

Student Teachers' Perceptions of the Nature, Extent and Causes of Child Abuse by Teachers in Zimbabwean Secondary Schools

Almon Shumba

*School of Teacher Education, Faculty of Humanities, Central University of Technology,
Free State, Bloemfontein 9300. South Africa
E-mails: ashumba@cut.ac.za and almonshumba@yahoo.com*

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ABSTRACT This study sought to determine: (a) student teachers' perceptions of child abuse within the school context; (b) forms of child abuse perpetrated by teachers on pupils in secondary schools; and (c) causes of child abuse by teachers in schools. A retrospective study was conducted using a purposive sample of 28 participants (15 male, 13 female; aged 21 to 45 years) who were attached to experienced teachers as their mentors for a whole year during their teaching practice. Participants were asked to reflect on how teachers interacted with their pupils in schools. The study assumes that since the perpetrator was no longer present, participants were free to verbalize without fear how their mentors treated their pupils during teaching practice. Participants were asked to write an essay explaining: (i) what they understood by child abuse from the school context; (ii) to indicate forms of child abuse that they observed being perpetrated on pupils by teachers in schools; (iii) to suggest causes of child abuse by teachers in schools; and (iv) to recommend the action that could be taken against child abuse perpetrators in schools. Data were analysed using content analysis. The study found that participants conceptualised child abuse as the maltreatment of pupils by teachers sexually, physically, emotionally and making pupils do domestic activities for teachers at their houses. It is clear from the study that pupils are vulnerable to child abuse and hence there is need to protect them against abuse in schools.

INTRODUCTION

Abuse of pupils by teachers in schools is now a social problem locally and globally (Amunga et al. 2009; Khan 1995; Shakeshaft and Cohan 1995; Shumba 2009; Zindi and Shumba 1999). Teachers play multifaceted roles within schools including *acting in loco-parentis*, counsellors, advisers and researchers within the school and in society as agents of social change. As such, the society entrust authority, power and respect and also pupils look up to teachers for their guidance and assistance in dealing with their social problems (Bhana and Naidoo 1988; Makura and Shumba 2009). It is expected that teachers have a mutual working relationship with both pupils and society. However, some teachers abuse the trust and their *loco-parentis* role within the school and abuse their pupils (Shumba 1999).

Child abuse by teachers appears to take various forms in schools. Some teachers abuse children without knowing that they are abusing them and children do not know that they are

being abused in schools (Shumba 2002b). In this study, child abuse is considered as any form of maltreatment that hurts the minor psychologically, sexually, emotionally or physically, for example, physical assault by teachers in the name of punishment (Shumba 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b and 2004). In this regard, some teachers abuse their *loco-parentis* role within the school and their authority and take advantage of young children who cannot make their own decisions. In a similar vein, other studies report some teachers accused of sexually, physically and emotionally abusing their pupils instead of protecting them since they *act in loco-parentis* within the school (Claussen and Critenden 1991; Vissing et al. 1991). Research also shows that most child abuse victims rarely report their perpetrators to the law enforcing agents for fear of reprisals and reported cases are merely *a tip-of-the-iceberg* (Khan 1995; Zindi and Shumba 1999).

Studies on child abuse show that the problem is widespread and varies from culture to culture and from society to society (Abrahams et al. 1992; Elliot et al. 1995; Amunga et al. 2009; Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman 1994). Although child abuse is reported to be on the increase globally, there is no agreed definition of child abuse (Khan 1995; O'Brian and Lau

Address all correspondence to:
Professor Almon Shumba
School of Teacher Education, Faculty of Humanities
Central University of Technology, Free State
Private Bag X20539, Bloemfontein 9300. South Africa
E-mail: ashumba@cut.ac.za, almonshumba@yahoo.com

1995; Renk et al. 2002; Shumba 2002b). As such, the lack of uniformity in the definition of child abuse has made it difficult to interpret and to compare the different findings from various studies (Black and DeBlassie 1993; Roberts and Miltenberger 1999). Evidence available shows that child abuse has no boundary because children of all ages, socio-economic statuses, and ethnic and racial groups are victims of child abuse (Kendall-Tackett et al. 1993; Shakeshaft and Cohan 1995). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as a person who is under the age of 18 (Shumba 2003). In general, child abuse occurs when a parent, guardian or caregiver (such as a teacher) mistreats a child sexually, physically or emotionally resulting in injury, emotional or psychological harm, or serious risk of harm to the child (Jones and McKurdy 1992).

Current studies show that there are three forms of child abuse that are known internationally and these are sexual, physical and emotional abuse (Amunga et al. 2009; Claussen and Critenden 1991; Gwirayi and Shumba 2009; Shumba 2009; Zindi 1995). In his study of child abuse in Zimbabwean schools, Shumba (2002b) found another form of child abuse known as the 'hidden curriculum abuse' whereby pupils are involved in doing domestic chores at teachers' houses during school hours. These domestic chores include cooking food, washing pots and plates, sweeping the teacher's house, making the teacher's bed, buying groceries, fetching water and firewood and selling popcorn, freezits or fruits for teachers. All these activities that children are involved in are not the core business of the school curriculum and they benefit teachers and not pupils. This form of child abuse is normally prevalent in rural primary schools in Africa. In most cases, the abuser is not aware that he or she is abusing the victim (the pupil) and the victims (the pupils) do not know that they are being abused (Shumba 2002b). Child sexual abuse occurs when a child is used for sexual purposes by an adult and this involves exposing the child to any sexual activity such as sexual intercourse, fondling (making a child to touch or be touched sexually; or touching private parts, buttocks), harassment, kissing, hugging, prostitution and sexual exploitation through showing pornographic materials to children (Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman 1994;

Kendall-Tackett et al. 1993; Shakeshaft and Cohan 1995; Zindi and Shumba 1999). Sexual abuse is inherently abusive and is often accompanied by separate and more direct forms of psychological abuse. Hence, a child exposed to sexual abuse also suffers emotionally and psychologically (Hart 1987; Krugman and Krugman 1984; Shumba 2004a and 2004b). Physical abuse is the deliberate application of force on the child's body which may result in injury or non-accidental injuries (Jones and McKurdy 1992; O'Brian and Lau 1995; Shumba 2002b; Zindi 1995). It also includes behaviour such as kicking, pushing, pinching, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, choking or any other harmful or dangerous use of force or restraint used on the child (Dubanoski et al. 1983; Payne 1989; Shumba 2003; Zindi 1995). Emotional abuse or psychological abuse occurs when a parent or caregiver do not provide essential requisites to a child's emotional, psychological and physical development (Hart and Brassard 1991; Korbin 1980; O'Brian and Lau 1995). Physical neglect occurs when a child's needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care and protection are not adequately met and emotional abuse occurs when a child's need to be loved, wanted, safe and worthy are not met by adults or caregivers (Rohner 1975; Rohner and Rohner 1980). Emotional neglect involves rejection, degrading, humiliation, terrorising or scolding the child in public or in front of others (Krugman and Krugman 1984; O'Brian and Lau 1995; O'Hagan 1995). It also involves attack on the child's sense of self or self-concept (Doyle 1997; Garbarino 1978; Shumba 2004a and 2004b). In other words, it can make the child lose self-confidence in oneself. It is clear from the above studies that child abuse now includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse and the 'hidden curriculum abuse'.

Student teachers were used as participants in this study because they were attached to experienced teachers as their mentors during their teaching practice and are likely to have observed how teachers interacted with pupils in schools. It is against this background that this study sought to determine: (a) student teachers' perceptions of child abuse within the school context; (b) forms of child abuse perpetrated by teachers on pupils in schools; and (c) causes of child abuse by teachers in schools.

METHODS

Participants

The study sample comprised of 28 participants (15 male, 13 female; aged 21 to 45 years) who were attached to experienced teachers as their mentors for a whole year during their teaching practice. All participants were studying their Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) at a State University in Zimbabwe. The participants' biodata were collected from the Teaching Practice Departmental office and the Faculty Registry. All participants taught in co-educational schools.

Participants used in this study are an ideal group of students because they had already acquired 3 to 4 years of teaching experience before their teaching practice. In this study, participants are expected to have observed how teachers interact with their pupils. Participants' observation is first hand information and is likely to be valid and reliable.

Instruments

This study adopted the qualitative research design by using the essay form. The advantage of using the essay form is that participants were free to express their own feelings and observations about child abuse in schools. Since the perpetrators were no longer present, it was expected that participants were free to verbalise their views.

Procedure

Purposively selected participants were put together in one classroom. The purpose of the study was explained to all participants. Participants were asked to reflect on how teachers interacted with their pupils in schools. Participants were asked to write an essay on (a) their perceptions of child abuse within the school context; (b) forms of child abuse perpetrated by teachers on pupils in schools; (c) to suggest causes of child abuse perpetrated by teachers in schools; and (d) actions that could be taken against child abuse perpetrators in schools. The main study data from participants themselves was collected between May and June before students wrote their final examinations in June.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using content analysis in this study. Researchers extracted the information relating to the critical questions from the participants' essays. A thematic approach was adopted in this study. The following themes were adopted in this study: (a) conceptualisation of child abuse; (b) forms of child abuse; (c) causes of child abuse; and (d) actions to be taken against child abuse perpetrators.

Ethical Issues

Since child abuse is a sensitive issue, permission to carry out the study was sought from the University through the Teaching Practice Department and this was granted. Participation in the study was voluntary. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants. The researchers assured participants that the information collected will be kept confidential and used for purposes of the study only.

RESULTS

This section is divided into the biodata and the research questions used in the essay compiled by the participants used in this study. The profile of student teachers shows that 15 male and 13 female participated in the study. Other biodata of participants shown in Tables 1 to 3 was presented to give the background of the participants used in this study.

Table 1 shows that only male teachers had a qualification in mathematics and the rest held various qualifications.

Table 1: Qualifications by degree by major subject by gender (N = 28)

	Subjects									
	Maths		History		English Lit.		Shona		Geography	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Degree										
BA	0	0	2	3	3	3	2	4	3	3
BSc	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	0	2	3	3	3	2	4	3	3

Table 2 shows that the majority of participants used in this study had 3 to 4 years teaching experience.

Table 3 shows that the majority of participants were teaching in urban schools.

Table 2: Teaching experience after degree qualification and before joining Midlands State University by gender (N=28)

Teaching experience in years	F	M
1 – 2	2	0
3 – 4	6	8
5 – 6	3	4
7 – 8	2	3
Total	13	15

Table 3: Type of school by gender (N = 28)

Type of school	F	M	Total
Govt. urban	9	10	19
Church rural	3	3	6
Private	1	2	3
Total	13	15	28

Conceptualization of Child Abuse in Zimbabwean Schools

In this study, participants' conceptualisation of child abuse has been categorised into the definition of child abuse and forms of child abuse.

Definition of Child Abuse

Student teachers view child abuse as: 'irresponsible behaviour by an adult in charge of learners, for example, having or falling in love with learners, supplying learners with drugs, mbanje (dagga) or liquor (beer). Liquor is meant for adults who are 18 years and above under the law in Zimbabwe'; 'any action inflicted on a minor to hurt a child, for example, sexually, psychologically, emotionally or physically causing negative effects'; 'making children remain behind in school as form of punishment or revenge on what they did; forcing pupils to stay behind after school to make them feel the pain that the teacher felt (revenge)'; 'making children not to go for break as a form of punishment'; 'making pupils sit in the sun (heat) or cold places as punishment'; 'make children stand or sit in a very hard position for 35 minutes'; 'teachers soliciting for money from pupils'; 'teachers who come to school or class drunk'. 'Such adults should be charged with statutory rape and should be discharged from the teaching service for committing such an offence'.

Forms of Child Abuse Perpetrated on Pupils

(a) Sexual Abuse

Student teachers view sexual abuse as 'sexual harassment, sexual attacks, fondling, sexual intercourse under duress'; 'ill-treatment of a child within the school context, for example, canning, sexual harassment'; 'violation of children's rights in schools, for example, child labour, indecent assault, exploitation perpetrated by teachers, school heads and non-teaching staff (general workers)'; 'improper association with pupils'; 'having love affairs with pupils'; 'violation of children's rights by teachers in schools for personal pleasure or gratification'; 'teachers are not aware of the importance of children's rights (because of their *loco-parentis* role within the school)'; 'holding hands, hugging, using sexual explicit language to a child'; 'having sexual intercourse with pupils even outside the school premises'; 'fondling female students (breasts, buttocks, private parts etc.)'; 'sexual abuse, for example, sexual intercourse, sexual harassment by school authorities such as teachers, headmasters etc.'; 'making sexual advances'; 'indecent assault of pupils (touching breasts, buttocks, private parts etc.)'; 'propose love to pupils'; 'teachers touch their private parts and have sex with pupils'; 'falling in love or having sex with learners'; 'having love affairs with children is the highest form of child abuse'; for example, Form 2 pupil – the teacher takes advantage of the child and uses his power to force the child to do what he wants since the child does not understand what is going on in the relationship'; 'proposing love to pupils done mainly by male teachers; young teachers had love affairs with pupils; case of a senior teacher who was accused of being intimate with a Form 4 girl. The teacher fondled her breasts and asked her if she is still a virgin and when the girl said yes, the teacher pushed her on the charts that had already been arranged; the girl threatened to report the teacher and was left alone. The case was reported to the head and the teacher is currently on suspension'.

Student teachers also reported that 'some teachers exchange pornographic videos with pupils leading to pupils becoming promiscuous'; 'put on a miniskirt whilst teaching an A' Level class and boy pupils started admiring the teacher and wishing they were in bed with the teacher –

this act of exposing herself is child abuse'; 'threaten them by death not to report them to authorities'; and 'some pupils are silenced by being given gifts like money'. Both male and female pupils are sexually abused by teachers; male teachers are mainly involved in sexual abuse in schools; girls are impregnated and cannot make decisions on their own. Such adults should be charged with statutory rape and should be discharged from the teaching service for committing such an offence.

(b) *Physical Abuse*

Student teachers view physical abuse as: 'the administration of unlawful corporal punishment on pupils by teachers'; 'any physical or verbal action that affects the child emotionally, physically or psychologically'; administering corporal punishment on learners without following necessary statutory procedures; teachers sometimes use bare hands to assault learners as a form of punishment; this is an act of misconduct and child abuse'; 'physical assault using a stick to beat up the pupil'; 'hard canning of pupils by teachers'; 'use of corporal punishment on pupils in schools'; 'indiscriminate beating of school children for making noise in class'; and, 'physical abuse such as canning'. It is clear from this definition that participants view physical abuse as involving emotional or psychological abuse of the child.

(c) *Emotional or Verbal Abuse*

Student teachers view emotional or verbal abuse within the school context as: 'the ill-treatment of children by people entrusted for their upkeep, for example, teachers, headmasters etc.'; 'depriving pupils of what they should get'; 'any action meted on a child by an adult or person in authority on a school child, for example, hurting the child physically, psychologically or emotionally'; 'any action taken by an adult that may physically, emotionally, psychologically or sexually hurt or harm the child'; 'ill-treatment of children by people entrusted for their upkeep, for example, teachers, heads etc.'; 'an act that causes sorrow, pain, deprivation etc'; 'an action or verbal act of misconduct by teachers against pupils'; 'using abusive language on pupils because of family or professional frustration'; 'using all forms of foul language on pupils

that hurts their self-concept'; 'verbal abuse by both male and female teachers, that is, verbal assault or use of vulgar language at assembly. This may cause psychological or emotional damage on the child'; 'scolding, verbal, assault, psychological or humiliating misbehaving pupils in front of the whole class, that is, degrading, stress, embarrassment'. 'calling pupils names in front of other pupils'; 'emotional abuse of pupils'; 'use of vulgar language by teachers, for example, male and female teachers'; 'labelling pupils as 'useless, stupid, dull' – cause the pupil to hate school'; and 'scolding pupils in front of the class causes low morale and low self-concept on pupils'.

(d) *Domestic Chores or Child Labour*

Student teachers view abuse of pupils involving doing domestic chores / child labour as: 'making pupils do menial work that do not benefit the child or the school, for example, cleaning teachers' houses during school hours'; 'asking for money from pupils meant for pupils' transport or lunch'; 'an act of using a school pupil wrongly or badly for one's benefit'; 'making children clean the teachers' house or fetch water for teachers without pay during school hours' – the teacher takes advantage of the child who does not know his rights (violation of children's rights); 'doing domestic chores or child labour at teachers' houses'; 'showing pornographic materials to pupils - known as 'Tutorials at the University of Zimbabwe'; 'selling certain items for teachers to supplement their meagre remuneration'; 'sending pupils to clean their houses during school hours'; 'mind the teacher's garden during school hours'; 'sending pupils to buy beer for them during school hours'; 'sending pupils to grocery shops to buy foodstuffs for them during school hours. This deprives pupils of their learning time and risk being involved in accidents (child safety in schools); 'sending pupils to fetch water and firewood – prevalent in rural areas'; 'cleaning teachers' houses including bedrooms'; 'sending pupils to work in their fields for no pay'; 'sending pupils to shops to buy mealie-meal for them during school hours'; 'sending pupils to sell sweets, freezits, samosas, bread, biscuits, popcorn for teachers during break – was done by female teachers'; 'These activities are not part

Why Teachers Abuse Pupils in Schools/Causes of Child Abuse

Student teachers reported the following as some of the causes of child abuse in schools:
(a) Young male teachers admire school girls causing them to fall in love with learners (b) Female teachers fall in love with boys because of looseness or inward admiration of the boy (c) Some girls wear indecent clothes that expose their bodies (d) Lack of monitoring by school administrators (e) Teachers are fearful and powerful within the school because of their <i>loco-parentis</i> role and authority within the school; (f) Ignorance about the legal rights / legal protection of children by teachers, pupils and parents; (g) Pupils from <i>poor background</i> who lure teachers into love relationships in order to get money or married; (h) Teachers have power and authority over pupils in schools (i) Poverty, for example, poor remuneration and conditions of service for teachers; (j) Poor leadership in some schools where the head engages in sexual abuse of pupils and this leads to teachers doing the same practice (k) Ignorance on the part of teachers and pupils (l) Poor remuneration of teachers that led some teachers to solicit for money from pupils' money for transport and lunch (m) Frustration and economic hardships faced by teachers (n) Low morale of teachers; (o) Stress, lack of job interest and irritation; (p) Too much closeness between pupils and teachers; (q) Teachers use corporal punishment after failing to instil discipline in learners; corporal punishment is an aggressive act used to express his or her aggression or frustration of meagre pay or inferiority (r) Poor supervision of pupils by the school administration or because the head in also involved in the practice and so other teachers copy the behaviour (imitation) (s) Poor supervision of pupils by the school administration or because the head in also involved in the practice and so other teachers copy the behaviour (imitation)

Action to be Taken Against Pupil Abusers

(a) 'Discharge from the teaching service (Public Service) and hand them over to the police and charge them with statutory rape if the girl is under 16 and the boy is under 14 years' (b) 'Be fined heavily (c) Immediate suspension from the teaching service' (d) 'Withhold promotion; Reprimand / warn the teacher involved'; 'Teachers should be cautioned (e) 'Abusers must be prosecuted and sent to jail' (f) 'Pupils must report child abuse to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as ChildAlert, Child Helpline, Child and Law Project etc. Children should be provided with toll free numbers to access the NGOs etc.' (g) 'Blacklisting pupil abusers from the teaching service' (h) 'Provide teachers with alternatives to corporal punishment in schools' (i) 'School heads and counsellors must counsel abusive teachers' (j) 'Heads must bar teachers who sell items to pupils in schools' (k) 'Include human rights in the syllabus for teacher training' (l) 'Conduct seminars for teachers on child abuse within the school'; 'Conduct awareness seminars on dangers of child abuse (e.g. HIV/AIDS) for teachers, parents and pupils'; 'Have open discussions on the issue of child abuse with teachers and pupils' (m) 'Government should improve conditions of service for teachers'; (n) 'School heads need to implement Public Service (Disciplinary) Regulations on perpetrators' (o) 'Have 'whistle blowers' who report such abuses in schools' (p) 'Guidance and counselling of children necessary for children in schools'; 'Schools should have guidance and counselling teachers to help pupils know their rights and possible forms of child abuse within the school' (q) 'Parents must give their children adequate resources for their educational needs' (r) 'Teachers who administer corporal punishment without the head's approval should be charged with assault' (s) Verbal abuse should lead to suspension or even prosecution' (t) 'Teachers must withdraw privileges instead of using corporal punishment on pupils' (u) 'Make pupils aware of their rights in schools' (v) 'Conduct seminars on human rights of pupils e.g. invite a resource person (lawyer or police) to give a talk on human rights issues to both teachers and pupils' (x) 'Need for supervision of the interaction between teachers and pupils in schools by school heads' (y) 'Inform pupils to report any form of child abuse by teachers (empowerment)' (z) 'Have a suggestion box for reporting child abuse in the school'
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of the core-business of the school'; 'selling freezits, sweets, fruits, pop-corn etc for teachers during school hours'; 'These domestic chores

are not part of the school curriculum and hence child abuse'. A lazy teacher who asks pupils to mark other pupils' work this is child abuse and

an act of misconduct because this is not part of their duties in school and is not paid for doing the job. 'Marking registers for teachers'; 'sending pupils on errands during lessons'.

What Some Participants Witnessed During Teaching Practice

Student teachers also reported that: (a) 'Teacher-pupil love relations were very common. Both male and female teachers had love affairs with pupils; one teacher was caught red-handed in an uncompromising position with a female pupil under 16 years in the office. Under the Zimbabwean law, a girl under 16 years is presumed to be incapable of consenting to sexual intercourse. Section 3 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act views sexual intercourse with a girl under 16 years with or without her consent as an offence'; (b) 'One female teacher assaulted 3 learners with a stick and the 3 learners had to seek medical treatment from a clinic'; (c) 'Deputy head caught in action fondling and caressing a head girl in his office'; (d) 'Some teachers believe that using corporal punishment makes pupils learn in schools'; (e) 'A female teacher was impregnated by a Sixth Form male student after completing examinations'. It appears from the participants' responses that sexual abuse is prevalent in some schools where they did their teaching practice. This reflects the amount of lawlessness prevalent in some schools. This needs to be checked because if it continues unabated, it tarnishes the image of teachers since teachers are regarded as parents within the school and should lead by example.

DISCUSSION

The qualifications of participants by degree by major subject and by gender show a very interesting scenario especially in mathematics. All the 5 participants who were doing a Bachelor of Science and major in mathematics were male. This scenario appears to suggest that mathematics was a male domain. On the contrary, participants doing a Bachelor of Arts majoring in History, English Literature or Geography appeared to be evenly distributed across all the subjects. All the participants had a range of teaching experience after the degree qualification and before joining the institution of study. The majority of participants did their teaching

practice in urban government and rural church schools. In general, such schools are well established and perhaps this explains why teacher trainees were deployed into such schools during their teaching practice stint.

It appears from the participants' responses that child abuse by teachers is viewed as the maltreatment of children that involve 'irresponsible behaviour by an adult in charge of learners, such as having or falling in love with learners' or 'supplying learners with drugs, mbanje (dagga) or liquor (beer)'. Liquor is meant for adults who are 18 years and above under the Zimbabwean law' or 'any action inflicted on a minor to hurt a child sexually, psychologically, emotionally or physically causing negative effects'; 'making children remain behind in school as a form of punishment or revenge on what they did; forcing pupils to stay behind after school to make them feel the pain that the teacher felt (revenge)'; 'making children not to go for break as a form of punishment' or 'in a very hard position for 35 minutes'; 'teachers soliciting for money from pupils'; 'asking for money from pupils meant for pupils' transport or lunch'; and 'teachers who come to school or class drunk'. What appears to emerge from these various conceptualisations is that teachers abuse their learners sexually, physically, emotionally and involving letters in doing domestic chores at their houses during school hours. Similar findings have been reported in other studies conducted in Zimbabwe (Khan 1995; Shumba 2001a, 2001b and 2002b; Zindi 1995). For example, Shumba (2002b) found that teachers involved pupils in doing such domestic chores as selling pop-corn, freezits and fruits or sending them to wash pots, plates, cook for them (teachers) at their houses during school hours. This form of child abuse is known as the 'hidden curriculum abuse' (Shumba 2007) whereby the perpetrator is not aware that he or she is abusing someone and whereby the victim is not also aware that he or she is being abused. Such teachers take advantage of their pupils by abusing their *loco-parentis* role within the school (Shumba 2001b). This is a cultural issue because in cultures the 'hidden curriculum abuse' is not considered as a form of child abuse.

Besides this form of child abuse, student teachers also indicated that some teachers abuse children in other various ways by 'making children remain behind in school as form of pun-

ishment or revenge on what they did'; 'forcing pupils to stay behind after school to make them feel the pain that the teacher felt (revenge)'; 'make children stand on one leg or sit in a very hard position for 35 minutes'. It is interesting to note that there are 'teachers soliciting for money from pupils'; and 'teachers who come to school or class drunk'. Soliciting for money from pupils perhaps reflects the economic problems facing teachers in Zimbabwe. This also shows that the meagre salaries of teachers do not sustain their needs. This paints a very gloomy picture and one wonders the kind of morals that these teachers are inculcating in their pupils. Some of the economic problems that teachers face in fact degrade their status and need to be addressed, so that teachers can lead more decent lives.

From participants' responses, this study shows that teachers in Zimbabwean schools sexually, physically and emotionally abuse their pupils in schools. Similar findings have been reported in other studies on child abuse by teachers in Zimbabwean schools (Khan 1995; Shumba 1999; 2001a; 2002a and 2002b; Zindi 1995; Zindi and Shumba 1999). It is interesting to note that participants are aware about what is sexual abuse by teachers in schools. For example, participants used in this study view sexual abuse as 'sexual harassment, sexual attacks, fondling, sexual intercourse under duress'; 'ill-treatment of a child within the school context, for example, canning, sexual harassment'; 'violation of children's rights in schools, for example, child labour, indecent assault, exploitation perpetrated by teachers, school heads and non-teaching staff (general workers)'; 'improper association with pupils'; 'having love affairs with pupils'; 'violation of children's rights by teachers in schools for personal pleasure or gratification'; 'teachers are not aware of the importance of children's rights (because of their *loco-parentis* role within the school)'; 'holding hands, hugging, using sexual explicit language to a child'; 'having sexual intercourse with pupils even outside the school premises'; 'fondling female students (breasts, buttocks, private parts etc.)'; 'sexual abuse, for example, sexual intercourse, sexual harassment by school authorities such as teachers, headmasters etc.'; 'making sexual advances'; 'indecent assault of pupils (touching breasts, buttocks, private parts etc.)'; 'propose love to pupils'; 'teachers touch

their private parts and have sex with pupils'; 'falling in love or having sex with learners'; 'having love affairs with children is the highest form of child abuse'; for example, Form 2 pupil – the teacher takes advantage of the child and uses his power to force the child to do what he wants since the child does not understand what is going on in the relationship'; 'proposing love to pupils done mainly by male teachers; young teachers had love affairs with pupils. For example, in our school, there was a case of a senior teacher who was accused of being intimate with a Form 4 girl. The teacher fondled her breasts and asked her if she is still a virgin and when the girl said yes, the teacher pushed her on the charts that had already been arranged; the girl threatened to report the teacher and was left alone. The case was reported to the head and the teacher is currently on suspension'. Participants' responses show that some teachers sexually abuse their pupils in various ways. As such, one wonders then who guards the guards in Zimbabwean schools especially when teachers are expected to *act-in-loco-parentis* within the school and to protect their pupils against all forms of child abuse including sexual abuse?

Besides the above form of sexual abuse, participants also reported other forms of sexual abuse that are perpetrated by teachers on their pupils. For example, participants reported that 'some teachers exchange pornographic videos with pupils leading to pupils becoming promiscuous'; 'a teacher put on a miniskirt whilst teaching an A' Level class and boy pupils started admiring the teacher and wishing they were in bed with the teacher – this act of exposing herself is child abuse'; 'threaten them by death not to report them to authorities'; and 'some pupils are silenced by being given gifts like money'; 'both male and female pupils are sexually abused by teachers'; 'male teachers are mainly involved in sexual abuse in schools'; and 'girls are impregnated and cannot make decisions on their own'. It appears from the above findings that some teachers expose their pupils to various forms of sexual abuse. Such teachers are putting the teaching profession into disrepute and should be discharged from the teaching service for committing such offences.

In this study, participants also indicated that some teachers physically abuse their pupils in schools. In this regard, participants view physi-

cal abuse as: 'the administration of unlawful corporal punishment on pupils by teachers'; 'any physical or verbal action that affects the child emotionally, physically or psychologically'; 'administering corporal punishment on learners without following necessary statutory procedures; teachers sometimes use bare hands to assault learners as a form of punishment; this is an act of misconduct and child abuse'; 'physical assault using a stick to beat up the pupil'; 'hard canning of pupils by teachers'; 'use of corporal punishment on pupils in schools'; 'indiscriminate beating of school children for making noise in class'; and, 'physical abuse such as canning'. It appears from the above participants' responses that physical abuse is viewed also as involving emotional or psychological abuse of the child. This concurs with findings of other studies which argue that both physical abuse and sexual abuse involve emotional abuse of the victims involved (Garbarino 1978; O'Brian and Lau 1995; O'Hagan 1995; Rohner 1975; Rohner and Rohner 1980; Shumba 2002a). This implies that sexual abuse and physical abuse also involve emotional or psychological abuse (Claussen and Critenden 1995; Krugman and Krugman 1984).

Another form of child abuse perpetrated by teachers on their pupils indicated by participants in their responses is emotional or verbal abuse (Krugman and Krugman 1984; O'Hagan 1995; Shumba 2002b). Participants view emotional or verbal abuse within the school context as 'the ill-treatment of children by people entrusted for their upkeep, for example, teachers, headmasters etc'; 'depriving pupils of what they should get'; 'any action meted on a child by an adult or person in authority on a school child, for example, hurting the child physically, psychologically or emotionally'; 'any action taken by an adult that may physically, emotionally, psychologically or sexually hurt or harm the child'; 'ill-treatment of children by people entrusted for their upkeep, for example, teachers, heads etc.'; 'an act that causes sorrow, pain, deprivation etc.'; 'an action or verbal act of misconduct by teachers against pupils'; 'using abusive language on pupils because of family or professional frustration'; 'using all forms of foul language on pupils that hurts their self-concept'; 'verbal abuse by both male and female teachers, that is, verbal assault or use of vulgar language at assembly – this may cause psychologi-

cal or emotional damage on the child'; 'scolding, verbal, assault, psychological or humiliating misbehaving pupils in front of the whole class, that is, degrading, stress, embarrassment'; 'calling pupils names in front of other pupils'; 'emotional abuse of pupils'; 'use of vulgar language by teachers, for example, male and female teachers'; 'labelling pupils as 'useless, stupid, dull' – cause the pupil to hate school'; and 'scolding pupils in front of the class causes low morale and low self-concept on pupils'. There is no doubt from the participants' responses that teachers subject their pupils to various forms of emotional or verbal abuse in schools. Similar findings have been reported in other studies on emotional abuse by teachers in the classroom (Hart 1987; Hart and Brassard 1991; Krugman and Krugman 1984; Shumba 2004a and 2002a). Research shows that emotional or verbal abuse is now considered to be the most devastating form of child abuse than sexual abuse and physical abuse (Rohner 1975; Shumba 2002a and 2004a). This is because this form of child abuse is internal and does not leave any visible scars on the victim. As such, it is necessary for teachers to be aware of the devastating effects of this form of child abuse on the development of children.

In this study, participants were asked to indicate the effects of child abuse by teachers on pupils. Participants indicated that child abuse: 'causes sorrow, pain, low self-esteem or negative self-esteem'; 'teachers steal pupils' time for resting'; 'makes a child develop a low self-concept'; 'verbal abuse kills the child's morale and drive to try during lessons'; 'vulgar language causes pupils to hate school, feel inferior, transfer to other schools etc'; 'use of corporal punishment makes pupils to fear the teacher; hate school and transfer to other schools.' There is no doubt that child abuse causes a lot of harm on the development of children (Shumba 2003).

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the findings that the following forms of child abuse were perpetrated on them: sexual abuse; physical abuse; emotional abuse; and the 'hidden curriculum' abuse. As such, there is need to protect pupils against all forms of child abuse perpetrated on them in schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since participants suggested that they were not aware about what is and is not child abuse by teachers in schools, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture section in charge of laws and regulations on pupil abuse in schools should hold awareness workshops and seminars with both teachers and pupils. In other words, information on where pupils could report the abuse should be made available to them. For example, children should be provided with toll free numbers to access non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Child Alert, Child Helpline, Child and Law Project that deal with child abuse issues. Pupils could use the public booths to contact these non-governmental organisations for assistance. On corporal punishment, participants suggest that the government should 'provide teachers with alternatives to corporal punishment in schools'. It appears that most teachers have disciplinary problems with pupils in schools because of lack of alternatives. Participants suggested that school heads should 'ban teachers who sell items to pupils in schools'.

It is also recommended that the teacher education curriculum should 'include human rights in the syllabus for teacher training'. In other words, schools should 'make pupils aware of their rights in schools' and should also 'conduct seminars on human rights of pupils for example, invite a resource person (lawyer or police) to give a talk on human rights issues to both teachers and pupils'. Such resource persons should 'have open discussions on the issue of child abuse with both teachers and pupils'. This may empower pupils with knowledge on what is child abuse within the school and be able to stand up against any forms of child abuse that might be perpetrated on them by some teachers in their schools. Participants also suggest that schools could 'have a suggestion box for reporting child abuse in the school'. Such a suggestion box could scare away would-be-perpetrators within the school. Over and above, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture and the Ministry of Higher Education should 'conduct awareness seminars for teachers on what is child abuse within the school'. This will make teachers aware about what is and is not child abuse within the school. In order to address the issue of teachers who solicit for money from

pupils, the 'government should improve conditions of service for teachers'. Although teachers do a lot of good work within the school, their conditions of service leave a lot to be desired because of escalating prices of basic commodities (for example, food, fuel, transport, etc.) in Zimbabwe. Their salaries are far below the expected Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and hence the possible reason why teachers appear to be very desperate to survive.

It appears that there are some school heads who do not know what to do with teachers who abuse pupils in their schools. Participants suggest that 'school heads need to implement Public Service (Disciplinary) Regulations on perpetrators' of child abuse in their schools without fear or favour. It may also be useful to 'have 'whistle blowers' who report such abuses in schools'. Perhaps this might minimise cases of child abuse in schools. It appears that some schools do not have school counsellors that could help the abused children. As such, the government should provide such personnel to cater for children's needs in schools. In order to address the problem of economic poverty of pupils in schools, participants suggest that 'parents must give their children adequate resources for their educational needs'. In this regard, parents need to give their children adequate pocket money so that female pupils will not be lured into having love affairs with some teachers as a means to address their economic needs.

Student teachers also suggest that 'teachers who administer corporal punishment without the head's approval should be charged with assault'. According to the Secretary of Education Circular P. 35 (1993) of the Public Service, teachers who wish to administer corporal punishment on their pupils should seek for permission from the school head and should administer it in the presence of the school head. As an alternative, participants suggest that 'teachers must withdraw privileges instead of using corporal punishment on pupils'. In this study, participants also suggest that 'verbal abuse should lead to suspension or even prosecution'. In other words, a law on verbal abuse needs to be promulgated so that no teacher can verbally abuse their pupils in schools.

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