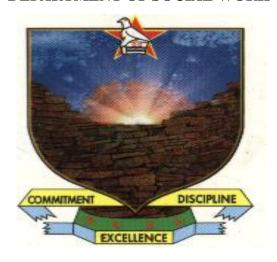**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

TOPIC

THE FACTORS HINDERING PROGRESSION OF ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS OF ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY OF WARD 6 RURAL MABOLENI, LOWER GWERU.

BY

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PROJECT PRESENTED TO BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONORS DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK.

DEDICATION

This academic achievement is dedicated to my mother, **Mrs Marongedze**. It is because of your never ending love, patience and support that I am what I am today. All your efforts will not go unnoticed. Thank you. I love you.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish the factors hindering the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe Gweru. The study was guided by the following objectives: identify factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas: determine factors that promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe: assess education services being provided to orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe and explore strategies that can be used by the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe. The study employed a qualitative approach in carrying out research on the phenomenon of orphans and vulnerable children. The study made use of a total of 15 participants which comprised of orphans and vulnerable children, teachers and community care workers. Data was collected through semi structured interviews with the participants. The key findings of this study highlighted that poverty, child labour, psychological effects of loss, early child marriages, early pregnancies and negligence are factors hindering the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe. The study recommends that the Government implements school feeding schemes in rural schools as these will promote enrolment, retention and school attendance as a meal will be guaranteed in school hence acting as a motivating agent. The study recommends the provision other educational needs that go beyond school fees subsidies by the Government such as provision of uniforms and stationery to Orphans and Vulnerable Children in schools in rural areas. The Government should initiate economic strengthening programmes and projects capital funding for poor rural households. The study recommends community education and awareness on the various aspects affecting orphans, policies and legislature so as to promote community interventions in assisting.

LIST OF TABLES

ACRONYMS

AIDS   Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

BEAM   Basic Education Assistance Module

CCW   Community Care Worker

DSD   Department of Social Development

HIV   Human Immune Virus

MoHCW   Ministry of Health and Child Welfare

MoPSE   Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

NAP   National Action Plan

NASW   National Association of Social Workers

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisations

OVC   Orphans and vulnerable children

UNICEF   United Nations Children`s Fund

WHO   World Health Organisation

ZIMSEC   Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council

ZIMSTAT   Zimbabwe Statistical Agency

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The study seeks to examine the factors which are hindering the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe. The possible factors may vary from economic to socio cultural factors. The research will have an appreciation on the measures that the government has put in place to increase progression rates in schools in rural areas and ways that promote an inclusive approach to education in Zimbabwe. This proposal will give a detailed outline of the background of the study, statement of the problem, research aims and objectives, theoretical framework, methodology, population under study, data collection, analysis, ethical considerations among others to be studied.

1.1 Background of the study

The rising number of orphans and vulnerable children has become a cause for concern globally, regionally and nationally. The case of Sub Saharan Africa is no different as statistics show are rise of orphaned vulnerable children due to HIV by 50 % (UNICEF, 2006) report of 2006 and this has resulted in the rise in number of orphans and vulnerable children.

Orphans and vulnerable children in Zimbabwe present need for community and government action to address their needs for survival. According to estimates, 761 000 children in Zimbabwe lost one or both of their parents to HIV and AIDS in 2003 (NAP OVC 2014-2010). The number has since seen a rise to an estimate 933 000 over the course of the years. The government of Zimbabwe seeks to address issues which directly affect orphans and vulnerable children especially to do with education. Orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas are the most vulnerable as economic and socio cultural factors further affect them.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states that education is a human right which every child should be able to exercise. Education promotes economic and social growth for both the person and nation at large. . It is the goal of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) to ensure quality education for all and especially the most vulnerable which includes orphans and ensure accessible education for all children especially children in rural areas. The Sustainable Development Goals states that 57 million school going age children do not attend school and a fourth of those are children living in the rural areas. Moreover, factors affecting education have a huge impact on orphans as they are among the vulnerable sub populations.

Education also increases human capital for the country as a whole and leads to economic development. Zimbabwe has since priotize its education system since gaining it independence in 1980. Through education reforms, policies and construction of new schools the education system has seen an improvement. Legal frameworks like the Education Act [Chapter 25:04] whose objective is to ensure every child has access to education. Moreover, the Basic Education Assistance Module initiatives has been a major initiative assisting orphans and vulnerable children have access to education. Civil Society Organizations have also played a role in ensuring accessible education for orphans and vulnerable children in Zimbabwe.

However, in as much as the government of Zimbabwe and CSO's have played a role in ensuring education of orphans and vulnerable children, educational issues especially for orphans and vulnerable children in rural schools have not been fully catered for. There is need for more efforts to address factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children especially in schools in rural areas in Zimbabwe. Henceforth due to this background, this study seeks to examine factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe and recommend possible solutions to address the gaps.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The government of Zimbabwe has made efforts to ensure its education system caters for every child and promotes accessible education for all. This is seen by initiatives such as the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), legal frameworks and building schools in marginalised areas. All these efforts are put in place to ensure progression of orphans and vulnerable children and especially those in rural areas. However, one cannot dismiss the underlying factors that are leading to low rates of progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. According to the Millennium Development Goals Final Report of 2016 it was reported that 72.3% of Zimbabwe's population were living in poverty during the period 2011-2012 and that particularly orphans and vulnerable children in the rural areas were leaving and dropping out of school. In a study conducted in communities of Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa on orphans and vulnerable children it revealed that poverty was the key driver leading to low rates of progression and access to education according to (Spaull, 2011). Therefore, it is of paramount importance to examine the factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. The identification and examining of factors which are affecting progression of OVCs will contribute to targeted response to matters arising.

1.3 Research aims and objectives

Aim

The aim of this study is to assess factors hindering retention, attendance and progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas in Zimbabwe. A case study of Gweru Rural District.

Objectives

  i.   To identify factors hindering progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas in Zimbabwe.

ii.   To determine factors that promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools.

iii.   To assess the education services being provided to orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas.

iv.   To explore strategies that can be used by the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas.

1.4 Research questions

i.   Which are the factors hindering progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas?

ii.   What are the factors that promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools?

iii.   Which education services are being provided to orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas?

iv.   What has been done by the government of Zimbabwe to ensure equal access and high levels of progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas?

1.5 Assumptions

The main assumption is that there are problems impeding the advancement or progression rate of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in Zimbabwe, where the phenomenon of orphans and vulnerable children is on the rise. Such unfavourable elements have hindered vulnerable children and orphans from receiving high quality education.

1.6 Significance of the study/justification

This study is important to scholars as it will serve as future reference for other scholars that might want to extend research concerning the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. The scholars will also use this study to read and gain knowledge on

this particular area. The study might aid students in realizing that, despite having lost one parent, their teachers serve as their second parents with whom they can openly discuss difficulties they encounter at home. Additionally, students will comprehend that their schools are their second homes and that they should feel at ease while there. The study might also be beneficial to the Government of Zimbabwe as it will help identify the challenges that orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas are facing hence come up with strategies and policies that will best address these gaps. By requesting assistance from donors, the government may be able to provide those orphans and vulnerable children with all the support they need. The study might also help in drawing attention of Non-Governmental Organisations which are in Zimbabwe and might want to help orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas have access to education through provision of funds, basic need including food and psychosocial assistance to help them deal with issues that may affect their education.

1.7 Limitations of the study

Identifying orphans and vulnerable children and getting information from them could be difficult as they might be cases of withdrawal on certain issues hence affecting validity of findings. Furthermore, as the COVID 19 pandemic is still ongoing this may affect smooth and effective study,

1.8 Delimitations of the study

The study will be confined to rural schools in Gweru district, rural cluster. Focus will be on variables influencing orphans and vulnerable children's academic achievement will be the main focus. The study's primary focus will be on the plight of orphans and vulnerable children in rural Zimbabwe and its relationship to educational attainment.

1.9 Definition of terms

Progression relates to the process of gradually moving

Orphaned and Vulnerable Children refers as a child below the age of 18 years who has lost one parent (either mother or father) or both and has been made vulnerable by HIV.

1.1 Proposed Chapter outline

Chapter 1- Introduction and background

The chapter acts as an introduction providing a synopsis or history of the research.

Chapter 2- Literature review and Theoretical framework

This chapter lists the key pieces of literature that support and validate the subject. The literature review focuses on areas that provide chance to examine and synthesize prior research as well as areas that provide foundation for the new study.

Chapter 3- Research methodology and design

This chapter describes the research methodology and approach that will be used to perform the study in this described chapter.

Chapter 4- Data analysis, presentation and discussion of findings

This chapter gives a summary of the findings obtained from investigations.

Chapter 5- Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations and areas for further Research

This chapters focuses on the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study findings based on the information gathered and overall observations.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.0 Introduction

The chapter's main focus is on accessing the factors that are of hindrance towards progression of orphans and vulnerable children, to also further assess measures which are being implemented by the Government of Zimbabwe and how these can be better improved. This chapter provides identification of major literature in line with the research objectives which are factors affecting and promoting progression of orphans and vulnerable children, assessing services that are being provided to orphans and strategies that can be put in place to improve progression. The literature review concentrates on areas that support forthcoming research opportunities to analyse and synthesize past research that supports the concept of progression and orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas in Zimbabwe.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study makes use of the systems theory to help examine the factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas and access the education systems within the rural areas of Zimbabwe. The systems theory which was coined by Ludwing Von Bertalanffy in 1973 (Bertalanffy, 1973) looks at an interdisciplinary study of systems and how these systems relate to each other. The theory gives cognisance to the fact that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It gives attention to smaller systems having an effect on the greater systems and how each system must be recognised and strengthened. According to this theory every element influences the greater system. The theory takes a closer look at the smaller systems that surround a particular situation or an individual and how these smaller systems come together to affect the greater system. The elements have an influence on the system as this can lead to different outcomes. The interdisciplinary nature of the systems theory implies a holistic approach to viewing matters where there is need to look at all the possible elements

of a system even those that might not be similar in nature as a system may relate to multiple elements.

The systems theory takes an interrelationship and interdependence approach. This means that the different elements surrounding a greater system all play a vital role towards the output. The smaller systems are greatly linked to the greater systems to formulate an entity. The systems theory also focuses on the environmental and social entities having an impact on the output. The environment effects the greater whole system as the environment which the person is in has an effect on their behaviour and how the think. Environmental factors may vary from availability and scarcity of different inputs which transcend the needs of an individual. The availability of inputs have an impact on the individual in this case who serves to be greater system.

Social entities also function as systems that have an impact on the greater whole as is the view of the systems theory. When looking at the systems theory it is of paramount importance to take an analysis of the person in the environment and how the environment acts as a smaller system that has an impact on the greater system. Social systems surrounding an individual have an influence of the outputs that are produced hence play a role in the process. Social systems are those systems that have direct influence on a behaviour and thought of a person and contributes to the outward reaction in different situation. Social systems vary from family relations, close friends and people one constantly interacts with.

All systems have an impact of on the greater system and their influence can be either positive or negative. Shifting an element of a system can be beneficial to the greater system or pose as being detrimental to the whole system. A system is defined as a group if interacting, interdependent parts that form a complex (Bertalanffy, 1973) defines a system as a complex of interacting elements. If an element of a system is strengthened the outcome will be positive

and will have more desirable results. If these elements are interacting in positive circumstances the whole will be changed for the greater good as a system is a group of interacting parts. This is the same when an element of a system is negatively reinforced, this may lead to undesirable outcomes and impact on the whole system.

The systems theory is of the view that behaviour is influenced by multiple factors that determine the outcome of an action. According to (Chih- Hui Lai & Sapphire Huili Lin, 2017) three levels of observation are the system's theory primary focus and these are the environment, the social organization and influence of human participants. This therefore means that all these elements play a crucial part on the whole and influence outcomes. These systems influence how people act and think thus have a direct consequence. The result may be favourable or unfavourable depending on how the elements have influenced the system. This theory in relation to social work allows for a holistic approach when assessing a client. Through the systems theory there is an analysis and assessment of the different systems that are influencing a client. Furthermore, the systems theory helps in the identification of a clients' condition and needs henceforth allowing for the best measures of a client to be put in place for one to reach maximum potential.

2.1.1 Relevance of theory to study

When examining factors that are affecting progression of orphans and vulnerable children in the rural areas, it is important to get an in depth understanding of the systems surrounding the children and how these are having an influence on progression. Children's behaviour in general is strengthened by systems and it is these systems that help reinforce good behaviour and promote good educational habits. Systems surrounding orphans and vulnerable children are the family, the school and the government hence the systems theory is put into practise during this investigation. All these systems play a role in ensuring progression in schools and if one system fails it affects the progression of orphans and vulnerable children who are the greater system.

The relation of the systems theory and the study is that there is need to strengthen systems surrounding orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas.

The family plays a role as system that affects the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school. When children are left orphaned with no parents, the extended family takes up the role of caring for the children and meeting their needs and this is most apparent in the Zimbabwean community context. In the rural areas orphans and vulnerable children are usually left in the care of grandparents, aunts or uncles who then act as the primary caregivers. The family of the OVC has an impact on the progression of OVC in school as they play a role in monitoring child's school attendance and providing materials that promote progression. The family ensure the child attends school every day and is progressing well in school. The family also plays a great part in paying for school fees and providing materials such as school uniforms to ensure OVC attend school. However, the family as a system might fail to monitor child's school attendance and to provide for the orphan and vulnerable child financially and with resources that promote progression. Therefore, the systems theory is applicable to the research under study as the family is an important system which contributes to the whole system which is orphans and vulnerable children and progression.

The community plays a role as a systems that helps promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. The Indigenous Knowledge System of the Ubuntu philosophy comes into play when ensuring community responsibility and community mutualism (Mosana, 2002). The Ubuntu philosophy 'umunntu ngumuntu ngabantu' which translate to 'a man is a man through others' shows that the community members have an influence on an individual. The community advocates for children to attend schools and attain education. In most rural areas and wards, the community selects members that act as community liaison addressing issues affecting children in the community. These selected members Community Care Workers (CCW's) ensure children within the community are

attending schools and are not facing any challenges in their households. This is also for orphans and vulnerable children who are in constant communication through dialogues with the CCW's.

The systems theory gives credit to influence of systems to the greater whole and the school is an important system which plays a pivotal role in the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe. The school is an establishment that ensures access to learning materials like study books and tutoring by the teachers. It is critical that OVC's attend school every day to ensure good grades that promote progression to the next level of school. The teachers are important to the school as the system as they are in constant interaction with orphans and vulnerable children and can be aware of issues affecting their progression.

The government is a major system that has an impact on the progression and attendance of school of OVC's in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe. The government puts laws and policies that protect the best interest of children in terms of accessing education like the Education Act which gives fundamental right to education in Zimbabwe and this is inclusive of orphans and vulnerable children in the rural areas. Through the government laws and policies there's an inclusive approach to distribution of educational benefits of vulnerable children across the nation and special regards given to orphans and vulnerable children in the rural areas.

However one can note that it is important that these various systems are improved and strengthened in order to fully cater for the needs of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. The family as a system can be improved by knowing the importance of education to children and how they can support this in terms of materials or financial provision and also offer emotional support to orphans within the family. The community as a system can also be improved by taking part in dialogues that seek to improve the protection and welfare of orphans

within the community and be aware of the legislative measures and policies in place. Furthermore, the government as a system can be improved and strengthened by adopting measures that are being implementing across the globe may it be internationally and regionally to improve access and progression of orphans in schools and also ensure new policies are put in place for the beneficence of vulnerable groups.

Henceforth in applying the systems theory in the study, the researcher has to give cognisance to systems that have an effect on orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas.

2.2 Factors hindering progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas

Progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural can be affected by multiple factors. Poverty is one of the most leading cause across the nation leading to failure to progress to the next level. Factors such as negligence by caregivers to cater for the educational needs to children also affect the progression of OVCs. Neglect can also be further characterises by a lack to offer psychosocial support which is vital in building resilience to school going children. Other factors also include issues of child marriages, early pregnancies and child labour among factor hindering the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe.

2.2.1 Poverty

In the global context, poverty has been one of the most deriving factors leading to low progression rates and especially among orphans and vulnerable children. Poverty is amongst the great causes of low progression rates affecting orphans and vulnerable children to progress to the next level of school. Poverty is most prevalent in developing countries and 3rd world nations for instance Africa, Asia and Latin America. (World Bank, 2011) describes poverty as a lack of money, shelter, hunger and not having access to school and inability to read. The lack of education is associated with poverty. According to (Suckling, Christensen & Walton 2021),

a projected 698 million people of the world's population, were expected to be living in extreme poverty in 2021. There were an estimated 97 million more individuals living in extreme poverty between 2019 and 2020 due to the COVID 19 pandemic according to World Banks estimates (World Bank, 2021). Poverty affects many people but arguably the effects of poverty are seen most in children.

In the Sub Saharan Africa, poverty has great impacts on education of children and orphans and vulnerable children are at greater risk of school dropout. Factors that worsen poverty rate in Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia are related to economic instability and conflict which have negative effects on the educational system. (UNESCO, 2022) populates that 98 million of children and youth between the ages 6 -18 are out of school in Sub Saharan Africa. The proportion of children not in school is highest in Sub Saharan Africa and this can be linked to poverty being the main cause. This is followed by Southern Asia which populates a total of 85 million nit in school according to (UNESCO, 2022)

Poverty in Zimbabwe is dominant and is caused by issues of economic instability, unemployment and climate change (ZIMSTAT, 2016). The influence of climate change mainly affects people living in the rural areas as agriculture is a source of their living hence making them more vulnerable to poverty. Poverty in Zimbabwe is largely a rural phenomenon as statistics show that in 2019 International Poverty line indicated rural population having 52% poor compared to the urban population having 11% poor . (Williamson, 2006) cited that the high rate of poverty in communities worsens the situation for orphans and vulnerable children and especially those in the rural communities. Children who are living in poverty suffer from lack of food, shelter and other basis commodities like access to educational services.

Poverty tremendously affects the financial capabilities of families to cater for educational costs and fees of orphans and vulnerable children. Lack of finances affects the progression of

children in school as payment of school fees is prerequisite for school attendance and progression. In the case of orphans and vulnerable children, the financial strain worsens as caring is directed to the grandparents or extended families. The elderly as caregivers have low income sources as they do not work thus cannot earn money on a regular basis to provide for the educational costs. In the rural areas, most the elderly survive through assistance programs which are mainly offer food hampers rather than cash transfers.

Poverty also affects progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas as poverty leads to a lack of food needs. Lack of nutrition has great consequence on the results that a child can produce. Nutrition has an effect on children's performance and involvement in day to day activities and in schools. This greatly affects the progression of children as there is less performance which results in low grades. Poverty not only has impact on the children in terms of access to educational facilities but has an impact on their psychosocial condition which in turn affect their performance in school as poverty is at household level and has a direct influence on the child. . Poverty can contribute to poor performance and lack of involvement of children in school as lack of basis needs like food may lead to failure to concentrate and grasp concepts learned in school. Poverty thus has a great effect on the progression of orphans and vulnerable children especially those in schools in rural areas.

2.2.2 Negligence

The issue of negligence is a global view which has taken the attention of multiple big organizations such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization and has been an apparent phenomena which dates back to 1999 where the WHO defined neglect as the failure of institutions like schools, health care centres and society fail to provide for the fundamental needs of a child's wellbeing. Negligence within nations like the United States of America is among the factors leading to orphaned children being raised in orphanages as there is a lack care for the children. Globally measure are put in place such as acts and policies to ensure no

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child is neglected and most especially orphans and vulnerable children for instance the U.N Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC, 1989). The child protection measures put in place help prevent and protect from neglect. Negligence of orphans and vulnerable children by caregivers has negative effects on the progression to the next level in school. Negligence is a situation in which one does not give enough care and attention to someone or something or the state of not receiving enough care or attention. In this instance the type of neglect that accounts for education can be termed as educational neglect. Educational neglect has to do with failure to cater for a child's educational needs. Negligence in terms of caring for orphans and vulnerable children affects progression in schools in rural areas.

In the Sub Saharan context issues of neglect of orphans and vulnerable children are common for children in the care of extended families. In a research carried out by (Gillian Moranttz, Donald Cole, Rachel Vreeman, & Paula Braitstein 2013) in countries within the sub Saharan showed frequent of resurfacing issues of neglect of orphaned children and the youth like material and educational neglect. In South Africa issues of child neglect often translate to cases of social withdrawal by the child, learning difficulties and poor performance in school.

In the Zimbabwean context when a child is left an orphan the duty plays upon extended family to take up the caring role. In rural setups this mainly takes upon grandparents be it grandmother or grandfather to be the caregivers. Aunts and uncles also play a role in caring for orphans and vulnerable children within the family after death of a family member. In cases were grandparents act as caregivers to orphans and vulnerable children other factors like ageing might have an impact on their full ability to carry out all the roles required of them. Ageing can be a barrier to fully catering for and giving the children educational attention required for progression in school. Due to ageing, grandparents acting as caregivers may face challenges of fatigue and other illnesses associated with age. Educational needs do not only include financial and resource support but go as far as psychosocial support for the child to attend school and

progress to the next level. Psychosocial support is a form of support that seeks to address the social, emotional and mental needs of an individual.

Psychosocial support plays a part in meeting the educational needs of orphans and vulnerable children and also strengthen the resilience within children and if this need is neglected it is a challenge to progression. Psychosocial support helps improve the emotional wellbeing of children and better improves their mental development.   Psychosocial support is of paramount importance to the child as this is characterised by carrying out follow ups school performance, whether or not the child is facing any challenges in school and finding ways to motivate the child. Motivation by the caregiver is a form of offering psychosocial support which can be in form of praising good grades, encouraging school attendance and pointing out the benefits of acquiring education. Negligence and a lack of support on the caregivers part affects grades of the child as there is no participation in helping the child with after school work and reinforcing existing educational strengths hence affecting progression to the next level. Negligence also occurs in cases where the caregiver was not fully willing to care for the orphaned vulnerable child but due to circumstances the role befalls them hence low levels of participation in catering for the child's educational needs resulting in educational neglect.

2.2.3 Child marriages

Child marriages and pregnancy which are closely related are also factors which affect the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. Child marriage refers to any illicit relationship between a minor under the age of 18 and an adult or another minor according to UNICEF. Orphaned and vulnerable girls are at higher chance of being in child marriages. In the global concept child marriage is considered to be a human rights violation and this greatly affects girls' growth by resulting in pregnancies. Child marriages also has tremendous effects on the mental health and negative sexual and reproductive health outcomes. Early child marriages also affect the educational outcomes of orphans and vulnerable children

as it disrupts schooling of the girl child affecting progression in school to the next level hence dropping out. Globally efforts have been made to ensure the end of child marriages which is one of mandates of the United Nations Sustainable Developmental Goals for 2030.

It has been noted in sub - Saharan Africa the highest child marriage prevalence is in the West and Central Africa. In the rural context in Africa, child marriages are common as a way to bring in wealth into the family through dowry payment and to lessen the burden of feeding an individual. International policies that recognise child marriage as violation include The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women which seeks to protect against child marriage

In 2022 the Government of Zimbabwe declared under the Marriage Act that any child below 18 is a minor and will not take part in any marriage practises. Zimbabwe's government has established statutory measures to protect children from such acts, child marriages are still occurring especially in the rural setups. A very good example of the effects of child marriages is the case of Memory Machaya a girl of age 13 who passed away giving birth. This case caused a great stir in all the corners of the nation of Zimbabwe and is one of the major contributing cases that made the nation visibly understand the concept of child marriages and how they are occurring within the different societies. Child marriages and early pregnancy are greatly linked as child marriage leads to early pregnancies and vice versa. Child marriages and early pregnancy affect the education of orphaned and vulnerable girls this affects the attendance and in turn affects progression. Child marriage and early pregnancy lead to failure to attend school and increase in school dropouts as schools prohibit attending of classes while pregnant.

2.2.4 Child labour

Child labour is also another factor that influencing progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. When children are left orphaned due to cases of HIV/AIDS

or other related issues it affects them in terms of provision of needs as the children are left to fend for themselves. According to the International Labour Offices and UNICEF (UNICEF & ILO 2021) , one in ten children aged 5 and older engaged in child labour at the beginning of 2020 and were economically active thus involved in some form of work. The ILO states that children carry out work in various forms and sectors ranging from children in manufacturing, agriculture, mining and quarrying. Globally the rate of child labour increased from 21% to 36 % according to a research carried out by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2021) due to the COVID 19 pandemic when most children were not attending school and the pandemic led to economic disparities across the globe and in households.

In cases were children are orphaned in the rural areas, child labour is the existing form of survival for the children. Children engage in child labour related matters to cater for basic such as food and up keep. Educational needs are secondary to the primary needs to survival. In the rural areas children may engage in agricultural piece works and working in farms as herdsman and ploughing fields. In turn payment may be in form of food items, clothes or money for survival. Child labour issues affect the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school as time will be spent working and not focusing on education. Child labour also tires the physical body of children and in turn affects the mental capabilities to focus on school and attain good grades to actually progress to the next level.

2.3 Factors that promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools.

In the global perspective many efforts have been made to promote the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school. Among the various factors that affect progression in school lack of financial capability has been a great cause of low rates of progression. The low rates of progression into school are primarily a result of caregivers failing to raise the funds required for school costs especially in the rural areas hence multiple funding mechanisms have been put into place to help promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school. The

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been an influential player in promoting education for all. Financial assistance has been given as a provision to multiples nations worldwide and the most in developing countries. Progression of orphans and vulnerable children can be promoted by factors that include availability of financial resources to cater for the educational needs such as school fees, stationery and uniforms. Family support and community interventions also help in terms of progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools. Furthermore attendance also promotes good grades which are a requirement for one to progress to the next level.

2.3.1 Financial Resources

Availability of financial resources is an important factor that promotes and determines the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school. Financial resources cater for expenses such as school fees, school uniforms and stationery. All these elements are important when one is attending school as they are a requirement for education to be catered for. Payment of school fees means that a child can attend school every day without any interferences of lack of payment. Availability of finances depends on the caregiver and whether or not they have a stable reliable source of income to cater for school funds needed to cater for the educational needs of a child.

2.3.2 Family Support

Access to social capital is another factor that promotes progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools. Social capital can be a combination of both the family and the community. Social capital is the existing relations that can be strengthened to promote full education promotion. Social capital is an important element to progression in school of orphans and vulnerable children. The family is the primary care system and offers social support to children. It is within the family that certain behaviours and tendencies are learnt and reinforced. If the family is supportive towards the retention, attendance and progression of orphans and

vulnerable children there can be higher rates of progression. The family can reinforce good educational behaviours by encouraging children to attend school every day and helping them address certain problems they might be encountering.

2.3.3 Community Based Interventions

Community based interventions promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school. The community also contributes in promoting progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school as community raises awareness to importance of education through community based interventions. The community is often the first respondent to the needs and plight of orphans and vulnerable children before government intervention (Foster, 2008). Community members like the councillor, community leaders and other professionals like teachers within the community should bring awareness of importance of progression and educate the community on the requirements for one to successfully progress to the next level. Other important players within the community are the Community Cadre Workers who play a critical role in promoting progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school. Community Cadre Workers monitor and conduct follow ups on the progression of orphans and vulnerable children within the community. Community based interventions can also be through mentoring adolescents in school and conducting mentoring sessions where there is education and awareness of issues that may be a challenge to progression for all school going children. Henceforth, strengthening of these already existing social capital systems such as the family and community will promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school.

2.3.4 Attendance

One of the factors that promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school is attendance. Attendance means that a child attends school every day. Attendance promotes progression as attendance leads to regular school participation which affects grades. Attendance promotes progression as this improves school performance of the child. Therefore

there is a need to reinforce the systems surrounding orphans and vulnerable which include the family. The family is a source of capital which is crucial to the attendance and progression of any child in school. When the family net is aware of the importance of attendance there is better reinforcement when it comes to attendance henceforth attendance promotes progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school.

2.4 Education services being provided to orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas.

Globally action has been taken to provide orphans and vulnerable children with services that are aimed at improving their wellbeing and among that an important mandate which is to promote education. Legislative measures, policies and acts have been put in place across the globe to have an impact on the education of all school going children worldwide. Education is a universal right of all children as is highlighted in global, regional and national policies and legislators that advocate and protect children. Every person has a right to education according to Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). International legal instruments have been adopted dating back to the end of World War 11 through conventions and recommendations. The United Nations and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) provide frameworks that are expected to be recognised by states at regional and national level and are categorised into two types of law which are hard law and soft law. Hard laws are those legally binding for instance Acts and are adopted by states while soft laws are not legally binding and can include policies, frameworks, declarations or government action or inaction.

The Global Convention by UNESCO set outs universal principles for a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory access to educational services. Furthermore, UN Member states set out Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which are meant to address the global challenges affecting people established 2015 to 20230. The SDG key indicators seek to address the global

challenges and in this instance to address the issues of quality education which is SDG number 4. This SDG aims to ensure universal primary and secondary education, inclusion and equity.

Nationally the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) Amendment No20, Section 19 seeks to protect the welfare of vulnerable children including orphans. Section 19 of the Constitution also outlines that it is the duty of the state to ensure policies and legislature are upheld to protect the best interests of children from different disparities across the nation. The Constitution helps in progression it allows for the recognition of the needs of orphans and ensures universal attainment of education for all subpopulation of children including orphans and other groups. Furthermore, the Constitution allows for the adoption of policies and other measures to promote education and this heightens the success rates of children in school in terms of enrolment, progression and retention.

Moreover, Acts put in place by the Government have an impact on the provision of educational services of orphans and vulnerable children. Laws have been passed that address the welfare of children such Chapter 5.06 of the Children's Act and the Education Act Chapter 25.04 (Masuka, 2012). The act provides care for vulnerable groups of children from destitute children, children with health care issues and children with deceased parents or parents that cannot be traced. The Act defend the right and interest of underprivileged children hence it is significant to orphans and vulnerable children. The Education Act also provided for equal access to education for all citizens of Zimbabwe.

Therefore, the government has a responsibility to provide the services required to meet the educational needs of orphan and vulnerable children. The government of Zimbabwe has made strides in a bid to ensure accessibility of educational facilities by building schools in marginalised areas. Furthermore, there are other laws that speak to the issue of education like the Education Act and the Children's Act. (Masuka, 2012).

The efforts of the Government to ensure service provision have also gone further to policy implementation in the interest of overcoming obstacles faced by orphans and vulnerable children. In 1999 the Government of Zimbabwe adopted the National Orphan Care Policy which was meant to reflect on the benefits and strengths of the traditional systems as safety nets in collaboration with other civil societies (MoHCW, 2011). The policy aimed at promoting access to educational services for orphans. The National Orphan Care Policy also lead to implementation of other policies like the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC). The NAP for OVC was initiated due to the rising cases children made vulnerable due to the loss of parent due to HIV/AIDS with the Zimbabwean Government in collaboration with United Nations. The NAP for OVC in Zimbabwe was implemented in phases NAP 1 running 2004 to 2010, NAP for OVC phase 2 running from 2011 to 2015 and phase of NAP 3 2016 to 2020.

In an effort to cater for the educational needs of orphans and vulnerable children in Zimbabwe through service provision, the government introduced the Basic Education Assistance Module. The Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), initiated by the government of Zimbabwe is aimed at improving access to primary and secondary education for orphans and vulnerable children. This programme was initiated in 2001 by the government to ensure access to education for all children especially the vulnerable groups. The programmes is eligible for orphans and vulnerable children between the ages of 6-19 years and provides school fees waivers. The BEAM national programme is being implemented in both the rural and urban areas. This programme initiative is in line with some of the international frameworks in support of education for all like the United Nations Rights on the Convention of the Rights of Children (1989) and regional frameworks like the African Charter in the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999). The programme is being implemented in rural wards across the nation and that includes

the Gweru Rural District. This is one of the educational service that has been put in place to help orphans and vulnerable children progress to the next level in school.

These provisions by the government thus show the efforts it is making in order to advance the education and access to educational services for vulnerable groups. However the implementation of services by the government remain questionable.

2.5 Strategies that can be used by the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas.

In as much as the Government of Zimbabwe has put in place strategies to help improve to help improve retention, attendance and progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school there is need to improve existing programs like the Basic Education Assistance Model and coming up with new measures such as school feeding programs to be put in place to address issues of accessing education and progression for all groups including OVCs.

2.5.1 Improved BEAM benefits

One of the strategies the Government of Zimbabwe can establish to ensure the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school is improving the benefits of the Basic Assistance Education Model. While it is noted that the BEAM programme offers school fees waivers for OVC, one can note that they are other requirements that are play a role in the progression of children. The BEAM programme could also include providing orphans and vulnerable children school uniforms. Low income families especially in the rural areas if Zimbabwe lack the financial capabilities to even provide school uniforms for children. Henceforth adding school uniform package to the school fees waiver would extremely address the rates of progression of orphans and vulnerable children especially in the low income rural areas.

While the economic adversaries of the country make it hard to access financial resources to ensure enrolment and progression, providing for school uniforms is another challenge for

families. One can note that a number of orphans and vulnerable children attending school in rural areas barely afford to have a full inform. The alternative is wearing casual wear at school for example shoes and jackets. Therefore if the government of Zimbabwe was to address this issue progression rates would rise as the orphans and vulnerable children will confidently attend school with a feeling of being at par with the other students. Furthermore, the BEAM Government programme can further be strengthened by provision of stationery for all orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. Stationery is important as it leads to improved participation of children in terms of school works hence better improving grades that are a requirement for one to progress to the next level in school.

2.5.2 School feeding programs

Another strategy that the Government of Zimbabwe can put in place to improve the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas is putting in place food feeding programs in schools. Food is basic need as has been argued by scholars like Abraham Maslow in the Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of needs food is a biological requirement to the survival of human beings. According to Abraham Maslow (Maslow, 1943) who coined the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, food is part of the physiological needs which are biological requirements for human survival. Poverty affects the ability for households in the rural areas to access all the pillars of food security which are food availability, accessibility, consumption and stability. Lack of food satisfaction affects the ability of one to concentrate and in this case for the OVC to concentrate in their school work and studies. Orphans and vulnerable children are most affected by poverty especially in the rural areas and this leads to an increased risk of food deficit among households. At household level food may be lacking due to multiple factors for instance lack of agricultural inputs, availability of labour, low income and issues of climate change.

The school feeding program as a strategy has been successfully implemented by countries within the African Region like Rwanda and Ghana. The Government of Rwanda in 2021 initiated the National School Feeding Programme which provides meals at school. In Ghana a school feeding scheme was introduced by the government and the main objectives of the scheme was to improve enrolment, attendance and progression of children in schools. The strategy of putting in place food feeding programs in schools in rural areas will improve attendance of children in school and in turn improve progression. The availability of food in school will motivate orphans and vulnerable children to attend school every day as there is a guaranteed meal at school.

2.6 Economic strengthening

It is important that households that are caring for orphans and vulnerable children are economically empowered and strengthened to ensure financial capability to care for orphans especially the school going age. Economic strengthening helps caregivers who are not employed to also gain a source of income. Poverty is one of the leading factors affecting the progression of orphans and vulnerable children henceforth economic strengthening of these families would have a positive impact on the educational outcomes of orphans. These programs and activities will help families that area economically vulnerable and improve income. The government of Zimbabwe could put in place economic activities that will target to help assist poor household in the care of orphans and vulnerable children most especially in the rural areas. These economic strengthening should also complement existing social assistance programs and policies.

Economic strengthening programs may vary from agricultural, craft work and local buying and selling depending on resources and skill sets available in different communities. All these activities can be sustainable and offer long term solutions in addressing the issue of poverty hence addressing the issue of lack of finances affecting progression of orphans and vulnerable

children. Countries in the sub Saharan Africa like Liberia introduced a program targeting youths starting at age 14 both male and female, the Youth Education for Life Skills program. The program carries out training in financial management and agriculture. In 2004 the program in Liberia managed to assist 29 360 orphans across the nation in primary and secondary schools. The program helps assist vulnerable populations including orphans to have an understanding of income generating activities they can take part in to help assist their economic capabilities and reduce household poverty. Furthermore the Government of Zimbabwe can also borrow from other international agencies that promote economic strengthening like the United States Agency for International Development which operates in over 100 countries globally improving the lives of poor households by carrying out skills training and providing inputs.

Furthermore, economic strengthening can also target and support orphans and vulnerable children develop a set of skills that can help improve their lives. Therefore one can note that the Government of Zimbabwe can act to empower and improve the lives of poor households with orphans and vulnerable children progress to the next level thorough implementing economic strengthening strategies the help reduce poverty in families and meet educational needs of orphans.

2.7 Psychosocial support interventions

Offering psychosocial support to orphans in the school environment and outside the school environment is another strategy that the Government of Zimbabwe should consider to help orphans in rural areas progress to the next level. The Department of Social Welfare in collaboration with the Ministry of Education should ensure that orphans are monitored in school and out of school. The psychosocial support interventions can allow for a holistic approach with inclusion of the school, family or caregivers and the community as a whole. This will protect orphans from toxic situation like abuse and harms that can further deteriorate and affect their education. Psychosocial support interventions will assist orphans to deal with

the feelings of a loss in a healthy way and provide with healthy coping mechanisms. Psychosocial support interventions will help both the children and caregivers deal with issues affecting them and suggest possible solutions.

2.8 Chapter Summary

The chapter mainly focused on accessing the factors that are of hindrance towards progression of orphans and vulnerable children, to also further assess measures which are being implemented by the Government of Zimbabwe and how these can be better improved. The chapter provided identification of major literature that supports the concept of progression and orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas in Zimbabwe. The literature evaluation concentrated on information that provides room for prior research to be analysed, synthesized and offer foundation for new research.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology which the researcher used in conducting a research on the factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. The researcher implored a qualitative research approach making use of semi structured interviews and a focus group discussion which guided the validity and reliability of the information collected. The study made use of a thematic analysis method for data presentation which encompasses stages that were followed by the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher sought to uphold ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality and voluntary consent.

3.1 Methodology

Methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select and process information acquired about a topic. Methodology is a way of explaining how a researcher will carry out their research. According to (Goodsmith, 2004) research methodology is a primary principle that will guide your research.

In carrying out the study, the researcher made use of qualitative research. Qualitative research design is significant when one has to have a thorough grasp of human behaviour, social phenomena and perceptions. (Biggerstaff, 2011) asserts that qualitative research methods have a lot to offer when one needs to examine people's sentiments or ask them to consider their experience. Through the use of qualitative research, the study will have an in depth understanding of the factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. This method allowed the researcher to probe further and allowed for detailed descriptive information on the thoughts, view and perception of participants.

3.2 Research design

A research design is a detailed plan outlining the precise approach that will be used in a study or research (Orodho, 2014). The researcher made use of the explanatory research to carry out the study. The explanatory research design was created to study a phenomenon that has not been well explored or described before. The explanatory research allowed for an in depth understanding of a topic which in this case is an exploration of factors hindering progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas.

The explanatory research can best be used in case studies which allows for case analysis and observations. According to (Yin, 2011) a case study is an empirical investigation that examines people's social lives , experiences and sentiments in relation to a specific issue in context of real world events. The case study approach used in this study is quite adaptable and allows for an inquiry in an effort to comprehend a situation better. (Ochieng, 2015).

3.3 Population under the study

A population according to (Hanlon, 2011) is made up of all subjects or units that make up a research sample. Based on these academic definitions, one might define population as group of all participants that a study seeks to influence. The population under study consists of orphans and vulnerable children of school going age between 10-17 years including both girls and boys. The population also includes teachers in the educational sectors of schools who provided a professional basis in the study. Furthermore, another population under the study the community which was represented by the community cadre workers also took part in the research.

3.4 Sample size

Sample size refers to the chosen component being examined (Taherdoost, 2016) thus the sample size of this study was 15. These include 10 (orphans and vulnerable children) and 5 key informants (3 community cadres, 2 school teachers)

3.5 Sampling methods

The researcher made use of the purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling where researchers use their own discretion when selecting participants. A total of two schools where used in this study using purposive sampling. Two teachers where picked from the selected schools based on their knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of orphans and vulnerable children. 10 of the participants were orphans and vulnerable children with 5 participants from one school and 5 participants from the second school. Three community cadres were purposely selected from the communities that the selected orphans and vulnerable children reside.

3.6 Data collection methods

Data collection is the procedure through which the researcher gathers information to address the study problem. According to (Punch, 2005), data collection is a technique to gather data on variables of interest and provide answers to research questions. Data is gathered through the use of various mechanisms that include questionnaire and semi structured interviews which the researcher will make use of in this study.

3.6.1 Semi structured interviews

Interviews are one way of data collecting used to get pertinent information form respondents. Semi structured interviewing is a combination of both structured interviewing and unstructured interviewing. The researcher made use of semi structured interviews making use of open ended questions and a few predetermined questions. Semi structured interviews gives participants

more opportunities to openly express themselves (Moriarty, 2011). Semi structured interviews were used for 5 participants (OVC's) and 5 key informants (2 teachers and 3 CCW's) taking part in the study and these interviews' duration was between 30 minutes and one hour to allow for ample interaction time. The researcher took down notes during the interviews highlighting the different views and thoughts of each person respectively. The interviews took place at a community meeting point to ensure easy accessibility for 5 participants (OVC's) and 5 key informants (2 teachers and 3 CCW's)

3.6.2 Focus group discussion

Focus group discussions are frequently used in qualitative approach to gain insight on issues affecting a particular groups of people. A focus group involves bringing together people from comparable backgrounds or experiences to discuss particular topic of interest. The focus group discussion took place in the community hall and lasted for an hour. The focus group discussion was conducted with 5 orphans and vulnerable children only to ensure they can freely communicate on issues affecting progression without fear of authority or the elderly and ways they best see fit to ensure progression in school. The discussion was guided by a short list of guiding questions.

3.7 Research instruments

A research instrument are tools used for data collection to obtain, measure and analyse data.

3.7.1 Interview guides

The researcher made use of 2 interview guides, one interview guide which will be used for 5 participants (OVC's) and the second interview guide for the 5 key informants (2 teachers and 3 CCW's). The first interview guide was used for the 5 participants (OVC's) and the questions were ones that can best be understood by children in that age group that will be sensitive when probing. The second interview guide was used for the 5 key informants (2 teachers and 3

CCWs) containing open ended questions and present general topic to be discussed. The interview guides were not be rigid in nature and allowed for open discussions on the different factors affecting progression of OVC's in schools.

3.7.2 Focus group discussion guide

The researcher made use of a single focus group discussion guide which helped guide the discussion towards the objectives of the research. The guide contains a set of guiding open ended questions which best suite the OVC's to help the researcher probe further and have an in depth understanding of the research.

3.8 Data collection procedure

Bindura University of Science Education gave consent and authorization to conduct the research investigation. Additionally the researcher requested approval from the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), Provincial Education Director (Midlands Province), District Schools Inspector (Gweru District) and heads of the 2 schools to conduct the study. The researcher also sought consent of the participants and key informants in this research.

3.9 Data analysis and presentation

Data analysis procedures allow you to determine your findings. Data analysis describes the strategies that a researcher will use to prepare the data. It notes down the measures which will be undertaken to increase validity and reliability of results. A good measure should be both valid and reliable. Data analysis is the process of employing statistical analytic methods to condense gathered data into manageable amounts according to (Coopers & Schilder, 2006). The researcher made use of thematic analysis in their study which is a method of analysing qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a technique for analysing qualitative data that involves looking for, analysing and reporting recurring patterns across a data collection (Braun &

Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis helps bring out social, cultural and structural contexts that have an impact on individual experiences. The thematic analysis method was most suited to the research as it identified different themes which have an effect on the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. Theme identification can either have an inductive approach or deductive approach. Thematic analysis follows six steps which are familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, finalising themes and producing a write up.

- **Familiarization:** At this step the researcher familiarized themselves with data sets. These data sets include the semi structured interview sets and other notes which will be obtained during the focus group discussion. The researcher went through all data sets in form of notes and audios to have knowledge of what best answers the research topic.

- **Coding:** The researcher took note of patterns or connections that inform regular themes and code the findings. The researcher also transcribed to a shorthand description of content in sentence form or phrases and deducing it to a certain code. Each code described an idea, feeling or a factor which might be having an impact on the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe.

- **Generating themes:** At this stage the researcher searched for themes that are reoccurring within the data sets that are relevant to the research study.

- **Reviewing themes:** This stage traces themes previously identified and making sure the themes are well aligned with the data sets and previous coding. At this stage the researcher went through all the data sets and ensure all themes have been captured and can supported by materials.

- **Finalizing themes:** After final themes had been drafted the researcher named and defined each of the themes. The final themes were then generated and the researcher

had clear themes that address topic on factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas in Zimbabwe and addressing the objectives of the study.

- **Write up:** The write up will explain findings and how the thematic analysis technique of data analysis was used. How the data was collected and how thematic analyses was conducted itself.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Ethics in social work are defined as to how social workers should behave in professional situation, for example, with service users, carers, colleagues, other professionals, students (Shardlow, 2013). Ethics guide social workers in their practice and these also guided the researcher. The researcher uphold the following ethics in carrying out their study and research.

- **Informed consent**

It is important that the ethic of informed consent is upheld in research work. According to (Banks, 2012), informed consent involves willingness to take part in any research. Voluntary involvement of participants and key informants is crucial to ensuring information is captured. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) highlights social workers should obtain informed consent before conducting and research or work that needs participation of people. The researcher made use of consent forms which were given to every participant to ensure participation willingly. For OVC under the age of 18 consent forms were signed by the caregivers before engaging the children. The consent form also highlighted that the participants are free to withdraw from participating at any moment they do not have the will to continue.

- **Confidentiality**

In any context where information is shared it is an ethical mandate to ensure confidentiality. Confidentiality entails the principle of keeping private and safeguarding information (Saunders, 2015) .NASW code of ethics outlines that there should be respect to a person's right to privacy. Upholding confidentiality promote good rapport between the participants and the researcher. Confidentiality also meaning not disclosing personal information like names and residence hence the researcher made use of pseudo names to protect the identity of participants. Moreover, it is important that before engaging in any dialogue the researcher articulated that anything said and information shared will be safe.

- **Voluntary participation**

Voluntary participation means that all research participants and key informants are have the right to choose to participate in the research without imposing or consequences (Saunders, 2015). Participants have to be willing to participate and that also means anyone if free to withdraw without feeling an obligation to continue. During the study, the researcher informed all participants that they are free to withdraw at any point and this was supported by the consent form which also stated that participants can freely withdraw.

3.11 Validity and reliability of study

The study made use of tools and instruments that ensured questions asked where in line with the objectives of research to ensure validity of information gathered. The research was also made on a basis of truth hence the semi structured questions to allow all participants to air their views hence reliability and validity of information gathered. The study also took into considerations studies on issues affecting orphans and vulnerable children that had been previously carried out nationally, regionally and internationally to ensure information acquired is feasible and is on strong basis.

3.12   Limitations of the study

Identifying orphans and vulnerable children and soliciting data from them was a challenge as they were cases of withdrawal on certain issues hence affecting validity of findings. Furthermore, as the COVID 19 pandemic is still ongoing this may affect smooth and effective study.

3.13   Delimitations of the study

The study was only conducted in the rural cluster of the Gweru District. The development of orphans and vulnerable children in rural schools was consequently the focus of attention. The study's main concern was how orphans and vulnerable children in Zimbabwe rural areas fared in terms of educational attainment.

3.14 Chapter conclusion

The chapter highlighted the methodology used by the researcher in the course of the study. It further highlighted the research population, design, and research instruments which were made use of in the study of factors affecting progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. Ethical considerations were outlined and discussed. The chapter also pointed out the limitations and delimitations of the study and sought to give an overview of the validity and reliability of the study.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis, Presentation and Discussion of Findings

4.0 Introduction

The chapter gives a summary of the findings for the research carried out on the factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe Maboleni Rural Ward. The study was guided by research objectives; to identify factors hindering progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas in Zimbabwe; to determine factors that promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools; to assess the education services being provided to orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas and to explore strategies that can be used by the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas. This chapter gives focus on the findings obtained from investigations presenting, analysing and carrying out a discussion of findings. Data was collected from 15 respondents with ten being school going orphans and vulnerable children, five informants comprising of two Teachers selected from two different schools and three Community Care Workers within Maboleni Rural Ward. The researcher took into cognisance the research ethics such as voluntary participation, confidentiality and informed consent during the data collection procedure. Data is presented in themes from responses that emerged from respondents.

4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

The section presents the demographic information of participants.

4.1.1 Demographic of Total Respondents

Table 1 Total Respondents

Respondent	Intended	Actual	Total
Orphans & Vulnerable Children	10	10	10
Key Informants	5	5	5
Total	15	15	15

N=15

The table above shows that the total number of respondents was fifteen. The respondents were all orphans and vulnerable children as the research was focusing on the challenges that this group encounters in term of progression in school. Five key informants comprised of three Community Care Workers with two being females and one male and two female Teachers. The targeted total number of respondents was achieved.

4.1.2 Orphan status of Orphans and Vulnerable Children Respondents

Table 2 Orphan status of Orphans and Vulnerable Children

ORPHAN STATUS	TOTAL
Single Orphan	3
Double Orphan	7
Total	10

The above table illustrates the number of Orphans and Vulnerable Children that took part in the study and their orphan status. Single orphans are those children that have lost a single parent

either a mother or a father. Double orphans are children that have lost both parents. 3 single orphans and 7 double orphans took part in the study.

4.1.3 Age Range of Respondents

Table 3 Age Range of Respondents

AGE RANGE (YEARS)	TOTAL
9-12	2
13-15	3
16-18	5
25-39	2
40+	3
TOTAL	15

The table above illustrates the age range of all respondents that took part in the study. The age range of orphans and vulnerable children that took part in the study are between the ages 9 to 18 years. The first age range of OVC's 9-12 years are orphans that are in Primary School. Age range 13 -15 years are orphans that are in High School and are in their Ordinary level. The final age range of OVC's illustrated above is 16-18years and this age range comprises of High School and are in their Advanced level children. The age of the key informants ranged from 25 to 45. The first range of key informants 25-39 consists of one 25 year old teacher and a 39 year old Community Care Worker. The age range 40 plus comprises of two Community Care Workers and one teacher.

4.2 Qualitative Data Presentation

The main aim of the study was to explore the factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in the rural area of Maboleni Lower Gweru. Guided by the study

objectives, the researcher acquired relevant data through carrying out semi structured interviews with orphans and vulnerable children and key informants comprising of teachers and community care workers. A total of two schools where used in this study using purposive sampling. Two teachers where picked from the selected schools based on their knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of orphans and vulnerable children. 10 of the participants were orphans and vulnerable children with 5 participants from one school and 5 participants from the second school. Three community cadres were purposely selected from the communities that the selected orphans and vulnerable children reside. The researcher recorded and took down notes during the interviews. The data was coded into different themes using thematic analysis. These themes will be discussed and described below using four research objectives.

4.3 Factors hindering progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas in Zimbabwe.

This section takes a look at the factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children as highlighted by the respondents. To address the first objective respondents were asked on these factors and how the factors pointed out directly affects progression in school. Factors discussed as hindering progression are poverty which was disintegrated to economic background, and lack of access to food. , negligence, child labour, early child marriages and pregnancies and psychological effects of the loss of a parent or parents. These challenges are explained below.

4.3.1 Poverty

All of the participants (15) highlighted that poverty is a hindrance to progression in school. Poverty and the economic background are major contributing factors to the hindrances in the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe in particular Maboleni rural ward in Lower Gweru. Households in Lower Gweru are characterised by poor income families who struggle with basic daily needs which in turn affect

the education of school going children within families especially orphans. The majority of the respondents attested to poverty being a major contributing factor to challenges in progression.

One of the participants had this to say;

"Poverty is affecting the majority of households in this community. Families are failing to provide the basic needs to survival and the cost of education is a growing challenge. This is worsened when the caregivers are of old age and no longer have a source of income to fend for families."

Poverty affects the financial capabilities of families to cater for the educational needs of orphans and vulnerable children and also to cater for the food needs of children. In the case of death of parents, children are left in the care of grandparents as caregivers. Poverty is mainly because the majority of the household caregivers are older adults who do not work thus do not have a regular source of income to fend to the various needs of a child. These households depend on remittance from relatives that are working and earning. Remittance and assistance is not on a regular basis and is not fixed hence each day is unpredictable and this possess as a challenge in terms of the education of school going children.

4.3.1.1 Economic background

Two of the teachers agreed that the economic background of a student plays a great part in progression especially for orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. During an interview a teacher who interacts with orphans in class stated that;

"You will find that orphans in my class often at times do not have exercise books that are needed for all the subjects they will be studying. When you ask where the exercise books are they state that the books have not been bought. Even the books they do have

will not be covered and you can tell that this child is lacking financial resources needed

to successfully complete studies."

The economic background of a household dictates their financial capabilities in ensuring the child attends school every day and successfully progresses to the next level in school. In cases where the child lives in a stable economic household the rates of progression are higher and the school needs of a child are catered for. Whereas in cases where a child lives in a household that is economically crippled it becomes a hindrance to progress to the next level in school. Education requires resources that call for finances to ensure all these requirements are met. In this particular research, the economic background of the learners was a factor hindering their progression and the results will be highlighted in the table below.

Table 4. Showing Economic Stability range of learners

Economic stability range	Frequency
Very Stable	1
Stable	2
Poor	7
Total	10

Table 1 shows that 1 of the 10 learners in the study are from very stable economic households, 2 of the learners are from stable households while the majority 7 of learners are from poor economic households. As shown by the findings, the economic instability of a household affects the progression of a child in school to the next level. Orphans from poor households as

highlighted on the table above lack material resources such as a full uniform and stationery required to complete daily tasks.

4.3.1.2 Lack of access to adequate food

All of the key informants (5) argued that lack of food affects children in school. During the data collection procedure it was noted that some children come to school without having a meal and sometimes going to bed without eating anything. A teacher stated that;

> *"It is quite heart breaking when you see a child not having any food on the tea breaks and lunch breaks. This often leads to social withdraw even among peer groups of the child as they feel they do not fit in".*

Food is a basic need which is important to the survival and wellbeing of a child. Food is an important component in the full development and growth of an individual. Availability and access to adequate food increases the energy levels of a child, participation and in turn progression rate. Lack of food affects the child's ability to concrete and grasp the concepts being taught in school as there is a low energy thus affecting overall response.

4.3.2 Early child marriages and pregnancies

Key informants (5) comprising of teachers and community care workers highlighted early child marriages and pregnancies as a hindrance to the progression of orphans and vulnerable children. In a bid to uncover the factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas, the respondents were asked to respond to this. One of the Community Care Workers had this to say;

> *"Children are getting married at an early stage so as to find a way to cater for their materialistic needs which they feel can be fulfilled in marriage by a husband. These children often fall into these early marriages to have basic needs such as food and even*

a roof over their heads. Orphans often at times fall victim to early child marriages due to their more complex circumstances. "

This response corresponds well with (Jere, 2014) who states that a need for materialistic fulfilment is also a cause to early child marriage. Furthermore, in cases of early child marriages the one of the Teachers highlighted that;

"Pregnancy affects the attendance of children which has a detrimental effects on their performance. Pregnancy may lead to failure to attend school every day and also lead to drop outs."

Child marriage is a contributing factor hindering the progression of orphans and vulnerable and most especially those living in rural areas of Zimbabwe in particular Maboleni Rural Wards. The Constitution of Zimbabwe as revised in May 2022 prohibits the marriage of minors under the age of 18 as this affects the mental, physical, emotional wellbeing of a child and in turn affecting their education.

4.3.3 Negligence

Three key informants highlighted negligence as another factor hindering the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. During the investigation one of the key informants a teacher stated that;

"Orphans and vulnerable children sometimes lack the care needed so that they can fully reach their maximum potential. For instance when there is a consultation day some of the caregivers do not show up and this is because they are not invested in the child. In some instances a child comes to school without completing their homework and says that no one could help them at home. Furthermore behaviour of children who lack care and supervision at home leads to misbehaviour and getting in trouble at school."

Negligence implies ignoring and not catering for the needs of a child may it be in terms of emotional support or care, to materialistic items such as food or clothing. Negligence affects the progression of children in school as the caregiver may not fully support and cater for the educational and financial needs of a child as is argued by (Gillian Moranttz, Donald Cole, Rachel Vreeman, & Paula Braitstein, 2013). When a child is left an orphan, the responsibility extends to family member to offer foster care for the child. However, this may negatively affect a child in cases where the extended family responsible for the child is neglecting the child.

4.3.4 Child labour

Key informants (5) and 2 vulnerable children stated that child labour is another factor that affects the progression rates in school. There has seen a significant number of children especially male children taking part in artisanal mining within the community. One Community Care Worker had this to say;

> *"Children especially orphans are forced to take part in activities that help them cater and provide for their needs. Many of the children have fallen victim to taking a part in illegal mining schemes because they feel a pressure to provide for themselves. Boys usually take part in these and it's quite saddening as this does not only affect their education but also affect character leading to delinquent behaviour like not listening to the elderly and becoming disrespectful."*

Artisanal mining according to (United Nations Environment Programme, 2014) a gold mining conducted by individual miners or small enterprise with limited capital investment and production. It is characterised by the use of rudimentary tools such as pans, picks and shovels and do not have a mining title. This practice is becoming a prominent practice in the rural wards of Lower Gweru negatively impacting attendance of students and leading to school dropouts.

Child labour is also not limited to the commercial aspect but also extends to labour within the household and agricultural farming. During an interview a female orphan stated that;

"Ndisati ndaenda kuchikoro tomukira kumunda kunorima kana ndapedza ndima yandatarirwa ndozotanga kugadxirira kuenda kuchikoro. Dzimwe nguva ndima yacho inenge yakakura ndononoka ndopedzisira ndarega kuenda kuchikoro" (Before I go to school I wake up early morning to go to the fields to plough , when I'm done with the section I would have been allocated I then start preparing to go to school. Sometimes the portion I would've been allocated will be large hence I take a lot of time to finish and end up not going to school)

In the rural areas across the nation agriculture is the main means of livelihood for most household and is practiced religiously. It is the case of Maboleni Rural Ward with various agricultural practices and livestock rearing. When orphans are left in the care of caregivers after the death of parents, often at times these children are subjected to work especially in the fields. The time in the field also increases in the rain season when most agricultural work is carried out. The progression and school attendance of orphans and vulnerable children is affected by this as they are subjected to working long hours in the fields which affects their school performance and attendance.

4.3.5 Psychological effects

Another factor hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas is dealing with the effects of a loss of parents psychologically and emotionally. The loss of a loved one can give room to traumatic experiences especially when a child is faced with the reality of losing both parents and now being an orphan. That sense of a loss affects the wellbeing of a child having to deal with the aftermath of the loss. A Community Care Worker had this to say;

"It takes times for a child who has lost a parent most especially double orphans to get back to their usual self. Some children may withdraw completely and shutdown in terms of their participation in day to day activities and even to school. Accepting that a parent is gone is a real challenge to these children. As a community worker who is in constant interaction with these children you can see how the loss has affected their day to day living"

4.4 To determine factors that promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools.

The following section takes a look at the factors that promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school as was discussed by the key informants and participants of the study.

4.4.1 Stable economic household

The economic stability and household income of a household that a child is living in greatly affects the progression rate in school. Children from stable income households have higher progression rates and are able to attend school every day and have their school requirements. Regular household income allow for a child's financial and material needs to be met. During an interview with a maternal orphan this what they had to say;

"My father works in South Africa and sends money every month so that we can buy groceries at home and also if there is any school materials that I need we use that money. I do not face any challenges that stop me from progressing to the next level in school because I have all the materials I need. "

4.4.2 School fees subsidies

School fees subsidies from the government and non-governmental organisations assist in promoting and improving the progression rates of orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas of Zimbabwe. The government through the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) seeks to improve the access to education for orphans. 3 of the respondents confirmed to be receiving school fees subsidies from BEAM and can attend school every day as there in no worry about the financial aspect of school costs. One of the respondents said;

> *"I have been on the BEAM program since grade 1 and I am now in grade 4. Without this program I do not think I would have made it this far in school as I live with my grandmother who does not work so it would have been difficult for her to find my school fees money."*

Another 3 of the respondents also receive school fees subsidies from 2 non-governmental organisations that are operating in the rural wards of Lower Gweru. One of the informants a community care worker highlighted that;

> *"Some of the orphans and vulnerable children in our community receive assistance from non-governmental organisations who enrol these children in the community. Community care workers help link and refer these children to these organisations as we are the most aware of orphans within the community."*

4.4.3 Caregivers level of education / Motivation

One of the respondents a teacher said that;

> *"The level of education of a caregiver promotes progression of orphans as they intrinsically understand the importance of education thus motivates and encourages the child to attend school every day and will go the extra mile to ensure child progresses to the next level."*

Previous studies show that orphans with caregivers who gave achieved a higher level of education as caregivers now form the baseline to which the child must follow and look to. This is supported by the social learning theory by psychologist Albert Bandura (1963) which is of the view that behaviour is learned through interaction. This can also be further supported by the systems that in cases were systems are positively reinforce positive outcomes are guaranteed which in this particular study promotes progression of OVC.

4.5 Education services being provided to orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas.

All key informants said that orphans and vulnerable children could access education services which were put in place by the government of Zimbabwe that is the Basic Education Assistance Module. One teacher had this to say;

> *"Orphans and vulnerable children can access services put in place by the government and this helps progression to the next level. However, you will find that as the children progress to High School level in school most are not in the program. Furthermore, you will find that some of the children in most need are not in the program while children with better conditions are."*

The respondents all highlighted that non-governmental organisations play a pivotal role in providing services that assist orphans and vulnerable children. An informant a community care worker said;

> *"The impact that non-governmental organisations has had on the lives of orphans and vulnerable children has helped their education and also personal growth. These organisations offer financial assistance, counselling services and homework group clubs to help vulnerable children be able to attend school every day and progress to the next*

level in school. However, these services due to organisations' targets end up being granted to the most in need through means testing."

In terms of improving services that are in place to assist orphans and vulnerable children another community worker said;

"In my own opinion I think that the government should borrow a leaf from how non-governmental organisations assist vulnerable children by not only offering school fees subsidies but also offering services that help with emotional and psychological needs of a child which has an effect on their progression levels."

4.6 To explore strategies that can be used by the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas.

The section will highlight all the possible strategies suggested that can be put in place by the Government of Zimbabwe so as to increase the progression rates of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas across the nation.

4.6.1 Provision of non-school fees related costs

One of the strategies highlighted by key informants and respondents was that the government should supplement existing programs with other services that contribute to successful progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. A teacher said;

" The government of Zimbabwe could put in place strategies that supplement the existing school fees subsidy program BEAM with other services that are important to progression of children which include providing stationery and uniforms as these materials have play a great role on the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school."

4.6.2 Economic empowerment of households

All the key informants highlighted the need for promoting economic development for all poor households with school going orphans. One of the key informants had this to say;

"It is important that these families have a source of income to which they can generate finances to cater for the financial needs of children in school. This can be in form of offering project start-ups within the industry they are well versed with for instance poultry and agriculture or even welding".

Furthermore a respondent an OVC stated that;

"I think if we get more training on skills that help us become independent in a safe way it would actually help. For instance if we learn skills such as detergent making, sewing masks we could sell during the weekends in our communities."

This therefore shows that economic empowering goes beyond financial and material provision but also assisting individuals gain skills that empower them. The government could also borrow a leaf from Local Implementing Partners like Non-governmental organisations that invest in the community carrying out entrepreneurship training, business mentorship and market linkages.

4.7 Discussion of findings

The main focus of this research was on the assessment of factors hindering the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in school in rural areas of Zimbabwe case study being Maboleni Rural Ward of Lower Gweru. The research was guided by objectives; to identify factors hindering progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas in Zimbabwe, to determine factors that promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools, to assess the education services being provided to orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas and to explore strategies that can be used by the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure progression of

OVC's in schools in rural areas. The researcher managed to interview 10 orphans and vulnerable children five in primary school and five in high school. 5 key informants 3 Community care workers and 2 teachers from the two selected schools were interviewed making use of semi structured interviews. Making use of the findings presented above, the researcher managed to understand all research objectives which guided the discussion of findings.

The researcher was guided by the systems theory so as to get an in-depth understanding of the challenges that OVC's in schools in rural areas encounter that are hindering progression to the next level. The systems theory allows for a greater understanding of the various components surrounding a child and how these can negatively or positively impact educational outcomes. Von Bertalanffy (Bertalanffy, 1973) argues and defines these systems as complex interacting parts. With this in mind, the researcher found that some of the challenges faced by orphans are due to conditions within systems such as the family, community, school and the government.

The researcher through interaction with respondents managed to identify factors hindering the progression of OVC's in school as poverty, negligence, early child marriages and pregnancy, child labour and HIV & AIDS. Poverty is a phenomena largely affecting rural communities in terms of education and even across all spectres of life. These conditions have been worsened by the outbreak of the global pandemic COVID 19 era leading to a rise of extreme poverty according to (Christensen & Walton 2021). During the study, the research found that poverty affects access to educational materials for instance books, uniforms other school related costs and availability of food. Another factor highlighted and noted down by the researcher is the issue of child labour which goes beyond domestic work but further extends to cases of illegal commercial work and this affects progression. Artisanal mining being practised around the rural ward as male children are turning to this practise to fend for their financial needs and neglecting their education and in some cases leading to school drop outs. In other instances

OVC's are subjected to working in domestic fields for long periods and large sections which affects energy levels and school attendance. Lack of attendance affects progression as poor performance affects progression in school. Negligence of OVC's by caregivers is another factor that was discussed by respondents during the research as hindering progression. This is similar to the findings in a research carried out by (Braitstein et al 2013) where he stated that countries within the Sub Saharan showed frequent resurfacing issues of neglect of orphaned children and youth of material and educational neglect.

Moreover, the researcher found that the factors that promote progression of OVC's in school include stable economic household , school fees subsidies, support and motivation of OVC by systems surrounding them especially the family unit , attendance and also the educational level of caregivers. Availability of all these factors promotes higher rates of progression. Furthermore it is important that systems surrounding OVC's are strengthened and reinforced in order for them to cater for the needs of orphans. The family as system can be educated on the coping mechanisms that can be used to help orphans deal with the aftermath of loss in healthy and constructive means that promote progression and overall education of an orphans. The community can be strengthened by bringing awareness of the policies, legislature surrounding OVCs and how best children can be more involved in the decision making process and not merely be side-lined.

The researcher managed to establish strategies that the government of Zimbabwe can put in place to ensure progression of orphans and vulnerable children. The researcher noted that there is a need to supplement the BEAM program with other benefits that are vital to overall education of orphans. While the program offers school fees subsidies, there is need to provide learning materials stationery like books, covers, pens and also provision of school uniforms and food. This is supported by (Murenha, 2006) who states that the fees related costs of sending a child o school represent only a small portion of non-fees costs.

The study has limitations in that its main focus was on one vulnerable group which are orphans in terms of progression in school. Future studied should also give emphasis and recognition to other vulnerable school going groups such as children with disabilities, children in contact and conflict with the law and children living with HIV & AIDS.

4.8 Chapter Summary

The chapter has been successfully indicated and presented demographic data from the respondents. This chapter gives a summary of the findings obtained from investing the factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children and also the factors that promote progression to the next level. The chapter went on to recommend strategies that the Government of Zimbabwe can put in place to ensure the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on summarizing the findings on the research on the factors hindering progression of Orphans and Vulnerable Children in schools in rural areas. It presents conclusions from the research findings on factors hindering progression, factors promoting progression, educational services put in place to promote progression and the strategies that the Government can implement to promote progression in school in rural areas.

5.1 Summary of findings

The previous chapters reviewed and discussed the background of the study, reviewed existing literature, methodology and data presentation analysis and discussion. The study was aimed at examining and assessing the factors hindering progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe. The study was carried out in the rural wards of Lower Gweru, Maboleni Ward 6 Rural. The study was guided by the objectives; to identify factors hindering progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas in Zimbabwe; to determine factors that promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools; to assess the education services being provided to orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas and to explore strategies that can be used by the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas.   Ten of the OVC's were selected using random sampling with five from one school and another five from the second school. Five key informants comprising of three Community Care Workers and two teachers were selected using purposive sampling.

5.2 Factors hindering progression

The research identified the following factors as hindering the progression OVC's in school in rural areas, poverty which is interrelated to factors such as economic background and lack of

access to food, early child marriages and pregnancies, child labour, negligence and psychological effects of loss. It is also highlighted that these factors result in educational problems affecting school attendance and lead to school dropouts.

5.3 Factors promoting progression

Taking into cognisance the guiding framework, the research found that systems surrounding OVCs can have a positive impact on the progression in school. The family's or caregivers level of education play a role in promoting progression as the child will be motivated , guided and supported in terms of provision of educational needs. The economic stability and household income of family also promotes progression. Furthermore community interventions and monitoring of OVC within the community promote progression as member such as Community Care Workers identify, monitor, link and refer vulnerable groups to access educational services School fees subsidies from systems such as the Government and Non-Governmental Organisations promote progression.

5.4 Education services being provided

The research identified educational services being provided by the Government and Non-Governmental Organisations. The Basic Education Assistance Module program being implemented by the government has been a crucial programs in financially assisting orphans successfully attend and progress in school. However it can noted that this program can further be strengthened by providing stationery and uniforms for orphans.

5.5 Strategies to improve progression

Strategies that can be used to promote and improve progression rates in schools in rural areas are the provision of no school related costa such as provision of stationery and uniforms. School feeding schemes could also be put in place and these will promote retention and attendance thus improving progression in school. Furthermore, another strategy would that can be put in

place is economic empowerment of households through skills and entrepreneurship training and capital investments into vulnerable family to allow them to start small scale business.

5.6 Conclusion of study

Deducing from the findings of the research, the study arrived at the following conclusions;

The progression of Orphans and Vulnerable Children in schools in rural areas is hindered by various socio economic factors surrounding the child. Poverty in the rural areas has been a striking cause of hindrance as issues of economic background, household income and lack of resources such as food and educational materials like uniforms and stationery which emanate from poverty. Low progression rates and failure to progress to the next level are also because of other factors such as child labour, negligence and early child marriages and pregnancies as has been discussed. Furthermore, progression in school in affected by intrinsic issues which a child has to forego after the loss of a parent or parents hence psychological issues are a hindrance. The study also conclude that the factors promoting progression of OVC's have to do with assistance rendered by the Government and also Non-Governmental Organisations interchangeably. However, the study concluded that there is a need to improve services through supplementing with other benefits that go beyond fees assistance and subsidises.

The research upon an analysis of findings and data collected reached a conclusion that there is a need for the Government to implement strategies such as school feeding schemes and also to include other provisions that benefit and promote progression such as uniforms and stationery in existing programmes. The research also concluded that there is a need to educate and bring awareness in communities to policies and legislative measure surrounding orphans so as to protect the social welfare and safeguard the overall educational welfare of orphans and increase the progression rates in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe.

5.7 Recommendations

The research intended to investigate the factors hindering progression of Orphans and Vulnerable Children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe. This section will therefore provide recommendations on ways which will assist in increasing the progression rates of OVC's in schools in rural areas.

- The study recommends that the Government implements school feeding schemes in schools especially those in rural areas. School feeding schemes will promote enrolment, retention and school attendance as a meal will be guaranteed in school hence acting as a motivating agent. Furthermore, access to food at school will help orphans and other learners at large retain energy needed to actively participate, complete tasks thus promoting good grades which are vital to progression to the next level in school.

- The study recommends the provision other educational needs that go beyond school fees subsidies by the Government such as provision of uniforms and stationery to Orphans and Vulnerable Children in schools in rural areas.

- The Government should initiate economic strengthening programmes. These programmes could include various aspects such as skills and entrepreneurship training. Furthermore, promotion of economic empowerment of vulnerable families through capital funding into small scale projects that help families and orphans be economically empowered.

- Community education and awareness on the various aspects affecting orphans so as to promote community interventions in assisting. Furthermore, community awareness and education on the policies and legislation surrounding orphans and vulnerable groups are vital in the protection and welfare of orphans within the various communities

5.8 Chapter summary

The research made conclusions due to the findings and gave recommendations for measures to promote progression of OVC's in schools in rural areas, the study highlighted factors hindering progression of OVC's which include poverty, child labour, psychological effects of loss, early child marriages and pregnancies and negligence. The study highlighted factors that promote progression and has an evaluation of the services put in place to help progression. The study also highlighted how the guiding theory and framework was made relevant to research and put into use. The study lastly made recommendations on the measures and strategies that can be put in place to promote progression. These include implementing school feeding schemes, provision of stationery and uniforms, education and awareness of policies and legislation surrounding orphans and vulnerable children.

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APENDICES

Appendix I : Consent Form

Good day, my name is Yolanda Marongedze. I am a student from Bindura University of Science Education studying Social Work with my registration number B1953389. I am carrying out a research with tittle **The factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas. A case study of Ward 6 Rural Maboleni, Lower Gweru.** I further intend to find out ways progression rates in the rural areas can be improved.

I hereby take part in this research well aware of what the study is about as has been explained to me.

I understand that confidentiality will be upheld with right to not disclose identity and any completed forms or notes will be stored safely.

I confirm that I can use any language I am comfortable with and can freely withdraw from the study at any time.

I understand that there will be no compensation in taking part of the study.

Participants signature   Date

……………………….   …………………………..

Appendix II : Interview schedule for Community Care Workers

Interview Schedule for Community Care Workers

Factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe. A case study of Ward 6 Rural, Lower Gweru.

Section A: Factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas.

1. How long have you been a Community Cadre Workers?

2. What is your view on orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas?

3. What is your relationship with the orphans and vulnerable children in your community?

4. What are the challenges that orphans and vulnerable children in your community face?

5. How do these challenges affect the progression of orphans and vulnerable children?

Section B: Educational services being provided to orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas.

6. What educational services are being provided for orphans and vulnerable children in the rural areas?

7. Can all orphans and vulnerable children access these educational services?

8. Are the educational services being provided to orphans and vulnerable children improving progression in school?

9. What can be done to improve educational services being offered to orphans and vulnerable children to ensure progression of every orphan and vulnerable child in school in rural areas?

Section C: Factors that promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas.

10. What factors can you identify that have an impact on the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas?

11. What measures can be put in place to ensure successful progression of orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas.

12. How would these measures be effective?

Section D: Strategies used by the government of Zimbabwe to ensure progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas.

13. What has the government of Zimbabwe done to ensure progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas?

14. What can be done by the government of Zimbabwe effectively promote the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in the rural areas?

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THANK YOU!

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Appendix III : Interview Schedule for Teacher

Interview Schedule for Teacher

Factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas of Zimbabwe.

Section A: Factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas.

1. How long have you been a Teacher?

2. What is your view on orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas?

3. What is your relationship with the orphans and vulnerable children in your school?

4. How regularly do orphans and vulnerable children attend school?

5. What are the challenges that orphans and vulnerable children in your school face?

6. How do these challenges affect the progression of orphans and vulnerable children?

Section B: Educational services being provided to orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas.

7. What educational services are being provided for orphans and vulnerable children in the rural areas?

8. Can all orphans and vulnerable children access these educational services?

9. Are the educational services being provided to orphans and vulnerable children improving progression in school?

10. What can be done to improve educational services being offered to orphans and vulnerable children to ensure progression of every orphan and vulnerable child in school in rural areas?

Section C: Factors that promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas.

11. What factors can you identify that have an impact on the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas?

12. What measures can be put in place to ensure successful progression of orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas.

13. How would these measures be effective?

Section D: Strategies used by the government of Zimbabwe to ensure progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas.

14. What has the government of Zimbabwe done to ensure progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas?

15. How can the government of Zimbabwe effectively promote the progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in the rural areas?

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THANK YOU!

</div>

Appendix IV: Interview schedule for Orphans and Vulnerable Children

Interview Schedule for OVC

Factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas.

Section A: Factors hindering progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas.

1. How old are you and which school level are you in?

2. Who do you stay with at home?

3. What does your caregiver do to get a source of income?

4. Do you attend school every day?

5. Have you ever missed school for more than 14 days and why?

6. Have you ever gone to school without eating?

7. What are the challenges that you are facing to progress in school?

Section B: Factors that promote progression of orphans and vulnerable children in schools in rural areas.

8. Who helps you with challenges in school that you face?

9. What can be done to ensure you successfully progress to the next level in school?

Section C: Educational services being provided to orphans and vulnerable children in rural areas.

10. Which services help you with your school fees and costs?

THANK YOU!

APPROVAL FORM

ZIMBABWE

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

23 January 2023

Yolanda Marongedze
Bindura University Of Science Education
P.O.Box 1020
Bindura
Zimbabwe

**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN MIDLANDS PROVINCE:
GWERU DISTRICT:MABOLENI PRIMARY AND MABOLENI HIGH SCHOOL.**

Reference is made to your application to carry out research from the above-
mentioned district school on the research title:

**"FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROGRESSION OF ORPHANS AND
VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS IN ZIMBABWE. A
CASE STUDY OF GWERU RURAL DISTRICT MABOLENI WARD 6 RURAL."**

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

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

C.Nyambuya
A/Director : Strategic Policy Planning Research and Statistics
For: **SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**