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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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THE PERCEPTION OF CHILD RIGHTS AND CHILD PROTECTION BY THE MWENEZI COMMUNITY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE ON GOVERNMENT AND DONOR SUPPORTED CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAMMES

BY

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DEDICATION

To my wife and children who extended their unwavering support throughout my studies.

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ABSTRACT

The research was conducted on the backdrop of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the African Union (AU) Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child. Both conventions sought to protect children by outlining the rights and responsibilities that are obligatory to be upheld at law. The thrust of the two conventions therefore is to empower children to demand their rights and at the same time ensure duty bearers meet their obligation to uphold children's rights and afford them the necessary and adequate support. It is, therefore the responsibility of each country to ratify the conventions and domesticate their provisions through enacting child protection legislation. Zimbabwe ratified the conventions and domesticated the provisions through various legislation. In spite of the numerous legislation that are in place to protect children, cases of rights violation and child abuse are on the increase according to statistical evidence available. Casual discussions with community members seem to point to conflict between UNCRC/ ACRWC provisions and cultural norms. The researcher's motivation to undertake the study was based on the need to explore the perceptions of the community of child rights as provided in the UNCRC and ACRWC in Mwenezi district of Masvingo Province. For in-depth understanding the researcher adopted a qualitative approach guided by interpretivist research paradigm. The research used interpretivist phenomenological analysis research design which enhanced an appreciation of the participants who were selected through purposive sampling technique. The study participants were twenty students, twenty parents and six key informants comprising of government technical staff and community leaders. Data was collected through FGDs and Key Informant Interviews and analysed using interpretive phenomenological analysis method. The study's main revelation was that there were mixed reactions to the introduction of child rights in the community- both positive and negative with positive reactions being in the majority. There is significant appreciation of children's rights and their contribution to the wellbeing of children both physically and psychologically. At the same time other community members expressed resentment at children's rights as they infringe on customary practices and beliefs. The study recommended several strategies to improve the understanding, appreciation and advancement of children's rights. Policy makers are required to align the various laws to the constitution for a supportive environment. The wider community encouraged to engage in meaningful dialogue on social and gender norms that impede child rights and child protection. Lastly further research on the impact of child rights on girls and boys separately is recommended.

ACRONYMS

ACRWC   -   African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

ATR   -   African Traditional Religion

AU   -   African Union

BEM   -   Boy Empowerment Movement

CCW   -   Case Care Worker

FGD   -   Focus Group Discussion

GEM   -   Girl Empowerment Movement

KII   -   Key Informant Interview

NAP for OVC -   National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children

TPB   -   Theory of Planned Behaviour

UDHR   -   Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN   -   United Nations

UNCRRC   -   United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNICEF   -   United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

VSL   -   Village Savings and Lending

WW 1   -   World War 1

WW 2   -   World War 2

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Chapter one: Introduction and Background

1.0.Introduction

The study seeks to explore the perception of child rights and child protection by the Mwenezi community in Zimbabwe and its significance on Government and donor supported child protection programs. In this chapter topics to be looked at include, study background, problem statement, significance of the research, purpose of the research, objectives, assumptions, research questions and definition of terms.

1.1. Background to the Study

The concept of children's rights developed in response to the vulnerability of children which was witnessed during World War 1 and 2 (WW 1& 2). The two world wars affected millions of children in various ways which ranged from physical displacement, physical injuries and psychological scaring. It is reported that the children accounted for a tenth of all the deaths that occurred in London during the bombing of London between the years 1940 to 1941. During the same bombing there was heavy evacuation which involved the whole population and in some cases children were unaccompanied and found themselves in stressful situations where there were in their own or with strangers further compounding the psychological effects of the trauma of bombing and numerous deaths. The evacuation itself to rural safety areas of Britain involved in excess of four million children. The psychological effects of the displacement, though not fully studied at that time, were significant particularly on the clash of cultures between rural and urban environments. It exposed the fragility of children. The damage on the psychological wellbeing of children from the two wars was difficult to measure and emphasis was put on the reunification of the family. No special attention was given to the fragility of children. In mainland Europe children suffered the same, if not worse fate. The occupying soldiers were brutal on both adults and children as well.

Germany occupation of Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium and France witnessed the exploitation of children as well as traumatizing experiences of death, destruction and displacement all of which contribute to the development of psychological problems.

Following the end of Second World War and by 1923 the founder of Save the Children managed to draft a declaration of the Rights of the Children for presentation to the League of Nations. According to Aston et al. (2005) the League of Nations adopted it in 1924. Thus

began the evolution of child rights and by 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) consolidated the issues surrounding child rights through Article 25(2) which states that "Motherhood and Childhood are entitled, to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection".

The first United Nations (UN) statement dedicated explicitly to children's rights was the Declaration on the rights of the Child which was implemented in 1959. However, the declaration was merely moral as opposed to being a lawfully mandatory document. This situation changed through Convention on the Rights of the Child ushered in by the United Nations in 1989 which integrated the whole range of human rights encompassing civil, political, economic social and the cultural rights. It also spelled out how the rights were to be advanced in specific ways. Above all the UNCRC is a legally binding document which requires all states to ratify and domesticate through their in country legal framework. Zimbabwe is a signatory to the UNCRC and has gone further to enact and emend various legal acts to assist in the implementation of the 54 articles of the UNCRC.

While the UNCRC sought to protect children through the advancement of their rights, it is also argued that it poses a challenge to traditional practices that view children as incompetent, passive objects that require adult protection and care. Indeed the UNCRC defines child rights as the human rights of children with special focus the rights of superior protection and care given to minors and it classifies them into three distinct categories that ensure that children are empowered and at the same time receive adequate protection from society. Precisely therefore children must be provided for. This is to say children have the right to an acceptable standard of living, sufficient health care, high quality education and services, play and recreation. The second classification of rights is protection which provides for the right of children to protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination. In the same fashion of classification of rights, scholarly study generally focuses on children's rights by emphasising and identifying individual's rights which comprise of freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom from fear, freedom of choice and the right to make decisions as well as ownership of one's body.

The UNCRC therefore provides a wide clarification and application of child rights which in turn poses a challenge to traditional approaches that view children in a different and culturally relative perspective. According to Reichat (2006) the salient feature of that human rights is that they are inherent in every person irrespective of culture, race, geographical

location or any other socially constructed classification. A universal application of human rights without difference to cultural traits diminishes the cultural identity- which then becomes a human rights violation in itself. On the other hand culturally relative interpretation of human rights in this case children's rights argues that human rights doctrine must give way to cultural norms and therefore promotes group cantered perspective of children's rights where the community is the basic social unit (Zecheter, 1997). In the universal interpretation of child rights the individual constitutes the basic social unit (Nathan, 2009). Cultural relativism is, in short, a concept which is Afrocentric in its origin and flourished as a counter argument to Western or Eurocentric moral values.

These two contradicting perspectives on Children's rights prompted the African Union (AU) to take a closer look at the UNCRC and review it to conform to cultural relativism and this gave rise to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). The AU members observed that the UNCRC missed the crucial socio- cultural and economic realities that are peculiar to Africa. There was the realization that the Rights of the child must emphasise the need to include African cultural values as well experiences. It was also deemed necessary to consider and take into account the religious environment into which children's rights were being introduced. The significance and impact of the African Traditional Religion (ATR) on children's lives was considered important and so were the Christian and Muslim faith.

To this end the ACRWC incorporated responsibilities that must be shouldered by children in order for them to also enjoy the rights that accrue to them. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (1999) Article 31 spells out the responsibilities assigned to the African child. The article clearly states that children have an obligation to meet the demands placed upon them by the family, society and the nation at large. The article also recognises that depending on the age of the child they must contribute towards building family unity and at the same time follow the customary requirements of paying reverence to elders and help them whenever a requirement arises. It goes further to state that each child has the responsibility to serve his national community by placing his physical and intellectual abilities at its service. The child also has the responsibility to preserve the African cultural values in his/her relations with other members of the society in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and consultation and to contribute to the moral wellbeing of the society. The child also has an obligation to preserve and strengthen social and national solidarity. In addition every child is expected to preserve and strengthen the independence and integrity of his/her

country and at the same time contribute to the best of his/her ability to the promotion and achievement of African unity. In spite of this compromise and attempt to take into account cultural relativism, both declarations still find themselves in conflict with certain cultural values.

Zimbabwe ratified and domesticated both conventions through enactment of legislation that seek to protect children from all forms of abuse through upholding of the rights of the child. Constitutional and legal provisions on children's rights are enshrined in at least forty primary laws dealing with children and these are distributed within the sectors of education, health, social protection, food security and child rights (Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No. 20 of 2013). The government is currently in the process of reviewing some of these legislations in particular the Children's Act in order to harmonize and align its provisions with that of the supreme law of the country, the Zimbabwe Constitution Amendment number 20 (2013).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In spite of the numerous legislation that are available to protect the children and promote child rights, cases of child abuse seem to be on the increase and there is flagrant disregard for the provisions of child rights conventions and the observation and conformity to local legislation by communities. Statistical evidence seems to portray an alarming scenario of increasing breach of child rights and child protection protocols. According to the Childline report for 2014 sexual abuse cases accounted for 49% of reports, neglect 25%, physical abuse 22% and emotional abuse 12% with bullying almost insignificant at 2% (University of Edinburgh et al., 2016). The Zimbabwe Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) (2014) data shows that child marriage is persistent at 32.8%. Rural-urban differences stick out, showing that 43% of rural women were married by age 18 compared to 18% in urban areas. Casual discussions with community members point to a conflict between cultural social norms and legislative provisions on children's rights as enshrined both in the conventions and national legislation. This perceived conflict between cultural social norms and universal dictates on Children's rights has in some cases impacted on the implementation of developmental programs and projects in Zimbabwean communities. This prompted the researcher to investigate this phenomenon to obtain insights into community conceptualisation of child rights and possibly suggest solutions for the benefit of the community as a whole.

1.3. Significance of the study

1.3.1. To the researcher

The study is crucial to the researcher since it has the potential to increase the researcher's knowledge on conducting research and enhance the researcher's ability to work with large volumes of data which requires scrutiny, deduction and application to specific situations.

1.3.2. To the community

The data gathered will be useful in equipping the community with an understanding of child rights and community perceptions on the same. This knowledge can assist in bridging the knowledge gap and inform strategies for behaviour change towards acceptance and incorporation of child rights into the local culture thereby creating conducive conditions for enhanced development.

1.3.3. To other stakeholders

The research findings are critical to stakeholders like community psychologists social workers, health workers and many others whose collaborative efforts will be adequately informed in the provision of services for community and individual wellbeing, in particular the wellbeing of the children. The research also contributes to the university's body of knowledge on culture and child rights and also provides a basis for future studies.

1.3.4. Government including policy makers

The research will provide insights into the interface of culture and child rights. This study will give policy makers a clear picture of how child rights are being perceived in the community. Results will also contribute to the making of policies and revision of policies and laws that have to do with the protection of children.

1.4. Purpose of the study

The study seeks to investigate community perception of the rights of the child and child protection in the rural wards of Mwenezi district. The researcher seeks to establish the impact of these perceptions on the implementation of development programs that are funded by both government and aid agencies. The researcher will come up with possible solution to the issues raised and provide recommendations.

1.5. Research Objectives

   i.   To establish community understanding of children's rights

   ii.   To establish community concept of rights within the cultural/religious context

   iii.   To identify the conflict areas between child rights as provided for in the UNCRC and ACRWC and the cultural perspective of child rights

   iv.   To establish the consequences and effects of the conflict of perceptions

   v.   To come up with possible solutions to the conflict that promote implementation of community development programmes

1.6. Research Questions

   i.   What is the community's understanding of the provisions of the UNCRC and ACRWC?

   ii.   What are the traditional understanding of child rights, responsibilities and protection?

   iii.   What is the relationship between the UNCRC /ACRWC and the tradition concept of child rights?

   iv.   How are the communities reconciling the traditional concept of child rights and the ACRWC /UNCRC provisions?

   v.   What are the reconciliation strategies necessary to bridge the differences?

1.7. Assumptions

   i.   The community has a working understanding of child rights

   ii.   There are differences and conflict between the universal rights of the child and traditional concept of child rights.

1.8. Delimitations of the study

The research seeks to investigate the perceptions of Mwenezi Community on child rights and the significance on government and donor supported child protection programs. The study will focus on children as defined by the constitution of Zimbabwe as well as on adults and traditional leaders. Government workers within the communities in wards 1, 2 and 5 of

Mwenezi district will also be targeted as key respondents in the study. Mwenezi district is situated in Masvingo province and borders Chiredzi in the east, Chivi in the north, Beitbridge to the south and Mberengwa in the west. The district has eighteen wards and is predominantly rural and the population thrives on agrarian activities. Service centers are for the population are available at Neshuro, Mwenezi and Rutenga. According to the Zimbabwe National Statics Agency (2012) Mwenezi district has a total population of 166 263 people with children under the age of 18 constituting about 54%. The culture of the people is predominantly Shona with a significant Shangaan and Ndebele culture as well.

1.9 Limitations of the study

i.   The researcher may not be able to come up with a large enough sample size and this may affect the outcomes of the study

ii.   Some participants may be reluctant to cooperate due to lack of knowledge of the subject

1.10 Key terms of the study

Child rights – Child rights are human rights of children that focus on special protection and care given to minors. In this context human rights are ethical considerations that dictate specific behaviours and are protected as natural and legal rights in municipal and international law. They are commonly understood as undeniable fundamental rights "to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being", and which are "inherent in all human beings" regardless of their nation, location, language, religion, ethnic origin or any other status (UNCRC, 1989).

Child protection - Child protection is defined as the practice of protecting individual children identified as either vulnerable, or have a very high likelihood of being harmed as a result of their vulnerability.

Culture -Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour.' (Spencer-Oatey, 2008)

Child – every human being between the ages of 0 and 18 years of age. This definition is universally binding save for situations where local law provides otherwise.

1.11. Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the context and aim of study. It also explored the importance of the study, and provided the statement of the problem that drove the researcher to carry out the study. The chapter also set out the objectives of the study, discussed limitations and also set out the scope of the study. Research questions were formulated and assumptions were drawn. Definitions of key terms in the study were given to provide circumstantial meanings.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review of the study. Conceptualization of child rights, international, regional as well as national legislative framework that promote the introduction and advancement of child rights was discussed. The chapter also discussed customary law and looked at the critical aspects of children's lives that are impacted directly by child rights and where possible conflict with traditional customs and practices exist. In that respect child rights and family, culture, marriage and religion were discussed. Theories that explain the adoption and incorporation of new behaviors were discussed under the heading theoretical framework and finally the knowledge gap was looked at.

2.1 Conceptualization

2.1.1 Child Rights

The United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989), describes children's rights as the human rights of children that focus on special protection and care given to minors. In this context human rights are ethical considerations that dictate specific behaviours and are protected as natural and legal rights internationally. They are commonly understood as undeniable fundamental rights to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being. They are also considered to be intrinsic in all human beings regardless of their nationality, language, religious affiliation, ethnic origin or any other assigned status.

2.1.2 Legislative framework – international and regional

The advent of child rights ushered in an era of consciousness to the plight of children across the globe with direct focus being placed on for cardinal principles of child rights. The UNCRC placed emphasis on the right of each child to life, survival and development. It also places particular emphasis on the right to non-discrimination, the need to act in the best interest of the child and the right for each child to participate in all spheres of development

that affects them. The promulgation by the UN emphasised the motion that children are rights holders by virtue of their humanity. The UNCRC also recognised that a child is a developing person with evolving capacities that include autonomy, mental capacity, and capacity to assume responsibility. Hence the child is entitled to participatory rights (United Nations Convention on the rights of the child 1989.

Over the intervening period since the promulgation of the convention on the Rights of the Child, the notion of human rights has grown in prevalence and influence and the language of human rights has permeated every social issue internationally and locally. Suarez and Ramirez (2004) observes that human rights engagements on the rights of the child in particular has influenced developments in social issues, child development and education. This influence has placed specific demands on member states, regional bodies, communities, families and individuals to act in difference and compliance with the dictates of the UNCRC. The African Union (AU) in compliance with the provisions of the UNCRC and in recognition of the human diversity which characterize the African continent and its socio –cultural context promulgated the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the Child (ACRWC).

 While the UNCRC presents the child as an autonomous entity and therefore entitled to full participation as a key process in child development, in Afrocentric communities and contexts this demand may clash with the social norms and practices. The ACRWC sought to bridge the gap by negotiating for a position where, in keeping with the values of African societies, the child enjoys the full rights as outlined in the UNCRC but at the same time assume responsibilities that come with the rights. The responsibilities placed upon the child recognise that the psychological development of the child is not linear in nature and neither is it individualistic but involves the dynamic reiterative interaction with the child's social context. In order, therefore, for the CRC to meet the socio- cultural and economic demands of African Communities the ACRWC provided for responsibilities that must be endured by the child, according to their evolving capacities, for the enjoyment of rights. Thus every child shall have responsibilities towards his/her family and society, the state and other legally recognised communities and the international community. The African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child (1990) goes further to specify that the child, subject to his/her age and ability, and such limitations as may be contained in the present charter, shall have the duty to work for the cohesion of the family, to respect parents, superiors and elders at all times and to assist them in case of need. The child is further obliged to serve his national community by placing his physical and intellectual abilities at its service. In addition the child's duty is to preserve

and strengthen African cultural values in his/her relations with other members of the society, in spirit of tolerance, dialogue, consultation and to contribute to the moral wellbeing of society. The child is is also required to preserve and strengthen the independence of and integrity of his/her country and to contribute to the best of his/her abilities at all times and at all levels to the promotion and achievement of African Unity.

2.1.3 National Legislative framework

Zimbabwe is one of the countries that have ratified both the UNCRC and the ACRWC and also domesticated the two charters through legislation that provide legal instruments for policy formulation and practical implementation of the two charters. The Zimbabwe Constitution Amendment number 20 of 2013 is very candid on the promotion and enhancement of the rights of the child and chapter 2 section 19 (1-3) instructs the state to ensure upholding of the children's rights through adoption of reasonably policies and measures to ensure that children are protected in several aspects. The first aspect is concerned with the enjoyment of family or parental care or appropriate care. When removed from the family environment. Children must have shelter and basic nutrition, health care and social services. In addition children must be protected from maltreatment, neglect or any form of abuse. The constitution also compels the state to ensure that children have access to appropriate education and training and protect children from exploitative labour practises. This therefore, guards children against being required to perform work that is inappropriate for the child's age or work that places children at risk in terms of their wellbeing, education, physical or mental health inclusive of spiritual, moral or social development. Further in chapter 4 part 3 the constitution of Zimbabwe elaborates the rights of children to the effect that each child, boy or girl, under the age of eighteen years is entitled to equal treatment under the law, including the right to be heard. The child is also entitled to a name and family name and therefore must be issued prompt with a birth certificate weather born in Zimbabwe or is a citizen by descent. The child is furthermore not permitted to be recruited into a military force or take part in armed conflict or hostilities. It is also imperative in pursuit of enhancing the rights of each child for the state to ensure that children are not compelled to take part in political activity. These rights, in addition to those mentioned earlier on are administered to ensure that in any situation the legal, social, economic and cultural actions are designed with the best interest of the child in all matters concerning the child. It is also notable that the high court of Zimbabwe is the upper guardian of each child and is therefore expected to provide adequate support and protection. To promote the dissemination,

education and comprehension of the constitutional provisions, the government of Zimbabwe tasks all government departments and civil society organisations to facilitate citizen engagement and awareness raising at all levels up to community level.

In keeping with the commitment to ratify and domesticate the UNCRC and ACRWC, the Zimbabwe government came up with new legislation and also amended existing laws in order to provide legal support to enjoyment of rights by children. The children's Act 5:06 is one such law which is pivotal in the promotion of the children's rights. The Children's Act (5:06) was promulgated to give effect to certain rights of children as contained in the Zimbabwe constitution. It is also set out principles relating to the care and protection of children and to define parental responsibilities and rights. Invariably it is currently under amendment specifically to accommodate the provisions of the Zimbabwe Constitutional Amendment 20 of 2013. However, in recognition of the critical nature of the rights of the child and their effect on the mental wellbeing of the child, the application of the Children's Act (5:06) is applied together with the constitution and where they conflict the Zimbabwe constitution applies and supersedes the Act. For instance the children's act (5:06) defines the child as any individual of the age 16 years and below. This definition is superseded by the by the constitutional definition of child as any individual below the age of 18 years. The legal provisions in the act are specifically designed to ensure the promotion and advancement of the rights of the child. To further protect children in all circumstances that affect their development several laws are in place and some are currently under review for amendments as well.

The Marriage Law which encompasses both the customary and civil law marriages is also under review to be particularly sensitive to the social, psychological and developmental requirements of children. The Criminal codification and Reform Act is also another legal instrument under review to accommodate children in conflict with the law with a possibility to separate the aspect of children in conflict with the law and make it an independent act that responds to the special needs of children. Indeed many other legal instruments have the capacity to contribute towards children's attainment of their rights and they include the Education Act, Health Act and many others.

While the legal instruments do exist to promote and advance the enjoyment of rights by children, the advent of child rights has permeated both the local and international community with varying reactions which are both positive and negative depending on the particular

contexts. Some of the critical areas affected include culture, the family, marriage, religion, participation, health and many other significant spheres of children's lives.

2.1.4 Customary law

The environment in which children's rights are being advanced and promoted is influenced, to a large extent, by the customary, cultural and religious practices of the host community. These practices impact on the strength of existing child protection systems and strengthen or weakening them in some cases to a varying degree. The interplay of African custom and the demands of child rights is therefore critical to explore with a view to obtain insights into results of such interactive processes. It can be argued that African customs and practices have a fundamental child protection core. While the cultural and customary practices emphasise the pre-eminence of the extended family the protection and nurturing of individual family members including children is, however, not neglected. Thus most customary laws and practices are found to be protective of children. It is also worth noting that customary law and cultural practices are inherently organic and have not remained static over the years. They have consistently and constantly changed to accommodate and respond to external social, economic and legal pressures that have been brought to bear on African communities. The result have been the discarding of some protective practices and mechanisms that were designed to safeguard children. Some of these customary and cultural practices are no longer providing the same level of protection in the modern day changed environment as they were able to do so in earlier times. Furthermore, some of the practices may have changed in such a way that they have actually created a risk for children.

2.2 Community understanding of children's rights

The United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) places specific obligations on member states related to the incorporation of the rights of the child into member states legal framework. In a study by UNICEF involving twelve (12) countries comprising one African country and the rest from the western world it was established that all countries were at different stages of implementing the UNCRC thereby presenting different levels of awareness by the public in the respective countries. It is the state's responsibility and duty to train and raise awareness of children's rights among those involved in the implementation of children's rights and the public at large. Article 42 of the UNCRC obliges States Parties to ensure that the provisions and the principles of the UNCRC are widely disseminated and known (United Nations, 2003). In spite of this requirement, the findings established that there

were very few examples of systematic training in order to raise awareness among the public and duty bearers thereby restricting the understanding of child rights among the general public. A few good examples of information dissemination were found in Norway, Belgium and Australia where information on the UNCRC is disseminated in schools and the legal training offered to the legal profession (Human Rights Branch, 2010). The study also established that the incorporating child rights and subsequent training of decision makers and awareness raising has significant value in bringing rights home to children, the public and duty bearers. This result should be underpinned by a systematic training on children's rights and setting up of infrastructure which monitors, support and enforce implementation. In Zimbabwe the state has incorporated the UNCRC in the constitution and related legislation. Through the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC) key players like UNICEF, National human rights institutions, NGOs, academics and the media are playing a key role in raising awareness on the rights of the children to the public. A study by Mhaka-Mutepfa et al. (2014) targeting school children in urban areas of Harare Province revealed that most participants had learned about children's rights at school and a smaller percentage had heard about children's rights from peers. The study further revealed differences in knowledge levels and understanding of children's rights among different age groups. Younger children of ages below 16 years had less understanding of rights whereas older children understood the rights of the child as well as the responsibilities as set out in the ACRWC. It was also noted that responsibilities were emphasised more at home and school than the rights.

2.3 African concept of rights within the cultural context

The concept of child rights within the African cultural context can be understood from the perspective of the socialization of the African child or person. According to Peltzer (2002) the African child, soon after birth, experiences close bodily contact with the mother throughout his/her infancy. The mother provides instant and prompt relief whenever the child is in discomfort or cries. Throughout infancy and early childhood the growing up child is mothered by several others and in the process there the child is socialised to be obedient to the elderly members of the community and to their immediate family members and the extended family members. This begins soon after being weaned to continue throughout infancy and adolescence. During this stage children of the same age group are considered very important and they influence each other's behaviour and life experience. The socialization process has three distinct outcomes. The first outcome is that of emphasizing

authority dimensions as a vertical relationship. This relationship is hierarchical and recognises seniority through mother, elders, brothers and sisters, father, ancestral spirits and God. The second outcome is the emphasis of group dimension. Eventually the authority of mother and father is transferred to brothers and sisters as well as peers of the same age who continue providing learning which is focused on responsibility, observation and practical participation. These tenets are important in building relationships and protecting the individual child. Cooperation with others is considered important and the basic value of the child resides with the group. The third outcome is the body-mind-environment dimension which promotes social intelligence necessary from survival within the complex environment.

Within this complex context there are numerous positive parenting practices that advance children's rights and ensure protection. The highly significant naming practices and ceremonies are aligned to children's right to a family name and nationality as well as the right to have and be cared for by parents and family.

The extended family system guarantees a child's access to material, intellectual and psychological needs that are necessary for development. The communal approach which obligated the whole community the responsibility for child upbringing ensured enhanced security, safety and well-being of the child. Customary adoption and care provide support and safety to orphans and vulnerable children. Fathers in African communities provide adequate security for the child. Peers and grandparents provide psychological support to children who may have experienced trauma in their lives. The socialisation process also provided early childhood development and education for children through playing of games with children and playing adult roles such as "mahumbwe" in Shona in psychologically safe environment. According to Okeke et al. (2015) children learn best when they feel safe and secure in a given environment.

2.4. Conflict areas between the UNCRC and ACRWC and the cultural perspective of child rights

2.4.1 Child Rights and the Family

Mkiwane and Chimere – Dan (2010) define family as referring to people who enjoy a relation with either through sharing same blood or related through sexual relationship which is socially acceptable. While adoption is prevalent in many societies, it is not very culturally

acceptable in the majority of African cultures. However, in the African context it where it is approved it involves the socially approved methodology of taking into care children of relatives distant or close and is characteristically not formalised by written documentation. In addition the African family is quite extended as opposed to the Western concept of family. Thus in African tradition a family is extended to include grandparents. It also encompasses aunts and uncles as well as cousins and many other extensions through social attachments. In other words the institution of the family in the Afrocentric context evolves around the concept of community and as such a child is in the care of the community of relatives who are interconnected in an intricate pattern of relationships. It is therefore the collective responsibility of the community to ensure that that the child is adequately provided for. The family therefore in the African context is a vital socialization component of society into which children are born and natured as well as receive social education throughout the life cycle.

In such a closely knit society the provisions of the UNCRC are sometimes observed as an intrusion into the privacy of the family and as alienating children from their elders. The impact of child rights focuses is felt on both the individual child and the family unit particularly as the child attempts to become autonomous in a collective environment where responsibilities are shared and individual rights are accrued through collective approval by both peers and elders.

While the family basically, to a certain extent, agrees with the basic provisions of the UNCRC and ACRWC it is necessary to take note of the fact that the interests of the community at large take precedence over individual rights. The role of the family is therefore to socialize the child into grasping and demonstrating this concept popularly underpinning the Ubuntu concept. Thus in this context the accrual of rights such as right to life, right freedom of association, it is the community that recognises those rights. Invariably these is always tension between individual rights in this case child rights and societal basic rights are interests.

However Article 5 of the UNCRC dwells, to a large extent, on parental guidance and compels respective governments to advance the rights of the child through supporting families to meet that obligation to their children. Families in turn have the primary duty of ensuring that children get to learn about and understand their rights. However, care has to be taken not to

turn young children into adults by placing on them responsibilities that are beyond their age capacity. The children's evolving capacity is always a critical consideration. From this stand point the article and indeed other articles seem straight forward and therefore easy to apply and conform to different contexts and environments. However, this is not always the case in the African context. According to Senghor (1964) in African communities, community needs should be precedent to individual needs.

The African therefore considers the demands of the community to be paramount when compared with individual aspirations and anatomy. These views are held within the African culture of Ubuntu/Unhu and the net effect of this concept in African societies reduce the liberties and freedom afforded the individual and as such restricts the family's latitude to assist the child in understanding and assimilating rights that are perceived to be outside of the social norms, values and beliefs of the community and the family. In this context it is rather complex and difficult for the family to then assist the child fully with regard to the understanding of child rights as espoused in the UNCRC. Limitations will always exist just as Kasanene (1993) takes note of the fact that in African communities individuals are able to think and act independently as long as their actions do not harm to others and thus the individual has to always bear in mind that excessive individualism is regarded as being a denial of one's corporate existence.

This therefore means the enjoyment of rights has to take into consideration family and community will not be accessed by children. Within this matrix of family and community one can argue that absolute individuals child rights may not exist. Masikatsana (1998) observes that because of their immaturity with regard to physically, emotional and intellectual development it is difficult to grant children their rights since they will cause dependence on adults to assist the children in existing those rights. The counter argument is that just because children cannot claim their rights for themselves is no valid reason to deny them their rights. It is therefore necessary to set up institutions that monitor care givers and families to enforce provision of rights to children. The enforcement, however, maybe viewed by families as an intrusion into the privacy of their homes.

2.4.2 Child Rights and Culture

Another significant area that is impacted on by the UNCRC and ACRWC is the people's culture. Realizing the significance of cultural issues that impact children's rights realization, the ACRWC makes an attempt to reconcile child rights and cultural norms and values by

emphasizing on responsibilities that a child also has towards family and the community. Matsumato (1996) explains culture as comprising of people's attitudes and values that influence their beliefs and subsequent behavior patterns. This is shared by a community who communicate the same through people's minds and influences thinking and behavior. Thus it is comprised of specific behavior patterns which are driven by symbols. Achievements and accomplishments by communities also communicates culture. Central to culture, however is the aspect of tradition and the value attached to it. Kroeber and Kuchohn (1951) culture can be said to be a result of actions and also requirements and conditions for future action. It is therefore necessary to realise that culture introduces and reinforces values that govern individual behaviour and this anything considered valueless in a given culture is literary ejected and rejected. In spite of the importance of culture in assimilating new thinking in a given community, it is unfortunate that culture is often dismissed as dance and drama and thus viewed as an obstacle to development and forward looking. According to the Cross Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU) this perception is perpetuated at the detriment of positive aspects of culture such as the spirit of communal responsibility and accountability, conflict resolution, informal moral education. Culture also espouses and embodies such values of honesty, industriousness, virginity and abstinence which depending on circumstances may conflict with rights education.

Along with these positive aspects of culture there also undesirable characteristics of culture that are in direct conflict with child rights realisation and enhancement. Some cultural traditions that promote lobola may be exploitative to children especially the girl child when it leads to families viewing girls as a means to a better economic status for the family. The girl child may be married off in times of crisis or hardships and this is in violation of child rights. In some cases young girls are married off as a strategy to protect them from sexual assault, rape, sexual activity or stigma of pregnancy out of wedlock. Initiation ceremonies that transition girls and boys into adulthood and are an accepted practice have the tendency of catapulting girls in particular into sexual activity, early marriages. Coupled with this custom is the tradition of permitting young girls to bear children for a barren sister or aunt. These customs are in contradiction with the provisions of both the UNCRC and ACRWC.

2.4.3 Child rights and marriage

Child marriage is recognised widely as a social cultural practice that is harmful physically as well as psychologically. According to (UNICEF) 2005 child marriage results from rights

violation and also causes rights violation. According to the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) 2015, child marriage or co-habitation at the age below 18 years and Therefore erodes the girl's self-determination in adopting a life free from all forms of violence. Essentially child marriage results in deprivation of sexual choices and thus puts the girl's health at risk. The child is expected to from both the husband and the couple's families to bear children thereby putting undue physical strain on an otherwise immature body and undue mental stress on a child's mind. The UNCRC and the ACRWC are purposely designed to protect children. However, though the African countries, including Zimbabwe, ratified the conventions implementation is still hamstrung by the lack of cultural and political will to harmonise the national laws with the international conventions.

While acknowledging the legal age of majority as 18 the Zimbabwean law for instance, still allows children to marry at the age of 16. This anomaly may be due to the fact that childe marriage has been practised for generations within the Zimbabwean community and viewed as culturally legitimate way of protecting children from premarital sex. This is a contentious position which has the potential to impact in one way or another on the realization of rights by the children. It also has a direct influence on the behaviours and attitudes towards the introduction and embracing of the child's rights by the Zimbabwean community. Statistical evidence reveal that a staggering 31% of girls are married by the age of 18 and 4% of these are married by the age of 13 (UNICEF) 2014. Central to the drivers of child marriage is the rigid gender and cultural beliefs and social norms that define the role and value of girls in the community. Poverty as well plays a pivotal role in promoting child marriage. The advent of child rights runs contrary to this practice as it impedes the realisation of rights.

2.4.4 Child rights and religion

Religion plays a central role in the people's lives throughout the whole world and it defines who they are spiritually and materially. It is a part and parcel of their culture and it places extreme demands and expectations on the people through strict adherence to behaviours that are defined by religious dictates through norms, beliefs and practices. Elsewhere in the world, in the Middle East and parts of Africa where the Islamic faith is predominant, religious practices are finding themselves in conflict with the provision of the UNCRC. One of the controversial religious practices involves the requirement for circumcision for both male and

female and children. While this practice is seemingly harmless and has both health and spiritual benefits for the boy child, the same cannot be said for the girl child. The process of circumcision for the girls has been found to be a health hazard and indeed classified as female genital mutilation (FAM) which also negatively effects the psychological development of the child (UNICEF, 2007). In Europe as well the debate on burning circumcision on religious grounds is also raging as it is considered a human rights violation. Jewish and Muslims in Sweden are under the spotlight. Carpenter (2009) examines how the press and in particular newspapers have contributed to the public debate on circumcision through letters to the editor and religious identity is central to the debate. This is a tacit acknowledgement that in some ways and aspects religion does come into conflict with children's rights.

While Zimbabwe is a predominantly a Christian nation, it however promotes religious pluralism and hence many denominations prevail and thrive. The Christian religion was introduced into a community practicing African Tradition Religion (ATR) and the Islamic faith was probably the first foreign religion to be introduced in Zimbabwe.In Zimbabwe the issue of children's rights and religion is quite prominent within the Apostolic sects of the Christian community. There are documented evidence of denial of children's right to access adequate health care, for instance, due to religious beliefs. According to UNICEF report the Apostolic faith community members believe that spiritual healing powers are adequate to provide relief from all medical conditions and hence the strong belief in faith healing, healing rituals and prayer. Due to this doctrine the modern health care delivery system is deemed worldly and therefore heathen and unacceptable to their members. To that extent this belief in what can be termed the Apostolic healthcare system acts as a barrier for children in particular to access and utilize modern health care services and medicines. In most instances children are denied the services of compulsory immunization and maternal and child care services. This is a violation of the child's rights to adequate health care services. Child pledging for marriage, a violation of the UNCRC, is also one of the contentious aspects of the Apostolic members practices which is promoted by spiritual dictates.

 In effect all these religions expect their members to behave in a particular manner, adopt specific practices and values and believe in particular phenomenon and objects. Into these societies and communities the concept of child rights was introduced and made legally binding. Therefore the acceptance of children's rights by all these religions is worth exploring and studying.

A close examination of the African Traditional Religion (ATR) reveals that it is premised on beliefs and practices derived from the faith at the ancestors (Bourdillon, 1973) and traditional leaders are the custodians and religious leaders in the authority to enforce existing practices or adopt new behaviours in line with ancestral spirits approval. It is therefore a facility through which the people can accept or disapprove child rights. Among other positive practices, the African Traditional religion (ATR) has a specific practise that are negative and contrary to the provisions of the UNCRC. One of these practices involves the conducting of rituals targeted at appeasing an avenging spirit or *kuripangozi* in Shona. The practice involves the pledging of a young girl into marriage to the family of the deceased in order to pacify the spirit of the dead. The consequences of this practice include perpetuation of child marriages since all the girls are pledged at a very young age. Psychological effects include severe trauma suffered by the girl child as well as retarded child development (Marashe, 2014)

2.5. Theoretical framework

Psychological theories are important in understanding the complexities that enhance social learning among community members that subsequently change people's perceptions and leads to social change. Theories help in identifying potential modifiable targets and strategies for affecting psychological change in attitudes and behaviours. According to Nilsen (2015) there are three overarching aims of the use of theory in research. Theoretical framework provides a clear platform to the process of describing and translating research into practice. It also assists in understanding and/or explaining what influences outcomes and lastly theoretical framework is the key in the evaluation of the implementation process.

2.5.1 The social learning theory

Pioneered by Bandura and the further developed by Sears, the social learning theory emphasises the fact that the socialization process has a particularly strong impact on how individual internalize or take as their own the values, attitudes and behaviours of the culture in which they are raised. Seats also stressed the role of parenting in fostering internalization of new concepts and solidifying them into social norms that guide, inform and direct individual behaviour modelling is quiet central to the social learning theory. Bandura (1986) argues that the process of modelling has four components that interplay to in the acquisition of information about events and information of rules, regulations and societal dictates. The four components also determine the how this information is put to use in guiding behaviour. Observational learning depends to a large extent on the appeal that is displayed by the model

and the environment in which the behavior is observed. The more compelling the medium the ore attention it is given and the more likelihood of adoption. In addition there must be adequate adoption at the behaviour. Self-regulation is also one of the critical components. Bandura argues that people do not behave like weather vanes constantly shifting their behaviour in response to instant changes. People always judge modelled behaviours against their own internal standards and behaviour that fall short of these standards are viewed negatively. Yet another components is social learning is self-efficacy. This refers to the individuals of effectiveness and has a direct bearing on the regulation of behaviours. In other words this theory posits that people have beliefs about their own abilities ad characteristics that influence behaviour change from any learning. Negative self-perceptions about a situation result in an individual becoming inward looking and therefore unable to adopt new behaviours.

According to Ackers (2000) the basic assumption underpinning the social learning is that the same learning process can produce conforming as well as delinquent behaviour. Specifically Ackers argues that four variables are considered to function in strengthening attitudes towards social behaviour. The variable here is differential association or the influence of these with whom one associates frequently. The social learning thus has the potential to assist in the explanation of how the community embrace and accept or deny child rights and how their behaviour positively or negatively influences each other in the process.

2.5.2 Theory of Planned Behavior and Theory of Reasoned Action

The theory of planned behavior is informed by the cognitive paradigm in the explanation of behavior and this focuses on the attitude of the individual and the beliefs of the individual, it is therefore appropriate in providing insights into the perceptions of the community towards child rights and the subsequent behaviours that are representative at that perception. According to Ajzen (1991) the planned behavior theory rose out of the theory of reasoned action which posits that behavior can be predicted through consideration of the intention to take action. In other words the social pressures, or subjective norms that are exerted on the individual and resulting from perceptions of what others think they should do foster intention to behave in a certain manner. Thus the theory of planned behaviour is suitable for predicting behaviour and retrospective analysis of behaviour Armitage and Conner (2001). It is therefore appropriate in assisting to understand community perceptions of child rights.

2.6 Knowledge Gap

From the available literature the researcher realized that information in relation to child rights and community perceptions of the same is mostly from other countries especial western countries and little is documented on the Zimbabwe situation. Very few researches were done in African countries. Moreover, most of the studies conducted are general in nature focusing the region and whole country and at all age groups and mostly on adults and there is very little documentation on people's perception of the concept of child rights within a given area. Furthermore, most studies on child rights in Zimbabwe focus on isolated aspects of child rights and not on the comprehensive perceptions of the phenomenon.

2.7. Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the issues .surrounding the rights of children and also the legal framework that facilitate the advancement of child rights internationally, regionally and nationally. The chapter also discussed the specific aspects of the cultural context in which traditional practices and social norms conflict with provisions of child rights. The following chapter will look at research methodologies.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The chapter outlines in detail themethodology of research which was employed in undertaking the research. Methodologies used in this study are highlighted and described and explained. The focus of the chapter will be on the following specific areas. The research approach will be discussed and justified. The chapter will also detail the research design which was adopted and the population, sample, research instruments and data collection procedures. Ethical considerations as well as a snapshot of subsequent data presentation and analysis will also be outlined.

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Research paradigm

A research paradigm provides the basis for explaining the nature of the research or study. This is achieved through a comprehensive analysis of ontology epistemology and methodology. The researcher was grounded in the interpretivist paradigm. The research was conducted on the basis of the interpretivist paradigm and according to Klein and Myers (1999) interpretivist makes several assumptions on how knowledge is generated and transmitted. It assumes that knowledge is generated through various customs and beliefs and it is then passed on through use of language as well as through conscious uptake of the same. Shared meaning is also considered as a way of transmitting knowledge. Interpretivist also insists that reality is constructed. When conducting research in interpretivist there are no hypothesis that require testing neither are there variables that are dependent or independent. Rather its focus is to unearth appreciation of the phenomenon from the view point of the participants. Walsham (1995) argues that interpretivist paradigm tries to find out how the phenomenon is affected and influenced by the environment and vice versa. This paradigm was deemed to be appropriate in obtaining important insights into the experiences with child rights of the Mwenezi community and how this influences their behaviour.

The interpretivist paradigm is anchored on ontological assumption that it is the people who create their own understanding of their environment and themselves from the passage of time and from their customs, beliefs and practices. There the understanding of what is real and what is not is highly subjective and must be understood as such by the researcher. This

paradigm provides opportunity for the researcher to formulate new theories that are supported by the study and therefore appropriate for explain the phenomenon being investigated.

3.1.2 Approach

The qualitative research approach was used in conducting the research. According to Atkinson et al (2001) qualitative research is a type of social inquiry that emphases the understanding of how people interact and decipher their environment and try to make sense of that experience. Methods such as interviews, focus group discussions and ethnography are means of generating qualitative data. The specific aim of qualitative research approach is to understand the social realities of individuals, groups and cultures. A major strength of the qualitative research methodology is the depth in which explorations are conducted and descriptions written usually resulting in sufficient details for the reader to grasp the characteristics of the population under study. It is therefore imperative for researchers to utilise qualitative methods to discover the behaviours, feelings and experiences of people and how it relates to the very essence of their existence. The basis of qualitative research lies in the description of the lived experience of human beings. According to Bryman (2001) the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research perspective is a technical matter whereby the choice between them is to do with their suitability in answering particular research questions. Therefore the selection between the two methodologies depends on the paradigm guiding the research. In line with the interpretivist paradigm, qualitative research approach provides an opportunity, on ontology of deriving constructs from the field through in-depth examination of phenomenon of interest. On epistemology the qualitative research approach ensured a free from manipulation process.

Ulin et al. (2004) argues that qualitative research relies on personal context over a period of time between the researcher and the population under study. This relationship has a potential to unearth critical insights and revelations into the context under study thus adding fullness and depth to data and findings. Trustworthiness was ensured through rigorous attention to the aspects of credibility, transferability and dependability. Credibility was respected by prolonged engagement with participants as well as persistent observation in the community. The use of peer de-briefers, negative case analysis, and participant checks was applied.

According to Geerts (1973) credibility is also assured by thick descriptions. Transferability refers to extent to which the reader is able to generalize the findings of the study to their context. This was achieved through provision of sufficient information about self, the research context, processes, participants and the researcher participant relationship. Dependability refers to the core issues of the way the research is conducted to ensure consistency across time, researchers and analysis techniques. An audit trail of process was maintained through a detailed chronology of research activities and processes. This was examined by student advisor and colleagues. Conformability is a key consideration to ensure objectivity. This is assured by the previously mentioned rigours applied in the other three aspects.

3.1.3 Research design

Pannerselvam (2006) provides a robust working definition of research design by referring to it as a description of how the study is structured in order to meet practical and academic requirements. Another definition is given by Creswell (2009) who states that research design can be taken to mean the specific outline of how the research will be conducted from a practical and theoretical perspective. It takes into account the strategies that will inform process and methodologies that will guide the actual activities. Groove (2005) isolates the theory informing the study as being critical as being a critical aspect of the research.

Phenomenology can be defined as an exploration of how people of given context and location experience certain occurrences in their day to day undertaking. Invariably people are affected differently and it is the intention of the researcher to draw out the meanings of the experience by each affected individual. Cohen et al (2007) insists that each individuals experience is worth studying in order to understand human behavior. Thus any research which is guided by phenomenology must be highly descriptive and with vigor. It must explore the relationship between the individual and their experiences. The research must effectively draw meaning from these experiences (Giorgio, 1989).

The major strength of phenomenology is that it gives a detailed description of human experience. According to Boyd (2013) results from this type of research comes out of gathered data rather than being imposed as structured statistical analysis. This is the reason why the researcher decided to employ a qualitative research method so that a detailed explanation of the experience of the children and adults who are exposed to the requirements of upholding children's rights and protection can be obtained.

3.1.4 Population

Population can be defined as the aggregation of subjects or units which collectively has the data required by the researcher to draw conclusions on issues of interest and affecting the population. The information possessed enables the researcher to make generalized conclusions about the issue being researched (Drunker, 2000). Simply put a population can be said to be the complete composition of either people or objects which are to be studied by the researcher (Manoharan, 2010). The target population in this study constituted of Mwenezi district traditional chiefs who are the custodians of the local culture and its social norms, values and beliefs. It also constituted of boys and girls, men and women in whose hands the socialisation of the children reside at family level. Heads of government ministries and departments as well as non-governmental organisations operating in the area were also targeted.

3.1.5 Sample size

Sampling can be described as a deliberate undertaking to choose a manageable sub-section of the entire population under study. Information about the issues affecting the population are then obtained from this subsection. Therefore a sample is a representative section of the population. A1 Busaidi and Cohen et al. (2000) take note of the fact that some scholars are of the informed opinion that the sample size is dependent on the purpose of the study and what is achievable considering the available resources and the given timeframe. The sample for the research comprisedof two traditional chiefs, four government staff members and twenty men and women were involved in the dialogical engagements. Also included in the sample were twenty boys and girls. This sample managed to represent the entire entire community of Mwenezi. A critical observation is that sampling facilitates a process of obtaining results much faster and more accurately than when the whole population is involved (Borrington and Stimpson, 2008)

3.1.6. Sampling method

It is practically impossible to gather information from the entire population when undertaking a study. The magnitude of the undertaking in itself will mean that the time required to do so will not be available. Financially it would not be feasible as well as the exercise will require huge budgets. In addition to the two factors above, it will also be impossible to access the entire population. Thus samples are utilized in research to represent the population under

study. The study adopted the non-probability sampling method to accommodate the limited resources both financial and time. As such purposive sampling was used in the study. This is a non-random sampling procedure carefully chosen because it targets participants with knowledge required to satisfactorily fulfill the demands of the study. This method is suitable in situations where it is impossible to access the entire population and therefore the researcher relies on a specific target group (Michael et al, 2000).

The careful choice of this sampling method had its merits in the basic characteristics of the technique. It provides the researcher with the latitude to select those participants with characteristics and knowledge that suite the research and therefore better able to assist in the research. Cohen et al. (2007) emphasizes what some researchers observed - the fact that purposive sampling enables the researcher to access participants who are knowledgeable about specific issues in the research. This could be power holders within the community. It could also be professionals responsible for implementing related activities or those with skills and expertise in specific areas. The objective of purposive sampling is to obtain rich information from sources with the ability to provide it. While it is also argued that purposive sampling may compromise reliability of the research findings, since personal opinions and judgement on an issue may not be representative of the entire population, triangulation methodologies were utilized and comparisons were made with other sources of information. Journals, websites articles and books were used to guard against this short come. Purposive sampling is a less costly way of conducting research.

3.1.7 Research instruments

Accurate and systematic data collection is critical in conducting any research and requires the use of appropriate and well-designed tools or instruments. Seaman (2007) points out that data collection tools such as questionnaires, structured interview schedules, tests are all categorized as data collection instruments or research instruments. These make it possible for a researcher to gather information from the group he or she intends to study and record the information accordingly. According to Polit and Hungler (1999) these are two district categories of research instruments namely those that are completed by the researcher and those that are completed by the subject of the study. The choice is left and utilize depending on the research objectives and research questions. The research employed qualitative instruments in the form of focus group discussion (FGDs) as well as Key Informant Interviews (KII).

Interviews with key informants are carried out to obtain vital information about a population under study. Zorhrabi (2013) notes that Notes that the KIIs are sources of information and are expected to know the community context and the critical issues of the research. This is further expanded by Abawi (2013) who details that engaging semi-structured dialogue with participants who have special understanding and knowledge on the research topic is referred to as key informant interview (KII). The originators of such interviews were ethnographers who sought to gain more knowledge on cultures different cultures. Competent key informants are capable of sharing the specialized knowledge with the researcher.

One distinctive characteristic of key informant is that they should have in-depth understanding of the issues and coupled with that they should have a keen interest and desire to solve or prevent the particular issue. Thus the thoughts, opinions perspectives and feelings of the key informant must be expressed and captured. Key informants are expected to have knowledge of community issues and at the same time be able to express them coherently. In the study, key informants drawn from government departments, traditional and religious leaders as well as development aid workers were selected to participate in the study primarily because of their knowledge on child rights and child protection issues due to their position in the community. Zorharabi (2013) argues that key informant interviews allow the researcher to have an in-depth exploration of the subject leading to unearthing of information otherwise not obtainable through surveys.

Key informants must be selected from a wide range and represent the various structures and demographics as the community (Abawi, 2013). The choice therefore will purposefully be made along ethnic lines, religious affiliation and educational achievement. Age is also a critical factor for consideration. These factors were considered in the study. It is critical that the community characteristics and uniqueness be reflected in the participants thus selected. Any failure to observe this critical requirement will result in biased opinions and conclusions of the study will be affected.

The study also used Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with selected boys and girls as well as men and women as a research instrument to gain full insight on the perception of child rights and child protection by the Mwenezi community. Baral et al. (2016) note that, a focus group discussion involves bringing together people of the same background who share common interests and experiences to engage and deliberate on a specific subject. FGDs are dialogue groups that provide a platform for participants to express their opinions and feelings on a

specific subject of discussion. FGDs provide participants with the freedom to engage with other group members and voice their opinions, their beliefs as well as offer their ideals. This sets it apart from other research methods. It is characterized by the administration of open ended questions to a small group of participants. A moderator leads the discussion which may cover a number of varied topics. Each of the focus group discussion (FGD) comprised of not less than 10 participants.

In order for any instrument to fully serve its purpose it has to be validated. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe validation as the extent to which an instrument performs its function according to expectation and design. The procedure therefore entails data gathering and subsequent analysis to assess the level of precision. Validity of data collection instruments fall in two main categories compromising of external and context validity.

External validity otherwise referred to here as transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of the research can be applied to represent the whole population. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) makes the observation that an externally valid instrument improves the degree to which the findings can be applied to represent the whole population from the sample studied.

Content validity is a research term which talks to the suitability of the research instrument content and its ability to assess and derive what the researcher wants to know. In essence it involves the researcher drawing questions and evaluating them against desired outcomes. The process of validity generally is done via pilot testing of research instruments. The researcher conducted a pilot assessment of the tools to be used before carrying out the actual study.

3.1.8 Data collection procedure

Data can be defined as information that has been gathered in the process of conducting a study or investigation (Polit and Hungler, 1999). The main tools which were utilized to gather information in this study were KIIs and FGDs. The study sought to identify perceptions of the Mwenezi community with regards to child rights and child protection and the effect of such on government and donor supported child protection programs. The researcher first sought permission from the responsible authorities. An approval letter was obtained from the Psychology Department at Midlands State University and the letter was presented to Mwenezi Rural District Council seeking permission to gather information related to child rights. The researcher then made use of of KII to gather information from Key Informants.

Focus group discussions assisted in engaging men, women and children to collect information on topical issues. Every person who participated in the study was adequately informed in writing and gave their consent in writing as well. Focus group discussions were conducted with stratified groups of boys and girls, men and women. Interviews were conducted with key informants that included government officials, traditional and religious leaders as well as development aid workers.

3.1.9 Data analysis

The analysis of gathered data is a critical stage in conducting research and Barnett et al. (2006) observe that analysis of data is a meticulous process reorganization of data in order to draw sense and meaning out of large volumes of raw data. This process involves the rearrangement and organization of collected data and the analysis to verify adequacy, appropriateness and quality of the data and therefore determine whether it is possible to reach a general position on the issue under research. In keeping with the dictates of the above stated process, all collected data was guided by the following stages in the process of analysis:

Stage 1: Data familiarization

The researcher read through the raw data gathered in order to understand each and every detail. The availability of large volumes of raw data assisted the researcher in generating themes and grasping concepts that would be used in later stages of the research.

Stage 2: Data coding

The data coding stage was used by the researcher to categorized then analyze data collected during the research exercise. Data coding assisted in enabling the researcher to generate themes and group them in order to meet the objectives of the study.

Stage 3: Thematic development. The stage involved exploring in detail the general codes or thematic areas that were generated in stage 2 so as to pinpoint vital wider themes as they emerge. As such, the researcher classified each available code with each thematic category in order to ensure that all data belonged to a relevant thematic area.

Stage 4: Thematic review

The stage encompassed analyzing the themes alongside the raw data so as to ascertain that they conform to and are able to answer the research questions and attain the research objectives. The process also involved rigorous refining of themes which meant divided, merged or disregarding irrelevant themes.

Stage 5: Thematic title and definition

A detailed examination of each theme was conducted at this stage. This was done so as to ensure that each theme had a title that would detail the research findings.

Stage 6: Documenting

This conclusive stage involved the researcher merging all the examined narratives, data extracts and putting into context the analysis in comparison to the available pre-existing literature. The completion of this process led to the presentation of research results.

3.1.10 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are central in the process of conducting qualitative research. When compared with quantitative research ethics become even more critical due to the fact that in qualitative research the researcher intrudes into the private lives of participants. The researcher must therefore be aware of the ethical issues when conducting psychological inquiry. According to Pera and Van Tonder (1996) the definition of ethics centers on the demonstration of correct and appropriate behaviors by the researcher throughout the course of the study and afterwards. The behavior should at all times prevent any harm to the participants. The awareness of ethical consideration should therefore be with the researcher as well as the participants and it is critical to clearly inform the participants of the ethical consideration and spell out each party's obligation, justice and fairness must guide the process at all times. The study therefore ensured that all participants gave their informed consent and at all times were conscious of their rights. They had the option to continue with the study or terminate their participation. All the recommendations outlined by Blink and Wood (1998) which include the right to privacy, voluntary participation, confidentiality were strictly observed in order to protect all the participants.

3.2 Chapter summary

The chapter looked at the research approach which was adapted for the study. It also detailed the research design and deliberated at length on the selection of the population sample, instruments for data collection which were utilized in the study. A closer look at the ethical consideration was undertaken to ensure that no participants suffer from harm.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Presentation

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings obtained through focus group discussions and key informant interviews conducted with the participation of girls, boys, men and women of ward 1, 2 and 5 of Mwenezi district. Key informant interviews comprised of government staff, traditional leadership and religious leaders. The findings are presented in accordance with the research objectives of the study under the following thematic areas:

- Community understanding of children's rights

- Community concept of rights within the cultural/religious context

- Conflict areas between children's rights as outlined in the UNCRC and ACRWC and the cultural perspective of child rights

- Consequences and effects of the conflict of perceptions

- Possible solutions to the conflict that promote implementation of community development programmes

4.1 Demographic data

The participants in the study were both males and females who invariably have the responsibility of being duty bearers with the specific tasks of bringing up children within a family setting. In addition children, both boys and girls participated in the study. All the children were of school going age and at secondary school level with age range of 14 to 17 years. Thus the children were literate and had experienced issues of child rights and child protection and therefore able to conceptualize the essence of child rights. Government technical staff were also targeted precisely for the reason that they shoulder the burden of educating the community on child rights and facilitate government and non-governmental (NGO) funded or supported child rights programs. Key informants from closely associated ministries of education, social services, gender and youth formed the core of respondents. Community leadership comprising of chiefs and councilors also participated in the study. Chiefs are the custodians of customary law which encompasses social norms, values and beliefs and it is in their power and authority to retire or promote some customary practices in line with the provisions of the UNCRC and ACRWC as they see fit. Their influence is thus

significant in promoting child rights, two chiefs participated in the study and one councilor represented the other councilors. The table below illustrates the demographic data of the study participants.

Study Participants	Male	Female
School Children	10	10
Adults	10	10
Key Informants	3	3
Total	23	23

Table 1: Study participants by gender

4.2 Community understanding of children's rights

The study established that both adults and children understood and defined a child as someone below the age of 18 years. However, they also came up with social and economic definitions of a child. Socially, they recognize that anyone born of a woman is a child and economically they defined a child as anyone depending on parents and or guardians for survival.

There was yet another definition of a child which came out in the discussions, particularly with adult males and females as well where they defined a child as anybody who has not yet experienced menstrual period for girls and anybody who has not yet experienced wet dreams for boys. For this group, anyone who has experienced these can no longer be treated as a child.

A detailed account of how the diverse group of participants understood child rights is presented in this section of the findings. It emerged from the participants that the government information dissemination programs are central in educating the community on child rights. Other players, such as NGOs, working together with government are instrumental in the dissemination of information to specific groups in the community such as school children, community leadership and other community groupings.

4.2.1 Children's perspective

Both boys and girls aged 14 to 17 outlined child rights as human rights for children which are entitlements that accrue to every child by virtue of being a human being and are therefore indivisible and accrue without any conditionality. One participant (Participant #7 female) described child rights in as:

"These are rights that are guaranteed for each child and ensures the all-round protection, allowing the child free association and the opportunity to be a child and enjoy the experience. They also provide for child participation and have a say in issues that affect them. In short the rights ensures that the child is treated with human dignity."

This implies that every child should be safeguarded against all forms of harm and enjoys universal freedom in the community as well as being treated equally and respected like any other human being.

About 90% of the children in the FGD were also able to point out the provisions of the UNCRC and the ACRWC. Of particular note was the depth of knowledge on the responsibilities that children have as outlined in the ACRWC which places an obligation on children to respect their parents and adults. It also places special emphasis on children to work for the cohesion of the family.

The study also established that children feel that in general their rights are being respected by each other, by their parents, by teachers and by the community at large. The school environment was flagged out as the centre of learning on child rights which is facilitated by teachers and other non-governmental organizations. Children noted that in an effort to promote the rights of the child, teachers encourage gender equality. Girls are encouraged to attend school and also provided with guidance and counseling through well established procedures. School clubs such as Girl Empowerment Movements (GEM) and Boy Empowerment Movement (BEM) were mentioned for providing the much needed information on the rights of the child.

Children however noted that while efforts to uphold their rights are visible, incidences of violation occasionally manifest even the school environment.

"Teachers are yet to desist from administering corporal punishment. They continue to administer corporal punishment to girls as well while knowing full well that the policy does not allow them to do so." (participant #5 male).

This implies that teachers still engage corporal punishment irrespective of the prohibitive ministry of education policy. Even girls face this form of punishment as well.

"It is sad that in spite of all these efforts to promote respect of child rights, children, especially girls are still vulnerable. Just this school term alone two girls in form two and three were married in what we can only call child marriage. Nothing has been done as far as we know to protect these girls." (participant #4 male)

4.3 Community concept of rights within the cultural/religious context

4.3.1 Children's perspective

From a children's perspective the study found out that religion and culture play a significant role in influencing community members' understanding, internalization and upholding of children's rights and protection. Both boys and girls cited cultural practices that are meant to safeguard children but in the process actually violet the rights of children. It was observed that some practices that require children to be seen and not be heard though meant to maintain dignity of adults and good manners for children violated the right to participation.

"Our parents seem not to care about child marriage. Girls are being married off at a very young age and they do not seem to care. Although the number of girls being married is not very big, all the same it sends a wrong message to other girls and they feel very vulnerable and exposed." (Participant #5 Female)

The above sentiments and observations were shared by a Form 3 female student at whose school two fellow students were married of in before completing form 2 and form 3 and were all below the age of 17 years.

Another practice cited by children is that of eloping. The study, from the children's responses, established that eloping is sometimes forced upon children by the parents.

"If a girl child gets home late, parents especially fathers, will insist that they go back to where they were and the suspicion is always that they were with boyfriends. The child is not

allowed an opportunity to explain. This is not a good practice as innocent children are thus forced into marriage to someone they do not even love" (Participant #3 male)

While this is a commonly accepted custom in the community of Mwenezi, it runs contrary to the dictates of the UNCRC and the ACRWC.

Children, however, were able to identify some customs and practices that are or were specifically targeted at protecting children and ensure that they develop into responsible adults. Chastity for girls was emphasized under both religious and cultural contexts while the custom seems to be losing popularity it is still considered shameful for a girl to engage in sex before marriage. According to children this was a protective mechanism from abuse.

The concept of the child belonging to the community also came out distinctly from the study.

"According to our culture a child belonged to the whole family and extended family and subsequently to the whole community. They were responsible for the child's upbringing and protection from any form of abuse," (Participant #9 Male)

In essence safety, security and adequate standard of living was guaranteed by the the extended family and subsequently by whole community collectively.

4.3.2. Adult perspective

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with both male and female adults revealed that the cultural set up of the community of Mwenezi was made up of social safety nets which were designed to provide for children's needs. The immediate family formed the nucleus for child socialization. The nuclear family was assisted by members of the extended family who took the responsibility of parenting all children seriously in order to ensure that all children grew up to be responsible adults.

"All children respected their uncles and aunts and referred to them as fathers and mothers respectively. Grandparents were a source of knowledge and learning for the children and were respected accordingly." (Participant #6 Male)

This extended family structure ensured that children are protected depending on their gender they had the right of access and utilization of different family assets. In return children had specific responsibilities to which they were held accountable. It was expected that the behavior of the child must not put the family name into disrepute.

"Each child particularly starting at adolescence was expected to contribute to the good name and social standing of the family and never at any moment, through bad behavior, put the family name into disrepute. This is still a critical expectation today. Girls must behave in a way that is totally devoid of sexual promiscuity and must be respectful in their engagement with adults. Likewise boys must not be bullies and irresponsible drunkards for example." *(Participant #7 Female)*

The research also revealed that certain rights were extended to all children, boys and girls, on an equal basis. The participants were able to isolate such rights as the right to a name and identity and nationality.

"Each child was and is still entitled to a name that identified his or her parentage and origin and this in turn guaranteed the child all the entitlements that accrued to him or her. The entitlements include access to land and family inheritance. However, it is critical to note that girls were and are not treated the same as boys under traditional customs but customs are now changing with changing times." *(Participant #7 Male)*

The above quotation is also revealing in as far as it acknowledges the changes in cultural perceptions of children's rights with the passage of time. Whereas in the past girls were not afforded the same rights as boys current indications are that people are starting to appreciate the need to give equal opportunities to both boys and girls.

The study also revealed that traditional custom and practice promoted the right of the children to freedom of association and opportunities to play with peers and develop both mentally and physically. From an early age girls would engage in free play such as "mahumbwe" and boys would accordingly associate with peers as well.

"It is common practice to observe and allow the children to play and associate with their peers under careful watch by elders, especially grandmothers who had and to some extent still have the responsibility of assisting the girl child to freely associate and play with peers. Likewise boys also have the freedom to associate with peers as well." *(Participant #6 Female)*

The above reflection by a participant in FGDs is indicative of the realization, under customary practice, that children require time to play and be children. Though this was without the label of rights it indeed is indicative of the promotion of the right for children to freely associate for their psychological and physical growth and maturation.

It emerged during FGDs with both male and female participants that religious precepts provide special treatment and position in society for children. Religion compels children to be looked after and provided with adequate care and support.

"Children are a gift from God and our ancestral spirit. We must provide adequate care to each and every child. Both boys and girls have designated positions in religion and this should be respected by all." (Participant #3 male).

The study also revealed that in some cases religion does provide for the rights of children and at the same time deprives children of their rights due to gender differences. Thus boys and girls are afforded different rights due to the mere fact of gender differences. The right to life, name and nationality as enshrined in the UNCRC and ACRWC are afforded to all. However, the right to freedom of association may be enjoyed more by boy children that girl children who are restricted for the sake of their own protection.

"Although it varies from religion to religion, children are provided with basic rights but certain rights are not provided wholesale. This can lead children to commit sin and other transgressions that are punishable. Girls should not be allowed to do what they feel like doing, there must be some form of control. It is the role of men to lead the family and congregation. This is provided for in religion be it Christian, ATR or Islam." (Participant #5 male).

4.3.3 Perspectives of key informants

The findings of the study pointed to the fact that the advent of children's rights ushered in an era that has seen the status of children being elevated. However, at the same time conflict and controversy has also been witnessed between cultural norms and children's rights as well as religion and children's rights.

"Rights ushered in a marked change in our communities. One significant change in our community is the participation in the right of passage to adulthood (Komba in Xangani) which used to be conducted during school days and hence compromising the children's right to education. By way of respecting children's rights the Komba sessions are now being conducted during the schools holidays. Schools and parents collaborate to promote the right to education without necessarily coming into conflict." (Participant #1female).

The study further established that the introduction of rights has also introduced critical changes in education, health and in socially assigned roles and responsibilities for both boys and girls. This gender equality dimension is highlighted by the observation from one of the key informant, a government officer in the district of Mwenezi.

"While children remain under the control of parents, we however, have witnessed a change in the roles and responsibilities assigned to boys and girls. There is a realisation that boys and girls have the ability and capability to perform the same tasks and therefore none should be discriminated against.

In schools and in homes this gender transformative thinking is starting to take root."

Significant changes are also being witnessed in religious circles where some Apostolic sect Churches are now allowing their children to access health services from local service providers in addition to spiritual and faith healing.

The local school head observed that this is a small but significant stride in harmonising children's rights with religious customs and laws:

"Parents who used not to take their children for modern medical care are now doing so and there does not seem to cause any negative effect on the religions."

4.4. Areas of conflict between children's rights and cultural / religious perspective of rights

The majority of the participants within all the categories from boys to girls, men and women as well as key government workers and traditional leadership in Mwenezi indicated that there are conflict areas between rights in UNCRC/ACRWC and cultural / religious perceptions of rights. While positive developments have been realized and significant progress is being made, conflict areas still exist particularly in issues of strong belief and practices.

4.4.1 Children's views on conflict areas

During FGDs both boys and girls in Mwenezi district identified child marriage as an area of conflict between children's rights provisions and cultural as well as religious expectations. Child marriage was described as rampant in the community and yet parents were doing nothing to stop this violation of children's rights. According to the majority of the participant's parents and religious leaders of some churches seem to condone and promote it.

"In some religious sects children are married off whilst they are below the age of majority – 18 years yet the law does not allow that. Girls in form 3 are sometimes forced to drop out of school and forced to marry religious leaders in polygamous relationships." (Participant #7, male).

"It is unfortunate that some parents actually accept Lobola that is paid for underage girls. These violations are never reported and are accepted as part of the cultural practice yet it violates the specific provisions of the constitution, UNCRC and ACRWC. Even rape is sometimes never reported to protect the perpetrators especially if they are relatives" (Participant #6, female)

Further probing on the above assertions by the participants pointed to the fact that most parents are aware that this practice violates the rights of the child and is in conflict with the law and therefore the undertakings are shrouded in secrecy and only close relatives may be aware. A conspiracy of silence is maintained.

In all the FGDs children identified the most common forms of rights violation as physical, sexual, emotional and neglect.

"There are some parents who still hang on the belief that boys have more value than girls and therefore given more opportunities to pursue their aspirations. Boys are encouraged to progress with education and the same encouragement is not given to the girls. The cultural belief is that educating a girl child will only benefit the family into which she eventually gets married. Therefore it is deemed not necessary."(Participant #1, female)

4.4.2 Conflict areas identified by men and women

The response by participants showed that while the introduction of children's rights in Mwenezi ushered in certain positive developments there were areas of conflict. Mostly the conflict is prevalent in the areas of traditional customs as well as religious rules and regulations. The following excepts from FGDs illustrate this finding;

".... The introduction of child rights was carried out without the involvement of the parents. Our children were taught about these rights at school and suddenly we just woke up to find that we have little rebels in place of our children. They are now untouchable even when they misbehave. You cannot discipline them anymore. You risk being arrested."(Participant #9, male)

"When we were growing up we were beaten for misbehaving and we were model children. We still beat our children in some cases but we know we are breaking the law and therefore risk being arrested. Now the children are spoilt – they have no respect for elders at all."(Participant #8, female).

The issues of disciplining children both at home and in institutions of learning has generated unending debate with parents and teachers believing that children must be beaten when they disobey or make mistakes.

"It is disconcerting that our children these days are given to talking back to their parents. Instead of listening and receiving advice and guidance, they actually embarrass you by telling you what to do and what not to do. They no longer respect us because of freedom of speech."(Participant #1, female).

The above sentiments reveal the underlying resentment to the freedom of expression which challenges the traditional requirement for children to be seen and not be heard.

The majority of the participants indicated that child marriage is an aspect of conflict. The FGDs corroborated this outcome and pointed to the fact that religious sects frequently violated these provisions of the child rights in this regard.

"Some religious churches, especially those that believe in spiritualism are culprits and marry off their children when they have not reached the age of majority. Some children as young as 13 years old are given to old people as wives. This is not good for the child – it is wrong and violets their rights."(Participants #3, female).

The above quote was unanimously supported by the majority (85%) of the participants who went further to state that the practice is harmful to children.

"The child will be too young to negotiate for safe sex let alone give her consent. This exposes the child to dangers of contracting HIV and AIDS and also having complications when giving birth."(Participant #4, Female).

"Some of the churches especially the Apostolic sects, do not allow their members to access and utilize modern health services. They prefer to administer spiritual healing. Hence children are not immunized. This is against the law and exposes children to life threatening diseases"

4.4.3 Conflict areas according to key informants

All key informants were unanimous and confirmed that conflict areas do exist between rights and community expectations. It is the community perception that children no longer listen to elderly advice.

"In our culture children are expected to listen to their elders' advice. Nowadays children do not listen to their elders and do not respect this tradition hence there is conflict."(Government Youth Officer).

"There is an outcry from the community. We now live in a global village and culture is being influenced and changed by issues at global level. When conflict between culture and law exist, the law takes precedence. This has caused disagreements from the community where they feel that their way of life is being disrupted."(School Head).

"The freedom brought about by children's rights and human rights in general sometimes results in conflicting issues. Take for instance some of our dress codes. There are certain expectations from our local community – both traditional and religious. The choice that girls and women make in terms of clothing may violet certain expectations but they will be expressing themselves."(Acting School Head).

"It is unfortunate that children have become uncontrollable as they are now in the habit of borrowing culture from other places like South Africa and when they come back they become rebellious and hide behind rights."(Youth Officer).

The majority of key informants including local traditional leaders cited the issue of control as above and concurred that children are now difficult to manage due to the issue of children's rights. The study also revealed that it is better to teach children about rights when they are still young. The key informants also observed that it is critical to start teaching children about responsibilities first before introducing rights.

"I think we should have first our children responsibilities when they were young than talk about rights with them. This is where we miss it when we teach children about rights when they are grown up."(Case care Worker),

"The study also revealed that concentrating on rights is isolation and neglecting the local context is bringing conflict between rights and culture as well as religion, hence some

churches do not believe in the rights and sometimes violates them as in denying children immunization."(Child Protection Point Person).

"Our children used to date when they were in their 20's but nowadays due to the advent of rights some as young as grade 7 pupils are having sexual relationships. They are taking sex as a standard and measurement of love. This is against our customs and practices."(Councilor)

4.5. Consequences and effects of the conflict of perceptions

The study established that the conflict between provisions of child rights and cultural and religious laws affect children and adults differently.

4.5.1 Children's views

All children concurred that where the UNCRC and cultural or religious practice differ, it's us the children that suffer.

"Some girls are forced into marriage and they are powerless to resist and cannot report because of cultural demands, region or poverty. Sometimes the cases are not reported for fear of reprisals."(Participant #8, female).

The violations of rights are subtly hidden from public view and therefore never followed up and prosecuted.

4.5.2 Men and women's view

FGDs with both men and women were unanimous that this conflict is detrimental to the proper development of the child.

"There is a lot of confusion among children and they find themselves failing to understand what is expected of them. Outside of the home they have UNCRC rights. In the home they are expected to observe cultural and/or religious custom. They live two lives and it is not good for our children."(Participant #6, male)

"Sometimes children are neglected by their parents due to this conflict. They say those who taught you rights must look after you."(Participant #3, female)

4.5.3 Key informants views

Respondents who include government technical staff, traditional leaders and religious leaders noted that the ensuing conflict between the UNCRC provisions and cultural and/or religious regulations affects program implementation throughout the district.

"Without adequate buy-in and support from the community members it is impossible to implement any program that targets the development of the child. Even schools, for example, may find it difficult to operate without the support of parents. The result is that children will fail to get the necessary education and never realize their full potential."(School Head).

"Depriving children their rights has a domino effect. Those children who fail to enjoy their rights will in turn deprive their children of their rights as well. This includes their spouses as well. Growing up I remember my mother being treated like one of the children. She did not have a say in the home."(Acting School Head).

4.6. Possible solutions to the conflict

During FGDs with both children and adults and also interviews with key informants it was established that a significant number of activities are being carried out in the district. Government, NGOs, civil society, religious organisations and other non-state actors are engaged in information dissemination and education of the community and child rights. The programmes are mainly aimed at promoting the adoption, advancement and respect of child rights. They are also targeting cultural. and religious norms that underpin gender inequality and discrimination of the girl child.

4.6.1 Programs targeting children

Children unanimously agreed that they are directly targeted by child protection programs in schools and other spaces in their communities.

"We have had training on child rights from such organisations such as Plan International working together with government staff. Our teachers are at the fore-front of promoting learning on child rights. This has helped us to understand our rights and responsibilities and how to relate well and respectfully with our parents and elders."(Participant # 1 female).

"We also use suggestion boxes to communicate our issues with those in authority such as our teachers and police. This promotes understanding of child rights issues and resolutions of any misunderstanding."(Participant # 7 male).

Focus group discussions also highlighted the importance of school based clubs such as GEM and BEM whose objective is to build confidence and self- esteem in children. The clubs also facilitates interface with teachers and promotes intergenerational dialogue.

"We all belong to one of the clubs –GEM and BEM and this forum provides us with opportunities to express ourselves, build our confidence good engage with our elders. This is where we learn our rights and responsibilities." (Participant # 3 female).

The above except demonstrated the need for intergenerational dialogue between children and parents to create a common understanding of child rights and cultural norms.

"It is necessary to also continue educating our parents on children's rights. Drama and other plays can also help."(Participant # 2 female).

"The department of social welfare, Plan International and other organisations have specific programs targeting social norms, adolescence reproductive health and child rights. The programmes are assisting us and our parents to reflect on our situation and suggest solutions to change behaviour." (Participant # 8 female).

4.6.2   Community programmes

Men and women FGDs revealed the existence of a number of government led programmes that are also supported by NGOs and other civil society organisations that promote child rights. The constitutional of Zimbabwe amendment number 20 of 2013 ushered in a new era in the understanding of rights.

"We participated in the constitutional amendment and following that we have had several programmes on child rights spearheaded by department of social services. Child protection committees were revived in the villages and in schools to protect children and report any abuses. We had several workshops with the VFU and Case Care Workers (CCW). Our councillors engaged us on child rights and child protection." (Participant # 9 Female).

"In Village Savings and Lending (VSL) groups we have learned about gender equality and the related gender based violence act (GBV).We also have engaged during the

implementation of a project to support the girl child to continue with education called Building skills for life. Currently we are participating in the project Women and Youth Economic Empowerment which is supported by Plan International. We have learnt a lot and our behaviour towards children is changing." (Participant #10 female).

4.6.3 Key Informants perspective.

The study showed that concerted efforts have been made by government to educate the community of Mwenezi about child rights. The various pieces of legislature are domiciled in various government ministries and the most prominent of them is the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare which acts as the provider of social services to children. However, the research also revealed the existence of child protection legislature and policies in the Ministry of Education and Health all of which act in concert under the guidance of the Constitution of Zimbabwe to uphold children's rights and protect children.

"All schools have child protection committees (CPC) which are set up in line with Ministry of Education Policy provisions and these committees look into the issues of child rights and child protection. Within the community as well and in each village these committees exist and are headed by the village head. They look into such issues as dropouts and the welfare of children. This has enhanced knowledge which should influence behaviour that is supportive of child rights." (School Head).

It was apparent during the key interviews that a significant number of projects aimed at supporting both children and parents are being implemented by both government and non-government organisations (NGOs).

"Each school has a guidance and counselling service. The department of social welfare has introduced case care workers to educate communities and refer child abuse cases. Musasa Project established a safe shelter for children and Plan International is supporting women and youth economic empowerment projects as well as dialogue on social norms." (Youth Officer).

It has however been noted that while these projects are registering significant success, the participation of parents is rather low.

"NGOs have been taking the lead in these projects and government has challenges with resources to spearhead the programmes. Parents and the rest of the community members need to fully participate." (youth officer).

"The promotion of child rights is very noble and we embrace it and parents are being educated on the various charters (UNCRC and ACRWC). However, cultural values which are good for moulding children into responsible adults are being ignored. Cultural norms which promote children's rights should be recognised as well and a common ground established." (Chief)

The above except recognises the need to harmonise child rights and progressive cultural norms in order to reconcile the existing gap between child rights and cultural and religious norms.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter covered data presentation and the researchers' interpretation of verbatim quotations. Data was presented under six themes which sought to respond to the study's research and objectives. The next chapter dwells on the discussion, conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.0 Introductions

The chapter discusses the research findings by making comparisons with other previous and similar studies. The discussion is guided by the research questions. Each research question will be reflected upon under conclusion. The chapter concludes by making recommendations going forward.

5.1 Discussions of Results

The discussion of the study results will be guided by the five research questions as outlined below:

5.1.1 Research question 1- What is the community's understanding of the UNCRC and ACRWC?

The study revealed that the community have a working and functional understanding of the UNCRC provisions as well as the provisions of the ACRWC. It is the research finding that government together with non- state actors made significant efforts to educate the community on the issues of child rights as provided for by the two conventions. This has had significant impact on the knowledge levels on child rights and safeguarding requirements as well as the psychological and physical consequences of abuse. The benefits of involvement of Government, non-governmental entities and the public at large is confirmed by research findings by Rangana (2011) who contends that children's rights should be addressed individually and collectively by entities that include government departments, training entities, non-state entities, families, individuals and humanity at large.

The study also established that the understanding, internalization of rights enshrined in the UNCRC and ACRWC has, to a greater extent, benefitted from and promoted by enabling legal environment. The constitution of Zimbabwe provides the enabling environment for a variety of laws which are domiciled in different government ministries to support the advancement of children's rights. The incorporation of the UNCRC and national law is assistive in advancing child rights. This position is confirmed by Lund et al (2013) in their study of fifty two countries that are at different levels of ratifying the UNCRC and domesticating the provisions. The findings confirm the fact that where the UNCRC are

incorporated into the national laws, the understanding of children's rights is at an advanced stage.

The study also established that the understanding of children's rights is at different levels among the respondents. Children have a different perspective from adults and the Government technical staff and community leadership also have a different perspective.

Children demonstrated an understanding of children's rights as outlined in the UNCRC siting the four principles of children's rights namely the right to life and survival and development, the right to non – discrimination, the best interest of the child and the right to participation. Children were also able to demonstrate their knowledge of the responsibilities placed upon them by the ACRWC but however noted that their responsibilities are not being given sufficient emphasis in educating both children and adults. This findings is confirmed by Block (2009) who noted that rights are being emphasised in the teaching and learning system but instilling a sense responsibility is receiving less attention

The study further revealed that children generally feel that their rights are being respected and upheld by their parents, Government institutions and the community at large. However, the findings also pointed to violation of rights to a significant degree especially on issues of discipline where corporal punishment is being used. A critical observation and finding of the study is that as the best centre of learning by children and therefore there is need for the schools to act accordingly and be exemplary in upholding and advancing the rights of the child. The findings are in line with Mhaka- Mutepfa et al. (2014) whose research established that both rights and responsibilities should be taught in schools. They also noted violations of rights by both parents and school authorities.

The study revealed that both men and women do have a functional knowledge of the legal framework that provides for children's rights. However, they did not have explicitly knowledge of the UNCRC and the ACRWC but were able to explain in general the provisions of the two conventions and their implications on how to nurture and help children develop into responsible adults. Through working with the department of social welfare and the Ministry of Health, the men and women were able to learn more on the legal instruments that are in place to protect children from all forms of abuse. The right to education and how the law compels parents to ensure their children attend and complete school and the right to health are some of the specific legal obligations that were isolated.

Key informants that included Government technical staff and community traditional leaders demonstrated significant knowledge the provisions of the UNCRC and ACRWC primarily due to the fact that all Government heads of ministry and departments have the responsibility to disseminate information and raise consciousness on the rights of the child.

The study also established that key informants, whose role is to educate communities on child rights, were well versed in the legal provisions that support the advancement of children's rights. It was also observed that a variety of opportunities were being utilised to engage communities and children on dialogue related to child rights and their relevance with the Mwenezi Cultural and religious context. It was the key informants view that child rights are important in the upbringing and development of child in as far as they have the potential to provide safety and security for both psychological and physical wellbeing. The study also confirmed the finding that child abuse and violation of children's rights emanated from certain cultural norms as well as religious norms. This finding concurs with Gregson et al. (1999) who concluded that health seeking behaviour can be explained by understanding religious teachings and church doctrine. One of the key findings was child rights violation relating to denial of medical care for children from religious sects such is the Apostolic Faith.

The study, through discussion with key informants, revealed significant awareness level of the importance of children's rights in the lives of children particularly on prevention of child abuse and enhancing child safeguarding mechanisms for curtailing violence against children, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse as well as neglect. It was also noted that there is a difference in the understanding of rights between children and parents and this gap is the source of conflict and challenge regarding upholding children's rights by parents and guardians of children.

5.1.2 Research question 2 - What are the traditional understanding of child rights, responsibilities and protection?

From the study findings it was revealed that culture and religion play a significant role in the understanding and advancement of children's rights. The study revealed that the concept of childhood is understood differently culturally and legally. Within the cultural context the definition of a child in rendered along specific developments in the life of the child. For instances the study noted that a child can be described as an individual who is still under the care of the parents. A child can also be described as a woman who has not yet experienced menstrual cycle or a boy who has not started to have wet dreams. On the other hand the legal

definition is that a child is any person below the age of 18 years. The cultural definition is in direct conflict with the UNCRC (1989) which defines a child as a human being under the age of 18 years.

The cultural perspective considers children to be fragile and vulnerable and thus unable to make meaningful decisions on their own hence the children must be seen and not heard. Effectively they are not allowed to participate in decision making and such decision making and such decision as marriage can be made on their behalf. This cultural perception of children is in direct conflict with Velez (2016) who argues that a child must be conceptualized as a distinct unit defined by his or her internal characteristics and age group rather than external contexts and further points out that the child is embedded within the social unit and therefore must participate in these settings to shape psychological development.

The study also revealed that same cultural norms that were meant to protect children may also cause harm to a certain extent. Chastity for girls is emphasised by both cultural norms and religious norms. While it is designed to ensure that children, in particular the girl child, grow up into responsible adults the practice is discriminatory in nature as it targets girls only and allows boys to exercise free will. It also violets sexual and reproductive rights. This finding is in agreement with Martin et al. (2011) who assert that within the confines of the law virginity testing runs contrary to the provisions of the children's Act in South Africa as it strips the child of their dignity, equality, privacy and health.

The study confirmed the assertion by Martin et al. (2011) that cultural practices have a communal care ethic which is provided by the extended family members. It also emphasized the role played by traditional games and folklore and folktales in stimulating psychological development in children. This observation is confirmed by the study findings which noted that traditional customs and practices are also promoting the rights of the child. This was noted in freedom of association and opportunities to play with peers. It also highlighted the advancement of the right to a name and nationality which is guaranteed and extended by traditional practices that ensure each child is identified appropriately through their lineage. This aspect extends the opportunity to acquire assets and inheritance.

Another finding of the study relates to positive developments in cultural and religious practices that are changing to conform to the demands of the UNCRC and ACRWC. Most notable changes were noted in education and health as well as gender relations. Both boys

and girls are accessing school and the retention and completion rates were observed to be satisfactory. However, disparities between boys and girls is still evident but slowly changing for the better. In contrast to Maguranyanga (2011) findings, the research findings are indicative of increased uptake of modern health care services by some of the religious groups within the district.

Child marriage, however, was identified as a retrogressive practice fuelled by cultural norms and making sporadic appearance within the district of Mwenezi. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Makwikwa et al. (2015) which showed that in Southern African countries child marriage is prevalent with Mozambique at 42%, Malawi 38% and Zimbabwe at 33%.

5.1.3   Research question 3: What is the relationship between the UNCRC/ACRWC and the traditional concept of child rights?

The study findings indicated the existence of a relationship between the two which is characterized by harmony and concordance in some aspects and on the other hand discordant in other aspects. The cultural norms, as revealed in the study are designed to provide a conducive environment for the development both physically and psychologically of the child. This is evident in such customs as allowing children to be cared for by the extended family in order to provide adequate protection. The study also showed the importance of customary laws in ensuring that the child is given appropriate identity and nationality. The study found these customs to be corroborative with the UNCRC and the ACRWC. However, on child marriage Makwikwa et al. (2015) notes in the study on child rights and marriage a high prevalence (33%) of child marriage in Zimbabwe which is corroborated by the findings of the study. This is in direct violation of the UNVRC/ACRWC provisions and therefore causing conflict within the community. It was also noted in the study that religious sects especially the apostolic sects seem to directly promote child marriage and consider it spiritually appropriate.

The study also captured the concerns of the community regarding the occurrence of such child abuse acts as rape and corporal punishment. On rape it was the study finding that sexual abuse such as rape do occur and sometimes goes unreported due to cover up communities in order to maintain peace and harmony in the family and community. The study further isolated corporal punishment as a religious and cultural practice that perpetuates violence against children and thus conflicts with the UNCRC/ACRWC and legal provisions. Community subscribe to the religious dictum of "Spare the road and spoil the child" and this is one

practice that is causing conflict with child rights demands. This practice traumatizes the child and has the potential to cause psychological harm and it is prohibited by policy.

It emerged in the study that freedom of expression was generating conflict within the family and community at large. Expressions of personal opinions by children are considered rude and violating cultural practice where children are supposed to be seen and not heard. This restriction further limits the child's rights to participation and benefiting physically and psychologically from their environment Mosikatsana (1998) observes that it is difficult to grant children their rights since their immaturity physically, emotionally and intellectually makes them depend on adults to assist in exercising those rights. He goes further to insist that it is, however, not a valid excuse to deny children their rights.

Less emphasis on responsibilities as compared to child rights is a factor that is contributing to skepticism when it comes to upholding the rights of the child. Parents and guardians proffered responsibilities to be taught first before rights to ensure that children internalize and change their behaviour accordingly.

5.1.4 Research question 4: How are the communities reconciling the traditional concept of child rights and the UNCRC/ACRWC provisions?

It emerged from the study that community members which include parents and guardians, traditional and religious leader as we well as the children have accepted that children's rights as enshrined in the UNCRC and ACRWC are now an integral part of their lives. The two conventions were ratified by government and domesticated and incorporated into Zimbabwe's constitution and subsequently in the various legislation. The acceptance has led to adoption efforts that are targeted at behaviour and attitude change towards children's rights.

Engagement at family level, community level and institutional level is taking place in Mwenezi district facilitated by both government and non-state actors to allow learning to take place at individual level and collectively.

5.1.5   Research question 5: What are the reconciliatory strategies necessary to bridge the gap?

The research findings point to a number of interlinked strategies that government and non-state actors in the district are utilizing to facilitate behaviour and attitude change towards

children's rights. Primarily consciousness raising is at the centre of all activities targeting such institutions as schools, the village itself and other voluntary spaces such as women's clubs and village lending and savings (VSL) groupings. The school environment has been found to be conducive for teaching children about children's rights and in order to build children's confidence and impart skills and knowledge in children, the learning environment is organised around child protection committees (CPC) which are led by the children. Girl Empowerment Movement (GEM) and boy empowerment movement (BEM) clubs are also set up through policy provisions to again complete the cycle of imparting knowledge to children and empower them for engagement with adults and power holders on issues that affect children.

Intergenerational dialogues are also being conducted to facilitate interface of children and their parents in a culturally sensitive and appropriate way. The essence of these dialogues according to the research findings is to provide a platform to interrogate some of the cultural and religious norms that underpin violence against children and disrespect of children's rights. Olowu (2002) concurs with the finding of the study and asserts that the typical framework for the implementation of children's rights is based on four principles that foster equal opportunity for children, that factor in the actions and documents relating the rights of the child, that look at physical and non-physical aspects of children's health and that also provides an opportunity for children the right to be heard and taken seriously. In other words, Olowu is emphasising non-discrimination, the best interest of the child, the right to life, survival and development and the right to participation which is being enhanced by the strategies.

Within the community the study findings confirm the existence at child protection committees that are led by traditional leaders such as village heads who are mandated by law to take up issues of child rights education and refer any violations through the referral procedures. The structure also includes volunteers – case care workers (CCW) who have the responsibilities to raise awareness on child protection, child rights and act as conduits for referral of any child rights violations.

The study also revealed the existence of trained paralegals who provide peer to peer education on the laws governing and supporting child rights. The department of social services provides secretariat and technical input to child rights activities in the district.

It emerged from the study that the inequality existing between boys and girls contribute significantly to deprivation of rights affecting girls to a large extent. The strategy being employed to bring about equality between the sexes is that of ensuring gender transformation in all programmes. An analysis of the gender norms and social norms is deemed necessary in order to understand and respond to the way in which gender intersects with social characteristics. The study revealed the fact that communities are aware of the fact that gender norms drive and sustain inequality. They are also aware that gender norms can be changed. Thus the gender transformation process. Works towards changing gender norms and several projects were identified that are focused on this outcome. One of the project focuses on empowering women and young people though acquisition of life and vocational skills. The other project focuses on challenging social norms. Both programs are rights based and work to build individual capacity and confidence to tackle issues of gender through community platforms. It has however been observed that the participation of adults in these rights based programs is still very low and there are concerted efforts to create more and more platforms for both men and women interaction.

5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 Research question 1: What is the community understanding of the provision of the UNCRC and ACRWC?

It can be concluded that all members of the community girls, boys, men and women including various institutions that provide service to the community have significant knowledge of the two conventions. In addition it can also be ascertained from the study that the legal framework comprising of the Zimbabwe constitution and the other acts of parliament inform and direct the understanding of child rights. Information dissemination on child rights and their impact positive or negative on the psychological and physical development of the child is an ongoing process that is being driven by both government and non-state actors. Community participation and contribution is being realised as well and is provided voluntarily. This multi-sector approach is making it possible to reach the majority of the Mwenezi population.

5.2.2 Research question 2: What are the traditional understanding of child rights, responsibilities and protection?

It is evident from the study that child rights, responsibilities and protection are understood differently by the community. Since the community is not homogeneous it was very clear that different categories had different conceptualization of the same aspect. It came out in the study that according to the children, the definition and provisions of child and child rights are understood as is given in the UNCRC and ACRWC as well as the constitution of Zimbabwe and subsequent legislature. However, for men and women there was divided definition of childhood which was informed by psychological, social and biological developments. While the men and women in the majority supported the concept of child rights upholding these may be affected negatively or positively due to the varied definition of a child. It can also be concluded from the study that men and women-in other words parents and guardians have different expectations from child rights which in some cases run contrary to the upholding of child rights. Child participation has not been fully embraced by all parents and guardians. Child marriages is still occurring and may seem to be acceptable to the community due to varied rendering of age on the basis of other variables other than that of the number of years as stipulated in the legal provisions. Certain cultural practices conform to the provisions of the UNCRC and ACRWC and these have potential to consolidate the gains and influence adoption of the provisions of the UNCRC and ACRWC by the rest of the communities.

The aspect of responsibility as provided for in the ACRWC is acceptable by the majority of both children and adults and it is the majority's preference that more emphasis be placed on responsibilities ahead of teachings and learning on child rights.

5.2.3 Research question 3: What is the relationship of the UNCRC/ACRWC and traditional concept of child rights?

It is evident from the study that the relationship between the two conventions – ACRWC/UNCRC and traditional concept of child rights evokes mixed feelings among the community. It came out that certain traditional practices are in agreement with the rights of the children and therefore are not in conflict with the law. Such practices as ensuring that each child's lineage is traceable through name and nationality reinforce positive relationship. The extended family care provided for children ensures protection and advancement of rights and should be promoted and emphasized as they can be used to leverage understanding and embracing of child rights by the rest of the community. It is also evident that other practices

run contrary to the upholding of child rights and these should be discouraged. The majority of the population fully support child rights and the progressive members of the community can be instrumental in changing behaviour and attitudes of the rest of the community members.

Within the confines of cultural norms and values it has been noted that cause of child abuse may not be reported for prosecution according to the laws of Zimbabwe. Instead families may prefer to resolve the issues amongst themselves and the perpetrator punished according to custom. It is therefore imperative to engage community members on the basis of such practices and influence their attitudes and behaviours towards embracing children's rights. From the findings of the study it is apparent that there exist a relationship between traditional efforts to safeguard children and UNCRC/ACRWC provisions to advance the rights of the child. The relationship, however, is characterized by disagreement in other areas and aspects and harmony in certain practices. Taking advantage of the positive aspect of the traditional practices it is possible to progress in incorporating the child rights b day to day lives of the community members. In the process this will provide a safe and secure environment conducive for psychological and physical development of the child.

5.2.4 Research question 4: How are the communities reconciling the traditional concept of child rights and the ACRWC/UNCRC provisions?

From the study it can be safely concluded that community members are aware of the legal provision that guide the implementation of child rights from the two conventions, the constitution of Zimbabwe down to the legal framework and the various laws and policies that support upholding of child rights and enforcing protection. It can be ascertained that, to a certain degree, the majority of the community have full knowledge of the child rights and protection mechanisms. Therefore, in the majority of the population efforts are being made to comply with legal requirements and at the same time educating each other and influencing behaviour change to overcome the reluctance. These efforts are in progress facilitated by government and non-state actors as well as traditional and religious leaders together with volunteer peer educators.

5.2.5 Research question 5: What are the reconciliatory strategies necessary to bridge the gap?

It can be ascertained from the study that community perceptions, myths and biases towards child rights can be influenced and dispelled by continuous engagement and raising

consciousness. The various platforms that are prevailing in the district have the potential to educate and promote learning on child rights. The presence of social groupings within the community is an advantage that can be seized to promote child rights and gender transformation. Children are critical agents of change ad have the potential to engage to engage with and influence attitude and behaviour change within their nucleus family and those with positive perceptions will radiate the same through neighbour to neighbour approach.

The referral system for multi-stakeholder participation in the advancement of child rights and child protection is a critical strategy for tackling issues of inclusion and non-discrimination. It also has the added and critical advantage of ensuring appropriate support is provided for children by trained and competent service providers like psychologists. It is therefore necessary to exploit this referral pathway.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The small sample of participants engaged is a limiting factor to the generalisation of results to wider population.

5.4 Recommendations

The recommendations that outlined below are proposed on the basis of the findings that emerged from this research.

5.4.1 Government and policy makers

While knowledge levels on child rights are in the majority of cases, quite high among children, parents and institutions, conflicting legislation that is misaligned with the constitution have the potential to confuse the public and induce inaction and dissatisfaction. It is therefore recommended that all children related legislation and policies be aligned to constitutional provisions and also be tailored to complement each other and thus provide adequate support to children and the community. It is also recommended that government technical support be in a position to strategically coordinate all activities on child rights and child protection in order to maximise on the contributions of both non-state actors and members of the community.

5.4.2 Community and traditional/religious leaders

The wider community should collectively engage and utilize the already existing platforms for continued dialogue on social and gender norms that impede the advancement of child rights and child protection. The community must also ensure that progressive majority engage in social mobilisation of their neighbours to effect wider reaching positively on the lives of children. Traditional leaders are the custodians of customary law and as such they should utilize their position, influence and power to review some of the customs, beliefs and practices that underpin discrimination against women and the girl child and promote adoption of progressive and healthy practices that enhance psychological and physical well-being throughout the whole community and in particular children. Religious leaders have the responsibility to promote positive changes within their congregation and there is need to engage with religious organisations to influence such developments.

5.4.3 Awareness campaigns

It is recommended that the department of social services conduct consciousness raising on specific issues of child protection that are proving to be an impediment to the realisation of children's rights. These will be subject specific and targeted awareness raising engagements with the public and power holders.

5.4.4 Schools and students

The schools have been identified as centres of excellence for working with children on issue of child rights and child protection. The recommendation is to increase their interface with community members for consensus building and promotion of best practices. Teachers and students are required to be psychologically prepared to manage issues of abuse and utilisation of the referral pathway.

5.4.5 Recommendations for further research

This stud explored perceptions on child rights. It is recommended that further studies be conducted to isolate the effects of child rights on the girl child and boy child separately.

5.5 Chapter Summary

The chapter presented discussion of the study's results and compared these with other researches. Conclusions and recommendations in line with the key aspects under investigation were also presented.

Given the magnitude of the issues surrounding child rights and child protection and community perceptions, the study sought to understand the community perceptions on children's rights and hopefully the results will be useful in influencing behaviour change.

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APPENDIX A

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET

Good day, my name is Track Murauzi, a Master of Science in Community Psychology student with Midlands State University (MSU). As part of my study requirements, I am seeking to explore the perception of child rights and child protection by the Mwenezi community and its significance on Government and Donor supported child protection programs. Your participation is entirely voluntary and refusal to participate will not be held against you. All information gathered and data collected will be treated with confidentiality. You may withdraw from the study anytime and you may refuse to answer any question that you feel uncomfortable to answer. The findings will be reported in form of a research report submitted to MSU and a summary of the findings will be made available to you upon request.

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

I _____ herby consent to participate in the study for the research project conducted by Track Murauzi. The purpose and procedures of the study have been explained to me. I understand that participation is voluntary and that all my responses will be kept confidential. I also understand that I may withdraw from the study at anytime and that I may refuse to answer any questions that I feel uncomfortable with answering. I am aware that there will be no direct benefits or rewards for my participation in the study.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX C

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, TRADITIONAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Name of Respondent: _____

Organization: _____

Position\Designation: _____

Date: _____

1. What is your understanding of the concept of child rights

2. How important are these rights and in you view do they have any influence on community development programming

3. How do you view the issue of child rights in the socio-cultural and religious context

4. What conflicting areas do you feel are present between the provisions of the UNCRC/ACRWC and the cultural understanding on child rights

5. What are the possible repercussions that come with conflicting perceptions on child rights and their impact on the implementation of child protection programs

6. What measures have been adopted to strike a balance between the cultural understanding of child rights and the provisions of UNCRC/ACRWC and other related statutory instruments

7. What methods/programs are being employed by various stakeholders in promoting the rights of children within the community

8. How successful have these efforts been to date

9. What challenges have been met in the process of promoting and upholding child rights and do you have any possible solutions

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Date: _____

Venue: _____

Number of participants: (M) _____ **(F)** _____ **TOTAL** _____

1. What is your understanding of child rights, responsibilities and protection

2. Do you feel that your rights as boys and girls are being respected and protected within the family, schools and community

3. What programs or projects have been developed within the communities that aim to address the issues of child rights and child protection

4. Is there a conflict between the cultural and religious understanding of child rights that exists within the community

5. Are there any differences on how the community views child rights towards the boy and the girl child

6. Are there any reporting mechanisms in place aimed at reporting incidences of child rights violation

7. What do you think should be done to continually promote and enhance child rights and child protection programs

APPENDIX E

Letter from Organisation

All communications should be
Directed to
"The District Schools Inspector"
Cell: 0772268542/0775907330
Email: bspzmwenezi@gmail.com

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P O Box 45
NESHURO
zimbabwe

10 July, 2018

Mr Track Murauzi
Plan Chiredzi
P.Bag 7010
Chiredzi

Dear Sir

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN SELECTED SCHOOLS MWENEZI DISTRICT

Permission to carry out a Research on:

The perception of child rights and child protection by the Mwenezi community and its significance on Government and donor supported child protection programs.

In Mwenezi District has been granted on these conditions

1. That in carrying out this you do not disturb the learning and teaching programmes in schools
2. That you avail the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education with a copy of your research findings
3. That this permission can be withdrawn at any time by the District Schools Inspector or by any higher office

The District Schools Inspector wishes you success in your research work and in your University College studies.

MINISTRY OF PRIMARY &
SECONDARY EDUCATION

10 JUL 2018

MWENEZI
P. O. BOX 45
NESHURO

ZANAMWE L.

(District Schools Inspector-Mwenezi District)

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..................................

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE WITH DISSERTION INFORMATION
FOR....Track Murauzi R161684J...
MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

This letter serves to introduce to you the above named student who is studying for a Master of Science Degree in Community Psychology and is in his/her final year. All Midlands State University students are required to do research in their final 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: **The perception of child rights and child protection by the Mwenezi community and its significance on Government and Donor supported child protection programs.**

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

Yours faithfully

....
N. Ncube
Chairperson

APPENDIX F

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Date: _____
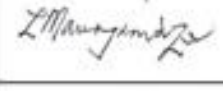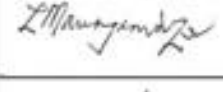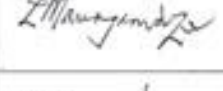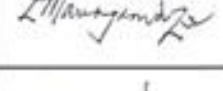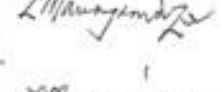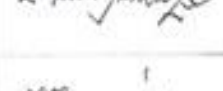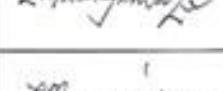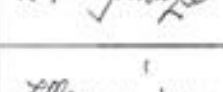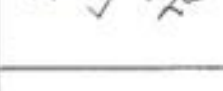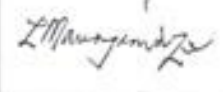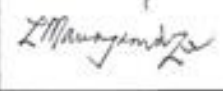
Venue: _____

Number of participants: (M) _____ **(F)** _____ **TOTAL** _____

1. What is your understanding of child rights and child protection

2. What is the significance of promoting child rights

3. How do various religious sects view the issue of child rights and child protection

4. Within the cultural context, what responsibilities are expected of children in the family and community

5. Are you conscious of (any) or the various statutory instrument(s) adopted by the government that seeks to address issues of child rights. If yes what are the provisions of each (or any) instrument (s)

6. What are the conflicting areas between the provisions of the above statutory instruments and the socio-cultural perspective on child rights

7. Are there any programs/projects/workshops/activities that strive to enhance the community understanding and uptake of child rights being undertaken in Mwenezi district

8. Have these programs resulted in any positive change in behaviors and attitude towards the issue of child rights

APPENDIX G: AUDIT SHEET

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

SUPERVISOR- STUDENT AUDIT SHEET

DATE	TOPIC DISCUSSED	COMMENT	STUDENT'S SIGNATURE	SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE
16-01-18	Submission of topic and discussion	Proceed to proposal		
02-03-18	Submission of proposal and discussion	Effect changes and submit		
07-03-18	Submission of proposal and discussion	Proceed to chapter 1		
01-04-18	Submission of chapter 1 and discussion	Effect changes and submit		
06-04-18	Submission of chapter1 and discussion	Proceed to chapter 2		
30-05-18	Submission of chapter 2 and discussion	Effect changes and submit		
15-06-18	Submission of chapter 2 and discussion	Proceed to chapter 3		
20-07-18	Submission of chapter 3 and discussion	Effect changes and submit		
25-07-18	Submission of chapter 3 and discussion	Proceed to develop research instruments		
28-07-18	Submission of research instruments and discussion	Effect changes and submit		
02-08-18	Submission of research instruments and discussion	Proceed to data collection and chapter 4		
22-08-18	Submission of chapter 4 and discuss	Effect changes and submit		

73

27-08-18	Submission of chapter 4	Proceed to chapter 5	*signature*	LMauojemdze
25-09-18	Submission of chapter 5 and discussion	Effect changes and submit	*signature*	LMauojemdze
28-09-18	Submission of chapter 5 and discuss	Proceed to first draft	*signature*	LMauojemdze
19-10-18	Submission of first draft and discussion	Effect changes and submit	*signature*	LMauojemdze
23-10-18	Submission of first draft	Proceed to final draft	*signature*	LMauojemdze
26-10-18	Submission of final draft		*signature*	LMauojemdze

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MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

A GUIDE FOR WEIGHTING A DISSERTATION

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	ITEM	POSSIBLE SCORE	ACTUAL SCORE	COMMENTS
A	RESEARCH TOPIC AND ABSTRACT: Clear and concise	5		
B	PRELIMINARY PAGES Title page, approval form, release form, dedication, acknowledgement, appendices, table of contents	5		
C	AUDIT SHEET Clearly shown on the audit sheet	5		
D	CHAPTER 1 Background, statement if the problem, significance of the study, research questions, hypothesis, assumptions, purpose of the study, delimitations, limitations, definition of terms	10		
E	CHAPTER 2 Address major issues and concepts of the study. Findings from previous work, relevancy of literature to the study Identify knowledge gap, subtopics	15		
F	CHAPTER 3 Appropriateness of approach, design, target population, population sample, research tools, data collection procedures, 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		
	Total	100		

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