

## CHAPTER ONE: GLOBALISATION, MIGRATION AND THE EDUCATION ASPECT OF LEARNERS LEFT BEHIND BY PARENTS

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Today, many people have the potential to move and settle across many countries because of the compression of time and place wrought about by globalisation with the attendant consequence that is making travelling easier (Morawska, 2009; Chimanihire, 2005; Bommès & Morawska, 2005; Skeldon, 2008). As early as 2003, Faist (2003:3) made the following crisp observation, “if merged into a single country, this nation of immigrants would be the world’s tenth-largest nation-state.” According to Peru’s 2007 National Census, 1 635 207 Peruvians, more than 10% of the national population, were residing outside Peru (IOM, 2009; Skornia, 2008). In a 2000 population census, 1.1 million children in the Philippines have been left behind by their parents working abroad while in Moldova 17.1% of children live in families where at least one parent is abroad and around 7% of children live in households in which both parents are overseas (Skornia, 2008). In Ecuador, 36% of women migrants and 40% of migrant men have left children behind (IOM, 2009; Skornia, 2008). These movements exert inordinate challenges for children left behind.

Guendell *et al.* (2013) aver that parental migration may expose children left behind to a new material culture which may create new aspirations that are difficult to realise. In a study in the Philippines, Portner (2014) it was found that girls left behind experienced a very significant reduction in their time spent on school activities, that is time which could have afforded them enhanced educational opportunities, in response to the absence of the mother in the household. In that respect, it is not out of place to evaluate the effectiveness of caregiving strategies employed by the government,

schools, biological parents and guardians in the Mwenezi District where children are also left behind by parents who migrate to other countries.

For Zimbabwe, the Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAPs) of the early 1990s and the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme of early 2000 which led to the loss of formal employment, resulted in the massive emigration of people to other countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Great Britain, Germany, New Zealand, Australia and Canada, among others, to seek employment and for political safety (SIRDC, 2003; Fillipa, Cronje & Ferns, 2013; Dube, 2014, Zirima, 2016; Crush *et al.*, 2017; Tawodzera & Themane, 2017; Machinya, 2019; Munyoka, 2020). Consequently, transnational families have increased since then hence the need to critically probe into the capacity of strategies used by the government, schools, biological parents and guardians in fulfilling the educational needs of this emerging category of learners in the Mwenezi District where migration is high.

The major challenge in Zimbabwe is that, despite the increasing numbers of learners left behind by emigrants, the phenomenon of vulnerability among such learners is largely not understood and appreciated as evidenced by the exclusion of such learners in welfare programmes such as the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) on the basis that they are believed to be well up economically (Filippa, 2011; SIRDC, 2003; Filippa *et al.*, 2013; Makina, 2012). It follows therefore that, one may need to establish how various stakeholders in Mwenezi District partake in fulfilling the educational needs of the learners left behind who are perceived as not vulnerable by a majority in society.

As if to uphold the views of the larger part of the Zimbabwean population on the welfare of learners left behind by emigrating parents, some scholars whose trope of scholarship focuses on the emergence of transnational parenting in Zimbabwe, (Kufakurinani *et al.*, 2014; Fillipa 2011; Shaw, 2008; SIRDC, 2003), are silent on the effectiveness of roles taken by the government, schools, biological parents and guardians as they endeavour to fulfil the educational needs of the learners. However, some exceptional studies such as Runhare and Gordon's (2004) that focused on gender issues in education and SIRDC's (2003) were carried out using survey design. Though the surveys brought to light some challenges faced by some learners left behind such as lack of supervision by some guardians, they did not extract rich and in-depth data on the effectiveness of the emerging parenting arrangement concerning how it responds to the educational needs of rural primary school learners. In that respect, this study sought to employ a different methodological approach in the form of a qualitative case study seeking to gather rich and detailed natural data from the participants about their experiences regarding how learners left behind by emigrants learn in schools. It was also the objective of the study that the results obtained become the springboard for confirming the current parenting strategies or adopting new ones for this group of learners rather than only revealing the challenges as was the case in the previous studies.

As alluded to earlier on, transnationalism is affecting many people around the globe (IOM, 2009; World Bank, 2006). In a study of Peruvian migrants in Italy, Blangjardo (2009) it was noted that 55% were women and studies by Tamagno (2003) and Caselli (2008) reveal that studies on transnational families were mainly on changing roles of family members left behind. Peleah (2007) in the re-organisation of roles and responsibilities due to the absence of family members in

Moldovan families revealed that women had been emancipated by migration so much that they could now initiate divorce. These studies in as much as they provide the nature of transformed family roles due to migration did little to give us details of the educational experiences of learners left behind. This is the area where the present study sought to investigate and establish the educational experiences and outcomes of the learners left behind in the Mwenenzi District of Zimbabwe because of the high prevalence of emigration from the district into South Africa.

Runhare and Gordon (2004:11) noted in the Western regions of Zimbabwe, especially around Tsholotsho that;

Some children had been deserted by parents who crossed the borders to work in South Africa and Botswana.

The '*injiva*' or young people of school-going age were found to leave school for manual jobs in neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Namibia and Botswana. Migrant labour left children in the care of grandparents or relatives who did not adequately discipline the children.

- Teachers revealed that lack of discipline led to lose morals especially among high school girls, high absenteeism and lack of commitment to schoolwork because of inadequate supervision.
- Children left behind lack adequate adult guidance and care.
- Girls are abused, beaten and denied access to money sent to relatives for them by their parents and had difficulties paying school levies and fees.
- Girls were overburdened with responsibilities and could not pay attention to their schoolwork.
- *Injiva's* children despise teachers on the teachers' account of the low salaries, social cost of migrant labour and parenting from afar.

Considering these effects of parental migration on children’s moral, social and intellectual development, this study then sought to further explore in detail the role played by various stakeholders in the Mwenezi District in ensuring the educational needs of these learners are fulfilled.

Mwenezi District is a rural space and one of the seven districts of Masvingo, a province in the Southern part of Zimbabwe. The district had 166 993 inhabitants comprising 77 372 males and 89 621 females in the latest national population census of 2012 distributed as follows:

**Table 1.1:** Population distribution of Mwenezi District by age group 2012 (*Zimbabwe Statistical Agency, 2012*)

Age Group	Population
0-14	83 492
15-64	76 464
65+	6 313

Most learners left behind that apply to the present study are in the 0-14 demographic age group, being the age group in which most primary school pupils are, while the guardians are in all age groups since some homes are child-headed (Ganga& Maphalala, 2014). The district is about 100km by road from the district business hub of Rutenga to Beitbridge Border Post which links Zimbabwe to South Africa hence can essentially be said to be close to South Africa. There is a railway line that passes through the district to Botswana to the west and Mozambique to the east. These transport networks make it easier for residents of Mwenezi District to migrate out of the country to neighbouring countries, hence the background to high numbers of emigrants from the district which motivated the present study meant

to establish educational experiences of learners left behind by migrants.

The staple livelihood economic activity among the residents of the district is subsistence farming which unfortunately is not a lucrative venture since the district is in Agricultural Natural Region 5 that is characterised by poor rainfall patterns and high temperatures (Hlungwane, 2018).

Largely, therefore, the district can be economically rated as poverty-stricken (Tembo, 2017). However, livestock farming thrives in the district and some people benefit from it by selling their cattle and goats to both local butcheries and butcheries from towns such as Masvingo, Zvishavane and Beitbridge. Some residents also earn a living through fishing in Manyuchi Dam which is in the central part of the district. In addition, there are others whose livelihoods depend on selling Mopani worms (*amacimbi* in Isindebele or *madora* in Shona) that are harvested in the area during summer or the end of autumn. According to Hlungwane (2018), although the identified economic activities cushion some Mwenezi residents, they are not enough to sustain the population of the district hence high migration rate among the economically active residents into such countries as South Africa and Botswana where economic fortunes are better. However, in the process of migration, school-going age children are left under the care of relatives and old parents because most of the emigrants cross the borders through illegal points and at times are apprehended by law enforcement agents hence find it riskier to migrate with children (Zirima, 2016). The purpose of this book was to evaluate this type of parenting arrangement to establish its strengths and weaknesses concerning the system's response to the educational needs of the learners left behind.

Mwenezi District houses four distinct ethnic tribes which live together peacefully. The table below shows the various ethnic tribes and places where they prominently live.

**Table 1.2:** Traditional leadership jurisdiction areas and tribes in Mwenezi District (*Table made by the author, Information, Hlungwani, 2018*)

Traditional leadership/Chiefs	Tribes
Chitanga	Shangani, Shona
Maranda	Venda, Shona, Shangani, Ndebele
Mawarire	Shona, Shangani
Mazetese	Ndebele
Murove	Shangani, Shona
Negari	Shangani, Shona
Neshuro	Shangani, Shona

In response to the diversity of people who live in the Mwenezi District, some schools in the district offer the following indigenous languages: Shangani, Shona and Ndebele languages, in addition to English that is the primary means of teaching and learning. These languages that are spoken and learnt in Mwenezi District schools namely Isindebele, Shangani and Venda are also spoken in some parts of South Africa hence those people who migrate into South Africa find it easier to integrate into that country's communities due to cultural convergence necessitated by common languages shared (Banks, 2006; Ndamba & Madzanire, 2010) and this could be one reason why some emigrants rarely return since they find comfort once they enter South Africa. Informed by this analysis, the researcher drew a study sample from Chief Maranda's area of jurisdiction where three languages that are spoken in South Africa are also spoken, a scenario that could explain the largest number of migrants into South Africa from the area

compared to the other areas in the district. To note, however, is that mention of possible differences in the population of emigrants from the various traditional jurisdiction areas is the researcher's observation being a resident of Mwenezi since birth. It is assumed that more authentic results could be obtained if the study is done in an area where there are many learners affected by parental migration hence the choice for schools in the Maranda area.

The role of the Zimbabwean Government, schools, biological parents and guardians in fulfilling the educational needs of learners with parents in the diaspora is not clear amidst the high rate of academic failure, absenteeism, indiscipline and erratic levies payment among the learners (Filippa *et al.*, 2013). Although some inclusive programmes and policies such as the Basic Education Assistance Module and the Zimbabwe National Strategic Policy on the education of girls, orphans and other vulnerable children (Ganga & Maphalala, 2014) are in place, some implementers exclude the learners based on some beliefs that those in the diaspora are affluent since some of them live lavishly hence ought to meet their children's educational needs (McGregor, 2010). There is however a paucity of studies testing such beliefs. Most studies on vulnerable learners focus more on those whose parents have succumbed to HIV&AIDS (TARSC, 2012). There is, therefore, limited literature on the schooling life experiences of learners whose parents are in the diaspora and this study therefore, seeks to contribute in filling the lacunae in the available body of knowledge. While studies that acknowledge the emergence of such learners are recorded, (Runhare & Gordon, 2004; Zirima, 2016), further studies should be carried out to establish the extent to which various stakeholders respond to the educational needs of the learners. Such studies may become springboards for capacity building on parenting styles that respond to the needs of the learners. It was against this background that this study sought to explore how the educational needs of learners left by parents in the diaspora and who live under the care of non-

biological parents are catered for in the Mwenezi District of Masvingo that has a large outfall of Zimbabweans into South Africa.

Generally, the production of this book has been a result of some residents of Mwenezi District who participated in a study that sought responses to the following understated questions:

1. How are the educational needs of learners with parents in the diaspora catered for in Mwenezi District?
2. How do learners with parents in the diaspora experience schooling in Mwenezi District?
3. What are the educational challenges faced by learners whose parents live in the diaspora in Mwenezi District?
4. How do parents in the diaspora cater for the educational needs of their children back home in the Mwenezi District?
5. How are learners whose parents live in the diaspora assisted in the home to meet educational needs in Mwenezi District?
6. How are educational welfare policies and programmes implemented in Mwenezi District?

This study sought to evaluate the contributions of biological parents, guardians, schools, government and other stakeholders in fulfilling the educational needs of learners whose parents have migrated out of Mwenezi District leaving children under the care of others, and thus the following objectives are addressed:

- To establish learning experiences of primary school learners whose parents have migrated out of Mwenezi District.
- To identify educational challenges faced by primary school learners in Mwenezi District whose biological parents live in other countries.
- To establish how parents in the diaspora cater for the educational needs of their children whilst they are away from their home country.

- To establish how the learners left behind by parents in the diaspora get assistance at home to meet their educational needs.
- To describe how educational welfare policies and programmes are implemented in Mwenezi District.

The Zimbabwean Government has promulgated various education laws since independence in 1980 to promote equal educational opportunities to all citizens regardless of their race, gender, and socio-economic status (McGregor, 2010; Kawewe & Dibie, 2000; Kanyanda, 2014). To further enhance full access to basic education among its citizens, various policies and programmes were also introduced to cater for the disadvantaged such as the orphans and vulnerable children. According to the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) (2013:4-5), some policies and programmes introduced for the poor include:

- The National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC) in which education constitutes the largest component in resource allocation.
- Zimbabwe National Orphan Care Policy (ZNOCP, 1999) to establish procedures and framework for catering for the disadvantaged children exposed to orphan-hood by HIV&AIDS.
- The National Strategic Plan for the Education of Girls and other Vulnerable Children (2006) addresses gender disparity in education and other gender-based violence in schools.

The draft Education Policy framework on which existing policies are grounded, were reviewed, some of which are outlined below:

- The Early Childhood Development Policy (2005) incorporated the introduction of early childhood enrolment in schools extending primary school from seven years to nine years and training teachers in colleges to teach those minors.
- The Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) (2001) to cater for school fees requirements of orphans, the poor and other vulnerable children.

- The Schools Expansion Programme-to build new schools and develop satellite schools in newly resettled areas.
- The Rural Computers Programme -massive electrification of rural schools to ensure that computer literacy will be realised in rural communities.
- The Education Amendment Act 2006-to regulate the school fees system.
- The Education Transition Fund 1 and 2- for the provision of textbooks and syllabi in all schools in the country.

Despite all these government efforts to ensure an all-inclusive education provision, learners whose parents live in the diaspora continue to remain side-lined and marginalised by implementers of welfare programmes such as BEAM (TARSC, 2012). Ganga and Maphalala (2014) posit that the Zimbabwean government incorporated children left behind by emigrants in the Zimbabwe National Strategic Plan for the education of girls, orphans and other vulnerable children (2005-2010). Despite such positive endeavours by the government, this plan has however remained in policy documents without practical implementation (TARSC, 2012). It is therefore unknown how much the children cope with schooling amid psycho-social, moral and socio-economic support systems availed by the children's biological parents and guardians. This study was designed to reveal challenges faced by emigrants' children at rural schools in the Mwenezi District and probably form the basis of rare practical interventions on such learners' welfare in Zimbabwe.

The study comes in the wake of noted challenges that normally affect children who stay away from their parents. "Children left by emigrating parents experience powerlessness and abandonment which may result in the prevalence of deviant or anti-social behaviour including at worst school dropout, rebellion against adult authority among other such high-risk behaviours such as drug and alcohol

abuse, precocious sexual relationships and teen motherhood'' (Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012:347). While studies reveal that anti-social behaviours lead to academic failure, not much has been done in Zimbabwe at the policy-making level to try to help children whose biological parents are absent so that they may stop engaging in anti-social behaviours (Filippa, 2011; McGregor, 2010).

One major impediment as far as assisting learners whose parents are in the diaspora is concerned is that they are not identified as vulnerable because of the notion of the larger Zimbabwean society that those in the diaspora are well remunerated (SIRDC, 2003; SAMP, 2003; International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), 2017). Furthermore, there is largely a belief among some Zimbabweans that since most emigrants run away from the poor socio-economic and political environment in the country they should be enjoying in the countries of destination and hence ought to be able to support their families back home (Shaw, 2008). This study, therefore, intended to validate or invalidate such claims upon gathering evidence from the concerned learners and from their teachers to establish the learners' fees payments trends.

For Zimbabwe, emigration into other countries is a daily phenomenon and the numbers are so large that host countries such as Britain and South Africa had to craft legislation that restricts the further entry of some immigrants' children (McGregor, 2010). The exceptions are children of highly qualified professionals whose parents get into the diaspora through special arrangements such as in the United States of America where special visas (HB-1 visas) and high salaries are used to attract technical experts like engineers (SIRDC, 2003).

According to the Dakar Framework for Action, today's excluded children become tomorrow's marginalised youth (UNESCO, 2000) and reaching the marginalised children is more difficult and more

expensive as most of them suffer from multiple disparities and are not targeted by public policies and development problems because they are not identified in the population data. Essentially this study sought results that could clearly show how learners with parents in the diaspora receive assistance for their education from various stakeholders inclusive of their parents, teachers and caregivers among others. It is envisaged that such results would help in the formulation of appropriate parenting styles, especially in the Mwenezi District where there are many learners with parents who reside outside the country.

There are extensive studies on children left behind by emigrating parents in Asian countries, especially on the causes and effects of migration to family re-organisation and changing roles and some illustrations include (Chen, 2006) in China, Kofman and Raghuram (2012) in Palestine and on effects of parental separation due to migration in the Caribbean countries (Smith *et al.*, 2004). Young-ee Cho (2007) examined the causes of the out-flax of South Korean children to receive education in the diaspora. Studies in America emphasised the impact of remittances on the upkeep of families left behind with particular interest in child health and emotional development (Cortes, 2007) in the Philippines; Kyle (2000) in Ecuador; Smith (2006) in Mexico. While all these studies provide pertinent information regarding children left behind, they fall short of revealing how these children's educational needs are catered for by the various stakeholders such as the government, schools, biological parents and guardians hence this study.

In Africa, major migration studies were surveys by such organisations as International Organisation for Migration (2009) largely to ascertain the magnitude of brain drain from the continent to America, Europe and Asia. A related study was also carried out in Zimbabwe by SIRDC

in 2003. The Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) 2002 carried out a survey mainly to establish the prevalence of migration in Zimbabwe and the purpose of migrants visiting South Africa. Zanamwe and Devillard (2009) surveyed to establish statistics of Zimbabweans who migrate without proper documentation. Despite revelations on the increase of transnationalism, little has been investigated on the quality of emerging parenting styles for children left behind by those emigrating. The studies done earlier were mainly surveys and lacked the depth to give more information on issues such as the extent to which learners with absent parents' educational needs are catered for hence the valve the present study sought to close.

Whilst predecessor and foregrounding researchers on the emergence of learners with parents in the diaspora in Zimbabwe especially Fillipa (2011) and Kufakurinani *et al.* (2014) have provided information on the phenomenon, there is a realisation that they drew samples from urban areas only, hence the existence of a research gap that could be filled by the present study which aims to establish experiences of children left in the rural areas. They also carried out surveys and were inclined to psychology where their thrust was on the general lifestyles of children left behind. This study is unique in that it is a case study whose thrust is to establish ways in which learners left by emigrating parents' educational needs are catered for. The study which also sought to evaluate existing programmes available to orphans and other vulnerable children such as BEAM largely helped come up with recommendations that could be adopted by the government and society for the care and educational provision of learners made vulnerable by their parental emigration.

According to Creswell (2014), the literature review is a search for studies related to one's topic and is done to provide a framework for establishing the significance of the study and the springboard for

comparing the results with findings of other studies. One may therefore view literature review as an activity involving reading about what others have written about one's chosen area of interest to establish processes others have taken to address related problems. In that respect, therefore, the literature review should lead one into seeing gaps regarding the topic that needs attention. It makes researchers aware of what is obtained in their chosen area of study hence a large part of it should be from dissertations (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, to address the current problem of the educational welfare of learners with parents in the diaspora, literature was sought from studies done before by other researchers regarding the effects of migration on families left behind. Studies that reveal the role of parents, both fathers and mothers were extensively studied to have an overview of possible challenges that normally arise where parental care is missing. To draw a wide range of literature, studies done in various parts of the world were studied where migration is rampant to establish how children left behind are catered for elsewhere. In line with the scope of the present study which sought to evaluate the role of various stakeholders in the provision of educational needs to learners whose vulnerability has been necessitated by parental migration, terms that largely explain or have an influence on migration such as globalisation, transnationalism, multi-culturalism, brain drain (SIRDC, 2003; Chimanikire, 2005) among others are also extensively discussed under literature review.

Studies conducted before indicate that learners left behind by migrants experience schooling differently in response to roles that change when the parents leave (Portner, 2014; Guendell *et al.*, 2013, Brown & Grinter, 2014; Graham & Jordan, 2011). In many cases, parental migration harms the children left behind (Antman, 2012; ACPF, 2012). Moreno (2013) in a study on Mexican transnational families and their experiences, argues that children experience more emotional

challenges when their mother migrates than when their father migrates. This brief overview of studies undertaken before illustrates some effects of roles that parents have on the development of their children.

Grant and Osanloo (2014:13) are of the view that a theoretical framework is “the blueprint for the entire dissertation inquiry. It serves as the guide on which to build and support your study and provides the structure to define how you will philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically and analytically approach the dissertation as a whole.” It is a guide outlining the aggregate scope of a particular research study illuminating the source or background of the topic, how the topic will be studied and the type of data that will be produced and how the data will be analysed and presented to readers. Grant and Osanloo (2014) further observe that selection of a theoretical framework requires a deep and thoughtful understanding of one’s problem, purpose, significance and research questions. For a study that sought to gather in-depth qualitative data from participants about their views on the experiences of learners with emigrant parents, it was envisaged that a theory that outlines and explains family patterns, functions and relationships among members could be informative. Consideration was made that the chosen theory should be able to provide adequate assumptions from which responses to the research questions could be derived. Furthermore, in the present study where natural views of the participants were sought and cross-checked between study sites and between respondents at the same study sites to generate qualitative data, the theory sought had to allow the use of data collection techniques such as interviews and document analysis since all these techniques yield qualitative data (Gray, 2014; Creswell, 2014). With this in mind, it was opined that a comprehensive analysis of the topic of educational needs of learners with absent parents could

be better tackled by borrowing ideas from family systems theory which is premised on how families are structured and function (Boss, 2002; Johnson, 2010; Filippa, 2011; Moreno, 2013).

Family systems theoretical lens is premised on the idea that a family is a system with parts that should all work together undisturbed to maintain the system (Johnson, 2010). In the present study, the family members, that is, parents and children are the parts of the system that should work harmoniously to ensure that the system is intact. This theory was found relevant in this study that sought to evaluate the role of family members especially parents in the provision of educational welfare to the learners left behind by parents who have migrated.

Leedy and Ormrod (2013) refer to research methodology as the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project. In a related conceptualisation of the term, Antwi and Hanza (2015:220) say “methodology refers to how the researcher goes about practically finding out whatever he or she believes can be known.” The methodology is thus a grand plan mapped out from the problem under study incorporating beliefs, strategies, techniques and tools a researcher will use to investigate a problem. One, therefore, needs an in-depth understanding of the topic and problem before deciding which approach to use. Research methodology involves research paradigm, research design, population and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and data analysis (Creswell, 2014; Antwi & Hanza, 2015). An overview of the methodology for this study which aimed to evaluate roles played by various stakeholders in the provision of educational needs to learners whose parents have left Zimbabwe for other countries in the Mwenezi District is diagrammatically represented as follows:



**Figure 1.1:** Overview of Methodology

Research questions and objectives generally guide one's choice of a paradigm (Creswell, 2014). Since the present study intended to evaluate the effectiveness of roles of different groups in the provision of educational needs of learners whose parents are in the diaspora, the interpretive methodological paradigm was adopted as the main vehicle for gathering and interpreting data. Ontologically, the interpretive paradigm asserts that knowledge is socially constructed (Irene, 2014) and in this study data on the experiences of learners whose parents are in the diaspora could largely be sought from people immersed in the vivid experiences of the children through interacting with the children and through social, economic and educational support thus guardians, teachers and the learners themselves. Also, the

qualitative approach was chosen since it helped in the selection of participants who were both information-rich and willing to participate in the study, a sample obtained through employing the purposive sampling technique (Thanh & Thahn, 2015; Creswell, 2014). The researcher resorted to this technique since it was not certain that all those who had their relatives working outside of the country were ready to supply information about factors that influence treatment given to children left behind by migrating parents concerning the learners' educational requirements. Starman (2013) and Baskarada (2014) recommend the qualitative research approach in that it makes use of the non-random selection technique of its participants and is based on whether the individuals have information vital to the question being asked. The qualitative approach was therefore suitable for this study which is informed by the interpretive paradigm that emphasises the collection of natural data from the subjective human being (Creswell, 2013; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013).

Since the study sought both description and explanation of parenting efforts put in the provision of educational needs and experiences of learners who live with non-biological parents, a bounded multi-site descriptive collective/multiple case study design was effectively used. A descriptive collective design was suitable because the study involved the exploration of data from many cases that were supposed to give their experiences in detail and real-life context (Starman, 2013; Irene, 2014; Baskarada, 2014).

Mae (2008) observes that any research is dependent on a clear definition of the population since it is to this group that results will be generalised. Asiamah *et al.* (2017) define a population as a group of individuals having one or more characteristics of interest. One can view the population as members who have information that can address a researcher's research questions. Since it is from the population where research credibility is determined, the choice of the

study population should be carefully done (Baskarada, 2014; Asiamah *et al.*, 2017). In that respect, Irene (2013) advises that an accessible population defined as a population which can participate in the study willingly and which will be available during the study period should be selected. Since a qualitative design in form of a case study grounded in the interpretivist paradigm in which in-depth subjective experiences and individual meanings are highly regarded (Starman, 2013; Yin, 2014; Creswell, 2014), a population comprising of people involved in the life of learners whose biological parents are living outside Zimbabwe was chosen so that first-hand data could be gathered. The members of the population from Mwenezi District were: primary school heads, primary school teachers, guardians of learners whose parents are living outside Zimbabwe and learners whose biological parent(s) /are living outside Zimbabwe.

It was anticipated that guardians and teachers who teach learners who were left behind by their parents could describe in detail the circumstances that these learners were in since they mingled with them on daily basis providing moral, and socio-economic support that is essential for children's upkeep and socialisation in general. Teachers are mandated as part of their duties to interview learners in their classes about challenges they face both at home and school so that they could improve their pedagogy and hence are better placed to supply information about the learners they teach. The same applies to guardians who stay with these learners and are equally responsible for the provision of learning materials, uniforms, encouragement towards educational goals, counselling, shelter, and food among other support systems that are essential for child upkeep and socialisation in general (IFFD, 2017). Furthermore, the learners left behind were better placed to narrate their experiences and how they coped with schooling under the care of non-biological parents.

Fillipa (2011) refers to sampling as a step in the research process which entails making decisions regarding which people, settings, events, processes, and behaviours are to be observed. While Fillipa (2011) is silent on where these people or events come from, Anney (2014) elucidates and observes that sampling is a process whereby a small proportion or sub-group of a population is selected and analysed. Anney (2014)'s analysis indicates that population and sample share similar characteristics and are only distinguished by numbers. Informed by such conceptualisation, the researcher then selected two primary schools from which teachers and heads who teach learners whose parents have emigrated from the Mwenezi District were also selected. In addition to that, the researcher also selected guardians and learners whose parents reside in other countries.

One other important aspect of research is how one collects data. Data collection procedures are practical steps that a researcher takes in the field collecting data from participants using the research instruments (Creswell, 2013; Gray, 2014; Yin, 2014). These authors further advise that the way one collects data should correspond to one's chosen research design, research instruments, research questions, nature of respondents, and type of data one intends to generate. It follows, therefore, that one needs to use research instruments effectively so that all data availed by the participants will not be lost.

The study adopted was a collective case study with a strong inclination to the collection of descriptive and explanatory data from participants in their real-life contexts. Effectively to collect data, four research instruments namely face-to-face key participant interview protocols, focus group interviews schedules, document analysis guide and researcher's reflective journal were employed, and this was done so that detailed data could be gathered from various sources to improve research worthiness (Yin, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

Filippa (2011:54) critically argues that “interpretive analysis can be looked upon as being a back and –forth motion between different dimensions and points of view, such as between different descriptions and interpretation, part and whole or foreground and background.” Data analysis is thus an exercise in which data gathered from various sources in a single study are extensively scrutinised, corroborated and explained so clearly that they become meaningful and acceptable to readers and seen as a true reflection of the perspectives of the participants about the phenomenon of a specific study. To analyse data in the present study, qualitative data analysis approaches were adopted since the design is a qualitative case study that sought to generate textual, descriptive, narratives, actual quotations and memos as data types (Creswell, 2014; Creswell, 2013; Filippa, 2011).

Thanh and Thanh (2015) identify corresponding constructs to quantitative investigators that can be applied in qualitative research as follows: credibility corresponding to internal validity, transferability corresponding to external validity/generalisability, dependability corresponding to reliability and confirmability corresponding to objectivity. This study is a qualitative case study rooted in an interpretive paradigm where reality is discovered through participants’ views and experiences of the phenomenon under study.

Resnik (2011) conceives of ethics as norms for conduct that distinguish acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Ethical research avoids violating the rights of the people being studied or harming them in any fashion. The major aspects cited by researchers as crucial to the keeping of the rightful ethical code relate to privacy, confidentiality, assent and informed consent (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2013).

For this study, the researcher sought consent from the permanent secretary Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Masvingo Provincial Education Director, and District Schools Inspector Mwenezi

District for school heads, learners and teachers. Assent was also sought from guardians for the learners to participate. None of the participants was asked to identify themselves by name. A commitment to the keeping of privacy and confidentiality was done. The respondents were also told to withdraw from participating at any time whenever they thought or felt that their participation could negatively affect them. All these strategies were done to ensure that the participants who supplied information could do it freely and honestly thereby improving research trustworthiness as well.

Theofanidis and Fountouki (2019) conceptualise research limitations as those characteristics of design or methodology that set parameters for the application or interpretation of the results of the study. Limitations can thus be referred to as potential restrictions that impose themselves on both the researcher and the study at hand. The major concern with limitations is that they may compromise the worthiness of the study if not handled carefully since in most circumstances the researcher may not have the capacity to control them.

One major limitation of the present study had to do with the preferred qualitative methodology. The fact that the researcher chose who to interview made purposive sampling problematic as bias in participant selection could have been carried forward even to the data presented (Gray, 2014; Creswell, 2013). Researcher bias, therefore, needed to be guarded against and one way to prevent outright bias was to prolong the time of data collection so that results could be discussed and analysed extensively before publishing.

The case study design was adapted and data were collected from only two primary schools in the Mwenezi District and the views of such a small sample cannot represent (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Gray, 2014) all learners left behind by parents in Zimbabwe. The respondents who provided data were the learners left behind, teachers, school heads and

guardians only. Documents namely class registers, exercise books, individual progress and welfare registers were analysed too to establish the learners' school attendance rates, performance and inclusion in welfare programmes respectively. The emigrants were not conducted to give their input so that it could be corroborated with evidence given by the learners and the caregivers.

However, despite all these challenges, this study contributed a lot to building literature on the educational welfare of learners of emigrants. The strength of the study is in the depth of analysis employed since a small sample afforded the researcher enough time to interview participants which enhanced the gathering of detailed data (Gray, 2014; Yin, 2013). Information was also collected from two schools (site triangulation) (Baskarada, 2014) and this also helped in getting enriched data since it became possible to compare from different sites.

One aspect of research that must be spelt out is delimitation. Delimitation is the limits or boundaries that the researcher sets to control the range of the study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). Delimitation involves the author telling us about the preferred theoretical framework, the area where the study is carried out, the objectives of the study, concepts and themes that the study covers and the characteristics of the population from which informants are drawn (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). According to Creswell (2014), delimiting studies helps the study to remain focused and ensure that the aims and objectives of the study are attainable.

According to Makoni (2007), the physical boundary is the geographical area under which a study will be conducted. This study involved two primary schools in the Mwenezi District of Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe. The location of the Mwenezi District is shown on the map below.



**Figure 1.2:** Positioning of the study site

Cohen *et al.* (2011) refer to the conceptual boundary as that which is to be investigated including the themes that will help define the subject matter under investigation. This study sought to evaluate strategies used to support the educational needs of learners whose parents live in the diaspora. The major guiding ideas were presented in question form such as; are the learners getting any psycho-social, moral and socio-economic support for educational purposes? Is the support enough and helpful to the orphans' schooling needs? Are the learners getting too much support such that they fail to manage it to the extent that the support ends up negatively affecting their schooling goals? How do

the caregivers link if ever there are links with the learners' biological parents towards educational support commitments? What are the educational programmes designed specifically for such learners and how are they implemented? All these questions among others formed the major area under which this study was explored.

Since the problem under investigation in the present study was a product of parental migration, it was important too to discuss concepts that are generally associated with migration (Karen, 2012). In that respect, globalisation, migration, brain drain, transnationalism, and remittances (Chimanikire, 2005; SIRDC, 2003) were extensively explored to establish how they influence each other and subsequently, the way learners left behind's educational needs could be addressed. Educational challenges of learners left behind and parenting styles and their impact on schooling were identified and discussed with the view to finding possible solutions to redress them. In addition to the discussion of the identified concepts, Family Systems theory was also used to analyse parenting styles and other concepts were borrowed too from ambiguous loss theory and attachment theory (Johnson, 2010; Boss, 2009).

While the purpose of any scientific inquiry is to gather evidence from the subjects (sample members), the researcher also plays a significant role regarding the nature of questions likely to be asked and how they are asked because of prior views held about the topic under study (Creswell,2014). Accordingly, this study was influenced by the following assumptions:

- Learners with parents in the diaspora are largely exposed to harsh learning experiences.
- Learners with parents in the diaspora encounter a plethora of challenges that compromise the quality of education received by the learners.

- Very few biological parents contribute meaningfully to the educational needs of their children due to constraints related to the distance that separates the parents from their children.

Very few guardians have the academic capacity and moral motivation to appropriately assist learners left behind meet educational needs. Educational welfare programmes and policies are not wholly accorded to deserving beneficiaries in Mwenezi District.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined in relation to their meaning to the present study.

#### **Educational needs**

Educational needs are all the physical and non-physical materials that support a learner's access to education, attending school, learning without disturbances, performance academically and completing schooling (Mwoma & Pillay, 2016). In the present study, by educational needs reference is made to the following among others: school levies, school uniforms, moral support including encouragement and listening to children's concerns, guidance and discipline, motivations, supervision and monitoring of school attendance, the accomplishment of homework, academic progress, parent-school engagement, consulting with teachers, attending to the health of the learners, cleanliness, material support-for example stationery, lighting, food, textbooks and provision of study time.

#### **Learners**

A learner is someone who is receiving tutorials to gain knowledge, acquire or improve skills and orienting him or her towards the development of some changes in attitudes. For this study, children who attend or who are supposed to be attending primary school in Mwenezi District are the learners.

#### **Diaspora**

Marlon (2012) refers to the diaspora as displacement, dispersion, exile, exodus, or movement of a given people. In a more elaborate characterisation of the term, Garivaldis (2010:11) defines diaspora as "a group of individuals that conceives of separateness based on a set of characteristics and a common ethnicity or nationality, and who live in a host country while maintaining ties with the home country." Thus in this study, diaspora meant residents of Mwenezi District by birth, descent, registration or otherwise who have voluntarily or involuntarily left the district and are legally or illegally living in other countries either in the region or elsewhere.

The study is presented in seven chapters.

### **Chapter One**

The first chapter orients the reader to the whole framework and conceptual grids underpinning the study. It thus provides a brief background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, study objectives, significance and justification for the study. A brief illustration of the literature studied is given too together with the research design and methodology. In addition, limitations and delimitations, assumptions of the study and definition of key terms are also given.

### **Chapter Two**

The second chapter outlines the theoretical framework which underpins the study. The family systems theory which expounds on how families function informed this study.

### **Chapter Three**

This chapter reviews the literature related to the study in detail. The role of parents, child friendly policies and strategies adopted in various countries to ease the challenges that emanate from parental migration is extensively discussed with the view to see their applicability to the current problem. An analysis of concepts that relate to migration which subsequently leads to challenges faced by children left behind such as transnationalism, brain drain, and globalisation is done in this chapter too.

### **Chapter Four**

Chapter four provides a detailed description of the research methodology. Research paradigm and design, population, sampling techniques, data collection methods and analysis procedures and their justification are provided. Also included in this chapter are quality assurance measures.

### **Chapter Five**

This is where results obtained in the study and their analysis are presented.

## **Chapter Six**

Chapter six discusses findings from the study.

## **Chapter Seven**

This is the final chapter with conclusions drawn from the study and suggested recommendations.

This chapter introduced us to the study. It identified the research problem and questions and discussed the rationale for undertaking the study. A brief review of related literature and concepts that relate to issues surrounding the educational needs of learners with parents in the diaspora are presented. The chapter also outlined the research methodology adopted in the study inclusive of the paradigm, research approach, design, population characteristics and sampling procedures. Also highlighted are research delimitations, limitations, and ethics and quality assurance measures. Finally, the chapter outlines the structure of the whole study and introduces us to the next chapter on the theory that underpins the study.