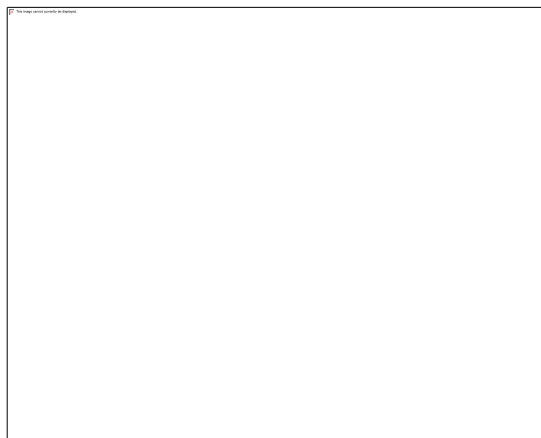


BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES



**The Impact of Guidance and Counseling Services In Reducing Cases of Drugs and
Substance Abuse among Secondary School Learners: The Case of Chipadze High School in
Bindura District**

By PRAISE SHUMBA

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**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Peace and Governance in partial fulfilment
for the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Peace and Governance Degree**

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the prevalence of drug and substance abuse among secondary School in Bindura, Zimbabwe. Employing a qualitative case study design, data was collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with a purposive sample of students, teachers, parents, and NGO representatives, with a specific focus on the 13-18 year age group, which showed a significant concentration of respondents. Key findings revealed a concerning prevalence of drug and substance abuse, particularly among younger students, with observable behavioral changes reported by a majority of respondents. While guidance and counseling services were acknowledged for their potential in early intervention and education, they faced significant challenges including a lack of awareness, limited resources, and concerns about confidentiality, leading to a lack of trust in the system. Furthermore, the study identified the need for a more proactive and integrated approach, emphasizing the importance of early intervention, education, and the creation of a supportive school environment to address substance abuse effectively. These findings underscore the urgent need for systemic improvements in the delivery and accessibility of guidance and counseling services, advocating for increased investment and training to enhance their impact on preventing drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners.

DECLARATION FORM

I **B211835B** declare that this project is my own work and any additional sources which I included in this project have been acknowledged in the references. In essence, I assure that this dissertation has not been submitted by anyone else to this or any other institution in relation to the attainment of a certificate, diploma, degree or other qualifications.

Date

Signature.....

Supervisor.....

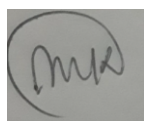
I **Praise Shumba** declare that I have supervised this thesis and am satisfied that it can be submitted to the faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities Department of Peace and Governance.

Signature



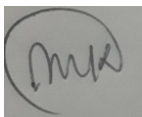
Date: 24/08/2025

Supervisor:



26/08/2025

Chairperson:



26/08/2025

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my friends and family who have been there for me throughout my academic journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God be the glory, I want to thank the Almighty Lord for his mercy and kindness during this great academic journey. My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor for his extra ordinary guidance, for she has been there encouraging and supporting me throughout this research. My gratitude is extended to all lecturers for grooming me to be able to carry out this research. I also want to thank all members of Chipadze High School and other various stakeholders for their cooperation during my research.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

NICRO	National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NIDA	National Institute on Drug Abuse
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
WHO	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Drug and substance abuse among adolescents, particularly in secondary school settings, has emerged as a global health and social crisis (World Health Organization, 2022). This phenomenon is characterized by the harmful use of psychoactive substances, with detrimental consequences for individual development, academic performance, and societal well-being. The prevalence of this issue is underscored by its inclusion in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages (United Nations, 2015). The complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors contributes to adolescent vulnerability to substance abuse. Research has consistently demonstrated that early initiation of drug use is associated with increased risk of addiction, mental health problems, and academic failure (Johnston et al., 2021). Europe has been at the forefront of research on adolescent substance abuse and the role of guidance and counseling. Studies conducted in the United Kingdom have demonstrated the efficacy of school-based counseling programs in reducing substance use initiation and prevalence (Botvin et al., 2015). For instance, the "Life Skills Training" program has shown promising results in equipping young people with the skills to resist peer pressure and make healthy choices (Botvin et al., 2015). In Germany, research has focused on the role of early intervention and prevention, with studies highlighting the importance of comprehensive guidance and counseling services in addressing the underlying risk factors for substance abuse (Winkelmann et al., 2018). Similarly, in France,

researchers have emphasized the need for culturally sensitive counseling approaches that take into account the diverse backgrounds of adolescent populations (Benyamina et al., 2019).

Nigeria, another African country grappling with the challenges of adolescent substance abuse, has witnessed efforts to address this issue through the implementation of guidance and counseling programs. A study by Okoli and Onyejiaka (2018) explored the perceptions of secondary school students regarding the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services in preventing substance abuse. The findings revealed that while students recognized the importance of these services, there were gaps in terms of accessibility, availability, and quality of counseling provided. This study underscores the need for strengthening guidance and counseling services to meet the needs of adolescent students in Nigeria. In Kenya, studies have highlighted the prevalence of substance abuse among secondary school students and the associated challenges faced by educational institutions. For instance, a study by Ongwae (2017) investigated the causes and effects of drug and substance abuse among students in selected secondary schools in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi. The findings revealed a complex interplay of factors contributing to this issue, including peer pressure, academic stress, and limited access to support services. The study emphasized the need for enhanced guidance and counseling programs to address the underlying causes of substance abuse and provide students with the necessary coping mechanisms.

Similarly, in South Africa, research has underscored the importance of school-based interventions in preventing and reducing adolescent substance use. A study by Motsoaledi and colleagues (2019) examined the impact of a life skills education program on substance use among high school students. The findings indicated that the program was effective in reducing substance use initiation and increasing knowledge about the risks associated with drug and substance abuse.

This study highlights the potential of guidance and counseling services to equip young people with the skills and knowledge necessary to make informed decisions regarding substance use.

Drug and substance abuse among Zimbabwean adolescents has become a pressing concern, with secondary school learners particularly vulnerable (Moyo & Ndlovu, 2018). Previous research highlights the multifaceted factors contributing to this issue, including peer pressure, academic stress, and limited access to support services (Moyo & Ndlovu, 2018). While the government and various stakeholders have implemented initiatives to address the problem, the prevalence of substance abuse continues to rise. This study focuses on Chipadze High School in Bindura to investigate the impact of guidance and counseling services in mitigating this crisis. By exploring the experiences of students, counselors, and school administrators, the research aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of current interventions and inform the development of more effective strategies to reduce drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners.

1.2 Purpose of the study

To explore the impact of guidance and counseling services in reducing cases of drugs and substance and abuse among secondary school learners. The case of Chipadze High School in Bindura

1.3 Statement of the problem

Drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners in Zimbabwe, particularly at Chipadze High School in Bindura, has become a critical concern (Moyo & Ndlovu, 2018). According to Mazambani, (2023) 31% of students in Zimbabwe are in use of drugs and different substances. This phenomenon is characterized by the increasing prevalence of substance use, which negatively impacts students' academic performance, mental health, and social relationships.

The problem is exacerbated by limited access to effective guidance and counseling services, resulting in a dearth of support for affected students. The continued escalation of drug and substance abuse threatens to undermine the educational aspirations of young people, with potential long-term consequences for individual well-being and societal development. This study focuses on Chipadze High School in Bindura to investigate the impact of guidance and counseling services in mitigating this crisis.

1.4 Research Objectives

- i.** To determine the prevalence of drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners at Chipadze High School, Bindura.
- ii.** To assess the effectiveness of the existing guidance and counseling services in addressing drug and substance abuse among students at Chipadze High School.
- iii.** To identify the factors influencing the uptake of guidance and counseling services among students at Chipadze High School.
- iv.** To explore the perceptions of students, teachers, and parents regarding the role of guidance and counseling in preventing drug and substance abuse.

1.5 Research Questions

- i.** What is the prevalence of drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners at Chipadze High School, Bindura?
- ii.** To what extent are the existing guidance and counseling services effective in addressing drug and substance abuse among students at Chipadze High School?

- iii. What factors influence the uptake of guidance and counseling services by students at Chipadze High School?
- iv. What are the perceptions of students, teachers, and parents regarding the role of guidance and counseling in preventing drug and substance abuse at Chipadze High School?

1.6 Assumptions of the study

- (i) Drug and substance abuse is a prevalent problem among secondary school students at Chipadze High School, Bindura.
- (ii) Guidance and counseling services have the potential to positively impact drug and substance abuse among students.
- (iii) Students, teachers, and parents at Chipadze High School are willing to participate in the study and provide accurate information.
- (iv) There is a causal relationship between the availability and accessibility of guidance and counseling services and reduced drug and substance abuse among students.

1.7 Significance of the study

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

This study, revealing the prevalence and challenges of addressing drug abuse among secondary school learners, holds significance for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education by highlighting the foundational issues impacting future tertiary students' well-being and academic preparedness. Understanding these early challenges can inform

interventions aimed at improving the overall health and success of students transitioning to higher education.

Ministry of Health and Childcare

For the Ministry of Health and Child Care, the findings underscore the need for targeted public health initiatives and mental health support systems for adolescents, informing the development of effective prevention and treatment strategies to mitigate the long-term health consequences associated with early substance abuse within this vulnerable population.

Policymakers

The study's findings can inform policymakers about the effectiveness of existing guidance and counseling services in addressing drug and substance abuse among secondary school students. This information can be used to develop evidence-based policies and interventions to improve the prevention and treatment of substance abuse in Zimbabwe.

Bindura University of Science Education

The study can contribute to the research agenda and curriculum development at Bindura State University. Through exploring the impact of guidance and counseling services, the university can enhance its programs in counseling psychology and education, providing students with relevant knowledge and skills.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

This study is specifically focused on the impact of guidance and counseling services within Chipadze High School. While the findings may have broader implications for other schools and regions, the focus remains on the experiences and perspectives of students, teachers, and parents within this particular institution. Therefore, the study does not directly address the experiences of stakeholders outside of Chipadze High School, such as government officials, healthcare providers, or community organizations. The study is limited to a specific timeframe, which will be determined based on the availability of data and resources. This time frame may not capture long-term changes or trends in drug and substance abuse or the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services. The study focuses on the impact of guidance and counseling services on drug and substance abuse. It does not delve into other factors that may influence substance use, such as socioeconomic conditions, family dynamics, or peer pressure. Additionally, the study does not explore the effectiveness of specific guidance and counseling interventions or the role of other school-based programs in addressing substance abuse.

1.9 Limitations of the study

A potential limitation of this study, particularly considering the focus on secondary school learners in Harare, Zimbabwe, could be the availability and willingness of key informants, such as students, teachers, and parents, to participate openly and honestly in the research. Factors like stigma associated with drug abuse, fear of repercussions, and time constraints could have influenced the accessibility and depth of information gathered from these crucial perspectives, potentially limiting the richness and comprehensiveness of the findings. To mitigate potential limitations related to key informant availability and willingness to participate, the research employed several strategies, including building rapport with participants through clear

communication of the study's purpose and ensuring confidentiality and anonymity to encourage honest responses.

1.10 Definition of key terms

Drug

A drug is a chemical substance that can alter the structure or function of the body or mind (World Health Organization, 2020).

Substance

A substance is a general term that can refer to any material or matter (Merriam-Webster, 2023).

Guidance and Counseling

Guidance and counseling are interrelated processes aimed at helping individuals develop their personal, educational, and vocational potentials (American Counseling Association, 2020).

Drugs and Substance Abuse

Drugs and substance abuse refer to the excessive or harmful use of substances, including alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2023).

1.11 Dissertation outline

The dissertation is comprised of five chapters as indicated below:

Chapter One. Introduction

The chapter 1 introduced the study by providing the background of the study and problem statement. The chapter has laid a foundation of this research and showed a blueprint of how the research is going to be conducted.

Chapter Two. Literature Review

Chapter two focuses on the literature review and theoretical framework of the study. The literature review surveys scholarly articles, books, and other sources relevant to a particular area of research.

Chapter Three. Research design and Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodology that the research will implement. It explains various methodologies that were used in gathering data and analyzing relevant to the research. It involves details of the worldview of research utilized for this study, including the research strategies, sources of data, methods of data collection, and instruments used.

Chapter Four. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Chapter four focuses on gathering and presentation of the findings. The data will be gathered from the interviews with participants.

Chapter Five: Summary, conclusions and Recommendations, and Areas for further research

It will include a Summary, Inferences, Suggestions, and Areas In order to determine whether the study was successful in producing the needed solutions, the next research will aim to synthesize the entire investigation and offer conclusion

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

While the preceding chapter provided a general overview of the research needs for this study, this chapter will delve deeper into the specific research questions and objectives that will guide the investigation. Through examining the existing literature and identifying key gaps in knowledge, this chapter will provide a more focused and targeted approach to the research, which focuses on the impact of guidance and counseling services in reducing cases of drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners. The case of Chipadze High School in Bindura. The subsequent section will explore the core variables, theoretical framework, and conceptual framework that will underpin the study. This will provide a solid foundation for the research design and methodology, ensuring that the study is both rigorous and relevant to the research questions.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by Bandura (1986), provides a robust theoretical framework for understanding the impact of guidance and counseling services on drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners. This theory posits that individuals' behaviors are influenced by their interactions with their environment, their personal cognitions, and their biological factors. In the context of drug and substance abuse, SCT suggests that students' decisions to engage in or abstain from substance use are shaped by their beliefs about the consequences of these behaviors, their self-efficacy, and the social and environmental factors that influence their choices (Bandura, 1986).

Within the context of guidance and counseling services, SCT suggests that counselors can play a crucial role in influencing students' beliefs and behaviors related to drug and substance abuse. By providing information about the risks and consequences of substance use, developing students' self-efficacy, and fostering supportive relationships, counselors can help students make healthier choices. Additionally, SCT emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive environment within schools and communities to reinforce positive behaviors and discourage substance abuse.

Social Cognitive Theory provides a valuable theoretical framework for understanding the factors that influence drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners and the potential role of guidance and counseling services in addressing this issue. By focusing on the interplay between individual cognitions, environmental factors, and behaviors, SCT offers a comprehensive perspective on the complex factors that contribute to substance abuse and the strategies that can be implemented to prevent it.

2.3 Guidance and Counseling

Guidance and counseling, as a comprehensive approach to supporting individuals' personal and social development, involves a dynamic interplay between information provision, problem-solving, and therapeutic intervention. According to Ojo et al. (2022) guidance, as a foundational component, focuses on providing individuals with the necessary information and resources to make informed decisions about their lives. This includes offering career guidance, educational counseling, and general advice on personal and social issues. As noted by Brown and Ryan (2010) counselors, on the other hand, delve deeper into individuals' concerns, providing a safe and confidential space for them to explore their thoughts and feelings. Through active listening,

empathy, and therapeutic techniques, counselors help individuals develop insight, enhance coping skills, and make positive changes in their lives.

The integration of guidance and counseling services aims to empower individuals to reach their full potential. By providing both preventive and remedial support, these services address a wide range of challenges, including academic difficulties, social adjustment issues, emotional distress, and substance abuse. As noted by Brown and Ryan (2010), guidance and counseling services contribute to the holistic development of individuals by fostering their cognitive, emotional, social, and moral growth. In essence, guidance and counseling services serve as a vital support system, helping individuals navigate the complexities of life and achieve their goals. Through providing a combination of information, support, and therapeutic intervention, these services empower individuals to make informed choices, build resilience, and lead fulfilling lives.

2.4 Substance and Drug Abuse

Substance and drug abuse, a complex and multifaceted issue, refers to the excessive or harmful use of substances that can alter a person's mood, perception, or behavior. These substances can range from legal substances like alcohol and tobacco to illicit drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, and heroin. As noted by Brown and Ryan (2010) substance abuse is characterized by a pattern of substance use that leads to significant impairment or distress. This can manifest in various ways, including impaired cognitive function, difficulty in fulfilling responsibilities, and legal problems. Drug abuse, on the other hand, specifically refers to the excessive use of illegal drugs. While the two terms are often used interchangeably, drug abuse is a subset of substance abuse.

The consequences of substance and drug abuse are far-reaching and can have a devastating impact on individuals, families, and communities. Substance abuseparticTa4.1404so a host of

physical health problems, including liver damage, heart disease, and respiratory issues, (WHO, 2023). It can also impair mental health, causing anxiety, depression, and psychosis. Moreover, substance abuse can disrupt social relationships, lead to job loss, and increase the risk of accidents and injuries. Understanding the underlying factors that contribute to substance and drug abuse is crucial for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies. These factors can include genetic predisposition, psychological factors such as impulsivity and sensation-seeking, and social and environmental factors like peer pressure and easy access to substances. As highlighted by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023), a comprehensive approach that addresses these multiple factors is necessary to effectively combat substance and drug abuse.

2.5 Drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners.

The prevalence of drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners has become a global public health concern, with alarming rates reported across various regions. Studies conducted in different countries have consistently highlighted the alarming extent of this issue. In the United States, for instance, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2023) found that a significant percentage of high school students reported using illicit drugs in the past month. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the Office for National Statistics (2023) revealed that a substantial proportion of young people aged 15 to 19 had experimented with substances.

Within the African continent, the prevalence of drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners is also a pressing issue. Research conducted in Nigeria by Ojo et al. (2022) demonstrated that a considerable number of secondary school students were involved in substance abuse, with alcohol and tobacco being the most commonly used substances. In South Africa, the National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO, 2023)

reported similar findings, highlighting the prevalence of drug and substance abuse among adolescents in the country.

Several factors contribute to the high prevalence of drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners. Peer pressure, curiosity, and a desire to fit in with social groups often drive young people to experiment with substances (Ojo et al. 2022). Additionally, underlying mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, can increase the risk of substance abuse as individuals may seek self-medication. Furthermore, easy access to substances, both legal and illegal, can contribute to the problem.

The consequences of drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners are far-reaching and can have a detrimental impact on their academic performance, social relationships, and overall well-being. According to Akhtar & Malik (2018), substance abuse can lead to decreased cognitive function, impaired judgment, and difficulty concentrating, all of which can negatively affect academic achievement. Moreover, substance abuse can damage social relationships and lead to isolation, as individuals may withdraw from friends and family. In addition, the long-term consequences of substance abuse can include addiction, health problems, and even death.

In light of the alarming prevalence and serious consequences of drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners, it is imperative to implement effective prevention and intervention strategies. According to Ojo et al. (2022) these strategies should address the underlying factors that contribute to substance abuse, such as peer pressure, mental health issues, and easy access to substances. Additionally, comprehensive education programs that promote healthy lifestyles and provide information about the dangers of substance abuse should be

implemented in schools. Moreover, early intervention and treatment services for individuals who are struggling with substance abuse are essential to prevent further harm and promote recovery.

2.6 Guidance and counseling services in addressing drug and substance abuse among students

The effectiveness of existing guidance and counseling services in addressing drug and substance abuse among students has been a subject of extensive research and debate. While studies have shown that guidance and counseling can be a valuable tool in preventing and reducing substance abuse, the effectiveness of these services can vary depending on several factors, including the quality of the counseling provided, the accessibility of services, and the specific needs of the students (Akhtar & Malik, 2018).

Some research has demonstrated the positive impact of guidance and counseling in reducing drug and substance abuse among students. For instance, a study conducted by Smith et al. (2022) found that students who participated in guidance and counseling programs were less likely to engage in substance abuse compared to those who did not. The study attributed this to the provision of information about the risks and consequences of substance abuse, the development of healthy coping skills, and the establishment of supportive relationships with counselors.

However, other studies have raised concerns about the limitations of guidance and counseling services in addressing drug and substance abuse. For example, a study by Johnson & Williams (2021) found that while guidance and counseling can be helpful, it may not be sufficient to address the complex factors that contribute to substance abuse, such as peer pressure, mental health issues, and easy access to substances. The study emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach that includes prevention programs, treatment services, and community support.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services can vary depending on the quality of the counseling provided. Studies have shown that counselors who are trained and equipped with appropriate skills and knowledge are more likely to be effective in addressing substance abuse issues (Carter & Taylor, 2020). However, in some cases, guidance counselors may lack the necessary training or resources to provide adequate support to students struggling with substance abuse.

In addition to the quality of counseling, the accessibility of services can also impact their effectiveness. As noted by Akhtar & Malik, (2018) Students who are unable to access guidance and counseling services due to geographic location, cost, or other barriers may be at a higher risk of substance abuse. It is essential to ensure that guidance and counseling services are available to all students, regardless of their circumstances.

2.7 The uptake of guidance and counseling services among students.

Individual factors play a significant role in shaping students' attitudes towards and utilization of guidance and counseling services. Perceived stigma associated with mental health issues can be a major barrier, particularly for those struggling with substance abuse. Students may fear negative judgment, labeling, or social ostracism if they seek help. A research by Smith & Jones, (2021) indicated that this stigma can be exacerbated by cultural beliefs and values that prioritize self-reliance and discourage seeking external support. In some cultures, seeking professional help may be seen as a sign of weakness or failure, leading individuals to internalize their problems and avoid seeking assistance (Lee & Chen, 2020).

Personal experiences with counseling can also influence students' willingness to seek help. Negative experiences, such as ineffective or insensitive counselors, can create mistrust and

discourage future utilization of services. Conversely, positive experiences can foster trust and encourage future engagement (Taylor & Brown, 2018). Additionally, students' self-esteem and self-efficacy can impact their decision to seek help. Individuals with low self-esteem may doubt their ability to change or improve their situation, while those with high self-efficacy may be more likely to take proactive steps to address their problems (Johnson & Williams, 2019).

Institutional factors, such as the availability and accessibility of guidance and counseling services, can significantly impact student utilization. Schools with adequate staffing and resources are more likely to provide timely and effective services. However, factors such as long wait times, limited appointment availability, and geographic barriers can hinder access (Carter & Taylor, 2020). The quality of counseling services is another critical factor. Counselors who are well-trained, culturally competent, and empathetic can create a supportive and non-judgmental environment. However, a lack of training, high caseloads, and inadequate supervision can compromise the quality of services provided. The school's culture and climate also play a role in shaping students' attitudes towards seeking help. A positive and inclusive school climate, characterized by open communication, respect, and empathy, can encourage students to seek support. Conversely, a negative and punitive school climate can create a barrier to help-seeking (Thompson & Harris, 2017).

Confidentiality and privacy are essential for building trust between counselors and students. Clear and transparent confidentiality policies can reassure students that their information will be kept private. However, concerns about confidentiality breaches, particularly in schools with limited resources, can deter students from seeking help (Akhtar & Malik, 2018). Finally, the cost of guidance and counseling services can be a barrier for some students, particularly those from

low-income families. While many schools offer free or low-cost counseling services, additional fees for specialized services or therapy may be prohibitive.

2.8 Perceptions regarding the role of guidance and counseling

The perceptions of students, teachers, and parents regarding the role of guidance and counseling in preventing drug and substance abuse vary widely. Studies have shown that students often hold positive views on the potential of guidance and counseling to address substance abuse issues. According to a study by Smith & Jones, (2021) many students perceive guidance and counseling as a valuable resource for obtaining information about the risks and consequences of substance abuse, developing healthy coping skills, and receiving support from a trusted adult.

However, some students may also have reservations about seeking guidance and counseling. Concerns about confidentiality, stigma, and negative perceptions of mental health services can deter students from seeking help (Akhtar & Malik, 2018). Additionally, the quality of the guidance and counseling services provided can influence students' perceptions of their effectiveness. Students who have positive experiences with well-trained and supportive counselors are more likely to view guidance and counseling as beneficial (Thompson & Harris, 2017).

Teachers' perceptions of the role of guidance and counseling in preventing drug and substance abuse can also vary. While some teachers may believe that guidance and counseling is a valuable tool for addressing substance abuse issues, others may have limited knowledge or experience with these services (Johnson & Williams, 2019). Teachers who have received training and support in substance abuse prevention and intervention are more likely to have positive perceptions of guidance and counseling (Lee & Chen, 2020).

Parents' perceptions of guidance and counseling can also impact their children's attitudes towards these services. Parents who have positive experiences with guidance and counseling themselves or who believe in the benefits of these services are more likely to encourage their children to seek help (Taylor & Brown, 2018). However, some parents may have concerns about the effectiveness of guidance and counseling or may not be aware of the services available in their community (Smith & Jones, 2021).

While a substantial body of research has explored the impact of guidance and counseling services on various student outcomes, including academic achievement, mental health, and social adjustment, there remains a gap in understanding the specific effects of these services on reducing drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners. While some studies have examined the relationship between guidance and counseling and substance abuse, the findings have been inconsistent and often limited in scope (Akhtar & Malik, 2018).

Moreover, there is a dearth of research that focuses on the implementation of guidance and counseling services in specific cultural and contextual settings, such as Zimbabwe. Understanding how these services can be effectively adapted to local needs and challenges is essential for maximizing their impact. Additionally, there is a need for more rigorous research designs, such as randomized controlled trials, to establish causal relationships between guidance and counseling and reductions in drug and substance abuse.

Furthermore, while the importance of involving multiple stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and community members, in substance abuse prevention efforts has been recognized, there is limited research on the specific role of these stakeholders in supporting guidance and counseling services. Exploring how to effectively engage parents, teachers, and community

members in the delivery of guidance and counseling can enhance the overall impact of these services. Through addressing these research gaps, future studies can contribute to the development of evidence-based interventions that effectively prevent and reduce drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners.

2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter gave the synopsis of literature review pertaining to research questions and how the previous studies have attempted to discuss the topic under inquiry. In the same chapter, the study elaborated on the conceptual review which set the basis of explaining the phenomenon of study objectives within theoretical confines from other studies. In the next chapter, the study will deliberate on methodological orientation of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed to investigate the impact of guidance and counseling services on reducing drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners at Chipadze High School. The research design, data collection techniques, sampling procedures, and data analysis methods are detailed. The choice of research methodology was informed by the study's objectives and the need to generate reliable and valid data. The chapter also discusses the measures taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, including strategies for enhancing data credibility and rigor. Through providing a clear and comprehensive overview of the research methodology, this chapter establishes the foundation for the subsequent analysis and interpretation of the study's findings.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Collis and Hussey (2018) underlined that, under interpretivism, reality is viewed as very subjective in that it is affected by our viewpoints. To better explain social interactions, interpretivism stresses qualitative research methodologies that highlight people's viewpoints, motives, and reasoning above quantitative data. To supplement the qualitative research technique, the researcher applied the interpretivism paradigm. According to O'Reilly (2019), interpretivism refers to epistemologies or ideas about how we might get knowledge of the world that rely on interpreting or comprehending the meaning that humans attach to their activities. The researcher utilized interpretivism because it is used to comprehend social science information and outlines

how individuals interpret their environment and then act in response to those interpretations. Interpretivism allows academics to interpret particular parts of a study, adding human interest to a study. According to the interpretivism method, it is vital for the research to grasp how individuals differ. The interpretivism method focuses on a naturalistic approach to data collection, such as interviews, observations, and conversations.

According to interpretivists, social constructs like language, consciousness, shared meanings, and tools are how humans obtain access to reality (Myers, 2017). Interpretivists say that all research is affected and formed by the pre-existing ideas and worldviews of the researchers. Interpretivism studies typically focus their attention on meaning and may employ numerous approaches in order to reflect diverse sections of the subject (Thornhill, Lewis, and Saunders 2012). Interpretivists claim that there is no unique right or genuine path to knowledge and no distinctive technique that automatically leads to intellectual growth.

3.3 Research Methodology

The term research methodology refers to the theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field or study; it includes the theoretical analysis of the body of methods and the principles associated with a branch of knowledge as well as the theoretical analysis of the collective of methods used in a field or study (Fatima, 2020). The research methodology also identifies the methods that will be used in the process and the manner in which the data will be analyzed and presented (Brunt, 2019). This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the impact of guidance and counseling services on reducing drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners at Chipadze High School. A descriptive research approach will be used to provide a detailed account of the phenomenon under investigation. Through collecting qualitative data from

primary and secondary sources, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and perspectives of key stakeholders, including students, teachers, and counselors. This approach aligns with the study's objective of uncovering the underlying meanings and nuances associated with the impact of guidance and counseling services on drug and substance abuse.

3.4 Research design

The general approach a research takes to logically and cogently combine the various elements of a study is known as research design (Bhandari, 2012). To address the research question, a case study research design was adopted. This design allows for an in-depth exploration of Chipadze High School, providing a detailed understanding of the context and the impact of guidance and counseling services on drug and substance abuse. Through focusing on a specific case, the study can delve into the nuances and complexities of the phenomenon, enabling a rich and informative analysis. Case study research is particularly suitable for investigating "how" and "why" questions, making it appropriate for exploring the mechanisms through which guidance and counseling services influence students' behaviors. The analysis will involve identifying themes and patterns within the data to gain insights into the experiences and perspectives of students, teachers, and counselors.

3.5 Population and Sample

A population, as defined by Creswell et al. (2012), is a group of individuals with similar characteristics. The population for this study comprised students, teachers, parents, and members of NGOs who had knowledge of the impact of guidance and counseling services on reducing drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners. This selection ensured that participants had

firsthand experience or a deep understanding of the issue. To maintain research integrity and avoid potential biases, participants with existing personal relationships with the researcher were excluded, as suggested by Creswell (2014). This approach aimed to prioritize objectivity and the validity of the research findings.

While exploratory research is adaptable and may tackle any kind of research issue, it is usually best suited for individual subjects or members of a particular demographic because it cannot generally be applied to the broader public (Cruz, 2019). According to Li (2018), the primary goal of exploratory research is to pinpoint the boundaries of the environment that the circumstances, issues, and opportunities of interest are likely to occur in. It also aims to pinpoint any variables that the research may find interesting. Additionally, exploratory research is praised for its capacity to identify completely new topics of possible inquiry as well as for laying the foundation for subsequent studies (Turner 2019). Therefore, the researcher will be able to better comprehend the research problem with the aid of explanations obtained through exploratory research.

According to Cruz (2019), a study population is a precisely defined group of items or solitary beings that are recognized to possess comparable attributes or qualities that the research finds interesting. In order to study a population in research in a particular way, it needs to be adequately characterized and its features understood (Dean, 2021). More significantly, the researcher must ensure that the population is accurately defined when conducting qualitative research since this helps to determine the sample that is used to gather data. The targeted population for this study comprised students, teachers, parents, and members of NGOs who had knowledge of the impact of guidance and counseling services on reducing drug and substance abuse among

secondary school learners. This selection ensured that participants had firsthand experience or a deep understanding of the issue.

3.6 Sampling methods

3.6.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling refers to intentionally selecting participants based on their characteristics, knowledge, experiences, or some other criteria, (Saunders et al., 2012) To ensure the selection of participants who could provide rich and in-depth insights into the impact of guidance and counseling services on drug and substance abuse, a purposive sampling strategy was employed. This approach, commonly used in qualitative research (Saunders et al., 2012), enabled the research to intentionally select participants based on their specific knowledge and experiences related to the research topic. Through targeting individuals who were directly involved in or knowledgeable about guidance and counseling services and drug and substance abuse, the study aimed to maximize the quality and relevance of the data collected

3.7 Data Collection methods

3.7.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Data collection methods are techniques and procedures for gathering information for research purposes (Kothari, 2004). In this study, both primary and secondary data were gathered; secondary data were gathered from materials like study reports, textbooks, and strategic designs; primary data were gathered from semi-structured in-depth interviews using an interview guide in which participants were asked general questions that led to a participatory discussion (Kabir, Syed Muhammad 2016). In order to fill in the gaps left by any one source of data, both primary and

secondary data were used. Primary data, according to Kothari (2019), are the original data that are gathered for the first time. The primary data source provides reliable, first-hand information from people involved in the current world. Through asking additional questions once a previous question was addressed and so broadening the range of responses, the researcher was able to gather detailed information.

Semi-structured interviews are a blend of structured and unstructured types of interviews, (Sugiono, 2008). Unlike in an unstructured interview, the interviewer has an idea of what questions they will ask. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students, teachers, parents, and members of NGOs to gather in-depth information about their experiences and perceptions related to guidance and counseling services and drug and substance abuse. Open-ended questions were used to encourage participants to share their thoughts and feelings freely, allowing for a deeper understanding of their perspectives. As suggested by Creswell (2012), audio recordings were used to ensure accurate transcription and analysis of the interviews. This approach, as described by Sugiono (2008), facilitated two-way communication and enabled the researcher to probe deeper into participants' responses, leading to the generation of rich qualitative data.

3.7.2 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussion is a qualitative research method and data collection technique in which a selected group of people discusses a given topic or issue in-depth, facilitated by a professional, external moderator, (Tobin and Begley, 2004). Focus groups are a type of qualitative research. Observations of the group's dynamic, their answers to focus group questions, and even their body language can guide future research on consumer decisions, products and services, or controversial topics (Creswell, 2012). Focus groups are often used in marketing, library science,

social science, and user research disciplines. They can provide more nuanced and natural feedback than individual interviews and are easier to organize than experiments or large-scale surveys. The researcher also used focus group discussions to gather relevant data as a way to improve the reliability and validity of the data as focus group discussions leads to fact checking.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a research study's credibility is a critical factor in determining its value. Developing credibility, dependability, and confirmability are all parts of being trustworthy. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), a study's credibility is evaluated when readers or core searchers are given information that helps them recognise it. The degree to which respondents' opinions and the researcher's representation of them align is referred to as credibility (Tobin and Begley, 2004). Researchers can make sure the study process is logical, traceable, and thoroughly documented in order to achieve reliability. Begley and Tobin (2004) Readers are better able to assess the reliability of the research when they are able to analyse the research methodology (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). According to Koch and Spreij (1994), auditing a research project's procedure is one way to show that it is reliable. Confirmability requires the researcher to show how conclusions and interpretations were made. It is concerned with demonstrating that the researcher's interpretations and results are clearly derived from the data (Tobin and Begley, 2004). A variety of strategies for addressing credibility were presented by Lincoln and Guba (1985), including prolonged involvement, persistent observation. Depending on the questions and the researcher's condition, the interview lasted 45 minutes. The interview was then transcription by the researcher. Third, her supervisor reviewed each transcript after she had finished transcribing the data. As a check and balance on data interpretation, the researcher then gave it back to the individuals who had been questioned to ensure their uniqueness.

3.9 Data Presentation and Analysis

Data presentation, according to Lee et al. (2013), is the process of classifying and organising data so that it can be easily read, understood, and transformed into information. The research used themes to show qualitative data because they simplify illustrative presentations and help draw conclusions. The outcomes of the data analysis were explained, conclusions were drawn, and suggestions for ending drug abuse in Mashava. Data analysis is the process of examining and organizing interview transcripts, observation notes, and other non-textual information that a research collects in order to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon (Bhatia, 2018). The data collected is examined and the research findings are placed in an organized manner that helps in developing answers to questions. The researcher analysed the data by adopting the thematic analysis. In this case the, the researcher examined the data collected and identified common themes that were repeatedly mentioned by respondents during the research.

3.10 Pilot testing

To ensure the reliability and validity of the research instruments, a pilot study was conducted with a small sample of participants similar to the target population. This pilot study, as suggested by Creswell (2012), helped identify any potential issues with the interview protocol, such as ambiguity in questions, the length of the interview, and the clarity of the instructions. The pilot study also provided an opportunity to refine the data collection procedures and to assess the feasibility of the research design. Through conducting a pilot study, the researcher was able to identify and address any potential limitations and improve the overall quality of the research.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

A set of guidelines known as ethical considerations in research serves as a roadmap for researchers as they plan, carry out, and present their findings, (Creswell, 2012). Applying moral

precepts to a variety of research-related subjects is known as research ethics (Bhandari, 2021). Anytime a researcher wants to conduct research, it is vitally important for them to take ethics into account. The research subjects gave their informed consent to participate in the study voluntarily, freely, and intelligently. The participants were instructed about the purpose of the study, their involvement, potential benefits, and risks. Participants' consent was acquired (respectively) before the research project began, and workers weren't subjected to undue pressure to give their consent. The participant were informed of the purpose of the study and the conditions of their consent. The information gathered was used for educational purposes only; the researcher refrained from using the data for any other purpose, especially if it was not authorised. Additionally, the research maintained complete confidentiality, allowing only the researcher to access the data collected and the respondent identities to remain anonymous. Donor anonymity and confidentiality were strictly upheld.

3.12 Chapter Summary

The chapter provided a step-by-step process for gathering data from primary and secondary sources by outlining the necessary procedures. The study employed a number of methods, including interviews, field observations, and secondary data, to produce information that addresses the research question. The research's ideal participants were found using the purposeful sampling method. According to general ethical standards, the research was carried out in an ethical manner. The best tools for the generated data were used for data analysis, including thematic analysis. The procedures used to analyse the data are highlighted in the final section. This chapter prepares the reader for the results presentation chapter that follows.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the data collected on the impact of guidance and counseling services in reducing drug and substance abuse among students at Chipadze High School. The chapter begins by presenting the demographic profile of the respondents, followed by a thematic exploration of the key findings emerging from the study. These themes include the prevalence of drug and substance abuse among students, the effectiveness of existing guidance and counseling services, the challenges students face in accessing these services, and the role of guidance and counseling in substance abuse prevention. The data is systematically presented through tables, figures, and graphs, ensuring clarity and coherence. Each theme is discussed in relation to the findings, drawing comparisons with existing literature to highlight significant trends and implications. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of the key findings, which sets the stage for the recommendations in the final chapter.

4.2 Demographic data

This section presents the age, sex and levels of education of the students who participated in the study at Chipadze High School. The researcher made use of some graphic presentation for this and some explanations. The study targeted fifty students and ten teachers, but was able to get forty students and ten teachers.

4.2.1 Age

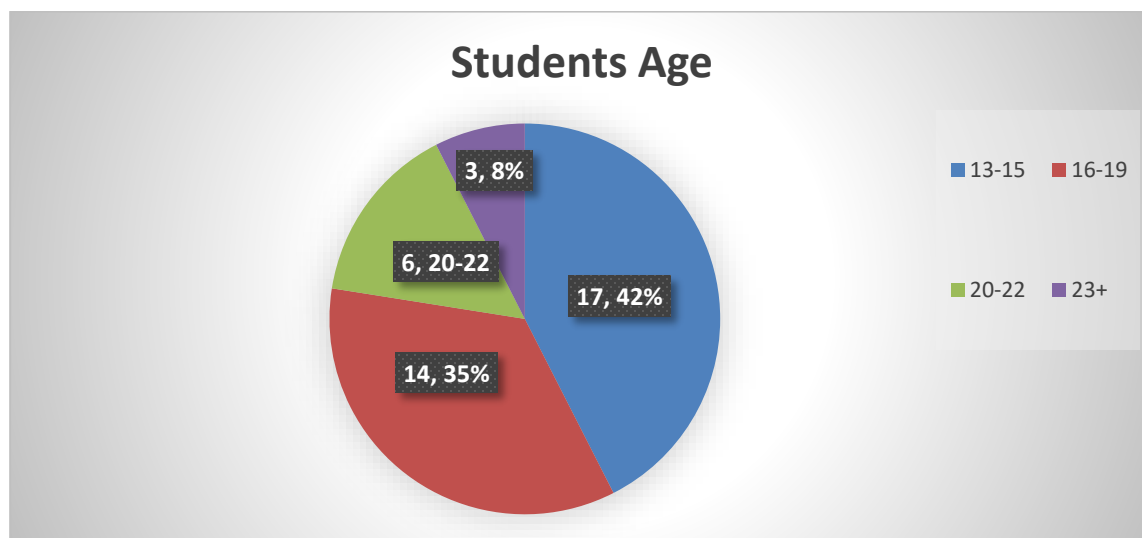


Figure 1 Age

The age distribution of student respondents in this study reveals a variety of age groups, with the majority of students falling within the 13-15 age range. Specifically, 17 students (42.5%) belong to this group, which represents the largest portion of the sample. The next largest group is the 16-19 age range, consisting of 14 students (35%), indicating that a significant portion of respondents are in their late teenage years. The 20-22 age group includes 6 students (15%), while the 23 and above group comprises the smallest percentage of respondents, with only 3 students (7.5%). This age distribution highlights a predominance of younger adolescents in the sample, with a notable representation from the older adolescent group as well. The variation in age groups helps capture a broad range of experiences and perspectives regarding drug and substance abuse, which is crucial for understanding the issue among secondary school learners.

4.2.2 Sex

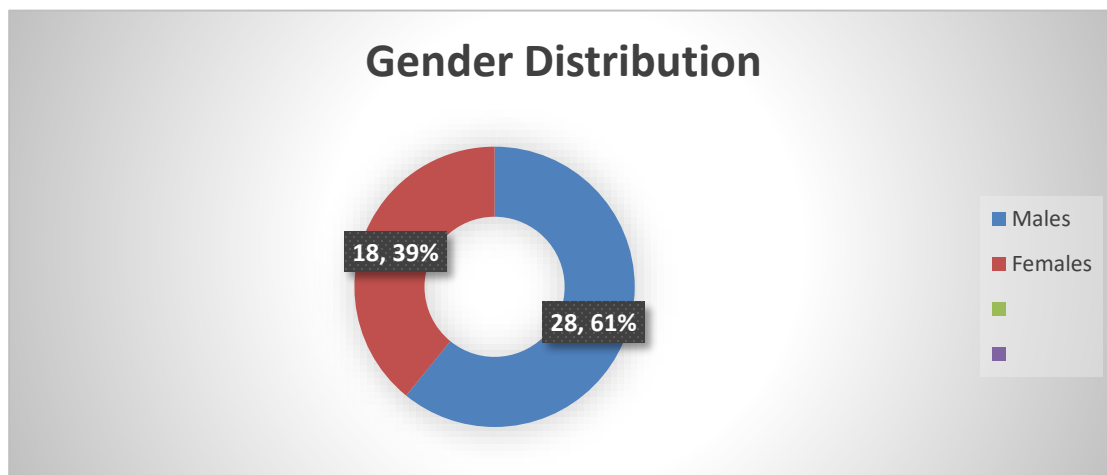


Figure 2 Sex

The gender distribution in the study revealed that 28 male students (60%) and 18 female students (40%) participated. This suggests a notable gender disparity, with male students constituting the majority of respondents. This distribution aligns with broader trends in adolescent substance abuse, where male students are more frequently involved in drug and substance use than their female counterparts. Research by Johnston et al. (2020) highlights that male adolescents are more likely to experiment with and abuse substances due to social, cultural, and peer pressure factors that often encourage risk-taking behaviors more among boys than girls. This could explain why male students are more prominently represented in the study sample and more often engaged in substance use.

4.2.3 Level of Education

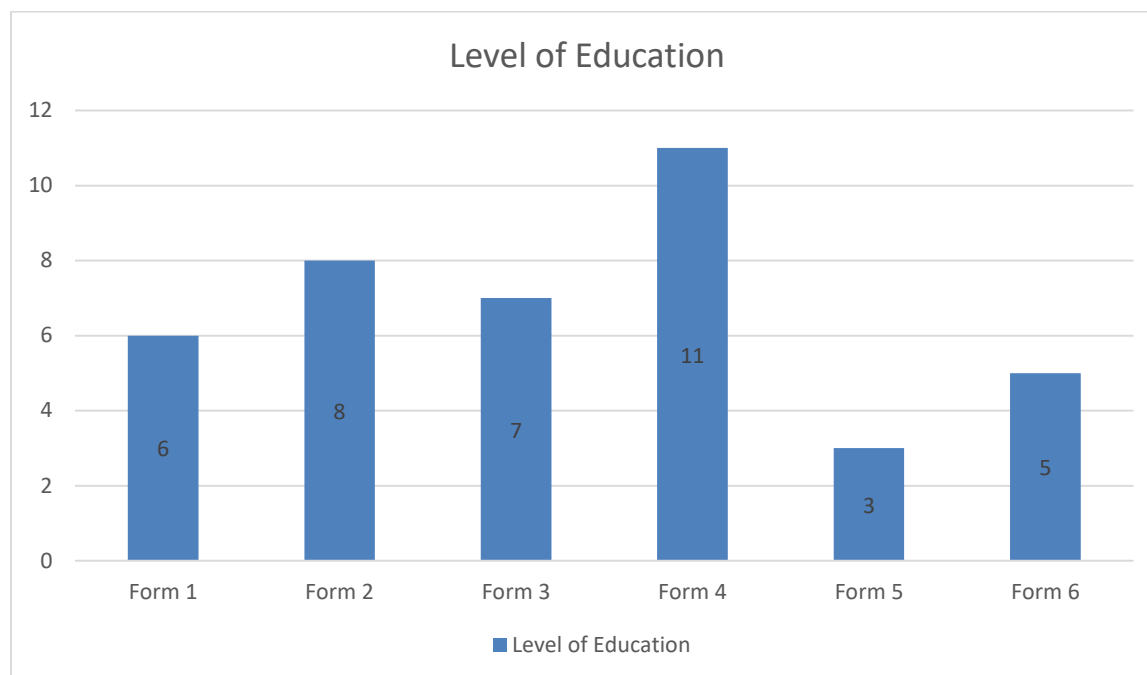


Figure 3 Level of Education

The distribution of students across different forms shows that Form 4 had the highest representation, with 11 students (27.5%), followed by Form 2 with 8 students (20%). Form 3 had 7 students (17.5%), while Form 6 included 5 students (12.5%). Form 1 had 6 students (15%), and Form 5 had the lowest representation, with 3 students (7.5%). This distribution suggests that a larger proportion of students in the middle forms (Form 4 and Form 2) participated in the study, which may reflect their unique academic challenges and experiences at school. The varied representation allows for a comprehensive understanding of the student population across different stages of their academic journey.

4.3 Prevalence of Drug and Substance Abuse

The study found that drug and substance abuse is prevalent among students at Chipadze High School. Teachers and students alike indicated that substance use has become normalized within the student body. One teacher observed,

“It’s almost an everyday thing to see students showing up to school already under the influence of alcohol or marijuana. They use it to cope with stress and peer pressure.”

A student in Form 4 admitted,

“I used to think I was the only one drinking, but soon realized most of my friends drink and smoke. It’s like it’s expected of us to fit in.”

This peer influence is confirmed by another teacher who said,

“The students often seem to be more focused on where to get substances rather than their studies. This is a major concern among teachers.”

In the same vein, a female student from Form 2 commented,

“You’d be surprised how many students are already using alcohol. They say it helps them relax.”

Teachers and students also noted that while alcohol and marijuana were the most commonly used substances, other substances, including hard drugs were becoming increasingly accessible. A guidance and counselling teacher remarked,

“Recently, we’ve seen an uptick in the use of more dangerous substances like meth and cocaine among some of the older students, especially those in Form 4 and Form 5.”

The head girl confirmed this by saying,

“It’s not just alcohol or weed anymore. Some of the students have even experimented with stronger stuff. It’s frightening how quickly things escalate.”

4.3.1 Types of Substances Used

Marijuana and alcohol were highlighted as the most commonly abused substances at Chipadze High School. One Form 3 student shared,

“Everyone knows that after school, students go out to smoke weed or drink alcohol. It’s like a routine. It’s almost like a way to fit in.”

Another Form 5 student agreed, stating,

“I think marijuana is the most popular drug here. People think it’s harmless, but it really messes up your focus.”

Teachers also echoed these sentiments. One teacher explained,

“Marijuana is the number one drug among students. It’s cheaper and easier to access, and most students don’t think it’s as dangerous as other drugs.”

However, as the discussions unfolded, some students admitted to experimenting with other, harder substances. A Form 6 student confessed,

“At first, I just tried alcohol and weed, but then I tried harder substances, like cocaine, out of curiosity. I was influenced by older students, and I regretted it soon after.”

Another Form 4 student shared,

“I know a few students who use meth. It’s not something I’d ever do, but they say it gives them energy and helps them stay awake.”

This shift toward harder substances was also noted by a teacher, who commented,

“We’ve started noticing more students coming to school visibly under the influence of hard drugs. It’s alarming to see how quickly they’re transitioning from alcohol and marijuana to more dangerous substances.”

4.3.2 Impact on Student Behavior and Academic Performance

The effects of substance abuse on student behavior and academic performance were widely discussed. Teachers observed noticeable behavioral changes particularly in students who regularly used substances. One teacher noted,

“Students who use drugs are often irritable and unfocused in class. They disrupt lessons and struggle to keep up with the material. It’s clear that drugs are affecting their academic performance.”

Another teacher observed,

“There’s an increase in aggression among students who are under the influence. It’s harder to manage them in class, and they don’t participate in academic activities.”

Students also reflected on how their academic work and behavior were affected by substance use. A Form 5 student said,

“I started drinking and smoking weed to cope with stress, but it only made things worse. My grades went down, and I couldn’t concentrate in class. I regret it.”

A Form 2 student shared,

“I missed a lot of school last term because I was always hungover or recovering from getting high. It’s hard to focus when your head’s not clear.”

A teacher confirmed,

“We’ve seen a noticeable decline in performance from students who are involved in drug use. It’s not just about bad grades; their behavior becomes erratic, and they miss a lot of school.”

One student admitted,

“At first, I thought I could handle it, but I failed two subjects this term. It’s definitely because of the drinking and smoking I was doing.”

4.3.3 Factors Contributing to Drug Abuse

The study identified several key factors that contribute to the prevalence of substance abuse at Chipadze High School. Peer pressure was highlighted as a major influence. A Form 2 student commented,

“I started drinking because my friends did it. I didn’t want to be left out. At first, I didn’t like it, but eventually, I got used to it.”

Another Form 4 student shared,

“Everyone in my class smokes weed. If you don’t, they look at you like you’re weird.”

Teachers also noted the role of peer influence, with one teacher stating,

“Peer pressure is the driving force behind drug use at this school. It’s very difficult for students to resist when their friends are involved in drugs.”

Another significant factor contributing to substance abuse was the availability of drugs. A Form 5 student explained,

“It’s really easy to get drugs around here. There’s always someone selling, and students know where to find them.”

A teacher added,

“Drugs are sold just outside the school gates. Students know exactly where to go if they need something. It’s frightening how easily accessible they are.”

The accessibility of drugs is further confirmed by the headboy, who said,

“It’s not hard to find drugs at all. Some of the older students sell them right near the school, so it’s really easy to just walk up and buy what you need.”

Finally, family issues and stress were also mentioned as contributing factors. A teacher reflected,

“Many of these students have difficult home lives, and they turn to substances as a way to cope. It’s their way of escaping their problems.”

One student shared,

“I started drinking because things weren’t going well at home. I just wanted to forget my problems for a while.”

These findings reveal a high prevalence of drug and substance abuse among students at Chipadze High School particularly with alcohol and marijuana. The normalization of substance use within peer groups has contributed significantly to this widespread abuse. Students highlighted that substance use is often seen as a means of social integration with many feeling compelled to partake in substance use to fit in with their peers. The World Health Organization (2023) reports that peer influence remains one of the strongest determinants of substance use among adolescents, reinforcing the importance of addressing social dynamics in any substance abuse prevention efforts. As students indicated, the peer-driven nature of drug use creates an environment where not participating is often seen as abnormal, further entrenching substance use within the student body.

The study also uncovered a troubling trend of students progressing from using milder substances like alcohol and marijuana to more dangerous drugs such as methamphetamine and cocaine. This shift from recreational substances to harder drugs is particularly concerning. A report from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (2024) have indicated that marijuana and alcohol use among adolescents often serve as gateways to more potent substances, a trend that is becoming increasingly evident in many school environments. The availability of these harder drugs within the student community raises alarms, as their use can quickly escalate, leading to long-term health complications and addiction. The progression from softer substances to more potent drugs underlines the importance of early intervention to prevent further escalation, as students who experiment with harder drugs are at greater risk of substance dependency, a trend highlighted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2023).

The impact of substance use on academic performance and student behavior was another critical finding. Teachers noted that students who engaged in substance abuse often displayed irritability, lack of focus, and disruptive behavior in class, all of which hindered their academic performance.

These observations echo research by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2023), which identifies poor academic performance as one of the most significant consequences of adolescent substance abuse. Students themselves admitted that their substance use negatively affected their schoolwork, with many mentioning difficulties in concentrating and frequent absences due to hangovers or recovery from substance use. The disruption in both academic focus and behavioral issues underscores the broader negative impact substance abuse has on the overall well-being and future success of adolescents.

Several contributing factors to the prevalence of drug and substance abuse were identified. Peer pressure was the most commonly cited influence, with students reporting that they began using substances due to the influence of their friends. The availability of drugs both on and around the school premises also emerged as a significant factor, with students revealing that drugs were easily accessible from their peers and local vendors. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (2024), the easy accessibility of substances significantly increases the likelihood of experimentation and habitual use among adolescents. Additionally, students mentioned personal and family-related stress as contributing factors, with some using substances as a coping mechanism for difficult home lives. The combination of these factors, including peer pressure, availability, and personal stress, creates a challenging environment for students to resist substance use, highlighting the need for targeted interventions that address both the social and personal factors contributing to substance abuse.

4.4 Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling Services in Addressing Drug and Substance Abuse

The effectiveness of guidance and counseling services in addressing drug and substance abuse at Chipadze High School was a recurring topic throughout the interviews with both students and teachers. The responses reflected mixed opinions on the adequacy and effectiveness of the services provided with a general consensus that the guidance and counseling services though present are under-resourced and not sufficiently proactive. Teachers expressed concerns about the counseling services' capacity to address the widespread drug abuse issue among students. One teacher stated,

“While there are counselors available, the scale of substance abuse among the students is too much for them to handle. The counselors are overwhelmed by the number of students coming for assistance, and as a result, the intervention is often too late.”

Another teacher expressed concern about the lack of sufficient follow-up,

“Students come to the counseling sessions once they’re caught or facing consequences, but there’s no system in place to follow up or support them after their initial visit. This leads to a cycle of relapse.”

In contrast, a few students reported that the counseling services had been helpful, though these experiences were limited. A Form 4 student noted,

“The counselor spoke to me once after I got into trouble, and I felt better afterwards. But it was more of a one-off session, and no one followed up.”

Another student from Form 5 stated,

“I went to see the counselor after being caught smoking weed. She told me about the dangers of drugs and gave me some advice, but no one really checks in with me afterward.”

Several students voiced concerns about the availability of counseling services to those who did not already have a direct issue with substance abuse. One Form 3 student noted,

“You can only get help when you're in trouble. There's no program that encourages us to talk to counselors before things get bad. It's like they only focus on the students who are caught using drugs.”

This point was reiterated by a teacher, who mentioned,

“There's a lack of outreach. We need to engage students before they start abusing substances, but the counseling services mostly react to problems instead of preventing them.”

The general perception among both students and teachers was that guidance and counseling services at the school are not effectively reaching all students who need help. One teacher expressed,

“The counseling services are very reactive. We need more proactive measures, such as drug education programs, peer counseling, and a more visible presence of counselors on school premises.”

Several teachers pointed out that the limited number of trained counselors was a significant challenge.

“We only have two counselors for the entire school, and the number of students seeking help is overwhelming. It’s hard for the counselors to give each student the attention they need,” shared a teacher.

While some students were open about their need for counseling services, many others did not feel that the services were accessible or approachable. A Form 6 student revealed,

“I would go for counseling, but I don’t think my friends would. They don’t trust the counselors or think they would help. There’s a stigma about counseling here.”

This stigma around seeking counseling was a consistent theme in the interviews, suggesting that students may not feel comfortable approaching counselors due to perceptions of judgment or inadequacy of the services.

However, a small group of students who had utilized the counseling services reported that when the counselors were able to engage them, they felt the sessions were beneficial. A Form 2 student explained,

“I went to talk to a counselor once when I was feeling pressured to start smoking. She was really understanding and gave me a lot of good advice. I felt like she actually cared about my problems.”

But this was a rare sentiment, with many students expressing that the counseling services were not a go-to resource for them until a problem had escalated.

The feedback gathered from both teachers and students suggests that while the guidance and counseling services at Chipadze High School are present, their effectiveness in addressing drug and substance abuse remains limited due to several key issues. First, the overwhelming number of

students seeking help combined with a shortage of trained counselors hinders the ability to provide effective and timely interventions. The counselor-to-student ratio at the school appears to be inadequate making it difficult to provide the necessary one-on-one support required to help students struggling with substance abuse. This finding supports National Institute on Drug Abuse (2024), which notes that an under-resourced counseling system in schools leads to delayed interventions and poor outcomes in addressing substance abuse.

The primarily reactive nature of the counseling services is a major limitation. The majority of students and teachers reported that counseling services were typically accessed after students had already been caught using drugs or when behavioral issues had become evident. This approach, while necessary does not prevent substance abuse from occurring in the first place. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2023), prevention is key to reducing substance abuse, and proactive programs that engage students before problems escalate tend to have more successful outcomes. The absence of a preventive program at Chipadze High School highlights a gap in the current approach to addressing substance abuse.

The stigma surrounding counseling services was another major barrier to their effectiveness. Many students expressed reluctance to seek help due to the perception that counseling was only for those with severe problems, or because they feared judgment. This aligns with findings from Ojo et al. (2022), who notes that stigma and misconceptions surrounding mental health services often prevent adolescents from utilizing available resources. In order to improve the effectiveness of counseling services, it is crucial to create a non-judgmental, safe space where students feel comfortable seeking help without fear of stigma.

While a few students reported positive experiences with the guidance and counseling services, these experiences were the exception rather than the norm. This suggests that when the services are accessed they can be beneficial but the system as a whole lacks the necessary capacity and proactive approach to effectively address the growing issue of substance abuse..

4.5 Factors Influencing the Uptake of Guidance and Counseling Services

The uptake of guidance and counseling services at Chipadze High School is influenced by various factors, with both students and teachers providing insights into the challenges and barriers to accessing these services. One of the primary factors identified by both groups was the lack of awareness and understanding of the services offered. A Form 4 student explained,

“I didn’t know what counseling was for at first. I thought it was only for students who were in real trouble. It took me a while to understand that it’s for anyone who wants to talk about anything.”

This sentiment was echoed by a teacher, who noted,

“There’s a general lack of awareness about what the counseling services actually do. Many students only seek help when they’ve already encountered a major issue.”

Another significant factor affecting the uptake of counseling services is the stigma surrounding mental health and substance abuse. Many students expressed reluctance to approach counselors due to concerns about being judged or labeled. A Form 5 student revealed,

“I know people who wouldn’t go to counseling because they’re afraid their friends will think they’re weak or have problems. It’s like there’s a stigma around seeking help.”

Teachers observed this reluctance as well, with one teacher remarking,

“There’s a stigma associated with counseling. Students are often embarrassed to admit they need help, especially when it comes to things like drugs and alcohol. It’s seen as a personal failing rather than a health issue.”

Teachers also pointed out the limited availability of counseling services as a barrier. A teacher shared,

“We only have two counselors, and the demand for their services is so high. Many students have to wait for long periods before they can see a counselor, and by then, the issues may have escalated.”

The timing of counseling services was another challenge. Some students noted that the counseling services were often not available during critical times, such as after school or during busy periods when students needed help the most. A Form 3 student commented,

“I wanted to talk to the counselor during the school break, but they were always busy or not available. It would be better if counseling services were available at more convenient times.”

Similarly, a teacher noted,

“Many students need support during specific times, like before exams or after incidents of substance abuse, but the counselors’ schedules don’t always align with when students need help.”

On the other hand, a few students and teachers highlighted the effectiveness of informal channels of support. Several students mentioned that they preferred talking to trusted teachers or peers about their issues rather than seeking formal counseling. A Form 2 student shared,

“I talk to my teacher when I need help. It feels easier because they’re not a counselor, but they still listen.”

This preference for informal support systems reflects the importance of peer and teacher involvement in addressing students’ needs, though it also indicates that the formal counseling services are not always seen as the first choice.

The study findings suggest that the uptake of guidance and counseling services at Chipadze High School is influenced by multiple factors with awareness, stigma, resource limitations, and timing playing key roles. First, the lack of awareness about the purpose and scope of counseling services emerged as a significant barrier. Many students, especially those in the early years of high school, did not fully understand that counseling could be accessed for a variety of issues, including academic stress, personal struggles, and drug abuse. This is consistent with findings from Johnson & Williams (2018), who emphasizes that a lack of awareness about available mental health services can prevent students from utilizing those resources. The need for awareness campaigns and educational initiatives to inform students about the benefits of counseling is evident.

The stigma surrounding counseling, particularly in relation to drug and substance abuse, also emerged as a prominent barrier. The fear of being labeled as "weak" or having problems prevents

many students from seeking help. This aligns with recent findings by the World Health Organization (2023), which identifies stigma as a significant obstacle to students seeking mental health support. The fear of being judged can discourage students from using counseling services, particularly when the issues at hand are related to drug abuse, which is often associated with negative societal perceptions. To reduce stigma, schools must create an environment where seeking help is normalized, and students feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues without fear of judgment.

Resource limitations, particularly the lack of counselors and the overwhelming demand for services, were also identified as major factors hindering the uptake of counseling. The findings from Chipadze High School mirror challenges seen in many schools globally, where there are not enough trained counselors to meet the needs of the student population. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (2024), inadequate counselor-to-student ratios often lead to delays in intervention and a lack of personalized support, making it harder to address the substance abuse issues that may be affecting students. It is crucial for schools to allocate more resources to mental health support services to ensure that counselors can meet the demand for services.

The timing of counseling services also plays a significant role in whether students seek help. The study found that students often struggled to access services at critical times, such as during exam periods or after incidents of substance abuse. This highlights the need for more flexible counseling schedules, particularly during high-stress periods when students may be more vulnerable to using substances as a coping mechanism. Providing after-hours counseling services or ensuring that counselors are available during peak times could improve accessibility for students who need help the most.

The preference for informal support networks such as trusted teachers and peers indicates that students may be more comfortable seeking help from familiar figures rather than formal counseling services. While informal support can be valuable, it should not replace professional counseling services. Teachers and peers can provide initial support, but trained counselors are needed to address the underlying issues and provide specialized interventions. The role of informal support networks should be viewed as complementary to formal counseling services, providing a more holistic approach to student well-being.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a detailed presentation, analysis, and discussion of the data collected from students, teachers, and other stakeholders at Chipadze High School. It focused on the prevalence of drug and substance abuse, the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services, and the factors influencing student behavior. Data was systematically presented through direct quotations from participants, reflecting on their personal experiences and observations. Thematic analysis was applied to identify key trends such as the normalization of substance use, the impact on academic performance, and the role of peer pressure and accessibility in substance abuse.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

This chapter consolidates the empirical findings and analytical conclusions derived from the comprehensive investigation into the impact of guidance and counselling services on reducing drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners at Chipadze High School. Specifically, it synthesizes the principal research outcomes, delineating the adaptive mechanisms utilized by these enterprises, and subsequently proffers actionable recommendations aimed at bolstering their resilience in the face of future economic and public health crises. This chapter serves as a culminating point, giving the contributions of the study to the existing body of knowledge regarding informal sector adaptation in resource-constrained environments.

5.2 Summary

Chapter 1 of this research mainly focused on the introduction of the study, problem statement and the background information of the study which formed the basis of the research. Thus, establishing the groundwork for the research pertaining to the research on the impact of guidance and counseling services on reducing drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners at Chipadze High School. From the objectives of the study the research questions were generated. Limitations, delimitations as well as definition of key terminology appeared in this chapter.

The second chapter reviewed relevant literature of the research topic under study. The theoretical framework underpinning the research was the resilience theory by Norris et al, (2008). In addition, the conceptual framework was established and explained. Finally, the research gap was established.

The third chapter dealt with the discussion of all the research methods and techniques that were used when conducting the research. The research is qualitative in nature so it used interpretivist research philosophy because they work in hand. Next, as part of their research design, the researcher employed case studies. Because this is qualitative research, a purposive sampling was employed under non-probability sampling methods. Using semi-structured interviews, a sample of twenty participants were interviewed were pertaining to the research on the impact of guidance and counseling services on reducing drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners at Chipadze High School. Trustworthiness, ethical considerations as well as the chapter summary all sum up to make the third chapter.

The following chapter which is chapter four focused on presentation of data which was collected using structured interviews pertaining the impact of guidance and counseling services on reducing drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners at Chipadze High School. The researcher made use of tables to present the gathered data for better understanding. To add on, a thematic approach was used, employing themes obtained from the research questions. In the same chapter, the response rate of the study was presented so as to protect the trustworthiness of the research, hence maintaining the authenticity of the research findings.

The fifth chapter dealt with the discussion of the research findings that were gathered by the researcher. The research findings are then evaluated tallying with the research questions and connecting to the larger body of literature. The research questions include the factors pertaining

the impact of guidance and counseling services on reducing drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners at Chipadze High School.

5.3 Conclusions

5.3.1 To determine the prevalence of drug and substance abuse among secondary school learners at Chipadze High School, Bindura.

The study confirmed that drug and substance abuse is widespread among students at Chipadze High School, particularly within the 13 to 18 age group. Alcohol and marijuana were the most commonly used substances, with an increasing trend towards the use of harder substances like methamphetamine and cocaine. These findings are consistent with recent studies on adolescent substance use, which have highlighted the role of peer pressure, environmental factors, and the developmental stage of adolescence in increasing the likelihood of substance experimentation (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2020; Miller et al., 2023). Furthermore, this research highlights the importance of early intervention, as the consequences of substance abuse can be severe, affecting academic performance, social relationships, and long-term mental health (Kosteniuk et al., 2022). These findings highlight the urgent need for effective school-based prevention programs to address this growing problem.

5.3.2 To assess the effectiveness of the existing guidance and counseling services in addressing drug and substance abuse among students at Chipadze High School.

The study found that guidance and counseling services were valued by students, with many acknowledging their role in identifying at-risk individuals and raising awareness about the dangers of substance abuse. However, challenges such as confidentiality concerns, limited resources, and

stigma were identified as barriers to the full effectiveness of these services. This conclusion is supported by recent literature, which highlights that the success of school-based counseling programs depends not only on the availability of trained counselors but also on the students' perception of the counseling environment as confidential and non-judgmental (Corey et al., 2020). Moreover, the lack of sufficient resources to provide comprehensive support aligns with studies by Capuzzi & Gross (2019), who emphasized the negative impact of high caseloads and insufficient funding on the quality of counseling services. Thus, while the guidance and counseling services at Chipadze High School play an essential role, they are constrained by these challenges, which need to be addressed for more effective substance abuse prevention.

5.3.3 To identify the factors influencing the uptake of guidance and counseling services among students at Chipadze High School.

The findings revealed several key barriers to the uptake of guidance and counseling services at Chipadze High School. The most significant obstacle was a lack of trust in the counseling system, with students expressing concerns about the confidentiality of their sessions and the potential for judgment. Additionally, many students were unaware of the services available to them, and some perceived counseling as unnecessary or ineffective. These barriers are consistent with recent studies that have explored similar challenges in school-based counseling programs. Eisenberg et al. (2009) found that stigma and lack of awareness were major deterrents to students seeking mental health support in schools. Corrigan & Watson (2002) have demonstrated how the stigma associated with mental health services can prevent students from utilizing available resources. The findings from Chipadze High School suggest that addressing these barriers through effective communication, trust-building initiatives, and destigmatization campaigns is essential to increase the utilization of counseling services.

5.3.4 To explore the perceptions of students, teachers, and parents regarding the role of guidance and counseling in preventing drug and substance abuse.

The perceptions of students, teachers, and parents largely supported the role of guidance and counseling in preventing drug and substance abuse. However, younger students, particularly those in the 13-18 age group, had a stronger belief in the relevance and importance of counseling services compared to older students (ages 19-26). This finding aligns with the work of Dishion & Tipsord (2011), who noted that adolescents are particularly susceptible to peer pressure and are more likely to engage with counseling services during this critical period. The lower engagement with counseling services among older students may reflect a shift in their priorities as they transition to adulthood and face different challenges. Botvin et al. (2020) also emphasizes the effectiveness of school-based interventions during adolescence, highlighting that these programs can significantly reduce the likelihood of substance use and related behaviors. Thus, the findings suggest that school-based counseling programs should be tailored to the developmental needs of different age groups to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness.

5.4 Recommendations

To the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education:

Integrate drug abuse prevention programs into the national curriculum, ensure counselors are well-trained, and allocate sufficient resources for counseling services. Establish policies to protect student confidentiality.

To the School Administration at Chipadze High School:

Enhance guidance and counseling services, provide ongoing training for counselors, and organize regular awareness campaigns about the dangers of substance abuse. Create a more supportive environment for students to access help.

To the Community Members:

Collaborate with the school to raise awareness of substance abuse, offer mentorship programs, and provide alternative recreational activities to engage students and deter drug use.

To the School Children:

Actively engage in counseling services, support peers in avoiding substance abuse, and promote a healthy, drug-free school environment. Be role models for positive behavior among fellow students.

To Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):

Partner with schools to offer drug prevention workshops provide training for teachers and counselors, and engage in community outreach programs that target both students and parents. Facilitate access to rehabilitation services and support for students already affected by substance abuse.

5.5 Areas for further research

Investigating the effectiveness of culturally tailored guidance and counseling interventions in this context could provide valuable insights for developing targeted prevention and treatment programs. Further research should explore the specific cultural and socioeconomic factors contributing to the high prevalence of substance abuse among the 1-20 year age group in Bindura.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE

PREAMBLE

My name is..... a student at University studying Bachelors degree in..... I am undertaking a research study titlein partial fulfilment of the requirement of a BSc Degree in..... I am kindly requesting you to participate in the research, your participation will be greatly appreciated. The study is purely for educational purposes and information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. You are also assured that your responses will be treated with anonymity and that users of the final research report will not be able to trace the responses to you, your family or your organisation. To help uphold anonymity, you are encouraged not to state your name or any information that may disclose your personal information.

Please note that participation in this study is voluntary. Should you require further information or clarity please feel free to contact me on +263 or my supervisor Dr

Demographic Data**(a) Gender***Male**Female***(b) Age group***Below 20 yrs**20-4 yrs**41-60 yrs**61 and above***(c) Highest Qualification***Diploma level**Degree level**Masters Level***(e) Work Experience***5 years & below**6- 9 years**10 years & above***For Students**

1. What is the prevalence of drug and substance abuse at Chipadze High School, Bindura?
2. Are the existing guidance and counseling services effective in addressing drug and substance abuse among students at Chipadze High School?

3. What are the factors influencing the uptake of guidance and counseling services among students at Chipadze High School?
4. What are the perceptions of students, teachers, and parents regarding the role of guidance and counseling in preventing drug and substance abuse?

For Teachers

1. Based on your observations, what is the prevalence of drug and substance abuse among students at the school?
2. How effective do you believe the current guidance and counseling services are in addressing drug and substance abuse?
3. What are the biggest challenges students face in accessing or utilizing guidance and counseling services?
4. In your opinion, what is the most effective role guidance and counseling can play in preventing drug and substance abuse among students?

Appendix B: Consent form

