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Bachelor of Education in Educational Management and Leadership Degree

LEARNING CHALLENGES FACED BY ORPHANS IN JUNIOR LEVEL AT MZILIKAZI

DISTRICT IN BULAWAYO.

BY

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STUDENT NUMBER:

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Submittedin partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree in Educational Management and Leadership submitted to the department of Education at Midlands State University in Gweru, Zimbabwe

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DECLARATION

I, Masihoro Annastancia do hereby declare that the contents of this dissertation are the result of my own investigation and research, and I acknowledged either by direct or indirect quotation those that are not mine, otherwise the work is a true record of my research endeavours.

APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have supervised the student **Masihoro Annastancia's** dissertation entitled **Learning challenges faced by orphans in juniour at Mzilikazi District in Bulawayo** submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor Degree in Management and Leadership in Education at Midlands State University.

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DISSERTATION RELEASE FORM

I certify that the following student, **Masihoro Annastancia**, Student Number **R167970H,** was under my supervision. I further certify that she has attended all the scheduled meetings with me and that she has fulfilled all the requirements that I set before her as the Supervisor. It is my professional judgment that the dissertation is of a sufficiently high standard as to be submitted with my name attached to it as the supervisor.

I hereby release the student without reservation to submit his/her dissertation for examination.

Name of Supervisor **DR. M.MUKONI**

Signature--

Date---

DEDICATIONS

I wish to dedicate this piece of work to one who strengthened me to tackle all the challenges I was facing throughout the course of this research study, that is God the Almighty.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

The study set out to examine the learning challenges facing orphans at junior level in Mzilikazi District . The research design used for the study was a qualitative method approach because it is effective in gaining an understanding of the underlying reasons of the challenges especially when it comes to sensitive issues of the learners. The population of the study consisted of 6 schools which are in Mzilikazi District. The random sampling methods was used to select the learners, teachers, guardians as well as the SDC members to represent the communities. During the sampling, the researcher ensured that equal representation of sex was attained. This was done to give equal chance to be drawn. Only the school heads were purposefully selected as they are the administrators of the already selected schools. The research had a total of 90 respondents of the study, 48 learners, 24 teachers, 6 administrators, 6 guardians as well as 6 SDC members. The data collection instruments used were questionnaires administered on teachers as well as school administrators, and interviews which were administered to orphaned learners, guardians as well as SDC members. The data collected through the use of questionnaires and interviews were described, discussed and presented in tables, charts and graphs.

Research findings point out that most orphans face challenges of being marginalised and stigmatised both at home and at school. They also struggle with life because of lacking basic needs such as love, foods and clothes. This tends to demotivate them to learn.

The study therefore recommends teachers to be continuously workshoped on how to help the orphans, as well as the training of Life Oriented Teachers in schools who will be fully trained to deal with such vulnerable children. Further studies can also be done to cover all phases as this study concentrated on junior level of primary school.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

SDC: School Development Committees

OL: Orphaned Learner

LOT: Life Oriented Teachers

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter will present the general orientation of the whole study. It introduces the learning challenges facing orphaned learners at junior level of primary school education in Mzilikazi District of Bulawayo Province in Zimbabwe. The chapter then successively details, in sub-headings, the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the delimitations and limitations of the study, a definition of terms, and the chapter summary.

1.1 Background to the Study

Enormous published works already hinted on the persistent challenges facing orphaned learners the world-over. There is a problem of orphans dropping out of school that richest and poorest countries across the sphere are facing (Bledsoe, 2002). In the United States, over 30 percent of orphans leave school too early and this disempowers the nation economically and denounces them to life-threatening peripheries of the mainstream economy (Bledsoe, 2002). In 2013, the United Nations (UN) had to red-flagthat Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest rate in the world of childrenwho leaves school early. It clearly states that two out of five children who began primary school in 2010 could not make it to the last grade. This is a clear indication that our overall rate of school drop-out in primary schools was well above the global normal, yet worryingly, it is showing no clear signs of falling significantly in the foreseeable future. The most affected are obviously orphans who are bereft of their parents to otherwise fend for themselves and perhaps their younger siblings, and also do chores to raise money to pay for their own school fees. Unfortunately, this makeshift arrangement consumes their study time. In Zimbabwe, most orphans are reported to be in terrible need of basics and this state of want is said to be perennially denying them access to education. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, in its annual statistical report for 2013, attributed the high

pupils drop-out to mainly failure to pay school fees and complain about the low pass rate in primary schools in Matabeleland. The report added that orphans are the worst affected whenever the pass rate is low. It picked Matabeleland Region which it highlighted to be persistently ranking lowest on Grade 7 results. In 2014, the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) gazetted that Matabeleland's low pass rate was worrying as several schools had registered 0% percent pass rate. The report pointed that the most affected could be from child-headed families who are said to spend most of the time looking for food instead of going to school. This phenomenon gave the researcher a clue of how serious the challenges affected the learning of orphans since Bulawayo is considered to be in Matabeleland. The researcher then sought official data on how orphaned learners perform when challenged but discovered that there were no exclusive official data from government sources specifically modelling how the challenges affected their academic performance specifically in Bulawayo-Mzilikazi District. The UNICEF Report on Zimbabwe of 2016 acknowledged that gap too. The researcher then had to read several reports in the media that red-flagged these challenges to gain an insight.

The Financial Gazette of 12 March 2015 reported that the rate of pupils dropping out of school rose to over 13 000, an increase of about 40 percent from the 2012 figures. The researcher also read *The Herald* of 17 March 2015 which added that the number of children dropping out especially at primary education level had increased from 23 percent in 2012 to 43 percent in 2013. She then read *The Weekend Post* of 20 March 2015 which reported that the chief reason for dropping out is failure to pay school fees. The Ministry of Social Welfare (2015) then posted a circular that highlighted that these grim statistics emerge at a time the Government of Zimbabwe has been struggling to pay school fees for orphans streamlined to be state-assisted under the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM). Sadly, the number of orphans pushed out of school certainly got worse especially after the BEAM programme had seemed to be at a halt. The researcher then read *the Sunday News* of 8 November 2015 that headlined "HIV/AIDS account for 50 percent of school drop-outs" which narrowed down the study group to orphans and basically differed with previous media reports on the major cause of school drop-outs. The publication cited the Smart investment to end HIV/AIDS analysis by the National Aids Council (NAC)

that stated that 48 percent of primary school orphans drop-out due to the disease and death of parents. This NAC analysis added that these orphans then exchange their labour for some money, which limits their ability to attend school and to learn effectively. The researcher also read *the Reuters* of 27 July 2017 which posted that about 185,000 H1V/A1DS-orphaned Zimbabwean children are living under the guardianship of their grandparent. In the same report, Anatalia Mabeza, who chaired an HIV/AIDS support group in Norton, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that it is hard for most aged people to have the capacity to produce nor buy food on their own and most of the orphaned kids they look after are far too young to be so working to produce food for their families. The burden, at the end of the day, rests with the grandparents, who, in a true sense, are also dependents. This inspired the researcher to explore the effect of these challenges on the performance of the orphans in schools so as to solicit strategies that could help them improve on their academic performance. None of these cited media reports too suggested strategies to help orphaned learners improve on their academic performance. This motivated this researcher to initiate a comprehensive research aimed at soliciting possible strategies to help orphaned learners perform better. Thus, there is need to consider if ever previous studies co-related these challenges to the academic performance of orphans; and to ascertain what pattern of correlation between the learning challenges of orphans and their academic performance they had already established. The researcher, thus, now briefly review literature on the research problem to expose the vacuum to be filled by this research.

In a study that was made in Ireland which focused on behaviour of young children as well as the practical approaches for the teachers and the guardians by McGee (2002), it was noted that using school enrolment to show the access of orphans to learning falls short of the fact that the simple supply of education might not necessarily produce its demand and it obviously doesn't mean that those in school are indeed learning without facing any challenges. McGee (2002) also asserted that young children who are face challenges back at home are unable to follow their sequence when in school. They have problems in organising a sequence of ideas and are inconsistent when it comes to recalling information, which might possible explains their low academic performance. However, this present study will focus not

on just young children, but the orphaned ones at junior level of primary school education. The geographic setting is also now in Zimbabwe which is a third-world economy in Sub-Saharan Africa, quite characteristically different from the first-world Ireland.

In another study which focused on identifying trends in sustainable programmes which support vulnerable children in South Africa, Ebersöhn and Eloff (2002)noted that when parents die, some orphans are left under the care of aged grandparents or under older siblings to care for them. Ebersöhn and Eloff (2002) further observed that this arrangement may yet negatively influence the learning of the children. The questions driving their study were "Who are vulnerable children? What educational measures do exist to support vulnerable children? Why are some educational practices and programmes successful and sustainable in addressing these challenges?" This study will however focus not broadly on vulnerable children but specifically orphaned learners at junior level in primary schools. It will also consider not the schooling status of the affected group, but the challenges they face when in school that affect their academic performance and extend to find what can be done to help them perform better.

Another study made in South Africa again which focused on the academic performance of orphaned primary school children between the age of eight and ten, Magampa (2014) posited that the loss of a parent may contribute towards children showing lack of concentration at school. She added that this may make the affected children perform poorly academically. Magampa (2014) also sought to answer the question of whether or not there is a relationship between orphan-hood and academic performance among primary school going children. She however concluded that there is very limited empirical data on the topic to answer this question. As such, this critical question is still pending. The present study attempts to answer the same question but will however focus not exclusively on the eight to ten aged orphans, but will include any orphan within the junior level of primary school education irrespective of their age. Some might fall outside the normal age limits.

The research establish that all the cited literature broadly covered the case of orphans, but none established the correlation between the challenges facing

orphaned learners and the effect of these challenges on their academic performance, let alone at the junior level of primary education. Magampa (2014) who attempted to establish the relationship between orphan-hood and academic performance among primary school going children concluded that there is very limited research on the topic to answer this question. Her attempt too did not cover specific grade levels. Also, there were no exclusive official data modelling the research problem now to be answered by this study. Thus, there is a research vacuum of 'how these challenges affect the academic performance of learners by specific grade levels' in the Mzilikazi district context. Therefore, there is need to exhaustively carry out a detailed research specifically to fill this gap. In view of the existing knowledge vacuum vis-à-vis the unresolved orphan crisis, this study therefore explores the challenges facing orphaned learners at junior level and then seeks to solicit possible strategies to resolve them.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The challenge of the day now is to resolve the continuing orphan crisis as previous attempts have to date effectively failed. There is virtually no official data by Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZimStats) or the Registrar General's Office of specifically how orphaned learners perform, which possibly hampers any efforts meant to help them perform better. Therefore there is a knowledge crisis too that could confuse key stakeholders and misinformed key decisions in tackling the orphan crisis.

Also, more orphans are reported to be pushed out of school by the day as BEAM which used to fund orphans in schools in no more (UNICEF, 2014). Both state media and private media have alternately red-flagged that more are falling out of school and that most orphans are performing dismally yet none of them did in any way suggest possible strategies to help orphans perform better. In addition, even enrolment in primary schools is said to be too erratic to inform government fiscal planning (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2014). Worryingly too, the failure by ZimStats and the Registrar General's Office to publish exclusive official data on how challenges affecting orphans are affecting their academic performance confuses key decision makers. The Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe (BSPZ)

Merit Awards (2015) bemoaned that Matabeleland North schools perform dismally in Grade 7 exams(Chronicle June 2013), and asserted that only a handful pupils attaining four units from all the primary schools in the province. Since Bulawayo is also in Matabeleland with results not as high as in other Provinces like Manicaland and Mashonaland, the researcher got interested in finding out if orphans contribute too

This researcher, being a primary school teacher by profession, was naturally privileged to analyse the performance of learners in her class and discovered that a number of those not doing well in school are orphans. She then inquired performance of learners in other classes and got the same results. With further investigations, the researcher found out that prior to the death of a parent or parents of some orphans, most of the learners were doing well in school but suddenly changed with the death of parents. in her preliminary probe, the researcher found out that prior to the death of a parent or parents of most orphans, they were performing high in class but suddenly dipped with the death of parents. She then read the Education Management Report released in 2016 which also stated that some of the orphans went to the extent of dropping out before even completing Grade 7.The researcher established the effects of the challenges are real.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is therefore:

- To map the challenges facing orphaned learners at junior level of primary school education in Mzilikazi District.
- To find out the impact of these challenges on orphaned learners' academic performance.
- c. To solicit strategies to help orphaned learners improve on their academic performance.

1.4 Research Questions

The research will be guided by the following questions:

- What challenges do orphaned learners at junior level of primary school in

Mzilikazi District face?

- How do these challenges impact on their academic performance?
- What can be done to help orphaned learners improve on their academic performance?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Subject to the responses to the research questions above, the following entities are projected to benefit from the findings of this study:

1.5.1 Educators

The research will provide information about the learning challenges facing orphaned learners in the classroom and at home to educators. Both teachers and school heads will be able to identify orphaned learners who need help or support such as guidance or material support to help the learners overcome their challenges and improve academically. Since teachers are the ones who spend more time with the learners, they must be able to identify problem areas that affect the learners in the classroom and acquire the correct techniques in dealing with the orphans such as counselling, discipline and classroom management. When this is correctly acquired, it can help to improve learning. The research can also assist teachers in mobilising other parents and strategies to help and minimise the learning challenges facing orphaned learners. When efficiently done, workshops and staff developments can be organised to inform stakeholders on how to address some of the challenges facing orphans in the educational systems.

1.5.2 Learners

It is the researcher's wish to help learners especially orphans to be responsible and be positive in their learning regardless of challenges. The research is therefore going to attempt to inform learners of the support system that is available in their community which can assist when they need help. The research will help the orphans try to accept loss of a parent or parents and not view it as the end of the world. Other learners who are not orphans will also benefit in accepting each other, and de-stigmatise their orphaned peers and learn to help those in need.

1.5.3 Other researchers

Other researchers will also refer to this research when they wish to research on topics similar or in line with this one. This therefore means that other researchers will also benefit from this research as they should be able to identify problems that can result to learning challenges in the child. The research will help the other researchers to keep on researching on right attitudes, conducive learning environment, effective learning material support and interventions that would enable them to overcome the learning challenges. Also, possible solutions on the problem are going to be recommended.

1.5.4 The Government

The strategies so solicited will help inform government decision-making. The government departments, particularly the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education could then strategize on how to make the learners' social and academic life at school more comfortable and accommodative. Also, the state will be informed as to how to take appropriative legislative and other measures to ensure that children are not required or permitted to perform work or provide services that are inappropriate for the children's age, (i) or 'place at risk the children's well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral and social development" as 1stipulated in i9(3)(b)(i) the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act 2013.

1.6. Delimitations of the Study

The study confined to primary schools in Mzilikazi District which is in Bulawayo Province. This is because the province school attendance among learners has been low and erratic over the years (Education Report, 2013), and academic performance across the years has been persistently low and random (ZIMSEC, 2018). Focus is the Tshabalala and Mpopoma Cluster because these clusters are in a different widely dispersed geographical frame, and stretch to opposite ends of the study district, hence the orphans had varying backgrounds. In addition these clusters consists of some of the oldest suburbs in the province were many learners stay with their grandparents. This means the researcher considered varying challenges across the orphans to have informed findings.

It confined to both sexes of orphaned students from grade 4 to 7 taking at least two orphans of each sex so that the findings get truly representative of both genders and could be generalised across all orphans irrespective of gender. All the grade level of the focus population, grade 4 to 7 were taken in each target school so that the academic performance registered could be representative of the generality of orphans in that level across all schools despite the how the teachers taught. Grade 4 to 7 were opted because the curriculum gets tougher as pupils proceed beyond Grade 3, and the children would have grown up such that they meet new challenges back home especially household chores that could affect their performance.

This study was done over a period of 10 months between June and March 2018. This period sufficiently covers the period prior to the onset of summative examinations by the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) for examination classes in October/November and comes after the release of Grade 7 results in December. Hence, in the case of learners in the examination classes, it allows analysis the comparison of their academic performance against their challenges prior to sitting their Grade 7 examinations. For non-examination classes, the period sufficiently covers all the three terms in a school calendar during which all forms of assessment of their performance can be done at school level by the school teachers.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The following factors limited this study, hence forced this researcher to adopt counter measures to mitigate their impact:

1.7.1. Time

Teachers outside the sample who could also give fundamental inputs regarding the challenges to orphaned learners in their classes could not find time, nor could the researcher reach them because she would be in class too. it would have been more effective if the research was going to cover a large geographical area to compare if the challenges being faced in Mzilikazi District are the same being faced in, for example, Imbizo District since each location has its own cultures. To compensate for this deficiency, the researcher then decided to draw cluster samples that are truly

and representative of the classes that she could not physically reach. Also, she had to communicate using social media after work with some of the fellow teachers who would have been busy during the day.

1.7.2. Financial Constraints

The researcher could only commute within the budget she afforded, and some remote areas could not be reached because the routine trips needed more money than she could not afford. As such, those remote schools which could provide data relevant to this research could not be physically accessed by the researcher. The study therefore only physically accessed orphaned student and the teachers of only six schools in the district. However, she could access the data of those schools after accessing their contacts from the District Education Offices and would solicit relevant data through interaction with their teachers on social media. Also, at chances, the researcher would utilise teacher workshops at both district level and provincial level to gather relevant data.

1.8 Definition of Terms

a)Orphan – Mentjies et al (2010) defines an orphan as a person under the majority age of eighteen years whose mother, father or both biological parents have passed away (it can also include those whose status are unknown but not those whose living status is unspecified). An orphan, is this case, is the learner whose either one or both parents are dead, or one who doesn't know the where about of his/her parents.

b) Learning – According to Houwer & Moors (2013), learning can be defined as changes in the behaviour of an organism that result from regularities in the environment of the organism. itis in this case, the process at which learners acquire knowledge at school.

c)Learner– Hawkins (1987) says a learner is a someone who is learning a subject or skill. A learner in this study refers to young student mainly those in the elementary phase of their study.

d) Challenges–Hawkins (1987) defines a challenge as something new and difficult which requires great effort and determination. The researcher defines challenges as

psychological, economic, social and physical difficulties facing orphans which hinder them to perform well when learning.

e) Junior Level of Education –The official primary school age is 6-12 years, but under-age and over-age pupils can be found in some primary schools. The Presidential Commission of inquiry into Education and Training (CIET), 1999. This study refers to junior level as primary school learners who are in the 4th Grade up to the 7th Grade. Mostly, they range from 9-12 years.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter brought in the importance of learning and how teachers facilitated this process. It then chronicled the background to the study to brief the learning challenges facing orphans at junior level of education in Zimbabwe as found by other researchers, how these challenges impacted on their academic challenges and previewed the coping strategies which could help the orphans improve on their academic performance. The chapter proceeded to describe the problems caused by this issue with evidence at schools nationally and at individual level which made the main research question worth researching. It then specified the objectives of the study and the research questions, and described the significance of the study, the delimitations and limitations of the study, and explained terms with meanings peculiar to this study. The next chapter will then detail the literature preview to put the study into its theoretical context.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a critical review of the three key areas of primary concern to this study namely the challenges facing orphaned learners in academic performance at junior level of primary school education, how those challenges impact on their academic performance, and the strategies which could help orphaned learners improve on their academic performance. Thus, the chapter looks at different studies to identify different theories explaining these three key areas; then it also reveals related sources that have been used previously in other research works and ultimately demonstrate the gap of knowledge to be filled in this study. This comparative analysis is done to provide an up-to-date and comprehensive understanding of the three research questions, and to illustrate the deficiencies of similar works done within the same or related research area to determine the scope of the existing knowledge gap. Finally, the chapter looks at how the knowledge gained in reviewing published literature helped this researcher design her own study.

2.1 Theoretical Review

This section will essentially identify relevant literature, critical interpret it and evaluate previous scholarly studies in relation to area of this study. The theoretical framework will preview the conceptual impact of selected significantly inter-related concepts guiding this research, as well as to determine both the cases (objects whose characteristics are under study) and the variables (characteristics of the cases) to be measured. Such problem analysis in theoretical context makes the implicit conceptual framework of the study explicit. Once it is explicit, the researcher can then deliberate on other frameworks to assess the research problem from other lenses and inform data collection and analysis. While conceptualizing the research idea, the researcher essentially conceived questions like 'what is the problem that the idea solves', 'who the consumer for the idea is', 'does the idea solve the consumer's problems' and 'how the solution will be delivered to the consumer'. Thus, it is now very important to direct that thinking to specific dimensions and search for

answers to certain questions that help in evolving the idea from the initial thought of just a research problem through the various stages of problem analysis to strategic solutions. A study of literature relevant to the research problem threw many interesting findings which informed the design and conceptualisation of this study. Also, it guided the researcher to assume only relevant theoretical contexts that would make data collection and analysis very feasible in the local settings.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) highlighted that the family manipulates all characteristics of a child's development. This includes the acquisition of language, nutrition, security, health and beliefs. Assuming this tenet, the researcher hence interpreted that logically every child who has the chance to attend school is definitely a result of his/her family, and therefore used more than one method of data collection to account for their varying backgrounds. This interpretation naturally raised the question of the way this relationship between the child and his or her family might manifest at school, be it as either a challenge or facilitation to his/her formal learning. As such, the researcher also observed the behavioural trends of children through interaction. Matseke (981) added that for a learner to excel in all she or he does, it mostly depends more on his/her home situation and social context than on the formal learning at school. His view essentially guided this researcher to assume that formal learning can be either facilitated or challenged by the circumstance of the pupil back home. As such, it became prudent to heed his theoretical argument and explore the effects of difficult life circumstances such as orphan-hood especially on children opting or forced by circumstance to reside and attend school from child-headed households (CHHs). The researcher, thus, figured variations in academic performance as the benchmark to measure the resultant effects of the background challenges on formal learning.

John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (1982) as advocated in Bowlby (1982) developed the theory of attachment which explains that during this early period of life, children develop an inside working model on life expectations and on how their relationships with significant attachment figures should proceed. Attachment itself is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space (Bowlby, 1982). The researcher selected this concept because it sufficiently investigates the associationthat is there between the child and a parent or the

significant figure that make possible the fulfilment of his/her needs from a tender age. Thus, this observation could aptly be tested at the primary level of education where students are still juveniles. This suggested relationship between the child and the parent will also determine the respondents to be targeted. Also, the nature of the relationship described in the theory is hereby assumed to provide an insight into understanding the needs of orphaned learners and the relationship between the learners and the educators that will emerge from the study. Nellie Deutsch (2014) online concurred with that observation in his statement, "positive emotions such as love, excitement, enthusiasm and joy enhance the ability to process information and create permanent mental programs". Nellie Deutsch (2014) online also emphasised that learning cannot take place unless the learner feels safe.The researcher therefore conceptualised a responsive design approach to help create a more innovative and sustainable learning environment which acknowledges that the environment shapes the learner, and that learners influence their environment. Furthermore, this approach informed the researcher on how to solicit strategies which would make the learner feel safe. Hence, various groups of orphans across grade levels were at instances randomly studied irrespective of the age factor.

Sousa (1998) then propounded the brain-based learning theory which entails that the ability to learn must be based on previous interests and emotional interaction with reason to support or inhibit learning. Sousa (1998) further explained that the way students feel in the classroom will determine the amount of attention they apply during lesson. It is therefore very important for learners to feel relaxed and safe in the learning environment. The researcher therefore considered that emotional disturbance has negative impact to orphaned students during the learning process. Assuming the empirical evidence adopted to formulate this theory, she also considered that emotional disturbance can therefore occur to any student however depending on the school setting and can challenge learning. There is therefore a relationship to be explored between such challenges to learning and the academic performance of the very affected student.

According to Bowly (1982), a bond is established between a child and a parent or caregiver that is mutual in that the child seeks protection from the parent or caregiver, who provides safety and security for the child. This therefore entails that

when a child has lost a parent through death, there is a great gap and torture even emotionally. The significant figure that the child was attached to, to provide the needs, will no longer be there. Thus, the child tends to feel lost. The researcher had to probe to what extent that feeling of being lost is challenges in learning, and to inform what mechanism could be devised to return the sense of belonging to the child.

According to Bolen (2000), the attachment theory supports the relationship that bonds a child to the parent and facilitates the fulfilment of the child's needs. It is expected that parents must provide for their children's material and non-material needs, including emotional and social needs (Karoly *et al.*, 2005). It is the duty of the parent to provide these and it is the right of the child to be supported by the parent with the above-mentioned. The attachment theory states that, from the infant stage right through the first early years of life, maintenance of closeness and availability of attachment figures is crucial to child development (Bowlby, 1982). The tenets of this theory guided the researcher explore information from the perspective of both groups and individuals and to generate case studies and summaries rather than lists of numeric data. Also, the theory indicated the need to analyse the early years of child development. The researcher had to focus on children at primary level of education and assumed the qualitative approach which is to be used when we do not know what to expect, how to define the issues, or lack an understanding or why and how affected populations are impacted by a situation, events or practices as advised by Silverman (2006). The researcher also considered orphans as typical and coded them during data collection in conformity with (Gibson, 2006) who regarded children as "of the same type".

In another view, Bittman (2006) advocated that the foundation of the attachment theory posits that children are born with a tendency to attach themselves to the parent or caregiver, and their behaviour is geared towards maintaining closeness with the parents. This means that when the parent or caregiver is around, the child feels safe and secure. Since the experiences of children are observed to vary with circumstance, the researcher assumed thematic analysis since the analysis also goes further to interpret various aspects of the research topic. Ogina (2007) even added that the experiences that most of the orphans gethint that they have no

secure support to turn to when they are in need of material, emotional and social support. This observation then guided the researcher to realise the insecurity of such orphans, and to consider strategies that could be solicited to resolve their crisis. Also, preliminary observations locally which are assumed to be empirical, have also indicated that orphaned children suffer mental stresses and anxiety manifested in the manner they socialise or isolate themselves. Yet researchers such as Cluver and Gardiner (2007) asserted that very little is known about challenges that affect orphans' mental health. More so, this framework directed the researcher to study the academic performance of orphans in relation to their challenges and weigh against possible strategies on a case-by-case basis which is appropriate where research is conducted in an area where few previous studies have been done there. The researcher will articulate the opinions, views, experiences and observations gained from the most related studies to answer the research questions. The researcher then organized this reviewed literature and linked it to the research question /problem.

Having gained insightful knowledge from the literature reviewed, the researcher established that the challenges affecting orphaned learners might be mainstream but their impact on the academic performance of the affected orphan differ on every orphan. As such, this helped the researcher to make an informed decision on conceptualizing this study, hence had to opt for the case study design so as to consider orphaned learners on a case-by-case basis. The researcher also established that this was a purely qualitative researcher as the impact could not be quantified.

2.2 What challenges do orphaned learners at junior level of primary school education face?

Miller (2008) who made a study in Ethiopia on Educational Access for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) noted that many orphans living with relatives either fail to go to school due to failure of having school fees or go there without uniforms and books.The outcome of her research indicated that when proper care, motivation and supportis givenby the community members and as well as at school, the orphans will be able to reveal and share their struggleswhich will enable them to get help (Miller, 2007). However, the approach omitted participant observation in the classroom that

would have allowed the researcher to observe behavioural patterns of orphaned learners and their participation in class. This omission could have compromised the depth of the findings on the challenges which manifest during the learning process, and how pupils feel when so challenged. This researcher then

In a study focused on investigating the plight of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in South Africa, Agyakwa (2012) aimed at disclosing the plight of the OVCs in terms of their financial situation, health, emotional conditions, the education, status of grant benefits, family support and public perceptions of the children. Agyakwa (2012) mentioned Atkinson (2000) who had propounded that material resources consist of paper supplies and writing materials such as pens, eraser, exercise books, crayon, chalk, drawing books, notebooks, pencil, ruler, slate, workbooks and so on. These are needed during learning of every child. This researcher will however assess not only the orphans in terms of the same variables identified by Agyakwa (2012) but also use participant observation and interact with pupils during the learning process to assess which learners are performing low and whether the pattern of their academic performance across the school terms to derive valid and reliable findings. The researcher will also focus on learners at primary school, junior level

According to Abashula, Jibat, and Ayele (2014) who focused on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Sub-Sahara, these OVCs are more vulnerable to various types of disease due to lack of appropriate nutrition, clothes, houses, hygiene care and their exposure to disease causing polluted environment. With poor health conditions, one cannot expect good performance from learners. Lack of educational material support as well as poor social interactions were the other challenges brought out from the research (Abashula *et al*, 2014). According to Abashula *et al* (2014) there is little/no time for the OVCs to interact with the significant others including their parent/guardians who play vital role in their socialization. Thus, they are poor in their social skills and exhibit deviant behaviours which are potentially harmful to the community (Abashula *et al*, 2014). With the poor social skills and that deviant behaviour, it is impossible for the child to perform well at school. Based on the observation of poor social skills on the part of orphaned learners, this researcher will interact extensively with orphans during co-curricular

activities to observe their skills set and assess their behavioural deviation from the expected normal. Abashul *et al* (2014) also found that educational materials like uniforms and stationary were also identified as a major challenge that is faced by OVCs. Shortage of these materials will make the learner feel out of place and reduce the concentration span of the child. The researchers however focused on all orphans and vulnerable children who included the abandoned, and the physically and mentally handicapped children. The researchers did not involve the teachers to find out what challenges indeed affect the children at school, instead it focused on what the communities say about those challenges. This researcher sought to establish the real problems manifesting in the class by personally assessing the academic performance of orphaned learners and deepened her analysis through interaction with colleague teachers.

In her study on the academic performance of orphaned primary school learners aged between eight and ten years in South Africa, Magampa (2014) explained that a pupil's achievement is dependent more on his/her home condition and social context than on the formal learning at school. Magampa (2014) further stated that a person with a high intellectual potential may perform poorly because of number of non-intellectual factors emanating from home and physical living condition. Magampa (2014) mentioned Mooketsi (1996) who had investigated the non-intellectual psychosocial factors emerging from home and scholastic achievement of high school pupils in South Africa and found a slight positive relationship between self-concept and scholastic achievement. Magampa (2014) on the other hand investigated psychological effects of parental death on primary school children and found that the death of parents causes negative behaviour. The studies do suggest that there is merit in carrying out more investigations regarding the crisis of orphans in schools. However, this study will still focus on specifically public primary schools which have the biggest proportion of orphans but will go beyond the age bracket of between eight and ten to focus on the entire junior level of primary school education and acknowledge that the ages of learners within that level vary and it is not strictly age that determines the grade level of an orphan. The restriction of the eight to ten age bracketis not an inclusive depiction of orphans. The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative component of the study included the sampling

of 200 learners from ten schools in Mankweng circuit. One hundred learners formed the experimental group (orphans) whilst another hundred were placed in the comparison group (non-orphans). Availability and quota sampling was used for sampling the experimental group and simple random sampling was used to sample the comparison group.

2.3 How do these challenges facing orphaned learners affect their academic performance?

In another study, Rozana (2009) looked at the lives of the stunted children usingloadedfacts set that presentsinformation on a number ofconservative and exceptional aspects. She looked at their households, the type of food they consumed, theirinsight on their own lives, and their psychosocial outcomes and how it all this negatively affected cognitive learning. Rozana (2009) mentioned Ramey *et al* (2000) who had posited that when one of these needs are lacking, not only does it create a problem when it comes to that basic need, but deprivations also carry over into other aspects of the child's life such as cognitive learning. Rozana (2009) found that the children who were continually stunted during the middle age of childhood came from families that are typically poorer in terms of earnings. Rozana (2009) added most of these children's parents have poorer and feel less included in their communities. He also posits that these children are most likely to belong to a backward caste and are more likely to be from child-headed families hence orphaned. Rozanaalso (2009)pointed out that even the caregivers of the persistently stunted children seem to be suffering from a low sense of inclusion compared to the caregivers of children who were never stunted.

Rozana (2009) mentioned that Dercon and Sanchez (2008) who had found that clear evidence that stunting early on in childhood has serious adverse effects on a child's cognitive and psychosocial abilities later at age 12, in all four Young Lives countries Ethiopia, Peru Vietnam and India; and that this negatively. As such, Rozana (2009) posited that such condition is a challenge to learning. However, the major weakness in Rozana (2009) is that he focused strictly on stunted children, yet stunted children are not synonymous with orphaned children; there is need to focus on the double-disadvantaged, whichis those stunted who are orphans too. Also, he did not account for the hereditary information of the affected children, and did not specify how it indeed challenged learning, if ever. This researcher will specifically analyse how every condition of the orphan affects academic performance.

Though Rozana (2009) also cited Lambert (2008) who concurred that when a child lacks proper health care, she or he may suffer from chronic conditions that elevate pain, once again elevating stressors and impeding daily functioning. They did not determine the extent of the impact of such challenges on academic performance, which is central to this study. Also, they did not analyse the challenges within the school setting to determine the environmental impact as will be done in this study yet Burleson and Thoron (2014) pointed out that after physiological needs have been met, there is need to satisfy the safety needs which are generally concerned with the environment either at home, at school or elsewhere. If a child has a bad home life (fighting parents, addicted parents, absent parents, etcetera) or lives in an unsafe neighbourhood, the child will have trouble focusing on learning when he/she does not feel secure.

Studying how learners between the age of eight and ten perform academically in South Africa, Magampa (2014) mentioned Matseke (1981) who posited that poor social conditions can create an environment that is disadvantageous to academic performance of the learner. She cited Ramey and Campbell (1991) who had pointed out that a hungry child becomes preoccupied with food and will find it harder to concentrate on anything else, adversely affecting their academic performance. If a child isn't getting enough to eat, they'll never be able to concentrate. A lack of proper shelter or other essentials in the physical surroundings of the child's home can create problems in social or general development.This observation omits the fact that some schools do provide food to school children as was the case in this study.In agreement is Anderson et al (2014)'s case study done in Zimbabwe on children affected by HIV. They concluded that most affected come from families that fail to acquire basic need and this causes barriers to school attendance as they come late or don't come at all. They proceed to explain that the participation is also affected by lack of school material, food, bullying and social exclusion. The study focused on HIV affected but highlighted that most of them come from impoverished families which might also be the same case with the orphans. She also cited Eckenrode *et al* (1993) who concluded that of all the maltreated children, neglected children showed the poorest outcomes on academic performance, and physically abused children showed the most discipline problems. This study also borrows the relationship between orphan-hood and academic performance but instead focuses on the junior

level of education who are more conscious of their environment. Magampa (2014) also corroborate a study conducted by Rozana (2009) who found out that the death of a mother increases the chance that a child fails to write by 15 % and failure to read words or sentence by round 27%. However, Magampa (2014) confined her assessment to summative assessment by the national examining body which omitted the day-to-day effects performance patterns.

In seeking answers to her research questions, Magampa (2014) also proposed an assumption that educators will tend to believe that orphaned children in generalhave poor academic performance and that they are beset by several psychosocial problems. Magampa (2014) assumed that educators are homogeneous and are equally myopic to the extent she indicated. However, this researcher will interact extensively with the rank and file of educators to determine how each assessed the impact of challenges facing learners on their academic performance. This study therefore borrowed from Tadesse *et al* (2014) who explored the psychological problems and coping strategies of orphans and vulnerable children in Ethiopia to for the researcher to conclude that since the OVC suffered from stress, depression and other emotional problems which were rooted from their lack of parental love from staff, particularly care givers and with that depression, children fail to concentrate on their school work.It is therefore very important to assess how these challenges impact on their academic performance. Magampa (2014) omitted in-class behavioural patterns of orphaned learners yet one of the signs that show a child is being abused might be sleeping regularly during the lessons which would mean that there is no learning taking place when a child is sleeping. Therefore, this researcher observed orphaned learners in-class during the learning process to model how the challenges affect their academic performance.

2.4 What can be done to help orphaned learners improve on their academic performance?

Orphaned students are facing a number of challenges and these include lack of fees and learning material, lack of parental love, lack of basic needs, sexual abuse for girls *etc.* and these hinder orphaned students in acquiring better education. Also, foundation skills which include literacy and numeracy are foundational skills that are used to continue learning other subjects. The acquisition of these skills at an early stage helps to predict the later educational success, hence it is necessary to keep children at a tender age in school. Researchers therefore came up with different interventions that can help these orphans to acquire better education.

In his investigation into the plight of orphans and vulnerable children in the two high schools in the Libode district in the former Transke in South Africa, Agyakwa (2012) concluded that the problems of the orphans are of such magnitude that only long-term government intervention can address them. This study will however focus specifically on orphaned children and will not limit the community response to only the government. Also, the previous researcher also gathered information from the teachers and school heads ignoring the caregivers and people from the community, thus forgetting that the child's environment does not start and end at school. This researcher will personally gather primary data in-class during the learning process and will also fuse in secondary data from colleague teachers in other classes or from other schools. Agyakwa (2012) also cited Carroll and Boker (2003) who had conducted a research addressing the educational needs of orphans and vulnerable children in London who found numerous strategies to help orphans and vulnerable children. These included open distance and flexible learning (ODFL), school feeding programmes and index for inclusion to enable learners who fail to come to school for a period either caring for the sick or for their siblings to be at home, be able to engage in home discussions or even learn the concepts being learnt at school during their absence (Carroll and Boker,2003). The inherent weakness of this analysis is that it underplays or even omits the role of the teacher in-class who is the chief instructor in the learning process. Agyakwa (2012) also advocated the QEDC (2008) initiative which noted that many poor children, including girls and other educationally disadvantaged groups, are going to school but only a few are learning. This researcher therefore studied both sexes of orphans to test this claim.

Agyakwa (2012) added that the global targets set by the Education for All goals and the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals have succeeded in making the centre point of the donors and government interest and investment on making sure that more children go to school. He argues that because of that fact, in the two poorest regions of the world, student enrolments have dramatically increased over the past decade (Agyakwa, 2012). In South Asia, it was noted that from 1999 almost 30 million new studentsenrolled in the education system, and 20 millionin sub-Saharan Africain the same period (Seddoh, 2010). Agyakwa (2012) acknowledged that while such rapid growth is laudable and unprecedented, this massive expansion of schooling has significantly strained existing education systems. Hewlett Foundation's Global Development Program (2008) report points out that teacher and resource shortages are severe with teacher to pupil ratios being very high in the sub-Saharan Africa with 47:1 and South Asia having 35:1. This is far high especially when compared with developed countries which have 17:1 ratios. According to a report issued by UNESCO (2006), it is the responsibility of the sub-Saharan Africa region to hire more teachers of about 1.6 million in less than a decade so that they keep up with the increasing levels of enrolments.These system-wide statistics do not show the differences by grade as some classes hold as many as 60 students in one room. The statistics also do not reveal issues that are perhaps more threatening than the shortages of teachers and facilities. Among these are the lack of effective teaching practice and very little attention to and accountability for student learning among teachers and education managers.

Considered collectively, the cited researchers also concluded that all schools should aim for inclusive education. This means minimising all barriers to learning and participation, whoever experiences them and wherever they are located within the cultures, policies and practices of a school. This is also supported by Adefrsew (2003) who conducted studies in the Americas on how the environment can be adjusted to conduce learning. He propelled that creating an enabling environment is another way of making the orphans free to disclose their problems and through discussing the learner may improve his or her communication skills, build friendship and be motivated to learn (Adefrsew, 2003). He advocated for strategies that were established by teachers to ensure that orphans learn effectively. These include

establishing scheme on identifying orphaned students which will assist in the seeking of assistance from the government in terms of fees, keeping records of number of orphaned students so that they can easily be reached for the support, and to put more emphasis on cooperation among teachers with orphaned students especially to take concern about them in teaching and learning process, as well as to create a spirit of solidarity among orphaned students and non- orphaned students in the class to do away with discrimination and despises (Adefrsew, 2003). The questionnaires used on this research will be borrowed to help in getting information from the teachers and care givers. Nevertheless, this study will appreciate that not all respondents will be literate enough, hence will consider respondents on a case-by-case basis. However, the research focused on getting information on helping learners from teachers and school heads only leaving out the community who also contribute to the learning of the learners. This study also went beyond Adefrsew (2003) who focused on just adjusting the environment, to solicit any relevant strategies which would help orphaned learners improve on their academic performance.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a critical review of the three key areas of primary concern to this study namely the challenges facing orphaned learners in academic performance at junior level of primary school education, the impact of those challenges on their academic performance, and the strategies which would help orphaned learners improve on their academic performance. The chapter also identified relevant literature, critically interpreted it and evaluated previous scholarly studies in relation to area of this study Thus, the chapter looked at different studies to identify different theories explaining these three key areas, then it also revealed related sources that have been used previously in other research works and ultimately demonstrated the gap of knowledge to be filled in this study. This comparative analysis provided an up-to-date and comprehensive understanding of the three research questions; illustrated the deficiencies of similar works done within the same or related research area and determined the scope of the existing knowledge gap.The next chapter will focus on the methodology used in this research.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter illustrates the methodology used in this study. The research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments and data collection procedures are discussed. Details of data presentation and analysis techniques, the ethical issues that the researcher observed during this study and the chapter summary complete this chapter.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurements, and analysis of data (Kothari, 2004). In general, the research designsseek out to show the steps used to gather and analyse information in order to relate to the research objectives (Eisner, 1991). This researcher adopted the case study design under the qualitative approach. This decision follows the research insight gained from the reviewed literature which indicated that the effect of challenges on orphaned learners differed from orphan to orphan, hence the phenomenon would best be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Yin (2003) also supported that the qualitative case study is an intensive description and analysis of a single individual or sometimes group and enlightened that the strength of case study is in answering the "how" questions, thereby providing a deep understanding of the phenomena. This view is corroborated by Family Health information (2005) who noted that its data is based on the participants' own categories of meaning, thereby providing deep understanding and description of people's personal experiences of phenomena.

Babbie (2008) acknowledged that the case study design under the qualitative approach is useful in studying limited number of cases in depth and describing complex phenomena. He concluded that it is therefore generally appropriate where research is conducted in an area where few previous studies have been done there, as was the case in this study whereby the phenomena of learning challenges faced by orphans is an under-researched area, especially in Bulawayo-Zimbabwe. Furthermore, in view of the research objectives guiding this study, the researcher

seeks to find trustworthy answers to the key "how" research questions of how challenges affect academic performance of orphans. Thus, the case study under the qualitative approach best suits this phenomenon.

3.2 POPULATION

Polit and Hungler (1999) defines population as the totality of subjects or objects under study. A target research or focus population is the group upon which the researcher is interested in making inferences (Donald and Pamela, 2003). The focus population of this study were orphaned learners at junior level of primary school education in Mzilikazi District under Bulawayo Province of Zimbabwe, members of the community especially the guardians to the orphaned learners, and teachers found in such primary schools. Orphaned learners were used in this study as they are the ones expected to have more immediateinformation about the challenges that they encounter in generalduring the learning process.It is also expected that the orphans are the ones who would give more details about the effects of the challenges that they encounterin normal school settings. The researcher selected teacher participants based on their role as classroom teachers, experience in teaching at selected schools, possession of relevant knowledge of the subject matter and issues pertaining to orphaned learners and related issues that would enrich the study, and their willingness to participate in the study. Teachers and heads of schools would assist with vital information as they spend much of their time with orphaned learners during teaching and learning process and are the assessors of academic performance, hence they can give more information about the effects of the challenges facing orphaned students in academic performance. Guardians/SDC members are the ones living with the orphaned children when they are out of school and they would know most of the background challenges they face at home which would possibly hinder their academic performance.

3.3 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

A sample is a sub-unit of the population that allows the researcher to produce accurate generalizations about the population (De Vos, 1998), and Kothari (2003) urged that the most advantageous sample is the one that fulfils the requirements of efficiency, representative, reliability and flexibility. The research drew a sample of 90

respondents comprising 48 orphaned learners, 24 teachers, 6 school administrators, 6 guardians and 6 members of the School Development Committee(SDC) to represent the community; all to be drawn proportionately across 6 randomly sampled schools. Each of these samples is now here below described:

1. Orphaned Learners

To yield 48 orphaned learners, 2 were drawn from each of the 4 grades across the entire junior level randomlyper sex at grade levelat each of the selected 6 schools, so that there is equal chance or likelihood of every orphaned learner to be drawn. However, the grades and schools were purposefully sampled so that the sample covered the whole junior level and the whole Tshabalala-Mpopomacluster.

2. Teachers

The drawing of the sample of teachers was congruent to the selection of orphaned learners as their study focuses on the same subject of academic performance in class. To give a total of 24 teachers, 4 were drawn from each school of the 4 grades across the entire junior level randomly at grade level so that there is equal chance or likelihood of every teacher to be drawn. Amongst the selected teachers, the researcher purposefully selected 1 Life Oriented teachers (Guidance and counselling teachers) from each school. However, the grades and schools where they teach were purposefully sampled so that the sample covered the whole junior level and the whole Tshabalala-Mpopoma cluster.

3. School Administrators

The sample of school administrators is only 6, and was drawn from schools within the cluster which was purposefully selected as they are the school administrators of the already randomly selected schools.

4. Guardians

Likewise, the sample of guardians is only 6, and was drawn from orphaned learners from all the schools within the cluster randomly so that there is equal chance or likelihood of every parent or guardian to be drawn. The random sampling technique

also ensured that neither orphaned learner nor their guardian was stigmatized.

5. SDC Members

This sample is only 6 and was drawn from all the schools within the cluster randomly so that the researcher gathers collective views to inform inclusive strategies on how best to help orphaned learners improve on their performance.The random sampling technique also ensured that no school was stigmatized.

Purposeful sampling was considered above as it assisted the withdrawal of specific data central to the research objectives (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). As Ball,1990, cited in Cohen *et al*, 2007: 115) further stated, "purposeful sampling is used to access 'knowledgeable people' that is, those who have in-depth knowledge regarding issues at hand, maybe because of their professional role, power, access to networks, expertise or experience". In addition, the method is useful in selecting unique participants, those that are especially informative from a difficult-to-reach (Neuman, 1997). Specifically, Marc *et al* (2005) highlighted that purposeful sampling is a useful method to investigate the specific experiences of most vulnerable children. The 6 schools were randomly sampled to ensure that the researcher results are representative and can be generalized, based on Ghosh's (1992) assertion that the smaller the target population, the larger should be the sample and vice-versa. Also, it ensured the researcher accessed orphaned learners and teachers with different characteristics such age, sex and class of the population. This was achieved by writing all the names of the primary schools that are in Mzilikazi District in the Tshabalala-Sizinda clusters. The name of each school separately on a piece of paper, folding the pieces of paper and placing them in a container where they would be thoroughly mixed up before picking up at random one name of primary school after the other until 6 schools (sample size) were selected. The names of the schools picked would therefore represent the sample of the proposed study.

3.4 RESEARCH (OR DATA COLLECTION) INSTRUMENTS

Research instruments are tools that facilitate the collection of data from the research respondents drawn so as to answer the research questions. This researcher selected instruments that are compatible with the case study design under the qualitative approach. Each research instrument has to suit nature of the respondent, and has to effectively probe sincere responses that best answer the research questions.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

Chiromo (2009) posited that a questionnaire is a form of inquiry which includes gathered and organized series of questions that are sent to the population samples. These can either be structured or non-structured questionnaires. Self-report questionnaires for teachers and school heads were designed to capture both descriptive and qualitative data concurrently through structured and non-structured questions, as they are professionals who are literate in English, and competent to self-evaluate. These open-ended questions essentially sought information on the challenges facing orphans in class, how such challenges were impacting on their academic performance during summative assessments, and what they thought would best resolve these challenges, hence answer the research problem. The questionnaires also sought information on the possible interventions that could be utilised to mitigate the challenges. The closed questions sought to assess their role as classroom teachers, and to solicit demographic data that would determine their experience in teaching at selected schools, possession of relevant knowledge of the subject matter and issues pertaining to orphaned learners that would enrich the study. Qualitative data from non-structured questions were typed into text, coded and categorised into themes ready for analysis. Qualitative data were analysed alongside descriptive data to provide an overview of the teacher support, challenges and possible interventions to mitigate the identified challenges.

Questionnaires have the advantage of being handy in managing voluminous data. Harvey (2012) pointed out that questionnaires allow large amounts of information to be collected from many people within a short period of time and in a relatively cost-effective way. The questionnaires were of utility as the researcher was financially constrained to physically access the full geographical focus area under study. Also,

recorded responses can also be analysed later in ample time. Additionally, they eased the solicitation of responses from teachers as the researcher would share them on social media and emails without the need to physically visit the respondents. Also, questionnaires give well-clarified questions thereby extinguishing the need to explain to the educated respondents as they are easy to administer and analyse (Harvey, 2012). On an important ethical issue, anonymity is maintained. The researcher would not be able to identify any respondent by name and other personal features. This ensured that no orphaned learner could be stigmatized. Questionnaires, however do have limitations. According to Patton (2002), the construction of questionnaires requires skill to guard against ambiguity in phrases, choices of words, overloading the questions and making the questionnaire unnecessarily too long for the respondents. Also, it can only be best interpreted by the literate respondents. To overcome these limitations, the researcher took time to so design questions to fully cover all aspects of the topic and include open-ended questions which would allow the respondents to respond in their own words on some aspects. Also, the researcher used questionnaires on teachers and school administrators who are professionals, hence literate and competent enough to interpret them. Questionnaires remained first choice as they solicit both qualitative and quantitative data to yield informed answers to the key research problem of how the challenges facing orphaned learners affect their academic performance in school Patton (2002). Kothari (2003) explained that the combination of more than one method of data collection (that is Questionnaires and Interviews) in a study results in more qualified data, hence the researcher also used interview guides on other respondents.

3.4.2. Interview

Fontana and Frey (2005) defined an interview as a conversation between two or more people where questions are asked by the interviewer to extract facts or statements from the interviewee. In another view, Gray (2009) stated that an interview is a dialogue between two people in which one person has the role of being the researcher. In this study, structured interviews were used to obtain information from orphaned learners, their guardians and the community representatives. A structured interview has a series of questions written down on a piece of paper and

the process involves asking these questions verbally and then noting down the answers given, hence of utility when the respondent is literate, or geographically far from the researcher. Interviews have the advantage that responses can be elicited from respondents who are illiterate in a relaxed environment.

However, face-to-face interviews have the potential of exposing the respondent, hencepossibly cause stigmatisation. Also, interviews generally demand more time and money to meet interview appointments, yet the researcher was both time-limited and financially constrained. This limitation conforms to Patton (2002) who pointed out that different situations will generate different responses so that a great deal of effort must be made to analyse the data systematically to find patterns within it. To overcome these challenges, the researcher also conducted such interviews over the telephone and recorded the voice notes, hence no need for physical appointments. The researcher only needed to replay and listen to the voice notes, hence saving the time of jotting down and reading through. Also, this ensured the generally anonymity of the respondent. Over and above, interviews are useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences and still maintain anonymity when done over the telephone (Briggs, 2000). Patton (2002) added that the interviews allow for more information to be collected, they enhance flexibility and cross-examination due to the preserve of the interviewer and they reduce incidences of non-response. They also provide easier access to confidential information in a face-to-face situation. interviews are easier for the primary school junior learners to respond as some cannot complete questionnaires. The same is true for the elderly parents or guardians and community representatives who may now be tending illiterate. This observation conformed to Education Report (2013: 24) which found that "generally, literacy decreased with age".

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Clearance to carry out the study was acquired from Midlands State University (MSU). Then, the clearance to conduct the study in primary schools under the administration of Bulawayo Province was granted by the Provincial Education Director's Office. The researcher proceeded to get a clearance to access primary schools in Mzilikazi District was granted by the District Education Office. Written

consent to participate in the study was sought from parents/guardians of the learners and from teachers who participated in the study.

The questionnaires were piloted in November 2017 in one public primary school in Mzilikazi District with research peers where teachers, orphaned learners and their guardians, each group being six in total, were randomly sampled and initially all administered to complete questionnaires. To validate the questionnaires, respondent validation was done which according to Silverman (2001) is where membersin the pilot were taken through their responses in the questionnaire to establish whether the questions and responses matched their own experiences. The proposals that were given by participants were used to improve the questionnaire used in this study to collect data from teachers and school heads. The researcher realised that some educators preferred anonymous responses and discovered that not all orphaned learners and guardians were literate enough to complete the questionnaires. As such, the researcher sought to use the option of interviews on these two groups. Also, the researcher then decided to use randomly sampling only to draw schools to be studied but change to purposeful sampling to draw the sample of the 90 respondents. Letters of the alphabet were used by the researcher to categorize the schools that participated,whereas the participants were allocated codes to identify learners and teachers and the schools they came from. During actual data collection, orphaned learners were given the code 'OL' while teachers were coded 'T'. Each code was given a number to indicate whether the participant was number 1, 2 or 3 from a given school, in school A, B or C. Therefore, in establishing who said what, the codes were indicated as follows: OL3SD denoting orphaned learner 3 who is from school D, T12SC denoting teacher 12 who is from school C. The researcher mentioned no names of participants or schools to enhance confidentiality and to de-stigmatize groups which could have be affected. Actual data collection, revised to now use both questionnaires and interviews, was conducted between January and February 20i8.

3.6 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES (OR PLAN)

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) claim that data analysis is the process of arranging and storing data. It is an interactive process that starts with initial interviews, observations

and reading documents. It additionally allows the researcher to create patterns of categories, deduce themes from the patterns, and develop generalizations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, cited in Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). Significantly, it allows for bringingtogether and interpreting the participants' views, thereby producing rich, detailed and authentic descriptions (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992).Qualitative data analysis is an iterative process aimed at understanding how participants make meaning of the phenomenon under study (Nieuwenhuis, 2011). Data are to be presented in a narrative form, articulating the opinions, views, experiences and observations gained from the study and be presented in the context of themes established and defined based on the research's objectives and questions since the answers to the research questions are of qualitative design and cannot be quantified. This process conforms to the view by De Vos (1998) who posited that data analysis must serve to categorize, order, manipulate and summarize gathered data to obtain answers to research questions, the purpose of the analysis is to reduce data to a legible and interpretable form so that the relationships of the research problems could be studied and conclusions could be drawn.Interpretation refers to the assignment of significance or coherent meaning to the data, and data are interpreted by giving them meaning, translating them or making them understandable. Therefore, open-ended questions which elicited qualitative data were analyzed according to themes based on the research questions and the objectives, and thereafter inferences and conclusions will be drawn.

The researcher will analyze data using thematic analysis which is one of several methods of qualitative data analysis. According the Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative data analysis involves methods of interpreting data or themes from content, conversations or loosely structured interviews, and then tells a logical story. The open-ended nature of these methods allows for more flexibility and gives a chancein identifying factors and practical tactics than the formal structured quantitative approach, (Struss, 1987). Thematic analysis, which this research will useis a qualitative analytic method in order toidentify, analyze and report patterns (themes) within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Data from interviews and focus group discussion and questionnaire were transcribed and those scripts that were vernacular language were translated into English. Data were hence organized and

maintained, categories and themes were developed based on the responses to the interview questions.

Thematic analysis simply organizes and describes data set in adetailed manner, but also repeatedly goes on to interpret a variety of aspects of the research topic, (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Gibson (2006) posited that thematic analysis is an approach to deal with data that involves the creation and application of codes to data, and the data being analyzed may take any number of forms such as an interview transcript, field notes, policy documents, photographs or video footage. The researcher also coded data as informed by the pilot study. Coding refers to the construction of categories in relation to data. It can also mean the grouping together of different cases of datum under an umbrella term which canmake it possible them to be considered as of the same type (Gibson, 2006). Since the purpose of this research was to assess the challenges faced by orphaned learners, the most appropriate method of coding adopted was relational coding.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is known thatinterviews do not offer a high degree of confidentiality like the questionnaires, the researcher therefore made sure that the contributions and the identities of the respondentswere confidential throughout the study. The researcher obtained assent from the guardians of the learners for them to participatein the study. The guardians were made aware of the pros and cons aspects or consequences of participation. Consent for participation was obtained from the educators as well.According to Ghosh 1992), privacy refers to an individual's right to be free from intrusion or interference by other. Roberts (2003) notes that data protection forms the most important area of privacy protection regarding collection and processing of research data and publication of results. Research ethics principles concerning the protection of privacy fall into three categories, that is, firstly, protecting research data and confidentiality; secondly, storing and disposing of research data; and thirdly, research publications, (Roberts, 2003). Vaughan and Chong (2011) argue that the targetis to be able to balance confidentiality and the openness of science and research. The Helsinki National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (2009) supposes that, in some instances data with identifiers can

be collected and used when this is appropriate from the viewpoint of that research. However, with consent of the subject, data can be stored for secondary research with identifiers since research in the humanities, social and behavioural sciences may require processing and storage of identifiers, (Roberts, 2003). In maintaining this code of conduct on privacy and data protection, the researcher is going to ensure that respondents fill in questionnaires without being exposed whether physically or in published research results. In addition, all interviews and discussions with key informants will be conducted privately, that is, on a one-to-one basis without any third party.

The researcher intend to observe the ethical obligation on confidentiality which Babbie and Mouton (2011) identify as the duty of an individual or organization to protect entrusted information. Confidentiality includes obligations to protect information from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, loss or theft, (Babbie and Mouthon, 2011). In addition Ghosh (1992) points out that confidentiality determines the extent to which research data may sensibly be expected to or not to recognize an individual or organization. Meanwhile, Nelson (2010) talks about shared confidentiality where, in some cases organizations and/or professionals are compelled by law to revealinformation when a client is at any form of risk. In observing the principle of confidentiality, the researcher will ensure that all the data to be collected is kept safely and out of unauthorized parties by ensuring that data kept as software has a password-protected and the one in hardware is kept under lock-and-key. All organizational records will be treated with anonymity so that no data will be identified by any specific organization or individual. For Babbie and Mouton (2011), if ever data needs to identify specific subjects, as when purposive sampling is used to nominate participants, such data should be used for the purposes of the research only and participants should be informed of how they were selected and be assured either verbally or on paper that their information would not be used otherwise. Similarly, in this research, the researcher is going to first explain to the participants the nature of their purposive selection to participate in the study. The researcher is also going to verbally assure them that their information will not be used for purposes other than the research. Further, interview schedules and questionnaires are going to be constructed in such ways that no names or personal

details will be collected which identify an individual.

Informed consent is another ethical code this research is forced to observe. Babbie and Mouton (2011) note that informed consent is not a single event or just a form to be signed; insteadit is an educational process that occurs between the investigator and the potential subject. In addition, its basic elements include full disclosure of the nature if the research and the participants' involvement; adequate comprehension on the part of the potential participant; and the participant's voluntary choice to participate, (Helsinki National Advisory Board on Research Ethics, 2009). In observing informed consent, this researcher intends to first explain to each participant the nature of the study and their involvement before asking them to voluntarily participate in the research. All respondents are going to be asked to participate out of their own free will by confirming through verbal consent. The researcher is also going to get informed consent from guardians of the orphaned learners (since they are minors) and assure them that identity is not going to be exposed. The researcher intends to explain the advantages of the research so that the guardians give their consent.

3.8. TRUSTWORTHINESS

This research is a purely qualitative research hence trustworthiness of the findings is paramount. Thus, since this research is both a qualitative and a subjective one, it must pass both tests. In qualitative research, Schwand (2009) points out that the credibility and trustworthiness of the data may be improved by means of triangulation of data from different sites and participants. The same research procedure was so used for all research participants in the same category to be consistent in collecting data. The data from different research participants was corroborated, the findings were cross-checked, and follow-ups were so conducted to achieve data clarity and depth (Schwand, 2009).Cohen *et al* (2009) referred to cross-checking of findings as "investor triangulation". The researcher did member-checking by giving the relevant participants an opportunity to comment on the interview transcripts and their reflective notes to confirm findings and reduce possible bias in reporting the findings. The researcher also engaged with her research peers in discussion of the study at its different stages, namely the raw data stage and when reporting the findings and

making tentative interpretations, to obtain their insights and reduce personal bias in the research process. An audit trail was kept of all the research procedures in terms of methods used in collecting data, data analysis, and triangulation of research findings and the interpretation of the findings (Merriam, 2009). To enhance trustworthiness of qualitative data, actual words of the participants have been used to report the findings of the study.

3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter illustrated the methodology used in this study in terms of the steps, procedures and strategies for gathering and analysing the data. The research methodology detailed the know-how of the scientific methods and techniques employed to obtain credible and trustworthy knowledge. These methods described in detail how the study was conducted. The research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments and data collection procedures were also discussed. Details of data presentation and analysis techniques and the ethical issues that the researcher shall observe during this study were detailed. The next chapter will focus on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter proceeds under two sections; that is, the first section is on presentation and analysis of findings and proceeds using content analysis, and the second section is on discussion (and interpretation) of the findings and proceeds using thematic analysis. Hence the first section beforehand considered the demographic data of the respondents and proceeds to present and analyse the results or findings of this qualitative study under the themes that emerged from qualitative data analysis relating to the challenges facing orphaned learners at junior level of primary school education in Mzilikazi District, how these challenges impacted on their academic performance and the strategies which would help orphaned learners improve on their academic performance. The second section discusses the results or findings which have been synthesized and grouped under the three coherent themes with much care not to dilute the thoughts and ideas of the contributors or research participants. The qualitative data that yielded such results were collected from the orphaned learners, teachers, school heads, parents/guardians, and representatives from the community using the research methodology already described in chapter three. These results or findings are essentially perspectives from the mentioned five groups of research participants. The chapter concludes with a brief recap that prepares the reader to transition to chapter five.

4.1 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The researcher noted that on one hand are Categorical variables that have values that describe a 'quality' or 'characteristic' of a data unit, like 'what type' or 'which category', hence these give qualitative data. On the other hand, are Numeric variables have values that describe a measurable quantity as a number, like 'how many' or 'how much', hence these give quantitative data. This study is purely qualitative and will particularly consider Categorical variables to facilitate qualitative data analysis. This first section of the chapter presents and analyses findings under two categories, that is, socio-demographic data of the named five groups of the research participants as essentially sourced from Section A of the questionnaires; and then their themed responses to the research questions as sourced from

Sections B-D of the questionnaires.

4.1.1 Section A: Socio-Demographic Data

To establish the qualitative data of the respondents involved in this study, 'section A' was included in the questionnaires for each of the five groups of research participants to probe their Categorical variables. The researcher will give summaries of the qualitative characteristics of the five groups of research respondents in the order set in their respective questionnaires. The first set of data is *Composite Bar Chart 1*that shows the distribution of all the 90 respondents by sex.

Distribution of the five groups of Respondents by *Sex*
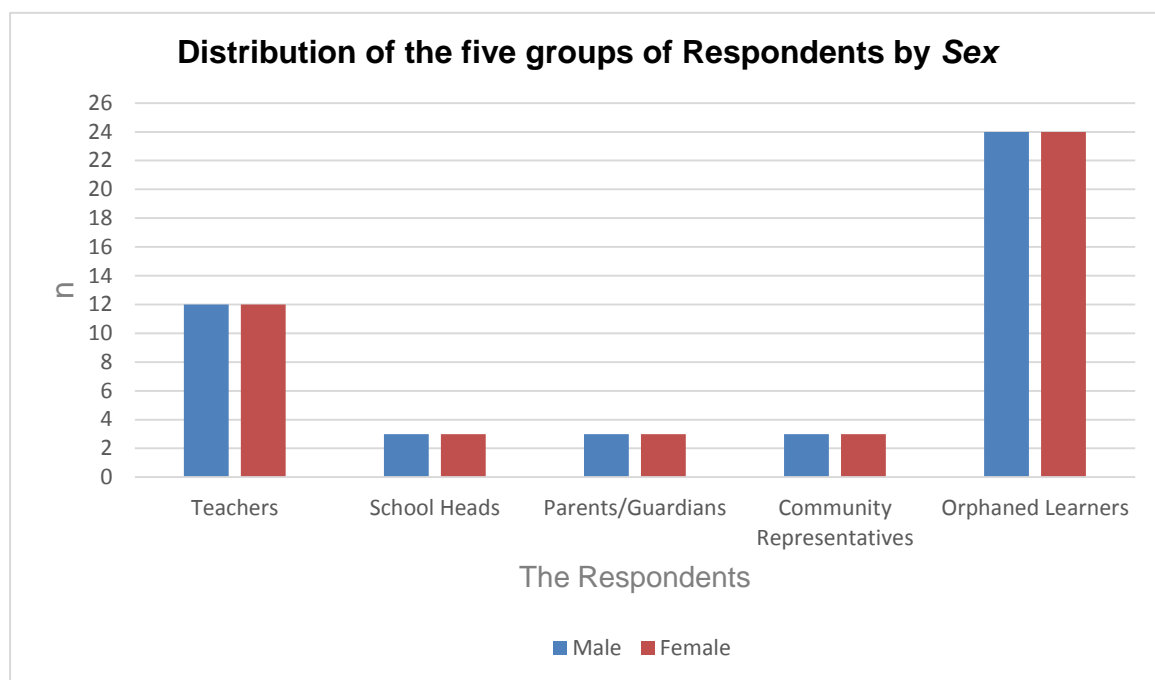
Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by sex

Key:**n** = sample size of the group of research participants in question

Source: Research Survey Data 2018

Both sexes of each of the five groups of respondents in this study were equally represented, that is 50% a piece. This implies that the views captured in this study across the groups are proportionately balanced as they are equally based on both males' and females' perspectives of each of the sets of respondents. This inference concurs with Sylvester (1996: 126) who observed that the capacity "to process

information and make informed decisions" is not a function of the gender of the person (respondent); he found no correlation.

Next is *Table 1* that shows the distribution of Teachers and School Heads by age and attempts to indicate the difference between the two sets of respondents in every age bracket.

| Age | Respondents | | | |
| | Teachers | | School Heads | |
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 30 years	1	4	0	0
31 to 40 years	2	9	1	17
41 to 50 years	8	33	2	33
51 to 60 years	8	33	2	33
Above 60 years	5	21	1	17
Totals	24	100	6	100

Source: Research Survey Data 2018

No school head is below the age of 30 years. The majority (66%) of both teachers and school heads equally lie between the ages of 41 to 60 years. The least of both teachers and school heads are below the age of 30 at 4% and 0% for teachers and school heads respectively. However, in both cases there are more teachers above the age of 60 (21%) than there are below the age of 41 (13%); the two brackets are equal at 17% for school heads. Therefore, this distribution essentially models a normal distribution of both school heads and teachers as it registered peaks between the more central 41-60 age bracket and registered the least values on the downward

slopes. This conforms to general measurements of continuous variables such as age.

Next is *Table 2* that shows the distribution of Teachers and School Heads by teaching experience and attempts to indicate the difference between the two sets of respondents in every teaching experience bracket.

| Teaching Experience | Respondents | | | |
| | Teachers | | School Heads | |
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Less than 10 years	9	38	0	0
10 to 20 years	12	50	1	17
21 to 30 years	2	8	2	33
31 to 40 years	1	4	3	50
Above 40 years	0	0	0	0
Totals	24	100	6	100

Source: Research Survey Data 2018

Half (50%) of both the teachers and school heads have teaching experience of 10 to 20 years and 31 to 40 years respectively. Neither of the two sets (0%) exceeds 40 years of teaching experience. All teachers and school heads have less than 40 years of teaching experience. There is not a single head (0%) who has less than 10 years of teaching experience. Generally, most teachers and school heads (58% and another 50%) have between 10 to 30 years and 21 to 40 years of teaching experience. This confirms that school heads are generally more experienced in the

teaching service than teachers. These findings conform to the recommendations of the1999 Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (CIET) which are advocated by the Ministry of Primary Education (2017). They posited that promotion of educators is earned on merit of years of in-service teaching experience. Nevertheless, both teachers and school heads are thus experienced to give credible and trustworthy responses.

Next is *Clustered Bar Chart 1*that shows the distribution of the two subsets of the only teaching professionals within the set of respondents, that is, Teachers and School Heads. This set of respondents shared the same structured and non-structured questionnaire.

Distribution of Teachers & School Heads by *Professional Qualification*

Respondents	Certificate	Diploma	Degree	Masters
School Heads	0		2	4
Teachers	1	11	8	4

n

☐ Certificate ☐ Diploma ☐ Degree ☐ Masters
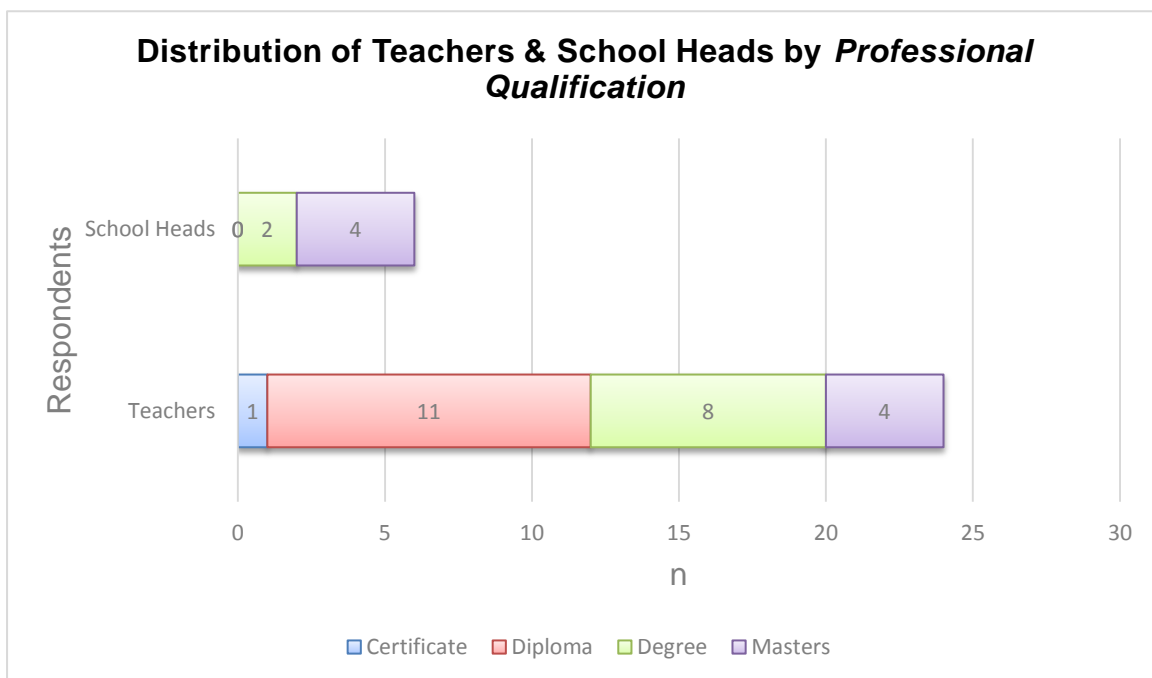
Figure 2: Distribution of teachers by qualification

Key: **n** = sample size of the group of research participants in question

Source: Research Survey Data 2018

The study found it important to analyse the level of education of teaching professionals. All school heads (6 or 100%) were degreed. However, there were twice as many school heads with master's degrees (4 or 67%) as there were school heads with undergraduate degrees (2 or 33%). In the set of teachers, the majority

(11 or 46%) held diplomas in education. Across all the 6 schools, only 1 (or 4%) held the minimum qualification of just a certificate. There were twice as many teachers with undergraduate degrees (8 or 33%) as there were teachers with master's degrees (4 or 17%). The researcher noted that all teachers and school heads were at least qualified to teach at junior level of primary school education in Zimbabwe. These findings confirmed the assertion by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (2017) that all educators so employed through the Civil Service Commission to teach in primary schools are qualified professionals who hold at least the minimum qualification of a teaching certificate. Hence, all were literate and able to comprehend the terms and language used in structured and non-structured questionnaires to provide competent answers. However, at least the only teacher (4%) across the 6 schools who held only a certificate was not trained through teacher training colleges. This confirms the findings by the Education Report (2013: 31) that "eighty-eight percent of the teachers are trained" meaning 12% are untrained; the trained would have earned at least a Diploma in Education plus any other qualification.

Next is *Line Graph 1* that shows the distribution of Parents/Guardians and Community Representatives by age and attempts to illustrate the trends.
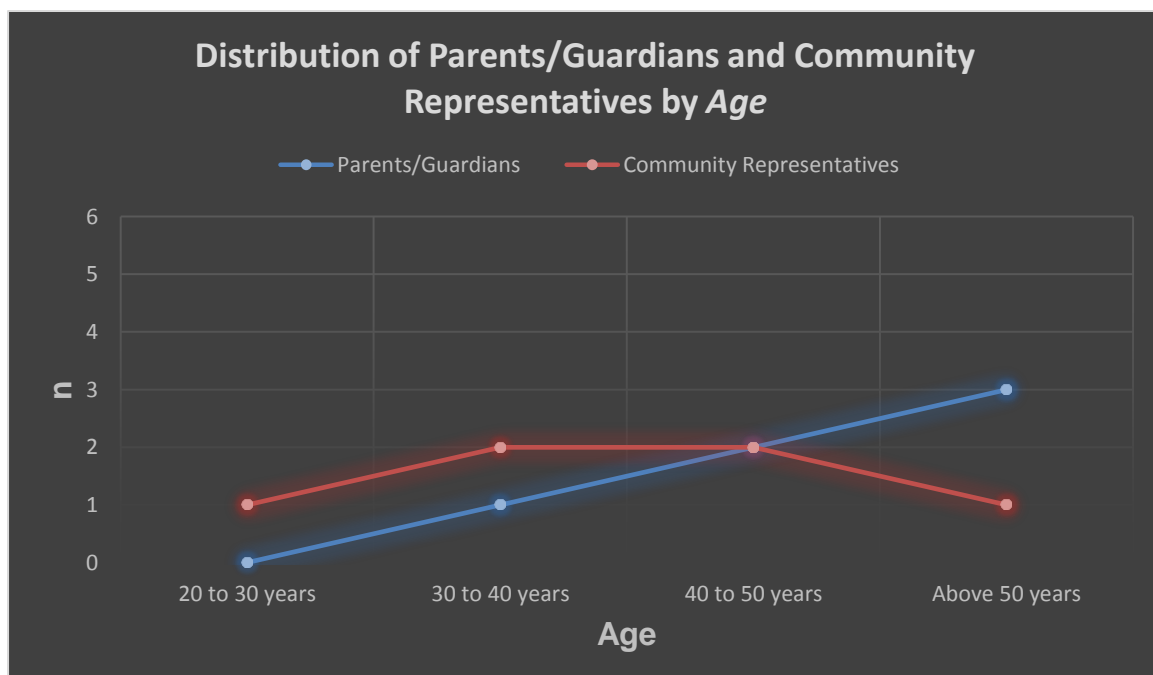
Figure 3: Distribution of parents and guardians by age

The number of parents/guardians increased with age, a trend comparable to that of community representatives which however decreased after reaching a peak of 2 (33%). Half of the parents/guardians (3 or 50%) were above the age of 50. This concurs with Ogina (2007) found that the parents/guardians who are left to take custody of orphans are often elderly. In both distributions, the least proportion were those in the 20 to 30 age group, that is 0% and 15 % (or 1) for parents/guardians and community representatives respectively. Therefore, the distribution of community representatives essentially models a normal distribution with a central peak and downward sloping ends; this conforms to general measurements of continuous variables such as age.

Next is *Composite Bar Chart 2* that shows the distribution of Parents/Guardians and Community Representatives by level of education.

Distribution of Parents/Guardians and Community Representatives by *Level of Education*

Figure 4: Distribution of parents and guardians by level of education

Key: **n** = sample size of the group of research participants in question

Source: Research Survey Data 2018

All parents/guardians and community representatives completed basic primary education. Hence these can basically read and write and apparently could interpret interview questions in general. This conforms to Education Report (2013: 13) which asserted that "the literacy rates in 2011 for males and females were about 98% and 97%, respectively". However, not all completed secondary education. Twice as many parents/guardians (67%) as community representatives (33%) completed secondary education. The least of both sets of respondents (1 or 17% apiece) completed tertiary education. This shows that only the least of them would be trained professionals who can be trusted to analyse pre-written questionnaires to give competent answers to thematic aspects of structured and non-structured questions. Interviews would be best for most. This conforms to Braun and Clarke (2006: 79) who found that thematic analysis goes further to interpret various aspects of the research questions.

Next is *Pie Chart 1* that shows the distribution of orphaned learners by grade.

Distribution of Orphaned Learners by *Grade*

Grade 7
25%

Grade 4
25%
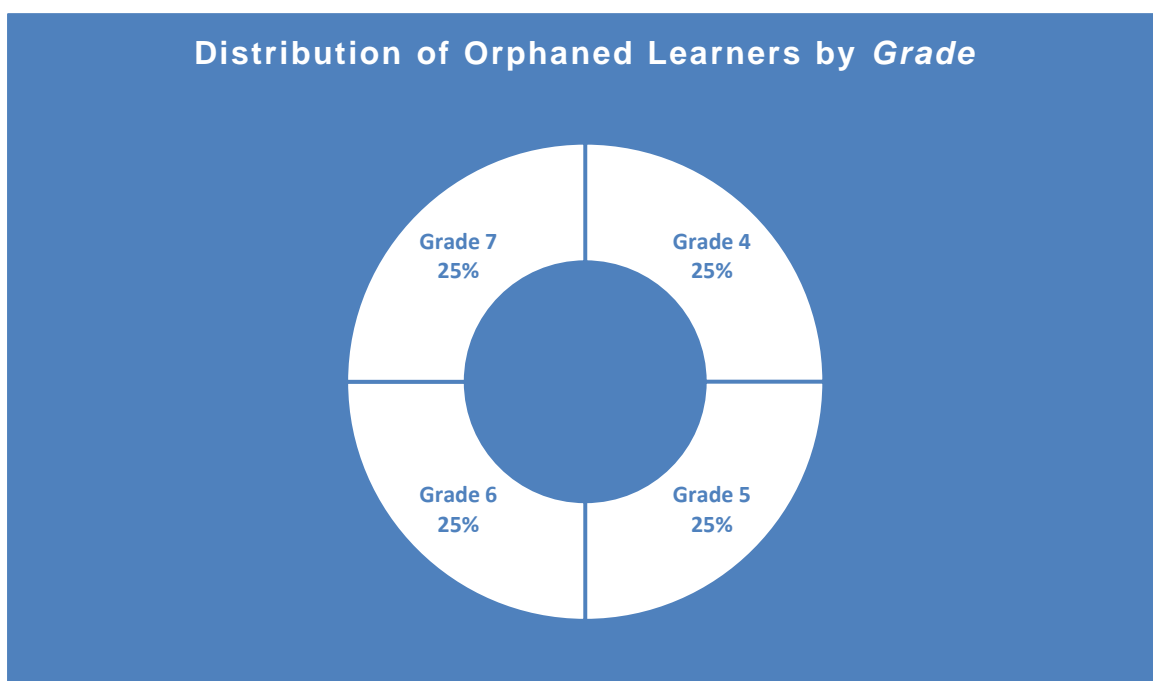
Grade 6
25%

Grade 5
25%

Figure 5: Distribution of orphans by grade

Source: Research Survey Data 2018

12 pupils from each grade represented the 25% pie of each grade. Thus, the proportionate representation by grade considered orphaned learners as typical. This

conforms to Gibson (2006: 123) who regarded as essentially "of the same type".

Next is that shows the distribution of orphaned learners by age. Most (26 or 54%) orphaned learners under study were aged between 9 and 12. This conforms to the contextual definition of junior level that orphaned learners in grade 4 to grade range mostly between 9 and 12 years of age.
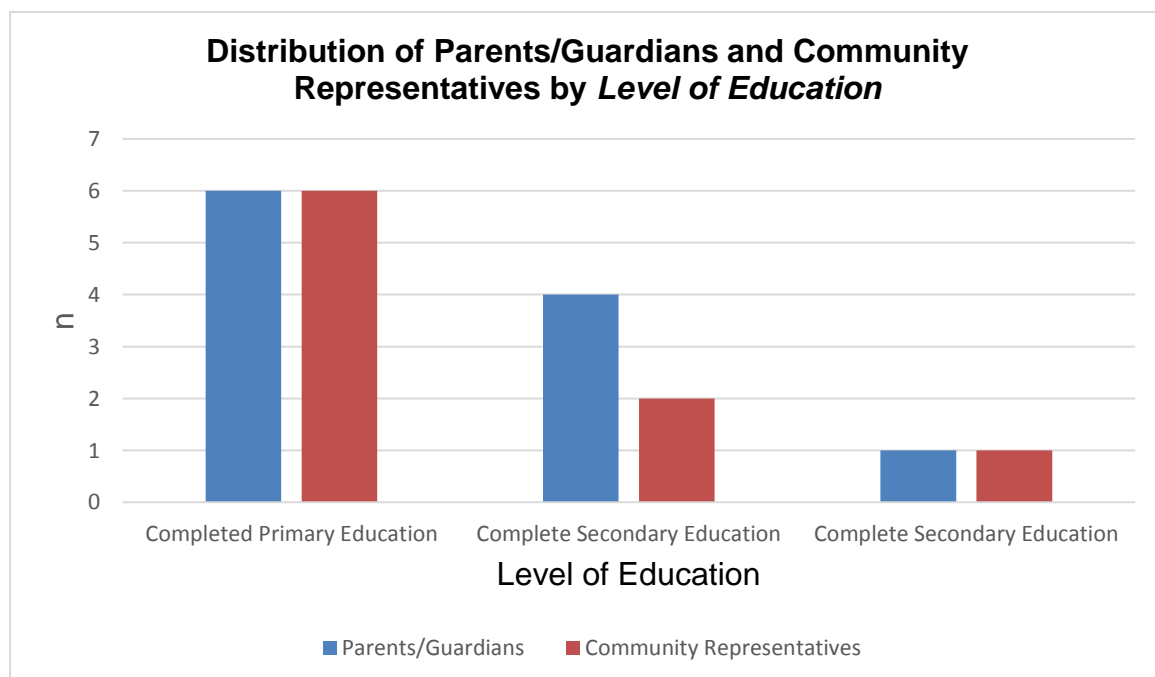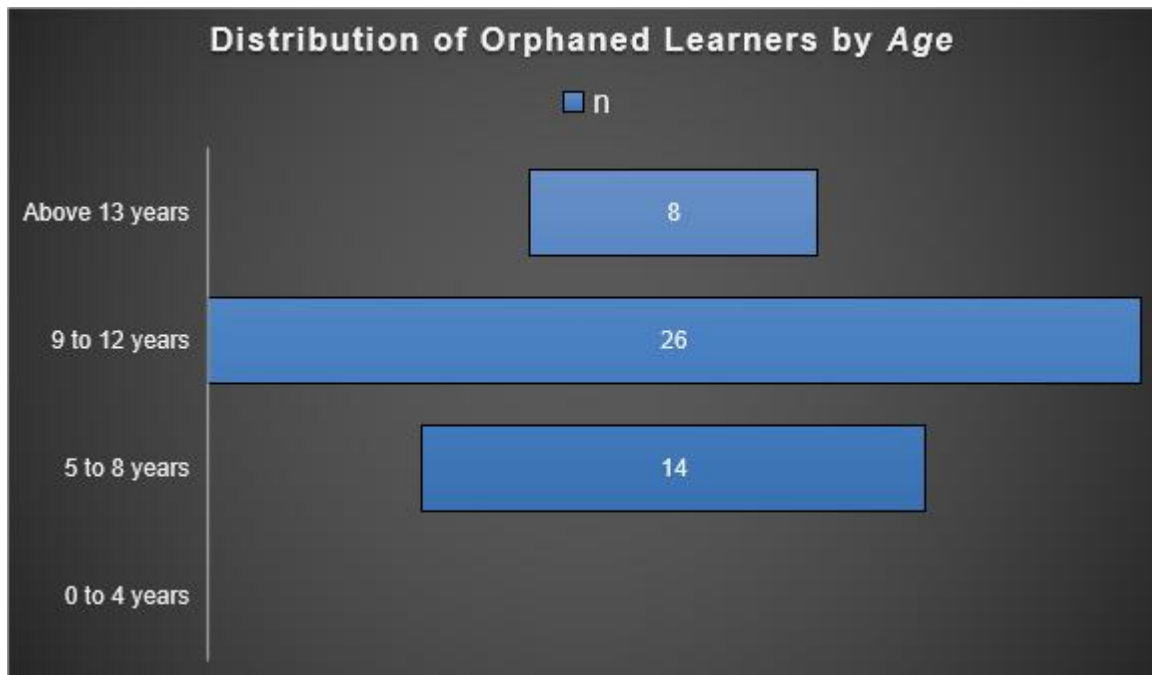

Figure 6: Distribution of orphaned learners by age

Key: **n** = sample size of the group of research participants in question

Source: Research Survey Data 2018

No orphaned learner was below the 5. This concurs with Census Report (2012) that the 0 to 4-year-old children are mostly in ECD. The above 13 age group is the least (8 or 17%) as some "drop out of school before completing" (UN, 2013: 16) and some age as they repeat. Hence, they were grown up enough to give reasonable responses in interviews. This concurs with Miller (2008: 3) who found that "with care, motivation and support in the community and at school, the children will be able to disclose and share their problems and obtain the necessary assistance". Also, this distribution essentially models a normal distribution with a central peak around 9 to 12 years and downward sloping ends; this conforms to general measurements of

continuous variables such as age.

Following the conclusion of presentation and analysis of results, the next section will now discuss (and interpret) the themed responses to the research questions as sourced from Sections B-D of the structured and non-structured questionnaires, and the interview guide.

4.1.2. DATA INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Data from structured and non-structured interviews and questionnaires were read and re-read and coded to identify emerging themes and their relationships to the main research objectives. This thematic analysis was done to identify the major themes and discourses that emerge from the transcriptions, to acknowledge and represent the multiple voices and perspectives of the individuals who participated in this study. Thus, in this second section, the themes will be all discussed and interpreted section according to the three research questions of this study as follows:

Responses of respondents to research questions

Data from structured and non-structured interviews and questionnaires were read and re-read and coded to identify emerging themes and their relationships to the main research objectives. This thematic analysis was done to identify the major themes and discourses that emerge from the transcriptions, to acknowledge and represent the multiple voices and perspectives of the individuals who participated in this study. Thus, in this second section, the themes will be all discussed and interpreted section according to the three research questions of this study as follows:

4.1.2.1 Which challenges face orphaned learners at junior level of primary school education in Mzilikazi District?

To get answers to this research question, Section B in both the interview guide and in the questionnaire contained questions that probed responses to answer this question.

In the questionnaire for teachers and school administrators, the questions 5, 6 and 7 were used and the following common responses were given in all the responses:

- Lack of basic needs which sometimes leads to absenteeism
- Social isolation and lack of family support
- Neglect and emotional hardships

From the interviews of parents/guardians and SDC members, questions 7 and 8 were used to answer and the following responses emerged:

- Financial constraints that make it impossible to acquire proper food and clothes as well as school material and school fees.
- Discrimination and neglect

Lastly, to help answer this question were the orphans themselves using questions 5 to 10 from their interview instrument. From the responses the following challenges were noted:

- Lack of food, proper uniforms and learning materials
- Isolation and discrimination both at home and at school
- Poor support at home and at school

Through analysing the responses, the researcher came up with three themes for this question which are:

Theme 1: Marginalisation and Stigmatisation

This came out from the responses of most of the orphans. Most orphans feel marginalised, discriminated and stigmatised in several ways at home, school and even in the community. Some of the incidences that, being streamed or singled out and treated differently compared to other children in the school, the use of other that differentiated them from other students. One orphan said that:

My teacher is always telling me that I should work hard to overcome my disadvantaged condition. I really feel like I am the odd one out in the class: OL3SA

To agree with the orphaned learner, one SDC member explained that most these have a feeling of inferiority and tend to isolate themselves:

I think because of the poor treatment they get especially at home, they often become

reserved and isolate themselves such that they don't even disclose some of the challenges they are facing. SDC3

Speaking of how he sees himself marginalised within the school, one orphan said:

When I am at school I do not feel free and I do not enjoy like the other children do. Instead, I feel so judged and caged: OL1SA

According to most participants, such experiences were the causes of low morale for learning and had in some cases become a source of depression. Most educators also pointed out that the home environment was the major contribution to the cause of why most orphans isolate themselves:

Failure to get enough support from the guardians at home and seeing their peers getting that support and love from the same people makes them feel neglected. This will in-turn cause them to isolate themselves even to teachers who can't even notice this because of the workload. SH4SD

However, many teachers also pointed out that aspect of low morale. Those teachers upheld that from their own experience with vulnerable children, low school morale affected their educators' attempts at teaching. This explanation indicates that there is a serious dichotomy between how teachers view low school morale in vulnerable children and how the children themselves regard it. There is therefore the need to analyse the issue of low school morale further to trace its root causes and to resolve it.

Theme 2: Daily Struggles and Hopelessness

The majority of the respondents in this study, especially the orphaned children, pointed out that they to them school was a less rewarding experience than it is a daily struggle to be endured. They indicated a number of challenges that had made them to see going to school as a daily struggle. Some of these challenges included misunderstandings lack between them and the teachers, failure to get basic needs, being judged through their life style, fear of failure and the unknown and also being judged by their peers.

This then clearly indicates that school was indeed a struggle for these orphaned children. Some of them added that their school experience is more about continued existence at school instead of positive learning experience. For example, one participant wrote:

School experience is not always good because sometimes I feel left out and discouraged as though don't have anyone by my side to help me. I feel I have to struggle on my own: OL32SD

Another student also said about their disappointment with the school:

"I don't like my school because some teachers show favouritism and don't care about me. There is this teacher who always speaks negatively about the children who come from child headed families": OL21SC

This concurred with Sylvester (1996) who emphasised that learning can only take place if the learner feels catered for and safe. The struggles of life came out in all the responses as it appeared that the orphans are struggling with day to day life due to failure to access basic needs and school requirements. One teacher explained:

"Most of them struggle to get food, proper clothes and even learning materials such as books and pens. I sometimes feel for them when they stare at others during break-time. This really destroys them." T6SB

In support were many guardians who explained that they had big families such that providing for basic needs was a struggle. This was quoted from one guardian:

"I have about 5 orphans and 3 of my own children such that it makes it hard for me to cater for all their needs. Sometimes I just have to prioritise my own children since no one is helping me take care of these orphans. They don't have enough learning materials." G6SF

With the struggles that the orphans face they develop hopelessness of even learning as they feel that life has already failed them

Theme 3:"We are Victims of Negative Misconceptions"

It was noted from this study that most orphans have negative experience at school because of victimisation and being misunderstood. This makes them think that they are victimised because of their status of being orphans and because they come from disadvantaged homes. One of the participating children said,

I always feel that everyone is suspecting me for all the wrong that happens at home and at school. OL37SA

Similarly, another one noted:

I like going to school but I always fear this other teacher who always reminds me that I am an orphan through the way she talks to me and calls me names. OL43SB

Although corporal punishment is not unique to orphaned children, they express strong opinions about it because they feel particularly targeted. This observation however contracted the Ministry of Primary and Education (2017) which asserted that corporal punishment at school is banned, following a court order.

4.1.2.2 How do these challenges impact on their academic performance?

To get answers to this research question, Section C in both the interview guide and in the questionnaire contained questions that probed responses to answer this question.

In the questionnaire for teachers and school administrators, the researcher used 8, 9 and 10

In the interview guide for orphaned learners, the researcher used questions 14 and 16, then questions 12 and 13 set for guardians and SDC members:

All the teachers, school heads, guardians a well as SDC members agreed that most challenges facing the orphaned learners both at home and at school affected their academic performance.

The responses to these set questions were now themed

Theme 1: Orphaned Learners are demotivated

Most of the learners who are orphans come to school hungry, sick or even too weak to stay motivated to learn. Some of the respondents explained that learners who are stressed by some personal issues that make them vulnerable and the focus on academic matters is divided..

"Obviously once they come to school hungry their attention will be divided, and some even sleep during the lessons, a clear indication of hunger." T9SC

The respondents felt that the educational goals are put at risk just because of the challenges that the orphans face since it takes most of the teaching and learning time trying to deal with them. Some also pointed out that there were cases where they had orphans who were ill of the deadly diseases like HIV/AIDS.

I had a case in my school where by the orphan was HIV positive but no proper care and medication was being given. This tend to affect the performance since there will be health problems. SC1

In this case, the orphans felt demotivated as they are constantly sick and this can cause failure to concentrate. From the other angle, most teachers think that learners who are unhealthy and hopeless require a lot of time and energy from them but it becomes impossible to effectively assist since they are already weighed down by the massive number of children in their classes. The teachers highlighted that for the orphans to achieve the academic goals, they must first spend time trying to solve the individual problems of the learners they identify to be having problems.

It's a pity that most of these learners lack intrinsic motivation and with our overloaded timetables and pressure it is hard to give individual attention. T2SA

Unfortunately, not all teachers can afford such time and energy to do extra work. This lack of motivation lowered their academic performance. This concurred with Miller (2008) who found that lack of motivation lowers performance; and Agnes Magampa (2014) who had pointed out that a hungry child becomes preoccupied with

food and will find it harder to concentrate on anything else, adversely affecting their academic performance.

Theme 2: Lack of Opportunities to Exchange Views

Most of these orphans isolate themselves due to stigmatised and marginalisation, the lack the opportunity to get close to the significant figures to express their views even during learning. One had this to say:

"In class I don't have the courage to participate. I feel everything that I do is wrong and I am afraid of saying the wrong thing." OL13SC

Not only do they fail to get the opportunity to express themselves in-front of the teacher, but also in front of their peers:

"My classmates always say that I don't have anything sensible to say. They undermine every contribution I make even during group work. So I no longer participate." OL40SE

On the other hand, the teachers also feel that the failure of them to share idea and knowledge about learners with other educators was the contribution to the poor performance of the orphans.

"With the number of pupils that we have in our classes and the time that we have, it becomes difficult to find time for extra work, worse still to discuss learners' problems with other teachers to find solutions."T16SD

This means that teachers were not taking time to discuss issues regarding vulnerable children. It is not their priority and they had to first deal with their work load challenges. In one of the schools, teachers expressed that apart from the challenge of time, they hardly shared or exchanged views about what they could do together to support their vulnerable students because very little was known to them about such children. As such, orphaned learners tend to fail. This concurs with Magampa (2014) who found that poor social conditions create an environment that is disadvantageous to academic progress.

Theme 3: Lack of Parent/Guardian Involvement

Involving parents is one of the crucial aspects in the children's learning process. Regrettably, as the researcher learned from most respondents especially teachers and school heads, parents or guardians were rarely involved in the learning of their children especially orphans. One SDC member shared an incident of a single parent who wished that his son would not excel in the exams so that there will be no need to proceed to secondary. The SDC member explained:

"Some parents don't bother about the academic performance of their children such that they don't even come to apply for the BEAM assistance, so how can you expect that child to excel in school." SCD3

In agreements were the teachers and the school heads as they cited that most guardians do not have any interest in the learning of the orphans in their care such that the learners themselves lose the zeal to learn:

"Many teachers complain that some of these orphans do not have anyone to assist them even with homework as their guardians are not interested. Even when you ask them to come to school they ignore." SH4

4.1.2.3 What can be done to help orphaned learners improve on their academic performance?

To get answers to this research question, Section D in both the interview guide and in the questionnaire contained questions that probed responses to answer this question.

In the questionnaire for teachers and school administrators, the researcher set the questions 17, 19 and 20:

In the interview guide for orphaned learners, the researcher set the following questions. For guardians and SDC members question 21 was used and the responses were as follows:

Theme 1: Teachers need to be capacitated to translate knowledge into action

Many teachers pointed out that they could not implement what they had learnt in the training even though the theoretical knowledge and attitudes were improved. The teachers explained that the training courses will equip them with knowledge and improve their attitudes regarding dealing with orphans.

If the Ministry organises workshops for the teachers, I think the attitudes of many will be changed such that many teachers will be in a position to assist the orphans. T6SC

Although the counselling course was mentioned as being particularly useful in helping them to be more approachable and more empathic towards orphaned learners, participants also stated that they did not have enough skills to do more than simply listen. In addition, because their colleagues thought they were now trained counsellors, they referred all problem cases to them. This was considered a predicament, because they did not feel equipped to offer the necessary help.

There is no monitoring at all, only when they want information that will be needed at the offices. In all the workshops that I have attended, there was no follow-up afterwards, you don't even know who to contact when you get stuck. We only gained some knowledge through attending workshops, which are sometimes a day or three days, this is not long enough: T2SE

It is apparent that the courses do not do more than provide knowledge, and that there is little emphasis on how to implement that knowledge back at the school. There is no training offered on ways to get the rest of the school involved or on how to overcome the shortage of resources that presents severe barriers to implementation, in the eyes of the teachers. These are the areas that need correction.

Theme 2: Train and deploy Life Orientation Teachers

The life orientation teachers, also known as the school counsellors, seemed to be worried by the way their colleagues have too high expectations of them. These teachers seem to experience marginalization, since they were the teachers mostly

targeted for special class workshops by the Department of Education. After training, when trying to involve colleagues in initiatives to address in-class challenges facing orphans issues, the responses they received were often like the following:

This teacher and her counselling, she is always talking about the HIV/AIDS issue. They don't know that we do more than just talking about HIV issue.T42SF

In addition, the life oriented teachers also felt that they weren't adequately trained to deal with some of the issues that orphans face to help them improve academically.

Being the LO teacher makes people think you are trained in all aspects, whereas we are like any other teacher you are trained just to teach learners: T5SE

The targeting of only LO teachers for special training is contrary to Ministry of Education's (2015) statement that it is the responsibility of all teachers to address learners' issues .Participants also experienced stress because of feeling responsible for responding to the needs of orphaned children:

The issues of HIV/AIDS-related deaths have had a great negative impact in our schools. It causes learners to drop their performance since they are either infected or affected. The teachers is left to deal with things they were not trained for. This makes it very difficult for all of us: SH3

The participant teachers felt the pain of their learners, leading them to try to provide for their needs in the absence of a coordinated response from the school. For example, one teacher described how they tried to cook for their hungry learners, bridging the gap left by parents who could not provide the learners with their basic needs:

A child will complain of a headache, and you will find out that she had nothing to eat, except for what we gave her, meaning that we are parents to these learners because these learners are orphans: SH4SD

This sense of responsibility adds to the stress in the lives of the teachers, since they might fail to meet all the needs of these children.

I was trained to be an teacher, but now the profession that I am in is now changing

everyday. I am also a social worker and sometimes be nurses: T6SB

The ministry needs to specifically capacitate teachers and resource training programmers to capacitate them to assist orphans improve on their performance.

Theme 3: Adapting educators' perceptions of environmental barriers to provision of care and support to orphaned learners

One of the biggest problems facing teachers in addressing orphans' issues, according to the participants, was the stigma attached to orphans mostly because of the HIV-related deaths of their parents. They are perceived to be HIV positive too. As one teacher said:

Some teachers cannot stand learners infected with HIV and regard it as a burden and an added responsibility to assist these learners: T1SF

Even although the ministry employs specialists such as psychologists and social workers to address learner wellbeing, their services were not actually made available to the schools:

"Though the Ministry has many specialists but they are unavailable when needed as they are said to be understaffed."SH6

More expertise is needed to deal with this problem because most learners even those people think that everything is normal with them, seem to have problems that might be beyond their control. Most of the teachers offered ideas on how social workers could be sent to schools so that teachers could work together with them to help learners:

"The availability of these resources can help to make a positive impact, as they are the ones who are always or who has the first contact with the orphans." T6SA

Some teachers argued that although the Life Orientation Teachers are expected to enlist the help of colleagues to implement their training, the lack of support by school management makes this almost impossible:

"Even if you want to give feedback, your teacher colleagues and the principal do not

show any interest and refer this challenge to you to attend." T11SC

This was perceived as unfair by the participating teachers, since they had no choice in deciding whether to attend training, or even in choosing which learning areas to teach.

"In my school, you do not choose for yourself the learning area you are comfortable with you are given any learning area to teach with no choice." T11SC

This implies that the teacher may not be happy to teach life orientation, but that they have no choice but to try and cope with the incumbent stressors:

Theme 4: Awareness Campaigns in the Community

Most responses from the teachers, school heads and SDC members highlighted the need to have awareness campaigns in the communities so that all the community members are informed on how best to assist the learners and to be told the consequences of ignoring the needs of these children.

"For these children to do well is to intervene in some of these problems emanating from home and this can only be done through awareness campaigns s as to reach out to all parents and care givers." SC1

"Some of these guardians really need to be taught on the importance of education and the impact of the home background on the performance of the child." T14SC

Touchingly, one orphaned when asked how best she could be assisted to improve academically, she responded:

If only my auntie can be asked to help me with my homework and also come during consultation, I will be very happy and improve for her: OL19SC

Theme 5: Provision of basic needs by the Government

Most responses from all the questionnaires as well as the interviews pointed out that the government should take care of the school financial needs of the orphans. This includes payment of school fees, uniforms and stationary.

"The government should just try to pay for all orphans' fees and school material. The BEAM programme benefits only the selected few and leaves out some." T23SC6

Most guardians also feel that the orphans should receive a special grant from the government to cater for their basic needs at home. On guardian mentioned that if government cannot offer funds for the orphans they should at least give basic food like mealie-meal, cooking oil, sugar and flour so that the orphans don't go to school hungry:

"I think it should fall on the shoulders of the government to make sure that the basic needs of learners are met. Like what they are doing through the feeding system, they should do that even at home for the orphans." G3SC

It is a belief of most respondents that if the learners get enough assistance in terms of basic needs as well as learning material they can perform better academically, and they placed this in the hands of the Government.

4.2 DATA DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

Data discussion and interpretation section will be organized according to the research questions as follows:

4.2.1. What challenges face orphaned learners at junior level of primary school education in Mzilikazi District?

The data presented in the preceding section in this research question shows that most learners at junior level in the Mzilikazi District are facing challenges of marginalisation, stigmatisation and discrimination. This leads to the daily struggles in life and losing hope. These challenges mainly emanated from lack of basic needs, social isolation, emotional hardships, neglect as well as lack of family support. This concurs with the findings of several researchers. Abashula et al (2014) pointed out that the dilemma of OVC is on lack of appropriate nutrition, clothes, houses, hygiene care, educational material support as well as poor social interactions. The outcome also coincides with the findings of Magampa (2014) a pupil's achievement is

dependent more on his or her home situation and social context than on the formal learning at school. Although his research were restricted to only the bracketed age group in South Africa, this study extended the age group of study in the Zimbabwean context and the findings came out the same but in addition, this research pointed out the challenge of verbal victimisation both at home and at school.

4.2.2 How do these challenges impact on their academic performance?

The study reveals that because of the above stated challenges, the learners become demotivated to learn. This collaborates with earlier findings of Matseke (1981)who posited that poor social conditions create an environment that is disadvantageous to academic progress. This also concurs with Eckenrode*et al* (1993) and Tadesse*et al* (2014) bothhighlighted that of all the maltreated children, neglected children due to stress, depression andemotional problems because of lacking parental love showed the poorest outcomes on academic performance. The study also revealed that failure by orphans to get opportunity to exchange views with teachers and peers also causes a negative impact in their academic performance. Not only the orphans, but also failure by the teachers to share enough knowledge and skills on dealing with sensitive minors like the orphans also causes the poor performance of the learners. This again aligns with Magampa (2014) who advocated that many educators tend to generalise that orphans perform poorly academically and just assume that the causes are psychological. The finding also aligns with Andersen et al (2014) who pointed out that teachers who get support from the wider community of education are better equipped in supporting children both socially and academically. This means that the teachers' failure to acquire the correct skills of helping the learners causes the orphans to perform poorly during learning.

4.2.3. What can be done to help orphaned learners improve on their academic performance?

The study brought out the strategies that can be used to help improve the academic performance of the orphaned learners and these include: equipping the teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills of effectively assisting the orphans, to have more trained life oriented teachers in all schools as well as changing the educators perceptions of environmental barriers to provision of support to the orphans. This

aligns with Egan (2002) report who advocated for the opportunity to practice counselling skills in a supportive environment. Agykwa (2012) also explained that when teaching is combined with counselling, the best can be brought out of the vulnerable child. In addition to the above stated strategies, awareness campaigns and provision of basic needs by the government were also brought out. In the same vein, Adefrsew, (2003) findings in America pointed out that teachers must establish a scheme on identifying orphaned students which will assist in the seeking of assistance from the government in terms of fees, keeping records of number of orphaned students so that they can easily be reached for the support. This study went beyond finding environmental and resource challenges, but came up with the relationship strategies between the orphan and significant figures (guardians and teachers) improve to help the orphan learn and improve academically.

4.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter discussed the responses to the research questions. This chapter presented and analysed results from the questionnaires and interview guide in the first section and discussed (and interpreted) the findings. The first section beforehand considered the demographic data of the respondents and presented and analysed the results or findings of the study using content analysis. The second section used thematic analysis to discuss the themes that emerged from qualitative data analysis. The second section discussed the findings which were synthesized and grouped under the three coherent themes. The results so analysed were collected using the research methodology already described in chapter three. The chapter concluded with a brief recap that prepares the reader to transition to chapter five. The next chapter will look at the summary and conclusions drawn from this study and the recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion of the study as well as recommendations on the way forward. The summary of the key findings of the study are discussed with reference to the initial research questions. Conclusions are made from both the literature study and the present study. The researcher highlights the successes and some limitations which can assist future researchers when conducting a similar study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the researcher's recommendations to stakeholders. This researcher hopes that recommendations made will assist government departments and other stakeholders that interface with orphaned learners in creating programmes which can assist orphans in being resilient and capable of overcoming their challenges.

5.1 Summary

This study focused on the learning challenges facing orphaned learners at junior level of primary school education in Mzilikazi District of Bulawayo Province in Zimbabwe. The study mapped the impact of the challenges that orphaned learners face at both home and school, and established how they affect the performance of the orphans in class. It then solicited strategies which would help these orphaned learners improve on their academic performance. The study was carried out in primary schools the Tshabalala-Mpopoma cluster. The research participants who assisted the researcher with investigations were the orphaned learners, teachers, school administrators, guardians and SDC members who represented the community. Written questionnaires were used to elicit responses from the 24 teachers and the 6 school heads who took part in this research. These are professionals who also usually use English as their mode of instruction hence were deemed to be competent in responding to a questionnaire phrased in English. Both face-to-face and telephone interviews were used to probe guardians, SDC members who represented the community, and on orphaned learners. Even though orphaned learners usually learn in English depending on the subject, the researcher opted for

interviews so that they can be able to effectively communicate and share their challenges. Besides, some still struggle to construct logical written sentences and interviews overcame this challenge.

The researcher encountered some challenges during the collection of data. Some school administrators and teachers did not have sufficient data on orphaned learners within their school. The researcher advised them to technically probe through the SDC members and advised against probing from learners as this could unsettle them and provoke stigmatisation of the target group. The SDC members were in direct and constant touch with the community and could submit reliable statistics. The researcher would sometimes find both teachers and orphaned learners in class, and could not disrupt the lessons. However, the researcher then contacted teachers now used social media to request timetable, and would book appointments in advance. Also, absenteeism was generally high amongst orphaned learners and even after booking an appointment, the researcher could still find the orphans absent from school. To overcome this challenge, the researcher resorted to confirming the presence of the orphaned learner with their teachers, who are required by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to cloak the class register to record attendance count before the start of lessons every day. These teachers would then communicate to advise the researcher on attendance.

The major findings of this study now follow from the data presented, analysed and discussed in chapter 4. All the teachers (24 out of 24 or 100%) strongly agreed that lack of school uniform causes orphaned pupils to drop out. The majority of school administrators (5 out of 6 or 83%) of the class teachers agreed that lack of school uniform causes orphaned pupils to drop out. All the teachers and school administrators (100%) disagreed that the guardians provide learning materials for orphaned pupils. Most teachers (23 out of 24 or 96%) agreed that the lack of guidance and counselling of challenged orphans worsen their academic performance. The researcher established that inadequate learning resources cause them to drop out of school and to perform poorly when back.

The influence of availability of learning resources on the quality of performance among orphans in public primary schools was clear. The school administrators and

class teachers agreed that the guardian should provide all the learning resources for orphaned pupils. They also suggested that schools be equipped to support orphaned pupils byproviding books for them.

Effect of erratic school attendance on quality of performance among orphans in public primary schools indicated that the majority (36 out of 48 or 75%) of the orphaned learners attained below-pass test scores. The majority (22 out of 24 or 92%) of the school administrators responded that inadequate learning material influences the orphans' school attendance. They added that inadequate learning. Most guardians responded that family responsibilities contribute to school absenteeism of orphaned pupils. They argued that orphaned pupils are usually absent from school due to lack of school fees. Most teachers said that this affected the quality of academic performance attained by the orphaned pupils. However, the school community stated they are comfortable with the school administrators' leadership. The school administrators and SDC members agreed that more family income is spent more on family needs than education and suggested that guardians should prioritise the learning of orphans under their custody. The next section concludes the study.

5.2 Conclusions

This section concludes the study based on the three research questions:

> a) *What challenges do orphaned learners at junior level of primary school education in Mzilikazi District face?*

The researcher found that stigma and discrimination were visible in the school environment and negatively impacted the social interactions and learning of orphans. Most orphaned learners particularly HIV positive, and those from poor background experienced stigma and discrimination by teachers and their peers or counterparts. This impacted on their social interactions and learning. There was passive participation of orphans in various extracurricular activities, such as scouting, music and dance and health clubs. The study noted throughout chapter four that most orphans were more likely to be tired and hungry at school, with the consequence of children fainting during classes, clearly education cannot take place under such

circumstances, and the feeding programs were unreliable. The researcher observed that school feeding programmes were not consistent. These programmes used toensure that orphans are ready to learn and enrol on time, to keep them in school by enhancing attendance and reducing dropout rates, and to enhance their cognitive skills and educational achievements.

b) *How do these challenges impact on their academic performance?*

Findings in this study revealed that a significant relationship exists between the home environment orphaned learners stay in and their academic achievement. Those who are challenged back home performed below class average in school. The reason for this could be that orphan learners need more of warm family environment where they can get food support and love. The researcher also found that the increasing number of orphans in schools versus the limited resources is in itself affecting how orphaned learners assimilate knowledge in class. Many teachers of orphans expressed concern that their classes were too large, and needed to be de-crowded, as they could not effectively teach every pupil in class. Overcrowding caused lack of physical space which reduced opportunities for all learners to participate actively in the learning process. Therefore, teaching a large class was possibly challenging as it is also pedagogically unacceptable and effectively disadvantages all learners. The teacher-learner ratio recommended by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is 1:33 which is way below what the study found on the ground. These overwhelmed teachers always failed to meet individual learner needs for self-activity and inquiry, motivation, discipline, safety and socialization. The researcher also observed that some teachers have huge workload in terms of both the teaching load and extracurricular responsibilities. These workloads made it difficult for them to counsel learners during school time.

c) *What can be done to help orphaned learners improve on their academic performance?*

The study also found that in many schools, there is a lack of teaching and learning materials like books, writing materials, and school essential requirements. In addition to that, to attain that state of learning and teaching environment, certain services need to be provided. The services include health maintenance for learners, safety

and protection assurance, water and sanitation services, psychosocial care and support, food and nutrition and orphaned learners' involvement and participation in planning and decision making. Also, several teachers emphasized that some orphans were gifted, and their leadership skills were excellent. Involving orphans in these activities fostered their confidence in their capabilities and talent. It also promoted peer acceptance, enhanced self-esteem and encouraged social interactions. This was possibly one of the best ways of improving peer attitudes towards orphans which reduced incidences of stigma and discrimination in schools. Also, those teacher counsellors were not comprehensively trained, and most of them have no counselling rooms to provide counselling and support to orphans with psycho-social needs that affect their academic performance. The researcher also found that knowledge and skills for many teachers of dealing with orphans were inadequate. Most teachers are not trained on that specific discipline and do not have the required knowledge and expertise to teach orphaned learners with diversity of needs that are included in their regular classes and it is somehow contributing to a reduction in the academic success of those orphans. Parents and the community also need to be taught

5.3 Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the study findings and suggest how stakeholders can assist to resolve the research problem.

a) The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

The Ministry must address the problem of stigma and discrimination against the orphans in school policies and practices. The Ministry has to focus on safety and security in the schools, promoting ethical codes of conduct, training teachers to help in promoting such codes, and establishing community protection monitoring networks and services. Furthermore, qualified psychologists in each schools should be deployed to support the teachers and school children with psycho-social problems that challenge learning. Peer education, abstinence life skills programmes and counselling and, above all, the training of teachers must be implemented in all schools to guide the learners. The education sector thus has a fundamental role to play in addressing the problems of the orphans. The Ministry should formulate

regulations to minimize the teaching load and extra-curricular responsibilities of the teacher-counsellors with a view to make it possible for teacher-counsellors to counsel orphaned learners during school time. In addition to that, the appointment of a full-time teacher-counsellor at every school is highly worthwhile. The Ministry must ensure that at least two compassionate teachers per school shall be comprehensively trained and that they have counselling rooms with facilities to provide counselling and support to orphaned learners with psycho-social needs. The researcher recommends that all teachers should be well equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills necessary to enable them provide care and support to all learners particularly the orphans emotionally, spiritually as well as to give material support. Both pre-service and in-service teachers should be equipped with skills on how to identify learning challenges facing orphans and on how to offer them support. Teachers need special training on identification of orphaned learners, counselling skills, how to act when they identify the learning challenges facing orphans, information about services to which they can refer orphans with specific educational needs and monitor the basic health status of all learners.

b) The Government of Zimbabwe

The government should formulate the policy on the abolish school fees or exemption of orphans from paying school fees, and then monitor the implementation of the policy. They should provide them with free education and cover all the education cost for orphaned learners. The government agencies and support organizations should be sensitised to establish programmes providing care and support for orphaned learners. Furthermore, they must enhance collaboration between schools and other sectors that can provide services and support. The government should increase the number of schools and classes to reduce the number of students in classes. This can help to improve the quality of instruction for orphaned learners. Teachers need to be enhanced their innovative awareness, and capabilities for developing effective ways for dealing with large classes based on the characteristics of large classes. Also, if the government can set up databases on orphaned learners-based information, it would up-date the children on future job and other opportunities. They must also endeavour to promote a policy of non-fees for the orphans, incentives such as subsidies through schools and communities, as well as

bursaries and loans, community grants, skills development, food, and other incentives.

c) Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)

There are many educational expenses which are not paid for by government, many parents are forced to pay different cost to school administration, and therefore the families of orphaned children in cannot afford these expenses. It is likely that the inability to pay education related costs perpetuates the continuous poor performance, absenteeism and drop-out among vulnerable children. In Zimbabwe, universal access to education was made possible by the Government proclamation in 1980 to offer free education in primary schools around the country, but only a decade later, all pupils let alone orphans had to pay. In 2013, Zimbabwe, like many signatories to the then UN MDGs pledged to "take all practical measures to promote free and compulsory basic education for children" (the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No.20) Act of 2013: s 27(1)(a)). This was ironically the time when "the Central Government expenditure on education fell" (Education Report, 2013: 55). The state pledged to waive all school fees for primary school children by 2015 to meet the then fast-approaching MDGs but has not yet made significant progress to do so. Yet, primary education in Zimbabwe is not free.

d) Schools

More workshops are essential in the villages. Regular meetings of the stakeholders are key in addressing the needs of the orphans. The meetings bring together all the sectors of the local community development processes such as school-based feeding organizations, health programmes, civic education programmes, ethical and faith-based education organizations and above all, political education programmes will all be necessary. Increased children's participation in advocacy activities is important to ensure that the voices of these orphans are heard and listened to. The collaboration between the schools and the other sectors of the local society can assist to provide services and support in areas such as social development, health, professional career counselling, future job opportunities, and links to international organizations that have specialized in helping the disadvantaged children in Africa. Teacher-counsellors must manage a demanding teaching workload in addition to

their counselling role, given the complex nature of orphaned and challenges experienced by orphaned children; counsellors need to devote ample time to attend to the needs of the orphaned pupils. The school should therefore consider reducing their teaching load. There is a need to increase social protection at school level and income generating opportunities for parents of orphaned learners.

e) The general public

Government social protection schemes, livelihoods programmes and adult training opportunities have not targeted specifically towards households in which there is an orphan. However, the issue of providing health services to orphaned learners especially for those with chronic illness through the education system is key. There was emerging evidence showing that where services link up (for example, education health and social protection), there are improved outcomes for orphaned children. Providing access to health services can help reduce the impact and severity of various illness and impairments in children, leading to improvements in educational achievements. Most orphans particularly HIV positive children experienced stigma and discrimination by parents, teachers and peers, which impacted on their social interactions and learning, yet, intervention strategies addressing stigma and discrimination were limited, therefore, specific guidelines or a school-based policy specifying issues of admission and how orphaned learners should be treated can effectively promote a climate of inclusiveness that is conducive to learning and socialization.

f) Other Researchers

This study opened vast avenues for future research. There is a need to investigate factors which contribute to the ability of orphaned learners to cope in all phases. The present study has limited itself to orphaned learners at junior level of primary school education while there are also orphaned learners in secondary schools and tertiary institutions. There is room for research beyond the scope of primary schools. Also, comparative study is needed to investigate resilience of orphans who stay with grandparents and those in orphanages. More longitudinal studies need to be conducted to investigate how the relationship between foster parents and their orphaned children relate to academic achievement. A longitudinal design is

recommended for such study. Relatively few studies have been conducted among families using this form of design. We need to investigate the effect of life skills and HIV/AIDS programmes in the care and support of the infected and affected orphaned learners in schools. This is the programme that has been implemented by some schools in other countries by their Departments of Education and has helped orphans respond better to their circumstance.

This study was able to identify challenges that affect academic performance of orphaned learners and described actions to promote academic achievement. It was also able to determine the influence of the areas where orphans stay, the assistance orphans receive at home in doing homework as other strategic areas which contribute to academic achievement. The study sufficiently closed the research gap.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOUNDATION, MANAGEMENT & CURRICULUM STUDIES

Bachelor of Education in Educational Management and Leadership

Questionnaire for Teachers and School Heads.

Introduction

My name is **AnnastanciaMasihoro**student number **R167970HZ**from the Faculty of Education at Midlands State University. I am conducting a study entitled**, "LEARNING CHALLENGES FACING ORPHANED LEARNERS AT JUNIOR LEVEL IN MZILIKAZI DISTRICT"**. You are amongst those that have been selected and I am thus requesting for permission to carry out the study.

Section A **:** Demographic Data

Instruction: Please tick where appropriate.

Sex: male ☐   female ☐

Age   : below 30 years ☐   31 to 40 years ☐   41 to 50 years ☐

51 to 60 years ☐   above 60 years ☐

Teaching experience

Less than 10 years ☐   10 to 20 years ☐

21 to 30 years ☐   Above 40 years ☐

What is your professional qualification in education?

Certificate ☐

Diploma ☐

☐

Degree

Masters ☐

What is your position in the education sector?

Head Teacher ☐

Deputy Head Teacher ☐

Class Teacher ☐

Section B: CHALLENGES FACED BY ORPHANS

1. Do you have orphans in your school/class?

Yes ☐   b. No ☐

2. If yes, how many are they?

_____

3. Are they doing generally well academically?

a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

4. In your opinion, do you think there are any challenges that these orphans are facing?

a. Yes ☐   b.   No ☐

5.If your answer is yes on question 5 what challenges are they facing?

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6. How have you been able to identify them?

Behaviour change ☐

Absenteeism ☐

Lack of required school materials ☐

School drop-out ☐

7. State the challenges faced by orphaned learners from Grade 4 to Grade 7?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION C: IMPACT OF CHALLENGES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

8. Do you think these challenges have some effect on their academic performance?

a. Yes ☐   b.   No ☐

9. If yes, can you explain how they are affected by these challenges academically?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10 By means of a cross(X) Indicate in the table below how you would rate the following statements.

statement	strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Orphaned participate fully and engage in group activities					
Orphaned learners come to school regularly					
Caregivers face difficulties in keeping the orphaned learners clean					

Orphaned learners show feelings of rejection, unhappiness, isolation and shame.					

SECTION D: STRATEGIES FOR HELPING ORPHANS

14. Are there any supporting systems for orphaned learners?

Yes ☐   No ☐

15. State the supporting systems that you know

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. Do caregivers use properly the help which they get from the available supporting systems e.g church, school and donors.

Yes ☐   No ☐

17. As a teacher/head how do you assist orphans who have learning challenges for example lack of learning material?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

18.Does the school assist orphaned learners?

Yes   ☐   No   ☐

19. If yes in what way:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

20. How best do you think orphans can be assisted so that they improve their academic performanceby:

    a) The teacher:

_____

_____

_____

_____

    b) The school administrators:

_____

_____

_____

_____

    c) The caregivers:

_____

_____

_____

_____

d) The Community:

_____
_____
_____
_____

e) The Government:

_____
_____
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_____
_____

Section C: Comments, Observations, and Recommendations

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Faculty of Education

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOUNDATION, MANAGEMENT & CURRICULUM STUDIES

Bachelor of Education in Educational Management and Leadership

Interview for Parents / Guardians &SDC Members

Section A

Demographic Data

Tick in the appropriate box.

Gender Male ☐   Female ☐

Age: 20 – 30 years ☐

30 -40 years ☐

40-50 years ☐

Above 50 years ☐

1. What is your highest level of education complete primary school?

    i.   Complete primary school ☐

ii. Did not complete secondary education ☐

iii. Complete secondary school ☐

iv. Tertiary education ☐

Section B: Challenges facing the orphans

2. Do you have any orphan you are taking care of?

3. If yes, how many are they?

4. Do you go to school / teachers to discuss the learning problems of the orphan?

5. Do you ask them what they have learnt at school?

6. As a care giver to an orphan how is the relationship between you and the child's teacher?

| Good ☐ | Better ☐ | Best ☐ | Bad ☐ | Worst ☐ |

7. As a caregiver, what the challenges have you noticed that are being faced by the orphan/s that you are taking care of?

8. What other challenges do you think other orphans in Grades 4 to 7 in your community are facing?

SECTION C: IMPACT OF CHALLENGES ON ACADEMIC PERFOMANCE

9. Do you assist the orphan with his / her homework?

10. How is the orphan you are taking care of performing at school academically?

Poor	Good	Average	Excellent

11. Do you think the challenges you mentioned above has effect on the performance of the orphans?

12. If yes, explain how

SECTION D: STRATEGIES FOR HELPING ORPHANS

17. Where do you go for support on orphaned children?

i. Church ☐

    ii.   Donors   ☐

    iii.   School   ☐

    iv.   All the above ☐

18. Do caregivers use properly the help which they get from the available supporting systems

    Yes ☐   No ☐

19. If No, how best can they be assisted to use the properly the assistance meant for the orphans?

20. What difficulties do you face as a caregiver in keeping the orphaned children?
21. How best do you think orphans can be assisted so that they improve their academic performance by:
a) The teacher:
b) The school administrators:
c) The caregivers:
d) The Community:
e) The Government:

Section C: Comments, Observations, and Recommendations

Faculty of Education

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOUNDATION, MANAGEMENT & CURRICULUM STUDIES

Bachelor of Education in Educational Management and Leadership

INTERVIEWS for the Orphans

Section 1: Demographic Details of Informant

Sex: male ☐   female ☐

Age: _____

Grade: _____

School: _____

Section 2: Challenges faced

1. Are both or only one of your parent is dead? _____

2. Do you remember when your parent/parents died?

a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

3. If yes, when was it?

4. Who do you live with?

5. Do you carry food to school?

6. If yes, what type of food do you carry to school?

7. If No, how do you feel when going to school with or without food?

8. Do you have everything that you need for school, e.g books and uniforms?

9. If NO, what is it that you don't have that other learners have?

10. What problems are you facing now at:

a) Home

b)School

SECTION C: IMPACT OF CHALLENGES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

11. Have you ever been sent back to get school fees?

12.When you go to school without books or pens what does the teacher do?

13. Do you think you are doing well at school?

14. What challenges do you think are making you not to perform to the best of your ability at school

15. Do you attend school regularly?

16. If not, what are the reasons you sometimes not come to school?

SECTION D: STRATEGIES FOR HELPING ORPHANS

17. How best do you think you can be assisted for you to improve academically by:

    a) The teacher?:
    b) The school?:
    c) The Guardians/Caregivers?:
    d) The Community?:
    e) The Government?

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, MANAGEMENT AND CURRICULUM STUDIES

25 April 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer....MASIHORO....ANNASTANCIA..........................is a
B.Ed/MED/PGDE student at this University. She / He has to undertake research and thereafter present a Research Project in partial fulfilment of the degree programme.

In this regard, the university kindly requests both your institution and personnel's assistance in this student's research endeavours.

Your co-operation and assistance is greatly appreciated.

Thank you

....

Dr. C. Manyumwa
(Chairperson – Educational Foundations Management and Curriculum Studies)
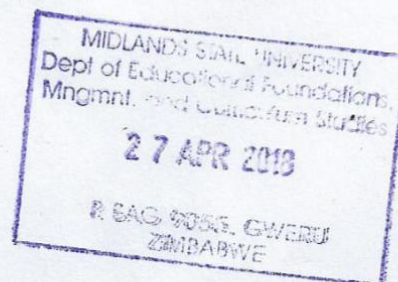
all communications should be addressed to
"The Regional Director"
 Telephone: 09-69511/69942
Telegraphic: "SCHOLASTIC"*-
Telex: 50531 MPSEMN ZW
Fax: 09-77027

ZIMBABWE

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
Bulawayo Metropolitan Province
P.O Box 555
Bulawayo
Zimbabwe

25 APRIL 2018

ANNASTANCIA MASIHORO
MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY
GWERU

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH: LEARNING CHALLENGES FACED BY ORPHANS IN JUNIOR LEVEL AT PRIMARY SCHOOL. A CASE STUDY OF INTUNTA, MAPHISA, MASUKU, MPUMELELO, NKULUMANE AND NSUKAMINI PRIMARY SCHOOLS

With reference to your application to carry out a research on the above mentioned topic in the Education Institution under the jurisdiction of the Bulawayo province permission is hereby granted. However, you should liaise with the head of the Institution /School for clearance before carrying out your research.

It will also be appreciated if you could supply the Bulawayo Province with a final copy of your research which may contain information useful to the development of education in the province.

J MUKONYORA
For: PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR
BULAWAYO METROPOLITAN PROVINCE