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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

EFFECTIVENESS OF GROUP THERAPY ON THE PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING OF
FEMALE ADOLESCENCE SURVIVORS OF INCESTUAL ABUSE

BY

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The undersigned certify that they have read and recommended to Midlands State University for acceptance of a dissertation entitled:

Research topic: **EFFECTIVENESS OF GROUP THERAPY ON THE PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING OF FEMALE ADOLESCENCE SURVIVORS OF INCESTUAL ABUSE**

Submitted by GRACE KAMANGIRA, **Registration Number** R144836R, in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Psychology.

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ABSTRACT

The research examined the experiences of children who have gone through the foster care program in Zimbabwe. Children coming into foster care would have been take away from their parents may be facing emotional, psychological and behavioural problems due to the turmoil, abuse and negligence they may have experienced as such it is critical to emphasise the healing aspect of foster care. There are certain challenges from the system which need to be addressed. This research was guided by three research questions, how foster care positively impacted the lives of children in Zimbabwe, the major challenges faced by children who go through foster care and central issues in foster care which children want to be addressed. In order to understand the experiences of children in foster care, a case study which is an explorative design was used. Data was collected using the purposive sampling targeting 24 foster children, 6 registered foster parents and 2 probation officers, all participants being from Harare province. In-depth interviews were conducted. The study established that foster children experience improved lifestyle during placements, having the opportunity to be part of a family, have access to better education and being part of an open society where they can create lifelong relationships. Foster care system has challenges which include failure by the children to adjust to the home environment, lack of basic needs and lack of government support. Conclusively, the research discovered that more needs to be done to improve the foster care. The research recommended increased public awareness to provoke and attract new candidates for foster parents in the country, provision of support from the government to the foster parents in form of grants, health and educational assistance.

ACRONYMS

CPS   - CHILD PROTECTION SOCIETY

UNICEF -   UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN EMERGENCY FUND

OVC   -   ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

NGO   -   NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

NANGO -   NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

DSS   -   DISTRICT SOCIAL WELFARE

NRCSs   -   NATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CARE STANDARDS

DCWPS - DEPARTMENT OF CHILD WELFARE AND PROTECTION SERVICES

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Zimbabwe has a rich history and strong tradition of providing care for children where a child belongs not only to his or her nuclear family but also to the extended family, the clan, the community and the states. However due to a number of challenges there are children who fall from the safety nets and need alternative care. The Zimbabwe National Orphan Care Policy (ZNOCP) provides a guide called the six-tier system safety net system for orphan and vulnerable children to be cared for within: biological or nuclear family; extended family; community care; formal foster care; adoption and institutional care. The Children's Act provides a variety of actions and conditions that are used to legally define a child in need of care. They range from poverty, neglect, abuse, disability, health, education and cultural issues. As part of an initiative of care for vulnerable children, Unicef is working hand in hand with the Ministry of Labour and Social Services in a project titled Children Living outside the Family Environment and of special interest being Foster Care.

1.2 Background to the study

Curtis (1999) defines Foster care as a system in which a minor has been placed into a ward, group home, or private home of a state-certified caregiver, referred to as a "foster parent". The placement of the child is normally arranged through the government or a social service agency. The institution, group home or foster parent is compensated for expenses. Before 1945, "fostering" referred to numerous arrangements in which children were cared for in homes other than their own. The point of the term was to contrast institutional care with family placements. The case for foster care was articulated by nineteenth-century child-savers, including Charles Loring Brace, publicized by the orphan trains, and advanced by states that experimented with placing-out children rather than consigning them to orphanages.

McCall (2011) states that, Foster care is a complex service. It serves children who have experienced abuse or neglect, their birthparents and families, and their foster parents. Children in foster care may live with unrelated foster parents, with relatives, with families who plan to adopt them, or in group homes or residential treatment centers. Because foster care is designed as a temporary service that responds to crises in the lives of children and families, an expectation exists

that children who enter care either will return to their parents as soon as possible, or will be provided with safe, stable, and loving families through placement with relatives or adoption.

Some children, however, remain in foster care for extended periods of time. Many "age out" and go on to live on their own. Over the past decade, the population of children and young people in foster care has grown dramatically, and the challenges associated with achieving permanency for them have mounted. As foster care faces new and increasing demands, policies and practice must respond in ways that ensure that children, their families, and their caregivers receive the highest quality service possible (McCall,2011). Numerous factors have shaped foster care over the past several decades. One key force has been the heightening of societal expectations and standards for acceptable family functioning, a social shift that began in the 1960s and continues to the present. A second key dynamic that has shaped foster care is the convergence of factors that place great numbers of families at increased risk of child abuse and neglect. Poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, discrimination, declining informal and extended family supports, and other forces are undermining the resilience and coping capacity of families (Freundlich, 1997). At the same time, the service systems on which families traditionally have depended have not kept pace with demand.

According to Kaseke (2000), the first move to provide child care and probation services in Zimbabwe, Southern Rhodesia then, was in 1936 when the Probation and School Attendance Compliance Officer programme was introduced. Interventions were titled in favour of whites with black children being expected to be settled in rural areas with their parents. The Department of Social Welfare (DSW) was established in 1948 targeted at addressing the problems within the white community. Today there are numerous Residential Care Facilities, also known as children's homes, which are registered and operated by government, churches, NGOs and individuals, whose mandate is to care for children in need of care. The placement of children in these institutions is the Probation Officer's responsibility.

In Zimbabwe, the DCWPS is the custodian of all children in the country and has the statutory mandate over all processes and procedures related to formal foster care in the country. Formal foster care is operationalised through the issuance of a court order by the children's court. Informal care on the other hand is that kind of fostering that does not pass through any statutory procedure.

The primary goal of foster care is to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable children. The placement of children into foster care temporarily fulfils their right to a family, which institution constitutes a primary care setting for socialisation. Foster parents only assume custodianship of the child and the legal guardianship remains with the natural parents or the DCWPS.

Child circumstances that may warrant foster care including the following:

- Children living with parents/guardians experiencing multiple stressors that weaken their ability to appropriately parent

- Fragile family systems characterised by homelessness, poverty, substance abuse, mental and physical illness, domestic violence, migration of one or both parents [family and societal challenges co-exist and tend to reinforce each other]

- Where children are completely abandoned without any known relatives

- Marital conflict involving the child or where the child 's presence makes resolution difficult

- Instances where due to divorce, separation, or desertion and/or any such other circumstances that leave the remaining parent unable to cope and in need of time to reorganize him/herself

- Children experiencing abuse or neglect by his/her own family

- Physical and mental illness of parents

Studies have shown that children think and develop better when they are in a stable family environment. The family forms the most important structure where children are shaped and prepared to face the external world. As noted in the declarations of the 27th session of the UN General Assembly; "The primary responsibility for the protection, upbringing and development of children rests with the family." Thus, parenting is a very important ingredient in moulding behaviour and imparting social skills during the formative years, necessary in instilling morals, self-discipline and responsibilities in children. Therefore, a child who is placed into foster care experiences family life, relates and interacts with relatives and siblings, gets psycho-social support,

important cultural and religious socialisation, material support, sense of belonging leading to attainment of high self-esteem and sense of self worthy and security and stability.

The Demographic and Health Survey 2010-2011 provides that children aged 0-14 years make up 41% of the total population of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Fact sheet indicates that the 15-24 years' age group accounts for 22.5% of the population. The statistics considered together confirm Mupedziswa's (1995) claim that children in Zimbabwe account for more than half of the total population hence the need for a comprehensive foster care system for children living outside the family environment to be absorbed into the family unit, so as to promote safe, secure and supportive environments that are conducive to their optimum growth and development.

While Zimbabwe boasts of its rich culture on care and protection of its children where traditionally a child belongs not only to his or her nuclear family, but to the extended family, the clan, the community a large and the state, for more than a decade the country has experienced an unprecedented decline in most of all human indicators as a result of the complex social, economic and political challenges coupled with HIV and AIDS. According to NAP II (2011-2015), an estimated 1.6 million children have been made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS pandemic, having lost one or both parents.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Children who have gone through foster care have different experiences, some positive whilst some are negative (Nelson,2007). There are more than enough horror stories about social workers discovering children who have been abused or neglected within the foster care system or worse, yet reports of social workers who knew of abuse or neglect and failed to address it. But is there hope for change, and if so, what important strategies must be implemented? This then triggers the need for evaluation of the entire system and how best can it be improved to provide quality care for the children.

1.4 Significance of the study.

The family environment has been proven by years of research to be the best place for a child to live and grow up in so as to achieve holistic growth. However not all children have the privilege to be in this family setup due to a number of factors that in turn sees them being placed in institutional care. These reasons range from abandonment, death of parents, abuse, cultural, issues,

religion and many more. To resolve this problem foster care came into existence. Greater numbers of young children with complicated, serious physical health, mental health, or developmental problems are entering foster care during the early years when brain growth is most active. Every effort should be made to make foster care a positive experience and a healing process for the child. Threats to a child's development from abuse and neglect should be understood by all participants in the child welfare system. Caregivers have an important role in assessing the child's needs, providing comprehensive services, and advocating on the child's behalf. The experiences of the children who have gone through foster care important as they are the major stakeholders, so as to make informed decisions about policies that govern foster care. Children's rights organisation will also benefit from this research, as data attained will help them craft policies to better advocate for children who are in need of care. Foster parents will also gain knowledge on how best to handle children under their care basing on the accounts of children who have gone through the system.

1.5 Research questions.
The study was guided by the following research questions:

1.5.1   How has foster care positively impacted the lives of children in Zimbabwe?

1.5.2   What are the major challenges that children who go through foster care face?

1.5.3   Which central issues in Foster Care do children want to be addressed?

1.6 Purpose of the study.
It is important to note that the children coming into foster care who have been take away from their parents may be facing emotional, psychological and behavioral problems due to the unrest, abuse and negligence they may have experienced. As a result, it is of paramount importance to come with ways to address this burning issues within the system and then come up with strategies which will in turn improve the system not only for the children but for the caregivers as well.

1.7. Delimitations.
Qualitative research method is opted instead of quantitative, as it uses produced findings that were not determined in advance and produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study. Interviews are the data collection tool that was used to gather data. The sample used for the research includes foster children, foster parents and probation officers. The age group of children selected for the study is between 10 to 18 years old, reason being this age

group can give a detailed account of their experiences for the purposes of quality evaluation. This choice of procedure will not affect the result that will be attained by this research.

1.8. Limitations.

Children participating in the research cannot disclose full details of their experiences due fear of victimization. In that same light children also tend to exaggerate their experiences so as to get sympathy. Some of the children also go through the system at a very tender age such that they will not be in a position to give a full account of their experiences. A sample of a few children does not represent the entire experience of the majority, just but a fraction of those who have been interviewed. Foster care is something that is relatively new to Zimbabwe and not very popular such that most people who are given the honours to care for these children do not know much about providing quality care for them, that will in turn interfere with the experiences. Time constraints also come into play as most of the children who have gone through foster care are still in primary or high school and are mostly found in Residential Care Facilities, here time to see and interview the children is limited.

1.9 Assumptions.

The researcher holds the assumption that children who have gone through foster care have a considerable chance of being abused. The study also assumes that religious beliefs of the foster parents can have an impact on the experiences of children. The researcher also holds the assumption that Probation officers can overlook some cases of abuse. The foster care system has not yet been full established in Zimbabwe. To the contrary the issues raised in this research remain as urgent as they have been since the adoption of the Foster Care Program here in Zimbabwe.

1.10 Definition of key terms.

Foster Care – it is a system in which a minor has been placed into a ward, group home, or private home of a state-certified caregiver, referred to as a "foster parent". The placement of the child is normally arranged through the government or a social service agency.

Children's Act - is an Act of the Parliament of the Zimbabwe. The Act is now the basis for most official administration considered helpful to children, notably bringing all local government functions of children's welfare and education under the statutory authority of local Directors of Children's Services.

Foster Parent - a person who acts as parent and guardian for a child in place of the child's natural parents but without legally adopting the child.

Six-Tier System – These are care options for children, with the first being the best, all things being normal. So the six care options are nuclear family, extended family, community, foster care, adoption and institutional care.

1.11 Chapter summary

This chapter focused on providing the skeleton of the research. Thus it illustrated how the researcher intends to gather his data, the population involved and the aims of the research among other things. Therefore, it remains the researcher's task to clearly articulate the above mentioned aims of the research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In Zimbabwe, a greater numbers of young children with complicated, serious physical health, mental health, or developmental problems are entering foster care during the early years when brain growth is most active. Every effort should be made to make foster care a positive experience and a healing process for the child. Threats to a child's development from abuse and neglect should be understood by all participants in the child welfare system. According to Peter (2011) Pediatricians have an important role in assessing the child's needs, providing comprehensive services, and advocating on the child's behalf. The developmental issues important for young children in foster care are reviewed, including, the implications and consequences of abuse, neglect, and placement in foster care on early brain development; the importance and challenges of establishing a child's attachment to caregivers and the importance of considering a child's changing sense of time in all aspects of the foster care experience.

2.2 Empirical evidence: factors that influence Foster Care placement stability

Placement stability as an outcome goal in child welfare performance measurement is grounded in the importance of providing stability for children as they are developing attachments and relationships to caregivers. Research shows that many children are vulnerable to placement instability, especially those who have been in long term foster care. Several studies have identified children's behavioral problems as a contributor to placement instability. Studies examining the relationship of behavior problems to subsequent moves have found a strong association in both bivariate and multivariate analyses. In a longitudinal study conducted by Fanshel and Shinn (2002), behavior problems as measured at entry into care were predictive of greater movement over a five-year period after controlling for demographic characteristics of the child. This study provides the best test of the role of behavioral problems in leading to placement disruption. Several studies have indicated that older children are more likely to experience placement disruptions than younger children (Pardeck, 2004). As older children are more likely to have serious behavior problems, this association may be due to differences in the types of behavior problems among children of different ages.

2.3 Types of Foster care

2.3.1 Informal foster care

Traditionally across many tribes in Zimbabwe nuclear families and extended families arrange for the care of children related to them when the need arises. Informal foster care is therefore an arrangement where vulnerable children without parents or with parents who may be unfit to care for them, are placed in the care of other people within the extended family. This is the common form of foster care in Zimbabwe. This form of foster care has survived the test of time. However, it needs to be complemented and resourced given the rising levels of poverty in both rural and urban areas. Anecdotal evidence suggests that informal foster care is prevalent mostly in rural areas mainly due to issues of cost and the extent of the strength of family ties. As such, most children, even though their parents or guardians were initially urbanites find themselves being sent to the rural areas to be cared for by relatives.

The informal model of foster care has the following advantages:

- The child is looked after within his/her social environment which makes adaptation and independent living upon attainment of the majority age easier.

- The child does not lose touch with his/her significant others.

- The model of care fosters and promotes a sense of unity, social duty and responsibility to members of either the extended family or the community to care and protect children in need, usually without external support.

- The model of care is less expensive for both government and other partners involved in child care and protection.

2.3.2 Formal foster care

Foster care becomes formal when a probation officer has placed a child into another family through the Children's Court as outlined by the Children's Act (Chapter 5:06). In the case of formal foster care, prospective parents will undergo the screening process where a probation officer undertakes thorough investigations and intensive assessment. Critical to this process is the best interest of the child, the probation officer has to ensure that all decisions are protecting the interests of the child.

Court orders issued are valid for three years and can be reviewed depending on circumstances. Children can be removed from their foster families if their nuclear families' environment improves

or relatives willing to take care of the child have been traced and prepared for reunification. The all-encompassing advantage of formalised foster care is that it protects both the child and the foster parents and compels the government to monitor and provide support to the foster family.

2.3.3 Legal and policy framework for foster care

The Government of Zimbabwe in line with international and regional provisions such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999) respectively has put in place significant protective legislation for children which informs alternative care provision for children.

The UNCRC provides for the child`s right to be cared for by its family and by the state should the family be unable to do so. Foster care therefore seeks children's protection from violation of such rights as the right to be loved and cared for, the right to shelter, food, medical care, identity and education. In view of such rights, the Government of Zimbabwe promulgated the Zimbabwe National Orphan Care Policy in 1999. Central to this policy is the six tier system that puts emphasis first and foremost on the importance of the family as an appropriate social institution within which children should grow and develop. In the absence of the nuclear family, the policy further calls upon the extended family to take over the care and protection of the child. If for some reason the extended family cannot assume responsibility over the child, the community within which the child is domiciled is obliged to set up a model of care that best suits the social, cultural and economic needs and rights of the child.

 Emphasising the centrality of the family environment as the most appropriate institution, the policy provides that if the first three forms of care fail, the most viable option becomes foster care. This is where any family that is willing and qualifies in terms of the set criteria is given custody of the child by the Children's Court. This is done at the behest of the office of the Probation Officer set up in terms of Section 46 of the Children's Act (Chapter 5:06). Adoption is considered when the other options fail still with the intention of affording a child the right to a family environment. The policy emphasises that institutionalisation should be considered as the last resort. From a rights based perspective the child is surrounded by a group of duty bearers who in a functional society must be ceased with the fulfilment of the child's rights to social, emotional, physical, mental, spiritual, cultural and economic well-being.

2.4 Foster and child development

More children are entering foster care in the early years of life when brain growth and development are most active. According to Landsverk (2001) during the first 3 to 4 years of life, the anatomic brain structures that govern personality traits, learning processes, and coping with stress and emotions are established, strengthened, and made permanent. If unused, these structures deteriorate. The nerve connections and neurotransmitter networks that are forming during these critical years are influenced by negative environmental conditions, including lack of stimulation, child abuse, or violence within the family. It is known that emotional and cognitive disruptions in the early lives of children have the potential to impair brain development.

Paramount in the lives of these children is their need for continuity with their primary attachment figures and a sense of permanence that is enhanced when placement is stable. There are critical periods of interaction among physical, psychological, social, and environmental factors. Basic stimulation techniques and stable, predictable nurturance are necessary during these periods to enable optimal cognitive, language, and personal socialization skills. Because these children have suffered significant emotional stress during critical periods of early brain development and personality formation, the support they require is reparative as well as preventive. The pediatrician, with knowledge of the child's medical and family history, may assist the social service and judicial systems in determining the best setting to help the child feel safe and heal.

2.5 Attachment and Positive Foster experience

To develop into a psychologically healthy human being, a child must have a relationship with an adult who is nurturing, protective, and fosters trust and security. Attachment refers to this relationship between two people and forms the basis for long-term relationships or bonds with other persons. It is an active process, which can be secure or insecure, maladaptive or productive. Attachment to a primary caregiver is essential to the development of emotional security and social conscience. Optimal child development occurs when a spectrum of needs is consistently met over an extended period. Successful parenting is based on a healthy, respectful, and long-lasting relationship with the child. This process of parenting, especially in the psychological rather than the biologic sense, leads a child to perceive a given adult as his or her "parent." That perception is

essential for the child's development of self-esteem and self-worth. Bowlby (2000) states that a child develops attachments and recognizes as parents' adults who provide "… day-to-day attention to his needs for physical care, nourishment, comfort, affection, and stimulation." Abused and neglected children (in or out of foster care) are at great risk for not forming healthy attachments to anyone. Having at least 1 adult who is devoted to and loves a child unconditionally, who is prepared to accept and value that child for a long time, is key to helping a child overcome the stress and trauma of abuse and neglect.

The psychosocial context and the quality of the relationship from which a child is removed, as well as the quality of alternative care that is being offered during the separation, must be carefully evaluated. This information should be used to decide which placement is in the child's best interest. The longer a child and parent have had to form a strong attachment with each other for example the older the child, the less crucial the physical proximity will be to maintain that relationship. Separation during the first year of life, especially during the first 6 months, if followed by good quality of care thereafter, may not have a deleterious effect on social or emotional functioning. Separations occurring between 6 months and about 3 years of age, especially if prompted by family discord and disruption, are more likely to result in subsequent emotional disturbances. This partly results from the typical anxiety a child this age has around strangers and the normal limitations of language abilities at this age. Children older than 3 or 4 years placed for the first time with a new family are more likely to be able to use language to help them cope with loss and adjust to change. These preschool-aged children are able to develop strong attachments and, depending on the circumstances from which they are removed, may benefit psychologically from the new setting (Ainsworth, 2000).

The emotional consequences of multiple placements or disruptions are likely to be harmful at any age, and the premature return of a child to the biologic parents often results in return to foster care or ongoing emotional trauma to the child. Children with attachment disorders and an inability to trust and love often grow up to vent their rage and pain on society. Any intervention that separates a child from the primary caregiver who provides psychological support should be cautiously considered and treated as a matter of urgency and profound importance. Pediatricians should advocate that evaluation, planning, placement, and treatment decisions be made as quickly as possible, especially for very young children.

2.6 Effects of neglect

An increasing number of young children are being placed in foster care because of parental neglect. Neglect has very profound and long-lasting consequences on all aspects of child development, poor attachment formation, under stimulation, development delay, poor physical development, and antisocial behavior. According to Karen (2001) being in an environment in which child-directed support and communication is limited makes it more difficult for a child to develop the brain connections that facilitate language and vocabulary development, and therefore may impair communication skills. Recent findings in infant mental health show how development can be facilitated, how treatment can enhance brain development and psychological health, and how prevention strategies can lessen the ill effects of neglect.

2.5 Formal foster care process

Identification

Identification in this context is divided into two aspects. That is, identification of children in need of foster care and the identification of prospective foster parents.

Identification of children

The identification of children in need of foster care, is done through a multi-sectoral approach. Concerned members of the community can report a case of child abuse, maltreatment, neglect or general lack of appropriate care and attention and/or parental love, care and protection to CCWs, Child Protection Committee (CPCs) members for onward reporting to child welfare officers and case management officers. Such reports can also be made to the nearest official authority for that particular community. In terms of the Children's Act, such an authority includes a school teacher or head, Chief, Headman or Village Head. The authority may also include the police, hospital/clinic/rural health centre medical staff including village health workers and case care workers.

School teachers can, during their routine interaction with children discover that a child is not receiving adequate parental supervision, care and attention. In that case, the teacher should

immediately report his/her observations to the immediate superior who in turn is obliged to report to the village or ward child care community as the case might be. Once reported, the case goes to the social worker (probation officer) responsible for that particular area who in turn takes legal processes to assess the child. (See the next stage of assessment).

In other instances, Village Health Workers during their routine interaction with communities may discover that a particular child is experiencing health problems related to inadequate care and attention, neglect and/or abuse by the biological family or other carers. The Village Health Worker is obliged to take the matter to the health centre for onward transmission to the social worker responsible for that particular area.

The police may also identify children requiring foster care either during their own interaction with communities or get a tip off from the public. In terms of the Children's Act, the police are then obliged to remove the child and place him/her in a place of safety. The place of safety is either a hospital or a children's home. Once that happens, the local social worker is then alerted and takes the case to the next stage.

Other organisations involved in child care such as Child Protection Society, Childline, SOS Children's Villages, and Family Support Trust may also identify children requiring foster care when there is serious emerging child abuse concern/issue through direct interface with the community or through getting information from community members and stakeholders.

In some instances, potential foster parents can identify a child or children requiring foster care. Some children requiring foster care (the abandoned and those living on the streets) can present themselves at the DCWPS offices, any other child protection agency or their personnel at village or district level.

Identification of prospective foster parents

The DCWPS in conjunction with other child welfare organisations has been raising awareness through the electronic and print media as well as through community outreach campaigns to encourage people to consider registering to become foster parents. Prospective foster parents can therefore voluntarily register with the Department of Child Welfare and Protection Services.

Through this avenue, anyone willing to foster a child can register his/her intention to do so with the DCWPS. Child protection committees and CCWs can also identify prospective foster parents as well as children's residential institutions. Some prospective foster parents may be identified through churches, foster parent awareness campaigns, general public gatherings. CCWs are also encouraged to register as foster parents if they so wish.

Documentation required during the identification stage

- The DCWPS screening tool that has a set of detailed questions and also incorporates the police screening forms.

- Profile forms

- Initial Case Record

- Record of information

- Probation officer's report to the children's court

Timelines for identification

There are no set timelines for the identification stage; varies from case to case. Officers, are however, generally encouraged to complete all processes related to identification within 1 month.

i. Assessment

The assessment of children requiring foster care and of prospective foster parents is the primary role of a Probation Officer in the DCWPS. The Probation Officer however, receives support from community cadres i.e. CCWs and CPC members who provide information on the child's circumstances and the suitability of identified potential foster parents.

Assessment of children identified for foster care

Children considered for foster care are defined as those children in need of care according to Section 2 of the Children's Act. Such children are usually outside their family or their family has demonstrated virtually no capacity to care and protect the child. Foster care is more appropriate for children under 6 years but less desirable for adolescents who are at the stage of achieving

independence from the family group. Probation officers are encouraged to foster children into families that share the same language (should not be a barrier for children aged 5 years and above), religion and culture

- Every child being considered for foster care under goes a medical examination to determine their state of health including disability, HIV, immunisation, nutrition status, medical allergies as well as their progress in relation to critical milestones. The health report is provided to a prospective foster parent to enable them to make an informed decision. Prospective foster parents should however, not discriminate against children on the basis of their disability or chronic conditions.

- Behavioural attributes of the child must also be assessed by checking whether they have a juvenile delinquency record, their social history and their friends. Children with serious delinquent behaviour are not suitable to be considered for foster care.

- It is not encouraged for children being considered for foster care to cross provincial boundaries unless the probation officer considers it necessary to do so.

Home visits

Home visits must be carried out to ascertain the circumstances of the child such as their family size, incidence of child abuse, general well-being i.e. behaviour issues, health as well as nutritional status, behavioural issues, parental capacity and family stability.

Role of biological parents in the assessment of children

No child must be fostered if their biological parents are alive unless there are serious child abuse/protection concerns. In instances where biological parents are alive but it has been deemed necessary to consider the children for foster care the biological parents are expected and/or encouraged to:

- Provide information about their family background, circumstances and challenges

- Provide consent for releasing the child

Assessment of prospective foster parents

Assessment of prospective foster parents is intended to determine their capacity and suitability to be foster parents.

Reasons for considering fostering

To safeguard children being considered for foster care from abuse and exploitation by potential foster parents it is important to ascertain the reasons or motive for fostering.

Possible reasons for people to consider being foster parents include philanthropy, altruism, social responsibility, religious reasons, consideration of fostering as a step towards adoption and infertility. In addition, fostering may be considered by the family as a way of replacing grown up children or children lost through death while some consider fostering because of the perceived associated income/benefits.

The prospective foster parents must be thoroughly assessed whether they do not intend to traffic or sell the child. Social workers (probation officers) should guard against being bullied into making rushed and ill-conceived decisions due to political interference and pressure emanating from perceived racial superiority by prospective foster parents of other races.

Socio-economic assessment aspects

A prospective suitable foster parent should generally not be under 25 years and there should be an age difference of 21 years between the child and foster parents unless they are within prohibited degrees of consanguinity.

A single man is not allowed to foster a child unless they are related and females are most preferable to foster children to safeguard against child sexual abuse. The capacity of the prospective foster parent to provide family life and promote the child's development, well-being and uphold all their rights. This should include physical, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of the child's development. The parent should also be willing to accept the child as a unique individual and willing to let go the child if circumstances change. From the onset the prospective foster parent should understand that foster care is a temporary arrangement that can be revoked at any time subject to change of circumstances for both parties. A prospective suitable foster parent should preferably have own family (usually married) with or without children but whose family is deemed suitable and appropriate to socialise a child, should be a Zimbabwean citizen or resident and should

be in good health. Assessment of prospective parents should place emphasis on family set up to ensure opportunity for role modelling but it is not a pre-requisite that the parents have children of their own.

Consideration is given to the child's right to a conducive family environment free from immoral, anti-social and/or criminal intents. It is important for a child to know what a 'normal` family is like hence it is important to assess the stability of the family and/or of the marriage where applicable by checking for incidence of domestic and intimate partner violence. The religious orientation and practices of the prospective foster parent must be investigated and assessed to protect foster children from issues of religious extremism and cultism. Prospective foster parents should be willing to promote reunification of families, accept the child's parents and appreciate permanency of children in family environments.

Criminal record

The prospective foster parent should be an upright person free of moral controversies and criminal convictions.

A police clearance is required to ascertain that the person who wants to foster has never been involved in serious crimes for example rape, murder, child trafficking, sexual abuse or any other offences against children. Therefore, a clean police record should be submitted with the application.

Prospective foster parents must have 3 or 4 referees who are not related to them and should be people of good standing in the community who have a general understanding of child welfare issues. They should have good relations with neighbours and at least two of their neighbours must provide testimonials.

Home visits

Home visits provide the probation officer with an opportunity to assess the capacity and suitability of the foster parent/family to provide accommodation and other necessities for the child to be fostered. Home visits also present an opportunity for the probation officer to ascertain the residence of the prospective foster parent at the place of residence that they indicated at registration.

Number and state of rooms Vis-a-Vi the current household size and composition as well as sleeping arrangements are assessed in relation to the adequacy and suitability of living and sleeping space for the anticipated foster child. The assessment of accommodation facilities and household size serves to ensure that the parent is not burdened by caring for the additional child and that the child will receive the necessary care as well as attention.

Safety, cleanliness and sanitation facilities at the house are also assessed to guard against potential exposure to physical harm and diseases.

Household's sources of income, employment situation and number of dependents are also assessed to ascertain capacity to adequately provide for own child/children and for the foster child. However, one's economic status cannot in itself militate against an individual's need and willingness to foster a child.

Foster parents' knowledge of and commitment to child rights, general well-being of the family and in the case of married couples' willingness of both spouses to foster is assessed to ascertain parenting capacity.

In facilitating foster placement, the probation officer should also consult with neighbours, community leaders, and other reputable authorities such as members of the CPCs to get an objective assessment of prospective foster parent's parental skills and personality and behaviour. The probation officer must be wary of unconstructive community dynamics that might yield negative information concerning the suitability and capacity of the prospective foster parent.

Documents used or required during assessment

Currently there are no specific assessment tools though the Children's Act provides a general guide for assessment. The following documents are required during this stage:

- National identity card (I.D) of the prospective foster parent

- If married, spouse' I.D and marriage certificate/affidavit, consent from partner

- Child birth registration documents though foster care can take place without birth registration in the case of abandoned children

- Initial Child Court Orders (for children in institutions)

- Affidavit-stating reasons why a parent wants to foster

- Police clearance or criminal record

- Medical report of the child and of the parent

- Initial child case record

- Reference letter (from church, community leaders, employers. government authorities etc.)

Time lines for the assessment process

Though time lines vary from case to case depending on levels of compliance from the prospective foster parents and other critical stakeholders, the assessment process should take a minimum of 7 days and a maximum of 21 days to complete.

ii.   Registration

Registration entails the legal aspects of fostering; the probation officer writes and submits a probation officer's report to the juvenile courts explaining the circumstances of the child and findings of the investigations on the foster parent applicants. The process will culminate in the inclusion of prospective foster parents and children in the formal system of foster care givers.

The social worker in his or her capacity as a probation officer in terms of Section 46 of the Children's Act, having satisfied him or herself that the child is really in need of foster placement and that the prospective foster parent meets the basic qualifying criteria stipulated above proceeds to process the application for foster placement.

The probation officer's report to the juvenile court should detail the social, cultural, psychological and even economic circumstances of the child in question obtained during the assessment stage. It must be convincing enough to persuade the juvenile court to grant an order giving the right to foster to a foster parent named in the same report. In effect, the prospective foster parent's

circumstances must also be detailed in the same report. That report is presented to the Juvenile Court by the probation officer in person. In all cases, the child and prospective parents must be there. In instances where biological parents or other guardians previously taking care of the child before the other processes that removed the child from their custody were instituted must also be present in Court.

The social worker must persuade the biological parents or previous guardians that the process is first and foremost in the best interest of the child and that as parents or guardians they still retain some rights over the child.

The child him/herself has to be convinced that whatever is being done concerning them is entirely in their best interest.

When satisfied, the Court then proceeds to grant the order in favour of the foster parent. Such an order is usually valid for a period of three years. On expiry, the order is reviewed, set aside, discharged or renewed depending on the prevailing circumstances. It is however, common practice for such Court orders to be renewed in three year phases until the child attains the majority age or until the said need no longer exists.

Documents required for registration

- Probation Officer's Report

- Foster parent identification particulars

- If married, spouse's I.D and marriage certificate/affidavit

- Child birth registration documents (N.B foster placement can take place without birth registration in case of abandoned children)

- Initial Child Court Orders (for children in institutions)

- Police clearance or criminal record of foster parent

- Medical report of parent and child

- Assessment forms from the DCWPS, references, testimonials

- Foster Parent Register

- Child Foster Register

- Court Register

- Affidavit/consent letter agreeing to the transfer of the child to another family. This however, depends on the circumstances necessitating the foster placement; in instances where biological parents/guardians are alive and willing to commit the child for foster care they may provide their consent, however, in some instances this may not be feasible and the registration process can continue without their consent.

Time lines for registration

Although no timelines are set; in practice, it is in the best interest of the child that the registration process be expedited. To that effect, the DCWPS maintains a register of all prospective foster parents.

iii. Placement

The probation officer

When the Court Order has been obtained, the probation officer is compelled to quicken the placement process. The Probation Officer undertakes the process of removing the child in need of foster care from their place of residence and placing them with the foster family. The government through the DCWPS meets all the travel costs for the child and the accompanying probation officer. There may be delays in accessing government vehicles as they are few and probation officer can liaise with other stakeholders for assistance with transport.

Upon registration and the issuance of a Court order, the foster family must be provided with appropriate assistance particularly from government. In addition, it is desirable, (depending largely on the economic status of the foster family) that the child accesses all social safety nets provided by both government and other partners within his/her foster family's community. In applying for

foster fees from government, the probation officer needs to attach the Court Order from the juvenile court, a copy of the probation officer's report, record of information and any other such documentation as may be appropriate. For purposes of record keeping, a set of the reports should remain in the child's file at district level, another copy goes to the provincial file and the other to head office. In keeping with social work ethics and principles, such records are strictly confidential.

As part of the placement process, the foster fees so claimed are periodically given to the foster parent. It should be noted that these foster fees are grossly inadequate for the daily needs of the child and are not necessarily meant to provide full maintenance of the child. They are meant to be tokens of appreciation for the good and philanthropic work done by the foster parents. In most cases, the DCWPS pays for the school fees, uniforms and medical fees for the child under foster placement.

The social worker should strive to even reach out to all the inhabitants of the foster home to facilitate easy integration and assimilation of the new child. The Probation Officer should liaise with CPC members, CCWs Child Welfare Officers, Case Management Officers and community members to ensure that the placement process is as smooth as possible. The probation officer in liaison with the CPC members should ensure that the child secures a school place at their new place of residence.

Placement and the foster child

On the part of the child, the process of placement needs to be handled with care. The child has a right to actively participate in the foster care placement process and should be furnished with all the necessary information related to the process. Some children especially those coming from an institution may refuse to go to the foster parent/family. The probation officer must provide supportive counselling to adequately prepare the child socially and psychologically for the foster placement. Naturally, children tend to experience trauma and anxiety associated with change of environment. This is particularly so when the circumstances warranting the child's removal and/or placement into alternative care are themselves detrimental to the child's psycho social wellbeing and self-worth. Depending on their age and level of comprehension the advantages and disadvantages of foster placement must be clearly explained to the child. The probation officer

must ensure that the child understands that the placement is in their best interest, that it is a temporary arrangement and that their biological parents or guardians still hold some rights. The probation officer must explain the possible changes in diet, family set up, housing structures, religion, education etc. It is also important for the probation officer to explain to the child the plans that are in place for them to continue with their education at the new place of residence.

2.7 Theoretical framework

Theories are formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions. The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists.

2.7.1 Attachment theory

Attachment theory draws on the work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. It refers to the special bond and the lasting relationships that young children form with one or more adults. Attachment also refers specifically to the child's sense of security and safety when in the company of a particular adult (Ainsworth, 2002; Bowlby, 2000). It is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space. Attachment does not have to be reciprocal. One person may have an attachment to an individual which is not shared. Attachment is characterized by specific behaviors in children, such as seeking proximity with the attachment figure when upset or threatened (Bowlby, 2000).

Attachment theory is concerned with how children's early relationships affect their development and their capacity to form later relationships. It can be useful in helping those who work with children in care to think about both past and future. It can increase understanding about what children may bring into the new relationships that care involves, and, looking forward, how one can build on the past, modify expectations and strategies that are no longer helpful, and help the development of new positive relationships.

The concepts derived from attachment theory have been widely embraced by those who work in child welfare as they offer a framework for understanding the developmental importance of close relationships. These concepts help to explain why children who have had a poor start to relationships with others, or who have experienced seriously disrupted care, often behave in very

troubling ways in care. They are also used in making decisions about the arrangements for family visits and specific forms of therapy for children experiencing behavioural problems.

The British psychiatrist John Bowlby pioneered the concept of attachment in the 1940s, and used the term 'attachment bond' to describe a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with a mother permanent mother substitute in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment. In his influential wo Bowlby described the attachment system that helps an infant to seek comfort from their caregiver a develop a sense of security. Bowlby used the term 'attachment behaviours' to refer to the actions signals of infants, such as crying, smiling and vocalising, which usually summon their caregiver a which therefore help the infants feel calm and safe. The term attachment is most often used to refer to the relationship between an infant or young chi and the infant or child's parent (usually the mother) or preferred caregiver. The theoretical basis most of the attachment research is that secure attachment in infancy will predict good social and emotional outcomes. However, attachment theory is continually evolving in the light of new research and the importance of attachment to developmental issues in middle childhood and adolescence, such as a child's independent involvement in life experiences beyond the home (at school, with peers an in the community), is also recognised.

Attachments are best thought of as mutually reinforcing patterns of behaviour between a caregiver and a child. Although children play an active role in developing and maintaining an attachment relationship what motivates a caregiver to respond to the child is as important to attachment as a child's behaviour in moments of need. How caregivers anticipate, respond to and interpret the child's attachment behaviour is influenced many factors. For example, caregivers who are dealing with a major challenge such as mental illness domestic violence are likely to have difficulty in focusing on and attending to their child's needs. Their own experience as children and the mental image of parental relationships that they bring to their r as parents are also likely to affect how caregivers anticipate, respond to and interpret their own child attachment behaviour. Caregivers without secure attachments with others, may also find it difficult respond to a child in such a way that will lead to the formation of a secure attachment.

Having a caregiver who provides consistent, responsive care helps children to learn to recognise that nature of their own emotions, and to regulate their own behaviour and emotional states. Through experiencing responsive and sensitive care, a child also develops social competencies,

empathy and emotional intelligence, and learns how to relate to other people and understand what to expect from them. When a caregiver is sensitive to a child's emotional needs and responds positively, helps the child to develop a sense of being loved and lovable. This is how children learn that they w be able to rely on others for help in times of trouble later in life. Children are better able to cope with traumatic experiences when their earlier experiences are of being safe and protected. A child's confidence that a caregiver will be protective also enables the child to explore the world a learn new skills, using the caregiver as a secure base for exploration, play or other social behaviours. A child who feels that they are looked after and protected by reliable adults is freed from the fear and anxiety that accompany a sense of being alone or abandoned. The more secure the child feels the more energy and enthusiasm they have to be curious, to learn, to seek understanding and to try to make sense of the worthy. During adolescence personal development leads children further away from those who protect the to explore intimate relationships, and to develop a sense of belonging in a community.

Research beginning to show that attachment is integral in helping adolescents achieve autonomy from pare and is important for the quality of ongoing peer relationships, social acceptance and functioning romantic relationships. Attachment to parents has also been associated with a range of indices wellbeing, including high self-esteem and low anxiety.8 Although attachment is universal to all humans, it is important to recognise that the majority of wo on attachment theory has been based on Western studies. More information is needed about t applicability of attachment concepts in different cultural contexts, especially in traditional culture where children are encouraged to form attachments with many caregivers (Julian, 2011).

2.7.2. The importance of secure attachment in Foster Care

Young children who have sensitive and responsive attachment figures develop trust. This allows them to explore their world while knowing that if they need help, they can return to their 'secure base' (i.e. attachment figures they can turn to as a safe haven when upset or anxious) (Schofield and Beek, 2014). Early attachment is important because it acts as an 'internal working model' (or template) for subsequent relationships. This model refers to a set of expectations and beliefs about the self and others. For example, a baby whose crying results in a prompt response will learn that certain of his behaviours are linked with the positive behaviours of his caregiver, and he will feel that he is loved and nurtured. A response that is unavailable or cold will lead to an internal working

model of the attachment figure as rejecting, the self as unworthy of care and others as not to be relied on for help and support (Schofield and Beek, 2014).

Children's expectations of themselves and others also influence the ways in which other people relate to them. A young person who expects rejection and has low self-esteem is likely to signal to other people that they should not come close, which is likely to lead to further rejection. Sensitive caregiving is needed in this situation to overcome children's hostility and lack of trust (Schofield and Beek, 2014).

Children who are securely attached benefit in a number of ways:

- they have higher self-esteem and empathy

- they can deal with stress more effectively

- they have faster memory recall

- they have higher impulse control

- they are reliable and likely to be popular with others (Shemmings, 2011).

2.8 Knowledge gap
Foster care is relatively new in Zimbabwe, as such there has not been much research conducted in this area. Much of the research done on this comes from the western world, which in most cases cannot really address issues faced by the children who undergo the same program here in Zimbabwe. Therefore, having realized this challenge, this research aims to rectify this knowledge gap that exists.

2.9 Chapter summary
In this chapter, the Literature that was used throughout the course of the research is evaluated with the intention of pointing out central issues regarding foster care, its beginnings and how it was adopted and then came into existence in Zimbabwe. Theories with regard to foster care are also propounded in this chapter, with the idea of projecting the theoretical foundation on the system and how those theories can influence the general findings of this research. Ultimately this section also intends to show light on the knowledge gap that currently exists in matters central in foster care and also how this research anticipates to address this gap.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, focus was directed on the research methodology, basically emphasising the motion for research intended to be employed. This subject area of the research study, visited the research design, the data collection tools, the population considered for the study, the data analysis techniques employed, the data collection methods and ethical considerations were impulsively included. This segment also defined the methodology engaged by the researcher. The methodology included publication research, interviews, surveys and other research techniques.

3.2 Research approach

The researcher adopted the qualitative approach in tackling this study. According to Fisher (2013) Qualitative research is designed to reveal a target audience's range of behavior and the perceptions that drive it with reference to specific topics or issues. It uses in-depth studies of small groups of people to guide and support the construction of hypotheses. The results of qualitative research are descriptive rather than predictive. As such experiences of children who have gone through foster care are supposed to described in detail for purposes of quality evaluation and future improvements of the system.

3.3 Research Design

Research design defined by Bell (2001) is simply as a preparation intended for gathering information with the intention of coalescing significance and determination of the study so as to advance the excellence of the research which can solitarily be realized over improved consideration of the study. Research design can also be said to point on to the overall strategy that the researcher chooses to use for sourcing data and also to assimilate the diverse components of the study in a comprehensible and rational way that most effectively addresses the research problem; in actual fact it counts on the dimension and examination of data. The researcher used a Case Study which is an explorative design. This enhanced in depth account of issues relating to gathering of relevant facts about the experiences of children who have gone through the foster care program in Zimbabwe.

3.3.1 A case study

Karen (1998) postulates that a case study simply refers to an in-depth study of a certain research delinquent or problem. Alacuustari et al (2008: 34) defines a case study as "…the empirical investigation of specific or bounded phenomenon". Jeanne (1995) laments that, a case study

research design constricts down to a very wide field of research into a single or rare illustrations. The case study research design as referred above mainly manoeuvres on the experiences of children who have been fostered. In this instance, case study refers to Harare Province. This is where a selected number of stakeholders was studied as representation of the whole country's foster care program.

According Paungano (2015), Foster care is a relatively new concept in Zimbabwe, which is still in its infancy. So a case study is most applicable in research of this nature. The researcher selected a specific number of cases amongst the children who have been fostered in Harare Province, with the intention of getting a reflection of the experiences of the children who have gone through the system across the country. Most of the children who have been fostered are usually sent back to the residential care facilities, so the research picked cases of such children, taking into consideration age of the children and gender.

A case study is a very useful research design especially when little information is known about an issue or occurrence. The researcher had little knowledge on how foster care has impacted the lives of children who have gone through it, his attempt to explore the genre was made possible through the use of the case study research design. More to that, the researcher found it relevant to use a case study research design to understand as well as get in-depth information on the foster care program and how it is unfolding within local communities. Interviews allowed personal contact with the subjects, so this helped in getting first-hand information.

3.4 Target Population
The target population is the total group of individuals from which the sample might be drawn. In this research the target population is of children who are in various Residential Care Facilities within Harare, who have experienced foster care placement. According to the latest figures from the Ministry of Social Welfare, currently 300 children have since gone through foster care placement this year. Harare has about 150 registered foster parents. Overseeing the placement of these children, are 5 Probation Officers from Harare Central.

3.5 Sample and Sampling technique
Sampling is the process of selecting units from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalize our results back to the population from which they were chosen. The sample was taken for this study, was of randomly selected children from various residential

care facilities in Harare, who have gone through the foster care system. As part of this study, foster parents and probation officers, were also considered to be part of the sample, so as to attain best results from all aspects of foster care, with children being the major stakeholders (Berinsky, 2008). Purposive sampling methodology was employed in this important chapter.

3.5.1 Purposive Sampling

The researcher used purposive sampling, a homogeneous sampling method which targets a small group with similar characteristic to represent the whole. Such a method can be very useful when the research requires specific information from a composite cluster in a situation where proportionality is not a prerequisite, in this case the experiences of children who have gone through the foster care program.

Therefore, this sampling technique was used in this research in the selection of stakeholders be they government officials, foster children and foster parents who are directly involved in the issues of foster care to obtain the relevant information and pertinent statistics. In Harare Province, purposive sampling was used to guide the researcher as it is amongst one of the provinces where foster care marked its birth in Zimbabwe and according to DCWPS statistics, it is the Province with the greater number of Residential Care Facilities and as such most children who have gone through foster care hail from this province.

GROUP	TOTAL POPULATION	SAMPLING TECHNIQUE	SAMPLE SIZE	RESEARCH INSTRUMENT
Foster Children	300	Purposive	24	Interview
Probation Officers	5	Purposive	2	Interview
Caregivers	150	Purposive	6	Interview

3.6 Research Instrument

Research Instruments are measurement tools (for example, interviews, questionnaires or scales) designed to obtain data on a topic of interest from research subjects. In this research interviews were the tools which were used for data collection. Three groups categories of people were central in this research, and these are foster children, foster parents and probation officers. Each category had its own research instrument, as their input contributed to different areas of this research.

3.6.1 Interviews

Kuman and Aaaker (1999) define interviewing as direct contact between the interviewer and the respondent in a suitable environment. An interview is "…a meeting or conversation in which a writer or reporter asks questions of one or more persons from whom material is sought for a newspaper story, television broadcast, a research document etc. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used face to face interviews to collect data. The researcher used the exploratory interview. An exploratory interview as explained by is when the question areas are pre-determined, but the respondents are allowed to have some latitude to answer in their own way and the interviewer may probe for more information in promising areas (Godener & Söderquist, 2004). To avoid emotions from overriding the interviews the researcher came up with interview questions structured to always safeguard the manner of answering.

3.7 Data collection procedure.

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 2002). As a precondition, there was need to formally ask for permission of conducting the research. Since this research is children centred, permission has to be granted by the Department of Child Welfare and Protection Services (DCWPS). The researcher spent a week gathering data, conducting interviews with children, foster parents and probation officers. The researcher avoided prolonging interviews, as this can cause boredom resulting in distorted presentation of information by participants.

3.8 Data presentation and analysis

Data Analysis is the process of systematically applying statistical and/or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap, and evaluate data. According to Shamoo and Resnik (2003) various analytic procedures "provide a way of drawing inductive inferences from data and

distinguishing the signal (the phenomenon of interest) from the noise (statistical fluctuations) present in the data." Qualitative data analysis ought to pay attention to the 'spoken word', context, consistency and contradictions of views, frequency and intensity of comments, their specificity as well as emerging themes and trends (Beck, 2003).

The qualitative researcher, however, has no system for pre-coding, therefore a method of identifying and labelling or coding data needs to be developed that is tailored for each research. In this research a method which is called content analysis was chosen.

Content analysis can be used when qualitative data has been collected through:

1. Interviews

2. Focus groups

3. Observation

Content analysis is a procedure for the categorisation of verbal or behavioural data, for purposes of classification, summarisation and presentation (Holsti, O. R, 2001).

The content can be analysed on two levels:

1. Basic level or the manifest level: a descriptive account of the data, that is the thematic model approach i.e. this is what was said by the children who were interviewed, but no comments or theories as to why or how. Data related to the already classified patterns are presented, related patterns are combined and catalogued into sub-themes and new themes that emerge from the participants' stories are pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective experience.

2. Higher level or latent level of analysis: a more interpretive analysis that is concerned with the response as well as what may have been inferred or implied by the children and other participants in this research.

According to Beck (2003), content analysis involves coding and classifying data, also referred to as categorising and indexing and the aim of context analysis is to make sense of the data collected and to highlight the important messages, features or findings.

3.8 Ethical considerations.

Ethics are the basic concepts and fundamental principles of decent human conduct. It includes study of universal values such as the essential equality of all men and women, human or natural rights, obedience to the law of land, concern for health and safety and, increasingly, also for the natural environment. In this research, the following ethics have been taken into consideration.

3.8.1 Harm and Benefits

The most fundamental consideration in undertaking research involving children is deciding whether the research actually needs to be done, if children need to be involved in it and in what capacity. Accordingly, at the very outset of the research process the researcher needs to engage with critical issues regarding the purpose of the research and the impact that participating in the research may have on children in terms of potential harm and possible benefits.

3.8.2 Informed Consent

Obtaining consent from parents or guardians and children is central to the research relationship and signals respect for the research participant's dignity, their capability to express their views and their right to have these heard in matters that affect them. Informed consent is an explicit agreement which requires participants to be informed about, and have an understanding of, the research. This must be given voluntarily and be renegotiable, so that children may withdraw at any stage of the research process.

3.8.3 Privacy and Confidentiality

Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of children participating in research involves close consideration of several aspects: privacy with regard to how much information the child wants to reveal or share, and with whom; privacy in the processes of information gathering or data collection and storage that allows the exchange of information to be confidential to those involved; and privacy of the research participants so that they are not identifiable in the publication and dissemination of findings.

3.9 Chapter summary

In this chapter, research methodology and research design used in carrying out the research was outlined. A combination of items mainly the research population, presentation data collection, and analysis have been outlined to guide the researcher in the gathering of data. It also weighed the pros and cons of using each instrument. Also examined were the sampling techniques and how the researcher chose to use them. The investigation accustomed qualitative approaches including

questioners and interviews. Ethics are the basic concepts and fundamental principles of decent human conduct. It includes study of universal values such as the essential equality of all men and women, human or natural rights, obedience to the law of land, concern for health and safety and, increasingly, also for the natural environment. These are of essence when conducting research involving children.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

The chapter will highlight the positive experiences of children who have gone through the foster care program in Zimbabwe and how it is shaping their lives as they prepare to embrace adulthood. It should be noted that research findings from this chapter were used to make research conclusions and recommendations in the last chapter which is chapter five. Results obtained revealed Foster care program has managed to positively impact lives of many children, however at the same time more needs to be done in order for the program to reach out to more children who are in need of care and a family environment.

4.2. Characteristics of respondents

24 foster children, 6 foster parents and 2 probation officers participated in the study. There were 15 males and 17 females. As is expected by the Department of Social Welfare and Protection services, the true identities of the children who participated cannot be disclosed. In line with identity protection, numbers were used to stand in for the participants' real names. The researcher conducted semi structured in-depth interviews with the participants. This is shown by the figure below.

4.2.1 Participants' Demographic Data

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender ➢ **Male** ➢ **Female**	**17** **19**	47% 53%
Age in Years **10 – 14** **15 - 18** **25 And Above**	**15** **9** **8**	**47%** **28%** **25%**

4.2.2 December 2016 Statistics of Children in Foster Care Placement in Zimbabwe

PROVINCE	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL
Midlands	37		22		59
Mash West	21		27		48
Mash Central	13		32		45
Bulawayo	36		63		99
Mat North	3		14		17
Mat South	12		12		24
Masvingo	8		14		22
Mash East	16		15		31
Harare	56		47		103
Manicaland	16		3		19
Total	**218**		**249**		**467**

4.3. Theme 1: Positive impact of the Foster Care program on children in Zimbabwe

The research found out that foster care had the following positive impacts for children who have been fortunate enough to be beneficiaries namely: provision of a family environment, access to better education opportunities, mending of children's lives, a chance to a normal life and creation of life long relationships.

4.3.1 Sub Theme 1: Provision of a family environment for children in need of care

Findings from this research indicate that children who are fostered having been previously residence at Residential Care facilities, reported that the family environment was some much better as compared to institutional care. They revealed that they were showered with love, going for shopping, there was a variety of food to eat, also additional television viewing time. This made them feel cared for. One foster child had this to say:

"Ever since my placement on foster care, I have enjoyed the experience of having a place I can call home, where I have a mother, father and other siblings. Prior to my placement, I was staying at a children's home but to be honest I did not like it there but at the end of the I had no other option. I greatly appreciate this opportunity of finally having a family of my own, as this has uplifted my psychological and social wellbeing. My wish is to remain part of this family for a long

time. It is my prayer that other children who reside in residential care facilities also get the same opportunity which I was accorded of having a place they can call home." (Participant 1)

The children who have been fortunate enough to have been placed on foster care reported positively about their experience. One participant who showed gratitude to foster care:

"These days I cannot wait for lessons at school to come to an end so that I can go to be with my new family. Before placement I used to wonder how it felt like going back to meet parents after school. I would see many of my classmates carrying their books and happy that they are going home. I only prayed that may one day I will also get the very same life like that of my mates. God answered my prayer through foster care. Now I have a family and a very lovely home." (Participant 2).

This research highlighted that for some children foster care placement introduced them to a home environment for the first time. One participant had this to say:

"I never knew the meaning of being part of a normal family and having a place I can call home. All I knew where the gates of the children home, where I shared residence with children of the same status. Deep down I felt the need of being part of a family that I can share with my sorrows and happiness. After being placed on foster care, that crucial need was addressed and I have been very happy ever since." (Participant 3).

Basing on the accounts of the interviewed children foster care is better especially for children who were residing in residence at Residential Care facilities prior to their placement. They reported that the home environment provided them with an opportunity to be part of a family and explore things like shopping, family gatherings, variety of food, more television viewing time amongst other things.

4.3.2 Sub Theme 2: Access to better education opportunities
Children reported that they can now attain the much needed access to better education, some are even going to boarding schools being funded by their foster parents to pursue their academic dreams and also vocational training centres where they are equipped with skills which they can use to even better their lives. One participant said:

"One of the things that I appreciate the most is the opportunity I was given by my foster parents to go to a boarding school to pursue my academic goals. There I am getting better facilities as compared to those I had before foster care placement. Above all my parents support me a lot by making sure that I have everything I need at school to make my stay throughout the school term very much comfortable and productive." (Participant 4).

Research findings indicated that having a family that children belong to has proven to be a psychological boost in relation to their performance at school, as they can now take part in discussions which have to do with family and share their experiences. One participant had this to say:

"*Usually at school we discuss about family life, especially after the holidays, were our teacher ask for accounts of how our holiday was like for instance the places that we visited, recreational activities, amongst other things. Before placement I could not participate actively in such discussions but now that I have a family through foster care, I participant immensely and its even now easier for me to even write essays about my holiday experiences and I am so happy about it." (Participant 5).*

This psychological boost has proven to be essential as general performance in school has improved, which has a tremendous impact on the ultimate success of children the education.

4.3.2 Sub Theme 3: Mending of children's lives
The study participants reported that through foster care their lives have been put back together after have gone through abuse and neglect prior to placement. False accusations, verbal and physical abuse central in their lives, but they reported that foster care changed all that. On participant said:

"...Before I was placed in foster care, I used to stay with my relatives, who were very abusive, as they would accuse me of things which I have not done and beat me up mercilessly for no apparent reason, I felt broken and I felt hopeless and had no will to keep on living this life. Foster care came to my rescue. The parents that I live with now have showered me with love and support since day one, even when I do something wrong, they always correct me in a loving manner. My life is finally getting back on track and I am very grateful." (Participant 6).

This research found out that abused children may have difficulties forming and keeping positive relationships. Findings indicated that foster care placement has managed to overturn that problem by ensuring that children form and maintain stable relationships with their siblings and people in the society as a whole. One foster parent had this to say:

"When we took in this child for foster care, we noticed a strange anti-social behaviour. She would prefer to stay alone in her room and even when around other siblings, she would rather keep quiet, seem distant and have sudden violent outbursts. Upon inquiry she opened up and told me she had lived with an abusive aunt in the past. I am a Christian and I believe that love heals all wounds. My wife and I decided to give this child extra attention, sometimes we take her out for meals in town, go shopping amongst other activities. At the moment we have noticed change in the way she behaves and she even has conversations with other siblings and recently she made friends with children within our community." (Participant 7).

Overall findings revealed that foster care has so far managed to mend lives of abused children. The participants in the study pointed out that foster parents are providing much- needed love, attention and affection, which heals emotional wounds which children once had before placement, hence helping the society in growing and becoming a better place.

4.3.5 Sub Theme 5: Creation of life long relationships

This research found out that foster care has made it possible for children and foster parents to create long lasting. The foster parents indicated that they develop a strong sense of emotional bond as well as trust with children under their care. In the long run, both parties are seen to be benefiting from this relationship. One foster parent had this to say:

"Creation of a relationship is critical to make the foster care experience beneficial for both the child being fostered and the foster parents. In my case it took a bit of time for me to create a relationship with my foster daughter, but now we are very close and I cannot imagine how life will be like in case I am separated with her." (Participant 8).

Even in cases where by the child is reunified to his or her biological parent, the relationship created between the foster child and the fostering family can last for long regardless of the separation. One participant said:

"To me, I consider my foster parents as my real parents, there has been talk of reunification here and there but I am not interested to go back. I am so much attached to my foster parents and we have bonded to the extent that I cannot leave them to go back to my biological family. I love it here and my foster parents have a pivotal role to play even when I come of age and get married." (Participant 9).

4.4. Theme 2: Major challenges that children who go through foster care face

This research found out that foster care, just like any other system has its own fair share of challenges. These challenges include short placement duration, lack of basic needs whilst under care, failure to adjust to the home environment, harsh treatment and neglect from other siblings.

4.4.1 Sub Theme 1: Lack of Basic needs

In some cases, children reported that at times they lack basic needs like adequate food and school stuff. Upon enquiry, some foster parents highlighted that, due to the harsh economic conditions that are currently prevailing in the country, often times they are left incapacitated to fulfil their mandate of providing for the children under their care, as the monthly assistance from the government which is pegged at $15 per child only exists in theory but in reality, foster parents are not receiving that financial aid. One Foster Child point out that:

"My parents (foster parents) have showered me with love since placement, nut sometimes they will not have money to buy me want I need especially school requirements. For instance, at times I do not get adequate food, uniforms, shoes and also stationery. My parents explained to me that often times they will not have the money to buy me these requirements, in as much as they have been promised monthly support for my upkeep from the government, however they have not received it ever since I was placed in their care." (Participant 10).

Due to the fact that foster parents also have their own biological children, in light of the harsh economic climate currently engulfing the country, it has become very difficult for most of them to provide all the basic needs that children need on a daily basis. One foster parent had this to say:

"As parents we have the mandate to provide the basic necessities for children under our care. But I think you will agree with me that money is hard to come by these days, which in turn results in us as parents failing to meet the daily needs of our children. When we registered to become foster parents we were told that we would receive a monthly support of $15 per child, but my wife and I have been fostering children for 5 years now and we have never received that money. The

government needs to do more to assist us as foster parents, if they cannot provide finances, they should at least assist us with food stuffs so that we can be able to feed the children in our care." *(Participant 11).*

Research findings revealed that lack of basics need like adequate food, school supplies, short placement duration, failure to adjust to the home environment, harsh treatment and neglect from other siblings, has been affecting children in foster care. Foster children appealed for urgent rectification of these problems so as to improve their experiences in home environment.

4.4.2 Sub 2: Theme Failure to adjust to the home environment

Foster children reported that, while they are coming from residential care facilities going into a foster home at times they find it difficult to adjust to the home environment. In most cases, they reported that they are used to have chores done for them for instance cooking but now when they become part of a family, they are expected to cook, which is something they will not be used to. One participating child had this to say:

"Relating with my foster parents has been quite a challenge for me. As someone coming from a children's home, the way of life I was used to is very different from what we now have here with my parents. For instance, back at the children's home, most of basic chores are done for us by our house mothers like preparation of meals, cleaning amongst other things, but here my foster parents expect me to do the work, though I know that it is actually good for me, but I am just not used to this." (Participant 12).

Findings also indicated that the inclusion of a new and unknown member into the family is often not accepted well by other children in the family, hence giving rise to stressful situations for both the fostering family as well as the foster child. One foster child highlighted:

"I was very happy when I got the opportunity to for foster care, as I saw that as an opportunity to be part and parcel of a family, however my happiness was short live. The major problem that I faced when I went for foster care was neglect coming from the biological children of my foster parents. They seemingly did not want to interact with me, as they would go and play leaving me behind and would not involve me in the activities that they would be doing. This really affected me as I would spend most time alone with no one to talk to and to me that was the most stressful aspect

of my foster care experience. I think my siblings need to be fully informed as to why I came to stay with them and I believe after that they can relate with me better." (Participant 13).

Overall findings indicated that some children reported being ill-treated by their foster parents, through being subjected to harsh language and being given too much work to do. These new chores and responsibilities makes it hard for them to settle in the family environment, coupled by the rejection in some cases by the siblings.

4.5 Theme 3: Central issues in Foster Care which children want to be addressed

This research found out that Foster Care system has central issues which needs to be addressed. These issues include foster parents conduct on how they can mend the lives of children under their care, taking into consideration that the children would have gone through traumatic experiences prior to foster care placement. There is also the aspect of government policy initiatives that can be used to improve the system to attain the best results. Further, probation officers who are responsible for the children under placement have a huge responsibility to always to ensure an abuse free foster care experience to reinforce the current strategies which are in place.

4.5.1 Sub Theme 1: Foster Parenting and mending lives of children

Foster children reported that most of them came from backgrounds characterised by abuse and neglect. Therefore, foster parents need to shower children under their care with love, groom them using social acceptable values so as to facilitate their reintegration into society after they leave foster care system. One foster parent had this to say:

"The foundation of every relationship is based on love. Love changes everything, if in cooperated in a family, it brings about a strong connection, were children are free to talk about anything regardless of how complex it might be. The first thing I did when I took in children to foster, I showered them with love. That on its on facilitates the healing process as some of the children I was fostering with my wife had been abused before. Another critical thing is that, children are a blessing from God, so as a Christian man and also a pastor, I raise all children under my care using Christian principles. This has worked out the best for me as a father, my wife as a mother and also mostly importantly for the children that we took in. The bond that we have now with our children is so great that if you Mr. Konzo were to visit us you will find it difficult to tell the

difference between our biological children and the children whom we are fostering. So yes love heals all wounds and God works in miraculous ways to help us maintain a wonderful relationship with our children." (Participant 14).

Findings indicated that supportive nurturing by primary caregivers is crucial to early brain growth and to the physical, emotional, and developmental needs of children. Children need continuity, consistency, and predictability from their caregivers, multiple placements are injurious. One foster parent had this to say:

"Children take a bit of time for them to develop a connection with a caregiver, as such there is need for foster parents to be consistent in their approach whilst they care for children because failure to do so can result in the children not being able to associate themselves with the environment around them. In line with this there is also need to place children for foster care on a longer period of time as compared to temporal care, as this can facilitate the healing process especially for those children who would have come from abusive backgrounds." (Participant 15).

Foster parents reported that they need to be well-informed about the importance of the home environment in the development of normal brain function and the specifics needed for the child under care. Findings also indicated that children need nurturance, support, and cognitive or insight-oriented interventions to make them feel safe, comfortable, and loved.

4.5.2 Sub Theme 2: Government Policy Initiatives

This research found out that, the government needs to come up with a national foster care policy, which should serve as a guideline on identification, screening and registration of foster parents. One probation officer stated that the current Children Act does state much about foster care, so that needs to be corrected so that foster care related issues can be encompassed with the Act. Below is the narrative:

"It is of paramount importance for the government to come up with a National foster care policy to manage foster care program here in Zimbabwe. It must spell out all the procedures to be taken in foster care, which clearly states due process from identification, screening and finally registration. Our current children's act does not state much about foster care, so there is need for

it to be revised so as to address specifically foster care issues, for instance supporting structures that can be put in place for children in foster care." (Participant 16).

In line with the same issue to do with government policy initiatives that can be implemented to improve the foster care system, one probation officer had this to say:

"To improve the quality of foster care, the government needs to engage with Foster parents, social workers, and child care professionals about what works, what does not, and how things can be improved. The recruitment and retention of foster parents is key in improving the foster care program in Zimbabwe. Foster parents complained that the process of becoming a foster parent is rather complicated and straining, which results in some people dropping." (Participant 17).

Another critical aspect which needs government review has to do with the screening process for one to register as a foster parent. One foster parent had this to say:

"The screening of foster parents is rather complex and costly on the part of the prospective foster parent as they have to pay for everything. Furthermore, for instance the standards that are expected in homes of prospective foster parents are not realistic. For example, if you are to look at the home requirements you can see that some of their expectations are not realistic, how can I honestly have a fire escape, fire extinguishers, entrance and exit signs in a 5 roomed house? The standards should at least be attainable to allow more people to come forward and register because a lot of children out there need a place they can call home but unfortunately the number of currently available foster parents is overwhelmed by the children in need of care." (Participant 18).

Inclusive findings highlighted that the government needs to revise its policy on recruitment and retention of foster parents so that it becomes more favourable to attract a number of people to register as foster parents. Foster parents hinted that more people can be motivated to register if the government ensures free screening for prospective parents, realistic standards expected for foster homes and financial support to cater for the cost of quality care for the children.

4.5.2.1 Sub Theme 3: Commissioning of fostering services

This research found out that, there is need for the government to commission dedicated foster care services. One probation officer noted that as it stands the Department of Social Welfare has that responsibility, but they have other pressing welfare responsibilities. In turn foster care does not get the much required attention as it needs. One foster parent had this to say:

"Government workers stationed at the department of Social Welfare have a lot of work to such that they do not have enough time to focus on foster care related issues. Therefore, there is need for the government to commission a foster care services department which is dedicated on foster care issues and to closely manage the system so as to attain the best results. (Participant 19).

Findings also indicated that the Health Care assistance policy should also be revisited, as most foster parents pointed out that the Assisted Medical Treatment Order, which is supposed to assist children to get access to medical care is currently not being accepted in a number of hospitals and clinics, even at government facilities like Parirenyatwa. A foster parent had this to say:

"Often times when I take children to hospitals or clinics, they usually complained that the AMTO is rather no functional as the government is not paying for the health care services rendered through this scheme and because of this sometimes we will have to pay cash to get the children treated. So there is need for the government to revise this order so that children can get the medical attention they need, when they need it, without hindrance." (Participant 20).

Overall findings highlighted that fostering children comes at a cost, so in that regard, foster parents hinted that the government has commission a dedicated department of foster care services, review its Health Care assistance policy, financial assistance policy, and increase the financial support they offer to foster parents and so to it that they receive it without disruptions every month.

4.5.2.2 Sub Theme 4: Long-term foster placements

This research found out that attachment between children and foster parents requires more time for it to be stable. Some children reported that they go on short term foster care placement that is during school holidays and have limited time to develop secure attachment with foster parents. Below is the narrative of a foster child:

"During school holidays, I go on foster care. However, the major challenge is that the time I stay with my foster parents is very limited as I cannot really get to bond with them due to the limited time. It is also very confusing as I have to try to adjust living in two very different environments that is at the children's home and foster home. Personally I would prefer a longer term placement than short term, as it gives me more time to bond with my foster family and created stable relationships." (Participant 21).

Children also reported that they find it very difficult to have secure attachment with foster parents as they spend very little time with these parents to due limited placement time. One participant had this to say:

"I appreciate the opportunity that I get of going to foster care every school holiday. The life I live there is very different to that which I was used to at the children's home. My major worry is that the time is limited only to school holidays. The other children at the home usually mock me when I come back saying "you thought life has changed but then it has not and you are back here with us." I wish I stayed with my foster parents more and on a long time basis, I do not like being in a children's but look at me what other choice do I have?" (Participant 22).

Inclusive findings indicated that the government has to come up with an initiative which facilitates the placement of children in foster care to be more of long term than short term, especially for children who are coming from residential care facilities, as short term placement according to the conducted interviews has been reported to be unpopular amongst children who have gone through it and have indicated the challenges they faced as a result and they indicated that they opted for a longer duration of being fostered.

4.5.2.3 Sub Theme 5: Supporting children returning home from foster care

This research found out that theoretically children leave the foster care system according to the law at age 18, however they are left vulnerable with no supporting structures to help them attain a stable life outside the system. An 18-year-old foster child had this to say:

"As a foster child I was told that I have come of age and very soon I would be expected to stand on my feet as an adult and begin an independent life. But as you can see I am not in any position to do so, I depend on my foster parents and I have nowhere else to go. If the worse comes to the

worst, I will be forced to go and live in the streets of Harare. For me this is a nightmare, I wish something could be done to ensure that I stay longer at least maybe when I can get a job." (Participant 23).

Findings of this research noted that in most cases children reach that age with no clue of what they should do to survive outside the system, which results in most getting into prostitution, drug abuse, crime and in worst cases, committing suicide. One foster parent had this to say:

"I stayed with one particular child for about 5 years. When she reached 18 years she was reunified to her biological family. Although clearly she did not want to go back, she was left with no choice. After sometime she escaped from her family home and went to stay in the streets. I got a call from her one day and she told me this heartbreaking story that she had ran away from home and that she is now staying in the streets, I asked her to come back to me which she did, after a few months I helped her secure a job in South Africa and that is where is she right now and life seems to be on the right track for her. In light of this, as a parent I think more needs to be done for these children to support them to become independent adults not to just release with no support whatsoever." (Participant 24).

Children reported that the government needs to come up with supporting structures for those who have aged out of the foster care system, like vocational skills training where they can acquire various expertise, allocation of grants to help with their upkeep, providing employment opportunities, and provision of funding so that they can venture into business to empower themselves.

4.5.2.4 Sub Theme 6: Training and support for Foster Parents

This research found out that there is need to impart skills into care givers on how they can provide quality care for the children. The research went on to discover that as it stands workshop are usually conducted by non-governmental organisations but not frequently. One foster parents highlighted that there is need for the government to come up with a regular training program for foster parents around the country. Below is the narrative of the foster parent:

"Training workshop are not being conducted as often as they would need. Since I was registered as a foster parent in 2012, I only attended one foster care training workshop which was organized

by a child rights based non-governmental organization called Child Protection Society. I think to address this challenge the government should engage with such organisations so as to make it possible to conduct regular training workshops." (Participant 25).

Research findings pointed out that most Foster Parents think regular training workshops should be conducted, so as to train and equip both old and new foster parents with the necessary skills that are need to give quality care to children. One foster parent said:

"Training workshops are essential in that, as foster parents we can get an opportunity to gather as one unified team, which facilitates the sharing of ideas, challenges and also different experiences that we come across in the day to day care of children. This has proved to be critical in most cases especially to new foster parents who can get ideas from other old foster parents on the provision of quality care for their children. In our culture we say, Rume rimwe harikombi churu (one man cannot go at it alone) so taking care of children is a very big responsibility that requires us as foster parents to join hands to attain one common goal, which is to give children the best family experience for children in our care." (Participant 26).

Foster parents indicated that due to limited government support, some of their colleagues end up defaulting from the responsibility of taking care of the children resulting in the parents bringing the children back to the Department of social welfare which is a major setback in the system. They stated that there is need for the government to come up with a regular training programs for foster parents around the country.

4.6 Theme 3: Initiatives which Probation officers can implement to ensure an abuse free foster care experience

The research found out that by Law, any child who is in foster care in under supervision by probation officers. One probation officer highlighted that to attain an abuse free foster care experience for children, probation officers need to maintain regular home visits, at least once a month. This helps in making sure that the living conditions of the child are maintained as per expect standards. Below is the narrative:

"It is the duty responsibility of a probation officer to consistently make follow ups on the child that he or she has formally placed under foster care. This can be done through home visits or organising office visits were the foster parent comes with the child under their care to the

department. By so doing it facilitates continuous engagement between the probation officer, foster parent and the child." (Participant 27).

Further findings indicated that the creation of a database is essential to facilitate consistent follow ups on children and their foster parents. One Probation officer emphasized on the importance of coordination between them and case care workers so that they can maintain a contact with fostering families in the various districts. The officer had this to say:

"The department is actually in the process of updating the foster parents' database. This data base will help in monitoring and evaluation of foster parents, so as to make it possible to conduct regular follow ups. Critical information pertaining to the number of children under the care of a particular foster parent, location, duration of care amongst other things will help especially in the line with assigning case care workers, who have a more hands on approach, to frequently engage with foster families." (Participant 28).

Probation officers also touched on a critical issue which is proper vetting. They said there is need to ensure that prospective foster parents are properly vetted to make sure they are fit enough to foster children. One probation officer had this to say:

"...In as much as we might need more people to come forward and register as foster parents, proper vetting procedures should be upheld, so that the care of children does not fall into the wrong hands. People who have a history of abusing children cannot be given the mandate to take care of children." (Participant 29).

Research findings also indicated that psychological assessments have been overlooked in the vetting process, but to achieve an abuse free foster care experience, there is for these assessments to be conducted. One probation officer noted that this is in the best interest of the child, the foster parent an also the Department of Social Welfare. Below is the narrative:

"I*t is of paramount importance to ensure that a prospective foster parent is in the right mental state before he or she can be cleared to register as a foster parent. Psychological assessments are critical so that children can only be given to those who are mentally sound to take proper care of them." (Participant 30).*

4.7 Chapter Summary

A foster family provides a safe, supportive, loving home to children in need of care. The goal of foster care is to provide children with a safe, nurturing environment while their parents of origin improve their ability to care for their children remove any threats to the child's safety and well-being from the environment and, ultimately, reunite with their children. Families that take in foster children also have the opportunity to form a strong bond with the children that are in their care. This is not only beneficial to the children, but to the foster parents as well. Many foster parents build strong bonds with the foster children they have that lasts a lifetime, and this is indeed a huge benefit and blessing. Children in need of care outnumber the available registered for parents, with only 423 children in the entire country under foster care placement according to December 2016 consolidated statistics. The government however needs to do more to improve the foster care system in Zimbabwe, and this is mainly through advocacy, public education about foster care and policy formulation and modifications that favour the development of this program here in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the research findings in which the findings are analysed and assessed to figure out as to whether they have any association and uniformity with beforehand conducted studies on the subject of the experiences of children who have gone through the foster care program in Zimbabwe. This discussion also addresses concerns of how has foster care positively impacted the lives of children in Zimbabwe, the major challenges faced by children who go through foster care and the central issues in foster care that children want to be addressed. The significance of the research findings will be interpreted with the reference to the evidence collected, and relates the findings to a larger body of literature on foster care, including the theoretical framework, statement of the problem and research questions that guided the study. The interpretation will therefore ensure a clear understanding of the positive experiences that children went through during foster care placement. Conclusions will be arrived at in this chapter and to end with recommendations to aid in solving the problem at hand.

5.2. The positive impact of foster care on the lives of children who have gone through it in Zimbabwe.

Foster care has managed to mend the lives of those children who have benefited from it. This research revealed that most children in foster care system who have gone through traumatic experiences, abuse or neglect. Basing on this therefore foster parents note that it is to give these children unconditional love, that will in turn facilitate secure attachment, which is much needed in the healing process. Findings also highlighted that a child must have a relationship with an adult who is nurturing, protective, and fosters trust and security. According to Ainsworth (2002), attachment refers to this relationship between two people and forms the basis for long-term relationships or bonds with other persons. It is an active process, which can be secure or insecure, maladaptive or productive. Attachment to a primary caregiver is essential to the development of emotional security and social conscience (Karen, 2001). The research that optimum child development can occur when a spectrum of needs of a child are consistently met over an extended period. Successful foster parenting is based on a healthy, respectful, and long-lasting relationship with the child.

This research established the fact that foster care has managed to give children the opportunity to normal childhood. Most of the children interviewed were visibly overjoyed by being in a position to live just like other children of their age group, as they can now have parents to look up to and also engage in family activities like going for trips, shopping, eating out amongst other things. In support of this, Kortenkamp (2002), states that childhood is the time for children to be in school and at play, to grow strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and an extended community of caring adults. Due to good care they are receiving from foster parents, children are living free from fear, safe from violence and protected from abuse and exploitation. Unfortunately, events like death, sickness or divorce have left most children with no family, thereby affecting usual life. In that regard foster care has made it possible for children to attain a normal life. Reports on foster care system in the United States have revealed that children who are being fostered can get to experience life the same way as other children do, as they get the opportunity of experiencing family oriented life, having mother and father figures whom they can look up to in their lives (Bowlby, 2000).

The results of the research pointed to the fact that creation of life long relationships has proven to positively impact lives of children. Children can open up to their foster parents to share their concerns, which are then addressed to help shape them to become responsible adults. Peter (2011) endorsed this finding when he stated that foster parents develop a strong sense of emotional bond as well as trust with children under their care. Children tend to also bond with their foster parents and other siblings within a particular family (Karen, 2001). In the long run, both parties are seen to be benefiting from this relationship. Even in cases where by the child is reunified to his or her biological parent, the relationship created between the foster child and the fostering family can last for long regardless of the separation.

5.3 Major challenges that children who go through foster care face
This research established the fact that like any other system, foster care has quite a number challenges that children who go through it face. Dhlembeu (2000) states that foster care becomes formal when a probation officer has placed a child into another family through the Children's Court as outlined by the Children's Act. The accounts given by children who are being fostered indicate a number of challenges they face. As it stands, foster care can be short term or long term. As per information attained, children who go foster short term foster care, that is during school holidays, indicated that the experience is somewhat confusing. For instance, it is very difficult to

development any attachment to the foster parents due to the fact that they spend less time with them, as they have to go back to the institution after the school holiday. In support of this fact, a large study conducted in North Carolina of foster children found that there is a strong link between placement instability to children's aggression, coping difficulties, poor home adjustment, and low self-concept. Children may also experience behavioural difficulties if they think their placements will not last (Harden, 2004). Children who are being fostered reported that life style at residential care facilities is very different from that provided by a family setup, with most of the children indicating the need for them to stay in the family set up for a longer period so as to fully adjust and development attachment to the family without disruptions.

In some cases, children reported that at times they lack basic needs like adequate food and school items. Upon enquiry, some foster parents highlighted that, due to the harsh economic conditions that are currently prevailing in the country, often times they are left incapacitated to fulfil their mandate of providing for the children under their care, as the monthly assistance from the government which is pegged at $15 per child only exists in theory but in reality, foster parents are not receiving that financial aid. In line with this, James (2008) states that the United States foster care system was in a bad financial condition at the climax economic crisis in 2007. Nearly in every state the cost of providing basic care for a foster child exceeds the government's foster-care reimbursement rate. Researchers at the University of Maryland, who conducted the another study, factored in that children lacked basic needs such as food and clothing as a direct consequence of their foster parents failing to meet the cost of care (Chamberlain2008). Considering the current economic condition in Zimbabwe, as a measure to avoiding defaulting, foster parents should be given financial assistance so that they can remain capable of taking good care of children and providing children with their basic needs.

The study found out that, children who are coming from residential care facilities going into a foster home at times find it difficult to adjust to the home environment. In most cases, these children are used to having chores done for them for instance cooking, laundry but when they become part of a family, they are expected to cook, do their laundry which is something they will not be used to. Another challenge is that, in some isolated cases, some children reported being ill-treated by their foster parents, through being subjected to harsh language and too much work to do. Those who reported ill treatment also highlighted the fact they are not given the opportunity to

air out their concerns, to the extent that even if they have problems they do not know who to consult. To support this, in a study carried out in Netherlands, information obtained from 419 case files was used to investigate the associations between the foster child's adjustment to the foster family and new demands for children coming from residential care facilities. Problems in the foster child's prior history, particularly attachment disorders and the experience of re-placements, affect the extent of adjustment to the foster family(Egeland,2002). The fact that many foster children come from problem-laden backgrounds raises the question of whether foster parents are always sufficiently equipped to cope with these problems to ensure normal adjustment (Strijker & Knorth, 2009). The inclusion of a new and unknown member into the family is often not accepted well by other children in the family, hence giving rise to stressful situations for both the foster family as well as the foster child. There is need for children to be also fully informed about a foster child who will be coming to join them, so that they too can also accept that child which results in unity and love within that particular family.

5.4 Central issues in Foster Care which children want to be addressed

The research revealed that foster care system has central issues which needs to be addressed. These issues include foster parents conduct on how they can mend the lives of children under their care, taking into consideration that the children would have gone through traumatic experiences prior to foster care placement. There is also the aspect of government policy initiatives that can be used to improve the system to attain the best results. Probation officers who are responsible for the children under placement need also to come up with ways to ensure an abuse free foster care experience to reinforce the current strategies which are in place.

According to Fanshel and Shinn (2002) children who go through the foster care program usually would have been subjected to harsh treatment in the past, that is abuse and neglect, Foster care placements should always maximize the healing aspects of foster care and be based on the needs of the child. Findings from this research indicated that foster parents need to shower children under their care with love, groom them using social acceptable values so as to facilitate their reintegration into society. This ushers in the healing process and also creates positive attachment with the foster parents, which in turn enables the children to create relationships with other people within a

particular society. In line with, Keck, G., Kupecky, R. (2009) states that Learning about the child's unique history is an important first step for all parents and caregivers in providing a healing environment for children who have experienced abuse or neglect. This can be achieved through building resilience and promoting protective factors which facilitates a child ability to cope, and even thrive, following a negative experience and building a strong relationship with a child. This the sense of security and safety a child feels with caregivers and is important for that particular child's physical, emotional, mental, and psychological development.

This research through reports from participants also discovered the supportive nurturing by primary caregivers is crucial to early brain growth and to the physical, emotional, and developmental needs of children. Foster parents highlighted that children need continuity, consistency, and predictability from their caregiver. According to Pardeck (2004), multiple placements are injurious. Parents and foster parents must be well-informed about the importance of the home environment in the development of normal brain function and the specifics needed for the child under care. Children can often be helped by providing predictability, nurturance, support, and cognitive or insight-oriented interventions to make them feel safe, comfortable, and loved. (McCall, 2011).

Probation officers reported that the government needs to come up with a national foster care policy, which should serve as a guideline on identification, screening and registration of foster parents. The current Children Act does state much about foster care, so that needs to be corrected so that foster care related issues can be encompassed with the Act. To improve the quality of foster care, the government needs to engage with Foster parents, social workers, and child care professionals about what works, what does not, and how things can be improved. The recruitment and retention of foster parents is key in improving the foster care program in Zimbabwe. Foster parents complained that the process of becoming a foster parent is rather complicated and straining, which results in some people dropping. The screening of foster parents is rather complex and costly on the part of the prospective foster parent as they have to pay for everything. Furthermore, for instance the standards that are expected in homes of prospective foster parents are not realistic. So the government needs to revise its policy on recruitment and retention of foster parents so that it becomes more favourable to attract a number of people to register as foster parents. This can

include a free screening for prospective parents, realistic standards for homes, amongst other things.

This research found out that there is need for the Zimbabwean government to commission dedicated foster care services. In a similar research conduct is America, Moore (2003) states that The individual states bear the principal responsibility for the welfare of children, and each state has its own administrative and legal structures and programs to address the various facets of child welfare: supportive services for families, the provision of financial assistance, and placement of children outside in foster care. According to Dhlembeu (2000) here in Zimbabwe as it stands the Department of Social Welfare has that responsibility, but they have other pressing welfare responsibilities. This in turn means foster care does not get the much required attention as it needs. The government has to set up a department which has the sole responsibility of the Foster Care program. Fostering children comes at a cost, so in that regard, the government has to review its financial assistance policy, and increase the financial support they offer to foster parents and so to it that they receive it without disruptions every month (Kaseke, 2000). Foster parents highlighted the need for Health Care assistance policy to be revisited, as they indicated that the Assisted Medical Treatment Order, which is supposed to assist children to get access to medical care is currently not being accepted in a number of hospitals and clinics.

Research participants revealed that attachment between children and foster parents requires more time for it to be stable. According to the findings of this research, children who go on short term foster care placement that is during school holidays, complained that they find it very difficult to adjust and have secure attachment with foster parents as they spend very little time with these parents to due limited placement time and disruptions. In a research conducted in Britain, the findings showed that generally children crave stability and that disruption may undermine their well-being and feelings of self-worth (Napier H, 2001). Research participants pointed out that government has to come up with an initiative which makes it possible to make the placement of children more of long term than short term.

This research found out that all care givers need support to meet the challenges of dealing with children who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Ongoing support in managing challenging behaviour is key to promoting stability and permanence. In similar researches,

findings showed that children who are removed from their family suffer separation and feelings of loss, even if they have been maltreated. These feelings are compounded when they experience multiple placements (Schofield and Beek, 2005). Placement instability reduces a child's opportunities to develop secure attachments. It may also exacerbate any existing behavioural and emotional difficulties (Schofield and Beek, 2005), making it more difficult for children to establish relationships with carers and contributing to further placement breakdown and rejection (Munro and Hardy, 2006). Research with foster children shows they want to be heard and to have their views taken into account (Sinclair, 2005). Through stable placements, children have five main requirements for their foster care: normality that is they do not want to feel singled out, family care that is they want to feel they belong in their foster family, they also need control over their lives and opportunities for success at school (Sinclair and Wilson, 2009).

This research found out from the accounts of participants that the government needs to come up with supporting structures for children who have aged out of the foster care system, these can include sending them to vocational training centres where they can acquire various skills, allocation of grants to help with their upkeep, providing employment opportunities for them, and provision of funding so that they can venture into business to empower themselves. According to Peter (2011), when children leave the foster care system according to the law at age 18, they are left vulnerable with no supporting structure to help attained a stable life outside the system. Reilly (2003) states that in most cases children age out of foster care with no clue of what they should do to survive outside the system, which results in most getting into prostitution, drug abuse, crime and in worst cases, committing suicide.

There is need for the government to come up with a regular training program for foster parents around the country. Through this way, foster parents can learn positive parenting skills, how to establish relationships with children and various other skills which can be handy. Most Foster Parents think regular training workshops should be conducted, so as to train and equip both old and new foster parents with the necessary skills that are need to give quality care to children. One foster parent said. Due to lack of government support, some foster parents end up defaulting from the responsibility of taking of the children resulting in the parents bringing the children back to the Department of social welfare. So more needs to be done in terms so assistance to the foster parents so as to avoid defaulting.

Findings of the research established the fact that by Law, any child who is in foster care in under supervision by probation officers (GOZ Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare Services, 2000). To attain an abuse free experience, probation officers highlighted that there is need to maintain regular home visits, at least once a month. Creation of a database to facilitate consistent follow ups on children and their foster parents. Office visits should also be conducted, this where the foster parents come with the child under their care to social welfare and have a discussion with the probation officer responsible for that child so as to bring out issues that could be of concern and also give the child the opportunity to air out his or her views on the ongoing foster care experience. Probation officers need to ensure that prospective foster parents are properly vetted to make sure they are fit enough to foster children. Psychological assessments have been overlooked in the vetting process, but to achieve an abuse free foster care experience, there is need for these assessments to be conducted (Peter, 2011).

5.5. Conclusions

From the study the following conclusions were drawn:

The goal of foster care is not simply to increase the number of foster families, but also to provide quality service for the children in need of care. The ultimate goal of foster care here in Zimbabwe is to bring about a sharp reduction in the number of children placed in residential care facilities and other institutions by the year 2020 (GOZ Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare Services, 2000).

The number of foster parents who are currently registered is not adequate to meet the demand of children in need of care. There are many myths in the country surrounding foster care. Most people believe that it only exists in the western world. While some are against the idea, as they point that it's a burden to take care of someone else's child. In 2015, the Department of Social Welfare and Protection Services in Conjunction with Child Protection Society and Unicef, embarked on a massive TV and radio foster care awareness campaign. This initiative managed to sensitize citizens, as this was proven by the increased number of prospective foster parents who approached DSWPS to go through screening so as to be registered as foster parents. Therefore, more needs to be done in terms of public sensitisation of this program, so as to encourage more people to register.

There is still an overwhelming number of children currently living in residential care facilities. If as a country we are serious to create a society where all children belong to a family, then we need to join hands to help all the children in need of care, that is through advocacy, donations, sharing expertise in child care, policy creation and implementation. By so doing that common goal for the wellbeing of all children in our country can be achieved. This process can take a long time, probably surpassing our lifetime, we should begin to take the first steps towards this great initiative, God willing that goal will be achieved.

Children who have benefited from foster care so far, now experience a different life in a positive way. The high moral they exhibit is very encouraging, such that it stresses the need for more children to be also accorded that opportunity to be part of a family and have a place that they can also call home. UNICEF supports the process of deinstitutionalisation in Zimbabwe in the best interest of the child and the right of every child to live in family environment. The main focus of that work should be put on prevention of abandonment of children, support to families at risk of separation and development of alternative services such as foster care (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2011).

5.6. Recommendations

After having given an account of the experiences of children who have gone through the foster care program in Zimbabwe, it is clear that there are certain steps that need to be taken so as to improve the system and provide quality care for the children who are in need of it. Therefore, basing on the discoveries of this research these recommendations have been listed:

➢
  Increase public awareness on foster care, so as to attract and encourage more candidates for foster parents across the country.

➢
  Provision of support from the government to the foster parents in form of monthly grants, health and educational assistance is of the essence.

➢
  Crafting of a flexible foster parent screening and registration policy, so as to encourage more people to register.

➢
  The government should commission dedicated fostering services which handle foster care matters alone so as to achieve efficiency and best service delivery.

➢
  The government needs to revisit child oriented policies for instance the Children's Act, so as to in cooperate a fully-fledged section of foster care.

➢ Development of a foster care handbook, which governs the conduct of foster care in Zimbabwe.

➢ The government of Zimbabwe also needs to step up the engagement with child centered non-governmental organization such as Child Protection Society, World Vision, SOS, amongst others so as to join forces for the attainment of the best foster care system.

➢ Strengthening Foster Parents financially is of paramount importance so as to avoid defaulting due to harsh economic conditions.

➢ Strengthening the Judicial process is essential so as to ensure the smooth follow of court processes since all decisions on foster care placement and successive treatment of foster children need a court order.

➢ Improving foster parent training, identifying and coordinating public and private community resources.

➢ Creation of supporting structures to assist children when they age out of the foster care system.

➢ Provision of required resources to make it possible for probation officers to conduct frequent visits to see foster parents and children under their care.

5.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter gave a discussion of the results of the research study. These findings of the research could not be compared with the findings of previous researches on the area of study due to the fact that this is the first research of its nature in Zimbabwe, however reference was made to previously conducted research in other parts of the global village. The discussion focused on the uniqueness of issues that came up in this study as they are not evident in previous researches in other countries. Conclusions of the research study were also drawn in this chapter and revealed the how has foster care positively impacted the lives of children in Zimbabwe, what are the major challenges that children who go through foster care face and the central issues in Foster Care that children want to be addressed. Finally, recommendations were brought forward on the challenges faced by children who have gone through the foster care program in Zimbabwe and how these challenges can be resolved, which ultimately leads to the betterment of the system so as to achieve the best results in the provision of a family environment and quality care for the children who are in need of it.

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

My Name is Brian Konzo, currently studying for a Bachelor of Science in Psychology Honours Degree at the Midlands State University. I kindly ask for your contribution to my research project by responding to questions asked by this questionnaire. The title of the research is: **Experiences of children who have gone through foster care program in Zimbabwe.** All the information that is to be supplied is to be evaluated with the highest degree of confidentiality and will only be used for academic purposes only.

Please respond to the paused questions by writing on the spaces provided on this questionnaire. Do no write your name.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. SEX   **Male** ☐   **2. AGE: 10 - 14** ☐

Female ☐   **15 - 18** ☐

21 And Above ☐

3.   Foster Child   **Foster Parent**   **Probation Officer**

☐   ☐   ☐

SECTION B: POSITIVE IMPACT OF FOSTER CARE

1. How has your life changed ever since placement in foster care? Explain your answer.
   ……………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………

2. Which aspects of foster care placement do you like the most?
   ……………………………………………………………………………………...
   ……………………………………………………………………………………
3. During the placement period which positive life skills did you acquire?
   ……………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………
4. Did foster care engagement manage to heal the negative experiences before placement?
   ……………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………

5. Did you manage to go to school during the placement period? If YES, how was the experience like?

………………………………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………....

6. How did you manage to develop good relations with other children both at home and at school?

………………………………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………...

SECTION C: MAJOR CHALLENGES FACED BY CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

1. Since placement in foster care, which challenges did you face?

………………………………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………....

2. How did you handle those challenges?

………………………………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………....

3. Were you given the opportunity to air out your concerns?

………………………………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………....

4. Did you lack any basic needs whilst under foster care placement? If YES, state the needs.

………………………………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………....

5. As someone who has been fostered, what do you suggest as a solution to challenges you faced?

………………………………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………....

SECTION D: CENTRAL ISSUES IN FOSTER CARE

1. What can foster parents do to mend lives of children under their care?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

2. Which government policy initiative can be implemented to improve the system?

………………………………………………………………………………....

…………………………………………………………………………………

3. What can probation officers do to ensure an abuse free foster care experience?

………………………………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………....

4. How do you view your social life and wellbeing after foster care?

………………………………………………………………………………...

…………………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX B: LEETER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE

Official communications should
Not be addressed to individuals
———————

Telephone: Harare 790871-6
Telegraphic Address: 'WELMIN
Fax:796080/

ZIMBABWE

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE
Compensation House
Cnr 4th Street/Central Avenue
P.O. Box CY 429
Causeway
Harare

SW 12/5

13 January 2017

Brian Konzo
382 Torwood
Redcliff
Kwekwe

Dear Sir
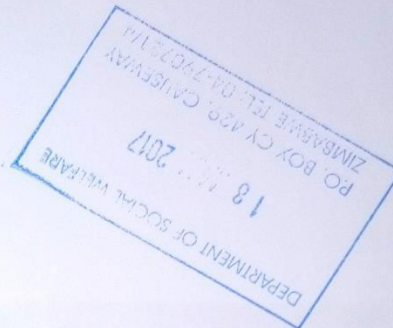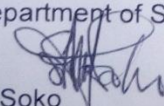
RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH ON THE EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE GONE THROUGH THE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM IN ZIMBABWE

Receipt of your letter dated 04 January 2017with reference to the above mentioned matter is acknowledged.

The Department of Social Welfare would like to inform you that permission has been granted for you to conduct a research on the topic: "Experiences of children who have gone through the foster care program In Zimbabwe." You are requested to approach the Harare Provincial Social Welfare Office for guidance and assistance in obtaining the required information for your research since your area of study is in the province.

Please be advised that this permission is granted on condition that the research is for academic purposes **only** as you work towards obtaining an Honours Degree in Psychology at the Midlands State University.In that regard, the research shall not be for **publicity** and in case of child participation, **children's identities** have to be protected at all costs.

You are kindly requested to submit a copy of your final research document to the Department of Social Welfare upon completion.

S. Soko
ACTING DIRECTOR SOCIAL WELFARE

APPENDIX C: LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Midlands State University

Established 2000

P BAG 9055
GWERU

Telephone: (263) 54 260404 ext 261
Fax: (263) 54 260233/260311

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Date. 04 / 01 / 17

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE WITH DISSERTION INFORMATION
FOR BRIAN KONZO
BACHELOR OF PSYCHOLOGY HONOURS DEGREE

This letter serves to introduce to you the above named student who is studying for a Psychology Honours Degree and is in his/her 4th year. All Midlands State University students are required to do research in their 4th year of study. We therefore kindly request your organisation to assist the above-named student with any information that they require to do their dissertation.

Topic: Experiences of children who have gone through the Foster Care Program in Zimbabwe.

For more information regarding the above, feel free to contact the Department.

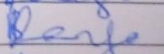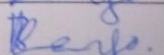Yours faithfully
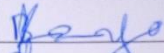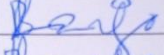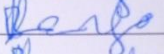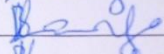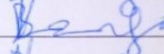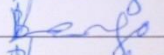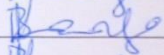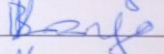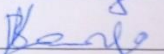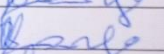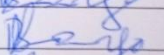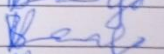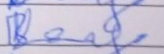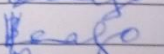
N. Ncube
Chairperson

APPENDIX D: AUDIT SHEET

<div align="center">

AUDIT SHEET

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

SUPERVISOR- STUDENT AUDIT SHEET

</div>

DATE	TOPIC DISCUSSED	COMMENT	SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE	STUDENT'S SIGNATURE
13/09/16	Proposal	Rework		
22/09/16	Proposal	Proceed		
11/10/16	Chapter 1	Rework		
14/10/16	Chapter 1	Proceed		
01/11/16	Chapter 2	Rework		
03/11/16	Chapter 2	Proceed		
07/11/16	Chapter 3	Rework		
06/12/16	Chapter 3	Proceed		
17/12/16	Research Instruments	Proceed		
27/02/17	Chapter 4	Rework		
06/03/17	Chapter 4	Rework		
13/03/17	Chapter 4	Proceed		
29/03/17	Chapter 5	Rework		
05/04/17	Chapter 5	Proceed		
24/04/17	First Draft	Rework		
26/04/17	First Draft	Proceed		

APPENDIX E: TURNIT IN REPORT

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APPENDIX F: MARKING GUIDE

Name of student: Brian Konzo   REG No: R133863N

	ITEM	Possible Score	Actual	Comment
A	RESEARCH TOPIC AND ABSTRACT clear and concise	5		
B	PRELIMINARY PAGES: Title page, approval form, release form, dedication, acknowledgements, appendices, table of contents.	5		
C	AUDIT SHEET PROGRESSION	5		
D	CHAPTER 1 Background, statement of problem, significance of the study, research questions, objectives, hypothesis, assumptions, purpose of the study, delimitations, limitations, definition of terms	10		
E	CHAPTER 2 Addresses major issues and concepts of the study. Findings from previous work, relevancy of the literature to the study, identifies knowledge gap, subtopics	15		
F	CHAPTER 3 Appropriateness of design, target population, population sample, research tools, data collection, procedure, presentation and analysis	15		
G	CHAPTER 4 Findings presented in a logical manner, tabular data properly summarized and not repeated in the text	15		
H	CHAPTER 5 Discussion (10)Must be a presentation of generalizations shown by results: how results and interpretations agree with existing and published literature, relates theory to practical, implications, conclusions (5)Ability to use findings to draw conclusions Recommendations (5)	20		
I	Overall presentation of dissertation	5		
J	References	5		
K	TOTAL	100		

Marker …………………………Signature ………………………………… Date……………

Moderator……………………..Signature ………………………………… Date……………