FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

CHALLENGES FACED BY EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNERS FROM CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES IN COWDRAY PARK SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF REIGATE DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BULAWAYO METROPOLITAN PROVINCE.

BY

MATHUTHU NONTANDO

R185607Z

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE **(DEGREE)**

GWERU, ZIMBABWE

NOVEMBER 2019

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: MATHUTHU NONTANDO

TITLE OF PROJECT: CHALLENGES FACED BY EARLY CHILDHOOD

EDUCATION LEARNERS FRO CHILD-HEADED FAMILIES: A CASE OF REIGATE

DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BULAWAYO METROPOLITAN PROVINCE

SIGNED…………………………………………………………………………

YEAR DEGREE GRANTED: 2019

APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommended to the Midlands State University for acceptance a dissertation entitled: Challenges faced by Early Childhood Education learners from child-headed families in Cowdray Park schools: A case of Reigate primary schools in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province.

Supervisor……………………… Date………………………………

Coordinator…………………….. Date………………………………

Chairperson…………………….. Date………………………………

DEDICATION

The research project is dedicated to my husband Elmon and my children Bathabile and Buhlebethu who gave their full support and encouragement throughout my research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Though it is impossible to list all names, the researcher would like to sincerely, warmly, profoundly and heartily thank all those who contributed in various ways towards the accomplishment of this research. I want to express my sincere heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Dr C Manyumwa who spared his precious time reading, correcting and analysing my work from its initial stage to its completion. I am truly grateful and honoured to have been afforded the opportunity to know and work with you Doctor. Thank you for your commitment and the time devoted in this work to make it a success.

My sincere thanks to the Provincial Education Director and Reigate District schools that authorised the study and all school heads, teachers and learners who voluntarily participated in this project. I am also indebted to my study mates, the "five musketeers" who were a great source of inspiration and were always there for me.

A special thank you goes to my mother for the unceasing encouragement and support. I am obliged to the love of my life, my husband, Mr Elmon Mathuthu, who financially supported me through this venture, not forgetting my children Bathabile and Buhlebethu for their tolerance and moral support. Thank you so much my beloved.

Above all, I thank God Almighty for giving me the strength Iso desperately needed to surge forward. Thank you, Jesus.

DECLARATION

I, Mathuthu Nontando, hereby declare that this project is my original work and affirm that it has not been submitted to this or any other University in support of an application for the degree.

Signed…………………………………… Date………………………… 2019

Signed………………………………….. Date………………………… 2019

ABSTRACT

The study aimed at finding out the challenges faced by Early Childhood Education learners from child-headed families in Cowdray Park schools in Reigate District. It focused on the background of the study which revealed the statement of the problem and significance of the study. The study employed a number of qualitative research approach. The population of the study consisted of four school heads, sixty teachers and four thousand and sixty learners under Reigate District in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. A sample consisted of twenty-four participants including teachers, school heads and learners. Questionnaires, interviews and observation were used to collect data from the study.

Furthermore, the research targeted at presenting and analysing data using tables, pie chart and bar graphs. The study revealed that there are children who are from child-headed families and are not performing well academically in the selected schools. There were challenges that these children from child-headed families faced such as financial constraints, hunger to mention a few and these challenges led to poor performance in school. The study also revealed that children at the ages of six to thirteen are too young to source food and other basic needs for themselves. In addition, the study sought to discuss on the findings, summary and recommendations for teachers, school heads and Government. From the findings it was recommended that the school heads, teachers as well as the Government try to identify children who are living on their own without parental care so that they can assist them at the earliest time.

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CHAPTER 1

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The study seeks to assess the challenges faced by Early Childhood learners from child-headed families in Cowdray Park schools. In this chapter the researcher looked at the background of the study. After that the statement of the problem was highlighted then the researcher moved to the research questions. Significance of the study was also looked at, limitations and delimitations and definition of terms were outlined. Lastly the researcher finalized with the summary.

1.1   BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Child-headed families is a type of family which is rapidly growing especially in Zimbabwe mainly due to increased death rates of parents caused by HIV and AIDS, road accidents, violence, broken marriages and due to economic hardships which lead parents to migrate to other countries in search of greener pastures. In African culture, child-headed families did not exist much. Tutu (2008) says there is no orphan in the African community as other family members looked after the child when the parents died. However, the issue of extended families is quickly coming to an end due to some challenges that the families face, for example, financial challenges whereby the nuclear family cannot afford to support children from other units in the extended family.

UNICEF (2008) indicates that there is between 143-200 million orphans worldwide and an estimated 14 million orphans are due to HIV and AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa. This increase of child-headed families is witnessed both internationally and nationally. De Klerk (2006), in his study in Northern Uganda, revealed that war resulted in many children becoming orphans.

Anderson and Philips (2006), say in South Africa, AIDS is a main cause of parental death. Some children are abandoned by their parents, especially the young mothers and fathers who dump their children with their parents to take care of them. This is supported by Jones (2005), who states that in Swaziland there is an increase in number of child-headed families due to child abandonments, displacement or when parents cannot afford to take care of their children.

Zhangazha (2010), say an average of 100 000 children in Zimbabwe are living without parental care and supervision. Once left parentless, many children establish a household where the eldest sibling takes over the household leadership (Tsegaye, 2008). Some parents who have migrated to other countries to seek employment no longer value the importance of guardians. They leave children to take care of themselves, since they will be using technology to communicate with the children and also use it to send money in a fastest possible way to their children. Leaving children to take care of themselves without a guardian is a disadvantage to some of the children. Oghvbu (2010), conducted a study on how the child-headed families perform academically, only to find that such children display behavioral problems like coming to school late, truancy, inability to read and not consulting teachers. Since there will not be anyone to mould and motivate such children to behave well and love school. Mpofu and Chimhenga (2016), state that from the research that has been done by other researchers in Sub-Saharan Africa, an increase in numbers show that child-headed families are rising rapidly. This affects the children's welfare, since a family is an institution where children learn to interact with other human beings (Le Roux 1984). The interactions then lead to the formation of relationships which extend to the external world when children start school. The family is the most universal of all institutions found throughout history in every society, and it is the basis of all human society. This means without a proper family the well-being of a child will be compromised, hence the study will assess the challenges faced

by Early Childhood Education (ECE) learners from child-headed families in Cowdray Park schools, in Reigate District in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Child-headed families are on the rise as a result of parental death caused by HIV and AIDS and road accidents. Young children who need adult care and support are taking care of their siblings thus depriving them of their childhood and education. The absence of adult caregivers leads to taking over of responsibilities by children below eighteen years. The challenges like the socio-economic conditions of these families will not enhance academic performance, hence the challenges faced by the ECE learners in Cowdray Park schools are to be assessed.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.3.1 Main Research Question

Challenges faced by ECE learners from child-headed families in Cowdray Park schools.

1.3.2 Sub Research Questions

1.3.2.1 What are the main causes of child-headed families?

1.3.2.2 To what extent do the challenges faced by learners from child-headed families affect the teaching and learning process?

1.3.2.3 What strategies can be employed to assist learners from child-headed families?

1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Results from this study, when finally published, may benefit primary school heads, teachers, learners from child-headed families and the Ministry of Education.

The results of this study may assist the **Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and social workers** to plan and organize programs that will help learners from child-headed families to be given adequate resources that they need to learn and be assisted with payment of school fees through programs like Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM).

Teachers may gain more insight into the phenomenon and this will enable them to respond positively and effectively in helping learners from child-headed households in the challenges they face. The research may also assist teachers to keep in mind that no matter their social background, children come to school ready to learn with high hopes for success (Epstein and Sanders, 2008). This implies that learners come to school willing to learn and succeed in their schooling activities. Therefore, this research might raise awareness in teachers on how to treat such learners and provide ways and means to assist such learners to realize their full potential.

Learners may be assisted and might develop holistically as they will be receiving adequate support from teachers and other people responsible. Learners' self-esteem would be boosted since they will be receiving support from teachers and peers, improving their relationships and creating a sense of belonging, hence an improvement in their academic life.

School heads will be enlightened on how to handle situations of learners from child-headed families in the challenges that they face. The school heads might influence policy development and advocate for policy implementation. Policies regarding children would be recalled so as to do the requirements of the nation.

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since the researcher will be interacting with the participants in this study, the researcher's presence during interviews may influence participants not to give honest and correct

responses. However, the researcher of this study will make pre-visits to selected schools for a few weeks before data collection to promote researcher-participant familiarization and trust.

The study was carried out during a semester period where the researcher had other study obligations such as assignments, discussions and examination preparations. However, the researcher relied on electronic sources and information from other related research studies.

1.6 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research will be carried out in the Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. It will be confined to four primary schools in Cowdray Park under Reigate District. The community is mainly composed of young adults, a few are a working class who are employed, some are indigenous entrepreneurs who are always busy all day and some of them have migrated to neighboring countries in search for jobs. The participants will be school heads, teachers and learners from the child-headed families selected after finding about their background from the child study. The study will mainly focus on the challenges that the learners from child-headed families encounter that affect their performance academically. It will not focus on what led them to be left on their own, which is taking care of them in terms of their welfare in the absence of their parents as this will need a research study on its own. The study started on January 2019 to November 2019. The findings from the study may not be the same with other places unless similar problems may exist.

1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Child-headed families

Martinus (2009) defines child-headed families as those in which there is absence or permanent incapacity of an adult caregiver which leads to the taking over of responsibilities by children. Sloth-Nielsen (2004) says a child-headed family is one where there are no adult caregivers available and children under the age of eighteen living on their own. Therefore,

according to the study child-headed families can be defined as families headed by young people below the age of eighteen and have to take the responsibilities of adults by providing for their siblings.

Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) defined a child as any person below the age of eighteen. Therefore, according to the study a child is a person below the age of eighteen years who still needs parental care and support.

Academic performance

Gordon (1995) views academic performance as passing an objective test. Therefore, according to this study academic performance refers to coping well with school activities and one has to pass and obtain good results in the studies completed.

1.8 SUMMARY

The chapter gave the introductory part of the study which includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study and definitions of key terms. The next chapter focuses on literature review.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The literature review is a select analysis of existing research which relates to the researcher's subject and the questions that are chosen (Minkoff, 2012). There are various secondary sources of information such as researchers, theories, articles, newspapers and documentaries that will give detailed analysis of the literature review on matters related to the hypothesis. Assessing the literature will help the researcher to identify the gaps to be filled.

2:1 The meaning of 'child-headed families'

Child-headed families refer to children below the age of eighteen and are left without adult care or caregiver. Martinus (2009) cited in Lepheana (2010) states that child-headed families are those in which there is an absence of adult caregivers which has left the responsibilities to children. Bequele (2007) defines a child-headed family as a family where everyone who lives in the household is younger than eighteen years of age and the family will be headed by one of the older siblings. Lepheana (2010) says the rate of child-headed families in Africa is on the rise since 2005. Some children will have lost both parents while others one. Some parents if left alone to be single parents migrate to neighboring countries in search of jobs (Tsegaye, 2008) leaving the children parentless.

In African tradition, when the parents died, some other relatives like aunts, uncles and grandparents would take care of the children and become extended family members. Awino (2010) says, with the prevailing poverty in Africa, extended families no longer effectively exist and children who are parentless end up taking care of themselves and their siblings. The

research that has been done by other researchers in Sub-Saharan Africa show an increase in numbers showing that child-headed families are rising rapidly (Mpofu and Chimhenga, 2016).

Child-headed families may be caused by many factors, De Klerk (2006) in his study in Northern Uganda revealed that war resulted in many children becoming orphans. Tsegaye (2008) says child-headed families may be due to residential instability and family arrangements such as parents migrating to other cities and towns to seek employment leaving children on their own. Bregg (2004) in his Rwandan study revealed that the 1994 genocide led over one hundred thousand child-headed families, Jones (2005) posits that in Swaziland there is an increase in the number of child-headed families due to child abandonments, displacement or when parents cannot afford to take care of their children. Phillips (2011) says in South Africa there is also an increase of child-headed families, this has been due to parental death as well as other factors. Anderson and Phillips (2006) added that AIDS is the main cause of parental death in South Africa, also some children are abandoned by their parents for reasons known to them.

2:2 Causes of child-headed families

HIV and AIDS is regarded as a major factor leading to the establishment of an increase in the number of child-headed families. Phillips (2011) indicates that the death of parents as a result of HIV and AIDS has resulted in children being left to be orphans. Johnson and Dorrington (2011) state that in South Africa, HIV and AIDS is the leading factor to an increase of child-headed families. Most parents die because of this pandemic disease leaving children to be forced to take care of themselves. Abdool and Abdool (2008) suggested that the number of orphans as a result of HIV and AIDS is expected to beat the level of 5, 7 million in 2014 and this was in agreement with Johnson and Dorrington (2011) who predicted that by 2015 there

would be 5,7 million children who would have lost one or both parents as a result of HIV and AIDS in South Africa.

Some child-headed families may be due to war. De Klerk (2006) in his study in Northern Uganda revealed that war resulted in many children becoming orphans. Thus, most parents went for war and never came back. Bregg (2004) in his Rwandan study revealed that the 1994 genocide led to over one hundred thousand child-headed families. Some children are abandoned by their parents for different reason peculiar to themselves. This is supported by Jones, (2005,163) that in Swaziland there is upsurge in the number of child-headed families due to abandonments, displacement or when parents cannot afford to care for their children. According to Vander Waal (1996, p37) a child-headed family may be due to residential instability and family arrangements such as parents leaving children on their own to seek employment and migrate to cities or towns. This is also experienced by most children in Zimbabwe who have parents who migrate to South Africa and Botswana in search for jobs leaving other siblings to take care of their youngsters. Some parents when migrating to neighboring countries leave their children in the custody of their grandparents. In this regard children will be well catered for, but since the grandparents also die in their old age, children will be left without a guardian (Armstrong, 2005).

2:3 Challenges encountered by learners from child-headed families

Children from child-headed families might be financially challenged. Such children can be vulnerable to poverty because they have limited means of generating income to sustain their households. Masondo (2006) asserts that financial constraints impact negatively on both the education and behavior of children from child-headed families. Children from child-headed families may have many unfulfilled basic needs such as providing food, paying fees. As a result of this, some of them end up missing school or completely dropping out trying to work

and provide for the other siblings. Some children sell cigarettes at beer gardens and they might end up being victims of sexual abuse, especially the girl child who end engaging in prostitution so as to earn a living, who in turn will become a bad role model to the young siblings.

Financial constraints interfere with schooling and academic progress of the learners heading families. Children heading families are faced with pervasive poverty that leads to them losing out on education for the sake of financial income (Masondo, 2006; Leatham, 2005; Mokoena, 2007). Mokoena (2007) points out that crime is prevalent in child-headed families as the families are poverty stricken which leads them to resort to criminal activities to support families. Pillay (2012) asserts that lack of money causes children to fail to purchase school needs, supplies and this leads to failing in class due to lack of these needs.

Another challenge that the child-headed family children have that might affect their academic performance of learners is household chores. Masondo (2006) points out that heads of families shoulder the bulk of house work, they take up many domestic chores such as cleaning the house, paying attention to siblings, gardening and this does interfere with their school work. When they go to school, they will be tired and will not concentrate. This will eventually lead to absenteeism and dropping out of school. In a study by Mkhize (2006), children from child-headed families reported that it was stressful to carry out household roles for family and making decisions. Thus, after the death of parents, children are faced with the problem of role adjustment, and the routine chores are extremely exhausting physically, psychologically and financially, thereby affecting the children's academic performance.

Fox (2001:122) notes that," children in child-headed households face tremendous, emotional and psychological challenges and live in constant memories of their deceased parents. The majority of children suffer feelings of loneliness, trauma, desperation and sadness because of the combined effects of bereavement and stress associated with shouldering an adult role at a

young age, low self-esteem, fear and a sense of alienation". Thus, children in child-headed families have low self-esteem and fear. Such children are sometimes traumatized psychologically because of loss of parents when they are still young. This is worsened if members of the extended family and community reject them.

2:4 Some strategies that can be employed to assist learners from child-headed families

Article 6,24-27 of the Convention on Rights of Children (CRC) mention rights that have to be considered by every citizen to children, thus the right to health, food, safety and education. This might be a way of assisting to overcome challenges faced by children from child-headed families. Through the ministry of primary and secondary the government can monitor programs that assist the orphans and children left to live on their own. Programs like the social welfare and non-governmental organizations because due to corruption and greediness of some individuals, the needy children might end up not benefiting from these programs. According to Pillay (2012) the department of education can employ some professional counselors to offer counseling to learners from child-headed families.

The government has introduced feeding programs at schools so as to assist learners who come to school without food. This will reduce increased absenteeism and withdrawal of learners who would be not having adequate food at home. Some non-governmental organizations in line with the social services assist learners from child-headed families by paying school fees, providing food as well as taking them to hospitals when they are sick in order for them to receive medical care so as to avoid poor school performance due to illnesses. Leatham (2006), says most children relied on teachers for support, children should regard their teachers as parents or role models and seek advice and practical assistance from them. This can only be effective if the teachers know how to handle situations of different

learners. Therefore, the government always makes workshops to equip teachers with such skills such that they are being able to give counseling to those learners from child-headed families.

The Government of Zimbabwe has enacted a policy in favor of the orphaned child. The policy stresses that the child whose parents are both dead or cannot be traced and who has no legal guardian is considered by the state as a child in need of care (The Child Protection and Adoption Act chapter 5, 06 1996 section 2b). The National Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable (OVCs) was implemented in 2005 to 2010. Its national strategic plan's overall goal is to promote an enabling environment, preserve, nurture and restore the psychosocial well-being of children so that they live in hope and dignity in safe and caring environments. This is done by the department of Social Welfare and the Non-Governmental Organizations who engage in many endeavors to address the plight of orphans. They provide services which include provision of shelter, food, clothes and handouts and in some cases resources for income generating projects. They are child friendly courts which are open for especially abused children, thus protecting the rights of all children.

For the orphans and vulnerable to be taken care of there is institutionalization were the social welfare together with the non-governmental organizations offer orphanages and employee adults to be mentors to the children in the orphanage centre. Smart (2003) is of the view that children in the age range of 0-15 years who have no parent or guardian to take care of should be given the Child Support Grant. This will enable them to buy food and other school requirements though some children end up abusing the funds and buy drugs. Smart (2003) also says in some countries like South Africa there are Foster Care Grants which are given to guardians of children who are orphans or the ones left to stay on their own without adult support. This is an incentive to encourage people from the community or extended family to take in orphans. If the government of Zimbabwe can adopt the Child Support Grant and the

Foster Care Grant they will be few children who will be left to stay on their own in child-headed families, most people would rush to take care of since they will be having an income to take care of the needs.

2.5 Summary

In this chapter literature was reviewed based on research questions. It focused on the meaning of child-headed families, causes of child-headed families, the challenges that are encountered by learners from child-headed families and some strategies that can be employed to assist learners from child-headed families. Therefore, the next chapter focuses on the research methodology.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the research methodology which will be used to carry out the study. The research paradigm and the research design which are going to be used will be explained. The population, which will be the number of people to be involved, will be explained and the sample which will be the small portion of a population selected in carrying out the study will be explained. The chapter will look at the instruments that will be used in the study for collecting data, and will discuss the validity of the research, the reliability of the research and also the ethics of the research.

3.2 Research Design

MacMillan and Schumacher (2014) define a research design as a plan for collecting subjects of research sites and data collection procedure to answer research questions. Research design is the plan of the study providing the overall framework for collecting the data (Leedy 2007:94). It can be observed that a research design is a systematic way of gathering scientific data to answer research questions about variables of interest to the researcher with the aim of controlling the variables so as to improve practice. In this study a case study research design will be used. Gall (2007) defines a case study as an in-depth investigation of two or more phenomenon in natural settings considering perspectives of the participants involved in the phenomenon. Cresswell (2007) states that a case study, is a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a case or cases over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection. A case study will be suitable for this study in that it will help the researcher to investigate deeply on challenges that are faced by learners from child-headed families. A case study will enable the researcher to collect sufficient data as the focus will be on small population

(Zainal, 2007). The case study appeared to be the most appropriate method of finding evidence, trends and differences of the study. It will be used because it will enable respondents to be open and fully contribute when answering questions. It will also be used because it could be used in natural settings, for example Cowdray Park cluster primary schools.

3:3 Population and Sampling

3.3.1 Population

Population is any group of individuals whom the researcher would like to generalize the results of the study. Bless and Smith (2012) view population as the interest group of people which the researcher wants to learn more about. A population is any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interests to the researcher. In this study, the research's population will involve thirty-one primary schools in Reigate District in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. The targeted population of the study will consist of four school heads, sixty teachers and four thousand and sixty learners.

3.3.2   Sampling

According to Best and Kahn (2006), sample refers to a small group of population selected for survey and analysis. Newman (2006) views sampling as a smaller set of cases that a researcher selects from a larger pool and generalizes to the population. Thus, a sample can be described as a small selected group taken from the population to fairly represent the section of the population. In this study, the chosen sample will be made up of administrators and teachers. The researcher will use simple random sampling. Chiromo (2006) says with random sampling each member of the population has an equal opportunity of being selected. There

will be 'yes' and 'no' papers put in a plate and those that will pick 'yes' will be the sample of the study. Two school heads out of four will be sampled along with twelve out of sixty teachers and ten selected learners from child-headed families. This study will consist of twenty-four participants. Participants will be given structured questionnaires and attend interviews in order to generate trustworthy data.

3.4   Data Collection Instruments

Research instruments will assist the researcher to gather information needed. Best and Khan (2006) say research instruments are tools used to collect data for the research study. Leedy (2001) says research instruments are any data collecting device. One can say research instruments are tools used to collect data or information. In collecting data for this study, the researcher will use questionnaires, observation and interviews as the tools.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of series of questions and other prompt for the purpose of gathering information from the respondent (Krenter, Presser and Tourangaeau, 2008). Kothari (2003) says questionnaires are generally less expensive and do not take much time in the administration. In this research, questionnaires will be used to gather information from the teachers. There are numerous advantages of using a questionnaire to carry out a research. Polit and Hungler (2005) state some of the advantages. They are less expensive than other data collection methods, they reduce bias or faults which could be caused by the researcher's attitude, results are quickly achieved, they offer a considered and objective view on the research question. As time might be a constraint for the researcher, using questionnaires is best suited as they are not time consuming as other methods. However, Debois (2016) suggests that dishonesty could be an issue to

questionnaires, respondents may not be truthful with their answers. Sometimes respondents might give wrong answers before reading the questions fully they might just answer. Some respondents might also withhold information because they do not wish to give it for some reasons.

3.4.2 Interviews

Mara (2009) views an interview as a two- way conversation initiated by the interviewer for a specific purpose of obtaining information. Maxwell (2005) says an interview is an effective and valid way of understanding someone's ideas. In this research, the researcher will use interviews that will enable the researcher to generate vast amounts of qualitative data and in the process build trust relationships with the participants. Interview sessions will be presented to a target sample of purposefully selected primary school heads in Cowdray Park Cluster in Reigate District. Structured interview guides will be employed and their usage will allow the researcher to generate information regarding specific questions and the topic. To achieve effective data generation during the interview process, the researcher will allow participants to continuously provide their responses for as long as they feel they have answers and the researcher will only respond by asking probing questions and follow-up questions to fill in the gaps that the researcher may not understand. Questions will be posed one at a time in order to prevent confusion and maintain the participant composure.

3.4.3 Observation

According to Marshall and Rossman (2006:107) observation is "the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviors and artifacts in the social setting chosen for the study". It includes muted cues, facial expression, tone of voice, express and other universalized social interactions. Smith (2008) says observation is another method of collecting data that can be used by an individual or individuals to collect first-hand information on programs. In this

study, the researcher will observe class registers and progress record books of learners from child-headed families to see how often they come to school and their performance. The researcher will make class visits during teaching and learning to assess the behavior of learners from child-headed families as they learn. Finn and Jacobson (2008) say observation method does not rely on people's willingness to provide information. Participants will be observed in a natural setting and recorded without being bothered with questions. Since the participants will be observed unknowingly, they will act naturally and their true behaviors will be observed. However, Stringer (2007) says observation requires a lot of time and is expensive, also the researcher has to wait for an event to happen. Despite the challenges cited observation will be used to collect data. This is so because participants will be expressing themselves in various situations and activities, therefore data collected through observation may be more real.

3.5   Data Collection Procedures

Rouse (2016) suggests that data collection procedure is the systematic approach to gathering and measuring information from a variety of sources to get a complete and accurate picture of an area of interest. The researcher sought a letter from Midlands State University which was taken to the Provisional Education Director in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province seeking permission to conduct the study in the schools. The researcher then informed the heads of selected schools in Cowdray Park Cluster on the intention to carry out the study. When permission to carry out the study was granted, the researcher made appointments with the administrator prior, thus selection of venue and suitable time for collection of information. The researcher distributed questionnaires to teachers for answering which were collected once they had answered. The questionnaire information was then analyzed. The researcher made observations of class registers, progress record and lessons as teaching and learning is

in progress. The researcher read questions of interviews to the respondents and noted down the responses that were given, then after collecting raw data, it was ready for analysis.

3.6 Reliability and Validity Issues

According to Rees (2012) reliability relates to the method of collecting data and refers to the accuracy consistency of the measurements produced by the tool of data collection. The services used for measurements, such as achievements tests must be applied consistently to ensure that the results repeatable and the error are kept minimal. In this study, to ensure reliability of the responses, the researcher will use questionnaires and interviews to perform a pretest of the instruments on the respondents. According to Mugenda Mugenda (2003), validity is the extent to which the tool of data collection has produced what it has intended to produce. This helped the researcher to acquaint with the research problem and be guided in preparation and development of the study tools. To ensure validity of the study tools, the researcher ensured that the items of the research instruments adequately represented what was supposed to be measured by presenting it to supervisors for review and validation.

3.7 Data Presentation and Analysis

The aim of the data analysis is to transform information or data into an answer to the original research question. Data analysis is the practice of extracting useful information from raw data. It is the process of organizing the data collected for example into categories (Kothari, 2004). Berg (2006) defines data as the systematic breaking down, organizing and presenting of statistics and logical techniques to describe and evaluate phenomena. This means the data collected will be analyzed according to content in relation to problem. Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing the data into categories and identifying patterns among the categories, most of which emerge from the data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). The type of data analysis should match the research paradigm and data should answer the research question.

Data analysis began immediately after the first data collection process to discover if there was any information that would be necessary or missing. Data were analyzed using content analysis which according to Kruger and Casey (2012) is comparing of the words used in the answers of the respondents. Qualitative approach was used in the analysis and interpretation of interview data. Qualitative data analysis consists of identifying, coding and categorizing patterns or themes found in data (Johnson and Christiansen, 2011). The data collected through interviews were described and narrated. The data collected was analyzed according to themes, codes and patterns in relation to problem. Data collected was then be edited, coded, classified and tabulated. After tabulation, data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version. Data collected using questionnaires were presented in tables, pie charts and bar graphs, the other part of questionnaires, observation and interviews was described and narrated.

3.8 Summary

This chapter focused on the research design, the population, sampling technique, data collection instruments and procedures, reliability and validity issues as well as data presentation and analysis. The next chapter will focus on data presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents analyses and discusses the data gathered by the methods outlined in chapter three with respect to three major themes: causes of child-headed families, challenges faced by learners from child-headed families and overcoming the challenges faced by the learners from child-headed families. The main purpose of this chapter was to assemble the data collected through questionnaires, interviews observation and present it in line with the research questions which guided the study. In order to make the responses more informative, some findings are presented in pie chart, bar graph and in tabular form that is frequency distribution tables. These tables are accompanied by descriptive statements.

4.2 Biographical data of participants

The biographical data of the participants assists in providing significant information on the challenges faced by learners from child-headed families. Biographical data discloses the gender, age professional qualifications and teaching experiences of participants.

Table 1 Gender of school heads, teachers and learners

Gender	SH (N=2) Frequency	Percentage	Trs(N=12) Frequency	Percentage	L(N=10) Frequency	Percentage
Males	-	0	2	17	4	40
Females	2	100	10	83	6	60
Total	2	100	12	100	10	100

Key

SH = school heads

Trs = teachers

L =learners

N =number of participants

As indicated on the table above, two school heads, twelve teachers and ten learners were used in the study. Of the two heads, there were no males which is 0% and while both of them 2 (100%) were females. It was also revealed that out of twelve teachers, 2(17%) were males and 10(83%) were females. It was further indicated that out of ten learners 4(40%) were males and 6(60%) were females. This means that the views of both sexes were taken into consideration during the study.

Table 2 Distribution of participants by age

Age range	SH(N=2) f	Percentage	Trs(N=12) f	Percentage	L(N=10) f	Percentage
0-19	-	0	-	-	10	100
20-30	-	0	0	0	-	-
31-40	-	0	4	33	-	-
41-50	-	0	6	50	-	-
51-65	2	100	2	17	-	-
Total	2	100	12	100	10	100

Table 2 reveals that all learners used in the study from child-headed families were in the age range of 0-19 years (100%). All the school heads participants were in the age of range 51 and above. Relating to the ages of teachers, 4(33%) belonged to the 31-40 age range, 6(50%)

were ranging from 41-50 years and the other 2(17%) was in the 51-65 age group category. The presented data show that school heads and teachers were mature people in the school.

Table 3 Professional qualifications of school heads and teachers

Professional qualifications	SH(N=2) f	Percentage	Trs(N=12) f	Percentage
Diploma in Education	-	-	8	67
Bachelor of Education Degree	-	-	4	33
Honors Degree	-	-	-	-
Master of Education Degree	2	100	-	-
Total	2	100	12	100

The data in table 3 indicate that 2(100%) school heads were professionally qualified teachers who had undergone training in teacher education colleges and they possessed a Master of Education Degree which they obtained after they had acquired Diploma in Education and also Bachelor of Education Degree. The table also shows that the majority of teacher participants 8(67%) had a Diploma in Education and 4(33%) held a Bachelor of Education Degree. All the above qualifications are recognized as legitimate qualifications in the teaching profession in Zimbabwe.

Table 4 Teaching Experience

Years	Trs(N=12) f	Percentage
1-5 years	5	42
6-10 years	6	50
11-20 years	1	8
Total	12	100

The study established that 5(42%) of the teachers had 1-5 years teaching experience, 6(50%) had 6-10 years teaching experience and 1(8%) had more than 11 years teaching experience. Having presented the participants' biographical data, attention is now given to responses pertaining to research questions.

4.2.1 DATA PRESENTATION

4.2.1.1 Causes of child-headed families

In addressing this research, the study wanted to find out about the causes of child-headed families. The information was important as the study wanted to find out the views of participants about child-headed families. A number of instruments were used to gather the information such as questionnaires for teachers, interviews for school heads and observation on learners.

Teachers were asked if there are children from child-headed families in their class, 9(75%) of the teachers said they have identified children from child-headed families in their class and only 3(25%) said they were not aware of such cases. On a similar note the school heads said they are some children from child-headed families in their schools. The observation revealed that all ten selected learners are children from child-headed families.

When asked on the age range of children from child-headed families. On questionnaires 5(42%) teachers said the ages ranged from six to ten years, 4(33%) teachers said the ages ranged from eight to thirteen years and then3(25%) said they did not have children from child-headed families so they were not sure about the age range. The school heads also said the ages ranged from six to thirteen years.

FIGURE 1
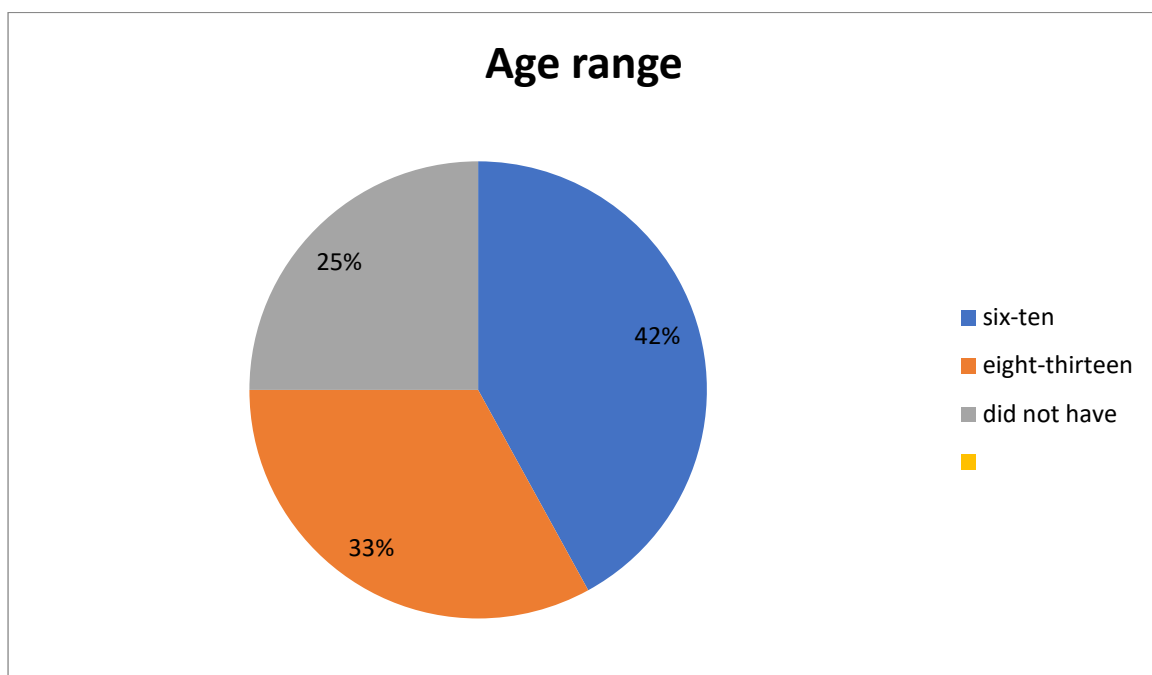
From the observation the researcher could say the age range was about seven to twelve years. Upon being asked on how did teachers become aware of child-headed families, 3(25%) of the teachers said these children were always absent from school for most days and attend school once or twice a week, 3(25%) said the way these children dressed made then become aware. They dressed in old, torn, incomplete uniforms and sometimes they came to school dirty. The other 2(17%) said the children did not have books and other school requirements, also when parents were asked to come at school only older siblings came.1(8%) said these children were always sleepy in class showing signs of being hungry. The other 3(25%) said they were not aware since they did not have children from child-headed families

FIGURE 2
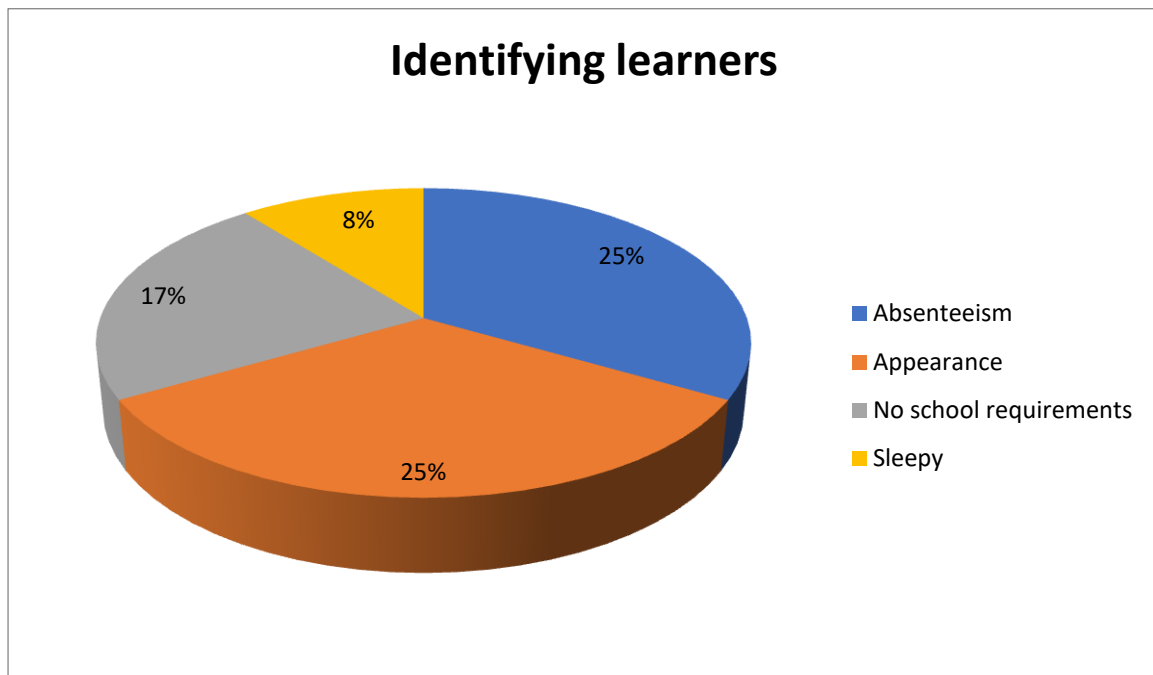
The teachers being questioned on whether they knew what happened to the parents of children from child-headed families, 1(8%) of the teachers said one of her learner's parents died in a road accident, though it was on rare instances where children lose both parents in an accident. The other 5(42%) said that most of the parents migrated to neighboring countries to seek employment, some went as far as United Kingdom. The other 3(25%) said death of parents due to diseases such as HIV and AIDS pandemic and chronic diseases such as cancer was the major cause of child-headed families.

FIGURE 3
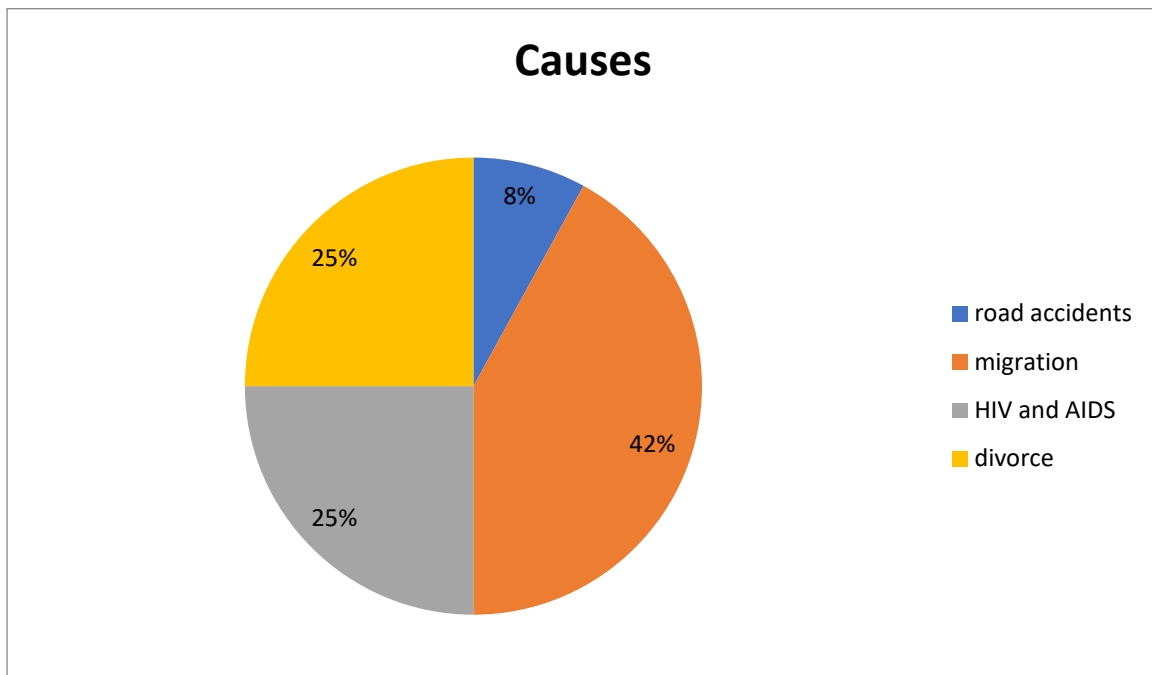
The other 3(25%) said the other cause of child-headed families was the issue of separation of parents due to divorce. From the observation, the researcher outlined that most parents migrated to neighboring countries to seek employment.

From the above presentation, this may mean that there are a number of children who are as young as six years who are not under parental care, also the researcher can clearly state that amongst the reasons as to why there are child-headed families is due to the loss of parents as a result of diseases like HIV and AIDS pandemic and other chronic diseases like cancer. Lastly some parents migrate to neighboring countries in search of jobs.

4.2.1.2 Challenges faced by learners from child-headed families

When teachers were asked about the challenges faced by children from child-headed families almost all the teachers stated absenteeism, 6(50%) said children from child-headed families fail to get to school because they do not have the school requirements such as books, fees and uniforms therefore they do not come to school regularly, on average they attend 20 to 30 days

of the school term out of 60-67 days. Teachers said children only come to school when they know there is feeding which are on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The other 3(25%) did not have children from child-headed families in their class. The other 2(17%) said these children are always absent because of doing part time jobs so as to try to earn a living, then 1(8%) said these children are always absent from school because they often fall sick and they have no money to go to clinics or even buy medication.

When school heads were asked about challenges faced by learners from child-headed families, one of the heads was of the view of hunger, not having enough school requirements and the other head said some learners are always absent because of doing part time jobs, also they have no one to encourage them on attending school daily since they will be children on their own. From the observation, exercise books and registers were analyzed and they showed that learners do not perform well in given exercises and learners do not come to school daily they were a lot of absentees in the registers.

Under the same heading teachers were asked about the effects of those challenges on the learner's learning. 3(25%) of the teachers said the learners are always absent and when new concepts are introduced they won't be in school therefore affecting their learning. They also said since the learners do not have books and pencils they do not concentrate knowing that they will not write. 3(25%) of the teachers said the learners sleep in class when learning is taking place because they will be hungry, they also end up stealing other learner's food leading to labeling by other learners. 2(17%) said the learners do not concentrate they will be sleepy and looking tired because of the duties they do at home (doing house chores). Then 1(8%) said the learners always use vulgar language and bully other learners since they have no adult care giver to tell them what is good or wrong, this leads to teachers having attitude towards such learners. 3(25%) did not comment since they do not have learners from child-headed families.

FIGURE 4

Bar graph on effects of child-headed families
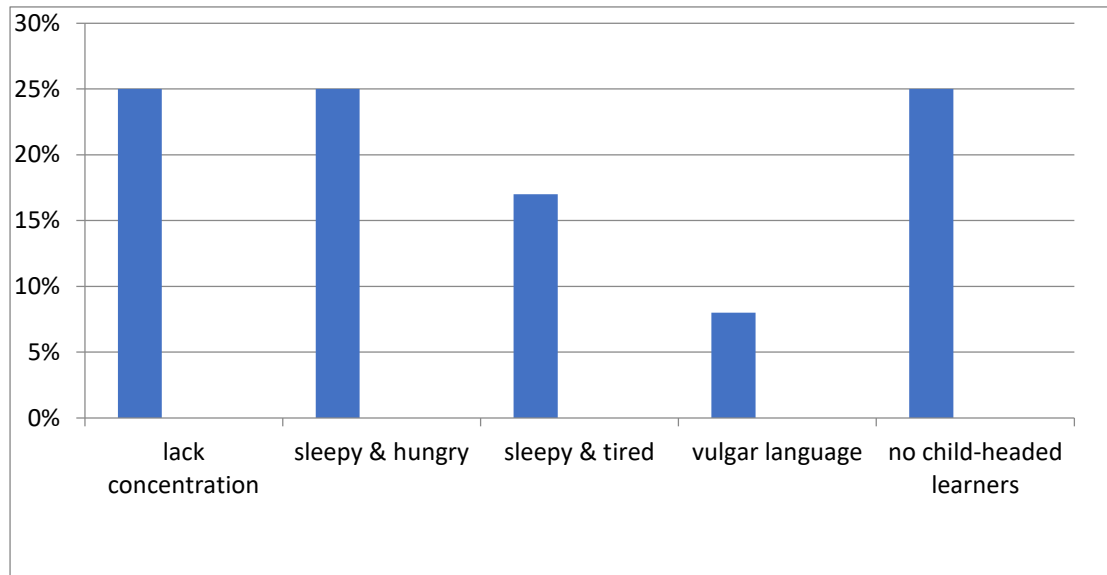
On a similar note the school heads were asked to comment about these challenges, both of them said since these learners are always absent from school it affects their performance. From the observation the researcher observed learners during break and saw those begging for food from other learners, and also some of them were not playing with others they just sat under the shade of trees.

Under the same heading teachers were asked about the academic performance of learners from child-headed families in their classes. Almost all teachers who had children from child-headed families in their classes said the learners do not perform well and they do not collect their school report cards since most of the learners will be absent on closing day. 6(50%) of the teachers said these learners do not perform well because they will be absent when new concepts are introduced, 3(25%) of the teachers said they perform badly because children will be sleepy during learning as a result this leads to poor performance. From the observation the

researcher analyzed exercise books, progress record books and the school reports of the learners from child-headed families they showed poor performance.

From the above presentation, this may mean that most learners from child-headed families do not attend school daily and this affects their learning and academic performance.

4.2.1.3 Overcoming challenges faced by learners from child-headed families

Teachers were asked on the measures they have taken to assist learners from child-headed families. 4(33%) of the teachers said they usually buy pencils and exercise books for the children from child-headed families, 3(25%) said they gave them bond paper to write on as a way of assisting them. 2(17%) of the teachers said they gave them uniforms and food, 3(25%) did not comment since they do not have such learners.

FIGURE 5

Bar graph showing assistance done by teachers to child-headed learners in their class
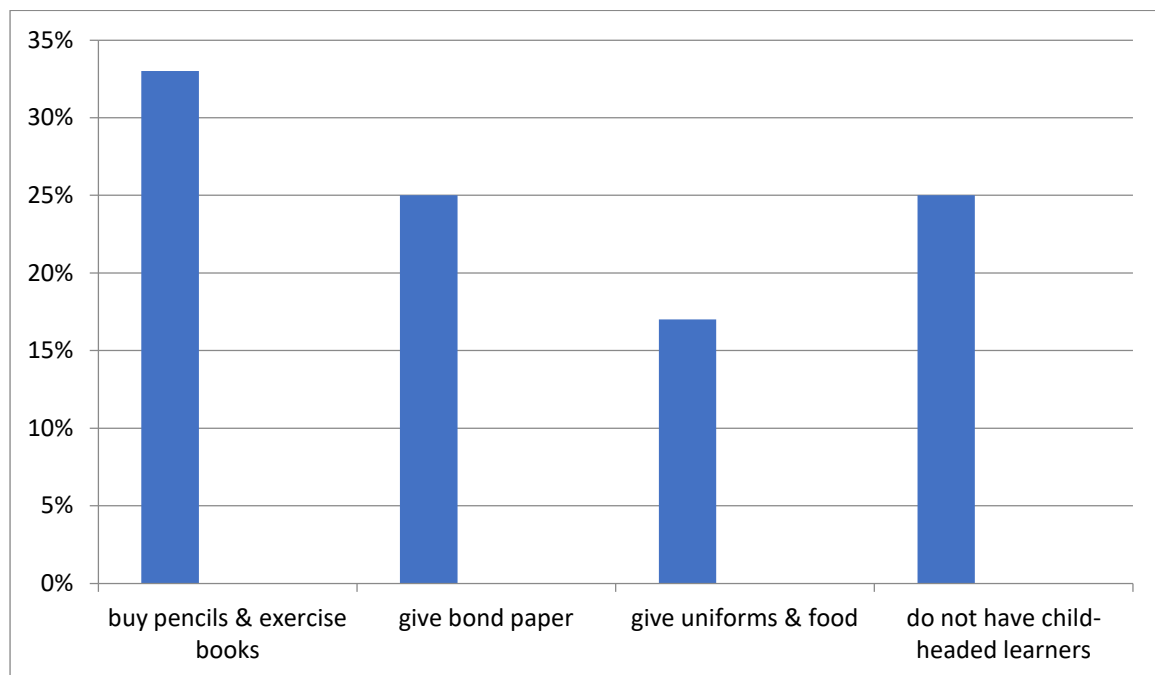
On a similar note the school heads were asked the other one said they always seek donations of books and uniforms from well-wishers to assist such learners. The other school head said they seek donations from churches and other organizations in the form of food and clothes to assist those learners. They also had the same view of keeping the record of such learners and whenever they were donations and programs that assisted learners' first preference is given to the child-headed learners.

Under the same heading teachers were asked on what they think the school as a community should give to learners from child-headed families. Almost all the teachers said the schools now have a feeding programme children now eat a proper meal cooked at school. The other teacher said the school should assist such learners by paying visits to them when they realize that the learner has been absent for a long time to find out the cause of that. School heads said the schools work with the government to enroll children with challenges under the Better Education Assistance Module (BEAM) scheme, thus fees are paid through this scheme to schools in order for children to learn. From the observation point, the concentration of children improved after break time when they had eaten meals cooked at school.

Teachers were also asked on other services provided by the government that help learners from child-headed families to overcome the challenges they face. Half the teachers 6(50%) said the Social Welfare sometimes comes to schools and have counseling sections with the learners giving them hope of a bright future. 3(25%) of the teachers said the government has allowed Non-Governmental Organizations to assist those learners by paying school fees, buying them school requirements such as books and uniforms.

Lastly the teachers were asked on what additional support do they recommend to assist the learners from child-headed families, 4(33%) teachers said the government together with the social welfare services should take the children to orphanage centres were they will have an adult to take care of them. 3(25%) of the teachers said such learners should be given the

Child Care Grant to assist them in their day to day living. 2(17%) of the teachers said such learners when they fall sick, should be given free medication. On the similar note the school heads were asked to comment, one of them said the government can introduce the income generating projects so as to help such learners to fund raise and have money to buy the school necessities. The other school head said such learners should be forced to join religions so as to shape them spiritually and psychological.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF DATA

The researcher seeks to discuss the findings of the study guided by the research questions. The discussion of findings was centered on views of teachers and school heads and observation by the researcher on the challenges that are faced by Early Childhood Education learners from child-headed families as well as solutions. The discussion of findings was done referring to responses from questionnaires, interviews and observation with reference to literature reviewed. Basing on the findings there are children who are in the age range of six to thirteen years who are not under parental care, most children lose their parents through the pandemic disease of HIV and AIDS and also through migration. Mthethwa (2009) says in Zimbabwe there are quite a number of children who are left to live on their own. In line with this statement, Jones (2005) posits that there is an increase in the number of child-headed families due to various number of reasons. According to Vander Waal (1996) some child-headed families may be due to family arrangements such as parents leaving children on their own to seek employment and migrate to other cities and towns. In the recent studies by the Zimbabwe National AIDS Council (2011), it was claimed that that there was a high increase in the number of orphans in Zimbabwe where an estimated 240 000 were believed to be operating from child-headed families. Anderson and Phillips (2011) say HIV and AIDS and other chronic diseases are the main causes of parental death in most countries.

The findings of the study revealed that teachers and school heads noted some signs which led them to discovering that there are children who come from child-headed families such as absenteeism, coming late to school, lack of school requirements like uniforms, books and payment of school fees, uncleanliness and being weak. Basing on the findings, children from child-headed families do not have the school requirements and are usually hunger stricken all the time. Masondo (2006) asset that financial constraints impact negatively on both the education and behavior of the child from child-headed families. Thus, the children from child-headed families absent themselves from school so that they can go and do part time jobs in order to buy something to eat and books, this has a negative impact on the child's academic performance resulting in poor concentration, decreased participation in class activities and decline in school grades. Snider (2006) noted that children from child-headed families were vulnerable and showed signs of hunger, thus, hunger often leads to lack of concentration and falling asleep in class.

Basing on the findings that children from child-headed families do get little assistance from teachers and school heads from the school. Findings revealed that the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) cited in Brook (2000) point out that duty bearers should recognize that every child needs adult societal support to survive and to achieve an adequate standard of living including food, housing, health and education. In schools, children are given assistance by churches, social welfare, non-governmental organizations working together with the government in schemes like CAPERNAUM, save the children, BEAM schemes. Recently, the government launched a feeding scheme and donated maize to all schools in Zimbabwe to assist in feeding children. However, Ayieko (2003) argued that child-headed families have difficulty in getting the Child Care Grants because they are minors and as a result they do not qualify to apply for financial support.

4.4 Summary

In chapter four the researcher presented, analyzed and discussed findings obtained from the study on challenges faced by Early Childhood Education learners from child-headed families. Graphs, pie charts and tables were used for data presentation based on questionnaires, interviews and observation. The next chapter summarizes the major findings of the study, gives conclusions drawn from the findings and suggests recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provided an overview of the study. It focused on summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendation. The chapter also summarized the proceeding chapters of the study and provided conclusions and recommendations based on research findings.

5.2 Summary

The main objective of this study was to find out the challenges faced by Early Childhood Education (ECE) learners from child-headed families in Cowdray Park schools in Reigate district under the Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. Sampled teachers were given questionnaires to answer, whilst the school heads were interviewed and some observations were done.

In chapter one the background of the study was outlined, followed by the statement of the problem. The research questions assisted the researcher in carrying out the study including the delimitations and the limitations that were revealed. The significance of the study stated out the beneficiaries of the research which were; Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and social workers, teachers, learners and the school heads and how they were to benefit. Lastly the operational definitions which were child-headed families, child and academic performance were defined relating to the study.

The literature in chapter two was reviewed in order to discover sufficient information about the challenges faced by ECE learners from child-headed families. The literature revealed the causes and challenges of child-headed families from an international, regional and local perspective. Internationally it was discovered that war resulted in many children becoming orphans, divorce of parents and also child abandonments, displacement or when parents cannot afford to take care of their children leads to child-headed families.

From the regional aspect, literature revealed that parental death due to HIV and AIDS was regarded as a major factor leading to the establishment of an increase in the number of child-headed families. Locally, the literature revealed that most parents migrated to neighboring countries in search for jobs leaving other siblings to take care of their youngsters, also death of parents due to road accidents though it was in rare instances were children lose both parents in an accident.

The findings also revealed that there are a lot of challenges that these learners from child-headed families encounter such as being financially challenged resulting in such children to be vulnerable to poverty because they have limited means of generating income to sustain their household. Lack of basic needs such as providing food, paying fees and buying other school requirements result in some learners missing school (absenteeism) or completely dropping out.

In chapter three the researcher used the case study as a research design. Random sampling was used when selecting teachers and school heads to become a sample of the study. Questionnaires, interviews and observation were research instruments that were used on the study. Questionnaires were used on teachers whilst interviews were done on school heads. Observations provided an opportunity for the researcher to capture, follow up the thoughts, feelings and ideas behind the responses given. Some observations were conducted during teaching and learning to assess the behavior of learners, also the researcher observed class registers, progress record books and school report cards. Data collection procedures, data presentation and data analysis were revealed by the researcher. Reliability and validity issues were also stated in this chapter.

In chapter four some findings revealed that there were a number of challenges that affected the learners from child-headed families. These challenges affected the learner's academic performance. The data revealed that teachers who participated in the study mostly were

females, who are qualified and experienced. The challenges revealed were absenteeism, thus learners failing to get to school due to not having enough school requirements like books and uniforms, coming to school late, doing part time jobs to buy food, being weak because of hunger, often fell sick because of malnourished meals and poor hygienic conditions. It was discovered that these challenges lead to learner's poor performance in class. However, collected data revealed that teachers, school heads, government and non-organizations came up with different solutions on challenges that are faced by ECE learners that affect their learning at school to help the learners on their academic performance.

5.3 Conclusions

The results from research findings indicated that there are children whose age range from the ages of six to thirteen years who are not under parental care or supervision. Migration of parents to neighboring countries in search of jobs leaving the older siblings to take care of their younger siblings is the highest cause of child-headed families; also the results revealed that most of these children from child-headed families lose their parents through the pandemic diseases of HIV and AIDS and other chronic diseases like cancer.

The results also revealed that children from child-headed families sometimes come late to school and at times are always absent from school due to certain reasons. Some will be tired of doing household chores and sometimes they will be tired from doing part time jobs trying to raise money to buy food. The results also revealed that children from child-headed families are victims of poverty, they have no money to buy food and they suffer from hunger which makes them weak and sleepy in class affecting their concentration leading to poor performance.

The study also revealed that they were signs noted by participants which made them to be aware that there are children from child-headed families in their classes such as lack of

school uniforms and requirements like books and pencils, uncleanliness, looking weak and being absent from school most of the times. However, findings from participants revealed that teachers, school heads, government and the non-governmental organizations are working together to assist learners from child-headed families to help overcome the challenges they encounter which leads to poor academic performance.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on findings of the study, the researcher came up with the following recommendations that will help improve the challenges faced by ECE learners from child-headed families that affects their academic performance;

To help overcome the challenges the Government should allow the non-governmental organizations and churches to help with the welfare of these children to afford them dignity.

The Government should work with the policy makers to include the children from child-headed families in the programs which support them materially, educationally and psychologically.

The Government should continue with the feeding scheme in schools so that the children are assured of at least one full meal a day.

School heads should initiate income generating programs to assist learners to raise money for paying fees and buying school requirements.

The school heads should ask for donations from the government, churches and non-governmental organizations in the form of cash or kind to help assist learners from the child-headed families at school.

Teachers should be equipped with skills of how to deal with learners from child-headed families through staff developments and organizing workshops.

Teachers should build the good relationship with such learners from child-headed families and act in loco-parentise not to discriminate them for them to gain self-esteem and be confident during learning.

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Mkhithika Thebe Primary

P O Box 67

Luveve

Bulawayo

24 October 2019

The Provincial Education Director

Bulawayo Metropolitan Province

P O Box 555

Bulawayo

Dear Madam

REF: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY IN SELECTED REIGATE DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS

I am a student at Midlands State University who is studying for a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education. I am seeking permission to carry out a research in the above mentioned district as a partial fulfillment of the requirements of the programme. The research topic is as follows: Challenges faced by Early Childhood Education learners from child headed families in Cowdray Park schools. This research will be conducted in the following schools: Mkhithika Thebe and Mahlathini primary schools. Attached is the letter from the university.

Your permission will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Nontando Mathuthu (EC Number 0177163 S)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

My name is Nontando Mathuthu a student at Midlands State University undertaking a bachelor of Early Childhood Education Degree. I am requesting you to assist me with the information on the research I am doing. The   research topic is: Challenges faced by Early childhood learners from child-headed families in Cowdray   park schools. The information that you will give will be used to conduct the study and it will be private and confidential. Do not write your name or your school name in any place on the questionnaire.   Your cooperation will be appreciated.

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS BY TICKING IN THE BOX

SECTION A

1 What is your gender?

Male ☐   Female: ☐

2 What is your age?

20-30years ☐   31-40years ☐   41-50years ☐   51-65years ☐

3.What is your highest professional qualification?

Diploma in Education ☐   Bachelor of Education Degree ☐

Masters Education ☐   Honours Degree ☐

If other specify……………………………………………………………………..

4. What is your teaching experience in years?

1-5years ☐   6-10years ☐   11- 20 years ☐   21-30years ☐   31-40years ☐

SECTION B

5. Are there any learners from child headed families in your classes

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

6. How did you become aware of children from child headed families in your class?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………….

7. What is the age range of children from child headed families in your class?

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

8   What are the challenges encountered by learners from child-headed families in your class?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

………

9   What are the effects of those challenges on the learners' learning?

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10 How do these learners from child-headed families perform academically?

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11 Having identified learners with such challenges, are there any measures you have taken as a teacher to assist them?

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12 What support do you think the school as a community should give to learners from child-

headed families to overcome the challenges they face?

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13 What other services are provided by the government that help learners from child-headed

families to overcome the challenges they face?

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14 What additional measures do you recommend to assist learners from child-headed

families?

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INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL HEADS

My name is Nontando Mathuthu, a student at Midlands State University undertaking a bachelor of Early Childhood Education Degree. I am requesting you to assist me with the information on the research I am doing. The research topic is: Challenges faced by Early childhood learners from child-headed families in Cowdray park schools. The information that you will give will be used to conduct the study and it will be private and confidential. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

1. What challenges are faced by learners from child-headed families in your school?

2. To what extent do these challenges affect the teaching and learning process?

3. What measures have you employed as an administrator to assist learners from child-headed families?

4. What support do you give to learners from child-headed families as an administrator?

5. What additional assistance do you think can be offered to children from child-headed families?

OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR LEARNERS

The researcher aims at observing the following areas:

1. The daily attendance of learners from child-headed families at school at the end of the term in two selected schools

2. The academic performance of learners from child-headed families through the   progress record.

3. The way learners from child-headed families interact with others during teaching and learning.

4. The way teachers associate with learners from child-headed families.

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