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Vice Chancellor's Foreword



Professor R.J. Zvobgo(PhD)
Vice Chancellor
Great Zimbabwe University

It is my great pleasure to present the first issue of Dzimbahwe Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (DJMR). This is a peer-reviewed academic journal with a broad scope bridging across multiple disciplines and will be published biannually. The name of the journal has been carefully crafted, deriving from the “Dzimbadzemahwe” “House of Stone” indigenous taxonomy of the Great Zimbabwe World Heritage Site from which the University derives its identity. As it is multidisciplinary, the editors of this journal look for certain qualities in prospective manuscripts that may be less relevant to more traditional disciplinary journals but would provide an educative reading. The editors are unrelenting in their insistence on quality, hence articles submitted to the journal are put through a rigorous peer-review exercise. We are proud of our achievements and excited about more to come. We will innovate and evolve as a research journal. I am pleased to note that this inaugural issue has already attracted researchers from the region and I envisage that the journal will soon become international.

This inaugural issue contains ten articles from diverse academic fields. The first article, “Applied archaeology, heritage management and food security: an appraisal of indigenous agricultural practices in Zimbabwe” is co-authored by Thomas Panganayi Thondhlana, Rachel Gwazani and Henry Chiwaura. Its purpose is to demonstrate that archaeologists can go beyond the reconstruction of indigenous agricultural practices by way of actively encouraging the rehabilitation of some ecologically sustainable traditional practices. The researchers are of the conviction that it is not justified to preserve vast tracts of land for the sake of posterity in the face of acute shortages of agricultural land. The next article, “Bachelor of Adult Education students’ perceptions of polygamy at a state university in Zimbabwe” is self-explanatory and written by Christinah Gwirayi. The results of this study indicate that polygamous families are faced by a number of challenges such as abuse, jealousy, envy, co-wife rivalry, sibling rivalry and unequal distribution of resources. The third paper “A consideration of selected Shona personal names in light of the experiences of abused Christian women in Zimbabwe” is written by Excellent Chireshe and establishes that Shona personal names, as linguistic tools, express

situations of domestic violence, reflecting the victims' feelings and those of their advisors. Martin Musengi is the fourth contributor with his article, "Teachers' Sign Language beliefs and their influence on Zimbabwean curriculum-in-practice for deaf learners". Musengi in his study concludes that teachers do not adequately appreciate Zimbabwe Sign Language (ZSL) as a language in curriculum-practice and recommends that teachers be taught ZSL formally by Deaf adults so that they appreciate the nuances of the language. Simon Vurayai and Chenjerai Muwaniki provide the fifth paper "Zimbabwe's economic crises and the state of professionalism among rural secondary school teachers" which set out to investigate the impact of Zimbabwe's economic crises on the state of teacher professionalism in rural Zimbabwean secondary schools in Zaka District. It is also noted that in economic crises teachers were motivated by maximizing their rewards rather than public service. Patience Dadzie-Bonney and Samuel K. Hayford provide the sixth article, "Teachers' ICT knowledge, skills and usage at Oguaman School for the deaf in Ghana" which reports part of a graduate thesis which investigated the level of ICT knowledge, skills, and utilisation among teachers teaching at the Oguaman School for the Deaf in Ghana. Gamuchirai Tsitsi Ndamba, Rose M Mugweni, Lovemore Chirobe and Sharayi Chakanyuka have co-authored the seventh paper with a self-explanatory title "Perceptions of pre-service students on HIV and AIDS education at a state university in Zimbabwe". The eighth contributor Tendai Chikutuma provides a paper, "Management and organisation of Early Childhood Development programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe" which examines the quality of the management and organisation of Early Childhood Development programmes and concludes among other issues that effective management is possible through delegation. The ninth paper "Psychosocial correlates of infertility among married women undergoing infertility treatment in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana" by Stephen Antwi-Danso purports that infertility impacts negatively on women. The last contribution for this issue "Psychosocial effects of parental migration on rural children in Mwenezi, Zimbabwe" is provided by Herbert Zirima, and highlights the need for further research on the implications of rural to urban migration on rural children's intellectual development. Zirima also recommends that migrating parents should maintain contact with their children so as to maintain the emotional bond with their children.

The journal is multidisciplinary as can be seen from the submissions. I wish the readers a fulfilling reading and would like to take this opportunity to invite more articles for submission into the Dzimbahwe Journal of Multidisciplinary Research.

I thank you

Professor R.J. Zvobgo(PhD)

Vice Chancellor

Applied archaeology, heritage management and food security: An appraisal of indigenous agricultural practices in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The purpose of this position paper is to demonstrate that archaeologists can go beyond the reconstruction of indigenous agricultural practices by way of actively encouraging the rehabilitation of some ecologically sustainable traditional practices. In this paper, we review and summarise selected published archaeological literature that focus on indigenous agricultural systems in Zimbabwe. We also use case studies from other developing countries where archaeologists have partnered with their governments, non-governmental organisations and other professionals to investigate and rehabilitate ancient agricultural engineering and methods. The paper also highlights challenges associated with the rehabilitation of cultural landscapes that have since been designated protected areas. We have the conviction that it is not justified to preserve vast tracts of land for the sake of posterity in the face of acute shortages of agricultural land. We conclude that results from archaeological research can be applied to tackle contemporary issues like food security and land reform.

Key words: Applied Archaeology; Land Reform; Heritage Management; Indigenisation; Interdisciplinary Research

“What keeps a place alive is not the preservation of its past per se, but the continual weaving of that past into the present” Marks (1991: 9 cited in Moore, 1993).

“Land restitution ... brings the past into the present.” Fay and James (2008, p. 1)

Introduction

The southern Africa region has a comparatively long history of agropastoral practices that developed way before the advent of European colonisation, starting from the early first millennium CE. Agriculture together with other sectors like mining and metallurgy continued to be economic pillars of the indigenous state systems which developed during the early second millennium CE (Maggs & Whitelaw, 1991). Indeed the Zimbabwean landscape has evidence of pre-colonial farming infrastructure and settlements. Some of these agricultural practices were disrupted as a result of capitalism which was introduced by European settlers during the colonial era. Today the agricultural sector remains the backbone of the economy of modern nation states like Zimbabwe that have an agrarian economy (Dashwood, 2000; Maiyaki, 2010), with agriculture contributing on average 18% of the country's GDP. With such an economy, land is a vital source

of livelihood for the majority of the citizens. Archaeologists together with other researchers can contribute meaningfully to the aspirations of post-colonial countries by actively engaging with topical issues like land reform, indigenisation and agriculture. Unfortunately, archaeologists rarely perceive the role that they can play in finding solutions to problems of contemporary post-colonial countries. It is regrettable that currently, most archaeological investigations in Africa tend to be divorced from the topical issues. This is understandable because archaeology, which is a by-product of European colonisation in Africa, originated from the curiosity of the elite class of pre-industrial Europe (Miller, 1980). Archaeologists are largely preoccupied with the mere classification of stone tools and potsherds. However, archaeologists can provide insights into some of these problems since our predecessors also faced and solved the same problems. As such, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. According to Erickson (1998, p. 34), archaeology can play a significant role in development projects, especially those focusing on improving agricultural production. It is encouraging that some scholars are beginning to see the value of applied archaeology, which is the anthropologically informed study of the human past through material remains that aims to employ knowledge gained from such research to improve the human condition in the contemporary world (Erickson, 1998, p. 34; Guttman-Bond, 2010; Little, 2009; Selvakumar, 2010; Sowunmi, 1998). It is against this background that this paper seeks to encourage archaeologists and related professionals to engage with post-colonial struggles to alleviate poverty on the African continent.

Archaeologists in many developing countries have managed to unearth some ingenious and sophisticated farming knowledge and technology that can be used as alternative practices in cases where capital intensive methods have dismally failed (Erickson, 1998; Kendall, 2005; Swartley, 2002). The colonisation of the African continent saw the replacement of many indigenous food crops by exotic crops and more recently, genetically modified crops that some people suspect to be contributing to contemporary human health problems. With the introduction of capital intensive technologies, indigenous agricultural systems were shunned as backward at face value. In Latin America, for example, the “Green Revolution” of the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the displacement of many local species of crops by non-indigenous and genetically ‘improved’ varieties (Erickson, 1998, p. 36). However, non-indigenous food crops and technologies have sometimes failed to resolve challenges of food security in the so called ‘Third World’ countries. The dismal failure of non-indigenous crops and capital intensive mechanized farming methods has rendered them inappropriate in some regions, resulting in the search for alternative approaches. In the case of Zimbabwe, capitalist farming or commercial farming saw the production of high value horticultural and exotic crops that were flown on a daily basis to overseas markets (Worby, 2001, p. 479; Moore, 1999). Just like in other countries in colonial Africa, cash crops or exportable commodities like flue-cured tobacco, tea, sugar, coffee, cotton and sesame were introduced, promoted and produced for overseas markets. On the other hand, little effort was put to promote research and production of indigenous consumption crops for the domestic markets as will be discussed in this paper.

Artificial or chemical fertilisers and pesticides, which are typically required for capital intensive farming, are not always affordable to small-scale farmers in the developing world due to the high

costs involved. Technologically advanced mechanized farming may be deemed inappropriate in some regions because of environmental, historical, social and political factors. Some Africanists have blamed the introduction of European cash crops and farming techniques in Africa as one of the factors that created food insecurity (Tavuyanago, Mutami & Mbenene, 2010; Chazovachii, Chigwenya & Mushuka, 2012). Those who seek to develop or introduce new technologies must concern themselves not only with techniques and artefacts but they must also engineer the economic, scientific and social context of technology (Pfaffenberger, 1992, p. 498). A very sound technology in the developed world is not always appropriate in the context of the developing countries. According to Erickson (1998, p. 43), we know very little about non-western agricultural systems in terms of yields, efficiency, input/output, production and sustainability. In Zimbabwe, there is little information about indigenous farming methods and crops. However, there is need to actively promote indigenous agricultural practices as sustainable alternatives to capital-intensive agricultural practices because they utilise simple equipment that is easily serviceable and maintained using locally available material. Traditional farming methods rely on local resources together with human and animal energy with less technological input (Ayala & Rao, 2002, p. 797). On the other hand, commercial or industrialised agriculture which is highly mechanised require inputs such as fuel, chemical fertilisers and pesticides which are not always environmentally friendly. There is proof that some indigenous agricultural systems are actually efficient and productive. In fact, some scholars have argued that indigenous small-scale farmers are as equally productive per cropped unit as the capital intensive farmers (Worby, 2001, p. 483). Others have strongly argued that traditional African cultigens are drought, pest and diseases resistant (Tavuyanago et al., 2010; Chazovachii et al., 2012). It is therefore high time that we reconstructed the tried and tested farming methods that are indigenous to the southern African region. Water pumps, windmills, tractors and genetically improved crops are not proving to be the solution to perennial food security problems in Africa. It is against this background that indigenous agricultural practices that abandoned were successfully used by farmers in the distant past should be rehabilitated and revitalised. In cases where these indigenous agricultural systems no longer exist, archaeological techniques can be rediscovered as will be highlighted in this paper. Unfortunately, potentially productive agricultural landscapes which used to support large populations in the past lie or have been designated as protected areas. Against this background, this paper seeks to suggest ways in which archaeologists and heritage professionals can make meaningful contributions to the livelihoods of people in the post-colonial period by focusing on indigenous agricultural processes and land restitution issues.

The colonial legacy: appropriation of land to create commercial farms and protected areas

The colonial period witnessed the forced removal of indigenous Africans en masse to pave way for colonial settlers' commercial farms, colonial national parks and national monuments. The colonisation of other continents by Europeans radically altered the social structure and subsistence base of indigenous communities (Kendall, 2005, p. 205). It has already been pointed out that indigenous food crops were largely replaced by non-indigenous cash crops and commodities. The

need for land to produce these cash crops resulted in the appropriation of land to create European settler commercial farms. According to Fay and James (2008, p. 1), land dispossession during the colonial era was central to the creation of modern capitalism. As a result, the most productive agricultural lands were appropriated by few European settlers and designated them their private property. The colonisation of the African continent saw the imposition of alien land tenure systems. Private property laws favouring colonial settlers were enacted on landscapes that indigenous Africans considered their birth right. In the case of the then Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, the enactment of legislations such as the Land Apportionment Act of 1931 and Land Tenure Act of 1969 resulted in the eviction of indigenous Africans from their ancestral homelands. Traditional African land tenure systems were rendered obsolete after the enactment of such laws. According to Moore (1993, p. 385), Africans could not understand why land was now a commodity for purchase by individuals since this was against their pre-capitalist moral economy which stated that land belonged to the ancestors. In Rhodesia, large parcels of the best land were seized by the British Southern African Company (BSAC), which was administering this colony on behalf of the British Government (Worby, 2001, p. 480). Prime land which was previously utilised by Africans for agricultural purposes was designated “Europeans only”. The most productive agricultural land was allocated to the minority white settlers whilst Africans were pushed into marginal lands which were designated Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs). Hot and waterless landscapes which were severely unhealthy for humans and domestic livestock due to the prevalence of tsetse flies (*Glossina sp.*), mosquitoes and other vectors responsible for diseases such as sleeping sickness, malaria, black water fever, tick fever and bilharzia were reserved for Africans. The colonial land policies also resulted in the development of a dual agricultural economy where Africans were limited to small-scale agriculture on poor soils and overcrowded reserves whilst Europeans ventured into large-scale commercial agriculture on prime land (Moore, 1993, p. 387).

On the other hand, some vast tracts of land were also designated as protected areas once they were proclaimed national parks and monuments (Fig 1). These modern protected areas have their origin in the Western world (Neufeld, 2007), and they cannot be fully understood outside the context of the colonial experience to which they belong (Ramutsindela, 2005). The birth of these protected areas in Africa can be traced back to 1900, during a conference that was organised by European colonial powers in London which resulted in the drafting and discussion of the Convention for the Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds and Fish in Africa. This 1900 London Convention was subsequently revised in 1933 in the form of the Convention Relative to the Preservation of Flora and Fauna in their Natural State which was subsequently ratified and signed by major colonial state parties. These two Conventions provided the colonial administrators with the basis and mandate to establish legislative frameworks and protected conservation areas in their colonised territories (Hanna *et al.* 2008; Kaneri-Mbote, 2005; Ramutsindela, 2005). The institutionalisation of natural and cultural heritage conservation meant that the management of protected areas was solely left in the hands of government agencies like the National Museums and Monuments of Rhodesia, Department of National Parks and Department of Wildlife Conservation. The National Museums and Monuments Act of 1972 was promulgated to protect the country’s cultural heritage,

whilst the Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975 (Revised 1996) was enacted to protect the country's diverse fauna and flora. These government agencies preferred to preserve the archaeological and ecological integrity of these protected areas. Protected areas have over the years been presented as 'pristine' or 'empty' landscapes, spaces that should be free of any human interference as if humans have always been absent from these landscapes (Ramutsindela, 2005, p. 6). The government agencies responsible for running these protected areas usually claim that they are located in abandoned, rugged terrain and remote areas with little agricultural or other economic alternative use (Ramutsindela, 2005, p. 47). However, it will be established below that some of these protected areas were actually situated in prime agricultural land that offered livelihoods to indigenous Africans in the past. Archaeologists have also established that some supposedly marginal regions were actually utilised for the cultivation of drought resistant indigenous grain food crops (Pwiti, 1996; Manyanga, 2000; Manyanga, 2006). The creation of most protected areas actually disrupted the livelihoods of indigenous people. The creation of protected areas during the colonial and post-colonial era saw the uprooting of more people from the land of their ancestors and heritage (Pwiti & Ndoro, 1999). The majority of the landscapes currently designated protected areas are anthropogenic, which means that they have been shaped by human activities over several centuries as will be highlighted by the cases discussed in this paper. According to West *et al.* (2006, p. 257), the creation of protected areas severely alters land use rights and in most cases results in the criminalisation of indigenous people who were regarded as trespassers once they encroached into parks and monuments. This is also supported by Kaneri-Mbote (2005, p. 2) who notes that in most post-colonial African countries conservation agencies are paramilitary and uniformed. The utilization of protected areas by human beings or domestic livestock is largely viewed as destructive. People who live around these protected areas have been affected in various ways as a result of their creation since they impose considerable restrictions on indigenous community use and occupancy. It is important to note at this juncture that these protected areas largely appeal to wealthy people, mostly foreigners, who use them as tourist attraction centres and recreation facilities yet they are inaccessible and unaffordable to local communities (Thondhlana, Shackleton & Muchapondwa, 2011). In post-colonial Zimbabwe, protected areas have become contested landscapes with indigenous people viewing them as productive arable land and pastures whilst the government agencies like National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (*hereafter* NMMZ) and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (*hereafter* ZPWMA) see them as pristine landscapes that should not be disturbed (Chiwaura, 2012).

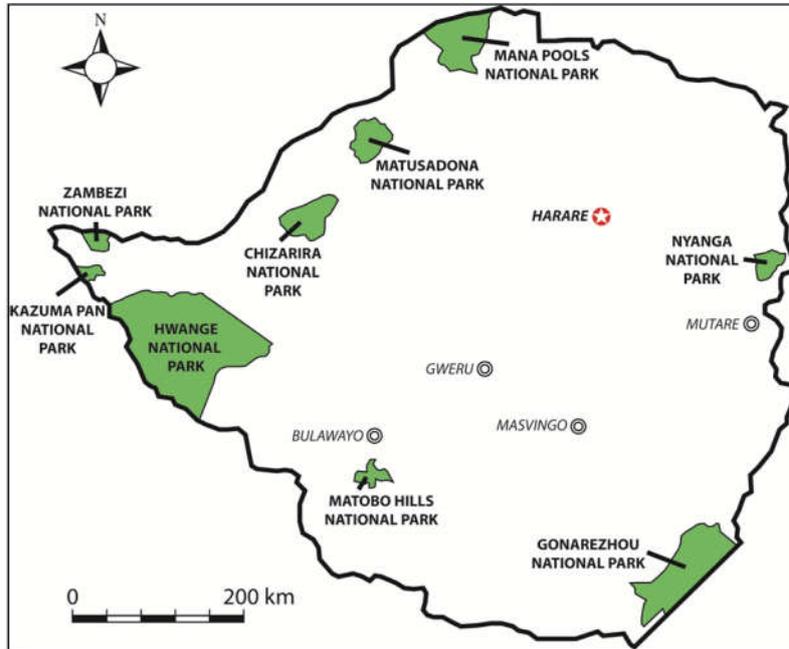


Figure 1: Map showing the distribution of National Parks in Zimbabwe (Illustrated by Thomas Thondhlana)

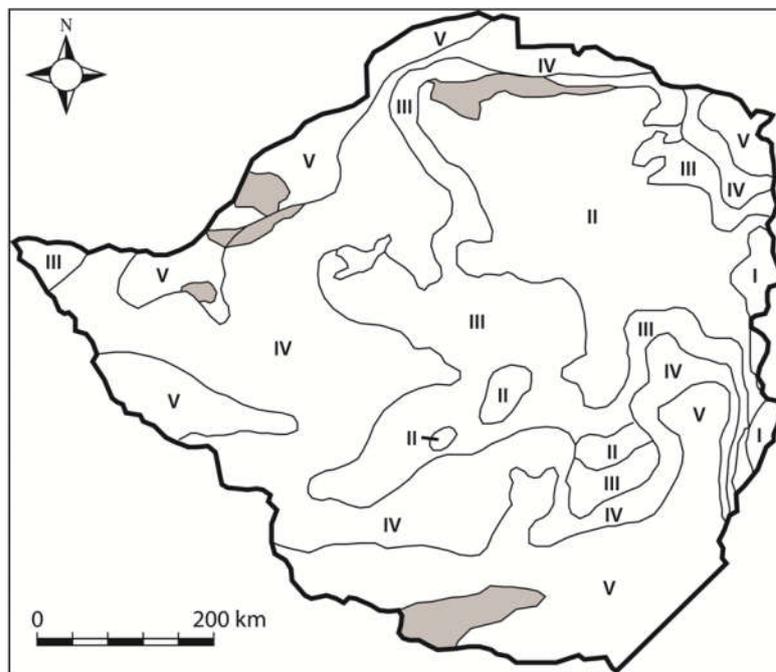


Figure 2: Map of Zimbabwe showing the agro-ecological zones (Illustrated by Thomas Thondhlana after Manyanga 2006)

Table 1: Annual rainfall patterns in the natural ecological zones of Zimbabwe illustrated in Figure 2 (For further information see Vincent & Thomas, 1961)

Agro-ecological zone Annual Rainfall (mm)

Agro-ecological zone	Annual rainfall (mm)
I	>1000
II	700-1050
III	500-800
IV	450-650
V	<450

Archaeology of food security and past agropastoral systems in Zimbabwe: the case study of the Nyanga Agricultural Complex

In order to highlight the potential role of archaeological research of previous agricultural practices to contemporary food security issues in this section, we will rely on secondary archaeological information that was gathered in Nyanga Eastern Highlands which falls under agro-ecological zone I, a prime agricultural region of Zimbabwe (Fig 2 & 3). Archaeology is probably the only discipline that offers a deeper time perception of land use in Africa. Zimbabwean archaeologists have managed to reconstruct past food security strategies and agricultural systems that date back to the early millennium CE to the eve of European colonisation in both prime agricultural areas and semi-arid regions (Pwiti, 1996; Manyanga, 2000; Manyanga, 2006; Soper, 2003; Mabgwe, 2013). Situated in the north-eastern part of Zimbabwe is Nyanga District, which has impressive archaeological evidence of past agricultural practices. Initial archaeological investigations in this part of the country revealed evidence of impressive late second millennium CE settlements (Summers, 1958; Garlake, 1966). However, the information provided in this section draws heavily on the archaeological work that was carried out by researchers from the Archaeology Unit at the University of Zimbabwe, with Dr Robert Soper as the principal researcher. Results of these archaeological investigations are available in several published and unpublished works in the form of refereed journals, post-graduate dissertations, book chapters, monographs and books (Chirawu, 1999; Katsamudanga, 2007; Soper, 1996; 2000; 2003; 2006; Mupira, 1995; 2008). Generally, the Nyanga District is situated in one of the well-watered ecological zones of Zimbabwe with the highest annual rainfall of between 1500mm to 3000mm (Hughes & Hughes, 1992) (Fig 2). Current landholding and land utilisation patterns reveal that large tracts of land in the Nyanga District are protected areas and forestry plantations (Fig 3). Iron Age (c. 1300-1900 CE) archaeological evidence in the form of terraces and homesteads inside the Ziwa National Monument is managed by NMMZ. However, the best known archaeological features are located in the Nyanga National Park which is run by ZPWMA (Soper, 2006, p. v). Forestry plantations of exotic species used for timber production owned by private companies also dominate (Mupira, 2008). The following

paragraphs will briefly establish pre-colonial land utilisation patterns followed by radical changes that took place during the colonial period.

The Nyanga landscape has probably the most impressive pre-colonial evidence of labour intensive agricultural practices in Zimbabwe and possibly southern Africa as a whole (Soper, 2003). The Nyanga cultural landscape has evidence of agricultural terraces, water furrows, cultivation ridges, pit-structures and hill forts that covers approximately 5000 square kilometres. This landscape has been interpreted as sophisticated agricultural infrastructure by professional archaeologists (Soper, 2003). According to Soper (2006, p. 1) the archaeological evidence around Nyanga represents an industrious society of farmers and stock raisers who perfected their art for at least six centuries starting from 1300 CE. Archaeological reconstructions established that indigenous crops like sorghum (mapfunde: *Sorghum bicolor*), finger millet (rukweza: *Elusine coracana*), bulrush millet (mhunga: *Pennisetum glaucum*), ground beans (nyimo: *Vigna subterranea*) and cowpeas (nyemba: *Vigna unguicualta*) were cultivated during the pre-colonial period around Nyanga (Soper, 2003). This sophisticated indigenous agricultural infrastructure and farming systems were once thought to have been the “grain basket” for the residents of the famous Great Zimbabwe pre-colonial city. To appreciate the ingenuity of pre-colonial Nyanga agriculturalists, a look at the functions of the various agricultural infrastructures is vital.

Although the Eastern Highlands region of Zimbabwe is generally well watered due to high rainfall availability, the soils are old and devoid of mineral nutrients essential for crop production because of heavy leaching. Younger and considerably unleached fertile soils are restricted to the mountain slopes (Soper, 2006, p. 3). According to Soper (2000, p. 224), the pre-colonial agriculturalists clearly appreciated the relative fertility and potential of the younger slope soils. As a result, they developed appropriate terracing technologies to exploit the mountain slopes. These terraces were also used to conserve soil from the effects of erosion by checking rainfall run-off whilst they also allowed greater water percolation (Soper, 2006). By constructing terraced platforms on hill slopes, pre-colonial agriculturalists in the Nyanga region were able to create more productive and arable land. Previous archaeological research also established that the majority of the soils in the lowlands and valleys in the Eastern Highlands are infertile. Thus, they could not be effectively cultivated without some form of fertility enhancement. Iron Age agriculturalists in this region had to venture into organic manure production to overcome problems of low soil fertility. In this scenario, one of the prime economic functions of all domestic livestock was to produce manure that was subsequently applied on heavily leached soils (Soper, 2006, p. 63). Peculiar livestock management which maximised the production of manure had to be developed by the pre-colonial agriculturalists (Soper, 2003; Soper, 2000). There is evidence of pit structures that were presumably used as livestock pens for manure production. We are aware of recent suggestions that these pit structures were used for gold production as opposed to livestock rearing (Kritzinger, 2007; Kritzinger, 2008). However, Kritzinger’s arguments have been met with serious rebuttal from both archaeologists and geologists (Love & Walsh, 2009). We therefore concur with Soper (2006, p. 63)’s suggestion that these pit structures were utilised to maximise on manure production through stall feeding of livestock, a practice that saw livestock being kept permanently penned whilst forage was brought to them. With efficient manure production, the agriculturalists managed to exploit unfertile areas with seasonally impeded drainage, known as bogs or vleis, and also on the valley sides or

interfluves by creating cultivation ridges (mihomba) (Soper, 2000, p. 218). These cultivation ridges enabled the exploitation of the more leached but well-watered valley soils. For the purposes of water management, water furrows were constructed as part of the Nyanga agricultural system (Soper, 2006, p. 53).

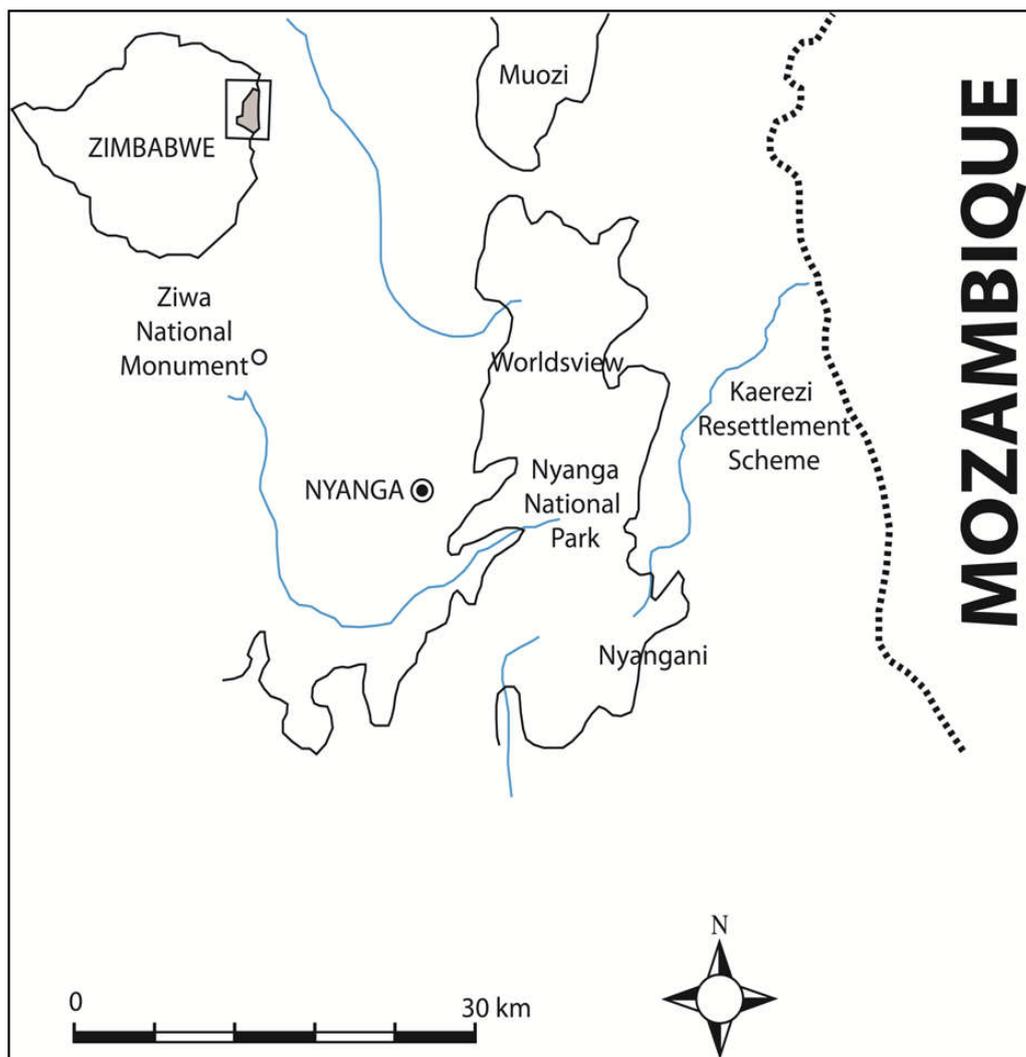


Figure 3: Map showing the location of Ziwa National Monument and Nyanga National Park, Zimbabwe Eastern Highlands (Map modified after Chirikure and Rehren 2004 by Thomas Thondhlana)

During the colonial period, chiefly after the 1940s, indigenous Africans who regarded the Nyanga landscape as their ancestral homeland were displaced to pave way for commercial farms, nature conservancies and monuments. Vast tracks of land in the Nyanga District were sold to wealthy individuals by the British South African Company (BSAC), whilst pre-existing indigenous African

ancestral land rights were superseded. European settlers expropriated vast stretches of land, much of which was neither cultivated nor pastured with livestock in the Nyanga District (Moore, 1993, p. 384). The Ziwa Estate was proclaimed a national monument in 1946 because of the impressive archaeological evidence. This estate has a dense concentration of agricultural terraces together with Iron Age settlements covering over 3000 hectares. In the post-colonial period, the Sanyangare people who had established gardens and settlements inside the monument boundaries were ordered to move out in the 1990s. Today, there are over 17000 people living around the Ziwa National Monument who require pastoral areas for their cattle and arable land for their crops. As a result of the ever shrinking space for livestock pasturing and farming, these local communities are once again encroaching into the monument premises (Chiwaura, 2012, p. 52). The demand for natural resources which include agricultural land and good pastures around the Ziwa National Monument is very high. The local community is utilising resources in the landscape for the purposes of basic survival. For local communities the monuments premises legitimately belong to them since this was homeland to their ancestors. Some members of the local community have actually resorted to cultivating on the ancient terraces inside the Ziwa Estate (Chiwaura, 2012, p. 53). According to Chiwaura (2012, p. 53), the local communities assert that before the coming of the central government agency to manage the monument, they used to live in harmony with the resources found in the Ziwa Estate. The cultivation of crops and grazing of livestock in this estate is prohibited by the country's conservation legislation. Professional heritage managers also strongly feel that such activities will cause irreversible damage to archaeological evidence. The Ziwa Site Management Plan that was prepared by NMMZ employees noted with some concern the establishment of settlements and agricultural fields inside the Ziwa National Monument premises. Land and resource management techniques that exclude the indigenous communities are viewed by some scholars as detrimental because they infringe indigenous people's agricultural and pastoral land rights (West, *et al.* 2006, p. 260).

The Nyanga National Park (formerly Rhodes Inyanga Estate) is another case study of a protected area which is located in the Nyanga District (Fig 3). This 47 000 hectare property once belonged to Cecil John Rhodes, the architect of the colonisation of Zimbabwe (Petherman, 1974). Just like Ziwa National Monument, this park has some of the best preserved archaeological features in the form of agricultural terraces and settlements (Soper, 2006, p. v). During the colonial era, this property was used as a plantation for exotic eucalyptus, pine and wattle (Moore, 1998). The estate was willed to the "people of Rhodesia" by Cecil John Rhodes and subsequently proclaimed a national park in 1947 (Moore, 1993, p. 385). With time, Africans who lived inside the park boundaries were systematically excluded from this landscape. In 1963, under the Rhodesian Front regime, the remaining indigenous African families were forcibly evicted from the Nyanga National Park (Moore, 1993, p. 385). Having lost their rights to resources in the national park, people of African descent were relocated to regions that offered little opportunities like the arid Lowveld reserve to the north of Nyanga District. In the post-colonial period, some local communities were resettled in places like Kaerezi (formerly Gairezi) close to the park. Today, the Nyanga National Park is managed primarily as a tourist attraction centre and recreation facility. Similar to other cases, the park remains out of bounds for the Kaerezi residents who are prohibited from cultivating and pasturing their livestock inside its premises.

This brief account of past and present land tenure system in the Nyanga District of Zimbabwe can help us to draw some useful conclusions. Archaeological investigations of pre-colonial land use reveal that indigenous people managed to develop their own sophisticated agricultural and water management systems. The construction of agricultural infrastructure required a lot of labour. With the advent of European colonisation, vast tracts of land in this extreme north-east part of Zimbabwe were expropriated by whites whilst other parts became state property. Colonisation also introduced capital intensive commercial plantations which specialise in the production of timber and fruit farming in the Eastern Highlands. The plight of the indigenous Africans who require land for agricultural and pastoral purposes has not been solved by highly mechanized farming, creation of plantations or creation of protected areas in this region, all of which were exclusionary to them. Although archaeological investigations have given us important insights into the effective use of the Nyanga landscape by pre-colonial agriculturalists, little has been done to impart this invaluable knowledge to contemporary peasant farmers in the region. As has been noted by Erickson (1998, p. 38), much of the archaeological research on past agricultural systems remains at descriptive and analytical level, with little emphasis given to the potential application of this knowledge to contemporary situations.

Applied archaeological studies and agriculture: some success stories

Several ground breaking archaeological investigations of ancient agricultural systems that aim to address contemporary food security problems have been carried out in developing countries, especially in Latin America (Erickson, 1998; Guttman-Bond, 2010; Kendall, 2005; Selvakumar, 2010). Archaeologists in these countries successfully joined forces with other professionals to rehabilitate and revitalise some ancient and forgotten agricultural systems. Today, there is an emerging field known as ‘applied archaeology’ which endeavours to generate information on things that occurred in the past and goes a step further to use the same information to tackle some contemporary problems and challenges (Lane, 2011). Case studies from countries like Bolivia and Peru, in Latin America are presented below to show ways in which developing countries can tap into the past to solve current food and land problems. Be that as it may, applied archaeological approaches have their own inherent limitations which will be highlighted in this discussion.

The Lake Titicaca Basin of Peru and Bolivia was largely overlooked as agriculturally unproductive by modern provisos. However, archaeological reconstructions established that this region was exploited by indigenous communities, beginning from 3000 yrs ago, to produce food to support comparably large populations. Archaeologists established that this region was once highly productive agriculturally to the extent that they interpreted it as a former “bread basket” of the South-central Andes (Erickson, 1998). The greater part of this basin was modified by human beings to create what archaeologists prefer to call raised fields. These raised fields are found in waterlogged areas of the Lake Titicaca Basin where the water table is high. The fields were extensively farmed to produce potatoes before the arrival of Europeans in the Americas. Interested professionals, who included anthropologists, agronomists and archaeologists initiated what came to be known as the ‘Raised Field Agricultural Project’. The project involved experiments which used indigenous crop varieties on the ancient

agricultural systems. After these experiments, these professionals were convinced that these raised fields were highly productive. The fields did not require artificial fertiliser because they relied on natural “green manure” that is produced in waterlogged conditions. Subsequently, these scholars managed to persuade some local farmers to rebuild a few raised fields and trained them to produce indigenous crops (Erickson, 1998). The Lake Titicaca Basin is one excellent example where archaeologists assisted local communities to rehabilitate ancient fields and reintroduce indigenous crops. On the other hand, in Peru archaeologists were also able to restore to full productivity some of the prehistoric agricultural terraces and irrigation canals for the benefit of the local communities (Kendall, 2005). Investigations in Peru also allowed scholars to evaluate the effectiveness of traditional farming methods. It is now appreciated that inorganic commercial fertilisers have serious negative effects on human health, agricultural land and the environment (Ayala & Rao, 2002). It was actually discovered that chemical fertilizers were harmful to the biomass system that is inherent in the agricultural terraces of Peru (Kendall, 2005, p. 217). Today, these agricultural terraces are being sustainably used to produce maize by the local farmers. In the same vein, archaeologists and interested professionals can come to the assistance of local communities in regions like the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe to offer training courses and workshops on indigenous methods of farming.

Having looked at the pros of applied archaeological investigations in the resuscitation and rehabilitation of pre-colonial agricultural systems, it is important to highlight some of the challenges associated with such approaches. One major challenge is that conditions that are required to establish these past agricultural systems without risking dissociation are no longer available in some cases. The ancient agricultural systems discussed in this paper flourished in specific contexts that are far removed from the realities of today. According to Erickson (1998, p. 40) many factors, which include among others land tenure systems, crops, tools and socio-economic dynamics, can influence or affect agricultural practices. The forces and modes of production have significantly changed from the pre-colonial times to the present day (Hall, 1987). Traditional farming systems which rely heavily on human and animal energy for their production and post-harvesting processing are labour intensive and are perceived to have less financial returns (Austen & Headrick, 1983). This makes exotic varieties, which require less time to mature, financially lucrative. There has also been exponential population growth which requires farmers to produce high yields in the shortest time possible, which leaves many agriculturalists to resort to exotic varieties. However, this practice is proving to be highly unsustainable, to both the land and the farmers’ food security and sovereignty. Post-colonial nation states would also prefer to produce crops like tobacco for export markets to boost their foreign exchange reserves rather than encouraging farmers to produce indigenous crop varieties exclusively for local consumption. With the much needed foreign exchange earnings, these nation states believe that they would be equally food secure once they convert their foreign currency reserves into food in times of need. However, the production of cash crops is detrimental to local food security and sovereignty because it leaves local communities highly vulnerable to global market price fixing and fluctuation. We still have the conviction that indigenous farmers are more food secure if they are self-sufficient rather than when they are exposed to the fluctuations in external crop prices. Indigenous agricultural systems and crop varieties will make indigenous farmers food sovereign, since they will not over rely on

commercially produced hybrids, artificial fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides. Indigenous agricultural systems will also capitalise on indigenous innovations and agro-diversity in place of foreign technologies and crops that poorly adapt to our local conditions.

Conservation versus rehabilitation of ancient agricultural landscapes

Pre-colonial agricultural landscapes like the ones found in the Nyanga District are protected by the heritage legislation because they are considered non-renewable archaeological resources. The colonially derived heritage laws in most African countries make it mandatory and legal for the nation states to acquire properties where monuments are located. Some scholars feel that these heritage laws infringe on the rights of indigenous people and individual property rights (Meskell, 2010; O' Keefe, 2000). Given this scenario, is it possible to rehabilitate and revitalise some of these indigenous African agricultural systems in situ? Is it possible to use these agricultural landscapes in a sustainable way to produce food as was the case during the "good old days"? Should some of this elaborate infrastructure be left untouched simply because it is protected by the law?

People who live adjacent to protected areas see that land as prime agricultural land that remains "unused" or "under-utilised". With the ever-increasing population, both human and livestock, the need for arable and grazing land is much greater than previously thought. Inevitable conflicts between the government agencies and local communities interested in resources inside these protected areas will increase. The rehabilitation of the archaeological structures is inconsistent with the current conservation philosophy. Professional archaeologists and heritage managers have a strong conviction that these landscapes should not be tampered with (Mupira, 1995). As a result, they prefer exclusionary 'fortress conservation' strategies which include the creation of buffer zones to separate heritage places from the local communities (West, *et al.* 2006, p. 259). However, without sustainable utilisation, these structures will inevitably continue to deteriorate. In the case of the Nyanga agricultural landscape, trees which grow on ancient agricultural infrastructure are one of the major threats because of the passive preservation policy of the NMMZ (Mupira, 2008, p. 340). Protected areas should not continue to serve the interests of a few scholars and wealthy foreign tourists. The conservation efforts inside these protected areas should have a positive impact on the daily livelihood of local communities. There is something wrong with the legislation that stresses on the 'conservation' of the natural and archaeological resources whilst people struggle for their daily livelihood (Ranger, 2000, p. 59). The colonially derived preoccupation with artefacts and structures from the past without equal concern for human life has been considered by some as the 'ethical crisis of archaeology' (Stone, 2009, p. 326). According to Ramutsindela (2005, p. 12), the protection of resources inside protected areas can be a daunting task if communities residing in the adjacent areas are poverty stricken. There is therefore need to improve the delivery of services and improve the livelihoods of these communities. We therefore concur with Mupira (2008, p. 379) who notes that conservation efforts should be socially oriented and allow continual human agency in the landscape.

Conclusions

This paper has attempted to critically underscore the advantages, prospects and challenges of resuscitating indigenous African agricultural systems. Archaeology has been put to the fore as a discipline that can help us to understand dynamics in agricultural land utilisation from the pre-colonial era to the present. Today, it is desirable to have a 'usable' African past which engages with social and economic conditions of the present (Davies, 2012, p. 319). This paper has attempted to engage with topical issues namely, the land reform programme and food security in post-colonial Africa. Capital intensive or commercial agriculture, which was introduced during the colonial era, is not the universal answer to perennial food shortages that continue to haunt post-colonial countries in the world. Modern agricultural methods and crop varieties that continue to be introduced in Africa are sometimes inappropriate and environmentally unfriendly. According to Erickson (1998, p. 43), it is unfortunate that major research funds have been channelled towards the capital intensive agricultural systems at the expense of indigenous agricultural methods that are sustainable to enhance food security and sovereignty. Indigenous African cultigens remain unstudied with very sketchy information about precise yields, efficiency and sustainability. Governments in the developing world should thus direct more funding towards the research of indigenous crop varieties and indigenous agricultural systems. African governments should also introduce policies which favour the cultivation, marketing and sale of indigenous crops. According to Ayala and Rao (2002, p. 797), many traditional farming systems that were once regarded as primitive and archaic are now being recognised as equally sophisticated and appropriate. In the developed world, there is a movement in favour of indigenous and organic farming and organic foods (Kuepper, 2010; Lockeretz, 2007). Efforts by contemporary farmers in the Bende Gap, Kumbu Valley, Honde Valley, Biriwiri and Nyamaropa areas in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe to use traditional farming methods should be actively promoted (Soper, 2000, p. 43; Soper, 2006, p. 49; Mupira, 2008, p. 354). A new paradigm that views protected areas as dynamic and living socio-cultural heritage rather than pristine and static is also required. Ramutsindela (2005, p. 11) correctly concludes that it is unfortunate that post-colonial governments in Africa have perpetuated the ideas and practices that are typical of the colonial era. This includes among other things, the uprooting of people from their ancestral land to make way for these protected areas. A liberal conservation paradigm should be adopted by professionals in their effort to preserve both natural and cultural heritage for posterity.

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Bachelor of Adult Education students' perceptions of polygamy at a state university in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The study explored the perceptions of Bachelor of Adult Education students at a state university in Zimbabwe who were born in polygamous families and aged between twenty five and thirty five years. Twenty participants were selected using purposive sampling while data were generated using face-to-face interviews. Responses were recorded using a digital voice recorder and analysed using the thematic content analysis technique. Results indicated that polygamous families are faced with a number of challenges such as abuse, jealousy, envy, co-wife rivalry, sibling rivalry and unequal distribution of resources. Positively, participants also reported unity and carrying each other's burden in trying times in some polygamous families. Recommendations for practice are suggested.

Key terms: Polygamy; Perceptions; University Students

Introduction

Polygamy, which is the marriage of a man to two or more women at the same time (Jonas, 2012), is regarded as a valid form of marriage in African countries and also in mormon societies (Al-Krenawi, 2010). Polygamous marriages are common in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and are also known to occur in Europe and North America (Altman & Ginat cited in Al-Krenawi, Graham & Izzeldin 2001). According to Scott (1986), polygamous relationships have always existed in the United States but were regarded as extramarital affairs or illicit relations. Furthermore, Jonas (2012) states that Westerners claim to have one man one woman societies but keep mistresses and sexual partners. Thus, it can be argued that polygamy is common in many different cultures across the world. In Zimbabwe, it is one of the most common cultural practices and has been in existence since time immemorial. Interestingly, in Zimbabwe, while polygamy is prohibited under the civil law, it can be practised under the customary law. For instance, The Customary Marriages Act [Chapter 5:07] allows a man to marry more than one wife. A man in such a marriage is not obliged under any law to inform his wife of his intention to marry, neither is he obliged to request the consent of his wife or wives before marrying another woman (Thobejane & Takayindisa, 2014).

Baloyi (2013) gives a number of reasons why polygamy was and is still practised in Africa. One of the reasons that he gives is that it was a remedy for infertility. In Africa, infertility has always been associated with women despite the fact that men can be sterile too. In the same vein, Chigidi (2009) argues that the traditional Shona man values children more than he values love. Love is important, but if it fails to produce children then there are serious problems. If a marriage fails to produce children, measures are taken to correct that anomaly. Marriage practices such as polygamy were used to ensure that every family produced children.

Another reason that has been given for explaining the practice of polygamy is that it was used as a solution to menopause (Baloyi, 2013). In most African countries, it was believed to be a taboo for women who have reached menopause to continue having sexual relations with their husbands or any other man. As such, African men would opt for polygamy to continue satisfying their sexual desires.

Polygamy is also a solution to social discrimination. Nyengele (2004) argues that in most African countries, women are expected to marry and stay married; a woman who remains single after she has attained a marriageable age is considered a deviant. Thus, at the prime of their youth both girls and boys are expected to get married and start a family. Rutoro and Madimbo (2015) argue that being single in Africa in the sense of never having been married is regarded as the worst fate that can happen to a woman. Such a person is considered to have a bad omen that chases away potential suitors. To avoid negative labelling from the community, some women end up in polygamous marriages.

Polygamy was regarded as a status symbol and as a symbol of wealth. For example, in a study which they conducted in Cameroon, Thobejane and Takayindisa (2014) reported that women and children were viewed largely as labourers and producers. Wives produced children and maintained gardens, while girl children produced dowry, provided personal service and were valuable for increasing garden income. The cash income from a man's gardens belonged to him exclusively and he shared as little as possible with his wives. Thus, women and children were used for economic gain. The status of women and children has not changed much up to today.

One of the most common explanations advanced for the continued existence of polygamy is that it is embedded in patriarchal societies in which strong kinship ties are established through marriages to maintain extended family and clan power (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Gharaibeh, 2011; Hillman, 1975). In some societies, polygamy was and is still practised for religious reasons (Madhavan, 2002). For example, among the Islamic and Apostolic sect members in Zimbabwe, polygamy is part of their religious beliefs. They believe that it protects the family from extra marital affairs and sexually transmitted diseases.

Lack of sexual gratification on the part of men has been cited as one of the reasons behind polygamy (Gumani & Sodi, 2009). Some scholars cite mere appetite for many sexual partners as one of the reasons behind the continued existence of polygamy (Struence, 2005). When some men become financially stable, they marry more wives because they are able to take care of them. In some instances, women's economic dependence often pressures them into polygamous marriages. Other people enter into polygamy for their personal and individual reasons.

With the advent of colonialism and Christianity, polygamy and other cultural practices were banned as they were considered to be primitive and uncivilized (Chavhunduka, 1979). Moreover, Christian missionaries regarded it as morally wrong although the bible has nothing to say against it (Karanja, 1994). Through their education systems, western ideas of a nuclear family were transmitted and inculcated in children who ended up despising polygamy and other cultural practices (Arowolo, 2010). However, it is of paramount importance to realise that despite desperate efforts by the missionaries to stop polygamy, it continues to be a highly significant type of marriage in Sub-Saharan African societies (Al-Krenawi, 2010).

Polygamy has been associated with negative outcomes especially for women and children (Al-Krenawi & Wiesel, 2002; Hassouneh –Phillips, 2001; Al-krenawi, Graham & Izzeldin, 2001). For example, Cook and Kelly (2006) found out that in polygamous societies women are socialised into subservient roles that inhibit their participation in the family and public life. Furthermore, Agadjanian and Ezen (2000) argue that due to its patriarchal nature, polygamy leads to the insubordination of women. Research has shown that women in polygamous marriages are at the increased risk of experiencing psychological problems such as anxiety, depression and irritability (Al–Sherbiny, 2015; Ghubash, Hamdi, & Bebbington, 1992; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2006). Other problems that have been associated with polygamous marriages are sexual, physical and emotional abuse (Al-Krenawi & Wiessel, 2002). Furthermore, research indicates that senior wives and their children are usually less favoured by their husbands, and have fewer resources for their children than junior wives (Al-Krenawi et al., 2001). In a study that was carried out among the modern Vavhenda people of South Africa, Gumani and Sodi (2009) found out that the issue of favouritism, neglect and dissatisfaction with the distribution of material resources was a serious problem in polygamous marriages. Moreover, competition and jealousy were common among co-wives as they competed for love and attention from their husbands. Daoud et al. (2014) in a study conducted among Arab Bedouin women found out that women in polygamous marriages had a high risk of suffering from mental health problems regardless of their level of education and socio-economic status. Moreso, Al-Sharfi (2015) argues that when compared with children from monogamous families, children from polygamous families have a variety of problems such as disorders, scholastic difficulties and social problems.

Although literature highlights the negative effects associated with polygamy, positive things have also been reported in other studies. For example, Sultan and Lazim (2010) argue that a woman in a polygamous marriage does not have to worry much about her family since there are other women to help her. She can work late while her family and husband are being taken care of by other women. In addition, Thobejane and Takayindisa (2014) believe that while women might initially feel uncomfortable and envious when a new woman enters the household, these sentiments usually fade away thereby ensuring harmonious relationships and the equal treatment of the wives.

Most studies that have been conducted to investigate the perceptions towards polygamy have focussed on the experiences of women (Daoud et al., 2014, Gundani & Sodi, 2009; Al-krenawi et al., 2001, Archampong, 2010). This study attempted to bridge this gap in knowledge in two ways. First, it sought to investigate the perceptions of both male and female participants towards polygamy. Second, it investigated the perceptions of adult university students regarding life in polygamous marriages. This is against the backdrop that not much is known about university students' perceptions towards polygamy in Zimbabwe. Adult education students play a critical role in the preservation of culture.

Method

Research design

The researcher made use of a phenomenological research design. Creswell (2013) describes a phenomenological research design as one in which all participants share common experiences of

a phenomenon. Participants in this study came from polygamous families. In this study, the phenomenological research design was useful in capturing the perceptions of Bachelor of Adult education students from polygamous families.

Participants

The sample consisted of 20 participants (13 female) from polygamous families, who were pursuing a Bachelor of Adult Education degree at a state university in Zimbabwe. The age range of participants was between twenty five and thirty five years. The sampling of participants was purposive in that it aimed at involving persons who were born in polygamous families in order to capture their experiences. Purposive sampling involves selecting certain units or cases based on a specific purpose rather than randomly (Tashakkori & Teddie, 2001). A purposive sample is selected based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to select students from polygamous families who were considered to be able to contribute to the study because of their experiences with the social phenomenon which was under investigation.

Research instruments

The researcher made use of individualised semi-structured interviews to collect data from the participants due to the sensitivity of the issue under investigation. Murthy and Bhojanna (2009) argue that interviews allow the researcher to ask probing questions. In this study, probing questions were useful in soliciting the perceptions of participants regarding polygamous families. Murthy and Bhojann (2009) believe that with semi-structured interviews, questions asked can change from one interviewee to the next as a result of information given in the previous interviews and desire to follow up new lines of inquiry. This enabled the researcher to gather as much information as possible from participants. The interviews focused on the following issues; the number of wives their fathers had, relations between co-wives, participants' relations with siblings, allocation of resources in polygamous marriages, benefits associated with allocation of resources, role of wives in polygamous families and the participants' views on having a polygamous marriage.

Data Analysis

Data captured using a digital voice recorder were analysed using the thematic content analysis technique. Prior research shows that thematic content analysis is well suited to analyse sensitive phenomena (Vaismoradi et al., 2011) such as perceptions on polygamy. According to Green and Thorogood (2004), when investigating an area where not much is known, content analysis can be effective for identifying common issues revealed in the data. This technique was preferred given that not much was known about the perceptions of adult education students who grew up in polygamous families.

Ethical considerations

Prior consent was obtained from the participants before data collection. The researcher explained to the participants that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt that they

could not continue participating in the study (Al-Krenawi et al., 2001). The purpose of the study was also explained to the participants before taking part in the study.

Findings and discussion

This study investigated the perceptions of students pursuing a Bachelor of Adult Education degree at a state university in Zimbabwe, on polygamy as a form of marriage. The results are presented under seven main themes namely; the number of wives possessed by participants' fathers, relations between co wives, participants' relations with siblings, allocation of resources in polygamous marriages, benefits associated with allocation of resources, role of wives in polygamous families and the participants' advice on having a polygamous marriage.

Number of wives possessed by participants' fathers

Participants' fathers had different numbers of wives. Fifteen participants reported that their fathers had two wives each; three revealed that their fathers had three wives and only two said that their fathers had four wives. By and large the finding from this study is consistent with previous findings that reported an average of two wives in most polygamous marriages (Gumani & Sodi, 2009).

Relations between co-wives

Participants were asked to describe the kind of relations that existed between their mothers and co-wives. Varied responses were obtained from the participants. Most participants highlighted that relations between their mothers and co-wives were hostile. The relations were characterised by violence, competition, hatred and as children, participants reported being caught up in those fights. One of the participants said:

My mother is the senior wife. She would fight with her co-wife over allocation of groceries whenever our father brought some groceries to our rural home.(Participant 2)

Another participant had this to say:

My father had three wives. Two of them were sisters. Whenever there were fights among them, the two sisters would team up against our mother. We were left with no choice but to join in the fights and defend our mother.(Participant 7)

The finding from this study was also reported in earlier studies. For instance, Baloyi (2013) established that polygamous marriages were characterised by jealousy, envy and hatred among co-wives and their children. Among the VaVhenda people of South Africa, Gumani and Sodi (2009) reported that consequences associated with polygamy include humiliation that women experience due to constant conflicts with co-wives, favouritism and neglect by husbands.

Another participant who reported that his father and his fathers' brothers were polygamists had this to say;

At times co-wives physically assaulted each other. The arrival of a new wife into the family was not welcome. She in most cases was

unwelcome by the senior wife or wives; as such relations between her and her co-wives were not cordial. (Participant 17).

In this study, many participants reported that their fathers would take another wife without the knowledge and consent of the co-wife or wives. Similar results were reported by Hassouneh –Phillips (2010) who also found out that some husbands kept their marriages to another wife a secret. When his family discovers this secret marriage, conflicts are likely to occur between the new wife and her co –wife or wives. In Zimbabwe, The Customary Marriages Act [Chapter 5:07] allows a man to marry more than one wife. A man in such a marriage is not obliged under any law to inform his wife of his intention to marry neither is he obliged to request the consent of his wife or wives before marrying another woman. Given such as scenario, there is likely to be tension between the newly married wife and other wives already in the family that she is joining. Men do not seek consent from the wife or wives presumably because they may not accept being joined by another wife.

Very few participants indicated that at times relations between their mothers and their co –wives were harmonious. However, they reported that peace did not usually last for a long time in their families. During happy times, co-wives are supportive of each other in child rearing, domestic duties and responsibilities. Furthermore, Yanca and Low (2003) also found out that in polygamous families which co-exist peacefully, relationships between co-wives tended to be beneficial to women’s economic power. Contrary to this finding, Hassouneh –Phillips (2001) reported that where co-wives lived close to each other, they witnessed violence being perpetrated against their co-wives but did not intervene. This could be due to lack of support and care for each other.

Participants’ relations with siblings

When asked to describe the kind of relationships that they had with their siblings from their stepmothers, most of them indicated that their relationships were not good .The relationships were characterised by competition, jealousy and rivalry. The fights, disputes and jealousy among co-wives and their children persisted even after the death of the husband and father respectively. Some respondents indicated that this competition often led to domestic violence, accusations of witchcraft and in some cases death. This finding is consistent with previous studies. For instance, Struence (2005) states that conflicts are the order of the day in polygamous families as children compete for scarce resources. This is because when a man has two or more wives, he is likely to have a large number of children within a short period of time.

One participant indicated that he had poor relations with siblings from his father’s other wives because they always competed for attention, love and recognition from their father who was most of the time not available for them. Furthermore, most of the participants also reported that their fathers could not share their love equally with their wives and children. This in most cases resulted in hatred and rivalry amongst children of the same family. Similar results were reported by Al-Krenawi et al., (2001) in a study among Palestinian women who found out that children of both senior and junior wives may internalize the antagonisms between the two wives and rather than considering themselves as loving and equal siblings, may in fact be hostile according to who their mother is. This hostility is exacerbated when the husbands are known to devote greater social and economic support to children of the junior wife, as well as to the junior wife herself.

One incident of sexual abuse was reported in this study. The participant was abused by her sibling from their step mother while they were still young. Although the case was reported to the police, it was later dropped due to lack of evidence. Physical and emotional abuses were also reportedly coming from siblings, step mothers as well as fathers. Strassmann (1997) argues that co-wife rivalry can cause women to abuse each other's children. Abuse from step mothers negatively affects their children's relationships. However, Thobejane and Takayindisa (2014) argue that it would also be a mistake to believe that all polygamous marriages are abusive.

Very few participants talked about having good relations with siblings from their step mothers. These rare participants mentioned working together and experiencing family unity in times of problems. However, it is important to note that such participants came from religious families such as apostolic sect churches, where family unity is emphasized in church teachings.

Allocation of resources in polygamous families

On the issue of resource allocation, participants reported that resources were not allocated equitably by their fathers. Students from senior wives highlighted that their mothers got little or no resources from their fathers. Their mothers relied on their brothers for financial up keep. One of the participants said;

Our father did not afford to pay for our school fees. We relied on assistance from our mother's relatives, especially her brothers
(Participant10)

This finding was also reported by Thobejane and Takayindisa (2014) who observed that because of high living standards, most polygamists do not afford basic commodities such as health facilities, education, shelter and clothing. This burden will be pushed and transferred to the extended family such as uncles, nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Most of the participants indicated that they had to help their mothers sell vegetables and fruits after school to supplement the little resources, if any, that they got from their fathers. Some had to do manual work after school to raise money for their school fees. They also highlighted that children whose mothers did not manage to work to raise money failed to go to school because their fathers could not pay their school fees.

One participant reported that

After school we had to work in other people's fields to supplement our school fees and food. At times we would help our mother at the vegetable market. We had little time to play with other children of our own age .(Participant 12)

Similar results were reported by Hassouneh – Phillips (2001) in America among Muslim families who found out that first wives together with their children were unhappy with polygamy because they were forced to share their husband and father's time, resources and money with the junior wives and their children. In this study even some participants from junior wives reported inadequate resources in their families. They indicated that the resources provided by their fathers were not

enough to meet their daily needs. However, on the contrary, a study by Al-Krenawi et al., (2008) revealed that junior wives had more satisfying relationships with their husbands than senior wives.

Benefits associated with allocating resources

Interestingly, some participants reported that senior wives were responsible for resource allocation in their households. In such households, being a senior wife was associated with respect from their junior co-wives. In such instances, the junior wives would wash, cook and do any other tasks assigned to them by the senior wives. This finding was reported by participants who belonged to certain apostolic church sects in Zimbabwe. Under such circumstances, the senior wife would become a mother figure to the junior wives and as a result of that their relationship is healthy rather than competitive. However, most participants reported that in their families fathers were responsible for resource allocation. In such families, the most loved wife always gets more resources which in most cases were indicated to be the youngest wives.

Role of wives in polygamous families

Sadly some participants reported that their fathers were not responsible husbands and thus their mothers had to work hard to provide for their children and their husband. In such types of families, the wives work hard in order to win the love of their husbands. One participant had this to say:

Our grandmother always encouraged my mother to work hard so as to win the love of her husband. On the other hand our father would take money from our mother by force and spend it on beer.
(Participant 9)

Women work hard to support their families and their husbands. The most financially stable wife will automatically become the most favoured wife. These results are similar to what was found by Hayase and Liaw (1997) who argue that women in polygamous marriages are at risk of economic exploitation by their husband. Furthermore, Ward (2004) argues that some husbands have abused these funds that women earn to support themselves and their children.

Participants' advice on having a polygamous marriage

When asked about the kind of advice they would give to someone intending to be involved in a polygamous marriage, all the participants reported that polygamy is a bad cultural and religious practice which violates women and children's rights. Surprisingly, some of the male participants reported that because of their religious backgrounds, they had no choice but to marry many women. Others envied the type of respect that their own fathers got from their children and wives, hence they still want to be polygamists. This is in line with what was found by Thobejane and Takayindisa (2014) who argue that children attached to a polygamous lifestyle view polygamy as the only key that can only lead them to the happiness that they aspire to have in life. However, most of the participants indicated that they did not wish to be involved in polygamy. More so they advised other people not to engage in polygamy. The advice offered to men in polygamous marriages was to treat their wives and children fairly and equally. This can go a long way in promoting love, peace and unity in polygamous families. It was also reported that certain men

consulted traditional healers in search of charms to maintain love, peace and unity among their wives and children.

Conclusions

The findings of this study indicate that polygamy is a cultural and religious practice that disadvantages women and children. This is because all the problems that are associated with it usually affect women and children. Most men in polygamous marriages are not able to provide enough resources for their families. The few resources which the husband has are usually given to the most favoured wife who in most cases is the junior wife. Usually, senior wives are not given attention, love and resources. This may result in their children failing to go to school if their mothers are not employed. Polygamous families are also associated with domestic violence, abuse, accusations of witchcraft and in some cases death of family members.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, some recommendations are made with a view to improving the quality of family life through establishing happy and stable marriages. Given that students are the future spouses, there is need to create a platform where they can debate on challenges associated with polygamous marriages. Adult education students, most of whom end up working in non-governmental organisations, should be encouraged to empower women in polygamous families through sharing their experiences with them. Students should be encouraged to undertake further research on polygamous families as part of their university research projects. It is hoped this may help identify possible solutions to some of the challenges associated with polygamous marriages.

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A consideration of selected Shona personal names in light of the experiences of abused Christian women in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The study is an analysis of selected Shona personal names often given to girls, in view of the experiences of abused Zimbabwean Christian women. The qualitative study was informed by the semantic theory that has it that, names are not just tags or labels but they are meaning-laden and reflect aspects of people's social and psychological experiences. The qualitative study combines empirical and theoretical components. The empirical dimension involved collecting first-hand information from twenty-two Christian women who were abused by their intimate male partners. The theoretical aspect entails an attachment of selected Shona names to those experiences to reflect such experiences. In-depth semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the abused. Data were qualitatively analysed in accordance with themes that emerged. The study established that Shona personal names, as linguistic tools, express situations of domestic violence, reflecting the victims' feelings and those of their advisors. Further research on the use of personal names in diverse situations is recommended.

Key words: domestic violence; Shona names; Christian women; abused women; Zimbabwe

Introduction

Personal names are a valuable source of information, serving as important signs or pointers to a range of people's lived experiences (Dalfovo, 1982; Pelczar, 2001; Sue & Telles, 2007; Suzman, 1994). As with other African indigenous names, all indigenous Shona personal names have meanings relative to people's lived-in experiences (Chitando, 2001). The Shona people constitute the largest ethnic group in Zimbabwe. Due to the effect of colonialism and globalisation, some Shona people today bear personal names that are not indigenous. However, Shona indigenous names still have a place in Zimbabwe and it is for this reason that they are the focus of the present study.

Like any other African indigenous name, a Shona personal name may tell a story about the circumstances of the child's birth or some aspect of social life. As an index, a name may reflect the context in which it was given (Suzman, 1994). For example, it may reflect the place of birth of a child such as a path or road in which case the child may be named *Chezshira* (of the road). In addition, names may also carry injunctions to behave appropriately (Katakami, 1997; Suzman, 1994). Such names include *Ruramai* (be righteous), *Kudzai* (be respectful), *Tendai* (be grateful), and *Gwadimirai* (kneel before). They may also reflect statuses and roles, authority as well as personality traits (Guma, 2001). Shona names falling under this category include *Muponesi* (saviour), *Chigume* (last born child), *Munyaradzi* (comforter), *Maunganidze* (one who gathers or brings together), *Dadiso* (a source of pride, happiness, contentment or appreciation), and *Mutongi* (ruler). Furthermore, personal names can have a social and psychological function

(Dalfovo, 1982). In this regard, personal names can reflect the social and psychological circumstances that prevailed at the time of the birth of a child (Agyekum, 2006; Akinyemi, 2005; Fitzpatrick, 2012; Suzman, 1994). Tensions, ill feelings, fears, and embarrassing situations are published by means of a name given to a new born baby (Agyekum, 2006; Dalfovo, 1982; Guma, 2001; Mutema & Njanji, 2013). In this connection, the name serves as a psychological outlet and a social challenge. Shona names that reflect this include *Dambudzo* (trouble or problem), *Zvanetsa* (things are not fine; there are problems), *Hazvinei* (it does not matter), and *Misodzi* (tears). Names may be commands or questions that often identify sources of tension (Suzman, 1994). Command names encompass those that carry injunctions to behave appropriately, presented earlier on in this paper. Shona names that come in the form of questions include *Ndakaitei* (what have I done?), *Munorwei* (why do you fight me?), *Machivei* (what have you coveted?), and *Ndaizivei* (literally, it means 'what did I know?' which implies 'if only I had known').

Some names may have religious connotations. Such names may be an assertion of the belief in God's presence, a request to God or ancestral spirits, and an expression of joy and thanksgiving to God or ancestors. Shona personal names that exemplify this include *Ndinatsei* (vindicate me or make me righteous), *Chengetai* (protect or be protective), *Sunungurai* (set free), *Tinaye* (we are with God), *Panashe* (where the Lord is), *Tendaishe* (be grateful to God), *Atida* (He (God) has loved us), *Kupakwashe* (It is God who has given or the giving of God), and *Chidochashe* (the desire or will of the Lord).

The topic of names has attracted many researchers from diverse theoretical backgrounds (Chitando, 2001; Guma, 2001; Makondo, 2013; Mutema & Njanji, 2013; Sue & Telles, 2007; Suzman, 1994). Names have been analysed in terms of their meaning in diverse social and cultural contexts (for example, Agyekum, 2006; Fitzpatrick, 2012; Katakami, 1997; Mutunda, 2011; Pelczar, 2001; Suzman, 1994), and in relation to religion (for example, Chitando, 2001; Dalfovo, 1982). However, there is a paucity of literature on the intersection of personal names and situations of domestic violence as experienced by Christian women, hence the need for the present study. Furthermore, the bulk of the literature on domestic violence, especially relating to religion, comes from the West, hence this study considered African (Zimbabwean) Shona Christian women's experiences of domestic violence and Shona names that serve as pointers to such situations. Although some of the Shona personal names under consideration are not Christian, they are relevant to the discussion in that the women in this study are Christians who belong to the Shona ethnic group.

The concept of violence relates to a range of coercive behaviours aimed at controlling a victim and includes physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuse (Nawaz, Nawaz & Majeed, 2008). Violence against women is related to power and patriarchy which is deeply rooted in many religious traditions and cultures (Partab, 2011). It includes domestic violence (in the form of intimate partner violence) which is the focus of the present investigation. In spite of significant attention given to the topic of domestic violence in recent years, it continues to be a huge problem with enormous individual and societal consequences (Townsend, 2008; Tracy, 2007). As such, the issue is worth investigating.

In this paper, names that are often used for girls (though not always exclusively so), and connote situations of domestic violence against women, are analysed in the context of Christian women's experiences of the same. A scenario may prompt an abused wife to voice her complaints, concerns, distress, sorrows, hopes and aspirations through naming her child or the child may be named by a close relative or friend to reflect the lived-in experience of the mother.

The focus on names of girls was stimulated by a related Zimbabwean study that was conducted by Makondo (2013), which considered the most popular Shona male personal names. Whereas Makondo had males in mind (androcentric), the present study has females in mind (gynocentric).

The terms domestic violence, abuse, violence, and intimate partner violence shall be used interchangeably. The terms abused and victim shall also be used in free variation in this paper.

Method

Research design

The study adopted the qualitative design. Since qualitative research is based on human experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), the current study is qualitative in that it is centred on the experiences of abused women. The study combines results of an empirical study on Christian women's experiences of domestic violence with an analysis of selected Shona personal names of girls that reflect those experiences. The empirical part of the study employs the phenomenological methodology. In a phenomenological study, the researcher attempts to describe as accurately as possible the feelings, attitudes and convictions of the participants (Cox, 1996). The phenomenological method allowed participants to freely express their individual perceptions about their experiences of both domestic violence and religion and so was appropriate for the current study. The theoretical part of the study was grounded in the semantic theory which looks at personal names as meaningful. As Mutema and Njanji (2013, p. 251) assert, "Proper names are not only employed as reference devices but they are also used to accomplish a variety of socially and interactionally relevant tasks."

Part of the findings analysed in this paper come from a larger study that sought to find out the extent to which domestically abused Christian and Muslim women took advantage of the Zimbabwean Domestic Violence Act (Chireshe, 2012). Shona personal names, which were not part of the original study, were superimposed on the experiences of domestic violence, with a view to illustrating that domestic violence, as a social reality, can be epitomised by some Shona personal names.

Participants, instrumentation, and procedure

Given that a successful research endeavour involves choosing prospective participants who have the right information for the study (Neuman, 2006), a blend of purposive sampling and

snowball sampling was adopted in the selection of participants for this study. Purposive sampling ensures that participants with the right information are selected. In snowball sampling, “Researchers identify a small number of individuals who have the characteristics in which they are interested” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001, p. 104). Such individuals will in turn identify others to the researcher. According to Cohen et al. (2001) snowball sampling is appropriate where identification of participants is difficult or when the subject under investigation is sensitive. As such, the sensitive nature of domestic violence called for the application of snowball sampling. The participants were twenty-two Christian women who had experienced domestic violence at the hands of their male intimate partners. They were aged eighteen and above and resided in and around Masvingo City, Zimbabwe.

All information regarding the aims of the study and the methodology was disclosed to prospective participants. The participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point, if they so wished. Since getting the informed consent of participants is an ethical necessity (Heppner, Wampold, & Kivlighan, 2007; Savin-Baden & Major, 2010), prospective participants gave their informed consent before participating in the study.

Given that in-depth semi-structured interviews are an effective means of gathering data on people’s experiences (Aspers, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), they were used to collect data. The interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed, analysed and interpreted. Identification of personal names that are relevant to situations of domestic violence was done with the collaboration of colleagues.

Results and discussion

Experiences of domestic violence

Sources/ antecedents and forms of domestic violence

The study revealed that participants experienced various forms of domestic abuse; situations that can be represented by some Shona personal names with particular reference to those names often given to girl children. It needs, however, to be borne in mind that most Shona indigenous personal names are unisex. The antecedents to the violence, the experience of abuse and the reaction to the abuse by the participants themselves as well as the responses of those to whom participants reported are all situations that can be captured by means of personal names. In situations of suffering or discomfort, the participants may give their children names that suggest their inner struggles as well as struggles with others.

Relatives and friends may give the victims’ children names that may be an encouragement to endure the situation, to seek divine intervention or to amend their behaviour where such behaviour is perceived as the cause of the abuse. Some names may be a plea of innocence on the part of the abused as well as an expression of regret for having married wrong men. Other names may be an expression of hopelessness; a spirit of resignation. Names can also express hope and such names are usually religious oriented. The study revealed that participants experienced various forms of domestic violence and that the cause of the abuse, in most cases, was the desire to control on the part of their abusive husbands.

The desire to control

All participants revealed that their abuse had to do with their husbands' desire to control them in one way or the other. One participant's statement that "My husband treats me like a child" epitomises the controlling behaviour exhibited by abusive partners. The analogy of a child shows that the abuser treated his wife as someone immature and not capable of making sound decisions. It is one of the diminutive elements of patriarchy.

Regardless of what form it assumed, domestic violence emerged as a tool in the hands of abusive husbands to ensure conformity on the part of their wives. From a feminist perspective, violence against women is a critical tool in the maintenance of male hegemony; it is the means by which the patriarchal requirements of conformity and obedience are extended to women and enforced (Partab, 2011; Rakoczy, 2005; Sai, 2007). As Moore (2008, p. 778) suggests, "...men commit violence against women because they want to dominate and control women." Abusive husbands expressed their control through isolation, curtailing mobility, behaviour prescriptions and controlling money. The abuse robbed women of a voice in their marriages.

Extra-marital affairs

Eight participants indicated that their husbands were unfaithful. The participants concerned felt that infidelity was the cause of the violence they experienced. When the women questioned their husbands about their extra-marital affairs, this resulted in domestic violence.

A common thread that runs through all the cases of domestic violence related to promiscuity is that participants did not tolerate infidelity on the part of their husbands and that their husbands were not remorseful about their extra-marital affairs. As one participant put it, "My husband would not tolerate my questioning, asserting his right to do whatever he wants as a man."

The extra-marital affairs also often led to emotional abuse, including denial of conjugal rights, as well as limited financial support since available funds were being channelled to girlfriends, leaving the wives economically deprived. That sexual promiscuity on the part of the husband fuels domestic violence is confirmed in the literature (Bowman, 2003; Chireshe & Chireshe, 2011; Mesatywa, 2009).

Risk of contracting HIV and AIDS

Extra-marital affairs not only resulted in domestic violence but also carried the threat of contracting sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS. In this study, men's infidelity, coupled with women's inability to negotiate the terms of sex because of the headship of the man and the use of violence made some participants vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. Two participants revealed that they had contracted HIV as a result of their husbands' infidelity. One of the participants had this to say: "It is not easy to deny your husband sex even if you feel strongly that sometimes this is risky... I have contracted HIV through my husband." The vulnerability of married women to HIV and AIDS is well documented (Chitando, 2004; Desai, 2005; Mungwini, 2008; Muzvidziwa, 2001).

Accusation of infidelity

Three participants revealed that the violence they experienced was triggered by unfounded suspicion on the part of their husbands that they (the women) were having extra-marital affairs. All three said this was a result of their spouses' relatives who misinformed their husbands that they were cheating on them. Relatives were in this case implicated in domestic violence.

Denial of paternity

Of the three women who indicated that they were falsely accused of infidelity, one fell pregnant during the period of conflict and the husband denied responsibility for the pregnancy. Even after the birth of the child, the husband did not economically support the child. The abuse was thus extended to the child who was considered illegitimate.

Accusation of bringing AIDS into the marriage

One of the three women who were falsely accused of infidelity reported that she was verbally abused by her husband who accused her of bringing AIDS into the family. She was evicted from the matrimonial home by her husband for the alleged promiscuity. All three participants who alleged that they were falsely accused of infidelity were exposed to psychological and emotional abuse.

Rooro/lobola-related abuse

Six participants indicated that their abuse was closely related to the custom of *roora* which caused their husbands to treat them like property or servants. *Rooro* or *lobola* is a custom practised by many ethnic societies in Africa and involves the groom or his family giving money, goods or livestock to the parents of the bride (Burn, 2005). Thus *lobola* involves some payment from the groom or his family to the bride's family (Chireshe & Chireshe, 2010). Participants in this study were very concerned about the payment of *roora* which they perceived as contributing to their vulnerability in marriage. Three of the participants regretted their marriage to the abusive men. The following statement illustrates this sense of regret:

Paying roora gave him a sense of possession. His words soon after roora payment were, "Know that you are now married and that I am the head". Ever since, our relationship has been one of a leader and his follower. Sometimes I regret why I got married to this man because, to say the truth, I have no voice in the marriage.

These experiences of suffering can be expressed through children's names as shall be discussed in the next section.

Names that speak directly to the experiences of domestic violence

In the face of domestic violence, some Shona personal names may be given to children to reflect the scenario, since, as Fitzpatrick (2012) and Suzman (1994) state, names may reflect social and psychological situations that prevailed at the time of a child's birth. All the women's experiences of domestic violence in this study can be summarised by Shona personal names that

are reflective of the situation. The abuse entails excessive control, cheating, exposure to HIV and AIDS and accusation of infidelity. The homes of the women concerned had become, so to say, 'homes of trouble'. Instead of being safe havens, the homes were no longer 'homes' if comfort and safety are taken as the essence of the 'home'. Faced with this situation, it is hardly surprising that the abused could give their children message-laden names such as *Dambudzo*, *Matambudziko*, *Hatihwani*, *Zvanetsa*, and *Misodzi*. *Dambudzo* (trouble or problem) or *Matambudziko* (troubles or problems) are reflective of a situation characterised by suffering such as that brought about by domestic violence. *Hatihwani* (we are not on friendly terms or we do not understand each other) points to animosity in the marriage union, reflected by the presence of domestic violence. Things had gone wrong, hence the name *Zvanetsa* (things have gone wrong or things are not right). Since the experience of violence is painful, it leads to the shedding of tears by the victim, so the name *Misodzi* (tears) aptly represents the situation.

In view of the violence propelled by relatives, abused women might give their children the names which suggest the destabilising influence of the relatives as well as the women's conceptualisation of such interference. *Runzirai* (have a negative influence on) shows that the people being referred to have had a bad influence on the perpetrator of the violence. *Gwadzisai* (make to suffer) and *Gwadziso* (what is intended to cause suffering) may refer to those who are held responsible for the abuse; that they are making the victim to suffer because of their irresponsible behaviour.

Tambudzai, *Shupai* and *Netsai* are synonymous with *Gwadzisai* and as such also communicate the plight of an individual who is suffering at the hands of others. Semantically, the names seem to be a directive to harm yet in Shona when such a directive is negative it may be ironical, which implies that it is a call to stop the harm. Alternatively, the names may allude to the helplessness of the victims of the abuse. It is as if the victim is saying 'go ahead with inducing the suffering; it does not matter'. This state of affairs can also be reflected by names such as *Hazvinei* (it does not matter) and *Itai* (do it or do as you please). The names connote a spirit of resignation on the part of the abused. These names may convey messages to both the abusive partner and his relatives who contributed to the abuse.

The name *Munorwei* (literally, translated as 'Why are you fighting me?') is a question which implies that the name giver (the victim of domestic violence in this case) does not see the reason why her husband's relatives are causing her suffering. She finds it absurd that they are causing her suffering when she has not offended them. The name *Mandivavarira* (you are after me) also epitomises the scenario represented by *Munorwei*. Since names are a mirror of social life (Mutunda, 2011), the names just analysed reflect a scenario in which the injured party is baffled by her victimisation.

Hamunyari (you are not ashamed) is a pointer to those who caused the trouble that they are not ashamed of their actions. The names *Svodai* and *Nyarai* which literally mean 'be ashamed' are synonymous and are a directive given as an imperative statement to those who promote violence to be ashamed of their behaviour. Since the accusation of promiscuity is likely to result in termination of the marriage union, the name *Rambisai* (cause to be divorced) can be used as a social comment, with reference to those relatives implicated.

Fungai (think) and *Rangarirai* (remember) are names which purport to point to the inciters of the abuse as people who do not think properly and are also forgetful. They are a call for those people to think of the wickedness of their behaviour and so desist from it. The names may also be referring to the acts of goodwill that the victim used to bestow on those who caused the problem but that they have forgotten about them. Causing trouble for the victim after she had done so much for them is a sign of forgetfulness. While the victim expected a good turn, she was, far from it, treated like someone who had not done anything good. For the Christian women, the name *Rangarirai* may also be a plea to God to remember them by putting an end to the violence. It is common for believers to look forward to God's intervention when faced with problems (Amenga-Etego, 2006; Knickmeyer, 2004).

The disowned child, whose mother was accused of infidelity, may be named *Ramwiwa*, (the disowned one), *Mandiramba* (you have rejected me), or *Makarasheni* (you dumped me or you abandoned me).

The participants' regret for getting married to the wrong men can be expressed by giving their children symbolic personal names such as *Ndakaziva* (if only I had known) and *Ndaizivei* (what did I know?). The names convey the message that the namers, in this case, abused women, did not know that the men to whom they would get married would be abusive; otherwise if they had known, they would have avoided such unions. The 'if-only-I-had-known' scenario is reminiscent of one of the Christian songs in which the believer wishes he /she had never lived a sinful life before turning to Jesus.

Responding to the violence

Reporting to religious communities, relatives and friends

Faced with domestic violence, the abused women largely reported to their religious communities, relatives and friends. A negligible number reported to the police. Reporting to religious communities reflects the centrality of religion in the lives of the participants (Knickmeyer, 2004; Wendt, 2008). Participants felt that religious communities were a source of advice and support.

Responses of religious communities, relatives and friends

'Be submissive to your husband'

Ten participants reported that they were advised to try to be better wives and to humble themselves before their husbands as is required of Christian wives. The advisors believed that the abused were in that situation because of their non-compliance with their husbands' expectations of them. The advice given clearly indicates a victim-blaming attitude. Victim-blaming attitudes also came out of studies conducted by Chireshe and Chireshe (2009), Davhana-Maselesele (2011), and Gonzalez (2010).

Since the abused were blamed for not properly executing wifely duties, it was felt that it was incumbent upon them to change their behaviour to curb further violence. Such a response

corresponds with names such as *Natsai* (do what is right or correct the wrong), *Gadzirai* (correct the situation or make amends), *Ruramai* (be morally upright) and *Dzidzai* (learn). The names represent a call to the abused to change their behaviour, learning from their experiences of violence. Such names are likely to emanate from the abused women's advisors or even perpetrators of the violence. Victim-blaming attitudes suggest that victims have the capacity to end their abuse (Amenga-Etego, 2006; Knickmeyer, 2004; Levitt & Ware, 2006).

'Pray about the situation'

Alongside the advice to be better wives in order to avert further violence was the advice to pray for their husbands. Prayer was seen as a way of seeking God's intervention, the conviction being that prayer would transform the abuser as a result of God's intervention.

The advice to pray is in tandem with Shona names that underline the importance of prayer or serve as an encouragement for the abused to pray. These names include *Munamoto*, *Nyengeterai*, *Namatirai*, and *Danai*. *Munamoto* (a prayer) may, in certain contexts, suggest that a prayer has been answered but in the context of the present study, it signifies a call for victims to pray about their situation and an assertion of the power of prayer. The conviction behind the advice is that prayer has the power to change the behaviour of abusive partners, thereby having the effect of making God to transform the abuser and so put an end to the abusive situation. *Nyengeterai* is a command to pray. *Namatirai*, which literally means 'pray for' is a name which serves as a directive to abused women to pray about their situation for divine intervention. *Danai* (call upon) is a name that serves as a command to the participants to call upon (the Lord).

Prayer was identified as the key to 'unlock' God's intervention. It was thus seen as having the potential to activate God's intervention and therefore a must for Christian women facing domestic violence. The advice to pray also came out of other studies (Amenga-Etego, 2006; Maluleke & Nadar, 2002; Phiri 2001).

Attributing the violence to the devil

The advice to pray was coupled with the belief that the devil was responsible for the violence. In this regard, it was believed that prayer would result in the defeat of the devil, hence the appropriateness of names that urge on the abused to conquer the devil through prayer such as *Kundai* (defeat or overcome). Seen as temptations from the devil, domestic violence situations may be symbolised by such names as *Miidzo* (temptations). The Christian conviction is that temptations can be overcome with God's intervention (Amenga-Etego, 2006).

Use of biblical texts to comfort and strengthen the abused

Some participants reported that some fellow Christians comforted them by quoting biblical texts. Such texts had the effect of making the abused endure the suffering in the hope that their comfort was going to come. For example, the use of the story of Job is meant to encourage the abused to endure the suffering in the hope of getting consolation from God just as the biblical Job experienced. Names befitting the advice to endure suffering in the hope of divine intervention include *Gamuchirai*, *Chawapiwa*, *Tsungirirai*, *Tsungai*, and *Shingai*.

Gamuchirai (accept) is reflective of the advice to accept the situation bearing in mind that what happens in a person's life, particularly if that person is a Christian, is according to God's plan. The name *Chawapiwa* (what you have been given [by God]), suggests that it is God who makes people experience what they are experiencing. *Tsungirirai* (persevere) is synonymous with *Tsungai* and *Shingai* which literally mean 'endure in the face of hardships'. A situation in which one waits upon the Lord to intervene may be aptly represented by the name *Davidzo* (reply or response) which signifies that the victim of violence is awaiting divine intervention.

'Silence is power'

Five participants reported that their friends and relatives advised them to maintain silence in the face of the abuse since 'silence is power'. It was believed that when one does not answer back in the face of domestic violence, and when one does not publicise the abuse, the violence is likely to subside. Ilika (2005), in a study conducted among Igbo women in Nigeria, also established that answering back was one of the reasons why men beat their wives. The name *Nyararai* (do not speak out) and *Chengetai* (keep it, which is an allusion to keeping the abuse a secret) are relevant to the situation. The advice to refrain from publicising the violence, and so keep the abuse in the heart, calls to mind the need to trust in God's intervention and the Shona saying *usafukura hapwa* (literally meaning 'do not expose your armpit which suggests that one should not divulge domestic secrets, which in this case include domestic violence). The finding that very often victims of violence are advised to keep it a secret echoes previous findings of Pazerait (2008), Phiri (2001), and Ruiz (2005). However, Phiri and Nadar (2006) argue that silence and passivity do not work. Following this line of argument, it can be inferred that silence does not help curb domestic violence.

The preservation of the marriage/belief in the sanctity of marriage

Most participants indicated that they were reminded of the importance of maintaining the family unit and they were also advised to avoid the disintegration of the family by not divulging family secrets. In fact, the participants were advised to endure the situation for the purpose of preserving their marriages at all costs. The advice was based on the perception of marriage as a sacred bond, a lifelong commitment, the conviction that God hates divorce (see Malachi 2:16), and that for women, marriage is a form of social security that enhances their dignity. In this connection, Fiorenza (1995, p. 145) says that abused wives "who believe that divorce is against God's will, cannot but remain in violent marriage relationships for 'better and for worse'". The fear of divorce and its associated stigma was a deterrent to reporting to authorities. Thus, in a bid to 'put on Sunday best' most participants did not take legal recourse in the face of domestic violence.

Divorce or separation, viewed as a shameful thing may prompt the abused to name her child *Svodeso* (something that brings shame) to connote that although at one point she contemplated leaving her marriage because of the abuse, she had to eschew the idea to avoid shame on her part, her family as well as the church. The name *Muchato* may also be given to a child by either the mother or a concerned relative as a reminder of the need to preserve marriage (*muchato*). It is worth noting that both the Shona society and Christianity value marriage to the extent that they want it to be kept at all cost. In this regard, marriage becomes, in Masenya's (1997, p. 58)

terminology, “an idol.” Thus the idolisation of marriage makes abused women to endure the abuse and so maintain their wedded status.

Economic reasons for staying in abusive relationships

Two participants reported that faced with violence they did not seek legal recourse in spite of the availability of this avenue because they felt doing so might result in divorce which might in turn mean loss of support from their husbands. The women felt they would be at a loss. As such they could give their children the name *Tingadini* (what can we do?) which implies that without their husbands’ financial support they cannot survive well economically. The picture that emerges is that some abused women stay in the abusive relationships because they do not have a sound financial base outside the marriage union.

Participants not blaming themselves in the face of domestic violence

While participants in this study were blamed for the violence, none of them blamed themselves for the violence, a finding that contradicts the literature (Chireshe & Chireshe, 2009; Davhana-Maselesele, 2011; Gonzalez, 2010). The participants insisted that they had not done anything wrong to provoke the abuse. That participants did not see themselves as the cause of the abuse is a scenario that can be reflected by giving children names such as *Ndakadadzei* or *Ndakachinyei* (what sin did I commit?), *Ndakaitei* or *Ndakadini* (what wrong did I do?). The names are questions that suggest an answer in the negative; that is, they suggest that the participants did not see themselves as blameworthy for the violence. The names are a plea of innocence. The implication is that participants did not see the cause of the violence in themselves but outside. They blamed their abusive partners and in some cases spiritual and mystical forces for the abuse they suffered. In this context, the abused woman may give her child the name *Ndinatsei* (vindicate me or prove my innocence) which is a request to God to exonerate them of any wrong doing and so end their victimisation.

Reporting to the authorities and thereby making use of the provisions of the Domestic Violence Act

Six participants reported that, owing to the advice they received from their religious communities, relatives and friends, they reported the violence they experienced to the police. The basis of the advice was the conviction that God’s desire is people’s peace. Two participants reported that they secured protection orders against their abusers. The names *Rugare* (peace), *Runyararo* (tranquility) and *Mufaro* or *Rufaro* (happiness) are symbolic of the desire for peace and happiness which propelled the abused to take legal action to secure relief from the abuse. The names also allude to participants’ perception of God as peaceful and as desiring people to live in peace which is an antithesis of domestic violence.

Hope in the face of the violence

In spite of the fact that most of the participants were still ‘reeling’ under abuse, they were hopeful that their situation was going to change as a result of God’s intervention. The hopes and aspirations

of the abused can be represented by some religious-oriented personal names such as *Tariroyashe* (hope in the Lord), *Ruvimbo* (hope), *Rutendo* (faith), *Tinevimbo* (we have hope), *Vimbainashe* (trust in the Lord). Thus the names suggest hope that God would intervene as participants put their trust in him. *Nyaradzo* (comfort), *Nyaradzai* (provide comfort), *Sunungurai* (provide relief or release from the unpleasant abusive situation), *Zororo* (rest), and *Zorodzai* (give rest) are names that befit situations where participants hope for relief from abuse. The names call to mind Jesus' invitation to all who are heavy laden to come to him and get rest (Matthew 11:28). *Miriraishe* (wait upon the Lord) and *Nzvirashe* (literally, the voice of the Lord, which signifies an anticipation of God's response to the plight of the abused) would represent situations where participants wait patiently for God's intervention.

Conclusions and recommendations

Names may be functional as tags linked with lived experiences. The paper has discussed selected Shona personal names that are usually, though not always exclusively, given to girls reflecting experiences of domestic violence. Thus names may serve as a way of speaking out about domestic violence, thereby having a social and psychological function. It should, however, be noted that names analysed may have meanings other than those in this presentation.

The experiences of domestic violence to which name tags have been attached include antecedents, forms and responses to the domestic violence. Since the abused in the study were Christian Shona women, it is expected that some names that they could give to their children to articulate their experiences are laden with religious overtones.

The names that befit the women's experiences can be influenced by both culture and religion, hence the reference to Shona names that may or may not be theophoric. Through names, participants may air their grievances without being victimised further. Name giving thus serves as a stress-reliever. Religious names pertain more to the response to the violence as participants plead with God for vindication and also express hope in divine intervention. Thus as women continue to suffer the abuse, their belief and trust in God's power is not quenched. Thus religion gives them the strength to soldier on in anticipation of relief which may never come their way. Since the names considered pertain to domestic violence situations, the thrust of the paper is limited. As such, more comprehensive studies covering a wider geographical space and focusing on a variety of experiences could be done.

The present study focused on names that could be given and not necessarily on names that the participants or other stakeholders actually gave to reflect situations of domestic abuse. In this regard, further studies exploring names that have been given to children to reflect domestic abuse situations may need to be conducted.

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Teachers' Sign Language beliefs and their influence on Zimbabwean curriculum-in-practice for deaf learners

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Abstract

This study sought to investigate how teachers' beliefs influence the use of Zimbabwean Sign Language (ZSL) in the curriculum. A qualitative cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data through focus group discussions with 34 hearing teachers. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis. It emerged that specialist and non-specialist teachers had superficial differences: on the surface many specialists believed that ZSL was a natural language while the non-specialists believed that it was not. Closer analysis revealed that both specialists and non-specialists believed that it was either a defective language or a contrived system. In either case, ZSL was believed to be incapable of teaching and examining abstract concepts as teachers used the language by occasionally borrowing signs from it. They believed that the language could not be used beyond this without being further developed. The study concluded that teachers did not adequately appreciate ZSL as a language in curriculum practice. It was recommended that they be taught ZSL formally by native users so that they appreciate the nuances of the language.

Key words: Zimbabwean Sign Language, Hearing Teachers, Deaf

Introduction

Traditionally, deaf pupils in Zimbabwe were taught to speak and listen to the languages spoken by the hearing majority around them (Musengi, 2014). The intention was to help them to integrate into their local communities. This is because more than 95% of parents of deaf children are hearing people (Mitchell & Karchmer, 2004) who typically think of deafness as a disability or deficiency (Brusky, 1995; Lane, 2005). According to the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), organisations of deaf people which think of the condition as a cultural difference rather than a disability argue that deaf pupils should have access to Sign Language in order for them to be included in society (WFD, 2010). This latter position received support from the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) which lists Zimbabwean Sign Language (ZSL) as one of the 16 previously marginalised local languages which must be developed and used in education. This study sets out to find out what hearing teachers believe about ZSL and how these beliefs influence the curriculum-in-practice in Zimbabwean schools.

Background to the study

The condition of not hearing spoken language has traditionally been referred to as deafness (Olusanya, Wirz & Luxon, 2008). This condition is measured as hearing loss greater than 25 decibels (Martin & Clark, 2009). Mellon et al. (2015) report that every year more than 10 000 infants are born with such hearing loss in the United States. According to the Zimbabwean Ministry of Health and Child Care (MOHCC), globally the prevalence of such disabilities as deafness is on

the increase because of the increase in chronic health conditions (MOHCC, 2013). The incidence of disabilities such as deafness are reported to be higher in lower income than higher income countries, for example Storbeck (2012) asserts that 90% of children born with deafness are from lower income countries. According to the WFD (2010), the United Nations ranks Zimbabwe as a low income country. In Zimbabwe, the government carried out a national disability survey which identified 22 500 people as having deafness and of these 7 500 were children of school going age (National Disability Survey, 1981). Westerberg et al. (2005) found that the prevalence of hearing loss in Zimbabwe was significant at 2.4% of the population. There are no accurate current figures on the prevalence of children who are deaf. The most recent Zimbabwe Persons with Disabilities Survey (MOHCC, 2013) does not provide figures specific to deafness. There are widely varying estimates ranging from 80 000 to one and half million people who are deaf in Zimbabwe (WFD, 2010). Despite these wide variations in prevalence figures, there is no reason to assume that the incidence of deafness is declining in Zimbabwe as the Ministry of Health (2013) reported a global increase in the prevalence of disabilities such as deafness.

It is for this growing population of deaf children that three boarding institutions were established before independence. In these institutions that were established specifically for deaf pupils in the 1940s, the children underwent elementary education after which most of them were then taught practical skills such as basketry, woodwork, leatherwork, sewing and cookery (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2004). Peresuh and Barcham (1998) observed that historically in Zimbabwe, teaching such children was considered more of a moral and religious obligation than a right, as churches and humanitarian organizations educated deaf children without national coordination and direction.

After the attainment of independence in 1980, government began to exert greater control of the education of deaf children and insisted on following the mainstream curriculum (Musengi & Storbeck, 2015) often in mainstream schools (Chimedza, 2008). Despite government coordination and direction, deaf pupils in Zimbabwe still typically do not go beyond primary school education. Their primary school education is usually longer than hearing peers and this longer stay in school is attributed to various factors. One of the prime factors is that in addition to learning the mainstream curriculum also followed by hearing pupils, the deaf pupils have other areas of need dictated by their deafness (Musengi, 2014). These areas are specialist and technical-vocational skills aimed at preparing deaf pupils to earn a living and fit into society. The specialist areas in the curriculum have traditionally included articulation or speech training, lip or speech reading and auditory training (Musengi & Storbeck, 2015).

To this traditional curriculum was added Sign Language which government directed should be one of the languages to be taught in schools (Secretary for Education, 2002). Government followed this up with another directive *Special Examination Arrangements for Learners with Disabilities* which allowed the signed interpretations of examinations (Secretary for Education, 2007). In addition, to give legal force to the status of Sign Language, the current Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) lists Zimbabwean Sign Language (ZSL) as one of the official languages in the country. Section 4 of Chapter 6 of the Constitution states that 'The State must promote and advance the use of all languages used in Zimbabwe, including Sign Language, and must create conditions for the development of those languages'.

These legal and policy instruments serve to recognise a language that Musengi and Kadenge (2016) say emerged from bringing together deaf children in boarding special schools in the 1940s where the need for communicative interaction resulted in this visual-gestural language. They describe it as a natural, manual language using hand shapes, movement and facial expressions to convey messages as it is visually accessible to people who are deaf. It, however, has no orthography. In pre-independence times, the language was not recognised as real and was therefore prohibited from use in schools as it was generally perceived as interfering with the acquisition of spoken languages which can be written (Musengi, 2014). According to Morgans (1999), deaf children displayed resilience over the years by using Sign Language underground, away from hearing teachers who prohibited it. It is this situation that government, informed by what Mpofu, Kasayira, Mhaka, Chireshe, and Maunganidze (2007) call its egalitarian values of equal opportunity, sought to rectify by developing appropriate legal and policy instruments after independence in 1980.

These developments notwithstanding, the specific role that ZSL should play in schools remains uncertain. Teachers of pupils who are deaf remain largely hearing individuals who hold various beliefs about the nature of ZSL and the feasibility as well as desirability of using it for teaching and examination. It is not clear whether teachers' beliefs about ZSL are conducive to the development and use of the language. Such teachers' beliefs need to be analysed as they have a bearing on how the language is used in schools.

In light of the emerging nature of ZSL, teachers' beliefs about it are largely unexplored aspects in education research in Zimbabwe even though they have the potential to give vital insights into teacher education and continuing professional development in education. For example, previous related studies have focussed on the socio-political history of ZSL (Musengi & Kadenge, 2016); challenges accruing from ZSL regional lexical variations (Mugari, Mabugu, & Nyangairi, 2015); the experiences of teachers of pupils who are deaf (Musengi, 2014) and perceptions of people who are deaf on Sign Language teaching (Mutswanga & Sithole, 2014). None of these studies analysed teachers' beliefs about Sign Language. The aim of this study is to analyse what the hearing teachers in schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe believe about using ZSL in the teaching and examination of their deaf pupils. Specifically, the study sought to address the following questions:

- What are teachers' beliefs about ZSL?
- How do the teachers' beliefs influence the use of ZSL in schools?

Method

Research design

This study employed a qualitative cross-sectional survey design. A qualitative cross-sectional survey design was employed in this study because it recognises, in concurrence with Leedy and Ormrod (2013), the multidimensional and layered nature of language beliefs and their relationship with language-in-education issues.

Sample and sampling procedure

The participants in this study were 34 purposively selected hearing teachers of deaf pupils from all three boarding special schools for pupils who are deaf in Zimbabwe. It was judged that these participants would yield first hand and therefore trustworthy data on ZSL for teaching and examination. This is because they are at schools where sign language is already a part of the implicit curriculum as the deaf children there form what Reilly and Reilly (2005) call a critical mass of users of the language. The teachers were specialists and non-specialists in Special Needs Education. Non-specialist teachers are teachers trained in mainstream education while specialist teachers are those who, in addition to mainstream training, are also trained in Special Needs Education to diploma or degree level.

Instrumentation

Focus group discussions were used to collect the data. A standard one-page focus-group set of six discussion items was used as a means of guiding and directing the discussion. The five main items covered by the guide included whether teachers thought ZSL was a real language; how well it could be used for teaching and learning in the various grades and subjects; how effectively examinations could be interpreted into sign language; what the impediments and strengths were in using sign language for teaching and examination. The sixth item on the discussion guide was meant to raise issues that may have been missed in discussing the first five items.

Procedure

Two focus group discussions were held at each school: one for five to six specialist teachers and another for the same number of non-specialist teachers. It was felt that specialists and non-specialists might have different beliefs and so they were grouped separately to try to capture their different perspectives. In conducting the focus group discussions, the researcher's initial job was to create a non-evaluative environment in which the teachers felt free to express their opinions without concern for the agreement or disagreement of others in the group, as advocated by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007).

Although a standard one-page focus-group set of six discussion items was used as a means of guiding and directing the discussion, the groups did not discuss every item in equal depth. The focus was on eliciting details in response to each of the five main items rather than standardising the responses. Cohen et al. (2007) stated that the interaction of participants in groups allows them to hear the ideas of others and helps them to formulate their own opinions.

Data Analysis

Data collection and data analysis were done simultaneously as advocated for qualitative data by Creswell (2009). In the first stage of analysis, the researcher made notes and wrote memos after each focus group discussion on the topics discussed in that particular session. Creswell (2009) indicated that this preliminary way of categorising data serves as a memory jogger as well as a record of the ideas and theories that the researcher has as he works with the data. At this initial

stage, codes were affixed to the notes and similar phrases, patterns and preliminary themes and differences between specialist and non-specialist teachers were identified. These similarities and differences were taken out to the field in the next round of data collection. Several such analyses were made during and after data collection when all six focus group discussions had been individually transcribed. In practice, analysis involved making comparisons of specialist and non-specialist focus group discussions. The results of this analysis are presented in the next section.

Results

Two broad but closely related themes emerged on teachers' beliefs about ZSL: *A defective language* and *A contrived system of communication*. These themes are used as sub-headings to frame details of teachers' beliefs. Teachers' beliefs are then related to specific ZSL teaching and examination practices in schools as discussed by the participating teachers. The teachers' beliefs are presented using pseudonyms to maintain anonymity and confidentiality before they are analysed and discussed in the following sections.

A defective language

The study revealed that all specialist and non-specialist teachers believe that ZSL is a defective language. The following quotes represent this belief in all three non-specialist focus group discussions:

"Sign Language is in short, it cuts - shortcut." (Fadzai, School A)

"You cannot use Sign Language to teach abstract concepts, it is limited."

(Nyarai, non-specialist at School C)

"They do not know idioms and proverbs in Shona because

Sign Language does not have these". (Moyo, non-specialist at School B)

In the specialist focus group discussions there was wide support for the idea that ideally ZSL was a language which should be used as a tool for deaf children's learning. This idea was immediately followed by observations that it is a basic, non-standard, telegraphic language that left out a lot of information. The following are quotes from the specialist focus group discussions:

"Their language is sort of telegraphic". (Nzou, specialist at School C)

"Sign Language leaves out a lot of information". (Muti, specialist at School

A) *"Sign Language should be their (deaf children's) tool for learning but up to now we do not have a national Sign Language. It is just rudimentary with one school signing one thing and another signing differently."* (Mwechi, specialist at School B)

The purported defective nature of ZSL was, in most specialist and non-specialist focus group discussions, believed to be an impediment to the acquisition of spoken language. For example:

"When they write English they write in a telegraphic way because that is how they sign. It is very difficult to correct that." (Rima, non-specialist at School A)

Beyond interfering with learning English language structures, ZSL was also believed to interfere with acquisition of hearing norms. For example:

"They (deaf children) can even address me as 'iwe ticha'. They have no respect for adults." (Rai, specialist at School B)

In the same group at this school, the issue of deaf children lacking good manners was disputed by one participant as shown in the following quote:

“On good manners – isn’t it their language? Just like in English where everyone is referred to as “you” or in Ndebele where everyone is referred to as “wena” – I think it is a language or culture difference rather than lack of good manners.” (Ndakos, specialist at School B)

ZSL was sometimes said to be so defective to the extent that it was unrecognisable as a natural, real language but was believed by many teachers to be a contrived system of communication, as reported in the next section.

A contrived system of communication

The study revealed that specialist and non-specialist focus group discussion groups implied that ZSL was a contrived system that they learnt from consulting among themselves and checking a dictionary. The following verbal quote illustrates this:

“Sign Language is difficult for us as teachers because the biological parents of these children may actually be signing differently from us here (at the school). At least here we are better in that we ask each other and also check in the dictionary. They may just improvise and for us to ‘un-teach’ (what they have taught their deaf child) becomes difficult.” (Ndaze, specialist at School A)

The belief that ZSL is contrived is also implied in suggestions that ZSL can be mastered in periods ranging from several weeks to several months, which is a very short time for learning any natural, real language. The following quotations illustrate this:

“Orientation here means being attached to an experienced teacher for about two weeks. During this period you observe lessons and learn communication skills like Sign Language.” (Khanya, non-specialist at School C)

“In two or three months, committed teachers will be using the language fluently.” (Rega, specialist at School A)

The study further revealed that ZSL is being learnt informally from deaf children, unlike what happens with most natural languages. For example:

“In the office the school-head explained to me that all the children could not hear at all. I pointed out that I was not going to be able to teach these children since I did not know how to sign and they did not know how to talk. He told me not to worry as the children would teach me as they had the Sign Language. He assured me that there was no one on his staff who came to the school already knowing Sign Language”. (Letho, non-specialist at School C)

The study revealed that ZSL is believed to be something that is universally understood, which suggests an artificial symbol system rather than a natural language. For example:

“We don’t have a standardised Sign Language which is uniform to use for all so that if we have a sign for ‘boy’ here (at this school) it is the same at another school and on television. They have different individuals with their different signs ... they are not confused by those different signs

because it is their culture just like hearing people. For example someone (hearing) from Manicaland and someone from Masvingo have dialectal differences (in Shona) but they understand each other. (Similarly) if a deaf person comes from America or Germany they (local deaf) won't get lost no matter that it is a different sign because it is their language. But we are people who only learn that language from them." (Moyo, non-specialist at School B)

Another instance of the belief that ZSL is a contrived system was the teachers' assumption that deaf children already had Sign Language. In all three schools, the specialist and non-specialist teachers believed that deaf children already had Sign Language. For example:

"We cannot really say we are depriving them of Sign Language because we can never take Sign Language out of the deaf child". (Moyo, non-specialist at School B)

"...whatever you do you cannot stop the deaf children from signing. They won't leave out signing, they will always sign." (Kudzai, specialist at School A)

Beyond the implied belief that ZSL is contrived, teachers explicitly stated that it did not measure up to other accepted natural languages. For example:

"Sign Language is broken English." (Ngeri, non-specialist at School A)

"In Sign Language they just use those words which are important." (Aripo, non-specialist at School C)

The teachers also believed that ZSL could not be translated into spoken languages such as English. For example:

"...and unfortunately that language (Sign Language) is very different from the language used in the books so much that you cannot translate Deaf language into English or vice versa, that is where the problem is." (Mavhu, specialist at School B)

The beliefs highlighted in the foregoing sections have effects on how ZSL is used in the schools. The effects of these beliefs on the use of ZSL in schools are discussed in the next section.

Effects of beliefs on the use of ZSL in schools

The various beliefs held by teachers were related to several practices in the schools. The belief that ZSL is a defective language in that it is telegraphic is related to avoiding using the language or using it minimally for teaching and examination. This was articulated in the following quotes:

"Although we might borrow some signs for teaching but come exam time, you might be allowed to say sign to them and you end up maybe giving them the answer because there is no sign for that." (Mavhu, specialist at School B)

"What you end up doing is explaining the examination. You explain until you get to the answer. So it is very difficult." (Gwara specialist at School A)

"Sign Language won't get us anywhere. In Science for example the abstract concepts like fusion, transpiration or chlorophyll – those are non-existent in their language". (Moyo, non-specialist at School B)

“So the best thing is to dump that language which does not get us anywhere and use the real tool for that subject – English”. (Nyarai non-specialist at School C)

The belief that ZSL lacks the capacity to convey abstract concepts is related to resisting its use in a national, mainstream curriculum and preferring to emphasise technical-vocational rather than cognitively demanding academic subjects. This is depicted in the following quote:

“Each institution should come up with an institutionally-based syllabus which depends on the technical skills they can impart. Using the syllabus for normal (hearing) children does not benefit our (deaf) children.” (Nzou, specialist at School C)

Discussion

The results reveal that teachers’ beliefs about ZSL as a defective language may be associated with its very limited use for teaching. Hearing teachers believe that ZSL is defective in that it is concrete and telegraphic. In contrast, Aarons and Reynolds (2003) point out that deaf signers make use of the rich registers and other variations found in Sign Language. Mugari et al. (2015) found variations in ZSL and appropriately attributed them to the richness of the language rather than any concreteness. Hearing teachers who may not be conversant with the registers and structures of ZSL mistakenly attribute deaf pupils’ difficulties in the figurative registers of spoken language to concreteness in ZSL.

The results reveal that teachers who believe that ZSL is a defective language also believe that interpreting an examination into ZSL results in explanations that inadvertently give candidates the answers. Such teachers may mistake their own lack of fluency in the language to either concreteness of the language or its being an artificial system. They also believe that deaf pupils are not academically gifted and so should have a more technical-vocational rather than academic curriculum. This contrasts with Mutswanga and Sithole (2014) who found that people who are deaf prefer the use of ZSL arguing that they can do as well as anyone in an academic curriculum if this language is used.

The perceptions of deaf-as-intellectually-retarded found in this study were also found in South African studies by Aarons and Reynolds (2003). Such perceptions are reciprocally influenced by teachers’ beliefs that Sign Language is concrete. Deaf pupils’ difficulties are however more likely to emanate from restricted spoken language input (Caselli, 2014; Holte et al., 2012) and lack of input from fluent Sign Language users (Herman, 2014). Stokoe (1960); (2005) found Sign Language to be as abstract and sophisticated as any spoken language.

Teachers who believe that ZSL is broken English or telegraphic may be unaware of the seminal finding by Stokoe (1960) that Sign Language follows its own grammar which is different from the grammar of any other spoken language. Such teachers would mistakenly believe that ZSL is not a real language because there is no one sign for every spoken word. This results from the misconception that Sign Language is a manual coding of a spoken language onto the hands (Aarons & Reynolds, 2003). According to the Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf, it is neither possible nor desirable to have one to one correspondence of words when interpreting Sign Language to a spoken language or vice versa as the two languages are independent (RID, 2004). Teachers who engage in teaching practices that try to interpret a spoken language into corresponding sign

characters without regard to the meanings are involved in ‘transliteration’ which is a misuse of ZSL as this may confuse pupils who are conversant with the language.

The results reveal that teachers believe that ZSL is a contrived system because they assume that ZSL can be taught by deaf children to hearing teachers who would master it sufficiently enough to begin to use it to teach in a matter of weeks. Musengi (2014) argues that none of these hearing adults would ever consider this as feasible for any spoken language and so believing this about ZSL shows that at least at what Freud calls the subconscious level, they do not believe ZSL to be a real language. The expectation that teachers would use for teaching a language that they were in the process of learning was further confounded by the informal reversal of roles between teachers and pupils as deaf children were expected to teach their hearing teachers this language informally. These unrealistic expectations reflected that even those who averred it was a natural language which could be useful for teaching might still not regard the language as up to the same standard as other natural languages. This would explain why they do not use it for teaching.

Many of the teachers, who on the surface accepted that ZSL was a natural language just like any other spoken language raised the issue of there being no national sign language in the country thereby making their work difficult. According to Aarons and Reynolds (2003), hearing people are uncomfortable with the rich register and other variations of Sign Language. The teachers’ argument that there should be no variations in ZSL may therefore indicate their discomfort with the register and variations of the language.

The teachers’ belief that ZSL was a contrived system was evident in what Schmalig (2000) called the misconception that there was one universal Sign Language. She pointed out that Sign Languages in different countries of the world were part of the Deaf culture there and so there were as many Sign Languages as there were distinct Deaf communities, each with its dialectal, regional and sociolectal differences (Schmalig, 2000). In this light, it was clear that Sign Language could not be inherent to deaf children because it was acquired in a community of deaf peers using that language, which Reilly and Reilly (2005) call a critical mass. For the same reason, just like any other language, it could not be universal either.

The study found that teachers believe that home signs are an impediment rather than a useful basis for the acquisition of school-based signs. Although Herman (2014) said deaf children could be at risk for language development because input from fluent Sign Language users was lacking, there was no evidence that home signs put deaf children at risk when they later acquire Sign Language in a natural community of users. Fusellier-Souza (2004) called home signs ‘emerging Sign Languages’ and says that they develop into micro-community and macro-community Sign Languages. As home signs contributed to the development of macro-community school-based signs they aided, rather than impeded the development of Sign Language.

The study found that the non-specialist groups were more explicit than non-specialist groups in their belief that ZSL is defective. This difference appears to emanate from the specialists’ exposure to literature on Deaf identity (McIlroy & Storbeck, 2011), Deaf culture in general (Padden & Humphries, 2005) and Sign Language (Stokoe, 2005). The literature may have made the specialists aware of the research evidence that Sign Language was an independent language used by people

with their own identity and from a different culture. The specialists' practice in the schools may, however, have been difficult for them to reconcile with the literature. In subsequent discussions therefore, the specialists proceeded to imply that Sign Language was a defective language or contrived system of communication. The specialists' superficial acceptance of Sign Language as a natural language may indicate what Musengi (2014) called inadequacies in specialist teacher education for teachers of deaf pupils in Zimbabwe.

The teachers' beliefs that ZSL is defective or a contrived system of communication leads to marginalisation of the language in the curriculum in favour of a spoken language which can be written. Baumann (2004) calls such marginalisation 'audism' and says it has parallels in the discriminatory practices of 'sexism' and 'racism'. Teachers' beliefs were found to be discriminatory as they are reserved only for ZSL in order to show that it did not have to be taught, unlike spoken languages. These are thinly veiled justifications for the linguistic discrimination of ZSL from the curriculum.

The study revealed that teachers believed that it was not possible to interpret examinations into ZSL without divulging answers to the candidates. This belief was used to justify the teachers' resistance of the directive to interpret examinations into Sign Language. It would appear that even though government has done its part to allow the signing of examinations (Secretary for Education, 2007), teachers on the ground were still uncertain of how to take advantage of this permission. In the meantime, some of them resist the government policy directive by not interpreting examinations into ZSL in the schools.

Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that teachers had various misconceptions which affect how they perceive the use of ZSL for teaching and examining pupils who are deaf. ZSL was not understood to be an independent visual-gestural language of equal standing to any auditory language. Teachers were not fully conversant with ZSL and so did not appreciate its richness probably because they were only exposed to it by their deaf pupils. The role of ZSL for teaching and examination was therefore downplayed in contrast to government policy to utilise this language for these purposes. Curriculum practice for ZSL was therefore dislocated between progressive policy visions and the reality of myths held by teachers. The potential role of ZSL as a language of teaching and learning in the schools was overlooked as teachers used spoken languages much more often than they did ZSL. The pupils struggled to understand academic concepts using these spoken languages and the teachers concluded that the pupils had intellectual disabilities. The demeaning of ZSL could reflect a hangover of patronising, colonial attitudes towards languages which were marginalised in colonial times.

It is recommended that in order for ZSL to be used properly in schools, teachers should be taught ZSL systematically in in-service teacher-education programmes in colleges and universities as well as continuing professional development. The teaching of the language could be done by adult native users of the language such as Deaf adults or hearing offspring of deaf parents. Teachers could then be assessed to determine that they have adequate levels of proficiency in the language

before they are allowed to use it for teaching and examination. This in turn would allow the teachers to teach and examine the language at appropriate levels and stop believing that ZSL is defective or contrived. ZSL could then be taken as the first natural language of deaf pupils who prefer it alongside English and other local indigenous languages in a multilingual curriculum in schools.

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Zimbabwe's economic crises and the state of professionalism among rural secondary school teachers

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Abstract

The study set out to investigate the impact of Zimbabwe's economic crises on the state of teacher professionalism in rural Zimbabwean secondary schools in Zaka District. A case study was conducted on the district's three worst performing schools out of the forty one registered for Ordinary level examinations in the 2013- 2014 academic year. Twenty one participants took part in the study comprising: nine teachers from three secondary schools, nine Ordinary level students, three School Development Committee representatives and one Education Inspector for the District. A focus group discussion with students was conducted while semi-structured interviews were held with teachers and School Development Committee representatives. Document review was also done to augment data from primary sources. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis. The study revealed that though there were other factors that affected the performance of rural secondary school teachers, to a larger extent the economic crises compromised teacher professionalism. It was also noted that in an economic crisis, teachers were motivated by maximizing their rewards rather than public service. As a resultant, the educational opportunities of rural learners were compromised. Based on the findings, the researchers recommend that the government should improve the working conditions of rural teachers including their rewards to motivate them to improve professionalism.

Key words: Economic crises, professionalism, rural teachers, educational opportunities

Introduction

Bernard Barber's Functionalist Theory of Professionalism spells out the four essential attributes of professionalism which are knowledge, public service, discipline and rewards (Cuzzocrea, 2014; DFID, Department for International Development, 1999, p. 47; Naanda, 2010). In his theory, Barber argues that professionalism requires a body of systematic and generalized knowledge that can be applied to a variety of problems. Professionals have a strong academic knowledge base, consisting of formal and practical knowledge and demonstrate rigor, clarity and scientific character (Cross, Mungadi, & Rouhani, 2002; European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2011, p. 54). Thus when Barber's theory is applied to this study, it states that professionals (teachers) have specialized knowledge to teach students effectively and to help them succeed in their studies and also exhibit high levels of accountability and collective autonomy (McGrath, Needham, Papier, Wedekind & van der Merwe, 2010b; Tripney et al., 2013).

Cuzzocrea (2014, p. 673) notes that professionals' primary orientation should be to the community interest rather than to individual self-interest; a high degree of self-control of behaviour through codes of ethics internalized in the process of work socialization and through voluntary associations organized and operated by the work specialists themselves; and a system of rewards (monetary

and honorary) that is primarily a set of symbols of work achievement and thus ends in themselves, not means to some end of individual self-interest. Professionalism therefore involves a concern for the interest of the community rather than self-interest and has to do with how one conducts oneself. The primary motivation of professionals is public service rather than personal gain (DFID, 1999). Teachers who exhibit professionalism are concerned primarily with teaching students rather than lining their own pockets. Teaching in this case is considered a profession in that for people to gain access into the profession, they go through training in institutions that were granted formal licences by the government and qualification is regulated by qualified practitioners (Maphosa, Bhebhe, & Dziva, 2014; Wilkinson, 2005). Maphosa et al. (2014, p. 265) note that “the education system has professional codes of conduct for the teachers, leading to self-government and an integral disciplinary process that provides a mechanism for controlling inappropriate professional behaviour”.

In another study, Simon McGrath (2010) argues that professionalism in education is vital as it determines the quality of the educational outcomes. Student success in the classroom depends more on the professionalism of teachers than on any other factors (Mourshed, Farrell, & Barton, 2012).

Zimbabwean post-independence history will show that during the first decade of independence, the country was on a path to growth and progress and was the envy of many on the continent and beyond. The newly independent Zimbabwe focused on attaining growth and development in the wake of inequalities based on race inherited from the colonial government. To that end, significant expenditure was to accompany the investments the government made especially in social services including health, social welfare and education (Kanyenze, Kondo, Chitambira, & Martens, 2011, p. 35).

During the first decade of Zimbabwe’s independence, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank piled pressure on the government to liberalise the economy, through a prescribed structural adjustment programme (Kanyenze et al., 2011). The government succumbed to the pressure and implemented the infamous Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) which affected education in several ways. After the adoption of ESAP, the government sought to cut expenditure on education by reducing the education budget significantly and through introducing cost recovery (Guile, 2011; Kanyenze et al., 2011; Okolocha, 2012). Students in urban schools were now expected to pay school fees. This was a departure from the socialist direction adopted upon independence in 1980. The number of school drop outs increased. The major challenges in the education sector in Zimbabwe during ESAP included among others, declining enrolments, increased gender inequality, deterioration of infrastructure and the exodus of qualified experienced teachers and a decrease in the quality of provision (Kanyenze et al., 2011; Lucas, Spencer, & Claxton, 2012; Nziramasanga, 1999). Despite those developments, the impact of the economic crises on rural secondary schools teacher professionalism was not looked into by researchers.

In Zimbabwe, the post-independence era has seen the country go through successive economic crises such as debt crisis and inflation (Reinhart & Rogoff, 2010; Serven & Solimano, 1993). The causes of the crises still remain unclear even among scholars. There have been a lot of accusations and counter-accusations on the causes of the Zimbabwean crises among politicians and scholars alike (Bond, 2007; Kanyenze et al., 2011; Raftopoulos & Phimister, 2004). Despite the polarisation among various players in Zimbabwe on the causes of the crises, what is undoubted is the fact that

Zimbabwe is a troubled country and seems to be in a continuous state of crises. Studies by (Kwenda & Ntuli, 2014; Msuko, 2005; Nyazema, 2010) confirmed that the provision of social services including education is affected by the economic crises. Not much was done specifically on its impact on teacher professionalism. Teachers are an important factor contributing towards quality education. According to Dike (2009), cited in Productivity Commission (2012, p. 113), education plays a central role in any society in changing the lives of people the world over. In this regard, teachers play a critical role in nurturing the minds and hearts of the youth. Productivity Commission (2012) notes that lack of motivation among teachers causes poor performance and low educational outcomes. A study by Chisholm (2005) on sub-Saharan and Asian countries has revealed high levels of teacher absenteeism attributable to poor teacher motivation and also a lack of accountability of teachers, schools, parents and communities. This situation is worse particularly in rural areas which are located in remote areas not easily accessible by school inspectors and managers. A similar study conducted by the World Bank also revealed shocking levels of absenteeism in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya. Ethiopia was the worst case with about forty five (45) percent teachers absent in one week (Agrawal, 2013). In spite of this, teacher professionalism in rural secondary schools in Zimbabwe has not been given attention.

Mukeredzi (2013) argues that rural education and rural schools have been associated with problems and deficiencies. In rural Zimbabwe, most schools are located in villages in the former reserves where blacks were resettled during the colonial period. Rural schools face a unique set of challenges, largely due to their geographical isolation. These include failure to attract and retain highly qualified and experienced teachers (Fallows & Steven, 2000; Graf, 2013; Razzak & Timmins, 2010). These schools are mostly situated farther away from each other and have limited financial resources due to lack of government funding. They normally lack appropriate teaching venues and resources (Mlahleki 1995 in Razzak & Timmins, 2010). The rural teacher faces a number of challenges including communication, transportation and sanitation. Most rural schools lack piped water and electricity. This makes working in rural areas a nightmare for the rural teacher (Mukeredzi, 2013).

It was the purpose of this paper to investigate the state of professionalism in secondary schools in light of the long lasting effects of the economic crises. Bernard Barber's functionalist theory of professionalism was the bedrock of this study. Special focus was given to how and in what ways the economic crises in post 2000 Zimbabwe has impacted on the duties, rewards and professionalism of rural secondary school teachers as well as the educational opportunities of rural learners. Therefore this study sought to investigate the impact of the Zimbabwean economic crises on teacher professionalism in rural secondary schools in Zaka District. To answer the main question, the following sub-questions were asked:

- What are the standard practices of a professional secondary school teacher?
- How did rural secondary school teachers perform during the economic crises?
- In what ways have the economic crises affected the duties of the teacher?

Method

The research employed a case study research design using an interpretive paradigm (Rule & John, 2011). A case study refers to an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary

phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and relies on multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2013). There are forty one registered secondary schools in Zaka District. Owing to that, it was not possible to include all of them in Zaka District (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015). Using ZIMSEC indicators on Ordinary level performance, three worst performing schools for 2013- 14 academic year were selected. A total of twenty two different participants took part in the study in line with triangulation of data sources. All the three schools had three 'O' level classes. A total of nine teachers were selected, three from each school, based on their supervisory roles in the school. The selected teachers also reflected key study areas in Science, Technology and Mathematics (STEM) and in Arts and Humanities. Nine 'O' level pupils were selected, three from each school representing three 'O' level classes per school. Three School Development Committee Chairpersons representing their respective schools and the District Education Inspector were also interviewed.

Multiple methods in data collection were used for triangulation of methods. The research employed semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion and documentary analysis as data gathering instruments. Semi- structured interviews were done with thirteen participants including teachers, School Development Committee Chairpersons and the District Education Inspector. The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to find out from these stakeholders on what constitutes professionalism in the teaching profession and how circumstances have changed due to the economic crises. The focus group discussion was done with the nine students from the three schools. Document analysis was also done to confirm data from semi- structured interviews and focus group interviews. The documents such as staff registers, exercise books, test record books, scheme books and results analysis records were considered for documentary analysis. Data were analysed using the thematic method of data analysis (Alhojailan, 2012; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013).

Results and discussion

In this section, the researchers present the results of the study based on findings from the data collected from all the participants in the study.

Attributes of professional teachers

Findings revealed that a professional teacher in secondary schools should be at work on time, wear professional attire all the time, use scheme books which will direct their sequencing of instruction and teach their students systematically following an agreed school timetable. Apart from that, professional teachers are expected to set aside periods for consultations of parents, attend to extra-curricular activities, attend meetings and assigned holiday duties. Bair (2014) observes that teacher professionalism includes how teachers conduct themselves both in and out of the classroom in terms of such aspects such as dress, appropriate communication and work habits.

Punctuality

The study revealed that teachers were expected to be at their work stations on time. This was, however, no longer the case in the three schools under study during the economic crises period. Data gathered from the semi-structured interviews with the senior teachers revealed that time

keeping had become a problem by most teachers. An assessment of the 'clock' in register filled by teachers corroborated that teachers were not signing the register and even school management appeared relaxed in enforcing compliance. The students also confirmed that teachers would not only be late but cases of absenteeism among teachers had reached high levels. The students were even worried that because of perennial lateness, they would not fulfill all requirements of their syllabuses.

The School Development Committee representative at one school noted that the majority of teachers at their school stay in Masvingo city and only get to their schools late on Mondays and leave early on Fridays. This confirms studies on teacher absenteeism in South Africa and India, which is often worse in rural schools because teachers often go home during weekends and can be absent up to one day a week travelling to and from school (Chaudhury, Hammer, Kremer, Muralidharan & Rogers, 2006; Chisholm, 2005; Rademeyer, 2013; Tripney et al., 2013).

On the reasons why teachers were late most of the time or even absent, it was revealed that the majority of these teachers would be attending to private business such as cross border trade especially in neighbouring South Africa to augment their salaries. The Education Inspector noted that his department is currently seized with a number of cases where teachers are being charged for neglecting their official duties and attending to private business. From the focus group discussion, students noted the following

"Most teachers are absent from lessons. Some teachers come late for lesson. Some teachers abscond lessons even when they are present".

These findings confirm earlier studies on teacher professionalism and accountability in South African schools (Maphosa et al., 2014; Maphosa, Mutekwe, Machingambi, Wadesango, & Ndofirepi, 2012).

Use of scheme books and lesson delivery

The use of scheme books to guide teaching and learning is an important requirement for school teachers in Zimbabwe. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education expects teachers to stick to their schemes of work when teaching students at all levels. Compliance with this requirement should be checked by subject supervisors, School Heads and Education Officers. Document analyses revealed that most schemes were not up to date. Evidence from the documents reviewed (notebooks, exercise books, schemes of work) was contradictory. The schemes topics covered did not tally with what was found in the notebooks and exercise books, an indication that students were lagging behind in terms of syllabus coverage. Written work given to students was below the expected volume at Ordinary level. The findings from the focus group discussion with students revealed a surprisingly high level of ignorance among students on the syllabus they are studying. They argued that teachers never communicate the syllabus to them. In addition, the students revealed the following issues:

"We do most of the marking. Some teachers come for lessons too weak and tired. Some teachers come unprepared. They send notes but rarely come for lectures. Teachers concentrate on the brighter learners".

The participants were asked to provide their views on the impact of the economic crises on professionalism with particular focus on educational opportunities of learners. From the focus group discussion, students went on to indicate that they were not allowed to have extra tutorials without paying extra tuition fees which goes directly to subject teachers. Others indicated that teachers tried to maximize their gains in extra tutorial fees in a number of ways. The most common cited way was to teach less during normal lessons and then cover more content during extra lessons. Others cited provision of supplementary revision and other resources in extra lessons so as to attract more clients. The implication was that those who struggled to pay for extra tutorials had lesser opportunities. Such disadvantaged students faced a double disadvantage in relation to their educational opportunities. Instead of gaining during normal lessons, their opportunities to do so were thwarted by teacher absenteeism and other commitments for personal gains. Most students pointed at this practice as a recipe for under-achievement in their education.

Professional attire

Teachers in Zimbabwe are expected to dress in formal attire. Normally for men formal trousers, shirts and neck-ties are mandatory. On the other hand, women are expected to wear formal dresses, two-piece suits and formal shoes. In the past, it was fairly easy to identify a school teacher based on their strict dress code. However, findings showed that, the teacher dress code was compromised by the economic crises. Semi-structured interviews with teachers revealed that most of them in the past used to buy clothes from big retail shops such as Edgars stores, Meikles, Topics and Truworths where they had accounts. This has become a challenge as they can no longer afford monthly instalments and have resorted to buying second hand clothes from Mozambique. Observations showed some teachers wearing flip flops to school bought mostly from Masvingo's Chitima market popularly known as "*Ma dollar for two*". This is because the cost of the flip flops was one United States dollar for two pairs.

One teacher in an interview commented about his dress sarcastically;

"Is this the kind of shirt a teacher should be wearing?, how do I convince my students that teaching is a profession worth considering".

Another teacher from the same school also argued that:

"Most of our students now even have better shoes than most of us teachers. I am even ashamed to stand in front of the class in my pair of shoes".

The above findings confirm earlier findings by Mareva, Gonye and Rubaya (2013, p. 503) who note that "those in the teaching profession [in Zimbabwe] were respected members of society in the past. They were smart and fashion-trendsetters. They could afford to wear the latest suit or dress/costume, wear the most expensive shoes and, most of all, they could afford their own cars".

Teachers and students were asked to provide their views on the economic crisis and rewards of the teacher. In Zimbabwe, the pay dates for government workers including teachers are no longer predictable. There is no longer a fixed pay date as teachers are only paid when the money becomes available in government treasury. Government sources have confirmed the changes in pay dates for civil servants in 2015. The Ministries of Finance and Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare announced new pay dates for civil servants for the year 2015 (Herald Reporter,

2014). The trend for most government departments shifted from the traditional mid-month pay dates to the month end.

Much attention by teachers was on salaries, extra tutorials, and organizational assets. Most teachers in the study indicated that teachers were not happy with the paltry salaries they were given as was noticed by various reactions given below:

“A number of mathematics and science teachers shun this place for better paying schools. School property is abused by teachers and heads. School income is abused by teachers and heads.

The above findings are similar to those reported in studies in Africa and Asia on factors which affect teacher professionalism in schools (Chaudhury et al., 2006; Maphosa et al., 2014). Key among these is poor salaries due to protracted economic crises as indicated in studies in rural secondary schools in Zambia and Zimbabwe respectively (Afeti, 2011; Chisholm, 2005). The responses from the teachers indicated that during economic crises, professionals take their rewards as a priority to public service. They utilize every possible opportunity to increase their rewards in and outside the organization. The results confirmed Afeti (2011, p. 507)’s studies which note that teachers had negative perceptions of their job due to poor rewards. Given another chance, they would ‘never’ join teaching, now that they were aware of other ‘rewarding’ professions such as engineering, law, medicine, banking and so forth. A study by Biavaschi et al. (2012, p. 230) revealed that rural teachers repeatedly referred to their poor salaries as an affront to their own self-respect and also to their dignity and standing in the community. This affects their professional conduct in that most teachers are dependent on cash incentives from parents.

Extracurricular activities

Teachers are expected to attend extracurricular activities such as sports, both at their local school and as visiting teams for inter-school competitions. Results confirmed that, intra-school sports were no longer popular with most teachers because they are not associated with any monetary rewards. However, if their school progressed to district competitions, most teachers would scramble for a place on the team bus for obvious monetary rewards. Interviews with most teachers showed that extracurricular activities suffered during the periods of economic crises. The following are some comments from teachers interviewed;

“How can we be expected to coach sports in the sun on empty stomachs? We do not even have appropriate sports attire to use while coaching. Sometimes we must demonstrate how these sports are played. It becomes a big joke when the teacher trips and falls while students watch”.

Focus group discussion with students confirmed that their teachers were no longer enthusiastic about coaching sports teams at their schools during practice sessions. However, they noted an unusually increased interest in time for inter-school competitions.

Holiday duties

Teachers in rural areas mostly attend to school business during school holidays. This involves being at the school during the holiday usually on a rotational basis to avoid a situation whereby the

compound is deserted and be an easy target for vandalism of school property. These holiday duties include acting as a responsible person in the absence of the Headmaster and other members of staff and do not have monetary rewards. Data from focus group discussion with students revealed that teachers on duty during holidays would take that time to abuse school property for their benefit. The following issues were raised by the students:

“Teachers most of the time in other projects than teaching. They also charge too high extra tutorial fees. They do not cover much in class and leave much work for extra tutorials teachers demand more incentives. Some of us cannot afford cash incentives, we pay in kind using chickens popularly known as ‘road runners’”.

On the other hand, the interviews with teachers themselves revealed that the performance of holiday duties was shunned by most teachers who would otherwise use the holiday break to earn more income through holiday lessons and other income generating projects away from the school.

Conclusions

The research has revealed that the economic crises in Zimbabwe have caused a number of challenges on the professionalism of rural secondary school teachers. Generally, teacher conduct has been affected by the crises. The economic crises in Zimbabwe compromised the commitment of teachers to professional duties as was shown in lack of punctuality and increased absenteeism especially before and after weekends. Most teachers were found to be concentrating on projects for personal gain rather than focusing on public service. It was also noted that teachers had more priority in maximizing personal rewards rather than being motivated by providing service to the students as was observed in charging more on extra tutorial lessons and a high teacher turnover of teachers for greener pastures. During the crises, teachers would no longer afford their professional attire as expected by government. The crises would also affect their enthusiasm for extracurricular activities including sports and holiday duties. The results of pursuing personal benefits at the expense of teacher commitment and public service impinge negatively on the learning opportunities of students. The study revealed that Barber’s Functionalist theory of professionalism has been challenged by the economic crises that gripped Zimbabwe especially in the last fifteen years.

Recommendations

The government should come up with policies that revamp the economy to enhance teacher professionalism in Zimbabwean schools. Teachers ought to be deliberately cushioned by government from the effects of economic crises to avoid compromising human development which is Zimbabwe’s strongest asset. Teachers should always try to stick to their professional duties rather than resorting to extortion of poor students and parents for personal gains. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should come up with policy governing payment standards for extra tutorials so as to avoid fleecing of students by teachers. Administrators and School Development Committees should come up with a variety of benefits for their teachers and other staff members so as to avoid high teacher turnover and promote more opportunities for the students.

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Teachers' ICT knowledge, skills and usage at Oguaman School for the deaf in Ghana

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Abstract

This paper reports part of a graduate thesis which investigated the level of ICT knowledge, skills, and utilization among teachers teaching at the Oguaman School for the Deaf in Ghana. A sample of 28 teachers was involved in the study. Data from a researcher-developed questionnaire were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The results indicated that the level of ICT knowledge and skills of a majority of the teachers at Oguaman School for the Deaf was high. The high level of ICT knowledge and skills positively influenced teachers' utilization of ICT for teaching. Again, it was discovered that the higher the knowledge and skills of teachers in ICT, the lower the challenges they faced in the usage of ICT tools, and there was a significant difference between male and female teachers' level of knowledge and skills in ICT. It is recommended that teachers, particularly female teachers, be given more access to the use ICT for teaching. Also, in-service training should be organized regularly for the teachers by the school and the Ghana Education Service to improve their knowledge and skills in ICT.

Key words: Information and Communication Technology; Access; Deafness; Teaching.

Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a powerful tool for extending educational opportunities to all students and, in particular, those with deafness in any educational system. ICT has enabled changes in the way students acquire knowledge, facilitated communication, enhanced access to information and fostered deeper understanding of issues through the development of problem-solving capabilities of all learners. ICT has transformed the nature of education by enhancing how learning takes place, as well as the roles of students and teachers in the learning and teaching process (Khvilon & Patru, 2002).

On their part, Sabzian, Gilakjani and Sodouri (2013) argued that competence in the use of technology in the classroom is a direct function of the degree of technology utilization, as a result of teachers' skills training and development. Thus, the successful integration and utilization of ICT tools and resources in Education, to a large extent depends on the skills possessed by teachers and the availability and collaboration with technology experts. Solomon (2003) stated that when users are aware of the value of a tool, they will be motivated toward the use of it and teachers' motivation is positively related to ICT use in the classroom (Karsenti, Villeneuve & Goyer, 2006).

Additionally, ICT-related training programmes help to influence teachers' acceptance of technology in classrooms (Hew & Brush, 2007; Keengwe & Onchwari, 2008). Also, Lawless and Pellegrino (2007) have suggested that if a training programme is effective, educators will be eager to involve it in pedagogical activities. The advantages of using ICT in education have been widely reported by several researchers (Bushati, Barolli, Dibra & Haveri 2012). These include the elimination of barriers to education for students and teachers (Bhattacharya & Sharma, 2007; Cross & Adam, 2007), allowing the use of new methods of education (Sanyal, 2001) and improving upon the process of teaching and learning (Barolli & Sevrani, 2009).

ICT policy in education – Ghana

Recognizing the significant role of ICT in enhancing learning, the Government of Ghana has prioritized the use of ICT in teaching and learning through the adoption of a national policy on ICT in education (Dadzie-Bonney & Hayford, 2016). According to the Ministry of Education [MOE] (2008), the Government is committed to a comprehensive programme of rapid deployment, utilization and exploitation of ICTs within the educational system from primary to the tertiary level. The ICT in Education Policy directs schools to provide adequate opportunities for learners to develop the necessary skills, regardless of the levels of education in order to benefit from the Information Society. Besides, the Ministry also argued that the effective application of ICT in education would, among other things, promote inclusive education by addressing inequalities in gender, language and disability (MOE, 2008 cited in Dadzie-Bonney & Hayford, in press).

ICT knowledge and skills among basic school teachers

Peralta and Costa (2007) found that ICT skills which are needed to make the teachers competent users of ICT in their teaching are low, but teachers who have more experience with computers and other ICT tools have greater confidence in their ability to use them effectively. Tasir, Abour, Halim and Harun (2012) pointed out that teachers' competence in using ICT tools in the classroom relates directly to their confidence and perceptions of the level of their skills.

In Malaysia, a study by Khalid, Nawawi and Roslan (2009) reported that in secondary schools, the presence of knowledge and skills for using computers and ICT tools influence teachers' decisions to implement educational technology innovations. Also, Yong (2011) found that his respondents demonstrated capacity and willingness to update their technical skills in order to achieve some degree of competence in implementing educational technology innovations.

In Ghana, Amenyedzi, Lartey and Dzomeku (2011) conducted a study to assess the use of computers and the Internet as supplementary sources of educational material in three Senior High Schools. The results showed that although 92% of the teachers were computer literate, less than 15% of them used the computer and the internet as an innovative way of improving teaching and learning. Over 30% of the teachers used the computer mainly for research

work. According to Amenyedzi et al., the challenges the respondents faced were the limited number of computers in the computer laboratories in the schools, and limited Internet service connectivity in the schools' computer laboratories. Amenyedzi et al.'s study did not include any of the special schools for the Deaf in the country. There is a dearth of research within the Ghanaian context with respect to studies that examine the knowledge, skills and utilization of ICT among teachers in schools for the Deaf.

Challenges faced in using ICT for teaching and learning in special schools

Researchers have categorized challenges relating to ICT utilization in educational settings into two, namely, extrinsic and intrinsic. However, there are differences in the meaning researchers assign to extrinsic or intrinsic. For instance, Ertmer (1999) perceives extrinsic challenges as difficulties which arise as a result of access, time, support, resources and training and intrinsic challenges as those related to attitudes, beliefs and practices. Al-Alwani (2005) on the other hand, views extrinsic challenges as those pertaining to organizations rather than individuals, and intrinsic challenges as pertaining to teachers, administrators and individuals. Besides, British Educational Communications and Technology Agency [BECTA] (2004) also offers another form of classification which groups the challenges with respect to individuals such as lack of time, lack of confidence, and resistance to change or the institution, such as lack of effective training and lack of access to resources. Additionally, other writers refer to the challenges as those relating to material and non-material aspects (Pelgrum, 2001). According to Pelgrum (2001), the material challenges comprise insufficient numbers of computers or copies of software whilst the non-material challenges include teachers' insufficient ICT knowledge and skills, the difficulty of integrating ICT in instruction and insufficient teacher time.

These arguments notwithstanding, it is essential to note that the challenges pertaining to ICT acceptance and usage for teaching and learning primarily include the lack of commitment in funding, staff training and stable power supply (Ijeoma, Joseph & Franca, 2010; Oye, Iahad & Rahim, 2012; Oye, Salleh & Iahad, 2011). The factors enumerated above are prevalent in educational institutions at all levels and, in particular, segregated schools for the Deaf in Ghana. Some of the major themes that have emerged from literature on the various challenges that hinder the successful use of ICT in the school environment include lack of confidence among the teachers (Balanskat, Blamire & Kefala, 2006; Dawes, 2001) and the lack of teachers' competence in dealing with the technology (Albirini, 2006; Almohaissin, 2006). As stated earlier, very little has been done in the area of ICT knowledge and skills of teachers in special schools for the Deaf in Ghana.

Research Questions

The study therefore set out to examine the ICT knowledge and skills of teachers in Oguaman School for the Deaf. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of ICT knowledge and skills of teachers of Oguaman School for the Deaf?
2. To what extent do teachers of Oguaman School for the Deaf use ICT in teaching?

3. What challenges do teachers of Oguaman School for the Deaf face in the use of ICT for teaching?
4. Is there a significant difference in the level of ICT knowledge and skills between male and female teachers of Oguaman School for the Deaf?

Method

Research Design

The researchers adopted the cross-sectional survey design to collect data at one point in time (Creswell, 2012). As pointed out by Creswell, the cross-sectional survey has the advantage of measuring current practices such as teachers' ICT knowledge, skills and usage.

Participants and settings

Oguaman School for the Deaf was selected for the study because it is the most well established school for the Deaf in the Central Region of Ghana. At the time of the study, the school had an enrolment of 269 Deaf students comprising of 150 males and 119 females. It has boarding facilities for both male and female students. As prevalent in the country, the school has primary and junior high sections. However, unlike other regular schools in the country, both primary and junior high sections are under one head teacher. Besides, the school was the only special school in the country which had a modern computer laboratory with functional computers and internet connectivity; however, none of the classrooms had a computer for the teacher's use. Thus, computers were only accessible at the computer laboratory.

The research involved all the 28 teachers who were teaching at the Junior High Section of the Oguaman School for the Deaf. The teachers were made up of 15 females (53.6%) and 13 males (46.3%), and these constituted the target population. The decision to involve all the 28 teachers was based on the guidance given by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), cited by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) that, where the population of the study is low (below 100), it is well advised to include the whole of the wider population as the sample. It is important to state that all the teachers had requisite qualifications for teaching.

Instrument

The questionnaire for teachers had four sub-sections. Section A requested for information on teachers' demographic characteristics. Section B examined teachers' knowledge and skills in ICT, section C elicited information on usage whilst section D solicited information on challenges. The overall Cronbach's alpha value, which was calculated to determine the reliability of the questionnaire for teachers was 0.90, which is higher than the 0.80 which is generally the accepted value in research in social science (Webb, Shavelson & Haertel, 2006).

Data collection procedure and analysis

The researchers had a discussion with the head teacher of the school in which they explained the purpose of the study to him. They assured him that the findings would be used for academic purposes only. The head teacher acknowledged the relevance of the study and allowed the researchers to meet the JHS teachers in the school. The researchers talked about the study and appealed to the teachers for their cooperation and assistance. This is consistent with Creswell's (2012) advice that it is important to respect the site where a research takes place. The researchers assured the teachers of confidentiality and told them the exercise was purely voluntary and anyone could opt out at any time. After the discussion, all the 28 JHS teachers agreed to participate in the study and therefore picked up copies of the questionnaire to complete. The senior teacher in-charge of ICT volunteered to collect the completed questionnaire for the researchers three days later. The findings were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. It is vital to add that for ethical reasons, the name of the school was changed to "Oguaman", which is a pseudonym. In reality, there is no town called Oguaman with a special school for the Deaf in Ghana.

Results

Table 1: Distribution of teachers by qualifications

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
SSSCE/WASSCE	1	3.6
Teachers Certificate 'A'	4	14.3
Diploma	7	25.0
Degree	16	57.1
Total	28	100.0

From the table above 96.4% of the teachers were professionally trained, the majority had a degree while the others had either a Diploma or Teacher's certificate 'A'. Since the ICT Policy in education in Ghana envisages that all learners develop the necessary skills regardless of the levels of education (MOE, 2008), it is assumed that on the strength of their educational qualifications, the participants should possess functional knowledge in the use of ICT. The next table presents data on teachers' knowledge and skills in ICT.

Table 2: Teachers' ICT Knowledge and skills

Statement	Agree STRF (%)	Neutral F (%)	Disagree F (%)
1. I can switch ICT devices on or off.	28 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
2. I can launch software applications on ICT devices.	21 (75.0%)	3 (10.7%)	4 (14.3%)
3. I can design a lesson that requires the use of the Internet.	20 (71.4%)	4 (14.3%)	4 (14.3%)
4. I can distinguish between different types of icons on a computer.	27 (96.4%)	1 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)
5. I can create folders and organize files on a computer.	25 (89.2%)	2 (7.2%)	1 (3.6%)
6. I can create documents with ICT devices.	22 (78.5%)	4 (14.3%)	2 (7.2%)
7. I can save documents on storage devices, such as pen drives.	23 (82.1%)	2 (7.2%)	3 (10.7%)
8. I can open files from storage devices such as pen drives and CD/DVDs.	22 (78.5%)	4 (14.3%)	2 (7.2%)
9. I can use a computer to format texts in a document (Highlight, Bold, Italics, Underline, Justify).	23 (82.1%)	3 (10.7%)	2 (7.2%)
10. I can use a computer to change the text in a document to either uppercase or lowercase.	18 (64.3%)	7 (25.0%)	3 (10.7%)
11. I can insert page numbers onto documents on a computer.	17 (60.7%)	4 (14.3%)	7 (25.0%)
12. I can communicate with others through the use of e-mails.	23 (82.1%)	2 (7.2%)	3 (10.7%)
13. I can send files as attachments to an e-mail message.	19 (67.9%)	4 (14.3%)	5 (17.8%)
14. I can search for and locate information on the Internet.	21 (75.0%)	3 (10.7%)	4 (14.3%)
15. I can download documents from the Internet.	20 (71.4%)	2 (7.2%)	6 (21.4%)

The data from table above shows that the majority of the teachers in the study had functional knowledge and skills in ICT and could therefore use ICT in teaching students with deafness. For instance, all the teachers could switch ICT devices on or off; also, 96.4% could differentiate

between types of icons (such as files, folders, programs) on a computer; 89.2% could create folders and organize files on a computer; 82.1% could save documents on pen drives and other storage devices, had knowledge and skills in formatting (highlight, bold, italics, underline, justify) texts in a document, as well as communicate through e-mails. Again, 78.5% of the teachers stated that they could create documents with ICT devices and also knew how to open files from storage devices; 75.0% of the teachers could search and locate information on the Internet; and 71.4% could download documents from the Internet. It was however, noted that a high proportion of the teachers reportedly did not have knowledge and skills in some specific areas such as inserting page numbers in documents, downloading documents from the internet and sending files as attachment to e-mails. This revelation contradicts the earlier assumption that all the participants by their educational qualifications possessed functional knowledge in the use of ICT in teaching. Consequently, it can be argued that one of the objectives for introducing ICT in education in Ghana, which was to ensure that all learners develop the necessary skills regardless of the levels of education (MOE, 2008) had not been realized. The next table (2) presents data on teachers' use of ICT in teaching.

Table 3: Teachers' utilisation of ICT in teaching

Statement	Agree F (%)	Neutral F (%)	Disagree F (%)
16. I use ICT devices in preparing my lessons.	9 (32.1%)	7 (25.0%)	12 (42.9%)
17. I design lessons that require the use of ICT devices.	12 (42.9%)	5 (17.9%)	11 (39.3%)
18. I use ICT devices to teach my lessons.	12 (42.9%)	9 (32.1%)	7 (25.0%)
19. ICT enhances my teaching methodology.	14 (50.0%)	6 (21.4%)	8 (28.6%)
20. ICT make my lessons very interesting.	14 (50.0%)	6 (21.4%)	8 (28.6%)
21. Using ICT devices make me highly motivated to teach.	15 (53.6%)	9 (32.1%)	4 (14.3%)
22. ICT devices help me to sustain the attention of my students.	13 (46.4%)	8 (28.6%)	7 (25.0%)
23. I use ICT in keeping my students engaged in lessons.	12 (42.9%)	7 (25.0%)	9 (32.1%)
24. I use ICTs as Teaching/Learning materials.	12 (42.9%)	7 (25.0%)	9 (32.1%)
25. I will use ICT tools more often, if they were available in my classroom.	16 (57.1%)	8 (28.6%)	4 (14.3%)

Generally, Table 3 shows that the utilization of ICT among the teachers was low; for instance, only a little above half of the participants, that is, 57.1% and 53.6% respectively, used available ICT tools in their classrooms in teaching, or reported that ICT devices motivated them to teach; also, 50% acknowledged that ICT enhanced their teaching methodology or made their lessons interesting. Additionally, less than half of the sample, reported that ICT devices helped to sustain the attention of their students, kept students engaged in lessons, were used as teaching/learning materials or in preparing their lesson notes. This was not surprising. Since a high proportion of the teachers did not have functional knowledge and skills in specific areas, they were therefore unable to utilize ICT in teaching as expected. Besides, apart from being a taught subject, in Ghana ICT is not used in teaching other subjects at the Junior High level (Amenyedzi, Lartey & Dzomeku, 2011; MOE, 2008). The next table (4) provides data on challenges teachers faced in the use of ICT in teaching.

Table 4: Challenges teachers face in using ICT in teaching.

Statement	Agree F (%)	Neutral F (%)	Disagree F (%)
26. I do not have access to ICT devices for teaching.	13 (46.4%)	2 (7.1%)	13 (46.4%)
27. There are insufficient ICT facilities for teaching.	18 (64.3%)	3 (10.7%)	7 (25.0%)
28. Frequent breakdown of ICT devices makes it difficult for me to use them in teaching.	17 (60.7%)	8 (28.6%)	3 (10.7%)
29. The availability of funding for the use of ICT is low.	17 (60.7%)	6 (21.4%)	5 (17.9%)
30. Lack of access to Internet service poses a challenge.	11 (39.3%)	5 (17.9%)	12 (42.9%)
31. I lack the competence in the use of ICT devices in teaching.	10 (35.7%)	5 (17.9%)	13 (46.4%)
32. Lack of motivation to use ICT devices in teaching is a challenge for me.	12 (42.9%)	6 (21.4%)	10 (35.7%)
33. I have not been trained on how to use ICT devices in teaching.	8 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	20 (71.4%)
34. There has not been any in-service training on how to use ICT devices for teaching.	13 (46.4%)	2 (7.1%)	13 (46.4%)
35. The quality of training is not good enough.	18 (64.3%)	7 (25.0%)	3 (10.7%)
36. There is no technical support staff to assist teachers in using ICT devices.	17 (60.7%)	4 (14.3%)	7 (25.0%)

Statement	Agree F (%)	Neutral F (%)	Disagree F (%)
37. Available software for teaching is inappropriate.	19 (67.9%)	4 (14.3%)	5 (17.9%)
38. The quality of available ICT devices is poor.	18 (64.3%)	3 (10.7%)	7 (25.0%)
39. My workload does not afford me sufficient time to develop instructional materials for teaching.	12 (42.9%)	4 (14.3%)	12 (42.9%)

Again, table 4 above reveals a number of challenges confronting teachers in the use of ICT devices for teaching. A majority of the teachers (over 60%) reported frequent breakdown of ICT devices, low funding of ICT programmes, lack of technical support, inappropriate software for teaching, as well as the poor quality of available ICT devices in the school. Besides, there were issues regarding heavy workloads, poor internet connectivity, lack of motivation and competence in the use of ICT for teaching.

Further analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the level of ICT knowledge and skills of male teachers ($M= 4.56, SD= .57$) and female teachers [$M= 3.81, SD= .69; t(26) = -3.05, p = .005, p < .05$] at Oguaman School for the Deaf in Ghana. This finding was surprising because the background qualifications of the teachers were similar between males and females. Besides, Colleges of Education in the country not only follows the same curriculum but the Colleges are also examined by the same institution, the Institute of Education at the University of Cape Coast. However, the data explains why there was a generally low level of teacher utilization of ICT in teaching among the study sample. As will be discussed later, the female teachers, who formed the majority of the sample (53.6%) were less literate in ICT than their male counterparts.

In order to find out the direction and strength of the relationships that existed between the Level of ICT knowledge and skills and the ICT usage of the teachers, the Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted. First, to assess the relationship between ICT knowledge and skills, and ICT Usage for teaching, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed. There was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .547, N = 28, p > .001$. This implies that as the level of ICT knowledge and skills increase, its usage for teaching also increases. Also, the relationship between knowledge and skills, and challenges faced was computed using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The result indicated a negative correlation, $r = -.224, N = 28, p > .001$. The analysis revealed that an increase in the level of ICT knowledge and skills will result in a decrease in the challenges faced in using ICT for teaching. Finally, the strength and relationship between the usage of ICT for teaching and the challenges faced was measured. The result proved a negative correlation between the variables, $r = -.307, N = 28, p > .001$. This suggests that as teacher's use of ICT for teaching increases, the challenges they face decrease. This was understandable, as Tasir, Abour, Halim and Harun (2012) have

argued that teachers' competence in the use of ICT tools in the classroom relates directly to their confidence and perception of the level of their skills. The higher the computer self-efficacy the more competent the teachers are in ICT (Majid & Abazova, 1999; Shelstad & Clevenger, 1996).

Discussion

From the analysis, the researchers identified two categories of teachers with respect to ICT application at Oguaman School for the Deaf in Ghana. The first category of teachers comprised those who could be described as ICT literate. The ICT literate teachers in the study demonstrated high levels of knowledge, skills and usage of ICT. Thus, such teachers were comparable to their counterparts in regular schools in Ghana and elsewhere. As discussed earlier, studies have shown that teachers demonstrated high ICT knowledge, skills and usage (Amenyedzi, lartey & Dzormeku, 2011; Khalid, Nawawi & Roslan, 2009).

Essentially, ICT literate teachers in the school used technology in lesson preparation and teaching, which enhanced their methodology and made their lessons interesting. This made them motivated and able to sustain the attention of and kept their students engaged in lessons. This revelation was understandable. Research studies report teachers' development of awareness and motivation in the use of technology in teaching (Ismail, Bokhare, Azizan & Azman (2013), which result in improvement in the process of teaching and learning (Barolli & Sevrani, 2009). More importantly, the effective utilization of ICT enhances inclusion of students with disabilities (MOE, 2008) and, in particular, those with Deafness. The use of ICT to complement sign language could go a long way in enhancing the participation of the Deaf in learning activities. Arguably, sentences and illustrations from the ICT devices such as computers and/or projectors used by the teachers would enable the students to understand what they are taught.

Another significant characteristic feature of ICT literate teachers in the study was that they were not deterred by challenges such as heavy workloads, infrequent power supply, poor quality of software and poor internet connectivity which were prevalent not only in the school but also across the country (Amenyedzi, Lartey & Dzormeku, 2011). However, these challenges that teachers experienced in the use of ICT were not peculiar to Ghana. Similar challenges were noted in the literature as occurrences elsewhere (Ijeoma, Joseph & Franca, 2010; Oye, Iahad & Rahim, 2012; Oye, Salleh & Iahad, 2011).

We turn to the second category of teachers who have been described as less literate in ICT application in education. They did not have the capacity to use ICT in teaching for the benefit of their Deaf students. Such teachers deprived their students of the benefits derived from the use of computers in teaching and learning, which invariably affected the quality of teaching. The less ICT literate teachers in the study consistently complained about access to computers and internet connectivity, frequent breakdown of available computers, lack of funding to maintain equipment, lack of expert support and the poor quality of software. As stated earlier, these same factors, however, did not adversely impact on their counterparts who were more literate in ICT application. This was not surprising as studies have reported on teachers' complaints about access, time, support, resources, training (Ertmer, 1999), insufficient numbers of computers and teacher time (Al-

Alwani, 2005; Pelgrum, 2001). Scholars also report on lack of confidence and resistance to change (BECTA, 2004) as challenges in ICT application in education. Indeed, Ertmer (1999) has described difficulties which arise from lack of access, time, support, resources and training as extrinsic challenges. In the case of lack of confidence, Ertmer described that as an intrinsic challenge.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes that a majority of the teachers at the Oguaman School for the Deaf possessed high knowledge and skills in ICT which enabled them to use technology in teaching; however, some of the teachers, mostly females, did not apply ICT in teaching because they did not have adequate training in ICT application in teaching and learning. It is therefore recommended that the school's administration should institute a school-based ICT training programme to enhance the competence of all teachers in general and female teachers in particular. Efforts should also be made to raise funds to acquire additional computers which should be connected to the Internet. Also, the Ghana Education Service should conduct regular in-service training for teachers of the Deaf to upgrade and enhance their ICT application in classroom instruction. In the long term, there should be a policy directive to mandate the use of ICT in teaching all subjects at the primary and junior high schools.

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Perceptions of pre-service students on HIV and AIDS education at a state university in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The study sought to determine Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) Pre-Service students' perceptions on the HIV and AIDS Education module (course) they had done at university. Thirty students out of a class of 94 were conveniently selected to respond to eight open questions to which they supplied qualitative responses. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis. Respondents reported that they immensely benefitted in terms of ability to change their own behaviour and competence in the delivery of AIDS Education lessons during Teaching Practice. They immediately practised safe sexual behaviour and influenced behaviour change in school pupils. Respondents felt that there were insufficient HIV and AIDS Education materials both for their use and that of learners in primary schools. Recommendations were made for the University that all students should take a module in AIDS Education and that a teaching methodology textbook should be produced as well as materials for primary school learners.

Key words: HIV and AIDS Education; B. Ed. Pre-service students; Teaching Practice

Introduction

Literature shows that HIV and AIDS remains one of the deadliest epidemics in contemporary societies (Rhatigan, Jain, Mukherjee & Porter, 2009; Akinwale & Aremo, 2010). Most impact studies show that teachers have been severely affected by HIV and AIDS (Jansen, 2007). In Zimbabwe, both qualified and pre-service teachers are often personally affected by fear and uncertainty regarding their own HIV and AIDS status (Tavengerwei, 2006; Mugweni, 2012). This study was justified as it sought to investigate the B. Ed. Pre-service (Primary) teachers' perceptions on the impact of the HIV and AIDS module which they had done before going for Teaching Practice (TP).

Where teachers have been the subject of research, they have been positioned as deliverers of uncontested, already negotiated body of HIV and AIDS knowledge within spaces (schools) that are unproblematic (Jansen, 2007; Thomas, 2007). A study conducted by Tavengerwei (2006) on the effectiveness of the HIV and AIDS guidance and counselling programme in tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe found that student teachers were aware of the facts and general information about HIV and AIDS. Furthermore, Tavengerwei found student teachers' increased participation in college based anti-AIDS campaigns; decline in the multiple partner phenomenon; students seeking assistance from peers and teachers on their sexuality problems and general increased discipline to be indicators of behaviour change among students as a

result of implementing the HIV and AIDS guidance and counselling programme. In this regard, Tavengerwei (2006) found that student teachers in four Teachers' Colleges lacked knowledge and skills to teach life skills or sex education programmes effectively. For sustainable development in HIV and AIDS prevention, student teachers' personal identities and involvement should not be downplayed in training programmes. In related studies, Kinghorn (2002) and Sarma and Oliveras (2013) yielded results which indicated that there was need to provide teachers with a lot of support in HIV and AIDS training and logistics.

As a way to fight against the AIDS pandemic, the Government of Zimbabwe introduced the teaching of HIV and AIDS Education in primary and secondary schools as well as in tertiary institutions (Boler & Aggleton, 2004). HIV and AIDS guidance and counselling has also been used as a proactive strategy to sensitise students about the pandemic in institutions of higher learning.

Studies on secondary school and college students' HIV and AIDS awareness undertaken in Zimbabwe revealed that the students were highly aware of HIV and AIDS and related issues (Chireshe & Chireshe, 2003; Banda, 2004; Katsinde & Katsinde, 2007). The Ministry of Health and Child Welfare (MoHCW) suggests that the cheapest, surest and sustainable solution to prevent the HIV infection is behavioural change (Government of Zimbabwe, 2006; Katsinde & Katsinde, 2007; Zimbabwe National AIDS Council, 2004). Behaviour change can be achieved if people are educated on the dangers of HIV and AIDS. To this end, MoHCW embarked on major awareness campaigns involving teaching society on how to avoid HIV transmission and protective measures (O'Donoghue, 1995). The youths are a special group targeted by HIV and AIDS awareness campaigns because statistics show that children between five and nineteen years are free from HIV infection as revealed by the HIV/AIDS in Education Assessment Team [HEAT], 2002). This puts pupils at risk as they become targets of 'sugar mummies' or 'sugar daddies' (Katsinde & Katsinde, 2007, p100). A study by Maticka-Tyndale (1992) on HIV and AIDS awareness among college students in Canada, found out that although students showed a high degree of scientific knowledge of HIV and AIDS, they indicated that the scientific knowledge on HIV and AIDS had not been incorporated in their common sense knowledge.

To protect students from the dangers of HIV and AIDS infection, the Government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Education produced materials for use in schools under the AIDS Action Programme. It is government policy that every class be involved in HIV and AIDS education so that pupils are assisted to understand the AIDS pandemic, in order for them to change their sexual behaviour and refrain from pre-marital sex. However, it is difficult to measure change of behaviour (O'Donoghue, 1995; Katsinde & Katsinde, 2007). In Zimbabwe, indications such as school girl pregnancies show that some pupils engage in risky sex behaviours, a practice which is not culturally acceptable (Gaidzanwa, 1998). In her study, Gaidzanwa (1998) found that adolescent boys in the 15 to 19 age range had early sexual experience with prostitutes and girls tended to have sex with men over 21 years thereby risking contracting HIV infection as people between 21 and 49 years have a higher percentage of HIV infection. In response to the call to sensitise students on the need for behaviour change, the University where this study was conducted launched a course on HIV and AIDS

to post Advanced level students doing a four-year B. Ed. Pre-Service (Primary) degree. The students spend two years at the university before they go for Teaching Practice (TP) during the whole of the third year. They come back to university to consolidate theory and practice in the fourth year. The HIV and AIDS course is done during the second semester of the first year at the university. The inaugural group was enrolled in 2004 and went for TP in 2006. Teaching HIV and AIDS modules to pre-service student teachers at the University was aimed at developing awareness of negative sexual behaviours and to equip them with HIV and AIDS knowledge and skills to impart to learners.

Since the course was meant to be results oriented, it became imperative to evaluate the course in order to establish its effects on those students who had returned from TP. Students in higher education institutions remain at the risk of contracting HIV. A study by Mapfumo, Shumba and Chireshe (2007) found that the majority of respondents from tertiary institutions viewed men to be initiators of sexual encounters and taking control and responsibility over sexual encounters, thus putting women at risk. Most related studies in Zimbabwean secondary and tertiary learning institutions focus on HIV and AIDS awareness issues (Ministry of Education and Culture and Ministry of Higher Education and Technology, 2001; Chireshe & Chireshe, 2003; Tavengerwei, 2006; Katsinde & Katsinde, 2007; Mapfumo et al., 2007; Mugweni, 2012). There is limited research which focuses on B. Ed. pre-service teachers' perceptions on the effects of the HIV and AIDS programme.

Purpose of the Study

The study aimed at investigating the extent to which university pre-service students understood issues relating to causes and effects of HIV and AIDS and to comment on the credibility of the programme in terms of its strengths and weaknesses. Specifically, the study explored how the acquisition of HIV and AIDS Education content/concepts had affected university (B. Ed.) pre-service students' sexual practices, attitudes and pedagogical competences during TP. This was a mobile and vulnerable group with an average age of twenty-five years. The study was guided by the following three research questions:

1. What is the overall assessment of the HIV and AIDS course at university?
2. How have the student teachers changed in (their) behaviour as a result of taking the HIV and AIDS Education course?
3. To what extent has HIV and AIDS Education empowered student teachers in the delivery of HIV and AIDS lessons?

Since the primary goal of the HIV and AIDS education curriculum at the state university was to equip student teachers with life skills and positive behaviour in the context of HIV and AIDS, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was chosen to form a theoretical basis in understanding how pre-service students at university understand, respond to the AIDS curriculum as well as how they intend to implement AIDS education in primary schools in Masvingo District of Zimbabwe. Within the context of this study, the theory centres on a student teacher's knowledge, behaviour, attitude, emotions, intentions and beliefs.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) has been applied by different researchers like Tlou (2009) and Beadnell et al. (2008) in studies involving sexual behaviour and HIV and AIDS. These studies found that theoretical variables (attitudes and behaviors within human action) predicted participants' intentions to use condoms and to seek HIV testing, with attitudes having the main effect on intentions.

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was formulated in 1980 by Ajzen and Fishbein after trying to estimate the discrepancy between attitude and behaviour. The theory provides a construct that links a person's beliefs, attitude, knowledge, intentions and behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). The Theory of Reasoned Action is sometimes referred to as 'a Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991; Noar, 2007:3). It suggests that behaviours can be understood by examining an individual's knowledge and attitude about the behaviour, his or her perception of social norms regarding the behaviour, as well as his intention to engage in the behaviour.

In this model, the best predictor of behaviour is intention (Ajzen, 1991; Noar, 2007). Intention is the cognitive representation of a person's readiness to perform a given behaviour, and it is considered to be the immediate antecedent of behaviour. The intention is determined by three things: her attitude towards the specific behaviour, her subjective norms (that is her beliefs about how people she cares about will view the behaviour in question), and her perceived behavioural control (that is the perception of her ability to perform a given behaviour) (Ajzen, 1991; Noar, 2007:398). By employing the TRA, researchers hoped to establish student teachers' attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, intentions and behaviour regarding HIV and AIDS.

The following aspects of TRA and definitions were relevant to university student teachers' response to an HIV and AIDS Education Curriculum:

Behaviour: A person's behaviour is shown by the interplay of intention and action. In this study, behaviour relates to the student teacher's understanding and practice in teaching HIV and AIDS education in primary schools.

Attitude: This aspect refers to the students' positive or negative behaviour or thoughts towards HIV and AIDS and their response to the call for positive behaviour change since the advent of the scourge.

Intentions: An individual's readiness to perform a given behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005; Noar, 2007). It is the desire to act, teach or practise according to what one believes. In this study, intentions imply that knowledge, attitudes and norms have an impact on one's intention to perform an action such as being promiscuous or developing positive behaviour change in learners through teaching HIV and AIDS education in the primary school.

Norms: The student teachers' attitudes and practice are formed on the basis of what positive behaviour to foster within the context of the school environment and their response towards equipping learners with life skills, under AIDS education.

Subjective Beliefs: refer to the student teacher's conviction of social normative pressures, or relevant other's beliefs that he or she should or should not perform such a behaviour.

Figure 1 below shows a conceptual model of the TRA diagrammatically.

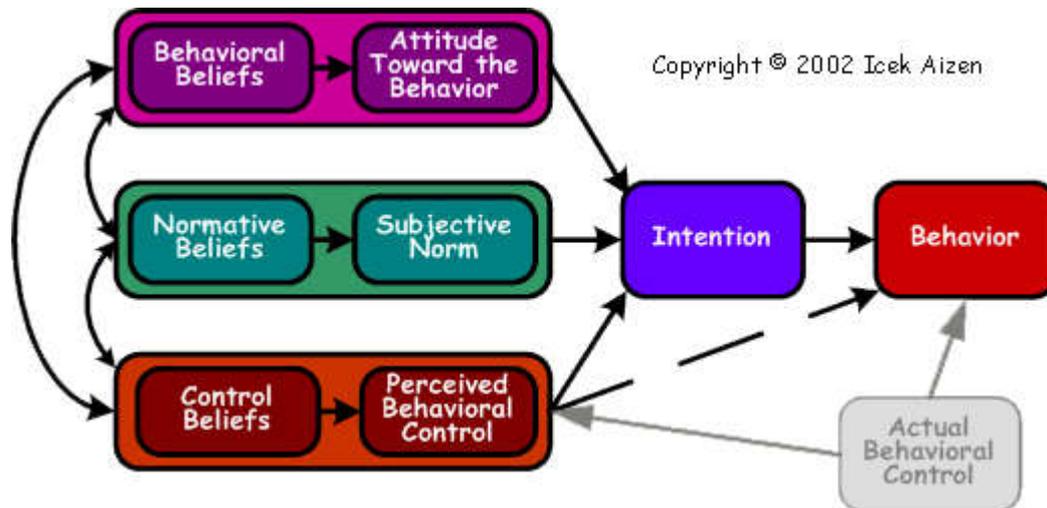


Figure 1: Theory of Reasoned Action – Conceptual Model (Adapted from Ajzen, I. 1991:179-211).

Method

The study used a qualitative case study design to investigate the impact of HIV and AIDS education on B. Ed. Pre-service (Primary) students at a state university in Zimbabwe. The nature of the topic requires thick descriptions and lived experiences by the participants. Thirty (30) B.Ed. Pre-service students aged between 23 and 30 years with an average age of 25 years who were selected had just returned from TP. Only those who had taught HIV and AIDS Education from Grades 4-7 were selected because it is the level where the HIV and AIDS policy is implemented in the primary school (Government of Zimbabwe, 2006). Convenience sampling was applied in this study because the students were selected for a particular end (Creswell, 2007). The sample comprised 15 males and 15 females. The researchers merely called upon those student teachers who were there and were willing to participate in the study. In line with research ethics, the 30 students voluntarily participated in the study. They wrote personal accounts of their experiences in participating in the University's HIV and AIDS programme as well as their experiences during their one year of TP. The researchers explained the purpose of the study, assured participants of anonymity and informed them that they were free to withdraw from the study any time they felt like doing so. The personal accounts, which were guided by eight open-ended questions to structure and probe the participants' thinking, were meant to solicit real lived experiences at a personal level. Among others, some of the questions guiding the personal account solicited data on: what the student had learned about

HIV and AIDS on the university programme; how his or her life had been affected after taking the course; course lecturer's effectiveness, knowledge level and credibility as well as effects of HIV and AIDS Education on the student's teaching while he or she was on Teaching Practice. The focus group interview was used to complement the written personal accounts (Creswell, 2007). Six students were conveniently sampled and constituted the group which held focus group discussions. The questions that were raised addressed the four research questions. The focus group discussion was audio-recorded and fully transcribed.

The researchers comprised four university lecturers, three from the same institution. The study had the limitation that data were based on students' reports on their experiences and not researchers' observations of the happenings.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, content analysis and analytic induction were the data analysis techniques employed to manipulate, interrogate and analyse data in this study (Denzin, 1997; Creswell, 2007). The content of the data was examined and the meaning and its particular implications for the research question discovered. In this study, data were analysed using research questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Results and Discussion

The responses from the 30 student teachers were presented, analysed and discussed under the following research questions which guided the participants' personal accounts: (a) Students' overall assessment of the HIV and AIDS education module at university. (b) The extent to which the course empowered student teachers to operate in the classroom and (c) What student teachers learnt and whether they changed in behaviour as a result of taking the HIV and AIDS Education module.

Overall assessment of the course

The HIV and AIDS course was regarded by all the 30 participants as highly beneficial. On the overall assessment of the HIV and AIDS Education module, participants noted its strengths as providing relevant methodologies for teaching purposes and equipping students with accurate content to promote behaviour change. The following response represents the views of many of the participants:

Before taking this course I was almost in the dark on so many things related to HIV and AIDS. I learnt so much and the lecturer used real life experiences in his examples and this helped me to see things more clearly. The lecturer had more than enough knowledge to put us in the green light (Female, 30).

Assessment of the course lecturer's effectiveness, knowledge level and credibility were rated as outstanding by all the participants in the focus group interview and in the narratives. Participants expressed that the lecturer was able to explain concepts very well, used best

methods to disseminate content, used media which was suitable for the age level of the students, possessed current knowledge on the subject, stimulated discussion, had good counselling skills and accommodated student teachers' questions in a professional manner.

The lecturer's effectiveness was demonstrated in the following response from one member of the focus group:

I just think that he is one of the most outstanding lecturers whom I just experienced at this university. And he is the one who has just cleared some of the misconceptions which I held for quite some time before I came to this university. I just feel that ah he was outstanding. The moment we met him, we were feeling that we are attending a lecture. And you were feeling that there is something that I learnt from the lesson as we were moving out. Even when we were in the community we were feeling that I learnt something. I am someone who is educated, who is able to control himself or to know what to do in life skills.

On a similar note, the other participants wrote:

One cannot doubt the lecturer's omnipotence regarding mastery of the course content and related issues. This has caused the majority of my peers to resort to condom use (Male, 29).

Such knowledge level and credibility may contribute to trust towards the lecturer as an advocate for responsible behaviours and emotional stability (Jansen, 2007). This is vital as students may emulate the lecturer as a role model and hence reduce risk behaviour. The course was thus regarded as highly beneficial. This could be an indicator that this module has to be done by all students at the University.

Many participants reported that more sources should be lodged in the library and workshops focusing on HIV and AIDS should be held at the university. It was felt that the HIV and AIDS module should be made compulsory for all students at the University. Since AIDS kills, participants felt that some students would die if this was not done. Further recommendations were that more research was needed in the area of HIV and AIDS; more time was to be allocated to this course; and that HIV and AIDS should be made a main subject so that B. Ed. pre-service students can conduct research in that discipline. Most of the participants also stated that during TP, there were inadequate relevant text books. As a result, student teachers relied on outdated sources.

What student teachers learnt from the module

Participants were asked to narrate whether they had learnt some HIV and AIDS related facts from the course. In response, all participants (30) in this study indicated that they had learnt a lot from the module, and their responses in frequency order included the following:

- to avoid unprotected sex
- to have one faithful partner who is negative
- abstinence from (unsafe sexual behaviour)

- how exactly HIV attacks the immune system and what actually kills the person in the end
- about causes, symptoms and effects of AIDS
- how to cope with stigmatization and anxiety
- some misconceptions about the transmission of HIV and AIDS
- that it is important to get tested before indulging in sex
- that anyone can have HIV and observation only does not prove that one is HIV positive
- not to have sex before marriage
- dangers of having multiple sex partners

The above responses given by participants indicated an awareness of facts and general information about HIV and AIDS. Measured against the TRA, it showed that the students may have changed in knowledge and attitude. This change in knowledge is crucial as it might have led to behaviour change by students as a result of being involved in the HIV and AIDS Education programme (Noar, 2007; Sarma & Oliveras, 2013).

Behaviour changes brought about by the course module

Participants were further required to indicate whether there was any change in behaviour by other students as well as themselves as a result of taking the AIDS Education module. The majority of the participants (twenty-five out of thirty) indicated that they had observed behaviour change, while five said some students were still promiscuous mainly because of the economic hardships. There were certain behaviour changes observed by participants but, however, they indicated that the major problems affecting students are economic hardships. Participants said that to meet the required amount of tuition fees, food and accommodation, some female students opted to get temporary husbands for support. Student teachers reported that the AIDS Education module might have informed them to be more cautious of the deadly disease in the majority of students as illustrated by the following response from the focus group interview:

Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the group in our course when they came they were running with Part 4s especially ladies (meaning - they were being promiscuous). Maybe they were looking for money, I don't know. Later after the course some were discussing that they needed to be principled because if they were not principled they were going to cry. They were going to find out they were stubborn for nothing so I think and I believe although maybe just few resist what they learnt from the course but a lot benefitted from this course [—]. Their character was showing behaviour change especially after the teaching practice. We found that some were stable and a lot of people were saying that eh- they were now showing that they are mature just because of this course.

An analysis of the quotation above shows that before undertaking the HIV and AIDS education module, some of the student participants were promiscuous. After the course, the majority of the student participants benefited from the programme and might have gained behaviour change. However, it was indicated that a few of the students might have been adamant. Similar sentiments

were raised in the responses from written personal accounts as illustrated by the following view which was generally shared by the participants:

I observed behaviour change in some individuals in our group. Some became afraid of the HIV virus (Female, 26).

After the course there was an improvement in student behaviour especially the girls. I think they revised the actions they encountered before (Female, 24).

Multiple partners were reduced (Male, 23).

The behaviour changed a lot as compared to our first year; semester one, before AIDS Education. At this moment everyone is showing that they are giving value to their bodies (Male, 26).

HIV and AIDS Education has promoted good behaviour (Female, 26).

Many participants made reference to how they themselves had benefitted from the HIV and AIDS module and how the knowledge gained had contributed towards change in behaviour. This kind of thinking, which represents the views of most of the participants, is demonstrated by the following comment from one member of the focus group interview:

Myself I benefitted a lot from this course because firstly, when I was coming to this University as a single guy, I was having a belief that as I am going to reach the University I am going to look for several women for me to show that I am a man who is enjoying life at the University. But, after having this course my mind started to change that I had to do some survival skills which I had learnt from the course. I needed to be a principled man with a focus concerning my life because I realized that I was going to spoil my life for a short time but going to regret later. So this helped me to be a principled man such that I observed abstinence and having some goals to achieve concerning some relationships. Then later, if I am not forgetting, then last year that is 2009 in May just because of the information or the data which I received from the course, I went for some (HIV) tests. I was highly excited and full of joy because I realized that I was negative. So from this course myself I benefitted a lot.

The above narrative indicated that acquisition of HIV and AIDS facts and content might have resulted in positive attitude and behaviour change by the particular student teachers. After taking the HIV and AIDS education module, the student teacher was able to abstain and go for voluntary testing and counselling. Evaluated against the TRA, there might have been development of normative beliefs in the sense that the student teachers practised abstinence (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005; Noar, 2007; Readnell et al., 2008). Consistent with the finding, Mugweni (2012) found that those teachers who had acquired requisite content knowledge showed positive behaviour and were able to deliver HIV and AIDS lessons effectively.

Other participants also echoed the same sentiments in the personal accounts when they indicated that the module had a positive impact since they were now better informed and had taken positive steps to make sure that they live healthy lives. Most of the participants shared the following sentiments:

After the course I moulded my character and behaviour including that I avoided sex and want to wait for marriage (Male, 25).

I was positively affected. I know my HIV status and I intend to keep it that way (Female, 23).

I underwent diagnosis through tests to establish my HIV status so that I can live a positive life and I now guard against promiscuity (Male, 30).

I gathered the courage to know my HIV status and I now live without fear and I can plan for my future. I was able to talk to my husband about the lectures and the topics covered and it opened a way for us to discuss about HIV and how as a husband and wife we could avoid infection. Eventually we agreed that I should not stay in the hostels but in rented accommodation so that my husband could come any time and have sex with me and not with other women (Female, 30).

The student teachers' knowledge of HIV and AIDS indicates an awareness of the importance of factors such as; abstinence, being faithful to one sexual partner, the use of condoms and rejection of misconceptions about HIV transmission (Akinwell & Aremo, 2010). The findings also indicate that the majority of students may have changed in behaviour as a result of gaining knowledge on HIV and AIDS issues during the course (Ajzen, 1991).

Those who stated that some students still had not changed in behaviour mainly pointed towards economic hardships as a contributory factor as follows:

Because of economic hardships and high cost of commodities, students still engage in high risk behaviour (unprotected sex). However, they seem to adhere to preventative methods (Male, 29).

Of course there are certain behaviour changes but the major weakness affecting people are economic hardships. With the required amount of tuition fees, food and accommodation students (females) choose temporary husbands for support. Landlords demand sex for rent from females (Male, 25).

These findings confirm observations by Akinwell and Aremo (2010) that poverty often contributes to the growth of prostitution which promotes multiple sexual partners and unprotected sex resulting in exposure to HIV infection. Literature on multiple concurrent sexual relationships demonstrates that poverty may be a contributory factor. On the same issue, Mapfumo et al. (2007) established that female students in tertiary institutions were at risk as the decision to use protective means during sexual encounters was dependent on male partners. Analysed against the TRA, there may have been formation of subjective beliefs by some students due to social normative pressures caused by economic pressures (Ajzen, 1991). Mapfumo et al. (2007)

recommended that these female students needed to be educated and empowered to insist on safer sex practices. There is a possibility that some students in the current study had the necessary knowledge about the consequences of such risky behaviour but chose to ignore the dangers of HIV and AIDS mainly due to economic hardships (Gaidzanwa, 1998; Maluwa-Banda, 2004; Katsinde & Katsinde, 2007).

How the HIV and AIDS Education module empowered student teachers to operate in the primary school classroom

Responses mainly centred on participants having been equipped with teaching methodologies to impart knowledge and life skills in HIV and AIDS issues. These methodologies, which participants claimed to have used effectively during their TP included discussion, playing the devil's advocate, letters, resource persons, role plays, videos, song, poetry, games, projects and others. Knowledge of various forms of child abuse which was learnt at the University, ranging from sexual abuse to child negligence, was said to have been applied during TP.

As a result of the professional knowledge gained from the HIV and AIDS course, one participant wrote in the personal account as follows:

During TP, the course helped me a lot in the following:

- *Being able to deliver relevant information.*
- *Being able to handle cases of children who have had their loved ones infected or had already passed away.*
- *Teaching children the types of food recommended for those who are infected.*
- *Being able to correct misconceptions of pupils in a professional way.*

On a similar note, the majority of the participants had this to say:

I realised with concern that pupils were a little bit nervous at the subject but I brought the subject matter to their level and subsequently pupils were able to speak out.

I was equipped with knowledge of what to teach and to which grade level.

The results above show that participants felt that the module had equipped them and made them competent to deliver AIDS Education lessons. These findings are contrary to those by Ndamba and Chirobe (2008) where the majority of rural primary school teachers, including those who had done HIV and AIDS Education at various teachers' colleges, said they were not well equipped to handle AIDS Education lessons in primary schools.

In recognition of the importance of education, Campbell and MacPhail (2002) reported that peer education facilitates contexts in which youth can engage in debate and dialogue about high risk sexual behaviours and the possibility of changing them. In line with TRA's notion of subjective beliefs, some student teachers might have been subjected to relevant others' beliefs that they should not engage in promiscuity (Noar, 2007; Tlou, 2009).

As a result of the student teacher's skills acquired during AIDS Education lectures, twenty-nine out of thirty participants reported that there was notable behaviour change in pupils that they taught during teaching practice. Participants also reported that learners were now able to

choose good friends, to stop labelling other pupils who were affected or infected, avoiding sharing of sharp objects, eagerness to learn about being abused by older people and strangers and caring for patients at home.

Commenting on how learners learnt to avoid discrimination, one participant wrote:

When I got to the school I discovered that there were some pupils who were on ARVs and somehow the information had got to other pupils and these were discriminating against those infected. After our first and second lessons the pupils on ARVs were befriended.

Primary school learners seemed to have benefitted on how to care for those infected by HIV at their homes as stated by one participant during the focus group interview:

I was teaching Grade six. Some of them showed that they learnt a lot from the AIDS Education lessons as I was delivering them concerning how to protect and how to handle someone who is HIV positive. Because sometimes after giving them homework, pupils were showing that they were trying to handle their parents or their relatives in a good way. These parents were appreciating what was going on after learning that I was teaching the pupils during the time whilst I was on TP.

Only one participant indicated that there were no major changes observed in pupils but that the pupils had gained a lot of knowledge about HIV and AIDS. These results meet one of the objectives of HIV and AIDS education outlined by O'Donoghue (1995) and reinforced by the HIV/AIDS in Education Assessment Team (HEAT) (2002) that the curriculum area equips learners with HIV and AIDS content and Life skills.

Participants said that the learners had benefitted from the HIV and AIDS lessons. This was demonstrated by the way affected and infected children became open and how other learners avoided discrimination and stigmatisation. The finding is consistent with the observation by Thomas (2007) which revealed that if HIV and AIDS content is effectively imparted to learners, it may elicit their emotions. It is important for primary school learners to gain knowledge about HIV and AIDS as they are our window of hope (Mugweni, 2012). Sexual relationships between younger women and older men and vice versa are the major entry point for HIV into the young generation (Zimbabwe National Behavior Change Strategy, 2006-2010; Gaidzanwa, 1998). Hence, there is need for student teachers to be well versed with HIV and AIDS facts through the GZU AIDS Education programme.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study findings were that participants found the module valuable as most of them reported positive behaviour change as a result of the acquired knowledge and experience on HIV and AIDS. They gained adequate knowledge for effective classroom practice in HIV and AIDS lessons during TP and also managed to influence behaviour change in the learners. Measured against the Theory of Reasoned Action, there seemed to have been a positive change in student teachers' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. The study concludes that when pre-service students join the University they will be lacking HIV and AIDS facts. As a result, they may engage in

promiscuous behaviour. Therefore, undertaking a module on HIV and AIDS Education is beneficial to B. Ed. Pre-Service (Primary) students for their own sake and that of their learners who may also be vulnerable to the AIDS pandemic. Participants recommended that HIV and AIDS should be taught as a main study subject just like any other curriculum area. They further recommended that more sources on HIV and AIDS education should be acquired and be accessible in the University library. The study further recommends that all students in the teacher education programmes at both pre-service and in-service levels should take modules in HIV and AIDS Education. The University should spearhead the production of a teaching methodology textbook as well as materials for learners at primary school level.

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Management and organisation of Early Childhood Development programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The study examined the quality status of management and organisation of Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes in Harare primary schools as perceived by the school heads, ECD teachers and ECD parents. A qualitative design based on three in-depth interview guides for school heads, ECD teachers and ECD parents and observations was undertaken with a total of 30 participants (10 school heads, 10 ECD teachers and 10 parents) from 10 purposively sampled schools. Data were content analysed. The analysis included direct reports of the participants' responses to in-depth interviews and observation checklists results were tabulated. The study revealed different views among school heads, teachers and parents on the management and organisation of ECD programmes. School heads noted that they managed and organised ECD programmes incompetently while ECD teachers were not supported by the school administration. The ECD parents acted as part of the administration and were consulted in decision making. The following conclusions were made: the school heads and ECD teachers were familiar with their administrative roles and the school heads were aware that effective management was possible through delegation of duties. The study recommended that training of all stakeholders on ECD management and organisation would bring about a better understanding of ECD programmes.

Key Words: Early Childhood Development; school head; teachers; parents; management; organisation

Introduction

Early Childhood Development (ECD) has emerged as a theme in international dialogue in education in recent years (Pence, 2004; Thomas & Thomas, 2009; Martinez, Naudeu & Pereira, 2012). ECD is defined as the period from pregnancy and birth to the age of eight years (Nziramanga, 1999; Christie, 2008; Thomas & Thomas, 2009). It is made up of the 0 to 3 years stage which involves parent education, early stimulation, nutrition interventions, home based care and crèches (Thomas & Thomas 2009). Hyde and Kabiru (2010) further state that ECD comprises of 3 to 6 year olds and, at this stage, there is parent and preschool education. Finally, ECD also includes 6 to 8 year olds and is marked by transition to formal education and improved early primary school (Thomas & Thomas, 2009; Mulford, 2003). In this study, ECD refers to the 4-5 year olds. ECD is of great importance worldwide (Nziramanga, 1999; Thomas & Thomas 2009). Hyde and Kabiru (2003) argue that parents send their children to ECD centres to prepare them for formal education (Christie, 2008; Chikutuma & Mawere, 2013) while assisting in the management process. Pre-primary education for children between the ages of 3 to 4 and 5 to 6, provide a sound foundation for formal education at primary level by developing the abilities, attitudes and qualities which are pre-requisites for learning among children of this age group (Chikutuma & Mawere, 2013).

Management and organisation is viewed as a system of working with individual persons or groups for the purpose of achieving the established goals of an ECD programme. According to Click (2000), management includes planning, organising, directing and controlling. Kapfunde (2000) views management as being concerned with, working with and through others to achieve ECD education and care goals. In addition, Davis and Degotardi (2015) highlight that management and organisation of ECD programmes entails recognising and fostering children's early peer relationships. The structure and management of educational systems from preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary education across the world is more or less the same (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003; Shumba & Chireshe, 2013). The private preschools, according to Director's circular 12 of 2005 in Zimbabwe are under the Infant Department which is supervised by the local school head of a nearby primary school who manages and supervises them. To cater for quality management, Director's circular 12 of 2005, which is a policy document relating to the inclusion of ECD programmes in primary schools, specifies that the School Development Committees (SDCs) contribute towards the construction and furnishing of ECD centres and classrooms and they also decide on the fees to be levied (Nziramanga, 1999; Shumba & Chireshe, 2013; Chikutuma & Mapolisa, 2013). However, the SDCs may fail to construct and manage child-friendly environments due to financial resource shortages which consequently compromise the quality of ECD programmes. As a result, the management of public primary schools is changing significantly and a school head's role now includes the development of a safe physical environment and the control of resources such as ECD play and learning materials, teachers and learners (Mulford, 2003).

A Malawian study by Ciumwari (2010) showed that head teachers were not well informed about what the ECD curriculum should achieve and the extent to which they should directly be involved with it. The school heads' poor knowledge of the ECD curriculum compromises the management of ECD programmes. The study expressed concern that the school heads may be unfamiliar with the essence of ECD education which can affect the way they manage the programmes. Part of the management duties of a school head is to assess the ECD teaching and learning and to give demonstration lessons to ECD children for the benefit of newly qualified teachers or para-professionals. While this is a requirement, the ECD teachers' assessments and lesson demonstrations by the school heads maybe limited (Chikutuma & Mawere, 2013). In this context, a study by Hyde and Kabiru (2003) notes that, school heads have limited involvement in the evaluation of the ECD learning environment and in their teaching abilities of ECD children.

Prior to the Dakar and Jomtien Conferences, in many African countries such as Zimbabwe, Kenya, Lesotho, Ghana and Nigeria, communities played a central role in the management and organisation of ECD programmes which included nutrition, health and safety issues (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003; Myers, 2004). Parents are also key participants in the management and running of the ECD curriculum (Myers, 2004). In this view, Edwards (2015) highlights that, cultural connections play a role in the management of learning, particularly in the relationship between the ECD curriculum, development and play. However, due to lack of ECD specialisation, ECD parents may feel incompetent to manage and run the ECD curriculum, hence the need to trust the ECD teachers' expertise. The school head collaborates with the parents, a task which may be difficult due to lack of cooperation from parents. Parents pay levies and the school head motivates the teachers through incentives. Conversely, parents may not pay the levies hence compromising the management and organisation of ECD children's learning. In this regard, school heads invest time negotiating teachers' salaries with parents

coaxing them to pay up the levies (Ciumwari, 2010). The school head engages parents to provide, manage and maintain play materials and feeding schemes for ECD children. These management tasks maybe viewed as basic services which assist children to learn. While these services are basic, they may not be fulfilled due to lack of commitment.

A study in India by UNICEF (2000) established that good provision, management and organisation of facilities, electricity and library facilities constituted a quality learning environment which was strongly correlated with high performance in school work. On the other hand, poor provision, management and organisation of sanitary facilities impact negatively on the quality of ECD programmes. Such factors as the availability of sanitary facilities and classroom maintenance have an impact on critical learning factors (UNICEF, 2000; Shumba & Chireshe, 2013; Edwards, 2014).

The fact that the quality of management and organisation of ECD programmes is integral to ECD education and care makes it imperative to study its status in Harare primary schools. More importantly, not much research has been done on the management and organisation of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools, hence the attempt to study the Zimbabwean situation.

Purpose of the study

The present study sought to establish whether there is quality management and organisation of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools. Specifically the study sought to provide an answer to the main research question: What is the quality status of ECD management and organisation in Harare primary schools? The study is part of a larger study assessing the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe (Chikutuma, 2014).

Method

Research design

A qualitative design with some quantitative aspects was used for this study. The qualitative design was preferred because it is the most appropriate design where perceptions of participants are sought *in situ* (Creswell, 2009).

Sample

The sample consisted of 30 participants from 10 schools representing 26 Harare low and high density suburbs (10 school heads, 10 ECD teachers and 10 ECD parents). The sampling was purposively done in Harare urban because of its accessibility to the researcher.

Instruments

Observation checklists and in-depth interviews were used for the study. Observation checklists were used at each of the ten schools under study to observe the management of the play areas and activities of ECD children. The observations were successfully used in line with Silverman (2006)'s argument that observations describe what is happening in context and why in the

situation under study. The observations led to the follow-up in-depth interviews done to school heads, ECD teachers and parents for triangulation purposes. Three interview guides were used in this study. The in-depth interviews were chosen for their ability to expose attitudes, interests, feelings that were not obvious through the observations (Gay et al. 2011). Interviews had the advantage that the researcher probed participants' responses to in-depth data about their experiences and feelings regarding management and organisation of ECD programmes.

Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was sought from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The researcher visited the purposively sampled schools to carry out the observations and interviewed the participants at their convenient times. The school heads were interviewed in the morning, the teachers after dismissing the ECD children while the ECD parents were interviewed at the time of fetching their children. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study. They were told that they were free to withdraw their participation at any given stage of the study. The Participants were referred to using pseudonyms. Permission to carry out the observations and the interviews was sought from the school head.

Data Analysis

Data was content analysed. The analysis included reporting verbatim, the participants' responses and tabulation of observation checklist results.

Results

Table 1 Observation checklist findings on the management and organisation of ECD programmes

Aspect	Management of play areas		Total
	Good	Poor	
Music and movement	6(60%)	4(40%)	10 (100%)
Dramatic play area	8(80%)	2(20%)	10 (100%)
Book corner area	6(60%)	4(40%)	10 (100%)
Mathematics and Science area	5(50%)	5(50%)	10 (100%)
Art area	8(80%)	2(20%)	10 (100%)
Block area	9(90%)	1(10%)	10 (100%)
Fine motor area	7(70%)	3(30%)	10 (100%)
Outdoor area	8(80%)	2(20%)	10 (100%)

Table 1 highlights observations made that the majority of the following areas in the schools showed good management: dramatic play area, fine motor area, art area and outdoor area, while the minority showed poor management.

School heads' responses to in-depth interviews on management and organisation of ECD programmes

Data from in-depth interviews revealed that the school heads were familiar with their management roles of ECD programmes. The excerpts below reflect their awareness of administration expectations of ECD programmes:

"I make sure that, the ECD children are attended to daily so as to ensure their safety"(Head participant 2).

"I ensure proper interpretation of the ECD curriculum, Government policies and syllabus"(Head participant 6).

"I organise staff development workshops and make sure that the ECD teacher gets the required material resources to run the ECD class"(Head participant 4).

"I hold teachers' and parents' meetings" (Head participant 3).

The school heads also revealed that effective management of ECD programmes was possible through delegation of duties. The excerpts below highlight these views:

"The ancillary staff cleans the ECD premises, maintains the play equipment and play areas"(Head participant 3).

"The SDC assists in the management of ECD programmes through repair and maintenance of outdoor play equipment"(Head participant 1).

"The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education supervises and appraises the ECD programme"(Head participant 7).

"In liaison with ECD teachers, the teacher-in-charge (TIC) plans for the ECD children's outings as well as distribute resources"(Head participant 3).

"The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education offers in-service training in liaison with non-governmental organisations that fund the programmes" (Head participant 8).

The school heads unanimously agreed that they incompetently managed the ECD programmes and needed continual training. They appreciated understanding of ECD children's development and management offered by the staff development workshops attended. The statements below demonstrate these sentiments:

"The staff development workshops offered by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education helped me to cope with uncertainty" (Head participant 3).

“I am managing the ECD programme through trial and error” (Head participant 9).

“Since I trained for junior teaching, my understanding of 4-5 year olds’ development and its management is very poor” (Head participant 5).

“While staff development courses offered by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education empowered me to manage ECD programmes, I need more” (Head participant 2).

The ECD teachers’ responses to in-depth interviews on the management of ECD programmes

Data from the ECD teachers’ in-depth interviews indicate that they received minimal support from the school administration. The teachers revealed that the school heads did not buy the required play equipment or, if they did, they did so only after a lot of coaxing. The teachers also highlighted that the school administrators held on to the toys instead of giving them to the ECD children to play with. The statements below illustrate these points:

“While the ECD children are in large numbers and pay their fees just like the other higher grades, they hardly get resources allocation” (ECD teacher participant 5).

“My administrator keeps the ECD children’s playground key and if she is not around, the children do not use the play equipment” (ECD teacher participant 6).

“The school has resources that were donated by an NGO in January 2012, but are locked up citing that, the ECD children will break the toys” (ECD teacher participant 9).

The ECD teachers also revealed that they were motivated through incentives while a few noted that they did not get incentives which had a negative impact on the quality of ECD services they provided. The statements below demonstrate these views:

“The lack of incentives affects my attitude towards work and my service delivery is poor” (ECD teacher participant 4).

“I get a good salary from the SDC and I also get an incentive which is satisfactory and this affects my service delivery positively” (ECD teacher participant 2).

Data from in-depth interviews with the teachers also revealed that the ECD teachers were familiar with their administrative roles in the ECD classroom and play area. They noted that they were responsible for planning the ECD children’s play and learning, comforting them when in pain and ensuring that the play equipment was safe. Excerpts from the interviews reflecting these sentiments are given below:

“I plan, guide and supervise ECD children’s play and learning. I also comfort those who are distressed in one way or the other” (ECD teacher participant 1).

“I carry out health checks every morning and if a child has a problem I let the parents know so that the child gets the necessary assistance” (ECD teacher participant 3).

“I communicate with the parents on the progress of their ECD children” (ECD teacher participant 8).

The ECD teachers unanimously agreed that they were not happy with the administration of ECD programmes. They noted, for example that the school heads had a negative attitude towards ECD resource allocation. The statements below highlight these sentiments:

“I am not happy with the way the ECD programme is run by the administrator because he tells me that the ECD class is not an exam class” (ECD teacher participant 7).

“The school head is just not supportive of this ECD programme and I am not happy” (ECD teacher participant 2).

“The administrator is not interested in the ECD programme though he knows what should be bought from the in-service training he got from the ECD trainers” (ECD teacher participant 6).

The ECD parents’ responses to in-depth interviews on the management and organisation of ECD programmes

Data from the interviews with parents shows that they were aware of their importance in the management of ECD programmes. The statements below illustrate this view:

“I help run the ECD programme through making a follow-up of parents’ payment of fees” (Parent participant 5).

“I donated play equipment especially for the play areas in the ECD classroom” (Parent participant 2).

“I pay for my child’s tuition fees” (Parent participant 7).

“I am involved in fundraising at the school” (Parent participant 3).

“As a committee member I am involved in decision making on the incentives of the teachers” (Parent participant 6).

The parents further highlighted that they were generally happy with the management of the ECD programmes though there were things they felt could be improved. The statements below highlight these sentiments:

“I am happy with the ECD programme because I do not need to engage a maid who is an expense for me” (Parent participant 1).

“I am not happy with the state of the playground and toilets and I think the school can maintain it in a better manner” (Parent participant 10).

“I can already buy the uniform in advance for my child because I know that the child will get a place at this school for grade one” (Parent participant 8).

“I am happy because my child is able to name colours, can count up to 10, speak English and retell stories with understanding” (Parent participant 2).

Discussion

Findings from the observation checklist generally showed that the Art, Block, Fine motor, Outdoor and Dramatic areas were well managed and organised while the Mathematics, Book corner, and Science areas were managed and organised poorly. The school heads' responses to in-depth interviews revealed that they were aware that quality management and organisation of ECD programmes involved the supervision of the ECD curriculum and adherence to ECD policies. Conversely, Ciumwari (2010) noted that school heads shunned supervision of the ECD curriculum due to lack of ECD specialisation (UNICEF, 2000; Chikutuma & Mapolisa, 2013). School heads were not following the ECD policies even though this is in contradiction with the Malawian study which revealed that clarity and adherence to ECD policies was part of management and organisation of ECD programmes.

The school heads also highlighted that quality management and organisation of ECD programmes entailed delegation of duties and collaboration with other stakeholders. The delegation of duties involved giving responsibility to the teacher-in-charge to manage and allocate resources in ECD and the SDC fundraised for the school. The findings of the present study concur with Ciumwari's (2010) Kenyan study which revealed that availing of resources was one important management role in ECD which could be done by any member of the administrative team. The current study also revealed that the school heads were not confident in managing ECD programmes. The school heads' lack of knowledge maybe because they were not ECD specialists. It could also be because the ECD policies lacked clarity on the practicalities of management and organisation of ECD programmes. The above situation echoes a Tanzanian study by Hyde and Kabiru (2003) who argued that school heads were not well informed about the ECD curriculum which meant that they were unaware of the aims and objectives of ECD and the extent to which they should have been directly involved with the ECD classroom. The school heads in the present study, however, appreciated the staff development workshops offered by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, admitting that they had equipped them greatly with ECD management and organisation skills.

The ECD teachers in the current study noted that they were getting very little support from their administrators and school heads. This lack of support may have emanated from the fact that the school heads were not well versed with the ECD curriculum as shown by their admission during the interviews. It may also be because they viewed ECD programmes as all play and no learning. The present finding confirms the Ghanaian findings by Hyde and Kabiru (2003) which

highlighted that school heads had very little involvement in the evaluation of ECD classrooms, in the teaching of ECD and the learning abilities of ECD children. However, the data from the interviews also revealed that some ECD teachers were motivated by their schools which had a positive impact on service delivery of the ECD teachers. In contrast, some ECD teachers noted that they did not get any incentive and this had a negative impact on the quality of ECD management and organisation. The fact that teachers did not get incentives could be because the schools were struggling to make ends meet due to the current economic hardships.

ECD teachers in the present study were familiar with their administrative roles which included good provision of sanitary facilities, managing play and learning in the ECD classroom which had a positive influence on the quality of ECD education and care. The finding concurs with Edward's (2014) view that the educator has a significant leadership role of recognising and fostering young children's peer relationships in learning and play settings. The familiarity by ECD teachers of their administrative roles may be because they were all ECD specialists. Similarly, in Namibia, UNICEF (2000) noted that familiarity with administrative roles involved good provision, management and organisation of sanitary facilities, electricity, play and learning which contributed towards a high quality learning environment and was strongly correlated with high performance in school.

The ECD teachers unanimously revealed that they were not happy with the administration's view and management of ECD programmes. The ECD teachers highlighted that the school heads were not sourcing the required play equipment or repairing the play equipment and were not buying material resources like disinfectants and this compromised the quality of ECD programmes. Ironically, UNICEF's (2006) evaluation on Zimbabwe revealed that the organisation of nutrition, health and safety services in ECD were crucial to the management of ECD programmes which brought quality education and care in ECD.

The study revealed that parents were aware that they had an important role to play in the management of ECD programmes. As a result of this awareness, they were part of decision making, fundraising, furnishing and repairing of the equipment in the ECD learning environment. The current finding concurs with a Nigerian study by Okeke and Ani (2006) which revealed that the school head spent time negotiating for teacher incentives, buying and maintaining play equipment with the parents. The parents in the study were very happy with the way the ECD programmes were managed but felt that the toilets and playground could be managed in a better manner.

Conclusions

From the findings of this study, the following conclusions are made; the school heads and ECD teachers were familiar with their administrative roles, the school heads were aware that effective management was possible through delegation of duties, the ECD teachers felt discouraged as the administration did not buy the required material for ECD children, the school heads felt incompetent to manage and organise the ECD programmes due to lack of ECD specialisation, and the ECD parents felt that they were fully involved in decision making and consequently the management of ECD programmes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- all stakeholders on ECD management and organisation should be trained to bring about a better understanding of ECD programmes;
- a policy with explicit directions on how to manage and organise ECD programmes and the guidance of school heads on the expectations in ECD should be introduced to improve the quality of ECD programmes;
- support and motivation offered by administrators to ECD teachers and the ECD programmes through strict adherence to ECD policies would improve the management and organisation of ECD programmes;
- planning and furnishing of the ECD play areas more effectively would improve the quality of play and learning of ECD children;
- carefully structured administrative procedures in which the school heads are guided in management and organisation would improve the quality of ECD programmes; and
- wider consultation among school heads, teachers, parents and other stakeholders would result in ownership, proper management and organisation of the ECD programme.

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Psychosocial correlates of infertility among married women undergoing infertility treatment in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana

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Abstract

The study explored the psychosocial aspects of infertility among married women in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana using the descriptive and correlational designs. A hundred women undergoing fertility treatment in two hospitals within the Tema Metropolis were purposively sampled to participate in the study. Two main instruments - Symptom Checklist-90-Revised (SCL-90-R) by Derogatis 1994 and an individual data form were used to collect data which was analysed by means of inferential statistics such as Pearson product moment correlation and learner regression analysis. The SCL-90-R data were expressed in means and area t-scores. Findings indicated that infertile women in the region were significantly distressed as a result of their childlessness with depression, anxiety and interpersonal insensitivity being the major psychosocial indicators. The study also found that infertile women display low self-esteem, despair and confusion as they grapple with their challenges. On the social plane, stigmatization, isolation and alienation were challenges the women face both in their families and the society leading to disruptions of their marital relationship. The study established that infertility significantly affects the social status of infertile women in society. It was recommended that psychological counselling services should be recognized and integrated into the treatment of infertility to complement medical treatment in Ghanaian hospitals in order to ensure the psychosocial support and adaptation of affected women.

Key words: *Psychosocial correlates, infertility, infertility treatment*

Introduction

Fertility in a woman is seen as a highly important expectation in marriage and is valued among most African societies. In Ghana, it is viewed as an indispensable condition for the achievement of parenthood. Therefore, when a woman is unable to conceive for a length of time after marriage, she is considered infertile or barren. Generally, couples are expected to start having children shortly after marriage and if this does not happen, there is much stress on the couple. In most cases, the blame is squarely put on the shoulders of the woman even before the cause is identified.

One of the most prevalent and widespread perceptions about infertility is that since women are the ones who ultimately conceive and become pregnant and carry the pregnancy, the inability to conceive is exclusively a woman's problem. Hence, they are seen as the cause of a childless marriage. For instance, Bevilacqua (1998) observes that women are inclined towards expressing their emotions more verbally than men. He explained that it is women who generally do the emotional work in a relationship and the underlying experience of infertility appears to be the same, no matter who carries the diagnosis of infertility. He stated further that in view of this,

infertile women would experience depression as a result of their infertility. In women where the cause of infertility has been identified, Szabo (2002) found out that they are more likely to suffer from depression than those who experienced unexplained infertility. According to Szabo, an infertile woman might develop a negative sense of identity, an experience of being worthless or inadequate, a perceived lack of personal control, feelings of resentment, grief, and stress as well as envy, lower life satisfaction, loss of dream of parenthood, isolation and lack of support. This, in my view is when cognitive error may come into play as the woman tries to attribute the fault to external circumstances. For example, she might think her condition is caused by her mother-in-law, witchcraft or by a rival. These emotions may degenerate into depression and become a major psychological challenge to her.

According to Shehab (2002), many infertile women become envious whenever they see other women who are pregnant. As a result of this envy, they tend to use different coping strategies by avoiding situations in which pregnant women and young children may be encountered. To Bergart (2000), some infertile women feel incomplete as women while others experience a sense of being hollow. According to Imber Black (1993), the humiliation experienced is internal and the sense of failure gradually and imperceptibly spreads like cancer over an infertile woman's life and ultimately becomes shame.

What appears to be the most significant part of infertility is the aspect of loss. According to Gibson and Meyers (2002), whereas the loss may not be related to a specific object or a person, it is the loss of the experience of a potential, a goal and an aspiration. The experience of infertility in women may imply the loss of the role of motherhood and the possibility of a significant relationship (marriage) to move to another dimension.

Research conducted by Greil (1991) showed that in the African set up, failure to conceive not only renders the "culprit" socially unaccepted but also vulnerable (if the cause is the woman) to the emotional abuses of her husband and members of the society. In cases where the cause is unidentified, the couple faces abuse and unpleasant confrontations from the spouse's family and sometimes from their own individual family members.

Schmidt, Christensen and Holstein (2005) also concluded in their study that inability to conceive carries a stigma. What this means is that in closed social groups, a degree of rejection or a sense of being rejected may cause considerable anxiety and disappointment. Some people, in such situations may respond by actively avoiding the issue altogether and as a consequence, become alienated from the social group in order to avoid the possibility of talking about their problems. This is mostly felt among families and close peers who might be hurting them through their concerned questions about their problem and most importantly, when peers start having children. Some women may feel uncomfortable around children and consequently start to isolate themselves from families and friends who have children.

Infertility is also found to have a profound impact on the couple's lives. Greil, Leitko and Porter (1988) found that differences in the way couples commonly view infertility could

lead to tension and anger in marital relationships. In support of this, a survey conducted by Hevi and Ansah (2002) in the Volta Region of Ghana suggested that infertility is one of the serious problems threatening the emotional stability of married women and to a large extent, marriages in the country. They described the feeling of one woman in their study as anger, directed at the husband because she did not think the condition really affected him the way it affected her. They again described the man as becoming frustrated by the woman's disposition since he did not see why she should be so worried. There is no doubt, therefore, that the discovery of infertility in a marriage brings about a significant crisis in the lives of couples involved. One would therefore, conclude that women experience infertility as a serious crisis. Although there is much more scientific information about the biological or medical aspects of infertility, understanding the psychological and social implications of infertility have lagged behind. It is against this background that this study is being carried out to identify the psychosocial impact of infertility on married women.

Purpose of the study

The treatment of infertility in Ghana has for many years tended to ignore the psychosocial crisis that profoundly affects nearly every aspect of one's personality and life. However, fertility treatments, ranging from medical monitoring to hormonal remedies and in-vitro fertilization (IVF) appear to have both physical and emotional burdens on women. This is because, as pointed out by Mabasa (2002), a thwarted desire to have children may challenge one's sexuality, social roles and self-image and may compound feelings of inadequacy, guilt, grief and loss of control. The author argued that although infertility is mainly viewed from a medical perspective, its consequences go beyond the physiological component to the social and psychological aspects of infertility, which he maintained, are as important as the physical aspects. Paradoxically, many people support expensive and invasive infertility treatments by pointing to the devastation that many infertility patients experience, but we rarely articulate or treat these psychosocial symptoms. Even worse, infertility treatment itself can compound psychosocial distress in ways that are rarely recognized or remedied. For example, a married woman who is trying to conceive will undoubtedly experience feelings of frustration and disappointment if the efforts do not result in her falling pregnant.

However, if the difficulties continue and the man or woman is labelled as having fertility problems, this may result in a severe assault on self-esteem, body image and self-assessed femininity. Most infertile married women in Ghana are humiliated and denied certain benefits enjoyed by their fertile counterparts. They tend to see themselves as failures in society and in their marriages and suffer a degree of rejection. This may cause considerable anxiety as a result of the distress they go through as they privately or publicly seek interventions to reverse their status. Ironically, in Ghana knowledge about the psychological impact of infertility seem to be sparse and the existing fertility clinics operate without taking cognisance of the psychological challenges their patients go through. This study therefore aimed at investigating the psychosocial challenges infertile married women in Ghana go through focusing on the Greater Accra region of Ghana. This is deemed pertinent as it would serve to advocate for the integration of psychological services into the medical set up. It is

envisaged that the findings might yield intervention strategies for the psychosocial adaptation of women with infertility challenges and their social support system. Families of infertile women will see the need to provide support for the 'victims of infertility' and thereby reducing the stigma attached to the infertile in the Ghanaian society. The study findings might also assist health care providers, especially gynaecologists in understanding the non-medical dimensions of infertility for treatment considerations. Finally, clinical psychologists and counsellors would be equipped with knowledge that would enable them to provide appropriate services to women who have fertility problems.

To achieve the purpose stated above, the study attempted to find answers to the following research question and hypotheses:

1. What are the psychosocial factors associated with infertility among women undergoing infertility treatment in the Greater Accra Region?
 - H1. There is a significant interactive relationship between infertility and psychosocial challenges of women undergoing infertility treatment
 - Ho1. There is no significant interactive relationship between infertility and psychosocial challenges of women undergoing infertility treatment
 - H2. Infertility will have a significant impact on the psychosocial status of women undergoing infertility treatment in the Greater Accra Region
 - Ho2. Infertility will have no significant impact on the psychosocial status of women undergoing infertility in the Greater Accra Region

Method

The study adopted the descriptive and correlational designs using the quantitative approach to develop and employ mathematical models and hypotheses to investigate the phenomenon. This model also offered the researcher an opportunity to employ inferential statistics such as Pearson correlation coefficient and linear regression to measure and determine relationships in the study.

Participants and setting

All fertility clinics in the Greater Accra Region constituted the population for the study. The targeted participants comprised all married women who were experiencing infertility in the Greater Accra Region. The criteria for the selection of the sample were: (i) the women should be between the ages of 21 and 40 years, (ii) be experiencing primary infertility and (iii) having been in fertility treatment for more than two years (Bevilacqua, 1998). Information on the ages and duration of treatment of the women involved was obtained from the doctors of the fertility clinics. Forty years was used as the cut-off point because generally it does not fall within the menopausal age of women (Kern, 1982; Mazor & Simons, 1984).

Two fertility clinics within the Tema Municipality were purposively sampled for reasons of recording the highest infertility cases in the region. (<http://www.modernghana.com/GhanaHome/regions/greateraccra>). Purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used

in selecting 100 volunteered women between the ages of 21 and 40 years diagnosed of primary infertility. Fifty women were selected from each of the two clinics under strict confidential considerations.

Instrumentation and Data collection

Symptom Checklist-90-Revised (SCL-90-R) by Derogatis (1994) and the author's self-developed interview guide were the instruments used. The SCL-90-R is a 90 item symptom inventory designed to measure current psychological symptom status. Each item is rated on a five-point scale of severity. (0 =Not at all, 1 = A little bit, 2 = Moderately, 3 = Quite a bit, 4= Extremely). The test generates nine primary symptoms dimensions namely: Somatisation (SOM), Obsessive-Compulsive (O-C), Interpersonal Sensitivity (I-S), Depression (DEP), Anxiety (ANX), Hostility (HOS), Phobic Anxiety (PHOB), Paranoid Ideation (PAR) and Psychoticism (PSY) as well as three global indices of distress namely: Global Severity Index (GSI) which reflects both number and intensity of reported symptoms, the Positive Symptom Distress Index (PSDI), a marker of symptom intensity and the Positive Symptom Total (PST), which measures symptom breadth. Results were expressed in area t- scores in which the mean was 50. Higher scores were indicative of higher degrees of psychological distress. The SCL-90-R was administered to participants individually with each taking 25 minutes to complete.

The Individual Data Form was utilized to gather information regarding demographic variables directly related to this study that is, age, educational background, course of infertility and type of treatment being assessed. Data gathered was analysed by means of inferential statistics such as Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and Linear regression analysis to test the study hypotheses one and two respectively. The SCL-90-R data were analysed and expressed in area t-scores in which the mean was 50. Higher scores were indicative of higher degrees of psychological distress.

Results

The mean age of respondents was 37 years. Respondents were between 25 and 40 years, while the average duration of current infertility was 3 years. All respondents had some form of education with 60% of them having tertiary education, 30% secondary educations and 10% basic education. The causes of infertility among the respondents were blocked fallopian tubes (40%). Twenty per cent had both blocked tubes and hormonal problems, while 40% had undefined diagnoses. At the time of the study 70% were receiving treatment for IVF while 30% were undergoing hormonal therapy.

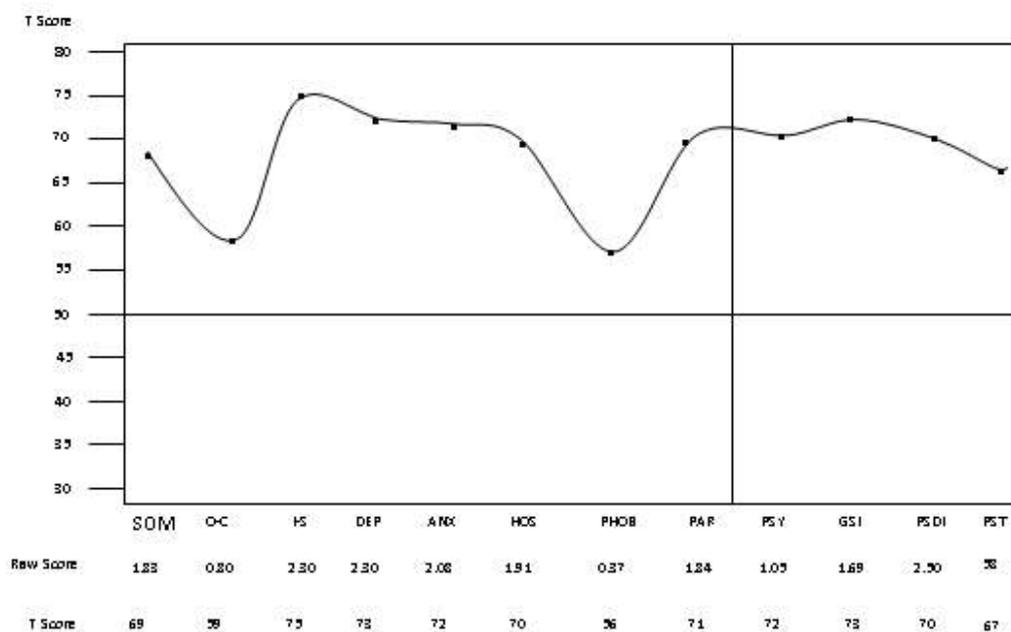
Research question. What are the psychosocial factors associated with infertility among women undergoing infertility treatment in the Greater Accra Region?

To answer this question data obtained by the use of the SCR-90 R was analysed and the results are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Mean Distress levels of psychosocial factors associated with infertile women (n=100)

Symptom	SOM	O-C	I-S	DEP	ANX	HOS	PHOB	PAR	PSY	GSI	PSDI	PST
\bar{X} Raw score	1.83	0.80	2.30	2.30	2.08	1.91	0.37	1.84	1.05	1.69	2.50	58
\bar{X} t score	69	59	75	73	72	70	56	71	72	73	70	67

Fig 1: Graphical representation of Mean Distress levels of infertile women (n=100)



It can be seen in Table 1 and Fig. 1 that the somatisation level of respondents as revealed by a mean t- score of 69% on their SOM symptom scale was high and elevated from the start off point of 63. This, though not highly significant, was clearly indicative of a picture of enhanced distress associated with somatic ailment and complaints as a result of their status.

Their level of Obsessive Compulsive (O-C) symptoms indicated a mean t- score of 59% and this, although above average, was not significant enough to warrant ‘clinical caseness’ but could have

consequent psychological connotations. Meanwhile, on their I-S scale, mean t- score of 75% could be seen in a clinical dimension that suggests that most of the women seemed to experience feelings of self- doubt, inadequacy, inferiority and discomfort during interpersonal interactions as a result of their childless status. Further, the level of depression for a majority of respondents on the DEP scale was fairly high with a mean t-score of 73%. Similarly, the mean t-score of 72% exhibited on their ANX scale seems to be an indication that many of the respondents were experiencing anxiety as a psychological reaction to the challenges of infertility. Further, there was slight evidence that respondents were experiencing negative effects of anger and hostility from neighbours (society) as a result of their infertile status.

Respondents endorsed highly symptoms on the SCL-90-R scale that demonstrated tendencies of aggression, irritability, rage, and resentment on the hostility scale (HOS) which recorded a mean t-score of 70%. On the PHOB scale, one could identify 56% as the mean t score which was not elevated enough to imply psychological distress. Again respondents indicated substantial distress associated with suspicion, delusion and projective thought about people and social ideation in light of their infertility status. Their level of paranoid ideation (PAR) was significantly high 71%, an indication of disordered mode of thinking.

It could also be observed that respondents' symptoms response of 72% on the psychotism scale (PSY) was highly consistent with a clinical case. However, it was likely that such a high score on this scale could be the consequence of social isolation, stigmatization and humiliation they experience from society in the face of their infertility. Apparently, a graphical picture of the mean t-scores in Fig 1 discloses a consistent elevation above the clinical start off point of 63% in all the scales except on the O-C and the PHOB scales which fell below the start off point.

In conclusion, the SCL-90-R symptom profile of the women revealed a high Positive Symptom Total (PST) of 67%. In addition, the symptomatic intensity of a majority of the respondents was significantly high and suggestive that they were highly distressed psychosocially. This was evident from their mean Positive Symptom Distress Index. (PSDI) of 70%. Again, the overall intensity of distress was significantly high and could be seen in the light of clinical "caseness" likely to have implications for counselling. This is due to the fact that the women responded to most of the symptom items on the scales with a higher degree of distress (extremely) which made the mean t value of Global Severity Index (GSI) high (73%).

H1. There is a significant interactive relationship between infertility and psychosocial challenges of women undergoing infertility treatment

Pearson's correlation matrix analysis was conducted to examine this relationship. Three variables of psychosocial distress, namely, Depression, Anxiety and Interpersonal Sensitivity were considered in this relationship because of their high level score obtained in the study. The correlation matrix is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Correlation between infertility and psychosocial challenges of infertile women

Variable	Depression	Anxiety	Int. Sensitivity	Infertility
Depression	1	----	----	----
Anxiety	0.45*	1	----	----
Interpersonal Sensitivity	0.63*	0.35*	1	
Infertility	0.57 **	0.49*	0.23**	1

*P = 0.05 **p= 0.01

Table 2 shows that there was a significant positive correlation between infertility and the psychosocial variables; Depression ($r=0.57$, $p=0.001$). Anxiety ($r=0.49$, $p=0.05$) and Interpersonal Sensitivity ($r=0.23$, $p=0.01$). This result although not so strong gives an indication that there is a corresponding increase in depression, anxiety and interpersonal relationships among women as they grapple with infertility problems. The hypothesis was therefore accepted.

H2. Infertility will significantly impact on the psychosocial status of women undergoing infertility treatment in the Greater Accra Region

A simple linear regression was conducted to test this hypothesis. Treating psychosocial factors as the independent variable, it was realised that infertility had a significant effect on the psychosocial status of infertile women undergoing treatment ($\beta=0.192$, $t=2.268$, $p=0.001$). The model predicted that for every unit increase in infertility, the psychosocial status of the women decreases by 19.03 units. This implies that infertility contributes negatively to the psychosocial status of women. Thus the study hypothesis was supported.

Table 3: Forced entry regression of infertility on the psychosocial status of women undergoing fertility treatment

Variables	b	Beta (β)	R	R ²	t	Sig.
Step 1						
Constant	104.32				2.413	0.002
Infertility	-19.03	-0.192			2.268	0.001
			0.184	0.229		

P=0.001

Discussion

Concerning psychological challenges of infertile women in the Greater Accra region, it emerged from this study that one major indicator of psychological distress was depression which could be considered in the clinical range contrary to the assertion made by Downey and McKinney (1992), that while infertility is a highly stressful experience for men and women, they do not report clinical levels of depression. Individual scores on this scale indicated that the infertile women were significantly distressed scoring high on depressive symptoms such as low energy, persistent crying, suicidal ideation and feeling of loneliness. Their depressive condition was shown by the mean t-score of 73 on the SCR-90 scale. Other psychological symptoms found in the women under study as regards depression, include feeling hopeless about the future, anger, envy, loss, feeling devastated, feeling worthless, and having a sense of failure coupled with disappointment.

Another major indicator which appeared to be a significant psychological challenge of the participants was anxiety. This was apparent in the results of the SCL-90-R analysis evidenced by participants' indication of feelings such as nervousness, being scared for no reason, feeling tensed or keyed up and having spells of terror or panic as a result of the infertile challenges they experienced. On the Anxiety scale, their mean t score was as high as 72 which implied that such women were experiencing high levels of anxiety as a result of their childless condition. This finding corroborates Payne and Hahn (2001) who reported that the prospect of infertility treatment may give rise to a more natural anxiety where the infertile woman becomes anxious about the nature of treatment and the chances of success. Obviously, fear of having a rival who could become pregnant, fear of being divorced and about a childless old age are other potential aspects of anxiety that may be inherent in such a troubled woman.

Results from the data also indicate that stigmatisation, isolation and alienation were the challenges the women of the study faced in the society. In trying to avoid the insensitivity, a woman may shun the company of fertile women and even family meetings where she would be expected to answer questions about why she has not yet conceived. This avoidance was consistently reflected in the Psychoticism and interpersonal sensitivity levels in their individual SCL-90-R profiles which, for most, were high. A look at the average t-score on participants' interpersonal sensitivity (I-S) scale which was 75 and Psychoticism (PSY) scale of 72 reveals that a majority of the respondents had either approached or penetrated the clinical level and as such were seen to have experienced high feelings of inferiority in their personal relationship with others in the fertile world and had a high feeling of estrangement from society. This may mean that lack of social support, especially from members of their husband's families could be a source of great stress to women who are infertile. This finding of social stigmatisation of infertile women in the Greater Accra region of Ghana is quite consistent with findings of Schmidt, Christensen and Holstein (2005) who observed that inability to conceive bears a stigma and that in closed social groups, a degree of rejection or a sense of being rejected may cause considerable anxiety and disappointment in infertile women. Obviously, in a situation

where society denounces women, insult and/or assign them derogatory names, they are likely to feel inadequate and worthless in the society since they would be seen as falling short of the societal mandate for motherhood. Findings in this study therefore suggest that because the social role of women is strongly linked to the role of motherhood, infertile women's social lives alter as their female friends become mothers and change their focus in life.

In view of this, infertile women in Ghana are likely to observe life from outside the fertile world and experience a change in their interpersonal relationships and social interactions. This might make them lonely and also lack support from significant others. In the face of the absence of sincere support from others, these women may experience great despair and acute withdrawal from the society. In this instance, Ghanaians might have need for education as regards the interpersonal sensitivity in the circumstances of infertility.

The significant positive relationship between infertility and psychosocial variables in this study provides a strong indication that as the women grapple with increased infertility problems, a corresponding increase in their psychosocial challenges arises. Infertility is also found to have a significant negative impact on the psychosocial status of women in our society and this is a situation that needs attention.

Conclusions

The study provides more insights into the experiences of women who are infertile. Infertility presents a crisis for women who suffer from serious psychological effects of infertility and its treatment. These effects encroach on the emotional stability of infertile women. For this reason, the study suggests that the psychosocial dimension of the condition can no longer be ignored. Overall, the study contributes to an improved understanding of the level of distress experienced by primary infertile women, identifying depression, anxiety, inferiority, anger, hostility, aggression, resentment and self-blame as some of the effects of psychological distress experienced. Without any social support, a combination of these factors is likely to make the infertile women develop a feeling of worthlessness which might lead to suicide.

Again, as revealed in the study, infertile women are subjected to ridicule, stigmatisation, isolation and alienation in the society. The study suggests that these are issues infertile women would have to deal with in the society and which could traumatise them. This calls for education and counselling of members of the society on the implications of childlessness in order to alleviate the stigma of infertility. One could infer from the findings that the inability to conceive could even be a threat to marital stability in the homes of infertile women. A woman's infertility may damage or disrupt a marital relationship. Infertile women may live with the fear of an actual or emotional abandonment by their husbands. For some women, sex with their husbands may become an activity with a definite goal of conception. Thus, sex life may be characterized by an endless cycle of hoping for pregnancy, followed by despair in realising they have not conceived. This suggests that until counselling is integrated into infertility treatment, the psychological experiences may impede the success of medical treatment.

This study has, therefore, demonstrated that psychological counselling which has been absent in the process of treating infertile women at the fertility clinics could be a beneficial service to help infertile women make meaning of their infertility status.

Recommendations

Since infertility has a social and psychological impact on women as established in this study, it is recommended that infertility doctors should recognise and accommodate counselling in their set ups so that they could provide psychological support to the infertile women who come to them for treatment. On the other hand, given that infertility has a biological aspect, it is recommended that counsellors who would want to be part of the medical interventions or set up their private infertility counselling services be given basic training and insight into the biological nature of infertility so that they may pass this knowledge on to and give insight to those infertile women who might be well informed about their circumstances. These measures, when taken are likely to minimise the unusual crises infertile couples experience in our society.

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Psychosocial effects of parental migration on rural children in Mwenezi, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the psychological experiences of children left behind by one or both parents who have migrated. The researcher used a qualitative approach, particularly employing a case study on a sample of twelve (12) children with absent parents. The children were aged between four (4) and eleven (11) years. Seven (7) of them were girls and five (5) were boys. All the child participants had one or both parents who had migrated either to the Diaspora or to urban areas. Data were generated using in-depth interviews with the children and their caregivers. The thematic content analysis technique was used to analyse data. Results revealed that rural children with absent parents exhibit symptoms of emotional detachment, feelings of rejection and loss. This study also revealed that children left behind are susceptible to abuse. Low self-esteem was found to be another effect of absent parenting on children and was more prevalent in girls than in boys. The study highlights the need for further research on the implications of rural to urban migration on rural children's intellectual development. It is also recommended that migrating parents should maintain contact with their children so as to preserve emotional bonds with their children.

Key words: Absent parents, anxiety, loneliness, child abuse

Introduction

Children left behind by migrating parents constitute a particular vulnerable group. The impact of parents' migration on children can be devastating as it threatens the long term well-being and development of children into adolescence and adulthood (French & Berlin, 2000). Zimbabwean people have a high degree of mobility. Mobility in this country includes internal migration (rural-urban), intra-regional as well extra-regional migration (Zanamwe & Devillard, 2009). This migration, exacerbated by a dwindling economy has created a significantly large group of absent parents. The economic meltdown in Zimbabwe has been the major culprit in this regard as it forced many Zimbabweans to leave the country in search of better opportunities in the Diaspora. Preferred destinations were mainly the United Kingdom, United States of America, Botswana, Australia and South Africa. At present, thousands are still crossing the Limpopo for South Africa (Njanjaya & Masango, 2012). The situation was and is such that going to work in a foreign country enables one to earn foreign currency which they can, in turn remit home. However, it is very difficult for parents to travel with their children when they leave because of inadequate travel documents and finances. Families have been forced to stay apart with children living with grandparents or other relatives while their parents work abroad to earn money (Kanyeze, Kondo, Chitambara & Martens, 2011). As of 2009, an average of 200 000 children in Zimbabwe are living without parental care and supervision (UNICEF, 2009). Children in rural areas are particularly more vulnerable as they do not have the privilege of communicating with their absent parents through the use of social

media and sometimes even through the cell phone. This is so because of the poor communication network in most rural areas of Zimbabwe.

Globally, studies have revealed that children in rural areas have higher incidence rates of maltreatment than children in major urban areas in nearly every category of maltreatment (Sedlak, Metternburg, Basena, Petta, McPherson, Greene & Li, 2010). A study conducted in the United States of America by Sedlak *et al* (2010) found that rates of abuse for children in rural areas were nearly two times higher than for children in major urban areas.

When children are left behind, they struggle with a lot of psychological and social challenges whose intensity depends on the age of the children concerned (Makusha & Richter, 2015). The psycho-social dynamics that ensue emanate from lack of parental attachment and guidance. When parents leave, a major source of stress for young people is created. The children must adjust to their new life without parents (Dunn, 2012). Families with absent parents have been a convenient and ready target to blame for a variety of social and psychological maladjustments, especially delinquency. Children who have been left behind by one or both parents who have migrated are placed in a vulnerable position and are subject to increased violations of their rights. Reis (2013) argues that such children face risks of abuse, including sexual abuse and suffer from psychosocial problems and deterioration in academic performance.

Effects of parental absence are usually felt some time after the departure of the parent rather than on the actual day of departure. Blank (2007) argues that the effects of absent parenting on children are more directly related to the emotional atmosphere of the family before, during and after the departure than the event itself. Children usually feel the impact of parental absence after a relatively long period after the departure of the parent (Zirima, 2012). The impact of absent parenting also depends on the sex of the parent who would have migrated. Zirima and Nyanga (2012) reported that children were psycho-socially more affected by migration of the mother than the father, because in most cases the mother is more emotionally attached to children than the father.

The ramifications of absent parenting depend on the child's age and gender. Thomas, Kaminsky and Podell (2001) argue that school aged children are much more conscious of the situation. They are therefore more inclined to suffer from periods of depression, loneliness, anxiety, poor school performance and so on, but they will also occasionally show zeal to find the parent who is currently unavailable. These children may be tempted to commit antisocial acts as a way of compensating psychologically. For pre-school children, the primary fear is abandonment and loss of parental love. According to Hugo (2006), for these children, the family unit is all they have ever known and to hear that a parent or caregiver is no longer going to be there is very traumatic and almost unbelievable.

Children living in rural areas face unfavourable economic conditions. Rural communities face a number of challenges such as poverty, substance abuse, unemployment and lower levels of education. These challenges are particularly marked because they are also strongly linked to child maltreatment (Sedlak *et al.*, 2010). However, it is also known that in Zimbabwe, like most African societies, people especially in rural areas, have a communal way of living. The communal life style entails that parents in general may take of children who are not biologically their own through

remittances and social visits (Makusha, Richter & Bhana, 2012). Such kinds of support may cushion the child left behind in the rural areas. The picture that this portrays is that the rural child is not as isolated as the urban child when parents migrate.

The gender of the child left behind is another important variable. Some studies have shown that male children are more affected by migration of the father than the mother (Dowd, 2010; Thomassin & Suveg, 2014). This is based on the assumption that the father acts as a model for the boy. As a result, male children who have grown up without fathers have been seen to be more vulnerable to criminal behaviour (Dowd, 2010). However, a fairly substantial amount of literature also shows that the girl child is affected by the migration of both the father and the mother. In a study carried out in South Africa, Makofane (2015) found that girls who had absent fathers experienced a lot of emotional challenges which pursued into adulthood and sometimes affecting their relationships.

This study sought to unveil the psycho-social struggles endured by children left by migrating parents in rural areas. The research focused on school going children in Mwenezi district, Zimbabwe. Mwenezi district was chosen because it is one of the districts that are highly affected by migration of the adult population to the Diaspora, particularly to South Africa (ZIMSTAT, 2015). Most studies done on parental migration in Zimbabwe have focused on how urban children left behind have adjusted to their new circumstances (Njanjaya & Masango, 2012).

Studies done in rural areas have focused largely on the effects of poverty on child development (Chinyoka & Ganga, 2012). One closely related study has focused on children who look after themselves when their parents are engaged mostly at work, known as latchkey children (Ganga & Chinyoka, 2013) but this study focused on rural children left behind giving special attention to how effects of parental migration are related to the gender of the child left behind and the psycho-social implications of being left behind by migrating parents.

Children left behind tend to experience a multiplicity of challenges like abuse, stress and exploitation which militates against their psycho – social wellbeing. Despite the significance of this problem, not much research has been done on the likely implications of absent parenting on the behaviour of children.

This research therefore sought to address the following research questions:-

- i. What are the emotional effects of parental migration on rural children?
- ii. How does gender affect the adjustment of children to parental migration?
- iii. To what extent are children left behind by migrating parents susceptible to abuse?
- iv. Does parental migration affect the health and well-being of the children left behind?

Method

Research design

A case study was employed in this study. A case study seeks to describe what exists and to observe, describe and document aspects of a situation as it naturally occurs (Warren & Karner,

2008). The researcher opted to employ this design as it gave an appropriate framework to capture the lived experiences of children living without one or both parents. The case study was chosen because it allowed the researcher to get rich and detailed information about the psycho-social experiences of the children. Moreover, the case study enabled the researcher to explore the immeasurable aspects of human behaviour and the subjective dimension to experience which is necessary in this particular research.

Population, sample and sampling

The population of Mwenezi District is approximately 133 108 (ZIMSTAT, 2015). The district is administratively divided into East and West. This study was carried out in Mwenezi West ward 10. The target population in this ward were children aged between four (4) and eleven (11) years. Caregivers and teachers of these children also participated in the study.

A total of twelve children aged between four and eleven were purposively sampled from two primary schools. Three of the children were at the pre-school level, (ECD A & B) and the other nine were at the primary school level. Of the twelve children selected, three had fathers who had migrated to urban areas, four had both parents who had migrated to the Diaspora, two had fathers who had gone to the Diaspora as were the three who had mothers who had done the same. Seven of the child participants were girls and five were boys. Four caregivers and three teachers also participated in the study and these were selected using purposive sampling. Two (2) of the caregivers selected were taking care of children whose parents had migrated to urban areas and the other two (2) had parents who had migrated to the Diaspora.

Data gathering instrument

Unstructured interviews with caregivers, teachers and some of the children were conducted. The researcher purposively chose some respondents that he felt would provide rich and meaningful data. Interviews enabled the researcher to get in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of the children as well as to get the perceptions of the caregivers regarding the situation affecting the children.

Data collection procedures

Permission to assess children was sought from the District Education Officer and the Acting Principal Educational Psychologist. The researcher was assisted by school heads to identify children who had absent parents. Contact was made with some of the caregivers of the children through the assistance of the two school teachers who participated in this study. Permission to work with the teachers was sought from the school head.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analysis method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data, (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It minimally

organizes and describes data in rich detail. Some of the themes that emerged include gender and adjustment to the departure of parents, emotional issues confronting children and assumption of adult roles. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants.

Results and discussion

The results are presented under several themes which emerged from the study. Direct quotations are used in order to accurately capture the experiences of the respondents.

Emotional detachment as a result of parental migration

The departure of parents resulted in emotional detachment between the parents and their children especially in cases where the parents were not in constant communication with the children left behind. This was highlighted in interviews with the children. One of the child participants, Rudo (*not real name*) said, “...*daddy na mhamha pavakaenda ku South vakatisiya tichigara kumba kwa bamkuru,dzimwe nguva bamkuru na maiguru havatipi zvese zvatinoda uye isu tinonetsekana kuti tingova kumbira kumbira...*”. (...when dad and mum left for South Africa, they left us in the custody of our uncle...sometimes uncle and aunty do not give us all that we need and it is also difficult for us to ask every time...). Some of these children noted that they lack the emotional attachment to their parents because they rarely interact with them either through the telephone or face-to-face since they are outside the country. The sentiments raised by Rudo were also echoed by Joshua, another child participant. When asked how often his Botswana-based father talks to him over the phone, Joshua (*not real name*) said, “...*ah havambo foni avo, pavakambo fona vaid a kutovhunza sekuru kuti mombe dzichiri kuwana bundo here?*”, (...he does not phone, when he phoned some time back, he wanted to ask if there were still some pasture for cattle). This situation was exacerbated by the fact that the area where the study was conducted has poor connectivity. To this end, most of the children noted that they are deprived of that parental love which is vital for their upbringing. One of the children interviewed argued that he once saw his parents some five years ago because his parents have not returned. He, however, confirmed that they occasionally send remittances to him and his grandmother. Kudzai (*not real name*) who is in Grade Five (5) said, “...*ndakapedzisira kuona vabereki vangu ndichiri ku crèche,....asi vanogara vachitumira mari ne hembe*”, (...I last saw my parents whilst I was still at pre-school...but they always send us some money and clothes).

While the departure of parents for the Diaspora usually leads to improved economic status for the individual who has migrated, the psychological, social and emotional costs for the children left behind is usually too heavy to carry. This is in line with what Jampaklay (2001) concluded in his research in Thailand where he observed that separation due to migration is a painful process for children who long for missing parents. This was also confirmed by Sassen (2006) who noted that, “most of the people touched by globalisation (and the resulting migratory flows) are quite immobile” (p.199). Immobile people, refers to those who lack

the means and permission to travel including children. Hugo (2009) also noted that there has been an increase in the number of child-headed families in Africa, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa because of the relocation of parents to other countries in search of greener pastures.

Anxiety and loneliness confronting children with absent parents

Findings from in-depth interviews revealed that children with parents in the Diaspora experienced anxiety and loneliness. The children did not seem to indicate any anxiety during the interviews but when further probed, the interviewed children expressed feelings of anger, confusion and worry. One of the participants, Fiselani (not real name) expressed that, “*Zvinondi rwadza kuti mai vangu vakaenda Joni vakati siya na mbuya, ...dzimwe nguva ndinonetsekana kana kuchikoro tikanzi tiuye ne vabereki, ini mai vangu havauyi nekuti havapo*” (It pains me that my mother went to Johannesburg and left us with grandmother...I sometimes get confused if we are requested to bring parents to school, my mother will not come because she is not around). This sentiment was also expressed by Chiedza who said that, “*...dzimwe nguva ndinonzwa kusurikigwa nekuti vabereki vangu havapo...kana tasvika kumba vamwe vatino dzidza navo vano taura ne vabereki vavo asi ini vangu havapo....*” (...sometimes I feel lonely because my parents are not there...when we get home my classmates talk to their parents but mine are not there.) It therefore emerged that feelings of loneliness, anger and anxiety were deep-rooted among these children and especially where the parents were not communicating with their children they left behind. The findings concur with Parrena’s (2002) study in the Philippines where he observed that the increase in regular and frequent communication probably accounts for lower levels of anxiety and loneliness among children with both parents in the country.

It emerged from the study that when faced with pressing problems, children with parents outside the country experience a lot of stress which sometimes strains their health and performance at school. One respondent (a teacher) noted that it is quite stressful and a tall order to live without parents because some of the problems children face can only be addressed by their parents. Mr Chademana expressed that, “*...pane mamwe ma issues anotoda presence yema parents, zvinogona kunetsa vanhu vanenge vasiirwa mwana kuti vamupe zvese zvaanoda*” (there are some issues that require the presence of parents; it may be difficult for caregivers to address all the needs of the child). He further noted that such a scenario makes children vulnerable to a number of challenges such as sexual abuse and ill-treatment.

Impact of gender in adjusting to departure of parents

This study revealed that the psychological consequences of separation from a parent(s) seem to also vary by gender. Findings from interviews with the children revealed that girls who participated in this study had low self-esteem when compared to boys. This was also supported by findings from interviews with the caregivers. Mbuya Chuma, one of the

caregivers, said that, “...muzukuru wangu anongo zvi tarisira pasi, chero maitiro aanoita zvinhu zvake anoratidza kuti haana chokwadi ne zvaanoita...” (...my grandchild always looks down upon herself, even the way she does her things shows that she is not sure about what she is doing...). Findings from the interviews revealed that most of the girls were moody and had a negative view of themselves. One of the girls, Wadzanai (not real name) said, “...hapana vanhu vanondifarira, vanhu vese vanongondi vhairira...” (noone likes me, everyone ridicules me). One of the caregivers said, “...uyu muzukuru wangu nhambo zhinji anongoita ma mood andisinga hwisisi...” (...my grandchild is moody most of the time and I do not understand it...). Jones, Sharpe and Sogren (2004) reported that boys were more likely to have problems with interpersonal relationships while girls were more likely to experience negative mood and low self-esteem. The coping mechanisms among boys often include externalizing their pain and frustration while girls tend to internalize their suffering.

Susceptibility of children to abuse

Teachers who were interviewed by the researcher highlighted that they suspect that some children with absent parents could be abused. One of the teachers said, “...judging by their behavior, dressing and language, I suspect that girls who are living without their parents, especially their mothers could be sexually abused. I also know that most boys who have absent parents are usually physically abused mainly through child labour...” According to UNICEF (2009), 18 percent of children experience forced sex and the vulnerability of abuse significantly increases when a child loses the protection of a parent(s).

This study further revealed that the gender of the migrating parent has differing effects on the family and a child’s security, which could be captured by gender roles in Zimbabwean society. This is in line with Reis’s (2008) finding that when a mother migrates, abuse, whether it is physical, emotional, sexual or neglect is more likely to occur. However, findings from this study contrast with Asis’s (2003) findings in a study he carried out in the Philippines which showed fewer instances of abuse among migrants’ children.

Crosson’s (2008) study also revealed that most diaspora children suffer from child neglect and abuse where the purported responsible adults fail to provide adequately for various physical (hygiene) and emotional (failure to provide nurturing or affection) needs and sometimes fail to take the child to a doctor when sick. The children may experience physical abuse such as punching, kicking, pulling ears and choking. Children with a history of neglect or physical abuse are at risk of developing psychiatric problems. In a study carried out in Ethiopia by Takele (2010), it was found that 80% of abused and maltreated infants exhibited symptoms of disorganized attachment. Although the findings of this research did not clearly reveal that children left by their diaspora parents are prone to abuse, one cannot completely rule it out since these children have no full parental protection and have nowhere to turn for emotional and social support. Furthermore, in Zimbabwe it is taboo to talk about some forms of abuse especially those of a sexual nature. This could be one of the reasons why the idea was not explicitly brought out. However, a related study carried out in Chipinge, Zimbabwe, revealed

that latchkey children left behind are largely abused and actually vulnerable to HIV infection, (Chinyoka & Ganga, 2013).

Variation in effects of absent parenting on children

It emerged in this study that pre-school children are more affected by the departure of parents when compared to older children. Evidence from interviews revealed that older primary school children were coping better than their pre-school counterparts. This concurs with findings by Nordahl, Zambrana and Forgatch (2015) that the implications of father absence among one-year olds were more devastating than father absence among seven year olds. The assumption in this case could be that as children grow older, they may adopt resilience and better coping mechanisms to parental absence.

Assumption of adult roles

This study revealed that some children are left with the burden of looking after other children which then makes them child parents. This is because some of the children especially the eldest assume parental responsibilities like fending for the family and thereby becoming *de facto* parents. One of the teachers, Mrs Magazini, said that, "...most of the first born children who are not staying with their parents ultimately head their households. They become completely in charge of their siblings, ensuring that they are provided with all their needs". The study revealed that these new roles help the children to become more responsible as they carry the responsibility of managing the resources sent by their absent parents. The study also revealed that since children are forced to live under the care of themselves or grandparents or other relatives, they become exposed to multiple responsibilities in the household irrespective of their age. Children assume responsibilities including leadership in the family, which under normal circumstances, is provided by their parents. This situation does not only deprive children of their rights and privileges but also lead to an unstable and dysfunctional society in the near future. The findings are in line with those established by Takele (2010), who observed that most Diaspora children are left in the custody of older people who no longer have the energy to carry out daily family chores. Hence, they delegate these responsibilities to children. Grandparents and other relatives are keeping families together and serving as a safety net to keep children out of the formal foster care system. However, many face obstacles not encountered by biological parents like inability to provide psycho-social support and perform other family chores (Hugo, 2009). The new responsibilities that are assumed by the children may be detrimental to family cohesion, mental growth, moral and educational development of the child concerned.

Health and wellbeing

On the flip side, findings from in-depth interviews revealed that children of migrant parents had or perceived themselves to be having better physical health than those with local parents. This was also confirmed by the school teachers. One of the teachers said, "children with parents in South Africa and Botswana are well off, at least they have their school fees paid

in time and they put on proper school uniform”. This is in line with the findings of Asis (2003) in which he established in a study in the Philippines that the overall physical health of children of migrants is generally better than that of the children of non-migrants. A number of children interviewed noted that they are better resourced than those with local parents since they receive remittances in cash and kind from their parents in the diaspora. Ruvimbo (*not real name*) said, “...*isu baba vedu vanogara vachiti tumira mari, chikafu ne hembe...ma uniform edu anotengwa ku South Africa kuna baba...*”, (our father always sends us money, food and clothing...our uniforms come from South Africa where our father is based). They acknowledged that they can afford to live healthy lifestyles from their parents’ remittances. Some of the children noted that this has also improved their wellbeing at school and in their communities. On the contrary, some children, however, pointed out that the migration of their parents has led to a plunge in their lifestyles and health. This came mostly from children whose parents are not sending remittances. These children noted that they are rarely affording three meals a day and most of them are living from hand to mouth. The research noted that the effects of absent parenting are worse off in situations where migrant parents fail to send remittances as compared to those who send remittances to the remaining children.

Conclusions

This study revealed that children left by migrating parents face a multiplicity of psycho – social problems that cannot be addressed by those in their custody. In most cases, these children experience feelings of abandonment, despair, despondence, low self-esteem and emotional instability. Some of the children end up taking up parental responsibilities thereby becoming de facto heads of households. Child shifting which is common among children with absent parents leads to emotional detachment. Children in these situations are sad and at risk of depression. They may also have greater difficulties forming healthy relationships in future. The gender of the child left behind is a crucial factor in determining how the child adjusts to the departure of parents. Boys, in this study, appeared to externalize their pain and frustration while girls tend to internalize their suffering. Ultimately, girls suffer more in terms of low self-esteem and depression than boys. The absence of a mother has more serious repercussions than the absence of a father as children with absent mothers appeared to suffer more in terms of neglect than those with an absent father.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings gathered from this study, the following recommendations are therefore proffered.

- Parents should try as much as possible to take their children with them when they leave for the Diaspora or to urban areas as nothing can substitute the value of the family unit.
- Absent parents should always keep in touch with the children so as to check educational progress, offer moral support and show them affection.

- Schools should put in place psychosocial programs to cater for the needs of children with absent parents.
- Teachers in charge of guidance and counselling should increase their attention on children with absent parents as they could be having psycho-social challenges that may not be picked up by the regular teacher.
- Further research needs to be conducted on the implications of rural to urban migration on the pass rates of schools in the rural areas.

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