children and Education Fund
WASS	West African Senior High School

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1: Background of the study

1.1.1 The concept of child sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse is defined by Simuforosa and Rosemary (2015: 9) as a “deliberate misuse of power over a child by an adult or an adolescent to gain sexual gratification.” Even though it is difficult to accurately estimate the world’s child sexual abuse cases, UNICEF came up with a global estimate of 150 million girls and 73 million boys who have been sexually abused (UNICEF, 2020). Africa and Asia are among the regions with the highest incidence of child sexual abuse worldwide (Selengia et al., 2020). According to Selengia et al. (2020), 24% of Asia’s population are children under 14 years of age, and that of Africa is 41%. They added that child sexual abuse for females in Ethiopia and Tanzania is 2.1% and 68.7%, respectively. Additionally, in South Africa, child sexual abuse ranges between 4.1% to 60% for males. The rate for Asia is 3.3% in China and 42.7% in India. In Ghana, among all the forms of child abuse, reports suggest that child sexual abuse is only reported when it has severe health consequences for the victim (Bordoh et al., 2016). This is due to the stigma attached to someone who has been sexually abused (Jones et al., 2020).

Child sexual abuse cannot be considered under any circumstance as good. It is a significant public health issue with short and long-term medical and psychological effects. The medical impacts are disease infections, withdrawal symptoms, and in severe cases, disability. Psychological effects include trauma and sexual disorders in later life (Brannon, 2017). Several factors account for the sexual abuse of children. Factors such as poverty, substance abuse, living arrangements of children, poor parent-child relationships, and parental absence

(Bordoh et al., 2016; Kebede & Belay, 2020; Letourneau et al., 2017; Theimer & Hansen, 2020; Zagrodney & Cummings, 2020). In addition to these factors, Diraditsile (2018) established financial gain as the main contributing factor to sexual abuse among students at the Senior High School level. For instance, teachers' pay school fees for students, buy expensive items such as mobile phones, and some students also engage in sexual acts for marks or good grades.

1.1.2 Prevalence of child sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a social problem and a severe public health concern confronting most countries (World Health Organization, 2020). A substantial number of children across the globe have experienced sexual or physical violence before attaining the age of 18 years (UNICEF, 2020). The report further states that the prevalence rate of child sexual abuse among students worldwide ranges between 15 to 25% for girls and 5 to 17% for boys (UNICEF, 2020).

Child sexual abuse in Sub-Saharan Africa is not different from what occurs globally (KibaruMbae, 2011). In addition to these global occurrences, some traditional cultural practices in Africa, such as child marriage, child brides, female genital mutilation, virginity testing, and pre-pubertal sexual relations with a man regarded as a husband, are considered child sexual abuse (Kibaru-Mbae, 2011). Also, Elvis (2020) claims that wrong beliefs, misconceptions, and taboos account for child sexual abuse. Therefore, these misconceptions prevent a child from knowing their rights and sexual and reproductive health concerns. For example, discussing sexual topics with children is taboo in most African societies (Bohm, 2016). Aside from the taboo and misconceptions, wrong beliefs are also prevalent in specific South African and Tanzania communities. For instance, these societies have seen virginity as

sacred, and it is believed that taking a girl's virginity brings good fortune and is a way of cleansing (Elvis 2020).

Ghana is not an exception to the child sexual abuse menace (Bordoh et al., 2016). According to the Criminal Code (Amendment) Act 1998 (Act 554), sexual abuse of a child below 16 years is considered a crime in Ghana. However, studies conducted in Ghana (Boakye, 2009; Markwei & Osei-Hwedie, 2019; Markwei & Tetteh, 2021; Tetteh & Markwei, 2018) on child sexual abuse revealed that the phenomenon continues to sour in the country and due to low disclosure rates. These underreported cases are due to patriarchal nuances, (child) rape myth acceptance, and a "collective shame problem" (Boakye, 2009). The concept of patriarchy has been given prominence in some societies in Ghana. This concept empowers men and oppresses women, which encourages and justifies sexual coercion against women who are usually victims of sexual abuse. The (child) rape myth acceptance is when perpetrators of child sexual abuse trivialise or justify sexual abuse against children. "Collective shame problem" focuses on protecting the child's interest who has become the victim of sexual abuse. The collective shame problem protects social values rather than the immediate or long-term effect of child sexual abuse. These child sexual abuses, such as defilement, sexual exploitation, and sexual assault, are only reported to the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) when it has severe health consequences. The delay in reporting may be due to stigma and the relationship with the abuser or perpetrator (Boakye, 2009; Markwei & Osei-Hwedie, 2019; Markwei & Tetteh, 2021).

1.1.3 Forms of child sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse takes various forms. The forms of child sexual abuse have been classified as contact and non-contact sexual abuse (Koçtürk & Yüksel, 2018). Contact sexual abuse include kissing, caressing, masturbation, oral intercourse, and anal and virginal intercourse. In

contrast, non-contact forms of sexual violence are listed as exposing a child to pornographic materials and unwanted love messages (Baker et al., 2013; Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019; Esin et al., 2020; Kloppen et al., 2016; Sivilis-cetinkaya, 2015). The findings from these studies concur with Carson et al. 2013; Glaser, 2015; Saied-Tessier (2014). Their studies revealed defilement, transactional sex (sex in exchange for money or other essentials), and children watching pornographic images as the common forms of child sexual abuse.

1.1.4 Different contexts of child sexual abuse

In some societies in South Africa and Tanzania, virginity is considered sacred, and taking a girl's virginity is seen as a cleansing that brings good fortunes in the future (Muridzo, 2021). These wrong beliefs may be because these societies are oblivious to a child's sexual reproductive health and rights. For example, when a girl's physical features at puberty develop quickly, she is seen or considered an adult. Hence, nothing is seen wrong with engaging the child in sexual activities. However, some cultures consider CSA a crime punishable with heavy fines, ex-communication, or a humiliating cleansing ceremony in public (Sanjeevi et al., 2018). In the Ghanaian context, child sexual abuse occurs due to its citizens' varied religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. The Ghanaian population comprises Christians, Muslims, and Traditional Religion. Traditional and non-traditional Religions, beliefs, and cultural practices expose some children to sexual abuse. For instance, apart from the forms of sexual abuse mentioned above, in the Northern part of the country, Female Genital Mutilation, and in the Southern part (Volta Region), the Trokosi System is prevalent (UNICEF, 2012). Female Genital Mutilation is the cutting or removal of a girl's clitoris to prevent the girl from having any sexual desire.

On the other hand, "Trokosi" which means "slave of the gods", is a practice where girls as young as three years are virgins are sent to a shrine or fetish priests to serve in the atonement

of the sins of their family members or forefathers (Ame, 2012). These cultural practices are considered an abuse of a child's rights, especially sexual abuse in the Ghanaian context.

1.1.5 Settings of child sexual abuse

The United Nations Children's Fund (2020) suggests that sexual abuse may occur in any setting where a child spends most of their time. They indicate children's homes, perpetrators' homes, and the school environment where child sexual abuse occurs. Nevertheless, the school environment is considered safe and secure where students develop their mental and physical capabilities. However, when students are sexually abused in the school environment, it can represent a risk factor that heightens mental problems (Sivis-cetinkaya, 2015). Research suggests that the school environment represents 62% of perpetrators of child sexual abuse (Diraditsile K. 2018). Simuforosa and Rosemary (2015) supported this assertion that the school environment possesses prestige and power in economic, social, or physical status, which they use to entice their victims.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, child sexual abuse is rampant in countries like Botswana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, especially in the secondary school environment (Diraditsile K., 2018; KibaruMbae, 2011; Simuforosa & Rosemary, 2015). The contributing factor to such abuses in schools in these countries is poverty. These students are then abused for financial and material gain by students. In Ghana, child sexual abuse is common in Senior High schools because it is believed that most female students exchange sexual favours for good grades and material things such as phones and clothes (Bordoh et al., 2016)

1.1.6 Consent for sexual activity

Sexually abused children are between 13 and 17 years and, on average, 14 years old (UNICEF, 2020). Notwithstanding, victims of child sexual abuse could be as young as five years up to 17 years (Cashmore et al., 2017). However, in most countries, the legal age for a marital union

is 18 years (Buck, 2020). This legal age of marriage implies that anyone who marries below 18 years or consents to marriage could be a victim of child marriage or sexual abuse.

Closely linked to the legal age of marriage is the minimum age for sexual consent, at which a young person can consent to sexual activity (Petroni et al., 2019). There are different legislative instruments for the minimum age of sexual consent. In England and Wales, the legal age at which a person can engage in sexual activity is 16 years (Munro, 2017). Although the legal age for consent is 16 years, it is illegal to pay for sexual services from someone under 18 years or take a photo of someone under 18 years who is engaged in any sexual activity. In Australia and South Africa, consent for sexual intercourse is 16 and 17 years, respectively (Cashmore et al., 2017).

In Ghana, according to the Criminal Offences Act 1960 (Act 29), the minimum age of sexual consent is 16 years (Ahinkorah et al., 2021). However, the Children's Amendment Act and the Convention on the Rights of a Child peg the minimum age for marriage at 18 years. The disparity between the age of sexual consent in the Criminal Act and the age of marital consent implies that it is illegal to marry below 18 years but legal to have sex consensually above the age of 16. Furthermore, this disparity is perceived as an endorsement for early sexual initiation, leading to children being sexually abused.

1.1.7 School guidance and counselling program

To prevent or limit child sexual abuse and its effects on children, most schools, both at the Junior and Senior High levels, established guidance and counselling programs to educate children on the phenomenon and how to prevent it. Guidance and counselling aid in advising students on potential solutions to their problems and obtaining answers to those problems. Guidance and counselling are crucial in schools because most parents tend to neglect their responsibility in educating their children about sex in the hands of teachers.

Guidance and counselling started in India way back in ancient times. However, in 1938, guidance and counselling were first introduced at Calcutta University to research educational and vocational guidance of students (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013). In 1967 Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia introduced guidance and counselling in the higher education curriculum so trained students would be posted to schools and other settings where guidance and counselling services are needed (Alemu, 2013). In Nigeria, guidance and counselling started at St. Theresa's College in Ibadan in 1959. The rationale behind the guidance and counselling in Nigeria was to cushion school leavers in furthering their education, employment, and adjusting to society's conditions after leaving school (Alika, 2010).

In Ghana, for instance, due to the socio-cultural dynamics between parents and their children, sex is not readily discussed in the open. In addition, the unit also helps students make responsible social choices and informed decisions (Chaudry, A. H., Murtaza, A., Sarwar, M., Kahn, N., Naseem, 2012).

These backgrounds of child sexual abuse and its prevention motivated exploring the phenomenon of child sexual abuse and its prevention strategies put in place by the Ghana Education Service (GES). These prevention strategies are employed in the La Nkwantanang Madina Municipality (LaNMMA).

1.2 Problem statement

The interest to conduct a study on child sexual abuse among Junior High Schools in the La Nkwantanang Madina Municipality came to me not as a daunting decision but instead as a call to an urgent social responsibility as a practicing social worker. Having worked at the La Nkwantanang Madina Municipal Assembly (LaNMMA) Social Welfare and Community Development Department since 2012, I have become aware of the enormity of the problems associated with child sexual abuse within the Municipality. The Social Welfare Department, Madina, has regularly been inundated with cases of child sexual abuse. For instance, by the

close of 2019, there were forty-two (42) reported cases of child sexual abuse. Similarly, in 2020 and 2021, there were fifty-three (53) and forty-seven (47) reported cases of abuse, respectively (Unpublished). Often, the victims are basic school-going age children ranging between 8 to 15 years. Unfortunately, both the victims and culprits seem ignorant of the effects of such acts on the children's physical, psychological, educational, and emotional growth.

Following the ignorance shown by some of these school children, I decided to follow up on teachers' role in creating awareness and educating pupils on the dangers and effects of child sexual abuse. This adventure led to the realization of the establishment of a guidance and counselling program and the safe school program in the schools. Knowing the magnitude of this child abuse phenomenon and the existence of guidance and counselling units, I resolved to research the phenomenon and teachers' role within the Municipality in curbing it.

Sexual abuse, particularly in schools, has become a universal problem that has received research attention over the years. Several girls and boys globally are confronted daily with this threat of child sexual abuse (Baker et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2020; Rudolph et al., 2018; Sebahat, 2020). According to a UNICEF report, an estimated 120 million girls under 20 years have been sexually abused (UNICEF, 2014). The report also indicates that millions of boys have also been sexually abused, which violates children's rights, thus affecting other rights inadvertently. In Africa and Ghana in particular, the social system of care provided by the extended family system is still quite prevalent. Children receive upbringing from extended family members, including uncles, aunties, and grandparents (Nukunya, 2007). This social care practice from the extended family is a fertile ground for sexual abuse (Horvath et al., 2014).

In the Government of Ghana's quest to respond to issues such as child maltreatment, including sexual abuse, the 1992 Constitution, and other legal frameworks such as the Children's

(Amendment) Act, Act 937, Juvenile Justice Act, Act 653, the Convention on the Rights of a Child, and the Child Welfare Policy have been adopted. These frameworks are set out to promote children's well-being, prevent child abuse, strengthen the child protection system, and protect any child from harm. Despite these legal frameworks, the level of abuse against school learners, especially sexual abuse, continues to increase both in communities and schools (MacMillan et al., 2013).

The colossal effect of these sexual abuses on school learners affects their rights to education, health, and security and the consequences of these abuses are teenage pregnancies, lower school enrolments, high school drop-out rates, early marriages, early parenthood, and associated social vices (Russell et al., 2020).

Empirical research (Koçtürk & Yüksel, 2018; Siviş-cetinkaya, 2015) on the phenomenon of child sexual abuse prevention in Ghana has been chiefly focused on Senior High Schools and also on risk factors. Most studies (Artz et al., 2018; Bordoh et al., 2016; Kebede & Belay, 2020; Kibaru-Mbae, 2011; Simuforosa & Rosemary, 2015) conducted in Africa have also been limited to Senior High Schools. However, the Ghana Education Service (GES) has rolled out programs that help prevent child sexual abuse, such as the guidance and counselling programs and the Safe School Program, which helps educate children on the dangers of sexual abuse and how to prevent it. On the other hand, section C of the Teachers Code of Conduct (2008) spells out punishment for teachers of child sexual abuse in schools, yet reported cases continue to sour in the country (Rizo et al., 2021). Besides, there have been increasingly reported cases of child sexual abuse at the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), and the Municipal Health Centers in the municipality.

The Social Welfare Department, Madina, has regularly been inundated with cases of child sexual abuse. For instance, by the close of 2019, forty-two (42) reported cases of child sexual abuse. Similarly, in 2020 and 2021, there were fifty-three (53) and forty-seven (47) reported cases of abuse, respectively (Unpublished). Due to a lack of financial resources and logistics, staff have been overwhelmed with issues and face challenges in appropriately handling such cases.

Furthermore, even though studies (Boakye, 2009; Markwei & Osei-Hwedie, 2019; Rizo et al., 2021; Tetteh & Markwei, 2018) have been conducted on child sexual abuse prevention in Ghana; little is known about the role of guidance and counselling in preventing child sexual abuse. This study sought to fill in this research gap by exploring the part of guidance and counselling in child sexual abuse prevention in Junior High Schools in the Madina Municipality of Ghana.

1.3 Gaps in the literature

A literature review suggests that studies (Cowan et al., 2019; Kibaru-Mbae, 2011; Rudolph et al., 2018; Smellie et al., 2012) have been conducted on child sexual abuse in schools. However, some of these studies (Walsh et al., 2015; Weatherley et al., 2012) focus on sexual abuse in Senior High Schools and Universities globally. Schools have introduced guidance and counselling units to tackle the menace of child sexual abuse. Besides, studies (Anyi, 2017; Eyasu et al., 2019; Gallant & Zhao, 2011; Goss & Adebowale, 2014; Mulenga & Mukaba, 2018; Ondima et al., 2013) conducted on guidance and counselling focused on services rendered in Senior High Schools. These services centered on how they could instill discipline in students in the Sub-Region and the Ghanaian context.

However, other studies, such as Kanga (2017), looked at how new students cope with their new environment, which was conducted in Kenya. These studies show an increase in adolescent pregnancy and a high dropout rate of teenage girls due to sexual abuse. This

portends the greater need to understand why the increase in pregnancies and the role of guidance and counselling in preventing these needless pregnancies.

Furthermore, studies in the Ghanaian context focus on Senior High School and university students, leaving out basic schools. Admittedly, the basic school, the Primary and Junior High School Pupils form an essential bracket of the educational system. Research (Asiedu-Yirenkyi et al., 2019; Chebon, 2018; Wihyanti et al., 2019) suggests that basic schools are necessary because when appropriate guidance and counselling are administered to them at this level. This study focuses on the role of the guidance and counselling program in Junior High Schools in child sexual abuse prevention.

1.4 Research Objectives

The overall objective is to explore the preventive mechanisms of child sexual abuse in Junior High Schools in the La Nkwantanang Madina Municipality (LaNMMA) in Accra. The specific objective of the study are:

- i. To explore the knowledge of Junior High School pupils in the LaNMMA about the role of guidance and counselling towards the prevention of child sexual abuse.
- ii. To identify the support services available to Junior High Schools in LaNMMA towards preventing child sexual abuse.
- iii. To document factors that militate against using guidance and counselling programs to prevent child sexual abuse in the LaNMMA.
- iv. To identify strategies employed by Junior High Schools in LaNMMA towards preventing child sexual abuse.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. Do JHS Pupils in the LaNMMA know about the role of Guidance and Counselling in preventing CSA?
- ii. What support services are available to JHSs in LaNMMA for preventing CSA? iii.
- iii. What factors militate against the utilization of guidance and counselling in the prevention of CSA in JHS in the LaNMMA?
- iv. What strategies are employed by JHS in the LaNMMA to prevent CSA?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is significant in terms of existing literature, policy, future research, and social work practice

1.6.1 Contribution to Existing Literature

Studies (Artz et al., 2018; Bermetz et al., 2013; Kloppen et al., 2016; Simuforosa & Rosemary, 2015; Smellie et al., 2012) conducted on child sexual abuse have focused attention on the prevalence and risk factors in Senior High Schools. In addition, studies (Anyi, 2017; Manyeyo, 2018; Salgong et al., 2016; Upoalkpajor et al., 2018) on guidance and counselling centered on career guidance and counselling, the role of guidance and counselling in effective teaching and learning and the role of guidance and counselling in discipline management. The study's findings provide a different perspective on the role of the guidance and counselling program in child sexual abuse prevention.

1.6.2 Contribution to Policy

The suggested recommendations of the study could serve as a framework to assist policymakers in enhancing policy-making decisions at the Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MMDAs) and key stakeholders, to find practical solutions to address the menace of

child sexual abuse in the municipality. Also, the guidance and counselling unit of the Ghana Education Service could make informed decisions in providing appropriate and effective prevention strategies for child sexual abuse in communities. This could influence the design and implementation of the guidance and counselling program, especially in Junior High Schools.

1.6.3 Contribution to Future Research

The study will also serve as a reference point for further studies to support child sexual abuse prevention.

1.6.4 Contribution to Social Work Practice

Findings from the study could help School Social Work practitioners play the advocacy role by educating school authorities and the community to understand better the peculiar challenges of pupils, guidance and counselling facilitators, and critical stakeholders in preventing child sexual abuse.

1.7 Definition of terms

The study adopted the following key terms:

Child: A child is defined as any person below the age of eighteen years (Children's (Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act 937).

Child sexual abuse: It is defined by Simuforsa and Rosemary (2015: 9) as a "deliberate misuse of power over a child by an adult or an adolescent to gain sexual gratification.

School environment: A school environment is any academic setting, which includes a physical plant, that promotes the safety and health of students and where there is fairness and adequacy of disciplinary procedures (Mick Zais, 2011).

Guidance and counselling: This is defined as "the process of helping an individual become fully aware of themselves and the ways they are responding to the influences of their environment" (Anyi, 2017: 38)

Perpetrator: A perpetrator is a person who carries out a harmful, illegal, or immoral act (Martinello, 2020).

Prevention: Measures taken to prevent or stop child sexual abuse from occurring.

Victim: Any child who has encountered any form of sexual abuse

1.8 Organisation of the study

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter one includes the background of the study. Identifies the study's problem and highlights the study's research objectives and questions. It also consists of the significance of the research and the definition of key terms/ concepts used. The second chapter is dedicated to the literature review. The objectives and research questions constitute thematic areas for the literature review. The theoretical framework employed is presented in this chapter.

The third chapter provides the study's methodology. This comprises the research design, study area, target population, study population, sampling procedure, sample size, techniques for data collection, inclusion and exclusion criteria, ethical consideration, gender equity, and how Covid-19 protocols were observed. Chapter four of the study deals with data analysis, interpretation, and discussion of findings. Chapter five is the concluding chapter which presents the summary of key findings, conclusions, recommendations and implications for social work practice. The direction of future studies is also indicated in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing studies on the role of schools in child sexual abuse prevention. It also includes the role of guidance and counselling coordinators in awareness creation on child sexual abuse prevention, support services available to the guidance and counselling unit in child sexual abuse prevention, factors militating against child sexual abuse prevention, and strategies employed in preventing child sexual abuse.

2.1 Awareness creation on child sexual abuse prevention in schools

Awareness creation on child sexual abuse is very vital for its prevention. Child sexual abuse awareness is the degree of information or knowledge about child sexual abuse and understanding different ways of responding to situations that lead to abuse. Jasmine and Hameed (2016) used a qualitative study in India to examine awareness of child sexual abuse in Higher School students. Their results indicate that most students in Higher Schools are aware of child sexual abuse and how to identify perpetrators compared to those who are unaware. They further stated that girls are more aware of child sexual abuse and its prevention among these Junior High School students than boys. However, this finding contradicts Diraditsile K. (2018), who also explored students' knowledge of child sexual abuse using a mixed method in Botswana. He found that children need to be aware of CSA and its threats because most children are unaware of what child sexual abuse entails. Other studies (Baker et al., 2013; Foster, 2017; Zhang et al., 2015) used the train-the-trainer model, quantitative and quasi-experimental design, in Benjiug and Hawai'i to assess the knowledge of children in sexual abuse prevention. Their studies revealed that awareness of child sexual abuse could be created using a quasi-experimental study design and the train-the-trainer model in social work to determine students' actual knowledge or understanding. These methods must involve

collaboration between guidance and counselling coordinators and parents in educating children on preventing child sexual abuse anywhere they find themselves. This awareness creation and the partnership between parents contribute to child sexual abuse prevention in schools and communities.

2.2 Guidance and counselling services in schools

Guidance and counselling started in India way back in ancient times. However, in 1938, guidance and counselling were first introduced at Calcutta University to research educational and vocational guidance of students (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013). In 1967 Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia introduced guidance and counselling in the higher education curriculum so trained students would be posted to schools and other settings where guidance and counselling services are needed (Alemu, 2013). In Nigeria, guidance and counselling started at St. Theresa's College in Ibadan in 1959. The rationale behind the guidance and counselling in Nigeria was to cushion school leavers in furthering their education, employment, and adjusting to society's conditions after leaving school (Alika, 2010).

In Ghana, formal guidance and counselling began in the late 1960s due to Ghanaians' quest for a meaningful education for children (Appiah, 2013). The Ghana Education Service (GES) in 1980 established guidance and counselling units in primary schools throughout the country (Manyeyo, 2018). The guidance and counselling unit helps individuals discover and develop their educational, vocational, and psychological potential in achieving an optimal level of personal happiness and social usefulness. Additionally, the rationale of the school guidance and counselling unit is to support students in addressing their future and social challenges.

Guidance is best explained as the assistance given by someone to an individual of any age to help them manage their own life's activities (Anyi, 2017: 38). On the other hand, counselling is a helping process given by qualified or trained persons, which depends on a series of direct contacts with an individual that aims to help and change attitudes and behaviour (Magdalene

et al., 2019). According to Odeleye (2017), there are three main approaches to counselling: Directive, indirective (Non-directive), and Eclectic approaches. The directive approach, also known as the counsellor-centered approach, is explained as where the counsellor takes center stage in psychotherapy. The indirective method is client-centered, while the eclectic approach combines the directive and indirective approaches. A guidance counsellor best utilises the Eclectic system in a school setting because it treats emotional problems (Odeleye 2017). However, school guidance and counselling services include student appraisal, information giving, placement and follow-up, and counselling services (Hossain & Faisal, 2013). Lunenburg (2010), in his qualitative study conducted in the United States of America, Texas, examined the aims of guidance and counselling programs. He observed that the guidance and counselling programs services include assessment, information, placement or follow-up, counselling, and evaluation services. This is in line with Namale and Awabil (2018), whose quantitative study in Gomoa West District, Ghana, focused on delivering guidance services in Senior High Schools. They observed that some of the services implemented by the Ghana Education Service are appraisal, consultation, counselling, and information services. They added that appraisal services were effectively implemented in the Senior High Schools, while the guidance and counselling poorly implemented information, counselling, and consultation services unit due to a lack of funds.

In Ghana, schools' guidance and counseling programs aim to reduce school learners' drop-out rates, educate children on sexual abuse, enhance academic performance, and facilitate informed career choices (Manyeyo, 2018). However, guidance and counselling do not relate only to schools, and there are several areas where it can be employed, such as psychosocial or marital guidance and counseling.

Guidance and counselling programs create awareness among children, including child sexual abuse prevention. However, children in primary schools are primarily unaware of child sexual

abuse prevention strategies because they often lack the ability and knowledge to protect themselves from all forms of abuse or harm from adults or even their peers (Zhang et al., 2015). For this reason, sexual abuse prevention programs are vital in all educational institutions. To successfully implement a child sexual abuse prevention program, it must involve parents and teachers in a coordinated manner to fight against child sexual abuse, with much fewer efforts.

According to Sebahat (2020), parents and teachers are essential for sexual abuse prevention programs because they play an indispensable role in a child's developmental process. This is true to the extent that parents' and teachers' coordinated efforts could avert or prevent many unfortunate child abuse cases.

2.3 Roles of the guidance and counselling units in schools

In certain educational institutions, guidance and counselling units are presumed responsible for roles such as guardians or gatekeepers to prevent child sexual abuse; professional school counselors are regarded as consultants, advocates, leaders, and collaborators (Joy et al., 2011).

All basic and pre-tertiary schools in Ghana have a school-based guidance and counseling coordinator or facilitator. It is the responsibility of the school-based guidance and counselling coordinator to mobilise teaching and non-teaching staff, stakeholders which include parents and community members, for effective implementation of guidance and counselling programs to students (GES).

One of the roles of the guidance and counselling unit in schools is counselling. The unit provides developmental, preventive, remedial, and crisis counselling to students and staff by encouraging them to desist from malpractices such as bullying, truancy, stealing, drug abuse, sexual abuse, and risky sexual behaviours. The unit looks out for challenges students face and provide counselling to them. In addition, counselling can help students cope with difficult

situations by learning strategies and coping skills to think about their problems more positively (Joy et al., 2011).

In addition to the counselling role performed by the guidance and counselling unit, they also document issues concerning students, teachers, and non-teaching staff. The unit is also responsible for maintaining students' cumulative record cards by keeping their personal, family, health, career, and academic records. Documentation helps the counselor keep track of all the guidance and counselling unit's activities (Anyi, 2017).

These assertions corroborate with Upoalkpajor et al. (2018), who found out that school counsellors organize career conferences and counselling for students to prepare them for employment and enhance their capacity to secure employment. He added that the unit sensitizes the school community on sexually transmitted infections, bullying, cybercrime, drug abuse, and adverse use of social media.

2.4 Support services in the prevention of child sexual abuse

The term “support services” describes various groups of people offering advice and their expertise to aid integration and promote general education on a subject matter (Lacey & Lomas, 2013). Support services can differ according to the function of the personnel, their role, and the authority which employs them. Support services can take the form of a collaborative approach from stakeholders.

The Ghana Education Service is mandated to support the guidance and counselling program in child sexual abuse prevention. These support services for the guidance and counselling unit can take any form, such as financial support, collaboration from other agencies, the school curriculum, and social support for victims of child sexual abuse, which are all geared towards the wellbeing of students.

Support services to students in the form of school curriculum encompass various subjects and activities, including girls' clubs, academic support, and guidance and counselling services

(Koçtürk & Bilge, 2018). Guidance and counselling play a vital role in teaching and learning in schools by enhancing academic performance and reducing drop-out rates. It is an essential student support service to help students develop their educational, vocational, and psychological potentials to achieve optimal social usefulness. Guidance and counselling further serve as the building blocks for decisions that affect children's academic, career, and sociopersonal endeavours (Magdalene et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Sinanan (2011) argued that support services could be available to child sexual abuse victims. His study revealed that adolescents who had survived single sexual abuse and sexual revictimization have higher familial, social, and community support levels than victims of sexual revictimization who receive lower support services from family and the community in maintaining their physical and mental health. This finding supports Muzdalifat et al. (2014) that support services will successfully promote parental competencies to nurture their children. He added that it is necessary to improve family and social support for children exposed to sexual abuse. Support services such as training programs for the community and guidance for families will alleviate stress and provide support networks for parents to raise their children well.

In addition, emotional support should also be provided for victims to enable them to cope with cases of sexual abuse. Finally, the juvenile justice system and child protection services should be strengthened to provide social support for survivors of child sexual abuse during legal processes to enhance disclosure (McKibbin & Humphreys, 2020).

2.5 Factors militating against child sexual abuse prevention

This section discusses factors that militate against guidance and counselling in preventing child sexual abuse. It has been suggested that identifying factors that militate child sexual abuse prevention will inform prevention mechanisms and enable therapists, clinicians, and

legal practitioners to understand better the menace and support victims (Kellogg et al., 2020).

The discussed here include:

2.5.1 Disclosure

It is believed that a self-disclosure of child sexual abuse is a prerequisite for intervention and support for the child, which further limits severe health consequences and other children being victims (Schönbucher et al., 2012). However, according to Theimer and Hansen (2020), several child sexual abuse cases are undisclosed and under-reported due to fear of being blamed, stigma, relationship with the abuser, and threats by the abuser. Studies in Ghana showed that many children are continuously abused due to the low disclosure rates of child sexual abuse cases (Boakye, 2009; Markwei & Osei-Hwedie, 2019; Markwei & Tetteh, 2021; Tetteh & Markwei, 2018).

Tetteh and Markwei (2018) examined why victims of child sexual abuse in Ghana cannot disclose their abuse. He stated that most children are afraid of being labeled as “bad children,” tempting their perpetrators or engaging in sexual activities for money. He claims disclosure brings shame and dishonour to the victim’s family.

Boakye (2019) also considered conceptions of patriarchal societal norms and power differentials as reasons for non-disclosure of sexual abuse. This, he said, is due to beliefs and perceptions such as men are unable to control their sexual desires, which leads them to abuse children sexually. Early disclosure of CSA positively affects the victim and prevents future abuses (Horvath et al., 2014). Furthermore, disclosure is necessary for providing appropriate interventions and other programs geared towards curbing the phenomenon across cultures (Gewehr et al., 2021).

2.5.2 Poverty and stress associated with litigating court cases

Poverty and poor parental care are determinants of child sexual abuse (Choudhry et al., 2018; Muzdalifat et al., 2014). Parents or guardians with low socioeconomic backgrounds, such as unemployment or low earning occupations, make it difficult to provide for their children. Many of such children are left to fend for themselves by exchanging favours with sex to survive or make a living (Muzdalifat et al., 2014; Rizo et al., 2021; Russell et al., 2020). However, this is contrary to the study by Collin-vézina et al. (2013), who stated that the low socioeconomic status of families could lead to physical abuse and child neglect. However, its impact on child sexual abuse has not been proven.

Another factor that hinders child sexual abuse prevention is litigation when the case goes to court. Yüksel & Koçtürk (2020) stated that most parents of child sexual abuse victims refused perpetrators to be prosecuted due to the length of time it takes before the perpetrator is prosecuted and inability to engage the services of lawyers. When this happens, it hinders the prevention process because perpetrators are left off the hook, and it does not deter others from engaging in similar acts (Blakey et al., 2019).

Reporting pathways when abuse occurs is also a challenge in preventing child sexual abuse. Jenny and Crawford-Jakubiak (2013) also note that most families of victims of child sexual abuse lack knowledge of the legal system and reporting pathways. Many of them try to resolve the issue at the family level when abuse occurs. Before they proceed to court, all evidence of the abuse might have been lost, making prosecuting the perpetrator difficult.

2.6 Strategies employed in the fight against child sexual abuse

This section of the literature explores strategies employed in the fight against child sexual abuse. Some of these strategies include:

2.6.1 Child-focused education strategy

According to Rudolph et al. (2018), a child-focused education strategy focuses on educating children between the ages of 4 to 8 years and eight to 16 years on personal safety designed for school children, and delivery is done by experts in the school environment. This strategy of personal safety is based on key-self protecting concepts that seek to teach children, especially girls on how they could identify inappropriate sexual behaviours, resist sexual advances, and disclose sexual abuse (Baker et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2020; Radford et al., 2015a).

There has been criticism of the child-focused strategy. Studies show that the content of these programs on personal safety unduly focuses on girls and neglecting the needs of boys (Olafson, 2011; Rudolph et al., 2018; Stephen et al., 2013; Yüksel & Koçtürk, 2020; Zeuthen & Hagelskjær, 2013). Another contrasting view of this strategy is that safety programs are at odds with the realities of most child sexual abuse because they are based on the resistance model of prevention (Stephen et al., 2013). This is because children's lack of sexual knowledge and the sexual intentions of perpetrators may be unknown to the child. In addition, when children become emotionally attached to the perpetrator, for instance, a family member, it will be difficult for the child to differentiate between sexual and non-sexual aspects of the relationship (Radford et al., 2015b).

A child-focused prevention strategy depends on the child's age range (Walsh et al., 2015). Walsh et al. (2015) further doubt the effectiveness of the child is a child's knowledge to prevent abuse. They add that it is difficult to establish whether children can use the information given to them to prevent abuse. This observation is corroborated by a study conducted by Ogunfowokan and Fajemilehin (2012), who found that children exposed to child-focused child sexual abuse prevention strategies could not avoid sexual victimization attempts because they could not protect themselves from actual threats.

2.6.2 Parent-focused education

Parents influence a child's behaviour because they can shape a child's behavioural and emotional development (Guastaferrero et al., 2019; Mendelson & Letourneau, 2015; Rudolph et al., 2018). Parent-focused strategies are considered more effective because of the child's proximity to the parents (Mendelson & Letourneau, 2015). It is believed that parents can play the role of protectors through supervision, monitoring, and involvement in their children's lives by promoting self-efficacy and well-being by responding and disclosing abuse if it occurs. Strategies such as incorporating questions about sexual touching into conversations or dropping unannounced when a child spends time alone with an adult are ways parents can prevent sexual abuse from occurring (Khoori et al., 2020). These strategies further help shape a child's behavior, and he/she can identify abusive situations and how to prevent them. However, a limitation to this approach is whether children can identify, avoid, or disclose abuse when it happens (Stephen et al., 2013). Findings by Zeuthen and Hagelskjær (2013) gave a contrary assertion to the parent-focused strategy. He indicated that despite attempts to encourage parents through CSA prevention campaigns to educate their children on CSA prevention strategies, most parents are still hesitant, making the parent-focused strategy less effective.

2.6.3 Community-focused prevention approach

This strategy of child sexual abuse prevention aims at improving social structures and other social conditions in a community that reduces or eliminates social conditions that lead to sexual abuse of children (Smallbone, Marshall, et al., 2013). Improving these social structures ensures that children can grow up feeling safe and loved in their community. This finding is supported by Harkins et al. (2012), who indicated that residents in a community could provide recreational facilities and counselling for positive socialisation of children and youth, which will reduce delinquency in children. The community-focused strategy will also enable

adults to provide mentorship to children between the ages of 4 to 17 through coordination of groups and agencies (Reid et al., 2014).

In addition, local communities can also mobilise resources to secure access to needed resources to improve the social and economic conditions of residents (Smallbone, Marshall, William, et al., 2013). When the economic condition of residents improves, children in the community will be better-taken care of. This will reduce the rate at which children become victims of sexual abuse because one of the contributing factors of child sexual abuse is poverty.

2.6.4 Advocacy and campaigns

The media plays a crucial role in practice, policy, and public perception regarding public health concerns, including child sexual abuse, in which news is framed and put out to the public (Weatherred, 2015). This is because most public do not have first-hand information on child sexual abuse but will derive their understanding from the news (Mejia et al., 2012). Weatherred (2015) added that journalists and special interest groups could influence and shape public opinions on child sexual abuse by selecting and highlighting some facets of events and making connections among them to promote a solution or intervention. Also, news and media coverage on child sexual abuse could help policy makers and the public understand the phenomenon and prevent future occurrences (Nair, 2019). These news and media coverage could involve print media, electronic media, and community media (posters) (Schober et al., 2012).

In Ghana, several advocacy groups have campaigns designed to educate potential and actual victims and potential and actual perpetrators and the public on child sexual abuse and its prevention (Kenny & Wurtele, 2012). For instance, on the 28th of September 2017, the Standing Committee on Human Rights and Peace (SCORP), a committee under the Federation of the Ghana Medical Association (FGMSA), launched a campaign against child sexual abuse.

The association sensitizes the public on the terrible effects of child sexual abuse on the child, family, community, and country. They also encourage victims to speak concerning their experiences to identify culprits and let authorities bring them to the book (Daily Graphic, 2017).

2.7 Legal Instruments protecting the rights of children

The global recognition of children's rights can be attributed to an interest in human rights after the Second World War (Buck, 2020), when nations ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration was to ensure that regardless of age, race, tribe, gender, and country of origin, all human beings are to enjoy human or fundamental rights and are entitled to respect. This recognition of human rights marked the beginning and recognition of international human rights.

Before developing International Human Rights Law, the League of Nations showed interest in protecting and providing welfare services to children after the first world war. Through the instrumentality of the founder of the British Save the Children's Fund, the League of Nations adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The Declaration of the Child's Rights contains certain principles and conditions necessary for children to develop and be protected from becoming good citizens and contributing their quota to their communities. These principles protect children from abuse and neglect and ensure that children participate in decisions that affect their lives and their general well-being.

Over the years, countries including Ghana have shown a solid commitment to the protection of the rights of children by ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (AduGyamfi et al., 2013). The government of Ghana also enacted a range of laws to protect children, including the Constitution, the Criminal Code Amendment Act (Act 554), and the

Children's (Amendment) Act, Act 937. Furthermore, the country has implemented a range of policies to improve the protection of children's rights, such as the Child and Family Welfare Policy (Manful & Manful, 2014). These legal frameworks ensure that the rights of children are protected from all forms of abuse. However, their implementation remains weak because they seem pertinent on paper than in practice (Dako-Gyeke, 2019), and as a result, children are still at risk of being sexually abused.

2.8 Ghana Education Service safe school policy

The government of Ghana instituted laws that seek to promote children's rights to education supported by the free Compulsory Basic Education (FCUBE). The FCUBE aims to improve access to education and participation, improve the quality of teaching and learning, and strengthen management to improve efficiency.

Despite all these legal frameworks, there are alarming harshness and violence levels against children (UNICEF 2014). Globally, these studies showed that 34% of children were beaten by a teacher in school, 17% of adolescent girls between 15-19 years reported having experienced sexual violence, and 25% of women aged between 15-49 reported that their first sexual intercourse was forced and happened when they were less than 15 years. A report by PLAN Ghana in 2009 showed that 14% of school children surveyed had been sexually abused, with 53% of these abuses occurring in the school environment and 47% at home or the community in which the child lives. In Ghana, although the practice of violence against children has been in existence for decades, minimal statistics are available to support it.

Due to these occurrences, successive governments spend plenty of resources attempting to create schools that provide quality education for young people. However, there has been a significant challenge of providing a safe and welcoming environment for children to learn and

thrive. This major challenge is identified as violence in schools which impedes the realization of goals of quality education delivery.

To overcome this challenge, the Safe Schools Program / Policy was initiated in schools in Malawi and Ghana to create a gender-safe environment for boys and girls ranging in age between 10 to 14 years. Promoting a safe learning environment is the GES's response to attaining the Education for All (EFA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A safe school is where teaching and learning can be conducted in a welcoming and supportive environment free from intimidation, violence, and fear. Furthermore, Ghana Education Service defines a safe school as a school with zero tolerance for all forms of violence, physical, psychological, emotional, and sexual violence.

Despite the introduction of the Safe Schools and the guidance and counselling program, violence against pupils is still increasing both in communities and schools.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

Child sexual abuse is believed to occur due to the complex nature of individuals' interaction and contextual factors, which requires comprehensive prevention strategies applied over time (Rudolph et al., 2018). To effectively prevent or reduce child sexual abuse, prevention strategies should target multiple levels of a child's ecology. Therefore, child sexual abuse prevention could be explored using an ecological systems lens, which includes multiple interconnected factors that must be considered in prevention efforts (Martinello, 2020).

The ecological systems theory was propounded by Urie Bronfenbrenner in 1979. The theory explains human development by describing aspects of the individual's environment, their interactions, and how they are inter-connected (Bronfenbrenner 1979). The ecological systems theory has five human development systems: the micro, meso, exo, macro, and chrono systems. This study utilizes all the five systems as propounded by Bronfenbrenner.

The microsystem is the child's immediate surroundings, including the family, neighbours, churches, childcare environment, and child sexual abuse perpetrators. It encompasses the relationship and interactions with her closet or immediate surroundings (Perron, 2018). The mesosystem is the connection between the child's microsystem's various structures. For instance, as the child grows, the microsystems enlarge to include friends, schools, and other family members within the child's environment.

The mesosystem is the interactions between a child's parents and teachers and the enlarged systems (Perron, 2018). In addition, the exosystem is the indirect environment that impacts a child's development. The social system comprises events and decisions that the child does not influence; for instance, the relationship between the child's family and the media (Martinello, 2020).

Furthermore, the macrosystem includes elements of social and cultural values, beliefs, customs, and resources that impact the society in which a child develops. For example, laws that enforce and protect children's rights (Children's Amendment Act, Act 937, and CRC) from experiencing any form of abuse are part of the macrosystem (Sidebotham, 2001). However, the chronosystem highlights the impact of each system over time, which relates to the child's environment. This may include a change in the family structure, parents' financial status, and economic cycles—for example, loss of a job or a loved one (Perron, 2018).

2.10 Application and usefulness of the theory

2.10.1 Microsystem

Families: The most crucial element for a child in the microsystem is the family. The family directly impacts how and what a child learns. Research indicates that parents frequently communicate with their children are more likely to educate their children on sexual abuse (Martinello, 2020). This is against the backdrop that children trust their parents, and after feeling comfortable with their parents, they can always engage them in dialogue. Therefore,

educating parents on the signs, symptoms, and strategies for preventing CSA will be a tool to support children's healthy sexual development (Walsh et al., 2013).

In this study, the pupils' families, the pupils themselves, their teachers, guidance, and counselling coordinators constitute the micro system of children. Against this background, data were collected concerning toothier family backgrounds and pupils' experience at the family and school levels. The perspectives of teachers and guidance and counselling coordinators are also explored.

Perpetrators of CSA can also be found in a child's microsystem, impacting how the abuse is perpetrated and how to access support. Studies have shown that 88% of CSA perpetrators have a relationship with the child's family (Martinello, 2020). To this end, critical attention must be given to these perpetrators' risky sexual behaviours and characteristics because they directly impact sexual development. The ecological system posits that a child who experiences sexual abuse is likely to perpetuate the act in later life. Interventions and support within the microsystem should include confirmed and potential perpetrators (Martinello, 2020). In a study, information was collected on perpetrators. The key informants and the students attest that perpetrators are usually close to them, such as uncles, stepfathers, stepbrothers, and domestic assistants.

2.10.2 Mesosystem

Educators: There are families where child sexual abuse education and prevention strategies are considered educators' responsibility in the school setting (Walsh et al., 2013). In the ecological systems theory, educators establish a good relationship with students and increase their knowledge of child sexual abuse prevention and identifying and reporting child sexual abuse.

In preventing child sexual abuse, educators can provide information on available support and community resources for child sexual abuse prevention. For instance, social service workers,

mental and health practitioners, and law enforcement agencies are sources for valuable information on child sexual abuse prevention. They also serve as sources of referrals for child sexual abuse victims. Importance must be paid to how families interact with the school system and the perpetrators within the microsystems. These factors within the systems must be well examined due to their impact on a child's experiences with sexual abuse.

2.10.3 Exosystem

Regarding child sexual abuse, these social systems include the school curriculum and the media. Considering the school curriculum, awareness will increase child sexual abuse with students who participate in comprehensive sexuality education programs, recognizing that both males and females can be child sexual abuse victims and identify perpetrators. Therefore, the school curriculum must be evaluated to include programs that will benefit children in sexual abuse prevention.

The media serves as a primary source of information for families at a broader level. The exosystem could, however, impact how families understand and prevent CSA. To better understand the realities of CSA at the exosystem, there must be accurate media portrayals of the phenomenon.

2.10.4 Macrosystem

Adopting and enforcing laws that protect children's rights could help communities protect children from experiencing CSA. Laws can also indicate penalties for CSA perpetrators, deterring them from the act. The cultural perception of societies may also influence the understanding of CSA. For instance; In societies where there is mistrust in the justice system, the outcome of a CSA case can further victimize the family and the child. Besides, where CSA victims or family's resort to formal systems for any assistance, they may face blame, which could impact their reporting, and hence their recovery will be affected.

2.10.5 Chronosystem

Interaction between the ecological systems can change over time. As a child grows or develops at the individual level, their skills and knowledge base develop in that direction. This development over time provides opportunities for a child to report abusive situations or reject them. The change in programs and knowledge, and societal values happen over time. As time passes, cultures become more dynamic, and children's rights can be protected, and hence the way society responds to child sexual abuse can also change.

In conclusion, the ecological system theory used for addressing child sexual abuse emphasizes all systems in a child's environment for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. At the micro-level, the theory ensures that all vital information regarding child sexual abuse is considered in the prevention process. The meso level identifies factors in the community that may be contributing to child sexual abuse. The theory also enables practitioners or child rights advocates to look beyond the immediate causes of child sexual abuse to include all structural that might be hindering the protection of children's rights. In terms of prevention strategies for child sexual abuse, if multiple factors at different levels contribute to the abuse, all the factors must be targeted at each level. For instance, if a low-income family structure or parental neglect causes child sexual abuse, avenues for education and other intervention must be provided to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methodology of the study. It includes the research design, the study area, the study population, the target population, sampling procedures, sample size, data collection procedures, data handling, and analysis employed for the study. Issues of ethical consideration, credibility and trustworthiness, dissemination of findings, limitation of the study, and adherence to Covid-19 protocols have also been discussed in the chapter.

3.1 Research design

The research adopted a qualitative research design, specifically a phenomenological study. A qualitative research design is when a researcher examines an in-depth human behaviour by interacting directly with the study participants. A qualitative method is written as descriptive or narrative (Alan, 2012). With phenomenology, the researcher gains insight into the feelings or experiences about a phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Phenomenology was adopted because it explored students' experiences of child sexual abuse and how they perceived the role of guidance and counselling programs in child sexual abuse prevention in their schools.

In addition, the study also explored the experiences of key informants based on their perceived understanding of the role of Guidance and Counselling Facilitators, Headteachers, and Girl Child Coordinators who have a mandate of rolling out guidance and counselling to schools. Adopting a phenomenological qualitative design for this study became necessary for the following reasons, as articulated by Creswell (2014).

First, qualitative designs allow the researcher to provide a detailed view of the studied topic. Second, it enables the researcher to learn about populations in their natural settings, that is, going out to the field, gaining access and gathering material. Third, qualitative research helps

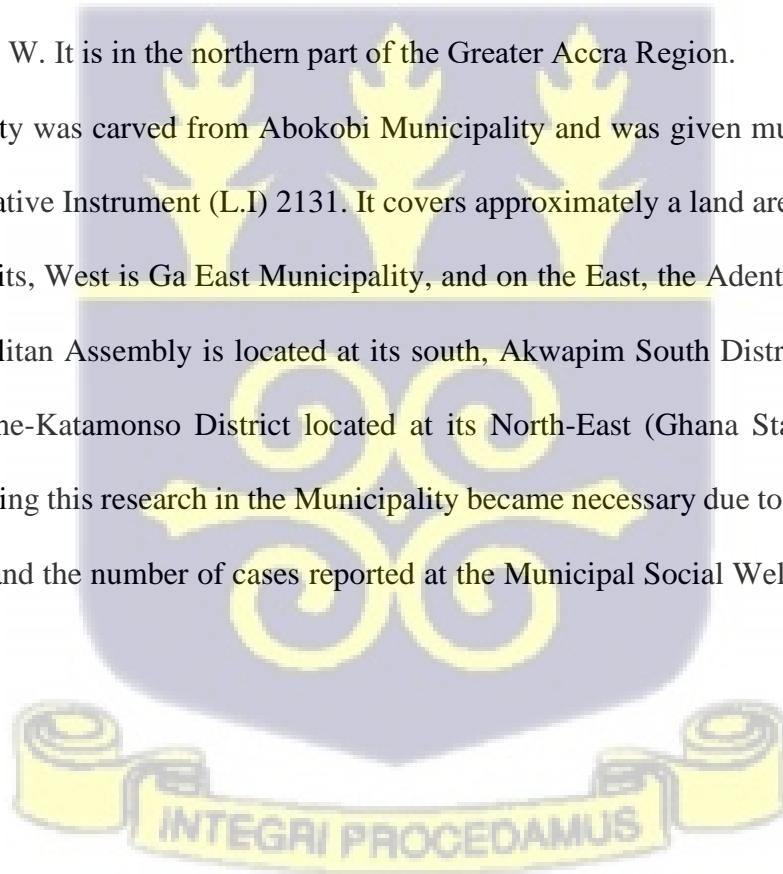
the researcher to build a complex, holistic picture and analyse words, reports and detailed views of informants. The research design enabled the researcher to gather information on perceptions from participants through in-depth interviews and data collection.

3.2 Study area

The research was conducted among selected Junior High Schools, both private and public, in the La Nkwantanang Madina Municipality (LaNMMA) in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. It was carried out in Oyarifa, Pantang, Nkwantanang, Ayi-Mensah and Teiman, all located in the Municipality.

The La Nkwantanang Madina Municipal Assembly (LaNMMA), with its capital Madina can be found between Latitude $5^{\circ} 81'3''$ N and Latitude $5^{\circ} 67'7''$ N, between Longitude $0^{\circ} 24'0''$ W and $0^{\circ} 13'1''$ W. It is in the northern part of the Greater Accra Region.

The Municipality was carved from Abokobi Municipality and was given municipal status in 2012 by Legislative Instrument (L.I) 2131. It covers approximately a land area of 74.4 square kilometers. To its West is Ga East Municipality, and on the East, the Adentan Municipality. Accra Metropolitan Assembly is located at its south, Akwapim South District, to its North-West and Kpone-Katamonso District located at its North-East (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). Conducting this research in the Municipality became necessary due to the proximity to the researcher and the number of cases reported at the Municipal Social Welfare Department and DOVVSU.



The Municipality has a dominant Muslim population. However, Christians comparatively have a higher population. Other religious persuasions include traditionalists and pockets of practitioners of other religions. The researcher chose this study location because the department of Social Welfare has been receiving several cases on child sexual abuse in the selected location.

3.3 Target population

The study population constitute the subjects that meet the study's inclusion criteria. The target population was selected students from public and private Junior High Schools from the Ghana Education Service circuits in the Municipality, as well as key informants running schools and guidance and counselling programs.

3.4 Study population

The study population included Junior High School students from form 1-3. The ages range between 12 and 17. The researcher considered on this age range because, according to the literature children 12 years and above can express and understand themselves well (Jones, 2004). The study recruited headteachers from five municipal schools, comprising two headteachers from two public schools and three from three private schools. The headteachers from the schools were selected because they are well-informed about the activities in their schools. The five schools' in-school guidance and counseling facilitators were also chosen for the study because they are responsible for guidance and counseling. Also, the researcher selected the Municipal Guidance and Counselling coordinator, Girl Child coordinator, and the School Management Committee (SMC) chairman for the municipality for the study because they are involved in all activities in every school in the municipality.

3.5 Sampling procedure

The study adopted convenience sampling to select schools for the study. Lavrakas (2008) describes convenience sampling as a type of nonprobability sampling in which the population

is selected because they are ‘convenient’ data sources for the researcher. This method was applied to determine available and willing schools to participate in the study. After the researcher conveniently identified the schools, purposive and quota strategies were used in recruiting participants and key informants for the study. The students were put into subgroups as either private or public school students. The students were put into three Junior High School quotas: One, Two and Three and were selected randomly based on their willingness to participate. Participants were further recruited, taking into account the different levels. Students selected randomly participated willingly. Purposive sampling was utilized to recruit key informants. The researcher relied on expert judgement in determining who was qualified and relevant to the study.

3.6 Sample size

There are 104 Junior High Schools in the LaNMMA. They comprise 40 public Junior High Schools and 64 private Junior High Schools. Applying a quota to the public and private schools, two schools were selected from the public schools and three from the private schools totalling five schools. Fifteen (15) students were selected from the five schools. One student was sampled from JHS 1, 2, and 3, making three students from each school and 11 key informants. Although there are 104 schools in the municipality, five schools were selected due to the covid-19 pandemic. Most schools, especially the private ones, did not allow the researcher to conduct the research with their students. To keep students and the researcher safe, the researcher settled on five schools. The final sample size of 26 participants was determined by data saturation. Data saturation is when no new information can be obtained from the participants (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In addition, qualitative data does not aim to generalise its findings, and a large sample size could lead to data repetition from participants.

3.7 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria were students between the ages of 12-17 years, irrespective of their ethnic background or religious affiliations and whether the child has ever been sexually abused. The researcher settled on this age range because, according to the literature, children 12 years and above can express and understand themselves well. Also, under the GES educational curriculum, a child is expected to be in Junior High School by 12 years. The key informants in charge of guidance and counselling and headteachers must be acting for not less than two years. The researcher selected two years of working experience for the key informants because, in 2020, schools were not in session due to the covid-19 pandemic.

The exclusion criteria for students are students below 12 and above 17 years old. Students above 18 years were excluded because a child is anyone below 18 years. Guidance and counselling coordinators and headteachers with less than two years of working experience were not recruited because they might not be well informed about the role of the guidance and counselling program.

3.8 Data collection methods

3.8.1 Data collection procedure

Ethics Committee for Humanities (ECH) approved the researcher from the University of Ghana. The researcher went to the Ghana Education Service in the LaNMMA with an introductory letter from the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana, and ethical approval from the Ethics Committee.

The Ghana Education Service approved the researcher for the interview to be conducted in schools selected by the researcher. The researcher, in person, contacted the heads of the various chosen schools. The purpose of the study was explained to the authorities before recruiting the participants. Students' participants were randomly recruited, and the guardian consent forms were given to each student for consent from their parents or guardian. After

receiving the guardian consent forms, some parents of the students contacted the researcher and research supervisors to understand the purpose of the research before allowing their children to participate. The time for the interviews was scheduled at the convenience of the school authorities. Interviews were conducted on the premises of the schools, and their chapels where available. Where no chapels or conference rooms were unavailable, the head teachers offered their offices to be used for a maximum of 45 minutes. The interviews were conducted as early as 6.45 am and during break times to avoid disrupting their studies. Participants were not coerced into participating in the study. Permission was sort from the participants before audio recording the interview. In instances where the student participants wanted to speak off the record, the researcher willingly granted it. After each interview session, evidence of participation in the study was obtained, with participants signing the protocol consent form. Data collection started in the first week of June 2021 and ended in the second week of July 2021.

3.8.2 Instruments for data collection

Different interview guides were designed in English for students and key informants, and all interviews were conducted in English. The instruments were designed based on the literature and the theoretical framework employed (Ecological Systems Theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner). These were used to gather information from the participants through individual interviews with open-ended questions.

3.8.3 Students' Individual interviews

Fifteen individual student interviews were conducted on the premises of the schools when schools were in session. Many of the interviews were conducted in the conference rooms of the schools, headteacher's offices and chapels where they were available. The school authorities suggested these. This was necessary to ensure the students felt comfortable sharing their knowledge and experiences. The interviews sought students' views regarding the

guidance and counselling program and how it helps prevent child sexual abuse. It also centered on their knowledge of child sexual abuse and their experiences with sexual abuse. Each interview lasted between 30 to 45 minutes and was conducted in English.

3.8.4 Key Informant's interview

Eleven key informant interviews were conducted. Some took place at the headteacher's offices and other sites participants considered convenient to them but outside the school premises, some in their homes. The interviews, on average, lasted between 40 minutes and to 1 hour and fifteen minutes. Data was gathered on the role of the guidance and counselling program in preventing child sexual abuse, their experiences with child sexual abuse victims, the support services available to the guidance and counselling unit, and the challenges they face in performing their duties.

3.8.5 Data processing and analysis

According to Tashakkori and Creswell (2007), data analysis involves consolidating, recording, and interpreting what people have said to develop categories and themes that become the findings. Consistency was checked from the data collection instruments. Braun and Clarke's (2008) six thematic analysis steps were used to produce the final report. These steps involve transcribing the data, familiarizing with the data through reading, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and analysing themes and producing the final report.

The audio recordings were transcribed during the first stage using Microsoft 365 Transcription Application software. This Application enabled the researcher to upload the audio recordings online and transcribe them electronically.

After transcription, the researcher familiarised herself with the data by listening to the audio recordings and correcting wrongly transcribed voice notes. In addition, Microsoft Word and google forms were used to compile responses from the transcripts in tables. The researcher proceeded to generate initial codes. Similar themes were searched for, and I reviewed and

named themes. The themes and responses were further analysed per the research objectives and questions with direct quotations to illustrate the findings from the in-depth interview conducted with participants to produce the final report.

3.8.6 Ethical consideration

The study was conducted in an ethical manner taking into consideration the well-being of all participants. Before data collection, ethical clearance was sought from the University's Ethics Committee for Humanities and the Ghana Education Service. The participants obtained informed consent by completing the consent forms, including the guardian consent forms. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were made to unambiguously understand the objectives and implications of the study before they took part. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were assured throughout the investigation and even afterwards by using pseudonyms. The researcher ensured the respect, politeness, and comfort of all participants. Finally, all references have been fully and duly acknowledged to avoid plagiarism.

3.8.7 Ensuring trustworthiness

The trustworthiness and credibility of the study were ensured through peer debriefing and member checking. The researcher's supervisors did peer debriefings and went through all the stages involved in the study, from the proposal to the presentation of findings. A panel of department experts also took turns making valuable contributions during all three phases of the presentation and questioned all processes employed by the researcher.

Member checking was also conducted with only key informants. Member checking, also known as informant feedback, takes back the data collected to participants to confirm the credibility of the information gathered (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). To avoid bias, some key informants were contacted to verify whether their responses collected during the data collection were accurate and aligned with their thoughts.

3.9 Dissemination of research findings

The process of making research findings known to stakeholders and broader audiences is known as the dissemination of findings. The results will be shared with selected community members and key stakeholders to sensitize them to the study's findings on preventing child sexual abuse, including the Municipal Education Directorate.

The researcher plans to present at international conferences to share the research findings with people, not part of the study population, especially the municipality's Department of Social Welfare and Community clients. Finally, a publication of the findings and the whole research process will be made available in a Social Work peer-reviewed journal.

3.10 Covid-19 protocols

In the era of Covid-19, one of the protocols required is hand sanitisers. Against this background, the researcher supplied hand sanitisers to participants. Social distancing, another protocol prescribed by the World Health Organisation and adopted by the Ghana Health Service, was religiously followed. A distance of two meters between the researcher and participants was followed throughout the study. In addition, to wearing masks, another protocol for observing Covid-19 was followed to the latter. The researcher provided masks to participants, particularly students. The researcher ensured that students washed their hands under Veronica buckets supplied by their school before and after an interview.

3.11 Limitation of the study

The study was conducted only in selected communities in the La Nkwantanang Municipality. Out of a total of 104 schools in the municipality, only five were eventually selected for the study, making the findings not generalisable. Notwithstanding this perceived limitation, the researcher mitigated this limitation by attaining data saturation. To this end, the findings from the study are trustworthy and reliable and reflect the views of the targeted population. Findings

from the study can still provide crucial information on how to curb the phenomenon of child sexual abuse by different stakeholders in the municipality.

Due to the covid-19 pandemic, the researcher found it difficult to access private schools for the study. Many schools demanded the covid-19 vaccination certificate of the researcher before she could interview students and key informants. To overcome this limitation, the researcher got herself vaccinated against the covid-19 to gain access to participants.



CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and the discussions thereof. To remain focused within the delimitation of the subject matter of this thesis, the discussions, however, focused on the following themes: knowledge of JHS students on child sexual abuse and the role of the guidance and counselling program in preventing child sexual abuse, support services available to schools, factors militating against the use of guidance and counselling program and strategies employed in the fight against child sexual abuse. An addendum to this chapter is the demographic data of the participants. This includes both the key informants and the students.

4.1 Demographic Data of Study Participants

Table 4.1: Demographic Data of interviewed JHS Pupils in LaNMMA

Class	Age Range	Private Schools No. of students	Gender		Public Schools No. of students	Gender		Total
			M	F		M	F	
JHS 1	12 - 14	3	2	1	2	1	1	5
JHS 2	13 -15	3	1	2	2	1	1	5
JHS 3	14 - 17	3	1	2	2	1	1	5
Total		9	4	5	6	3	3	15

N= 15

The total number of students respondents remains fifteen (15). Among the fifteen students, nine (9) students were chosen from 3 private schools, and six (6) students were chosen from 2 public schools. The overall demography of their gender representation stands at seven (7) male students and eight (8) female students. The number of students selected from various class

levels was equal, with five (5) students each from JHS 1, JHS 2, and JHS 3, respectively, ranging between 13 to 17 years.

Table 4.2: Demographic data of key informants

Position	Total	Gender		Qualification	Work experience	Marital Status
		M	F			
In-school G&C Facilitators	4	1	3	First/Second Degree	3 – 12 years	All married
Head Teachers	4	3	1	First/Second Degree	3 – 6 years	Married (3) Widowed (1)
SMC Chairman	1	1	-	First Degree	10 years	Married
Mun. G&C Coordinator	1	-	1	Masters in G&C	3 years	Married
Mun. Girl Child Coordinator	1	-	1	Masters	4 years	Married
Total	11	5	6			

N=11

A total of eleven (11) key informants were selected for the study. All of these were teachers from the municipality, represented by four (4) headteachers, four (4) in-school G&C facilitators, one (1) SMC Chairman, one (1) Municipal G&C Coordinator, and one (1) Municipal Girl Child Coordinator. Concerning the marital status of the key informants, ten (10) are married, and one (1) is a widow. Except for one of the key informants attaining the first degree, all other participants have a master's degree in their different fields of study. The working experience of all ranges between 3 to 12 years.

The most striking finding is that apart from the Municipal Guidance and Counselling Coordinator, who has a qualification in guidance and counselling, none of the in-school guidance and counselling facilitators has an educational qualification in guidance and counselling. May I quickly add that this revelation neither represents a verdict on their

competence nor an assessment of their work. The specialities of the rest are in basic education, early childhood education, educational psychology, and educational administration, with their ages ranging between 35-45years old.

4.2 Knowledge of child sexual abuse and the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

The first objective was to establish the knowledge of JHS pupils about the role of the guidance and counselling program in preventing child sexual abuse. The following themes were identified during the interview with students: knowledge of child sexual abuse and forms of child sexual abuse,

4.2.1 Knowledge of child sexual abuse

This theme highlights the knowledge expressed by student participants on child sexual abuse. The following subthemes emerged; forced sexual activity, absence of consent, adult perpetrator, and the victim below 18 years.

4.2.1.1 Forced sexual activity

Under forced sexual activity, all fifteen students were unaware that whether a child has consented to sexual activity is abuse. Their knowledge was limited to forced sexual activity. The following responses were obtained:

A female student participant emphasised what child sexual abuse is:

Child sexual abuse is forcing a child to have sex with a person without her consent which causes physical and psychological damage to the child (Female student participant 7, 15 years, JHS 2 – Public school A).

A male student participant also revealed what child sexual abuse entails:

Child sexual abuse is when a child is being forced into sexual activities without their consent (Male student participant 6, 13years, JHS 1 Private school B).

As evident in the above responses by the students, their knowledge of child sexual abuse is limited to forced sexual activities. However, they are oblivious that whether a child consents to any sexual activity is also regarded as abuse.

4.2.1.2 Absence of consent

Consent is absent where sexual activity occurs by deception. The majority of the student participants also demonstrated that sexual abuse occurs when the perpetrator deceives the victim by luring them into the act, as indicated in the comments below:

Child sexual abuse is when a child is abused sexually without her consent. For example, when a man deceives a girl that intercourse is part of the necessary medical examination, there is no consent (Female student participant 1, 17years JHS 3, Private school B).

Another student also demonstrated what absence of consent entails; He narrated:

Consent can only be free or voluntary without fear, coercion, or intimidation. There is no consent when a sexual activity happens involuntarily, by force and intimidation (Female student participant 6, 15 years JHS 3, Private school C).

As evident in the above narrations, most students believe that child sexual abuse occurs only when there is no consent from the victim.

4.2.1.3 Adult perpetrator

Student participants also highlighted their knowledge of child sexual abuse as having been perpetrated mainly by someone older and close to the victim. They added that child sexual abuse is often perpetrated by uncles, nieces, nephews, stepfathers, others in the home and the school environment, and teachers. Some students stated:

A perpetrator usually is anyone close to the victims, such as stepfathers, uncles, stepbrothers, and neighbours. They are usually far older than the victim (female student participant 14, 13 years JHS 1, Public school B).

Hmmm, a perpetrator is always very old and close to the victim, such as uncles and friends of the victim's family (Male student participant 1, 15 years JHS 2, Private school C).

However, the students are unaware that engaging in pre-marital relationships or sexual activity with a friend or colleague constitutes abuse. They believe that once a child has consented to any sexual activity, it cannot be regarded as abuse. Their perception is that only forced sexual activity is viewed as abuse. This is evident in their responses:

I am not convinced that allowing my boyfriend to have any sexual activity with me will be abuse. I willingly allowed it; no, it cannot be abuse (Female student participant 5, 16 years, JHS 3 Public school A).

If I have a girlfriend of less than 16 years and she agrees for us to kiss and have sexual intercourse, I won't regard it as abuse; we will decide to do so (Male student participant 3, 17 years JHS 3, Private school A).

These responses indicate that the students consented to sexual activity with a minor or between minors, not abuse.

4.2.2 Forms of child sexual abuse

The pupils also identified the types or forms of child sexual abuse classified in the literature as contact and non-contact sexual abuse. The following subthemes were identified and narrated in the summary of the transcript of the interview session:

4.2.2.1 Contact forms

Of the 15 participants, 12 listed different forms of CSA, while three (3) had no idea about the types of child sexual abuse. In their own words, some of the pupils provided the following forms of CSAs:

Forms of sexual abuse can be kissing, fondling and rape of the opposite sex (Female student participant 3, 14 years JHS 1, Private school C).

The forms of sexual abuse can be of touching sensitive parts of the body, such as private parts, breasts, and sexual intercourse (Male student participant 1, 13years, JHS 1 Public school A).

Some of the student participants could classify sexual abuse under contact forms. They mentioned rape, kissing and touching private parts as the most common form of contact abuse.

4.2.2.2 Non-contact form

While some participants said, they did not know any form of CSA, none of those who listed the CSA mentioned non-contact sexual abuse, such as exposure to pornography and sexual text messages, as forms of abuse. Their knowledge of child sexual abuse is limited to the contact form. When the student participants were asked about the non-contact form of sexual abuse, such as pornography or sexual text messages, none considered it sexual abuse.

4.2.3 Sources of knowledge and exposure to child sexual abuse

Following the knowledge and understanding of CSA expressed by the pupils in the above assessment, the researcher wanted to know where they acquired their knowledge, whether from teachers, parents, friends, the news, social media, or other sources. In their responses, some attested to the following:

During my primary school days, they taught us about all those things and how we can protect ourselves; yes, I learned it from school and read about them on social media, in movies, and in storybooks (Female student participant 9, 13 years, JHS 1, Private school B).

Sometimes I watch on TV and, also, from my parents. Our teachers also teach us during lessons in Citizenship in school (Female student participant 2, 16 years JHS 3, Public school A).

I learned about it from school; my teachers educated us on it during worship, social media, and the news. Sometimes too, from my church (Male student participant 3, 13 years JHS 1, Private school C).

I always read about them, and sometimes too, it is included in some of our subjects in school, like social studies and RME (Male student participant 6, 14 years, JHS 2, Private school A).

The primary source of knowledge was from school. As seen from the responses above, the pupils learned about CSA mainly from their Social Studies, Religious and Moral Education (RME), and Citizenship subject teachers. Others learned from television in the form of news, stories, and movies, while some personally read from books, the internet, social media, and print media. The first point the students learned about child sexual abuse was from school, followed by television, parents, and personal readings. Knowledge from movies and the church was a minor source indicated by the pupils.

4.2.4 Personal experience and knowledge about victims of child sexual abuse

The participants were further asked to share their experiences with child sexual abuse. They were to indicate if they had been fondled, kissed, touched, engaged in sexual intercourse, or exposed to pornography or sexual text messages. Participants were also asked to indicate whether they knew or had heard about anyone who had been sexually abused. Most of the 15 participants revealed they had never been abused. However, most of them have heard about child sexual abuse victims in the news and around the communities they live in.

Three out of 15 participants experienced one of the forms of contact child sexual abuse, 12 out of 15 said they had never been abused. Those abused were mainly exposed to pornography or sexual text messages by friends through mobile phones or movies. None of the participants had experienced actual sexual intercourse with anyone. In contrast, 15 participants have been

kissed, fondled, or touched on their private parts by someone. When asked to explain what led to the abuses and what they did in the circumstances, the participants were shy and reluctant to speak about the cases. However, those who responded indicated they experienced it with their boyfriends, girlfriends and neighbours. They narrated:

I had a boyfriend was I was in JHS 2. By then, I was 15 years, and anytime we met, he touched my private parts, and one day he attempted to have sex with me. I told him I feared getting pregnant, so he should stop. He got angry and asked me to leave his house, and I went, since then he does not assist me financially again (Female student participant 4, 16 years, JHS 3, Public school B).

I used to have a fine girl who is now in JHS 3 but no longer in my school. Yes, we had sex a couple of times, it was fun, and I don't consider it abuse because she also agreed to it anytime it happened. She was 13 years by then, and I was 16 years (Male student participant 5, 17 years, JHS 3, Public school A).

Some students who indicated having experienced abuse stated it was a harmful exposure, and they took steps to discourage the perpetrators of the abuse. For instance, participants who experienced exposure to pornographic videos, sexual text messages, and fondling of private parts indicated their displeasures as follows:

I was selling in my mother's shop, and a man who came to buy started harassing me sexually. He touched my buttocks and breasts and told me I was beautiful. I told my mother, and she doesn't allow me to be alone in the shop again (Female participant 3, 14 years, JHS 2, Private school C).

A girl in my class used to send me love text messages. I did not tell anyone about it, but I asked her to stop, and she did (Male student participant 2, 13 years JHS 1, Private school A).

The above cases are the participants' personal experiences concerning contact with CSA. The researcher also enquired further to know if the participants had ever heard about any victims of child sexual abuse in their schools or communities. In response, 14 out of the 15 interviewees said they have ever heard about victims of abuse in their schools, community and also in the news on television, radio, and social media, as indicated in some of the following responses:

Yeah, I know of a family; they are not rich and live in a compound house in my community. Their mother does not have time for the children and comes home late from the market every day. The girl goes out without permission and comes home anytime she wants. Sometimes men take advantage of her, and now she is a school dropout. She became pregnant, aborted the baby, and no longer went to school (Female student participant 7, 15 years, JHS 2, Private school B).

Just three days ago at our place, the girl went back to trim her hair, did not go home on time, and her parents lashed her, got angry and left the house. She did not want to stay with them again because they constantly beat and abused her. So, it was around 10:00 PM, and one guy saw her, deceived her, took her to an uncompleted building, and raped her. As of now, the guy has been arrested, and the girl is at the hospital (Female student participant 6, 16 years, JHS 3, Private school C).

Yes, I heard one in my area, but I do not personally know the girl. I heard it from my elder brother; he is a girl's friend. He told me that foreigner raped her female friend because he promised to buy a phone for her. Nevertheless, he was caught later; I do not know what happened to the girl (Male student participant 4, 15 years, JHS 2, Private school A).

4.2.5 Students' knowledge of the role of guidance and counselling

The final session of inquiries from the JHS pupils in the LaNMMA relates to the role of G&C programs in preventing child sexual abuses identified in the preceding sessions above. Having confirmed the assertion that JHS pupils in the LaNMMA have some knowledge about the nature, forms, perpetrators, and sources of child sexual abuse, the researcher enquired further to ascertain the knowledge about guidance and counselling units and their programs in the Junior High Schools.

Responses from eight (8) students indicated that they have heard about G&C. In comparison, the remaining seven (7) students said they had never heard about G&C. Most of the participants who responded to knowing G&C units indicated that they heard about the program from, church and from their parents and school. One student said she read about it, while the remaining seven (7) students indicated they had no idea about the sources of G&C programs. When asked whether there is a G&C unit in their schools, only one (1) student said yes, and the remaining fourteen (14) students said there was no G&C unit in their schools. In the school with a G&C unit, the participant indicated that the unit met the children in groups only once in the academic year term. All fifteen (15) participants stated that they had never visited a G&C unit; however, some of the pupils said that some teachers often educate them in groups during assembly sessions and in class, during Social Studies lessons, as indicated in the responses below:

A female student participant who has no knowledge G&C program but is aware of teachers as counsellors said:

I do not know of any guidance and counselling unit in the school. However, we have specific teachers responsible for guiding and counselling students when they need help.

I have never visited such teachers (Female student participant 1, 14 years, JHS 2, Public school A).

A student who had knowledge of the G&C program and had never visited the unit narrated:

I have never visited the unit. I am afraid that if I confide in my teacher, she might tell other teachers. Sometimes the teachers are too many in the staff common room. I always feel shy to approach them (Female participant 2, 15 years JHS 3, Privat school A).

The above responses suggest that most JHS pupils do not know about G&C programs. Furthermore, these pupils do not utilize G&C services even in schools where G&C units exist. It was revealed from the study that both students in public and private schools, particularly in JHS 2 and 3, have more knowledge and experience with child sexual abuse. However, male students between the ages of 15 and 17 are engaged in pre-marital relationships with their peers and all forms of sexual activity. Students in JHS 1 between the ages of 12 and 14 years have limited knowledge of child sexual abuse. Regardless of their age, class, or type of school, all the students have limited or no knowledge about their schools' guidance and counselling programs.

4.3 Availability of support services

To achieve the second objective of this research, the key informants were asked about the availability of G&C support services at the JHS level for preventing CSA. They were asked whether their schools have G&C units or dedicated staff in charge of G&C programs. Further, the researcher enquired whether the pupils patronize these G&C support units and staff anytime they experience any threat or actual child sexual abuse. There were inadequate guidance and counselling support services in their schools from their perspective. This assertion was evident in the responses provided by the pupils in the preceding interactions about their knowledge of G&C programs. The researcher asked the key informants whether they receive adequate support in providing guidance and counselling service in curbing child

sexual abuse. The following themes were identified: Collaboration, financial support, school extra-curricular activities and support for sexual abuse victims.

4.3.1 Collaborations from stakeholders

One of the supports received by JHS in the municipality in preventing child sexual abuse is a collaboration from other stakeholders. For instance, when abuse occurs, whether in the school environment or the student's community, the issue is reported to DOVVSU for the arrest and prosecution of the perpetrator. Also, some of them receive support from Social Welfare when both victims and perpetrators are minors. Where the perpetrator is a minor, and there is the need for him to be sent to the Juvenile Correction Center, they collaborate with Social Welfare in that regard. Some of the key informants had this to say:

One female key informant revealed how they receive support: she said:

The kind of support we receive is that sometimes officers from the department of social welfare come from time to time to educate the children on sexual abuse prevention. Also, they assist in processing our perpetrators, who are juveniles at the Juvenile Correction Center at Ridge (In-school G&C facilitator, Public school A).

A male key informant also narrated the kind of support they receive; he recounted:

Some nurses from Pantang Hospital come here to educate the children on sexual abuse prevention. The guidance and counseling unit from GES also come to educate us. Sometimes too, we invite medical doctors from Korle-bu to also assist in educating the children on sexual abuse prevention (Headteacher, Private school B).

In addition, occasionally, the schools receive NGOs, CBOs, and nurses who come to educate the children on reproductive health, risky sexual behaviour, and adolescent health. One participant had this to say:

NGOs and CBOs sometimes come to inform children about such issues. When they arrive, the school bears the cost. GES does not provide us with anything for such programs. No financial support. Sometimes we get money from the offering during our worship; that is our IGF (Headteacher, Public school B).

Formally, yes, some nurses have been coming here to educate the children. I think most nurses from Pantang Hospital educate us. The guidance and counseling unit from GES also come to educate us. Sometimes we invite medical doctors from Korle-bu (Headteacher, Private school C).

In contrast to the collaboration with other key holders, one participant had to say:

Support services are lacking in the municipality by medical officers or specialized agencies like social welfare. There are no resources to educate the children; they do not have the resources. The institution has been created; it is very laudable, but can they do it because their work resources are not there? So, the lack of resources for the institutionalized agencies to operate and operate well creates some of these problems (Municipal key informant 1)

4.3.2 Financial support

Key informants from the private school stated receiving financial support whenever abuse occurs or when a student reports a sexual abuse case. However, the public schools complained of a lack of financial support in handling cases of child sexual abuse. This was evident in the participants' narrations:

Occasionally the municipal guidance and counseling coordinator educates the children on reproductive health. As for financial support to motivate us for our work, we do not receive anything. Our job is purely sacrificial. If you do not have a passion

for working with children and the youth, you can never do this work (In-School G&C facilitator, public school A).

When a sexually abused child is identified and needs to support teachers to handle the case, they provide us with transportation. They make sure any financial issues concerning such activities are provided (Headteacher, Private school A).

Not at all; I do not receive any support, no support. Even if I go around the schools to educate the students, I use my own money; no one gives me money for transportation, no allowance. Even if you attend workshops, you must use your money for transportation and other stuff (Municipal key informant 2).

I do not receive any support, no financial support. At times, uh, when you talk to one or two friends, they can help, but other than that, nothing. Sometimes, some NGOs come with letters to organize programs for the children; they do that with their finances (In-school G&C facilitator, public school B).

The key informants indicated some support services available to their schools to combat child sexual abuse from the above discussion. However, most of them stated that these are inadequate. Some participants said there were no support services for the effective implementation of G&C programs, and they indicated a lack of financial resources, logistics, and capacity-building programs.

4.3.3 Support for child sexual abuse victims

In addition, victims of CSA also lack support from the school anytime abuse is reported. This has made the recovery process for such children very difficult. The only support given is counselling. Generally, the participants indicated the inadequacy of internal support services for victims of CSA cases. Most facilitators and teachers use their resources to support the

victims, while counselling is the primary intervention strategy. This was revealed through the responses of some key informants:

We don't have any support for them. The parents must bear the cost even if the child needs to be taken to the hospital. All that we can do is counsel and advise the child in question and the parents (Municipal key informant 3).

No, we don't have any support in terms of finances, maybe assisting in paying hospital bills. All we give to the victim is counseling. Suppose the abuse happened in the community and has been reported to us. We also assist during court processes if the case goes to court. We had a few issues that went to court, but mostly, they were withdrawn before they even got to the court level (Headteacher, Public school B).

We counsel the victim and her family; that's what we do. We cannot afford anything in monetary terms, that is, payment of medical bills, etc. (In-school G&C facilitator - Public school B).

There are supposed to be supported, but it is not there. For instance, if a child is abused, she must be taken through counseling; where will the counselling come from? Sometimes, even the parents don't want to expose it, so the child will continue to suffer. (Municipal key informant 2)

4.3.4 School extra-curricular activities

Responses from all key informants showed that using extra-curricular activities such as Red Cross Society, Girls Guide, Cardet, and Christlikeness Clubs in schools supports preventing CSA. In addition, subjects of Religious and Moral Education and Social studies support the school curriculum in preventing CSA. Some of the key informants attested that:

Yes, we have a Girls Guide that takes care of these matters for the girls especially. So, during these meetings, these topics are discussed (In-school G&C facilitator, public school B).

We have here the girl Club and the Boys Club. It's also part of the curriculum. I usually like visiting the boys club. When we go there, we give them a chance to ask questions about everything they want to know. That is the role the curriculum provides to the children. They usually ask questions about sex or sexuality (Headteacher, Public school B).

When you look at Social Studies, Our World Our People, RME. You will realise those various areas, in one way or the other, seem to create awareness of the dangers associated with sexual abuse or any form of abuse concerning that. In addition, we have Clubs, the Girls Guide Club, that sensitises the girls on some of these things since they are mostly the victims (Headteacher, Private school C).

Some areas and topics talk about child sexual abuse. Subjects such as Our World Our People, Social Studies, and RME highlight how to prevent sexual abuse and its dangers. We teach them these things to encourage them to avoid risky sexual behaviour. We also have clubs too. During club meetings, they do educate them on some of these issues (Headteacher 3, public school B).

We have the Red Cross Society, Girls Guide, Cardet, and this Christlikeness Club. Before covid-19, it was very active here, organizing symposia and group discussions, and all these go a long way to keeping or tuning their mind towards a positive direction. However, they tend to do nothing if these things are unavailable. Such activities occupy them and make them socially connected, not necessarily to think of something of such nature (In-school G&C – Private school C).

One of the key informants stated that the school curriculum does not contain enough information on child sexual abuse prevention. He had this to say:

Apart from the clubs in the schools, the school curriculum does not contain much information. So, we inculcate these things during lessons. We educate them on child sexual abuse, menstrual hygiene, and illicit drug use (Headteacher 1 – private school).

4.4 Factors militating against the use of guidance and counselling programs in the prevention of child sexual abuse

The third objective of the research was to identify the factors that militate against the use of G&C programs to prevent CSA in JHS. This objective was achieved by interaction with the key informants. The following themes emerged: Time factor, risky sexual behaviour, parental neglect, poverty, social media, disclosure, and dwindling cultural and societal values.

4.4.1 Time factor

This theme highlights the key informants' feelings about the time allocated for educating students on CSA. Many of them consider the time as inadequate, and also, being an in-school guidance and counselling coordinator is just an extra duty or burden given to teachers. Some feel that it is a challenge because whatever needs to be discussed with the children ends abruptly without the students understanding whatever is being discussed, as indicated in the comments below:

Sometimes we do not have enough time to talk to the children. You know, we have many things to do simultaneously. We must teach and do other things too. When we break for club activities, it is just 20 or 30 minutes, which is too short. By the time the children organize the activities, most of the time is over. So, we don't have enough time to engage the children (In-school G&C – public school A).

We have a timetable for that. So, it is not easy for you to create another time within. You know, not every teacher is interested in what you are doing. Although it is beneficial, not all the teachers will agree to eat into their time. So, it becomes a challenge when you plan the time and want to eat a little into somebody's period (Headteacher 4 – Public school A).

Apart from the time factor, some participants considered the lack of logistics and a proper structure for the in-school guidance and counselling facilitator a significant challenge. They had this to say:

Another factor is the unavailability of a structure purposely for the coordinator. Sometimes the children need time to talk to the guidance and counseling coordinator, but they feel reluctant to approach due to lack of space. This may be attributed to the fact that we don't have independent guidance and counselling coordinator. The coordinator is also a teacher with other subjects to teach, which makes them always occupied (Headteacher – public school).

4.4.2 Risky Sexual Behaviour

This theme attests to the fact that most students are already sexually active and engage in risky sexual behaviours. According to the key informants, this militates against their efforts because some students do not care or understand whatever is being taught. Some of them had this to say:

Some of the children, too, are already sexually active. So, they are reluctant to accept or listen to whatever you tell them. These sexually active students or children also try to influence their peers who are not sexually active. We realized that we gave them the talk, but it did not yield many results (In-school G&C coordinator – Public school B).

It is difficult for children to understand what you want them to know because they are already involved in sexual activities. Sometimes, they do not take them seriously

because of things they watch and peer pressure, educating them or telling them about things like this. Sometimes too, they want to get involved in something like that; they want to explore. So, these are some of the challenges that are making things difficult. Sometimes it happens before they regret it (Headteacher, Private school A).

4.4.3 Parental Neglect

All the key informants mentioned irresponsible parenting as a major setback in using guidance and counselling in CSA prevention. They stated that parents are supposed to be the first to educate their children on sex. However, most parents do not have time for their children and are not interested in whatever the child does, their friends, and where they go. They put their careers first at the expense of their children. In addition, some of their parents leave caring for their children in the hands of the house helps. This worsens the situation in which the children find themselves. Some of the key informants made the following comments:

Some parents are not just interested in what their children do. They are very busy with their work that they forget about the children. When you even invite them to the school, they say they are tired of such a child or children. When the parents are unwilling to help their children, we, the teachers, cannot do much (Municipal Key informant 1).

When parents neglect their children, they do not take care of them. Some parents are careless; they don't have time for their children. Yes, they leave them to their fate for their children to do whatever they want. Then these perpetrators find them and do whatever they want to the children. So, I would say that parents' negligence also contributes to children being sexually abused. (Municipal key informant 2)

I will say parental neglect. These days some parents are workaholics; they are working-class parents. They leave their children in the hands of caregivers, and these

caregivers, in turn, abuse these children. Mainly is the parents' neglect; they don't have time for their children. Even if they return from work, they don't ask the children whatever happened when they were away (In-school G&C coordinator, Private school C).

Broken homes was another factor preventing the effective use of guidance and counselling programs to prevent sexual abuse. It was evident in some of the comments by the key informants that when a child comes from a broken home, they do not get the attention they need. After the children have been educated, they have no guidance from home to continue what they are taught at school. Some of the informants have these to say:

Some parents become irresponsible and feel pressured when there is a broken home. All these things push these children out of the house, and they are easily sexually abused by men who try to show concern towards them (Municipal Key informant 3).

Apart from parental irresponsibility, broken homes is also a factor. For instance, a boy brought a condom to school; what is it for? Because the parents are no longer together, the man brings other ladies to the house, leaves the thing there, and the boy brings it to school. So, we realize that a broken home harms their efforts in school. It's not a good practice (In-school G&C coordinator – Private school A).

4.4.4 Poverty

When the economic condition of parents or guardians is below the expected living standards, it influences the children. The private and public key informants revealed through their responses that poverty hinders their efforts in educating children about CSA. They added that most parents could not provide for their children's basic needs, which compelled them to seek them elsewhere. For instance, after sensitizing them not to receive gifts from strangers and

their parents cannot meet their basic needs, they will undoubtedly tend to others for those needs to be completed. Below are some of the responses from participants:

Poverty could also be a factor. When a family is poor, the children are always vulnerable and can be abused by their neighbours or anybody who help them (Municipal Key informant 1).

Negligence on parents, poverty, and lack of providing for the children with their basic needs. When their basic needs are not met, they are forced to accept or go out for those needs to be met through other people, such as neighbours and friends. Some of them are abused in the process (Municipal Key informant 2).

4.4.5 Social Media

Responses from the key informants showed that social media had become a canker destroying the lives of the young ones in modern times. They narrated that all their efforts are being destroyed due to what the children watch and listen to on television, media, and other forms of social interaction. When they educate them on the dangers of social media, some do not take them seriously. Because some of them want to practice whatever they hear or see. Some headteachers mentioned that with the influx of mobile phones everywhere, some students even go to the extent of watching pornographic images on their phones in class and sometimes during lessons. They added that although social media has its good aspect, most students abuse it. In the participant's own words:

Although social media is a good thing, many children abuse it. It will surprise you that most children watch pornography images on their phones while a teacher is teaching. I have caught several such students, but they continue to do it. Parents should try not to introduce their children to phones and social media as much as possible (Headteacher, Public school A).

Social media has a negative influence on our children. Most of these children have learned destructive behaviours from so-called celebrities. They understand their way of dressing and how they talk to people. So, I think social media has a bad influence on children, although it also has its benefits (Municipal Key informant 3).

Social media and the influx of phones is significant challenges. We teach the children, and they go and learn other things on social media. It looks as if we are not doing enough. For instance, in my class, students watch pornography while classes are ongoing. I caught them several times. Parents should avoid giving their children mobile phones, as it is causing havoc in our society and having a negative influence on our children (In-school G&C coordinator, Private school C).

Parents should stop providing their wards with mobile phones. Gone were the days before you met someone; you had to go to their homes and ask permission. Nevertheless, now, you can be anywhere and get in touch. I have seized several phones from students, but they still buy new ones. Social media is luring them into harmful activities (Headteacher – Public school B).

Some of the students also commented as follows:

Parents should also control the use of phones by their children. They watch many things on the phone, which is not healthy, like pornography. Also, we tend to practice whatever we watch, which prevents us from studying. We have less time to learn (Female student participant, 16 years JHS 3, Private school B).

When children use mobile phones, I think they cannot concentrate on what they want to do. They always get text messages on their phones, and at times they watch pornographic materials. Parents should seize their children's phones so they can concentrate on their school studies (Male student, 17 years, JHS 3, Public school A).

4.4.6 Disclosure

It is believed that self-disclosure of child sexual abuse is a prerequisite for intervention and support for the child, which further limits severe health consequences and other children being victims. Considering the discussion with both the key informants and students, most child sexual abuse cases are under disclosed or not disclosed. They say this might be attributed to the fear of stigmatization, the relationship with the abuser, financial problems, lack of family corporation, and the length of a court case. Responses from some of the key informants are as follows:

Some families are also unwilling to report abuse cases due to stigma and relationships with the perpetrator. They will tell you they will handle it at the family level. Also, the length of a court case and the financial cost prevented many families from taking legal action against the perpetrator. When it happens like that, you, the teacher, or whoever oversees the case become helpless; there is nothing you can do (Municipal Key informant 3).

Victimization can be one of them. Sometimes you are at the forefront of reporting some of these cases; at the end of the day, you have become the target because they think you have brought shame to them. For instance, if a teacher sexually abuses a child, once that is reported, indeed, they will be sacked or even arrested. If that happens, the family can hold you on, or the person can see you as a threat to him, and from there, he can go a long way to harm you, whether physically or spiritually (Headteacher public school B).

When you report a case, nothing is done about it. When something of that sort happens, and you report, and nothing or no follow-up is made, the next time you see

something of that nature, you would not like to bother (In-school G&C facilitator, Private school C).

Lack of corporation between the victim and the family is also a factor. When the victim's family is unwilling to disclose the abuse, it hinders the prevention process. I think it is essential to start working on this phenomenon better than we used to. Because when we look at the rate at which our children are prone to some of these things, it's very alarming. Today, children know many things they had no idea about some years back, at 15 or 20 (Headteacher – Private school B).

4.4.7 Dwindling cultural and societal values

Participants indicated that because of civilization, advancement, and contact with other nations, the role of the traditional Ghanaian had been affected. Some key informants added that there had been a paradigm shift in the position of the extended family due to this. For society to keep moving and free from social vices such as abusing a child sexually, the community must remain united. In tackling dwindling cultural and societal values, such as ‘dipo’ or ‘bragro,’ must be reintroduced. This will make their work and guidance and counselling coordinators and headteachers much easier. Some narrated:

In the past, we lived in this communal society where everybody was each other's keeper, but it is not so anymore. Yes, apart from the extended family system, which also played a crucial role in the upbringing of the children, we have the community itself. This is where somebody can extend a child's training to another, not necessarily their biological child. But these days, these things are not there anymore. These are some of the cultural values that protect our children (Headteacher 2 – public school A).

In the olden days, girls were supposed to get to a certain age before they were introduced to a man. However, with the new modern trend, children find ways of doing their own thing because of social media. Most of them end up destroying their lives, some are sexually assaulted, and others to are killed (Municipal key informant 1).

In our communities, we have several cultural and social practices which influence our children's upbringing. Some of them we have neglected, one, because of Christianity, two, because of civil awareness. Some of these things they claim are not good. For instance, we are told that child rights prevent teachers from lashing students. It is soiling the discipline in schools. Yeah, what do we do? Sometimes you give in to some of these child rights, and things are getting worse because if a child misbehaves and their given six or three lashes, it will serve as a deterrent. Nevertheless, we claim they are not good, so we should abandon them. We have abandoned them, and we can measure the level of discipline in such children to those of us who received the lashes (Municipal Key informant 3).

I do not think there are social and cultural values now that protect children's rights. In the olden days, we have the 'dipo' and other values in other cultures that protect children's rights. But now, because of these child rights advocates all over the place, children have become undisciplined, you cannot even cane a child at school now (Municipal Key informant 2).

4.5 Strategies for preventing Child Sexual Abuse

The fourth and last objective of the research was to enquire about other strategies adopted by JHS in the municipality to prevent child sexual abuse. The pupils were asked to suggest any preventive measures that could be adopted to fight CSA. The key informants, the prominent persons responsible for implementing the strategies to prevent CSA, were asked to indicate the

preventive measures they have adopted in their various schools to reduce the risk of CSA. The following recommendations were gathered from both pupils and key informants. The following themes were identified; Economic empowerment, responsible parenting and putting the right people in place.

4.5.1 Economic Empowerment

Some of the key informants believed that poverty is because of unemployment. They suggested that when unemployed parents are trained in various vocations, they can acquire employable skills and will be able to cater to their children. They added that women or females should be encouraged to have higher education, limiting their inability to acquire employable skills. With this, the parents, primarily mothers, can provide their wards with their basic needs; it will prevent them from seeking help elsewhere, and they will not fall prey to any sexual abuse. A participant summarised:

Apart from education, we can organize parental programs and bring them together. Also, NGOs can assist parents without jobs in training to equip them with employable skills. I think they will be able to take care of their children well so that these children may never fall victim to child sexual abuse (Municipal Key informant 3).

4.5.2 Responsible parenting

Another strategy mentioned by most participants is responsible parenting and parents spending more time with their children and educating them on sexual abuse. According to them, parents are the first contact with their children and hence must have the upper hand in educating them on issues regarding sex. A key informant also said:

Yes, I believe that parents should have time for their children. It's not all about money. Parents must be conscientious and make every concerted effort on their children, don't neglect them; if you ignore them, you will pay very dearly for it. Every school should

have a guidance and counselling unit, be conscious of this menace, and begin to fight it (In-school G&C coordinator – public school A).

Some student participants also agreed with the key informants on parents spending more time with their children and educating them on sexuality.

Parents should take more time to advise their children on sexual abuse. They should not allow their children to go wayward. They should take time, sit them down, and inform them about sexual abuse so that no one will abuse them, and then it will become a problem for the family (Female student participant, 15 years, JHS 3, Private school C).

Our parents, too, should make time for us; they should not be busy with their work. They should listen to us whenever we approach them with issues of sex. They should not shy away from it and provide for our needs (Headteacher, private school B).

4.5.3 Putting the right people in place

One of the key participants further expressed his dissatisfaction with how most teachers who occupy certain positions have no experience or qualification in that field especially the in-school guidance and counseling coordinators. He had this to say:

You see, most of the guidance and counselling facilitators do not have any qualifications in guidance and counselling. If GES can employ teachers with guidance and counseling qualifications to act as in-school facilitators, it will go a long way to helping these students. Some of us do not qualify, which sometimes makes things difficult. When your superior assigns you as the in-school guidance and counselling facilitator, you cannot refuse (Female In-school G&C facilitator – public school B).

I think having the right people in place is very important. I read early childhood at the diploma and the degree level. It will interest you to know that sometimes when you go to our offices, the very people occupying certain positions as early childhood coordinators have no idea or do not know much about the same thing they have been assigned. So having the right people in place and supporting them will go a long way to curbing some of these things (Male In-school G&C coordinator, private school B).

The schools must have psychological counselors responsible for counselling students. Parents should also be engaged during PTA meetings on parenting. There should be a time not only for the examination but also for mock and end-of-term exams and punishment. There should be a time when parents will be given a talk during PTA meetings so that they also understand what we go through and what their children are also going through; they need to be enlightened on such areas (Female headteacher, public school A).

Some of the student participants also had this to say about the strategies that can be adopted in curbing child sexual abuse in the municipality.

The teachers should respect the students and should not tell other teachers' whatever students have discussed with them (Female student participant, 13 years JHS 1, private school B).

The teachers should be free with us. They should not be rude to us so that when we have any issue, we can approach them (Male student participant 7, 16 years, JHS 3, Private school C).

The government should also move to the rural areas to educate the children on sexual abuse. Also, avenues and procedures of reporting child sexual abuse should be known

to the public so that they are aware of the appropriate steps to report when such issues occur (Female student participant, 15 years, JHS 3, Public school A).

The government should go to the rural areas and educate the children on child sexual abuse because they are not fortunate to have such education as we in the urban areas. Chiefs and elders in the community can also organize durbars, invite resource persons, and educate community members on the dangers and repercussions of not taking care of their children and child sexual abuse (Male student participant, 14 years, JHS 1, Private school A).

Some students also suggested strategies that the government can implement to prevent child sexual abuse. They narrated:

The teachers should be friendly with us to confide in them when we have any issues. They should also educate us on the dangers of sexual abuse and identify a perpetrator of sexual abuse. The government should provide resources for teachers to educate children well because they do not offer anything; they are not motivated to inform students about child sexual abuse. They should have a separate office for teachers responsible for counselling or talking to students when they have any issues (Female student participant 8, 17 years, JHS 3, Private school B).

In addition to the government's strategies, the student suggested what parents can do to prevent child sexual abuse. They commented:

Parents should regulate the use of phones by their wards because many children use them to do other things like watching pornography instead of studying and making phone calls. I use my phone only on Sundays when I am going to church (Male student participant 5, JHS 1, 14 years, Private school C).

You see, phones and social media have good and bad aspects. So, it depends on what you are using it for. However, nowadays, students are misusing it. We have to be educated on the advantages and disadvantages of the use of mobile phones (Male student participant 3, 15 years, JHS 2, Public school B).

4.5.4 Employment of independent counsellors or School Social Workers

Some key stakeholders suggested the services of school social workers or independent counsellors in schools with no teaching duties to take up counselling duties. They indicated the need to employ school social workers to address the issue of sexual abuse due to their skills in enhancing the social functioning of individual groups and communities. Some of the key informants narrated.

It is time schools in Ghana engage the services of school social workers as practised in developed countries. If school social workers are not available, they can hire the services of independent counsellors to be responsible for counselling. This will take off the load on some of us (Female In-school G&C facilitator, Public school A).

We need independent counsellors; we, the facilitators, are tired. We do not even have a separate structure for counselling sessions. When independent counsellors are employed, all these issues will be solved, and the students can feel comfortable confiding in us (Male Headteacher, Private school B).

4.6 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the research outcome based on the data presented and analysed in the preceding paragraphs. It discusses the implications of the study participants' demographic data on the study's results. The findings are then examined regarding the study objectives: knowledge about child sexual abuse and guidance and counselling by students, availability of G&C support services, challenges of using guidance and counselling programs in preventing

child sexual abuse, and other strategies employed to avoid CSA in the LaNMMA. The discussions are per the literature reviewed and the theoretical framework adopted.

4.6.1 Knowledge about child sexual abuse and the role of guidance and counseling in Preventing CSA

This study's findings showed that JHS children in LaNMMA heard about child sexual abuse and have a level of knowledge and experience about these abuses and the physical or emotional harm victims suffer. Many could define CSAs and cite examples of abuses in their schools and communities. Many students described CSA as ‘forcing a child to have sex with a person without the child’s consent or exposing a child to sexual materials which cause physical and mental damage to the child.’ For instance, the children cited examples of CSA, such as touching, kissing, harassment, pornography and sexual intercourse. However, the level of knowledge of the students regarding CSA differs. Students in JHS 2 and 3 have a better understanding of the phenomenon as compared to JHS 1 students. Many JHS 1 students have little or no knowledge of the phenomenon.

This disparity could be due to the continuous exposure the JHS 2 and 3 students have in school through the G&C program, the school curriculum and their environment and also the differences in their ages. The students attested that knowledge of child sexual abuse is part of the Social Studies and Religious and Moral Education (RME) syllabus. As such, children get the opportunity to learn about CSA in school. Therefore, it is not surprising that almost all the students who participated in the study indicated that they knew about it from school, making the school the primary source of knowledge about CSA for children in LaNMMA.

The pupils also identified the types of child sexual abuse, similar to those classified in the literature as contact and non-contact sexual abuse (Koçtürk & Yüksel, 2018). The findings of the awareness of CSA confirm the findings of Jasmine and Hameed (2016), Baker et al. (2013),

Foster (2017), and Zhang et al. (2015), which indicate that majority of students are aware of child sexual abuse and how to identify perpetrators as compared to those who are not aware.

However, many students' knowledge focused only on forced sexual activity and the absence of consent. JHS 1 focused their knowledge on forced sexual activity, whereas JHS 2 and 3 students had limited understanding of the minimum age of sexual consent. This finding is in line with Diraditsile K. (2018) found that children need to be aware of CSA and its threats because most children are unaware of what CSA entails.

These findings can be situated within the mesosystem in the ecological systems theory, which ensures educators establish a good relationship with students, increase their knowledge of CSA prevention, and identify and report CSA. Educators can provide information on available support and community resources for CSA prevention in preventing CSA. This has been established in the findings where many students attest that they acquired their knowledge of CSA within the school environment.

The theory further states that the family directly impacts how and what a child learns in a child's microsystem. Martinello (2020) aptly put it that parents who frequently communicate with their children tend to educate them on sexual abuse. Due to children's trust in their parents, they feel comfortable and can always engage them in dialogue. This assertion, however, did not reflect in the study's findings. Although some parents educate their children on sexual abuse, it is not as rampant as in school. This implies that parents have more to do in educating their children on issues regarding sex.

Additionally, when asked about their knowledge of guidance and counselling units in Junior High Schools, this study shows that 90% of the student participants do not know about the availability of G&C programs in their respective schools. This finding contradicts a study in Ghana by Upoalkpajor et al. (2018), which states that 93.9% of the students are aware of the guidance and counselling services in their schools, but 6.1% are unaware. This difference

might also result from the target population of the two studies. This study was conducted on JHS students, while the study by Upoalkpajor et al. (2018) was conducted among Senior High School students. Senior High School students are presumed to have more exposure than the primary pupils.

Regarding the students' patronage of the G&C program, the study found that JHS students in the La Nkwantanang Municipality do not utilize G&C services even in schools where G&C units exist due to issues of confidentiality, lack of structure for counsellors and insufficient time. These findings support Gallant and Zhao (2011), which found that 17.2% of students have patronized guidance and counseling services, while 82.8% of students have never patronized guidance and counseling services. They indicated this resulted from confidentiality issues, the counsellor as a teacher, insufficient time for the counsellors, stigmatization or teasing, and trust in the counsellors.

In order to ascertain whether the child's home or school environment could be a source of sexual abuse, the researcher enquired from the participants to indicate whether they live with their parents or other persons than their parents. Respondents were also asked to indicate whether they preferred the school environment or the home. Further inquiries were also made to know why they preferred the home or school environment; the researcher was also interested in knowing whether the participants entertained any form of apprehensions of being sexually abused at home or in the school. The questions were relevant in exploring the effectiveness of the safe school and safe home strategies in fighting CSA. This is as a measure of Ghana's commitment to protecting the rights of children as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). The researcher wished to verify the assertion by the 2009 report of PLAN Ghana that 14% of school children surveyed had been sexually abused, with 53% of these

abuses occurring in the school environment and 47% at home or the community in which the child lives.

All the 15 participants responded to the question from their responses, with majority living with both parents. Few of the student also live with their mother or father alone. Some of the participants live with their aunt, family friend, or maternal grandmother.

In a related session, the researcher enquired about the occupation of the child's parent or guardian to ascertain whether the child's welfare needs are being provided for to prevent children from seeking help from peers and other adults who may lure them into sexual activities.

From the students' responses, either one or both parents are engaged in one form of trade or profession. However, the students complained of their parents not having time for them due to their busy schedules at work.

4.6.2 Availability of G&C Support Services in Junior High Schools

This study showed that the key informants indicated some support services available to their schools to combat child sexual abuse, such as extra-curricular activities. However, many participants stated that these are inadequate for effectively implementing the guidance and counselling program. They indicated a lack of financial resources, logistics, and lack of capacity-building programs. This confirms the findings from Koçtürk and Bilge (2018) that support services to students encompass various activities, including girls' clubs, academic support, and guidance and counselling services. The findings find expression in the exosystem as espoused by the ecological system theory, which posits that social systems include the school curriculum and the media about CSA. Considering the school curriculum, awareness will be increased on CSA with students participating in comprehensive sexuality education programs, recognizing that both males and females can be CSA victims and identify

perpetrators. Therefore, the school curriculum must be evaluated to include programs that benefit children in sexual abuse prevention.

Whether there was internal support for victims of actual or threat of CSAs, generally, the key informants indicated inadequate internal support services for victims of child sexual abuse. Many facilitators and teachers attested that whenever abuse is reported or identified, they use their resources to support the victim, such as payment of medical bills. In contrast, the main intervention strategies used were counseling and regular talks on reproductive health, the use of Clubs such as Red Cross Society, Girls Guide, Cardet, and Christlikeness Clubs in the school, and lessons in RME and Social studies classes. This is contrary to Sinanan (2011), whose findings indicated that adolescents who had survived single sexual abuse and sexual revictimization have higher familial, social, and community support levels. This differs from victims of sexual revictimization who receive lower support services from family and the community to maintain their physical and mental health.

4.6.3 Challenges in the use of guidance and counselling to prevent CSA

Findings from the study showed that several factors were militating against the effective use of G&C programs to prevent CSA in JHSs in LaNMMA. Most participants asserted the difficulty for the children to understand the issues of CSA and the consequences on their lives. Some teachers complained that children are exposed to abusive materials because of what they watch and see on the internet, television, and others. They said the pupils are not willing to be educated about CSA. They do not take them seriously, and sometimes pupils themselves want to get involved in sexual pleasures. They want to explore but later regret their actions. The findings support Rudolph et al. (2018) and Walsh et al. (2015). They found that child-focused education focuses on educating school learners on CSA and identifying, avoiding, and disclosing sexual abuse. However, the child-focused prevention strategy depends on how

effectively the information will help children avoid abuse. They added that it is difficult to establish whether children can use the information given to them to prevent abuse. This assertion was further confirmed by Ogunfowokan and Fajemilehin (2012) that children exposed to child-focused CSA prevention strategies could not avoid sexual victimization attempts because they could not protect themselves from actual threats.

Another challenge identified from the study's findings is parents' inability to educate their children about issues regarding sex despite attempts by teachers to encourage parents to do so. This finding also corroborates those from Zeuthen and Hagelskjær (2013), which indicated that despite attempts to encourage parents through CSA prevention campaigns to educate their children on CSA prevention strategies, most parents are still hesitant, making the parent-focused strategy less effective.

The study identified a challenge because of the lack of cooperation from victims' families, who are unwilling to report abuse cases due to stigma and relationship with the perpetrator. This is evident in the work of Theimer and Hansen (2020), which found out that several child sexual abuse cases are undisclosed and under-reported due to fear of being blamed, stigma, relationship with the abuser, and threats by the abuser.

The current study's findings can be situated within the microsystems as espoused in the ecological system theory. The microsystem posits that perpetrators of CSA can be found in a child's microsystem, impacting how the abuse is perpetrated and how to access support. To this end, interventions and support within the microsystem should include confirmed and potential perpetrators (Martinello, 2020).

The key informants also mentioned that guidance and counselling is not a subject on the school timetable. This absence of guidance and counselling on the timetable has made many schools pay lip service to a helpful program worthy of helping address a pertinent issue such as child

sexual abuse. This means that schools are not adopting a preventive approach to child sexual abuse but only reacting to situations when they arise. In an environment where reporting incidence of child sexual abuse is low because of stigmatisation, it stands to reason that the noble objectives of this program and the unit will not be significantly realised in basic schools in LaNMMA. The key informants indicated that they do not have enough time to talk to the children because of the tight school timetable for teaching and learning and extra-curricular programs. Because the in-school facilitators are teachers, they have several things to do simultaneously. Also, the time for club activities, usually 20 to 30 minutes, is insufficient for meaningful impacts. By the time the children organize themselves for these activities, most of the time is far gone. The findings are similar to those of Wambui (2015), who found that insufficient time for counsellors is militating against using G&C in schools to prevent CSA.

Another factor is the unavailability of a structure purposely for the in-school guidance and counselling facilitators and the Municipal Guidance and Counselling Coordinator. The findings revealed that sometimes students need time to talk to the guidance and counselling coordinator or teachers, but they are reluctant due to lack of space. Another reason pupils cannot speak to the coordinator is that they also have other subjects to teach, which keeps them occupied. These reasons make it imperative for independent guidance and counselling coordinators in schools. It was also evident that the in-school G&C coordinators have no training in counselling; they cannot give the children the counselling they need.

The study also revealed Dwindling cultural values as a challenging factor affecting the use of G&C in preventing CSA. Participants say this is due to civilisation, advancement, and contact with other nations. It has further led to the role of the traditional Ghanaian being affected and a paradigm shift in the role of the extended family. The finding above on dwindling cultural values is consistent with the chronosystem in EST. In the chronosystem, cultures become

more dynamic as time passes, knowledge and societal values change, and the way families interact will also change, and this can lead to children's rights being protected or not. As a child grows or develops at the individual level, their skills and knowledge base develop in that direction. This development over time provides opportunities for a child to report abusive situations or reject them.

4.6.4 Other strategies for preventing Child Sexual Abuse in Junior High Schools

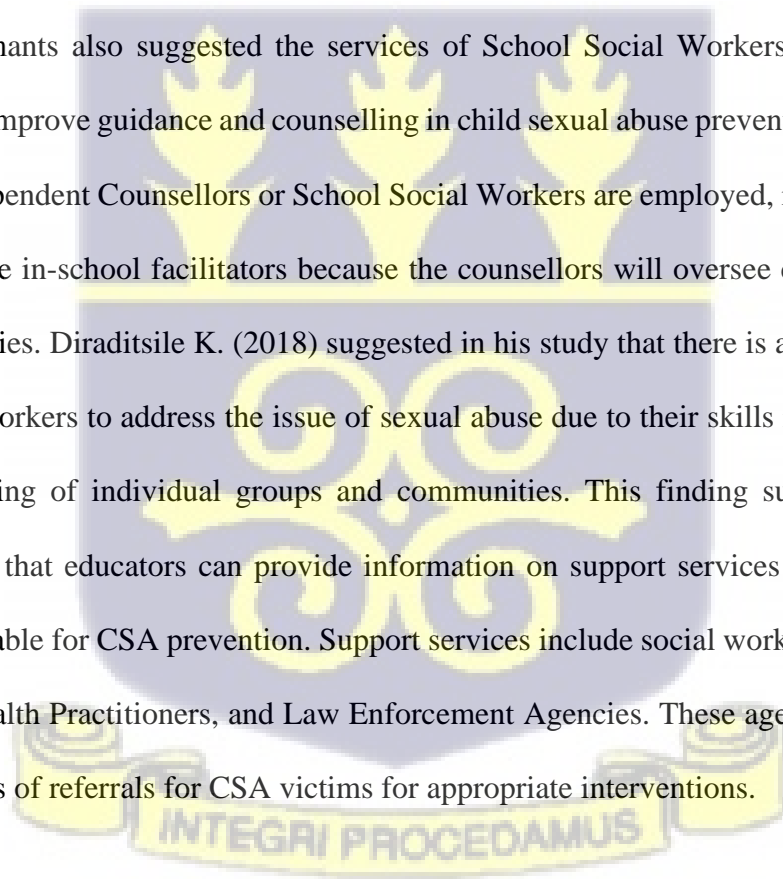
The pupils and the key informants were asked to suggest any other preventive measures that could be adopted to resolve the challenges and improve G&C programs to fight CSA in their schools. Most participants identified parental support and involvement in educating children against sexual abuse as a strategy. The above finding concurs with those of Mendelson and Letourneau (2015) and Guastafarro et al. (2019) that parents can play the role of protectors through supervision, monitoring, and involvement in their children's lives by promoting self-efficacy and well-being by responding and disclosing abuse if it occurs.

The strategies recommended by the participants to prevent CSA in the municipality are community involvement, advocacy, and campaign. The current study observed that students and key informants want more awareness apart from the guidance and counselling program and the school curriculum. They suggested that parents should be engaged during PTA meetings on parenting so that the teachers can explain some of the difficulties that some children face at home and in school. These findings support Sebahat (2020), which indicates that to create more awareness of child sexual abuse prevention, different approaches to education and awareness creation must be employed. He added that other disciplines, such as psychologists, teachers, counsellors, and paediatricians, must collaborate to enhance effective awareness creation.

Participants also recommended that key stakeholders include a community-focused strategy to prevent child sexual abuse. Places like game centers and musical jams should be banned

after funerals. Also, the communities should have good leadership to ensure that children are not at risk of experiencing sexual abuse. These findings confirm studies previously conducted by Harkins et al. (2012) and Marshall et al. (2013), which found that community-focused child sexual abuse prevention aims at improving social structures and other social conditions in a community that reduces or eliminates social conditions that lead to sexual abuse of children. They added that improving these social structures ensures that children can grow up feeling safe and loved in their community. In addition, this strategy will enable residents in a community to provide recreational facilities and counselling for the positive socialisation of children and youth, reducing delinquency in children. Adults can also provide mentorship to children and youth by coordinating groups and agencies.

The key informants also suggested the services of School Social Workers or independent counsellors to improve guidance and counselling in child sexual abuse prevention. They added that when Independent Counsellors or School Social Workers are employed, it will reduce the workload on the in-school facilitators because the counsellors will oversee counselling with no teaching duties. Diraditsile K. (2018) suggested in his study that there is a need to employ school social workers to address the issue of sexual abuse due to their skills in enhancing the social functioning of individual groups and communities. This finding supports the EST mesosystem in that educators can provide information on support services and community resources available for CSA prevention. Support services include social workers, counsellors, Mental and Health Practitioners, and Law Enforcement Agencies. These agencies could also serve as sources of referrals for CSA victims for appropriate interventions.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study's key findings, conclusions, recommendations, and implications for social work practice.

5.1 Summary of key findings

The study's first objective was to explore the level of knowledge of JHS pupils on the role of G&C coordinators in preventing CSA in LaNMMA. The study found that most students in public and private schools in the municipality have a limited understanding of what CSA entails. Their understanding highlighted forced sexual activity with an adult perpetrator. However, many students do not know the existence of guidance and counseling programs in their schools and what they entail. However, they know teachers are responsible for offering psychosocial support to students; all the student participants are unaware that such teachers are in-school G&C facilitators. Also, few of the sampled students know what G&C is but learned from sources such as the church other than the school environment.

The second objective was to identify social support available to Junior High Schools in child sexual abuse prevention. The study identified support in the form of collaborations from other stakeholders, such as Health Practitioners and Social Workers, for both the public and private schools in CSA prevention. However, the expenses of these collaborations are sometimes catered for by the Municipal Guidance and Counselling Coordinator, the in-school facilitators or the headteachers. Apart from the partnerships, the public schools lack logistics and adequate financial support in utilising the G&C program to prevent CSA in the municipality. It was revealed that in public schools, teachers and in-school guidance and counselling facilitators use their resources in utilizing the guidance and counselling program in child sexual abuse

prevention. However, the private schools receive monetary support from their management in utilising the G&C program to prevent CSA whenever needed. The study also revealed that there is no support for victims of CSA in public schools. Often, the in-school G&C facilitators and the municipal G&C coordinator must foot their bill when following up on a child sexual abuse case.

The study further revealed that the factors identified as militating against the G&C program were a lack of independent counsellors, financial resources and logistics, time, unwillingness to disclose abuse, parental neglect, social media, and victimisation of both teachers and victims of sexual abuse. The stakeholders suggested the need for trained independent counsellors or school social workers in schools with no teaching duties to take up only counselling duties.

The fourth or final objective sought to identify other strategies employed by JHS in the fight against CSA. The study's findings suggest that the only approach adopted by Junior High Schools in the fight against CSA is education, observation, and sensitisation. In addition, the study found that all public and private schools adopt the GES Teachers Code of Conduct to resolve CSA issues. Although the School Safe Policy was introduced to ensure a conducive and safe school environment to enhance teaching and learning, many key informants are unaware of the policy.

5.2 Conclusion

Students expressed some knowledge of child sexual abuse, but their knowledge is limited to forced sexual activity and the perpetrator being an adult. Guidance and counselling units established by the Ghana Education Service are meant to educate students on career guidance and counselling, risky sexual behaviour and child sexual abuse prevention. Following the study's findings, guidance and counselling in LaNMMA are not creating the needed knowledge and awareness in schools, particularly on preventing child sexual abuse. This is

against the backdrop that guidance and counselling are not treated as subjects and are not featured on the timetable of schools to enable students to have direct contact with guidance and counselling coordinators. Students' knowledge of guidance and counselling is mainly from what they learn in church and the clubs they belong to.

The study's findings indicate that students' use of phones and general exposure to the media, particularly social media, is militating seriously against effective implementation of guidance and counselling to prevent child sexual abuse. This is against the backdrop that students at the Junior High School level are exposed to the harmful content that social media presents on sex. Social media platforms have been identified as offering abusive sexual content to students who otherwise should not be exposed to such content at their ages. Key informants identified this as militating against efforts to run school guidance and counselling.

This study's finding established that non-government and community-based organisations help periodically run sensitization on child sexual abuse prevention.

The study's findings indicated a lack of adequate support for the guidance and counseling unit in the municipality. Inadequate logistics and financial aid, offices for the Municipal Guidance and Counselling Coordinator and the in-school guidance and counselling facilitators to properly hear child sexual abuse cases.

The factors that militate against using guidance and counselling in CSA prevention include parental neglect, in which parents exhibit less time for their children to educate them on sexual abuse. The study's findings further suggest that some parents do not provide their children with basic needs due to their low economic status, which compels them to turn to neighbours and friends who sexually abuse them.

Dwindling cultural values were formerly in the extended family system; any member in the family is each other's keeper, where uncles, aunties and grandparents can raise children with

no interference. Nowadays, no extended family member can even correct a child that is not their biological child. This has aided some children to become undisciplined and engage in all sorts of activities leading to abuse. In addition, the proliferation of child rights advocates has worsened the situation where children are not allowed to receive corporal punishment at home and school.

5.3 Recommendations

Findings indicated that pupils knew CSA, although they had different views on what it entails. The study recommends that the guidance and counselling facilitators educate the pupils, particularly on the minimum age of consent for sexual activity. This can be achieved by avoiding counselling together all students, irrespective of their age. The students must be segregated according to their age and the appropriate counselling offered. That is, age-appropriate guidance and counselling should be adopted.

The study indicated that a lack of resources hinders the successful implementation of the guidance and counselling program. This study recommends that GES and other stakeholders provide the resources needed to run the guidance and counseling program to prevent CSA effectively. The Ghana Education Service can collaborate with stakeholders such as the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development by organizing Child Rights Promotion and Protection programs. This collaboration will reduce the cost that would have been borne by one department. It will also allow sharing of varied ideas from different stakeholders.

Findings also revealed that parental neglect and unreported abuses are significant setbacks in using guidance and counselling programs to prevent CSA. Hence, parents should be encouraged to educate their children on sexual abuse and report or disclose abuse cases immediately. Parents and guardians, especially mothers, should report those who abuse their children and take legal action against them. Parents must avoid allowing their children to use

mobile phones or install parental control applications to monitor their children's usage of the phones. This is because most of the key informants agreed that mobile phones are the primary factor militating against the use of the G&C program in preventing CSA. Some key informants mentioned that after educating the children on the dangers of indulging in premarital sex, they later watch inappropriate images on social media, which hinders their efforts. Findings indicated that In-school guidance and counselling facilitators had excessive teaching loads in addition to their counselling duties. Hence, professional counsellors or school social workers can be employed to take up counselling duties.

There is a need to employ school social workers to address sensitive topics such as sexual abuse due to their skills in enhancing the social functioning of individual groups and communities. Until that is achieved, the in-school coordinators should be given monthly stipends to motivate them to deliver better services to the students.

Parents and community members should be educated on the reporting pathways when abuse occurs. Some key informants asserted that most parents are unaware of the channels to go through when abuse occurs. Before they get to the appropriate channel, all evidence might have been lost.

Finally, knowledge can only be obtained through reading. Reading relevant materials on the CSA will enable the students to learn about the phenomenon. Students should be encouraged to go to their school library to identify books that will provide them with more knowledge on the phenomenon. GES must also ensure books on the phenomenon are always available in the school libraries.

5.4 Implications for Social Work

5.4.1 Implication for Social Work Education

The foundation of social work practitioners is vital in curbing the menace regarding child sexual abuse. Contents of courses on child abuse must be integrated into the curriculum of social work students at the undergraduate and graduate levels (foundation and advanced levels). Faculty members must identify the phenomenon and make it a research area or an area of specialization. This will give them enough information on the problem to impact social work students and other professionals.

Furthermore, there should be adequate content on CSA in social work textbooks. This will expose students enough to the issue, preparing them as competent practitioners for the future.

In conclusion, the role of social work education in addressing CSA is to train capable professionals in acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes in handling issues of CSA in a safe, culturally, and competent manner.

5.4.2 Implication for Social Work Research

More research must be conducted in this area to develop social work knowledge about CSA prevention to create more awareness among students and other professionals such as the GES guidance and counselling Unit in handling and providing appropriate interventions.

5.4.3 Implication for Social Work Practice

Social work and other institutions handling CSA must network to address the issue. In collaboration with other stakeholders, the government must provide logistical support for these institutions to assist victims of child sexual abuse in our communities. The social workers must also ensure victims' confidentiality, privacy, and safety. They should provide support and respect and offer victims the help they need. Social workers must avoid lengthy or ineffective delays in handling cases and corruption.

Community Social Workers must educate communities on harmful gender norms and practices. For instance, preventing women from engaging in paid labour, child marriage, and blaming and shaming (stigmatizing) children and their families for such abuses.



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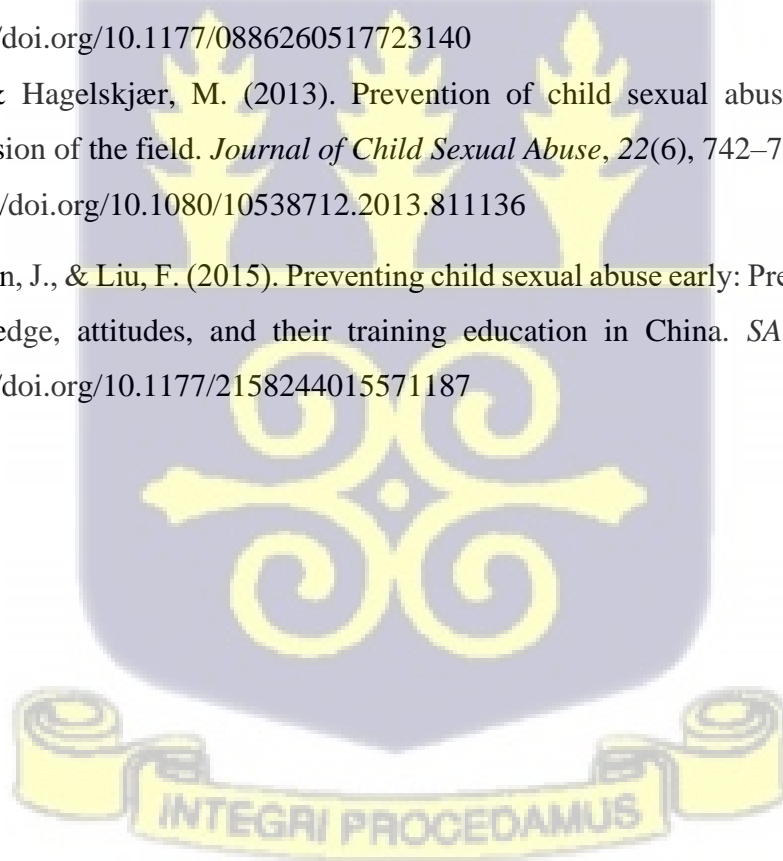
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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Demographic Information of Students

Dear Respondent,

I am Hannah Aimee Adzei an MPhil student at the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana Legon. I am undertaking a research on the topic: “**Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: The role of guidance and counselling program in Junior High Schools in the La Nkwantanang Madina Municipality.**” You are, therefore, kindly invited to participate in this study. Please, your responses will be recorded on a voice recorder for analysis. I assure you of anonymity and confidentiality of all your responses.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

Demographic Information

1. How old are you?
2. Which class are you in?
3. Do you stay with your parents? Yes No both one (specify)
4. If no, whom do you stay with?
5. Parents/Guardians Occupation.....
6. Do you feel happy at home? Yes No
7. Which do you prefer: home School Both Neither Reasons



Appendix II: Demographic Information for Key Informants

Dear Respondent,

I am Hannah Aimee Adzei an MPhil student at the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana Legon. I am undertaking a research on the topic: **“Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: The role of guidance and counselling program in Junior High Schools in the La Nkwantanang Madina Municipality.”** You are, therefore, kindly invited to participate in this study. Please, your responses will be recorded on a voice recorder for analysis. I assure you of anonymity and confidentiality of all your responses.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

Demographic Information

1. Position of Respondent
2. Profession / Educational attainment / Marital status / religious affiliation
3. Department/Unit of Respondent
4. How long have you been with the department/agency?



Appendix III: Interview Guide for Students

Objective 1: Knowledge on child sexual abuse and guidance and counselling

Knowledge on child sexual abuse

1. Please tell me what you know about child sexual abuse? Perpetrators etc.
2. Where did you learn about it from? Parents, teachers etc.
3. Have your parents/guardian ever talked to you about child sexual abuse? Which of your parents? What did they tell you?
4. Can you tell me some of the forms of child sexual abuse you know?
5. Have you ever experienced any of the following?

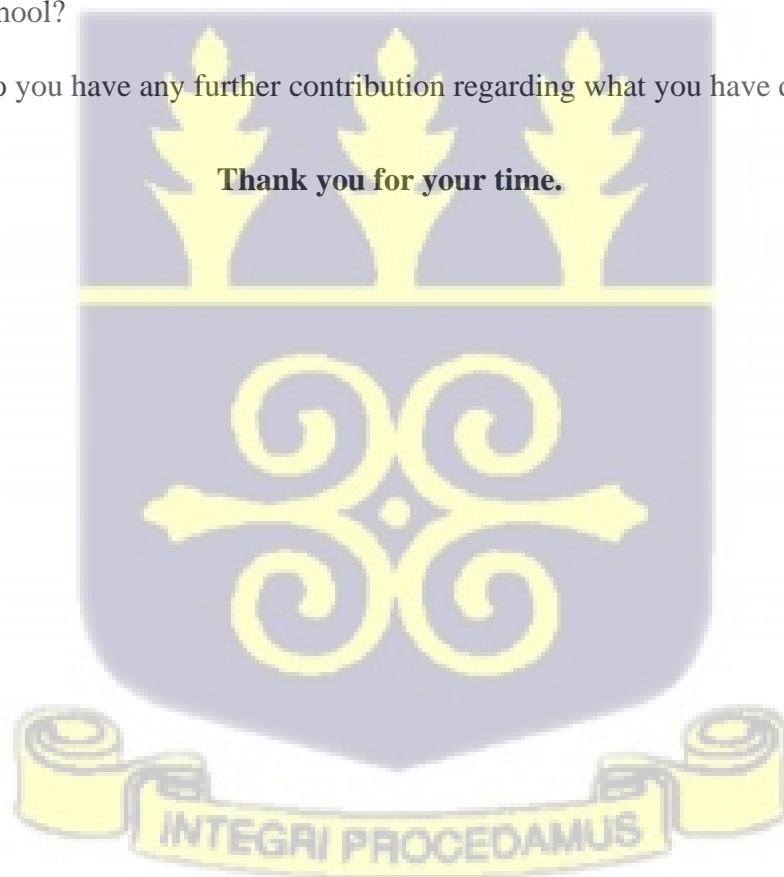
	Yes	No	Not sure	If yes, what did you do under the circumstance?
Touching of private parts				
Fondling				
Kissing				
Exposure to pornography				
Sexual text messages				
Sexual intercourse (at what age was your first sexual intercourse)				
Others, specify.				

6. Have you ever heard of someone who has been sexually abused? What happened to the person? What kind of abuse? What did you do then?
7. Please do you feel safe at school Yes No if no, why
8. What do you think should be done to prevent child sexual abuse?

Role of guidance and counselling coordinators/facilitators

1. Have you heard about guidance and counselling?
2. Do you have a unit in your school? Can you please tell me what the guidance and counselling facilitator in your school do?

3. How many times does the guidance and counselling unit meet with students?
How do they meet students? Eg In a group or one-on-one basis
4. How long does the Guidance and Counselling unit in your school spend time with students? Eg, 30 minutes, 1 hour etc.
5. Have you ever visited the guidance and counselling unit? When was the last time you visited?
6. What was your reason for visiting the guidance and counselling unit?
7. What did you like about the guidance and counselling unit? What did you not like?
8. What do you think can be done to improve upon guidance and counselling in your school?
9. Do you have any further contribution regarding what you have discussed?



Appendix IV: Interview Guide for Key Informants

Child Sexual Abuse

1. What is the nature of reported cases of child sexual abuse in your outfit?
2. Who are the most common perpetrators? Why? Are these perpetrators familiar with the victims?
3. What parental characteristics place children at risk, or serve to protect children from sexual abuse? Eg, parental neglect etc.
4. What factors in the environment or community that put children at risk in experiencing sexual abuse? Poverty, change in family structure, economic cycles (loss of job)
5. What can you say about our social and cultural values, beliefs and customs that protect the rights of children? (Cultural perception of societies that may influence the understanding of child sexual abuse)
6. What are the roles of teachers in creating awareness on CSA?
7. What are the roles of parents in creating awareness on child sexual abuse?

Availability of support services

1. Could you explain the kind of support services you receive in your quest to prevent child sexual abuse? For example, medical professionals, social workers, FBOs, CBOs and NGOs etc.
2. What internal support services are available to child sexual abuse victims in your outfit? What do you think of these support services?
3. Could you outline some examples of specific roles of the school curriculum in preventing child sexual abuse? Clubs etc

Factors militating against the use of guidance and counselling program in child sexual abuse prevention

1. What are some of the challenges that militate against child sexual abuse prevention? For E.g. What makes it difficult or easier? Can you give examples? (what can you say about social media, adverts on television and the influx of mobile phones?)
2. How do you deal with these challenges?
3. Could you give an example of how you handled a reported case of child sexual abuse?
 - a. Do you feel like you could solve it?
 - b. What would you need to solve it?
 - c. How do you solve the issue?
 - d. What are some of the barrier(s), if any, you encountered? Lack of key support?
 - e. How did you overcome the barrier(s)?
4. In your view, does the guidance and counselling unit receive adequate support in the prevention of child sexual abuse in the Municipality? Please elaborate.

Strategies in fighting child sexual abuse

1. What are some of the strategies employed by your outfit in the fight against child sexual abuse in the Municipality? Eg. Does your school have any specific policy on child sexual abuse? Mention and give details.
2. What are some of the strategies named above or interventions will you recommend being sustained or scaled up? Please justify your response.
3. Which of the strategies and interventions would you discount outright? Why?

4. What suggestions will you make to prevent the occurrence of child sexual abuse in the municipality apart from those mentioned? Subject to your experience on the job?
5. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your





UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR THE HUMANITIES (ECH)

P. O. Box LG 74, Legon, Accra, Ghana

My Ref. No...ECH 123/ 20-21 ...

May 9, 2021

Hannah Aimee Adzei
Department of Social Work
University of Ghana
Legon

ETHICAL CLEARANCE
(ECH 123/ 20-21)

The protocol title below has been reviewed and approved by the ECH Committee.

TITLE OF PROTOCOL: PREVENTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PROGRAM IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE LA-NKWANTANANG MADINA MUNICIPALITY

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: HANNAH AIMEE ADZEI

Please note that the final review report must be submitted to the Committee at the completion of the study. Your research records may be audited at any time during or after the implementation. Any modification of this research project must be submitted to ECH for review and approval prior to implementation.

Please report all serious adverse events related to this study to ECH within seven (7) days verbally and in writing within fourteen (14) days.

This certificate is valid till May 8, 2022. You are to submit annual reports for continuing review.

Please accept my congratulations.

Yours Sincerely,

Professor C. Charles Mate-Kole
ECH Chair

Cc: Dr. Kingley Saa-Touh Mort, Department OF Social Work, UG
Dr. Doris Akyere Boateng, Department of Social Work, UG

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REPUBLIC OF GHANA

17TH MAY, 2021

DISTRIBUTION

ALL HEADTEACHERS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

RE: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I write to introduce **Miss Hannah Aimee Adzei**, a student of the University of Ghana, who is pursuing a Master of Philosophy in Social Work at the University of Ghana to you.

She is to conduct a research in schools in the La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality as part of the requirement for completing the programme on the topic **“Preventing child sexual abuse: The role of guidance and counseling program in Junior High School in the Municipality”**.

I wish to inform you that permission has been granted her for the collection of appropriate data for her project work.

For further clarification, please contact **Mr. Peter N. Ngala**, the Head of supervision on telephone number **0244968884/0208251167**.

THE MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR
GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE
LA NKWANTANANG-MADINA

.....
ANGELA FRIMPOMAA NKANSAH (MS)
MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
LA NKWANTANANG-MADINA

CC: **PROF. C. CHARLES MATE-KOLE**, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
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INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS



Official Use only
Protocol number

Ethics Committee for Humanities (ECH)

PROTOCOL CONSENT FORM

Section A- BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Title of Study:	Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: The role of guidance and counselling program in Junior High Schools in the La Nkwantanang Madina Municipality
Principal Investigator:	Hannah Aimee Adzei
Certified Protocol Number	ECH 123 /20-21

Section B- CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

General Information about Research

The study seeks to find out the role of the guidance and counselling program in Junior High Schools in preventing sexual abuse among children in the La-Nkwantanang Madina Municipality. The study will look out for ways by which the guidance and counselling coordinators create awareness on child sexual abuse and its prevention. Besides, the study will identify support services available to schools in the fight against child sexual and abuse, their strategies employed and militating factors that hinder the prevention of child sexual abuse in the municipality. This will involve a qualitative approach of data collection. The study will recruit students, guidance and counselling coordinators and headteachers for an in-depth interview.

For the research to be gender-sensitive, equal number of boys and girls will be randomly selected until the sample size is reached. Besides, key informants will be purposively selected. Since there are more female school guidance and counselling coordinators/facilitators, the researcher will select schools with male guidance and counselling coordinators/facilitators to enhance gender equity.

The interview will last between 30 – 45 minutes which will be audio recorded taking into consideration the study participants. No information will be linked to any participant.

Benefits/Risks of the study

The study will inform Child Right Advocates and guidance and counselling coordinators of the Ghana Education Service on the appropriate prevention mechanisms for child sexual abuse in the municipality. It will further enhance social workers' advocacy role by educating children on

preventing possible sexual abuse and providing the appropriate interventions for children who are sexually abused. Besides, it will add to the knowledge of child sexual abuse prevention. There are no anticipated hazards of the study. However, if the researcher comes across any sexually abused child, appropriate intervention will be provided by referral.

Confidentiality

The researcher will not link any participant to a name. Recorded interviews will be kept safe on the researcher's google drive or any other device considered appropriate.

The only group of people who will have access to the research records is the researcher and her supervisors.

Compensation

There will be no compensation in any form to participants unless the researcher can obtain a source of funding.

Withdrawal from Study

There will be no penalty for voluntary withdrawal of any participant. Besides, no participants will be adversely affected when he/she decides to withdraw from the study at any given time. In addition, there will be no legal representative of any participant.

The researcher will terminate no participant's participation unless the participants decide to withdraw from the study.

Contact for Additional Information

If you have any further questions or clarifications, you may contact;

Name: Hannah Aimee Adzei

Institution: University of Ghana (Department of Social Work)

Address: C/o Dr Senyo Adzei, School of Performing Arts, P.O. Box LG 19 Legon

Email: mrsaimaadzei@gmail.com

Contact: 0263127235 / 0204951603

In the event of further questions or injury during the study, you may contact the following people:

Name of Supervisor (1): Dr Kingsley Saa-Touh Mort, Lecturer, Dept of Social Work, P.O Box LG 419 Legon, Accra Phone No.: 0555597265 / 0208038857, Email: kmort@ug.edu.gh

Name of Supervisor (2): Dr Doris Akyere Boateng, Lecturer, Dept of Social Work, P.O Box LG 419 Legon, Accra Phone No.: 0246507089 Email: dboateng@ug.edu.gh

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Administrator of the Ethics Committee for Humanities, ISSER, University of Ghana at ech@ug.edu.gh or 00233- 303-933-866.

“I have read or have had someone read all of the above, asked questions, received answers regarding participation in this study, and am willing to give consent for me, my child/ward to participate in this study. I will not have waived any of my rights by signing this consent form. Upon signing this consent form, I will receive a copy for my personal records.”

Name of Participant

Signature or mark of Participant

Date

If participant cannot read and or understand the form themselves, a witness must sign here:

I was present while the benefits, risks and procedures were read to the volunteer. All questions were answered and the volunteer has agreed to take part in the research.

Name of witness

Signature of witness / Mark

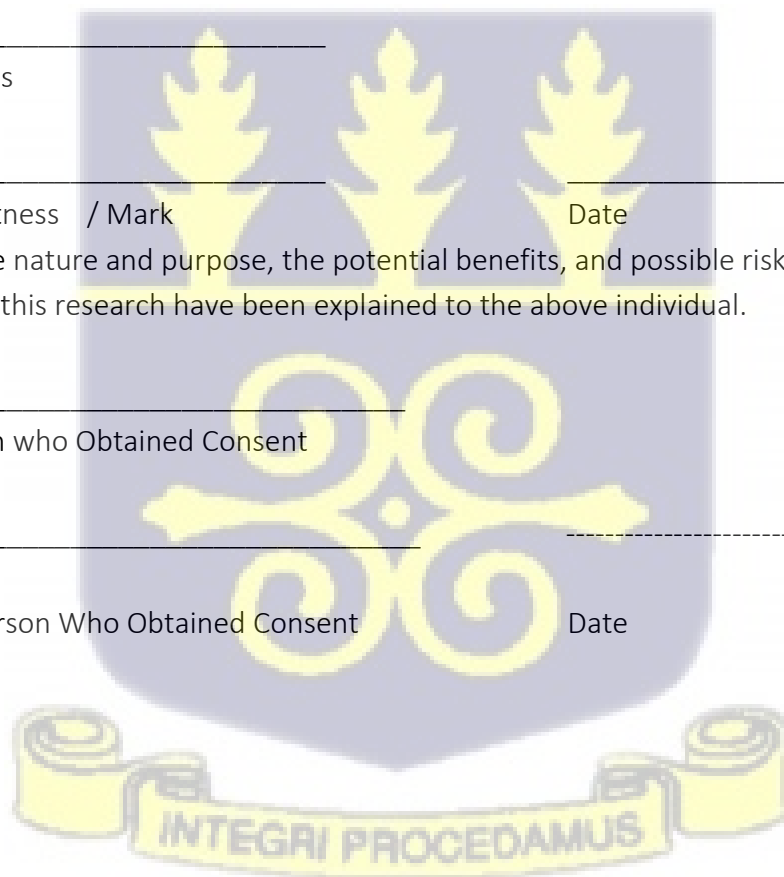
Date

I certify that the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research have been explained to the above individual.

Name of Person who Obtained Consent

Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent

Date





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GUARDIAN /PARENTAL PROTOCOL CONSENT FORM

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Section C- PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT

"I have read or have had someone read all of the above, asked questions, received answers regarding my child's participation in this study, and am willing to give consent for me, my child/ward to participate in this study. I will not have waived any of my rights by signing this consent form. Upon signing this consent form, I will receive a copy for my personal records."

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Name of witness

Signature of witness / Mark

Date

I certify that the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research have been explained to the above individual.

Hannah Aimee Adzei

Name of Person who Obtained Consent

Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent

Date

