

The Child Sexual Abuse Causal Model in the Zimbabwean Context

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ABSTRACT: This research aimed at finding practical solutions to the Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) scourge. In pursuit of the feasible solution, the study, which was hinged on the pragmatist philosophy, employed the mixed research methodology, which elicited the raw materials of the study process through structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews with perpetrators of CSA and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with stakeholders in the justice delivery system. The population of the study comprised all perpetrators of CSA and all stakeholders in the justice delivery system, for the 10 890 cases reported to the police between 2010 and 2015 and whose cases had been finalised. A multi-stage cluster sample of 372 cases was selected for the in-depth analysis of the cases as reflected in the police dockets. Perpetrators were purposively sampled from Chikurubi Maximum Prison, Chikurubi Female Prison and Harare Central Prison on a voluntary basis and finally, a Focus Group Discussion was arranged at Harare Magistrate Court with stakeholders in the justice delivery system, that is, magistrates, public prosecutors, investigating officers, traditional leaders, probation officers and members of the civic society organisations (CSOs), *et cetera*. In line with the Neo-Classical Theory of crime, propounded by Becker (1968), the study noted that low esteem, mainly emanating from very low incomes, resulted in low opportunity costs for committing CSA, hence a larger proportion of cases were perpetrated by very low income earners in the country. After conducting cost/benefit analysis, low income earners did not seem to realise much economic or monetary loss by being arrested and subsequently imprisoned for committing CSA, hence, the ever rising of CSA over the years. It was then recommended that the Police and their stakeholders endeavour focusing at the mindset of the potential perpetrator, instead of focusing on the victim alone if the scourge is to be contained. The study also bared a phenomenon of sexual starvation due to divorce, separation, imprisonment and widowhood as a very strong underlying factor of CSA. This group of offenders resorted to CSA as a way to gratify the important physiological need for sex, following sexual starvation as a result of the long absence of their spouses. Thus, useful insight into the potential perpetrator's thought processes, which could be utilised by the Police and their stakeholders, was gained.

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I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In Zimbabwe, Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) has become a growing concern, with barely a day passing without a child being sexually abused. By asserting that violence against women and children is a common phenomenon in Zimbabwe, Dube (2013) echoes similar sentiments in her study on perceptions of sexual abuse. She adds that among all the other forms of violence against women, rape and other forms of sexual violence are some of the social ills which are increasingly becoming rampant in the Zimbabwean society. To unravel this enigma, there was thus, need to come up with a causal model, which would facilitate deeper understanding of the phenomenon of CSA in Zimbabwe. In turn, solutions to address this scourge would then be obviated.

The vulnerability of children to sexual abuse has risen significantly in Zimbabwe. The crime's concentration per every 100 000 inhabitants rose from twenty-eight (28) cases in 1998 to forty-seven (47) cases in 2015, (Zimbabwe Population Census Report, 1992; Zimbabwe Population Census Report 2012; Zimbabwe Republic Police Annual Report, 1999 and Zimbabwe Republic Police Annual Report 2013).

Buonanno (2003) argues that CSA culminates from diverse areas but it is closely related to issues such as poverty, social segregation, wage and income discrimination, cultural and family background, level of education, unemployment, colonial heritage, age and sex, the availability and existence of illegal drug related activities, *et cetera*. He also highlights other socio-economic variables such as unstable economic and political environment, which are likely to impact negatively on the society, resulting in CSA. Over the period 2000 to 2015, Zimbabwe's poverty levels have worsened, from a Gross National Income per capita of six hundred and eighty dollars (US\$680) to less than two hundred dollars (US\$200) (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2016). CSA has also been on an upward trend during the same period, thus, suggesting a perfect correlation between the two variables.

The Zimbabwe National Baseline Survey on Life Experiences of Adolescence (Dzinotizei, 2011) reported that 33% of girl children in Zimbabwe, experience sexual violence prior to attaining the age of eighteen (18) years. A public opinion survey conducted by the Police in 1995 identified CSA as one of the ten (10) major crimes of concern in the country. Resultantly, the crime is accorded serious attention by the Zimbabwe Republic Police. A cursory glimpse of weekly, monthly and yearly statistics of Police records reveals that sexual abuse of children is quite rampant as infants as young as three (3) months, form part of the long list of victims.

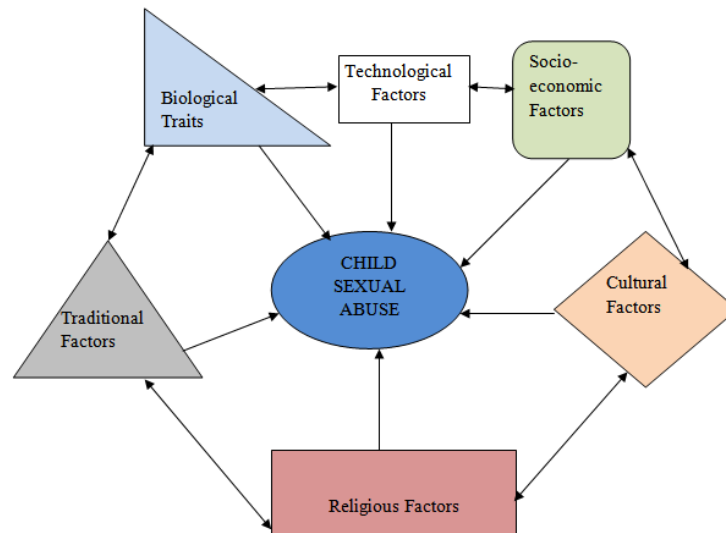
The majority of the perpetrators of CSA in Zimbabwe are persons' familiar to the victims. These perpetrators are mainly neighbours, domestic workers, family friends, et cetera, who constitute fifty-two percent (52%) of the total and close relatives who account for twenty-six percent (26%) of the total cases recorded in 2015. Thus, the two categories jointly account for seventy-eight percent (78%) of perpetrators who are familiar to the victim.

The thrust of this article is therefore, to illustrate with a causal model what leads to these statistics in the paragraph *supra*.

In their external environmental analysis, the Zimbabwe Republic Police (2010), guided by the reported cases, note that the socio-economic environment in Zimbabwe is characterised by declining moral values and norms, resulting in social ills such as CSA, pornography, prostitution, drug and alcohol abuse. They blame the following environmental factors for the rise in the social ills:

- a) Urbanisation;
- b) Access to negative internet and social media material; and
- c) Access to harmful practices of foreign cultures.

Hence, their Strategic Plan, Vision 2020, aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of the rapidly changing social, cultural, traditional, religious, economic and technological environment on crime, including CSA. This study therefore, looked at the concept of CSA using both detailed citations and diagrammatic representations. The diagram below illustrates how CSA could be arising in the Zimbabwean context.



The Concept of Child Sexual Abuse

Source: Researcher's Own Perception on Factors influencing CSA

From the diagram, it is clear that for a single case of CSA to occur, it requires both intrinsic and extrinsic forces to act on an individual person, who would eventually commit the crime. While social, cultural, traditional, religious, economic and technological factors are external forces that may adversely impact on the individual and lead him/her to commit CSA; biological factors on the other hand are internal to the individual. Thus, CSA is conceived as a product of both intrinsic and extrinsic forces, acting upon the individual who would eventually perpetrate the offence.

INTRINSIC FORCES

Under intrinsic forces, the following two theories were discussed, explaining how inner dynamic forces operate within an individual member of society, leading to his/her subsequent commission of CSA:

- The Classical Theory of Crime
- Paedophilia

According to Furnham and Heaven (1999), one's inner dynamic forces predict whether an individual will engage in criminal activity or not.

According to Zimbabwean common law, which was subsequently amended by the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act: Chapter 9:23; for any act to constitute a crime, the state is required to prove both *mens rea* and *actus reus* on the part of the offender. These two Latin terms simply mean; 'guilty state of mind' and 'guilty act' respectively, (Feltoe, 1991).

Mens rea, according to Feltoe (1991), refers to the guilty state of mind or the mental element of a crime. In other words, the perpetrator of a criminal activity, recognises that the action he/she is about to engage in is harmful, or otherwise endangering to the property, health, safety, or moral welfare of other people, but nonetheless, he/she consciously goes on to execute the act. Thus, Zimbabwean law punishes the offender, who has a guilty mind, for it is in the mind where crime is originated (*the emphasis is the researcher's*).

In this study therefore, *mens rea* comprises mere thoughts or intentions to commit CSA. As conceded by Feltoe (1991), thoughts alone are not punishable at law, unless they are followed by actions that clearly indicate intention to commit CSA. On the other hand, *actus reus* will comprise the physical aspect of actually touching, viewing, raping the child, *et cetera*.

i) The Classical Theory of Crime

According to this theory, people's decisions to offend are guided by calculations. Beccaria (1986) and Bentham (1907) argue that people freely choose whether to offend or not. They weigh the value of enjoyment they expect to obtain from criminal acts, against the opportunity cost of the potential pain they would receive if they were detained and punished for their crimes; without looking at specific areas of loss or gain. This school of thought is known as the Classical School of Criminology. It proposes that crime can be most successfully deterred by punishments that are certain, swift, and relative to the destruction caused. These punishments are also intended to discourage offenders from re-offending and would encourage other non offenders to be law obedient. The Classical approach to crime originated in the enlightenment of/and is evident from the writings of authors such as Locke (1632), Hobbes (1682) and Rousseau (1762). It was developed in the mid-18th century and was based on the utilitarian philosophy, which states that a consumer demands a good because of its usefulness. In this case, an offender commits crime because of its pleasure or benefits. According to this perspective, fundamental characteristics of people are intelligence and rationality as the principal foundation for their conduct. In other words, people are free to make choices and follow their own interests.

This study focused on CSA, where sexual pleasure is the major anticipated benefit. Thus, according to this theory, an offender weighs the benefits of sexual pleasure against the costs of being arrested and imprisoned. If he/she perceives that sexual pleasure resulting from sexually abusing a child would outweigh the pain or cost of imprisonment, then he/she would go ahead and commit CSA. Otherwise, without benefit, the crime would not occur. Thus, the Classical School of Criminology has its main weakness on the assumption that people always act rationally (*the emphasis is the researcher's*).

ii) Paedophilia

According to Bartollas (1993), paedophilia is a condition emanating from inner biological forces, particularly the brain structure and function, which results in the disorder of sexual preference. Bartollas (1993) asserts that paedophilia personalities are naturally attracted to young children, who show no signs of physical and sexual development. He further points out that these adults or older adolescents have extremely erotic cravings for children and that they want sexual activity with someone who will not reject or belittle them.

In summary, intrinsic forces acting on a potential child sexual abuser have been reviewed under the following theories:

- i) The Classical Theory of Crime, and
- ii) Paedophilia

However, for a single case of CSA to occur, the potential child sexual abuser has external forces to contend with as well. The other forces acting on the potential abuser are extrinsic to the individual and these were discussed below.

EXTRINSIC FORCES

Under extrinsic forces, the following five (5) theories were discussed, exuding their adverse influence on an otherwise law abiding individual member of the society:

- i) Social Learning Theory
- ii) Neo-Classical Theory of Crime
- iii) Finkelhor's Preconditions Model

- iv) Hall and Hirschman's Quadripartite Theory
- v) Cultural Myths and Beliefs

Unlike Furnham and Heaven (1999), who attributed criminality to an individual's inner dynamic forces, proponents of extrinsic forces such as Reece and McGee (1975), lay blame on forces outside the individual offender. They point out that the nature of the society itself can generate definite pressure upon individuals or social groups. Such pressure leads them to non-conforming, criminal behaviour. Thus, according to Reece and McGee (1975), there are circumstances in which criminality is a reasonable and entirely normal response to the demands of the society (*the emphasis is the researcher's*).

(i) Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning Theory propounded by Albert Bandura in 1977 postulates how people can learn new things and develop new behaviour by observing other people. The theory looks at how the observational learning process has an impact on the behaviour of people. In simple terms, Bandura (1977) points out that people can learn by watching other people perform their behaviour (*the emphasis is mine*). In order to get to this conclusion, he conducted an experiment known as the Bobo Doll Experiment. Bandura included an adult who was tasked to act aggressively towards the Bobo Doll, while children observed him. Later, Bandura let the children play inside a room with the Bobo Doll. He affirmed that these children imitated the aggressive behaviour towards the doll, which they had observed earlier.

Thus, according to the Social Learning Theory, CSA results from people who once witnessed or experienced sexual abuse in their early lives, either as victims, witnesses or both. In support of the above theory, Watkins and Bentovim (1992) found evidence to suggest that sexual abuse is a learnt behaviour in some adults. They show that a good number of sexually abused boys tend to molest children in their later lives. Thus, childhood environments that are physically violent, emotionally unsupportive and characterised by competition for scarce resources; have been associated with sexual violence. Thus, according to Watkins and Bentovim (1992), as the sexually abused boys grow, they develop stereotypic beliefs that it is 'justifiable' to sexually abuse children as they were also abused during their childhood and the chain goes on, from generation to generation.

In support of this theory, Finkelhor (1984) blames men's warped mindset, resulting from socio-cultural conditioning to be dominant and powerful in sexual relationships resulting in CSA. He asserts that such conditioning drives or motivates men to prefer smaller, younger and weaker sexual partners, hence they target children.

Chiroro (2007) et al.'s assertion that it is the environment that nurtures stereotypic beliefs, which would in turn determine a man's propensity to commit sexual abuse, also supports the theory. Chiroro, et al. (2007), also state that both the physical and social environments have an impact on the commission of sexual abuse, with the social environment being more important than the physical environment.

On the other hand, Gavin, et al. (2013) found strong evidence of causal association between CSA and anti-social behaviour, where the latter is an effect of the former. They also discovered anecdotal and experimental evidence suggesting that CSA increases the probability of negative psychological outcomes such as poor self-esteem, lack of a sense of control and mental disorder.

From the abovementioned scholars, it could be deduced that while CSA is an effect of anti-social behaviour, it is also a root cause of it. Thus, according to the Social Learning Theory, CSA appears to be a vicious cycle, that is, it is clear that CSA is grounded in mental disorder resulting from personal disorder and poor self esteem, which may be traced back to CSA at the childhood stage of the perpetrator; and the cycle goes on. Thus, when a child is sexually abused at childhood, he/she experiences personal disorders and poor self-esteem, which in turn develop into mental disorder. Such mental disorder then becomes the breeding ground for evil thoughts, hence, *mens rea* to commit CSA.

(ii) Neo Classical Theory of Crime

Becker (1968) developed this approach in an attempt to improve and modernise the Classical Approach. In the Neo-Classical Theory, the offender conducts cost/benefit analysis, weighing real life issues such as wage rate, level of education, social status, *et cetera*. The theory suggests that people who are educated and gainfully employed are less likely to commit crime, since they would be afraid of losing their jobs as a result of imprisonment.

The major difference between the Classical Theory and the Neo Classical Theory is that while Classical Theory ascribes to idealism, Neo Classical Theory ascribes to realism. Realism refers to actual or real existence of phenomena, as opposed to idealism, which is more concerned with abstract issues that only exist in the mind (Aristotle, 384 – 422 BC). Authors such as Economist Fleisher (1966), supported by Becker (1968) and Ehrlich (1973) provide an analysis in which potential criminals optimally choose to commit crime.

The Classical Theory only talks of an abstract cost/benefit analysis before committing an offence, without taking into account, the specific or real variables constituting the costs and benefits that the offender considers. The Neo Classical Theory actually goes further and takes into account, the real variables constituting the costs and benefits, such as the offender's wage rate, his/her probability of being arrested, his/her level of education *et cetera*.

Ehrlich (1973) argues that higher levels of educational attainment raise skills and abilities; and are associated with higher returns in the labour market, thereby increasing the opportunity cost of criminal behaviour. The opportunity cost that Ehrlich refers to here is the job that would be lost by being imprisoned for the crime committed. In other words, a perpetrator weighs whether it is worth it to commit CSA and risk losing his/her job.

Fleisher (1966) argues that the higher the degree of inequality in the distribution of income, the higher the possibility of commission of crime by the disadvantaged. An example is where ninety percent (90%) of the national income is enjoyed by only ten percent (10%) of the population, leaving only ten percent (10%) of the national income to be distributed among ninety percent (90%) of the population. Essentially, in this example, ninety percent (90%) of the population have nothing to enjoy. This then, results in high propensity to criminality as there is a very small opportunity cost of committing crime, that is, even if there may be high chances of being arrested, there is virtually nothing to lose in terms of economic wealth.

In summary, Fleisher (1966; 118 - 137) constructed the model for the commission of crime as follows:

The choice to commit crime, **C**, is influenced by wage rate, **W**, the risk of getting caught, **P**, inequality in the distribution of income, **I**, the unemployment rate, **U**, educational attainment, **E**, unemployment benefits, **A**, the cost of penalty, **S**, benefits of crime, **B**, and the effects of other variables **p**.

Thus, $C = W + P + I + U + E + A + S + B + p$

Crime = Wage rate + Risk of being caught + Income + Unemployment rate + Level of Education + Unemployment benefits + Cost of penalty + Benefit of crime + Effects of other variables

In this model *p* represents other factors, that is, social, cultural, traditional, religious, economic, technological and biological, that were omitted in the Classical Theory.

In this study, the offender would consider his/her wage, the risk of being arrested, his/her social status and many other socio-economic variables before committing CSA. If his/her wage rate, educational level and social status are very low and the likelihood of obtaining gainful employment are very low, then he/she realises that he/she has very little to lose as a result of being imprisoned for CSA, thus, his/her propensity to commit CSA becomes very high. Thus, the Neo Classical Theory's major weakness is that it assumes that people always carry out calculations before committing crime (the emphasis is the researcher's). Interestingly, CSA has been committed by very prominent people in societies, despite their social standing, well paying jobs, *et cetera*, that is, those who have very high opportunity costs of committing the offence.

(iii) Finkelhor's Precondition Model of CSA

Finkelhor (1984) developed a comprehensive model that created four (4) preconditions that must be satisfied before a person becomes a child sexual abuser. The four preconditions are:

- i) Motivation to sexually abuse a child;
- ii) Overcoming internal inhibitors;
- iii) Overcoming external inhibitors; and
- iv) Dealing with the child's possible resistance.

Motivation to Sexually Abuse a Child

According to Finkelhor's first pre-condition, the offender is naturally, sexually aroused by children. In addition, he/she is also unable to satisfy his/her sexual needs in other appropriate ways, for example, finding an adult partner for him/herself.

Overcoming Internal Inhibitors

Precondition two, which is the second step, is Overcoming Internal Inhibitors. Even though a person may be motivated to perform sexual acts with a child, he or she may not act on such emotions due to internal inhibitors, such as conscience. Internal inhibitors may be overcome by alcohol, impulse disorders, severe stress, or senility; thus, giving the offender 'Dutch' courage to commit CSA.

Overcoming External Inhibitors

The third step is precondition three, that is, Overcoming External Inhibitors. There are external factors such as the presence of the child's parents, which may inhibit the offender from committing CSA. External inhibitors, according to Finkelhor (1984), are the physical impediments to the offender, for example, the presence of the child's guardian or any other person who may detect his actions and cause his arrest. Thus, overcoming external inhibitors essentially involves elaborate planning or simply opportunistic behaviour where the offender capitalises on a mother who is ill, a mother who is not in close proximity with her child, death of a mother, social isolation of the family, lack of supervision of the child and any opportunity for the abuser and child to be together.

According to Police Statistics, in Zimbabwe, more cases of CSA are recorded during the day than during the night. The Police First Quarterly Report (2015) indicates that in Zimbabwe, an average total of twenty (20) cases per hour over the three (3) month period was recorded during the day, as compared to ten (10) that were recorded during the night. The higher average was attributed to absence of external inhibitors, especially the mothers' absence during the day as most mothers left home for various socio-economic activities. The lower average, that is, for cases committed during the night, was attributed to the presence of external inhibitors such as the mothers' return home, which deterred would-be offenders to a certain extent. Sometimes the mother would be around but not privy to what was happening to the child. Other external inhibitors recorded by Police were lone children abused while coming from school, fetching firewood in the bush, herding goats or cattle alone, *et cetera*. Such situations have created opportunistic conditions for perpetrators. Thus, absence of natural external inhibitors makes children vulnerable to CSA.

External inhibitors may be overcome by more conscious behaviour, such as creating opportunities for the offence to take place, with intricate planning, for instance, luring a child to a secluded place (Hudson & Ward, 2001).

Dealing with the Child's Possible Resistance

The fourth and last precondition, which entails dealing with the child's possible resistance, involves a lot of strategy. Abusers may use many different methods to gain access and build trust with the child, such as giving gifts, desensitizing the child to sex, or using threats of violence. Police records show that in a significant number of cases, children were threatened with death, violence, *et cetera*; in subduing and subsequently sexually abusing them.

The four (4) preconditions must be satisfied in a sequential pattern because they build on each other to create a child sexual abuser.

The assumption by Finkelhor (1984) that the preconditions to CSA must always be sequential is not practical. In the real world, human beings do not behave in a fixed manner as they react differently to external stimuli. This inherent weakness of the model was finally addressed by Hall and Hirschman (1991), who in their Quadripartite Theory, pointed out that the preconditions propounded by Finkelhor (1984), may not necessarily be sequential, but may assume any permutation or combination to finally result in CSA.

(iv) Quadripartite Theory

Hall and Hirschman (1991), in their Quadripartite Theory, as further revised in 1992 and 1996, identify four (4) causal factors that contribute to CSA. The factors are:

- i) Sexual arousal;
- ii) Cognitive distortions;
- iii) Affective dyscontrol; and
- iv) Enduring personality traits.

(a) Sexual Arousal

Hall and Hirschman (1991) assert that sexual arousal by children is the key factor for perpetrating CSA. Such deviant sexual urges and fantasies are mainly inherent in paedophiles. Hall (1996) notes that those who abused children primarily due to their physiological sexual arousal to children were likely to be less violent and have more victims. According to Finkelhor (1984), sexual arousal is the first precondition that must be satisfied before CSA can be committed. Thus, Hall and Hirschman (1991) and Finkelhor (1984) both agree that sexual arousal by children is the key factor in the commission of CSA.

(b) Cognitive Distortions

Hall and Hirschman (1991), view cognitive distortions as a central feature in CSA. That is, those who sexually abuse children, think about their sexual behaviour or their victims in a distorted way. For example, they think as follows;

- i) "This child wants me to touch her sexually"
- ii) "Children like sexual contact with adults"
- iii) "There is no harm in teaching them about sex"
- iv) "No one will find out it was me"

Thus, Hall and Hirschman (1991), argue that offenders evaluate their situation and systematically examine the costs and benefits of committing a sexual offence, and choose the course of action that will be best rewarding to them. In this regard, that is, in considering costs and benefits of committing crime by an offender, the Quadripartite Theory supports the Classical Theory of Crime. Hall (1996), notes that offenders whose motivation to sexually abuse children arose from their distorted thinking, tended to exhibit a high degree of planning, little impulsivity, and higher rates of incestuous sexual abuse.

(c) *Affective Dyscontrol*

Hall and Hirschman (1991), attribute this factor to difficulties in the identification and management of strong and negative emotional states such as depression, anger and hostility. They note that these emotional states become sufficiently compelling so that they overcome the normal internal inhibitors such as guilt, victim empathy and moral conscience, which naturally bar the average man from engaging in CSA. They further note that sexual offenders might have difficulty in identifying emotional states of loneliness and so they confuse them with those of sexual desire. They further posit that offenders may fail to cope with intense emotions and that they may resort to masturbation, or alcohol abuse to subdue the feelings of sadness. They contend that while these actions bring temporary respite, they result in greater unhappiness in the long run. Hall (1996) notes that offenders who suffer primarily from high levels of affective dyscontrol are more likely to be opportunistic offenders. Such offenders usually exhibit high levels of violence and are predisposed to depression.

According to Police records, many offenders who commit CSA, appear to suffer from serious depression, resulting from divorce, following domestic disputes or death of a spouse. Such offenders mainly resort to drug and alcohol abuse and subsequent sexual abuse of their own children. Thus, affective dyscontrol appears to fit the Zimbabwean scenario quite well.

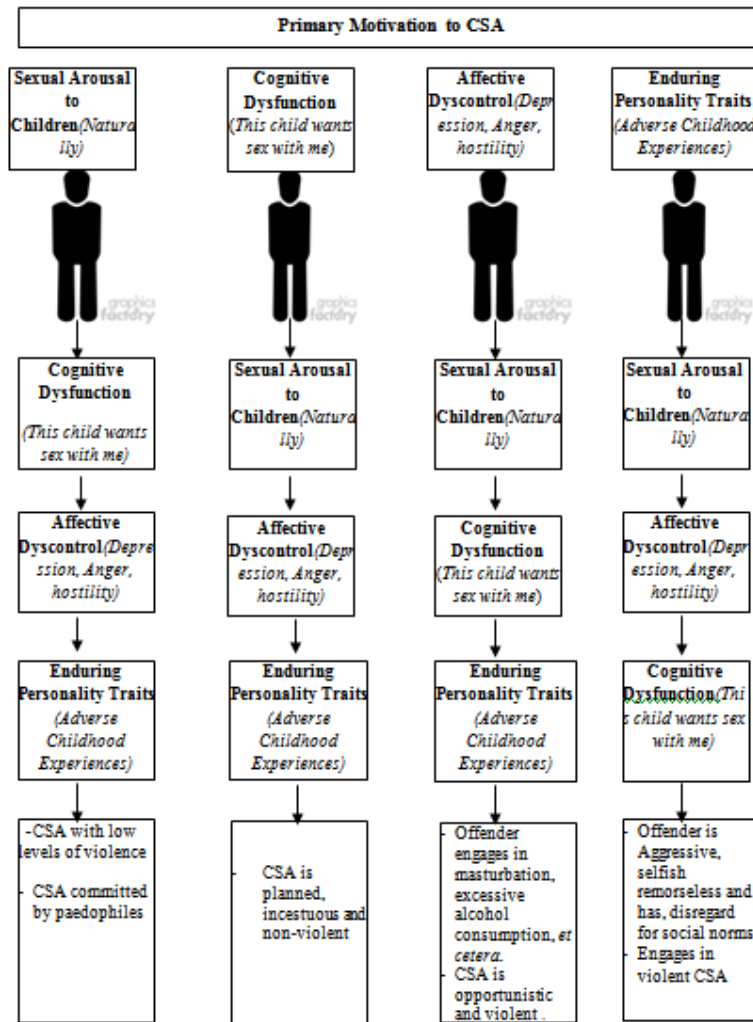
(d) *Enduring Personality Traits*

According to Hall and Hirschman (1991), the aforementioned factors namely; sexual arousal, cognitive distortions and affective dyscontrol are temporary dispositions in a potential offender. They have a temporary motivating role, thus, they are not enduring. They argue that these transitory states interact with more enduring traits, resulting in the sexual abuse of children. The factors they identify as abuse-facilitating personality characteristics are the experience of physical or sexual abuse, parental divorce, large family of origin, neglect, parental or sibling criminal behaviour or poor socialisation experiences. These experiences contribute to people developing enduring personality features that are selfish, remorseless, exploitation of others, hostile, aggressive, unstable and antisocial. Hall (1996) notes that those offenders whose offending behaviour is primarily motivated by enduring personality traits are likely to have chronic personality problems/disorders, disregard for social norms and conventions, and a tendency to behave aggressively.

In summary, it should be noted that in the Quadripartite Theory, there is, thus, a synergy of these four (4) factors present in people who sexually abuse children, with one factor being dominant. This theory is more realistic than Finkelhor's preconditions model in that people do not always react sequentially to external stimuli. Instead of CSA being always strictly preceded by sexual arousal, overcoming internal inhibitors, overcoming external inhibitors and overcoming the child's resistance, Hall and Hirschman (1991) argue that these factors are dynamic, thus, they come in any order.

The diagram below shows how each of Hall and Hirschman's (1991) four factors interact with the other three without any specific order, to finally result in CSA. Accordingly, there could be $(4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1)$, that is, twenty four (24) different permutations and combinations of these factors that could result in various forms of CSA.

The figure following, shows only four (4) combinations, just to illustrate how the factors may interact, leading to CSA.



Showing the Heterogeneity of Men who Sexually Abuse Children According to the Hall and Hirschman's Quadripartite Theory.

Source: Own pictorial depiction of model

Thus, the figure shows that according to Hall and Hirschman's Quadripartite theory, it is the primary motivating factor that determines the type of CSA that an individual offender perpetrates. Offenders whose primary motivation is either Sexual Arousal or Cognitive Dysfunction are more likely to perpetrate non-violent CSA, while those whose primary motivation is either Affective Dyscontrol or Enduring Personal Traits, are more likely to perpetrate violent CSA.

(v) Cultural Myths and Beliefs

According to Nyathi and Chikomo (2013), culture refers to patterns of behaviour and thinking that people living as a group learn and share. Cultural myths and beliefs have been found to be directly and indirectly linked to criminal behaviour, particularly CSA.

Hountondji (1976) in her book *African Philosophy, Myth and Reality*, asserts that African primitive mentality is guided by mythical ideas as opposed to real scientific concepts. In this light, Hountondji (1976), sees African culture as a product of myths and beliefs as opposed to being a product of natural, social and scientific development.

Burt (1980), describes myths of sexual abuse as prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs in as far as sexual abuse, victims and abusers are concerned. She notes the "women ask for it" attitude as one common myth of sexual abuse. Burt (1980), considers it a sexual myth that a woman who gets sexually assaulted "asked for it", through the way she dresses or acts. She points out that, community beliefs in male superiority and entitlement to sex, greatly affect the likelihood of sexual abuse. In the same light, societal factors such as *make-belief love (kutamba chiramu)* and *implied right of an uncle to have sex with a niece (muzukuru inzungu)*

yakateya gonzo), which are common notions among the majority Shona tribe in Zimbabwe, are also potential determinants of the crime.

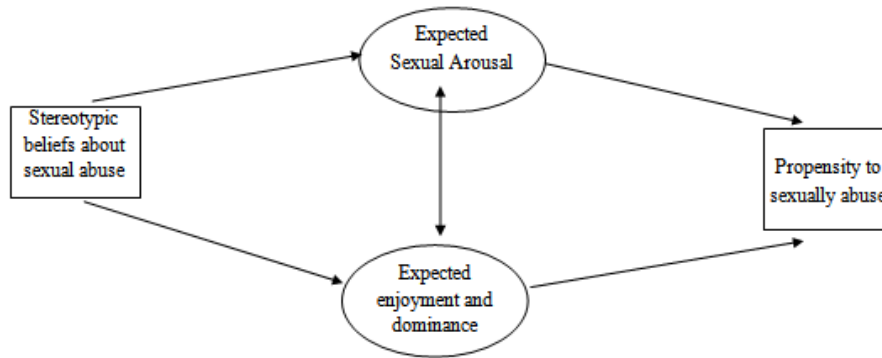
According to Kahari (1984), in his book titled “*Myths and Fantasy in Romances*”, myths are short stories of a divine nature which attempt to explain and illustrate the origins of things, events or gods. Kahari asserts that myths and fantasies demonstrate and transmit a legacy of shared values, expectations and roles in a culture. For instance, he points out that Shona folktales demonstrate themes where the disadvantaged and physically small, triumph over the huge and bully. According to Kahari (1984), children, who are generally smaller and weaker are spiritually encouraged and given hope to triumph over their tormentors, even when they seem to have been subdued. In this light, Kahari positively views African myths and fantasies as important empowerment apparatus on little children in developing instinctive vigilance and repelling possible sexual attacks.

One of the obvious points in these stories is not just the sheer entertainment afforded by the description of the amusing antics of various animals, but empowerment lessons for children not to be tricked into harmful practices and to desist from greed and all forms of immorality. Thus, with such kind of folktales, children were always forearmed with information on potential harmful phenomena such as CSA, especially not to accept gifts from strangers, who would eventually sexually abuse them.

This sharply contrasts Neilson’s (1967) demonstration of how African myths perpetuate sexual abuse, especially in the Matebele societies of Zimbabwe. As observed by Nielsen, according to the Ndebele culture, it is deemed improper for a woman to yield to the overtures of a man without at least the semblance of struggle. Therefore, a woman who flees from/or resists an offender is deemed to be simulating fear and flight. This stimulates a man to continue his pursuit. He further asserts that the crime of sexual abuse or rape was almost unknown among the Matebele people before the advent of the white man. Neilson’s assertion is in stark conflict with Kahari (1984) and; Samkange and Samkange (1980) who were more positive about African myths and beliefs. Both believe in African myths and beliefs as self-policing and empowerment tools of CSA.

Having considered the seemingly conflicting assertions of the African myths and beliefs, it is apparent that Africans had a way of regulating deviant behaviour, by coming up with certain notions, depending on the current prevalent problem. For instance, *the implied rights of an uncle to have sexual relations with a niece (muzukuru inzungu yakateya gonzo)* could have evolved around issues of; *wife replacement(kumutsa mapfihwa)*, in order to remove the guilt conscience from the niece or uncle or both when they would now regard each other as husband and wife in the new relationship. On the other hand, the sharply contrasting notion that; *don’t be tempted to have sex with a sister-in-law (muramu igonzo riri mumba haridyivi)*, could have evolved at a time when cultural norms and values were being rampantly violated, resulting in abominations (*makunakuna*). Thus, African myths and beliefs were meant to regulate deviant behaviour that seemed to get out of hand at the time.

Chiroro, Bohmer, Tendayi and Jarvis (2007), assert that in Zimbabwe, stereotypic beliefs about sexual abuse that tend to blame the victim and exonerate the abuser play a prominent role in the propensity or likelihood of a man to commit sexual abuse. According to Chiroro, et al. (2007), Zimbabweans hold more traditional views concerning male-female relationships than their European counterparts. This assertion demonstrates how a man’s social, cultural, traditional, religious, economic and technological environment go on to mould and nurture a potential sexual abuser, from a very early stage in life up to the time he actually perpetrates the crime. Chiroro et al.’s (2007) view on the impact of societal myths and cultural beliefs, on sexual abuse is as shown in the diagram following.



Showing the Relationship between Stereotypic Beliefs and Propensity to Sexual Abuse

Source: Chiroro et al. (2007)

According to Chiroro, et al. (2007), as demonstrated in Figure 2.7 above, sexual abuse starts with stereotypic beliefs, which lead to anticipated sexual arousal and anticipated enjoyment and dominance over the victim. These factors then ultimately determine the propensity and likelihood of the actual commission of sexual abuse by the individual concerned.

According to Samkange and Samkange (1980), the philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu*, when literally translated to English, means “humanness”. It demonstrates the original African ethical values that tend to inspire, permeate and radiate high moral attributes, promote brotherliness, togetherness, sharing, caring for one another, kindness, courtesy and good relations. Samkange and Samkange (1980) point out that sharing beer helped to cement *unhuism/ubuntuism* as people sharing the same cup become spiritually connected, hence, more empathy, sympathy and caring for one another.

Miczeck, et al. (1993) however, point out that alcohol and drugs play a dis-inhibiting role in certain types of sexual abuse. They note that alcohol may temporarily remove one’s cultural consciousness and thus, provide the opportunity for anti-social behaviour. Thus, according to Miczeck, et al. alcohol consumption could be positively correlated to the crime. They are supported by Freeman and Parry (2006) who established that in South Africa, there is a strong link between sexual abuse and alcohol consumption. This is also supported by Finkelhor (1984), who points out that alcohol erodes man’s ability to control his deviant sexual desire to have sex with a child, thus, giving him/her ‘Dutch’ courage to commit CSA.

Dube (2013), states that Zimbabwean men generally believe that a child who is a teenager can consent to sex, ignoring whether it is well informed and reasoned consent. She further asserts that such beliefs tend to increase the occurrence of CSA in the country. Dube, also cites some Zimbabwean religious, cultural and traditional practices such as child marriages (*kuzvarira/ukuzalelwa*), appeasing the avenging spirit (*kuripa ngozi*), imitation of sexual acts (*madenhe/chikapa/ukuthethela*), make-belief love (*chiramu/uunlamu*), which she believes are responsible for the increase in the susceptibility of girls to sexual abuse.

A closer look at the theories revealed that Finkelhor’s Preconditions model agrees with both the Classical Theory and Neo Classical Theory. In agreement with proponents of Classical and Neo Classical theories, Finkelhor (1984) points out that the perpetrator of CSA, carefully plans his/her actions, that is, he/she calculates the risks of being arrested and takes appropriate steps to overcome or minimise such risks, hence, a relatively strong relationship among the three (3) theories. According to the Neo Classical Theory, a person with high standing in society is very unlikely to commit CSA, since the risks and costs of doing so (cost of losing status, high paying job *et cetera*), more than outweigh his enjoyment of CSA. Such risks and costs are consciously or unconsciously taken into account by an offender, who according to Finkelhor (1984) must be overcome before the commission of CSA.

Also noted were both similarities and sharp contrasts between Finkelhor’s Preconditions Model and Hall and Hirschman’s (1991) Quadripartite Theory. Hall and Hirschman’s Quadripartite Theory recognises that sex offenders possess multiple causal attributes for sexually abusive behaviour as also depicted in Finkelhor’s Model (1984). It however, fails to provide a detailed account of how the four (4) factors interact in order to produce a sexual offence as is the case with Finkelhor’s four factor model. In Finkelhor’s four factor model, one (1) factor has to lead to the other. However, in Hall and Hirschman’s Quadripartite Theory, CSA is caused by a combination of any of the four (4) factors in any order. Hall and Hirschman’s Quadripartite Theory appears to be more realistic in this regard, as it considers the dynamic mental condition of an offender. The theory points out that an offender’s mental condition cannot be predetermined as was indicated by Finkelhor (*op cit*), who argued that the offender’s mental condition flows sequentially in a predetermined way until he/she perpetrates CSA. On the other hand, the two (2) theories concur that sexual arousal on the part of the offender, is the key component in the commission of CSA.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite sustained efforts to suppress CSA in Zimbabwe, through both state and non-state interventions, the crime has continuously increased over the years, with the children's vulnerability rising significantly with time. The pervasiveness of CSA has not been resolved by the Police and their stakeholders in the justice delivery system and search for causes of this monstrous crime has triggered this study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine the causal factors of CSA in Zimbabwe, particularly to construct a causal model of the crime, encompassing the social, economic, traditional, religious and technological environment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was guided by the following questions:

- (i) Does CSA have any underlying factors or mechanisms that generate it in the socio-economic, environment?
- (ii) Is CSA indiscriminately perpetrated across all the socio-economic groups, that is, by the rich/poor, rural/urban, educated/uneducated, male/female or it is confined to specific social groups?
- (iii) Why then, is CSA mostly perpetrated by the identified socio-economic groups?
- (iv) What can the police and their key stakeholders do to curtail the rising crime?

II. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The study used a mixed research methodology, which hails from the pragmatism philosophy. There were some complex variables such as culture, religion and tradition, which could not be quantitatively measured or fixed. There were also other problems such as ages of perpetrators and income that needed measurement in relation to certain attributes. This, therefore, called for a research design that was flexible, implying that there was more latitude to interrogate these variables during data collection and analysis, as opposed to giving respondents options to choose from, for example, closed questions during interviews.

In this study, the population comprised all perpetrators of CSA, whose cases were reported between the years 2010 and 2015, and all the stakeholders in the justice delivery system, who dealt with the cases, up to their finalisation, that is, magistrates, public prosecutors, police officers, traditional leaders, social workers and civic society organisations. Since each CSA case was dealt with and involved all these key players, the docket of case was the sampling unit for the study.

The multi-stage cluster sampling technique was adopted in order to draw a suitable sample of dockets of CSA cases. Kiddler (1981, p.59) points out that cluster sampling is ideal when the population is large and widely dispersed. In this study, the population was firstly divided into geographical areas such as provinces and districts. Zimbabwe is subdivided into ten (10) heterogeneous provinces which are in turn subdivided into districts that are also heterogeneous in terms of their cultural, traditional, religious, economic and technological setups. CSA in Zimbabwe comprises a plethora of offences as already shown. Each province was considered a cluster, which was again subdivided into forty (40) districts (that is, clusters within a cluster). Each type of offence, that is, Rape, Aggravated Indecent Assault, Indecent Assault and Having Sexual Intercourse with a Young Minor was considered as a stratum. The Districts were then stratified into rural and urban stations. Within the districts, simple random samples of stations were proportionally drawn from the urban and rural strata. Within the rural and urban strata and also within the offence strata, CSA dockets were randomly selected, using simple random sampling, ensuring that the contribution of the strata was proportional to size. This was aimed at capturing the unique cultural, traditional, religious, economic and technological factors inherent in each province and district about CSA.

An interview guide was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from the respondents dealing with cases, from the initial Police report up to its finalisation at court. These included initial attending officers, investigating officers, medical staff, probation officers, court officials and other stakeholders such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that deal with victims of CSA from time to time. Traditional leaders also formed part of this group of respondents, since they sometimes received initial reports of CSA from their subjects, who still preferred traditional policing strategies to contemporary policing strategies.

Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from complete dockets for the period between 2010 and 2015, tapping into information pertaining to victims, perpetrators, witnesses, places of occurrence, times of occurrence and circumstances surrounding CSA cases. Each docket comprised victim(s), witnesses and the perpetrator(s). Their official statements, which were already in the dockets, were closely scrutinised and the necessary data, (both qualitative and quantitative) collected, using the questionnaire that was then completed by the investigating officer (IO). Finalised cases were used because they were now public information after conclusion of the court processes.

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were done in order to arrive at meaningful conclusions for this study. In qualitative analysis, grounded theory and content analysis were mainly used from time to time, depending on the nature of the emerging theme. Quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Univariate analysis was used to explore the data, to identify trends and patterns, while bivariate analysis was used to investigate relationships between pairs of variables. Multivariate analysis was also used and this culminated in the construction of a multinomial logistic regression model, which captures the socio-economic causal factors of CSA.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Participants for the in-depth interviews, comprised male perpetrators who were purposively and on a voluntary basis, sampled from Chikurubi Maximum Prison and Harare Central Prison, female perpetrators who were also purposively and on a voluntary basis, sampled from Chikurubi Female Prison. Other participants for the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) comprised experienced stakeholders in the justice delivery system, that is, magistrates, public prosecutors, investigating officers, traditional leaders, probation officers and members of the civic society organisations (CSOs) *et cetera*.

The study bared the causal factors of CSA, and categorised them by age groups of the victims through a multinomial logistic regression causal model. This model could otherwise be the game changer in as far as addressing CSA in Zimbabwe through pro-active stakeholder participation, hence it was discussed in greater detail for the ultimate benefit of the stakeholders as each age group of victims is given its vulnerability factors which should be taken into consideration as follows:

i) Perpetrators from larger families of origin were the major culprits in respect of victims in the 0 – 4 year age group while perpetrators from smaller families of origin had a greater tendency to abuse children in the 10 – 14 year age group. It can be noted here that in comparison to the 10 – 14-year age group, the 0 – 4 year age group is naturally sexually unattractive; hence, the motive of abuse could hardly be attached to sexual attractiveness of the victims. According to the Quadripartite theory, persons from large families of origin develop abusive traits (enduring traits) in their childhoods as they grow up in environments associated with competition for scarce resources. Without these traits, Hall and Hirschman (1991) argue that one would not have the fortitude to commit CSA. In other words, the person would not be hardened enough to withstand the pain, shame and ridicule that would accrue to both the victim and himself/herself at the discovery of the offence. The explanation on the abuse of the 10 – 14-year group by perpetrators from smaller families of origin could be just natural lust as the victims become more sexually attractive due to the onset of adolescence.

ii) Relatively older perpetrators were the major culprits in respect of victims in the 0 – 4-year age group while the relatively younger perpetrators were the major culprits in respect of victims in the 5 – 9 and 10 – 14-year age groups. This is a pointer to certain beliefs, mostly propagated from false prophets and traditional healers, which are usually shared by the older people in the Zimbabwean society, that certain diseases can be healed by having sexual intercourse with such a very young child. According to Dube (2013), such beliefs are rooted in tradition and custom in the Zimbabwean society. The relatively younger people in the country generally do not share such beliefs, hence, they were not the major culprits in respect of victims in the 0 – 4-year age group. They however, were the major culprits in the more grown up children in the 5 – 9 and 10 – 14-year age groups.

iii) The preference of victims in the 5 – 9 year age group was significantly influenced by more socio-economic variables relating to the perpetrator's background as compared to the preference for the 0 – 4-year age group. These were *Income, Age, Marital Status and Level of Education*.

iv) Holding the other predictor variables constant, persons who were unmarried, that is, those who were single, divorced, widowed or separated at the time of the offence, were much more likely to abuse children in the 5 – 9 year age group relative to the 15 – 18 year age group. Sexual starvation was found to be the major underlying factor in this type of sexual abuse as single, divorced, widowed or separated people attempt to satiate their physiological need of sex.

v) Less educated people, that is, those with primary education and below, were more likely to abuse children under the 5 – 9 year age group as compared to more educated people, that is, those with secondary education and above, holding the other factors in the model constant. Due to very low opportunity cost of offending, after cost/benefit analysis by the less educated, the perpetrator still offended, despite the victim's ability to report the case. Thus, this finding supported the Neo-Classical theory of crime.

vi) The onset of adolescence triggers high sexual desire, hence, the positive marginal propensity to sexually abuse children in the 5 – 9-year age category by perpetrators below the age of 24 years. According to the multinomial logistic regression model, an increase in the perpetrator's age by one (1) year, raised the log-odds of preference of a victim in this age group by 2.088 units, relative to a child in the 15 – 18-year age group, holding the other factors constant. Due to high sexual desire and lack of skills to find suitable sexual partners, these perpetrators just targeted the more accessible 5 – 9 year olds, who were within their neighbourhood.

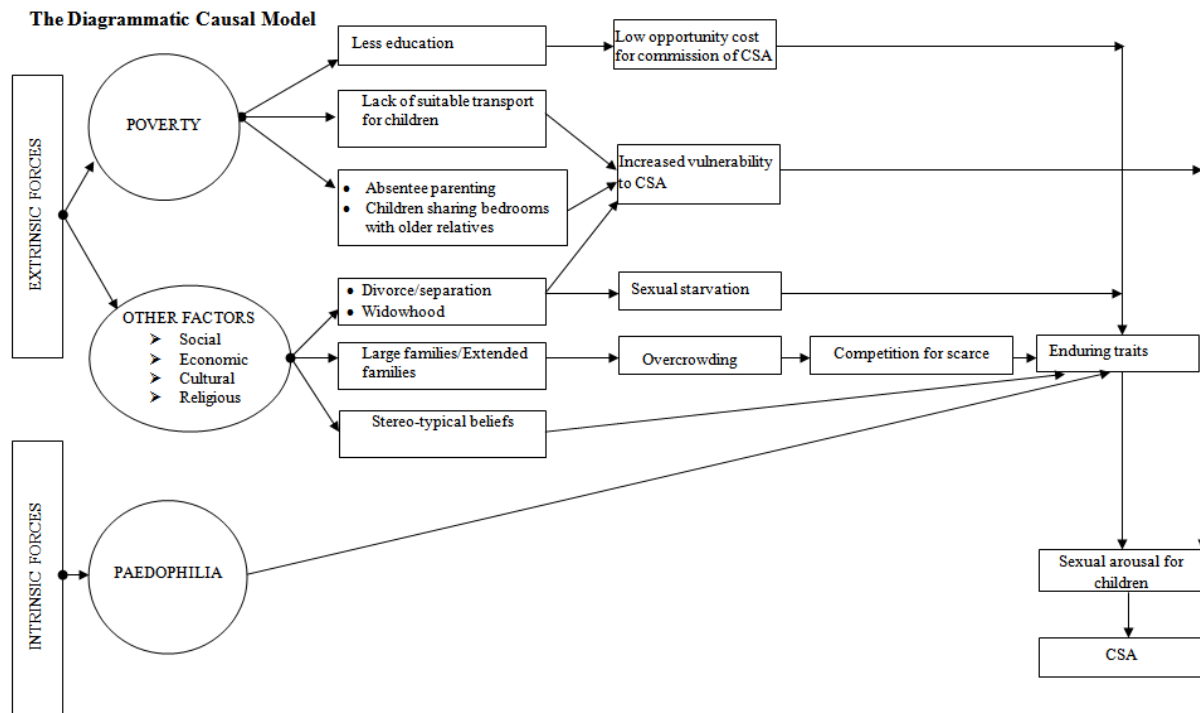
vii) *Ceteris paribus*, an increase by one member in the Size of the Family of Origin of the perpetrator, generally increased the likelihood of the occurrence of a CSA case involving a child in 0 – 4-year age category by 0.066 or six percent (6.6%), basing on a more mature child who is in the 15 – 18-year age group.

viii) Higher income was associated with less likelihood of offending against this age group (0 – 4 years) and *vice versa*. However, increments in an offender's income by one dollar (\$) raised the log-odds of the preference to sexually abuse a child in 0 – 5-year age category by 0.015 units, relative to a child in the 15 – 18 year age group, holding all the other factors in the model constant. Higher income also meant more consumption of alcohol, which was already found to be a strong causal factor of CSA (*the Dutch courage concept*).

Outside the multinomial logistic regression model, **poverty** was pinpointed as a major underlying factor of CSA. This broader socio-economic phenomenon was further exposed and found to be harbouring other more direct factors some of which were already captured by the model. These included:

- a) Absentee parenting as parents pursue livelihoods, leaving children susceptible;
- b) Surrendering children to wealthier relatives some of whom would sexually abuse them;
- c) Sharing of bedrooms with relatives due to shortage of accommodation;
- d) Overcrowding;
- e) Lack of suitable transport to and from school for children, thereby exposing them to CSA as they walked through bushes; and
- f) Very low income levels in the country, leading to very low opportunity cost of committing CSA.

Therefore, after summarizing all the above findings, the causal model of CSA was diagrammatically constructed as indicated below.



NB: Sexual arousal for children may be instigated from either factors that simply increase the child’s vulnerability to CSA or those social, economic, cultural and religious factors that generate and nurture potential perpetrators.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended the following remedial actions by the various stakeholders in the fight against CSA

- a) Families with juvenile children in the 0 – 4-year age group ought to be educated about the high likelihood of commission of CSA, particularly by unscrupulous relatively older people, originating from larger families within their homes or neighbourhood.
- b) Utmost vigilance ought to be exercised upon such persons, who were found to be the major culprits for this age group of victims.
- c) The Police should also, through awareness campaigns, target both male and female; divorced, separated and widowed people within their policing areas and appeal to them to promptly find appropriate sexual partners upon divorce, separation or bereavement so as to satisfy the important physiological need of sex and avoid sexual starvation, which was found to be a very strong underlying factor of CSA within homes, especially by close relatives and neighbours. The Unit can use platforms such as churches, clubs, *et cetera*.
- d) The Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service should also consider the establishment of more open prisons for eligible prisoners to allow regular visits by spouses as a way to avoid CSA cases due to sexual starvation.
- e) The Police should endeavour to be more proactive and consider looking into the mindset of the potential perpetrator and consider the following as counteractive action:
 - i) Raise the opportunity cost of committing CSA by people earning very low incomes, by reassuring such low esteemed members of the society during their awareness campaigns so that they realise their worth or value, other than in monetary terms.
 - ii) Raise the self-esteem of people with very low educational qualifications, that is, those with primary education and below by encouraging them to enroll for adult literacy classes, which would eventually raise both their hope for the future and opportunity cost of committing CSA.

iii) Harmful stereotypic beliefs such as “having sexual intercourse with a virgin cures HIV/AIDS”, should be addressed by the traditional leaders, traditional healers, religious leaders, and other social groups.

iv) The Police Victim Friendly Unit (VFU) should also target alcohol and drug consumers as high potential CSA perpetrators. The Unit should appeal to the conscience of this category of the Zimbabwean society through awareness campaigns and help them to resist the seemingly unavoidable urge to sexually abuse children as the alcohol or drugs take adverse effect on their conscience, that is, as they begin to overcome their natural internal inhibitors through alcohol or drug consumption as per Finkelhor’s (1984) Pre-Conditions Model.

f) Poverty, which harbours several other harmful socio-economic factors such as absentee parenting, overcrowding, children sharing bedrooms with older relatives, surrendering children to wealthier relatives and lack of suitable transport to take children to school, that all expose children to CSA, should be tackled by relevant departments and other organisations.

g) The multi-sectoral approach, which includes the police, hospitals, magistrates, social welfare department, prisons and correctional services should work very closely with each other and should be both proactive and reactive. Both the Police and the Prisons and Correctional Service should have an interest in the life after incarceration, of released prisoners to monitor progress in terms of their rehabilitation.

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