

**THE PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECTS OF POVERTY ON THE ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS FROM CHILD-HEADED
HOUSEHOLDS IN MANICALAND PROVINCE, ZIMBABWE**

By

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STUDENT DECLARATION

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I, Vincent Chidhumo, hereby certify that the following thesis, The Psychosocial Effects of Poverty on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Learners from Child-Headed Households in Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe, is entirely original work of the author, with full citations to all sources used.

Additionally, I certify that I have never before submitted this work, in whole or in part, for examination at DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY for another qualification or at any other higher education facility.

Signature



Date...04 September 2023

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study, which was based on an interpretive research paradigm, was conducted in Zimbabwe's Chimanimani District in the Manicaland Province with the purpose of examining the psychosocial effects of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed homes. The psychological theory of Erikson and the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner were used as the theoretical frameworks. Data collection methods included focus groups, interviews, and document analysis. Participants were carefully chosen, and there were 32 secondary school learners, teachers, administrators, and members of the School Development Committees. In the data analysis, themes and content were looked at. The study established that a large number of learners from child-headed homes lacked access to a healthy diet, high-quality education, school uniforms, fees, knowledgeable staff, resources, and support from the school, which had a detrimental effect on their health as well as their psychological growth and academic success. It is suggested that stakeholders help kids from child-headed homes to lessen the psychosocial effects of poverty on their academic performance based on the findings of the current study. To help learners from low-income households, the government ought to prioritize financing for BEAM expansion. The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development must examine the curriculum offered by teachers' colleges to train guidance and counseling school instructors. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should adequately staff and resource the School Psychological Services in order for it to effectively fulfill its mandate of treating learners with psychological, social, and emotional issues. In addition, school administrators should give priority to income-generating initiatives that would help disadvantaged populations, particularly learners from families with secondary school learners. The study created a diamond child-headed home intervention model based on the literature review and research findings, which can be used in the development and implementation of programs to address the welfare and educational help of learners from child-headed households.

Key words: academic success, child-headed households, poverty, psychological development, vulnerable groups

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Literature search strategy	19
Figure 2.2: Map of Zimbabwe	25
Figure 2.3: Zimbabwe Sustainable Development Goal dashboards	28
Figure 2.4: Zimbabwe Education System	31
Figure 3.1: Bronfenbrenner's nested system	50
Figure 5.1: Psychological effects of poverty	126
Figure 5.2: Social consequences	133
Figure 5.3: Emotional effects of poverty	138
Figure 5.4 Solutions to reduce the negative effects of poverty	143
Figure 6.1: Diamond child-headed household intervention model	160

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: ‘O’ Level pass rates by province and sex, 2019	32
Table 4.1: Target population	69
Table 4.2: Sample composition and size	71
Table 4.3: Documents examined	75
Table 5.1: Distribution of participants by gender	86
Table 5.2: Profile of adolescent participants	87
Table 5.3: Distribution of school heads by administrative experience	88
Table 5.4: Distribution of school heads by age	89
Table 5.5: Profile of teachers by age, qualifications and experience	90

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Learner declaration	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Dedication	iv
Abstract	v
List of figures	vi
List of tables	vii
List of abbreviations used	xi
	v
 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	 1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background to the study	1
1.3 Statement of the problem	4
1.4 Aim and objectives of the study	6
1.5 Research questions	7
1.5.1 Main research question	7
1.5.1.1 Research Sub-Questions	7
1.6 Significance of the study	8
1.7 Delimitations of the study	8
1.8 Limitations of the study	9
1.9 Assumptions of the study	10
1.10 Theoretical framework	10
1.10.1 Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory	11

1.10.2 Erikson's psychosocial theory	11
1.11 Nature of the study	12
1.11.1 Research design	12
1.11.2 Data collection and analysis	12
1.11.3 Ethical considerations	13
1.11.4 Trustworthiness of qualitative data	13
1.12 Clarification of concepts	15
1.12.1 Academic performance	15
1.12.2 Child	15
1.12.3 Child-headed household	15
1.12.4 Education	16
1.12.5 Poverty	16
1.12.6 Psychosocial	16
1.13 Dissertation outline	16
1.14 Summary and transition	17
 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	 18
2.0 Introduction	18
2.1 Literature search strategy	18
2.2 Poverty: An exposition	19
2.2.1 Global overview of poverty and education	21
2.2.2 Regional overview of poverty and education	22

2.2.3 Zimbabwean context of poverty and education	24
2. 3 Structure of Zimbabwean education system	29
2.3.1 Levels of education	30
2. 3.2 4 th year level pass rate	32
2.3.3 Effects of Covid-19 pandemic on education	33
2.4 International and regional declarations on the rights of the child	36
2.4.1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	37
2.4.2 Article 2: Fairness in treating Secondary school learners with no prejudice	37
2.4.3 Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child	38
2.4.4 The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	38
2.5 Challenges experienced by child-headed households	39
2.5.1 Psychological effects of poverty on educational accomplishment of learners	39
2.5.2 Social effects of poverty on academic achievement	42
2.5.3 The gendered factor in the well-being of child-headed households	43
2.5.3.1 Zimbabwe Education Act [25.04.1987]	44
2.5.4 Emotional effects of poverty on educational achievement	44
2.6 Conclusion	46
CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	48
3.0 Introduction	48
3.1 Why a theoretical framework?	48
3.1.1 Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory	49
3.1.1.1 Microsystem	51

3.1.1.2 Mesosystem	52
3.1.1.3 Exosystem	53
3.1.1.4 Macrosystem	54
3.1.1.5 Chronosystem	54
3.1.2. Erikson's psychosocial theory	55
3.2 Conclusion	59
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	60
4.0 Introduction	60
4.1 Interpretive research paradigm	60
4.2 Assumptions of the interpretive research paradigm	62
4.3 Qualitative research approach	64
4.4 Interpretive phenomenological research design	65
4.5 Target population	68
4.6 Sample and sampling procedure	69
4.6.1 Sampling technique	69
4.6.2 The inclusion and exclusion criteria	70
4.6.3 Recruitment Process	72
4.7 Data collection methods	72
4.7.1 Semi-structured interviews	72
4.7.2 Focus group interview	74
4.7.3 Document analysis	74

4.8 Data analysis and presentation procedure	76
4.8.1 Thematic analysis	76
4.8.2 Content analysis	77
4.9 Issues of trustworthiness	78
4.9.1 Credibility	79
4.9.2 Transferability	79
4.9.3 Dependability	80
4.9.4 Conformability	80
4.10 Pilot study – Determining possible outcomes	81
4.11 Ethical considerations	81
4.11.1 Ethical clearance and negotiating entry	81
4.11.2 Informed consent	82
4.11.3 Confidentiality and anonymity	83
4.11.4 Non-maleficence	83
4.12 Summary	84

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS85

5.0 Introduction	85
5.1 Demographic profiles of participants	85
5.2 Psychosocial effects of poverty on academic achievement	91
5.2.1 Research Question 1	92
5.2.1.1 Inadequate provision of food and nutrition	92
5.2.1.2 Inadequate stationery and access to quality education	96

5.2.1.3 Lack of school uniforms	99
5.2.1.4 Shortage of school fees	104
5.2.2 Research Question 2	106
5.2.2.1 Shortage of experienced staff	106
5.2.2.2 Workloads and the efficacy of teachers	110
5.2.2.3 Shortage of resources and support by the school	112
5.2.3 Research Question 3	114
5.2.3.1 Training of staff	114
5.2.3.2 Teachers' operating environments	115
5.2.3.3 Teacher attitudes towards learners from child-headed households	117
5.2.4 Research Question 4	119
5.2.4.2 Basic Education Assistance Module	120
5.2.4.2 Supplementary Feeding Programmes	121
5.2.4.3 Welfare of learners from child-headed households	122
5.2.4.4 Income generating projects	124
5.3 Discussion of findings	125
5.3.1 Theme One: Psychological effects of poverty	126
5.3.1.1 Provision of food and nutrition	126
5.3.1.2 Provision of stationery and quality education	128
5.3.1.3 Provision of school uniforms	130
5.3.1.4 Shortage of school fees	132

5.3.2 Theme Two: Social effects of poverty	133
5.3.2.1 Shortage of experienced staff	134
5.3.2.2 Workloads and the efficacy of staff	136
5.3.2.3 Shortage of resources and support by the school	137
5.3.3 Theme Three: Emotional effects of poverty	137
5.3.3.1 Training for staff	138
5.3.3.2 Teachers' operating environments	140
5.3.3.3 Teacher attitudes	142
5.3.4 Theme Four: Solutions to reduce the negative effects of poverty	143
5.3.4.1 Basic Education Assistant Module	143
5.3.4.2 Supplementary Feeding Programmes	144
5.3.4.3 Income-generating projects	145
5.4 Conclusion	145
 CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 147
6.0 Introduction	147
6.1 Summary of the study	147
6.2 Key findings of the study	150
6.2.1 Psychological effects of poverty	150
6.2.2 Social effects of poverty	152

6.2.3 Emotional effects of poverty	154
6.3 Conclusions	154
6.4 Recommendations	157
6.4.1 Government	157
6.4.2 Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education	158
6.4.3 Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education	158
6.4.4 Heads of school	159
6.4.5 Non-Governmental Organisations	159
6.5 Diamond child-headed households intervention model	159
6.5.1 The Government	161
6.5.2 School	161
6.5.3 Non-Governmental Organisation	162
6.5.4 Communities	163
6.6 Recommendations for further study	163
6.7 REFERENCES	165
APPENDICES	205
Appendix A: Letter of permission from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe	205
Appendix B: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CHIMANIMANI DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE	206
Appendix C: Ethical Approval	207
Appendix D: Letter Information (English)	208
Appendix E: Letter Information (Shona)	212
Appendix F: Informed Consent Form	217

Appendix G: Permission Letter to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Director	218
Appendix H: Schools permission letter to the Provincial Education Director	220
Appendix I: Permission letter to the District Schools Inspector	222
Appendix J: Request for permission from parent/legal guardian	224
Appendix K: Focus group interview guide for the learners	225
Appendix L: Semi-structured interview guide for learners	228
Appendix M: Semi-structured interview for teachers, school-heads and parents	230
Appendix N: Teacher's/ educator's observation guide	233
Appendix O: Focus group interviews for teachers	236
Appendix P: Certificate of Language Editing	240
Appendix Q: Turnitin Report	241

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FEWSN	Famine Early Warnings Systems Network
FGI	Focus group interview
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GCT	Guidance and Counselling Teacher
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
MDGS	Millennium Development Goals
MoESAC	Ministry of Education Sports, Arts and Culture
MoPSE	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
PDL	Poverty Datum Line
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
SDC	School Development Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SH	School Heads
SNAE	Sweden National Agency for Education
TCPL	Total Consumption Poverty Line
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations' Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisations
UNICEF	United Nations International Secondary school learners Emergency Fund

WFPZMFSO	World Food Programme Zimbabwe Monthly Food Security Outlook
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Societies in the twenty-first century cannot ignore the fact of poverty. A portion of society will always be negatively impacted by the vagrancies of poverty, especially secondary school learners from child-headed households. In this study poverty refers to the perception of the level of income in relation to household expenditure and satisfaction with economic conditions. It describes a situation where there is a lack of money material goods, leaving people and families unable to meet their basic needs like food, clothing, shelter and school resources. The psychosocial effects of poverty on learners' academic performance were investigated in the current study, which focused on secondary school learners from child-headed homes in Zimbabwe's Manicaland Province. The context and description of the problem are made clear in this chapter, which also serves as the dissertation's introduction. Goals and objectives, research questions, assumptions, delimitations, and boundaries of the study are also discussed. The significance of the study is emphasized in the context of how poverty impacts the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Poverty is recognised as a worldwide societal problem that cuts across nations, race, location, culture and religion. There is growing evidence that poverty has emerged as one variable which impacts academic achievement in schools today (Mckenzie, 2019, p.22). This scenario has created societal challenges which require educators to have an awareness of the effects of this poverty of the academic achievement of learners, especially those from impoverished backgrounds and child-headed households. Life is particularly challenging for those with low incomes because they deal with a variety of demands and problems that those with higher incomes do not have to deal with or understand (Cedeo, Martinez-Arias and Bueno, 2016, p. 258). It has been noted that students' academic performance is suffering as a result of the overwhelming

demands and duties they face, both within and outside of the classroom. Low socioeconomic status of parents, occupation, health, anxiety, and lack of a suitable learning environment, inadequate educational infrastructure, low income, low self-confidence, dysfunctional family structure, poor reading habits, and motivational issues are some of the factors contributing to students' poor performance in school. Because poverty exacerbates most of the aforementioned issues, a family's socioeconomic standing has an impact on academic attainment (Raj and Chand, 2023, p.1013; Cedeno, Marines-Arias and Bueno; 2016, p.258). In the light of this, Secondary school learners' impoverished backgrounds, who are likely to experience negative psychological effects of poverty, become a cause for concern, not only to educators, but society as a whole. This necessitates the development of sound support programmes to ameliorate the negative psychosocial challenges they are exposed to. Such programmes are only possible if the signs of poverty are quickly recognised.

The World Health Organisation (2020, p.8) defines psychosocial effects as the psychological, emotional, and social dimensions of an individual regarding health. The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) (2019, p.1) postulates that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Number One aims at ending poverty globally as outlined in its 2030 agendum. The Sustainable Development Goal aims at eradicating extreme poverty, including that which is experienced by learners from child-headed families. Despite the articulation of this goal, it is an inescapable truth that some learners may continue to face psychosocial challenges. For example, a variety of factors, such as inflation, experienced by most economies worldwide after Covid-19, have impacted the poor members of society. Families, especially child-headed households have been hit hard as their buying power, often very meagre, has been seriously eroded. Poverty has left many vulnerable people to eat less food or nothing at all (Action Aid Zimbabwe, 2020, p.2). Africa comprises fifty-three countries, all which have different economic dynamics. In most African countries, the majority of citizens lives in poverty, and has restricted access to essential services from their governments to assist them to reduce possible adverse events and develop suitable capacity (FAO, 2019, p.5). A physiological need for food is associated with inadequate nutrition involving the body, as distinguished from the mind and psychological, emotional and social welfare for learners and people of different ages (Lee, Lee and Cho, 2021, p.2).

The body of literature demonstrates that poverty exists in both industrialized and developing nations. 37.2 million Americans lived in poverty (Sharma, 2023, p. 4). The hardships faced by these Secondary school learners were frequently exacerbated, because they were more likely than their advantaged counterparts to live in economically deprived and under-resourced communities (Raj and Chand, (2023, p.1014). Furthermore, the deprived community disadvantage was associated with lower academic achievement (Buck and Deutsch, 2014, p.1140). There is also an increased recognition among scholars that differences in secondary school learners' academic achievement are associated with family socio-economic status (Zhang, Jiang, Ming, Ren, Wang and Huang, 2020, p.4). According to research conducted in Fiji, for instance, secondary school learners from low-socioeconomic-status families typically had worse academic performance than their more affluent peers (Raj and Chand, 2023, p.1013). Raj and Chand (2023, p.1013) further confirm that in Pakistan, the socio-economic status of a family was a significant predictor of academic achievement at school. Sharma (2023, p.2) revealed evidence of a significant variance in the academic accomplishment of secondary school learners from high socio-economic status in United States of America, compared to those secondary school learners coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. It can be inferred from the data presented above from the body of published literature that secondary school learners who grow up in poverty are more likely to have a range of psychosocial challenges that will probably have a detrimental impact on their academic performance. Because of this, the current investigation on the challenges faced by secondary school learners from child-headed homes adds to the body of knowledge on child poverty by illuminating the relationship between adolescent academic achievement and poverty in a Zimbabwean setting.

Examining the link between poverty and academic achievement is extremely important in the context of Zimbabwe. This is because secondary school learners from disadvantaged households are exposed to a myriad of difficulties which preclude them from accessing education. The Zimbabwean government has been sympathetic to the suffering of underprivileged secondary school learners and struggling communities. The Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) aims to increase access to education for individuals who are economically underprivileged. The main goals of the BEAM program were to lower child poverty and the rate of school dropouts (Mutasa, 2015, p.156). It is however prudent to note that this programme is grossly inadequate to

cater for secondary school learners coming from poor backgrounds, leaving the burden of responsibility to augment educational support to the very same families which request assistance and have no resources.

A Zimbabwean study in Insiza District, Matabeleland South province showed that such families were in a quagmire in that they were caught up in an unsupportive home environment which complicated the secondary school learners' bid to acquire education (Moyo, 2013, p.2105). While BEAM support only covered tuition, tax, and examination costs, Mutasa (2015, p. 159) correctly notes that it did not extend to pay other necessities like books, uniforms, and school projects. According to a research on orphans and vulnerable secondary school learners in the Gutu District, Masvingo Province, the aid was insufficient for the learners to complete their schooling for a number of reasons, including a shortage of food, clothing, and housing, among others (Ringson, 2020, p. 5).

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Poverty has always been a human phenomenon, and its effects have been felt by different people in different ways. In Zimbabwe, in particular, poverty has recently increased as evidenced by the dramatic rise in inflation from 676.39% in March 2020 to 737.26% in June 2020 (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, 2020, p.22). Basic essentials including food, clothing, shelter, and education are typically difficult to afford in such an inflationary economic environment (Losioki, 2020, p.188). With the introduction of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), as well as the deteriorating economic situation in Zimbabwe, a demographic feature highlighted by a rise in orphaned and vulnerable secondary school learners growing up in child-headed families appeared. Leatham (2005, p. 102) found that four out of every thousand families in Zimbabwe are run by secondary school learners. This is as a result of extended family members' refusal to adopt orphaned secondary school learners, which forced them to adjust to these new circumstances by recognizing child-headed families as a resourceful means of problem-solving.

According to scholars, the contemporary phenomenon of child-headed families in African

communities was caused by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which increased adult mortality and left Secondary school learners orphaned and deprived of a family life (Mkhatshwa, 2017, p. 366). Early cases were noted in the 1980s in Manicaland in Zimbabwe, the subject of the current study (Foster, Makufu and Drew, 1997, p.155), Kibera Slum Nairobi in Kenya (Gaciuki, 2010, p.10), and Rakai District in Uganda (Kendrick and Kakuru, 2012, p.397). For a very long time, society has been aware of the global problem of child-headed families. They developed as an alternative family structure to respond to shifting circumstances and ease the burden placed on the extended family as safety nets (Leatham, 2005, p. 12). Secondary school learners from child-headed households are subjected to a wide range of deprived conditions, such as inadequate access to food and food shortages (Buheji, 2019, p. 106), as well as short- and long- term disruptions in their education, which have a negative impact on their commitment to education (Mkhatshwa, 2017, p. 366).

Secondary school learners from such households often lack social support and their success is frequently contingent upon communities, government and non-governmental organisations assuming their physiological and educational needs (Mpofu and Chinhenga, 2016, p.38). Despite assistance from the government in the form of grants, it has been shown that this assistance was frequently utterly insufficient to meet the needs of these secondary school learners (Thwala, Christian and Okeke. 2021, p. 33). While it is still debatably possible that poverty will have an impact on almost all secondary school learners in general, it will have a different impact on secondary school learners from child-headed homes since they lack adult caregivers (Ntuli, Mokgatle, and Madiba, 2020, p.1). Various aspects of human development on the part of orphaned and vulnerable learners, such as emotional, physical and moral functioning, as well as the psychological domain, could be influenced by poverty.

There remains the possibility that these aspects of human development ultimately impact on the education of learners from child-headed families. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that a wide range of variables can generally have an impact on how well secondary school learners from various backgrounds succeed academically. However, due to their distinct demographic context, learners from child- headed homes in particular face a number of issues that affect their educational attainment (Mpofu and Chimhenga, 2016, p.38). Some adolescent learners from

homes with secondary school learners in charge frequently struggle to balance their home and school lives (Pillay, 2017, p. 6). However, it is wise to recognize that learners from these homes view school as a means of improving their adult lives, but they also worry about the lack of support they will receive to finish their further education (Motsa and Marojele, 2018, p. 6). On account of the numerous economic problems they face, the need to support them becomes all the more compelling (Gumbwe, Gumbwe and Mago, 2015, p.45). A generation in Zimbabwe is being raised by their extended family or in homes where the Secondary school learners are the adults. Today, it is believed that the constantly growing proportion of underprivileged Secondary school learners poses a severe danger to education for all (EFA), one of the United Nations' millennium development goals (Gomba, 2018, p. 37). A study of this kind consequently assumed significance since it enables a deeper knowledge of the psychological obstacles, verbalized by Secondary school learners from child-headed families. Given the earlier issues that secondary school learners from child-headed homes had to deal with as a result of poverty. Such comprehension aids in the creation of programs from diverse stakeholder organizations that are appropriate interventions.

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study's aim was to investigate the psychosocial impact on the academic performance of Zimbabwean secondary school learners who are adolescents from child-headed households in order to develop a practical educational framework that is sympathetic to their needs.

The objectives of the study were to:

- a) Establish the psychological effects of poverty on the educational attainment of learners from child-headed households.
- b) Determine the social effects of poverty on the education of learners from child-headed households.
- c) Establish the emotional effects of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households.
- d) Determine possible strategies to minimise poverty among secondary school learners from child-headed households.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Four closely linked sub-research topics were used to formulate the main research question for this study.

1.5.1 Main research question

The following was the main research question for the current study:

To what extent does poverty affect the academic performance of adolescent secondary school learners from child-headed households?

1.5.1.1 Research Sub-Questions

The current study was directed by the following sub-research questions. The literature review examines theoretical concerns connected to these inquiries.

1.5.1.1.1 Research Question 1

What effects does poverty have on the psychological health and academic performance of secondary school learners from families with secondary school learners as the primary caregivers?

1.5.1.1.2 Research Question 2

How does poverty affect the social wellbeing and education of Secondary school learners from child-headed households as the primary caregivers?

1.5.1.1.3 Research Question 3

How does poverty impact the mental health and academic performance of learners from families where Secondary school learners are the primary caregivers?

1.5.1.1.4 Research Question 4

How the detrimental impacts of poverty may be lessened among learners from families with secondary school learners

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study adds to the body of research on the effects of poverty on the academic performance of adolescent learners from homes with secondary school learners under the age of 18. It increases understanding of the real-world experiences of a group of learners from low-income Manicaland Province households, which has not previously been examined, for several sub-sectors of the

Zimbabwean educational system. The study makes a clarion call to the Zimbabwe Government to re-think the BEAM support model in the light of the inadequate funding that secondary school learners and learners from child-headed households are currently receiving. The study also assumes significance for school teachers and administrators who interact with such learners and creates awareness that secondary school learners from child-headed households are a special group of learners who, while needing inclusion into the school system, require them to create learner sensitive psychosocial support strategies for them as a special interest group. Again, the study sensitizes non-governmental organisations, the church and communities to the plight of secondary school learners from child-headed households and the need for them to put into place psychosocial interventions to ameliorate the negative impact of poverty of secondary school learners from impoverished homes, with a view of retaining them in the school system until they complete their education. The study is important to the learners from child-headed households and poverty-stricken backgrounds as it addressed their need for knowledge and skills for survival. Finally, the theoretical lens used in the study may spur other researchers to apply principles of develop an Afro-centric theoretical perspective which can be applied in African research settings.

1.7 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Simon and Goes (2011, p.12) define delimitations as lines that indicate boundaries of the detailed critical inspection. I restricted my emphasis of my study to 4th year secondary school learners and the psychological, social, and emotional effects of poverty on secondary school learners from child-headed homes. Geographically, the study was constricted to Manicaland Province in Zimbabwe and focused only on secondary schools. Only child-headed household learners were selected because of their experiences and knowledge about the challenges they confront in their survival. Due to their expertise and experience with secondary school learners from homes with secondary school learners as the primary caregivers, school heads, guidance and counseling instructors, and members of the school development committee were chosen as samples.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Focus groups, interviews, and document analysis were all part of the qualitative phenomenological technique used in this study. This approach can have resulted in researcher

bias, where the researcher's expectations or beliefs may have influenced the method used to collect the data and the research design. To constraint the level of bias in this study, I found it prudent to develop standards for the interpretation of data which demonstrated an awareness of alternative perspectives from my worldview. I used member verification to improve the data collecting and analysis for both focus groups and interviews. The practice of member checking is prevalent in qualitative research. The researcher involves the participants to confirm the accuracy and completeness of the interview transcript in order to increase study credibility and confirmability. This is done to make sure the transcript accurately captures the participant's meaning and intent (Johnson, Adkins and Chauvin, 2020, p.142).

I have to look at the researcher's reflexivity. The researcher's awareness of their own biases and reasons for judgments is imported as the study progresses by the researcher's reflexivity (Johnson, Adkins, and Chauvin, 2020, p.142). Being involved in the research required me to bring my prior experiences, presumptions, and opinions that can unintentionally influence the research process. To address this possible limitation, and increase accountability, trustworthiness, richness, clarity and ethics, a crucial element in knowledge creation, I scribbled notes during the interviews about participants' remarks and my own judgements during the interview and focus group sessions. I did this in order to maintain objectivity. I also engaged the research site and persons therein for a prolonged period. According to Johnson et al. (2020, p. 142), sustained involvement entails the researcher being familiar with and knowledgeable about the background and culture around the people or circumstances being investigated. Coming from the same province as the participants meant that I could possibly misjudge, or take for granted their facial expressions, spoken language, body language and my relationship with them. To circumvent this, I did memoing as soon as possible after interviews. To deepen my analysis and generate fresh ideas based solely on my encounters with the participants, I had to document my ideas, perceptions, and interpretations throughout the research process. Finally, I consistently challenged any biases I could have unconsciously brought into the research process by continually editing my data text for any personally held conceptions. I did this in order to eliminate any objectivity which might have crept in.

1.9 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study presupposed that secondary school learners in Zimbabwe who reside in houses with secondary school learners as the head of household are psychologically, socially, and emotionally susceptible. In addition, I presupposed that secondary school learners from families with secondary school learners in charge are economically insecure, have limited access to education, and are likely to perform poorly in school. I also assumed that the participants, namely, heads of schools, members of the School Development Committees and teachers would provide truthful and accurate verbal and document information reflecting the lived experiences of learners from child-headed households. This assumption was because the data collection instruments were validated by my research supervisors, and would therefore be reliable measures for use. Additionally, I assumed that all the participants who I recruited would remain available for the duration of the study by constantly communicating with them and posting reminders about scheduled contact times. Furthermore, I assumed that the sample of secondary school learners were mature and understood the importance of the study by contributing actively when required. The following sub-section gives a brief overview of the theoretical lens that was used in the current study.

1.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner and the psychosocial theory by Erikson served as the study's theoretical foundations. According to Christopher and Stockton (2018, p.2), a theory is a concept that has a high level of explanatory power that organizes and brings order to numerous other ideas. In this study, the two theories are utilized to explain how socioeconomic factors (including poverty) and personality are related and the degree to which, when combined, they affect the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed families.

1.10.1Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

The ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner was deemed relevant since it makes the claim that a child's surroundings can affect how they develop (Berk, 2007, p. 28). The theory of Bronfenbrenner holds that a person's development is the result of a range of direct and indirect impacts that have their origins in five nested structures: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The exosystem comprises of other individuals and environments

that the child cannot interact with directly but have an impact on him or her, such as work environments. The mesosystem explains how different components of the child's microsystem interact with one another.

Macrosystems are defined by Bronfenbrenner as activities that have an impact on social systems. The time system affects the mutual or reciprocal actions between these systems. In the current study, the various systems are important to the extent that they explicate the impact societal factors have on the psychosocial development of the child, and more specifically how this in turn affects academic achievement. According to the social capital theory, secondary school learners from disadvantaged backgrounds lack the resources and assets necessary to adequately meet their educational needs, which invariably results in the secondary school learners' failure to succeed academically (Zhang et al., 2020, p. 4). As a result, every aspect of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory is compatible with the thesis advanced by social capital theory.

1.10.2 Erikson's Psychosocial Theory

The psychoanalytic tradition is where Erikson's psychosocial theory originates. It explains personality development as a life-long process comprising eight stages. According to Angelis, Miranti and Dwiastuty (2019, p.263), psychosocial theory is constructed around the epigenetic principle and conflicting interactions between elements of syntonie (concord) and dystonie (discord). The two elements are essential for personality development to be able to balance between the two which is more inclined towards syntonie.

The eight stages are as follows: infancy (trust versus mistrust), toddler (autonomy versus shame-doubt), preschool stage (initiative versus guilt-purpose), school age (industry versus inferiority), adolescence (identity and identity confusion), early adulthood (intimacy versus isolation), middle adulthood (generativity versus stagnation), and late adulthood (integrity versus despair). On secondary school learners, the current investigation was focused. It is crucial to remember that Erickson contends that an identity crisis is a defining feature of personality development at every stage, particularly beginning in adolescence. In the context of the current study, exposure to an unfavorable ecological environment is regarded as a factor that may have an impact on adolescent personality development, which in turn affects their academic performance.

The study's methodology is described in full in the next sub-section.

1.11 NATURE OF THE STUDY

This sub-section briefly details the key methodological aspects of the study which I laid emphasis on.

1.11.1 Research design

The phenomenological research design of the current study was framed within an interpretivist paradigm. I decided to use a qualitative research approach for my study because it would help me comprehend the psychological, social, and emotional effects of poverty on the education of learners from child-headed homes in Zimbabwe. Phenomenology is a method of inquiry that aims to understand human experiences and the significance of their thoughts about their lives, as well as how people perceive the world and how it appears to them (Tuffour, 2017, p. 2). Phenomenological research is of significance for making deep issues emerge and making voices heard. The essence of qualitative phenomenological systematic investigation is to establish facts which provide a description of the lived experience of a phenomenon (Asenahabi, 2019, p.83). The purpose of the current study was to comprehend the actual experiences of secondary school learners from homes with secondary school learners as the primary caregivers.

1.11.2 Data collection and analysis

I decided to gather data using semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and document analysis. The semi-structured interviews were used with teachers, school heads, and school development committee members, while focus group interviews were done with child-headed learners in schools. The target population comprised 124 secondary school learners in their 4th year from child-headed households, aged between fifteen (15) and sixteen (16) years, who were attending school at four secondary schools. Thirty-two (32) participants, comprising four (4) school heads, four (4) school committee members from four secondary schools, eight (8) teachers who taught 4th year secondary school learners and sixteen (16) learners in their 4th year in secondary school from child-headed households were purposively sampled.

After transcribed, the audio for the interviews and focus groups was recorded. Data were interpreted using thematic analysis. Data analysis involves transforming data not yet subjected to analysis to make sense of and give underlying meanings (Ngulube, 2015, p.1). Thematic analysis allowed me to the nature or meaning issues verbalized by the participants more informatively. I also obtained official records such as registers, work schedules, learners' results and school disciplinary registers for scrutiny. These records were subjected to content analysis. To reduce a big volume of information into a more concise representation of some of its qualities, content analysis entails the systematic classification and counting of text units (Marvasti, 2019, p.10).

1.11.3 Ethical considerations

A participant's liberty and welfare interests are protected by ethical considerations, which serve as guidelines when implementing generally accepted ethical principles (World Health Organization, 2019, p. 7). Both written and handwritten versions are acceptable. In qualitative research, since the researcher regularly invades the participants' personal space, ethics are crucial. I requested permission to perform the study from the appropriate gatekeepers and authority. I coordinated a meeting with research participants to discuss problems of informed consent, anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality of the study with school heads after permission was obtained. I issued the sampled participants with consent letters and asked them to read and complete the letter. To ensure anonymity, I used letters and pseudonyms to represent the schools and the names.

1.11.4 Trustworthiness of qualitative data

Trustworthiness is the quality of being reliable and consistent in the study (Lemon and Hayes, 2020, p.608). Trustworthiness in qualitative research requires both the eradication of researcher bias and the growth of confidence in the objectivity of the study methodology and the conclusions (Senderayi, 2021, p.113). I carefully observed all the prescribed proceedings to ensure that the study was trustworthy. The following sub-sections illuminate the steps I took to enhance trustworthiness.

a) Credibility as a measure of trustworthiness

Credibility, according to Korstjens and Moser (2018, p.121), is the reputation that influences whether or not study findings may be trusted. The validity of qualitative research depends on the

researcher and not always on outsiders. Triangulation was used to make sure qualitative data was reliable. I made use of time triangulation and a method. While temporal triangulation entailed gathering the data at various locations and times, method triangulation was accomplished via interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. I also used extensive, comprehensive description to place the research findings in perspective and give the discussion of themes a sense of the readers' shared experiences.

b) Transferability as a measure of trustworthiness

Korstjens and Moser (2018, p.121) define transferability as the quality of being transferable to other contexts with different participants. According to Senderayi and Senderayi (in press), "other contexts" in this scenario can refer to comparable circumstances, populations, and events. Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, and Kyngäs (2014, p. 2) rightly note that transferability relates to the potential for extrapolation and is contingent on the justification that findings can be applied to other situations or groups. To demonstrate that the research findings may be applied to many locations, conditions, and scenarios, I turned to purposive sampling and the use of rich, thick description.

c) Dependability as a measure of trustworthiness

Dependability is the capacity to produce consistent study results over an extended period of time (Korstjens and Moser, 2018, p. 121). It is the quality of being dependable, reliable and the findings should remain constant in any given circumstance (Lemon and Hayes, 2020, p.605). This is like reliability in a quantitative study. Results from participants in the study should be constant. As an interviewer, I would be an essential constituent of the data collecting technique. I would be reflecting on other research done by reputable researchers. To ensure dependability, I provided an inquiry audit. It provided a platform for other researchers to make evaluations and conclusions regarding the output of the research findings. I also collected unanalysed data from the participants and kept it for verification, if need be.

d) Confirmability as a measure of trustworthiness

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018, p. 121) confirmability refers to how easily additional researchers can independently verify the research findings. It addresses some preconceptions analysis that you did in order to provide a justification for the choices made and it is a judgment of

a study based on observable phenomena, uninfluenced by emotions, and it establishes that the research study's findings accurately depict participants' responses. As the research developed, I kept meticulous records of my choices and analyses for review by other researchers, my peers, or a qualitative research expert to check for biases (Lemon and Hayes, 2020, p. 605). Senderayi and Senderayi (in press) argue that you can demonstrate confirmability by offering an audit trail that details each step of data collection and processing.

1.12 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The study's core principles are explained and introduced in this part. Although I provide operational definitions for these ideas in this part, their true meanings become clearer as the study goes on.

1.12.1 Academic performance

This is the process of monitoring learners' academic development across a wide range of disciplines using a number of instruments, such as exams and coursework tests. Grades that represent a pass are used to evaluate academic performance.

1.12.2 Child

This concept is used to refer to a person between the ages of zero to eighteen years. The term in the Zimbabwean context refers to a minor.

1.12.3 Child-headed household

Buzaare, Ankunda, and Menge (2023, p. 54) define the concept as a family structure in which no adult family member is available to care for the secondary school learners at home or in which a child under the age of eighteen has taken over daily family management and the duty of caring for other secondary school learners at home. The term "secondary school learners from families without parents" is also interchangeable.

1.12.4 Education

It is characterized by order and planning of a specific course of action designed to reach a goal (Namale, Upoalkpajor and Ayambire, 2021, p.17). The notion alludes to the process of teaching or gaining knowledge, skills, and values.

1.12.5 Poverty

This refers to the perception of the level of income in relation to household expenditure and satisfaction with economic conditions. It describes a situation where there is a lack of money and material goods, leaving people and families unable to meet their basic needs for things like food, clothing, shelter, school supplies, writing instruments, shoes, books, and medications (Ozoemenam, Ekanem and Delamónica, 2021, p. 10).

1.12.6 Psychosocial

The concept encompasses how social elements can affect a person's thoughts and behavior as well as how such influences interact with one another. The phrase indicates how social, cultural, and environmental effects on the mind and behaviour overlap and interact (Namale, Upoalkpajor and Ayambire, 2021, p.17).

1.13 DISSERTATION OUTLINE

This dissertation is organised under six chapters.

- As an introduction, Chapter One describes the study's context, the problem statement, the research objectives, the research questions, the aim, the significance, and the definitions of words, the limitations and delimitations, as well as a summary of the research. This helps to define and clarify the research problem.
- Chapter Two provides a thorough analysis of previous research relevant to the current topic. The review sheds light on the research concerns by analyzing major points made by other academics regarding the emotional and educational effects of poverty on secondary school learners from child-headed homes. Additionally, the discussion of the findings in Chapter Five will be connected to this review.
- Chapter Three presents the theoretical framework outlining the psychological, social, and emotional effects of poverty on the education of learners from families with Secondary school learners. This theoretical framework is based on the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner and the psychosocial theory of development of Erikson.

- The study design, paradigm, approach, population, sample, sampling methodologies, research instruments, data collection procedures, data presentation strategies, and analysis are all fully discussed in Chapter four.
- The literature on the suffering of learners from child-headed homes is discussed in Chapter five along with statistics that are given, examined, and taken from the global, continental, regional, and local levels.
- The broad summary of the study, its findings, and recommendations are provided in Chapter six, which also sheds light on the psychological, social, and emotional consequences of poverty on learners from child-headed homes and on their academic performance.

1.14 SUMMARY AND TRANSITION

This chapter describes and justifies the study's problem through the study's background, explanation of the problem, aim and research objectives, research questions, significance, definitions of words, restrictions, and delimitations, as well as a summary of the findings.

The review of relevant literature for the study was the main topic of the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

A literature review's main goals are to help the researcher narrow down on the research question, ascertain how the subject relates to current, recent, and upcoming studies, and create a theoretical framework to direct the investigation (Creswell, 2014, p. 44). The literature review makes an effort to connect with and clarify the research issues posed in Chapter One in a critical manner. The chapter reviewed and provided research concentrating on the psychological, social, and emotional effects of poverty on learners from child-headed households who succeed in school. Key issues overviewed and supported by literature included an exposition of poverty, the structure of the Zimbabwean education system, conventions on the rights of secondary school learners, the impact of Covid- 19 on access to education, mitigatory measures taken by the Zimbabwe government to assist learners needing assistance, and child abuse.

2.1 LITERATURE SEARCH STRATEGY

It is crucial to do a literature search that involves finding, evaluating, and choosing materials that are relevant to the topic of choice. Doctoral candidates must provide and justify the rationale behind their choice of literature in a formal research document. I conducted my search for relevant literature utilizing four interconnected stages, which were condensed into a framework by vom Brocke, Simons, Niehaves, Riemer, Plattfaut, and Cleven (2009, p. 11), in a manner similar to the Senderayi, 2021 study. The framework is depicted in Figure 2.1.

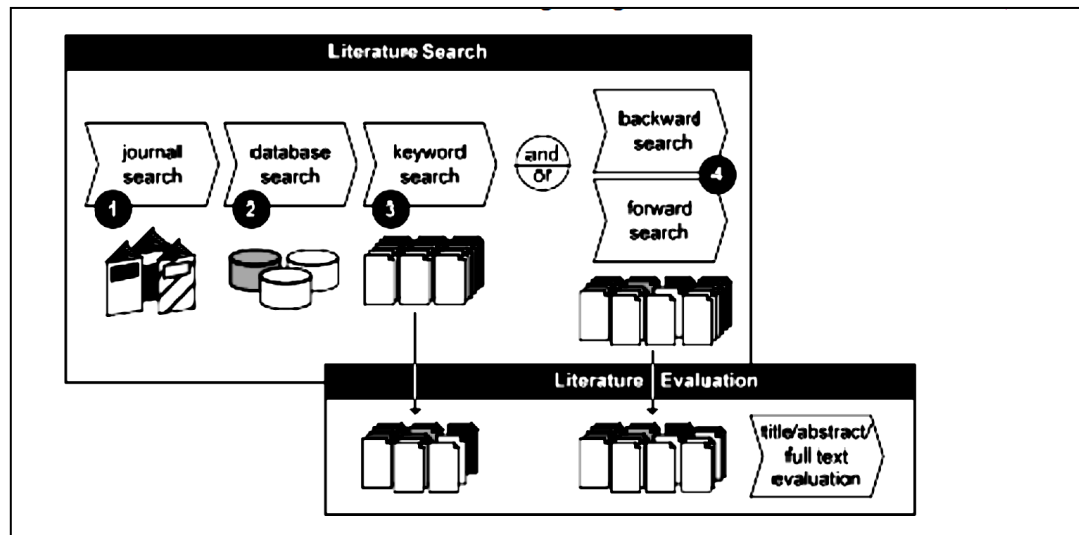


Figure 2.1: Literature search process

Source: J. vom Brocke et al. (2009, p.11),

I performed an electronic literature search utilizing the aforementioned approach using the research databases GOOGLE SCHOLAR, JSTOR, and DOJA. Finding relevant studies through 2023 was the aim of the search. In identifying the literature, I searched articles which, in the main, focused on child-headed households. The search words included the following: child-headed households AND poverty AND academic achievement OR educational attainment AND secondary school learners OR adolescence, AND academic success, AND psychological development AND, vulnerable groups, AND psychosocial. As a secondary search approach, I included a name search of academics who I considered to be the top authors in their respective subjects. The names of some important scholars were Erikson, Bronfenbrenner, Chinyoka, and Kufakunesu. This literature search strategy enabled me to narrow my search since I used the references in the identified sources to systematically evaluate more related sources (Cruz, da Silva and Capretz, 2015, p.94). It was now essential to review each title, abstract, and text in order to establish its applicability to the study. Due to the study's scope, no publishing date limits were put in place.

2.2 POVERTY: AN EXPOSITION

While poverty is a tangible experience for those who experience it, opinions on what poverty is vary over time and space (McCasin-Timmons and Grady, 2022, p. 4). Given this, there is

no absolute and universal definition of the term 'poverty'. Different scholars and institutions use a plethora of measures to define the construct. The current study proffers some commonly held definitions. Poverty refers to unavailability of a plentiful supply of material goods and money that human beings and families need such as shelter, food, clothing, school fees, writing materials, shoes, books and medicines (Ozoemenam, Ekanem and Delamonica, 2021, p.10). Raka and Muhammad (2021, p.51) define poverty as not having access to credit, food, clothes and other essential necessities. Poverty is a strongly marked or easily noticeable deprivation in well-being and is composed of several dimensions. Low levels of needs required for a human being to survive may also be included (Raka and Muhammad, 2021, p. 51). It may also include low financial gains and the inability to obtain basic commodities and services that are absolutely necessary for survival.

Poverty does not entail monetary things only (Ranasinghe, Karunarathna and Pradeepamali, 2019, p.1). Additionally, poverty might be a defining factor in the failure of individuals, insecurity, becoming weak and feeble, and the exclusion of persons (Raka and Muhammad, 2021, p.51).

Poverty can also be defined using a framework provided by Jensen (2009, p.6) who categorised poverty into six levels. Situational poverty, according to McCasin-Timmons and Grady (2022, p. 4), is frequently brief and is brought on by an unexpected crisis or loss. Generational poverty occurs in families when at least two generations have been born into it. Absolute poverty is defined as living without access to running water, a place to live, or food. When a family's income is insufficient to maintain the standard of living expected in their neighborhood, it is said that they are living in relative poverty. Rural poverty occurs where there are fewer than 50,000 people, and urban poverty occurs where there are 50,000 or more people. People from poverty-stricken backgrounds suffer the negative impacts of resource scarcity; environmental degradation and climate change the most. Worldwide, it is reported that in 2017 poverty was 57% with rural populations from poverty-stricken families most influenced (UN, 2021, p.7). The highest degree of poverty rose in 2011 from 22.5% to 38.3% in April-May 2019 (UN, 2021, p.7). Poverty makes people more prone to illness Typhoid and cholera is avoidable illnesses that can kill secondary school learners. Many people who live in extreme poverty may also find it difficult to survive these illnesses (Raka and Muhammad, 2021, p.51). Learners from poverty-stricken families need psychological, social and emotional assistance to assist them in their education.

2.2.1 Global overview of poverty and education

Examining the link between poverty and education assumes great importance if a global overview of the problem is undertaken. The strong association between social disadvantage and poor educational achievement is well acknowledged in the research literature, including the effects of poverty on secondary school learners' psychosocial well-being (Raj and Chand, (2023, p.1013) extant literature indicates that this association between poverty and education is a global phenomenon that cuts across developed and developing countries.

In the United Kingdom, government statistics show that in 2019 the figure of secondary school learners living in absolute poverty shot up by 200 000 in a year to a total of 3.7 million. In the light that scholars argue that in England the experience of education of secondary school learners depends on where one lives, this figure is alarming, more so that it reflects upon an advanced European economy. Furthermore, this scenario would seem to suggest that the education system in this advanced economy is in a serious crisis. It is also indisputable that childhood poverty raises the likelihood of adult poverty. According to Spanish study (Duarte, Fernando-Latore and Molina, 2017, p.2), although not solely, the respondents' family circumstances when they were young affect the respondents' likelihood of completing secondary education, which was used in the study as a proxy for escaping poverty. It is important to remember that Spain, which is only surpassed by Eastern nations (from the former Soviet bloc) and Greece in terms of the percentage of the population afflicted by poverty, is ranked among the top European nations (Eurostat, 2010, p. 25). According to research conducted in the United States of America, people can escape poverty if their secondary school learners receive a foundational education in the fields of science, engineering, and business (Sharma, 2023, p.1). According to Buheji (2019, p. 106), a recent research by the Global Partnership for Education indicated that investing in education increases the earnings of the poor by about 10% for each extra year of school. This study clearly suggests a positive correlation between schooling and reduction in poverty.

According to Cobbinah (2014, p.2), 1.2 billion people worldwide—mostly those in developing nations—live below the poverty line. This means about 50% of Africa's learners live under the poverty datum line (PDL). More than two-thirds of people influenced by lack of education or instruction are learners from poverty-stricken family backgrounds (UN, 2019, p.7).

As a result, more than 20% of secondary school learners from backgrounds affected by poverty choose not to go to school (World Bank, 2019, p. 26). Such an instance serves to highlight the profoundly detrimental effects that poverty has on secondary school learners' wellbeing (Gomba, 2018, p. 37). A worrying trend is that more than two thirds of all secondary school learners in Zimbabwe are food insecure, which hinders them from obtaining essential services like health and education (de Arruda, 2018, p. 3).

2.2.2 Regional overview of poverty and education

A gloomy picture of poverty prevails over Africa. For example, Thwala et al. (2021, p.39) assert that for the last three decades a large African population has been living in extreme poverty. Despite cooperative, earnest and conscientious global efforts aimed at poverty alleviation, research has shown that millions of learners from homes with no parents may fail to acquire education (Spielman, Soler-Hampejsek, Muula, Tenthani and Hewett, 2021, p.1). Due to an unfavorable confluence of events, those who lack income may be denied work prospects and may also have limited access to necessities like care and high-quality education (Raka and Muhammad, 2021, p.53). Over 821 million people in the world are starving and go to bed on empty stomachs regularly (Ranasinghe, Karunarathn and Herath, 2021, p.53).

Access to education remains an elusive dream for many African secondary school learners even though free education has been introduced in some countries. The proportion of learners who are out of worldwide school is still high, although there has been some progress made in returning secondary school learners to school. According to UNICEF (2021, p.12), the proportion of secondary school learners from child-headed households in charge who miss school is rising. Learners who withdrew from school in the past two decades increased by 12 million and 11 million respectively (UNICEF, 2021, p.12). The figures depict the impact caused by poverty on learners from the poverty-stricken backgrounds. Physiological needs, as well as knowledge, are necessities especially lacking in those learners from homes with no parents (Raka and Muhammad, 2021, p.52). The International secondary school learners' Emergency Fund of the United Nations (UNICEF) estimates that 53% of African nations have legal systems that mandate at least nine years of compulsory education (UNICEF, 2021, p. 14). However, there are a fairly large number of learners, particularly girls, who are still restricted from obtaining their educational goals due to reasons beyond their reach (UNICEF, 2021, p.14). In Ethiopia, learners from

poverty-stricken backgrounds, especially girls, are being abused at a tender age. In coastal cities in West Africa, the majority of secondary school learners from parentless homes are hired as domestic workers. According to growing body of studies (Ngwenya, Mtshali and Myende, 2023, p. 282), secondary school learners from child-headed household endure maltreatment that reduces their ability to succeed in school. Smit (2021, p.9) asserts that in Afghanistan, where girls from poverty-stricken family backgrounds are restricted from gaining educational goals, women experience sexual violence and exploitation. Given that the girl child was shown to be exceedingly vulnerable in many nations by existing literature, the lived experiences of the girl in Zimbabwe were a significant variable that was specifically explored in relation to academic achievement in the current study.

On the other hand, the situation of learners who are in school is no better. Secondary school learners from low- income families may experience isolation, stigma, and segregation inside the African educational system. According to Gubwe, Gubwe and Mago (2015, p. 45), learners living in households with secondary school learners in charge face a variety of psychosocial difficulties, and society frequently does very little to help. Marongwe Sonn, Mabel-Wendy and Mashologu (2016 p.159) concur weigh in that some teachers view learners' who have psychosocial challenges as being disrespectful. As a result, learners from poverty-stricken families maybe segregated and labelled if they leave something undone (Van der Mark, 2015, p.8). Le Roux-Kemp (2013, p.158) notes that these learners living in homes with no parents are not safe from harm at school. Most teachers are less likely to correctly assess the behaviour of these learners because they have a limited awareness of the challenges that these learners may be experiencing at school and at home. Given that poverty may hinder secondary school learners from child-headed homes from finishing their education, the predicament of adolescent learners in Zimbabwe becomes a cause for concern. By investigating the lived experiences of these secondary school learners and how they cope on a daily basis, the current study seeks to shed light on this topic.

A considerable number of secondary school learners from child-headed homes are vulnerable to maltreatment, drop out of school, and live in poverty, according to the literature study that came before it. In addition, it appears from the review that most of the time, girl secondary school learners' fare poorly. Last but not least, it is also clear that in some nations, providing secondary school learners from child-headed homes with access to education continues to be

extremely difficult. Secondary school learners from impoverished backgrounds continue to suffer stigmatisation in the school system owing to a lack of appreciation by teachers of the challenges that such learners experience. In the light of this, conducting a study into issues impacting secondary school learners, particularly in a Zimbabwean setting, was all the more compelling to add a fresh understanding of the problem to a growing body of literature, using a hitherto unstudied sample from Manicaland Province.

The second component of the literature study was concerned with the situation of secondary school learners from child-headed households in Zimbabwe.

2.2.3 Zimbabwean context of poverty and education

An outline of Zimbabwe's economic history was the goal of this section of the literature review. The economic background is discussed in order to demonstrate the situation that secondary school learners from child-headed homes must survive in. Most people in the country are living below the poverty line as a result of the weak economy. The survival of most families in this situation is under extreme strain. The organization of the educational system, the pass rate for 4th year secondary school learners and the effects of COVID-19 on the educational system are also covered in this part. The goal of the review was to reflect the difficulties that learners, especially teenagers from households with secondary school learners in charge, face as members of the greater Zimbabwean community.

The population of the 53 countries that make up Africa is 1, 383, 079, 947, or 16.72% of the world's population as of the present (UN, 2021, p.7). For example, South Africa and Mozambique have access to the sea which has socio-economic significance for the citizens (World Bank, 2019, p.26). Zimbabwe, on the other hand, is a landlocked country, whose economic options are different from those of the above-stated countries. Consequently, the research study explored a unique set of variables in a landlocked country. Figure 2.2 shows a map of Zimbabwe and its ten provinces.



Figure 2.2 Map of Zimbabwe

Through a liberation war, Zimbabwe, a former British colony, attained independence in 1980. 15,170,129 people call Zimbabwe home as of the present (UN, 2021, p.1). The nation has made a significant and diligent effort to enhance its educational system. Zimbabwe currently boasts one of the highest rates of literacy on the continent. Despite this, the nation has endured poor economic management for the last 20 years (Kavila, 2021, p.1). According to reports, one of the factors that caused the economic downturn that began around the year 2000 and gave rise to many of the issues the nation is currently experiencing is the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) (Marongwe et al., 2016, p.158). As a result of foreign investors leaving the country, many individuals lost their employment and ended up on the streets. The country's production,

distribution, and consumption systems took a very heavy knock leading to the precarious situation Zimbabwe is in now (Phillips, 2015, p.159). Consequently, the country experienced a debilitating economic melt-down over the years. Zimbabwe's hyperinflation reached its peak between 2007 and 2009 when it became impossible to surmount the economic problems (Kavila, 2021, p.1). Over the last four decades, Zimbabwe's economic growth has been rather haphazard. While the agricultural and manufacturing sectors have been prioritized and heavily promoted through various government policy interventions, the overall performance of the economy has not seen a significant upturn. However, it is critical to note that in two periods between 2009-2012 and 2017-2019, the mining and agricultural recorded sound performances. However, this did not translate into any meaningful social improvement or increased employment possibilities. Added to this, a weakened currency, the inflation of food prices and the declining of the purchasing power of most people resulted in hyperinflation which was at 874% as of July 2020 (UNICEF, 2021, p.2). This impoverished the majority of Zimbabweans, including Secondary school learners from child headed households. Poverty remained a significant barrier for the majority of people, households, and communities (ZimStat, 2013, p. 2). The Poverty, Income, and Expenditure Survey from 2013 provided evidence to back this, demonstrating how much more severe rural poverty was. According to the poll, 16.2% of Zimbabwean homes were living in extreme poverty, while 60.65 percent of households were classified as poor.

Zimbabwe's inflation rate, which for the past twenty years was on the rise, peaked in June 2008 at 231,000,000%, when inflation became hyperinflation (UN, 2021, p.18). Zimbabwe obtained the multicurrency system in 2009. Following the reinstatement of the Zimbabwe dollar on June 24, 2019, inflation reached its highest point due to currency devaluation. At the end of 2019, the inflation rate spiked to 521%, reflecting a decrease in the currency due to financial projections that went beyond or hung over the budget's adequacy and an ongoing quasifiscal Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) policy (UN, 2021, p.18). The currency rate on the black market, which was deteriorating or collapsing, caused a rapid increase in inflation to 838% (UN, 2021, p.18). The fixed exchange rate system was replaced by a foreign exchange auction system that began conducting activity on June 23, 2020. Due to financial reforms and other factors concerning financial matters that are combining into a solid mass, a general and gradual increase in prices is driving the market to become stable. On the market system, a slower rate of change was given more support. The system of production and management of material wealth activities are

negatively impacted by the general and gradual increase in prices that persists despite the recent drop, with those with no possessions or wealth being the most negatively impacted (UN, 2021, p.19). Pensioners have been absolutely crushed over the past years by an all-encompassing and gradual increase in prices.

The effects of hyperinflation are negative for secondary school learners from households with Secondary school learners in charge. According to Chikwature et al. (2016, p.38), adult guardians should be in charge of providing childcare and education for Secondary school learners. Unfavourable life conditions are claimed to have an effect on how well academically learners from homes with secondary school learners in charge perform (Magwa and Magwa, 2016, p.98). The emotional pressures of losing their parents require particular help for learners from child-headed homes (Oyedele, Chikwature and Manyange, 2016, p.38). The cognitive state of secondary school learners from child-headed homes who face the country's extreme poverty must be taken into account when social welfare is developing therapies meant to benefit such secondary school learners. The aforementioned factors are crucial to the social, emotional, and psychological growth of secondary school learners from parentless homes.

The persistent lack of rainfall in Zimbabwe is a key factor contributing to the rise in hunger (UN, 2021, p.7). The agricultural sector, which provides 70% of the population's livelihoods, is failing, which causes numerous challenges (UN, 2021, p.8). Under funding primarily affected farmers' capacity to practice their own innovation of sustained agricultural methods. Furthermore, Zimbabwe maintained a poor ranking, coming in at 150 out of 189 countries and territories (UN, 2021:1). Zimbabwe invests roughly 11% of its GDP in education, disregarding the country's economic difficulties (UN, 2021, p.2). The country was placed 125th out of 166 states by the United Nations (2021, p.4), with a worsening Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) index score from 56.1% in 2017 to 53.8% in 2020. According to the United Nations (2021, p.4), moderate progress was being made toward various SDGs, including gender equality, economic growth, health and wellbeing, and climate action. Of great concern was that partnerships for the objectives of achieving accessible renewable energy, peace, clean water and sanitation, and industry's progress on some Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was either at a standstill or inverted (UN, 2021, p.4).



Figure 2.3: Zimbabwe Sustainable Development Goal dashboards

Source: <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/profiles/zw>

Although the government reports that Zimbabwe's economy has exhibited signs of relative stability, the system of production, distribution, and consumption has not developed to a sufficient degree to produce either socially or conventionally proper jobs in a statistically significant way to reduce poverty (UN, 2021, p.5). Growth has been adversely impacted by similar events that have occurred one after another as a result of climate-induced shocks and unstable situations of great danger or difficulty (UN, 2021, p.5). The country's economic and social problems were made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, poverty is still widespread, particularly among the rural folk. The impact is disproportionately felt by people from all walks of life.

The environment illuminated in the preceding sections of this review reflects that Zimbabwe is dealing with a lack of food and money. Especially among those who come from families with no parents, some learners are quitting school because of hunger. Despite making some efforts, the Zimbabwean government has been accused of politicizing food assistance and of inefficient resource use. Since those in authority tend to show favour to family members and political acquaintances, in some villages the majority of people who need food endure marginalization.

This particularly affects secondary school learners from child-headed households. It is significant to note that, in Zimbabwe, the proportion of secondary school learners coming from child-headed households is rising (Marongwe et al., 2016, p.160), despite the fact that research indicates that secondary school learners from homes without parents are deprived of adult care and assistance (Van der Mark, 2015, p.8). The Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) initiative was created in Zimbabwe by the government specifically to address the problems faced by secondary school learners from households with secondary school learners as the primary caregiver. Therefore, it is critical that the current study assess the degree to which this intervention has served its intended purpose, particularly in light of the fact that secondary school learners from child-headed households suffer disproportionately in a struggling economy.

There are few Zimbabwean studies that have looked at the psychosocial effects of poverty on the capacity of secondary school learners who come from child-headed households to succeed in school, even though the detrimental effects of poverty on physical health and general well-being have received attention in a number of studies (Hennegan, Shannon, Rubli, Schwab and Melendez-Torres, 2019, p. 3). While previous studies used both mixed-methods and quantitative research methodologies, my goal is just to use qualitative research methods. It is an exploratory method that aims to collect data in a verbal and a visual format rather than a numerical form. This has motivated me to look at the psychosocial impacts of poverty on the educational outcomes of secondary school learners from child-headed households.

2. 3 STRUCTURE OF ZIMBABWEAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Junior classrooms and early childhood development comprise Zimbabwe's primary school system's two divisions (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, MoPSE, 2019, p. 2). This section describes the many levels of this structure and exposes the pass rate at the 'O' degree, which determines the degree of interest in the current study, which focuses on secondary school learners in the province of Manicaland. The goal of this section of the review is to show that, in addition to poverty, secondary school learners from households with secondary school learners as the head of household were exposed to crippling situations that enhanced their vulnerability. It also looks at the effect of Covid-19 on education.

2.3.1 Levels of education

To finish a primary education cycle and receive formal permission to enroll in secondary school, Grade Seven examinations should be taken (MoPSE, 2019, p.2). When starting first grade, secondary school learners should be at least six years old, and when finishing primary school, they should be at least twelve years old. On the other hand, there are two levels in the secondary education system: 1st year to 4th year and 5th year to 6th year. The majority of secondary school learners begin Form One when they are thirteen years old and complete a four-year programme to gain an Ordinary Level Certificate (MoPSE, 2019, p.2). Learners who are sixteen years old often complete the Ordinary Level. After earning their Ordinary Level Certificate, secondary school learners can move on to Advanced Level. At the end of Advanced Level, they will be seventeen years old. A learner will have access to several universities for professional training after completing Advanced Level (MoPSE, 2019, p.2). Figure 2.4 illustrates the Zimbabwean education system.

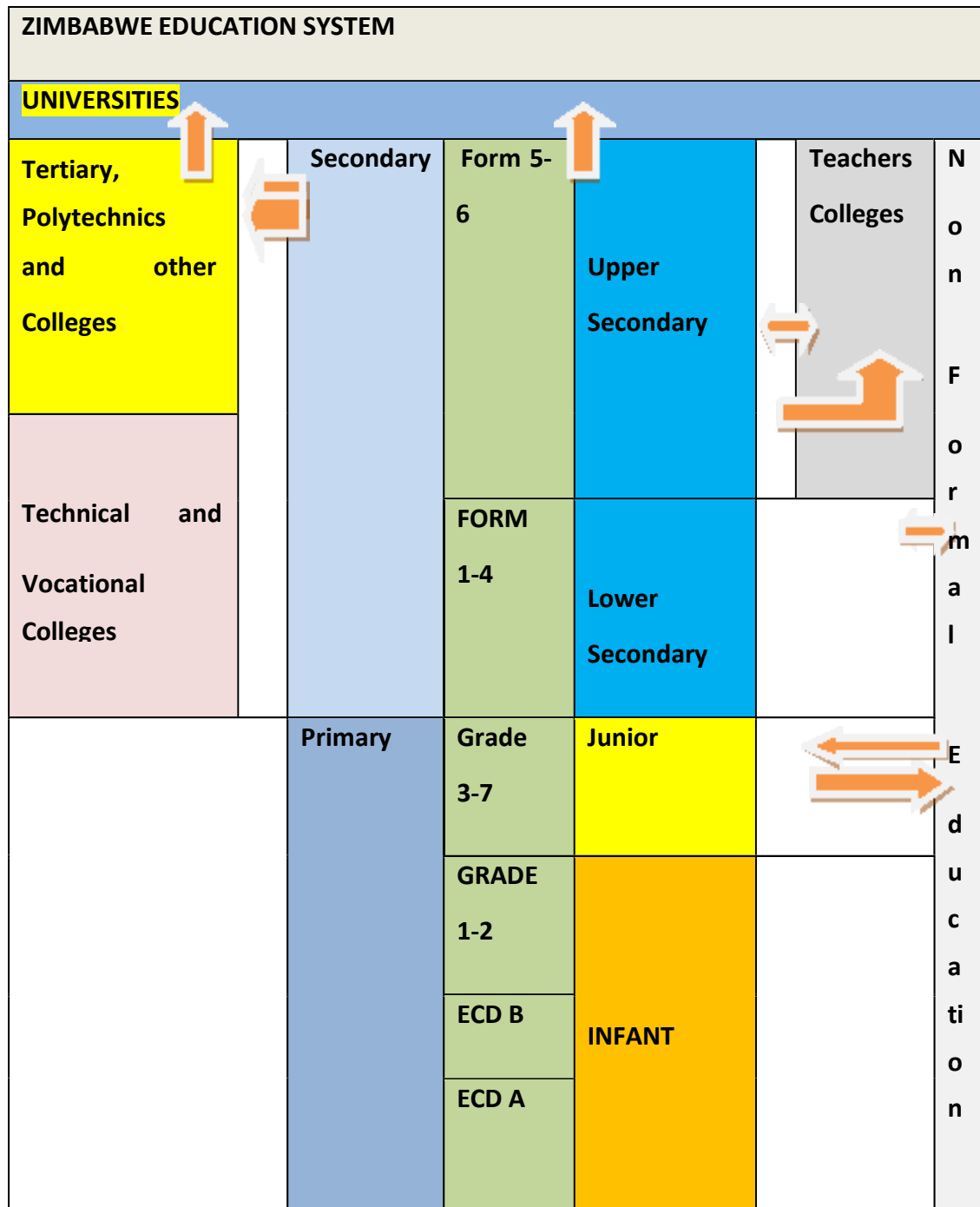


Figure 2.4: Zimbabwe education system

In Zimbabwe, a child is required to start in Early Childhood Development (ECD-A and ECD-B) before moving on to classes one through seven. The primary school system lasts nine years. The child can continue their education after primary level by going to secondary level, where they spend four years, from 1st year to 4th year and two years in high school, before moving on to

higher and tertiary education. At the elementary level, secondary school learners begin ECD-A at age four, ECD- B at age five, and Grade One at age six. A learner must have successfully completed Grade Seven to move on to Form One. Secondary school learners entering 1st year should be at least twelve years old.

2. 3.2 4th year level pass rate

Secondary school learners who are enrolled in secondary schools are the primary focus of this study. Table 2.1 presents the 4th year pass rate as recorded in 2019 during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 2.1: 4th year level pass rates by province and sex, 2019

Province	Candidates registered			Passed			% pass rate		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Bulawayo	4216	5070	9286	1445	1734	3179	34.27	34.20	34.23
Harare	9014	9609	18623	3305	3728	7033	36.67	38.80	37.77
Manicaland	15645	14642	30287	5647	5090	10737	30.09	34.76	35.45
Mashonaland Central	7048	6287	30335	2175	1804	3979	30.86	28.69	29.84
Mashonaland East	11098	10361	21459	3858	3664	7522	34.76	35.36	35.05
Mashonaland West	10147	9184	19331	3160	2596	5756	31.14	28.27	29.78
Masvingo	12131	11921	24052	4774	4210	8984	39.35	35.32	37.35
Matabeleland North	4010	5129	9139	1274	1394	2668	31.77	27.18	29.19
Matabeleland South	3402	4910	8312	1046	1479	2525	30.75	30.12	30.38
Midlands	10497	11182	21679	3617	3465	7082	34.46	30.99	32.67
Total	87208	88295	175503	30301	29164	59465	34.75	33.03	33.88

Table 2.1 reveals that the pass rate for Manicaland, which constitutes the research site and is highlighted, was the third highest at 35.5%. The table also shows a very worrying trend whereby the national pass rate of 33.88% is below 40%. This would seem to indicate that there is a crisis in the Zimbabwean education system. This comes as no surprise against the backdrop of the economic situation earlier presented.

An analysis by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) reveals that in 2020, the 4th year pass rate had decreased by 6.8% (MoPSE, 2020, p.221). Candidates with at least five passing subjects saw a decrease from 31.6% in 2019 to 24.8% in 2020. Additionally, the number of test takers dropped to just 184,000 from 294,464 in 2019 (MoPSE, 2020, p.222). Most schools were closed in 2019 as a result of the Covid-19 epidemic, which made it difficult for secondary school learners from underprivileged families to obtain e-learning (MoPSE, 2020, p. 224). As a result, many secondary school learners struggled to write. It is rather unsettling that the pass rate decreased by 6.8%. The analysis by MoPSE concluded that this fall in percentage might have been larger if more than 11% of candidates had taken their exams. Furthermore, it was noted that a 10.6% reduction in girls' pass rate, compared to the boys' drop of 6.5% served as a reminder of the gender gap in access to education (MoPSE, 2020, p.224). A key element in the current study was to find possible strategies in assisting secondary school learners from child- headed homes to perform better in the 4th year examinations.

2.3.3 Effects of Covid-19 pandemic on education

Since the first reports of the virus were made public in December 2019, the Covid-19 pandemic has spread to nearly all countries. By March 31, 2020 around 750,000 corona virus cases had been identified worldwide. The Covid-19 pandemic epidemic had a tremendous impact on the globe's educational system and disrupted classes in classrooms all around the world. The Covid-19 pandemic had a huge impact on and transformed social interaction and organization globally, especially in the field of education (Lukas and Yunus, 2021, p. 330). Over 1.5 billion secondary school learners were not receiving a worthwhile education (UNICEF, 2020, p.2), as a result of government-imposed restrictions and school closures aimed at minimizing the rapid spread of Covid-19. Many countries declared lockdowns as a stringent measure to in an effort to minimize

the effects of the pandemic. The nobility of these lockdown measures was in no doubt, but the impact this had on learners was devastating, especially learners from impoverished communities. For learners who physically attended classes, stringent social distancing measures, based on World Health Organisation guidelines, were put in place. Inevitably this meant reduced class sizes. To cater for the other learners who were out of school, educational institutions introduced online teaching and learning. According to Rad, Shokrollah, Hesamaddin, Mehdi, Nahid, and Fatemeh (2021, p.2), when the national social distancing standards were put into place, educational institutions all over the world pared back in-person instruction and shifted to online instruction.

Through e-learning platforms, the educational process may be planned to be very engaging, inventive, and adaptive (Zalat, Hamed and Bolbol, 2021, p.1). The use of computers and the internet in a synchronous environment is referred to as online or e-learning (Zalat Hamed and Bolbol, 2021, p.1). To allow for flexible learning whenever and wherever, this media delivers teaching and learning materials in written, animation, video, or audio-visual formats (Lukas and Yunus, 2021, p. 332). As a result, it is a cutting-edge web-based system that was developed based on a variety of technologies and options for learning resources and materials with the goal of producing a hospitable, interactive, and learner-centered environment (Rodrigues, Almeida, Figueredo and Lopes, 2019, p. 332). While e-learning was an effective strategy aimed at curtailing the spread of Covid, it was not without its own challenges.

E-learning continued to be a difficult challenge for various levels of education despite the many benefits it offered and the fact that it was quickly becoming popular worldwide (Lukas and Yunus, 2021, p.334). Some scholars indicate that for teachers and secondary school learners unfamiliar with information communication technology (ICT) mediated learning platforms were a huge disadvantage (Kawasaki, Yamasaki, Masuoka, Iwasa, Fukita and Matsuyama, 2021, p.1) as there were problems of technology barriers, accessibility and self- competencies (Supardi and Hasanah, 2020, p.155). Additionally, e-learning demands that secondary school learners have certain knowledge or abilities as well as self-activating capabilities. Self-activated learners demonstrate the ability to produce the desired effects that are pertinent to the learning processes, as well as the power to do so (Potra, Pugna, Pop, Negrea and Dungan, 2021, p.1). In a nutshell, e-learning basically removed the human element in the facilitation of learning. This implied that the

psychological advantage of human contact was lost on account that e-learning assumed an impersonal facet to learning. In light of this, learners from child-headed homes, who needed help, especially from their teachers, could have been severely harmed by the removal of the human aspect, which now became almost inaccessible to them. Potra et al., (2021, p.1) correctly observe that Covid-19 precautions made learners more susceptible to illness as a result of isolation (Potra et al., 2021, p.1). Another challenge which became particular in most rural Zimbabwean schools was that teachers and managers, who are the relevant professionals in the implementation of online learning, had challenges organising and creating online instruction (Potra et al., 2021, p.1). This was mainly because many teachers were not ICT compliant. In a research conducted in Malaysia on English Second Language instructors' "challenges in implementing e-learning during Covid-19," Lukas and Yunus (2021, p. 331) confirm that some teachers' ability to educate was hampered by their general inability to use internet technologies.

Learning was more difficult for secondary school learners who lacked internet connection and were not properly supervised. One of the major issues, according to the Malaysian study by Lukas and Yunus (2021, p. 331), was on technological hurdles relating to access to the internet and gadgets like mobile phones and computers. Zimbabwe was hardly a unique case. Numerous constraints, including the high cost of data charged by internet service providers and the absence of network connectivity, particularly in many rural towns, made it difficult for people to access the internet. Added to this, extant literature shows that online and distant learning programmes both experience an extremely high dropout rate Potra et al. (2021, p.2). The difficulties of data cost and internet access were additional factors in the Zimbabwean context that may have severely disappointed secondary school learners, including those from child-headed families, causing them to drop out of the online class—or, to be more precise, to be excluded from online classes. The adoption of online instruction excludes the majority of secondary school learners, according to a study by Nhongo and Tshotsho (2020, p. 6), because there was no pre-assessment of the accessibility of the ICT infrastructure. A participant in this study remarked that:

Online teaching can be a great challenge to rural school. Let's schools like D secondary where there is no electricity. For instance, there is an NGO called WORLD VISION which donated gadgets such as tablets, laptops, projectors etc. They wanted to ensure that the

school embraces technology in all aspects but we are failing to make use of those gadgets because we don't have electricity. Moreover, there is a network problem at school A so doing online teaching can also be a challenge as it required one to have network. Learners at school B are also ICT illiterate since they have less exposure to ICT tools. Learners can't even do simple things such as switching on Smartphone because they are rarely expose to smart phones, so online learning can be very difficult.

Given the myriad challenges that learners, particularly those from rural settings faced, the use of online learning did not significantly improve their learning situations. In fact, the introduction of ICRT mediated learning was exclusionary rather than inclusive.

Another challenge which emerged was access to food. Since they were no longer receiving meals and other support services, secondary school learners from child-headed homes were negatively impacted by the sudden shutdown of the schools. For those learners who had limited access to schools. Reports indicated that around 900 million secondary school learners worldwide did not have access to the basic hygienic facilities in their schools, increasing their risk of contracting the Covid-19 virus (UNICEF, 2020, p.2). In Zimbabwe, it was decreed that examination classes would be allowed to physically attend lessons against a backdrop that in many countries, only 53% of the nation's schools, offered basic sanitary services (UNICEF, 2020, p.2). Secondary school learners from poverty-stricken backgrounds lacked access to basic necessities at home (UNICEF, 2020, p. 2). Covid-19 therefore brought into sharp focus the psychological, social, and emotional development of secondary school learners from child-headed households and low-income families.

The review's following section looks at several worldwide legal systems that have been established to try to safeguard Secondary school learners' rights.

2.4 INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL DECLARATIONS ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Since the end of World War One in 1918, issues relating to secondary school learners' rights have gained a lot of attention on the international agenda. The three declarations and treaties that are the subject of this section's discussion has contributed to the advancement of secondary school

learners' rights, particularly those of families in which secondary school learners serve as the primary carers.

2.4.1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Only the Convention on secondary school learners' rights has a truly worldwide reach or applicability for the protection of secondary school learners' rights (UNCRC, 1989, p.2). All human rights are guaranteed to be protected by this convention (Chinyoka, 2013, p. 92). According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, p. 2), signatory governments must encourage trust in international collaboration, promote or appoint people to higher positions, and establish a logical or causal link between such activities and the acquisition of knowledge or skills. In this study, Articles 2, 28, and 29 of the UNCRC are outlined in order to illuminate the legally required economic aid for secondary school learners from child-headed homes.

2.4.2 Article 2: Fairness in treating Secondary school learners with no prejudice

No child must be the target of discrimination based on gender, socio-economic position, or disability (UNCRC, 1989, p. 2). Despite the presence of such a policy, the majority of schools continue to discriminate against secondary school learners from disadvantaged homes (Hlupo and Tsikira, 2012, p.14). Furthermore, Chinyoka (2013, p.106) argues that teachers' self-fulfilling prophecies, which might have a detrimental effect on secondary school learners' academic achievement, prevent facilitators from giving those secondary school learners from child-headed households enough attention and help in the classroom. The aforementioned confirms a research study Tefera and Refu (2019, p.315) found that learning activities commonly seen as acceptable rights of secondary school learners by Campbell-Montalvo, Kersaint, Smith, Puccia, Skvoretz, Wao, Martin, MacDonald and Lee (2021, p.2), which revealed that teachers interact with secondary school learners in a variety of ways depending on assumptions made beforehand about the learner's social background. The study by Campbell et al. (2021, p.2) found that many teachers had a tendency to classify their secondary school learners according to their social origins. Due to this, in-depth evaluations were carried out to decide how to classify secondary school learners into courses based on their skill levels. Most secondary school learners from wealthy households were placed in the A-stream in school, while those from poorer homes were sent to a different class (Giddens, 2009, p.816). This segmentation of secondary school learners based on class

meant that those from impoverished backgrounds were exposed to low-quality instruction while those from rich families received a curriculum that was quite competitive and therefore superior.

2.4.3 Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that concerns for education are of the utmost significance in terms of secondary school learners' rights. In this article, the idea that "young people should be encouraged to acquire the highest level of education in which they are competent" is given priority (UNCRC, 1989, p.4). The progress of the learner was considered in the plans of action connected to the educational process (UNESCO, 2009, p.9), which was outlined in Article 29 of the UNCRC. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, all secondary school learners, including those who live in households where secondary school learners are the main provider of income, have a fundamental right to the passing on of knowledge or skills. The deprivation of secondary school learners from poor homes compared to those from wealthy families has been demonstrated by a methodical examination (UNICEF, 2019, p.113). According to Losioki (2020, p.188), lack of material, social, and financial resources hinders secondary school learners from poor families. Learners from child-headed homes are unable to achieve their educational goals due to a lack of security and access to basic requirements (Majoni and Majoni, 2017, p. 3; Mulungu, 2018, p. 42). I was motivated to look into the psychological, social, and emotional effects of poor educational achievement in these learners for the current study since learners from child-headed homes represent a distinct interest group in the literature. The primary reason for my interest was that these learners were exposed to demanding situations which could have detrimental effects on their educational accomplishment.

2.4.4 The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)

The African Charter helps member states advance or develop by encouraging them to make the necessary moves to protect secondary school learners. The African Charter places a strong emphasis on eliminating child discrimination. It enjoins state parties to make sure that every child in a group is taken into account individually and is entitled to protection without exception. It specifies that all learners' preferences will be taken into consideration as programmes that model learners are developed. The rights of secondary school learners are specifically protected by Article five, which also addresses learners' survival concerns. Article 11 offers

encouragement for member states to use caution in all endeavours to transfer knowledge or skills in light of this thorough critical examination. The issues that secondary school learners from homes with no parents' face are the topic of the section that follows.

International law targeted at defending secondary school learners' rights has been specifically highlighted in this section. Such laws are significant in the current study since it examines the difficulties faced by adolescent learners from families with no parents. The next subsection looks at the challenges that secondary school learners from child-headed homes encounter in their fight for survival.

2.5 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

Learners who attend school in high-poverty areas and who require support in a variety of ways is disproportionately common (Buck and Deutsch, 2014, p. 1140). These learners encounter a plethora of psychological, social and emotional challenges. This section illuminates these challenges with a view of reflecting the experiences of such learners and their possible impact on academic achievement.

2.5.1 Psychological effects of poverty on educational accomplishment of learners

Secondary school learners from backgrounds of poverty make up the most vulnerable groups in many cultures and they deserve a quality education (Losioki, 2020, p.188). Schools create educated individuals with specific social norms and skills through educational programmes (Mipfide and Mapolisa, 2021, p.27). Many secondary school learners have hopes for the future, according to Ncamsile (2019, p. 16), even if they lack the support from their societies that they most urgently need to boost their confidence and resilience and make sure that they achieve their goals. Activities including education are obviously essential for lowering deprivation. Because of this, the majority of these secondary school learners prioritize their education above everything else (Hadna and Kartika, 2017, p.2), yet when their educational demands are not fulfilled, many secondary school learners from child-headed homes feel helpless (Losioki, 2020, p.188). On the other hand, Makuyana, Mbulayi, and Kangethe (2020, p.3) revealed that secondary school learners from households with secondary school learners in charge showed some of the most obvious manifestations of psychological, social, and emotional deficiencies, as well as failures in

neurological or mental functioning. These secondary school learners understood the harsh conditions in which they were raised. Due to their vulnerability, girl learners from child-headed households are drawn into marriage (Ellis, 2016, p.1). Secondary school learners' performance will be improved by parents, guardians, and society as a whole participating in their education (Mabuza and Mafumbate, 2019, p.42). Government intervention is necessary to ensure the welfare of orphans and vulnerable learners. The effectiveness of this intervention must take into account how well these learners can be cared for at home (Mkhatshwa, 2017, p. 366).

While the preceding studies focused on the psychological, emotional, and social barriers to academic success that secondary school learners from child-headed homes encountered, my study focused on the psychological, emotional, and social challenges of low educational achievement of secondary school learners from child-headed households using a theoretical lens which attempts to illuminate the plight of these learners using two theories that were not utilized in these studies; namely, the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner and the psychosocial theory of Erikson. The former highlights societal mechanisms that can assist and empower secondary school learners from families with Secondary school learners as the head of household, while the latter explains that the need to create a healthy personality can help such secondary school learners to develop into full and productive members of society.

According to Shava, Gunhidzirai and Shava (2016, p.94), secondary school learners living with adult carer or present biological parent might face so many psychological challenges since their parents are not availing any support to them. In many instances, secondary school learners who live in families with no parents face a variety of issues that go beyond what is normal which can have a detrimental impact on their dedication to education (Mkhatshwa, 2017, p.366). Inadequate resources to feed and clothe a family, as well as a lack of credit, are issues that vulnerable secondary school learners from child-headed households face (Amangwai and Amos, 2021, p.120). According to research, secondary school learners from homes without parents are likely to lose something important or experience unfortunate circumstances, including insufficient essentials (Tsegaye, 2013, p.34). The European Food Safety Authority (2022, p.5) revealed that many Africans are limited in their access to appropriate sources of food. Malnutrition and households with no parents were significantly impacted by the Covid-19 epidemic (Ranasinghe et al., 2021, p. 58). A study carried out in Botswana by Tsheko (2007, p.23) showed that secondary

school learners from child-headed households who were being cared for by grandparents lived in appalling conditions, according to one family with no parents:

We require clothing because the items we now own are outdated and poorly fitting.

A lack of clothing will make such secondary school learners lose confidence when among other secondary school learners because they have an acute awareness that they are not the same as other. Secondary school learners who grow up with no parents are confirmed to be susceptible to a number of issues, poverty being one of them, according to Mkhathswa (2017, p. 366). Low levels of health and low participation in learning, insufficient access to sanitary facilities, insufficient physical safety, and lack of voice are manifestation of poverty associated with such secondary school learners (Raka and Muhammad, 2021, p.52). Due to a lack of resources, poverty places a huge psychological burden on such Secondary school learners and invariably impacts on their performance at school. In the Zimbabwean context the Presidential Commission Report into education illuminated how vulnerable rural communities are to extreme poverty as 38.2% of urban households and 76% of rural households experienced poverty (Nzirasanga, 1999, p.177).

According to research, the majority of secondary school learners from homes with no parents are denied access to their basic rights because of poverty. Given that the current research context is rural, I tended to accept the view that secondary school learners who experience poverty and illness are at an extreme disadvantage educationally when compared with peers from families that have parents. For example, low levels of health will make such secondary school learners to be frequently away from class. Absence from lessons means that such secondary school learners miss out on important topics covered in the syllabi by other learners. On the other hand, attending school with insufficient clothing tends to make such secondary school learners to be labeled by other learners which create a stigma for them. Having to deal with the poverty stigma can bear down on their psychological strength and impact negatively on their academic performance.

It is therefore incumbent upon individuals, communities and governments that take up the onerous responsibility of meeting the psychological and educational needs of these secondary school learners. This is crucial for their success and can prevent such secondary school learners from dropping out of school before completing their studies. Although their desires are thwarted in their

educational experiences, Motsa and Morojele (2018, p. 6) established that learners from child-headed homes continue to publicly express hope that via education they can raise themselves from their dire situations and change their way of life. In the light of this, assisting secondary school learners from child-headed homes may turn their hopes and dreams into reality.

2.5.2 Social effects of poverty on academic achievement

Studies that have examined the psychological, social and emotional difficulties of low educational attainment in households with no parents have highlighted important issues for scholarship. Everything that has a causal connection to the consequences that affect secondary school learners from non-parental homes was defined using the ecological systems theory created by Bronfenbrenner (Chademaana and Wyk, 2021, p. 173). The origins of social ecology theory can be found in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems, which contends that a child's development and wellbeing occur in a setting with numerous interconnected social levels, including the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Buchanan, 2020, p.78). According to Ogina and Ramare (2019, p.2) the majority of secondary school learners who miss the opportunity to acquire information and skills that would help them get ready for the workforce are those who are dealing with several difficulties such as dropping out of school due to factors that are beyond their control. In Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the interconnectedness of the many systems implies that any disruption in one system will have an impact on the entire system. This implies if a child fails to get support from the microsystem which has the family as one component, that child will also have problems at the mesosystem level when interacting with peers and the school. The relationship between the various systems in this theory is dealt with in detail in Chapter Three.

A study conducted in Nigeria by Kazeem and Jensen (2017, p.670) that focused on orphan status, school attendance, and their link to the household head demonstrated the influence of blood-related parents on secondary school learners' decisions to attend school. Comparatively to those who are not, learners from child-headed homes who are deeply connected to their caregivers, through a shared interest or by being similar to them in nature or character, are evaluated favourably. This result would seem to indicate that teachers and society at large have negative

attitudes about secondary school learners who come from homes where secondary school learners are the primary caregivers. This is frequently made worse by the unattractive infrastructure of many schools and the high pupil-teacher ratio, which causes disadvantaged learners to be ostracized and overlooked in terms of their social needs (Dube, Ncube, Mapuvire, Ndlovu, Ncube and Mlotshwa, 2021, p. 5). Secondary school learners from homes with no parents may be forced into a stressful and depressing atmosphere if they are subjected to judgments which are against their interest or welfare (Marongwe et al., 2016, p.42). This is often because secondary school learners who live in families with no parents have a low quality of life (Thwala et al., 2021, p.39). Economic instability, food hardship or chronic illness prevents secondary school learners from low-income households from getting a quality education (Spielman et al., 2021, p.1). While studies on the learning experiences of secondary school learners from child-headed households are replete, my intent was to examine these using developmental and psychosocial theories, which were not considered in earlier research.

2.5.3 The gendered factor in the well-being of child-headed households

According to Mkhathswa (2017, p.369) the gendered aspect is a significant factor that has a varied impact on men's and women's lives. I focused on secondary school learners of both sexes who have lost both parents and are attempting to survive in the setting of my research project. The majority of secondary school learners from households with no parents were affected by Covid-19. Of importance was that the pandemic measures which included lockdowns, worsened the situation for the girl child. Many girls did not return to school. This was further exacerbated by the fact that many families, especially in rural areas believed that by getting their secondary school learners married might buffer their poverty (JOFA, 2021, p.22). While most teachers support both boys and girls in their difficulties, since those difficulties are essentially identical, different teachers have different understandings of the responsibilities that the two genders play (Mkhathswa, 2017, p.369). In most cases, the burdens carried by the girl child of acting as a mother figure, at home is overlooked. Again, the fact that girls are more exposed to abuse is an important gender variable. The majority of victims of abuse have been young girls from child headed households (JOFA, 2021, p.17). Furthermore, even though the government offers financial aid to the majority of secondary school learners from families with secondary school learners in charge, this aid sometimes falls short of covering all of the expenses

associated with receiving a top-notch education (Mkhatshwa, 2017, p. 369). In the context of the girl child, basic necessities such as sanitary pads are overlooked. It is therefore not uncommon for girl secondary school learners to be absent from school when they have their monthly periods.

2.5.3.1 Zimbabwe Education Act [25.04.1987]

The Zimbabwean government passed the Education Act in 1987 after realizing the revolutionary potential of education. This act was premised on three aspects:

- 4(1) free education to every child;
- 4(2) fairness in school admission; and
- 4(10) extra weight to primary and secondary education

While the act was ideally meant to support impoverished communities to be able to access free education, it must be observed that has not translated into reality for the majority of poor citizens who still required to pay fees, indirectly at times in the form of school development committee levies. Additionally, while the concept of fairness in school admission may seem appealing on paper, the reality prevents many secondary school learners whose parents cannot afford to send them to school from being admitted because schools charge fees and levies regardless of a person's social status. Because of this, many secondary school learners, especially those from the rural areas, are out of school. According to some academics (Kanyongo, 2005, p. 70), providing education was seen as making up for those who had been denied the chance by colonial governments, but the tactics utilized to accomplish the aims were neither defined nor concentrated. This infers that while there is a legal framework in place, this has not alleviated the situation of the poor, especially secondary school learners in homes with no parents.

2.5.4 Emotional effects of poverty on educational achievement

The availability of physical necessities and psychological help for the reduction of stress resulting from the loss of their parents can both contribute to the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed families. According to a study by Shumba and Moyo (2014, p.147), parental death frequently destroys a grieving child's social life, which can result in unacceptable conduct like stealing or skipping school. The study also looked at counseling

approaches that support secondary school learners from child-headed families. The study indicated that secondary school learners who had lost a parent experienced derivative losses on two different levels. The principal loss was the death of one or both parents, while the secondary losses were those of a caregiver, a place to live, a confidant or advisor, direction or purpose, or a family unit. Death of one or both parents was the fundamental loss. According to Lobi and Kheswa (2017, p. 100), the loss may have an impact on how happy, free, and entitled to education the girls feel because they are often required to care for their younger siblings in such situations. The loss of the family unit is not the only factor that contributes to the poor psychological and emotional health of secondary school learners from child-headed families; illness and sexual assault may also be factors (Shumba and Moyo, 2014, p.145). Due to a lack of funds to cover the cost of treatments and the absence of their parents, these secondary school learners might not have access to health facilities. Again, living alone may expose them to sexual predators in the form of pedophiles that may put up a façade of good Samaritans yet intending on sexually abusing the vulnerable girls, who more often than not, give in to sexual advances on the promise of financial reward.

Other studies show that secondary school learners from unparented households are deprived a general awareness of life while they are Secondary school learners, and are compelled to perform all household tasks that negatively impact their physical, emotional, social, and psychological well-being (Magwa and Magwa, 2016, p.19). In carrying out this burden early in their lives, these secondary school learners, especially girls, risk missing out on school due absenteeism. However, secondary school learners from homes where a child is the head are more likely to lack basic necessities seen in a typical home. A study by Raj and Chand, (2023, p.1013) which examined the relationship between income poverty and multi-dimensional poverty in Fiji, found that secondary school learners from disadvantaged backgrounds require non-food items like clothing, housing counselling, and health in order to better focus on their academic performance, reduce absenteeism, and improve their psychosocial wellbeing. These findings are consistent with another study by Wang and Nuru (2017, p.153) which found that when child-care facilities are handled well, it helps these learners succeed academically, because they are learning in a welcoming setting that also fosters good performance. This study also indicated that a learning environment that is suitable for secondary school learners with no parents can only be established when the fundamental and academic demands of these secondary school learners are satisfied.

As has been shown in earlier parts of this research, which is a reoccurring theme throughout this study, secondary school learners from child-headed homes are more likely to face abuse. Examining the forms of abuse suffered by secondary school learners from child-headed household was important to the extent that it impacted their social development negatively. At an international level, there exists a framework that I designed to protect secondary school learners and their rights. In the United Nations, the 189-member states ratified the UNCRC's comprehensive protections for secondary school learners' rights (UNCRC, 1989, p.4). Article 3 of the UNCRC states that behavior should be upheld provided it serves the child's best interests (UNCRC, 1989, p. 8). Article 3 of the UNCRC, according to JOFA (2021, p.22) includes secondary school learners from homes with no parents who are exposed to harm such as rape, violence, and kidnapping. However, the abuse of secondary school learners has been a pervasive issue, especially in developing nations.

Numerous studies have detailed some of the abuse in African countries. JOFA (2021, p.22) reports that in Ethiopia many of the secondary school learners being looked after as domestic workers. These secondary school learners were found to be orphans, while in Kenya secondary school learners who were sexually abused and made to perform domestic chores were also orphans. Furthermore, where secondary school learners worked in mining and quarries they were also denied the opportunity to go to school (JOFA, 2021, p.22). A worrying study conducted in the Netherlands by Østby, Rustad, Haer, van der and Arasmith (2022, p.2) indicated that the majority of learners are being enlisted in armed warfare, which is especially important for secondary school learners' safety. The majority of secondary school learners in Zimbabwe who suffer from various sorts of abuse are those with no parents. Schools play a crucial role in preventing child harm and combating the many forms of abuse that secondary school learners from child-headed homes are subjected to. Therefore, the study's focus was on determining the types of abuse that secondary school learners in the Manicaland province would encounter, as well as how much this might affect how well they performed in school.

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed poverty at the global and localised levels affected secondary school

learners from child-headed households. The discussion was done against a background international legislative framework designed to further secondary school learners' rights. The literature reviews revealed that educational institutions were well-positioned to provide for the needs of secondary school learners from child-headed homes but faced difficulties which prevented them from giving secondary school learners from households with no parents the support they required. Furthermore, the review illuminated that secondary school learners from child-headed homes have material, psychological, and social difficulties that need to be addressed.

The theoretical framework used in this study is described in depth in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner and the psychosocial theory by Erikson served as the foundation for the present study. The two theories' essential aspects are outlined and explained in this chapter, along with how they assisted me in coming up with a psychologically sound solution to the study challenge. This study employed ecological systems theory as the main theory while peripheral reference was made to psychosocial theory. I found that blending the two theories was appropriate in the circumstances surrounding secondary school learners with no parents. Focusing only on Erikson's psychosocial theory was likely to limit the spectrum of the study in the sense that psychosocial Theory helps to clarify the developmental attributes of the respondents, while Bronfenbrenner's theory makes it clear that the environment in which an individual dwells, starting from the family, cascades to the macrosystem and the chronosystem (Lundqvist and Sandström, 2019, p.199). The formation of relationships among secondary school learners from homes with no parents was the subject of the current research.

3.1 WHY A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK?

A researcher's choice of theory to direct the investigation is imported into a framework in theory. A conceptual framework is the application of an explanation for an event that uses a theory or a collection of ideas derived from one theory, or to provide insight on a particular event or research issue (Sitwala, 2014, p. 189), and is applied in a specific study (Swanson, 2013, p. 9). As a result, the notions should be pertinent to the problem at hand and have some connection to the larger body of information that is being taken into account (Yamauchi, Eva Ponte, Ratliffe and Traynor, 2017, p. 11). Accordingly, a framework is a collection of connected ideas that serve as a roadmap for research and specify the variables that should be measured in conjunction with the relationship that the researcher is attempting to understand (Yamauchi, Eva Ponte, Ratliffe and Traynor, 2017, p. 11). Due to this, I decided to employ an integrative lens, specifically the Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner and the Psychosocial Theory of Erikson. I realized that by utilizing an integrative lens, In that case, I could acquire a better perspective and full knowledge of the psychosocial factors influencing how well they did in school of secondary school learners from

child-headed families. This realization is comparable to the rationale used in the Gomba (2018, p. 37) study.

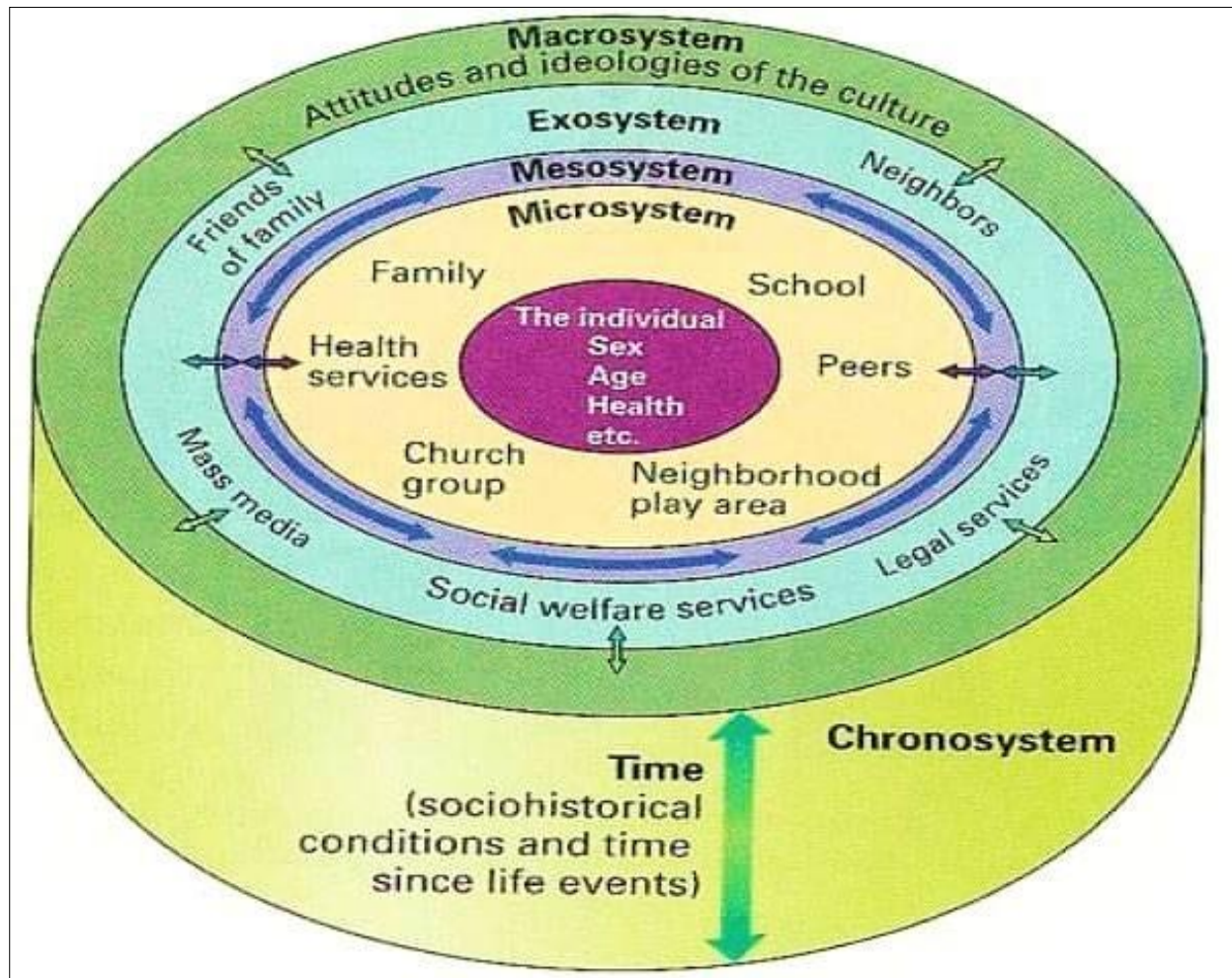
The ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner, commonly referred to as the bio-ecological systems theory, is a non-stage theory that emphasizes the setting in which a person finds themselves. Development is seen as taking place through social interactions which secondary school learners have with the environment (Losioki, 2020, p.189) constructed of ecological sub-systems (Oksanen, Sirola, Savolainen, Koivula, Kaakinen, Vuorinen, Zych and Paek, 2021, p.2). Erikson's psychosocial theory is a stage theory based on the epigenetic principle and conflicting interactions between elements of syntonic (concord) and dystonic (discord), with the underlying the idea that someone's personality is determined by how they are successful in resolving the different crises which characterize each of the eight stages of human development.

3.1.1 BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY

According to a hypothesis put forth by Bronfenbrenner (1977, p. 514), the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem are all interrelated ecological systems. Therefore, ecological systems theory focuses at systems and environments within which individuals and communities develop and function, as well as providing evidence on individuals and their progress (Van der Walt, 2013, p. 37). A child's environment is reciprocal, so Bronfenbrenner makes the case that it is crucial to focus on how the secondary school learners interact with the entire environment when studying secondary school learners' development rather than just their immediate surroundings (Jackman et al., 2022, p. 3). The inference is that all of the sub-systems work together in a connected manner to affect a person's social growth. Ecological systems theory is based on the fundamental tenet that what happens in one system can have an impact on other system components.

Ecological systems theory is a helpful framework that can provide a thorough understanding of how the disruption caused by the demise of one's parents or both affects the education of secondary school learners from child-headed households, which is particularly relevant given it being the main goal of the current study was on secondary school learners who had lost parents

and found themselves living in a child-headed family unit. When both parents pass away, it is common for the older child to take on parental responsibilities by looking after the younger siblings (Mpofu and Chimhenga, 2016, p. 37). The theory therefore illuminates how the behaviour being portrayed by child-headed household learners is predictably connected to societal forces and associations that create their environment.



The five ecological systems, namely; microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem are shown in Figure 3.1 above.

Figure 3.1: Bronfenbrenner's nested system

Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, (2010)

3.1.1.1 Microsystem

The microsystem sheds light on the interactions between the person and his or her surroundings based on Figure 3.1. Secondary school learners' environments include, among other things, their families, friends, and schools. The local environment that has an impact on families with Secondary school learners is known as the microsystem level, according to Bronfenbrenner (Crawford, 2020, p.1). According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, the microsystem will first affect the psychological development and the morals of a learner from a home with secondary school learners in charge. In a sense the microsystem is made up of a child's primary socializing agents who establish limits and a set of procedures which the child has to adhere to be an acceptable member of the community.

Bronfenbrenner's first system is closer to the point of attachment, which involves the context in which learners from child-headed households directly interact (Ettekal and Mahoney, 2017, p.3). There is no one to teach or mentor secondary school learners from families with no parents and skills regarding values, norms, attitudes which are recommended by the society or to give them educational support in terms of schoolwork such as homework. On the other hand, it should be mentioned that parental involvement in secondary school learners' education and other settings helps to create a setting that is very supportive of their learning. It is clear from the setting of the current study that secondary school learners coming from households with secondary school learners lack parents who fill this function. This responsibility is left to the older secondary school learners, who may not be psychologically capable of carrying it out due to their immaturity. Since they lack their parents' support and presence, secondary school learners from child-headed homes may encounter many difficulties in raising their own families. Magwa and Magwa (2016, p.25) aptly observe that these secondary school learners grapple with assuming several household chores which are demanding and beyond their reach. Due to the load placed on learners fail to reach crucial milestones in development as they begin to assume parental responsibilities when their parents are not around. Due to this, they have difficulties in both their social and academic lives (Crawford, 2020, p. 2).

Schools, which are a part of the microsystem, help secondary school learners develop academically. According to ecological theory, a learner cannot explore other systems of his/her

settings if there is a breakdown in the immediate microsystem. According to Bronfenbrenner (2008, p. 20), the most irreparable alteration in the development of those with secondary school learners in their homes are learners' instability and unpredictability of certain families' experiences. The Covid-19 epidemic makes it clear that learners from houses with secondary school learners in charge suffered much greater volatility and unpredictability than secondary school learners from similar low-income backgrounds who had parents who could provide some type of care. Therefore, it can be inferred that secondary school learners from child-headed families had a disjointed engagement with the educational system since they were branded as outcasts who lacked the necessary materials, such as uniforms, books, and other stationery, and were therefore seen as misfits. The interaction of secondary school learners with the school system led to an unhealthy psychosocial environment, so to speak.

From the foregoing review, one can conclude that the increase in learners coming from families with secondary school learners in charge occurs in connection to the immediate environmental setting of the learner (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p.514). Since learners from houses where secondary school learners are the head of the household and their microsystem are interwoven, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory encourages participation from all stakeholders.

3.1.1.2 Mesosystem

The links and interactions between the school and the home, which make up the second level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory of human growth (Crawford, 2020, p. 2), are explained by the mesosystem. The mesosystem is thus an interconnected system of microsystems, and what occurs in a single system can affect how an individual behaves in an alternative system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 40; Van der Walt, 2013, p. 38). Given this, the mesosystem directly influence learners' development from parentless homes.

The lived experiences of secondary school learners from child-headed homes are determined by reciprocal or mutual activities among various settings (Chowkase, 2021, p. 5). As noted earlier, Bronfenbrenner's idea was that varied systems work with or against each other. These mutual or reciprocal actions between multiple microsystems make the mesosystem layers (and the significance in the mesosystem is the working together of the systems aiming at creating a whole

(Crawford, 2020, p.3). In this vein, the fact that an adolescent comes from a child-headed household will impact the relationship with his/her peers, school teachers, and neighbours in multiple ways. In the classroom, the teacher and learners make a microsystem for learners from child-headed household (Crawford, 2020, p.3). Using the social capital theory as a foundation, it therefore becomes clear that the dominant culture, which exerts influence or controls courses, defines the crucial standards by which the majority of secondary school learners from child-headed families are deemed good or terrible. The possibility of being isolated and stigmatized by other learners from advantaged backgrounds looms large for learners living in houses with secondary school learners which may make them to be relegated to possibly attain lower grades because they do not have a support system that has parents. For example, it is not uncommon that teachers tend to stigmatize such secondary school learners and often ignore to cater for both their psychological and social needs.

3.1.1.3 Exosystem

An exosystem is made up of systems that do not involve secondary school learners from child-headed homes but instead manipulate secondary school learners from the near surroundings of families living in poverty (Chowkase, 2021, p. 6). The exosystem involves societal systems that secondary school learners from child-headed households are not necessarily in direct contact with, according to Ettekal and Mahoney (2017, p. 3). It is significant to remember that these frameworks affect how people develop (Van der Walt, 2013, p. 38). The exosystem includes extended family, community social services, and health services for teenagers who are from families where secondary school learners are the primary caregivers.

Owing to their impoverished circumstance, secondary school learners are often at greater risk of accessing health facilities and psychosocial support from government social workers. For example, if a member gets ill, they will need to visit a health care facility, which in the case of Zimbabwe may not assist the member because they have to pay for treatment. In most cases the child will not have any financial assistance from the immediate family or even the extended family implying that access to treatment is a closed door for them. The foregoing example reveals that by simply coming from a child-headed household, a child's healthy growth can be impeded. This has implications on attendance at school and the ability to compete with other learners as

such secondary school learners will frequently stay at home nursing their health.

3.1.1.4 Macrosystem

The prevailing systems of social, cultural, and economic life in addition to prevailing ideals, and conventions are referred to as the macrosystem (Van der Walt, 2013, p.38). Macrosystems include the political, educational and legal systems that impact the microsystems, mesosystems and exosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p.514). A macrosystem is a very important level that creates a dynamic structure of all government arms and legal systems which are broad in scope or content in the microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem of an individual (Chowkase, 2021, p.7). Oksanen et al. (2021, p.3) expound this by positing that the macrosystem places emphasis on the economics, politics, social stability, public policies and cultural values of the nation.

It is crucial to consider how secondary school learners behave in Zimbabwe since it is significantly influenced by the political climate. There is frequently mistrust between the government and non-governmental organizations, which occasionally prevents these organizations from helping poor secondary school learners because the government believes they may be pursuing a regime change agenda. Additionally, the political climate of the time affects how the economy of the nation develops. This suggests that if the government is not doing its best to stabilize the economy, such as is the case currently, secondary school learners from child-headed households will be denied financial support through educational grants from interventions like BEAM as the government will fail to adequately fund the programme.

3.1.1.5 Chronosystem

The chronosystem relates to the individual's developmental period and encapsulates events and changes in the environment across time (Porlares and Tan, 2021, p.411), like the transition from childhood to adolescence. Bronfenbrenner initially did not account for the chronosystem during the establishment of his ecological theory, but later he accounted for it through child-headed households' growth. In line with the preceding notion, as individuals grow, they undergo maturation at a particular time of development. When Bronfenbrenner included the chronosystem in his ecological systems theory, he first introduced the idea of time. Thus, the difficulties faced by secondary school learners living in homes with no parents including the time during which

secondary school learners survive and develop were taken into account (Crawford, 2020, p.2). Secondary school learners in various situations develop differently and experience a range of issues. Given that they are in no way equipped for such a job, the secondary school learners in the current study bear a heavy burden as a result of their abrupt shift from childhood to motherhood.

In conclusion, ecological systems theory is crucial for giving a thorough understanding of the psychosocial development of secondary school learners from households with secondary school learners in charge. On this page, I proposed Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as an important framework with a view of providing insights regarding the complexities of secondary school learners within the within the Zimbabwean context have to live with. I have demonstrated why Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is an important viewpoint because it sheds light on not only how individuals develop internally but also how groups and societies as a whole are structured and function.

The second theoretical framework provided by Erikson's psychosocial theory is presented below. The main goal is to concentrate on how secondary school learners' personalities develop and how comprehending the crises they experience might affect how they view society and, eventually, how they relate to the many ecological support systems that Bronfenbrenner suggests.

3.1.2 ERIKSON'S PSYCHOSOCIAL THEORY

It is crucial to define the term "psychosocial" before elucidating Erikson's psychosocial theory. A compound adjective called "psychosocial" is made up of the words "psychological" and "social," where "psychological" refers to a person's attitudes, ideas, and feelings and "social" refers to the connections between people and their social environment (Yousaf and Khurshi, 2020, p.93). Erikson's psychosocial theory belongs to the psychoanalytic tradition. It explains personality development as a life-long process comprising eight stages from the early stage of development to adulthood. The eight stages are as follows: infancy (trust versus mistrust), toddler (autonomy versus shame-doubt), preschool stage (initiative versus guilt-purpose), school age (industry versus inferiority), adolescence (identity and identity confusion), early adulthood (intimacy versus isolation), middle adulthood (generativity versus stagnation), and late adulthood (integrity versus

despair). The current study focused on secondary school learners.

Psychosocial theory is constructed around the epigenetic principle and conflicting interactions between elements of syntonic (concord) and dystonic (discord) (Angelis, Miranti and Dwiastuty, 2019, p.263). The two elements are essential for personality development to be able to balance between the two which is more inclined towards syntonic. According to Erikson, when one successfully passes through all stages, it reflects freedom from infirmity on one's personality. Freud's ideas of personality structure influenced Erikson to suggest his psychoanalytic theory of psychosocial development which comprises eight stages (Sokol, 2009, p.140). In a sense Erikson's theory does suggest an invariant sequence to human development. The underlying principle is that before moving on to the next degree of development, the previous one must first be experienced. Childhood, adolescence, and adulthood are the three divisions into which the stages are classified. Unlike Freud, Erikson spoke with emphasis about the actions and activities assigned to culture and society and an open clash within the ego itself, rather than concentrating on an open clash between the id and the superego (Freud, 1964, p.61). The ego, according to Erikson, emerges in a successful manner since it handles conflicts that are assembled to promote sociability and communal activity in nature, which includes developing a general conscious trust in others and awareness of identity.

According to psychosocial theory, secondary school learners who are experiencing identity versus role uncertainty are the subject of the current study. Hasanah and Supardi (2020, p. 3602) define adolescence as the transitional stage from infancy to adulthood and note that it is characterized by physical, psychological, cognitive, and sociological implications. According to Leatham (2005, p. 18), when it comes to changing social interactions, secondary school learners go through a variety of processes as their aspirations, roles, and responsibilities shift from dependence to independence. For secondary school learners, this is a time when gradually becoming more eager to try out novel behaviours (Leatham, 2005, p. 70), which is primarily characterized by ability to learn new things and govern oneself (Karabanova and Poskrebysheva, 2013, p. 623) and the ability to make decisions that are personal to them (Hoang, 2015, p. 273). Given the foregoing transformational processes, Pfeifer and Berkman (2017, p.2) argue that these processes are components of the self-identity construction made by secondary school learners.

A compelling issue at the adolescence stage is self-identity. Self-identity, a term initially introduced into scholarship by Erikson (1950, 1963), infers an intangible construct. By proposing that the term "identity" implies meanings that are produced for and placed on the self, Hasanah and Supardi (2020, p. 3604) explain the construct. This makes the process of developing one's own identity crucial for secondary school learners' success (Arnold, 2017, p. 2), and it consequently denotes a crucial stage in the development of secondary school learners. According to Zagrean, Daniela, Claudia and Francesca (2022, p. 4), it is crucial to take context into account of the culture the learner is surrounded by. This is due to the fact that the cultural perspective has a real-world impact on how secondary school learners define their own identities.

With regard to the current study, Ecological Systems Theory by Bronfenbrenner is a priceless resource that I felt was crucial to comprehending the culture that the secondary school learners from child-headed homes came from. The culture in this case is defined by the various ecological sub-systems which in total influence the manner in which the secondary school learners define and shape their identities in the context of the responsibilities that they carry in their homes without adult guidance. This viewpoint is reinforced by Pfeifer and Berkman (2017, p. 2), who convincingly contend that secondary school learners' perceptions of their living environment can affect their capacities to self-identify. Secondary school learners begin to develop a general conscious knowledge of self and personal identity during this stage, which ranging from twelve to eighteen years old. Most secondary school learners ask themselves questions like "Who am I?" and "What do I want to do with my life?" (Saleh, 2022, p.147).

The secondary school learners are therefore at a critical and experimental stage where they try out several activities, roles and ideas. As individuals who are passing from one state to the next, a state of confusion and insecurity about themselves is prevalent. They become concerned about how they will be accommodated in the society. It is therefore imperative to note that an identity crisis will only occur if an adolescent fails to reach a balance of their values (Saleh, 2022, p.147). Secondary school learners who suffer from identity crises lack self-confidence and struggle to "find" themselves as adults. Therefore, secondary school learners who are unable to successfully resolve the identity and role crisis may remain insecure about their beliefs, future and environment and conscious awareness of what is required in the society, when faced with stimulating situations (Saleh, 2022, p.147). It has a great essential to know and be able to understand the general

survival skills and stimulating conditions that are experienced by secondary school learners in search of health and well-being.

During adolescence, an individual begins to practice intra-psychological relationships (Chinyoka and Kufakunesu, 2019, p.50). Ego identity is emphasized in psychosocial theory of development proposed by Erikson. The "ego identity" is deliberately created general conscious awareness of one's own identity, confirmed in one's daily interactions with others and gained by reciprocal actions without any modifications of challenges. Creating an identity that is unwavering and imparting a general consciousness of independence has several benefits. As school settings work to address the necessity of a growing varied learner population, the aim of educating a child from a child-headed households' is to change traditional ways of doing things and provide a necessary education that is equitable and empowers the learner (Zhang, Basham & Yang, 2020, p.4). Therefore, learners from houses with secondary school learners in charge would have more opportunity to pick up skills and the psychological effects of learning and reasoning (Doebel, 2020, p.3).

Unsuccessful negotiation of any stage can hinder the usual way of child development. Interruption in psychological, social and emotional growth can emerge due to poverty. Secondary school learners from households with no parents may experience the emotional repercussions of poverty and come to feel rejected and ostracized. Erikson's fifth stage, identity versus role uncertainty, for instance, would be appropriate for the research project if it involved secondary school learners. During this stage secondary school learners search for a general conscious awareness of their consciousness and own identity through intense careful systematic search of personal values, beliefs and goals.

It is imperative that secondary school learners from families with no parents have access to schooling. According to Chowkase (2021, p.16) interactions among learners at school bring about strong influences. What matters most is the way learners from child-headed households occupy time in their surroundings (Stucke, Stoet and Doebel, 2022, p.12). Learners from poverty-stricken backgrounds who fail are confused about their identity. , Hence, lack self-confidence and cannot engage in meaningful friendships and appear aimless (Saleh, 2022, p.147). If learners from child-headed homes take positive strength from their developmental stages, they will be assured of a

solid basis for relating to themselves and the rest of the world. If a maladaptive propensity is acquired at any level, the development of the learners in the child-headed family becomes unstable.

3.2 CONCLUSION

The theoretical foundation for the current study was principally presented in this chapter. Ecological systems theory was utilized to understand the numerous subsystems and environmental elements that secondary school learners from child-headed homes were exposed to live with, while the psychosocial theory explained the personality development of secondary school learners, with special emphasis on how secondary school learners can develop healthy personalities when they successfully resolve the identity crises characteristic of this stage. The theoretical framework that was presented leads to the conclusion that both the Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner and the Psychosocial Theory of Erikson both support the idea that society is a multilayered, organized system, and that secondary school learners from child-headed households should receive support from a range of stakeholders and institutions, including schools, teachers, communities, and the government, in order to foster healthy psychological, social, and emotional development. Such help, if organised and integrated systematically, will enable these secondary school learners to develop healthy personalities whose chances of excelling academically will be greatly enhanced. Secondary school learners from parentless homes will be able to realize their aspirations and become contributing members of society if they succeed academically.

For this study, the research methodology selected is outlined and defended in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Research plays a critical role in informing not only academia but the generality of society of the issues and challenges that need attention and interventions. The current study's main objective was to investigate the effects of poverty's psychosocial aspects on secondary school learners' academic performance from households with no parents. Given this, research ought to benefit secondary school learners and the environments in which they live. It was crucial to choose a research methodology that would accurately reflect these experiences in their voices, including those of the actors with whom they interacted in a social ecosystem, given that primary objective of the current inquiry was to highlight the actual instances of these secondary school learners.

I defend my decision to select the specific research methodology employed in this investigation and make a case for the worth of the methodologies I used within this chapter. This chapter offers an overview of the following topics: the population, sample, sampling technique, design, and research paradigm and methodology. The three approaches employed were: the semi-structured interview, focus group interview, and document analysis, are described in relation to the Chapter One study. The chapter also illuminates how trustworthiness was established, and ends with an exposition of ethical considerations which I adhered to in conducting the inquiry.

Three methodologies are currently recognized by research orthodoxy: mixed methods, qualitative research, and quantitative research. Due to this, the methodology utilized in every research naturally based on the research topic, the researcher's theoretical viewpoint and the techniques that are most effective in solving the problem (Senderayi, 2021, p.113). I opted for qualitative research couched in an interpretivist research paradigm.

4.1 INTERPRETIVIST RESEARCH PARADIGM

Arguments that any technique "... rests on the nature of knowledge and of knowing" are objective (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.1). As a result, paradigms, or philosophical frameworks, direct

research. With the belief that a researcher cannot arrive at an absolute, singular reality, I performed the research from an interpretivist paradigm (Adiom, Yeboah and Ankrah, 2016, p.2). As a result, I agreed with the idea that understanding a phenomenon depending on the individual perspective developed based on individual human encounters with historical and cultural contexts (Creswell, 2013, p. 179). A paradigm is an accepted set of fundamental ideas in a certain discipline at a particular period (Makombe, 2017, p.367). A paradigm is crucial because it offers rules for researchers to follow both during and after the research project (Nguyen, 2019, p.2). As a result, paradigms are intended to address my views on ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology (Scotland, 2012, p.9). A paradigm serves to demonstrate how academics think about the area of study (Kamal, 2019, p.1389). A paradigm therefore significantly affects "every decision made in the research process" (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017, p. 26). As they were developed, positivism, interpretivism, and the critical approach are the three main research paradigms (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 5).

As a result, I decided to choose interpretivism as my research paradigm. According to interpretivism, people are different from physical phenomena since they can be investigated more deeply through language than physical things can (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020, p. 41). In choosing interpretivism, my decision rested on the premise that interpretivism takes into consideration variations like culture, factors and historical events that contributed to the emergence of different social realities phenomena (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020, p.41). In this vein, it would be possible for me to gain insights about the secondary school learners who were the subject of my interest by considering their interests in the actual circumstances and culture they were experiencing at the time of the study. On account that interpretivism encompasses richness in the insights gathered (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020, p.39). My curiosity in the paradigm sprang from the possibility of using a relativist ontology, which would allow me to subjectively analyze connotations in addition to comprehend the aspects of secondary school learners' social and experiential reality (Ryan, 2018, p. 9). Since the paradigm presupposed that humans cannot be separated from their knowledge, it gave me the chance to apply a subjective epistemology that made it evident how my research related to the secondary school learners (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020, p. 41). In the light of this my study was more sensitive towards the secondary school learners' individual meanings and contributions of their lived experiences (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020, p.42). This position is supported by Junjie and Yingxin (2022, p. 11), who claim that a

relativist perspective that understands as it relates to research comprehension experience, both social and emotional components may only describe reality according to social construction. Thus, through prolonged engagement in the field, I could confront the lived experiences of the secondary school learners as a co-participant who would then be able to construct their experiences more intelligibly from their point of view.

Even though Junjie and Yingxin (2022, p. 11) contend that interpretivism is connected to idealistic philosophical viewpoints such as rejecting the objectivist view that meaning exists in the world apart from consciousness include social constructivism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics. I was also aware that the major inherent weakness of this paradigm resided in the issue of generalisability. The interpretivist position, as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p. 15) note eloquently, seeks to understand instead of applying it to their fields, generalizing the phenomenon in a complicated framework, which might lead to mistrust in the results' validity assessment. Tuli (2010, p. 105) adds his voice to the discussion by making the succinct but important point that interpretivism ontology frequently contradicts itself when examining social phenomena. Mindful of these weaknesses in my selected paradigm, I addressed issues of rigour by dealing with trustworthiness. This involved examining confirmability, transferability, dependability and credibility in a bid to close the gap.

In the next section, I detail four key assumptions of interpretivism and explicate how I addressed these assumptions.

4.2 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE INTERPRETIVIST RESEARCH PARADIGM

The four propositions of interpretivism that are presumed to be true and from which inferences can be made are examined in this section.

Human actions and activities follow a pattern that is unmistakably identifiable. According to interpretivists, all of an individual's experiences that shape how things look to them are socially produced rather than being decided objectively. Due to absence of a single or a generally recognized definition of reality, interpretivism holds that only socially produced meanings may be

used to understand it (Ryan, 2018, p.9). I went into the study locations without any predefined advanced concepts or hypotheses to show in order to appropriately serve learners from low-income homes. I chose to observe and hear how the participants described their actions.

The human being's seat of the faculty of reason is a goal-directed location where the message is meant to achieve the core and most intense or profound component of comprehension of how schools come into being. Because people who provide interpretation uphold the conviction that psychological results of perception, learning, and reasoning are arbitrary, culturally particular, and historically placed depending on actual experiences and knowledge of such experiences (Ryan, 2018, p.9), they seek to comprehend the meaning that individuals ascribe to any state or process rather than doing so through intuition, reasoning, and consideration of their social context. Understanding that familiarity is a social construct, I used data collection techniques including semi-structured interviews to produce primary data, and gain participants' perspectives on the status of secondary school learners from child-headed families.

Without any assistance of human knowledge from the outside, the social world would not exist. According to interpretivists, one must disregard judgments based on one's own personal impressions, feelings, and opinions in favour of external facts of human endeavours in order to have an idea of the world as having outward features and being free from external control and constraint from the human mind. As a result, I used both interactive and non-interactive techniques of data collecting in order to consider scenarios from the perspective of an individual who understands the difficulties faced by secondary school learners who are adolescents from child-headed households. The way one interacts with others affects how comfortable one feels with human society and its members. Since interpretivism considers relativist ontology and subjective epistemology, it is argued that humans and awareness are intertwined. Without any preconceived ideas about the challenges they face in their educational environment, I moved toward the study in contrast to the belief that is taken to be true and from which it can be deduced that reality is a social construction that depends on circumstance. Instead, I paid attention to how precisely and in-depth individuals explain their thoughts on the events and their personal experiences. For the vast majority of individuals, the quality of being able to undertake the actions that promote achievement or accomplishment to interpret society through observation and measurement is what defines the state of being actual or real.

4.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

I used a qualitative research approach to better understand the secondary school learners who are adolescent participants' real experiences. A more flexible non-mathematical examination of experiences is used in qualitative research to study phenomena and provide answers for the what, how, when, and where research questions (Goertz and Mahoney, 2012, p.2). As a result, it is a diverse mix of strategies utilizing methods for gathering data like interviews, behaviour observation, and case studies. The subjective understandings, feelings, due to this, qualitative procedures place a strong emphasis on the opinions and viewpoints of research participants (Gomba, 2018, p. 37). Using a qualitative approach enabled me to gather the stories of the secondary school learners interpret them and retell them using their own experiences through thick rich description. I was therefore particularly concerned with assessing and evaluating how individuals live, "how they construct their world, and what significance they assign to their experiences," while performing a methodical study to establish facts (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.6). The qualitative investigation exposed the actual circumstances and experiences of the subjects, resulting in a thorough and convincing analysis of the phenomenon (Lemon and Hayes, 2020, p.604). I actively engaged in the qualitative research approach and become quite attached to the social contexts that it was taking place in.

In order to support the phenomenological research design it serves as this study's foundation, an investigation using the qualitative research method was conducted (Thwala et al., 2021, p.33). Due to their ability to give a voice to underrepresented groups, qualitative research methodologies are therefore strongly advised (Chilisa and Preece, 2005, p.140). The qualitative approach was found to be the most successful in establishing a functional relation between the parts and the whole of discernment in future of secondary school learners living in homes with no parents because this study focuses on the psychological, social, and emotional influence with regard to poverty on educational achievement of secondary school learners. In contrast to academic fields that strive to gain a deep discernment of phenomenal concern, Creswell (2009, p.175) established that a specific value in qualitative research is to experience a detailed critical inspection of things in their practiceenvironment.

In conclusion, there was a need to address some ontological and epistemological issues that are in

contention with regard to qualitative research. Maree (2012, p.54) asserts that the philosophical theory of knowledge examines important questions that are disputed and must be resolved and that these questions are connected either logically or casually to mental or emotional as opposed to physical in nature as a result of coherent and logical sensing and thought. Whatever knowledge may be, unquestionably and prior to philosophy, education attempts communicating the psychological result of perception and learning and reasoning, and the reason for learners to go to school is to learn new things (Siegel, 1998, p.20). The philosophical theory of knowledge considers each person's experiences, which shape how they perceive the world, as well as their technique of ascertaining the nature of reality (Maree, 2012, p.55). In this study, I learned interpretivist epistemology in relation to the provision of a basis for the systematic investigation to establish facts that are no longer true. I also acquired a scientific method that was identified as crucial in preventing my emotional participation with the research topic, but was found to be ineffective in advancing the objectives of the study.

According to Cohen et al (2011, p.15) and Punch (2013, p.178), interpretivist epistemology gives more weight to mental or emotional factors, which leads to coherent and logical perceiving and thinking that is personal, subjective, and distinctive. Under a close, critical examination, interpretivist scholars must remain connected to the subjects (Gary, 2014, p.385). I felt that the analysis of the actual experiences of 4th year secondary school learners from low-income families belonged to this philosophical framework of knowing. In order to comprehend the cognitive state of study, I was able to collaborate with secondary school learners from child-headed homes, school administrators, guidance and counselling teachers, and school development committees owing to the research tools I had gained.

4.4 INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

Because I agreed with the notion that human experiences are imbued with meaning, derived from one's sociocultural background, and constructed based on those experiences (Hasanah and Surpadi, 2019, p. 502), I opted to utilize an interpretive phenomenological approach in my study design. I chose to conduct a phenomenological investigation which was influenced by the notion that the direct performer or participant of the phenomena is the one who knows it best (Hasanah and Surpadi, 2019, p. 502). This point of view was consistent in utilizing the research inquiries, which made an effort to clarify meanings that the secondary school learners' experiences

in child-headed households helped them to construct in their minds about the difficulties they faced and how those difficulties affected their psychosocial development and, ultimately, their academic achievement in school.

The secondary school learners were therefore considered to be the only people who truly understand the phenomenon within the framework of the present investigation, which was motivated by my desire to comprehend the psychological, emotional, and consequences of poverty on society and academia success of learners living in non-parental households (Thwala et al., 2020, p.36; Baloyi- Mothibeli, Ugwuanyi and Okeke, 2021, p.241). Edmund Husserl (circa 1859 to 1938), is credited as being the founder of phenomenology (Cohen et al, 2011, p.18). Husserl was disturbed by the methods used by social scientists today in their studies. He noticed how theories were being imposed on the participants being studied by scientists far too early (Seruwagi, 2012, p.81). According to Husserl, science must try to set aside presumptions and provide an explanation for how phenomena look to human awareness (Chilisa and Preece, 2005, p.142). He thought that returning to the participants themselves instead of forcing meaning from the outside, figure out how they appear to the people involved (Cohen, et al., 2011, p.18). This was his motto. He contended that only by such an in-depth description could a solid basis because of science inquiry is constructed. In order to accomplish this, Husserl emphasized that investigators need to look beyond the specifics of day-to-day giving life to the fundamental principles or underlying structures of the understudied phenomena (Hart, 2012, p.211). Understanding the phenomenon is necessary under examination, the wellbeing of secondary school learners from child-headed families, I looked at the interaction in comparison made in this study between the family, the school, and the larger society. Husserl claimed that the quest of an experience's essence is the central component and defining characteristic of phenomenological study (Groenwald, 2004, p.25). In order to comprehend the core of social phenomena, Husserl advised academics to "frame" their opinions about the topic under inquiry and attempt to look at it from a fresh angle (Cohen et al, 2011, p.18) which angle he labelled as the epoch'. Epoch refers to the process of realizing and distancing oneself from the conventional worldviews (Mark, 2010, p.7; Walliman, 2014, p.60). Therefore, epoch-based empirical study seeks to comprehend social and psychological phenomena from the viewpoint of those affected.

Phenomenology aims to investigate the significance of human experiences and thoughts about their life, as well as how individuals see the world and how it looks to their consciousness (Tuffour, 2017, p.2) and is an effort to empirically examine all forms of action in daily life to (Hart, 2012, p.211). The study of observed human occurrences within common social situations, as seen from the viewpoint of those who experience them, is known as phenomenology (Haralambos and Holborn, 2010, p.794). The following four types of phenomenological designs are considered ideal for research questions that are typically open-ended (Abakpa, Agbo-Egwu and Abah, 2017, p. 393).

First and foremost, definitional phenomenology looks at the distinguishing characteristics of the experience to ascertain what the nature of the phenomenon is. The second method is descriptive phenomenology, which investigates what forms or variations the issues arise in by asking what features the phenomenon possesses. In the current study, for instance, I was tasked with figuring out the secondary school learners' storytelling tendencies so that I could interpret their experiences from them. Thirdly, interpretive phenomenology largely focuses on figuring out what is wrong (or correct) with the phenomenon in order to look at how it may be improved. Finally, deconstruction phenomenology seeks to determine the assumptions made in the research by examining the social or political interests being served.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis has idiomatic, inductive, and integrative components (Griffiths, 2009, p.53; Seruwagi, 2012, p.83). When it concentrates on the unique experiences that the individual has of the social environment, interpretive phenomenological analysis is idiomatic (Griffiths, 2009, p. 54). An idiographic study's major objective is to investigate individual situations and make specific claims about them. Because it places such a strong focus on analyzing the rich, lived account of a person's social experience, the current study leans more on idiographic phenomenology (Seruwagi, 2012, p.83). I was motivated to employ interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) because it focuses on idiographic data, which I believed was crucial for comprehending the surroundings of secondary school learners from child-headed households. Griffiths (2009, p.54) stressed the value of IPA as a technique for figuring out how people perceive particular events. Another component of interpretative phenomenological analysis is inductive reasoning. Depending on the analysis' tools, unexpected themes may emerge (Griffiths, 2009, p.54; Seruwagi, 2012, p.82). In this light the researcher must be alive to

and avoid making prior assumptions, and hypotheses which have not been examined. As a result, rather than specific hypotheses based on prior literature, interpretive phenomenological analysis offers wide research questions that encourage the gathering of extensive data (Bigger-Staff and Thompson, 2008, p.214). Inquiry is also central to interpretive phenomenological analysis. Adding new knowledge to the body of current literary works is the primary goals of interpretive phenomenological analysis (Griffiths, 2009, p. 54).

I therefore acknowledged that IPA involves a thorough analysis of a very small sample, like the one in the present study; the outcomes can still be assessed in light of analogous examples. The research of these effects in secondary institutions chosen for the study may therefore provide a full picture of poverty's psychological effects on academic achievement of secondary school secondary school learners from child-headed homes. Through the use of phenomenological methods, the experiences and viewpoints of research participants are successfully highlighted (Seruwagi, 2012, p. 82). The information for this study was gathered through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. These data gathering tools enabled me to comprehend some facets of the lives of secondary school learners from child-headed household as the primary caregivers.

The psychological and social impacts of poverty on secondary school learners' academic performance from child-headed homes, school administrators, instructors, and the school development committee were of particular concern to me. According to phenomenology and symbolic interactionism, people actively create their own biographical narratives by interpreting and comprehending the environment around them, as opposed to being passive observers of an objective reality (Griffiths, 2009, p. 50). In order to comprehend their environments, I tried to comprehend the meanings linked with the stories told by the secondary school learners from parentless homes rather than trivializing them.

4.5 TARGET POPULATION

The population in this study comprises of 124 participants in 4th year of their secondary school in Chimanimani District. A target population consists of everyone who possesses the qualities required for the research being (Alvi, 2016, p.10). All secondary school headmasters, school committee members, and secondary school learners enrolled in 4th year between the ages of 15 and

16 resided in and attended secondary school from homes with secondary school learners made up the target demographic. The target population's distribution is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Target population

Target Population	School A	School B	School C	School D	Total
Learners	25	25	25	25	100
School Heads	1	1	1	1	4
School Committee members	2	2	2	2	8
Guidance and Counselling	3	3	3	3	12
Teachers					
Total	31	31	31	31	124

4.6 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

A sample of 32 people was taken. A sample is a distinct subset of a larger group intended to represent the research's objective (Alvi, 2016, p. 11). Choosing an adequate sample for a study is the process of sampling (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg and McKibbin, 2015, p.1775). Since the study was qualitative, I employed non-probability sampling to create a purposive sample.

4.6.1 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling, involves accessing the sample with a specific goal in mind (Alvi, 2016, p.30). This sampling technique was appropriate for this study since I used my judgment to select situations that would be most conducive to achieving the study's goals. Purposive sampling was used to assist me produce accurate data regarding secondary school learners from child-headed homes in schools (Magwa and Magwa, 2015, p.68). The approach to sampling is the most defining noticeable characteristic or feature of qualitative and quantitative research (Gray, 2014, p.217). In qualitative research, examples are purposefully chosen, and small samples are used, whereas relatively large samples are used in quantitative research.

I sampled adolescent secondary school learners from families with no parents. Judgmental sampling is another name for purposeful sampling (Bhardwaj, 2019, p.5). De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2011, p.392) established that while acting with a purpose, one should consider all variables that characterize a system, assess how well it performs for the population, and select the sample based on the justification provided. I purposefully sampled both boys and girls because I wanted to appropriately represent the population's parameters. Furthermore, it was anticipated that male and female secondary school learners from households with Secondary school learners under the age of 18 would encounter gendered challenges in very different ways due to cultural pressures. Therefore, sampling both males and females would add richness in terms of understanding the cultural influences on gender and their impact on academic achievement.

4.6.2 The inclusion and exclusion criteria

The province of Manicaland is divided into seven districts. I chose Chimanimani District, where I currently work. There are three circuits and twenty-seven secondary schools in the Chimanimani District. As a school administrator, I frequently talked with other school administrators about my experiences in life. Through these interactions, I was able to gain an understanding of what life is like for secondary school learners from child-headed households. I chose one local secondary school among five secondary schools in Rusitu Circuit in Chimanimani District to conduct my pilot project. The fifth school served as the venue for the pilot project while the four secondary schools were used for the research study. According to demographic data from 2020, there are 100 ordinary-level parentless secondary school learners in Chimanimani District. Twenty (20) of the 100 secondary school learners were in their 4th year and came from child-headed households. Eight (8) teachers, sixteen (16) secondary school learners from homes with Secondary school learners as the primary caregivers, four (4) school heads, four (4) members of the School Development Committee from four secondary schools totaling to thirty-two (32) participants were purposefully sampled.

The criteria were designed to target four secondary school learners from each secondary school, two boys and two girls, who resided in families living in poverty and who were at least sixteen (16) years old which is the official age for a learner at ordinary level in Zimbabwe. After considering their age and likely susceptibility to poverty, this group had similar conditions and

this constituted a homogeneous group. Because of this homogeneity, I was able to recruit individuals from each of the different homes with almost similar backgrounds, which enhanced the likelihood of obtaining reliable data from the participants.

Four members of the School Development Committee two females and two males' one from each community, who worked with secondary school learners from homes with secondary school learners as primary caregivers, were sampled in the research based on their extensive expertise and understanding in working with secondary school learners from low-income families and child-headed households. Eight teachers were included because they taught 4th year learners and had guidance and counselling experience, while the heads were included because their schools had been sampled. Only after all participants had signed the agreement and assent forms, were they allowed to take part in the research project. The precise number of school administrators and secondary school learners who took part in this study was determined after informed consent and assent were requested and approved. This was done after receiving ethical clearance.

Table 4.2: Sample composition and size

Category	Male	Female	Total
School Heads	2	2	4
Teachers	4	4	8
Learners	8	8	16
School development committee	2	2	4
Total	16	16	32

In order to provide the essential information regarding secondary school learners from child-headed homes and their educational attainment, 16 secondary school learners, eight guidance and counselling teachers, four school heads, and four school development committees were chosen, totaling 32 as stated in table 4.2.

4.6.3 Recruitment Process

I requested approval from the relevant ministry and authorities to carry out this study (see Appendix: A for a letter of permission from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe). Once authorization had been obtained, I notified the chosen secondary schools that a study would be conducted in their facilities. After the message was issued, I went to each of the four secondary schools to contact the heads and the guidance and counselling teachers to have a personal discussion about the thrust of the research and to identify secondary school learners from child-headed households. I also held scheduled meetings with the parties concerned. I requested the total number of homes with no parents from secondary institutions that were chosen once the appropriate authorities had approved the research project. All 4th year secondary school learners from houses with secondary school learners in charge received consent forms to be signed by headmen, counsellors, and chief. I returned to the secondary schools I had previously visited after three days to collect the consent forms with handwritten signatures from each school. The secondary school learners had their headmen, counsellors, and chief sign the consent forms on their behalf. I took care to ensure that each participant in the study was aware of its goals in order for them to provide informed consent (see Appendix F: Informed Consent Form).

4.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and document analysis were the research tools I believed to be most appropriate for gathering rich data documenting actual narratives of secondary school learners because of the phenomenological research methodology for this research, I opted. These study tools were utilized to gather information so that precise conclusions on the psychological, social, and emotional impacts of poverty on academic success of learners from child-headed families could be drawn.

4.7.1 Semi-structured interviews

In accordance with the interpretive phenomenological approach used in this study, the interview technique was deemed appropriate as a data collection instrument. Austin (2020, p.1) views an interview as a verbal discourse between the interviewee and the researcher in which verbal information is elicited from the participant, giving the researcher the leeway to ask questions and

steer a conversation toward emerging and relevant facts (Austin, 2020, p.1). As a result, conducting interviews is among the most effective ways to obtain data for a qualitative study.

Interviews are probably the most often used approach in qualitative research because of its adaptability. Through the interviews, the collection of data that is rich and detailed in its depiction which provides accurate information on a conceptual whole made up of challenging issues that are interconnected and complex, as well as crucial issues that are contested and need to be resolve (Young, Rose, Mumby, Benitez-Capistros, Derrick, Finch and Mukherjee, 2018, p.17). Furthermore, the open-ended interview offers a logical discussion to examine a theme in a flurry of facts (Shamsuzzaman and Islam, 2018, p.256). Qualitative interviewing therefore has a tendency to be flexible, responding to the direction the respondents take the interview, and may force the researcher to change the focus of the research as a result of key concerns that surface during interviews. Additionally, the interview helped me become more perceptive to the meanings of different contexts (Phellas, Bloch and Seale, 2011, p. 202), and it served as an example of how knowledge may be shared among people through dialogue.

I was able to use the interview to get close to the data, learn about the secondary school learners' social lives firsthand, and comprehend the definitions, concepts, and meanings that the secondary school learners gave to a social life marked by deprivation and a variety of difficulties that had an impact on their academic success. In the interviews, I used a few hints or suggestions to encourage participants to respond to questions in line with particular themes. Secondary school learners, teachers, school administrators, and members of the school development committee were interviewed after lunch, in the school libraries.

The interview which was audio recorded lasted an hour on average. The participants in the interview provided their permission for the audio recording of the interview. Primary benefit of visual recording is that it allowed me to pay much concentration on the conversation rather than concentrating on writing notes which could distract the conversation. Recordings furthermore helped me to be consistent in the conversation and become critical in analysing key information that I could have missed, overlooked or forgotten during the actual interview. Before the interview started, the respondents and I agreed on the housekeeping matters. I gathered the participants in

this study and we decided on a meeting time to have conversations. Despite the advantages of the interview described above, I was alive to the fact that there could be a possibility that some interviewees could give inaccurate information in order to please the researcher (Magwa and Magwa, 2015, p.56), which could lead to false conclusions being drawn from the verbal data. I therefore called on all participants to be sincere and detail experiences as accurately and truthfully as possible.

4.7.2 Focus group interview

I employed the focus group interviewing technique in addition to the semi-structured interview. In focus group interviews, members are reportedly requested to share their personal experiences (Canals, 2017, p.396). The primary objective of focus group interviews is to stimulate collective ideas and experiences through participant dialogue (Woolley, Edwards and Glazebrook, 2018, p.2). Focus group interviews typically provide information including quality differences and rely on observation, on which further research is needed than is typically anticipated (Ochieng. Wilson, Derrick and Mukherjee, 2018, p.23). A defining advantage of the focus group is that participants benefit from group contact, which at times can be useful in triggering the memories of participants to recall essential prior occurrences which enable the researcher to create a pattern of personal beliefs (Hultin, Gunningberg, Coleman and Karlsson, 2022, p.233).

Each of the two focus group meetings, which took place in the school libraries after lunch and lasted, on average, an hour, included eight secondary school learners, two school heads, four members of the school development committee, four boys, and four girls. Following approval from all participants, all conversations were audio-recorded. The participants' anonymity was criticized by asking them not to use their own or other people's names when expressing their opinions. This ensured that any other person and I, would-be unable to identify or track down the origin of the answers provided by secondary school learners in these groups.

4.7.3 Document Analysis

An analysis is an investigation of the component parts of a whole and their relations in making up the whole (Wood, Sebar and Vecchio, 2020, p.457). Different documents, including social records, progress records, registers, workbooks, mark schedules, and individual record books,

were employed as documented evidence at various stages of the study. I sought to use school records because they offer convincing proof with precise details about the participants, events, and activities over the relevant timeframe (Wood et al, 2020, p.465). These records helped me to get accurate information about the learner's attendance, academic achievement, health, aspirations, and interests, as well as their backgrounds. I requested teachers and school administrators to supply the collective contextual data required in the study. Table 4.3 shows the records that I used.

Table 4.3: Documents examined

Document	Aspect examined
• Attendance Register	<input type="checkbox"/> Frequency of attendance
• Individual and progress record book	<input type="checkbox"/> Performance being portrayed by the learner in class
• Ordinary level results	<input type="checkbox"/> Subjects passed in the first and second term of the year
• School log register for learners	<input type="checkbox"/> The learners miscellaneous
• Learners' school reports	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments regarding strength or weaknesses of a learner in end of term tests
• Disciplinary record book	<input type="checkbox"/> Deviant and punishable behaviours

Table 4.3 shows that through the different records selected, I could have a detailed analysis of the various factors which congregated to impact the academic achievement of the secondary school learners in my study. As an example, the Attendance Register was crucial to determining whether or not the participants in my study attended classes on a regular basis. This information could be

further confirmed by school reports, which also include attendance information in addition to information on each participant's actual academic performance in the subjects covered by the educational program. Nevertheless, I also tried to understand whether the secondary school learners could be labelled as deviants or problem secondary school learners owing to bad behaviours.

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION PROCEDURE

Thematic and content analysis were both used to analyze the data. Data analysis involves structuring the data, reading through the database beforehand, coding and arranging themes, representing the data, and coming up with an interpretation of them, according to Creswell (2013, p. 179). Maree (2012, p.20) established that qualitative data analysis typically has a foundation that provides interpretation and a belief accepted as authoritative by some groups with an aim of considering in detail and subject to an analysis to uncover key meaning information that is involving distinctions based on qualities. Assuming that each piece of data collected from participants automatically becomes a unit of analysis, I then examined all the data provided by the participants (Adom et al., 2016, p. 6). I was aware that in phenomenological research, participant opinions and experiences serve as the main sources of information (Carel, 2011, p. 2). According to Magwa and Magwa (2015, p.92), since data analysis connects closely and frequently incriminatingly reduces data into controlled discussions, perceptual structure, and the general direction in which information tends to move, it provides order as well as discernment in the subject matter of a discussion under an inquiry into unfamiliar activities. The unanalyzed data was organized into a suitable structure that was read thoroughly to create a message that could be recognized by those who participated in the thorough critical examination (Thwala et al, 2021, p.35).

4.8.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was the best method for analyzing the data from the in-depth interviews since it facilitated the processing of vast amounts of data without sacrificing the original material's richness (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p. 57). Themes are narrowly focused replies that are collected in collections of data to describe a particular study issue (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p. 57). Thematic analysis offers a way for methodically sifting through data to find recurrent themes that

appear in spoken data (Thwala et al., 2021, p. 35). I followed Senderayi (2021, p.113) method of identifying themes by employing an inductive or "bottom up" approach. I failed to make an effort to impose my assumptions. I choose to let my analysis be shaped by the verbal data. Such a strategy went hand in hand with realism epistemology, which maintains that speakers, not words, serve as mirrors for the outside world. I therefore preferred to analyze the data using a method created by Braun and Clarke (2012, p. 57). As a result, it was possible to systematically identify, group, and shed light on the patterns of themes that appeared across a data collection (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p. 57).

It was essential that I reviewed the data I had painstakingly transcribed from the focus groups and interviews in the first phase, made note of noteworthy features, actively, analytically, and critically engaged with the data, and thought about what the data meant (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p.58). I then carefully examined the data and created preliminary programs. In the third stage, themes were sought out by looking for key elements of data that related to the aforementioned research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p. 59). I then went over probable themes relating to the entire data collection and the coded data in the fourth phase. The study questions started to take shape at this point and pertinent themes that were crucial and significant in relation to them started to emerge (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p.57). By conveying what was unique and explicit about each topic, I consciously started to define and label them throughout this phase (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p. 59). In the final and sixth phase reporting on the themes in a manner that exuded logic and meaningfulness with the aim of coming up with a coherent report, which went beyond description to make a relevant argument began (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p.57). In presenting the findings, I used polished excerpts from selected participants to add voice to the stories of the participants.

4.8.2 Content analysis

Content analysis was used to examine document data. To reduce a big volume of information into a more concise representation of some of its aspects, content analysis entails the systematic classification and counting of text units (Marvasti, 2019, p. 10). With different focus on the quantitative and qualitative components of data and data collection, content analysis (CA) can be viewed as a continuum of analytic choices (Marvasti, 2019, p. 2). I followed a content analysis

approach proposed by Marvasti (2019, p.10). The first step involved identifying data sources (See Table 4.3). I then developed and refined categories. The next step entailed coding the data. Finally, I summarized the data into readable analytic units based on inferences made from the coded data. This allowed me to condense the enormous amounts of information I had gathered from the many records into concise, yet detailed, units of knowledge.

At the relevant points, the data from the thematic analysis on verbal semi-structured and focus group interviews were combined with the themes obtained from content analysis. I did this for the purpose of gaining a complete grasp of the research problems and provide a rich, detailed account of the phenomenon being studied

4.9 ISSUES OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

Recently, qualitative inquiry has seen great growth in the field of educational research, making it uniquely positioned to make process-based data available to researchers, recounted, and more directly related to the human experience is narrative data. As a result, some academics argue that the story must have a measurable level of trust attached to the teller (Stahl and King, 2020, p. 26). Because of this, qualitative academics are worried about credibility. Being trustworthy in the study is being dependable and consistent (Lemon and Hayes, 2020, p. 608). Gaining confidence in the validity of the research method and the outcomes, as well as eliminating researcher bias, are essential components of trustworthiness in qualitative research (Senderayi, 2021, p.113). Being trustworthy means the research is consistent and reliable (Lemon and Hayes, 2020, p.608). Trustworthiness, according to Patton (2015, p.91), is the researcher's capacity to be correct in their investigation so as to be accepted by readers and participants.

Similar to validity and reliability in quantitative research, trustworthiness is a rigor factor in qualitative research. In general, four factors: credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity), determine whether a qualitative study is trustworthy. Research is considered to be of good quality if it has the aforementioned criteria. In the light of this, I saw that these criteria were meticulously addressed.

4.9.1Credibility

How realistically grounded are the findings? Is a question that determines credibility (Stahl and King, 2010, p. 26). Therefore, credibility refers to how much the research's conclusions may be trusted (Korstjens and Moser, 2018, p. 121). Credibility implies the studies and its findings' conclusions are internally valid. Validity of qualitative research depends on the researcher and not always on others. In the light of this, the researcher has to demonstrate to the audience of readers and scholars that a study is authentic and believable. I ensured trustworthiness through triangulation.

Johnson (2017, p.91) describes triangulation as a crucial method that uses two or more sources to increase the possibility that data is accurate. It offers a level of logical coherence and agreement with the findings obtained through various instruments and speeds up the process of evaluating the outcomes. By gathering data using a variety of tools at four secondary schools in the Chimanamani District Rusitu Circuit, I was therefore able to triangulate my findings. I used method and time triangulation. Method triangulation was achieved by using the interview, focus group and document analysis, while time triangulation involved collecting the data at different points and times. To put the research results into context and provide a feeling of the readers' shared experiences to the discussion of themes, I also employed dense, detailed description.

4.9.2Transferability

Research findings can only be interpreted in the way that is most likely from a given perspective; there is no one corrects interpretation or universal application (Korstjens and Moser, 2018, p. 121). In the light of this, it is imperative that researcher allow other scholars to assess how external validity of a study is ensured. Transferability is an apt way that a qualitative researcher can apply to this end. Korstjens and Moser (2018, p.121) define transferability as the quality of being transferable to other contexts with different participants. According to Senderayi and Senderayi (in press), "other contexts" in this scenario can refer to comparable circumstances, populations, and events. Elo et al. (2014, p. 2) rightly note that transferability relates to the potential for extrapolation and is contingent on the justification that results may be applied to different groups or circumstances.

To encourage transferability, it was helpful that I gave a detailed explanation of the culture and setting, participant selection and characteristics, data collection method, and analytical approach. Transferability was strengthened by a thorough and compelling presentation of the findings together with pertinent acceptances. Additionally, I used purposive sampling and dense, in-depth description to demonstrate how the research's findings may be applied to many settings, conditions, and circumstances. The use of extensive description is encouraged by Stahl and King (2020, p. 26). They contend that transfer is only conceivable when a detailed account offers a complete enough picture of the conditions to be applied to those of others.

4.9.3 Dependability

Dependability is the capacity to produce consistent study results over an extended period of time (Korstjens and Moser, 2018, p. 121). It is the quality of being dependable, reliable and the findings should remain constant in any given circumstance (Lemon and Hayes, 2020, p.605). This is like reliability in a quantitative study. Results from participants in the study should be constant. As an interviewer, I would be an essential constituent of the data collecting technique. I would be reflecting on other research done by reputable researchers. To ensure dependability, I provided an inquiry audit. An inquiry provides a platform for other researchers to make evaluations and conclusions regarding the output of the research findings. All the information I gathered from the participants was also safely stored for possible future verification.

4.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability measures how easily additional researchers could independently verify the research findings (Korstjens and Moser, 2018, p. 121). It tackles some of the assumptions analyses you performed in order to justify the choices you made because doing so demonstrates that the results of the study truly reflect the replies of the participants. It is a judgment of a study based on observable phenomena, uninfluenced by emotions, and it addresses some preconceptions analysis that you conducted. For review by other researchers, colleagues, or a qualitative research specialist on biases, I kept extensive records of my decisions and analyses as the research developed (Lemon and Hayes, 2020, p. 605). According to Senderayi and Senderayi (in press), you can present an audit trail that details each step of data gathering and analysis in order to show confirmability.

4.10 PILOT STUDY – DETERMINING POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

Prior to the main study, I ran a pilot study. A pilot study is used to test a more streamlined version of the major study (Eldridge, Lancaster, Campbell, Thabane, Hopewell, Coleman and Bond, 2016, p.2). A pilot study's main objective is to predict study results based on a lower sample size (Orsmond and Cohn, 2015, p. 2). Six secondary school learners, one headmaster, and two teachers from the school that was not a part of the main study to take part of an exercise that was meant to be a trial. It was crucial to consider the applicability of the data collection instruments and the potential outcomes since doing so would have given me insight into the potential outcomes of the field study itself.

Throughout and following the pilot project, the research instruments remained the same. The wording of the instruments was straightforward and intelligible, according to all participants. The comments from the participants showed that the interview process seemed to make the study questions crystal apparent. Given that the information gathered appeared to be in line with the study questions, this was helpful in establishing both their face validity and substance.

4.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Understanding and upholding ethics based on a set of principles to preserve participants' rights is a fundamental assumption consistent with scholarship (Abdelsalam, 2013, p. 92). According to the ethical guidelines established by the Durban University of Technology Institutional Research Ethics Committee (See Appendix C: Ethical Approval). The revised eight-point framework states that the research ethics committee should evaluate each research protocol to make sure that the study has the following characteristics: an independent ethics review, informed consent, a collaborative partnership, social value, scientific validity, fair participation selection and a favourable risk-benefit ratio (Emanuel, Wendler, Killen and Grady, 2004, p.1). According to the World Health Organizations (2019, p.7), ethical concerns also govern the application of ethical principles to protect each participant's right to privacy and general well-being. Throughout this investigation, I described the ethics that were upheld.

4.11.1 Ethical clearance and negotiating entry

At Durban University of Technology's Research Ethics Committee, under reference number

IREC/299/21 (see Appendix C - Ethics Approval Certificate), I first requested and received ethical permission. I secured access into the investigation at the outset by getting a letter outlining the research I would conduct from the Department of Arts and Design at Durban University of Technology. It was requested in writing to undertake the study. This approval came from Zimbabwe's Permanent Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education (see Appendix A). I sent emails to each secondary school's principal requesting more authorization for site visits. This request was backed up by a letter of authorization from the head of the ministry. The emails were sent with the intention of informing the principals of the study's rationale. To further explain the purpose of my study, I have also included a sample of the research tools. I then gave each principal a call. This step was required to confirm that they had all truly gotten the email and to officially state my request. Every time I went to a school to conduct the study, assuredly, I let principals know I attended.

A systematic investigation to establish facts adhering to established customs or doctrines to the state of being actual and as a result worthy of trust and certainty based on prior experience was conducted after receiving approval to conduct a detailed critical inspection (Chikutuma, 2013, p.84). It is advisable that a researcher should make an extra effort to obtain official approval of participants before beginning their study (Majoko, 2013, p.132). The researcher can now more easily get to the study sites because of this. Given the volatile political situation in Zimbabwe, particularly in rural environment, getting approval was also a safety measure to ensure that the researcher did not cause trouble with the local leadership.

4.11.2 Informed consent

Obtaining the participants' permission to take part in my study was crucial. When a participant gives informed permission, it means that they have been made aware of the benefits and potential hazards before participating in a detailed critical inspection (Magwa and Magwa, 2015, p.83). Participants should be made aware that they are more than welcome to stop participating in this extensive critical analysis. (Thomas, Mullane, Ang, Barrow, Leahy, Whelan, Lombardi, Cooper, Stevenson, Lester, Padley, Sprigg, Speers, Merritt, Coffin, Cross, Gething and Bowen, 2022, p.1). I gave all participants in this research project advance notice of the expected outcomes (see to Appendix F: Informed Consent Form).

4.11.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality signifies my duty to maintain the participants' identities and responses' secrecy. The right to a set of facts from which conclusions may be derived that is protected from harm or destruction is guaranteed by the increased emphasis on secrecy. Gamal, Stephan, Fahrenkrog, Mohammadreza, Koschmider, Mannhardt, Saskia Nuñez von Voigt, Majid Rafiei, and von Waldthausen (2021, p.2) define confidentiality as the exchange of promises on the steps taken to keep data in good working order and the identity of the person with the authority to receive data or retrieve it from a storage device. On the other hand, remembering that participants have a right to privacy is important for researchers (Chikutuma, 2013, p.85). Identity protection is made possible by anonymity (Arca and Hewett, 2021, p.2). When the researcher withholds responses that correspond to participants, participant anonymity is guaranteed (Arca and Hewett, 2021, p.2). Therefore, the participants' anonymity was guaranteed by this research study. I utilized fictitious names for the school administrators, guidance and counseling staff, secondary school learners, and the school's development committee in order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. This was particularly important because this would ensure that no comments would be traced back to any particular participant.

4.11.4 Non-malefeasance

The moral intention of the researcher to refrain from causing harm, increase the danger of harm, or stop injuries to others is the foundation of how non-malefeasance is understood. In the light of this, an understanding of what constitutes harm is highly contested territory in research literature but despite the numerous definitions in extant literature, a broad definition of the harm encapsulates, inter alia, the interference with the research participants' liberties, privacy, causing discomfort, humiliation or offending the person and reputation of the participant (Matloba, 2019, p.2).

It was crucial that I keep the participants in this study safe or shielded them from any injury (Mutambudzi, Niedzwiedzi, Macdonald, Leyland, Mair and Anderson, 2021, p. 307). Secondary school learners who are adolescents were suffering from humiliation and other bad actions, which I should aim to prevent. Participants can only suffer psychological injury when asked to speak out about their privacy. Confidential participant information will not be revealed throughout this

research study. In my interaction with the secondary school learners and other participants, being raised in a home where secondary school learners who are adolescents were in charge, I was very aware of this negative label and stigma which could make the secondary school learners feel uncomfortable to tell their stories openly. I therefore avoided any language that could insinuate disrespect for them. Furthermore, I avoided any paralanguage which could betray any emotions on my part and maintained a neutral appearance even when the stories being told were of an embarrassing nature. By remaining impartial throughout the data gathering exercise, it was made sure that none of the participants feel ashamed when sharing sensitive information.

4.12 SUMMARY

The research methodology chosen for this qualitative investigation was explained and supported in this chapter. I discussed the study approach and paradigm in detail, which in turn influenced the decision to choose an interpretive phenomenological research design. Additionally discussed was the procedure for gathering and analyzing data. The chapter's conclusion discussed the research ethics that were upheld during the course of the investigation.

In the following chapter, we will focus on the specifics and points that we made when presenting, analyzing, and interpreting the research findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This study's objective was to investigate the psychosocial impact of poverty on the academic performance of adolescent learners from child-headed homes in order to develop a practical educational framework that is sympathetic to their needs. The primary study was structured as follows:

- *To what extent does poverty affect the academic performance of adolescent secondary school learners from child-headed households?*

To explore the main research question, the study sought to answer the following research sub-questions:

Research Question 1: What effects does poverty have on the psychological health and academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households as the primary caregivers?

Research Question 2: How does poverty affect the social wellbeing and education of secondary school learners from child-headed households as the primary caregivers?

Research Question 3: How does poverty impact the mental health and academic performance of learners from families where Secondary school learners are the primary caregivers?

Research Question 4: How may the detrimental impacts of poverty is lessened among learners from families with Secondary school learners?

In this chapter, information acquired through focus groups, interviews, and document analysis is presented, examined, and discussed.

5.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS

The gender distribution of each participant in the study is shown in Table 5.1

Table 5.1: Distribution of participants by gender

Participants	Gender	Frequency
School Heads	Male	2
	Female	2
Guidance and Counselling teachers	Male	4
	Female	4
School Development Committee	Male	3
	Female	1
Child-headed households	Male	8
	Female	8
Total		32

Table 5.1 shows that there were two men and two women. This shows that campaigns to promote gender sensitivity within the Zimbabwean Public Service were successful in getting an equal number of school heads to assume leadership positions. Female teachers were encouraged to apply for positions as school heads or deputy school heads by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in a 1993 report. There was also a similar balance in the sample of eight guidance and counselling teachers. This was done with the intention of ensuring that challenging and stimulating situations faced by secondary school learners from child-headed households could be investigated in a state of proper equilibrium.

Table 5.2: Profile of adolescent participants

Code	Gender	Age	Form	Additional information
FGI-1	F	15	‘O’ Level	Lives with two older sisters, two younger sisters and a brother
FGI-2	F	15	‘O’ Level	Lives with older brother and five young sisters
FGI-3	M	16	‘O’ Level	Lives with older brother and four young sisters
FGI-4	M	15	‘O’ Level	Lives with two older sisters and two younger Brothers
FGI-5	F	15	‘O’ Level	Lives with two older sisters and two younger Brothers
FGI-6	F	16	‘O’ Level	Lives with older sister and two other young Brothers
FGI-7	M	16	‘O’ Level	Lives with older sister and two other younger Brothers
FGI-8	M	16	‘O’ Level	Lives with older brother and three younger sisters
FGI-9	F	15	‘O’ Level	Lives with older brother and one young sister
FGI-10	F	15	‘O’ Level	Lives with two older sisters and two younger sisters
FGI-11	M	16	‘O’ Level	Lives with three older sisters and two other younger Brothers
FGI-12	M	16	‘O’ Level	Lives with older sister and three younger sisters
FGI-13	F	15	‘O’ Level	Lives with older brother and two younger sisters
FGI-14	F	16	‘O’ Level	Lives with older brother and two younger sisters
FGI-15	M	16	‘O’ Level	Lives with older sister and two other younger Brothers
FGI-16	M	15	‘O’ Level	Lives with older brother and three younger brothers

Table 5.2 shows that there were eight boys and eight girls from the sixteen secondary school learners from child- headed households. This allowed me to hear gender balanced stories from the secondary school learners. All of the participants in this study came from families where secondary school learners were the only adults and siblings made up the sole members of the core family unit. The table shows that the sixteen participants had a total of seventy-two (72) family members made up of forty-seven (47) females and twenty- five (25) males. This implied that on average each child-headed family was made up of at least five members which in relative terms a large family unit given the impoverished circumstances surrounding the secondary school learners. The participants were 15.5 years old on average. Table 5.2's data provide further evidence that the sample of secondary school learners came from child-headed families who looked to the older siblings for support and care.

Table 5.3 profiles the school heads by administrative experience using age ranges in years.

Table 5.3: Distribution of school heads by administrative experience

Experience in years	Frequency
Below 5	0
6-10	1
11-15	3
16-20	0
Above 20	0
Total	4

Table 5.3 reveals that three of the heads have more than ten years of experience, while just one head has fewer. It can be concluded that all heads had had prolonged interaction with learners from child-headed household and would evidence sufficient knowledge to describe accurately the issues experienced by such learners.

Table 5.4 shows the distribution of school heads by age.

Table 5.4: Distribution of school heads by age

Age in years	Frequency
Less-30	0
31-35	0
36-40	1
41-45	2
Over -45	1
Total	4

Table 5.4 shows that three heads were between the ages of 41 and 45, one was over 45, and one was between the ages of 36 and 40. The research participants were selected because they were mature enough to handle the various challenges faced by different secondary school learners from homes with no parents, according to the ages of the heads shown in table 5.2, and because they could provide me with useful information about their welfare.

The guidance and counselling teacher's demographic information is shown in Table 5.5

Table 5.5: Profile of teachers by age, qualification and job experience

Variable	Variable description	Number
Age in years	Less -30	0
	31-35	0
	36-40	3
	41-45	2
	Above -45	3
Professional qualification	Diploma in Education	4
	Bachelor of Education Degree (Primary)	0
	Bachelor of Education Degree (Secondary)	0
	Bachelor of Science Degree in Counselling	0
	Master of Education Degree	2
	Doctor of Philosophy Degree	0
Job experience in years	Less-5	0
	6-10	2
	11-15	4
	16-20	2
	Above-20	0

Three of the eight guidance and counseling teachers were between the ages of 36 and 40, two were between the ages of 41 and 45, and three were over the age of 45, according to the information in table 5.5. According to Table 5.5, all eight guidance and counseling instructors were experienced professionals who could provide secondary school learners, especially those who came from homes with no parents as the primary caregivers, with the necessary psychosocial assistance. Eight teachers were there, but only two had counseling degrees; the other four had diplomas. Two of them held educational master's degrees. Table 5.5 demonstrates that guidance and counseling teachers are qualified to assist secondary school learners from child-headed homes who are experiencing a range of issues due to their academic backgrounds. The selected instructors all possessed a minimum of six years of teaching experience.

In general, the teachers had enough expertise to serve secondary school learners from families with no parents in their learning environment. School teachers are legally prepared to handle the challenges presented by secondary school learners from households with Secondary school learners as the primary caregivers due to their training and expertise in guiding and counseling.

5.2 PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECTS OF POVERTY ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

This displays and examines the participant tales that were obtained through individual and group interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. The section is organised using sub-research questions under which themes are indicated. Some participants chose to respond in their local language. Where necessary, the verbatim statements of these participants are presented in bold and are followed by the English interpretation. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity the following codes were developed as pseudonyms. Each code is suffixed by a letter to identify a particular story teller.

- FGI = Focus group
- SH = School head
- GCT = Guidance and counselling teacher
- SDC= School Development Committee

5.2.1 Research Question 1

- *What is the impact of poverty on the psychological wellbeing and education of secondary school adolescent learners from child-headed households?*

Secondary school learners from homes with no parents faced a number of material problems. The stories of the secondary school learners, as expressed by the secondary school learners themselves and other participants, are organised under the following four themes: inadequate provision of food and nutrition; inadequate stationery and access to quality education; both a lack of school fees and a lack of uniforms.

5.2.1.1 Inadequate provision of food and nutrition

Lack of concentration on learning as a result of nutritional deficits can be experienced in the secondary school learners from child-headed households. The adult participants claimed that secondary school learners from child-headed households lack food and nutrition that might psychologically impinge on learners negatively. The opinions of the adult participants that food was a substantial barrier that stopped them from attaining their academic goals were supported by focus group interviews with secondary school learners from child-headed households. The sentiments stated by the participants are shown in the following excerpts:

Due to insufficient rainfall and the effects of the Cyclone Idai-induced drought, which has afflicted the whole Southern Region, the majority of households typically do not have enough food. The homes with Secondary school learners as the heads and those with grandparents as the heads are the most impacted. Attendance of secondary school learners from these homes may experience a sudden, unforeseen change. SH-A

Most of the learners from child-headed households' learning is disturbed by absenteeism while attending to fields, sick sibling and lack of basic needs such as food. SH-C

Lack of resources, such as food, lead to low self-esteem, absenteeism and make these learners more vulnerable SH-D

The government ministries should provide learners from child-headed households with financial help and all resources required for their education. SDC-B

GCT-6 corroborated this by saying:

Secondary school learners from child-headed households usually come to school with no lunch boxes of food, an indication that, they do not have food at home and eventually they end up stealing other Secondary school learners' food.

Learners from focus group interviews stated their predicament thus:

Kazhinji tinotoenda kumarikicho kuita kuti tikwanise kuwana mari yokutenga chokudya uye chokupfeka

Most of the time we have to work so that we can raise money to buy clothes and food

FGI-3

Sezvo tisina vabereki tino tozvishandira kuti tiwanewo chokubata

Since we do not have parents to look after us we have to work so as to get something to eat.

FGI-2

Tinosangana nenhamo yokutsvaka zvokudya uye zvokupfeka izvo zvinoitawo kuti tive vanhu panevamweni vanhu

Mostly we are struggling to find food and clothes so that we can be part of other people.

FGI-1

Panenge pachidzidzisa Mudzidzisi inini handinyatsogona kuteerera nokuti ndinenge ndichitofunga kuti saka ndikadzoka kumba ndichasviko dyei uye vana ndichavapei inini ndasiya kusina kana chouviri

When the teacher is teaching, I fail to pay much attention because I will be thinking of what should I eat when I get back home since I left the house empty.

FGI-4

The aforementioned quotes provide sufficient proof that Secondary school learners from child-headed households saw inadequate food and nutrition as a severe obstacle that had an impact on their academic performance.

All of the participants who were questioned about the issues facing secondary school learners from child-headed households in relation to poor nutrition emphasized the practices promoted by

educational institutions in an effort to address the concerns. There was consensus that educational institutions lacked the capacity to feed secondary school learners from child-headed households without any forms of assistance from external organisations. Sentiment by school heads revealed the following:

In terms of the activity of supplying food to the people who are poor enough to need help from the school, the school has no power to provide food for the learners from child-headed households. Even though we are feeling for them but due to financial constraints we as schools are facing hinder us from assisting or providing these learners with food in schools. SH-A

When these learners are troubled by hunger, their minds will not concentrate but will be interrupted by episode of sadness. Their learning will be disturbed because in most of the occasion they are absent-minded. Their minds will be pre-occupied with the situation around them. Care International used to sponsor us with viable school-feeding scheme for the past eight years but it stopped of which it was very good for our learners. SH-C

The preceding opinions demonstrate that the school administrators agreed that due to a number of difficulties caused by financial limitations, the majority of schools are unable to provide meals for secondary school learners from child-headed homes. The comments from the participants showed that non- governmental assistance and interventions were necessary for effective feeding programmes.

An analysis of records used to carry out the feeding programme revealed a state of passivity following the suspension of the NGO-sponsored school meal programme that SH-C highlighted. The record indicated that the feeding programme expired in 2013. It was important to note that the cessation of the feeding was said to have been due to political actors. However, out of fear of possible retribution, school heads, teachers who specialize in guidance and counselling, and the school development committee members were unable to provide any further insight.

As I was gathering information, I noticed that bags of corn were being brought to the schools. The head of the school indicated that the government was reviving the school-feeding programme by

sending food to all of the district's schools through its educational institutions. One could deduce that this was ostensibly for political reasons. It became clear that this feeding programme only targeted 1st year and 2nd year secondary school learners. The delivery was also noted in the other schools. The following are thoughts from SH-B:

A voluntary gift made to some worthwhile cause is not worthy of notice. The government should not select among the vulnerable learners instead of assisting all learners from child-headed households regardless of his/her educational level at in secondary schools. It is not fair on the side of the government by providing bags of maize meal with no other materials like cooking oil and relish that make the feeding scheme a reality.

Additionally, the opinions expressed in focus group interviews by secondary school learners, members of the school development committee, and instructors of guidance and counseling schools were all consistent. The following arguments in favour of the necessity of a healthy eating plan:

A school feeding programme scheme which was experience by schools in 2009-2013 was very essential to the food challenges confronting learners from homes with no parents.
SDC-A

Tinoenda kuchikoro tisina chatadya zvopa kuti tisanyatsoterera kana Mudzidzisi achitidzidzisa, Muzvikoro medu umu mazuva ano hamusi kupiwa chikafu sezvaimboitwa kare saka iiii tinotoshatirwa nenzira zvokutosvika pakusatombokwanisa kunzwa zvirikudzidziswa

We usually go to school on our empty stomachs. This leads us not to pay enough attention when the teachers are teaching. In schools these days food is no-longer provided as it was in the past and eventually we suffered a lot with hunger to an extent that we learn nothing at school.

FGI-5

Nzara inototoita kuti tisateerera zvinodzidziswa nomudzidzisi sezvo tinenge tabva kumba pasina chatamboisawo mudumbu zvpedzisira zvitishaisa samba rokuterera Mudzidzisi achifundisa

Hunger caused us not to pay more attention since we come to school with empty stomach and no-one can pay attention with no power/energy. FGI-16

All participants agreed that without regulation, the government-sponsored school meal program could not function efficiently since it lacked the resources required by 1st year and 2nd year for learners from home with no parents. Participants pushed for a more comprehensive and inclusive school meal programme. Many participants from child-headed households expressed their displeasure at not being included in the programme, and they expressed unreservedly. I also noted that some of the focus group interview participants appeared to be extremely exhausted because they were clearly hungry.

5.2.1.2 Inadequate stationery and access to quality education

Poor academic performance associated with lack of access to books and psychosocial impact on secondary school learners who are adolescents might negatively impact their self-esteem. One of the concerns that came into focus was lack of suitable educational resources and quality education that might psychologically impinge secondary school learners who are adolescents negatively. Interviews revealed that many such secondary school learners from child-headed households lack sufficient resources which contributed to their frequent absenteeism. According to three out of four school administrators, budgetary restrictions prevent schools from accepting secondary school learners from homes with no parents.

It was important to highlight that some non-governmental organizations were supporting some secondary school learners with financial aid. For instance, GCT-6 implied that five secondary school learners from families with no parents received this help thanks to financing from the Higher Life Foundations. However, GCT-8 found that many secondary school learners who lived in homes with no parents urgently required assistance with stationery. The perceptions of school administrators, guidance and counseling instructors, and members of the school development committee that secondary school learners from child-headed households experienced stationery concerns were supported by focus groups with secondary school learners. The remarks that followed underlined how difficult it was for the secondary school learners:

We do not have the capacity of providing stationery to the learners, even to the vulnerable learners because we are running short of finances in schools. As schools, we do not have the powers to charge fees as we wish so that we can purchase stationary for the whole school. Our school is charging a very small amount of school fees which cannot allow us as a school to assist any learner with stationary. SH-A

The other two school heads agreed with (SH-A) when she expressed her concern with the academic results for secondary school learners who had limited access to school resources. Two guidance and counselling teachers presented the following statements made by school administrators regarding the impact of school resources on secondary school learners from child-headed households:

Almost three quarters of learners from child-headed households I provided guidance and counselling services this term made reference to lack of stationery, such as text books, exercise books, rulers, mathematical sets, calculators, computer related technologies and pens as the major reason for not coming to school regularly. These learners are in need of help in this regard. GCT-1

Most of the schools in this district used to have income generating projects which were used as an aid to learners from child-headed households by procurement of stationery for them, but these projects are no longer implemented of which I do not know the reason. GCT-4

They are supposed to be provided with material support so that they may not labour for school resources. SDC-A

Lack of school resources such as books and uniforms will make learners from child-headed households dislike attending lessons. SDC-C

Due to lack of resources their lessons will be distorted because most of the time they will be pre-occupied with thinking of ways to make ends meet. SDC-D

Lack of resources affects learners negatively such that in the long term most of them drop out of school. SDC-B

The majority of the district's schools are unable to provide stationery to secondary school learners who live in child-headed families, which can negatively impact their academic performance, in the opinion of school administrators and teachers who offer guidance and counseling. On the other hand, findings from focus group interviews with secondary school learners from child-headed homes revealed the educational institutions' incapacity to provide necessities as exactly and readily apparent in the passage below taken from a bigger work:

Kudzidza kwedu kunototishungurudza sezvo tisina zvakakwana semuenzaniso ikozvino kurikudiwa ma CALA apa mukuru wechikoro arikuti kana ukasamaunza nenguva yakatarwa tave kukudzima muregister wozotanga hako gore rinotevera apa hapana kwandinokwanisa kuwana rubabatsiro saka hazvidzidziki zvachose.

We are struggling with our education since we do not have adequate resources needed at school. For example, nowadays schools are demanding Continuous Assessment Learning Areas (CALA) where the school head is saying if you do not meet the deadline for CALA submission you are automatically out from the school register and you will rejoin the following year while we have to repeat the same level yet we do not have anyone who can assist us with these resources needed, so learning will become difficult for us. FGI-8

Since our schools are now demanding for CALAs we are being pressurized by teachers which will end up giving us the spirit of absenting ourselves from school or think of drop-out. FGD-6

Vamwe vana vanouya kuchikoro vakaisa mabhuku avo mumabag akanaka chaizvo asi isusu ndipo patinouya nawo takabatira mumaoko kana kuti kuisa mumapaperbags saka pamwe pachu unenge wave kutofunga kuda kubirawo vaya vanazvo.

Some of the learners from affluent families come to school with their books in good bags while we from restricted families put our books in paper bags so at times we may think of stealing bags from those who come from affluent families. FGI-15

Kazhinji kacho tinozvishaishira nekugara tichifunga zvakanyanya maerorano

nevabereki vedu avo vakatisiya tiri nherera sezvo pasisina munhu anokwanisawo kutibatsira nezvatinoshuvirawo muupenyu; Ukati utaurire mukoma wako unonzwa voti nditoriwo nemhuri yanguwo inotodawo kuriritirwa woti kunehanzvadzi sikana unonzwa yotiwo inini ndakatoroorwawo saka iiii zvinhu zvacho unotooa kuti hupenyu hwacho hwanyatsotooma zvechokwadi

We usually play it unsafe at our own side by continuing thinking of our own parents who passed on long back leaving us with nothing to show and no one is interested in assisting us by providing even basic commodities in life. If I was to ask for help from my big brother I hear him saying “I have a family to look after so do what you can do to survive” and to my big sister you can hear her saying I am a married woman so I do not have any power to assist you anymore and we can see that life is not easy especially to us from homes with no parents.

FGI-14

Our situation as learners from child-headed households can be improved if schools were to provide us with stationery. Due to inadequate stationery we are failing to prepare our tests in some of the subjects. We are not writing some exercises because we do not have exercise books.

FGI-10

The preceding excerpts would seem to show that in addition to facing challenges of food and nutrition, secondary school learners from child-headed households had an insurmountable struggle to get adequate support learning materials which invariably placed them at a disadvantage in terms of academic achievement. Without the necessary stationery to complete critical assignments for continuous assessment of learning activities (CALA), they faced exclusion and also failure on account that CALA constituted 30% of the coursework requirements at Ordinary Level. The data showed that secondary school learners from child-headed households could only count on the support of well-wishers to provide them with learning materials, as the government did not provide stationery to secondary school learners living in households with secondary school learners as the head of household. It was as a result of imperative to note that such support from well-wishers was not guaranteed as it was left to the benevolence of individuals to provide support as and when they could.

5.2.1.3 Lack of school uniforms

A lack of school uniforms might psychologically impinge on secondary school learners

negatively. A very low self-confidence which might emanate when secondary school learners from child-headed households are always called out for appearing different from other secondary school learners by not wearing the expected school uniform. This research found that getting uniforms was difficult for vulnerable secondary school learners from child-headed households. Despite the fact that all secondary school learners, regardless of their socioeconomic situation, were required to wear school uniforms, it was very difficult to enforce this policy in the rural schools, according to an interview with school administrators. This was due to the fact that the majority of learners were from low-income households. All four school heads concurred that some secondary school learners from such houses were, out of compassion, not required to wear uniforms since schools lacked the resources to assist learners from such households. They could go to school dressed appropriately casually. The following passages demonstrate how members of the schools committee, guidance and counseling teachers, and secondary school learners from families with secondary school learners all supported this finding:

In any case, schools have no power to purchase school uniforms for learners from child-headed households.

GCT-8

Parents or guardians of the Secondary school learners are the ones who can procure uniforms for them.

GCT-6

When it comes to learners from child-headed households, we usually relax the policy by allowing them to put on different types of clothes they may have because of the nature of their backgrounds.

SH-D

Allowing learners from poverty-stricken families to put on casual clothing is a sign of segregating them from the majority, hence we are labeling them which resulted in yielding readily to or capable of stigma and discrimination which negatively affects their self-esteem

SDC-A

Most of the learners from child-headed households usually put on tattered clothing which causes them to be discriminated and stigmatized by their fellow learners. As a school, we really want to assist but our hands are tied. SH-A.

They lack mental strength to accept the situation they are in but still settle for better tomorrow. Besides, help in issuing materials and giving guidance and counselling is prerequisite SDC-A

Due to lack of school resources, some learners are resilient enough to withstand the pressure while a few become even more responsible and mature than those with a lot of pressures hence the rest give into life's pressures and retire early from self-development.

SDC-C

Failure of our learners to pay school fees especial those from child-headed households would make them drop out of school and this affect the pass rate of our district. SH-D

The government should make some provisions of social services funds like BEAM and provision of food and allowances for such learners. SH-A

They have got nothing to inspire them to hope for the better. The society is not helping enough. The society is neither capable to assist them. SDC-D

Isusu hatina kwatinowana mari yokutenga mabhuku kana mauniforms saka tinopedzisira tavekuiita chipfambi kuti tikwanise kuwana mari yokutenga zvikwanisiro.
We do not have anywhere where we can get money to buy school uniforms and books so we end up practicing prostitution for us to have money to buy these resources. FGI-9

Kana tichienda kuchikoro tisina zvikwanisiro ndipo patinozopedzisira tave kubira vamwe zvinhu zvavo zvakaita semabhuku uye chikafu

If we go to school with inadequate school resources, that is when we start thinking of stealing other people's possessions such as food FGI-12

Inini semwana mukuru pamusha pane pandinotomborovhawo chikoro ndichienda kumarikicho ekuti ndiwane mari yokutengera vana chokudya uye chokupfeka.

As the eldest child in my family, there is a time that I absent myself from school in order to go to work and raise money to buy food and clothes for my siblings. FGI-13

Kuno kuchikoro tinodiwa kuti tiuye takashongedzeka uye tiine zvikwanisiro zvakanakwana saka isusu tinotonetsekana nekuti tozwiwanepi uye sei

Here at school teachers need us to come to school well presentable with adequate school resources yet we are stressing ourselves on how best we can find these necessities.

FGI-14

Tinorovha mazuva mazhinji zvinopedzisira zvoita kuti vadzidzisi vedu vati hatina hanya nechikoro apo tinenge tisina zvipfeko zvakanaka zvokuti tingapfekawo pane vamweni

Usually, we absent ourselves from school for several days in search for food and other basics at home which probe a feeling in our teachers to believe that we are not serious with school, yet we do not have what is required of us at school. FGI-15

Given that school uniforms minimized the stigmatization and segregation of secondary school learners from child-headed families, it appeared that everyone agreed that wearing one is a basic need for all secondary school learners, even those from these households. Participants noted that due to financial constraints and the fact that this was essentially outside of their mission, schools were unable to provide school uniforms to secondary school learners from child-headed homes.

Personal observation of the secondary school learners confirmed these sentiments. During my field visits, I actually witnessed some of the secondary school learners who had worn-out clothing. My data collection process was carried out during the winter, when it is assumed that all secondary school learners would be dressed in warm clothing and footwear. However, this was not the case for the vulnerable secondary school learners from child-headed households with whom I dealt in this situation. They were dressed in very worn-out, torn-up clothing. The majority of these secondary school learners were shivering during the focus group interviews due to the cold as they did not have warm clothing such as jerseys.

Administrators, instructors, and members of the school development committee all agreed that many secondary school learners from families with no parents skipped school in the winter because of the weather and then returned in the summer when it was more pleasant. When I questioned the school administrators, teachers of guidance and counseling, and members of the school committee about what the schools were doing to support secondary school learners from families with secondary school learners, they said that they planned to use a portion of the proceeds from some projects they were working on to support secondary school learners from families with no parents. However, not much was possibly going to be derived from the proceeds to be able to adequately assist the learners.

A worrying trend of deviant behavior was also observed from the stories of the participants as shown in the following excerpts.

The community leaders should unite the community in providing family setups to parentless learners where awareness of the dangers of sex and drugs can be explained.

SDC-B

Extended families should be at the forefront in providing family support systems to parentless Secondary school learners so as to avoid deviant behaviour.

SDC-C

Local community leaders should facilitate their selection in BEAM programmes and protect them from abuse.

GCT-4

Secondary school learners from houses with secondary school learners as the head of household were exposed to abuse, which was alarming. The failure to get adequate clothing and school uniforms led some of them to engage in untoward behaviour, including prostitution and theft in order to raise money. In addition, school attendance registers indicated that these learners frequently absented themselves from school in order to look for money. This clearly made them to lose lessons and inevitably get behind in their school work. The secondary school learners were also exposed to premature sex and drugs which could lead to unwanted pregnancy and exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.

5.2.1.4 Shortage of school fees

A lack of school fees might negatively impinge the psychological progress of secondary school learners from child-headed households. Low confidence which might emanate when secondary school learners from child-headed households are always called out for not paying school fees hence vulnerability to labelling and stigmatisation. Regardless of their backgrounds, paying tuition is an obligation for all learners. The majority of secondary school learners from child-headed households expressed concern about paying tuition. Despite being required, the tuition collection policy is difficult to execute, especially when dealing with secondary school learners from households with secondary school learners, according to in-depth interviews with school administrators. The majority of secondary school learners from families with secondary school learners in charge were unable to pay tuition in full due to their financial circumstances. On the other hand, schools were hamstrung, as they were unable to offer any financial assistance to the learners. The following excerpts from several participants in this study support this finding:

Schools are incapacitated to assist learners from child-headed households by paying them school fees since schools are facing financial constraints. So payment of the school fees is the responsibility of parents and guardians. GCT-6

Learners from child-headed households are discriminated and stigmatized by fellow learners because some of them fail to pay even a single cent, I feel for them but the school is experiencing financial constraints which is restricting schools to assist them in this regard. SH-A

Tinoshuvirawo kubhadhara mari yechikoro sezvinoitawo vamwe vana asi isusu hatina kwatinogona kuwana kana angagone kutibhatharira mari yechikoro.

We envy our classmates who are able to pay school fees in full since we do not have anyone who can assist us by paying us schools fees. FGI-10

For secondary school learners from households where a child is the primary caregiver, various nations have laws that waive school expenses. I suggest that our government create a similar policy to cover these secondary school learners. SH-A

This point of view also surfaced in FGIs with secondary school learners. The following

sentiments confirm the finding:

Kana hurumende ikasaitibhadharira mari yechikoro, kutobva zvedu tagara kumba. Hurumende yedu ngaiise mari parutivi inokwana tose vanonetseka.

If the government fails to pay for our school fees who will then take care of us? The government should raise funds to assist all learners from child-headed households to cater for our educational needs.

FGI-7

Komiti yechikoro haimboteerera zvichemo zvedu inodzanga, paita saizvozvo tinotombonogara kumba tozouya kuchikoro vaenda

Mostly we absent ourselves from school because of non-payment of school fees. There are times when the School Development Committee will not listen to pleas from parents or guardians but insist on payment of fees. During such periods, we stay at home and resurface when the situation is calm.

FGI-8

The school heads, guidance and counselling teachers, and members of the school development committee all agreed that a number of secondary school learners from homes with no parents are leaving educational institutions due to financial difficulties and resurfacing when the members of the school development committee are tasked with returning secondary school learners who have unpaid tuition away. When I questioned administrators, committee members, and teachers of guidance and counselling about what the schools were doing to help secondary school learners from parentless homes pay their tuition, they said that they had approached the BEAM committee to have them taken into account when they were compiling a list of BEAM beneficiaries. However, despite the government's hollow promises, school administrators, counselors, and committee members were prepared for the worst.

Teachers of guidance and counselling, school administrators and committee members, as well as secondary school learners from homes with no parents, agreed disadvantaged secondary school learners were prevented from achieving their educational goals because they are prohibited from attending classes due to expenses. Poverty made it more difficult for secondary school learners from families with no parents to pay their tuition.

5.2.2 Research Question 2

- *How does poverty influence the social wellbeing and education of secondary school adolescent learners from child-headed households?*

According to the study, secondary school learners from families with no parents encountered a variety of psychosocial difficulties related to segregation, bias, unfriendliness, rejection, and loneliness. As a result of factors outside of their control, educational institutions have difficulty addressing the psychological, social, and emotional challenges faced by secondary school learners from homes with no parents, according to interviews with secondary school learners from child-headed households. The following presents and illuminates the following three themes: shortage of experienced staff; workloads and the efficacy of staff, and shortage of resources and support by the school

5.2.2.1 Shortage of experienced staff

A lack of concentration on learning as a result of poor teaching methods might negatively impinge the psychological development of a secondary school learner. The study found that schools lacked adequate qualified guidance and counselling school teachers who could provide high-quality psychosocial services to secondary school learners, including those from child-headed households. Participants shared a wide range of opinions about the faculty and the caliber of the psychological support services available in the school. The viewpoints of the guidance and counseling teachers who were interviewed are reflected in the following excerpts:

There are professional guide and counselling school teachers who can guide and counsel learners from child-headed households with their challenges. The observable problem with them is that, they are not experienced in dealing with learners from homes with no parents. GCT-8

Most of our guidance and counselling teachers should be involved in many practical situations regarding assistance of learners from child-headed households. GCT-5

The Ministry of Education should conduct workshops for guidance and counselling teachers for them to be exposed to the ways and methods of conducting guidance and

counselling sessions because lack of exposure and experience in dealing with these learners may compromise the services rendered. GCT-3

The lack of specialized training by teachers who offered guidance and counselling was also seen as an obstacle by the school heads. This is an issue which was cause for serious concern because inadequate provision of essential counselling services in schools had a significant impact on the secondary school learners from child-headed households. Without adequate counselling information the learner would be unable to access government's financial assistance. The secondary school learners' inability to receive guidance on how to negotiate problems they experienced at both home and school meant that they were unable to deal with these challenges effectively without suffering from excessive stress and trauma. This was another crucial challenge.

It was fascinating to see that teachers who were involved in guidance and counseling were also conscious that they needed more staff development to fully understand how to handle secondary school learners, particularly those from child-headed families.

I still want to learn more about how to handle the situations of learners from child-headed households. I grew up in a well-up family and I may not have the experience of how to deal with poverty. Since I am guidance and counselling teacher I'm assisting these learners by applying some psychological theories I learnt from my studies. GCT-1

Yes, I am a qualified guidance and counselling teacher, but with no confidence and patience to assist learners from child-headed households. GCT-8

The foregoing narrations are important in that they reflect a willingness on the part of the teachers to be more effective in the way they assist learners to deal with their social challenges.

Secondary school learners had apparently contradictory perceptions about the guidance and counselling programmes in their school. This is exemplified in the following narrations:

Vadzidzisi vedu vazhinji vacho vanotibatsirawo nemazano kana tichinge tawirwa nematambudziko

Most of our teachers assist us with ideas when we experience problems.

FGI-11

Kunyange zvazvo mukuru wechikoro akadaidzira kuti pachikoro pano pane vadzidzisi vaviri mukadzi nemurume vachange vachibatsira nherera muzvinhu zvakawanda asi hapana kubatsirwa kwatati tamboona sezvo tichiri kungonetseka nematambudziko atinosangana nawo zuva nezuva.

Although the head of the school announced to us that there are two guidance and counselling school teachers; a male and a female who will assist us if we have problems of problems, but we have not yet seen them and we are also yet to receive their help. FGI-2

While the foregoing excerpts may appear to indicate divergent views by the secondary school learners, they reveal that schools do not have strong guidance and counselling programmes. Another plausible explanation could be that the programmes are not well marketed, giving rise to a perception that the teachers assigned to assist secondary school learners are not helping, yet they could be. It is also crucial to remember that getting counseling from someone you have never met is typically an alien concept, particularly in African cultures where counseling has always been the domain of family members who are adults.

Participants concurred that the phenomenon of secondary school learners from child-headed households was contemporary and pressing issue. In the light of this, there was agreement that guidance and counselling personnel needed to be empowered through localized staff development seminars with the primary purpose of equipping the teachers with requisite knowledge and abilities to cope with and handle concerns connected to secondary school learners from child-headed families. The reference to localized training was on account that there was a realization by the adult participants that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education was failing to organize such workshops, thereby making a community response to the problem more realistic and practical because previously, non- governmental organisations which used to support such workshops were also not keen to continue extending their assistance. Participants' responses revealed that insufficient guidance and counselling workshops had a significant impact on the schools' ability to serve secondary school learners from child-headed households. Participants expressed the following feelings:

Most of our guidance and counselling teacher grew up in well-up families so they did not experience any problem as experienced by these secondary school learners from poverty-stricken background families hence more workshops and staff developments should be done.

SH-D

The guidance and counselling job needs someone who has passion in helping those learners from child-headed households. These teachers are just forced by their administration to help these orphans yet they are de-motivated as far as their remuneration is concerned.

SH-B

Due to a lack of funding, schools are unable to offer seminars that would give our instructors the information, abilities, and exposure to the issues faced by secondary school learners from child-headed families.

SH-C

The preceding comments show that some people blame the government for not funding courses that would have given guidance and counselling school teachers the information and skills they needed to help secondary school learners from parentless families. School administrators' opinions concur with the guidance and counselling teachers' below:

I am a qualified guidance and counselling teacher who was thinking of attending several workshops regarding psychosocial supporting services as for us to be well equipped but we did not attend any workshop because the school has no money to fund the workshop.

GCT-6

We are asking for assistance from our Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to assist us to have some in-service courses so that we may be in a position to tackle complex psychosocial challenges which are being experienced by learners from child-headed households.

GCT-1

We will offer our clients high-quality services if the Ministry hosts some workshops. I only went to one non-governmental organization-sponsored session, but it was one that I greatly appreciated. So, to age similarly, we are aging our Ministry.

GCT-5

The remarks made by the guidance and counseling teachers show that they were acutely aware of their own limitations when it came to addressing the psychosocial requirements of secondary school learners from homes with secondary school learners as the primary caregivers. There was agreement with the school administrators' opinions that workshops could assist the instructors in resolving these issues. One of the guidance and counseling school teachers (GCT-6) admitted when questioned that he had not gone to any workshops since their organization was having financial issues.

According to document examination, there did not appear to be any proof of scheduled guidance and counseling activities for kids living in households with secondary school learners at the four schools. This is a blatant example of how secondary school learners' worries are not taken seriously. Additionally, secondary school learners from homes with secondary school learners reported not knowing the qualifications of their guidance and counseling teachers or the services they were expected to provide for them. It was evident that the secondary school learners felt they were not receiving psychosocial help from their professors based on their responses.

5.2.2.2 Workloads and the efficacy of teachers

Poor academic performance associated with lack of absence to adequate learning and psychosocial impact on secondary school learners' self-esteem hence vulnerability to labelling and stigmatisation. Extra workload was found to be the main factor holding up the delivery of psychological services to secondary school learners from child-headed homes by guidance and counselling school teachers. It would appear that the teachers were expected to perform their normal duties, in addition to carrying the extra burden of guidance and counselling duties. The following quotes from the school leaders provide weight to this conclusion:

We are allocating guidance and counseling school teachers with other regular teaching loads since we are unsure of whether guidance and counseling is a stand-alone subject where teachers should be assigned a full teaching load or not. Therefore, the Ministry's policy needs to be clear in order for us to assign the proper burden. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should designate the subject of guidance and counseling as a stand-alone area in order to provide quality guidance and counseling in schools.

SH-D

There is nothing we can do regarding overloading guidance and counselling teachers because this subject is not examinable. However we prioritize examinable subjects and guidance and counselling will become an extra load. SH-C

The amount of work we are given are intolerable and eventually risk compromising the quality of both our examinable subjects' outcomes as well as the guiding and counseling services we provide because this topic comes after our regular load for the week. GCT-7

The heavy workloads that were given to teachers, in the perspective of school heads, hindered the adoption of guidance and counseling as a discipline. Consequently, the discipline is perceived as having lower value than others. Furthermore, these excerpts would seem to suggest a policy gap at ministry level. There appeared to be no clear-cut policy which governed the duties of guidance and counselling teachers which would enable school heads to assign them suitable workloads. Another emerging issue was that guidance and counselling as a discipline was not properly placed as a curriculum subject. The lack of clarity and policy regarding how the discipline should be viewed in relation to the overall curriculum of the school therefore hurt the discipline. This was further exacerbated by the fact that it was non-examinable. The secondary school learners' earlier remarks that they were uninformed of the responsibilities of guidance and counseling teachers might partially be explained by this. All of the interviewed teachers agreed that they were overworked and given assignments that were viewed as less important and not subject to examination. Teachers, on the other hand, were in favour of a plan which would lessen their workloads in examinable subjects so they could focus more on guiding and counselling secondary school learners.

Results from FGIs showed that school administrators and teachers who provide guidance and counselling were obstructing a requirement that they provide psychosocial services to secondary school learners. The following are opinions expressed by secondary school learners about how the discipline has been applied offer apt evidence:

Panguva yochidzidzo cheguidance and counselling vadzidzisi vedu ndipo pavanotinyoresa bvunzo yemamweni masubjects anozonyorwa pakupera kwegore

During guidance and counselling lessons, most teachers give us test of other subjects which are examinable. FGI-16

Most of the lessons on guidance and counselling are usually done in the afternoon after lunch when most teachers are tired. Learners will be also be tired by then to an extent that no one will be in a position to pay attention to what the teacher is saying. FGI-15

The preceding stories offer interesting insights. A compelling observation is that both teachers and school heads were apparently paying lip-service to the guidance and counselling component of the curriculum, thereby confirming that the discipline (according to them) had less importance in curriculum on account of being non-examinable. What emerges is that while there is a clamour from teachers to have reduced workload, they actually would prefer to use any allocated guidance and counselling lessons to conduct lessons and assessments in examinable curriculum areas. A plausible explanation would be that guidance and counselling as a discipline did not contribute to their annual performance appraisal ratings and there it was safer for them to ignore it. Furthermore, the secondary school learners also appeared not to take any keen interest in the discipline as well, thereby underrating the value it had in terms of their psychosocial development and wellbeing.

5.2.2.3 Shortage of resources and support by the school

Secondary school learners who are adolescents might experience low confidence which might emanate when they are always called out for not doing school work that requires all these resources, vulnerability to labelling and stigmatisation if they appear different from other learners by not doing their school work. The study found that a lack of support from school administrators was one of the problems preventing guidance and counselling school teachers from offering psychological, social, and emotional help to secondary school learners from child-headed homes. The majority of guidance and counseling teachers have dealt with the ineffectiveness of school officials who haven't helped them out by giving them the tools they need for the job. Concerns from guidance and counseling teachers regarding a lack of administrative support from school administrators include the following:

In most of our school we usually end-up resorting to group counselling which we hold under a tree shade because we do not have infrastructure which are favourable for us to

be well accommodated and this will affect those secondary school learners who requires one-on-one counselling which will eventually not help the child in need. The school heads do not value guidance and counselling subject to taught to learners because when we request for some materials such as textbooks they just prioritize the subjects which are examinable.

GCT-3

Our school heads have inadequate knowledge or information regarding guidance and counselling. That is why they are putting less value on this subject and this might be the reason why this subject is allocated time in the afternoon and is one lesson per week.

GCT-5

The Ministry did not support discipline, which is why the government had not scheduled any workshops. Most local teachers were obstructing this subject's teaching and learning in classrooms. To this end, GCT-8 declared:

We are de-motivated by the school heads that are not providing us with materials needed. Our colleagues are also let us down by calling us names like nurse aid, social welfare officers which we think they are de-motivating us from carrying our duties as guidance and counselling teachers.

Teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with their heads' poor support in providing essentials that may require counselling sessions. What emerges from the excerpts is that school heads did not perceive guidance and counselling as important and because of this, no special learning spaces (classrooms and offices) were created for the discipline. By its nature, the counselling component of the discipline requires some privacy away from the glare of the public eye. Without rooms being provided, it becomes difficult for the secondary school learners to seek help in protected and private spaces. In addition, school administrators failed to allocate funds in accordance with a plan or set aside money for the discipline. On the other hand, by time-tabling it in the afternoon, school heads and their teachers indicated a negative attitude towards the discipline.

5.2.3 Research Question 3

- *In what ways does poverty affect the emotional wellbeing and education of adolescent learners from child-headed households?*

This section deals with four sub-themes namely, guidance and counselling training for school administrators, teacher working conditions and attitudes toward secondary school learners from low-income families, and the execution of the advice and counselling programmes.

5.2.3.1 Training of staff

Secondary school learners from child-headed households might experience a very low concentration on learning as a result of knowledge deficit from the inexperienced staff hence vulnerability to labelling and stigmatisation. Teachers of guidance and counseling must possess a solid foundation of fundamental knowledge and abilities in order to provide secondary school learners with efficient counseling services. For supply of relief, specific training is required and continuous staff development is necessary to improve teachers so they can cope with child-headed households if they are to effectively offer meaningful emotional interventions. The following opinions reflect how guidance and counselling teachers and school administrators felt about their ability to emotional support secondary school learners from child-headed households:

As a school head who oversees the implementation of school programmes, but with inadequate knowledge or information regarding guidance and counselling, I feel ill-equipped to supervise the implementation of this subject. SH-D

Inadequate training exists for school administrators and instructors who provide guidance and counseling to secondary school learners from homes with no parents. Our Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has a serious issue since they constantly bring new initiatives without providing adequate training for individuals who carry out curriculum implementation. SH-A

Guidance and counselling school teachers should strengthen their relationship with learners from child-headed households and increase ties and bond with them so that they would be open up. *SDC-D*

Government should enhance teachers' working circumstances and provide them with sufficient compensation so they can work, including aiding secondary school learners from child-headed households, in order to motivate them to perform their tasks in the highest degree of good faith. *FGI-6*

The guidance and counseling instructors as well as the school administrators, who also lacked the necessary subject-specific training, are solely to responsible *GCT-4*

Lack of support from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary prevents school administrators and instructors of guidance and counseling from attending or leading programs that would better prepare them to help secondary school learners from homes with no parents who are in need of assistance. *GCT-2*

As indicated in earlier sections, the teachers who were tasked with offering guidance and counselling had limited expertise and experience to offer well defined and intended programmes in the schools. The opinions of guidance and counselling teachers, members of the school development committee, and school heads revealed that they admitted their lack of competence in providing assistance to secondary school learners from child-headed households. All participants concurred that teachers had not received extensive and intense training in guidance and counselling. For most teachers, guidance and counselling as a discipline had not been part of their pre-service teacher training programmes which made them to be novices when assigned to take up the discipline in the schools that they were deployed to. The majority of the participants said that for them to engage the discipline meaningfully, in-service training was a pre-requisite.

5.2.3.2 Teachers' operating environments

Secondary school learners who are adolescents from child-headed households might experience low confidence which might also emanate when they are always called out for not doing school

work that requires educational resources; vulnerability to labelling and stigmatisation if they appear different from other learners by not wearing the expected school uniform to suit the school environment. Given the underperforming Zimbabwean economy, the current study was not lost to the fact that teachers were de-motivated because of poor working environments in which they were required to operate in. If teachers are de-motivated this may have a huge effect on how they conduct their teaching duties. Participants in this research revealed that schools lacked several basic amenities, including classrooms and instructional materials. The lack of facilities should be viewed against the background that teachers in Zimbabwe face accommodation challenges, especially in rural areas where they are forced to share housing:

Most of schools in rural area lack infrastructure since many parents are failing to pay school fees because of poverty. This shortage makes some classes to operate from under trees, which de-motivates teachers who will eventually fail to produce what is expected of them.

GCT-1

Many teachers are de-motivated by the situation whereby they spend the whole day or week under the shed of a tree to an extent that they end up resisting some other duties, such as providing care to the secondary school learners from homes with no parents. However, I am suggesting that government should assist schools by constructing classroom blocks.

SH-D

Some classes are taught outside because there are insufficient classrooms available. Teachers get de-motivated in this environment, which compromises their ability to effectively assist secondary school learners from child-headed households. The poor operating environments the teachers were exposed to were a concerning issue which needed to be attended to. Much like the adult participants, the secondary school learners themselves were aware of the untenable teaching environment. For example, one learner vocalized that:

Most teachers will be not happy if they are conducting their lessons under tree shed and this will also compromise their assistance to learners from homes with no parents.

Extant literature shows that education professionals' motivation levels are impacted by poor working conditions (Symeonidis, 2015, p.28). Given the foregoing poor working environments

which the participants articulated, there was no doubt that the teachers' ability to support secondary school learners from child-headed households would be negatively as well. In such scenarios, the teachers will evidently develop negative attitudes toward their work, including assisting secondary school learners from child-headed households. The end result will be that secondary school learners from child-headed household, by virtue of their already impoverished circumstances, will emerge worse off than other learners who have a family support system which can buffer the negative impact of an unsupportive school environment.

5.2.3.3 Teacher attitudes towards learners from child-headed households

Secondary school learners might experience poor academic performance associated with lack of access to books and psychosocial impact on their self-esteem, vulnerability to labelling and stigmatisation if they appear different from other learners by not wearing the expected school uniform or not doing school work. However, teachers have a significant impact on how learners are shaped and prepared for school. Existing research demonstrates that Secondary school learners from child-headed families arrive at school lacking parental support, affection, and warmth as well as bearing the pressures of their financial situation and social stigmas (Marongwe et al., 2016, p. 41). This puts a heavy load on educators who also have to make sure that learners are developing the necessary information, abilities, and mindsets. Teachers, school administrators, and communities frequently misunderstand the secondary school learners' emotional and social impairments as a lack of respect or bad manners and label them using a range of epithets because they are unprepared to cope with such learners. Different points of view expressed by the adult participants and learners from families with secondary school learners in charge are presented in the following excerpts:

Secondary school learners from families with no parents are purposefully avoided because of how they appear. They did not wear the correct attire to school. Even secondary school learners even show up to school late with soiled and torn uniforms, and even show up barefoot. SH-B

The absence of proper preparation in the implementation of counseling in schools and the teachers' unfavourable attitudes when conducting counseling sessions prevent secondary school learners from child-headed families from receiving adequate counseling. SDC-A

Secondary school learners from families with secondary school learners in charge rarely participate in academic and extracurricular activities. GCT-6

Secondary school learners raised in households where the primary caregiver is a child are often stereotyped as slow learners who lack the motivation to pursue a career in education. SDC-B

Secondary school learners from households with no parents frequently have their books unattended, appear exhausted in class, arrive late, and do not participate in class. They neglect their schoolwork and have a negative mindset. GCT-5

The majority of teachers despises and show little enthusiasm in secondary school learners from homes with Secondary school learners as the primary caregivers. SDC-B

Isusu vana vanobva kudzimba dzisina vabereki hatisikwana rubatsiro kubva kuvadzidzisi vedu nenyaya yemihoro yavo isiri kuvagutsa

We do not receive extra tutorship from our teachers ... FGI-8

Schools had become result-based hence we did not have time for learners from child-headed households who are lagging behind. GCT-2

Secondary school learners from wealthy homes who were already advantaged received resources, while those from impoverished backgrounds were subsidized for failure. GCT-4

During the interviews, school heads expressed congruent opinions:

Despite having been elected by their peers, the majority of secondary school learners from families with no parents were not given the chance to serve as school prefects because of their torn school uniforms and bare feet. SH-D

The considerable mobility among secondary school learners from child-headed homes, which finally led to changes in schools and complicated their education, was also a source of frustration for unwell secondary school learners SH-A

The lack of essential school supplies and the difficulty of switching schools frequently for secondary school learners from parentless homes would hinder their ability to cover the required material and perform well in class. SH-C

Vadzidzisi vazhinji vanotitarisira pasi nemhosva yokuti vanofuga kuti mwana wese anobva kumhuri inotamburwa haana njere

Most teachers stereotype and marginalise us since they have a belief that learners from poor backgrounds are not academically gifted. FGI-1

Isusu vana vanobva kumhuri dzakashooreka tinoiswa mumakirasi aya emadofo umo matinopiwa zvidzidzo zvakashooreka

We, learners from poverty-stricken family backgrounds are placed in lower streams where we receive altered content. FGI-13

Due to non-payment of school fees, the wearing of torn uniforms, going barefoot, and other factors that contribute to high dropout rates, secondary school learners from child-headed households are humiliated and labeled. GCT-6

The preceding stories revealed that instead of being supportive, teachers and school heads developed negative attitudes towards learners who came from child-headed households and viewed them as innately sluggish deviants who lacked ambition, neglecting the reality that these secondary school learners are psychologically and emotionally damaged, sleep deprived, and famished when they arrive at school (Ngwenya et al., 2023, p. 286). The results of the present research show that secondary school learners from child-headed families who attend school expecting to get assistance and encouragement from the educational system are instead turned away, which exacerbates their woes and trauma. This has untold implications on their commitment towards their school work and ultimately their level of academic attainment.

5.2.4 Research Question 4

How can the negative effects of poverty be reduced among learners from child-headed households?

Most participants believed that aiding secondary school learners from families with Secondary school learners as the primary breadwinner was essential to reducing the negative effects of

poverty and boosting academic achievement. Various interventions were suggested. These are illuminated under four themes: committed Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) committee; Supplementary Feeding Programmes; welfare of learners from homes with no parents in schools, and income generating projects.

5.2.4.1 Basic Education Assistance Module

Secondary school learners from child-headed households might have self-confidence which might emanate when they are always called out for doing school work that requires all educational resources; high self-confidence and high participation if they appear the same with other learners by wearing the expected school uniform. The study noted that every school had a Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) committee and that members of the community and school administrators made up the committee. Following are opinions that agreed with the findings:

The BEAM committee should be faithful in their work by choosing the most deserving secondary school learners from homes with no parents and recommend them for fees payment by the government. *SH-D*

Village heads should compile names of the child-headed families in their villages and forward these to the District offices, and they should be given the first preference when resources become available. *SDC-A*

All orphans should be taken care of by the Ministry of Social Services and the money should be paid on time. *SDC-D*

All four school administrators agreed that the BEAM committee was mandated to choose and suggest deserving secondary school learners from families with secondary school learners as candidates for inclusion in the programme. Participants revealed that some deserving secondary school learners from child-headed households were being denied BEAM money through biased selection of beneficiaries. Focus group participants from homes with secondary school learners in charge echoed precisely and succinctly the thoughts voiced by school committee members, guidance and counseling school teachers, and school heads:

I was not selected and recommended to benefit from BEAM funds yet I am a learner from child-headed households. I am being surprised by the way BEAM committee works because those who are from rich families are being selected and recommended to be BEAM beneficiary leaving those who have visible needy. I suggest that in BEAM committee selection it better to include ward councilors, headmen and pastors to help in the selection and recommendation. FGI-11

The disbursements of BEAM funds by the government usually reflect in school accounts after a long time to an extent that the school development committee may end up sending us back to collect money for fees of which we do not have. I suggest that schools should not send back home those who are BEAM beneficiary since their fees will be deposited in school accounts. FGI-7

Teachers of guidance and counseling, as well as members of the school development committee, should get training on how to approach and resolve problems involving secondary school learners from child-headed families properly. FGI-4

The excerpts would seem to indicate that bias in the recommendation of BEAM beneficiaries which precluded some learners from getting this assistance. The inference that the village head should directly be involved in the selected and recommendation process was evidence to this bias which could possibly have included an element of corruption in the selection whereby undeserving secondary school learners were awarded assistance.

5.2.4.2 Supplementary Feeding Programmes

Secondary school learners from child-headed households might pay much concentration on learning as a result of nutritional gains and good academic performance associated with plenty of educational resources such as books and psychosocial wellbeing on their self-esteem. According to information provided to the study by school administrators, members of the development committee, and teachers in the guidance and counseling department, all four secondary schools had a feeding committee made up of senior teachers and representatives of the community.

I suggest that schools should also involve in improving the school-feeding schemes so as to assist those learners from child-headed households who come to school with their empty

stomach. Schools should set aside a certain amount of money to assist in the provision of school-feeding scheme FGI-5

The government and the donor community should work together to support initiatives in secondary schools that will raise money for secondary school learners from families with no parents who need clothing, uniforms, food, and instructional materials. FGI-9

Sinking of boreholes in secondary schools should be initiated by the government and donor community so that schools can embark on nutritional gardens which will eventually assist all learners from homes with no parents. FGI-14

Institutions need to make their feeding programs efficient so that secondary school learners from households with secondary school learners can focus on their studies instead of worrying about what to eat after school. Secondary school learners from houses with secondary school learners in charge should also be included in involvement in decisions programs. GCT-2

Secondary school learners from child-headed households as the primary caregivers acknowledged the existence of feeding scheme committees but indicated that these committees were no longer as effective as when they were supported by non-governmental organizations such as Care International and Save the Children. While participants indicated that the Zimbabwean government continued to support school food programmes, they lamented that the level of support was extremely inadequate.

5.2.4.3 Welfare of learners from child-headed households

Secondary school learners who are adolescents from child-headed household might increase their confidence and concentration on learning as a result of good welfare. High quality of academic performance associated with adequate educational resources and psychosocial wellbeing on their self-esteem might be experienced by secondary school learners due to good welfare. Participants indicated that everyone involved in ensuring the welfare of secondary school learners from child-headed families needed proper training and assistance. They also acknowledged the significance of discipline in dealing with secondary school learners from those households. Optimal execution of tasks is challenging for school administrators and instructors due to a lack of resources and inadequate training. According to Nkala (2014, p. 85), instructors in guidance and counseling

should have graduate degrees in their fields. Participants agreed, however, that it was essential to give secondary school learners from child-headed families with the inter-psychological tools they need in order to more successfully navigate the school setting.

Counseling will be a solution to the psychosocial problems faced by secondary school learners from homes with no parents if guidance and counseling school teachers are supported by the government and their schools to do their tasks properly. SDC-D

In order to launch various programs or clubs that are essential in addressing the psychological needs of those from child-headed homes, guidance and counseling school teachers should be fully furnished with basic knowledge concerning counseling. GCT-6

To help secondary school learners from households with secondary school learners as the primary caregivers forget their circumstances, schools should involve them in sports and other academic activities. SDC-A

Being an authority figure, I have to plan campaigns against neglect of secondary school learners and establish safeguarding committees in the neighborhood as well as my Secondary school learners' institution. SH-C

The authorities should permit the deployment of measures that foster conditions that prioritize households with secondary school learners as the head of the household. SDC-D

To ensure that school counseling is carried out properly, school heads should encourage and assist guidance and counseling instructors as they carry out their tasks under supervision. SDC-C

The foregoing excerpts indicate clearly that participants acknowledged the need for qualified teachers to be employed so that they could offer psychosocial support to learner from According to the opinions of school heads and the school development committee, guidance and counselling school teachers should be required in educational settings and appropriately supported to enable schools to address the psychosocial needs of secondary school learners from parentless families.

Sesu vana vanogara vega tinodawo vanhu vakuru vatinokwanisa kuti tivapirewo matambudziko edu sezvo variwo vatinoona sevanhu vanogona kutibatsira nemazvo.

Since we are staying as young secondary school learners, we also need elder people whom we can share our problems which we are facing with a belief that they are the ones who are able to assist us in utmost good faith. FGI-16

The opinions expressed by secondary school learners from parentless home secondary school learners showed that they required counselling from teachers and assistance.

5.2.4.4 Income generating projects

Income generating projects boost confidence and academic performance which might emanate when secondary school learners are always called out for doing school work that requires all educational resources and appearing the same with other learners by wearing the expected school uniform and paying school fees in time. Three out of the four secondary schools reported being engaged carried out income-generating programmes intended to support secondary school learners from homes with no parents. The narrations of the adult participants are reflected in the following excerpts:

In order to raise money for the payment of school fees for secondary school learners from child-headed homes, the school is operating a banana plantation initiative. SH-C

Teachers and learners are in a club which sells freezits, ice lollies and zepnaks to buy stationery for learners from parentless homes, but the project is not fruitful. GCT-8

As a school, we have a passion to engage into some projects so that we can assist learners from homes with no parents by raising funds to buy them stationery, but we do not have capital. GCT-4

In order to collect money for school supplies and tuition for secondary school learners from households with no parents, a non-governmental organization sponsors the banana plantation project that is being run at this secondary school. SH-D

We are not currently doing anything to help secondary school learners from families with Secondary school learners in charge of the household, but if we were granted a borehole, we could cultivate vegetables on a huge scale to help secondary school learners from families with Secondary school learners in charge of the household. SH-B

The preceding excerpts reveal that there is a consensus that income-generating initiatives are

crucial for supporting secondary school learners from homes with no parents. Additionally, it is clear that insufficient funding limited the programmes from generating adequate cash.

Secondary school learners from child-headed households were asked to react to the foregoing narrations made by the adult participants. The following are some opinions of the secondary school learners about school-based projects:

Pachikoro pedu tiri kurima mabanana senzira yokubatsira nherera asi mari inobuda ipapo mushure mekunge tatengesa zvirimwa izvi ishoma zvakanyanya zvokuti parinhasi vana vashanhu chete ndivo varikogona kubatsirikana.

At our school we grow bananas as a school project to assist orphans in paying school fees and other school resources, but the money we get after selling our products is very inadequate to an extent that only five secondary school learners are being assisted.

FGI-13

BEAM ndiyo project yatingatoti tinoziva hedu mukubatsira nherera kwainoita kwete zvemamweni maprojects kwete.

BEAM is the only project which we can say helps orphans and not any projects, FGI-15

Overall, it can be gleaned that there are not enough resources to support secondary school learners from child-headed homes because the schools' programmes were not very successful. However, the narrations of the secondary school learners from child-headed households were apparently contradictory. Some secondary school learners professed ignorance about the existence of the projects while others confirmed that the project were not very viable. This demonstrated that the welfare of learners from families with secondary school learners in charge might not have been receiving appropriate and consistent care from the schools.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Secondary school learners who live in households where a child is the primary caregiver face a variety of difficulties, such as socioeconomic disadvantages, social stigma and isolation, psychological trauma, and academic pressure. Given these challenges, the current study was particularly interested in those experiences and challenges related to the psychosocial; development of secondary school learners, namely, psychological, social and emotional aspects of

belonging to a poverty- stricken child-headed household, and the extent to which these impacted academic achievement. I address the recently-presented emergent findings in this part with the goal of contrasting them with those of previous studies in the body of existing literature. The discussion's goals were to identify any odd trends that may have appeared and to place my findings within the larger body of literature on the effects of poverty on the academic performance of Secondary school learners from families with no parents.

5.3.1 Theme One: Psychological effects of poverty

Theme One is examined and guided by Research Question 1, which was framed as follows:

- *What effects does poverty have on the psychological health and academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households as the primary caregivers?*

Four sub-themes emerged under the psychological effects of poverty theme. These are illustrated in Figure 5.1.

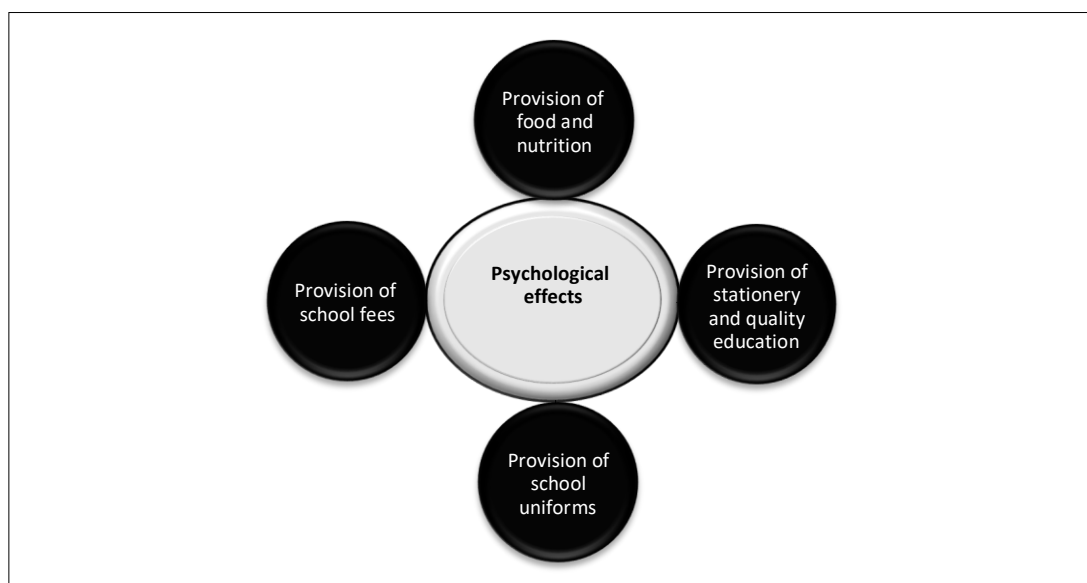


Figure 5.1 Psychological effects of poverty

5.3.1.1 Provision of food and nutrition

This study found that most secondary school learners from child-headed households attended school hungry, showing that they had a food deficit challenge. The primary cause of this deficit

was largely politically induced. There was mistrust between the government and non-governmental organisation which had hitherto provided support to communities in distress. The findings show that participants were concerned that a politically-induced drought through the cessation of funding for food programmes supported by non-governmental organisation was the main cause of hunger. This made many secondary school learners vulnerable, especially those from households with secondary school learners as the primary breadwinners. Removing these essential support organisations had a negative impact on secondary school learners from child-headed households' health and wellbeing because the schools were incapacitated to fill the void left by these organisations.

The findings of the current study are consistent with those of past investigations. A recent study in Eswatini (Mkhatshwa, 2017, p.366) confirmed that secondary school learners from child-headed households were faced with the challenge of accessing food and did not receive sufficient diet as a result of lack of income and poverty. Previous studies (Fielding-Muller, Dunkle and Murdock, 2015, p.362), also confirmed that in Swaziland, food provision and food shortages were among the major deprivations by secondary school learners from child-headed households. A Zimbabwean study (Germann, 2005, p.71) also revealed that secondary school learners from child-headed households struggled with food security, nutrition, and excellent hygiene. On the other hand, other studies (Buheji, 2019, p.106; Munyati et al., 2006, p.45), showed that secondary school learners from non-parental homes had greater limitations on their health and nutritional condition than secondary school learners from wealthy families.

In relation to academic achievement, it becomes evident that secondary school learners who face a food and nutritional deficit may not only fail to concentrate on their studies, but must be forced to absent themselves from attending lesson. This leads to the likelihood that they may drop out of school hence miss the opportunity to use education as a ladder out of their poverty. In this light, Ogina and Ramare (2019, p.2) found that the majority of secondary school learners who miss the opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge that will help them get ready for the workforce are those who are facing multiple difficulties, such as school drop-out due to reasons that are out of their control.

The argument by Quaidoo, Ohemeng, Kushitor and Antwi (2022, p.2), that the environment in

and around schools should present a good opportunity to address issues to do with child nutrition becomes all the more compelling. Such a line of thinking is valid and implies that to retain secondary school learners from child-headed households and ensure their academic success, it is imperative that a safety system is put in place. In the Zimbabwean context, it thus becomes critical that schools, as part of both the microsystem and mesosystem, should offer services like providing secondary school learners from child-headed households with a daily meal. This however does not in any way overlook the fact that the schools are incapacitated owing to the prevailing economic challenges the country is currently facing. It can only suggest that schools should be innovative in the manner in which they can provide food and nutritional support to secondary school learners deserving of such help.

5.3.1.2 Provision of stationery and quality education

A pervasive issue which has a negative impact on the quality of education with regard to Secondary school learners from child-headed households is access to resource materials. This study found that the secondary school learners had limited educational resources on account that they were poor, and could therefore not afford to have all the required essentials, such as books. The conclusion was that families and communities were unable to support these secondary school learners with school resources. Only five secondary school learners from low-income families reported receiving some form of assistance. The findings of this research on stationery shortages are consistent with past research. A Zimbabwean study by Chinyoka (2013, p.9) which was primarily interested in examining the psychosocial effects of poverty on the academic performance of the girl child revealed that when secondary school learners lack necessary educational materials like textbooks, quality education in schools is severely compromised. On the other hand, a study by Gaciuki (2016, p.11) found that teachers in Kenyan schools lamented the absence of secondary school learners due to a lack of resource materials which included homework books, rulers and other stationery needed for class. The study further revealed that of the sampled secondary school learners, only two learners out of sixteen intimated that they had all the required stationery.

The preceding findings are concerning because lack of stationery may preclude secondary school learners from child-headed households to complete assignments and tests which effectively limits

their prospect of succeeding academically. In the same vein, Mahruf and Shohel (2022, p.105) make it clear that education is the cornerstone of secondary school learners' futures as it equips secondary school learners with the knowledge, comprehension, and skills they need to build more successful futures for themselves and their communities. Given that the secondary school learners from child-headed households had stationery deficit, it becomes apparent that they may also feel insecure in the company of other secondary school learners and invariably withdraw from active participation in class activities. The psychological and academic implications of their self-isolation are immense.

Based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, it is evident that secondary school learners from child-headed households suffer a debilitating deficit at the microsystem and mesosystem levels, which describe the interaction between the individual and his/her immediate environment of family, peers, and school. The death of parents harms them psychologically and financially. First, at the psychological level, the death of a parent is by itself traumatic. Second, at the financial level, the consequent absence of that parent exposes them to poverty and material support, which would otherwise have been the responsibility of the parent. Third, when at school, like any other secondary school learners, they expect support from their peers and the schools, but as shown in this study, they instead meet with stigmatization and rejection from their peers. A study by Shava et al. (2016, p.94) revealed that learners from child-headed households lack psychological support since they have nowhere to report their problems confirms that many secondary school learners from child-headed household have no safety and support network which may be detrimental to their psychological wellbeing.

According to Mahruf and Shohel (2022, p.105) secondary school learners who live in homes with no parents can learn new social skills through group activities and one-on-one interactions, which will help them, form intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships. In the current study, the chances of interpersonal interaction were limited on account of the secondary school learners' resource material deficit. The argument by Caffrey and Browne (2022, p.513) established that learners who feel secure in their surroundings are liberated to explore and take part in all social activities that would foster their growth therefore assumes importance. For the secondary school learners coming from child-headed households, the breakdown of the mesosystem also imports that the extended family is no longer able to assist them (Muronda, 2009, p.64).

According to Raj and Chand (2023, p.1013), secondary school learners desire social capital because a child's scholastic success is highly dependent on access to financial, human, and social capital, especially if they come from child-headed households. This explicates the importance of a functional microsystem. This argument is consistent with the study by Mahruf and Shohel (2022, p.105) who found that secondary school learners from child-headed households lack access to adequate learning opportunities and human resources. This invariably makes the secondary school learners from child-headed household end up losing confidence and self-esteem. Erikson's psychosocial theory explains that at the adolescent stage, the development of an identity is important. Therefore, a lack of confidence and self-esteem may result in the development of an unhealthy identity. Saleh (2022, p.147) confirms that learner from poverty-stricken backgrounds may be confused about their identity and as a result cannot engage in meaningful friendships (Saleh, 2022, p.147). The implication of this lack of engagement in meaningful relationships is that secondary school learners from child-headed households were likely to be isolated by other learners at school. This eventual made them fail to enhance the development of interpersonal skills.

5.3.1.3 Provision of school uniforms

All participants in this research study noted that secondary school learners from child-headed households did not always dress appropriately in the required school attire. Although against regulations, schools did however indicate that on compassionate grounds, they occasionally permitted such secondary school learners to attend school with no uniforms. Several studies (Maushe, 2014, p.14: Munyati, Rusakaniko, Mupamhireyi, Mahati, Chibamoto and Chandiwana, 2006, p.45) have confirmed that secondary school learners from child-headed households had trouble affording school uniforms. Another study conducted by Raj and Chand, (2023, p.1014) found that secondary school learners from poorer backgrounds were more likely to be recognized or treated differently. In addition, Munyati et al. (2006, p.45) hypothesised that by not wearing school uniforms, secondary school learners who live in families with no parents may be distinguished from their peers. This observation is in line with the opinions expressed by secondary school learners who indicated that they were envious of their peers who were appropriately attired. A Zimbabwean study (Magwa and Magwa, 2016, p.98) which examined perceptions by teachers, parents and learners in Masvingo District of the challenges affecting schooling faced by child-headed families, also confirmed that segregation of secondary school

learners from low- income backgrounds by society as a whole led to the development of a denial response in self- concept and made secondary school learners more susceptible to sudden unpredictable changes in their attendance at school. This study also showed that the lack of proper school attire led to absenteeism which had a knock-on effect on academic performance.

A Kenyan study (Gaciuki, 2016, p.11) conducted among secondary school learners from child-headed households in urban settlements revealed that 80% of the participants had no full school uniforms. Faced by situations like this, the likelihood of these learners being segregated and mocked because of their poverty is very high (Ibebuke, Van Belkum, Maja, 2014, p.2; Le Roux-Kemp, 2013, p.158). These secondary school learners will ultimately suffer psychological trauma and it therefore cannot be a surprise if such deprived secondary school learners underperform in their academic work due to the stigma that gets attached to them. This conclusion is congruent with Cedeño, Martínez-Arias and Bueno (2016, p.259) who argue that psychological trauma due to poverty can cause secondary school learners to underperform in school, and either give up or become disinterested in their school work.

My fieldwork observations were validated by the opinions, as the majority of the participants in this study were not wearing school uniforms during focus group interviews. It was therefore concerning that school administrators were hamstrung and powerless to do anything about providing uniforms for secondary school learners from child-headed households because of financial limitations and that doing so was outside their mandate as school heads. Participants in this research were in agreement that the Basic Education Assistance Module programme's inability to cover all of the learner's needs at a particular time made the combination of circumstances for secondary school learners from child-headed households worse in terms of having to buy school uniforms.

In conclusion, the preceding discussion has shown that there is an apparent dislocation in the mesosystem of the secondary school learners in the current study. The mesosystem, with regard to the life of an adolescent, consists of the relationships and interactions between microsystems such as the school and the home. In this vein, if an adolescent comes from a child-headed household, such as is the case with the participants in the current study, this status may affect the adolescent's relationships with peers, school and teachers. Secondary school learners in the current study were psychologically affected by their lack of proper or full uniforms which made them to lose self-

esteem when among their peers. Therefore, it can be concluded that this not only diminished their interpersonal relationships with peers, teachers and the school administration, but at the intrapersonal level they had to suffer the indignity of being different from others.

5.3.1.4 Shortage of school fees

The current study found that secondary school learners from child-headed households face a number of difficulties concerning school fees because schools were strict about fees payment. The current set up in schools is that schools rely on fees to run their affairs. Secondary school learners from child-headed households were financed by BEAM, which was failing to remit fees on time. This resulted in School Development Committees being forced to send secondary school learners home due fees arrears. The dangers inherent in situations where the girl child has no source of fees are numerous and concerning. Girls may risk their health by engaging in premature sexual activities in order to raise money oblivious of the risks of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (Ellis, 2016, p.1). Furthermore, if secondary school learners are sent home for not paying fees; they also risk losing learning time which places them at a disadvantage when it comes to assessment through national examinations. Be that as it may, it is critical to note the government had decreased the number of BEAM beneficiaries as a result of the economic crisis implying that the majority of secondary school learners from child-headed households were excluded. The four school heads who were interviewed concurred that because there was no policy allowing for fee waivers for secondary school learners from child-headed households, vulnerable secondary school learners suffered.

The current study's findings are consistent with those of earlier surveys done in Zimbabwe by (Munyati et al., 2006, p.45) which revealed that as a result of being no longer eligible for the BEAM programme, learners from child-headed households stop attending school. The current study found that the selection of secondary school learners for support through BEAM was rather opaque and riddled with unfairness. As a result, many secondary school learners from child-headed households were unable to receive the much-needed financial support, while those who already had the means and came from advantaged households undeservedly received government financial support. In addition, this study revealed that none of the four secondary schools had any meaningful income-generating initiatives that could support secondary school learners from child-headed households. Only five secondary school learners from child-headed households were being

supported with school fees, because its banana initiative had not been successful enough.

Zimbabwe is party to both the UNGASS and UNCRC 1989 Article (28) which means that the conclusions above conflict with international education policies. According to UNGASS Article 65, secondary school learners from child-headed households are not entitled to a basic education. The Zimbabwe Education Act states that every learner has the right to education. Act 25:40 (1987 Part 4(1) and (2), and discrimination of any type is not permitted while enrolling secondary school learners in schools. In the light of these legislative frameworks, it is concerning that secondary school learners living in child-headed households continue to be excluded from accessing quality education by virtue of not being supported by the state.

5.3.2 Theme Two: Social effects of poverty

Theme Two is examined and guided by Research Question 2, which was framed as follows:

- *How does poverty affect the social wellbeing and education of secondary school learners from child-headed households as the primary caregivers?*

Secondary school learners from child-headed households reported that they experienced a number of social difficulties which were a direct consequence of the following variable; workloads, staff efficacy, and a lack of resources and support from the school. The emerging sub-themes on the social consequences of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school secondary school learners from child-headed households are summarized in the Figure 5.2.



Figure 5.2: Social consequences of poverty

5.3.2.1 Shortage of experienced staff

This study found that secondary school learners from child-headed households were treated differently by other secondary school learners because they lacked the necessary uniforms and stationery. In Zimbabwe, the quality of education has been hampered by a lack of educational resources, unfavorable infrastructure, and de-motivated teachers (Namale, Upoalkpajor and Ayambire, 2021, p.17). Interviews revealed that none of the four secondary schools included in the sample had guidance and counselling teachers had experience handling and resolving problems involving vulnerable secondary school learners from child-headed households. As a result, it is highly likely that the services these teachers provided to secondary school learners fell short of some desire minimum standards. The Mwoma and Pillay (2016, p.89) study also confirmed that teachers are underprepared to serve secondary school learners who live in homes with no parents because they lack the requisite knowledge and expertise.

A concerning finding in this study was that the secondary school learners were unfamiliar with guidance and counselling school teachers. The conclusion drawn is that in effect there was no meaningful guidance and counselling in the schools. These findings were in line with research done in Namibia by Taukeni (2015, p.12), which found that teenagers from child-headed households are rarely given the chance to receive emotional support from other informed people in their schools.

When secondary school learners from child-headed households lose parents, this often exposes them to prejudice in their communities. Furthermore, the fact that they have no financial support from parents makes them have access to a limited number of educational choices. A study conducted by Crawford (2020, p.2) found that when secondary school learners lose parents, it damages the Secondary school learners' current associations with their environments and fosters new patterns of development. In a similar vein, Mushunje and Mafico (2007, p.15) found that secondary school learners from child-headed households experienced emotional stress as a result of a variety of factors, including witnessing the deaths of parents. It is important to observe that the loss of a parent frequently leaves some secondary school learners and secondary school

learners with nobody to provide them with advice and counselling that is crucial for their psychosocial support. Ideally, in such cases, these secondary school learners from child-headed households should receive psychosocial support from their schools (Taukeni, 2015, p.13). The findings of the current study appear to be congruent with a study conducted by Taukeni (2015, p.13) which revealed that secondary school learners from homes with no parents lack opportunities and experiences for one-on-one emotional support from either of the knowing adults at school. The finding by Shumba and Moyo (2014, p.145) that teachers' negative attitudes about counselling prevented secondary school learners from child-headed households from accessing proper guidance and counselling sessions was also confirmed in the current study.

The preceding findings in effect imply that there is a dislocation within and among the ecological systems as given in Bronfenbrenner's theory. For example, at the microsystem level, they would require counseling from their teachers while at the mesosystem level they would need the support of the extended family. However, as explicated earlier on, this support is often not forthcoming because at the microsystems level, teachers are ill-equipped to deal with such learners or they are de-motivated to exercise their duties. In the current study, guidance and counseling teachers confirmed that due to their extensive workloads, they were unable to effectively serve the secondary school learners from child-headed homes.

The current research study revealed that by virtue of poverty, secondary school learners from child-headed household were also being bullied by other secondary school learners. Participants stated that such poverty was also related to the intimidation of secondary school learners from child-headed households by other secondary school learners. A person's growth occurs through contact with his or her environment which implies the interconnectedness of the various ecological sub-systems (Losioki, 2020, p.189). Because they lacked school supplies and uniforms, secondary school learners from child-headed households were also segregated. The observation by Giddens (2009, p.520) that social, emotional, and psychological difficulties have a detrimental effect on the self-concept of secondary school learners from child-headed families holds true. Similar to this, Jackson (2002, p.274) found that when secondary school learners recognize or sense the difference in communities, stigmas associated with secondary school learners from families with no parents emerge. As has been indicated earlier, secondary school learners are at Erikson's ego identity formation stage which makes them to be vulnerable to social influences. In

this case, an unsupportive social environment within the school diminishes the self-esteem of the bullied, stigmatized and segregated secondary school learners. This may inadvertently create a sense of worthlessness. On account of a hostile school environment, the likelihood of developing deviant and antisocial behavior as a concomitant response to the rejection they face at school is increased.

5.3.2.2 Workloads and the efficacy of staff

Due to the enormous workloads, the majority of guidance and counselling teachers were unable to address the social, problems of secondary school learners from child-headed families. Teachers revealed that, because of the demands of extensive school curriculum; they frequently did not have enough time to offer counselling services to secondary school learners from child-headed households. Teachers voiced concern that working longer hours affected their ability to support secondary school learners from child-headed households. It was observed that in addition to their regular class loads of examinable subjects assigned to them, guidance and counselling teachers also performed their regular teaching duties. The current study further revealed both guidance and counselling teachers and secondary school learners chose to be involved in other activities during lessons allocated to guidance and counselling. As a result, they rarely engaged in sessions where social support was offered.

Therefore, the results of the current study showed that the ability of guidance and counselling teachers to do their jobs effectively was being hampered by their enormous workload. It can be concluded that heavy workloads combined with insufficient training for guidance and counselling school teachers, poor resources, and teachers' negative attitudes toward the subject, hindered the schools' ability to address social, emotional, and psychological issues of secondary school learners from child-headed households. A Zimbabwean study by Kurebwa and Kurebwa (2014, p.237) highlighted an interesting variable that did not emerge in the current study. The study revealed that teachers were generally dissatisfied with guidance and counselling, and demanded incentives to implement the discipline. Given this, it becomes evident that guidance and counselling teachers are unlikely to address issues experienced by secondary school learners from child-headed households, even if they are not overburdened.

5.3.2.3 Shortage of resources and support by the school

The current study found that school administrators did not support secondary school learners from child-headed households because they simply did not have the resources to do so. It was concerning to note that none of the four school heads was able to attend even a single session on handling and interacting with secondary school learners from child-headed households. This was a sign that the majority of school administrators were not bothered to implement some of the policies relevant to the circumstances of the vulnerable secondary school learners. The problem of lack of support by the school administrators was also a direct consequence of the lack of external support from the Schools Psychological Services (SPS), which rarely visited schools to staff-develop guidance and counselling school teachers so they could carry out their duties effectively and successfully. These findings reflect concordance with the Naidoo (2010, p.66) study which found that numerous school heads and governing bodies lacked the necessary capacity to develop programme plans for secondary school learners from child-headed households. While it is incumbent upon all secondary schools to support and care for secondary school learners from child-headed households and create a child-friendly environment throughout (Chamba, 2011, p.19), the current study appears to confirm that the lack of support for learners from child-headed households describes a situation that is found in many countries.

5.3.3 Theme Three: Emotional effects of poverty

Theme Two is examined and guided by Research Question 3, which was framed as follows:

- *How does poverty impact the mental health and academic performance of learners from families where Secondary school learners are the primary caregivers?*

The emotional effects of poverty on Secondary school learners who grow up in child-headed households are examined in this section. Three sub-themes, namely; training of staff in dealing with secondary school learners from child-headed households, teachers' operating environments, and teacher attitudes towards learners from child-headed households, emerged. Figure 5.3 overviews the themes.

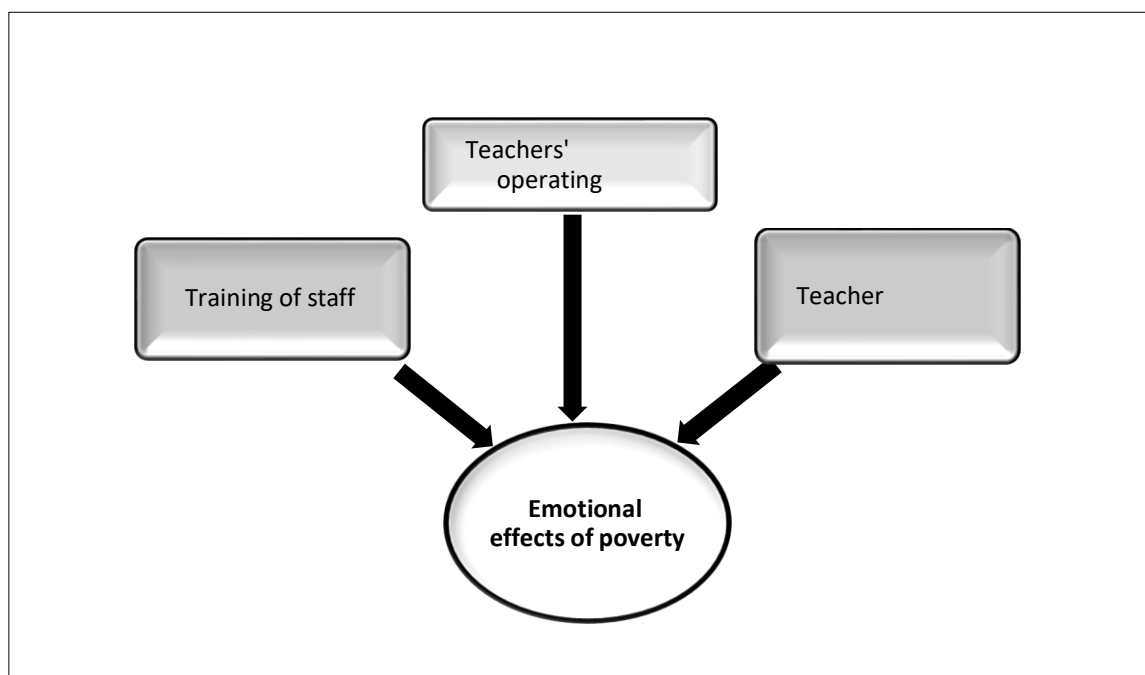


Figure 5.3: Emotional effects of poverty

5.3.3.1 Training for staff

This research study indicated that teachers, school administrators, and members of the school development committee all lacked counselling skills. In order to provide high-quality social, emotional, and psychological services, guidance and counselling school teachers and school directors must possess diplomas and degrees. Despite having credentials and degrees, as shown by their school leaders, the majority of teachers lacked the expertise and confidence to offer guidance and counselling to secondary school learners from families with no parents. Furthermore, the few teachers who volunteered to help secondary school learners from child-headed families felt overwhelmed by the work given to them. According to Omoniyi, Gamede and Uleanya (2022, p.266), guidance and counselling teachers and school administrators should be equipped with skills necessary to thoroughly analyse and deal with counselling issues.

According to school administrators, the School Psychological Services was non-functional as it had ceased visiting schools to assist secondary school learners in need. In this sense, training is essential, along with advice and counselling. The argument proffered by Omoniyi et al (2022, p.266) that guidance and counselling programmes should adapt in an effort to provide secondary

school learners from child-headed households with crucial psychosocial assistance lends credence to the need for teachers and administrators to be trained in guidance and counselling. Nurulpaik, Johar, Aceng, Suryana and Dadang (2022, p.400) weigh in by positing that the availability of skilled guidance and counselling school teachers in guiding learning is one of the main significant parts of educational resources. Secondary school learners from child-headed households can experience positive transformation in their lives if their guidance and counselling centre has well qualified staff.

The South African Department of Education opines that the greatest obstacle to the implementation of guidance and counselling is inadequate teacher preparation in the task of dealing with secondary school learners from child-headed homes (Mwoma and Pillay, 2016, p.89). Naidoo (2010, p.66) aptly advises that that prospective teachers should begin their education in teachers' colleges in order to give them the knowledge and skills they need to effectively assist secondary school learners with psychosocial needs to receive adequate care and support. In the context of the current study, the extent to which Zimbabwean teachers' colleges offer a curriculum which equips teachers with the prerequisite guidance and counselling competencies becomes relevant. This must be viewed against the background that a number of African nations have implemented measures to broaden or intensify teachers' efforts to address and manage difficulties faced by secondary school learners from child-headed households. Naidoo (2010, p.78) indicates that such training programmes focus on areas like attachment, techniques to elevate secondary school learners' self-esteem, and empowering teachers to recognize the difficulties faced by secondary school learners from child-headed households and their needs. Due to the capacity building provided by these initiatives, teachers in the countries where such training is given are now more sensitive to the needs of secondary school learners from child-headed homes, to the point where they do home visits after school is out in order to intimately understand the difficulties these secondary school learners face at home.

It is critical to observe that the current study found that teachers were not adequately equipped to deal with counselling issues despite the existence of the Chief Education Officer, Circular Minute, Number 51 of 1992, specifically issued to enhance the implementation of guidance and counselling. The seven objectives of the circular focused on: bringing order and organisation to the widespread implementation of guidance and counselling, including drafting for class-based

group activities; aiding with the establishment of the guidance and counselling committee that oversees daily programmes; providing face-to-face counselling and being able to set up necessary referrals; being very resourceful in the enforcement of the discipline; being consistent in the production of progress reports regarding the discipline; gathering, and comparing information about the learner from homes with no parents.

5.3.3.2 Teachers' operating environments

The current study revealed that poor working environments coupled with teacher incapacity hindered secondary schools' ability to respond to the emotional needs of secondary school learners from child-headed households. The workload for guidance and counselling school teachers was too heavy, which precluded them from addressing issues faced by secondary school learners. The validity of the incapacity by teachers can in part be explained by a study conducted by Dube et al. (2021, p.5) which found that there is a high pupil-teacher ratio which results in little support for vulnerable secondary school learners. Due to inadequate salaries, they indicated that they were unable to perform their tasks effectively as the motivation to do work effectively was virtually non-existent.

All participants in the interviews stated that although teachers were willing to engage in professional development activities, their levels of engagement were suppressed due to low pay, lengthy work hours, unfavourable working circumstances, and the economic environment characterized by hyperinflation. According to the focus group interviews with secondary school learners from child-headed households, teachers were finding it difficult to attend lessons or deal with the problems of secondary school learners from child-headed households because of the poor quality of infrastructure in the schools. A major area of concern was that the schools did not define and set aside physical spaces where secondary school learners could be helped in private. This created an untenable working environment for teachers tasked with guidance and counselling.

The current study found that rural secondary schools were struggling to implement guidance and counselling due to a lack of infrastructure, teaching resources, and skilled guidance and counselling school teachers. The Pillay (2021, p.5) study which examined the impact of inequality and Covid-19 on education and career planning for South African Secondary school learners of

rural and low- socioeconomic backgrounds, corroborates this finding as it established that learners, especially those from child-headed households, were negatively impacted by insufficient guidance and counselling sessions. All secondary school learners and guidance and counselling teachers stated that school administrators did not support all the programmes related to guidance and counselling.

Guidance and counselling education has a very important role in the school life of secondary school learners from child-headed households. Mwoma and Pillay (2016, p.89) argue that when a learner loses a parent, schools and teachers become the critical support elements for these secondary school learners. None of the secondary school learners in the current study had parents in their homes implying that their microsystem comprised of peers, neighbours, and the school. In this study, the family unit consisted of an elder child and siblings who averaged four. The school system was the next potential support system, but in this study, the school functioned to create more challenges for the secondary school learners from child- headed households. The lack of guidance and counseled implied that the emotional needs of the secondary school learners were largely unattended. To this end, Nurulpaik et al (2022, p.400) point out that that the implementation of the educational system depends on the ability to aid and encourage the use of adequate educational resources by trained professionals. The study by Pillay (2021, p.5) which found that present agents of power (the school) continued to place low-socioeconomic communities on a lower level, which eventually prevents secondary school learners from child-headed households from receiving support could not be further from the truth.

The lack of a structured programme to cater for the emotional wellbeing of secondary school learners was evidenced not only by the reluctance of teachers to help secondary school learners, but the schools did not make efforts to procure support materials such of textbooks, syllabi, and other resources that could make the subject's implementation possible and efficacious. Related studies (Kamore and Tiego, 2013, p.796; Majoko, 2013, p.45) found that guidance and counselling would be poorly implemented if school heads did not provide enough support. The conclusion drawn is that without adequate emotional support through guidance and counselling, secondary school learners from child- headed households were unlikely to do well if burden by unresolved emotional issues. A study by Omoniyi et al (2022, p.263) revealed that economically disadvantaged secondary school learners from low-income families typically had lower levels of

academic accomplishment.

5.3.3.3 Teacher attitudes

Guidance and counselling school teachers reported that learners from child-headed households were sluggish and lacked ambition. They felt that this behaviour of the secondary school learners was caused by the domestic duties which they did before coming to school. However, it is important that against a backdrop of lacking appropriate qualifications, the teachers could have been insensitive to the plight of the secondary school learners and mistook fatigue displayed by the secondary school learners as a lack of ambition.

Another finding was that secondary school learners from child-headed households were often kept out of class because they arrived late, and were dressed inappropriately in and torn clothes. Thwala et al (2021, p.39) argues that Secondary school learners living in households with no parents suffer from low quality of life due to their living in poverty. It was my observation that secondary school learners from child-headed households would arrive at school with their books unattended, their homework not done. On the surface this reflected a poor attitude towards schoolwork. This made teachers to despise and show little interest in the secondary school learners giving rise to an assumption that the secondary school learners were not academically gifted and therefore were ignored. Again, the expressions from the teachers seemed to support a perception that because schools were now result-driven, they had no time for behind- the-curve secondary school learners from child-headed households.

In Bronfenbrenner ecological systems theory, mesosystem interactions refer to how the different microsystems work together in a child's development. The preceding findings would seem to suggest that the economic pressures and political decisions originating in the macrosystem were also impacting the secondary school learners' mesosystems. The prevailing macroeconomic environment characterised by hyperinflation and government's failure to effectively fund BEAM and its mistrust of NGOs meant that there was no financial and material support for the secondary school learners who then faced a hostile school environment. On account of this, secondary school learners from child-headed households it comes as no surprise that the teachers stereotyped and marginalized the secondary school learners.

5.3.4 Theme Four: Solutions to reduce the negative effects of poverty

Research Question 4

- *How may the detrimental impacts of poverty be lessened among learners from families with Secondary school learners?*

A key element that emerged from this thorough critical evaluation was the implementation of readiness programmes in educational institutions with the goal of meeting the needs of Secondary school learners from child-headed households. The reactions of the participants revealed three sub-themes: a dedicated BEAM committee; supplementary feeding programmes; and income-generating programmes. Figure 5.4 overviews these sub-themes

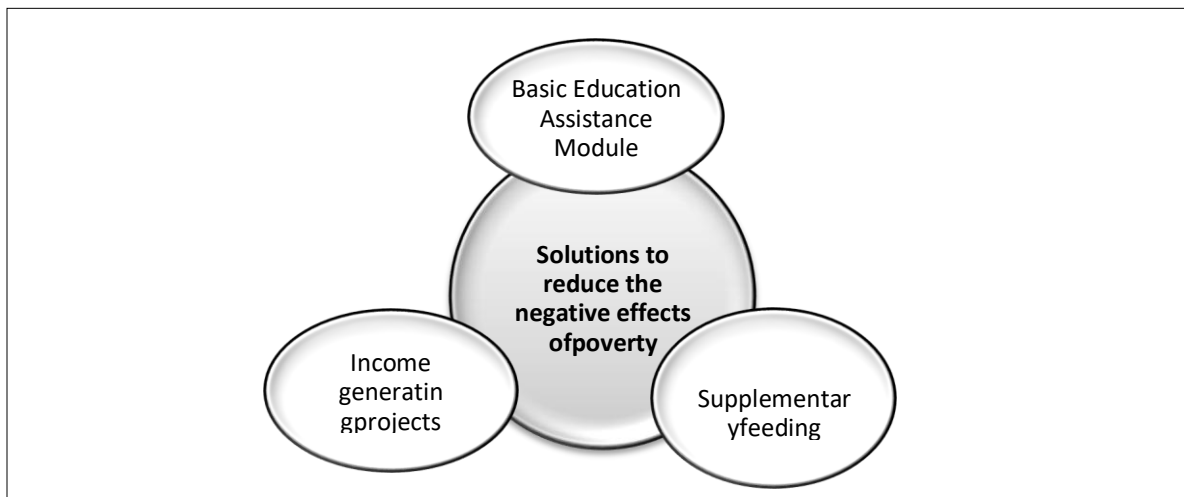


Figure 5.4: Solutions to reduce the negative effects of poverty

5.3.4.1 Basic Education Assistant Module (BEAM)

The Basic Education Assistant Module (BEAM) is a significant government-sponsored programme with a national thrust. There was consensus that the programme assists in paying tuition for Secondary school learners from child-headed households. This result was in line with the opinions of Pillay (2021, p.2), who claimed that even though education is regarded as "free" for some, it restricts access to high-quality education for secondary school learners from low-income families because they cannot afford uniforms, textbooks, exercise books, and other

necessities. Participants stated that the intervention's effectiveness in helping secondary school learners from families with no parents satisfy their needs was compromised by the bias in BEAM selection. The current study revealed that BEAM does not cover expenses like test fees, uniforms, or stationery, which places a significant burden on secondary school learners from child-headed households. Government action is largely necessary for the well-being of orphans and vulnerable secondary school learners, and this intervention must consider these homes' capacity (Mkhatshwa, 2017, p.366). The results of the study, with regard to BEAM, are consistent with the conclusions of the research study by Garutsa (2012, p.15), which determined that there is no adequate policy directing the implementation of BEAM. Similarly, Maushe (2014, p.14) found that parents of secondary school learners from low-income families spent more money on non-fee items like uniforms and stationery. This is an indication that many secondary school learners from households with no parents are likely to drop out of school because of the economic problems in Zimbabwe. In light of this, it is important that the government should modify its BEAM enforcement policies to cover non-fee-related expenses for secondary school learners from child-headed households.

5.3.4.2 Supplementary feeding programmes

The current study found that school feeding programmes run by NGOs met their demise in 2013. Based on the experiences of the participants in this study, the cessation of NGO activity had a devastating effect on communities, with secondary school learners from child-headed households being the worst affected as they were already in a serious state of vulnerability due to poverty. Without supplementary feeding programmes in place in the schools, there was a sharp decline in school attendances, especially by learners from child-headed households. Furthermore, the current study reveals that in a bid to survive some of the secondary school learners resorted to theft of other learners' food. On the other hand, girl secondary school learners were tempted to get married or get involved in promiscuity in order to eke a living. These findings clearly pointed out to the all-important need for schools to ensure that vulnerable learners had access to reasonable nutrition if they were to continue learning effectively. Therefore, the need for the establishment of programmes to provide supplementary feeding to vulnerable learners is all too compelling.

5.3.4.3 Income-generating projects

Two schools reported that they were running banana plantations with FACT funding. However, results of the document analysis showed that projects had low levels of functionality, which resulted in low margins of profit. According to the records of both schools, five secondary school learners living in households with no parents received assistance in the form of fee payments through the project.

Participants generally concurred that the banana project needed to be more effective in order to accommodate more secondary school learners from child-headed households. At two other schools no programmes were in place. Although the participants reported that there were clubs which sold freezits and zepnaks to raise money for the purchase of school supplies for some secondary school learners from child-headed households, this fund-raising practice could not be confirmed by my document analysis as there was no supporting evidence to account for the revenue raised. The logical conclusion was that the projects were non-existent. Confirmatory evidence participants revealed that there were no schemes to help secondary school learners from families with no parents. The study established that income generating projects at the schools were largely unproductive, if not ineffective. In the light of this, support for secondary school learners from child-headed households was largely thin or non-existent.

5.7 SUMMARY

The study's findings were presented, analyzed, and discussed in this chapter. The analysis and discussion were built on the themes that arose. The psychological, social, and emotional effects of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households, as well as methods to mitigate the negative effects of poverty on secondary school learners from child-headed households, served as the themes that guided the analysis and discussion of the data. These themes were discussed in relation to previous research. The purpose of doing so was to locate my findings in extant literature on poverty and its impact on child-headed families. The study revealed that secondary school learners from child-headed households in Manicaland province had a series of challenges emanating from their state of poverty, which when examined

holistically, constricted them from performing as well as they should academically. The findings point to a clear association between poverty and academic achievement as was seen in the extant literature. The following chapter concludes the study by detailing the summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations arising from the conclusions.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to explore the psychosocial effects of poverty on the academic achievement of adolescent learners from child-headed households, with the intention of creating a workable educational framework that is sensitive to the plight of these learners. In order to illuminate this aim, the objectives of the study were to:

- a) Establish the psychological effects of poverty on the educational attainment of learners from child-headed households.
- b) Determine the social effects of poverty on the education of learners from child-headed households.
- c) Establish the emotional effects of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households.
- d) Determine possible strategies to minimise poverty among secondary school learners from child-headed households.

This chapter brings down the curtain to the study detailing the key findings on the psychosocial consequences of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed homes in Chimanimani District, Manicaland province in Zimbabwe. The chapter begins with a précis of the study which is followed by a summary of key findings. I then draw conclusions based on the research findings and the review of literature, after which I make recommendations for various stakeholders. The chapter also includes a proposed model with which future researchers can examine the problem of poverty and its impact on learners from child-headed households.

6.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study was organised under six chapters. In this section I give a synopsis of each of the first five chapters before detail the key findings which emerged.

- **Chapter One**

This chapter contextualised the research problem. It focused on outlining the background which informed the study leading to the problem statement. Reference was made to issues of poverty and its impact on academic achievement with special reference to learners from child-headed households. The background therefore sought to show the challenges that poverty cause in psychological, social, and emotional development of the learners. The chapter outlines the aim and objectives of the study from the research questions were extracted. In the significance of the study, which aimed adding to extant literature on the impact of poverty on the academic performance of adolescent learners from child-headed households, I argue that this study brings a depth of understanding for various sub-sectors in the Zimbabwean education sector of the lived experiences of a previously unstudied sample of adolescent learners from poverty-stricken household in Manicaland.

- **Chapter Two**

In this chapter I conducted a review of the literature germane to this study. To be able to locate appropriate literature, I used a literature search framework suggested by vom Brocke et al. (2009, p.11). I primarily sought literature which would illuminate the body of research on the psychological, social and emotional consequences of poverty on the academic achievement of secondary school secondary school learners from child-headed households. The purpose of the chapter was basically to reflect on the depth and breadth of extant literature on the research problem. The chapter also examined some dated literature to determine whether it was seminal and would add value to the review. The literature which was reviewed covered a global expanse from local Zimbabwean, African and regional together with international scholars.

- **Chapter Three**

Bronfenbrenner ecological systems theory and Erikson's psychosocial theory of development served as the lens through which key variables in the research problem were examined and

explained. Ecological systems theory was used to illuminate that a person's environment, which includes their home, school, place of employment, church, neighbourhood, culture, and government, has an impact on how they develop. According to Bronfenbrenner an individual's growth can be influenced by five nested structures, namely, the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem, and the chronosystem. These structures have both direct and indirect effects that can help or hinder a person's potential and therefore explicate how various individual and societal factors impacted learners from child-headed households. The theory was an efficacious approach used to evaluate the psychosocial consequences of poverty on secondary school learners from the child-headed households.

After detailing the various structures that possibly impact the psychosocial development of secondary school learners, Erikson's psychosocial theory which explains personality development over the life-span was used as a supportive framework to illuminate the fifth stage (identity versus role confusion) at which the secondary school learners were at. The theory was used to explain how poverty may causes a disruption in a child's psychological, social, and emotional development leading to an unhealthy ego identity in both the school and society. Using the theory, the study aimed at showing that Secondary school learners from child-headed homes continue to experience transformation in search of an identity after experiencing the psychosocial repercussions of poverty.

• **Chapter Four**

The study methodology which encapsulates the research design, the population, and the sample, sampling techniques, the research instruments and the data analysis procedures were discussed and justified in this chapter. A phenomenological design based on the interpretive paradigm was adopted for the study. Four secondary schools in Chimanimani District of Manicaland province were sampled. Participants were secondary school learners in their 4th year from child-headed households, school heads, members of the school development committee, and guidance and counselling staff. Four focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observations were used to gather the data. Data were analysed using thematic and content analysis to unlock themes and sub-themes. I used direct excerpts from the semi-structured interviews

and focus group interviews in the presentation, and discussion of the findings. Both method and time triangulation were used to arrive at an accurate assessment of the phenomenon of secondary school learners which was being studied. Additionally, member checking was done to minimise researcher bias and ensure that the findings represented the actual perceptions and expressions of the participants. Finally, ethical procedures used in the field were detailed and justified.

- **Chapter Five**

In this the findings of the study were presented and discussed based on the research questions stated in Chapter One. The discussion was juxtaposed with the literature review in Chapter Two and a continuous review of further literature to support the findings. Four themes emerged from the analysis of the empirical data: the psychological impact of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households, the social impact of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households, the emotional impact of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households, and strategies to lessen the negative effects of poverty on the learner. To simplify the presentation and discussion of the results, sub-headings corresponding to the primary themes that emerged from the data were used.

6.2 KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

A summary of the key findings which are presented in accordance with the research questions is provided in this section.

6.2.1 Psychological effects of poverty

The psychological effects of poverty on secondary school learners from child-headed families were identifiable under four sub-themes, namely; provision of food and nutrition, provision of stationery and quality education, provision of school uniforms, and Shortage of school fees

The study found that the deaths of parents had created food insecurity for secondary school learners from child-headed households. Participants noted a number of variables that had an impact on secondary school learners from child-headed households, including political pressures

and the hyperinflationary environment in the country. Most child-headed households were vulnerable to food deficits because of a persistent lack of rainfall. The study also showed that schools were unable to provide material support to the secondary school learners from child-headed households because of financial limitations. School fees charged were insufficient to extend school feeding programmes. Furthermore, the school food programme excluded the secondary school learners as it was restricted to the lower forms. Government-funded feeding programmes had been reduced because of the economic difficulties the government is facing. No viable nutritional gardens existed in any of the four secondary schools.

Schools were not providing stationery to secondary school learners from child-headed households because the assumption was that the guardians were solely responsible for buying such stationery. However evidence from this study indicated that at the microsystem level, the secondary school learners had no parents to support them. Due to financial limitations, schools also had difficulty providing the stationery to the secondary school learners because the insufficient school fees which they collected with difficulty were primarily used to procure teaching and learning tools. The stationery deficit had a negative impact on the scholastic success of secondary school learners from child-headed families because they failed to do all assigned curriculum work owing to a shortage of books and related items. Again, some secondary school learners from child-headed households experienced embarrassment when they were excluded from class by their teachers for not having stationery.

The study found BEAM did not cover stationery needs which exacerbated an already difficult situation for the secondary school learners who had limited access to BEAM. Added to these problems, it also emerged that some secondary school learners were forced to engage in deviant behavior such as, stealing stationery in the form of pens, pencils, and exercise books from their classmates. In addition to causing erratic school attendances, lack of stationery put secondary school learners from child-headed households at risk of dropping out of school. Given the aforementioned difficulties, it is reasonable to conclude that the schools' failure to provide resources to secondary school learners from child-headed households has a detrimental effect on their academic progress.

Secondary school learners from child-headed households had no uniforms. Despite the fact that

many of these secondary school learners lacked school uniforms, the study revealed that schools were unable to assist them owing to the schools' poor financial standings. Further, the provision of uniforms was legally outside their mandate. Despite that out of compassion, some school heads overlooked the uniform policy by allowing secondary school learners from child-headed households to attend class, lack of proper school attire, exposed the secondary school learners from child-headed households to stigmatization from their peers and teachers. The stigmatization and unfair treatment had a detrimental effect on these secondary school learners' self-esteem and ultimately their development of positive ego-identities.

The study found that only five secondary school learners from child-headed households were supported through fees payment by the schools from a banana project. The research study, however, showed that even in schools where some efforts to raise money for secondary school learners from child-headed households were made, the interventions could not adequately serve the all the affected secondary school learners because the limited funds could only cater for a negligible proportion of these secondary school learners. The study found that a few secondary school learners from child-headed households were being supported through BEAM. It was however revealed that BEAM was plagued by problems. These included underfunding, late disbursement to schools, a lack of funding for instructional supplies like stationery, and bias in the selection of recipients. This negatively impacted the secondary school learners who had no other recourse to school fees payment. In addition, none of the four secondary schools included in the sample had a fee waiver policy; confirming that secondary school learners from child-headed households were not given preferential treatment when it came to paying tuition. Faced with a myriad of psychological problems, the conclusion drawn was that secondary school learners from child-headed households operated in a microsystem that heavily weighed them down. This was likely to negatively impact their academic performance as was shown by the progress reports from teachers.

6.2.2 Social effects of poverty

Three sub-themes emerged under this theme, namely: shortage of experienced staff, workloads and the efficacy of staff, and shortage of resources and support by the school.

Secondary school learners from child-headed households experienced a variety of social, such as

exclusion, bullying, discrimination, and stigmatization. One of the issues preventing schools from fully meeting the social needs of secondary school learners from homes was a shortage of qualified guidance and counselling school personnel. Guidance and counselling school teachers were found to be under qualified for their positions. Consequently, the quality of psychosocial services to secondary school learners from child-headed households was compromised. The scarcity staff development programmes in the schools did not help matters. Teachers assigned guidance and counselling responsibilities had enormous workloads and were therefore unable to effectively address the social problems of secondary school learners from child-headed families. Due to the extensive school curriculum, it was revealed that the teachers often did not have the time to offer counselling services to secondary school learners. Furthermore, it was evidenced that a negative attitude towards guidance and counselling characterized the teacher-learner interactions, as both teachers and secondary school learners revealed that they rarely met. They preferred to be engaged in other activities during time allocated to guidance and counseling. It was also revealed that teachers wanted to be incentivized for taking up guidance and counselling.

The study found that there were no school-based regulations created to assist secondary school learners from child-headed households. The lack of cooperation in planning and organizing events for secondary school learners from child-headed households was caused by the absence of such rules. While some teachers reported that they provided material support to secondary school learners from child-headed households, this form of intervention was unofficial as much as it was inadequate. The study also revealed that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's (MoPSE) Schools Psychological Services, charged with the mandate of supporting secondary school learners with learning issues, was not making the required number of school visits. Because of this, secondary school learners were ultimately managed by guidance and counselling teachers who lacked sufficient knowledge and abilities.

Given their compromised social circumstances, secondary school learners were clearly in need of a supplementary feeding programme at school. The study revealed that nutrition gardens at the schools were unproductive and the produce from these gardens was given only to secondary school learners in lower classes. This made the learners to go hungry when at schools because they could not afford to buy themselves food both at school and at home. School registers indicated a worrisome pattern of irregular lesson attendance coupled with a concerning dropout

rate among secondary school learners from child-headed homes. Without nutritional support, it can be concluded that if secondary school learners do not eat enough, they lose focus and involvement in class, which leads to poor academic achievement.

6.2.3 Emotional effects of poverty

Three sub-themes emerged under this theme, namely; training of staff in dealing with secondary school learners from child-headed household, teachers' operating environments, and teacher attitudes towards learners from child-headed households.

The study revealed that there were no guidance and counselling-specific teachers and those teachers were not periodically staff developed to be able manages psychosocial problems affecting secondary school learners, particularly those from child-headed households. This lack of training was further exacerbated by poor working conditions, low salaries heavy teaching loads that the teachers had. This precluded them from offering any meaningful assistance, even in circumstances when they wished to do so. Furthermore, instead of being supportive, teachers and school heads had negative attitudes towards learners who came from child-headed households. They perceive the learners as lazy deviants who were devoid of academic ambition. The school staff evidently overlooked the psychosocial circumstances of these learners. Teachers also kept out of class secondary school learners from child-headed households because they arrived late, and were dressed inappropriately. The current study therefore revealed that secondary school learners from child-headed households who came to school with the expectation of receiving support and encouragement from the school system were snubbed, not only by their teachers, but their peers as well, which further added to their woes and trauma. This has untold implications on their commitment towards their school work and ultimately their level of academic achievement.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

Poverty is a reality in Zimbabwe, more so, in the light of the current harsh economic environment characterised by hyperinflation. While the generality of the population is reeling under these conditions, the plight of secondary school learners from child-headed homes deserves to be illuminated, especially because they are more vulnerable than other segments of society.

None of the secondary school learners in the current study had parents in their homes. This

implied that at the microsystem level, they depended on peers, neighbours, and the school. In this study, the family unit consisted of an elder child and siblings who averaged four. It can be concluded that this type of family unit was a fragile and unreliable support system for members to develop into healthy personalities. The absence of the parent constitutes a breakdown in the microsystem and mesosystem which disables the child who is left with no tools to explore other parts of its environment. The absence of parents may impel the adolescent to seek attention in inappropriate places and persons in order to try and fill the void of love and affection that the parent would have given had they been present. The risk of early sex, prostitution and early marriages was expressed by the participants.

The lack of parent figures in this type of family also left the secondary school learners vulnerable to a number of material deficits which included; lack of fees, inadequate nutrition, poor clothing, lack of school uniforms, and lack of school stationery. Psychological deficits inter alia included the absence of parent role models to emulate socially acceptable behaviours, lack of a parent support system, and lack of guidance and counselling. Furthermore, these secondary school learners were forced to forego the normal developmental stages as circumstances forced them to assume adult roles of looking after and fending for their siblings in poverty riddled environment. In relation to Erikson's psychosocial theory, it can be concluded that while they were at a stage which required the development of an ego identity, they were caught up in a dilemma whereby, on one hand, they were 'Secondary school learners', and on the other 'little adults'. In terms of psychosocial theory the conflicting interactions between elements of syntonic (concord) and dystonic (discord) should lead to a balance between the two which is more inclined towards syntonic. In this study it is evident that managing such a situation was a burden which many of the secondary school learners could not negotiate successfully without psychological stress. In effect there was no homeostasis on account of the various psychological pressures which surrounded the secondary school learners from child-headed families.

At the microsystem level, the school system was the next probable support system but, in this study, the school functioned to create more challenges for the secondary school learners from child-headed households. The study concluded that at a social level, the secondary school learners experienced trauma which included negative attitudes by teachers, lack of guidance and counselling and emotional support. The study concluded that there was a dislocation at the

mesosystem level. The mesosystem describes the interaction of various systems at the microsystem, such as neighbours, the school and peers. The secondary school learners who expected solace and comfort from the school found the school to be highly hostile and lacked in psychosocial support. First, they had strained relations with their teachers who mistakenly perceived the adolescent as lazy and lacked academic ambition. They were stigmatized for failure to have appropriate school attire, being sent away for fees and being bullied simple because they were labeled as poor.

Several significant establishments were reached at the exosystem level, which describes the connections between microsystems, which involve the child, and remote social settings in which the individual does not have an active involvement. These social contexts can indirectly influence a person's development even though the exosystem is obviously far away (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 40). Community health services, social and governmental support mechanisms that provide tangible resources, values, and settings within which each adult relationship functions and which indirectly affect secondary school learners are included in these systems.

In this study, very few secondary school learners benefitted from government BEAM intervention because little was available and there was unfairness in the selection of beneficiaries. This hindered their attendance at school as they were often sent away. Furthermore, the secondary school learners from child headed families, as has been raised elsewhere in this study; study did not have adequate clothing such as school uniforms and stationery owing to the inadequacy of the BEAM which also did not extend to these needs. The conclusion drawn was that in the absence of this valued financial support the secondary school learners were in a precarious and untenable situation which could only worsen their plight and disadvantage them academically. This situation was also evident at the macrosystem level. The macrosystem describes the political and economic decisions that are for example made by the state. In the current study, the prevailing macroeconomic environment characterised by poverty and hyperinflation are in part a result of government policies. Furthermore and the current government's mistrust of NGOs meant these organisations could operate in sectors which had child-headed families which implied that there was no financial and material support for the secondary school learners. Therefore it can be concluded that secondary school learners were negatively impacted by external parties at exosystem level. Given that they ostensibly had no

political capital, the secondary school learners were in a serious quagmire from which they could not get any respite.

The last level, the chronosystem, is focused on the patterning of environmental events and transitions over the course of a person's life as well as socio-historical situations. It is important to note that this level was out of the current study's purview because it would have required a longitudinal approach, which was impractical given the nature of my study and the research strategy I had chosen.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous section presented the conclusions drawn from the research findings. This section details recommendations to various stakeholders. These recommendations are made with a view of informing the stakeholders of interventions which can improve the psychosocial environment of secondary school learners from child-headed families who are experiencing poverty.

6.4.1 Government

This section contains suggestions for the government that might improve its ability to deal with the difficulties faced by secondary school learners from homes with no parents. I make four recommendations.

In order to help many secondary school learners from families with secondary school learners in charge, the government should give BEAM funding priority in its national budget. Strategic mapping should be used to identify befitting beneficiaries. Furthermore, stringent measures should be put in place to have oversight over the school BEAM committees so that they operate within the confines of good governance. While acknowledging that the Zimbabwean economy is underperforming, the government should expand the school supplementary feeding by increasing the funding mechanism which will allow other players like NGOs to assist where necessary. A concerted effort should also be made to improve the operating environments of teachers, especially those in rural areas, so that they are capacitated to assist vulnerable secondary school learners.

The government is urged to improve the working conditions for instructors in order to promote morale and ultimately improve the government's provision of financial aid to learners from child-headed families, according to the research study's conclusions. In order to address the issues of inadequacy of professional guidance and counseling school teachers in dealing with learners from child-headed households, government should also allocate more funds to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education plan for staff development on care and support of learners from child-headed households.

6.4.2 Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education

Monitoring the activity of teacher training institutions is one of the many responsibilities of the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. In order to solve the issue of a shortage of qualified guidance and counseling school teachers, this study recommends that the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education reevaluate the curriculum provided by the teachers' institutes with a view to include guidance and counseling. A double-pronged programme including the personnel from the Schools Psychological Services to develop syllabi for this purpose is advised.

6.4.3 Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, oversees and renders decisions about, among other things, the implementation of the secondary school curricula.

It is suggested that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education reinvigorate the School Psychological Services Department (SPS) by making sure it has enough personnel and funding to fulfill its mandate of assisting learners who are having psychological, social, and emotional issues. To improve the guidance and counselling services provided by secondary schools, it is advised that school administrators determine the amount of time needed to provide adequate guidance and counselling services so that guidance and counselling school teachers are assigned fewer subjects to teach as well as less demanding co-curriculum activities. The Ministry might also encourage instructors by providing them with complete scholarships to attend local and international guidance and counseling courses.

6.4.4 Heads of School

This study advises that heads of schools employ peer guidance and counselling school teachers as a means of promoting learner-learner guidance and counselling. As a means of enabling schools to meet the psychosocial needs of secondary school learners from child-headed homes, school heads should also give top priority to supporting income-generating projects.

6.4.5 Non-Governmental Organisations

The research study suggests that non-governmental organizations maintain their political neutrality in their operations in order to build effective working relationships with the government and other local authorities for the benefit of vulnerable groups like learners from child-headed households.

6.5 Diamond child-headed household intervention model

Based on the literature analysis and research findings, I propose a model that may be used as a reference when developing and implementing programmes designed to improve the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed homes. Figure 6.1 presents the intervention model.

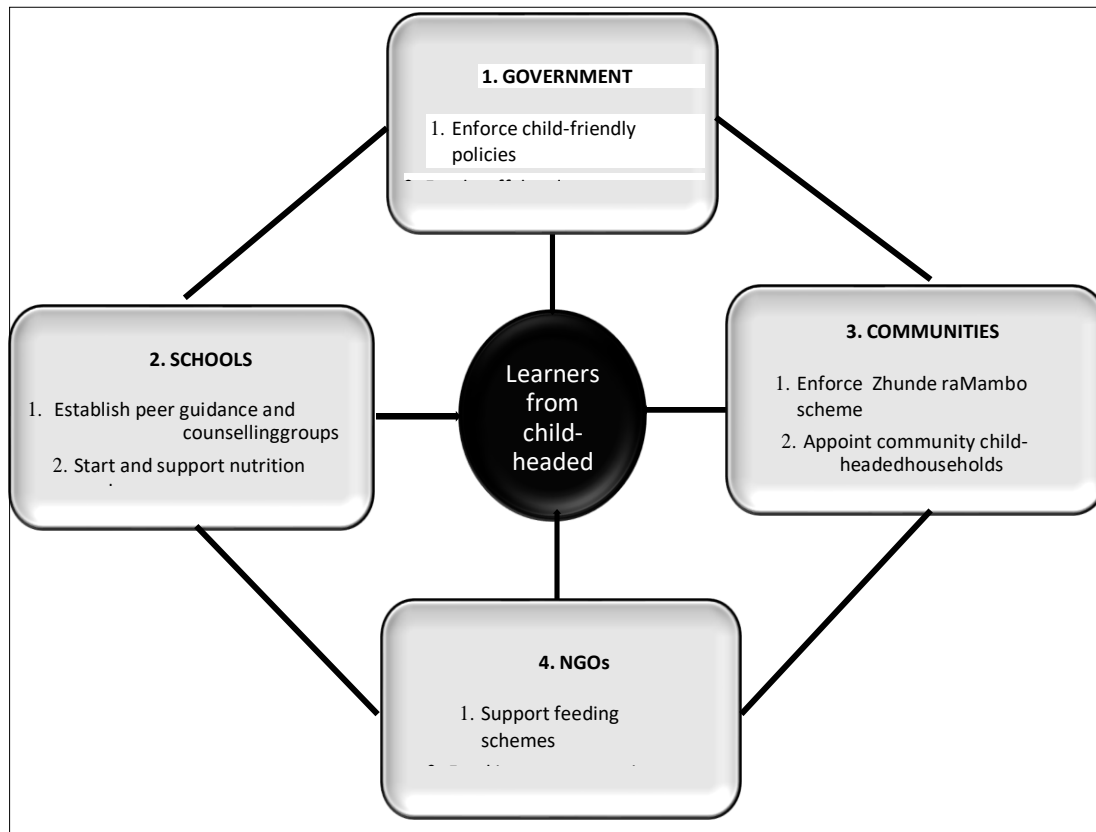


Figure 6.1: Diamond child-headed household intervention model

The proposed diamond child-headed household intervention model in Figure 6.1 includes four synergistic elements: the government; non-governmental organisation (NGOs); the local community, and the school. A diamond is a very beautiful yet tough jewel. In this context it symbolizes the learner from a child-headed family who has to be tough to survive, yet when given appropriate support the child has the potential to develop in a community jewel in terms of being a useful and independent member of society. Figure 6.1 shows that in the same manner as in the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.42); the Child-Headed Households Intervention Model has four interrelated elements, namely; the government, the school, the community, and NGOs. The elements are there complementary implying that a breakdown in one of the elements dislocates the entire system and renders it ineffective.

6.5.1 The Government

According to Bronfenbrenner ecological model, the government is part of the exosystem which directly or indirectly impacts vulnerable learners. The primary role of any government is to provide a legislative framework for the body politic to operate in. The body politic in this case refers to the schools and NGOs. The basic role of the government is thus to provide these elements with the necessary legislative supports necessary for them to efficiently assist learners from child-headed families. Currently, there are various statutes and policies whose intent is to assist vulnerable secondary school learners through the Ministry of Labour and Social Services; this model proposes that the enforcement of these policies needs to be more robust. A monitoring mechanism that allows all stakeholders to have oversight over the arms of government tasked with policy implementation should be set up at community, school and provincial levels. In addition, policies for secondary school learners from child-headed homes include fee waivers should be implemented as the government's drive towards education for all (EFA).

Furthermore, the teacher education model needs to be revamped so that guidance and counselling is made a compulsory course for all teachers who are trained by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. The syllabus development for this course component should draw on the expertise of the Schools Psychological Services, social workers, and Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and NGOs. The BEAM intervention, as was seen in this study, is both insufficient and badly managed. A new efficacious and well-funded model should be created and supported. For good corporate governance, men and women of integrity should be appointed to the various levels of managing this fund, beginning at community level. The disbursement model should also be enhanced through a framework which vulnerable allows learners from child-headed homes to remain in school while the fund is being processed.

6.5.2 School

The school is an important element because it implements what the other elements in the model will have proposed as critical in supporting learners from child-headed households. In terms of Bronfenbrenner ecological system, the school functions at both the micro and mesosystems levels. To provide psychosocial support for the learners, it will be important for the school to establish

peer guidance and counselling committees. Such committees should run under the auspices of the school development committee for monitoring purposes. Committed members of staff, the SDC, and teachers should be appointed on a rotational basis to assist the peer guidance and counselling committees. These committees should include at least two learners from child-headed households so that there is representation from these vulnerable learners. This will create a better appreciation of the pervasive issues that such learners need attended. The same committees can also be given the mandate to start nutrition gardens whose objective will be to provide supplementary feeding for the vulnerable learners. Given the good soils found in most parts of Manicaland, the supplementary feeding programme, if well supported can also raise extra funding which the committees can use for other supporting programmes. In the model, fund raising is very important and should also be used to train and empower the learners to be self-sufficient and avoid extending the begging bowl each time there is an urgent need.

6.5.3 Non-Governmental Organisations

Non-governmental organisations are an integral part of the model and part of the meso and exosystems of the learner from a child-headed household. By virtue of their ability to source funding, NGOs form an essential element of the model because of their ability to identify and draw attention to mistakes and shortcomings in the government's distribution of financial aid to secondary school learners from child-headed households. Furthermore, these organisations are field-based which makes them to have a better understanding of the various communities in which they operate. An important and valuable contribution NGOs can make is to create and maintain a data base with all vulnerable secondary school learners so that when recommending learners for BEAM, a verifiable source is used. Non-governmental Organisations should be used to provide for schools by funding school supplementary feeding schemes. An ideal situation would be that NGOs start and fund nutritional gardens to appoint that these gardens are self-sustaining. This will empower schools and communities to be self-sufficient and eventually wean themselves from a dependency syndrome where the NGOs become the life and bloodline for all local activities. NGOs can also be useful in setting up block funds, especially targeting learners from child-headed households. The block funds can be used primarily to supplement BEAM funding, which is solely design to cater for tuition. The block funds which can be administered through the school can then be used to cover stationary, uniform and other necessities such as sanitary pads for the girl child.

6.5.4 Communities

The final element in the model which functions at both the micro and mesosystems levels is the community. The community is made up of the extended family, neighbours, the chiefs and kraal heads. The community has an invaluable role to play as it can much in the same manner like the school mould desirable behavior for secondary school learners who are parentless. As a collective, it also can act as a safety net which provides necessary psychosocial support in various ways. In terms of nutrition support, the Shona communal concept of *Zhunde raMambo*, whereby after harvests, families contribute portions of the harvest to the chief or kraal head which is then distributed to the needy can be revived. This will ensure that vulnerable secondary school learners do not always go hungry and are able to attend to the business of going to school. At the microsystems level, the community can also appoint community child-headed household facilitators. The sole responsibility of the facilitators will be to monitor and apprise the community leadership of the needs of the vulnerable secondary school learners. Finally, the community can also avail land, through the chief which can be used by the vulnerable secondary school learners for various activities, such as growing vegetables for sale or engaging in small business ventures.

6.6 Recommendations for further study

The current study examined the difficulties faced by learners from child-headed families and the effects these had on their academic attainment using an interpretive phenomenological research approach. As it would give a sample I thought to be information rich to address the study objectives, I preferred to utilize purposive sampling. Because I only wanted to understand the experiences of adolescent learners from households with secondary school learners, my sample was homogeneous in light of this. However, this sampling strategy's intrinsic flaw was that it was susceptible to researcher bias. The sample was produced purely based on my opinion. Due to this, even if the study addressed concerns of credibility, it is challenging to extrapolate its findings to other contexts. The generalisability of the results can be improved in future study by using a more robust mixed-methods strategy that combines larger samples with both probability and non- probability sampling techniques. This study could also be faulted for concentrating only on the performance of secondary school learners from child-headed

households and failing to conduct a thorough and comparative analysis of how secondary school learners from privileged households would fare in the same educational setting as the vulnerable secondary school learners. Therefore, comparative analysis is advised for further investigation. Future studies can examine the gender differences between boys and girls from families with young secondary school learners.

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Appendix A: Letter of permission to carry out research from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe

*All communications should be addressed to
"The Secretary for Primary & Secondary Education
Telephone: 794895
Telegraphic address :
"EDUCATION"*



Reference: C/426/3
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
HARARE

21 April 2022

Vincent Chidumiro
1799 Chikanga 2
Mutema
Zimbabwe

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH IN MANICALAND PROVINCE: CHIMANIMANI DISTRICT: MUTAMBARA MISSIONHIGH, BUMBA SECONDARY SCHOOL, NHEDZIWA SECONDARY SCHOOL AND MHANDARUME SECONDARY SCHOOL.

Reference is made to your application to carry a research from the above mentioned district schools on the research title:

"THE PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECTS OF POVERTY ON THE ACCADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS FROM CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN MANICALAND PROVINCE, ZIMBABWE."

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director Mainland Province, who is responsible for the schools which you want to involve in your research. You should ensure that your research work does not disrupt the normal operations of the school. Where students are involved, parental consent is required.

You are also required to provide a copy of our final report to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education.

[Redacted]
Mhabela (Mrs.)

SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION



All communications should be addressed to
"The Secretary for Primary & Secondary Education
Telephone: 794895
Telegraphic address :
"EDUCATION"



ZIMBABWE

Reference: C/426/3
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
HARARE

21 April 2022

Vincent Chidumo
1799 Chikanga 2
Mutate
Zimbabwe



RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH IN MANICALAND PROVINCE: CHIMANIMANI DISTRICT: MUTAMBARA MISSIONHIGH, BUMBA SECONDARY SCHOOL, NHEDZIWA SECONDARY SCHOOL AND MHANDARUME SECONDARY SCHOOL.

Reference is made to your application to carry a research from the above mentioned district schools on the research title:

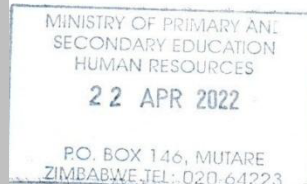
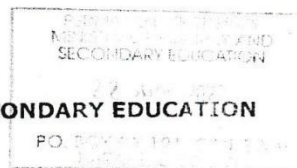
"THE PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECTS OF POVERTY ON THE ACCADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS FROM CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN MANICALAND PROVINCE, ZIMBABWE."

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director Mainland Province, who is responsible for the schools which you want to involve in your research. You should ensure that your research work does not disrupt the normal operations of the school. Where students are involved, parental consent is required.

You are also required to provide a copy of our final report to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education.

[Redacted]
M. T. Madela (Mrs.)

SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION



Appendix C: Ethical Approval



4 May 2022

Mr V Chidhumo
1799 Chikanga
2 Mutare
Zimbabwe

Dear Mr Chidhumo

The Psychosocial effects of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households in Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe.

Ethics Clearance Number: IREC 299/21

The Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letters.

Please note that FULL APPROVAL is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the IREC according to the IREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's).

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the IREC as outlined in the IREC SOP's.

Yours Sincerely



Dr K Padayachy
Deputy Chairperson: IREC

Appendix D: Letter Information (English)



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research Study:

The Psychosocial effects of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households in Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Vincent Chidhumo

Learner Number: 22064639

Qualification registered for: Doctor of Education

Supervisor: Dr Jose Abraham: PhD

Co-Supervisor: Professor Moses Kufakunesu PhD

Brief Study Purpose and Introduction: Greetings to you all. Vincent Chidhumo is my name. At Durban University of Technology (DUT), where I am a third-year learner, I am conducting research for my doctorate in education. In order to suggest sound educational policies, measures,

and solutions to minimize the effects of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school secondary school learners from poverty-stricken family backgrounds, the purpose of this study is to explore the psychosocial effects of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households in Zimbabwe. I'm here to invite you to take part in my research. Due to your suitability for the study, I choose you to take part in it. You are free to ask questions throughout the course in order to fully comprehend it.

Outline of the Procedures:

The qualitative research methodology is used in this study along with the interpretive research paradigm. To establish the psychological effects of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households in Chimanimani District, this study aims to examine the psychosocial effects of poverty on the scholastic attainment of child-headed families. The results will allow researchers to confirm or refute theories about the relationship between poverty and academic performance. Each of you must answer a questionnaire that will be given to you at your schools if you wish to take part in the study. The maximum number of participants for this study will be 20 secondary school learners from child-headed households, 12 form four teachers with training in guidance and counseling and at least five years of experience in the classroom, four school heads, and eight members of the School Development Committee who work with secondary school learners from child-headed households. All of these participants will participate in the proposed research study by signing consent and informed consent forms. Out of 20 learners only 16 learners returned their forms and only eight out of twelve teachers returned their forms. All four school heads accepted the interviews by returning the forms. School Development Committee members were supposed to be eight, but only four accepted the interviews. The actual total sample for the study will be 32 participants, this consisting of 16 form four learners, eight teachers, four school heads and four School Development Committee members. Interviews will be conducted at the schools, and these will take one-hour long. Interviews will be conducted in the afternoon to avoid interrupting with lessons. Purposive sampling will be used to select teachers, school heads, learners and committee members to be interviewed. During interviews I will record the interviews, and this will be done only if you are willing.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:

Due to the fact that the researcher will request your consent to conduct the study before beginning data collection and that all questionnaires and interviews will be conducted in the comfort of your schools, you would not be exposed to any risks or harm during data collection.

Explain to the participant the reasons he/she may be withdraw from the Study:

Since participation is voluntary, one may leave the study at any moment during the research period. If at any point you feel that you are not happy with the procedures taken during the study, you can advise the researcher to help you understand better and failure to understand taking part you are free to withdraw. As the researcher I will make it a point that in case one is not feeling well for example during the day of an interview, I will reschedule with you depending on agreement and wait for you to tell me when you feel comfortable and ready for the interview. In case I decide to withdraw you from the study, I will advise you on time before the actual data collection and explain clearly to you the reason for the withdrawal to avoid you from getting wrong information from wrong sources.

Benefits:

This research study will be of a benefit to you as teachers since it will help you to open and discuss the issues affecting you either positively or negatively and come up with opinions that will help to solve the problems encountered at your workplace during teaching and learning with learners from poverty-stricken backgrounds. Furthermore, this study will benefit the government. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education will receive the recommendations and proposals made by the study after it is completed by way of the district office. These recommendations and suggestions will be used by the government to help solve the problem faced within rural secondary schools. Lastly, as a researcher I will benefit from this study academically (throughout the study, I will read through different books, publications, journals etc. thereby gaining new knowledge and ideas). On the other hand, as I will be doing research, I will be gaining new experiences that I will use for my future research.

Remuneration:

Participants will receive no remuneration

Costs of the Study:

During the study you are not expected to face any expenses, but it is the researcher who is going to travel to the schools where you are based for data collection.

Confidentiality:

To ensure confidentiality during the study, I will make sure not to use your real names but use pseudonyms and the use of letters to represent the names of schools. Data collected during the study will be given to the supervisor to keep it under lock and key where no one can access it.

Results:

I will share my findings with the participants and the community after the study is complete. In order to accomplish this, we will first meet with the participants before moving on to the greater community. The participants will also receive a written report that they can send to their family. I will also make the findings public so that anyone else who is interested can benefit from my study.

Research-related Injury:

The study will not put you in any form of risk or harm throughout the research.

Storage of all electronic and hard copies including tape recordings:

The supervisor will keep the data under lock and key for 5 years before shredding it and keeping electronic data password-protected.

In the event of any issues or questions, Dr. Jose Abraham can be reached at abrahamj@dut.ac.za and (079) 250-6773. Please get in touch with the researcher at +263773118081/+263773682480, my supervisor at +27792506773, or the institution's administrator of research ethics at +31 3732375. Contact the director of research and postgraduate support, Dr. L. Linganiso, with complaints at researchdirector@dut.ac.za or by calling 0313732577.

Appendix E: Letter Information (Shona)



LETTER INFORMATION (SHONA)

Musoro wetsvakurudzo:

Matambudziko anosanganikwa nawo nenherera muzvikoro mudhunhu reChimanimani muZimbabwe

Mudzidzi: Vincent Chidhumo

Nhamba dzemudzidzi: 22064639

Chidzidzo chakanyoreswa: Doctor of Education

Mudzidzisi: Dr Jose Abraham: PhD

Mutevedzeri weMudzidzisi: Professor Moses Kufakunesu PhD

Pfupiso uye Chinangwa chetsvakurudzo

Makadiniko mese? Inini zita rangu ndinonzi Vincent Chidhumo. Ndiri mudzidzi ave mugore rechitatu pa Durban University of Technology (DUT) apo ndiri kuita tsvakurudzo yangu

saChiremba wezvedzidzo. Pamusoro pezvo, chinangwa chetsvakurudzo inoiyi ndechekuburitsa Matambudziko anosanganikwa nawo mukudzidza kwevana vanofunda kumasekondari uye vachibva kumhuri dzisina vabereki muno muZimbabwe nechinangwa chekuumba pfungwa kumitemo yese inochengetedza nherera kuitira kuderedza uwandu hweurombo muzvidzidzo zvevana vanodzidza kusekondari uye vachigara kumisha iyo ineurombo hunotyisa. Ndinokukokai kuti muuye mupewo pfungwa dzenyu mutsvakurudzo ino yandirikuita. Ndasarudza imimi mutsvakurudzo inoiyi sezvo ndaona zvakakodzera kuti munge muchindipawo pfungwa dzenyu maererano netsvakurudzo inoiyi. Mutsvakurudzo inoiyi munotenderwa kubvunza mibvunzo yese yamunoda kuitira kuti munzwisise zvese zvamungada kuziva.

Hurongwa wetsvakurudzo

Mutsvakurudzo ino tichashandisa interpretive research paradigm pamwe ne qualitative research approach. Tsvakurudzo inoiyi irikuzama kuda kuburitsa Matambudziko anosanganikwa nawo nevana vanofunda kusekondari avo vanovhiringidzwa kufunda kwavo nekuda kwenhamo yevana avo vanogara kumisha iyo isina vabereki izvi tinovziitira kuti zvichabuda mutsvakurudzo ino zvivenechokwadi kana kuti zvine pfungwa yokuti zvinofungidzirwa zvekuva nenhamo uye kugona kwevana muzvikoro zvinoenderana here tiinechinangwa futi chokuti tikwanise kuburitsa zvese zvinonetsa vana kana kuti zvinokanganisa vana mukufunda kwavo mudunhu reChimanimani. Kutikwanise kuva mutsvakurudzo iyi, munhu wese anofanirwa kuzadzisa zviripapepa iri ramuchapiirwa muzvikoro zvenyu mese. Vanhu vachava mutsvakurudzo inoiyi vanosanganisira makumi maviri evana kubva kumhuri idzo dzisina vabereki, gumi nevaviri maticha anofundisa vana vekusekondari uye vave nemakore mashanu nekupfurikidza vachifundisa Guidance and Counselling uye vave nemakore mashanu kana kupfuudzira vari pachikoro chimwecho, vatungamiriri vana vezvikoro uye vanhu vasere avo vanosarudzwa nevabereki kuti vatarise zvinoitwa muzvikoro vanova futi vanhu vanoshanda nevana avo vanobva mumhuri dzisina vabereki uye dzinotamburwa nenhamo, ava vose vachapinda muchirongwa ichi kupfurikidza nekuzadzisa mafomu etsindidzo amuchapiwa nemudzidzi. Pavanhu makumi maviri, gumi nevatatu ndivo vakazadzisa mafomu vakapetudza uye vasere kubva pagumi nevaviri ndivo vakakwanisa kudzosa mafomu. Vakuru vezvikoro vese vakakwanisa kuzadzisa mafomu ese nekumadzosera kumudzidzi. Vamiririri vevabereki vaifanirwa kuita vasere asi vana ndivo chete

vakakwanisa kudzosera mafomu acho. Vanhu vese vakazokwanisa kuva muchirongwa ichi kana kuti tsvakurudzo iyi vakazoita makumi matatu nevaviri, izvi zvoreva kuti vana gumi nevatanhatu vekusekondari, vadzidzisi vasere, vatungamiriri vezvikoro vana uye vimiriri vevabereki muzvikoro vari vana zvakare. Mibvunzo yese ichabvunzwa vanhu vari muzvikoro zvavo uye zvichatora awa rimwe chete. Mibvunzo iyi ichabvunzwa munguva dzamasikati kuitira kuti vana vasavhiringidzwa kufunda kwawo. Mudzidzi achasarudza vanhu vaanoda kushanda navo avo vanoburitsa pfungwa dzinodiwa chaizvo sezvo vachirarama vari mazviri uye vamwe vachishanda nevana varikurarama vari muhurombo. Pachange pachibvunzwa mibvunzo iyi pachange pachitorwa zvitauro zvese Mushure mekunge zvatenderwana nevanhu vese vachange vari mutsvakurudzo inoiyi.

Zvingakuvadza vabatsiri wetsvakurudzo

Hapana munhu achawanikwa achipinzwa munjonzi munguva yetsvakurudzo sezvo inini ndichatsvaka bvumo yekuti tiite tsvakurudzo iyi apo tinenge tisati tatanga kuitsvaka uye kupihwa kwemibvunzo yese kuchaitwa muzvikoro menyu apo mudzidzi ndiye achange achikufambirai muzvikoro.

Tsanangura zvikonzero kumubatsiri zvingaita kuti azure kana kuti kubuda mutsvakurudzo ino

Munguva ichange ichiitwa tsvakurudzo inoiyi munhu wese anobvumidzwa kunge achibuda muchirongwa ichi chero nguva yaanege ada asingamanikidzwi sezvo kuva mubatsiri irisarudzo yemunhu pachake. Kana munhu angonzwa kuda kubva muhubatsiri uhu kana kuti kana paanechaanoda kunzwisisa akasunungunga kubvudza mudzidzi asi ukasanzwisawo wakasununguka kuti ubude hako muhubatsiri nenguwa yakakusunungikira. Inini semudzidzi ndichaita chitsidzo chokuti kana paine mubatsiri arwara inini ndicha chinja nguva nezuva zvichienderana nekusununguka kwemubatsiri uyu uye kuti angangova anenge ave kunzwa zvakanaka zvariini kuti atipewo pfungwa dzake maererano netsvakurudzo yatirikuita. Kana ndafunga kukubudisa muchirongwa ichi ndinofanirwa kukuudza pachinemukana wakati rebeyi apo tinenge tisati tave netsvakurudzo azure kana kuti yakakwana ndinobva ndanyatsotsanangura futi

zvikonzero zvakazara maererano nekukubvisa muchirongwa kuitira kuti usazofungira kana kuudzwa zvisizvo maererano nekubviswa kwako muchironga chino chetsvakurudzo.

Betsero ingawanikwa kubva mutsvakurudzo

Tsvakurudzo ino ichabatsira zvikuru kwazvo kwamuri Varairidzi sezvo ichiburitsa zvinokukanganisai zvingave zvakanaka kana kushata apo munozokwanisa kuuya nedzimwe nzira dzingaita kuti mukwanise kupepeta nekugadzirisa matambudziko acho amunenge muchisangana nawo mumabasa apo munenge muchidzidzisa vadzidzi avo vanobva mumisha isina vabereki. Pamusoro pazvo tsvakurudzo ino inobetsera futi hurumende. Pakupedzisira kwetsvakurudzo inoiyi, pachazove nezvinotarisirwa nezvingadiwa izvo zvichazopiwa kubazi rezvedzidzo yekupuraimari nesecondari kupfukurikidza nemahofisi edu ekudhisitiriki. Zvingadiwa nezvinofungidzirwa kuti zviitwe izvo zvichashandiswa nehurumende kuedza kupedza dambudziko rinosanganikwa nare muzvikoro zvekuruzevha izvo zvemasecondari. Pakupedzisira, inini ndichabatsirika kubva mutsvakurudzo ino sezvo ndichaverenga mabhuku akasiyana siyana apo ndipo ndichawana pfungwa neruzivo rwutsva. Neimwe nzira apo ndichange ndichiita tsvakurudzo dzangu ndichawana ruzivo rwutsva irwo rwandichashandisa kuita dzimwe tsvakurudzo itsva.

Miripo ingapiwa vabatsiri

Vabatsiri vese hapana arikuzopiwa muripo wokubatsira kwaanenge aiita.

Miripo ingadiwa patsvakiridzo

Munguva yetsvakurudzo ino Hapana anobvumirwa kuti abhadhare kana chinhu zvacho asi mudzidzi uno ndiye achakufambirai muzvikoro achitora pfungwa dzenyu maringe netsvakurudzo irikuitwa pano.

Tsindidzo kana kuti vikiridzo

Pakuchengetedza tsindidzo muchinyorwa chino ndichashandisa dzimwe nzira dzakaita semavara pane kushandisa mazita evanhu uye ezvikoro. Tsvakurudzo dzichabuda muno dzichapiwa

kumudzidzisi wangu uyo achaichengetedzera pakanaka paisingaonekwi kana kutambiswa nevamwe vanhu.

Zvabuda mutsvakurudzo

Pachaperera tsvakurudzo ino ndichapa vandaishanda navo vese uye nharaunda yacho. Tichaita izvi mushure mekunge ndatanga kusangana nevandaishanda navo mutsvakurudzo ino tozoteverera nharaunda yese nekukura kwayo. Chinyorwa chichapiwa kuneavo vandaishanda navo kuitira kuti vapewo kumhuri dzavo. Ndichabva ndashambadza zvese zvichabuda musarudzo ino kuitira kuti avo vese vachafarira tsvagiridzo iyi vagokwanisa kufunda kubva mairi.

Njodzi dzingawanikwa mutsvakurudzo

Tsvagiridzo ino haifi yakakuisai panjodzi kusvikira taipedza.

Chengetedzo yezvishandiswa

Zvawanikwa zvese zvichachengetedzwa panzvimbo inokiiwa nomudzidzisi wangu kwemakore angasvika kana kupfuura mashanu apo zvinenge zvachengetedzwa mumakombuyuta zvichange zvakaiswa dziviro.

Vanhu vamunokwanisa kubata kana paita dambudziko kana kusanzwisana

Dr Jose Abraham foni nhamba dzavo: abrahamj@dut.ac.za and +27792506773. Ndapota ndibatei pa +263773118081/+263773682480, Mudzidzisi wangu pa +27792506773 kana kuti bato rinoona nezvetsvakurudzo pa 031 3732375. Zvichemo zvinoendeswa kumukuru wedu wezvetsvakuridzo Chiremba L Langaniso pa 0313732577 kana pa researchdirector@dut.ac.za.

-

Appendix F: Informed Consent Form



CONSENT

Full Title of the Study: The Psychosocial effects of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households in Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe.

Names of Researcher/s: Vincent Chidhumo

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby attest that I was informed about the purpose, methodology, potential advantages, and potential hazards of this study by the researcher, Mr. Vincent Chidhumo. Research Ethics Clearance Number: (Will be acquired)
- I also received, read, and comprehended the participant letter of information, which contains the above-mentioned written information about the study.
- I am aware that the study's findings, along with my name, initials, sex, age, date of birth, and diagnosis, will be processed anonymously and included in a study report.
- Considering the needs of research, I concur that the researcher may process the data gathered during this study using a computerized system.
- I am free to end my participation in the study and withdraw my permission at any time without repercussions.

Appendix G: Permission Letter to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Director

Email address: chidhumovinny.vc@gmail.com

Contact cell number: +263 773682480

7 April 2022

The Permanent Secretary

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

P. O. Box CY 121 Causeway, Harare

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: APPLICATION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN CHIMANIMANI DISTRICT:

DUT -Doctor of Education (DE.d) Psychology of Education, Learner Number: 22064639

I am a learner at Durban University of Technology (DUT) in South Africa pursuing a Doctor of Education (DE.d) degree with a focus in educational psychology. Please grant me permission to do research in four secondary schools in the Chimanimani district as part of my doctoral studies.

The psychosocial impacts of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school secondary school learners from child-headed homes in Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe, are the main focus of my dissertation. Participants in the study will include secondary school instructors, administrators, learners (particularly OVCs, or Orphans and Vulnerable Secondary school learners), and members of the school development committee. The instruments I propose to use to gather data from the people who have been nominated are listed below.

- Consent Form for Legal Guardians of child-headed households
- Consent form for participating stakeholders e.g. teachers, heads, DED and SWO
- Ascent Forms for child-headed households (English and ChiShona versions)
- Questionnaire for child-headed households

- Interview Guide for stakeholders
- Observation Guide
- Focus Group Interview Guide

We will handle the information we get in a discreet manner. I also promise to adhere to the ethical standards that have been set forth in relation to using human beings in research.

In order to better understand how to improve the learning of secondary school learners from child-headed homes, I am hoping to gather information.

Yours Sincerely

Mr. Vincent Chidhumo PhD Student (DUT- College of Education)

Appendix H: Schools permission letter to the Provincial Education Director

1799 Chikanga Phase 2

Mutare, Manicaland

Chidhumovinny.vc@gmail.com

7 April 2022

The Provincial Education Director

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

P.O. Box 89

Manicaland

Dear Sir/Madam

REF: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MANICALAND PROVINCE

My Student number is 22064639, and I am a teacher at Thabanchu Primary School as well as a doctoral learner at DUT studying educational psychology. Please grant me permission to conduct a study at the secondary schools in the Chimanimani district. My research focuses on the psychosocial impacts of poverty on secondary school secondary school learners from child-headed homes in Zimbabwe's Manicaland Province.

The participants for this study are orphaned and vulnerable Secondary school learners from child-headed households, Guidance and Counselling teachers, school development committee members and school heads. The study will employ focus group and in-depth interviews. I also expect to use document analysis. I will seek consent of participants before the commencement of the study. For minors (learners) consent of parents or guardians will be sought. For all enquiries relating to this study you are free to contact Vincent Chidhumo, cell +263773682480, Email address chidhumovinny.vc@gmail.com or my Supervisor Dr Jose Abraham on +27792506773 email

abrahamj@dut.ca.za.Vincent Chidhumo, phone +263773682480, email chidhumovinnny.vc@gmail.com, or my supervisor, Dr. Jose Abraham, phone +27792506773, email abrahamj@dut.ca.za, are all available to answer any questions you may have about this project.

I am very grateful for your assistance.

MR VINCENT CHIDHUMO

Appendix I: Permission letter to the District Schools Inspector

1799 Chikanga Phase 2

Mutare, Manicaland

Chidhumovinny.vc@gmail.com

7 April 2022

The District Education Director

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

P.O. Box 80

Chimanimani

Dear Sir/Madam

REF: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CHIMANIMANI DISTRICT

My Student number is 22064639, and I am a teacher at Thabanchu Primary School as well as a doctoral learner at DUT studying educational psychology. Please grant me permission to conduct a study at the secondary schools in the Chimanimani district. My research focuses on the psychosocial impacts of poverty on secondary school learners from child-headed homes in Zimbabwe's Manicaland Province.

Orphans and vulnerable Secondary school learners from households with Secondary school learners in charge, guidance and counseling instructors, members of the school development committee, and school administrators are the subjects of this study. In-depth interviews and focus groups will both be used in the study. Additionally, I intend to apply document analysis. Before the study starts, I will get the participants' permission. Parents' or guardians' consent will be requested for minors (learners). You can reach Vincent Chidhumo at +263773682480, chidhumovinny.vc@gmail.com, or my supervisor, Dr. Jose Abraham, at +27792506773, abrahamj@dut.ca.za, with any questions you may have about this project.

I am very grateful for your assistance.

MR VINCENT CHIDHUMO

Appendix J: Request for permission from parent/legal guardian

Name of researcher/learner: Vincent Chidhumo

(PhD-learner in Psychology of Education)

Learner number: 22064639. Durban University of Technology (DUT)

Email: chidhumovinny.vc@gmail.com

Cell number: +263 773118081/+263 773682480

RE: Request for Permission to Conduct Research

Dear Stakeholders (Teachers, School heads and Parents)

At the Durban University of Technology, I'm Vincent Chidhumo, a PhD Student. For my doctoral thesis, I want to investigate the psychosocial effects of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school secondary school learners from child-headed households in Zimbabwe.

I'm asking for your permission to take part in focus groups in the following request.

I've given you a copy of my proposal, which also includes the forms needed for consent and/or assent during the study process and copies of the data collecting tools, along with a copy of the letter of approval I got from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC).

Please feel free to reach out to me at +263 773118081/+263 773682480 or chidhumovinny.vc@gmail.com if you need any additional information. I appreciate your time and thought in this situation.

Yours sincerely,

Vincent Chidhumo

Durban University of Technology

Appendix K: Focus group interview guide for the learners

Psychosocial Effects of Poverty on the Academic Performance of the secondary school learners from child headed household in Zimbabwe.

Welcoming remarks by the researcher as the facilitator

The meetings will be informal. A cozy environment drinks, and a circle of chairs will all contribute to creating the proper atmosphere. One hour may be allotted for the sessions. To encourage participants to clarify their points of view and ways of thinking, constructive criticism is advised during this session.

Ground rules:

The researcher should consider using the following principles or ground rules to assist build the group norms:

- Only One speaker at a time is allowed.
- Confidentiality is guaranteed; anything said in the room remains in the room.
- No question has a correct or wrong response. Only valuable ideas, experiences, and opinions will be provided by the replies.
- The researcher will hear both the pro and con arguments for a given position.
- Shona, Ndebele, and English will be accepted.
- The assistant researchers will take notes and record responses.

These ground rules will be introduced to the group and placed on a flip chart that will be hung on a wall in a prominent place throughout the discussion in this research project.

Questions that guided the researcher

Theme 1: The psychosocial effects of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households in Zimbabwe.

1. Describe how the learner's home environment affects his or her academic success.
2. How does poverty impact secondary school learners' ability to learn?
3. Describe the impact of poverty on secondary school learners' academic achievement.
4. In what ways does poverty affect the secondary school learners' daily lives?
5. What obstacles prevent secondary school learners from low-income backgrounds from performing well academically?
6. What are some potential reasons why learners may leave secondary school, in your opinion?

Theme 2: The effects of poverty on the learners' academic performance

7. How does a learner's poverty impact their ability to learn?
8. Describe the impact of poverty on learners' academic achievement.
9. Describe how secondary school learners' self-esteem is impacted by poverty.
10. What elements make it difficult for learners from low-income families to perform academically?

Theme 3: The views and Learners' perceptions on teachers' preparedness on their academic performance

11. How do educators interact with learners from low-income families?
12. What impact does poverty have on the teaching and learning of learners from low-income families?

Theme 4: Possible solutions suggested attenuating the negative effects of poverty on the learner.

13. What actions should be taken to lessen the negative effects of poverty on learners?

14. What recommendations may be made to help learners from low-income families do better academically?

Appendix L: Semi-structured interview guide for learners

Psychosocial Effects of Poverty on the Academic Performance of the secondary school learners from child headed household in Zimbabwe.

Theme 1: Home-based variables

1. Describe how a learner's personal factors impact academic performance.
2. What are your family's main sources of income?
3. In your opinion, is the salary sufficient to fund your education? Explain.
4. Describe how your academic achievement is impacted by your neighbors' actions.
5. What behavioral issues do secondary school learners from disadvantaged families' exhibit?

Theme 2: The effects of poverty on the learners' academic performance

6. How does a learner's poverty impact their ability to learn?
7. Describe the impact of poverty on learners' academic achievement.
8. What effects does poverty have on learners' daily activities?
9. What are some potential reasons why learners in secondary schools drop out of school?
10. Describe how secondary school learners' self-esteem is impacted by poverty.

Theme 3: The views and Learners' perceptions on teachers' preparedness on their academic performance

12. How do educators interact with learners from low-income families?

13. What impact does poverty have on the teaching and learning of learners from low-income families?

Theme 4: Possible solutions suggested attenuating the negative effects of poverty on the learner

14. What steps should be taken to lessen the negative effects of poverty on learners?

15. What recommendations do you have to help learners from low-income families do better academically?

Appendix M: Semi-structured interview for teachers, school-heads and parents

Introduction:

The goal of the semi-structured interview is to extract information about how poverty impacts learners who live in households with secondary school learners in charge of learning and cognition. Please make an effort to respond honestly. Your responses will be kept completely private. Please feel free to ask the researcher any questions you may have about psychological terms while we speak.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF STAKEHOLDERS

NOTE: Have you read and signed the consent form?

Pseudonym/ Code of Participant

- 1) What is the range of your ages?
- 2) To what organization do you belong?
- 3) Have you ever interacted with learners from child-headed households?
- 4) How many years have you worked with learners from families that are struggling financially?
- 5) What certification(s) do you have in your field?
- 6) Do you work as an officer on a permanent basis?

SECTION B: Psychosocial effects of poverty on the academic performance of learners from child-headed households

- 7) Based on your experience and interactions with learners from low-income families, how do certain factors impact these learners' academic learning and thought processes?

- a) Is the lack of a parent affecting the learning of learners from homes where secondary school learners are incharge? Describe your response.
- b) Describe how different factors from encoding, retrieving, and use impair information processing in orphanhood.
- c) How resistant to pressure from daily life are learners from homes with secondary school learners in charge?
- d) How is learners' cognition from homes with secondary school learners affected by their familiarity with learning concepts?
- e) Distinguish between the ecological pattern in the case of a learner who is being parented and that of a child-headed home.
- f) How do decision-making abilities and self-identity of learners from child-headed households change as a result of psychosocial crises?
- g) What do you think about the broken parent-child link and any resulting separation anxiety among learners from child-headed homes?
- h) Describe the various barriers that prevent learners from child-headed homes from feeling secure and studying.

SECTION C: PREPARING STAKEHOLDERS FOR INTERVENTION

8) Based on your own observations of learners from houses with secondary school learners in charge, what are these learners' unmet cognitive and learning needs?

9a) How is your education impacted by the living circumstances of learners in the Chimanimani District whose households are headed by secondary school learners?

b) If you were a community leader, how would you organize the neighborhood to support vulnerable learners from families with young Secondary school learners so they learn better?

10) How can the sectors listed below help parentless learners complete their education goals?

a) Government Ministries

b) Non –Governmental Organisations

c) Local community elders

d) Extended families of vulnerable learners

11) What improvements could be made to the current laws or policies pertaining to vulnerable learners to better meet their requirements in terms of learning and cognition?

12) Given the rising trend of learners choosing to live and attend school from bases of child-headed households, what advice would you give to both learners from child-headed households and the local population?

13) What additional important information can you provide regarding the emotional effects of poverty on secondary school learners in Zimbabwe from child-headed homes and their academic performance?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Appendix N: Teacher's/ educator's observation guide

SECTION A

Instruction: Place a tick ☐

BEHAVIOUR TO OBSERVE	YES	NO	COMMENTS
1) Almost daily arrives late to class. 2) Prefers to keep him/her alone when cooperative learning is necessary. 3) Employs evasive tactics to hide incomplete homework. 4) As lessons go on, attention declines. 5) Answers to assignments given orally take longer to present. 6) An anxious viewpoint. 7) Fails to finish assigned homework. 8) Mainly laments having to do household chores. 9) Homework is not overseen by parents. 10) Reports experiencing headaches and other illnesses. 11) Has a bad attitude about education. 12) When scaffolded during group work, can cooperate. 13) Because of interruptions from siblings, peer play does not persist very long.			

<p>14) During recess and lunch at school, younger siblings cling to their older sibling.</p> <p>15) Skilled at manual labor.</p> <p>16) Lack of will to learn is common.</p> <p>17) The school has a high dropout rate for students.</p> <p>18) If BEAM funding is not available, students labor really hard to pay for school.</p> <p>19) Few students enroll in secondary education.</p> <p>20) Sexual abuse, poverty, and HIV/AIDS-related topics all cause anxiety.</p> <p>21) Many students eventually drop out of school.</p> <p>22) The learners won't receive much help from their extended relatives if they decide to stay.</p> <p>23) The learners' sense of helplessness and mistrust is apparent.</p> <p>Negative academic self-concept (number 27).</p> <p>24) Students from low-income families have great relationships with their teachers.</p> <p>25) Teachers pay more attention to students from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p> <p>26) Their performance is impacted by hunger and illness.</p> <p>27) The students display behavioral issues.</p>			
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SECTION B

If you noticed any other consequences of poverty on the learner's academic performance that weren't included in the section above, note them here.

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Appendix O: Focus group interview guide for the teachers, school-heads and parents

Psychosocial Effects of Poverty on the Academic Performance of the secondary school learners from child headed household in Zimbabwe.

Welcoming remarks by the researcher as the facilitator

Constructive criticism is advised in the session to encourage the participants to elaborate on their point of view and to clarify their way of thinking. The sessions will be informal; a comfortable setting, refreshments, and sitting in a circle will help to establish the rightful atmosphere. The sessions may last for an hour.

Ground rules:

The researcher should use the following recommendations as guidelines or ground principles to assist develop the group norms:

- One speaker at a time is allowed.
- What is spoken in the room stays in the room, ensuring confidentiality.
- No question has a proper or wrong response. Only valuable ideas, experiences, and opinions will be provided by the replies.
- The researcher will consider both the pro and con arguments for a certain position.
- You may speak English, Shona, and Ndebele.
- The assistant researchers will record the responses and take notes as well.
- In this research study these ground rules will be presented to the group, and displayed throughout the discussion on a flip chart that will be hung on a wall in a clearly visible location.

Questions that guided the researcher

Theme 1: The psychosocial effects of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households in Zimbabwe.

1. Describe how the learner's home environment affects his or her academic success.
2. How does poverty impact learners' ability to learn?
3. Describe the impact of poverty on learners' academic achievement.
4. In what ways does poverty affect the learners' daily lives?
5. What obstacles prevent learners from low-income backgrounds from performing well academically?
6. What are some potential reasons why learners may leave secondary school, in your opinion?
7. How have you previously interacted with learners from families with Secondary school learners?
8. Based on your experience and interactions with learners from low-income families, how do certain factors impact these learners' academic learning and thought processes?
9. Does being a child-headed family affect the way that learners learn? Describe your response.
10. Describe how different factors from encoding, retrieving, and use impair information processing in orphanhood.
11. Explain how learners from a child-headed home who are experiencing tough life circumstances differ from orphans living with foster parents/guardians in terms of how

they chunk information.

12. What prevents a learner from using the schemata or logical foundations of a child-headed household?
13. How does orphanhood effect the integration of new information into current knowledge or the assimilation of ideas?
14. Explain how additional factors may affect how assimilation and accommodation interact in an orphan's psyche.
15. How do cognitive conflicts (inability to solve problems) differ among weaker learners?
16. Describe what most interferes with the interactions between secondary school learners from low-income families.
17. What are your thoughts on the familial bonds or bonding that you see between orphans when they interact in their child-headed households?
18. Describe the level of attachment between the younger and older learners from low-income families in their child-headed homes.

SECTION C: PREPARING STAKEHOLDERS FOR INTERVENTION

- 19) Based on your own observations of learners from houses with secondary school learners in charge, what are these learners' unmet cognitive and learning needs?
- 20a) How is your education impacted by the living circumstances of learners in the Chimanimani District who come from families with secondary school learners?
- 20b) If you were a community leader, how would you organize the neighborhood to assist vulnerable learners from families with young secondary school learners learn more effectively?
- 21) How can the sectors listed below help parentless learners complete their academic goals?
 - a) Government ministries
 - b) Non –governmental organisations

c) Local community elders

d) Extended families of vulnerable learners

22) What improvements could be made to the current laws or policies pertaining to vulnerable learners to better meet their needs in terms of learning and cognition?

23)What advice would you offer to local residents who are watching the dramatic rise in the number of learners choosing to live and attend school from bases in families with secondary school learners?

24)What additional important information can you share regarding the psychosocial effects of poverty on the academic achievement of secondary school learners from child-headed homes in Zimbabwe?

25)Can you provide any other suggestions to make learning easier for learners from low-income families?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

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CERTIFICATE FOR THESIS LANGUAGE EDITING

Thesis title: *The psychosocial effects of poverty on the academic performance of secondary school learners from child-headed households in Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe*

VINCENT CHIDHUMO

Doctor of Education (Faculty of Arts and Design)

DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This certificate confirms that Vincent Chidhumo submitted his PhD thesis draft to me for language editing, including the checking of in-text and end-text referencing. This was duly done by me and sent back for revisions.

I make no claim as to the accuracy of the research content. The text, as edited by me, is grammatically correct. After my language editing the author has the option to accept or reject suggestions and changes prior to submission to the university which will look for plagiarism and check the accuracy of the content.

10 June, 2023

Dr Patrick Senderayi (PhD)

THE PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECTS OF POVERTY ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS FROM CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN MANICALAND PROVINCE,

ZIMBABWE_Chidhumo

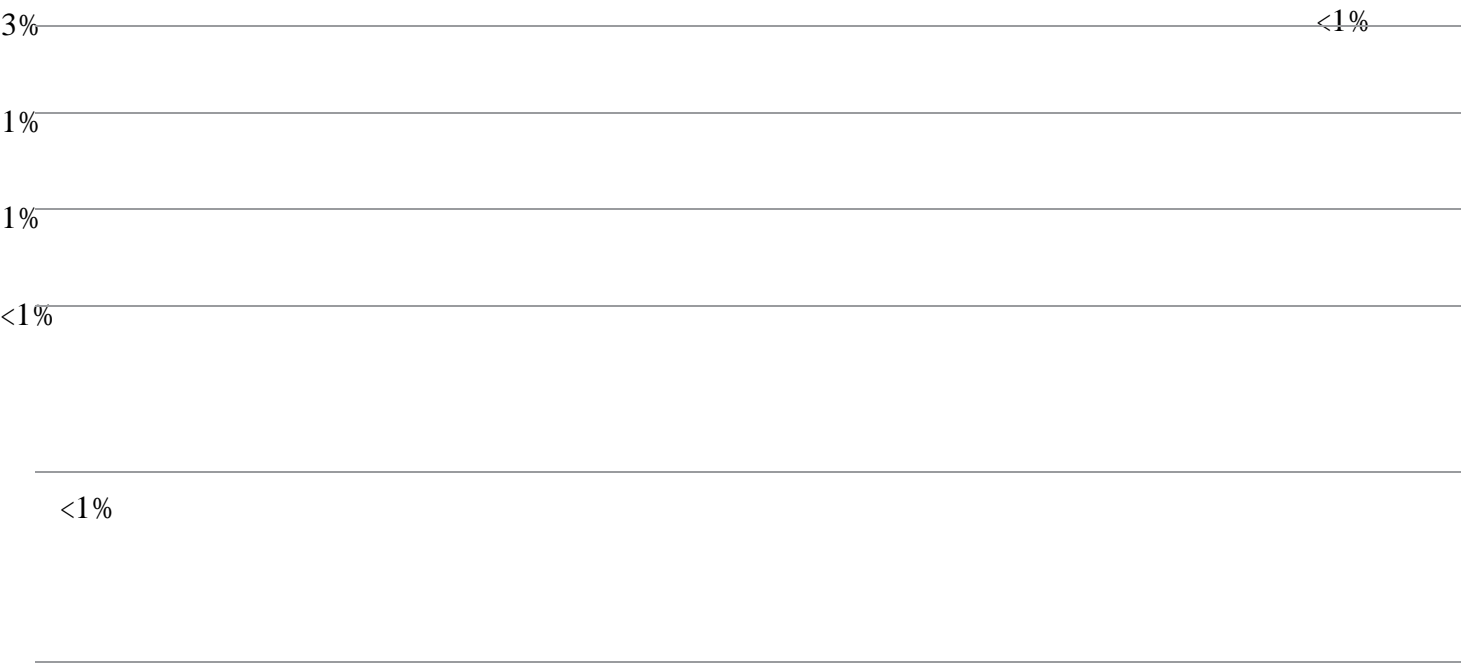
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6	Leatham, Charmaine Petro. "Meaning Makingof the Gendered Experiences of	ir.uz.ac.z
4	African	w
	Adolescent Girls from Child-Headed Households within Their Educational	Internet
	and Social Contexts", University of Johannesburg(South Africa), 2021	Source



214

Katie D. Schenk. "Community interventions providing care and support to orphans and vulnerable Secondary school learners: a review of evaluation evidence", AIDS Care, 2009

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Publication

215

Mary, Nthoroane Eliama. "Teachers' Challenges in Supporting Learners with Socioeconomic Barriers to Learning", University of Johannesburg (South Africa), 2021

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