

MAPPING THE FUTURE

of Educational Welfare of Learners in Zimbabwe with Parents in the Diaspora



SHEPHERD GUMBO

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DEDICATION

This monograph is dedicated to my late grandmother Tarupiwa Cecellia Mapukute who passed on during the course of the writing of the book, for keeping an eye on me from my birth until her death. May her soul rest in eternal peace. This research output is also dedicated to all family members particularly my mother Otilia, my wife Angelah and our children: Rukudzo, Runako and Rujeko- for their sacrifice, patience and trust in me, for which I shall eternally be grateful.

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BOOK SYNOPSIS

This study, captured in the form of a monograph that embeds in the family systems theoretical and conceptual framework was conducted in the Mwenezi District of Zimbabwe with the primary view to critically evaluating educational needs provisions for primary school learners with parents in the diaspora. An interpretive research methodological paradigm that incorporated an embellishment of qualitative research approach and case study design was adopted to gather data through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis techniques. The study had a sample of 27 participants namely 2 primary school heads, 13 teachers, 6 learners and 6 guardians who were drawn equitably from the two schools studied. Data were analysed using the thematic content technique. One of the findings brought to the fore in this study is that most learners left behind were not considered as vulnerable by the communities and hence were excluded from any educational assistance provided by the government. Additionally, schools had no programmes in place to cater for the welfare of learners left behind by parents who had gone to the diaspora. The third finding revealed by this study was that learners left behind got little support at home and had difficulties coping with home and school requirements hence felt dropping out of school was the panacea in order to follow their parents. It was established, too, that while in some few cases, the learners left behind were spoiled materially, the majority were spoiled socially and as a result despised education and authority. Sporting activities, harvesting Mopani worms and initiation ceremonies were also found to impact negatively on the education of learners left behind. Drawing from these findings and others reported in this study, it was recommended that counselling programmes be improved in schools by employing qualified counsellors at every school. Migration

studies could be introduced at all learning levels. Thirdly, learners left behind should be registered with the Department of Social Welfare with a view to ensuring that anyone interested in their welfare would access information about them easily. Furthermore, resocialisation of communities and schools on parenting befitting the emerging triangulated family type ought to be done. Schools were also advised to launch income-generating projects whose proceeds should assist needy learners to get food or learning material support. Individual learner assessment mechanisms should be used when considering learners for educational welfare programmes. The other proposed recommendation was that the government ought to improve communication infrastructure in remote schools such as those in the Mwenezi District so that teachers and learners can easily interact with parents in the diaspora.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACPF	Asian Countries Pacific Forum
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes
FGDSN	Focus Group Discussion School North
FGDSS	Focus Group Discussion School South
GSN	Guardian School North
GSS-	Guardian School South
HIV&AIDS	Human Immuno Virus/ Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
HSN	Head School North
HSS	Head School South
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFFD	International Federation for Family Development
IOM	International Organisation for migration
ISSFI	International Social Services Family Institute
LLB	Learners Left Behind
LSN	Learner School North
LSS	Learner School South
NAP for OVC	National Action Policy for Orphans and Vulnerable Children
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

	Development
POEA	Philippines Overseas Employment Administration
SAMP	Southern African Migration Policy
SIRDC	Scientific and Industrial Research Development Centre
TARSC	Training and Research Support Centre
TSN	Teacher School North
TSS	Teacher School South
UNCROC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children
UN-DESA	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe Statistics Agency
ZNOCP	Zimbabwe National Orphan Care Programme

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

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.

CHAPTER TWO: FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY AND THE QUESTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF LEARNERS LEFT BEHIND BY EMIGRANTS

This chapter critically maps out the theoretical strands underpinning and grounding this study. The Family Systems theory was used to analyse the impact of parental migration on the education of learners left behind. An overview of the role of the theoretical framework in research is furnished before a detailed analysis of family systems theory is laid out and immensely canvassed. Some implications of the Family Systems theory that pertain to how disruptions of family structures due to parents-children separation because of migration affect the academic performance of the learners left behind are articulated concomitantly with a discussion of major tenets of the theory. Despite the discussions on some implications of the Family Systems theory to some specific aspects of the study, there is a section devoted to the general implications of the theory to the study as well.

Articulating one's theoretical framework is one of the key benchmarks for any successful research report or any plausible research output. A theory is a set of ideas that attempt to locate general characteristics or properties that explain regularly observed phenomena (Giddens, 2009; Haralambos & Horlborn, 2010). Macionis (2012) says a theory is a statement of how and why specific facts are related. Related to Macionis's (2012) conceptualisation of a theory, Henslin (2015) defines a theory as a general statement that explains how two or more facts are related to one another. He further alludes that a theory is like a lens through which one can view social life, it is a way of conceiving a phenomena. In a more elaborative elucidation of the word 'theory', Creswell (2014) observes that the word can be used interchangeably with patterns, theoretical lens or naturalistic generalisations all meaning the broader explanations used or developed in studies.

Drawing from the definition of theory as given above, Grant and Osanloo (2014) conceptualise a theoretical framework as the blueprint for the entire dissertation inquiry that serves as the guide on which to build and support one's study and provides the structure to philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically and analytically conceptualise the approach of the whole monograph.

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. In addition to that, the theories should be able to give adequate assumptions from which responses to the research question could be derived. Ganga (2013) observes that a theoretical framework connects the researcher to the existing knowledge thus providing the basis of a hypothesis or research methods to follow. As a way of summarising the utility of the theoretical framework in research, Creswell (2014) says the theoretical lens; shapes the types of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analysed, provides a call for action or change, guides researchers as to what issues are important to examine, identifies the people who need to be studied and indicates how the researcher positions himself or herself in the study.

Guided by the above ideas on the functions of theoretical framework in research, this study was informed by family systems theory which expounds on the influence of family structure on family functionality a phenomenon under the spotlight in the present study where an evaluation of the role of biological parents, caregivers, teachers and government on the provision of educational needs to learners whose parents have migrated out of Mwenezi District into other countries was done.

This study sought to evaluate the role played by biological parents, guardians, government and other stakeholders in education such as

teachers in the provision of educational needs to learners left behind by parents who have migrated out of Mwenezi District into other countries. The role of the stated stakeholders was scrutinised against a backdrop of a repertoire of noted challenges affecting this group of learners for instance exclusion from welfare programmes such as BEAM based on some beliefs by some programme implementers that parents in the diaspora were well up economically and ought to support their children independently without seeking any assistance from government or other well-wishers (TARSC, 2012). Against this background, however, research indicates that some learners with parents in the diaspora faced challenges exhibited by other orphans and vulnerable learners which included non-payment of fees, absenteeism, dropping out of school, and a high rate of academic failure, among other related challenges (Ganga, 2013; Filippa, 2011; Zirima, 2016). Since the identified challenges partly resulted from the effects of disorientation of nuclear family structure due to parental migration where school-going age children were left under the care of others, it was construed that the problem could be better tackled from the lenses of theoretical foundations that relate to how families function thus in the present study how families provided for the education of their children hence the choice of family systems theory which expounds on how families are structured and function (Johnson, 2010).

Family systems theory was derived from general systems theory (Johnson, 2010). The author further observes that general systems theory proposes that human experiences, social, and scientific problems should be thought of as if they were systems. The theory was founded by Bertalanffy (1968) on the assumption that the entirety of a system is different from the arithmetic sum of its parts considered in isolation (Fingerman & Bermann, 2000; Johnson, 2010). In systems thinking therefore phenomena are analysed holistically and

components are only considered with reference to how they contribute to the whole system.

According to Morgaine (2001), a system is a set of interrelated elements showing coherent behaviours. From this view, therefore, a system should be seen as something consisting of components that are observable inclusive of rules that bind it together. Since a family is a composition of members who interact coherently as it is like with General Systems theory, Bowen (1988) founded Family Systems theory on similar assumptions to General Systems theory (Johnson, 2010).

International Social Service Family Institute (2015) observes that Family Systems theory is a theoretical framework about human behaviour and treatment of human problems which should be addressed from the view that humans are not emotional units but function collectively in emotional relationships. From this view, individuality is negated by relational analysis of human problems. In the context of this book on the educational needs of learners left behind by parents, an evaluative analysis was thus made considering the impact of effort made by biological parents, guardians, government and teachers who supposedly should work collectively in a systematic way as should rightly be the case in the family set up.

ISSFI (2015) also takes an organic analogy on human relationships to the natural world where a disturbance to one part will have ripple effects on the other parts and eventually on the whole ecosystem. Related to an analysis of educational experiences of learners left behind by emigrants, the assumption is that parent-child separation has caused some disturbance in one way or the other since such separation has resulted in new family arrangements whose parenting styles could be different from the original nuclear one hence the relevance of family systems theory as a guiding theoretical framework.

The Family Systems theory is founded on four concepts, namely anxiety, two basic life forces, the emotional system and the family as an emotional unit (Brown, 1999; ISSFI, 2015) and these are articulated below to show how they informed the present study on family functionality in the context of the provision of education to learners left behind by parents who lived in other countries.

One of the key concepts of the family systems theory is anxiety. Anxiety is an organisation's response to a real or current threat and is split into acute and chronic anxiety (Johnson, 1999). Acute anxiety occurs when there is a real threat and when the threat is short-lived while chronic anxiety is about our response to other people's reactions to stress (Bowen, 1988). Brown (1999) observes that chronic anxiety results when members of a family are incapacitated to think through their responses to relationship dilemmas but rather react anxiously to perceived emotional demands. The author further states that the Bowenian theory's major goal is to reduce chronic anxiety through facilitating awareness of how the emotional system functions, increasing levels of differentiation by focussing on changing self rather than changing others. In essence, life is characterised by fear and in most cases fear of the unknown resulting from how we are socialised. This fear governs the way we manage our emotional health. The separation of children from their biological parents due to migration could have an emotional impact on the children which may influence how the children learn in school. In that sense, family systems theory was useful to analyse the role played by biological parents, teachers, caregivers and government on the educational welfare of learners left behind considering the fact that parent-child separation presented new challenges and new anxieties in families. The theory provided a lens to visualise possible challenges for learners that came with altered family structures. It helped the researcher tap into the learners' educational experiences and their reactions to parental migration.

Filippa (2011) argues that when faced with the possibility of separating from a loved one, infants or older children undergo three phases of separation responses namely protest, despair (grief and mourning) then denial or detachment (Filippa, 2011). The concept of anxiety thus helped the researcher to generate questions that sought to get the reactions of learners to parental migration and in that way also evaluate the learners' adaptation to the new family structure and the extent to which the new family structure functioned to fulfil the educational needs of the learners.

The second foundational concept of Family Systems theory is the two basic life forces which assume that organisms are controlled by two opposing forces one for togetherness and the other one for individuality (Brown, 1999). It explains that while we all need company and to influence others to be alike, sometimes we desire to be independent. Consistent with the concept of chronic anxiety articulated earlier on, the force towards togetherness increases with increasing chronic anxiety (Morgaine, 2001). The two opposing forces are therefore both important as they regulate our contact. While we may pursue individual egos, and develop our principles relating to our contact, we ought to be responsible for our actions and account for the welfare of others within our relationship circles (Bowen, 1988; Johnson, 2010). In this thinking, therefore, family members, teachers and the government may be held responsible both individually and/or collectively for the educational provision to learners who have been left by parents who are in the diaspora. The role these stakeholders were taking in Mwenezi District thus needed to be evaluated since so many learners have been deserted by parents who were working in other countries. Similarly, the role the emigrants played in the provision of educational needs to their children also needed scrutiny, of course, in the present study, this was done through interacting with learners and caregivers.

Consulting the two basic life forces was thus relevant in this study since it made the researcher understand that while members of families ought to work towards collective conscience, they were also governed and driven by personal judgements and values towards their decisions. In that light therefore the researcher formulated questions that directed the respondents to give their views on the role of individual family members and the collective family in the provision of educational needs to learners left behind thereby providing information relevant to evaluating the educational needs of learners with parents in the diaspora.

The emotional system is the third foundational concept of family systems theory. According to Johnson (2010), this concept posits that human functioning both individually and in families is regulated by innate guidance mechanisms which evolve with time. Furthermore, the author further ascertained that above the emotional system, humans also have feelings and intellectual systems and all are useful depending on the conditions facing the person. The intellectual system which explains one's ability to comprehend and communicate is one of the basic foundations in learning where learners are tested after learning to see whether they have grasped the concept taught (Johnson, 2010). Since intellectualism is affected by the emotional system as it were, it follows that learners' learning experiences ought to be scrutinised by borrowing ideas from family systems theory which stresses the importance of examining the impact of the emotional functioning of individuals and groups. Furthermore, based on such propositions, the researcher inquired from learners left behind how emotions triggered by parental migration impacted their intellectual capacity and this was done by analysing learners' performances both before parental out-migration of Mwenzi District and after parental migration. Analyses of the learners' performance were done through scrutinising academic reports and through

interviewing teachers and caregivers to establish how opinions of all these integrated as should be the case in systems arrangement.

The last but not least important foundational concept of family systems theory that applies to the present study is 'the family as an emotional unit'. According to ISSFI (2015), Bowen relates the family to an organism and states that the family has properties that are greater than its parts. Furthermore, Bowen (1988) posits that the parts of a family are emotionally dependent on each other thus a change in one affects the other parts and the entire system (Johnson, 2010). Since this study examined the role of absent biological parents among other family members on the educational welfare of their children, the family as an emotional unit proposition of the family systems theory was thus informative and suitable in the analysis of the impact of parent-child separation in that separation itself induces emotions on both parents and the children (Boss, 2008) whose impact on learner performance needed to be evaluated so that appropriate parenting styles could be suggested. On that note, it was, therefore, necessary to interview learners left behind to establish how they were emotionally affected by their parental absence. In the Family Systems theory, Bowen (1988) states that there tended to be emotions in relationships that bind members together and the emotional processes are outlined below to illustrate how they relate to this study on educational provisions for learners with biological parents in the diaspora.

Differentiation of one self is a positive attribute in building quality relations within families. By differentiation of self, Bowen referred to one's ability to separate thinking from feelings, guided by rational capacity and the ability to maintain a solid sense of self regardless of social pressure to conform, while at the same time being able to maintain an intimate meaningful relationship to others (ISSFI, 2015). In Bowenian analysis, people depending on how they were socialised at the primary socialisation stage, have either a high level of

differentiation or a low level of differentiation. The levels of differentiation, therefore, influence how individuals relate, make decisions and cope with life challenges. It was because of such propositions that the concept was incorporated to inform this study which analysed the impact of family separation due to migration on the educational experiences of learners left behind since it is also the responsibility of families to socialise members hence an integral institution in determining one's differentiation of self-levels.

On differentiation of self, Bowen (1988) further talks about emotions where he states that people with a low level of differentiation tended to be overwhelmed by emotions and lead lives dominated by frustration while on the other hand those with a high level of differentiation can control their emotions and make rational decisions. Considering that the present study intended to establish how learners left behind coped with school life after disruption of the nuclear family set up following parental migration, it was important to incorporate this concept of family systems theory since it helped in the generation of questions relating to emotional effects of parental migration on the education of learners left behind. Such endeavour was found necessary because it became a prelude to the generation of ideas that could be used to build up a strong new family structure in response to challenges experienced by learners left behind and who found themselves in new family setups.

The other proposition of the differentiation of self-canvassed within the context of the present study was the aspect of roles, boundaries and personal responsibilities that characterise family functionality (Moreno, 2013). Without a doubt, these aforementioned were altered on all members of the families that were affected by migration hence how particular members managed life while staying away from their parents or children depended on their level of differentiation whereas those highly differentiated tended to manage roles and work in the

families boundaries quite well. In this sense, Family Systems theory helped one to establish how various families in Mwenezi District affected by migration responded to such and this was established through face-to-face key participant interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis that further helped the researcher extract qualitative data on roles and responsibilities assumed by learners after their parents migrated out of the country.

Differentiation of self also talks about delineating individuals based on life principles where those highly differentiated can live according to their principles as opposed to the lowly differentiated who may succumb to pressure and discard their own opinions thereby showing contrasting behaviour (ISSFI, 2015). The parenting styles of the emigrants could have been influenced by the social circumstances they experienced once they left the Mwenezi District and this could be seen from the level of support they rendered to their families back home as given by the participants. The concept also helped the researcher to evaluate the learners' coping strategies or learners' independence in decision making, especially on issues relating to their education such as attendance, completion, doing schoolwork and respecting school rules. In this regard, the concept also helped the researcher evaluate the influence of social pressure on both learners and their biological parents with respect to attitudinal changes towards education because of changes in family structure and the provision of educational welfare to learners respectively.

Differentiation of self also helped the researcher dig deeper from participants what they thought about the emigrants' decision to leave children without close parental control considering that such practices had the potential of affecting family cohesion and subsequently learner achievement in education. Such a view was arrived at because differentiation of self has it that decision making is influenced by one's level of differentiation where those with a high level of differentiation

tended to make appropriate decisions after due consideration to facts and alternatives on the ground while on the other hand individuals with a low level of differentiation tended to make poor decisions since they normally act without gathering enough facts on any issue (Johnson, 2010; Moreno, 2013). While migrating out of the country was the decision taken by the parents, it was important too to gather from the participants especially the guardians of learners left behind whether there were no other alternatives that the parents could have considered that could have eased challenges related to family disintegration due to members living apart. The influences of the two levels of differentiation are summarised below:

Table 2.1: Properties of levels of differentiation (*International Social Service Family Institute, 2015*)

Low level of differentiation	High level of differentiation
1. has difficulties differentiating feelings from thinking	1. has good awareness of both thinking and feelings
2. acts based on feelings without rational thinking	2. can express emotions freely and spontaneously
3. overwhelmed by emotions	3. acts after gathering relevant facts
4. leads a life dominated by emotions	4. makes appropriate decisions and leads a fulfilling life
5. ever stressed and unstable	5. can state 'I' position calmly and act according to own life principles
6. easily yields to social pressure	6. enjoy meaningful and intimate relationships with other people
7. provides up own opinion in favour of others`	
8. may show contrasting behaviour of being dogmatic and intolerance	
9. rigidity of roles, blurring of personal boundaries and responsibilities	

When one sets to critically examine the roles played by biological parents, guardians, teachers and the government in providing educational welfare to learners left behind by parents who have migrated out of Mwenezi District to countries beyond Zimbabwean borders, one realises that all these stakeholders view learner welfare differently depending on their social orientation and the value they put on education. In that light, therefore, one ought to treat them accordingly hence the qualitative approach adopted in the study which enabled the researcher to interview the participants who were willing to express their views on their roles and the roles of others. Further to this, the concept guided in formulating sub-research questions on educational experiences of learners left behind as these are linked to the home background, a pinnacle of primary child socialisation. Differentiation of self also taught the researcher that individuals need to be rational if ever they are to function effectively in the family hence the need for education. Above all, differentiation of self was found perfectly informing to an evaluation of various stakeholders' responses to the educational welfare of learners left by parents who migrated out of Mwenezi District since it clearly showed how family socialisation affects emotional unit within the family structure and subsequently family members' ability to differentiate thinking from emotions two aspects that are important when analysing learners' readiness in education where rationality tend to yield more positive outcomes than emotions.

Bowen (1988) avers that when two people in a relationship are in dispute and it often happens, their dispute can be successfully resolved if they approach the third party who would help the disputing pair to settle their disagreement thus triangling (Bowen, 1988). Related to the present study where it was noted that learners with parents in the diaspora were left out of welfare programmes such as BEAM despite

evidence of some of them failing to raise school levies resulting in high dropout rates, academic failure, school absenteeism among other related challenges (Zirima, 2016; Runhare, 2004; Filippa & Cronje, 2013; Ganga, 2013) one would want to know where these learners report their harsh schooling experiences and how those confided in helping the learners face the challenges. Triangling reveals the importance of seeking counselling when in challenges. By engaging learners in face-to-face key participant interviews where they shared with the researcher their experiences of learning without close assistance and monitoring from their biological parents, the researcher discovered that in some instances counselling of the learners could be a possible measure to ease the learners' challenges associated with acceptability of the new family arrangements necessitated by outmigration of the parents hence the importance of triangling. Gathering information about whether learners left behind were counselled and the quality of counselling they received helped the researcher familiarise himself with learners' social and emotional experiences, how these experiences were catered for and the impact of such efforts on the quality of education received by those learners who lived in nuclear families disintegrated by parental migration. While triangling largely relates to families in a conflict which may not be purely characteristic of the current problem, the major attribute that made it possible to be applicable in this study is that of emphasising the need to reach out to third parties to resolve challenges between individuals and between groups wherein learners left behind are sometimes left out in welfare programmes such as BEAM thereby complicating their schooling opportunities.

Triangulation can be illustrated diagrammatically as follows:

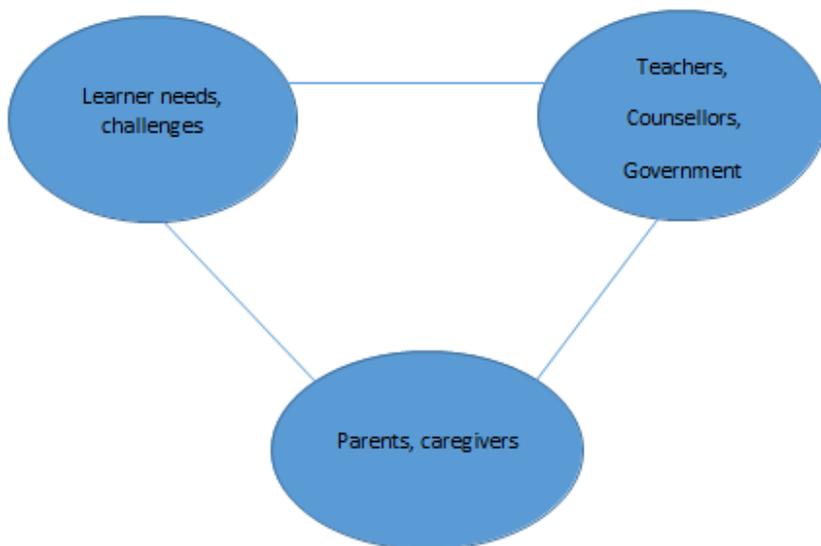


Figure 2.1: Triangulating Learner Challenges in the Context of Parental Migration

Henslin (2015) conceptualises a nuclear family as a family composed of a husband, wife and children. In a related definition, a nuclear family is also referred to as a conjugal family which means a family that results from marriage (Macionis, 2012). Giddens (2009) elaborates and says a nuclear family should have two adults who live together in a household with their own or adopted children. The present study examined the nuclear family through the lenses of the family systems theory where consideration was made to evaluate the impact of parental migration on the educational welfare of learners left behind. To do that, emotional processes that characterise nuclear family were expounded to show how they could help us better understand learner educational welfare in the absence of biological parents. While a family is defined in the context of kin relations as posited above, this study also sought views of other people outside the family structure such as teachers since their duties involve working with children who hail

from different family backgrounds and in this way were perceived to be well positioned in the collection of data that related to how learners left behind by emigrants experienced schooling.

According to Bowen (1988), four patterns emerge within a nuclear family when there is high chronic anxiety and these are reactive distance, marital conflict, reciprocal functioning and projection of problems onto a child (Bowen, 1988). These patterns and their impact on the education of learners left behind by parents who lived in the diaspora are hereby explicated.

Reactive distance is when a couple in discomfort decides to live physically apart from each other through such things as work, travel or other things or they may stay together but not emotionally connected and hence will not be communicating or planning family issues together (Bowen, 1988). This concept was found relevant in the analysis of educational experiences of learners left behind by parents in that in some scenarios it is either the father who migrates whilst the mother remains with the children or vice versa but still, the learners may fail to pursue their education due to constraints related to parental neglect. An arrangement where parents live apart or cease to plan for the family collectively alters family functionality inclusive of socialisation and moral support roles that are important in educating children since parental support and motivation have positive impacts on children's academic achievement. Macionis (2012) appraises the nuclear family as a good example of the ideal family for children in school due to child-parent intimacy that fosters discipline in school. Since this study sought to inquire how the educational needs of learners with parents who lived away from the children were catered for, the concept of reactive distance was found informative in that it helped the researcher evaluate this emerging family arrangement which is divergent from the commonly known nuclear family where parents and their children lived and planned family affairs collectively.

The other dimension of the nuclear family emotional process is marital conflict. ISSFI (2015) outlines the following behaviour characteristics of couples in conflict; being critical, blaming and accusatory of each other, focussing on the other person's faults/shortcomings (other-focused) rather than focusing on one's part in the problem (self-focused), rigid and insistent on one's viewpoint, behave abusively towards each other and reflects emotional dependency between the couple.

Since this study examined families in separation due to migration for periods stretching from six months up to over five years, it was prudent to establish the role either of the parents played in fulfilling the educational requirements of the learners even when the parents were separated by distance from their children. In the face-to-face key participant interviews with the learners, the researcher, therefore, sought to get the role played by each parent in meeting the learners' educational needs.

Nuclear family emotional processes also involve reciprocal functioning when one spouse is the caretaking partner in full control of the relationship while the other partner becomes the yielding partner who depends wholly on the caretaking partner (ISSFI, 2015). In such a situation, both partners experience challenges, for instance, the caretaking partner feels overwhelmed by responsibilities while the yielding partner feels abused and controlled resulting in physical and emotional dysfunction (Bowen, 1988). Should such relationship experiences happen in situations that mirror family arrangements under the current investigation where the members are geographically separated, the quality of schooling support provided to the children left behind could be compromised. It was thus befitting that when evaluating parental contribution to the educational needs of learners left behind, one also employed qualitative approach and interview techniques that allowed the respondents to empty their vivid experiences when parents lived apart.

Projection of a problem onto a child is another element of nuclear family emotional processes (Johnson, 2010). This happens when a feuding couple spills its challenges to a particular child within the family thus the child becomes the focus of parental anxiety (ISSFI, 2015). If this happens, the child's functioning will be impaired due to the inability to handle increased reactivity and sensitivity towards him/her by the parents. Bowen (1988), however, observes that such scenarios would result in parents finding common ground so that they can help the child together (Bowen, 1988). Since this book indicates that parental migration results in schooling challenges for the learners left behind questions also needed to be directed at the respondents, especially the learners themselves regarding their views on the contribution of both parents to educational provision and to briefly give their opinion on how the relationship of their parents could impact on the way they were supported. The importance of such information was to enable one to suggest parenting strategies that could be inclusive of the children's input hence most likely to get the support of the children, something indisputable in family functionality and in the current world order where children's rights are regarded so highly.

The family projection process is about the way parents convey their emotional problems to the child (Bowen, 1988). If the child is aware of the parental emotional anxieties, that child will have difficulties separating feelings from thinking and hence will display such behaviours as difficulties meeting others' expectations, a great need for recognition and approval, blaming others, feeling responsible for others' happiness or that others are responsible for his or her happiness and impulsiveness and lower functioning (ISSFI, 2015). While the present study examined the contribution of various stakeholders to the educational needs of learners left by parents in the diaspora, to note is the fact that these learners could at times communicate with their biological parents, conversations which could

have impacted the way the learners learnt in one way or the other. As this evaluation was done, therefore, one needed to gather data relating to issues that the learners discussed with their parents and that helped in understanding to some extent why this group of learners was associated with such schooling challenges as absenteeism, poor completion rate, academic failure and truancy among other related problems especially considering the fact that the parents could in some way have been providing social, emotional and educational support.

The multigenerational transmission process sets out the process of how chronic anxiety and roles are passed from one generation to the other (Bowen, 1988). It states that the most focused child will move towards the lower level of differentiation while the least focused moves towards a higher level of differentiation (Johnson, 2010). One could come to know the quality of roles exposed to the learners under the care of grandparents upon interviewing them and observing them as they interacted on day to day basis. Thus, the present study looked into both schooling experiences of the learners left behind and how they got assistance in schoolwork at home in addition to other duties that they were expected to accomplish by their caregivers. The level of education of the caregivers was scrutinised as well to establish how it impacted the assistance the learners needed doing homework or just motivation for studies.

Bowen (1988) concurs with Tomman (1976) that our personality and behaviour patterns are impacted by our sibling position (Bowen, 1988). In their view, both authorities posit that the eldest child usually develops leadership qualities, is more responsible and identifies with power and authority while the opposite is true for the youngest sibling. Furthermore, Bowen (1988) observes that in a family where there is only one child, the child normally enjoys maximum attention from parents and usually relates with elders. However, he also states that the youngest sibling can assume the role of the eldest sibling if the

eldest is incapacitated by illness. In a study in Ecuador on the life experiences of learners left behind by emigrants, Guendell *et al.* (2013) noted that older children usually assumed the roles of parents taking care of their young siblings. When evaluating the role played by biological parents, teachers, government and guardians in the provision of educational needs to learners left behind by emigrants, it could be better also to interview the learners themselves to get to gather data relating to their role in the absence of their parents. It is largely unquestionable that roles come with their related stress and time management challenges. In case some learners left behind assumed new roles commensurate with their positions in the family structure, the extent to which those roles impacted the learners' schooling experiences and their contribution to changing family patterns needed to be examined from the lens of Family Systems theory.

Emotional cut-off is emotional distancing where couples in dispute separate physically or decide to withdraw from each other psychologically by cutting all means of communication (ISSFI, 2015). While emotional cut-off is done to reduce anxiety among individuals, it usually yields more challenges since no one will be there to assist in times of need when family members are separated. In this study that sought to evaluate the role played by various stakeholders in fulfilling the educational needs of learners left behind, there was a need also to get deeper into analysing the circumstances that led the biological parents to remain away from their families for long periods. Since emotional cut-off could result in reducing anxiety or yielding more challenges, it was necessary to establish how separation due to migration which emotionally cut off learners from their parents in Mwenzi District impacted the performance of the learners through interviewing the learners rather than just assuming what the impact could be.

Societal emotional processes explain a situation whereby conditions of chronic stresses namely unemployment, natural disasters, political instability, and poverty induce pressure for togetherness and conformity as opposed to individuality (Bowen, 1988). This view resonates with the background of the present study where the government, biological parents, teachers and guardians' contribution to the educational welfare of learners left by parents in the diaspora was done by reflecting on the concept of togetherness. Further to this, the parents of the learners in question have also migrated because of social pressures in Zimbabwe including unemployment, poverty and political instability. Essentially the role of society to individuals and to groups in troubling times is revealed. Also, an evaluation of those roles was done resulting in improved strategies.

While some aspects of family systems theory were articulated above as far as they relate to the present study on an evaluation of the role of biological parents, caregivers, teachers and government in the provision of educational needs to learners with absent parents, this part summarises the major implications of the theory to the study.

Giddens (2009) observes that the family is the basic social unit of all cultures responsible for nurturing, caring for and socialising children. Also, from birth, a child's quality of life is directly influenced by the kind of care, support, stimulation and education he or she receives from family members in the home (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013; Considine & Zappala, 2002; IFFD, 2017). From the conceptualisation of family systems, as enunciated above, one can say elements of the family that make up the system are the family members composed of parents, children and other relatives and rules and obligations that bind the family together. When one explores and evaluates the roles of parents and other caregivers with respect to the educational needs of learners there is, therefore, a need to do it with a clear understanding of what the family ought to do and be like for it to remain an intact

system (Holland *et al.*, 2008). It was in this respect that this study adopted family systems theory to establish the availability, adequacy and appropriateness of psycho-social, moral and socioeconomic provisions to learners whose parents were outside Zimbabwe with the view to possibly suggest ways of improving the welfare of such learners in their educational endeavour.

Primary socialisation influences and moulds one's character, and therefore the relations one has with others and ultimately one's mental health (Castaneda & Buck, 2011). It follows therefore that analysing strategies meant for the provision of educational needs to learners from this view ought to be done using qualitative data gathering techniques that involve the immersion of the researcher into the life-world of participants so that detailed data that leave us in a comprehensive picture regarding expectations of both guardians and learners left behind are established. In the process of gathering natural data by involving oneself in the life experiences of the participants, one could discern how the learners were socialised by substitute parents and the expected future behaviour as well. In the approach of establishing socialisation patterns, the learners were exposed to circumstances in which caregivers were responsible for the learners' educational welfare helped the researcher understand the causes of schooling challenges faced by such learners and it was construed that any suggestion for improved socialisation patterns could be done within the framework of existing ones hence the importance of consulting family systems theory that helps us appreciate the influence of primary socialisation on learner achievement.

Artico (2003) argues that when children are paired with inadequate substitute attachments (caregivers), they become vulnerable and susceptible to psychological challenges such as suicide, depression, substance abuse and conduct disorder identities. Learning from such observations, the role of guardians, therefore, needed to be established

to weigh their impact on the behaviour of the learners left behind in the Mwenezi District. In a study by Fillipa (2011) on experiences of urban adolescents whose parents lived in the diaspora, she noted that this group exhibited wayward behaviour and usually disrespectful advice from their caregivers because some of their biological parents spoiled those by giving them a lot of money which the children failed to manage. It was for such reasons that in the present study, respondents were also asked to state the kind of support the learners got from their biological parents and to commend them for the impact of such assistance with respect to the quality of relations that existed between guardians and the learners.

Moreno (2013) states that family systems theory is premised on the assumption that all parts of the system are interconnected. Related to that assumption, Fingerman and Bermann (2000) comment that in systems thinking, elements of a system interact with and shape one another and create a distinct whole. One may deduce, therefore, that the absence or non-participation of a family member in the affairs of the family impacts all the members of the family. Relating to the present study it might mean that the migration of the biological parent had had an impact on the whole family. The impact however remains unknown until one immerses self into the life worlds of those involved to see how they could have been affected. This proposition of the family systems theory thus helped the researcher adopt an interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach that is characterised by the idea of immersion as one seeks to gather data from subjective human beings (Creswell, 2014). Not only did the proposition inform the methodology adopted but also guided the researcher to generate questions that exclusively addressed the research question about how all the family members were affected and viewed the impact of family disintegration on the welfare of the learners left behind.

While the migrant misses other family members and suffers emotionally, the children left behind experience both emotional and social shock since the parent who used to be there for them is no longer there (Fingerman & Bermann, 2000). With respect to educational outcomes, the absence of the biological parent could impact the children negatively since the social parents are less involved in children's schooling than are the biological parents (Teja & Rutgers, 2017). As opined by interactionist Nell Keddie, poor parent-child relationships usually negatively impact the child's academic progress especially if the parent cannot assist the child with schoolwork (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013; Giddens, 2009). This proposition was found worth referring to in analysing the experiences of learners with parents in the diaspora in that these parents rarely returned or hardly supported their children thus exposing the children to psychological trauma. Understanding the learners left behind's educational experiences, therefore, meant an appreciation of how those learners managed stress that had been induced by parental absence and that was done through engaging them in interactive interviews hence the choice of focus group discussions as one of data gathering methods in the present study. Noting that stress could affect both learners and caregivers indebted for the upkeep of those learners, the researcher framed open-ended questions that allowed the respondents to give their actual experiences regarding the impact of parental absence on learner education and interviewing the caregivers in their homes so that they could open up more than they would have done had they been involved in focus group discussions.

The other assumption of the Family System theory is holism which dictates that the family should be understood as a whole and cannot be comprehended by examining its parts in isolation from one another (Considine & Zappala, 2002; Moreno, 2013). Problems faced by learners at school should therefore be resolved in consultation with the other members of the family where the concerned learner comes from.

Teachers should understand and appreciate the way of life of each learner with respect to school provisions that can be afforded by each type of family (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013). While the learners may be under the care of non-biological parents, psychologically they could be thinking about when their biological parents will return (Moreno, 2013). In such circumstances therefore the learners may feel depressed and as a result fail to concentrate in class. For this reason, teachers ought to study learners and communicate with them so often to establish challenges early so that counselling could be done accordingly. These assumptions guided the researcher in seeking responses from teachers regarding their assessment of the role of both biological parents and caregivers in relation to their level of contribution in meeting the educational needs of learners left behind. The assumptions also revealed that teachers ought to study their learners if ever they would want to understand and assist them accordingly. In this regard, the researcher also asked teachers to evaluate their role in the provision of educational needs to learners left behind by emigrants.

The other assumption of the Family Systems theory that manifests from the discussion is that of self-reflexivity, that is, families can make themselves and their behaviour the object of examination and the target of explanation thereby establishing goals for themselves (Johnson, 2010; Moreno, 2013; Fingermann & Bermann, 2000). As one sets to investigate strategies used to educate learners with absent parents, one ought to be guided by the fact that it is from the family members and in this case the learners left behind and the caregivers from which one can get details about their schooling and parenting experiences respectively since it is them who experience the phenomena.

Changes in family structure also influence family processes that encompass family function, family communication and transactional

patterns, family conflict, separateness and connectedness among members, cohesion, integration and adoption to change (Fingerman & Bermann, 2000; Sun, 2017; Morgaine, 2001). Elucidating on this assumption, Considine and Zappala (2002) argue that in the case of migration of a family member, family processes ought to change. For example, the education of learners could be affected since some functions like visits to the school by parents, consultation with teachers, and celebration parties when a learner performs well among others will not be fulfilled under social parents (Teja & Rutger, 2017). Besides, some learners may at times assume roles previously performed by the parents who have migrated such as cooking for younger siblings and such roles may affect the way the learners learn. Since all these were just assumptions, the researcher did not assume the same for the present study but instead was guided and formulated questions that directed respondents to outline new roles and experiences that came with the out-migration of learners' biological parents.

Moreso (2013) observes that systems have boundaries and in a family set-up, these are the things that a family cannot do hence each family is identified by its behaviour. While the family may influence the school system through family values that are reproduced in schools, the school also influences the family and shapes relations among members of the family (Haralambos & Holborn, 2010). For example, homework given to learners at school affects interaction patterns between parents and children. Further to this, the authors further commend that the family can influence the environment and the environment can influence the family too. Since the concern of the present study was to get insight into the effects of migration of parents on children's education, it was also necessary that an analysis of contemporary issues that promote migration be done. In that respect, globalisation, transnationalism, multiculturalism and brain drain were articulated briefly since they also promote and shape migration and subsequently

reshape family structures in one way or the other (Levitt, 2004; SIRDC, 2003; Koser, 2007). For that reason, family systems theory was found applicable in the present study as it helped the researcher view circumstances leading to family structural changes from a broader perspective thus improving the scope of analysing the educational needs of learners left behind in the Mwenezi District.

In a family setup, the parents are responsible for ensuring that children are accorded safety. In the case of learners, parents should provide school uniforms commensurate with weather conditions so that learning takes place effectively. Lack of such provisions thus impacts negatively on motivating the learner and in some cases may lead to absenteeism or at worst dropping out of school (IFFD, 2017). The present study sought to establish how some such educational needs were provided in Mwenezi District to learners whose vulnerability has been necessitated by parental migration. In essence, the study sought to gather data from the affected learners by interviewing them and analysing their academic records. The Family Systems theory thus besides informing on the influence of structural changes in the family on the educability of learners left behind also helped the researcher to look into the influence of non-human materials such as uniforms when analysing factors that motivate learners. During the face-to-face interviews with the learners, the researcher could take note of the impact of the availability or non-availability of uniforms on learner motivation.

The assumptions of the Family Systems theory were aptly informative and gave direction on the questioning techniques and generation of the actual questions on the educational needs of learners left behind by emigrants. The assumption of holism was found to fit very well in the study since the object was to obtain the contributions of respondents involved in the schooling experiences of the learners.

The chapter has described and conceptualised the Family Systems theory that is premised on four major concepts namely anxiety, two basic life forces, the emotional system and the family as an emotional unit. All these concepts were extensively discussed to show how they inform the present study on an evaluation of the educational needs of learners left behind by emigrants from the Mwenezi District. The theory attests to the view that central to human existence and functioning is socialisation. It also states that human beings in general and learners in particular need company and are expectant of other humans for them to realise normal lives. In the event of disruption of family unity and the absence of social linkages with a trusted member, anxiety results and this may negate progress in one's life. All these assumptions were used to generate questions that guided the respondents namely learners left behind, caregivers, teachers and school heads to share their views on the schooling experiences of learners left behind.

CHAPTER THREE: EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, EXPERIENCES, CHALLENGES AND EDUCATIONAL WELFARE OF LEARNERS LEFT BEHIND BY EMIGRANTS

This chapter offers a critical and comprehensive review of related literature available in the canon or body of knowledge. For this purpose and following the research sub-questions, the chapter is divided into six sections. The first section conceptualises the literature review and outlines its purpose in general. The second part relates the problem to its setting; hence, an articulation of circumstances leading to the emergence of learners left behind is done. Further, the nature and demographic profile of learners left behind are provided in this section too. Educational needs, experiences and challenges relating to these needs are conceptualised and articulated in the third section of this chapter. Devotion to the role of parents and parenting styles is done in the fourth section of the chapter. The fifth section of the chapter expounds on the responsive measures and learners' coping strategies. As such, policies and programmes for the education of learners left behind are articulated. A further point to note is that the implications of the literature review to the present study are articulated as the discussion on literature review progresses, hence, there is no section dedicated to the implications of literature review alone. The summary section thus concludes the chapter.

Though the present study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of the role played by various stakeholders in the provision of educational needs with regard to the Mwenezi District in Zimbabwe, reference is made to other countries across the globe to give a broader picture of the phenomenon. To achieve this goal, the literature reviewed is reported starting with global trends before an analysis of what obtains

locally is done. The literature review was intended to respond to the following questions:

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

Accordingly, the sub-topics in this section are derived from the stated research sub-questions to ensure that the literature read relates to the study.

Tanczer (2014) conceptualises a literature review as a critical and analytic narration of the existing research on a given topic aimed at summarising, synthesising, analysing the arguments of other researchers, uncovering similarities and differences, identifying gaps within research and helping one to generate and justify research questions and hypothesis. In a related conceptualisation, Creswell (2014) says 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 the findings of other studies. Since through reviewing the literature, one can see gaps regarding the topic that needs attention, the exercise improves the quality of the research report. It makes researchers aware of what is in their chosen area of study, hence, a large part of it should be from dissertations (Creswell, 2014; Western Sydney University Library, 2017). APU Writing Center (2015) comments that a good literature review identifies areas of controversy, raises questions and identifies areas which need further studies. In the

current problem of educational needs of learners with parents in the diaspora, analysis and synthesis of various research studies were done showing both contrasting and complementary ideas. Reviewing literature helped the researcher to modify the research questions and methodology of the study after analysing approaches adopted by predecessor researchers on topics related to this one. Patently, the quality of this book is to a greater extent attributed to works done before by others. Though the present study examines the educational needs of learners left behind in Zimbabwe, literature is reviewed from studies done elsewhere to show the general picture of the problem of learners left behind.

Migration of people within and between countries has been there everywhere since the history of man (Hornby, 2000; Lane, 2000; Engel *et al.*, 2006; Joanna, 2006; Dobrova, 2014; Mwoma & Pillay, 2016; Fillipa, 2011; Shaw, 2008). In the process of migration, some people would settle permanently in the new places while for others links with the places of origin remain, hence, the possibility of living between places or between countries (Dobrova, 2014). According to SAMP (2002), the process whereby people establish and maintain sociocultural connections across geopolitical borders is what is referred to as transnationalism. Zontini (2007) observes that transnationalism results in transnational families in which members of one family live in different countries but maintain social, cultural, reproductive and economic links.

Transnational families may assume several forms and hues that include; fathers leaving families behind to work abroad and unite with wives and children later on; children going to boarding schools outside their country, single women working abroad, and one family member returning to care for the elderly, or a child being sent away to live with relatives (SAMP, 2002; Zontini, 2007). In the case of the Mwenezi District where this study was conducted, transnational families involve

families with absent parents (biological father or mother absent or both absent) because of migration to other countries (*injiva*) (Runhare & Gordon, 2004; Dube, 2014) and children who are left behind under the care of either grandparents, self-care or with other relatives. Based on the situation seen by the researcher on the ground as a resident of Mwenezi District, the identified groups were deliberately selected to put the study into context because these are the ones that largely manifest in Mwenezi District transnational families.

All countries experience migration. According to the IOM (2009), in 1965, the world's population of migrants was 75 million but the figure jumped to 175 million by 2002. Europe lost around 17 million people between 1846 and 1890 due to emigration to the new world (Hochschild, 2002). The period 1846 to 1890 also marked the intense colonisation of Africa (Chimanikire, 2005). IOM (2009) argues that soon after World War 2, some European countries offered soldiers in their countries residential status and Britain offered 90 000 such permits. Blangjardo (2009) observes that Peru a country of destination up until the 1960s had since become a sending country since then and to the present, 10% of the Peruvians live in other countries and mostly in Italy with about 55% of the Peruvian staying in the Italian regions of Lombardy and Emilia Romagna. The author further argues that, 48% of Peruvian women had all their children in Italy. UNESCO (2018) reports that by 2017, 258 million people were international migrants representing 3.4% of the world population. The trend seems to point to the fact that migration will continue. This reality motivated the researcher to want to critically analyse its effects on children left behind in Mwenezi District where parents rarely return.

In a more intriguing scenario, Rojas and Taylor's (2013) document that 1.1 million children in the Philippines have been left behind by parents working overseas. Ecuador had by the year 2000, 36% of its women and 40% of men who had left their children to seek greener pastures in

the diaspora while in Moldova 17.1% of children were left behind (Skeldon, 2006). Botezat and Pfeiffer (2014) in their study in Romania established that the rate of children left behind was increasing noting a jump from 60 000 in 2006 to over 92 000 by 2008 and these figures represented statistics from parents who have officially notified authorities about their leaving children behind. The numbers could, therefore, have been bigger than these.

In South Africa, Kautzy (2009) reveals that under 40% of children aged five and under were living in households with both parents absent due to migration. In the same study, the author also established that less than 50% of children in rural South Africa lived with their fathers while less than 80% lived with their mothers. These statistics show the prevalence of children left behind because of migration. How these children experience schooling is the subject of the present study.

Generally, Zimbabwe and Mwenezi District have no statistics of learners left behind (Zirima, 2016). By the year 2000, UNICEF reported that as many as 200 000 children were approximated to have been left without parental care in Zimbabwe (UNICEF, 2009). However, the irony of statistics with regards to the population of children left behind to date is that they do not reveal and categorise these children with respect to whether they were enrolled in school or not at the time of parental migration (Guendell *et al.*, 2013; Antman, 2012, Botezat & Pfeiffer, 2014). Due to this gap, one estimates only the probable number of learners left behind judging from the children's age. Though the present study was not meant to establish statistical figures about learners with parents in the diaspora, a general analysis of the prevalence of migration by the productive age group helped in motivating the study whose key goal was to evaluate the role of biological parents, government, teachers and guardians in the provision of educational necessities for learners left by parents who have migrated to other countries.

While most parents migrate to other countries leaving children under the care of other relatives, the scope of parent-child separation due to migration in South Korea is slightly different from other scenarios discussed above in that it involves the migration of children into other countries for schooling reasons leaving the parents in South Korea (Young-ee Cho, 2007). How the educational needs of such learners may be fulfilled could therefore be different from the other scenarios in which parents leave children in their countries of origin to seek employment elsewhere. The South Korean scenario is mentioned here for the sake of interest and illustration purposes to the reader that parent-child separation could be driven by the interest of the child, the parent or both. Again, to illustrate that it could be a result of family arrangement when resources are available to facilitate such. The circumstances under the present study are however different from the South Korean scenario in that it is the parents who are deserting their children in response to negative effects of the country's economy and some instances political instability within Zimbabwe.

The phenomenon of left-behind learners is more popular these days than ever before, particularly in less developed countries (Graham & Jordan, 2011; Antman, 2012; Portner, 2014). Research studies show that socio-economic and political underpinnings largely either demotivate or motivate people to migrate from one place to the other (UN-DESA, 2013; Guendell, Saab & Taylor, 2013). In most cases, however, emigrants leave children alone or under the care of other relatives in their countries of origin (Filippa *et al.*, 2013; ACPF, 2012; Moreno, 2013; Kurebwa & Kurebwa, 2014).

According to Skornia (2008), political violence in the Peruvian Highlands followed by economic crises which resulted in high levels of poverty and inequality in the 1990s led many Peruvians to leave their country for the United States of America, Spain and Italy to seek political safety and better employment opportunities. Contributing to

the subject of migration IOM (2009) commend that, migration is largely from developing nations to developed nations due to economic disparities that have emerged between these two. In a study on factors propelling migration in Latin American countries, Cave (2012) argues that large numbers of people run away from economic woes in countries such as Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru into Argentina, Brazil and Chile where economic fortunes are comparably better.

To illustrate the differential economic outlook of developed and developing countries as a key factor that propels migration and subsequently transnationalism, research studies show that economies of countries such as Ecuador, Philippines, Mexico, Jamaica, and Bolivia among others, depend on remittances from their citizens in the diaspora (Dobrova, 2014; Calero, 2009; Dreby, 2007; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011; Heymann, 2006). As Calero (2009) notes, education and health systems in Ecuador are largely dependent on remittances since they are the second-largest source of external financing after oil revenues. Arango (2013) also commends that, Spain received close to 5 million people between 2000 and 2009 for economic reasons from North African countries. The major reasons cited for Africa's loss of its population to developed countries are to do with economic and political development failures, immigration and refugee policies in Europe and the United States, globalisation and interaction of the world economy and colonial background (Chimanikire, 2005; SIRDC, 2003).

The socio-economic and political landscape in Zimbabwe since the early 1990s largely forms the basis on which transnationalism can be discussed today. According to Tevera and Zinyama (2009), more than 70% of Zimbabweans in South Africa by that time had gone there for economic reasons. Most Zimbabweans emigrants are victims of economic reforms introduced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the early 1990s that spelt mass economic disaster as

companies downsized and closed shop resulting in massive loss of employment (Kawewe & Dibie, 2000). The situation was further worsened by the Fast Track Land Reform program of 2000 which also resulted in the decline of operations in most companies that were agro-based since the program had weakened productivity in agriculture (Hlungwane, 2018).

Resultantly, family members had to engage in cross-border trading or seek employment elsewhere beyond the Zimbabwean borders. Unfortunately, not all those emigrating could take their children with them to foreign countries due to restrictive migration laws in the destination countries and high accommodation costs (Dube, 2014). Even those who managed to smuggle their children into some destination countries such as South Africa, could not stay with their children there since the South African Immigration Act of 2002 prevented undocumented migrants from enrolling in schools, more similarly to laws in Cote d`Ivoire that require proof of nationality for one to have access to education in that country (UNESCO, 2018). Some children were, thus, left under the care of grandparents, other relatives or self-care so that they could receive some education in their home country (Chinyoka & Naidu, 2013). However, Kurebwa and Kurebwa (2014) opine that leaving children under the care of older relatives is akin to child abandonment since these grandparents' health and advanced age may not help in monitoring the children. Once again cultural systems that used to accommodate such arrangements have been eroded by modernity, western cultural practices value the nucleus family type that even the children themselves would not feel comfortable being cared for by old grandparents (Giddens, 2010).

Globalisation also facilitates the emergence of transnationalism. Giddens (2006:1018) defines globalisation as, "growing interdependence between different people, regions, and countries in the world as social and economic relationships come to stretch

worldwide.” Giddens (2006) further provides factors facilitating globalisation as the rise of information and communications technology, economic and political. In addition to that, Chimanikire (2005) and World Bank (2010) argue that globalisation has been perpetuated by its network factors namely; free flow of information, improved global communication and faster and lower-cost transportation. Due to the network factors of globalisation, brain drain has been made easier too (Giddens, 2009; Zanamwe & Devillard, 2009). Mazzucato and Schans (2011:707) commend;

Modern production relations and greater and cheaper travel and communication technologies make it easier for people to move and maintain linkages with the regions they come from and other regions they pass through. These linkages result in flows of people, goods, money and ideas that affect the way migrants conduct their lives in the new country and the lives of people back home.

In a related analysis, globalisation is seen as facilitating the emergence of learners left behind through global care chains in which care and love are imported from poor to rich countries in a gendered fashion where women are hired to work in the service industry thereby altering family care structures because women who historically cared for children now leave them under the care of others (Hochschild, 2002).

The other determinant of the emergence of learners who live without biological parents is brain drain. SIRDC (2003) refers to brain drain as the loss of skills by one country or from one industry to another. In a more specific conceptualisation, Chimanikire (2005:8) defines brain drain as, the “migration of professional people (as scientists, professors or physicians) from one country to another, usually for higher salaries or better living conditions.” In the context of the present study, loss of skills has been facilitated by the ease of travel and communication as enunciated above. Thus, it is not out of place for one to observe that globalisation and brain drain perpetuate each other. As long as the

world remains globalised, the problem of brain drain and subsequently learners left behind will remain upon us.

In a study carried out to establish causes of brain drain and to identify measures to reduce or stop it in Zimbabwe, SIRDC (2003) found the following results; 479 348 Zimbabweans were in the diaspora though some could not be contacted. Also the study found that, the population of the diasporas included PhD, master's, bachelor's and diploma holders. The work-related reasons for emigrating given by 34.5% of the respondents were low salaries in Zimbabwe. The study further revealed that there was an increasing trend in the number of people leaving Zimbabwe and that also saw more Zimbabwean-born scientists and engineers working in the diaspora than there were in Zimbabwe.

In the same study, SIRDC (2003) revealed that Africa was losing 23 000 university graduates and 50 000 executives annually to the developed world but commended that most of these African expatriates continued to have links with family members in their home countries because they had left children in their home country since they preferred African child parenting styles to either American or European styles where the parents work. IOM (2013) observes that African scientists and engineers working in the United States alone outnumbered engineers and scientists in all African countries put together.

For Zambia, IOM (2013) argues that the population of practising doctors had dropped from 1600 to 400 in 2012. Transnationalism is therefore a reality. In South Africa, 7 400 graduates and professionals left the country for greener pastures while large numbers of both skilled and unskilled jobless Africans were flocking into South Africa (SIRDC, 2003, Chikanda, 2005). While brain drain is symbiotic to posh life hence seemingly irrelevant to discuss in the present study that

focuses on circumstances of learners who are sometimes left behind in poverty, it found its place in that there are some Zimbabwean professionals who for reasons best known to themselves would prefer leaving their children learning in the country to exposing them to foreign culture (Dube, 2014). This had resulted in the professionals also leaving their children behind under the watchful eyes of schools, grandparents or relatives. The educational needs of such learners hence needed to be scrutinised as well.

SAMP (2002) revealed that, in a 1951 census, Zimbabwe had 246 000 foreign Africans with 40% of them coming from Mozambique. However, in the same survey, SAMP reported that about 400 000 immigrants from Zimbabwe were staying in South Africa alone. Zanamwe and Alexander (2009) also revealed that 114 848 illegal immigrants from Zimbabwe were repatriated from South Africa.

In the wake of continued economic challenges in Zimbabwe, the migration of able-bodied people into countries where a better living could be realised may continue (Shaw, 2008). According to Koser (2007), migration is a central dynamic in the process of globalisation that is inextricably linked with other important global issues including development, poverty and human rights. There is a link, therefore, between globalisation and migration, hence, the suitability of the concept in this analysis that sought to evaluate the effectiveness of psychosocial, moral and socio-economic support systems for the educational needs of learners who were made vulnerable by parental migration (Bommes & Morawska, 2005; Faist, 2003; Karen, 2012).

Research indicates that most of the learners left behind are from poor families (Portner, 2014). Besides that, largely the parents of the affected learners had low educational credentials. Both boys and girls are left behind (Filippa, 2011). However, in most families, older girls are left to look after other children. Studies also show that the population of

learners left behind are higher in towns than they are in rural areas (Makina, 2010). However, this observation could be contested since the disparity could probably be because most research on the topic of learners left behind was largely conducted in towns and cities. Botezat and Pfeiffer (2014) in a study in Albania established that most learners were left under the care of their fathers as more mothers out migrated than fathers. The Albania scenario could however be different from what obtains in Zimbabwe where studies show that fathers migrate more than mothers (Filippa, 2011; Dube, 2014; McGregor, 2010; Shaw, 2008).

Generally in Africa and Zimbabwe, in particular, most people who migrate out of the country are from regions that share boundaries with destination countries (Dube, 2014). Such areas in Zimbabwe include the Matebeleland regions and part of the Masvingo region since these are closer to Botswana and South Africa, two countries where most Zimbabwean emigrants live (Makina, 2010; Dube, 2014). Mwenezi District where the present study was conducted is in Masvingo Province and close to South Africa. The issue of proximity to the border could be one of the reasons why there are so many migrants from the district (Hlungwane, 2018). The other group of those who live children behind in Africa and Zimbabwe, in particular, are politicians in the opposition who usually run away from political persecution (Makina, 2010).

Antman (2012) articulates the fact that the other category of emigrants who live children behind is the ethnic minority and those who speak a language regarded as minor in the country of origin. The present study was also conducted in Mwenezi District which houses some ethnic minorities namely the Shangani, the Venda and the Pfumbi. Therefore, besides the predicament of being parentless, the learners left behind, thus, sometimes further face other challenges related to their gender, political affiliations of their parents, ethnicity, the language they speak

and residential status. All these challenges affect most people even those living with both parents, hence, for the learners left behind it becomes a double-edged sword.

While the phenomenon of leaving children behind is growing the world over, the decision to do so is largely a prerogative of the parent emigrating (Sanduleasa & Matei, 2015). These authors commend that in Romania, children left behind are largely not given a choice as to where and who will take care of them when the parent is away. It is like that despite the proliferation of child rights some of which give the children the power to make decisions regarding how they should be cared for. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child (UNCROC) article 12 observes that the views of the child should be considered when effecting decisions that affect the child (Fagbeminiyi, 2011). Related to this article, article 13 further expands and observes that children have the right to express their views and to access information. Despite the existence of these international laws which many countries ratified, Wang (2013) in a study in China established that the learners left behind had no choice regarding where they would stay when their parents left for the city. Also, it is unknown if the decision to leave learners alone or under the care of other family members in the Mwenezi District involves all family members including the concerned learners as guided by child rights and family systems theory principles articulated elsewhere in this book.

This part outlines the role of parents in educating their children. However, while the object of the present study is to evaluate this role relating to the type of education the learners get from formal schools, it should also be acknowledged that the word education has a wide meaning. It also incorporates what the parents teach at home, the teachings regarding societal norms and values, sanctions and other related issues (Gwirayi, 2010). Therefore, parenting styles and roles regarding the way the parents raise and prepare their children for

school are articulated too. Again a global picture regarding this is given.

The way children are socialised or made to learn the language and the moral ethics of society vary depending on the culture of the family and community into which a child is born (Gwirayi, 2010). According to Antman (2012), whilst in the western world, children are more autonomous, the opposite holds for some other places such as Africa and Asia. The differences are so glaring despite the existence of global child rights conventions to which most countries in the world inclusive of Africa and Asia have ratified. Socialisation patterns thus largely explain the differences in the way children be must a very large extent (Haralambos & Horlborn, 2013). If all nations would abide by the guidelines as provided in the global child rights as articulated in the said conventions, the differences in parenting would be very minimal. However, the emergence of the diaspora means that children no longer assimilate what has been passed on from their ethnic forefathers only but are also exposed to a hybrid of cultures that they learn from their parents who have emigrated or from the media (Banks, 2010). Essentially, the behaviour of the modern child can loosely be described as unpredictable. An analysis of the behavioural traits of learners left behind by emigrants is accordingly therefore done with this background in mind.

As Dreby (2007) commends, diasporans are socially enriched due to overseas contacts that they have. While the guardians may socialise learners in the local cultural way, the learners may be exposed to hybridisation of culture since their biological parents may impose culture experienced in the countries where they stay through telephone contact with their children (Kufakurinani *et al.*, 2014). Smith *et al.* (2004) carried out a study on the effects of parental separation on Caribbean children focusing on problems encountered by those children following a reunion with their parents and noted that most

children felt abandoned by their parents, hence, developed negative attitudes towards their parents. Engel *et al.* (2006) in a study on the academic performance of children whose parents were on military deployment in the United States of America found that the children had a lot of challenges since they could not have anyone to assist with homework. In a related study, Codjoe (2007) established that home environment and parental encouragement contributed to the academic success of Canadian-Caribbean adolescents. The child's behaviour and educational outcomes are thus to a greater extent influenced by the child's primary socialisation experiences.

While some emigrants may become competent providers of both material and emotional resources via tele-parenting, a scenario where the parent plays parental guidance through the phone. Smith *et al.* (2004) argue that being a good parent from afar still cannot fully compensate for the physical absence of the parent. The telephone cannot replace physical contact like hugging, smiling, and frowning among other gestures that can communicate and teach learners important lessons (Flouri, 2006). Child socialisation is effective when there is regular face-to-face conduct between the parent and the child (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013). From this view, therefore, the impact of socialisation from afar through the telephone becomes a subject of debate hence this study adopted a qualitative approach that involved key participants and focus group interviews to generate comprehensive qualitative data on the experiences of learners with parents who have migrated from Mwenezi District.

Though we are living in a multi-culturally dominated society, there is a need to understand the cultures we are to embrace to limit cultural clashes (Banks, 2010). Without dismissing socialisation patterns from other cultures outside Zimbabwe, it should be noted that parenting from afar needs to be evaluated to see how much the phenomenon is helping learners left behind to cope with schooling and such research

is currently not available in Zimbabwe let alone in the remote rural area where the present study was carried out. The effects of the influence of parental socialisation from afar on the satisfaction of educational needs of the learners left behind thus ought to be interrogated.

Education is a basic right of every child on earth (UNICEF, 2013; African Child Policy Forum *et al.*, 2013). In this regard, every nation-state, parent and community must do everything possible to ensure that all school-going age children are accorded the right to education (Save the children in Sri Lanka, 2006). In the 21st millennium, the right to education has been redefined to incorporate the component of quality (Antman, 2012; Mandina, 2012). This means that it is no longer enough to send children to school without an analysis of the quality of education the child will receive. Quality education means that type of education whose value to the learner and the nation is in sync with the learner's needs and each country's object of establishing learning institutions, one that serves its purpose. It is thus a broad phenomenon which every learning institution thrives to achieve and its measurement encompasses such things as the type of curricula offered, teacher characteristics, school infrastructure, learning materials, time for learning, parental support and involvement, school discipline among other things (Fagbeminiyi, 2011; Brown & Ginter, 2014).

Boler and Carroll (2003) opine that educational needs in the context of vulnerable children can be better understood by looking at aspects that are of concern to these children namely enrolment, hunger and anxiety, missing classes to look after family, educational progression, repetition and learning outcomes. All these attributes to quality education characterise the major discussion points of this book. Thus reference is constantly made to the attributes in parts of the discussion with respect to how they individually or collectively manifest in the

education of learners left behind by biological parents who have migrated out of the Mwenezi District.

Parents ought to be involved in their children's education for without their involvement children will largely not achieve (Fagbeminiyi, 2011). IFFD (2017) commend that, families have the primary responsibility for the development, education and socialisation of their children. Han and Jun (2013:1) define parental involvement as "parents' interaction and engagement in a child's life that promote some aspects of development." The authors further explain that involvement encompasses three dimensions which are;

El- leisure, fun and play, companionship, sharing activities/interests, caregiving, and promoting emotional, social, physical and spiritual development; developing responsibility and independence, encouraging ethical/moral and career development, providing income, discipline, being protective, and concern about school or homework; and developing competence, mentoring/teaching, advising, and intellectual development.

Connor and Scott (2007) cite four dimensions of parenting as presented by Baumrind (1966) that are characterised by warmth (as opposed to conflict or neglect) and control strategies. These dimensions are authoritative (high warmth, positive /assertive control and high expectations); authoritarian (low warmth, high conflict and coercive, punitive control attempts); permissive (high, warmth coupled with low control attempts); and neglectful/disengaged (low warmth and low control attempts). In relation to these dimensions of parenting, Connor and Scott (2007) further observe that children's behavioural and emotional problems often co-occur where those who show high rates of aggression, truancy and oppositional behaviour also tend to experience higher levels of depression and anxiety, and educational underachievement and reading difficulties.

Epstein (1990) provides a comprehensive analysis of how parents can be involved in their children's education.

Table 3.1: Parents' type of involvement in their children's education (Epstein, 1990; Fagbeminiyi, 2011; Moreno, 2013)

Type of involvement	Specific parental responsibilities
1. The basic obligations of parents	Child's health and safety preparing a child for school supervision, discipline, guidance provision of positive home conditions that support learning and appropriate behavior
2. The basic obligations of schools	☐ Communications from school to home e.g. memos, notices, report cards, conferences
3. Parent involvement at school	assisting teachers, administrators, and learners in a class watching learners participating in sports
4. Parent involvement in learning activities at home	assisting learners with homework initiating schoolwork-related programs for the learners
5. Parental involvement in governance and advocacy	taking up decision-making roles at school participating in school committees monitoring schools for improvement
6. Collaborating with the community	☐ identifying and integrating resources from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development

While the above table is devoted to parents with respect to how they should partake in the education of their children, the responsibilities seem to encompass roles supposedly played by others such as schools and communities. Learner achievement can only be realised if all facets of involvement as given above are combined and practised. It is in this respect that this study above interviewing the learners affected by parental migration also sought views from the guardians and teachers who interact with the learners often.

Fagbeminiyi (2011) in a study in Nigeria on the role of parents in early childhood education noted that there was a positive correlation between parental involvement and educational achievement. The author cited parental interest and engagement in supportive learning activities such as rhyming and shared book reading as a key to learner motivation and subsequently attainment of high grades later in schooling life.

There is strong agreement among researchers that fathers need to be involved in the education of their children (Bhamain, 2012; Forgarty & Evans, 2009; Moreno, 2013; Mancini, 2010). According to the Fragile Families Working Paper (2011), paternal involvement encompasses three domains namely; accessibility which refers to fathers' availability for interaction with their children; engagement which involves fathers' direct contact with their children through child care and play activities and responsibility which refers to the role of fathers in ensuring that their children's needs are taken care of. Related to the above analysis, Forgarty and Evans (2009:1) describe father involvement as "direct interaction between a father and a child when needed, responsibility for managing and providing resources for a child and building of social capital or how fathers provide a support network for children as they grow up to contribute to society." The above analyses point to the fact that there is a need for a child -father contact for a child to develop positively. In addition to that, Trahan and Cheung (2012) commend that, involved fathers provide practical support in raising children and serve as role models for their development. The authors further argue that children with loving fathers are significantly more likely to do well in school, have healthy self-esteem, and exhibit empathy and pro-social behaviour compared to children who have uninvolved fathers.

Research on Syrian refugee youths in Jordan established that a father's absence affects the youth in three ways namely family functioning, health and economic well-being (IFFD, 2018). With respect to health,

the Jordan study revealed that a father's presence fosters healthy psychological development, self-concept and enhancement of personal values throughout one's entire life. Furthermore, Bhamain (2012) also says;

Children raised in involved father families tend to do well in school, less school readiness issues, have a higher intelligence quotient, are less likely to fail examinations, have higher self-regulation, fewer coping and competence issues, self- management problems, and are better in handling stress, more resilient, positive peer relationship, better liked by others, team builders and participate well in social events.

Goldman (2005) observes that children with distant caring and committed fathers tended to behave well at school and were less likely to be suspended or expelled from school due to cases relating to misbehaviour. Goldman's analysis mirror results obtained in a study in Romania by Botezat and Pfeiffer (2014) who also found that a father's absence and less commitment to children's education increased the chances of dropping out of school for their children, girls and rural children being the most affected. The argument for such results is that a household without a father tends to lack child discipline. In this light, one would want to establish how the referred contact can be possible in the case of families that live separately due to migration. Also, there is a need to see how the bond between a child and a surrogate parent can achieve positive results as enunciated above.

The motive to want to seek the forested comes considering the works of some scholars such as Carlson (2006) who commend that, resident fathers tended to have much higher levels of involvement than non-resident fathers. Related to this view, ACPF (2012) also observes that, transnational fatherhood becomes difficult as common cultural notions of the relationship between fathers and children built on respect and not a very close bond are difficult to uphold over long distances. To further worsen father-child relationship outcomes Moreno (2013) and

Dreby (2005) observe that in the case of migrant fathers who are failing to send remittances home, this failure may embarrass them and they may subsequently avoid regular communication thereby aggravating children's sense of loss.

In recognition of the importance of fatherhood on the welfare of children, the United States government through the Department of Health and Human Services initiated programmes such as the Responsible fatherhood grants, Effective parenting, Access, Visitation, Paternity and Child Support among others whose key responsibilities include setting aside funds for activities that promote fatherhood such as counselling, mentoring, marriage education, and collection of child support to provide non-resident parents with access to their children (Trahan & Cheung, 2012). All these programmes were mooted after the realisation that children with involved fathers were more likely to do well in school, had healthy self-esteem and exhibited empathy and pro-social behaviour in comparison to their counterparts whose fathers were not involved in their lives (Trahan & Cheung, 2012). From all this evidence, the need for father involvement in the education of their children cannot, therefore, be debatable hence the need to see how learners left behind by their biological fathers in Mwenezi District experience education.

Mothers have been known as key figures in providing primary socialisation to their children since time immemorial (Fagbeminiyi, 2011). Mazzucato and Schans (2011) in their study discovered that the caregiving roles of emigrant mothers were passed on to other female caregivers such as grandmothers even when the father was present. This could be due to traditional beliefs held in most societies that caregiving roles were feminine. Probably influenced by such thinking, Moreno (2013) says, among the responsibilities a mother should provide, child protection, valuables for children such as food, clothes, shelter and health, ensure that school provisions and schoolwork are

done, interact with the child's teacher, disciplining the child, shaping morality, advising the child and selecting entertainment for the child are key.

In a study in the Caribbean in 2009, Bakker, Elings-Rels and Reiss found that learners with absent mothers were susceptible to sexual abuse and exploitation (ACPF, 2012). ACPF 2012; Parrenas, 2005; Schmalcbauer, 2010) further noted in their studies done in different countries that, learners in families where mothers have migrated tended to have more schooling challenges such as absenteeism, dropping out of school, academic failure and truancy than in those in paternal emigrants. Caregivers in Sri Lanka revealed that children undergo emotional and behavioural changes in response to the migration of mothers and exhibited such signs as weight loss, loss of appetite, bouts of anxiety, lack of interest in school, absenteeism, bed wetting, low concentration level, use of drugs, isolation from other children, temper tantrums, vandalism, disobedience, joining gangs and peer groups (Save the Children in Sri Lanka, 2006). The impact of mother absence and less involvement in children's education with respect to Mwenezi District where the present study was done was largely unknown due to limited research studies in the area.

Parenting using technology is new but growing rapidly in various parts of the world (Taylor, 2008; Parrenas, 2005). According to Mazzucato and Schans (2011), as many as 25% of children living in migrant serving countries are monitored by their parents from afar using the telephone. Tele-parenting (the system of monitoring children by use of the phone) ensures that the migrant parent is involved and attached to the child's experiences whilst they are apart and usually involves the creation of an extended network of surrogate caregivers that include guardians, relatives, and educators (Brown & Grinter, 2012).

In a study in Jamaica, Brown and Grinter (2014) cite three motivations by migrant parents for use of mobile phones which are: triangulating the truth where parents phoned teachers to verify information conveyed to them by children; remote household interaction and micromanagement in which parents called to make sure that children completed chores or homework, complied with rules they had set, or to ease guardian-child tension and mediated access to their child's care network where for instance, a child may initiate a phone call while at school and then ask the teacher to talk with the parents.

Bacigalupe and Lambe (2011) refer to a cell phone as a new family member in families where members live apart in that it facilitates instant communication through phone calls or messaging thereby creating a feeling of co-presence. Earlier on, Parrenas (2005:328) had commended, "The children who receive constant communication from migrant parents are less likely to feel a gap in intergenerational relations." From this view, therefore, it shows that the mobile phone reduces anxiety to some extent since it helps both the parent and the child to exchange messages and assure each other of the commitment they both must each other. The phone removes the ambiguity that could be there if parents and children separate and cut communication.

Furthermore, the mobile phone plays roles that could be undertaken by real parents (Moreno, 2013). Dreby (2010) observes that in Mexico, parents assist their children to do schoolwork and offer advice over the phone. The mobile phone is thus used as a tool to instil discipline in children.

However, despite this huge and important role, Miranda (2003) in a study in the Philippines noted that communication between members in families that lived in rural places had been a challenge due to infrastructural unavailability or dilapidation. The present study was

done in a rural community where communication infrastructure pose challenges likely similar to the situation experienced by Miranda in the Philippines. It is unknown how much communication is done between parents and children who were left under the care of guardians in the Mwenzi District where the present study was done.

Once parents migrate to distant countries leaving children behind, somebody is usually entrusted with the responsibility to look after the children (Dube, 2014; Zirima, 2016, Antman, 2012). In some circumstances, children are left at the parental home and a relative is asked to keep an eye and advise as much as they see fit. Alternatively, the children must leave their parental home and go to the guardian's place of residence depending on the age of the children left behind and the quality of the relationship between the children's biological parents and the guardian (Guendell *et al.*, 2013). Filippa *et al.* (2013) observe that when the guardian is much trusted and viewed as honest and responsible, the children will be transferred to the guardian's home and similarly when the children left behind are viewed as mature and responsible, they are usually left at the biological parental home. In either case, the guardian should monitor the education of the children left behind. How much are the guardians able to fulfil this role is the topical issue in this part of the book.

Brown and Grinter (2014) observe that the non-biological parents' role in looking after children left behind is centred on two issues, namely, the ability to assume authoritative roles and proficiency in the use of communication technologies. Authority ensures that the children are guided and adhere to those guidelines with less or without hitches while proficiency in technology enables the guardians to communicate with the children's biological parents from afar using such devices as cell phones, YouTube, e-mails, and WhatsApp among others (ACPF, 2012). However, in a study in Thailand, Jampaklay *et al.* (2012) observed that children's caretakers in households where both parents

have migrated had high risks of suffering from psychological health problems because of responsibility pressures that also emanate from an inability to control the children entrusted to them. The authors noted that children were less independent and less happy when under the custody of grandparents whose life priorities were different from those preferred by the young due to generational gaps. An analysis of this type of relationship may lead one to conclude that educational learner outcomes may be negative since the social environment of the learner is compromised. ACPF (2012) observe that in Shanghai, China where for instance 90% of grandchildren live under the custody of grandparents children end up engaging in misdemeanours that cause them to perform badly in school. However, on the part of the grandparents, ACPF (2012) asserts that they feel better when they take care of grandchildren since it compensates for their feelings of loneliness.

In their study in Zimbabwe, Filippa *et al.* (2013), participants (adolescents) complained that it was difficult to stay under the control of grannies who imposed a rigid code of discipline such as denying girls to put on trousers, going out with friends at night and confiscating gifts which the grannies consider as spoils. Elsewhere Kurebwa and Kurebwa (2014) blamed the influence of westernisation which they say had weakened extended family ties resulting in the breakdown of traditional authority thus children no longer respect elders although, in the long run, it is them who lose out and end up in destitution. From the evidence given here, therefore, the extent to which guardians manage learners left behind remains debatable. To some extent and in certain situations, yes but largely imperfect.

Schools are mandated by either international or national law to provide quality education to all learners irrespective of the learners' socio-economic or political background (Moreno, 2013; Brown & Grinter, 2014; OECD, 2015). The ways through which schools achieve

this goal include ensuring that all learners who need some education are enrolled without obstacles. Boler and Caroll (2003) writing for the UK working group on education and HIV&AIDS lament that schools ought to provide inclusive education to learners which should involve: valuing all learners and staff equally, restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of learners in their locality, learning from attempts to overcome barriers to access and participation of particular learners, to make wider changes for the benefit of learners, viewing the difference between learners as resources to support learning, and learners as problems to overcome, acknowledging learners' rights to an education in their locality and improving schools for staff and for learners.

Secondly, the method of instruction should accommodate all levels of learners. Unfortunately, according to results of surveys conducted by OECD (2015) in various countries, strategies and programmes meant to assist learners in migration situations are largely done in developed and destination countries with little being done in developing countries where many migrants come from. What this means is that the few learners who migrate with their parents find assistance so that they can quickly integrate into their new school communities while those left behind rarely get help from specific school programmes.

In Zimbabwe, learners are supposed to be taught in their mother tongue from Early Childhood Development (ECD) up to Grade Three as a means of trying to motivate them and improve understanding (Nziramasanga, 1999). This, however, is far from being an initiative from schools but a government policy. The content learnt in schools and homework given by teachers should also be indiscriminate of the learner's home background. As such learners with parents in the diaspora are supposed to receive similar treatment in schools just like the other learners with resident parents.

However, though equity as far as educational provision is expected, it will be fool hard to ignore the plight of those learners with absent parents. Accordingly, schools ought to respond to the needs of this group of learners with full knowledge and acknowledgement that they are special in that the absence of their parents causes them to experience schooling differently. Schools should, thus, consider the ability of learners left behind to meet such school demands as parental attendance to consultation days, completion of mandatory homework, school uniform availability, attendance patterns, health reports, home counselling, availability of educational materials, and motivation among others (Dube, 2014). Schools' responses to the said needs can be divided into two categories for analysis purposes, an administrative role where school policies regarding the factors are scrutinised and implementation of those policies by teachers. The literature one may need regarding this subject, thus, should look at what is obtaining in various countries and various schools pertaining to school policies and implementation mechanisms.

Some schools recognise the presence of learners left behind and the challenges these learners face. To mitigate such challenges, school-based programmes are in place that aim to improve the educational welfare of the learners. In Jamaica, schools create social spaces that bring migrant parents, caregivers, educators and learners left behind together to ensure and increase visibility (Brown & Grinter, 2014). According to these authors, visibility encompasses three aspects namely, the educator's access to the learner's home environment and living conditions, the educator knowing migration status (whether the child was expected to migrate or their parents intended to return) and knowing the nature of the parent-child relationship. Schools should put in place psycho-social programmes such as guidance and counselling sessions to cater for the needs of learners with absent parents (Brown & Grinter, 2014).

Handling of challenges faced by learners left behind varies from country to country and from school to school (Brown & Grinter, 2014). As a strategy to motivate the learners left behind to develop positive attitudes toward education, teachers in Romania avoid punishing the home alone learners as they are known in that country by giving them lower marks in examinations thereby increasing the chances of the learners progressing to higher educational levels (Botezat & Pfeiffer, 2014). The higher marks they get in examinations are additional incentives for educational materials and resources that the learners get from their parents. The learners are, thus, motivated to emulate their parents, hence, quite often work extra hard in school so that they can also successfully go abroad upon completion of their studies. However, elsewhere studies show that learners left behind and who have better prospects of joining their parents abroad rarely concentrate on schoolwork since they might be aware that their destinations have nothing to do with education (Jampaklay *et al.*, 2012).

The successfulness of school-based programmes, therefore, rests on the socio-emotional family environment and the country under investigation (Botezat & Pfeiffer, 2014). However, in a study in Zimbabwe teachers had difficulties assisting learners left behind because of the perception of communities that education was less important since teachers were poor as compared to *injivas* who came driving from South Africa (Dube, 2014; Filippa *et al.*, 2013). Though counselling is not an exclusive preserve for learners left behind in Zimbabwe, all educational institutions including primary schools are compelled by education policies to implement it in schools (Ganga & Maphalala, 2014; Zirima, 2016).

Schooling experiences of learners under surrogacy can largely be assessed with reference to educational access, school attendance, dropout rates, performance and general behaviour of the orphans.

Studies on the educational experiences of orphans in Zimbabwe have been extensively carried out on the aforementioned dimensions with respect to orphans whose status was occasioned by parental death (Ganga & Maphalala, 2014; Dzimiri & Gumbo, 2016; Makoni, 2007; Kurebwa & Kurebwa, 2014). However, Artico (2003) argues that when an important attachment figure like a parent is detached from a child, the child will face feelings of abandonment, loss of identity and loneliness hence a period of mourning is experienced by both the parent leaving and child left behind, similar to experiences one has when bereaved.

Parents in the diaspora are not dead and most have gone there with the hope of finding something better for their families, hence, are largely expected to send remittances back home to their children who are under the care of non-biological parents. This study, therefore, sought to assess the effectiveness of surrogate parenting to see how much this new parenting arrangement helps children left behind access education, attend school, complete schooling, perform at school and behave as expected by society in the district of Mwenezi which is affected by high migration into other countries such as South Africa and Botswana.

Research shows that some emigrants leave children home alone, and take older children out of school to care for the younger children thereby denying older children access to education (Artico, 2003; Heymann, 2006; Dobrova, 2014; McGregor, 2010; Castenada & Buck, 2011). United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2007) noted that in Mexico, the academic performance of girls was compromised by obligations of caregiving which they meet as they look after young siblings. Also, studies on the link between schooling and remittances from migrant parents in Latin America and Asia have shown that children largely perform below their standards if their biological

parents do not directly monitor the children (Mckenzie, 2006; Yang, 2004). Observations in Haiti were that left-behind children had high rates of absenteeism and dropping out of school simply because quite often some of these children would assume parental roles (parentification) to make up for the missing income from parents who migrated or to supplement school requirements which could not be offset by remittances (Bakker *et al.*, 2009).

Following parental migration, children left behind in Thailand were reported doing worse in school, drinking alcohol more, less satisfied with where they lived, less independent and less happy (Jampaklay *et al.*, 2012). Botezat and Pfeiffer (2014) in an urban-rural comparative study in Romania in which they assessed four aspects of experiences of learners left behind namely; being bullied, involved in the conflict, being depressed, and having any illness, established that rural learners were negatively affected more than their urban counterparts in all the four aspects with rural learners 44% more likely to be sick and unattended to when the biological parents were away.

Despite the overwhelming evidence outlined by IOM, (2009); SIRDC, (2003); Fillipa, (2010) and Kufakurinani *et al.*, (2014) about the emergence of diaspora orphans also called learners left behind in this study in Zimbabwe, little was done to focus studies on the effectiveness of parenting styles currently in use. The information about how the emigrants' children cope with schooling is therefore scanty. The present study was done to evaluate the effectiveness of parenting styles for the educational needs of learners who are living in rural areas where knowledge about the schooling experiences of the learners remains largely unclear.

Studies in Zimbabwe show that children under social parental care lack discipline, a strong factor to explain their poor performance in

schoolwork (Kufakurinani *et al.*, 2014; McGregor, 2008; Makoni, 2007). Dube (2014) in a study carried out in Beitbridge, a place which borders Zimbabwe to South Africa revealed that out-migration into South Africa by the rural residents of the area was not helping improve the educational prospects of the learners left behind because the emigrants could hardly send anything home since they were predominantly earning meagre wages in South African Farms. While these studies reveal some challenges faced by the children, they are silent on what could be done to redress the challenges. This study, thus, built on what has been researched before by exploring factors that weaken parenting from which measures that could be instituted to improve the parenting styles were suggested.

Diaspora parents largely support their families through both social and financial remittances and it is documented that diaspora remittances are raising the economies of developing countries (Lane, 2006; World Bank, 2003; Silver, 2006). UNESCO (2018) documents that in 2017 alone, international remittances stood at US\$ 613 billion from which US\$466 billion went to families in low and middle-income countries. Dobrova (2014) observes that, in Ecuador, remittances are the second-largest source of external financing after oil revenues and Calero (2009) argues that, in Ecuador, remittances recipients reported that they use most of the remittances for education, food, health and rent and only a small part is used for construction and property investments, settlements of debts, savings, business investments, household assets acquisition of vehicles and other forms of consumption. In a draft paper presented by UNICEF (2013) on the results of studies undertaken in various countries to establish the impact of remittances on the education and health of children left behind, more positive outcomes than negatives were noted. A selection of the countries reported on is given here for illustration purposes.

Table 3.2: Impact of remittances on education and health for some selected countries (*UNICEF, 2013; UNESCO, 2018*)

Name of country	Impact of remittances on the education of children left behind
Philippines	<p>increased school attendance by more than 10%</p> <p>children sent to private schools</p> <p>reduced child labour by three hours a week</p> <p>students show better academic performance</p> <p>involvement and participation in schoolwork and extra-curricular activities improves</p>
Mexico	<p>increased school attendance rate among young children</p> <p>decrease in schooling among 16-18-year-old children</p> <p>improved literacy rate</p> <p>poor education outcomes among rural children left behind</p>
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased school attendance
Guatemala	<p>increased expenditure on education</p> <p>poor education outcomes among rural children left behind</p>
Jamaica	<p>education and health were the second set of uses</p> <p>boys dropped out of school and showed a marked decline in performance than girls left behind</p>
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no differences in patterns of expenditure compared to other households that do not receive remittances
Moldova	<p>a decline in educational performance due to household responsibilities for girls</p> <p>psychological suffering due to lack of parental care and support</p>

In addition to the effects of remittances as postulated by UNICEF above for various nations, Antman (2012) also observes that remittances have both positive and negative effects on learners left behind depending on the type of migration with maternal migration having more negative effects than paternal migration. Wang (2013) in a study in China established that an increase in family income results in improved family nutrition, better access to educational supplies, less housework and subsequently better educational outcomes. Further, it was noted that remittances were injected into the education of learners through remedial tutoring, additional books, learning software, and associated computer hardware. Of much interest were these authors' findings that students with mothers who owned at least junior high school degrees had their children's academic scores going down while those of less-educated mothers were improving especially immediately after parental out-migration due to a phenomenon they called parental care-household resources trade-off. By parental care-household resources trade off. Sawyer (2014) illustrates and says, it is like when an educated parent who used to assist his or her child with schoolwork separates from the learner such that the learner experiences a gap when there is no one to assist while on the other hand, those less educated parents who had never assisted their children before because of both financial incapacity and academic shortcomings would now hire tutors to assist their children back home as soon as they get employed in the foreign land.

Most Zimbabwean migrants were affected by the economic reforms that were introduced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and adopted by the Zimbabwean government which spelt mass economic disaster exacerbated by the HIV&AIDS devastation of the most productive population of society and the fast track land reform program that left most agro-based companies closing shop due to shrinking products supply because of low farm production (Kawewe & Dibie, 2000; SIRDC, 2003; McGregor, 2010;

Kurebwa & Kurebwa, 2014; Fillipa, 2011; Shaw, 2008). As far back as 2004, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe introduced 'Home Link', a facility intended to ease the sending of money by the diasporans to their families through the banks (World Bank, 2009; Kufakurinani *et al.*, 2014). Though the home link facility was shelved, another similar facility in the name of 'Mukuru' is operational and such initiatives are testimonies that diasporans are sending money home to support their families (Fillipa, 2011; Kufakurinani *et al.*, 2014). However, though financial remittances are sent, literature on their effectiveness in supporting children left behind is scarce. Therefore, by focussing on the relationship between the learners left behind's socio-economic support and their educational outcomes, this study could help in adding valuable literature to the education of learners with absent parents.

In some studies, in Zimbabwe on the experiences of children of diaspora parents, it was noted that most of these children do not properly plan how to use financial remittances (Fillipa, 2011; McGregor, 2010; Shaw, 2008; Kufakurinani *et al.*, 2014). Despite such revelations, no studies have been conducted to establish the reasons for such failures by the children to manage the remittances for educational purposes. The present study should, therefore, above establishing the level of financial support children left behind receive, also inquire from the concerned children about the motive for using the money in the way they do.

While some studies reveal a lot of negative effects of child-parent separation, Lichard (1999) found that Zimbabwean families where one or more members work outside the country tend to have higher levels of educational attainment as compared to households without migrants. In a related analysis, Lu and Treiman (2006) report that, receipt of remittances significantly increases the chances that children attend school in three ways namely, increased household educational

spending, the diminished incidence of child labour and easing of the negative effect of parental absence due to out-migration.

Countries, non-governmental organisations, communities, schools, families and individuals all respond to issues of learners left behind though in various ways (UNICEF, 2013). Accordingly, in this section of this report, ways by which the identified institutions respond to the welfare of learners left behind by emigrant biological parents are articulated.

Various nations have enacted policies and programmes in line with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) meant to address challenges faced by learners who live apart from their biological parents (Moreno, 2013). However, Garza (2010) reporting in a working paper for UNICEF, noted that government agencies viewed learners left behind by emigrants as more privileged than non-remittance recipient learners and hence tended to exclude them from the main target groups of interest in traditional social protection policies. Furthermore, Garza (2010) laments that there tended to be a policy dilemma, should governments institute policies specifically targeted at learners left behind and other policies for other vulnerable learners without such actions viewed as discriminatory and thereby dampening the spirit of inclusivity? Drawing lessons from such possible dilemmas, however, UNICEF recommend the following as possible point of departure on which every nation-state may address challenges faced by learners left behind;

- Strengthening of policy to secure children's basic social and economic rights. This could be enhanced by putting child welfare monitoring mechanisms and a framework for punishing those who violate children's rights.

- Acceptance by governments that it is their responsibility to ensure that there are policies and institutional frameworks that address exclusion, inequalities and the provision of social services irrespective of the availability of remittances.
- Paying due attention to the effects of the economic crisis on children and families left behind to redress negative impacts through the establishment of family development-oriented policies in the medium and long term.
- Assisting families and caregivers of children left behind through formulating policies that support them in their child-rearing responsibilities. Such policies should incorporate guidelines on parenting skills, gender sensitivity, and mitigation of risky behaviours and management of peer relationships of course following migrant communities' cultural values.
- Ensuring that educational institutions develop training programmes that capacitate staff to recognise traits associated with the psycho-social effects of parental migration (Garza, 2010).

In line with UNICEF guidelines, the Sri Lankan government promulgated the National Plan of Action for Children 2004-2008 whose goal was to ensure adequate care and a safe and healthy environment for Sri Lankan children of migrant mothers (Save the Children in Sri Lanka, 2006). To achieve its goal, there was compulsory registration at the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment at district level centres for all migrant women. The initiative was also in line with guidelines as provided in the International Convention on Protection of the Rights of All migrant workers and members of their families Article 64(2) which compels the state to pay due regard not only to labour needs and resources but also to the social, economic, cultural and other needs of migrant workers and members of their families and to the consequences of such migration for communities concerned (Save the Children in Sri Lanka, 2006).

Related to the Sri Lankan government initiative, the Philippines government also enacted into law the Migrant Workers and Overseas Philippines Act of 1992 whose goal was to establish high standards of protection and promotion of the welfare of Filipino workers and their families (ACPF, 2012). In line with the provisions of the enacted law and partnership with UNICEF, the Philippine government introduced a variety of programmes meant to ease harsh challenges exposed to families and children left behind by emigrants. The table below outlines some of the programmes and their mandates.

Table 3.3: Philippines government responsive measures on the welfare of migrant families and children left behind (*UNICEF: Draft 2B DPS, 2013*)

Administrative policy	Mandate of the policy
Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)	□ supporting the development of modules around the psychosocial reintegration of migrants and their families and children
The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration	managing a trust fund to support workers and their families ensuring that workers who contribute have their children have access to education and training programmes e.g Tuloy-Aral or Continuation of education project meeting educational expenses of school students in financial need by providing them with \$100.00 per annum for books and other stationery requirements
NGO Atikha	training children and families left behind to be self-reliant department of education has since included Atikha modules in the school curricula in regions with large populations of children left behind

<p>The National Action Plan on Children Left Without Parental Care 2010-2011</p>	<p>established social services for children at the community level awareness among the general public on the potential negative impact of migration on children strengthened capacity building for professionals working with children e.g. teachers, psychologists, police, and health workers among others on the vulnerability of children left behind and protection of their rights envisaged introduction of life-skills education in school curricula monitoring and evaluation system of children left behind</p>
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According to UNICEF (2013), the Moldova government through technical support they got from UNICEF established the 2008-2011 National Development Strategy whose mandate was to identify causes of exclusion among children left behind and create mechanisms that ensured that children with inadequate parental monitoring get special attention in school and identification of a nationwide network of community-based social workers created by the Ministry of Social Protection, Families and Children in 2007 to address the challenges faced by children left behind.

Wang (2013) observes that apart from ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, the Chinese government went further to enact the People’s Republic of China Law on the Protection of Minors which among other child welfare issues recognises all left behind children under the age of 16 years as vulnerable hence mandate the state to protect such learners from any form of abuse including neglect.

Zimbabwe’s framework to respond to the needs of learners left behind is in the country’s Constitution especially chapter 2 on national objectives which compels the government to attend to children (section 19); protection of the family (section 25); education (section 27) and social welfare (section 30). To illustrate the core principles that guide

the government in attending to the welfare of children in Zimbabwe, national objective 19 of the Constitution on children thus states:

The state must adopt policies and measures to ensure that in matters relating to children, the best interest of the children concerned is paramount.

The state must adopt reasonable policies and measures within the limits of the resources available to it, to ensure that children-

- a) enjoy family or parental care or appropriate care when removed from the family environment*
- (b) have shelter and basic nutrition, health care and social services; (c) are protected from maltreatment, neglect or any form of abuse; and (d) have access to appropriate education and training.*
3. *The state must take appropriate legislative and other measures-*
 - (a) to protect children from exploitative labour practices; and*
 - (b) to ensure that children are not required or permitted to perform work or provide services that are inappropriate for the children's age; or place at risk the children's well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development (Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No 20 of 2013, Chapter 2, Section 19).*

Drawing from the above-stated objective and normative provisions of the Constitution and in recognition of the growing number of national challenges related to migration and the migration development nexus, the Zimbabwe government responded by mandating a ministerial task force to look into migration issues and the task force produced a Draft National Migration Management and Diaspora Policy which cited the following seven key areas to be attended to; brain drain, remittances, labour migration, migration and health, migration and gender, irregular migration and trafficking in persons (Zanamwe & Devillard, 2009; IOM, 2009). The content of the task force's draft seems to downplay the impact of migration on the education of the learners left behind since there is no reference to education except for mentioning brain drain.

Again, while there is recognition of learners left behind in the National Strategic Plan for the education of girls, orphans and other vulnerable children (2005-2010) in Zimbabwe (Ganga & Maphalala, 2014), it is not as explicit as the cases in China, Philippines, Moldova and Sri Lanka in terms of spelling out how these learners should be identified and assisted. It is against such background that this study sought to evaluate the role played by the government of Zimbabwe in the provision of educational opportunities to learners whose parents have out-migrated from the Mwenezi District especially given the fact that parental migration leads to both positive and negative schooling experiences for the learners left behind.

It is undeniable as revealed by literature elsewhere in this book that parental migration leads to both positive and negative experiences for learners left behind (UNICEF, 2013; Sanduleasa & Matei, 2015; Dube, 2014). Accordingly, learners left behind must adapt to some 'life without parents' regardless of the consequences brought about by migration since responsibilities naturally change in response to parental absence. Filippa *et al.* (2013) define coping as psychological devices individuals employ when they are in stressful or difficult situations. In a study in Romania by Botezat and Pfeiffer (2014), the researchers observed that adaptation mechanisms vary depending on the socio-economic status in which the learners find themselves upon losing their parents to migration, and individual learners' perception of the loss, length of loss among other variables. Again, it depends on the type of orphanhood, is it maternal, paternal or both (Kurebwa & Kurebwa, 2014).

In a study in Jordan, it was found that some male youths cope by leaving school and joining the workforce to ensure that there is food on the table while female youths also adopted early marriage as a coping mechanism (IFFD, 2018). However, while opting for work makes the family left behind have something on the table, Sanduleasa and Matei

(2015) in their study in Romania noted that learners who did so deprived themselves of the right to education, leisure and play resulting in cyclic poverty since those employment opportunities tended to pay less and only lasted for limited periods.

Dube (2014) in a study in Beitbridge and Mangwe in Zimbabwe noted that although learners left behind despised teachers for low salaries, their parents were also incapacitated to send them meaningful financial remittances since they were poorly paid in South Africa due to their engagement in menial jobs such as picking oranges due to lack of education. From this view, therefore, coping with parental migration by engaging in migration by the children left behind is largely not beneficial in the long run to the government, individuals and the families involved. Zirima (2016) in a study in Mwenezi, Zimbabwe established that coping mechanisms were gendered where boys externalised their pain of missing parents by engaging in anti-social behaviour while girls internalised their pain.

Filippa *et al.* (2013) in their study in Zimbabwe in which they interviewed adolescents aged between 11 and 21 years about their coping mechanisms in response to stresses brought about by parental migration got the following:

- Justifying the absence of the parents-adolescents stated that it was necessary that their parents left them by going into the diaspora where they could get something to sustain the family since the local economy was not supportive
- Denial- participants stated that they were used to staying alone hence there was no need to worry as everything was normal
- Seeking support- the respondents stated that they turned to friends for help when in traumatic problems

- Acting as if the guardians were real parents by accepting every command they gave and trying to show in a way that they were not real parents
- Phoning the parents and interacting with them via Facebook, Instagram, You tube and Whatsapp.

The chapter has cited socio-economic, political, stringent migration laws and globalisation as key drivers to the emergence of learners who are left without parents in some developing countries today. Parenting styles that emerge in response to the new status of children after parental migration were also outlined in the chapter notably tele-parenting, self-care and use of guardians. Challenges relating to how these children learn in the absence of their biological parents were articulated with special attention given to the capacity of guardians to provide psycho-social incentives to the learners. Also discussed were learners' needs, the role of teachers, government and the learners' coping strategies in the presence or absence of remittances. Generally, literature revealed that little was being done in developing countries such as Zimbabwe in pursuit of strategies that could help learners left behind realise educational opportunities in the same manner as most other learners. It was also evident from the literature that there were divergent views regarding the treatment of learners left behind. While some recommended that these learners deserved special treatment and have programmes specifically for them, others opined that would be tantamount to labelling them and hence needed to be considered in the same bracket as other vulnerable children such as victims of HIV&AIDS

CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter comes in the heels of the one that articulated literature obtained from related studies conducted on the topic available in the existing scholarship canon. Mainly, a comprehensive analysis was done on related studies carried out in various countries and settings on the educational welfare of learners left behind by emigrants. To note is that many countries have such learners albeit the majority are found in developing countries due to higher numbers of parents who migrate out of those countries. Also, it was noted that learners left behind experience schooling differently because of different parental responses by various societies in their diversity. In pursuit of the need to further knowledge on how best issues of the educational welfare of learners left behind could be addressed, this study was also carried out in rural Mwenzi in form of an evaluation of parenting strategies in as much as the strategies are experienced by the learners left behind and by people who cater for the educational needs of such learners. As such, this chapter outlines the research paradigm, design and procedures that were used to gather data from the participants. The specific issues covered in the chapter are research approach, population, sampling, research instruments, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, trustworthiness, and data analysis techniques that were used in the present study.

The structure and content of this study mirror the paradigm adopted. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) refer to a paradigm as abstract beliefs and principles that shape how a researcher sees the world and how he or she interprets and acts within that world. The authors further observe that a paradigm acts as a conceptual lens through which the researcher examines the methodological aspects of their research project to determine the research methods that one uses to gather data and how

such data are analysed. In a related conceptualisation of the term, Morgan (2007) thinks of a paradigm as worldviews or ways of experiencing and thinking about the world including beliefs about morals, values and aesthetics. Elucidating further, McGregor and Murnane (2010) assert that paradigms encompass two dimensions namely philosophical orientation which is about basic beliefs and assumptions about the world and technical dimension which talks about the methods and techniques adopted when carrying out research. All these definitions point to the fact that paradigms are at the cornerstone of any research endeavour since they influence what can be seen as worth researching and direct ways on how research can be done from problem generation to interpretation of research results. Paradigms are distinguished by four key elements namely; axiology, ontology, epistemology and methodology (Urus, 2013; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). These elements are briefly discussed below to show how they inform the present study on the educational welfare of learners left behind by emigrants in the Mwenezi District.

Antwi and Hamza (2015) refer to ontology as a view of the nature and structure of the world specifying the form and nature of reality and what can be known about it. There are two broad positions regarding ontology and these are objectivism which assumes that there is absolute and independent reality and constructivism which posits that reality is a product of social processes (Irene, 2014; Thahn & Thahn, 2015; Yin, 2014). According to Urus (2013), the assumption of independence of reality that is embedded in objectivism might mean that everything around us should be considered as naturally given, and detached from any influence while constructivism points to the possible influence of various factors on any phenomenon hence see reality as fluid. One's understanding and appreciation of the form of reality that shapes the world one lives in is either objective or socially constructed thus guiding how one approaches research studies (Creswell, 2014; Gray, 2014). In this study where parenting roles were

assessed through interacting with the affected learners, caregivers and teachers all in their natural operating environments, it was opined that all these could most probably view social life differently depending on individual specific experiences about the phenomenon, personal attitudes towards life challenges in general or whether one is highly self-differentiated or lowly self-differentiated as propounded by family systems theory and explained elsewhere in this book (Johnson, 2010). In that regard therefore responses anticipated from all these diverse participants could not be assumed to be homogeneous but varied hence subjective ontology was regarded as appropriately more informing and hence adopted.

The other element of a research paradigm is epistemology. Epistemology refers to the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what could be known and it denotes the nature of human knowledge and understanding that can be acquired through different types of inquiry and alternative methods of investigation (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). According to Urus (2013) and Antwi and Hamza (2015), epistemology attempts to address the following questions: What is the relationship between the knower and what is known? How do we know what we know? And what counts as knowledge? Our epistemological view thus guides us in the choice of research strategies and techniques that we may employ to answer our research question. It, therefore, influences us in shaping our research questions, selecting appropriate literature, choosing suitable data-gathering instruments and in employing analysis procedures when we try to contribute and add knowledge to the existing body of knowledge (Urus, 2013). Considering all these attributes of epistemology in research, the researcher in this book opined that any possible solutions to the challenges associated with the caring arrangement of learners left behind by emigrants could be sought if one appreciated what obtained within families affected by parental migration most particularly with reference to issues such as children's

lived perceptions from living apart from biological parents, learners' school attendance, learner motivation, parental participation in school activities that enhance effective learning of the children, the role of school authorities in educating such learners and the families' appreciation of all these. Thus while the participants were key sources of data, the researcher had a role in directing the orientation of the study in terms of research questions, selection of respondents, adoption of research tools, and choice of analysis techniques among other issues in one way or the other. This approach of considering multiple sources to gather data to answer research questions share similar characteristics with triangulation, an aspect of family systems theory extensively described earlier and on which the present study is framed and therefore on that basis the epistemology adopted fits into other aspects that characterise this book.

The third element of a paradigm is methodology. "Methodology refers to how the researcher goes about practically finding out whatever he or she believes can be known" (Antwi & Hamza, 2015, p.220). Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) conceptualise methodology as processes followed in conducting a research project to gain knowledge about a research problem. The methodology one chooses is determined by the ontological and epistemological orientation one has. In that respect, researchers who believe that reality is objective may not select methodological strategies that call for the social construction of reality (Creswel, 2014). Anney (2014) opines that there should be a positive corresponding link between one's philosophical view of reality and the methodological view of every inquiry. Drawing from that view, this study adopted processes that were largely subjective since the aim was to gather data from human beings whose views of reality differ from one person to the other or from context to context.

The fourth element of a paradigm, as posited by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), is axiology; and this refers to ethical issues a researcher ought to

consider when planning how a study should be conducted. Axiology, therefore, addresses issues to do with what the researcher ought to do or not to do with the information obtained from participants or with the participants themselves with the key objectives of respecting the respondents' rights. This study gathered data from respondents attached to professional institutions in the form of learners, teachers and school heads. To meet basic axiological principles therefore assent and consent were sought from authorities respectively before the study was done.

Informed by the above explanations with regards to methodology and having considered the multiplicity of respondents demanded by the present study that sought free respondent participation to generate detailed data about how the stakeholders viewed schooling experiences of learners left behind by migrants from Mwenezi District, several methods were used and are described in detail in the ensuing discussion.

Several authors put paradigms in a continuum with positivism on one end and interpretivism on the other end based on the two opposed ontological and epistemological orientations (Yin, 2014; Thahn & Thahn, 2015). According to Urus (2013), besides positivism and interpretivism, the other paradigms that fall between the two are critical realism and soft positivism which borrow ideas from the two major paradigms. Critical realism concedes that while reality may exist independent of human beliefs and behaviour, there are social processes and forces beyond the control of humans which affect their behaviour hence reality is probably true (Urus, 2013; Livesey, 2011). More related to this is soft positivism which holds that objective reality exists beyond the human mind but is largely influenced by culture and one's experiences of the phenomenon under study. In this respect, therefore, the paradigm may be applicable where positivist case studies could be used where a fusion of interpretive analysis and

quantitative methodologies can be probably employed (Urus, 2013). This study was undertaken purely to generate qualitative data and needed an analysis from a distinct paradigmatic point of view hence the inapplicability of any of these two paradigms that fall in between the major identified paradigms hence their acknowledgement suffices.

However, to position this study in the appropriate philosophical and methodological paradigms, a candid description of the major opposing paradigms was done. First, an attempt was made to discuss philosophical paradigms namely positivism and interpretivism to show how they relate to the study where contributions of guardians, teachers and biological parents with respect to the provision of educational needs to learners left by emigrants had to be analysed. The second part looks into the technical dimension of paradigms hence an extensive discussion of research approaches is done.

As alluded to earlier, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) say paradigms are differentiated on the axis of four major elements that characterise them namely epistemology (how we come to know something or how we know the truth or reality), ontology (nature of reality), methodology (systematic processes observed in conducting a research project) and axiology (ethical issues or what counts as wrong or right behaviour when conducting research). An analysis of interpretivism and positivism, therefore, conargues that one looks at how the two paradigms compare and contrast in terms of the four elements.

Antwi and Hanza (2015) assert that a positivist paradigm assumes that reality is objectively given. By contrast, interpretivism holds that reality is subjective and is constructed by people in the course of their daily experiences (Macionis, 2012). Antwi and Hanza (2015) further observe that epistemologically, the positivist paradigm holds that true knowledge can be obtained by use of observation and experimental methods since the focus of the paradigm is on what people do or their

actions unlike in interpretivism where the focus is on people's understanding of their actions and the environment around them.

The other difference between the two is that the positivist paradigm claims that the researcher does not influence knowledge formation since he or she is detached from the phenomenon that can be studied at any time while interpretivism holds the view that the researcher is a participant who also contributes to knowledge generation since questions asked are determined by one's experience in the social environment (Urus, 2013; Creswell, 2014). From a positivist paradigm point of view, the purpose of research is to provide scientific explanations to empirical facts that are governed by laws of cause and effect (Anney, 2014). This contradicts interpretivist analysis which views the purpose of research as identifying potential, critiquing, understanding and interpreting phenomena as one experiences them (Macionis, 2012; Bhattacharjee, 2012).

According to Irene (2013), studies underpinned by the positivist paradigm generate quantitative data that can be analysed using statistical methods. Thus, a researcher who intends to apply positivism would need to generate hypotheses first before carrying out the study predicting relationships between phenomena or between variables to be tested hence ought to start with a theory to be either confirmed or rejected after the study (Irene, 2014; Urus, 2013; Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, since the paradigm is scientific it can be applicable in a laboratory environment where a researcher can manipulate some objects with the intention of proving or disapproving a held view (Gray, 2014; Irene, 2014). Conversely, interpretivism advances the fact that the social environment is the better laboratory where people can learn through interacting with other people (Macionis, 2012). The author further differentiates the two paradigms based on methodologies that are applicable in each where positivism favours the quantitative approach which tends to generate statistical data while

interpretivism disputes numerical measurement of people and goes for the qualitative approach where the researcher's perceptions of how people understand their world are accommodated. Furthermore, Phothongsanan (2010) observes that in positivism, research starts with hypotheses that need to be either accepted or rejected due to their deductive nature while the interpretive paradigm incorporates methods such as interviews that use open-ended questions since the purpose is to generate new knowledge as opposed to knowledge confirmation as is the case with positivism. The interpretive paradigm involves idiographic studies that use small numbers of participants since the purpose is not to end up generalising results but simply to explore meanings that participants have about a phenomenon in question (Phothongsanan, 2010). It was based on the above narration and propositions of both interpretivism and positivism that the latter could not suit the present study whose key objective among others was to get in-depth data from participants who are subjective and who view reality contextually (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Though some tenets of interpretivism have been discussed in relation to positivism, others are further elaborated to show justification for the paradigm's adoption in the present study.

According to Creswell (2014), the interpretive paradigm holds that the truth is relative and is dependent on one's perspective. He further contends that from an interpretivist point of view, individuals make sense of reality differently depending on their worldview, experiences and circumstances prevailing at each particular time and place. The paradigm emphasises context as a major variable that influences how one views reality (Yin, 2014). In this regard, the reality is therefore multi-faceted. According to this paradigm, reality is not static but ever-changing since environmental factors and our life experiences may affect our appreciation of different forms of knowledge (Johnson & Christenson, 2014). In a study that draws views from the interpretive paradigm, the researcher just like the participants also contributes to

the generation of knowledge since he or she asks questions that are inclined to his ontological and epistemological view of reality (Antwi & Hanza, 2015). On that note, the interpretive paradigm was found instrumental in the present study since it informed the researcher to focus on appropriate respondents and to get deeper into their lives by interacting with them noting that each one of them could be experiencing or interpreting schooling experiences of learners left behind differently. Interacting with participants helped in the production of thick descriptions that would facilitate the basis of suggesting possible welfare programmes that would address challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora. Deep sourcing of data from participants and thick descriptions were not going to be possible if for instance positivism was adopted since the paradigm assumes that reality is objectively sought thereby side-lining the researcher and incorporating data gathering tools such as questionnaires, approaches that were not going to capture some issues such as learners' emotions which the researcher managed to capture through observing the learners during interviews. Emotions that the learners could naturally reveal as they interacted with the researcher were important aspects that could add to what the learners could have said regarding how they experienced schooling in the absence of their biological parents hence helping in revealing what was happening in affected households.

Additionally, according to Thanh and Thanh (2015), the interpretive paradigm calls for a close relationship between the researcher and the participants to enable the participants to contribute as freely as they can. The authors further observe that the quality of the relationship between the researcher and the participants influences the credibility of the study hence the researcher needs to build a good rapport with the participants so that they open up and improve the depth of the data to be gathered. The interpretive paradigm places a strong emphasis on a better understanding of the world through first-hand

experiences, truthful reporting and quotations of actual conversations from insiders' perspectives than testing the laws of human behaviour (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Furthermore, the paradigm employs data gathering techniques such as interviews, focus group discussions and naturalistic observations which allow participants to speak freely thereby promoting the exploration of rich and thick descriptions of social phenomena (Gray, 2014; Creswell, 2014). Since this study involved minor respondents (primary school learners) and their guardians who were all unknown to the researcher, the researcher had to build rapport with them to attract their participation and trust for them to supply more credible data and that was only possible through coming face to face and interacting with them. Such approaches may not apply when one undertakes research from a positivist point of view because the paradigm does not give due regard to the relationship between the researcher and the respondents as key to the generation of worthwhile data. Interpretivism was thus more informing because interacting with the participants helped the researcher collect data in a natural environment set-up where the researcher also gave direction through probing for the respondents to elaborate on issues raised concerning how the guardians and learners left behind experienced the learners' biological parents absence especially now in Zimbabwe where the updated educational curricula present more demands from the learner than before in terms of educational materials and content to be comprehended.

Research questions and objectives generally guide one's choice of a paradigm (Creswell, 2014). Since this study intended to evaluate the effectiveness of roles of different groups in the provision of educational needs of learners whose parents live in the diaspora, the interpretive paradigm was found suitable. Ontologically, the interpretive paradigm asserts that knowledge is socially constructed (Irene, 2014) and in the present 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 the provision of social, economic and educational support thus guardians, teachers and the learners themselves.

Yin (2013) posits that the interpretive paradigm is suitable for studies that aim at exploring little-known phenomena to get a deeper understanding of social processes that underlie the phenomenon with a possibility of generating a theory that could be used in the future to explain the phenomenon. In that regard, this study explored the effectiveness of strategies employed to assist learners left behind by emigrants to meet educational needs which are relatively unexplored in the rural area where the study was undertaken. It was anticipated that data that could be provided by the informants could illuminate critical areas in the realm of child welfare and thus invoke responsible intervention programmes from the various stakeholders inclusive of government, non-governmental organisations, parents, communities, and the church among others.

The researcher was guided by the chosen paradigm to adopt a procedure of collecting, analysing and interpreting data. While Leedy and Ormrod (2013) refer to research methodology as the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project, Antwi and Hanza (2015, p.220) say “methodology refers to how the researcher goes about practically finding out whatever he or she believes can be known.” Creswell (2013) further elucidates and observes that research methodology is a process that involves a description and justification of techniques or procedures undertaken by a researcher for data collection, interpretation and analysis of research results. One, therefore, needs an in-depth understanding of the topic and problem before deciding which approach to use because methodologies involve a clear description and reasons for selection of research paradigm, research design, population and sampling

procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and data analysis (Creswell, 2014; Antwi & Hanza, 2015). On that note, therefore, a detailed description and justification of each of the stated components of research which apply to the present study are hereby given.

This study adopted the qualitative research approach. Creswell (2014:32) defines qualitative research as “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.” According to Starman (2013), qualitative research methods take into account possible changes that may take place over time and emphasise understanding meanings that are given by the participants as the study unfolds. In that regard, the approach is phenomenological and attempts to employ data-gathering instruments that promote flexibility for both the participants and the researcher (Urus, 2013). Creswell (2014:234-235) outlines the characteristics of qualitative research as follows:

Natural setting: data are collected in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study

Researcher as a key participant: researcher collects data himself or herself through examining documents, observing behaviour or interviewing participants

Multiple sources of data: researcher collects data from multiple sources such as interviews, observations, documents, and audio-visual information rather than relying on a single data source. All data are reviewed, made sense of and organised into categories or themes that cut across all data sources

Inductive and deductive data analysis: researcher builds patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up by organising the data into increasingly more abstract units of information. The researcher works back and forth between themes and the database until a comprehensive set of themes is established

Participants` meanings: researcher keeps focus on learning the meanings that the participants hold about the problem or issue without imposing their meanings.

Emergent design: plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed and some or all phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field to collect data

Reflexivity: the inquirer reflects on how their role in the study and their background, culture, and experience hold potential for shaping their interpretation such as themes they advance and the meaning they ascribe to the data.

Holistic content: researchers try to develop a complex picture of the problem or issue under study. It involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in a situation

In addition to Creswell's characterisation of qualitative research, Thanh and Thanh (2015) also observe that qualitative research is interconnected to the interpretivist paradigm in that the approach often provides rich reports that are necessary for interpretivists to fully understand contexts since interpretivism discovers reality through participants' views, their background and experiences. The present study sought data from participants in their natural environments about their experiences of educational welfare needs offered to learners whose parents migrated to other countries thus bearing an interpretive and qualitative paradigm and approach respectively.

While some studies fall under the qualitative research paradigm, others are quantitative. Examples of studies that fall under the qualitative approach are; ethnography, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, narrative research, grounded theory, symbolic interaction and case study among others (Irene, 2014; Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). On the other hand, Gray (2014) observes that surveys and experiments largely feature quantitative studies. The categorisation of studies as either qualitative or quantitative is chiefly due to their

ontological and epistemological orientation hence essentially there is no one paradigm which is superior to the other (Thanh & Thahn, 2015; Yin, 2013). Thus the choice of qualitative approach and interpretive paradigm in this study was not because of their supremacy over others but it was because of their suitability in gathering in-depth data which the study sought to get.

One of the differences between qualitative and quantitative studies is that the former generates non-numerical data such as words and pictures while the latter generates numerical data (Starman, 2013). These qualities of the quantitative approach do not resonate well with the present study where the experiences of people were sought. Experiences and feelings of people could not be quantified into numbers. Though prevalent rates of learners left by emigrants were inferred in the study, the objective of such an activity was merely to motivate and lead the researcher into the main objective of the study (latent function) (Antwi & Hanza, 2015) and could not warrant the study to be classified as a quantitative one.

Secondly, qualitative and quantitative paradigms differ in that the latter employs exploratory scientific and confirmatory methods where hypotheses are stated first before the study and then tested empirically for either confirmation or rejection, an approach which is contrary to qualitative research where researchers are interested in the phenomenon from which new knowledge will be generated from the views of the participants (Creswell, 2014). This study suited qualitative design in that it sought to gather data from people who could not be reduced to tools like what happens in quantitative studies (Irene, 2014). The type of data expected from this study was qualitative since unlike in quantitative studies where causal explanations for the relationship between variables are sought, the study sought to gather data from human beings whose behaviour is fluid, dynamic and ever-changing (Gray, 2014; Creswell, 2014).

The other difference is that the quantitative paradigm attempts to operate under the assumption of objectivity where the researcher is supposed to be detached from data gathering where his or her role ends at the construction and distribution of research instruments level while in qualitative research, the researcher is also an instrument of collecting data (Yin, 2014; Starman, 2013). In this study, the feeling was that detailed data about the experiences of the participants could largely be obtained if the researcher got immersed in the study and interacted with the participants to get inner feelings and emotions. Getting involved in the life world of the participants through interacting with them also helped in building rapport and subsequently enhanced getting some more secretive and valuable data that could not have been given had one administered an instrument such as a questionnaire which tends to be narrowly focussed (Johnson & Christenson, 2014).

The qualitative approach helped in the selection of participants who were both information-rich and willing to participate in the study since the purposive sampling technique was also used (Thanh & Thahn, 2015; Creswell, 2014). This was valuable since it was not certain that all those who had their relatives working outside of the country could be ready to supply information about factors that influenced treatment given to children left behind by migrating parents.

Starman (2013) and Baskarada (2014) commend 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 was informed by the interpretive paradigm that emphasises the collection of natural data from subjective human beings (Creswell, 2013; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016).

The quantitative approach that seeks to establish, confirm or validate relationships could not apply in the present study since it was not premised on testing any known hypothesis about the schooling experiences of children left behind by biological parents (Creswell, 2013; Gray, 2014). Furthermore, the quantitative approach did not apply in this study since it holds that the social world exists externally calling for the measurement of its characteristics using objective methods (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016) which was not in tandem with the subjective human being who was the principal source of data in the present study.

The collection of data about school children is a sensitive exercise that calls for a sound recording of every episode and interpretation as the study unfolds. In that respect, Bory and Gall (2011) posit that qualitative research needs a holistic enquiry, more formal, subjective and inductive approach to problem-solving issues. It follows therefore that the study that sought to explore the effectiveness of parenting roles on the educational needs of learners be tackled using the qualitative approach where scrutiny of data needed to be done holistically (Creswell, 2014).

Every research study should be carried out within a methodological framework that will ensure that the objectives of embarking on the study are achieved. This framework is what is called research design. Smith (2007) defines a research design as a plan and structure of an investigation that one uses to obtain evidence to answer research questions. In another definition that seems to elaborate on Smith's (2007), Yin (2014) and Punch (2011) say a research design is a blueprint or overall plan of a piece of research that deals with the conceptual framework, questions to be asked, data relevant to the study, data to be collected and how the data are to be analysed and aims to avoid situations where evidence obtained does not address initial research questions. Others say research design is the overall strategy that a

researcher chooses to integrate the different components of the study coherently and logically thereby ensuring that one effectively addresses the research problem, it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Urus, 2013). Also, Akhtar (2016) refers to research design as an arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy and procedure thus suggesting it should provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the study about and, what type of data are required?
2. What is the purpose of the study?
3. What are the sources of needed data?
4. What should be the place or area of study?
5. What time, approximately, is required for the study?
6. What should be the number of materials or number of cases for the study?
7. What type of sampling should be used?
8. What method of data collection would be appropriate?
9. How will data be analysed?
10. What should be the appropriate expenditure?
11. What should be the specific nature of the study?

Drawing from the above conceptualisations and in line with this study's problem and the key objective of establishing how learners left behind were catered for in Mwenezi District for the ultimate intention of suggesting possible strategies to ease the challenges the learners face, the current researcher accordingly identified, described and integrated the various elements of research namely, participants and their characteristics, how the participants were selected, participants' relationship to the investigator, ways of collecting data, type of data sought and data-gathering instruments, data interpretation and analysis procedures, ethical considerations and trustworthiness issues. That way the design for the study was comprehensively given.

Various authors contend that research designs are distinguished by their paradigmatic orientation (Thanh & Thanh, 2015; Gray, 2014; Creswell, 2014). According to these authors, designs that are inclined to a positivist paradigm and those that generate numerate or quantifiable data such as surveys and experiments are called quantitative. On the other hand, those designs that are inclined to interpretivism paradigm that generate non-numerical data such as case studies and ethnographic studies fall in the qualitative category. In addition to the two methodological approaches, there is mixed methods research approach. According to Cameron (2015:3) “mixed methods research is research that involves collecting, analysing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a series of studies that investigate the same underlying phenomenon.” The major premise of mixed methods research is that there is better articulation and understanding of research problems when the two methodological approaches namely qualitative and quantitative are combined than when one is used. While that could be the case, this study adopted a qualitative descriptive case study design since it sought to get first-hand experiences, feelings and opinions of guardians, teachers and learners about the effectiveness of efforts put by biological parents, guardians and government in the provisions of educational needs to the learners and these feelings and experiences could not be quantified as quantitative designs demand.

While the qualitative research methodology generally befitted this study, it was envisaged that the study could be well articulated using the qualitative case study design. Yin (2014) refers to a case study as a strategy of doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence. More similarly, Creswell (2014) observes that a case study involves exploration and description of an event, people or individuals in natural form. What is striking from the two definitions is that the case study design could be used when

investigating phenomena in their natural settings. It is also clear from the definitions that one could gather data from many sources and possibly use different instruments in the same study when using a case study design. However, some authors do not regard a case study as either a method or design for data collection and analysis but only as a choice of what to study and further argue that other designs such as surveys and experiments may also make use of cases hence view it as a general approach of conducting research (Baskarada, 2014).

Baskarada (2014) observes that case studies can be applied in both qualitative and quantitative studies and that their choice is mostly dependent on the research question. In a related analysis, Cohen *et al.* (2011) observe that a case study should have a 'case' or object of study which should be a complex functioning unit, be investigated in its natural context with a multitude of methods and be contemporary. Yin (2013) states that a case study is used when: the focus of the study is to answer the how or why question, you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study, you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study or the boundaries are not clear between the phenomena and the context.

Furthermore, Baxter and Jack (2008) observe that a case needs to be bound, that is, deciding what one's case will not be to be specific and improve the feasibility of the study. The authors suggest that the cases can be bound concerning time and place, time and activity and definition and context. In the present study, two primary schools, heads and teachers who taught in those schools, learners who learnt at the identified schools and whose parents were working outside Zimbabwe and the guardians of those learners were the cases that were investigated to give their perceptions of the learners' schooling experiences in the absence of their parents who have migrated. The study also regards a case study as a research design.

There are several types of case studies that are largely distinguished by the philosophical views of various authors regarding the nature of knowledge and how knowledge can be known (Yin, 2014; Creswell, 2013; Baxter & Jack, 2008). Baxter and Jack (2008) further observe that case studies are classified according to whether one intends to describe a case, explore a case or compare between cases yet Starman (2013) posits that case studies are classified according to the time dimension and theory formation. Since the classification of types of case studies are inexhaustible and largely depended on the discipline under which one is studying, researchers generally choose types of case studies to use depending on what they want to explore, for what purpose, what they want to achieve and how they want to study (Urus, 2013). While this study was not informed by many case study types, the researcher felt that it could be better and more informing to the reader if some types of case studies could be briefly described and to show justification of the ones chosen for the study. In that regard, illustrative case study types by Yin (2014), Stake and Guba (1995) are analysed.

Some types of case studies as categorised by Stake (1995) are instrumental, intrinsic and collective (Creswell, 2014). Yin prefers to categorise them as explanatory, exploratory, descriptive and multiple case studies while Guba and Lincoln say there are factual, interpretive and evaluative case studies (Yin, 2013; Baskarada, 2014; Creswell, 2014). An illustrative description and analogue of some of these case study categories could help the reader discern the background to the types chosen in the present study.

Baskarada (2014) posit that intrinsic case studies are those studies in which the researcher has much interest in the phenomenon and wants to know more about it hence providing a deeper understanding of the case. Elucidating further, the author observes that such studies do not result in one conceptualising abstract constructs and cannot be based on when building a theory since it focuses only on a single case. Due to

that narrow focus, the results of intrinsic case studies, therefore, have limited transferability. This type of case study could not, therefore, apply in this study because the study was based on research questions that had to be responded to produce data that could be used to generate a model for assisting learners who were disadvantaged in education because of the absence of their parents who lived in the diaspora and rarely returned home. The other limitation of the intrinsic case study concerning this study was that it could not compare cases yet in this study, data had to be obtained from several cases where ideas and experiences were to be integrated to improve the worthiness of the study.

The other case study type by Stake (1995) is instrumental. The instrumental case study provides insight into an issue and hence enables the researcher to study the phenomenon of interest (Baxter & Jack, 2008). According to these authors under this case study type, the research question is important since it is from the research question where the phenomenon to be studied is derived. Cases are very important in instrumental case studies since the phenomenon is studied in the cases regarding how they experience it (Creswell, 2014). In that light, cases are treated as unique and it also enhances in-depth data to be gathered from various sources and could thus be used to refine existing theory (Yin, 2014).

Stake (1995) also talks of the collective case study. According to Johnson and Christenson (2014), a collective case study is similar to Yin's (2014) multiple case study. A collective/multiple case study is used when several cases are examined to understand similarities and differences between cases (Creswell, 2014). The goal of a collective/multiple case study is to replicate findings across cases hence is related to an instrumental case study in that both can accord more cases to be studied at the same time (Yin, 2014). This type of case study was suitable for the present study since the study was based on

stated research questions that had to be answered by different cases namely guardian parents, teachers, school heads and learners. Since several cases needed to respond to the research question, it too attracted the inclusion of a variety of instruments each commensurate with the demands of specific sub-questions hence some such tools included interview protocols and document analysis schedules.

Yin (2014) categorises case studies into four types namely, explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive and multiple case studies. According to Irene (2014), exploratory case studies are a prelude to other social research projects. They are carried out to define the questions and hypotheses of subsequent studies or determine the feasibility of the desired research (Baskarada, 2014). As postulated by Irene (2014), when we carry out exploratory studies, we test the applicability of our methodology ranging from the research paradigm, research instruments, and data collecting procedures, the research participants, and our choice of data analysis techniques and our bias as researchers. Creswell (2014) also adds and observes that an exploratory study helps us to find ways of perfecting our research design since it makes our weaknesses glare on our face. Guided by such advice, the researcher could not assume that the chosen methodology for the study was going to be perfect hence the inclusion of an exploratory study as the basis to improve data gathering instruments and other methodological-related issues especially after considering the sensitive nature of the study which involved among others interviewing minors (primary school learners) on their schooling experiences in the absence of their parents who had migrated to other countries.

The other case study categorisation by Yin (2014) is a descriptive case study. This case study type is similar to Guba and Lincoln's factual case study (Gray, 2014). According to Creswell (2014) in the descriptive case study category, an intervention or phenomenon is described in

detail in its real-life context. Since the present study intended to describe fully the schooling experiences under which learners left behind by migrating parents found themselves, it was opined that the descriptive case study type was adequately informing and more justifications for its choice are detailed later.

Yin also talks about the explanatory case study type. According to Creswell (2013), an explanatory case study is used when the intention is to answer 'how' and 'why' questions. Creswell further says it is used when our research question compels us to provide reasons or explanations to circumstances that link the object and the subject in a study. Since the present study was aimed at finding out how the educational needs of learners with parents in the diaspora were catered for in Mwenezi District, the researcher found it generally more descriptive than explanatory hence could not see the latter's major contribution even though some aspects of it are evident in the study. Due to the descriptive nature of the data that were sought in this study and the fact that the researcher collected the data from several cases namely school heads, teachers, learners and caregivers, the preferred terminology for the case study design is descriptive collective/multiple case study design.

Following extensive reading and analyses of various types of case studies and relating their major tenets to the research question and goal of the study, an appropriate case study type was chosen. Furthermore, after realising that the study sought descriptions of parenting efforts put in the provision of educational needs and experiences of learners who lived with non-biological parents, a bounded multi-site descriptive collective/multiple case study design was effectively adopted in the main study. A descriptive collective/multiple design was selected because the study involved the exploration of data from many cases that were supposed to give their experiences in detail and a real-life context (Starman, 2013; Irene, 2014;

Baskarada, 2014). The idea was to ensure that descriptions given by each of the respondents were integrated to form the basis of generating a model that could be used to institute welfare programs for learners whose parents migrate into the diaspora and rarely commit themselves to the children's educational welfare. Such an analysis could not be possible if for example an intrinsic case study type was employed because it lacks rigour and only focuses on a single case different from the present study that involved many cases. Urus (2013) outlines the utility of collective/multiple case studies as follows: help to develop a cross-case analysis to extend the theory, allow cross-case analysis and comparison and investigation of a particular phenomenon in diverse settings, enable prediction of similar results, help to produce contrasting results for predictable reasons, increase the generalisability of findings to theoretical propositions and yield more compelling and robust results than a single case study can increase methodological rigour of the study.

While case studies do not result in the generalisation of results due to their inductive nature, Filippa (2011) in a study in Zimbabwe on experiences of adolescents with parents in the diaspora commends the collective and descriptive case study designs in that they provide new insight into taken for granted phenomena as experiences are cross-pollinated among participants. In a related study on psychosocial effects of parental migration on children conducted by Zirima (2016) in the Mwenezi District, a descriptive collective/multiple case study design was adopted and generated detailed data that helped illuminate the challenges experienced by different groups of children. Likewise, a descriptive collective/multiple case study was appropriate in this study since it drew participants from a variety of cases inclusive of school heads, teachers, learners and caregivers who all viewed schooling experiences of learners left behind varyingly depending on what happened within their families or within the school system and that resonated with propositions of family systems theory to which the

study is grounded which contend that individuals perform different roles in families which roles help to bind families together. Similar views are shared by Yin (2014) who contends that a multiple case study design enables a researcher to explore differences within and between cases. From this view, the descriptive collective design further helped in broadening the scope of knowledge generated on schooling experiences of learners left behind since it accorded the researcher the opportunity to provide a comparative description of learner experiences from various sources involved in the welfare of the learners. In that way, the design also improved the research rigour and credibility of the results since the participants were rich in data due to their daily contact with the learners under the spotlight (Hancock & Algozzine, 2016).

The researcher drew the participants of the present study from a population that was rich in information required to respond to the research questions. 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 while Tuckman (2011) refers to it as the target group from which the researcher wants to get information about the problem or phenomenon of interest and then draw conclusions. 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. Drawing from all these conceptualisations of the population and guided by the key objective of the current qualitative study which aimed solely at

broadening an understanding of the schooling experiences of learners left behind rather than seeking to generalise the results to any group (Starman, 2013; Yin, 2014; Creswell, 2014), the population identified comprised people who were involved in various ways in the lives of learners whose biological parents were living outside Zimbabwe so that first-hand data could be gathered. The study was thus bounded on the quality of respondents to the research topic on experiences of participants on schooling needs provision to learners left behind and on that basis, the researcher found it plausible identifying a population rich in anticipated data although results from a qualitative approach would not be generalised to some such other members due to a small sample involved (Creswell, 2014; Hancock & Algozzine, 2016; Patton, 2015). The members of the population all residing or working in Mwenezi District were: primary, school heads, primary school teachers, guardians of learners whose parents were living outside Zimbabwe, learners whose biological parent(s) was/were living outside Zimbabwe and those learners who were attending school in the Mwenezi District during the study period.

It was anticipated that guardians and teachers who taught 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, socio-economic and cognitive support that are essential for child upkeep and socialisation in general respectively. 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 were better placed to supply information about the learners they taught. Similarly, guardians who stayed with these learners and were 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) were considered appropriate

respondents. Furthermore, the learners left behind themselves were better placed to narrate their experiences and how they coped with schooling under the care of non-biological parents.

While an information rich population was identified, data were gathered from only a sample of the population. 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's (2014) analysis indicates that population and sample share similar characteristics and are only distinguished by numbers. Drawing from that logic, therefore, the researcher selected two primary schools from which teachers and heads who taught learners whose parents have emigrated from the Mwenezi District could be found. Studies related to this one done before largely focused on the experiences of adolescents (mainly secondary school or post-secondary school learners in Zimbabwe) (Filippa, 2011; Dube, 2014; Kufakurinani *et al.*, 2014) leaving out primary school learners. While Zirima (2016) conducted a related study in Mwenezi District on children aged between four and eleven years, the focus was on the psycho-social effects of parental migration on such children marginally different from the present study whose focus was on the schooling experiences of the learners with parents in the diaspora.

Anney (2014) identifies two types of sampling namely, probability sampling where every member of the study population has a chance to be selected into the sample due to a random sampling procedure which is done and non-probability sampling in which the probability of being selected is not known since the researcher has the freedom to select participants he or she thinks will provide the desired data

(Creswell, 2014). Considering the qualitative nature of the case study design adopted in the present study as informed by the interpretivist paradigm also chosen for the study with subsequent thrust on gathering detailed data from information rich respondents in a natural set-up, non-probability sampling techniques were preferable and adopted to select participants who could give their experiences of parental styles and their impact on the education of learners left behind by parents who were staying in other countries such as South Africa, Namibia and Botswana.

Some non-probability sampling techniques are judgemental/purposive, convenience, snowball and quota sampling (Gray, 2014; Creswell, 2013; Baskarada, 2014; Anney, 2014; Starman, 2013). Although non-probability sampling was preferred, not all techniques in this category were used in the present study since the researcher viewed others to be less appropriate regarding applicability to the research question. However, to enrich the reader and for justification of exclusion and inclusion of some of the techniques, a brief description of some of them follows.

The researcher had to choose the most fitting technique from among the various sampling techniques. One of the common non-probability sampling techniques is purposive sampling also known as the judgemental sampling technique in which the researcher chooses a sample that he or she thinks has information that will help address the research question (Grinnell & Unrau, 2008). As these authors view it, the idea of purposive sampling is to obtain the most characteristic representation of attributes that will serve the purpose of the study.

Besides purposive sampling, the other non-probability sampling technique is convenient sampling also known as grab, opportunity, accidental or haphazard and it involves drawing a sample from that part of the population which is close to hand or readily available and

convenient to the researcher (Anney, 2014; Baskarada, 2014; Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). Though convenient sampling has the disadvantage that it cannot allow generalisations of results to the study population since it may not be representative of that population, its major positive attribute is that the researcher will never run out of participants from which data could be gathered since anyone within the study population could provide data as long as they are available to the researcher (Anney, 2014). Despite the above-stated advantage of the convenient sampling technique, it was not adopted in this study because it was reasoned that it could probably distort findings since it gave room for even participants not rich in the required information about schooling experiences of learners left behind to contribute based on their availability to the researcher.

The other non-probability sampling technique is quota sampling. Yin (2014) observes that quota sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where the population is first segmented into mutually exclusive sub-groups and after which purposive or convenient or both techniques can be used to select the sample from each sub-group according to the proportion of the sub-group in the overall study population. Quota sampling ensures that all the different population categories are captured to represent their unique group in the study (Gray, 2014). However, according to Creswell (2014) if the technique is simply used to try to please a certain group within the population then it will not serve the real purpose of conducting a study. In that respect, Cohen *et al.* (2011) advise that researchers should select sub-groups for genuine reasons and after due consideration of the intended outcome of the study and the perceived population's probability of supplying the desired data. Since the present study desired qualitative data obtainable from in-depth interviews, the researcher felt that quotas were largely not warranted and hence could not adopt them.

Snowball sampling or chain referral is another non-probability sampling technique where a researcher selects a small number of subjects who have characteristics of the intended participants and then uses this small group to identify others who share similar attributes that are of interest to the researcher (Cohen *et al.*, 2011, Dragan & Maniu, 2013). Dragan and Maniu (2013) further commend that the snowball sampling technique is used when the researcher is dealing with hidden populations or populations on which there is no official information. While official information could not be there on the demography of learners affected by parental migration, the status of being a left-behind learner could not be regarded as a hidden one in Zimbabwe though sensitive in the sense that some such learners are susceptible to abuse by caregivers or by other people to the extent that their experiences remain closely guarded (Zirima, 2016). In that light, the learners may only be privy to their experiences and may not know what happens to others in similar circumstances hence the inapplicability of snowball sampling in the present study.

In this study, school heads, teachers, guardians and learners whose parents lived outside Zimbabwe were purposively selected. These respondents were chosen based on their involvement in the education and welfare of learners left behind and were seen as better equipped to describe and explain their experiences of parental involvement in the education of such learners in the Mwenezi District of Zimbabwe. The researcher used the personal experience of having worked in the district for fifteen years as a teacher and administrator in schools to choose two primary schools from a cluster of schools where many parents of school going age children usually migrate to neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Botswana. It was from those two schools that learners who had biological parents living outside Zimbabwe were selected. Consideration was made that to get the most detailed data, this could be obtained from learners who have been living under the care of non-biological parents for longer periods

hence class teachers were asked to rank their learners according to the period the learners could have spent staying with guardians due to biological parents' absence because of out-migration. The researcher opted for six learners because they all provided data in semi-structured interviews that allowed probing until data saturation could be attained. For guardians, teachers at each of the two schools identified them because they had records of learners and their parents hence could easily tell which learner stayed with who. Two primary school heads were automatically selected based on the inclusion of the schools they head. The table below summarises the selected sample and the key data generation tools associated with each category of the samples.

Table 4.1: Sample

CATEGORY	No.	DATA GENERATION TOOLS
Primary school learners with parents in the diaspora	6	Face-to-face key participant interview schedule
Primary school heads	2	Face-to-face key participant interview schedule
Primary school teachers	13	Focus group interview protocol
Guardians	6	Face-to-face key participant interview schedule
TOTAL	27	

Data were gathered using tools that were deemed appropriate for each category of participants. According to Liz (2007), research tools are designed to measure the variables' characteristics or information of interest. Since data generation tools seek to gather a specific type of information, it then follows that different categories of research will call for some specific type of tools. For example, quantitative research

designs such as surveys, tests and experiments that seek to generate statistical data may be better carried out using closed questionnaires where answers are provisionally suggested and to accommodate large samples that are usually involved (Creswell, 2014). However, Creswell (2014) further argues that the same cannot happen with qualitative designs where detailed descriptions and explanations of phenomena of interest may be required from the respondents. In that respect, this study which sought to gather data from participants in their real-life context could be better done using tools that promote respondent flexibility in answering questions hence semi-structured interview schedules for school heads, guardians and learners and focus group interview protocols for teachers were administered. In addition to the identified data generation tools, a document analysis guide was used too to analyse learners' school attendance and academic achievement from attendance registers and academic progress reports respectively. The selected data generation tools are further described below.

One important data generation tool for the present study was an interview. An interview is a conversation between two or more people sharing their views on a particular phenomenon (Gray, 2014; Urus, 2013; Creswell, 2014). Cohen (2011) observe that interviews enable participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regard situations from their point of view and commend that an interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used; verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard. In that respect, one can largely conclude that an interview is a suitable instrument to use when the intention is to gather qualitative data where participants ought to explore their experiences of a phenomenon. According to Gray (2014), in an interview, there is an interviewer who initiates questions and an interviewee whose responsibility is largely to respond to the questions asked by the interviewer though he or she might ask questions as well. Interviews vary depending on the nature of the topic being discussed and the type

of information being sought by the interviewer from the interviewee, the social distance or relationship between the researcher and the participants and the context of the whole interview process (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

While some interviews may require an interviewee and an interviewer to sit down and discuss an issue face to face, other interviews may be conducted by telephone yet others can be done through questionnaires (Creswell, 2013; Gray, 2014). The other categorisation is that some interviews may involve two people only, that is an interviewer and an interviewee (key participant interview) while others may involve an interviewer discussing a topic with many interviewees at the same time and this latter type is referred to as focus group interview (Makonese, 2012). In both cases, the choice of which approach to use depends on the information sought and the characteristics of the respondents concerning the questions to be answered. Interviews are also grouped according to how the interviewer intends to ask questions and his or her preferred quality of responses thus structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews (Urus, 2013; Makonese, 2012). These are briefly described below.

According to Urus (2013:93), structured interviews refer to “questions that are defined in advance and the interviewee has limited choices in answering them.” Structured interviews thus do not accord the respondents the leeway to explore the topic under investigation in detail. It shows that it is largely suitable in contexts where the participants are controlled and where the researcher has hypotheses that he or she needs to test. One would observe that it is largely suitable for such designs as surveys where large samples can be used to quickly gather data since responses can be given through circling or ticking preferred responses (Gray, 2014). The other advantage of a structured interview is that data analysis is easy since responses will be available and hence less varied.

Despite such strengths, structured interviews may not produce credible results most particularly so if employed in qualitative studies such as the current one where in-depth exploration of factors that influence parental systems was sought since it could not accord the participants the opportunity to describe and explain the circumstances in detail from their own experiences (Creswell, 2014). The other disadvantage of a structured interview concerning this study is that it is too artificial where the researcher has much independence on which questions to ask and which ones to avoid yet this study being qualitative required a natural set-up where the intention was to collect data obtained from less formalised encounters with the participants.

The other interview type is unstructured which is largely divergent from the structured interview. Unstructured interviews have fewer pre-defined questions and are more open-ended questions that intend to explore the interviewee's opinions in detail (Urus, 2013; Creswell, 2014). Concerning unstructured interviews, (Urus, 2013) argues that though the interviewer is the one who principally needs information from the interviewee, the relationship between the two is more equal than under structured interviews. The author further observes that in unstructured interviews, few questions are asked at the beginning just to introduce a topic and open a discussion and everything that follows is neither controlled by the interviewer nor by the interviewee. It, therefore, allows for the gathering of data in a natural environment and tends to be realistic. However, there are high chances that if not well directed, the discussion may end up picking issues that are irrelevant to the topic under investigation (Creswell, 2013). According to Yin (2014), its other weakness is that it usually generates a lot of data some of which may not be of any benefit to the researcher hence posing challenges to data analysis. It may however be used to generate sub-topics which may be separately explored in future. Though this study is qualitative and informed by an interpretivist paradigm that promotes the gathering of data in a real-life context, the

unstructured interview type could not be wholly adopted in the interest of serving time and partial adherence to suggested questions that possibly directed participants to respond to the dictates of the topic under investigation.

The third type of interview is the semi-structured interview. According to Urus (2013), a semi-structured interview sits in between the structured and unstructured interview types in that predefined questions should be established through the answers to the questions are not limited and that other questions could be asked during the interview. Gray (2014) says semi-structured interviews, are interviews that are focused around areas of particular interest yet still allow flexibility and are generally used to gain a detailed picture of beliefs and/or perceptions of a subject on a particular topic and are particularly well suited to gain insight into personal issues. Yin (2014); Gray (2014); Creswell (2013); Urus (2013) list the following characteristics of semi-structured interviews:

- it allows both the researcher and the respondents to discuss questions that are not clear so that they can be clarified and answered to the satisfaction of both parties.
- it enables the researcher to make follow-up questions to the participants' responses hence enhancing the gathering of exhaustive and new insights that could not be possible under structured interviews.
- the pre-defined questions ensure that the discussion is largely on target to address the phenomenon under investigation.
- it builds rapport between the researcher and the respondents thus likely to result in truthful data being provided.

Semi-structured interviews were administered to school heads, caregivers and learners left behind. While this study adopted a qualitative approach which tends to be inductive where the researcher could enter the field without prepared questions as is done in other

research designs such as surveys, it was opined that some questions were necessary for purposes of guiding the respondents since the topic being left behind was seen as sensitive especially to learners in that it provokes emotions (Zirima, 2016). Prepared questions ensured that the researcher was in control, and ready to direct participants to keep the research focus and avoid situations whereby the participants could end up supplying data irrelevant to the key research question on how learners left behind by emigrants' educational needs were catered for in Mwenzi District. However, Bhattacharjee (2012) advises that while questions could be prepared in advance, caution should be made to ensure that the researcher does not impose pre-conceived ideas on the participants but allow more room for the latter to empty their views regarding the topic at stake. Noting and respecting such views, however, the researcher felt that since interviews were done with primary school learners and caregivers probably new to interview experiences, especially with a stranger (researcher) it was necessary that guiding questions were there to introduce the topic to the learners and this also boosted rapport between the researcher and the interviewees in a way different from what could have happened had no hints been given at all.

Filippa *et al.* (2013) in a study in Zimbabwe where they sought to establish coping strategies for children left behind by emigrants noted that the topic induced stress on the children left behind and hence needed face-to-face encounters when one intends to seek data from the children. Semi-structured interviews that were conducted face to face between the researcher and individual participants also helped the researcher focus on similar or more related questions to various categories of participants and this eased cross-pollination of data at the analysis level since related themes emerged from the data collected. Furthermore guiding questions only meant that there was room for probing thus facilitating thick descriptions and such a procedure dovetailed into the descriptive case study design that was adopted for

the study. Semi-structured interview approach was seen as more appropriate to school heads after considering their busy schedule that required a carefully planned time frame and this was only possible through engaging them in discussions that were somehow directed since it helped serve time as opposed to what could have happened had the heads were not partially controlled. Generally, it was based on these attributes of the semi-structured interview that it was selected and used in the present study. The interview type allowed the researcher to immerse in the life worlds of the respondents hence facilitating easy capture of data suitable to the study.

The focus group interview was selected for its various strengths relating to the present study. Irene (2015) defines an interview as a data-gathering technique that brings the researcher in close contact with the participants. In a group interview, therefore, the researcher interacts with more than one interviewee at the same time. Makonese (2012) observes that focus group interviews help in the production of thick descriptions since participants can debate on issues raised by the interviewer depending on how they experience the phenomenon thereby generating detailed data that could be possibly not achieved in a personal or face-to-face interview. One can further deduce from such an analysis and observe that focus group interviews are semi-structured interviews and their success can be largely enhanced by careful selection of participants and planning of the context under which the interviews can be carried out. A researcher adopting the focus group interview technique should therefore select participants who are homogeneous in terms of how they understand the phenomenon under study and how they relate naturally in day-to-day life (Patton, 2015; Tuckman, 2011; Holloway & Wheeler, 2012). For this study, therefore, two focus group interviews were conducted, one at each of the two primary schools and both involved teachers who taught learners who lived under the care of guardians and those who made it into the sample.

Conducting focus group interviews involving teachers who taught at the same schools was done to improve the participation of the respondents since they knew each other and were open about what they observed and experienced about learners with parents in the diaspora with respect to their role as educators. Also, engaging teachers in focus group discussions helped in the generation of scholarly data that not only were descriptive but explanatory as well since the teachers gave their opinions as to what they thought could be done to improve parenting styles in households where parents and children lived separately. In other words focus group technique when administered to homogeneous and informed participants such as teachers who participated in the present study results in data saturation as debates and various experiences were extensively shared. What the researcher experienced in the focus group discourses was also echoed by Holloway and Wheeler (2012) who commend that in a focus group discussion, researchers interview participants with common characteristics or experiences to elicit ideas, thoughts and perceptions about specific topics or certain issues linked to an area of interest.

Besides the in-depth interview guide, the other tool used was a document analysis guide or template to analyse class attendance registers, welfare registers and academic progress records to establish school attendance, the probability of inclusion in welfare programmes and performance ratings of learners whose parents were not living in Mwenzi District respectively. Content analysis is a non-interactive method of data collection where the researcher makes use of information collected earlier by someone else without the intention of fulfilling the purposes which the present study intends to address (Yin, 2014; Gray, 2014; Creswell, 2013). For this study, class attendance registers were analysed since they contained official information pertinent to the challenges of school attendance and completion rate that too indicated school coping challenges by learners left behind by

parents who lived in the diaspora. Attendance registers also provided information concerning the orphanhood status of the learners and parental occupations hence quite valuable in this study that sought to establish how the learners learnt in the absence of their biological parents. Official documents are largely a reflection of reality on the ground. Cohen *et al.* (2011:249) say, "Documentary research typically makes use of documents produced previously and by others, rather than in the process of the research or by the researcher." One can therefore largely rely on the authenticity of the data obtained from natural documents since the documents are more likely to be clear of any possible bias from either the researcher or the respondent. Recognising the above positive features of document analysis, the researcher was however aware that documents could be incomplete and littered with errors thus likely to present credibility challenges (Creswell, 2013; Gray, 2014) hence triangulated the documents to cross-check congruence between learners' attendance from registers with written work in their exercise books.

While key participant interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis were the principal tools used to gather data in this study, some data were obtained through the compilation of notes about the researcher's reflections during interaction with the participants in the course of collecting data. According to Gray (2014), field notes record the feelings of the researcher about the researcher's experiences during data gathering. Stewart (2010) comments that field notes about what the researcher knows and how he or she knows it should be continuously taken as they help to expose the researchers' preconceptions and possible bias due to previous experiences hence forming the basis on how readers will evaluate study worthiness. In a related analysis, Creswell (2014:235) appraises reflexivity and comments:

In qualitative research, the inquirer reflects on how their role in the study and their background, culture, and experiences hold potential for shaping their interpretations, such as the themes they advance and the meaning they ascribe to the data. This aspect of the method is more than merely advancing biases and values in the study, but how the background of the researcher actually may shape the direction of the study.

Though the intention was to carry out a scientific inquiry, it should be acknowledged that the researcher being a subjective human being and an experienced educator with his own experiences and preconceptions about learner caring strategies, could have affected the study results in one way or the other. This was the basis on which note-taking was done to enable reflection later and it worked.

There are one hundred and twenty-seven primary schools in the Mwenezi District from which a sample of two primary schools was drawn. Since the current researcher was born, bred and worked in the district as a teacher for fifteen years, the task of selecting the study sites was easy. The researcher selected schools from a cluster where he once worked and witnessed huge emigration of parents into South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. Since the study adopted a qualitative approach that sought in-depth data from the respondents, it was opined that areas that lost huge numbers of parents into the diaspora could be fertile ground for learners left behind hence good sources of data that could help answer the research question. Furthermore, the place is known to the researcher and is accessible hence anticipation was that maximum support from the school authorities would be obtained.

The choice of cases was guided by study research questions. Thus, the fact that the intention was to generate detailed natural data about how the educational needs of learners left behind were catered for meant that the selection of cases was to be based on those that were immersed in the phenomenon so that first-hand information could be obtained.

As such teachers, school heads, guardians and learners who were also willing to participate were selected. These cases were selected from the identified study sites.

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 participants, and type of data one intends to generate. It follows therefore that one needs to use research tools effectively so that all data availed by the participants will not be lost.

This study adopted a descriptive collective case study with a strong inclination to the collection of descriptive data from participants in their real-life contexts. To do that, the research instruments namely face-to-face key participant interview protocols, focus group interview schedules and content analysis guides were employed and this was done so that detailed data could be gathered from various sources to improve research worthiness (Yin, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2011).

Face-to-face key participant interviews were administered to two school heads, six learners and six guardians. Since the study sought rich and in-depth qualitative data from these participants on their views of parental care on the educational needs of learners left behind, semi-structured interview guides were prepared to guide the research process so that focus of the study would not be lost (Gray, 2014; Creswell, 2013). Interview questions were drawn from sub-research questions where respondents were asked to give their views on learning experiences and challenges faced by learners with parents in

the diaspora and the role of various stakeholders in the educational needs of the learners.

Prior to the collection of data, permission was sought from responsible authorities and participants for their consent. Realising that the bulk of the respondents were teachers and learners, permission to visit schools was sought from the permanent secretary Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the Masvingo Provincial Education Director. Further permission was also sought from the Mwenezi District Schools Inspector and heads of schools where data were collected. In the case of learners, consent was obtained from their guardians and their assent was sought too.

After permission was granted to conduct the study, the second step was to seek consent from the prospective samples. After that was successfully done, timetables for each group of participants and individuals were made in consultation with the responsible authorities and the concerned members. Timetabling was done to ensure that all purposively selected participants who were information-rich would be available on the particular days and times when they were interviewed.

Before the actual data collection process began, the selected samples were assembled at each study site and briefed on the purpose of the study, and the expected procedures to collect data which in this case were face-to-face interviewing, focus group interviewing and document analysis. It was at this stage that an informed consent form was provided for each participant to sign. In the informed consent form, participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and hence were free to withdraw from the study without any repercussions. Secondly, they were advised that the study or the researcher was not going to harm them in any way. Instead, the results of the study could benefit them if recommendations could be taken up

by the government in future to improve educational welfare programmes for learners left behind by parents who stayed in other countries. The participants were also assured that they would be consulted to verify their contributions before the presentation and publication of the results.

To capture everything said by the participants in the oral interviews, a tape recorder was used to record the contributions of the interviewees and the respondents were made aware of this arrangement before the interviews to clear any suspicion that could have emanated from such and to ensure that respondents could be free to supply as much detail as they could. The tape recordings were to be kept in the researcher's password proof computer for at least three years before disposal to ensure that the information remained confidential and for future reference in case of any possible issues that could be raised by the participants against the content of the study. Furthermore, the researcher committed himself to keep privacy on everything that would be discussed to allow respondents to open up and supply qualitative in-depth data.

After rapport was built by being open and after supplying the respondents with all the information concerning the context under which the study was to be conducted, the researcher then embarked on the actual collection of data. Initially, it took two days to collect data from each of the two study sites. On the first day at each site, the researcher conducted focus group interviews with the selected primary school teachers. Due to probing that was done, focus group sessions took one hour to one hour thirty minutes per session. Focus group interviews were followed by face-to-face key participant interviews with learners and each session lasted for about thirty minutes. Furthermore, data were also collected during member checking thus data collection period stretched to six months.

The second day involved face-to-face key participant interviews with the school head and guardians. In addition to interviewing school heads and guardians, admission registers, class registers and academic progress reports of the learners were analysed too to establish enrolment patterns, attendance and performance progress respectively. The researcher got immersed into the data immediately after every encounter with the participants to discern meanings of everything said whilst fresh. Analysing the data during data collection helped the researcher further improve questioning techniques hence research rigour (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2016).

The other documents analysed were welfare programme beneficiaries' registers at the respective schools. This was done to check the level of inclusiveness in school policies concerning different categories of vulnerable learners at the schools. The vulnerable learners searched for included orphans, those with disabilities, those with terminally ill parents, children of old aged parents and children who were vulnerable because their parents had migrated leaving them under the care of other parents or staying alone.

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 conformability corresponding to objectivity. Accordingly, since this study is a qualitative case study rooted in the interpretive paradigm where reality is discovered through participants' views and experiences of the phenomenon under study, its rigour was established qualitatively; what has come to be known in research as trustworthiness? In that respect, terms that relate to trustworthiness are hereby expounded on.

One way to establish research rigour in qualitative research is to test research credibility. According to Anney (2014), credibility relates to the truthfulness of research results. Strategies that can be used to establish credibility include triangulation, prolonged exposure to the phenomenon, member checking, peer examination, time sampling, reflexivity, interview technique, and structural coherence among others (Anney, 2014; Thanh & Thanh, 2015; Creswell, 2013; Gray, 2014; Yin, 2014).

One strategy used in the present study to improve credibility was triangulation which is defined by Thanh and Thanh (2015) as a strategy of gathering data from various sources, and use of different data types or researchers in a single study. In line with the above definition, Anney (2014) categorises triangulation into three types namely investigator triangulation, data triangulation/informants triangulation and methodological triangulation and commends that triangulation helps to reduce bias, and cross-examines the integrity of participants' responses and enhances data quality. These ideas were made use of and methodological triangulation involved face-to-face key participant interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis. Data obtained through the use of all these techniques were compared and corroborated accordingly. In addition to the triangulated data gathering techniques, data were also obtained from various participants who were rich in information to do with the schooling life of learners left behind by their biological parents based outside Zimbabwe and these included school heads, guardians and learners left behind.

Besides, methodological triangulation, the time of data collection was stretched over six months including the initial interview, follow-ups and member checking stages during which time the researcher interacted with the participants and immersed himself in the life world of participants and this helped in building rapport. According to Yin

(2014), good rapport with participants helps to build trust and subsequently leads to the participants emptying issues that could not be told to a stranger. Since the study sought in-depth experiences of the respondents' feelings and their analysis of the role of biological parents, guardians and government in satisfying the educational needs of learners left by emigrants, it followed therefore that there was a need for the researcher to be part of the participants' community to have sensitive information released from the participants.

The participants in this study were accorded the opportunity to confirm the results of the study. This was done by taking the results of the study back to the participants so that the researcher's interpretation of the information provided by the participants could be verified. This was done to ensure that both parties shared similar data. To facilitate member checking, participants' verbal responses were audiotaped during data gathering and then played later at the stage of member checking. Thanh and Thanh (2015) commend member checking in that other than clarification of what could have been said by the participant during the interview, new or additional perspectives on the issue under study could be raised thereby improving the credibility of the study. True to the above observation, clarifications and corrections were done in the present study upon taking the findings to the two school heads who participated in the study.

The other technique adopted to improve the credibility of the present study was keeping of field journal or reflexivity. Reflexivity concerns keeping and maintenance of field notes where the researcher records observations, and own feelings about the phenomenon or the participants as the researcher experiences them in the field in a real-life context (Creswell, 2013). Keeping notes helps in that even the researcher can also evaluate self and improve on biases recorded based on one's prior experiences or held views before one immerses himself in the study. If one becomes aware of one's biases, there are high

chances that the biases can be corrected resulting in the recording of credible data. Accordingly, all notes were recorded as the researcher interacted with the participants.

Research rigour in qualitative research can also be established through testing its transferability. Transferability is the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents (Thanh & Thanh (2015). According to Anney (2014), transferability can be established through thick description and purposeful sampling. Thick description can be done by critically describing and outlining the whole research process from the methodology used to research questions, techniques of data collection and context under which data were collected to the production of the final report so that other interested researchers can also replicate the study elsewhere to see if similar results could be obtained (Anney, 2014). In this respect, a detailed analysis of the chosen interpretive paradigm, qualitative collective case study research design, research instruments, samples and sampling techniques, data gathering, data presentation and analysis procedures were done through reading and re-reading to ensure that the whole research process was intact. In addition to these, research ethics applicable to the present study were outlined as recorded somewhere in this book together with research limitations so that whoever would be interested in replicating it could do so. However, even though thick descriptions were done, it should be noted that this study could not be transferred to any context or to participants who are not involved in the care of learners with absent parents. This is so because the study was drawn from two schools only with a sample of six learners whose biological parents lived outside Zimbabwe, thirteen teachers who were teaching those learners, six guardians and two school heads from the schools where these learners learnt. The argument is that such a small sample could only provide in-depth data that is particular to the selected members hence results may not be transferrable to other groups since contexts may differ.

However, the results of the study could be a valuable springboard on which welfare programmes for the education of disadvantaged learners could be built.

The third trustworthiness measurement in qualitative research is dependability. It is defined as the stability of findings over time (Anney, 2014). Anney (2014) further observes that dependability can be established through; audit trail, stepwise replication, code-recode strategy and peer examination.

According to Cohen *et al.* (2011), an audit trail is an examination of the inquiry process and product to validate the data and it involves the researcher accounting for all the research decisions and activities to show techniques used to collect, record and analyse data. To put in place a clear audit of the present study, raw data, that is, field notes and audios recorded during data collection were kept so that whoever may need to check the authenticity of the analysed data can refer to the raw data to verify the data. Information concerning the research process was shared with other researchers during such moments as thesis defence and weaknesses identified were improved. Besides, one high school English teacher helped in reviewing the transcripts translated by the researcher from the Shona language that was used to collect from data with learners and guardians. Other than the fact that the teacher could translate English, she hailed from the area where the participants of the study were drawn so could pick every dialectical issues that could have ensued. Furthermore, the input of research supervisors was made use of strictly.

The fourth and final construct of qualitative research that was considered in this study was confirmability. Anney (2014) refers to confirmability as the degree to which the results of an inquiry could be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers where they establish that the results of the study are a true reflection of what could have

happened in the field rather than the researcher's imaginations. Other researchers can corroborate findings if they have verified them and this can be done through audit trails, reflexive journals, and triangulation (Anney, 2014; Creswell, 2014). To ensure that the results of the present study were confirmed, all field notes were safely kept and made available to anyone who would like to see them. In addition to recording and keeping field notes, data were obtained from various sources namely teachers, school heads, guardians, learners and from class registers, academic performance reports and welfare registers. In addition to these different data sources, interviews and document analysis were also used to collect data so that data could be corroborated.

The other technique used by the researcher in a bid to improve the worthiness of the study was pilot testing. Gray (2014) observes that a pilot study is a trial run-through to test the research design with a subsample of respondents who have characteristics similar to those identifiable in the main sample to be surveyed. The pilot study allows any potential problems in the proforma of the research instrument to be identified and corrected. One can thus say this trial is a prerequisite in research since it provides the opportunity to refine and develop sound instruments and the procedures for conducting the actual project. Kilanowski (2011) outlines the vitality of the pilot study as follows:

- To identify design and methodological problems
- To establish the feasibility of recruitment and retention procedures.
- To test the feasibility of protocols, and interventions.
- To estimate the effect of size.
- To determine the time required to administer an instrument.
- To assess preliminary data about reliability, readability and applicability of an instrument.

To develop calculated costs of an intervention and budget justification.

To refine analysis procedures.

The study, therefore, informs both process and outcome and the researcher had to administer it.

The pilot study was done at different schools from which the main study was carried out. The respondents were asked to evaluate the research instruments and the content of the questions for possible modification to produce one that would improve the worthiness of the main study (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). Accordingly, some research questions were modified because of the input of participants in the pilot study.

Resnik (2011) defines 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. Three major aspects cited by researchers as crucial to the keeping of the rightful ethical code relate to privacy, confidentiality and informed consent (Creswell, 2014, Yin, 2013). Gray (2013) suggests that respondents should be given an informed consent form before they participate which should include the following:

The aims of the research.

Identity of the researcher.

Characteristics and composition of participants.

Kind of information being sought.

The participant's time required.

That participation is voluntary.

That responding to all questions is voluntary.

People who will use the data.

Preservation of respondents' anonymity.

That data collected is the data to be used at last.

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 so that permission could be granted to get into schools. It was successfully done. Assent was sought for the learners to participate. None of the participants was asked to identify themselves by name. The introductory part of the interview schedule assured the participants that the researcher would commit himself to keep privacy and confidentiality. The participants were also told to withdraw from participating at any time whenever they thought or felt that their participation would negatively affect them or on any other personal grounds.

Once the data are collected, it needs to be analysed. Creswell (2014:245) says data analysis, “involves segmenting and taking apart the data (like peeling back the layers of an onion) and putting it back.” In a more related conceptualisation of data analysis, Filippa (2011:54) comments, “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 interpretations, 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 study adopted a qualitative case study design that aimed to generate textual, descriptive, narratives, actual quotations and memos as data types (Creswell, 2014; Creswell, 2013; Filippa, 2011).

There are several data analysis approaches under qualitative research ranging from hermeneutics, narratives/performance, discourse,

grounded theory, ethnographic, phenomenological, content, and inductive analysis among others and one's choice is depended on one's research questions, the design and instruments used to gather data, data type and the intended beneficiary of the data (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014; Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2016; Filippa, 2011). However, despite this long list of data analysis approaches, it should be acknowledged that in real practice these approaches largely share more similarities than differences hence reference is made to a variety of them in the current discussion. Cognisant of that fact though, the present study is analysed using qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis (Vaisimoradi *et al.*, 2016) since the approaches were viewed by the researcher as more elaborate, detailed and fitting to analysing textual and naturalistic data that are usually generated from multiple sources in this qualitative descriptive case study.

Cohen *et al.* (2011) define content analysis as a process by which huge volumes of textual or pictorial data are summarised and classified into fewer categories that are easy to comprehend. The authors commend the approach in that; a researcher can analyse data unobtrusively without the cases being aware that they are being analysed, it is systematic and can be verified since the data will be permanently written down on paper, and it improves research worthiness since data gathered in the natural context of the participants will be analysed. In the present study, this approach was used in the analysis of official documents namely class attendance registers, academic progress reports and child welfare registers to depict attendance trends, performance and schools' welfare policies respectively. Since various records were analysed, corroboration of data were made possible and this improved research credibility as well.

Vaisimoradi *et al.* (2016) view qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis as complementary approaches that can be used in the same

study to enhance understanding of results. In their analysis of thematic analysis, Vaisimoradi *et al.* (2016:101) begin by conceptualising the theme which they characterise as follows:

- the main product of data analysis
- used as an attribute, descriptor, element and concept
- an implicit topic that organises a group of repeating ideas
- it enables researchers to answer the study question
- contains codes that have a common point of reference
- has a high degree of generality that unifies ideas regarding the subject of inquiry
- has subthemes or subdivisions

Thematic analysis is thus a qualitative research analysis approach in which themes that emerge from the data gathered form the basis of analysing and interpreting data. In this respect, Vaisimoradi *et al.* (2016:103) indicate the importance of theme and give phases and stages of theme development thus:

Table. 4.2: Vaisimoradi, Jones, Turunen and Snelgrove theme analysis

Phases	Stages
Initialisation	-reading transcriptions and highlighting units -coding and looking for abstractions in participants' accounts
Construction	-classifying -comparing -labelling -translating and translitering -defining and describing
Rectification	-relating themes to establish knowledge -stabilising
Finalisation	-developing the storyline

While these author's 'take' places much emphasis on phases and stages of theme development in both qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis, Creswell (2014:247) outlines steps that researchers ought to consider when analysing qualitative data and arrange them from bottom to the top as raw data (transcripts, field notes, images), organising and preparing data for analysis, reading through all data, coding the data (hand or computer), themes description, interrelating themes/description and interpreting the meaning of themes/descriptions. However, Creswell (2014:245) says "Data analysis in qualitative research will proceed hand-in-hand with other parts of developing the qualitative study, namely, the data collection and the write-up of findings." In this respect, the identified steps are thus guidelines that may not be strictly followed in the given order.

The current researcher made use of the above authors' guidelines in the analysis of the results of this study. To begin with, the researcher recorded all data from personal and focus group interviews using a tape recorder during the sessions to ensure that correct raw data were always available. Besides tape-recorded data, notes were also recorded in a notebook where important accounts of the participants were captured during field visits. These data were interrogated through repeated reading to establish the general impression of the participants. de Hoyos and Barnes (2012) opine that repeated reading leads to data coding where the concern of the participants is established resulting in the segmentation of paragraphs, sentences and images into categories.

According to Vaisimoradi *et al.* (2016:102) "category refers to the descriptive level of text and is an explicit manifestation of the participants' account." The process of data categorisation was important in this study which intended to gather as much natural data

as possible. It was from these descriptive data in categories that themes could be developed from emerging data. For this study, narrations were captured verbatim across the various participants and comparisons were made against individuals, groups of participants and from information gathered from documents to establish key issues as raised by the participants.

Data coding (marking various sections of the text that seem to have the same theme) (Filippa, 2011) was done manually using coloured pencils. Creswell (2014:248) identifies three categories of codes which are: codes on topics that readers would expect to find, codes that are surprising and were not anticipated at the beginning of the study and codes that are unusual and that are in and of themselves, of conceptual interest to readers.

Since this study is a qualitative case study principally embedded in the interpretive paradigm where reality is fluid and ever-changing depending on the context, the researcher opted for open coding to allow new views to be accommodated throughout the study (Creswell, 2014). Opening coding helped in getting enriched data since some anticipated ideas could be captured from the participants who essentially should provide information about how they viewed schooling of learners with absent parents. The researcher related the coded themes to establish knowledge which was then presented as narratives, and words. A summary of the described methodology is hereby illustrated:

Paradigm Interpretive
Approach Qualitative
Design Descriptive qualitative case study
Sampling Technique Purposive
Sample 6 learners, 13 teachers, 6 guardians, 2 school heads
Data gathering Key participant interview, focus group interview, reflexive journal, document analysis
Data analysis Narrating, synthesising, content analysis, categorising, sorting, coding, developing themes
Trustworthiness Issues Credibility, dependability, transferability, confirmability
Ethical considerations Informed consent, confidentiality, assent, voluntary participation, anonymity

Figure 4. 1: Overview of Research Methodology

Chapter Four outlined the procedures taken in the study to gather data intended to answer the questions. Interpretive paradigm, qualitative approach and qualitative descriptive case study design were extensively discussed and their relevance to the present study was shown.

The chapter also discussed population characteristics and sampling techniques that were used to select a sample of 30 respondents. Research tools used and discussed in the chapter were face-to-face key participant interview schedule, focus group interview schedule, and document analysis guide and field notes protocol. The other important aspects discussed were trustworthiness issues, ethical considerations, the actual procedure undertaken to collect data and data analysis. The next chapter describes data that were obtained from the actual study.

CHAPTER FIVE: EVIDENCE FROM MWENEZI DISTRICT

The previous chapter outlined extensively the procedures that were taken to gather data from the participants namely school heads, teachers, guardians of learners with parents in the diaspora and the learners themselves on the educational needs of learners with parents in the diaspora. The data were collected through face-to-face interviews and focus group sessions as articulated in the preceding chapter. Data about attendance and enrolment patterns were gathered from class attendance registers and admission registers respectively. Furthermore, learners' performances were gleaned from exercise books and progress records while completion rate statistical records provided information on completion rate trends for learners left behind by emigrants. This chapter presents the results of the empirical study and their analyses following the sub-research questions. The major research question of the study was: How are the educational needs of learners with parents in the diaspora catered for, in the Mwenezi District? This major research question was further split into the following sub-research questions:

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

Views of the participants are presented and analysed in line with the qualitative content and thematic analysis as recommended by Creswell

(2014) and Vaisimoradi *et al.* (2016). The themes that emerged are learning experiences of learners with parents in the diaspora, educational challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora, societal influence on the education of learners left behind and educational welfare programmes for learners with parents in the diaspora.

Prior to the presentation of data gathered from the interviews and focus group discussions, biographical data of the participants are presented in table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Biographical Data of Guardians (*Field notes*)

Guardian	Level of education	Sex	Age range (yrs.)	Period of guardianship	Nature of guardianship	Relationship to learner participant
G1SS	Primary	F	70+	13years	Same household	Grandmother
G2SS	Not educated	F	70+	16years	Same household	Grandmother
G3SS	ZJC	F	30-40	4years	Different household	Aunt
G1SN	O' Level	F	30-40	8months	Different household	Aunt
G2SN	O' Level	F	30-40	4years	Same household	Aunt
G3SN	Primary	F	60-70	3years	Different household	Not related

Key to Table 5.1

G1SS-Guardian 1 at School South
at School South

G2SS- Guardian 2

G3SS-Guardian 3 at School South
at School North

G1SN- Guardian 1

G2SN-Guardian 2 at School North
at School North

G3SN- Guardian 3

F-Female; O' Level- Ordinary Level
Junior Certificate

ZJC-Zimbabwe

The data about guardians show guardianship experiences that ranged from eight months to sixteen years. Grandmothers whose approximate age ranged from seventy years had long experience of guardianship. Besides grandmothers, three of the learners were also being taken care of by their aunts while one learner lived under the guardianship of a non-relative. Except for one guardian, the other five had at least some formal education. The guardians' level of education, relationship with the learners and experience in guardianship made the respondents appropriate for the data sought by the researcher. There was also equal distribution of the guardians in relation to the status of guardianship where out of the six, three stayed in the same households with the learners whilst the other three stayed in separate households. Such a scenario made this study a rich one since data were obtained from participants who had vast and different experiences of taking care of learners left behind by emigrants.

Table 5.2: Biographical Data of Learner Participants (*School admission registers and attendance registers*)

Learner	Grade	Sex	Age(Years)	First year of enrolling in Grade 1	Special responsibility at school
L1SS	7	F	13	2015	Prefect
L2SS	7	F	16	2013	None
L3SS	7	F	12	2015	None
L1SN	7	F	12	2015	None
L2SN	7	F	15	2014	None
L3SN	7	M	14	2014	None

Key to Table 5.2

L1SS-Learner 1 at School South
School South

L2SS-Learner 2 at

L3SS-Learner 3 at School South
School North

L1SN-Learner 1 at

L2SN-Learner 2 at School North
School North

L3SN-Learner 3 at

F-Female; M-Male

All the learners were doing Grade 7 and this was necessitated by the fact that when the researcher first went into the field, only candidate classes had opened schools so it was ideal to deal with learners who were at school as that eased gathering of other data that were to be extracted from learners' exercise books, academic reports and attendance registers. The Grade Seven teachers at both schools were asked to identify learners who could participate in the study based on the learners' circumstance of having biological parents living in the diaspora. Though the sample was disproportionate in terms of gender where only one boy made it into the sample against five girls, that did not have any negative implications since the data required were purely about the educational needs of learners left behind which means the participants could freely deliberate on experiences and challenges such learners encountered without specifically bringing the gender issue. However, other researchers may in the future consider the gender issue and opt for a gender-balanced sample. Two learners from the sample had enrolled at the age of six which is recommended by the education system in Zimbabwe, two had repeated grades and the other two had enrolled at the age of seven or eight years. Repeating grades or enrolling at an advanced age could point to some challenges associated with the learners' left behind status. Furthermore, out of the six learner participants, only one had a special responsibility at school of being a prefect. Since it was a small sample one could not wholly

suggest that learners with parents in the diaspora were largely irresponsible and that they could not be trusted by the teachers though such an observation could not be out rightly dismissed.

Table 5.3: Biographical Data of Teacher Participants (*Staff records*)

Teacher	Sex	Professional Qualifications	Teaching experience in the cluster	Teaching level (Grade)	Responsibility
T1SS	M	BED	5	3	D/Head
T2SS	M	DIP.ED	12	6	Sports Director
T3SS	F	DIP.ED	22	2	TIC Infant
T4SS	F	DIP.ED	17	3-7	Ndebele Tr
T5SS	F	DIP.ED	8	ECD	None
T6SS	F	DIP.ED	5	7	None
T7SS	F	DIP.ED	3	ECD	None
T8SS	M	DIP.ED	8	5	None
T1SN	M	DIP.ED	25	4	Snr Master
T2SN	F	BED	4	2	D/Head
T3SN	F	DIP.ED	15	3	TIC Infant
T4SN	M	DIP.ED	16	7	Sports Director
T5SN	M	DIP.ED	12	7	None
HSS	M	BED	3	All	Head
HSN	M	MED	30	All	Head

Key to Table 5.3

T1SS-Teacher 1 at School South
South

T2SS- Teacher 2 at School

T3SS-Teacher 3 at School South
South

T4SS-Teacher 4 at School

T5SS-Teacher 5 at School South
South

T7SS-Teacher 7 at School South
South

T1SN-Teacher 1 at School North
North

T3SN-Teacher 3 at School North
North

T5SN-Teacher 5 at School North
Education

BED-Bachelor of Education Degree

ECD- Early Childhood Development

D/HEAD- Deputy Head;

Snr Master- Senior Master

FGDSS-Focus Group Discussion at School South

MED-Masters of Education Degree

FGDSN-Focus Group Discussion at School North

T6SS- Teacher 6 at School

T8SS- Teacher 8 at School

T2SN- Teacher 2 at School

T4SN-Teacher 4 at School

DIP ED-Diploma in

The data show that there was a fair distribution of participants with respect to levels taught, teaching experience in the cluster where the study was done, gender balance, professional qualifications and level of responsibility at the schools and all these improved trustworthiness of the study.

On this theme, a report is on how learners left behind by emigrants were experiencing schooling in some parts of the Mwenezi District. The theme generated three categories namely circumstances that led to the status of being left behind, the relationship matrix between learners left behind and their significant others and learners left behind's school participation and performance.

A synopsis of the learning experiences is presented in the table below.

Table 5.4: Learning Experiences of Learners Left Behind by Parents in the Diaspora

Theme	Category	Sub-category
5.2 Learning experiences of learners with parents in the diaspora	5.2.1 Circumstances that led to the status of being left behind by emigrants	5.2.1.1 Prevalence of learners left behind by emigrants 5.2.1.2 Factors contributing to biological parents' emigration 5.2.1.3 School heads, teachers and guardians' views on the practice of emigration and leaving children behind 5.2.1.4 Unpacking the biological parents returning patterns in the eyes of study participants
	5.2.2. Relationship matrix between learners left behind by emigrants and their significant others	5.2.2.1 Relationship between learners left behind by emigrants and other learners 5.2.2.2. Relationship between learners left behind by emigrants and teachers 5.2.2.3. Relationship between learners left behind by emigrants and guardians 5.2.2.4. Communication between biological parents of learners left behind by emigrants and teachers 5.2.2.5. Relationship between guardians and biological parents of learners left behind by emigrants

To establish how learners left behind by emigrants were experiencing schooling in some parts of Mwenezi, the researcher split the category on circumstances that led to the status of being left behind into four sub-categories in line with what emerged from the empirical study and these are the prevalence of learners left behind by emigrants, factors contributing to biological parents' emigration, school heads, teachers and guardians' views on the practice of emigration and leaving children behind and unpacking the biological parents returning patterns in the eyes of study participants.

This sub-category presents and analyses narratives on learners left behind, gender composition of the learners and their age. One teacher participant revealed that learners of both sexes were left behind and illustrated that;

"For example, I am teaching Grade 3 with 30 learners, 15 have parents in the diaspora in South Africa and 8 are boys and 7 are girls." (T1 FGDS).

Corroborating his counterpart's observation about the severity of learners left behind, another teacher expressed that learners left behind spread over the whole primary school thus;

"The learners are there, they may not be many but from ECD even up-to Grade 7 because their parents were our students so in every class they could be 5 or 6." (, T1 FGDSN).

T4, FGDSN reported that more and more learners were left behind by emigrants in the part of Mwenezi District where the study was done as parents sought greener pastures and means to improve their families' economic fortunes since;

"In this catchment area seeking employment means going to the diaspora so if you assess our learners either of the parents or both are in the diaspora."

T4 FGDSN's observation of the increasing number of learners left behind was also confirmed by HSN who expressed the view that most

able-bodied people in the district contributed to the number of learners left behind because;

“These parents are between the ages 20 and 50 years. Most of them go for employment in foreign countries, especially neighbouring South Africa. These parents who form most the parents have most the kids in schools.”

Expressing the view that some children were left in child-headed households due to emigrating parents, one guardian reported the concern;

“There is a family where the eldest is 14 years old and it has been some time now in that situation, their mother works in South Africa and they have no father” (G3SS).

The same respondent, G3SS went on to express the concern that traditional leaders were involved in the growing number of learners left behind by emigrating parents by accepting bribes and not helping to address the affected children’s social and educational challenges because;

They must not accept beer from those people and tell them the truth about the experiences of their children and advise them to take their children with them. Every December when they come they spoil kraal heads with beer to silence them on the welfare of the children.

The data presented show that the phenomenon of leaving learners behind as parents migrated out of the country was common in the part of the Mwenezi District where the study was conducted. It was revealing too in the data that able-bodied parents, both males and females were leaving their children behind as they sought greener pastures outside the country. The participants revealed too that some children of school-going age, including children as young as those at ECD level, were left by their parents. Both girls and boys were left behind to experience schooling in the absence of their parents. The emergence of child-headed families because of the diaspora is not a new phenomenon as earlier research indicates that such has happened in several countries including Romania, Albania, Thailand, Indonesia,

Mexico, Jamaica; Zimbabwe among others (Botezat & Pfeizer, 2014; Jampaklay *et al.* 2012; Moreno, 2013; Brown & Ginter, 2014; Dube, 2014).

On a different note, one school head seemed to appraise the practice of seeking greener pastures outside the country as such enabled the parents to meet financial obligations for the learners, by commenting that;

“it is now our source of revenue for the school since it is through parents who pay fees than projects” (*HSN*).

However, in contrast to the school head’s positive perception of emigrating parents, one guardian had a negative view of the practice since the biological parents disconnected themselves from their *children* once they crossed over and send the learners things that could not assist the education of left-behind children as she observed that;

“Usually they are provided with some phone numbers so that they report once stocks of food are diminishing but those given numbers will never be accessible.” (*G3SS*).

The extracts show that while some viewed the practice of leaving learners behind as noble since the parents were going for greener pastures, other participants regarded it as child neglect since parents never returned once they crossed the Limpopo into South Africa. These findings confirm UNICEF's (2013) results in a survey in Guatemala and Moldova where the participants reported a positive and negative impact of parental migration on the education of learners left behind respectively.

One reason common among the participants for parental migration was the desire to improve the family's economic life. For one learner, family life before her parental emigration was unbearable and characterised by inadequate food provisions, lack of clothes and being

sent away from school for non-payment of fees among other life necessities hence;

“When they migrated out of the country, they intended to look for employment so that I would lead a normal life” (L1SS).

Expressing similar views to L1SS’s, L2SN identified the actual necessities that the parents intended to accumulate upon finding employment in the diaspora thus;

“They went out to seek money for our education, clothing and food”.

Despite the learner participants’ views that parental emigration was motivated by the desire to improve family economic life, the guardians pointed out that at times it was the need to relieve stress from home after family disintegration. On family disintegration as the underlying cause of emigration, one of the six guardians of this study outlined that;

“What necessitated my guardianship to these kids is that their parents separated and then the mother went for employment.” (G1SS).

In the same vein, G3SS alluded to family disintegration by also indicating that:

“We had to take care of these learners because our parents died in 2009 when we were still young so we had to assume the role. It’s only the two of us staying here in Zimbabwe, the rest are in South Africa. If a problem arises, like a sickness, one of us must attend while the other will be left behind to look after the kids.”

The major factors cited by the guardians and the learners left behind as reasons for parental emigration were family disintegration necessitated by the death of a spouse or divorce and the need to improve family economic life. Sadly for Zimbabwe, these factors reported in the present study among others as propelling out-migration have been reported too in earlier research findings (Zanamwe & Devillard, 2009; Dube, 2014; Filippa, 2013; Moyo, 2017; Tawodzera & Themane, 2019)

which points to the fact that the country is taking long to find the most appropriate strategies to redress the problems that prop up out-migration.

The school heads, teachers and the guardians who participated in this study were largely sceptical about the biological parents regarding their practice of leaving their children behind while living abroad. In their view, the practice was tantamount to child abuse as the learners became exposed to the vice and pressures of modern life in the absence of their parents who could provide both psychosocial and learning materials. The G1SS scoffed at the idea of leaving children behind with other families and expressed the concern that;

“If you leave children behind even if you have gone outside the country and never look back it shows a high level of unreasoning on your part.”

Also, while acknowledging that both boys and girls were affected by being left behind, G3SS was much more critical about leaving the girl child alone since in her view, girls could be easily sexually abused especially if remittances were not forthcoming. She narrated how girls who resided close to the residence of the learners she was taking care of were susceptible to sexual exploitation thus:

Even if you were to get there, you will appreciate the predicament those children go through, most of the time they are without basics which unfortunately leads them into promiscuity and if you are to enquire they will tell you that their mother has not been remitting for months.

The G2SN took a swipe too at the emigrants for the burden they put on others whilst they remained in South Africa even though there was nothing meaningful they were remitting and lamented that guardianship was a challenging task because;

“at times you just must contend with it that there is nothing you can do these are just children as long as the food is there and the rains are available you must get into farming so that they go to school because once the parents are used to South Africa...”

The arguments presented by most of the guardians on the practice of leaving learners behind while one lives in abroad were also shared by one of the school heads who commended that;

“I don’t regard it as a good idea, people do it because of the need to search for a living but it’s bad for the children. My reasons are that; fees are not paid in time then behaviour wise such learners do not behave well.”
(HSS).

Contrary to HSS’s negative view of the practice of leaving learners behind, HSN seemed to support the practice since according to his assessment it was risky for the parents to go with the children into the diaspora and leaving them behind was therefore in the best interest of the learners because;

“most of those parents when they go there they don’t have permanent settlements, are scavengers who live in squabbles, they live in shacks which do not allow them to take their children with them.”

Besides poor living conditions in the destination countries, HSN also noted that it was risky too for possible emigrants to take their children along since,

“most of those parents in the diaspora who leave their children do not have passports, they are border jumpers, so it is difficult and very risky for them to carry their children.”

While the HSN justified the practice of leaving learners behind citing those issues to do with the learners’ safety both on the way and at the destination countries, the general sentiment raised by most the participants was that the practice exposed the learners to when they stayed alone or under the care of non-biological parents. Parallels can be drawn with respect to findings of the present study to Mabharani’s 2014 study in Dzivaresekwa in Harare, Zimbabwe and Chakombera and Mubikwa’s (2018) study at Nemaikonde High School still in Zimbabwe who also reported mixed views of participants regarding parental motivation for migration and leaving the learners behind. The findings, therefore, compel me to conclude that the debate on whether

parents should leave behind learners or take them along as the parents out-migrate remains open not only in the Mwenezi District but in Zimbabwe as a whole.

Some of the learners left behind experienced learning for long periods in the absence of their biological parents. L1SS reported that it had been some time since she last saw her father because;

“My father went away when I was in grade three and up-to-now I don’t know where he is. I am not sure as to when mother went with us but had to return home for us to get a better education back home.”

In a similar predicament as with L1SS was L3SN because it was reported that, “Bennet’s parents never come back.

Bennet’s father last came in 2016, I can’t remember the last time his mother came but both of them are in South Africa.” (G3SN).

Though some parents visited their families, still it was not enough as expected by both the learners and the guardians because they rarely visited and the visits were too short as L2SN revealed that;

“They come back every December and leave in January after a short stay.”

Just like with the case of L2SN, L3SS also reported that her parents visited during the festive season only and bemoaned her limited time with her father and stated that

“They went, my father returns only in December.”

The subject of returning patterns of the biological parents torched a storm during data collection among some of the learners who could not hold their emotions and just cried uncontrollably. It showed that while the learners and the guardians wished the biological parents to work outside the country, they too expected them to come back as often as they could just to be physically present. One learner reported that despite all the provisions she got from her parents, she still felt that there was a void because;

“I just want to see them often (L3SS).”

The excerpts testify that the biological parents of the learners left behind rarely visited their families. For the few who visited, it was only for short periods during the festive season. As the learners revealed, non-returning by biological parents emotionally affected the learners left behind which in one way or the other could negatively impact the learners' education.

The negative effects of non-returning parents on learners' education expressed by the participants are not unique to this study since Zirima (2016) also reported on the negative psycho-social effects on children of non-returning parents. In another study, IFFD (2018) reports that children in Jordan were also traumatised by their parental absence irrespective of remittances sent to them by their parents in the diaspora. The present study, therefore, upholds that the non-returning of emigrants is negatively impacting the education of learners left behind in the Mwenezi District of Zimbabwe.

The researcher consulted the principle of triangulation of the family systems theory which expounds on the importance of interdependence among family members, to find out how the learners with emigrant parents related with significant others and the impact of such relationships on the learners' realisation of educational needs.

The participants expressed mixed views regarding how the learners with parents in the diaspora related with other learners. With respect to the learners themselves, most of them said that other learners never mentioned or initiated discussions related to their status of staying alone or under the care of non-biological parents whilst their parents were in the diaspora. However, L3SS shared that other learners were encouraging her to focus on the future irrespective of the absence of her parents;

"They would say please friend continue learning so that your mother will have peace of mind at her work knowing that you are attaining position 2."

Another learner also shared similar views regarding how her classmates were encouraging her to be hopeful of her father's eventual return and reported that;

"They say he will return." (L2SS).

The positive reports made by the learners with emigrant parents regarding how they related with other learners were somehow disputed by the school heads from both schools where the present study was conducted. The heads cited the issue of the behaviour of the learners thus;

"Ok... in most cases when we get reports of bullying, they involve these learners with absent parents and the major contributing factor is that their guardians are not strict on rules, while we instil discipline here at school, little is done at home in that area." (HSS).

Adding on and qualifying the sentiments raised by a fellow head with regards to the relationship between the learners with parents in the diaspora and other learners, HSS categorised the former into two categories and lamented that:

It now depends, there are some learners with parents in the diaspora whose parents may not afford to buy them even uniforms or pay school fees and those pupils are usually inferior to pupils with uniforms but there are those whose parents buy them everything from abroad those usually think they are in the best class and are very showy.

On one hand, the excerpts show that there were learners who could not relate well because of an inferiority complex necessitated by poverty that was caused by parents who were not remitting. On the other hand, there were other groups that could not associate too because they felt that they were too affluent to mix with the less privileged. Based on the above excerpts on how the learners with emigrant parents related with others, a conclusion was made that the learners left behind had relationship challenges irrespective of the quality of participation of their biological parents in their education.

There were conflicting sentiments raised by the participants regarding how teachers related to the learners with parents in the diaspora. While the teacher participants indicated that there was bad blood between them and the learners grounded on a lack of respect for the former by the latter, the latter reported that the two parties were in a cordial relationship. For the teachers, the learners with emigrant parents were difficult to work with because:

They are very few who respect teachers. I think it's because of the influence of the parents, they view teachers as people at the extreme bottom end of the social ladder and it leads them to tell their children that teachers are not all that important and after all, you shall come to South Africa so it's a challenge, especially at upper grades (*T3 FGDSN*).

All the teacher participants who raised concerns regarding their relationship with the learners left behind linked that poor relationship to the learners' parental influence as another teacher also lamented that:

They look down upon me just because I am poor as they are used to talking about this when they are at home. When I have seen that this one is looking down upon me I develop a negative attitude towards him or her. I will try by all means but naturally, you know I will be compelled to have a negative attitude (*T1, FGDSS*).

The HSN expressed similar sentiments raised by the teachers that the learners with parents in the diaspora were disrespectful of the teachers simply because those learners thought that they were in better financial positions than the teachers which unfortunately brewed strained relations between the two groups and he stated it this way:

Teachers fail to control them because those children bring cash for lunch which the teacher cannot afford so behaviour usually is not under strict control of the teacher because the teacher is inferior and he or she reports they are failing to control the learner.

Another source of acrimony between teachers and learners left behind by emigrants as revealed by another teacher was absenteeism. Again

that challenge was associated with a negative learner attitude to education because:

“...the child is pushed to go to school and being human I end up saying these are not for schooling, the book is not well handled so in order for the child to develop an interest in school I will try at first but once I realise that the problem emanates from home then what do you think will be the status of my relationship with the child? It is strained” (T5, FGDSS).

It emerged from the participants too that learners` level of education and age were key variables in explaining the bond that existed between the teachers and the learners as illustrated in the following case:

“...we have a good working relationship maybe it’s because they are young, they show that they can afford, they buy books and pay their fees in time, we crossroads when it comes to schooling because they seem to have little interest maybe it’s because of their better status” (T3, FGDSS).

While the teachers said that there was a weak bond between them and the learners with parents in the diaspora most particularly due to the learners’ lack of respect for teachers, absenteeism and negative attitude towards schooling, the learners said that the teachers were commending them for good behaviour and the following excerpts are revealing

“They observe that I am a promising child who may become a teacher or a nurse in the future.” (L1SS).

L2SN also expressed her counterpart’s view and reported that

“They commend me for good behaviour.”

The learners’ attestations were echoed by one of the guardians when she shared that

“My granddaughter has never disappointed me. I am yet to get any bad report from the teachers.” (G1SS).

School heads and teachers raised similar sentiments upon which poor relations between teachers and learners left behind were premised and these were the learners` lack of respect for teachers and negative attitude towards schooling which led to absenteeism and non-commitment to schoolwork. For the teachers, the learners` negative attitude towards both school and the authority of the teacher because of influence from home where both teachers and education were despised by the biological parents in the presence of the learners, a finding which resonates with an earlier one in a study in Jamaica where teacher participants reported that learners left behind adopted a `waiting to migrate`, the assumption that one does not must work hard now because he or she will migrate to another country at any time (Brown & Ginter 2014). Based on these related findings, it could be concluded that the biological parents of learners left behind in the Mwenezi District largely contributed to the poor relationship that exists between their children and the teachers.

For some guardians, the responsibility of taking care of the learners left behind was a daunting one since most of the biological parents were not fully supportive materially or appreciative of the role the guardians were taking. Communication between the guardians and the biological parents was poor and some guardians reported that the learners were in-disciplined. It emerged from the interviews held that grandparent guardians related well with the learners and viewed the learners as well behaved while non-grandparent guardians had a negative view of the conduct of the learners left behind. One of the guardians could not hide her frustration over her caretaking role and lamented that;

“We take care of them because they are children but they are difficult to take care of.” (G2SN).

Another guardian cited behaviour as one of the things that made the caretaking role of learners left behind cumbersome since according to her;

“It’s tricky to comment on the behaviour of these girls, you may be very wrong because they can deceive you.” (G3SS).

Probed further to explain how she was relating with the learners with reference to her ability to influence their behaviour, she hesitantly commented;

“They are right but they are girls you cannot give them good.” (G3SS).

The responses by both teachers and guardians on the relationship between the guardians and the learners point to the poor relationship between the two which emanates from the fact that some learners had more authority over their guardians bestowed on them by their biological parents. When such poor relationships exist between guardians and learners, learners may be uncontrollable, leading to failure in education (Sawyer, 2014; Portner, 2014; Bai *et al.*, 2015).

According to the teacher participants, there was some communication between them and some of the biological parents of the learners left behind that could be initiated from either side because;

“They like to communicate with teachers. We phone them or beep and they respond and even passing a message if you don’t have the numbers and once they return they will come straight to see you.” (T3FGDS).

While T1 FGDSN concurred with T3FGDSS that there was communication between the teachers and the biological parents of the learners left behind, he hinted that it was only minimal, largely insincere and did not include most the biological parents and he expressed it this way;

“Yes some of them but only a few we communicate with them those who are concerned. Because when they come back from South Africa they come to school to show off, they visit the office to consult about their children.”

Contrary to T1 FGDSN’s view that the biological parents of the learners left behind’s contact with the schools were chiefly motivated by pride, HSN, praised the emigrants because in his experience:

Most of the people with a positive attitude towards the development of the school are people in the diaspora. Parents in the locality do not have contributions that are above those in the diaspora. It is only parents in the diaspora who are donating funds, and who are improving school revenue.

To qualify his observation about the positive role the parents in the diaspora were initiating for the development of the school, HSN highlighted some of the contributions that were made by those parents which he chronicled as;

They once came and threw a farewell party for the Grade 7 pupils. We have also received another group of parents who have decided to create a facility for holiday lessons for the pupils. We have also found that there is a group of parents in the diaspora who have decided to employ some teachers for Early Childhood Development.

The extracts show that to some extent, some teachers communicated with parents in the diaspora concerning the education of the learners left behind. Despite the divided experiences about communication between some teachers and the biological parents based in the diaspora, it emerged that both groups valued communication. Earlier studies elsewhere also established that communication between schools and the biological parents of the learners was instrumental in triangulating the truth about the education of the learners (Bhamain, 2012; Btezat & Pfeiffer, 2014; Sanduleasa & Matei, 2015).

It emerged from the study that there were two categories of guardians, one comprised of old grandmothers and another one made up of young nieces, aunts or mere house girls. It could be inferred that the former category of guardians rarely communicated with the biological parents of the learners left behind contrary to what was happening with the latter category of the guardians. One old grandparent guardian tearfully lamented that;

“We had never been in contact since he left. However, I once sought an audience with his brothers seeking their views regarding their kin over his unsupportive behaviour toward his children’s welfare. They too said that they had tried to engage him but in vain.” (G1SS).

In a similar situation was G3SN who revealed that there was no direct communication between her and the biological parents of the learners but, only learnt about them through other people thus, she commended;

“We are not communicating; --- I don’t have even the contact numbers.”

However, for those guardians who were communicating with the biological parents of the learners left behind, the major issues included;

“We phone them when food stocks run out but normally they send the food before that happens.” (G1SN).

Other than food issues, G3SS said that in most communication initiated by the biological parents;

“They would be emphasising for the kids to attend school at the opening. Recently, they asked the Maths teacher to conduct extra lessons with (Name concealed on ethical reasons) as she has problems in Maths.”

For some guardians, even though there was some communication with the biological parents of the learners left behind, its effectiveness was hampered by a lack of frequency in communication because;

“Sometimes it’s two or three months between calls depending on availability of airtime.” (G2SN).

The other challenge that reportedly obstructed the smooth flow of communication between guardians and the biological parents of the learners left behind was connectivity as G3SS lamented;

“Network is scarce so I rarely communicate with their parents.”

The extracts show that communication was very important in linking the biological parents and the guardians. It was revealed too that while there were network connectivity challenges in the area studied, efforts were made from both sides to initiate communication primarily to appraise each other about how the learners were learning. Despite the importance of communication especially in cases where parents and children lived apart from each other, the data collected revealed that

some biological parents never communicated or took up to three months without communicating with their children.

Generally, the present study reveals that there is a poor relationship among learners, guardians, biological parents of learners left behind and teachers which unfortunately limits learners left behind's educational access. Similarly, Dube (2014) in another study on socio-economic effects of cross-border migration established that learners in Beitbridge and Plumtree also despised both guardians and teachers resulting in the teachers failing to control them.

In this category, a report is made on the level of participation in school-related assignments by learners with parents in the diaspora, their academic performance and achievement and the learners' school completion rate and attendance patterns.

Data from the interviews were buttressed by data from the analysed documents namely attendance registers and completion rate registers as illustrated below:

Table 5.5: Attendance statistics for learners left behind for Term 1 2021 (*School attendance registers*)

Learner	Actual attendance	Possible attendance	%attendance
Learner1 School South	48	56	85.71
Learner 2 School South	30	56	53.57
Learner 3 School South	45	56	80.36
Learner 1 School North	45	56	80.36
Learner 2 School North	33	56	58.93
Learner 3 School North	38	56	67.86

Percentage attendance ranged from 53.57% for the lowest to 85.71% for the highest learner. Generally, the attendance was poor considering that these classes were examination classes that were supposed to have regular attendance since the learners were preparing for examinations. The data indicate that the learners` attitude towards education could be negative.

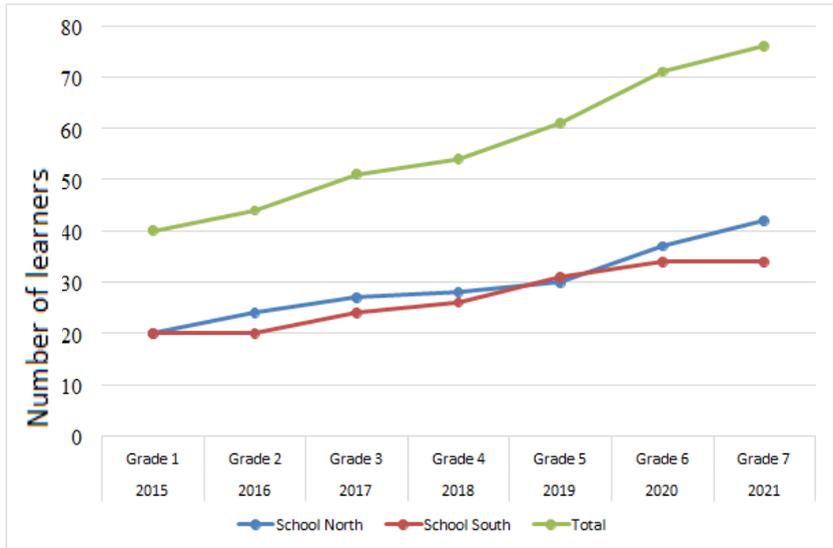


Figure 5.1: Learners Left behind for the Seven-year Period (*School Admission and attendance registers*)

The data show that the number of learners left behind increased in a progressive pattern from 40 in 2015 when the learners enrolled for Grade 1 to 76 in 2021 for both schools, representing 47.37% for the seven years. This shows that parents were leaving children whenever they thought the children were mature enough to look after themselves. Such a trend was also established in surveys carried out in Moldova, Mexico, Jamaica and China (UNESCO, 2018; UNICEF, 2013).

Resonate with documentary evidence on the patterns of school attendance and completion rate trends of learners left behind were views shared by school heads and teachers on the matter. In the case of absenteeism, one teacher participant blamed the learners since according to him;

“It depends on whether the learner has an interest or not, so it’s just a few days attendance in a week.” (T1 FGDSN).

By mentioning learner interest as a determinant factor of learner absenteeism, T1 FGDSN suggested that learners were wholly responsible for their absenteeism. However, T2FGDSN directed the blame to the biological parents because;

“Some of them go to South Africa during the holidays and it takes them long to return and you would think that they are no longer coming only to see them popping up one day.”

Another concern raised by the teacher participants was the poor completion rate. It emerged that although some learners left behind were completing their primary schooling, they did so later than their age mates because of their school attendance inconsistency for example;

“in my case in Grade 5, about 15 did not return from South Africa, some who returned did not complete their Grade 4 so their performance is going down hence they may complete but with 9s because they missed a lot.” (T5 FGDSS).

The other factor which affected the learners left behind’s completion rate was the age at which they enrolled;

“They start Grade 1 at 7to 8 years so they will be around 15/16 years by the time they are in Grade 7 which makes it difficult to control them because most of their age mates will be at the secondary level.” (T3 FGDSN).

The issue of enrolling late at school was addressed by T4 FGDSN who raised the concern that;

“Such cases are a result of some scenario where the parent could have taken the child to South Africa and returned with the child late.”

Teachers' concerns regarding poor completion rate among the learners left behind were also raised by the school heads who singled out boys for absconding lessons and truant behaviour because;

"they do not have parental care and most of them are left behind under the control of uneducated people who do not have quality education to encourage children to fulfil." (HSS).

The HSS concurred with HSN on the low school completion rate among learners with parents in the diaspora and added;

"They are not guided so that they cherish the value of education."

It emerged from the responses of the participants that the completion rate was poor among learners left behind due to a lack of supervision on attendance by the guardians. Secondly, it was revealed that most such learners were held too long in South Africa when they visited their parents resulting in the learners missing learning time. One may conclude that both guardians and biological parents were largely responsible for the challenges of the learners' poor completion rate. There is a concurrence of the current results to those found in Albania where it was concluded that parental emigration was responsible for a significant drop in learners left behind's school attendance, especially in rural settings where fathers had emigrated (Giannelli & Mangiavachi, 2010; Botezat & Pfeiffer, 2014).

The documents gleaned namely exercise books, academic reports and progress reports pointed to a distressing situation with regard to the school performance of the learners left behind. Of the six examinable subjects that the learners were studying, none of the learners had passed all of them as per first term 2021 academic report records. Rather, five of the learners left behind had passed one subject only. L1SS had however passed four subjects. Other than the learners' first term 2021 performance in summative examinations, the exercise books observed also showed that all the other learners in the sample except for L1SS and L1SN were not satisfactorily performing. Surprisingly,

the learners left behind's current performance was not reflective of what they used to do when they were in the lower grades. For example, L3SS and L1SN were outstanding learners as revealed by the progress records availed by the teachers. To that effect, one of the teachers commented that;

"As they grow up, they will be deteriorating academically, at Grade 1to 3 they are better but from Grade 5 the problem starts because they begin to get attracted by many things so most Grade 5, 6 and 7 it will be just a formality as they are ready to go." (T1 FGDSN).

The results in the present study are in sharp contrast to Botezat and Pfeiffer's (2014) study in Albania where they established that grades of learners left behind improved since the learners worked hard in school in anticipation of following their parents in the diaspora. It was like that because Albanians earned their places in the diaspora due to high educational qualifications, a case different from the situation of emigrants in the present study where most them were undocumented and rarely had formal education. Parental emigration had therefore little influence on the education of the learners left behind hence the learners' unimpressive academic results in the Mwenezi District.

The teacher participants lamented that the learners left behind were not fully participating in schoolwork due to abscondment and absenteeism. One of the teacher participants had this to say;

"Most of them don't come to school regularly. Some of them abscond lessons once they are out at break time they don't come back because there is no one home who would control them." (T1, FGDSS). Stressing a similar view as pointed out by T1 FGDSS, another teacher added; "They don't write, they hide the books." (T5 FGDSS).

Furthermore, the blame for learners left behind's poor participation in school curricula was put on the biological parents who rarely took hid of professional advice from the teachers and sometimes forced the learners to proceed into subsequent grades irrespective of their performance which unfortunately hampers learner confidence

resulting in the learner withdrawing from school activities. T3SN bemoaned the bad influence of biological parents on learners' progression into grades when she shared;

"I was chatting with some on WhatsApp and they were saying their children are coming to this term but the last term they didn't come but the instruction was that they maintain their grades".

Echoing related sentiments as given by the teachers about reasons for poor learner participation in school curricula, HSS blamed the parents too for failure or delayed fees payment which disturbed learners' learning attendance since;

"it affects the learners when they are often paraded for none payment of fees and that coupled with behaviour challenges they end up not attending lessons."

HSS further exonerated the learners left behind on their school curricula participation because they often had no one to assist them to do their homework because;

"A good number of them stay with grandmothers who upon the learners' request for homework assistance would simply say; we never did this, so the homework is never done."

Chiefly, the teacher participants and the school heads cited negative attitudes towards education by learners left behind and lack of parental control and input on the academic affairs of the learners as the main reasons that contributed to failure among most learners left behind by emigrating parents. It was also revealed that most of the parents rarely sought professional advice from teachers on the academic progress of their children but were interested in seeing their children complete the primary school level.

The teacher participants revealed that there were many cases of learners left behind by migrant parents in their classes. They too lamented the poor working relationship between them and the learners left behind due to what they referred to as the learners'

negative attitude towards education. The teachers thus reported that the learners left behind were lagging in terms of school attendance, academic performance and achievement. The completion rate among the learners left behind was very low. The teachers' most concern was high cases of indiscipline, behaviour that included abscondment, bullying, misuse of phones, not writing schoolwork, absenteeism and general lack of respect for the teacher. The teachers' sentiments revealed that it was problematic to leave learners behind under loose parental control. These findings were very close to what other researchers uncovered elsewhere. In a related study in the Philippines, Portner (2014) also found out that in school attendance, girls left behind were severely affected by the absence of their mothers to the extent that at times it looked like the girls were dropouts.

It was apparent from the details given in the interviews and focus group discussions that learners left behind by emigrants in the Mwenezi District had a plethora of learning challenges. Most of the challenges given were compatible with schooling experiences which in most cases were influenced by the age of the guardian and level of education, individual learner characteristics, learner's immediate social environment and the biological parent's frequency of returning and capacity to remit. In that respect, the challenges cited bordered on four major categories namely: inadequate educational material support, behavioural and attitudinal challenges that characterised learners with parents in the diaspora, factors that led to the challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora and strategies to ease challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora. The identified challenges and the categories that emerged thus helped in finding responses to the research question that sought to establish the challenges learners in the Mwenezi District were experiencing in the absence of their biological parents.

Table 5.6: Educational Challenges faced by Learners with Parents in the Diaspora

Theme	Category	Sub-category
5.3 Educational challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora	5.3.1 Inadequate educational material support for learners left behind by emigrants	5.3.1.1 Non or late payment of fees 5.3.1.2 Inadequate provision of stationery and uniforms 5.3.1.3 Inadequate food and shelter provisions
	5.3.2. Behavioural challenges for learners with parents in the diaspora	5.3.2.1 Indiscipline behaviour 5.3.2.2. Negative attitudes of learners left behind towards education
	5.3.3. Background factors to challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora	5.3.3.1 Inadequate firm authority over learners by guardians 5.3.3.2 Inadequate educational guidance of guardians 5.3.3.3 Inconsistent remission and return by biological parents 5.3.3.4 Inadequate resource management by learners left behind by emigrants and guardians 5.3.3.5 Ramification of negative parental conduct emulated by learners left behind by emigrants 5.3.3.6 Exposure to and use of negative social media by learners left behind by emigrants
	5.3.4. Strategies to ease challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora	5.3.4.1 Government's role in easing challenges 5.3.4.2 Biological parents` role in easing challenges 5.3.4.3 Guardians` role in easing challenges 5.3.4.4 School heads` role in easing the challenges 5.3.4.5 Role of the community in easing challenges 5.3.4.6 Role of teachers in reducing challenges 5.3.4.7 Role of other learners in reducing challenges

This category generated three major sub-categories namely, none or late payment of fees, inadequate provision of stationery and uniforms and inadequate food and shelter provisions. It emerged from the data collected that the identified categories had an immense influence on how the educational needs of a learner are fulfilled.

The learner participants attributed the challenges of non-payment or late payment of fees to wrong priorities by the guardians or failure to remit by the biological parents because as one learner observed her guardian was not sincere in the use of money she received because;

“Money is sent but unfortunately she opts to pay for her biological children at our expense. Normally fearing that the school fees may be misappropriated, they send it separately at the opening of schools but still, my mother’s sister often decides otherwise.” (L2SN).

The L2SN insisted that her parents sent them fees because:

They advise us through the phone and instruct us how to use the money and mostly it’s R1000 to be used for clothing and pocket money. In every case, my aunt is also given her R1000 for her use. Normally fearing that the school fees may be misappropriated, they send it separately at the opening of schools but still, my aunt often decides otherwise.

On L2SN’s side with respect to how remittances sent by emigrants were misappropriated by guardians was HSN who also lamented that;

“Most parents in the diaspora send their fees through guardians who may not be faithful enough to pay the school fees.”

The COVID-19 pandemic, a highly infectious disease which led the governments of almost all nations put restrictions on gatherings and movements hence stopped some people from going to work from 2020 through 2021 and attacks on foreigners in South Africa were also blamed for some challenges faced by some learners left behind. According to L1SS, the two events were responsible for her mother’s failure to pay fees in time as she lamented that;

"It all started with the outbreak of COVID-19 and there were xenophobic attacks in South Africa as well. Grandma's chickens were finished so there was nowhere she could find my school fees and even grinding mill fee."

L1SS` experiences regarding the genesis of her fees payment challenges were also echoed by one of the guardians who reasoned that emigrants needed to be exonerated from blame with regard to non-payment of fees because;

"in some situations such as this lockdown era finances may be difficult to get for many people." (*G3N*).

While it was sometimes understood by the school authorities that fees for learners left behind could at times take long to get to the schools due to the distance of the source of the money, the school heads expressed their displeasure over the parents` failure to keep to their promises as one of the heads lamented;

"The problem is those parents promise to pay and we exonerate their children from being sent home and let them learn but at the close of the term some may fail to pay." (*H3N*).

Concurring with his fellow head on school administrative challenges that emanate from late payment of fees by learners left behind, H3S further explained that the practice was not only bad for the school but also the concerned learners for the reason that;

"because their fees are paid late it emotionally affects the learner when they are often paraded for non-payment of fees."

The above excerpts from school heads also indicate that the two schools where the studies were carried out had policies that called for punishment for those learners who delayed or failed to pay fees. This view was buttressed by one of the guardians who reported the predicament one of the learners she was taking care of was going through

"He cannot attend holiday lessons because no one pays for him." (*G3SN*).

The responses from school heads, guardians and learners show that fees for most learners left behind were not paid in time. While the heads and learners blamed the guardians for holding on to the money, the guardians reasoned that in some instances the biological parents could not have sent the money. It shows that both biological parents and guardians took advantage of the dearth of a link that connects them to the school system thereby not being open about financial transactions and such a concern is the central pillar of the concept of triangulation as enunciated by the family system theory on which the present study is grounded on (Johnson, 2010).

The other challenge cited by the participants had to do with the provision of inadequate stationery and uniforms. The shortage of stationery and uniforms for some learners left behind strained some guardians such as G2SS who despite her advanced age reported that;

“I must look for piece jobs if I am to provide them.”

G2SN also pointed out that the challenge of providing adequate stationery was exacerbated by the fact that she had to split the little resources that came her way because;

“I have my children who look up to me for support. The money sent is not enough for books, so if I buy books I share equally and the shortfall will be sorted out later.”

While the teacher participants concurred with the guardians’ affirmations that some of the learners left behind had no adequate stationery such as books, they reasoned that the challenge was worsened by the fact that;

“Yes, most of them lack resources and may spend half of the term without them. However, there would be no one to monitor them when doing their homework, so it’s difficult to know whether the books are not there or something else.” (T3 FGDSN).

For T4 FGDSN, learners with emigrant parents lacked stationery because their parents were not supportive of their children's educational course and only participated when pushed so as;

"to avoid a situation where people will question as to why their kids are lacking when the parent is so rich, it's only a few who do not need to be pushed, the majority is a non-starter."

The lack of personal commitment by emigrants to their children's education as pointed out by T4 FGDSN was somehow illustrated by L1SS who narrated that although her mother sent her stationery;

"the books she sent were donated to her by her employer's child."

Regarding school uniforms, the researcher noted that out of the six learners who participated in the study, two were in complete uniform during the two days each of the learners was observed. However, both the learners and the guardians reported that the biological parents were providing the uniforms. One guardian reported that the learners had no challenges related to uniforms and stated that;

"They buy them school uniforms and all other school requirements." (G1SN).

L3SS absolved her parents from negligence when it comes to the provision of school uniforms because;

"They buy me everything I need and they are appropriate."

It looked like the learner participants and the guardians did not regard jerseys and shoes as part of the school uniform since they all reported that the learners had all the uniforms they needed at school even though some of the learners reported that they had no school shoes and jerseys. One learner said it all thus;

"I have one pair of school shoes. I don't have school jerseys my mother prefers to buy me the ones like this one I am putting on." (L1SS).

Buttressing what the learner participant said about the type of uniforms that may be provided by the biological parents, one of the teacher participants sarcastically confirmed that;

“Even uniform they can bring anything from that side inscribed Fountain High School just to show off.” (T5 FGDS).

The participants also indicated that the biological parents were at times discriminatory when providing educational material needs citing situations where nothing or little was provided for the learners in the lower classes. Sentiments captured in that regard include;

“a kid can spend the whole term without a book and they will begin to intervene when the kid reaches grades 5, 6 and 7 but in the lower grades they do not lay the foundation, especially at ECD and grades 1, 2 and 3.” (T3 FGDS).

Even though some of the biological parents had money that they could dispose of for the educational material needs of their children, the teacher participants grumbled over the inappropriateness of some of the materials provided and commended that;

“Most of the books are inappropriate because at times you find that a Grade 1 learner is given an A4 exercise book, white paper, or a ledger used in accounts.” (T2 FGDS).

One of the teacher participants, however, credited some biological parents for paying fees and providing all other basic material necessities required for the education of the learners but indicated that still, the learners had challenges linked to lack of parental monitoring thus;

“They pay fees and buy stationery and school uniforms but because of the child’s negative attitude towards education and that there is no parental care one at home, the book is left at home or torn into pieces to avoid doing anything at school.” (T3 FGDS).

Two groups of biological parents emerged from the data collected from the participants. There were those parents who were supportive

of their children's education and provided everything that the learners required and then the other group that rarely catered for the material needs of their children.

The extracts from the participants indicate that in most cases the learners were deprived of the necessities for their education. Without things such as uniforms and stationery, one wonders how the learners could be motivated to learn. Such a challenge of material deprivation could have had ripple effects and negatively impacted the learners' attitude towards education.

The other challenge that emerged from the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions was the issue of food. The participants revealed that some learners brought nothing to eat at school. Also, some guardians lamented that some of the biological parents were not remitting or their food supply to their children was not consistent resulting in the learners going to school hungry. Lamenting the issue of inadequate food provision, one learner revealed that;

"Sometimes I come to school without food." (L3SN).

G2SN concurred with L3SN that at times learners attend school without food and blamed the biological parents for that challenge because the biological parents only participated in fees payment and;

"didn't care about the food they expect you to make a plan."

The issue of non-provision of food cited by the two participants above was also echoed by another guardian who blamed her son for the food predicament L2SS was facing since the father;

"doesn't send anything it's me and my son here who is responsible even if you enquire from our neighbours they can testify." (G2SS).

Contrary to sentiments raised by most the participants who claimed that biological parents were not sending food to the learners left

behind, one of the participants absolved the emigrants for inadequate food supplies but put the blame on those responsible for carrying the food from the diaspora and commended that;

“the food will never be adequate even if you send, the transporters will take a share from the goods meant for the kids.” (G3SS).

G2SN bemoaned the practice of sending learners to school without food as in her view;

“It emotionally disturbs and bringing back the child when others are eating at school while he or she has nothing to eat. It distracts the child’s concentration in class as the child will be thinking about poverty and not the studies.”

G2SN’s observation of the negative impact of hunger on learners was observable in L3SN who could not hold his emotions as he narrated his ordeal. Again, on the day of data collection, the same learner said that he had nothing to eat during feeding time. His situation was further echoed by one of the teacher participants who reported that failure by a learner to bring food had no detrimental effect on the learner alone but also on the teacher because;

“those of us who teach ECD find that some who go to the diaspora do not remit anything and the child brings nothing to eat so you find the child isolated during feeding time so in such cases, I would not feel comfortable because we monitor them as they feed...” (T4 FGDSS).

With respect to accommodation, the researcher managed to infer the status of L1SN, L2SN, L1SS and L2SS. Guardians of the other two learner participants, that is, L3SS and L3SN were interviewed away from the residences of the learners since they only monitored the learners from afar. The purpose of visiting the homes of the participants was not to observe their residences but to interview the guardians in their natural environments commensurate with the qualitative research approach which guided this study (Creswell, 2014). During the interviews, however, the researcher noted that L1SN

stayed in the state-of-the-art house mounted with solar panels which could have had a positive impact on her schooling. However, the other three learners seemed to have shelter challenges since they stayed in very small and poorly constructed mud huts. It was evident that those learners who lived in make shifts huts were impacted negatively on their education due to a lack of learning space and lighting.

All the teacher participants and school heads reported that the learners with parents in the diaspora had behavioural challenges which they attributed to a lack of parental control. However, some of the guardians, especially grannies seemed protective of their grandsons and daughters since they all reported that the learners were disciplined. This section reports what was expressed by the participants regarding the discipline of the learners and their attitudes towards schooling.

Learners left behind in the Mwenezi District engaged in anti-school activities which according to HSS emanated from loose parental control and included;

“they come to school late and rarely do follow school rules because they stay with their grannies who pamper them with love and rarely rebuke their bad behaviour and we find that they are bullies here at school.”

Also sharing similar observations as those by HSS about learners left behind’s disciplinary challenges was the fellow head who however brought the issue of gender into the debate as he remarked that;

“It is only girls who seem to behave well. Boys usually adopt bullying, they become violent.” (HSN).

In a contribution that sustained HSN’s view regarding how violent the learners left behind sometimes become, T1 FGDSN narrated an incident when the learners

“threw stones at the school head intending to stone and the following day the learners were back at school with tinted hair, knobkerries and some other weapons.”

However, HSN’s assertion that boys were more prone to indiscipline behaviour than girls was disputed by G2SN who argued that;

“there are bound to be many challenges when children stay alone because there is a time when the child can sleep around in the case of a mature girl so it comes with serious complications because the child will be free to do as she pleases knowing that there is no one to reprimand.”

In the focus group discussion, it was revealed that learners left behind sometimes just decided to come to school without uniforms especially;

“when they are bought new clothes they will leave their school uniforms home to show off.” (T3 FGDSN).

While most the teacher participants described the learners with parents in the diaspora as in-disciplined, some teacher participants brought in the age variable as a factor that determined the extent to which the learners behaved and reasoned that;

“It depends on the learners in my case they are still young so in terms of discipline they are right just like others.” (T3 FGDSS).

The age variable brought in by T3 FGDSS as a key determinant of indiscipline behaviour also got a credit from T3 FGDSN who submitted that;

“Boys and girls in the upper classes will be in love relationships.”

G1SN commented too that early marriages were rampant among learners with emigrants and cautioned that once that happened it was irreversible because;

“if you withdraw her from the husband, you are initiating her into promiscuity.”

The respondents revealed that learners left behind had disciplinary challenges at school that included bullying, undermining teachers`

authority, absenteeism, absconding from lessons, love affairs, sexual immorality and general disregard for school rules.

One other challenge associated with the learners left behind as per respondents' submissions was that the learners had a negative attitude towards education. As T1 FGDSN put it, the learners' negative attitude towards education was such unbelievable that;

"a learner may write English paper 1 and fails to turn up for paper 2 and when you make a follow they don't cooperate, an indication that they don't value education so much that they buy time for them to be mature enough to be able to leave for South Africa."

A similarly related example to that given by T1 FGDSN was another by T1 FGDSN who reported that learners left behinds negative attitude towards education was classically shown in the year 2020 when;

"some of the learners went to South Africa to their parents and never returned."

However, T1 FGDSN traced the source of the learners left behind' negative attitude toward education to the parents since the parents' interest was for the learners to proceed from one grade to the next because irrespective of some situations such as what happened during the lockdown era where learning did not take place, the parents;

"will tell you that they cannot keep paying for someone who is static so would push the child on to the next grade."

The above excerpts from the teacher participants roped in the biological parents as key in influencing the attitudes of the learners towards education. Revealed in the participants' contribution was that the learners were not motivated to learn since they got influenced by their parents that one day they would leave for South Africa, just like the parents had done. There was an indication that the parents were not much concerned about the learners' educational outcome since they could not take advice from the teachers regarding grades the learners could enter.

The teachers' observations regarding attitudes of the learners towards education were however in contrast to the views of one of the guardians who reported that;

"His attitude is positive even though he is poor because even if they send him home for a whole week for non-payment of fees, he doesn't tire."
(G3SN).

Conversely, G2SN shared similar views with teachers that the learners left behind had a negative attitude toward education because with respect to the learners she was taking care of;

"Interest is there but with a push."

As the extracts from the interviews reveal, learners with parents in the diaspora's challenges relating to attitude toward education were mainly caused by guardians' lack of control over the learners. Cross-reference to the results of the present study can be made to the Chinese experience where the United Nations General Assembly (2017) also found that learners left behind under the care of grandparent guardians became defective in behaviour leading to the learners not performing well in school. Also, Kurebwa and Kurebwa (2014) in a study in Bindura, Zimbabwe made similar observations when they concluded that leaving learners under the guardianship of old parents was next to child abandonment since these old people are so fragile that they can hardly control the learners.

The reasons enunciated by the participants for learners left behind's bad behaviours and negative attitude towards education include inadequate firm authority over learners by the guardians, inadequate educational guidance by guardians, inconsistent remission and return by biological parents, inadequate resource management skills by both learners and guardians, ramifications of negative parental conduct emulated by learners left behind, exposure to and use of negative social media by the learners left behind.

Inadequate firm authority over learners by the guardians prominently featured in deliberations made by the teachers as one of the reasons the learners left behind had learning challenges. As T4 FGDSN put it some learners left behind stayed under the control of powerless housemaids who;

“do not have reprimanding authority, who cannot tell the learner to go to school so the learner has the freedom to decide when he or she wants to attend school.”

Expressing similar views to T4 FGDSN, T3 FGDSN reiterated that lack of parental control was a major challenge for the learners left behind because;

“these kids no longer have anyone to shape their moral behaviour as their housemaids do household chores and only without doing anything in line with their behaviour code.”.

Other than the inability to control the learners under their care, it was also reported that some guardians fuelled indiscipline among the learners by being bad role models in such circumstances as;

“if the guardian brings home her boyfriends the girl child, and the boy, would see what would be happening between the two.”(T7 FGDSS).

While the housemaid guardians were reported to negatively shape the behaviour of learners left behind through bad role modelling and limited reprimanding authority over the learners, the grannies guardians were accused of;

“pampering the learners left behind with love and rarely rebuked the learners’ bad behaviour.” (HSS).

The sentiments raised by the teacher participants with respect to inadequate firm authority over learners by guardians were also observed by the researcher from the engagements with the guardians in the field. It was observed that most of the guardians who took care of the learners with returning parents largely depended on the remittances sent by the biological parents of the learners for survival

and were reluctant to talk about the challenges the learners were experiencing only to do so after persuasion cautiously though.

The teacher participants claimed that one of the sources of challenges that characterised the learning life of learners left behind by emigrants was inadequate educational guidance by some of the guardians because;

“Even when the learners are given homework, there is no one to assist them, they would just copy answers.” (T2 FGDSN).

Also associated with inadequate educational guidance from guardians as articulated by the participants was the guardians’ lack of motivation to engage the learners in academic issues even though those guardians could be educated. For the teacher participants;

“Guardians only do their routine duties of cooking and taking care of domestic animals but anything concerning education they don’t mind unless if the kid is their relative.” (T2 FGDSN).

It also emerged from the participants that some of the guardians were complicit in some of the anti-school behaviour depicted by the learners as HSS raised the concern that;

“the guardians do not provide good advice so it’s like if the child chose not to go to school observes that, the guardians don’t question so all our efforts are then rendered useless. Even if you write a letter it may not be delivered.”

HSS’s observation regarding the negative influence of some of the guardians on the learners’ behaviour was echoed by T3 FGDS who raised the concern;

“I have observed that in Grade 5, they are now painting their fingernails. I inquired and was told that the guardian was responsible for that but they never used to do that.”

As revealed elsewhere in this report that economic lives in the area studied largely depended on remittances sent by the parents in the

diaspora, it follows that both inconsistent remission and inconsistent return by biological parents bred most of the challenges that were experienced by most of the learners left behind. One guardian related deteriorating academic performance by some of the learners left behind to emotional stress necessitated by the learners' parental absence as she commented that;

"The one doing Form 1 is doing very well but she will be affected by the mother's absence." (G3SS).

Related to the view raised by G3SS on the negative impact of not returning by parents on learners left behind, L2SS also stated that she felt let down by her father's absence and empty promises he allegedly often made that he would come every December and her major concern was that;

"I don't know him, and I had never talked to him. It is said that he promises to come every December but it has never happened and I am deeply hurt."

She further suggested that even though her father was not coming, he could lessen her ordeal by;

"buying me school accessories and paying fees." (L2SS).

The guardian of L2SS tearfully confirmed what was said by the learner with respect to her son's non-commitment to the provision of the educational needs to his daughter and said;

"He doesn't send anything it is me and my son here who are responsible you can enquire from our neighbours they can testify." (G2SS).

Related to L2SS's situation of the non-remitting father was L1SS who, however, exonerated his father and blamed her clansmen for casting a bad omen on him and in tears lamented that;

"My mother said that he once promised to buy me all school accessories. It's like the interest to buy is there but he is brain twisted."

Probed to explain what she meant by being brain twisted L1SS broke into tears and mumbled;

“He is brain twisted by members of our family such that he never thinks about his daughter. It is magically done and is meant to prevent him from thinking about returning home.”

While acknowledging that life situations of some families were improving in their area due to diaspora remittances, G3SS affirmed sentiments raised earlier by both other guardians and learners that not many of the emigrants were remitting which unfortunately impacted negatively on the educational life of the learners left behind and wished that;

“It was going to be better if they could spend a year here monitoring the education of their children but sadly these parents are responsible for the educational demise of their children.”

The participants revealed that there was no consistency in both remitting and returning by most emigrants in the part of the Mwenezi District where the present study was conducted. Unfortunately, as it emerged from the respondents, those inconsistencies in remitting and returning led many learners left behind to suffer from a lack of adequate learning provisions and emotional stress as they stayed long without interacting with their parents.

Notwithstanding the fact that the school heads and teachers also cited the dearth of remittances among some families, they added that even in those other families where the emigrants were remitting, the educational needs of learners left behind were rarely met because both the guardians and the learners left behind were inadequately skilled to manage the resources. In that respect HSN enunciated that learners left behind’s educational provisions were never adequate because of some decisions made by the guardians in that;

“It is usually the guardians who decide according to their priorities whether to pay fees or to buy food so usually the money will be diverted to food and clothing other than education.”

Concurring with the head's assertion on some guardians' misplaced priorities, L2SN also blamed her guardian for inconveniences such as being paraded or sent home for non-payment of fees as the guardian;

"At times she just decides not to pay."

Other than the guardians setting wrong priorities with the learners left behind's money entrusted to them, T5 FGDSN shifted the blame to the learners themselves because at times they shunned learning and competed on fringe items such as cell phones and his argument was based on what he observed thus:

If you observe them, especially at lunchtime, they buy so many fancy items at the tuck-shop and the learner's phone is worth R6000 and is better than that of the teacher so all those negatively impact on the motivation for schooling so they come waiting for the attainment of the right age so that they follow their parents.

The teacher participants and the school heads also narrated that some of the challenges they encountered managing learners with parents in the diaspora emanated from the biological parents of the learners themselves who modelled violent behaviour to their children. The violent behaviour was associated with what the emigrants experienced when out of the country and as HSN put it;

"the type of life they get there is violent, they portray that type of life to their children and their children then think it is the right type of behaviour."

In concurrence with the above observation on the source of violent behaviour, one teacher participant asserted that;

"Those people based in South Africa are impatient you can tell even when they share their experiences with you that they are impatient so they tend to be role models to their children." (T2 FGDSN).

T4 FGDSN bemoaned the immense influence of the diaspora in the community which he opined had transformed local community culture:

because of the influence of South Africa, whenever people gather it means blood would be shed, for them it would seem to be normal as they watch this happening and this will happen in view of these children, it might be their relative and it would be part and parcel of their life.

In the same vein, T1 FGDSN added too that above the parental influence on the learners left behind's behaviour, what the learners experienced when they visited South Africa also impacted the behaviour of the learners arguing that:

when some of the learners go for holidays, their behaviour changes completely on their return, life experiences over that side are completely different from this side. For instance, we are opening on Monday and some are on their way back you find that the hair will be burnt.

The emigrants were also blamed for their children's negative attitude towards education which they influence by spoiling the learners with a lot of goodies in T2 FGDSN's words;

"The parents flush their children with a lot of things to the extent that the child feels that schooling is insignificant."

The excerpts reveal that most learners with parents in the diaspora who were violent could have emulated such behaviour from their parents who tended to display violent behaviour in the presence of the learners every time they visited. It was reported too that the learners' negative attitude towards education was also due to parental influence where the parents could spoil the learners with expensive items such that the learners would end up not seeing the essence of education since most of the parents in the diaspora from the area studied were not educated.

The participants also reported that learners left behind were susceptible to the negative impact of social media since there were no authoritative adults who could monitor and guide the learners on the use of social media. In that regard, T1 FGDSN remarked that;

“Influence from what they are exposed to like materials send in their phones if you happen to have access to their phones you see a lot especially movies may impact negatively on the behaviour of the learners.”

Corroborating T1 FGDSN on the nature of things the learners viewed on their phones due to lack of monitoring and which negatively impacted their behaviour was another teacher who added that;

“Their phones are not monitored since they stay alone so they receive all sorts of things including violent films and pornographic ones which unfortunately impact negatively on the behaviour of the learners.” (T5 FGDSN).

T6 FGDSS bemoaned the bad influence social media was casting over most learners including those without phones and gave a case of one learner at their school who shared immoral films with other learners since;

“...is not interested in schooling he is interested in playing with his phone whilst the lesson is on. He hides his phone at break time and shows videos, porno or whatever to the kids.”

It appeared that the major challenges that affected learners left behind in the Mwenezi District emanated from inadequate guardian control and the biological parents’ lack of or limited involvement in the educational affairs of the learners. Earlier research studies indicate that when children are not controlled or given adequate appropriate guidance commensurate with their age, they regard themselves as adults and do as they wish which unfortunately leads to failure in school as teachers may not be able to manage them (Dube, 2014; Moreno, 2013; IFFD, 2018; UNICEF, 2013).

It has been widely reported in this document that learners with parents in the diaspora were experiencing a plethora of educational challenges. While some learners could get all the material resources, they required guidance on the use of those resources. Parental care and love were

sometimes inadequate yet other learners were deprived of both material and non-material support due to parental absence. In that regard, the participants suggested several strategies that could be utilised by the government, biological parents, school heads, communities, teachers and even other learners to redress the challenges the learners left behind were experiencing.

The government has been advised to work out modalities for the resuscitation of the economy so much so that citizens cherish working in the country thereby ensuring that parents stayed with their children and responded to the educational needs of the learners in time. One of the strategies suggested by T5 FGDSN was for the government to;

“create cooperatives that generate income to reduce motivation for out-migration.”

The issue of employment creation for income generation for the citizens was also viewed as a giant step towards inhibiting excessive emigration which would ensure that parents remained closer to their children as they would work in places close to home which would also help citizens;

“have a vision of working for their country...” (T1 FGDSN).

Other than employment creation, HSS suggested that the government needed to establish social structures in schools and communities meant to train people in modern parenting skills hence in that regard:

The government has a big role to play in this issue one being the guidance and counselling programme mentioned earlier. The other possible programme may involve training individuals on parenting and then those will then train guardians on how better they can take care of learners with absent parents.

Another school head opined that restructuring bureaucratic hurdles in some governmental institutions could help ease some of the challenges

that hindered some access to educational opportunities to learners with parents in the diaspora and acknowledged that:

Yes, the government has got a big role. Usually under different departments if we look at the department of registry, the government should ease the problem of issuing birth certificates. Usually, the government prioritises biological parents first. It is through this system that most learners complete school without birth certificates... (HSN).

He added that:

...through the Ministry of Health, the government should assist the health of the learners. These pupils with parents in the diaspora usually are not treated the same when it comes to the supply of drugs. They need the biological parent usually who should supply the baby clinic card and it is through this system that most of the girls passing through puberty fail to get treatment from the Ministry of Health.

HSN went further and suggested that;

“Under the Ministry of education, the government should provide a facility that allows these pupils with parents in the diaspora to move or transfer automatically where the parents are or even our schools to receive those pupils without reservations.”

The head proposed for a shift in transfer arrangements involving learners with parents in the diaspora to ensure that there is a transfer documents waiver for learners left behind when they returned from abroad since the issue of transfer documents was blocking some such learners to enrol in their schools of choice because:

We are not allowed to enrol pupils from South Africa who were born in South Africa with parents without a transfer letter from abroad. So that child ends up through some strict headmasters failing to get a place. So the government’s role is to allow that flow of information without interrupting the kid (HSN).

Other than directing efforts towards improving the broad national economic environment that would discourage out-migration, the participants added that the government needed also to amend the

education act so that learners who transferred from the diaspora were co-opted into the school system easily as a way of encouraging enrolment intake among such learners. Such a move would also likely improve the attitude of both the parents and the learners towards education and help keep them in school.

The participants suggested that the biological parents of the learners left behind ought to communicate regularly with the guardians and with the teachers to get information concerning the educational welfare of their children. T7 FGDSS argued that regular communication would help the biological parents;

“seek correct information about resources required from responsible authorities.”

The issue of seeking correct information about resources required at school was also echoed by HSN who declared that;

“parents should supply all pre-requisites that we need for the pupils to be comfortable at school.”

The head went further and advised that since one of the challenges faced by learners left behind by emigrants was late or non-payment of fees due to misappropriation of funds by some guardians, the biological parents needed:

“to send their money directly to the office through biller code or special account for the school and avoid the guardians.” (HSS).

It was also suggested that the biological parents of learners left behind needed to attend consultation invitations at the schools so that they remained close to the teachers of their children. In addition to consulting with the class teachers, T4 FGDSN further advised that;

“the biological parents should assign teachers to monitor their children while they are away and inform them if they absent themselves from school and for them to pressurise their kids they must get in contact with the administrators regularly.”

One of the participants however noted that some biological parents were taking their children to the diaspora in reaction to the challenges the learners encountered when they remained separated from their parents and seemed to endorse the move thus,

“these parents no longer have an option because they are condemning the situation in Zimbabwe and they are now taking their children to South Africa, if those kids come back the school will be too small to accommodate them.” (T1 FGDSN).

The participants lamented that there was a dearth of communication between the biological parents and the school authorities and that rendered some provisions by the parents not acceptable at school. Communication between the biological parents and the schools needed to be maximised irrespective of the distance that could be separating the two groups. The biological parents were advised to provide all the school requirements and to deposit fees directly into the schools' accounts rather than through the guardians.

While the guardian participants outlined their contribution towards easing some of the challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora, the other participants especially teachers and school heads felt that the guardians were letting the learners down by being loose on the learners with regards to discipline. Even though, the guardians reported that;

“Regardless, however, I at times chip in through selling chicken or marula nuts.” (G1SS).

Another guardian who acknowledged that there were challenges meeting the provisions of the educational need for learners said that even though;

“it's not easy to pay fees for seven children so at times I make payment plan arrangements with the school authorities but if I fail to meet the agreed payment dates the children are sent home for non-payment.” (G2SN).

The excerpts indicate that though the guardians were poor and old as noted in most of the cases, they were embarking on some strategies within their means to try to assist learners to pursue their educational aspirations in the absence of the learners' biological parents.

However, the teachers and school heads felt that the guardians needed to be more honest with the money they occasionally received and pay the fees accordingly;

"The guardians should attend to the grey areas we notice for instance the issue of fees, they give stories pertaining to where the fees could have been sent but at times they are the ones who could have used the money."
(HSS).

HSS added that the grandmother guardians were spoiling the learners left behind by being too lenient with the learners and hence needed to:

"educate their grandchildren the same way they educated their children who are in most cases the parents of these learners, they need to advise them properly."

Corroborating his counterpart's views regarding what guardians could do to improve the situation of learners left behind, HSN asserted that the guardians needed to be fully involved in the education of the learners left behind by;

"Ensuring that these pupils come to school, to ensure these pupils have good health and to come and attend meetings at school. Also, their role is to come to school and supervise the learning of the pupils on open days."

T1 FGDSS opined that while it was necessary to talk about what guardians may improve on for learners left behind to learn comfortably, it was prudent too for the biological parents of the learners to hire the guardians based on some basic attributes such as;

"should be one who can help the learner in schoolwork, should relate with the teacher, should communicate with the teacher about daily homework status. Also should inquire from the learner on homework given."

T5 FGDSS corroborated her counterpart's suggestions on consideration of some specific qualities when hiring a guardian and added that;

“Serve to assist in homework, the guardian should assist the learner socially by not engaging in sexual immorality or abusing drugs.”

It emerged from the responses of the participants that some guardians helped in the provision of educational needs of the learners left behind by selling *marula* nuts to raise the fees. However, other than the fees, it was suggested that the guardians ought to use the remittances honestly. The participants suggested too that guardians needed to have such attributes as literacy and good social standing so that they will be able to assist the learners in homework and be good role models respectively.

The school heads shared what the schools were already doing to help ease educational challenges experienced by learners with parents in the diaspora. One programme operational at both schools where the study was done was guidance and counselling as HSS reported that;

“We normally instruct the guidance and counselling team to assist the learners as a measure to clog the gap left by the absent parent.”

HSN said that they have incorporated the learners with parents in the diaspora into the vulnerable group since some of them lived alone without parental care and insisted that in his view it was the responsibility of every school head to;

“evaluate the welfare of the kid and then categorise the kid either as vulnerable or not vulnerable and to graduate the kid from one grade to the next if the child qualifies.”

Other than guidance and counselling and facilitating the learners left behind to be considered in welfare programmes such as the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), HSS suggested that schools needed to,

“embark on awareness programmes to the parents about the challenges these learners experience especially during meetings so that corrective measures can be collectively mooted.”

The heads emphasised that their concern was more on those learners who had challenges of material needs and that the heads were liaising with the community leadership for the identification of the learners for them to benefit from welfare programmes at school. Above such a gesture, however, the teacher participants also brought another dimension through which the heads could play a pivotal role in contributing to the fulfilment of the educational needs provisions of learners with parents in the diaspora and articulated that;

“Yes the heads should socialise these parents on the importance of education. They should make them see that with the education they will be employed in better jobs compared to those who are not educated even when they go to South Africa.” (T3 FGDSN).

Concurring with her counterpart at School North on the heads’ socialisation role, T5 FGDSS also stressed the need for the school administrators to open up communication channels so that:

“the school heads advise the parents on appropriate items to buy, it’s like educating the parents that uniform should be appropriate, the same as books.”

The teacher participants highlighted that there was supposed to be regular communication between school authorities and both guardians and biological parents of the learners so that notes on parenting could be shared for the benefit of the learner.

The community through their leadership structures were advised to be less discriminatory when treating learners, especially on issues to do with welfare. HSS opined that leading exemplary life was important for the learners left behind because;

“the guardians may admire and encourage the learners to emulate.”

It was also submitted that the community through community leadership should select learners suitable for welfare programmes after due consideration of the real circumstances characterising the learner irrespective of the migration status of the biological parent of the learner. According to HSN, such strategies would ensure that deserving learners benefited from welfare programmes because: “selection could have been done objectively.”

The extracts show that the participants had high hopes that if the community leadership was considerate of the circumstances of some of the learners left behind, most of those learners could get adequate assistance and do well in school.

As to how the teachers assisted the learners with disciplinary disorders, the teachers said that they counselled some of the learners and donated some books just to occupy them. This is what T5 FGDS had to say:

At times we find them exercise books to get them to concentrate because when the learner is not writing the teacher may request an exercise book from the office with the assumption that the learner has challenges not knowing that he or she has left books at home.

The other way teachers assisted the learners with parents in the diaspora was through counselling the learners and as T3 FGDS articulated, counselling and giving general advice were benefiting those learners with a positive attitude towards learning while not serving a purpose to those with a negative attitude;

“Those who are serious normally adhere to the advice and consult but others with a negative attitude towards school would not consult from anyone so it depends on the child on how they value education.”

While the teachers reported that they found it necessary to consult with the guardians as they counselled the learners, they at times faced

challenges as they failed to relate with the guardians who may because of old age or attitude just say;

“it’s your duty I cannot do your work what are you paid for.”(T1 FGDSS).

With respect to how teachers could help ease the challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora, HSN asserted that the teachers needed to have enough information about each learner which they should gather through;

“ensuring that these learners attend lessons, checking the welfare of the pupils inside and outside of the school and giving feedback to the office.”

In line with HSN’s observation on what the teachers ought to do to help reduce challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora, HSS stressed the need for teachers to target the behaviour and attitude of the learners and shared his belief that:

When teachers teach subjects such as Family Religious and Moral Education, they ought to dwell much on topics such as Ubuntu/unhu and how one’s aspirations in life can be achieved. If such subjects are well taught they will help mould learners’ characters including characters of those with parents in the diaspora.

The finding on the role of the teachers to reduce challenges faced by learners left behind by emigrants point to counselling and teaching of appropriate topics that could help the learners develop positive attitudes toward education.

The heads also believed that other learners though to a limited extent could also help reduce challenges faced by their counterparts with emigrant parents through behaving themselves well as HSS expressed that;

“not much from the other learners can be expected serve for model behaviour that can be emulated by some.”

Also important for the other learners to help reduce learners left behind's negative attitude towards education was to treat the learners fairly. Referring to other learners, HSN explained that;

“Their role is to regard those learners as their colleagues. They should treat those learners the same way they treat themselves and at the same time they should not differentiate the welfare of the pupils from their welfare.”

It emerged from the interviews and focus group discussions held with school heads, teachers, and guardians of the learners left behind and the learners left behind themselves and from the documents peeped through the government, biological parents, community leadership, school heads, teachers and other learners could take a leading role in easing the challenges if they worked collaboratively through regular communication, regular contact, counselling and teaching life skills. This finding resonates with the basic assumption of the family systems theory which informs that for a system to work properly, all components of that system ought to work collaboratively with all other parts (Johnson, 2010).

It emerged from the present study that feminisation of guardianship, learners' home chores and sports and marketing events that characterised the studied area in the Mwenezi District had a great impact on how learners valued education and responded to expectations from schools.

Table 5.7: Societal influence on the educational orientation of learners left behind by emigrants

THEME	CATEGORY
5.4 Societal influence on the educational orientation of learners left behind by emigrants	5.4.1 Feminisation of guardianship 5.4.2 The negative impact of domestic chores on the education of learners left behind by emigrants 5.4.3 Sports tournaments, harvesting <i>Mopani</i> worms, initiation ceremonies and marketing events on learners' appreciation of education

The gender demography of all the participants who were guardians of learners left behind in this study revealed that only females were entrusted by biological parents in the diaspora to look after their children. Three of these were in the age group range of 30-40 years by approximation. One was in her early sixties while the other two were approximately over seventy years. For ease of reference in this report, the guardians in the 30-40 years age range are referred to as the young guardians while the 60 and above are referred to as the older or grandparent guardians.

What was interesting was that the young guardians were taking care of learners with parents who occasionally returned and who were remitting while the old guardians were responsible for the learners whose parents rarely remitted or returned. Whether that was by design or coincidence no one knows.

It also emerged from the interviews that girls as young as twelve years were given caregiving responsibilities in the absence of their parents. One such learner was L2SN who testified that before she relocated to her present place of residence, she was responsible for the day-to-day management of family affairs because;

“Grandmother is now old so it’s me who was responsible for managing the finances. After our parents sent money I would take my siblings to the market for shopping.”

The extent to which the community where the present study was carried out believed in the use of females for guardianship roles, was demonstrated too by a classic description of the duties that were performed by one of the learners left behind as narrated by one of the teachers participants thus;

“I have a case of a student who was left in the care of a sister in law who was sick. Sometimes she would not come to school for some time because she cooks and baths the sick sister-in-law. You will see that the kid is in a difficult situation.” (T3, FGDSN).

It was evident from the interaction held with the guardians and the narratives shared by the participants that females were responsible for guardianship roles irrespective of their age. Unfortunately, as the narratives revealed, the caregiving role entrusted to school going age girls negatively impacted their education since the girls would sometimes be forced to be absent from school due to caregiving role commitments. While this finding concurs with what was found in Moldova, it contradicts with results of earlier studies in Mexico and Jamaica where the number of girls completing school increased more than that of boys who would drop out of school to find work on the farms to sustain lives of their young siblings left behind by emigrants (UNICEF, 2013; Moreno, 2013).

One of the objectives of this book was to establish how the educational needs of learners left behind were catered for in the Mwenezi District. In that regard, this sub-category infers meanings and value attached to education through relating domestic chores done by the learners and time allocated to those chores against schooling time. L3SN tearfully narrated that his guardian had a poor perception of educational needs because she without considering his schooling time needs laboured him with domestic tasks such as;

“Fetching water, watering the garden upon returning from school. I am also responsible for cooking early in the morning before coming to school.”

Concurring with L3SN on the guardians’ disregard for affording the learners adequate learning and resting time, L2SN said that what made her situation worse was that her guardian rarely participated in performing some domestic duties such as watering the garden since;

“Even if we go to the garden it’s only us who will be working while she is seated.”

However, for L1SS, her guardian understood that domestic chores could negatively affect her studies hence to mitigate against such possibilities, she reported that;

“her grandmother does some of the duties.”

The other learner who reported that domestic chores were not negatively impacting her studies said that she managed to balance her school time with that of domestic chores because;

“We have chores to carry out with my sisters”

It emerged from the responses of the guardians and learners that some guardians did not value the education of learners left behind since the learners were laboured with domestic chores thereby stealing the learners’ learning time. One would argue and conclude that some learners left behind in the Mwenezi District were underperforming in school due to strain related to domestic duties performed at home. A similar conclusion was made by Sanduleasa and Matei (2015) in a study in Romania where it was noted that domestic work deprived learners left behind their right to education, leisure and play.

The teacher participants also cited out-of-school factors that impacted how education was revered in the area where the present study was carried out. Some activities which allegedly were reported to conflict with the learners’ perception of the importance of education included;

“There are sports where the learners go with the house girl and normally come back late.” (T2, FGDSS).

With respect to the influence of sports on the learners left behind’s anti-school behaviour T2, FGDSS gave a chilling account of what was happening in their neighbourhood thus:

Where I come from, the girl is in Form Two and together with the guardian, they bring boyfriends from where they do sports. The next day the child is expected to go to school, she is tired already because of the night’s activity and will not learn so the guardian is a catalyst.

Other than sports another participant added;

“We also have marketing events and we have seasonal factors such as Mopani worms when the maid goes for Mopani worms the child does not come to school.” (T1, FGDSS).

While some teacher participants criticised sports tournaments, marketing events and *Mopani* worms for diverting the learners' educational orientation, one other participant inferred that such analysis was misplaced because;

"those who sponsor soccer tournaments are saying they discourage young people from engaging in sexual activities since the youngsters will be occupied so we should not sound crushing the idea." (T8 FGDSS).

T8 FGDSS's view on the utility of sporting events in managing youth behaviour was not disputed by the other participants but their concern was on the negative impact on the learners' schooling time hence clarified that;

"We are not crushing sports our focus is on the school going age learner. When they spend the whole weekend at sports, they usually don't report for school on Mondays because they will be tired and haven't done their homework so they will be doing homework." (T1FGDSS).

One other community activity related to sports that had a bearing on the education of the learners left behind was participation in initiation ceremonies. As one head argued, the community was not fair when conducting such ceremonies because;

"These learners are neglected culturally by their guardians. I haven't seen children with parents in the diaspora participating in initiation ceremonies." (HSN).

When the head was probed to explain how the issue of initiation ceremonies impacted the education of the learners, he inferred that exclusion of the learners left behind in such ceremonies came with mixed opportunities because on one hand the learners will miss out on opportunities linked to the community tradition in the future but on the other hand, such exclusionary practices played to the advantage of the learners because;

"Initiation ceremonies are normally done during school days but those with parents in the diaspora are left out and they have chances of proceeding with schooling." (HSN).

It was established that attendance at marketing events, sports and initiation ceremonies in as much as they helped bind the communities together through interaction, they, however, impacted negatively on the learners' education through crouching into the learners' schooling time as well diverting the learners' attention. While the issue of marketing events, sports and initiation ceremonies could be unique to the present study, the learners left behind have been reported in earlier studies to be ill-equipped in time management where parental guidance is inadequate (Antman, 2012; Mabharani, 2014; Chakombera & Mubikwa, 2018).

This theme produced three major categories namely knowledge of the existing welfare programmes in schools, selection criteria of beneficiaries of welfare programmes and implementation mechanisms of available welfare programmes and the way forward in the provision and management of welfare programmes to learners with parents in the diaspora. The table below illustrates the themes, categories and sub-categories that emerged.

Table. 5.8: Themes and Categories of Educational Welfare Programmes for Learners with Parents in the Diaspora

THEME	CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY
5.5 Educational welfare programmes for learners with parents in the diaspora	5.5.1 Knowledge of the existing welfare programmes	5.5.1.1. learners' knowledge about existing welfare programmes 5.5.1.2. Guardians' knowledge about existing welfare programmes in schools 5.5.1.3. Teachers' knowledge about existing welfare programmes

	5.5.2 Discourses on the inclusion of learners with parents in the diaspora in welfare programmes	5.5.2.1. Debates on inclusion and exclusion of learners with parents in the diaspora into educational welfare programmes
	5.5.3 Future of the educational welfare of learners with parents in the diaspora	5.5.3.1 Learners and community attitudes towards educational welfare of learners with parents in the diaspora

This category highlights learners', teachers' and guardians' knowledge about welfare programmes available that could help vulnerable learners inclusive of those with parents in the diaspora access educational opportunities. The knowledge sought from the participants related to the identification of welfare organisations and the support those organisations were extending to needy learners. The participants were also expected to describe how those welfare programmes were implemented and make an evaluation of the extent to which the programmes were benefiting the vulnerable learners.

The learner participants indicated that they knew that vulnerable learners were entitled to some assistance from welfare programmes and organisations such as BEAM, PLAN and Bubi Valley Conservancy. L3SS indicated that as far as she knew, vulnerable learners were;

“included in BEAM and got assistance from Bubi Valley Conservancy.”

Another learner who seemed to have similar knowledge to L3SS about the welfare organisations operating in the school also said;

“I only know about BEAM and PLAN” (L2SS).

Other than simply identifying the welfare organisations operating in schools, the learner participants proved that they somehow

understood the mandate of the organisations they identified with respect to the education of vulnerable learners thus;

“Their fees are paid and they also receive books.” (L2SN).

L1SS was supportive of the initiatives of welfare organisations to assist vulnerable learners through paying their fees and provision of other necessities such as books and pens as she professed that;

“I don’t have comfort learning in the company of others who are not writing due to vulnerability so I feel that they need to be assisted.”

Further from only mentioning names of the welfare organisations that were operating in their schools and the assistance the organisations were providing to the vulnerable learners, nothing else could be said about the organisations by the learner participants. There was also no mention of any form of school-based assistance offered to the vulnerable learners indicating that the schools had no such programmes or if they were there, the learners were not aware of their existence.

The guardians demonstrated some know-how about the non-school-initiated welfare programmes that were operating at the schools. The programmes identified included those superintended by PLAN and the BEAM initiative by the government of Zimbabwe. The guardians indicated too that they had some knowledge about the role of parents, the donor community, government and teachers regarding the implementation of the programmes. It was based on that knowledge about the welfare programmes that they could make comments regarding how the learners with parents in the diaspora got treated in the programmes. For example one of the guardians commended;

“They are excluded they say BEAM is for orphans only.” (G2SN).

Although learners left behind were excluded from welfare programmes as revealed by G2SN above, G1SN was opposed to the

selection criteria by those responsible for the selection and insisted that;

“They ought to assist the learners by including them in welfare programmes. For the secondary school learners, they should assist with bicycles because the schools are very far.”

When asked to comment on what they could consider the role of the teacher in the implementation of welfare programmes at schools, the guardians reasoned that;

“The teachers, I don’t see how the teachers can assist someone with parents in South Africa.” (G1SS).

Reiterating her counterpart’s views with regards to the role of the teachers in welfare implementation programmes, G2SS stressed that,

“there is no way teachers can pay fees for a child with a parent in South Africa probably the government may include them into BEAM or any other donors.”

G2SS emphasised that school leaders had no role in the production of lists of possible BEAM beneficiaries since that was the mandate of traditional leaders. However, by that she indicated that she somehow had some knowledge about how the BEAM facility was operating in schools though not explicitly expressed since the responsibility is done by the BEAM selection committee thus:

I don’t see what these school leaders can do because, in the case of donors, the production of a list of beneficiaries is the sole responsibility of traditional leaders who would then send the names to the school. The school leaders have no authority to dispute lists from the traditional leaders.

It emerged from the interviews that government policy guidelines in the selection of welfare beneficiaries were not followed in the schools since inclusion or exclusion depended;

“on the composition of the school board. For instance, they have been benefiting since (Name concealed on ethical grounds) was elected into the committee because he knows the situation since some of his brothers are failing to support their children.”(G3SS).

There was a citation of corrupt activities involving teachers in the selection of some welfare beneficiaries. Asked to explain how the teachers got involved in the selection of BEAM beneficiaries since legally it was exclusively the role of the parents, G3SS lamented that;

“Even though the parents could have drawn a list of beneficiaries, the teachers will later revisit the list plucking out some children claiming that their parents have a good history of paying fees.”

However, another guardian lamented that;

“She has never benefitted from donors. It’s only recently when there was a promise that they will benefit from PLAN so we were attending lessons which were stopped due to reports of an increase of cases of that thing.” (G1SS).

Similar to the learners’ assertions, the guardians also indicated that there were no known welfare programmes initiated at the school level that were meant to assist vulnerable learners including those with parents in the diaspora.

Teacher knowledge about welfare programmes varied depending on one’s level of responsibility at the school. It emerged that those teachers in administrative positions knew modalities around the existence and operationalisation of welfare programmes. For example, one head outlined that;

“We have created a horticulture programme and we ensure that people who are engaged in this programme half of them should be pupils with parents in the diaspora and half of them should be those with parents in the locality.” (HSN).

The head also chronicled the school-based initiatives meant to assist learners with parents in the diaspora thus;

“All pupils with parents in the diaspora are taken at least once a fortnight to the guidance and counselling team to check on areas that are stated there, the welfare at home, where they spend weekends, the duties they do after school.” (HSN).

Progress reported at school North regarding the establishment of projects that could help vulnerable learners was not evident at school South because according to the HSS:

so far we are yet to have any programme that caters for learners with parents in the diaspora specifically because our view is that majority of such learners with parents in the diaspora are well up in terms of things like money. They seem to be better than the residents.

Another teacher administrator shared that at their school they had no specific programmes meant for some specific group of learners since as he put it such an arrangement would have defied the logic of inclusivity promulgated by the government because;

“We have homogeneous classes, so we cater for all the children regardless of one’s disability or whatever. As a school we have a feeding programme that caters for all children.” (T1, FGDSS).

While administrators showed adequate knowledge about how the BEAM programme was operating, one teacher, a non-administrator could not hide his ignorance about the operationalisation of the programme as he confessed that:

we may not be aware of the protocols or procedures that are used in the selection of BEAM beneficiaries because some orphans are better than children with both parents so at times some may not be considered because the parents are in the diaspora but that will be just a name that they are in the diaspora whilst the child will be in dire need... (T4FGDSN).

The T4, *FGDSN* went further and declared that:

...such children ought to be considered in welfare programmes because some orphans if you are to see them you may not believe that they are orphans yet if another one with both parents is to be paraded there you may think that the child is an orphan so everything being equal such situations need to be considered.

The sentiments raised by the teacher participants indicated that there was a gap between administrators and the ordinary teachers at School North in terms of knowledge about the functioning of the BEAM.

Generally, however, all the categories of participants, namely learners, guardians and teachers indicated that they had some knowledge about the existence of educational welfare programmes in schools that included PLAN International, the BEAM, Bubi Valley Conservancy and Solon Foundation. While the participants described to some extent how the organisations provided for the educational welfare of vulnerable learners, it was clear in the discourses that the target of the organisations was for the provision of material needs only. Since educational needs requirements transcend material needs to non-material needs, it was concluded that most learners left behind in the Mwenzi District needed some educational welfare, be it material or non-material.

There were different views expressed by the participants regarding suitability for assistance in welfare programmes of learners with parents in the diaspora. While some participants reasoned that life was tough for the diaspora-based parents and hence advocated that their children back home ought to be included in welfare programmes, others argued that it was even much worse for the Zimbabwean-based parent hence it was unfair to consider learners with parents in the diaspora for inclusion into welfare programmes ahead of learners with locally based parents.

The debate also arose on whether learners with parents in the diaspora ought to be included in educational welfare programmes or not. One reason given for consideration into welfare was that;

“the child ought to be assisted because a child with parents in the diaspora is akin to an orphan, six months can pass without anything remitted whilst you claim that the parent is in South Africa remember South Africa is just a name.” (G2SN).

Other than the issue of parental irresponsibility as enunciated by G2SN above, G1SN said that from her experience as a regular visitor to South Africa, learners left behind deserved assistance because;

“at times the parents may not have the money even though they are working in the diaspora remember they are foreigners there and at times they can be made to work for nothing so their children must not be deprived of their right to education.”

G3SS concurred with both G2SN and G1SN and added another dimension that should propel the community to seriously consider the plight of learners left behind thus;

“They need food assistance especially when there is a donor because their parents may not always send food in time. The children may steal or get married whilst they are still young if they can’t find food on the table.”

Commenting on the suitability of learners left behind in welfare programmes, one learner decried the non-involvement of the learners in the beneficiaries’ selection process hence;

“There is nothing to say because they are selected in my absence. They have selected me for BEAM this year all along I have never been selected. The selection criterion is fine but they leave out other orphans.” (L2 SS).

The participants looked beyond school fees assistance and implored that the learners left behind also needed food assistance since in some cases the learners left behind were living in abject poverty. In that regard, the participants recommended that;

“I think they need food assistance and fees because some of them are bright but are betrayed by their unreasonable parents.” (G3 SS)

For the guardians, the responsibility to ensure that there was food on the table for learners left behind was supposed to be shouldered by;

“The government should ensure that such children are not segregated against and get assistance just like other children do.” (G1 SN).

The teacher participants who called for the inclusion of learners with parents in the diaspora in welfare programmes reasoned that such a move needed to be done with due reference to what was obtaining on the economic and educational life of the learner because;

“Whilst they are well up there are other exceptions such as that one whose parents had never returned since when she was a toddler up until Form 5.” (T3, FGDSS).

One teacher participant even opined that it was bad to rank learners with parents in the diaspora on the tail end of possible welfare beneficiaries on the basis that their parents were in the diaspora since;

“Some of these orphans have treasures that were left behind that can take them far yet you say they are orphans those treasures can take them far.” (T8, FGDSS).

The HSN revealed that learners left behind were getting assistance in welfare programmes and commended that;

“Most parents in the community especially those with the roles of community village works they appreciate this and village heads they appreciate when they see that we consider these pupils.”

The support for the inclusion of learners left behind in welfare programmes was however challenged by other participants on the basis that;

“Learners with parents in the diaspora do not deserve donor assistance because their parents send money it’s only that the guardians misappropriate the money.” (L2 SS).

L2SS’s contention was echoed by another teacher participant who also said that:

these learners with parents in the diaspora are excluded from such welfare programmes Just because they are the haves. Bubi Valley and BEAM do not cater for that group because their parents are still alive and are financially capacitated all they need is some education (T5, FGDSS).

T5 FGDSS’s assessment of the financial situation of parents of learners left behind resonated with HSS’s in that the head also stressed that;

“Like I said earlier, in our view the learners left behind are better as compared to those of locally based parents so they don’t deserve to benefit.”

The idea to exclude learners left behind in welfare programmes at School South was also influenced by the community because as the head pointed out;

“the community contend that since those parents are better off financially and are never present during collective duties they are to blame and should make efforts to pay something so that the school develops.”

What the head said with respect to the views of the community regarding the exclusion of learners with parents in the diaspora in welfare programmes was also confirmed by one of the guardians who reported that;

“the traditional leaders won’t entertain that even if you indicate to them that there is need to consider his child who is interested in her studies they will openly tell you that they won’t take it as long as the child has both parents.” (G1SS).

However, another guardian said that the exclusion of learners with parents in the diaspora in welfare programmes was not based on clear consideration of the circumstances of each learner but nepotism since;

“their targets are children of those they know.” (G3SS).

The participants raised two pertinent reasons that should compel whoever would be responsible for selecting learners with parents in the diaspora into welfare programmes. These are that the biological parents could be irresponsible and not remit to the children back home hence failure to assist the learners would be akin to punishing them for their parents’ neglect. The other reason given was that being in the diaspora did not mean that all was well for the biological parents since there were some possibilities that they could be financially strained whilst they were in the diaspora especially now due to COVID-19 pandemic that has resulted in compressed economies the world over. It was also reasoned that getting economic opportunities was not easy for most undocumented migrants, especially in South Africa where most the emigrants were reportedly domiciled. Evidence extracted

from earlier studies demonstrates that there were little economic fortunes realised by most of the non-documented migrants (Zirima, 2016; Dube, 2014; Sanduleasa & Matei, 2015).

Those participants who opposed the inclusion of learners left behind in welfare programmes did so on the ground that in their view the parents of the learners were far much better economically than the local parents hence it could be unfair for their children to benefit ahead of the local parents. Rather they advocated the training of both the guardians and biological parents of the learners to improve financial management.

With respect to the attitudes of the learners and the community to the programmes set in place to ease challenges faced by the learners with parents in the diaspora, the heads gave reactions of learners with parents in the diaspora thus:

Usually, some of them believe it is luck on their part and when they get those programmes they become daily attendances to school. Those who do not have prospects of being included usually drop out of school. Now the pupils who are given such an opportunity as CAMFED OR BEAM attend school regularly (HSN).

The HSN however added that;

“The programmes are useful especially if the social dimension fund is sent to school but if the pupils are not paid the programmes become a disaster to income of the school because the learners will learn using resources that are not paid for by the government.”

Another head also commented on the vitality of welfare programmes they had set in the schools to help learners with parents in the diaspora thus;

“it’s working we have cases of five learners here whose behaviour has since changed for the better after they underwent counselling programmes.” (HSS).

However, HSS went further and raised the concern that;

“With the exception of those, I mentioned earlier who benefited most of them shun counselling. The reason is linked to societal influence and they view our efforts as abuse and infringement of their rights to freedom.”

The heads also shared the attitude of other learners without parents in the diaspora when they saw those with parents in the diaspora receiving educational welfare assistance thus;

“Usually the attitude is if they are also orphans who have been left out and they see a pupil whom they know the parent is in the diaspora they feel discriminated.” (HSN).

In her submission on the future of educational welfare programmes for learners with parents in the diaspora, one of the guardians suggested that;

“If those children are to be assisted, each village should have a person responsible for taking statistics of children with non-returning parents because the reality in our community is that most children are left unattended.” (G3SS).

Stressing her point further about the necessity to compile registers of non-returning parents for possible consideration of their children in welfare programmes she lamented that:

Had you come earlier I could have taken you to a home next to our field and you were not going to control your emotions. There is classic impoverishment, the parents have been away for five to six years and the grandmother is advanced in age it's just disheartening (G3SS).

The heads too called for an attitude shift from the community if the learners with parents in the diaspora were to benefit from welfare programmes in the future. Illustrating the interaction challenges that existed between schools and the community regarding the treatment of learners with parents in the diaspora, the heads lamented that;

“there is this group comprising of guardians who seem to be opposed to the idea because at times we invite them to school to share notes on how we

think they ought to treat the learners and by that they think we are condemning their efforts and overstepping our role." (HSS).

Expressing similar views to his counterpart's regarding the negative attitude of the community towards educational welfare assistance extended to learners with parents in the diaspora, Head School South enunciated that;

"Usually it is the parents in the community where we get the information that they discuss with pupils that when such and such pupils with parents in the diaspora have been included in the programmes, the parents complain so their attitude is negative." (HSN).

The extracts indicate that learners and the school authorities regarded educational welfare programmes as vital for the education of learners with parents in the diaspora. That view was, however, not positively fully taken by some members of the communities and some learners with resident parents who argued that the latter ought to benefit from such programmes ahead of the former. Such differences in opinions could be resolved if as suggested by one guardian there were registers of non-returning parents in the communities that could be used as reference documents whenever some considerations for assistance could be mooted.

The future of educational welfare of learners with parents in the diaspora hinges on two aspects namely the educational aspirations of the learners with parents in the diaspora themselves and their attitude towards welfare and the attitude of the community whose responsibility currently is to select vulnerable learners into welfare programmes.

The excerpts above show that the learners with parents in the diaspora had an educational vision which they thought could only be realised if they received assistance from the government and other well-wishers. In my opinion, such calls from the concerned learners ought to be

listened to since they were the ones who were experiencing vulnerability due to parental absence.

In the chapter presentation and analysis of data about the educational needs of learners left behind by emigrants gathered through face-to-face key participant interviews from learners left behind, guardians of the learners left behind and from school heads were done. Secondly, a report on data obtained from teachers who were engaged in focus group discussions was made too. The data from the participants were also consolidated by data from some official documents such as academic reports and learners' exercise books.

It emerged from the data gathered that learners in the whole primary school from ECD to Grade 7 were left behind by emigrants in the part of the Mwenezi District where the study was conducted.. While school heads, teachers and guardians reported that emigration in the area where the study was done was largely a result of family disintegration or the need for parents to search for greener pastures outside Zimbabwe for family economic emancipation, they all decried that the practice was not to the best interest of the learners since it left the learners under inadequate parental control since most the biological parents were neither remitting nor returning and on that respect, HSS argued that;

"I don't regard it as a good idea, people do it because of the need to search for a living but it's bad for the children."

The learners left behind were further reported to grapple with challenges that include inadequate educational material support where their fees, uniforms, stationery, shelter and food were sometimes not provided or provided in short supply. The participants reported too that learners left behind had behavioural challenges including indiscipline and negative attitude toward education which were attributed to inadequate firm authority, inadequate educational

guidance, inadequate resource management skills, exposure to and use of negative social media and emulations of negative parental conduct.

Considering the challenges faced by learners left behind, the participants suggested that the Zimbabwean government should open up the economy for the citizens to remain in the country. Also, the biological parents were advised to remit and return above recruiting socially responsible guardians who should be able to assist learners in their academic work as well. School heads were advised to open communication channels with the biological parents and guardians of the learners left behind where learner welfare and parenting styles commensurate with the circumstances of the learners could be deliberated. Furthermore, teachers were advised to prioritise guidance and counselling and teaching *Ubuntu/unhu* in their classes. The community was advised to embrace the learners left behind and treat them fairly. Likewise, the other learners were encouraged to accommodate their counterparts.

The other finding from the data were that the society where the study was conducted had a great influence on how learners left behind valued and participated in educational issues. In that regard, it was noted that guardianship in the area was feminised. Domestic chores were also reported to be gendered and negatively affected the girl learner who emerged the one loaded with many responsibilities. The community also engaged in sports tournaments, marketing events and initiation ceremonies within the school calendar and all these activities defined how learners left behind responded to their educational mandate.

In view of all the experiences and challenges that manifest in the educational life of learners left behind, the participants also deliberated on the educational welfare of the learners. Though a strong debate ensued with respect to the suitability of learners left behind on

benefiting from welfare programmes where some suggested that the learners needed not benefit since their parents were financially better off than the local parents, the overwhelming point was that the learners deserved assistance since some parents were non-committal to the welfare of the learners. In the next chapter, further discussions are made on the findings of the study to establish what the findings mean in relation to existing literature.

CHAPTER SIX: RELATING DATA TO THE MAJOR TENETS OF THE FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY

This study sought to establish how the educational needs of learners with parents in the diaspora were catered for in the Mwenezi District of Zimbabwe. The results of the study gathered from school heads, teachers, learners and guardians were presented and analysed in the previous chapter. This chapter discusses the findings and is in two sections. The first section relates the findings of the study to the major tenets of the family systems theory upon which the study is premised to establish the extent to which the study has been informed by the theory. The other part of the discussion juxtaposes the current research findings to the existing literature on the educational needs of learners with parents in the diaspora in a bid to establish related findings, differences and the possible addition of knowledge on the subject area to influence policy formulation, practice and opening up areas for further research.

A prelude to the discussion of the application of the family systems theory to the findings of the present study may go with a brief mention of the theory's major assumptions which according to Moreno (2013) are:

- All parts of the system are interconnected
- Understanding is only possible by viewing the whole family
- A system's behaviour affects its environment and in turn, the environment affects the system.

All the theoretical assumptions together with the four foundational concepts of the family systems theory namely anxiety, two basic life forces, the emotional system and the family as an emotional unit were manifest in the data gathered about the educational needs of learners whose parents were in the diaspora (ISSFI, 2015). Accordingly, the

concepts are highlighted in the discussion to show how they relate to the specific themes and categories that emerged from the data.

One of the major objectives of the current thesis was to establish how learners left behind by emigrant biological parents experienced schooling in the Mwenezi District of Zimbabwe. The educational experiences of learners with parents in the diaspora, therefore, emerged as the central theme to address the learners' experiences. This theme starts by unpacking the circumstances that led to the status of being left behind. The parent-child separation brought about a new family set-up that also emerged with new and modified roles and expectations for biological parents, guardians and the learners left behind. From Bowen's views in his family systems theory, anxiety develops when people are not certain about their future (Johnson, 2010). Therefore, the discussion centres on what the participants revealed on how the learners left behind in the Mwenezi District experienced schooling in the anxiety-filled set-up with particular reference to the learners' working relationships with guardians, teachers and biological parents.

The present study reveals that while migration was at times considered by some parents as the only option available for the economic survival of their families, it in some instances led to some emotional uncertainty hence new challenges for some learners left behind. For example, L3SS lamented that since her parents moved to South Africa, she had not known the peace of mind because even though the parents were remitting;

"I just want to see them often."

L3SS's emotional response to her separation from her parents indicates that while the parents out-migrated on the belief that family economic emancipation was all that the family needed, they were somehow wrong since the decision had led to the anxiety of the learner left

behind as she tried to adjust to the altered family set up. This finding, therefore, resonates with family systems theorisation which state that anxiety among family members develops whenever the nuclear family set-up is shaken by the separation of members as the members try to adjust to the new family set-up (Moreno, 2013; Guendell *et al.*, 2013).

While findings from the present study reveal that migration from the Mwenezi District has largely been a result of poverty due to the volatile economic environment and family disintegration due to the death of a spouse or divorce and therefore intended to ease both social and financial pressure on the families concerned it did little overall in that respect. Those challenges seemed to have been passed on to the learners since they also experienced school poverty and love and parental attention deprivation because some of the parents were neither returning nor remitting as rightly put by one of the participants;

"his parents went to South Africa when he was in Grade 2 and had never returned nor remitted, now he is in Grade Seven." (G3SN).

The other learner participant also said that her guardian was misappropriating educational funds remitted by her parents leading to a disadvantage on her part because;

"my mother`s sister does not pay our school fees although my mother could have sent the money, she pays for her children first so at times we are sent home from school for non-payment of fees" (L2SN).

What exacerbates the situation for the learners left behind in the Mwenezi District as is reported in other local related studies (Filippa, 2011; Filippa, Cronje & Feirns, 2013; Moyo, 2017; Tawodzera & Themane, 2019; Crush *et al.*, 2017), is that they are never consulted when the parents decide to leave for the diaspora and a similar concern was also raised in a study in Romania (Sanduleasa & Matei, 2015; UNDESA, 2020). Parental disregard to seek views of their

children before parental migration especially when the children are left behind not only does it contravene the children's right to an opinion as stipulated in the Convention on the Right of the Child but also fits into the family systems theory proposition that parental migration usually projects problems onto their children who remain behind (Moreno, 2013).

The evidence presented in the study show that most the learners with parents in the diaspora were not performing as expected although the teachers reported that before parental migration, some of those learners performed fairly well. It emerged from the discussions held by the teachers that parental emigration impacted negatively on the performance of the learners because according to the participants as the learners;

“grow up, they will be deteriorating academically...as they are ready to go.” (T1 FGDSN).

L1SS and L3SN could not control their bitterness when asked to comment on the impact of parental absence on their academic performance as they responded by sobbing. Crying in response to questions that targeted to get learners' assessment of their academic progress was perceived to mean that the learners were not psychologically prepared to perform in the absence of their parents thus one could conclude that the learners' intellectual capacity was negatively affected by their failure to handle emotions derived from parental absence hence the poor level of differentiation (ISSFI, 2015).

It was also reported that the learners left behind by emigrant biological parents performed dismally because they rarely wrote work given as;

“they hide their books.” (T5 FGDSS).

The negative impact of a low level of differentiation on the academic performance of learners that manifests in the present study mirrors results found in a related study in the Caribbean where it was also established that the underperformance of learners left was largely attributable to the learners' failure to handle psycho-social difficulties such as feelings of abandonment, low self-esteem, anger and depression (Baker *et al.*, 2009).

On that note therefore one would observe that the family systems theory has been instrumental in shedding light on the understanding of the impact of parental migration on the academic performance of the learners whose parents had migrated out of the Mwenezi District into other countries.

In the present study, the researcher found that upon out-migration of the parents, L1SS, L2SS and L2SN being the first to be born in their families had assumed authoritative roles in their households, a situation similar to child-headed families in the wake of HIV and AIDS pandemic (Ganga & Maphalala, 2014). In that respect, L2SN shared;

"Because my granny is very old so it was me who would take the money to the market and buy items for my siblings and family groceries whenever my parents sent money."

L2SN's experiences of taking responsibility for managing the finances of the household were just disgusting considering that as per reports given by her current guardian, she was doing those responsibilities when she was just in Grade 3 or at the age of 10. The home responsibilities that she assumed because of her birth position in the family could have impacted negatively on her schoolwork and behaviour hence the guardian reported that she performed below average and disrespected authority since;

"she would just sleep until late if she doesn't want to go to school."(G2SN).

Also, L1SS who was a prefect at school showed that other learners were respecting her authority since they did almost everything that she instructed them to do.. Even her grandmother confirmed her responsible behaviour at home and reported that;

“she is responsible, acts maturely and had never disappointed me.”(G1SS).

The other learner participants who were born last in their families just as the sibling position thesis subsists showed less independence as they shared that they carried out duties as given by the elder siblings, unlike the first group who indicated that they initiated home programmes. On that note, L3SS affirmed her dependence on instructions from her elder sisters when she narrated;

“My elder sister arranges household duties for us, and we do our duties.”

The effects of the birth positions and the subsequent roles the learners took also affected their schooling experiences. For example, L1SS who was the eldest in her family got some positive compliments from her grandmother who commended that;

“My granddaughter likes schooling, and all her books are covered and she does most of her school including assisting her siblings.”

Contrary to L1SS’s experiences, L1SN and L3SS rarely completed their work even though they reported that their parents provided everything they required for schoolwork and as for LISN, GISN revealed that;

“They buy them school uniforms and all other school requirements.”

Since it seems there appeared to be two groups of learners segregated on birth position and the subsequent differences in behaviour and attitude towards schooling, one may affirm the family system theory’s proposition that sibling position influences one’s contact (Bowen, 1989; Brown, 1999; ISSFI, 2015). The theorisation role of sibling position argument in the present study may not go unnoticed. Therefore,

considering both positive and negative influences of sibling position on the learners' behaviour, one would suggest that age and sibling position-specific counselling programmes be done in schools to assist these learners who take new roles when biological parents out migrate.

The findings on what learners left behind went through in their education as they interacted with teachers, guardians, school heads, biological parents and other learners varied depending on the frequency of communication, biological parents returning patterns, learner attitude and the guardian's level of education and age. The present study revealed that learners who came from families that were emotionally cut off, where biological parents rarely interacted with both the teachers and the guardians had poor working relationships with the school authorities.

It was reported that the learners had a poor attitude towards learning and as put by teacher participants, this was due to a lack of guidance from both the biological parents and guardians since some parents;

“flush their children with a lot of things to the extent that the child feels that schooling is insignificant.” (T2 FGDSN).

The teacher participants also reported that they had challenges working with learners whose biological parents were not communicating with them since there was nowhere they could report the learners' progress and problems. The learners also developed negative attitudes and disrespected teachers because they knew that there was no connection between the teachers and their parents where their misbehaviour could be reported because even though some of the learners stayed with the guardians, the guardians pampered;

“the learners with love and rarely rebuked the learners' bad behaviour.” (HSS).

Therefore one can appreciate the informative role the family systems theory has contributed to the present study because of the dearth of communication among some guardians, emigrant parents and teachers, disrespect of authority and negative attitude towards education reported about the learners are a manifestation of the impact of family emotional disintegration which is explained in family systems proposition as family emotional cut-off (Johnson, 2010). In the case of the present study, families have separated because of migration from the Mwenezi District of Zimbabwe to other countries most particularly neighbouring South Africa.

The findings on challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora centred on none or late payment of fees, provision of inadequate and inappropriate stationery and uniforms, provision of poor food and shelter and indiscipline and negative attitude towards education. After identification of these challenges, it was also important to find out what caused them and indicate the role the government, teachers, biological parents, guardians, teachers and other learners could take to try to ease the challenges.

While it is said that it takes two to raise a child, participants in the present study indicated that most of the challenges do with none or late payment of fees were because in most cases only mothers were responsible for the educational welfare of most of the learners left behind . The fathers were thus hidden in the parental responsibility equation although that status of being fathers of the children remained which in some sense meant that they were yielding partners whilst the women were caretaking partners thus confirming the reciprocal functioning argument of the family systems theory that once parents migrated some tended to become weak, irresponsible and dependent on the other partner (ISSFI, 2015). Had it been that both biological parents were responsible, the challenges of late or non-payment of fees could have been kept at low levels not to warrant alarms from school

heads who reported that school budgets and plans were at times disturbed by fees defaulters who included learners with parents based in the diaspora because;

"The problem is those parents promise to pay and we exonerate their children from being sent home and let them learn but at the close of the term some may fail to pay." (HSN).

Other than causing administrative challenges in schools, the non-involvement of fathers in the educational affair of their children had also been found to have a long-term negative influence on the educational aspirations of the learners left behind by emigrant biological parents in Albania (Giannelli & Mangiavvachi, 2010). The reciprocal functioning thesis of the family systems theory has been insightful in the present study where a selection of educational welfare beneficiaries was reported to be largely based on one's orphan-hood status thereby disregarding those learners with parents based in the diaspora despite reports given that some were irresponsible as put by one of the guardians that;

"It's only my daughter who is responsible for everything, my son-in-law has never remitted since he went." (G1SS).

All the categories of the participants namely school heads, teachers, guardians and learners agreed that learners with parents in the diaspora had challenges that required consented effort to minimise or eradicate them. Some guardians reported that there was bad blood between them and the learners that could only be ameliorated if the biological parents of the learners were to be close so that such bad experiences could be discussed. G2SN lamented that the relationship between learners left behind and their guardians was made unbearable because;

"even the parents of the learners left behind may not trust you thinking that you are abusing the money intended for their children and usually they cut communication before consultations are made."

Teachers also suspected that guardians were irresponsible in some cases misappropriating remittances sent for the educational wellbeing of the learners or modelling bad behaviour to the learners. These problems, the teachers reasoned could only be solved if there existed a collegial working relationship where the guardian, biological parent and the teacher were to share experiences and assist the learners thus vindicating Bowen's view that problems in disintegrated family relationships ought to be attended to through consultation of third and neutral partners (ISSFI, 2015; Brown, 1999). Whatever challenge pertained education of the learner if it involved learner-guardian or biological parent-guardian needed to be communicated to the school for arbitration. That was not evident in the present study where the teacher participants reported that guardians rarely visited schools especially when invited to discuss learner problems. If such impasses between teachers and guardians continued, it would take long for learners with parents in the diaspora to learn free of parental absence anxieties.

The participants revealed that learners with parents in the diaspora just like other learners required both material and non-material educational needs to learn well.

Among the material needs that the learners required were fees, stationery, uniforms and food. As the participants articulated, some biological parents rarely sent the educational material needs and that affected their children since in the case of fees some learners were at times sent home or paraded and humiliated at school for none payment of fees as one school head put it;

"We find that some parents in the diaspora do not send the fees in time so their children are sometimes disturbed when they are sent home or paraded for non-payment of fees, it affects the learners psychologically." (HSS).

However, one reason given by some guardians for late payment of fees was that the biological parents of the learners lived far away from home so could not react immediately to the school demands hence the negative effect of the distance between the residence of the biological parents and the schools on educational provisions to the learners left behind. This finding on the impact of distance vis-a-vis frequency and level of participation in school programmes by emigrant biological parents was insightful because other than merely revealing the situation prevailing in the part of the Mwenezi District where the study was carried out, should also inform the school authorities that more patience was needed when requesting for levies from parents who stay in different countries from where their children learn.

It was revealed in the data collected that some biological parents only chipped in to partake in educational material provision to their children after being persuaded to do so by the teachers. One teacher hence revealed that;

"...if you tell some of them that you are so rich but your child lacks some basic items at school they will react." (T4, FGDSN).

Corroborating his counterpart's observation concerning the participation of biological parents in the educational affairs of the learners left behind, T1 FGDSN added;

"Yes these people have thick pockets that if they wanted they could fund very big projects but largely they are not concerned..."

Though the narratives show that some parents only contributed towards the education of their children after some persuasion, what is important is that sometimes those parents listened to the voice of reason which means the parents were at times attracted by the desire to associate with the rest of the society, what Bowen (1989) would call the force for togetherness. Even though there remained other parents who would ignore the advice of family members and decided to go

their way thus never participated in the educational welfare of the learners left behind and one guardian lamented the mental torture her son caused her thus;

"My son does not bother since he left when his daughter was yet to enrol in school she is now in Grade 7 and the father had never sent anything."
(G2SS).

Based on the two contrasting reactions undertaken by parents as reported above, one would observe that the family systems theory largely gave an insight into understanding experiences and challenges encountered by learners with absent parents hence recommendations that come from a study informed by the theory may help formulate educational policy in the future.

Mixed views were given regarding the suitability for exclusion or inclusion of learners with parents in the diaspora in welfare programmes in schools. Though some suggested that those learners needed not benefit on the basis that their parents were alive and float, most the participants opined that the learners with parents in the diaspora ought to be included in welfare programmes because some of their parents were irresponsible, not returning or both .

The emphasis by the participants on the role that the society could take in the inclusion of learners with parents in the diaspora in welfare programmes was indicative of the strength of societal emotional processes that bind societies together. All the guardians and most teachers and learners said that the learners with parents in the diaspora were supposed to be assisted because, in most cases, the learners left behind were suffering from both material and non-material deprivation since their parents were not remitting. They went further to observe that it was not fair for one's child to be denied welfare simply because the parent was in South Africa since most those emigrants were not employed or were exploited by the

employers who knew that the parents had no official documents to stay and work in South Africa .

The findings of the present study that were presented in the previous chapter are discussed in this section of the chapter to relate them to existing literature. The major findings as given by the participants from the focus group discussions, face-to-face key participant interviews and document analysis include factors that prompted the biological parents of the learners left behind to leave their children, home and societal environmental settings that defined learner experiences and challenges, in-school conditions that impacted on the education of learners left behind, learners' discipline and attitude towards education, material and non-material provisions towards supporting the education of learners with parents in the diaspora and strategies that could be adopted to improve educational welfare of the learners . The present study contributed to furthering knowledge to the body of literature on the education of learners left behind because other than its findings concurring only with what was also identified by other researchers as key attributes of educational needs namely; communication needs, social and emotional needs, personal needs, academic needs, learning style needs and behavioural needs (Parhoon *et al.*, 2014), they talk to unique challenges specific to learners depending on the learners` status of being left behind, their age, sibling positions, biological parents remitting and returning patterns among other variables that emerge in the discussion that follow.

The learner participants in the present study indicated that they had high hopes that their parents would get them all the resources they needed once they crossed to South Africa. This is how they put it;

“When they migrated out of the country, they intended to look for employment so that I would lead a normal life.” (L1SS).

Her counterpart from school North, L2SN corroborated and expressed it more intricately thus;

“They went out to seek money for our education, clothing and food.”

In a confirmatory tone to the issue of the need to improve family’s economic life as the chief motivator for out-migration in the area covered by the present study as enunciated by the learners, one of the school heads who participated in the same study also commented though disapprovingly that;

“Ok I don’t regard leaving children alone as a good idea, people do it because of the need to search for a living but it’s bad for the children.”(HSS).

Both push (poverty) and pull factors (improved economic prospects) that were reported to have been responsible for out-migration in the present study were also highlighted in previous studies. Munyoka (2020) in a study on the causes of irregular migration of people from Zimbabwe to South Africa found that it was largely in response to political and socio-economic instability that included poverty, low wages, difficulties in accessing passports and human rights violations. Related results were also found in an earlier survey conducted by Crush *et al.* (2017) in the cities of Johannesburg and Cape Town in 2013, where 50.5% of the Zimbabwean participants reported that they were pushed into South Africa for economic reasons after losing jobs in Zimbabwe and in reaction to high inflation in the country.

The above findings drive the study to the conclusion that as long as the economic situation in Zimbabwe remained low, the country should brace for continued emigration and the expansion of several learners who remain under the care of non-biological parents. Such experiences have been reported in studies done before in countries such as Mexico, Romania and the Philippines (Portner, 2014; Botezat & Pfeiffer, 2014; Moreno, 2013).

While participants of the present study identified the need for seeking job opportunities as the only reason why the parents in the Mwenezi District were out-migrating, other studies elsewhere indicate that other factors that derive people out of their countries included political and environmental ones. According to IFFD (2018), most immigrants in Jordan were Syrian refugees running away from political turmoil in their country. Political upheavals and environmental hazards were also reported for several internal, regional and international movements (UNDESA, 2020; Machinya, 2019; Moyo, 2017; Guendell *et al.*, 2013; Dube, 2014). The reason that could have prompted the participants in the present study not to mention the issue of political disturbances as one of the factors that pushed people in the area out of the country could be that there were no political disturbances in the area or that the area was too polarised that the participants were scared to talk about it. Nevertheless, it was clear from the participants that many learners were left under the guardianship of grannies or house girls.

Another finding that emerged from among the participants was that parents in Zimbabwe in general and in the Mwenezi District, in particular, valued the education system in Zimbabwe more than they did the South African one hence the reason why they left their children to learn in Zimbabwe than migrating with them. One learner alluded to this finding when she said:

...She took us along, but we had to come back for us to get a better education back home. She promised to go back and work to provide for my education wishing me to become a nurse or teacher one day (LISS).

HSN however added another dimension that limited most of the parents who work outside the country to take their children along especially on their first visit thus:

My point of view towards this issue is most of those parents when they go there, don't have fixed aboard, and they don't have permanent settlements.

Most of them are scavengers they live in squabbles they live in shacks which do not allow them to take their children with them.

The other reason that inhibits biological parents to take their children with them as they out migrate must do with security concerns on the way because;

“most of those parents in the diaspora do not have passports, so we can find it is very risky for them to carry their children.” (HSN).

The issues to do with lack of documentation, poor accommodation and fear of deportation were also prominent in findings from earlier studies on Zimbabwe (Munyoka, 2020; Tawodzera & Themane, 2019; Machinya, 2019; Chakombera & Mubikwa, 2018; Moyo, 2017). So learners from the Mwenzezi District are separated from their parents and learn under the guardianship of non-biological parents because their parents are pushed out of the country by the struggling Zimbabwean economy which in the views of the participants of the present study was failing to offer value for labour. Secondly, the learners could not permanently join their parents because working and living conditions out there were not favourable to undocumented immigrants. The findings of this study, therefore, explain that should the Zimbabwean economy and the issuing of documents from both Zimbabwe and the destination countries remain unresolved, more and more learners will be left behind hence the need for a concerted effort from schools, communities and the government to seek solutions to the challenges if the learners left behind are to benefit the education system in the future.

The home environment was perceived to have both positive and negative impact on how the learners with parents in the diaspora accessed education. On a positive note, the researcher found that some homes were well resourced with lighting, spacious rooms and fenced that in a way encouraged the learners left behind to study without

hiccups. One example was the home of L1SN where it was noted that even the guardian was an ordinary level graduate who could assist the learners with homework. The guardian showed that she was responsible as she reported that:

I assist by asking them: Can I see today`s homework, now you can get into the house and start writing because the lights are there and when they have finished writing I also check before I recommend them to take the work for marking (G1SN).

For L1SN, the elder siblings were attending secondary school and one had completed his Advanced Level studies and that environment motivated others to pursue studies unlike in situations where the guardians could hardly assist in homework due to illiteracy. On the contrary, some home conditions discouraged learners to pursue studies. It was established that in the present study three out of the six guardians who participated in the study could hardly read and write which means such guardians could not assist learners with homework as revealed by one of the guardians who said;

“I would ask my granddaughter to go around asking for assistance because I am not educated, I cannot help her with schoolwork.”

When learners are not assisted in schoolwork at home, they tend to develop a negative attitude towards education and it affects their academic performance because;

“the child is pushed to go to school.” (T5 FGDSS).

Other than that, they may exhibit disciplinary challenges such as absconding lessons, absenteeism and not writing schoolwork because they know that no one will ask them since the guardian is either illiterate or not concerned and that was revealed by T2 FGDSN who said that

“Even when the learners are given homework, there is no one to assist them, they would just copy answers.”

Some learners lacked guidance since the supposed guardians were lacking authority to control the learners as T4 FGDSN expressed that some guardians;

“do not have reprimanding authority...”

As the participants reported, some of the guardians were modelling bad behaviour to the learners such as bringing boyfriends home while the learners watched. Such experiences are toxic and they do not yield good results in the moral and social development of the learner thus jeopardising the learner’s prospects in education. In a related study in Jordan, IFFD (2018) also concluded that erosion of parental authority due to the distance between the parents and the children tended to promote maladaptive behaviours on the part of the learner thereby reducing the chances of success in education.

Another bad condition reported was that there were some social activities in the community where the study was undertaken that did not promote the education of learners. These include harvesting *Mopani* worms which were done during school days. Learners with parents in the diaspora also had to absent themselves from school during market days and community sports tournaments. The effect of parental absence on learners left behind’s school attendance in the Mwenezi District mirrors what Portner (2014) found in a study in the Philippines where girls were found to experience a significant reduction in school attendance as they filled up the gap left by their emigrant mothers. Similarly, in the same Philippines study, boys were also reported to spend most of their time doing market-related activities during schooling time to raise income to sustain the household (Portner, 2014; IFFD, 2018). The negative effect of parental emigration on learners left behind’s school attendance can thus be said to transcend geographical space and time. One can thus conclude that more concerted efforts are still needed at both global and local levels to

find ways of redressing the challenge if the learners left behind are to be fairly educated.

In the case of the present study, the community activities identified earlier namely sporting galas, initiation ceremonies and harvesting of *Mopani* worms did not only disturb the learners left behind's school attendance but also exposed the learners left behind to some immoral activities such as prostitution and violence that normally characterised such events and all those came as negative reinforcements to the educational aspirations of the learners. The study reveals that attending and participating in sports by children needs strong parental control if they are to yield positive outcomes for the young ones.

The participants reported that there was a good working relationship between teachers and the biological parents of the learners although that bond was disturbed by the distance. Some of the biological parents were communicating with the teachers regarding the education of their children.

However, according to some teacher participants, there were major challenges that were largely caused by the lack of cooperation of some of the guardians who could not want to interact with the teachers concerning the welfare of the learners they were taking care of HSN suggested that the biological parents needed to send school requirements direct to the schools rather than to guardians since some guardians ended up misappropriating the money thereby depriving the learners ample time to learn because;

“it is usually the guardians who decide according to their priorities whether to pay fees or buy food...”

Similarities could be drawn to HSN's observation regarding the misappropriation of money by some of the guardians to L2SN who

also complained about the conduct of her guardian with respect to how she managed remittances and stated that;

“Money is sent but unfortunately she opts to pay for her biological children at our expense.”

Findings from other related studies, though conducted in urban setups in Zimbabwe, Rupande (2014) and Tawodzera (2019) also revealed that poor guardians tended to abuse remittances where they would settle arrears of their biological children ahead of the school fees of learners left behind’s although the money could have been sent for the learners left behind. Findings from the present study and earlier studies point to the need to improve the relationship between teachers and some of the guardians to ensure that both groups work towards improving the educational welfare of learners left behind.

The teacher participants further reported that most of the learners with parents in the diaspora had negative attitudes towards schooling. In the teachers’ submissions, such mentality was caused by the fact that the learners were not attracted by the lifestyles of teachers who could have been role models had they been well remunerated. In that regard, T4, FGDSN had this to say:

"If the learners compared the standard of living of their parents and those of the teachers, they would see that their parents` were better. The learners were thus not performing well and dropout rates were high especially at upper grades because there was nothing that motivated them from within the school system."

While the findings in the present study in relation to the effects of the school social environment on the educational outcome of learners left behind reflect similar ones obtained in studies conducted in rural Romania and Albania, they are in sharp contrast to the ones found in the two countries in urban areas where it was found that grades of the learners left behind improved as teachers were reported to be more tolerant and kind to the learners in a way to compensate for the

negative effects of parental migration (Botezat & Pfeiffer, 2014). Other than the teachers' strong involvement in the education of the learners left behind in the referred countries, the learners themselves were also reported to be self-motivated by their parents whose emigration had largely been linked to their educational qualifications.

Data collected in the present study indicate that majority of the parents in the diaspora were undocumented school dropouts and that status could not cast a positive influence on their children's education. The other explanation for the differences between the results of the present study to those obtained in Romania and Albania could be that while the present study was conducted in a rural set-up, the latter was done in town and in a European community. Based on the results of the study, it could be concluded that learners left behind's educational experiences differed depending on their place of residence and the level of development in their country. Therefore, it could be recommended that more community resocialisation strategies be put in place to ensure that more and more people begin to cherish education. It should be made clear to the learners and stressed that while there were good opportunities associated with the diaspora, more could be achieved if one attained a professional qualification before leaving for the diaspora as a means of trying to motivate the learners to remain in school.

There were reports of a great deal of indiscipline among some of the learners left behind in schools that included bullying, disrespect of authority, not writing work, abscondment, absenteeism, stealing, engaging in love affairs and abuse of school uniforms . The disciplinary challenges were blamed on a lack of parental control because

“the learners stay with their grannies who pamper them with love and rarely rebuke their bad behaviour” (HSS).

The inability to control learners blamed on the grannies in the present study was also reported in other studies in Zimbabwe where it was established that learners left behind viewed themselves as adults thereby undermining the authority of the guardians (Dube, 2014; Kurebwa & Kurebwa, 2014).

Other than weak parental control as a determinant of indiscipline among most learners left behind, parental neglect was another inducing factor since the learners would at times engage in anti-social behaviour to fulfil basic life requirements such as food and this was aptly put by G3SS who said that

"Most of the time the learners left behind are without basics which unfortunately lead them into promiscuity and if you are to inquire they will tell you that mother has not been remitting for months" (G3, FGDSN).

Other disciplinary challenges such as abscondment and absenteeism were also linked to the bad influence of some of the guardians who engaged in acts of immorality in the full view of the learners. According to T2, FGDS, guardians were perpetrating bad behaviour on the learners because;

"Where I come from, the guardian who is a teenage girl brings her boyfriend from where they do sports and the boyfriend stays there for the whole week."

His counterpart, T4, FGDS also added that the issue of sexual immorality was high among primary school girls with parents in the diaspora and opined,

"So do you think the learner will come to school after the night activity, no ways she be tired and will not come."

While findings of earlier studies show that learners left behind had some disciplinary challenges including sexual immorality, abuse of social media, abuse of drugs and undermining the authority of guardians among others, the studies looked at adolescents hence the

challenges only applied to that group (Filippa, 2011; Filippa *et al.*, 2013; UNICEF, 2013; Tawodzera, 2019; Chakombera & Mubikwa, 2018). The findings of the present study are thus unique in that even though they are drawn from participants' views about rural primary school learners left behind, they too show similar features to those disciplinary issues experienced by urban adolescents. While a conclusion may not be drawn at the moment due to a dearth of studies that compare urban and rural learners left behind and primary school and secondary school learners' educational experiences, there are some clear pointers that both groups have challenges that need redress.

It emerged from the study that there were two groups of educational needs that were either availed or not availed to the learners with parents in the diaspora. The participants talked about the role of both the biological parents and the guardians in the provision of educational needs. The educational material needs that the participants said were supposed to be supplied to the learners included school fees, stationery, uniforms, pocket money and food. On the other hand, the non-material educational needs that were supposed to be supplied were communicating with the learners, encouragement and guidance and counselling, assisting in homework, attending school meetings and consulting teachers about the schooling experiences of the learners.

With respect to material educational needs, the participants indicated that there were again two groups of parents. The parents who returned often were reported to have been supplying the materials although inconsistently as revealed by HSN who said that;

“books yes but it could be once in two years...”

Even though, the teacher participants complained that in some instances the materials sent were not appropriate to the particular grade levels. They also raised the issue of inappropriate uniforms.

Besides, both the learners left behind and some of the guardians had inadequate skills to manage the resources send.

The other group was that of those parents who rarely returned and rarely sent educational materials to their children. That was causing most children under such circumstances to drop in performance or even drop out of school completely. T1 FGDSS attested to the negative impact of parental non-remission on enrolment patterns of learners left behind when he stated that;

“Some of the emigrants do not remit and their children end up dropping out of school because resources are not available.”

G3SN also blamed some of the emigrants on the poor performance of the learner she was taking care of because;

“his parents have neither returned nor sent anything since they went so their child has dropped in performance because he does not attend holiday lessons since no one pays for him.”

Besides the negative impact of non-provision of resources on the learners left behind’s school participation, HSS lamented that some such learners paused disciplinary challenges at school because;

“we find that some of the learners with non-returning parents end up stealing other learners’ stationery.”

Most of the participants in the present study decried the dearth of communication between biological parents and the learners left behind whose effect was great anxiety and subsequent underperformance in academic work. The three factors that were cited as the roots cause of lack of communication were poor communication infrastructure in the area where the study was done and both guardians and biological parents’ attitudes towards facilitating communication encounters between the learners and the parents. L3SN said it all when he lamented that;

“I had never talked to my parents since they left my sister does not want me to use her phone but she talks to them.”

L3SN's experiences were also echoed by G1SS who reiterated that despite her pleas for her son-in-law to contact his children that had never happened for years because;

"since my son-in-law went to South Africa, I had never communicated with him and he had never contacted his children although it is reported that he is there."

The findings on the dearth of communication between learners left behind and their biological parents in the present study differ significantly from other studies elsewhere, for example, Moreno (2013) in Mexico, Brown and Grinter (2014) in Jamaica and Parrenas (2005) in the Philippines who all report that the telephone had become another family member among families separated by migration where parents guide their left behind learners how to tackle some homework. Probably that difference could explain why unlike the findings in the present study, it has been reported that learners left behind in countries such as Mexico, Jamaica, the Philippines, and China among other developed countries were rarely negatively affected in their academics by parental migration (Parrenas, 2005; Moreno, 2013; Dreby, 2010; Antman, 2012; Brown & Grinter, 2014; Wang, 2013; Sawyer, 2014).

What one may learn from these findings from other studies in relation to the current findings is that more advocacies are required for all stakeholders inclusive of the government, guardians of learners left behind, community leadership, the emigrants and the learners left behind to cherish and positively use the cell phones for communication. Other than advocacy, there is a need to improve communication infrastructure in rural areas of Zimbabwe including in the Mwenezi District where communication infrastructure concerns were also raised by Zirima (2016) in a related study in Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe.

Considering the harsh experiences and challenges cited by the respondents that the learners with parents in the diaspora went through, the participants suggested that the government, schools and communities take some corrective measures to ensure that the learners left behind benefit from the education system.

The participants suggested that there were supposed to be people selected in the communities whose duties should include enlisting all children in the communities whose parents were not remitting and returning so that such children would be considered as vulnerable and considered in welfare programmes offered both in the communities and at school. Other than such an initiative, it was also suggested that community leadership needed to lead exemplary lifestyles so that these learners left by emigrants could emulate. It was suggested too that the biological parents ought to select guardians who were educated and knowledgeable about educational issues such that learners left behind could be assisted. Other than considering the educational status of the potential guardians, T5 FGDSS added that;

“the guardian should assist the learner socially by not engaging in sexual immorality and abusing drugs.”

HSS also said that it was important for learners with emigrant parents to realise their educational aspirations if the guardians ensured that;

“the learners attended school, had good health and that the guardians attended school meetings.”

These guardians also needed to be trained on guardianship for them to assist the learners better.

The schools were mandated to create platforms where they could link with the biological parents and the guardians so that welfare issues of the learners with parents in the diaspora could be openly discussed. HSS also reiterated the need for school heads to;

“embark on awareness programmes...about the challenges learners left by emigrants experienced especially during meetings.”

The government was advised to improve the economy through; “creating cooperatives that generate income” (T5 FGDSN) so that parents remained in the country and ensure that the bond between the parents and the learners is not broken. The government was also advised to ease challenges related to issuing of birth certificates and the transfer of learners affected by parental migration.

The intervention strategies suggested by the participants in the present study namely building communication networks to triangulate the truth about the educational welfare of the learners left behind, including the learners left behind in welfare programmes and increasing counselling programmes in schools were also prominent and found to be helpful in a study conducted in Jamaica (Brown & Grinter, 2014). The participants of the present study however added another dimension with regards to what could be done to improve educational access by learners whose parents live outside Zimbabwe when they suggested that there was a need to train community members on parenting styles commensurate with the emerging family type necessitated by migration. The respondents’ recommendation that the government may through statutory pronouncement set minimum educational and moral qualifications for one to be a guardian of children whose parents live outside the country is yet a new proposition in parenting discourses. .

This chapter helped to explain the findings of the study in relation to what other researchers found in studies related to the current one. Accordingly, a summary of key findings that relate to the extent to which the study has been informed by the family systems theory was given before a general synopsis of the research findings was presented. The findings discussed had a bearing on the key objective of the study

which intended to establish how the educational needs of learners left behind by emigrants were catered for in the Mwenezi District of Zimbabwe.

The present study reveals that the purpose of parental migration was largely the need to improve family economic life and relieve stress after family misfortunes such as death or divorce. While the need to improve family economic life sounded similar to what other researchers found elsewhere (Moreno, 2013; Filippa et al, 2013; Chakombera & Mubikwa, 2018; Tawodzera, 2019), the present study differed somehow because the participants talked about relieving stress after death or divorce which sounds an unfamiliar reason and did not mention political persecution that normally features in other studies.

Also, it emerged from the present study findings that in most cases, the learners left behind by emigrant biological parents remained in poverty, had little educational provisions and sometimes reported hungry at school because remittances were inconsistently sent or never sent at all, a finding similar to Dube's (2014) in a study in Beitbridge. In the family systems theory proposition, parental poverty could then be said to have been projected onto the child since the child had little or no access to resources and in that regard, one can conclude that the results of the present study concur with the family system theoretical proposition (Johnson, 2010)

Furthermore, the present study findings highlight that the situation of learners left behind by emigrants was further complicated by the fact that the parents did not discuss their decisions to migrate and leave the children behind pointing to disrespect of the children's right to information as given in the Convention on the right of the child hence it was concluded that the parents had erred in that respect. The finding on parental disregard for their children's right to information was

reported to be common among emigrants from less developed countries (UNICEF, 2013; UNESCO, 2018).

In addition, it was reported that a good number of parents especially fathers were not returning and for the few that returned, it was just for short periods most particularly during the festive season which means the bond between parents and children was weakened by the prolonged separation. According to the family systems theory, where families are cut off for example by migration, learners tended to grapple with emotional challenges that normally lead to reduced concentration levels in class and thereby resulting in academic failure. The negative impacts of the non-involvement of fathers on the academic performance of learners left behind by emigrants were also reported in other studies (Bhamain, 2012; Mancini, 2010; Trahan & Cheung, 2012; Botezat & Pfeiffer, 2014; ACP, 2012).

One aspect about some of the learners left behind by emigrants that got prominence among the respondents of the present study was that they missed a lot of learning time since they tended to report deep into the term having visited their parents in South Africa and failed to return in time for school and that was illustrated by one participant who reported that;

“just now I was chatting with some parents, they want their children to enrol this term and maintain their grades but they had never been to school for a long time.”

Further, some did not relate well with teachers because they rarely participated in schoolwork leading to failure and even dropping out.

Most the guardians were also reported to be inadequately prepared to assist the learners with absent parents in doing homework because the guardians were either illiterate or not concerned with the learners` schoolwork. There was also a poor working relationship between

teachers and some guardians because the guardians rarely reported for consultation and meetings which unfortunately disadvantaged the learners as it became difficult for the teachers to triangulate the learners' challenges. It also emerged that some guardians modelled bad behaviour on the learners such as bringing boyfriends in the full view of the children.

The learners left behind were reported to grapple with some challenges that include inadequate educational material support and behavioural ones. It was reported that fees for learners left behind were paid late or never paid at all in most cases and all that affected them;

“...because their fees are paid late, it emotionally affects the learner when they are often paraded for non-fees payment.” (HSS).

Other than the issue of fees, there were reports of inadequate provision of stationery and uniforms. The teacher participants lamented that in some cases, uniforms and stationery brought were not appropriate for the level of the learners.

It was further highlighted that there were two groups of learners left behind, one group composed of learners who had enough educational materials and the other group that had inadequate material provisions. Both groups of learners were reported to have behavioural challenges including a generally negative attitude towards education, violence, absenteeism, absconding lessons, not writing schoolwork and disrespecting school authority with a few exceptional learners whose behaviour and approach to schoolwork satisfied the teachers. Even though it emerged that indiscipline of learners left behind was not unique to the Mwenezi District, what was worrisome was that unlike in other studies where delinquency was reported among adolescents, this study reports disobedience of authority, sexual immorality,

violence, school abscondment among others from some of the primary school learners.

The participants reasoned that some of the forces driving indiscipline among learners left behind by emigrant parents were inadequate firm authority over the learners by the guardians and inadequate educational support which in some situations emanated from the fact that some guardians were wholly dependent on the remittances sent by the learners' parents hence were compromised. Related to the two cited background factors were the guardians' and the learners' inadequate skills to manage remittances sent by the biological parents of the learners. The other factors that compounded the learners' levies, stationery, food and uniform challenges were inconsistent remission and return by some biological parents. With respect to indiscipline among the learners left behind, the participants reiterated that it was aided by exposure to and use of negative social media by the learners where there was inadequate parental control. It was also reported that in most cases learners engaged in violent behaviour because they emulated their biological parents' behaviour which the parents portrayed whenever they returned from South Africa, especially at community gatherings such as sporting galas..

Considering the challenges cited by the participants, it was suggested that the government could put measures to stabilise the economy and introduce income-generating programmes as a way of empowering communities economically and discouraging out-migration to reduce the number of learners left under the care of non-biological parents. It was also suggested that the government could reduce communication challenges between emigrants and guardians of their children if communication infrastructure could be upgraded in the rural areas. The biological parents were advised to seek correct information about school requirements before purchasing the items such as uniforms and books. Furthermore, the participants suggested that the biological

parents ought to link with teachers and select guardians who could assist learners in schoolwork and those who were socially acceptable in the communities. It was also suggested that the biological parents needed to return and remit frequently so that the learners would not run out of necessities such as food supplies. Other than the biological parents, the guardians were also advised to attend school meetings and share their experiences with teachers regarding the behaviour of the learners and the challenges they were facing in managing learners left behind by emigrants. The participants suggested that school heads ought to re-socialise parents about updated parenting styles during school meetings and create platforms where biological parents, guardians and the school authorities could discuss the learning experiences of learners with emigrant parents. The community leadership was advised to consider emigrants' remitting and returning patterns when selecting beneficiaries of welfare programmes such as the BEAM. The suggestion to consider learners left behind by emigrants into welfare programmes is not unique to the present study because it is in line with guidelines of the Convention on the Right of the Child which recommends that:

States should be encouraged to reform legislation, policies and practices that prevent or discriminate against children affected by migration and their families, in particular those in an irregular situation from effectively accessing services and benefits such as health care, education, long-term social security and social assistance (UNICEF, 2013).

The teachers were advised to counsel learners whose biological parents had out-migrated. Learners with resident parents were advised to treat learners with absent parents as their colleagues. The next chapter summarises the research findings and presents conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations from the study.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE FUTURE OF EDUCATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS LEFT BEHIND BY EMIGRANTS IN ZIMBABWE

Findings of the present study were extensively discussed in the previous chapter and juxtaposed to the theoretical frame of the study and to existing literature and related studies on educational needs provisions for learners left behind by emigrants. This chapter summarises the whole research process that produced the findings presented in the previous chapter. Challenges encountered during gathering data are also highlighted. Further, a report on suggested new knowledge generated from the findings and some recommendations to policy makers, policy implementers, biological parents and guardians and to the learners left behind is given.

This study sought to establish how the educational needs of learners left behind by emigrants from the Mwenezi District of Zimbabwe were catered for. This section summarises the whole process undertaken to produce this report. Therefore, motivation of the study, the theoretical framework of the study, some reviewed literature and the methodology used are briefly presented. The summary of the key findings of the study, suggested knowledge generated from the study and recommendations for further research are presented too.

Based on the literature survey, the researcher established that there was a dearth of research on the educational circumstances of rural primary school learners left behind by emigrants in Zimbabwe since studies of that nature were centralised to urban areas and on adolescents (Filippa, 2011; Filippa *et al.*, 2013; Mabharani, 2014; Moyo, 2017; Chakombera & Mubikwa, 2018; Tawedzera & Themane, 2019). Conducting a study of this nature was therefore unique as it was going

to reveal some taken-for-granted issues about how primary school learners left behind were experiencing schooling in a rural set-up of a developing country such as Zimbabwe. Further, motivation to find out how the education of learners left behind by emigrants in the Mwenezi District was catered for subsisted from the researcher`s background of being a Mwenezi District resident since birth and who was witnessing many able-bodied parents from the district going out of the country leaving the children behind.

To carry out the study on the educational welfare of learners left behind by emigrants, the researcher consulted the family systems theory for enrichment and truly was inspired. The theory helped the researcher to understand that a family is a single unit which is connected by emotions. The theory further revealed that the migration of parents leaving learners behind disturbs the family functionality. Once the original state of the family is disturbed, there is bound to be anxiety among the members of the family because as Moreno (2013) opines, a system`s behaviour affects its environment and so does the environment. Knowledge about the development of anxiety among family members and possible changed roles that come about when members of a family separate helped the researcher to understand what it meant for the learners left behind in terms of their education when the biological parents were away and in most cases when the parents were participating minimally on the education of the learners.

The present study revealed that some primary school learners assumed caregiving roles to their minor siblings and to some old sick relatives left under their care on parental migration, an arrangement which negatively affected the learners` capacity in education leading to abscondment, dropping out of school and failure in most cases.

Also changing roles were old grannies who at times became responsible for the day-to-day parenting of the learners left under their

care by emigrants which unfortunately strained them leading to poor health, especially in cases where the biological parents were participating minimally in the education of the learners as rightly put by one of the guardians;

“my son has never remitted its only me and how do you think I can manage at my age.” (G2SS).

It also emerged from the study that most of the old grannies were illiterate and therefore could not assist the learners under their care with schoolwork. The caregiving challenges experienced by the guardians and some learners left behind’s schooling challenges indicate that the biological parents’ decision to migrate may be regarded as not having adequately saved its purpose of reducing family poverty but simply that the parental problems have been projected onto others as postulated in family systems theorisation (ISSFI, 2015). One granny, however, revealed that she had high hopes for her granddaughter even though she was illiterate, every time the granddaughter brought homework she would ask her to;

“find someone to assist.” (G1SS).

This particular granny’s reaction to the homework concerns of her granddaughter may better be explained in the spirit of the triangulation argument of the family systems theory that postulates that a third party should be called upon to assist whenever two parties are in disagreement (Johnson, 2010; ISSFI, 2015). However, while the teacher participants indicated that it was important for a consultation to ease some challenges such as learner absenteeism and inappropriate use of cell phones, they lamented that most guardians were not forthcoming citing the distance between their homes and the schools..

Literature gathered indicates that the phenomenon of learners left behind by emigrant biological parents was a common feature across the world as people run away from poverty, war, natural disasters,

and poor social services in their countries among other push factors (Makina, 2012; ACP, 2012; Portner, 2014; Guendell *et al.*, 2013; IFFD, 2017; Crush *et al.*, 2017; UNDESA, 2020). The present study reveals that most the emigrants were pushed out of the country by poverty since the respondents reported that the emigrants wanted to improve their families` economic status when they out-migrated and that revelation was aptly given by LISS who said that;

“When they went out they wanted to find employment so that we would live a normal life.”

According to ACP (2012) in Southern Europe, twice as many grandparents were caring for their grandchildren as in the Nordic countries. Wang (2013) also reports that young children were left alone or living with their relatives or neighbours in China. It appeared as if it has become a norm the world over that when one wishes to emigrate, one may leave own children under the care of old grandparents or other relatives because Southern Europe, and the Chinese experiences, were similar to what obtained in the present study.

The impact of parental migration on the education of learners left behind differs depending on the individual country of origin`s educational policies on learners left behind, the status of the migrant, remitting and returning patterns of the migrant, age of the learner left behind, sex of the learner and whether the learner left behind is living in an urban setup or a rural one.

While positive outcomes were noted in countries such as China (Bai *et al.*, 2015) and Colorado (Antman, 2012), negative outcomes were reported in most countries where the migrants were undocumented such as Ecuador (Guendell *et al.*, 2013) and Mexico (Moreno, 2013). Dube (2014) in a study in Beitbridge found that migration of parents or relatives had no positive impact on the education of the learners left behind because migration was perceived as more important than

education hence learners left behind tended to despise education since most of the migrants in their areas were not highly educated but seemed to have better life chances than more educated people back home in Zimbabwe. The negative implications of migration on undocumented emigrants such as prolonged period of stay in the destination countries without remitting necessitated by the emigrant's fear of apprehension by law enforcement agents reported in Mexico and Dube's 2014 study in Beitbridge featured a lot in the present study where it emerged too that a good number of the emigrants were primary school dropouts who crossed into South Africa illegally as revealed by one participant who said that;

“most these emigrants are border jumpers who cross to South Africa after Grade Seven so they don't value education.” (T1 FGDSN).

While the literature sought pointed to some similarities with the findings of the present study in terms of the factors that normally motivate migration such as the need to improve family economic life, one unique factor that emerged in the present study was the need to relieve stress after divorce or death in the family. However, in terms of the constraints that normally inhibit emigrants to return frequently, the present study concurred with earlier studies done elsewhere that also cited fear of apprehension by law enforcement agents especially when one stays in a foreign country illegally (Dube, 2014; Tawodzera, 2019; Rupande, 2014; Zirima, 2016). Literature suggests that most illegal emigrants were poorly remunerated in the countries of destination (Dube, 2014), and that observation concurred with findings in the present study where one respondent argued that learners with emigrant biological parents needed to be considered for educational welfare because;

“Remember those people are in a foreign country and they can be forced to work for nothing for the whole month.” (G1SN).

While literature largely expounds on psycho-social experiences and challenges encountered by adolescents left behind and learners at the secondary school level (Filippa, 2011; Filippa *et al.*, 2013), the present study appeared to add more depth to migration literature because it revealed that even toddlers were left by their mothers in the name of diaspora and a case in that respect was revealed by one guardian who lamented;

“Look, this child is three years old, she is as good as mine because her mother left her when she was fifteen months old.” (G3SS).

Since the intention was to gather detailed natural data about the experiences and challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora, the researcher employed the interpretive paradigm and qualitative research approach as data gathering frameworks (Creswell, 2014; Gray, 2014; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In that respect, a case study design was adopted where face-to-face key participant interviews were held with school heads, guardians of learners left behind by emigrants and the learners themselves. Data were also gathered by engaging teachers in focus group discussions. The researcher also analysed some attendance registers and admission registers to check on attendance and admission trends of learners with absent parents respectively. The learners’ exercise books and academic reports were also analysed to corroborate data from interviews and focus group discussions. In some instances where it became difficult to gather data, for example in the cases of L1SS and L3SN who cried at some point in the interviews, data about their progress in school were collected upon analysing their exercise books hence the research techniques adopted by the researcher managed to gather sufficient data for the study. Even though, the researcher noted that there was a need to include traditional leadership and members of school development committees as respondents to get their stories regarding the criteria they used to select vulnerable learners for educational welfare programmes since the participants of the study revealed that it was the responsibilities of

those leaders. . Generally, however, the research techniques and the participants were a perfect fit because sufficient data that helped in answering the research questions were gathered.

After gathering the data, the thematic content analysis technique which links with the adopted qualitative case study design as advised by Vaismoradi *et al.* (2016) and Creswell (2014) was used to produce themes that guided the identification and discussion of results of the study. The themes are further highlighted in the section on summary of the findings.

A statement is given too to indicate the conclusion drawn from the analysis of the key findings and the objective of each research sub-question.

The study revealed that there were two groups of learners left behind, those left under the care of old guardians most particularly grandmothers and the other group left under the care of young guardians comprising aunts and house girls. Learners under the care of grandmothers rarely completed their homework because most the grandmothers were illiterate and could not assist and those under the care of young guardians also rarely completed schoolwork because their attitude was negative and the guardians could not control them. The findings on the negative impact of compromised guardians on learners` education reported in the present study share similarities with a study in West Africa where it was also established that lack of parental authority led to delinquent behaviour among learners left behind (Rupande, 2014).

Most the biological parents went out of the country to seek economic fortunes after realising that they could hardly get rewarding jobs in Zimbabwe. The participants stated that in addition to being pushed by the harsh economic situation in Zimbabwe, most of the learners left

behind would have had their parents left for the diaspora after family disintegration due to divorce or the death of a spouse. While the need to seek better economic fortunes is recorded as one of the key push factors in migration literature (Tawodzera, 2019; IOM, 2018; Chakombera & Mubikwa, 2018), it was the issue of relieving stress that was unique to the present study.

It emerged from the study that all classes from ECD to Grade 7 at both schools where the study was conducted had learners left behind. School heads, teachers and guardians who participated in the study condemned the practice of leaving learners under the care of non-biological parents since the learners tended to be less cared for by the guardians who in most cases were inadequately prepared to provide educational, social and economic support to the learners left behind.

Some parents were returning and remitting occasionally whilst others were neither remitting nor returning. Where the biological parents of the learners were remitting and returning, the learners were more powerful than the guardians and at times had control over how the remittances sent were supposed to be used, this group was described as showy at school and never took education seriously. On the other hand, the learners under the care of old grandmothers somehow showed a positive attitude towards education although absenteeism among them was high because they too lacked proper guidance and assistance since the grandmothers were either illiterate or too old to engage with the teachers.

Evidence derived from the narratives of guardians, school heads, teachers and learners pointed to the fact that there was poor networking among biological parents, teachers, guardians and learners which unfortunately impacted negatively on the educational needs of the learners left behind.

A great concern which was raised by the teacher participants and corroborated by documentary evidence was that learners left behind did not participate in schoolwork satisfactorily. Overall, it emerged that the school attendance of learners left behind, attitude towards education, completion rate, the accomplishment of academic school tasks and performance were in most cases disgraceful and based on the data gathered it was concluded that learners left behind by emigrants in Mwenezi District were experiencing schooling harshly hence calls for a combined effort from the schools, parents, guardians, the government and other interested parties to seek ways to improve the situation of the learners . According to UNICEF (2013), the Sri Lankan government after realising that learners with absent parents faced educational challenges similar to the ones cited in the present study, established NGO Atikha programmes whose terms of reference included training of children and families left behind to be self-reliant and to include such programmes in school curricula. A trial of programmes related to the Sri Lankan NGO Atikha ones could as well be run in Zimbabwe.

The major setback cited by the participants with regards to the education of learners left behind was inadequate educational material support. It was reported that learners left behind rarely had their school fees paid or paid late in some cases which had negative implications on both the learners and the administration of the schools. In some cases, the participants revealed that learners left behind had inadequate stationery, uniforms, food and poor shelter and all of these disadvantaged the learners in their schooling leading to poor grades.

Other than inadequate educational material support, most learners left behind were also reported to be largely in-disciplined, engaged in violence, disregarded school authority, absconded lessons and all sorts of truants as rightly expressed by HSS;

“In most cases when we get reports of bullying, they involve these learners with absent parents.”

In line with the learners` negative behaviour, they too adopted a negative attitude towards schooling resulting in failure and dropping out of school.

The participants cited background factors to the challenges faced by learners left behind and these included inadequate firm authority from the guardians, inadequate educational guidance, inconsistent remission and return by biological parents, inadequate resource management skills by both the guardians and the learners, a ramification of negative parental conduct and exposure to and use of negative social media by the learners left behind.. The inadequacy of material support and indiscipline challenges cited to be characteristic of the learners left behind in the present study are not unique since earlier studies elsewhere also raised similar concerns (UNICEF, 2013; Moreno, 2013; IFFD, 2018; UN, 2020).

Upon realising the challenges and the background factors of the challenges, the participants suggested that the government ought to help ease the challenges by resuscitating the economy so that parents work in the country and refrain from emigrating and leaving the learners unattended . Related to the suggested government role to improve the economy, was that communication infrastructure needed upgrading in the remote areas of Zimbabwe such as in the Mwenezi District where the study was conducted so that parents in the diaspora could communicate with their children back home more conveniently. It was also suggested that the government should put in place training programmes in the communities on new parenting styles commensurate with the current family setup. Furthermore, the government was advised to address legislation provisions pertaining to the issuing of birth certificates to make it easier for children born outside the country to access birth certificates and to transfer from

schools they attend while abroad into the local schools. The participants recommended that migration studies be introduced in the education system in Zimbabwe from ECD up to the tertiary level so that society appreciates circumstances that befall emigrants and the impact of emigration on families left behind. .

The biological parents of the learners were advised to be in contact with the school authorities so that they could have correct information about school requirements and purchase the correct specifications given by the schools. Secondly, the biological parents were advised to recruit socially and academically responsible guardians who could assist the learners accordingly. The participants also submitted that the biological parents needed to link with teachers teaching their children at each particular period so that the concerns of the teachers regarding the education of the learners could be quickly addressed. In addition to that, the biological parents also needed to heed the advice they received from the teachers pertaining to the education of their children.

It was suggested too that guardians ought to be very responsible and treated the learners left behind fairly and authoritatively as if they were their biological children. In that regard, the guardians were supposed to counsel the learners, monitor the learners' school attendance and accomplishment of schoolwork, attend school meetings, and consult with teachers and lead model lifestyles.

School heads were deemed to be a cog in redressing challenges faced by learners left behind due to their technical expertise in the management of learners. Thus, it was suggested that the heads ought to evaluate every learner for possible recommendations for welfare programmes. The heads could also assist by engaging parents in awareness programmes, especially in parent meetings on the challenges the learners left behind faced so that collective decisions could be taken. It was suggested too that the heads could open up

communication channels that link parents in the diaspora, the schools and the guardians so that all the stakeholders share a common understanding of learners left behind's schooling experiences.

The community, more particularly the leadership could also assist by taking statistics of learners left behind whose parents rarely returned and remitted so that they recommend them for welfare support. Also, the communities needed not to segregate learners on the basis that their parents were in the diaspora since it was revealed that some emigrants were not remitting.

For the teachers of the learners left behind, it was suggested that they ought to prioritise counselling of all the learners, monitor lesson attendance and consult both guardians and biological parents of the learners left behind. It was also suggested that the teachers ought to teach *Ubuntu/unhu/vumunhu* to help the learners improve on the moral values of the society and this was emphasised by HSS who said that;

“Teachers should teach moral values in learning areas such as Family and Religious Studies to guide the learners since there are no parents at home who can take that role.”

It was suggested too that other learners without parents in the diaspora could help by providing model behaviour to the learners with parents based in the diaspora. Other than behaviour setting, the participants opined that it was also important for the learners with parents based in the country to treat those with absent parents as their friends and share life experiences accordingly. What the respondents suggested on the role other learners could take were largely in line with what some of the learner participants revealed because according to L3SS, her friends encouraged her to work hard at school irrespective of the absence of her parents thus;

“the other learners say please friend continue working hard so that your parents will be happy knowing that you attain position 2.”

Based on the views given by the participants, one can conclude that learners left behind in the Mwenezi District faced challenges such as inadequate educational materials provisions which include fees, uniforms, shelter and stationery. Also, the learners had non-material challenges such as in-discipline behaviour due to inadequate guidance and control by both biological parents and guardians and inadequate home assistance in their schoolwork. Considering that some of the educational concerns of learners left behind by emigrants raised in the present study also emerged in earlier studies though the studies were conducted in towns and on adolescents (Tawodzera, 2019; Filippa *et al.*, 2013; Kufakurinani *et al.*, 2014; Chakombera & Mubikwa, 2018; Munyonda, 2020), one may suggest that the government take a leaf from other countries that used to face similar challenges but have since managed to improve the educational welfare of emigrants' children through the enactment of protective laws and inclusive educational policies. Examples of such countries are China (the People's Republic of China Law on the protection of minors); the Philippines (Migrant workers and Overseas Philippines Act of 1992, Philippines Overseas Employment Administration) and the Sri Lankan NGO Atikha initiative explained elsewhere in this report (UNICEF, 2013; Wang, 2013).

It was established that learners left behind's educational orientation was to some extent influenced by their local communities' social practices. For example, it emerged from the observations made that guardianship was largely the responsibility of females since all the guardians in the present study were females. The belief that females were responsible for guardianship was linked to domestic chores that seemed to be allocated on gender lines too.

The arrangement where duties to do with guardianship and home chores were performed along gender lines meant that girls and boys in

the communities of the Mwenezi District where the study was conducted were exposed to different educational experiences..

The other social activities that negatively impacted the education of learners left behind were sports tournaments, harvesting Mopani worms and marketing events. These activities affected the learners left behind by stealing the learners' schooling time. Other than losing schooling time as the learners left behind participated in these events, the learners were also exposed to immoral activities and violence that characterised the events.

It was also reported that learners left behind lost out on initiation ceremonies since the communities rarely considered them in such events. However, while the exclusion of learners left behind in initiation ceremonies ensured that such learners would not be able to lead in the future, it afforded them time to be in class during the month-long period per annum when the other learners would be tied up with the activities and that was revealed by HSN who said that;

"It is good on their part because they will be in school when others are engaged in those programmes."

Based on the above social activities in which the learners left behind were largely exposed, it was concluded that the Mwenezi community where the study was conducted had a major negative influence on the education of the learners left behind. While the issue of feminisation of guardianship may not be unique to the present study as other researchers also talk about it for example (Brown & Ginter, 2014; Bhamain, 2012), what was peculiar about the present study was the issue of biological parental conduct, harvesting *Mopani* worms, marketing events and sporting activities being some of the prime sources of children violent behaviour and negative attitude towards education.

There was a poor understanding of the policy provisions regarding the inclusion or exclusion of learners with parents in the diaspora in welfare programmes such as BEAM. Such was revealed by the participants when they narrated that the learners with parents in the diaspora needed to be considered in welfare programmes irrespective of the fact that their parents were still alive. In the participants' appreciation of the policy provisions, BEAM was a programme for orphans. This shows that there was a gap in community awareness programmes on how the BEAM programme operated. As for the BEAM manual (2016), learners with parents in the diaspora were ranked in the pink category representing the second tier after the red category which is the first class for consideration when it comes to BEAM beneficiary selection. The selection of learners with parents in the diaspora into BEAM was therefore not supposed to be a result of the benevolence of the members responsible for selection but a right provided that those learners were poor. The learners with parents in the diaspora were thus not meaningfully benefitting from welfare programmes in schools where the study was carried out because the communities thought that those learners were better off economically as compared to the other learners whose parents were based in the country.

School heads, teachers, guardians and learners left behind all identified non-school initiated programmes that were meant to help vulnerable learners in schools. Some organisations that reportedly provided educational assistance to the vulnerable learners at the two schools where the study was conducted were Solon Foundation, PLAN International, Bubey Valley Conservancy and the government of Zimbabwe initiated BEAM programme.

The learners left behind revealed that they understood the mandate of the organisations they identified as for the payment of fees and provision of exercise books to orphans. Similar views about the

operational guidelines of the organisations were also shared by the guardians. However, the guardians further stated that learner welfare ought to include food provisions for the learners left behind.

It emerged from the focus group discussions and interviews held that teacher knowledge about operations of organisations that provided educational assistance to vulnerable learners depended on one's level of responsibility at school. For example, school administrators chronicled how the BEAM programme was implemented in schools while the teachers indicated that they were not fully aware of the operational guidelines of the programme as illustrated by T4 FGDSN who lamented that;

"It's only that we don't know how the BEAM beneficiaries are selected but there are other deserving learners that are excluded on the basis that their parents are in the diaspora yet some who seem to be well off are benefiting."

Other than articulating knowledge about existing welfare programmes in schools, the participants also gave their views regarding the suitability for inclusion of learners left behind by emigrants in the welfare programmes. On that issue, there was divided opinion where some participants asserted that learners left behind needed to be assisted in welfare programmes because most the parents rarely returned once they crossed into South Africa thereby exposing the learners left behind to extreme challenges back home because;

"at times the parents may not have the money even though they are working in South Africa." (GISN).

From that thinking, the participants who advocated the inclusion of learners left behind into welfare programme consideration reasoned that excluding the learners were akin to a violation of the learners' right to education. On the contrary, those who felt that the learners left behind needed not to be included in welfare programmes argued that;

“the economic situation is worse for the resident parents than for the emigrants hence the former’s children ought to be considered ahead of the latter.” (HSS).

Generally, though school heads and teacher participants mentioned that learners left behind needed psycho-social assistance, the bulk of the guardians seemed to centralise their debate on material needs provisions.

Considering the aim of this sub-research question which sought to establish how educational welfare programmes were implemented in the Mwenezi District and what ensued in the empirical study, the conclusion arrived at was that implementation modalities of welfare programmes in the Mwenezi District were riddled with obscurities. Further to that, it may be argued that the future of educational welfare of learners left behind rested on the learners, community and school authorities' attitude towards the programmes.

The conclusions arrived at in respect of the research questions, objectives of the study and the participants’ contributions are hereby presented.

The findings of the study reveal that most of the learners left behind in the Mwenezi District were exposed to unfriendly schooling experiences due to the negative effects of parental emigration. Largely it was reported that the completion rate of some learners left behind’s, school attendance and performance were poor. Considering the harsh experiences that the learners left behind faced in the Mwenezi District, it was concluded that leaving learners under the care of non-biological parents was not good for their education.

The major educational challenges affecting learners left behind in the Mwenezi District as articulated by the respondents in the present

study included inadequate educational material support and behavioural ones. These factors emanate from inadequate parental control of the learners. Though the government, school authorities, community leadership and guardians may devise strategies to ease some of the challenges that affect the learners left behind, biological parents' presence remains an undisputable cog in the education of the learner.

The participants reported that while a few biological parents provided some educational support to their children back home through sending fees and initiating communication episodes with their children, their involvement in the education of the learners remained superficial, minimal and insignificant to have any positive influence on the education of the learners. Notwithstanding those few who attempt to involve themselves in the education of their children, most the biological parents were non-committal to the education of their children hence it can be safely concluded that largely parents in the diaspora from the Mwenezi District were not catering for the educational needs of their children.

The participants reported that the guardians and the communities at large seemed to value education less and cherished migration more. Such beliefs manifested in some identified community practices such as the feminisation of guardianship, sports galas, and harvesting *Mopani* worms where school-going age children including learners left behind were exposed to during learning time, limited home and community positive influence on the education of learners left behind. Therefore, the conclusion one may draw from the participants' responses with respect to how learners left behind were assisted in the home is that little positive support was coming for them from home.

It emerged from the research participants' responses that knowledge about implementation guidelines of educational welfare programmes

in schools was privileged to school administrators. Both guardians and non-administrative teachers had little knowledge about the operation of existing welfare programmes such as the BEAM and seemed preoccupied to think about other means through which they could extend a hand in helping learners left behind enjoy education in similar ways to their counterparts with resident parents. Debate arose where some participants opined that learners left behind ought to be included in welfare programmes since some of their parents were not returning and remitting while others argued that whatever the case, the economic life of a rural Mwenezi resident was comparably poorer than that of the one in the diaspora hence learners left behind needed not to benefit from welfare programmes ahead of learners whose parents remained in the country. Conclusively one may observe that educational welfare programmes in the Mwenezi District were riddled with controversy.

While every effort was made to ensure that the results of the study were credible, it was noticed that there were still some grey areas that could have compromised the credibility of the results. Though it was established that every class at the two schools where the study was carried out had learners left behind by emigrants, the researcher only stuck to the qualitative research approach where a case study design was used involving twenty-seven participants inclusive of six learners left behind, two school heads, six guardians and thirteen teachers. Such a small sample may not reflect the views of a larger section of society regarding how learners left behind were experiencing schooling. Related to the issue of sample size, it also became apparent during the data collection that participants could have been extended to include community leadership namely traditional leaders and members of school development committees since it was reported that they also participated in the selection of welfare programmes beneficiaries in schools. However, the cited limitations could not have had many negative effects on the findings because data saturation was

achieved through prolonging stay in the field and triangulation of participants, data gathering instruments and data collection techniques.

It was also realised during interviewing that some of the guardians and the learners treated the subject of leaving learners behind as sensitive so much so that some were hesitant to supply data. The deadlock was however served by the fact that the researcher had experience working in the area so the participants consented to supply data after some persuasion.

It was also difficult to trace academic performance trends for all the six participants since there were no records to establish how the learners were performing prior to their parents' emigration. Some teachers however gave general comments about the learners without corroborating with documentary evidence.

The other limitation emanated from the researcher's inability to visit and observe activities taking place at sports tournaments and marketing events because the data collection period could not coincide with the events. As it was reported that most learners left behind visited such events during learning time and were exposed to immoral behaviour, direct observations from such events could have helped corroborate the data obtained from the interviews and focus group discussions.

The outbreak of the coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) delayed data collection which initially was scheduled for 2020 but was later moved to 2021 since schools were shut during the larger part of 2020 and such prolonged school closure could have presented fluctuating experiences to the participants thereby compromising data authenticity. Despite that drawback, data were finally gathered from candidate classes (Grade Seven learners of 2021). There was no gender

equity in terms of participant representation. Of the six learner participants, all except one were girls while all the guardians were females as well. The views of males regarding experiences and challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora were therefore limited to teachers where there were eight males against seven females. While the gender disparity was noted, it did not affect the quality of the study much since the questions asked were gender neutral and those who participated responded in clear detail.

Some of the learner participants were however overwhelmed by emotions and cried during the interview sessions. The researcher, however, managed to counsel the learners and completed the interviews. Though the responses of such participants were short, were insightful and were interpreted to mean that the learners had psychological challenges induced by anxiety necessitated by parental absence (Johnson, 2010; Makusha & Ritcher, 2015; Zirima, 2016).

While studies have been carried out before in Zimbabwe on the educational experiences and challenges faced by learners left behind by emigrants, the previous studies mainly looked at the situation of adolescents above primary school level and as such little was known about the primary school learners left behind's educational experiences (Filippa, 2011; Filippa *et al.*, 2013; Dube, 2014; Mashawi, 2017; Tawodzera, 2019). Therefore, if ever there were government and non-governmental agencies that could have invested resources to ameliorate challenges faced by learners left behind, such as excluding the primary school going age since not much has ever been talked about by researchers. The present study, therefore, tapped into territory not familiar to most contemporary researchers hence its results narrowed the knowledge gap in that respect.

Another emergent finding in the present study is that biological parents were reported to disregard informing their children on the

decision to leave for the diaspora on the assumption that it was good for the children, mistakenly however violating the children's right to information as provided for in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As the results of the present study reveal, many learners from as early as ECD level were left behind fendng for themselves or under the care of grandparents or non-relatives whilst the parents went into the diaspora from the Mwenezi District.

Unlike the case in most urban settlements in Zimbabwe where ECD centres are sprouting all over to support the education of learners from as early as the age of three, learners left behind of that age were not attending school in the Mwenezi District because other than the schools that were too far apart in most cases, there were no such alternative learning centres. Furthermore, the parents based in the diaspora were not committed to the education of the learners in the lower grades as they neither paid levies nor provided uniforms and other school necessities. Rather the parents were supporting the learners in the upper grades. The current research findings on parental preferences on the education of learners in the upper primary level to the ECD learners were in sharp contrast to findings from a study conducted in Nigeria where Fagbeminiyi (2011) found that most parents had more interest in the education of very young learners. Interestingly in the present study, it emerged that emigrants' educational support to the learners in the upper primary was not genuine but meant to buy favours from the children who at upper primary school level were now seen as potentially reaching maturity level to be able to emigrate from upon which the learners would be expected to return the favour of supporting the parents once they settled in the diaspora.

The other new dimension in the present study was the use of the family systems theory to embrace the ideas of learners, guardians, school heads and teachers as if these were members of a nuclear

family. Continued use of such an approach in analysing the educational welfare of learners left behind may result in the identification of an emerging triangulated family whose tenets may stretch beyond the usual blood and marriage factors but also to the functions and dependability of each member to the other. In that respect, it is proposed that if such a triangulated family must meet the educational needs of a learner affected by parental migration, it should be modelled and have its members equipped with the skills illustrated below:

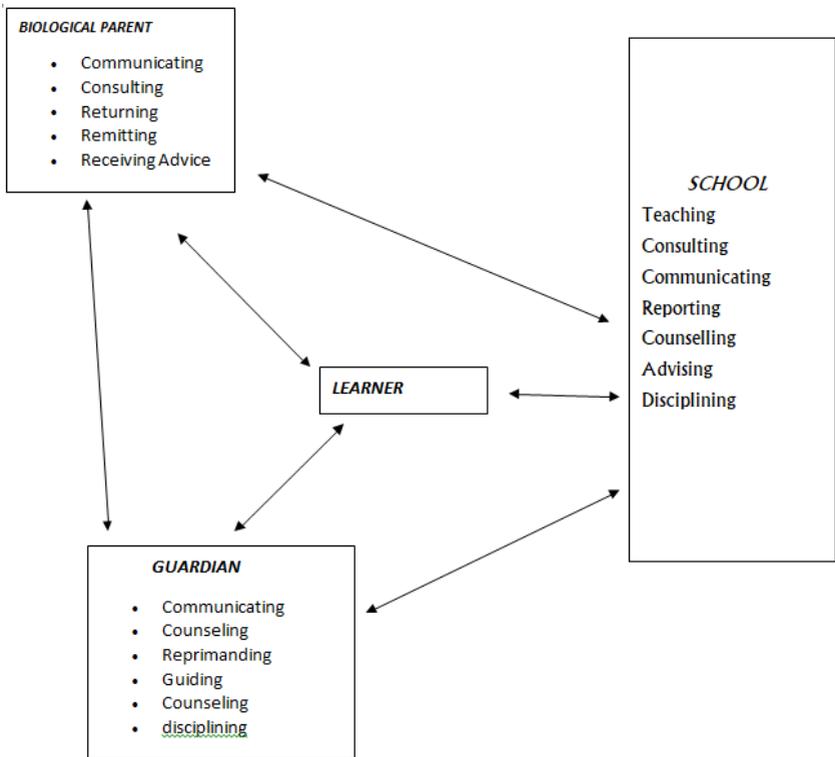


Figure 7.1: Modern triangulated family

Studies in Mexico, China, Romania, Philippines, Nigeria and Zimbabwe among other countries reveal that most emigrants run away from calamities such as war and natural disasters (Moreno, 2013; UNICEF, 2013; Dube, 2014; Sanduleasa & Matei, 2015; Bai *et al.*, 2015; Moyo, 2017; Cruch *et al.*, 2017; Chakombera & Mubika, 2018; UNDESA, 2020). This study added an unfamiliar factor of relieving stress away from the home country after family disintegration due to spousal death or divorce. Again, the present study unlike the previous studies that gave a whole sum analysis of the educational experiences of learners left behind, revealed that learners left behind experienced educational life differently depending on their age, educational qualifications, socio-economic status, character and motivation of the guardian. This revelation comes with the suggestion that guardians should meet certain minimum attributes if the learners left behind are going to benefit in the long run. Furthermore, while studies elsewhere indicate that teachers have been vital in assisting learners left behind realise their educational goals through counselling and giving professional advice to both the learners and the biological parents, the present study reveals that some biological parents had little respect for teachers and directed the teachers and school authorities on which grades their children ought to be placed. This finding calls for stakeholders' involvement in strategies to socialise the communities about the role of both the parent and the teacher in the provision of advice to the parents with respect to the education of the learners.

It emerged from the study that school administrators at the two schools where the study was carried out were not cascading updated information about policy guidelines on the implementation of the BEAM programme since there was a huge knowledge gap about the programme between the administrative and non-administrative members of staff. For instance, both teachers and guardians indicated that they only had some scant information about the BEAM implementation guidelines as per the 2001 framework when the

programme was initiated even though there is a 2016 updated document which accommodates learners left behind though in the second-tier category. Reports on inconsistency in the implementation of the BEAM programme indicate that there were no follow-ups from the responsible authorities to check if the pro-forma guidelines were followed in the schools.

While it is widely reported in other research studies that parental involvement helped mould good behaviour in the learners (Fagbeminiyi, 2011; Brown & Grinter, 2014; Moreno, 2013; Sanduleasa & Matei, 2015; UNESCO, 2018), this study revealed that most of the learners left behind emulated bad behaviour from their parents who displayed such wayward behaviour inclusive of violence whenever they returned from the diaspora. Related to this finding was another about the guardians who were reported to be perpetuating immoral behaviour among girls left behind.

The other unfamiliar finding from the present study was that traditional leaders whose role in communities included custodianship of the community rules and fostering order were at the forefront of perpetuating bad conduct of biological parents of learners left behind by accepting bribes to cover up for the biological parents' ill-treatment of the learners left behind. The schooling challenges of learners left behind were thus difficult to resolve because some of the emigrants did not want society to perceive them as poor and irresponsible.

This study was also unique in that unlike several studies on the educational issues of learners left behind that limited respondents' views on the experiences and challenges the learners left behind were facing (Makina, 2012; Chakombera & Mubika, 2018; Dube, 2014; Filippa *et al.*, 2013; Zirima, 2016; Tawodzera, 2019), it went further and sought views of the primary school learners left behind themselves on what they thought could be done to ease challenges they faced thus

added depth to the literature on the issue of educational needs of learners left behind by emigrants from rural settings in developing countries.

The other unique finding from the present study is that sporting activities done in the communities were reported to harm the behaviour of learners left behind because they took much of the learning time of the learners. Other than stealing the learning time of the learners, the participants reported that some bad behaviour noted in the learners left behind was associated with the learners' experiences at sporting galas and marketing events. Since some activities such as marketing events that were reported to negatively influence the education of learners left behind are administered by the Mwenezi Rural District Council which also is the responsible authority of most schools in the district, a collaboration between the council and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education could be mooted to draft policy guidelines that communicate to the schools and communities on the management of the events in such ways that learners are not disadvantaged by those events.

There was a concern raised that some learners with parents in the diaspora were not benefiting from welfare programmes such as BEAM because those responsible for selection argued that such learners were not entitled to the facility since their parents were perceived to be; "*the haves.*" (T5, FGDSS). However, G1SN dismissed the notion that all learners with parents in the diaspora were affluent and vowed that;

"The government should ensure that such children are not segregated against..."

Considering the exclusionary concerns raised and the argument presented by G1SN, it is recommended that policy makers ought to formulate clear policies in line with what is practically obtaining in society. While the inclusion of learners with parents in the diaspora in

welfare programmes such as BEAM is implied under the pink category in the BEAM user manual, the policy should be very clear and state that learners with non-returning parents ought to be included in the welfare programmes under the red category since some of them are neglected and at times worse than some orphans whose parents could have left some treasures;

“because the reality in our community is that most children are left unattended.” (G3SS).

Learners with parents in the diaspora should be registered with the department of child welfare and that responsibility should be given to traditional leaders so that it becomes easier to trace them and establish their welfare. Besides, the government is advised to initiate programmes that target to educate guardians on new parenting styles so that the guardians may be able to handle the learners amid concerns raised by some guardians such as G2SN who lamented that the learners left behind were; “difficult to take care of.”

There should be a policy that encourages biological parents to ensure that they entrust energetic and literate guardians to take care of their children. While the government, being the policy makers, is applauded for welfare initiatives such as BEAM as revealed by L2SN who pointed out that; “*their fees are paid...*” funds ought to be improved such that the assistance could be extended to uniforms and other stationery needs. It was revealed in the present study that learners who visited their biological parents during the school holidays tended to become difficult to manage both at school and home, as they changed behaviour upon their return, may be due to the influence of the learners’ parental conduct or exposure to negative social media they were exposed to. Therefore, considering the prevalence of migration both in Zimbabwe and in the Mwenezi District where the present study was conducted (Dube, 2014; Chakombera & Mubikwa, 2018; Tawodzera, 2019), one would propose that migration studies be

introduced in schools from ECD up to tertiary level so that both learners and teachers understand and appreciate its impact and circumstances of learners left behind by emigrants and probably handle the learners in a better way.

GISN asserted that it was ill-conceived to exclude learners with parents in the diaspora from accessing educational benefits from the government on the assumption that their parents were in the diaspora because;

“at times the parents may not have the money even though they are working in South Africa.”

Dube (2014) in a study in Beit-bridge also found out that most the emigrants to South Africa were not earning enough to sustain their families' general welfare back home since they were largely employed on farms where they were not paid handsomely. Based on such evidence, one would suggest that policies that accommodate all learners in public schools whose parents are in the diaspora be proclaimed. Attached to the policy on the vulnerability of learners left behind should be a proclamation that whoever segregates those learners should be liable for a punishment of some sort as a measure to monitor malpractices regarding the selection of educational welfare beneficiaries because those responsible for selection normally; “*target children of those they know.*” (G3SS). Again noting that both teachers and school heads who participated in the present study talked extensively about the importance of counselling the learners with absent parents and that counselling is done in schools with minimum success as evidenced by increasing cases of delinquency among the learners, it is recommended that qualified counsellors be employed in schools to provide services to learners, teachers and parents. Each school should have a comprehensive database of learners left behind so that assistance could be sought based on actual figures on the ground in

line with G3SS who asserted that learners left behind could be assisted if,

“there were persons responsible for collecting statistics of such in the communities.”

This category involves community leaders who are responsible for the distribution of stipends from the government and other well-wishers. Also falling in this category are school authorities that include school heads, teachers and members of the school development committees/associations. These policy implementers should consult extensively when they select welfare beneficiaries to ensure that learners who deserve assistance are accorded irrespective of whether their parents are in the diaspora or not . Records of returning patterns of parents who would have migrated out of the country ought to be kept especially when those parents have left their children under self-care or the care of old relatives. Platforms should be created in schools where learners with parents in the diaspora air out their schooling experiences in the absence of their biological parents.

Just as the case with recommendations of previous research studies, the present study recommends that counselling be done in schools as a way of guiding the learners left behind, most of them lack guidance from home. The present study reveals that migration is popular in Zimbabwe and very much so in the part of the Mwenezi District where the study was conducted because according to one participant;

“In this area when they talk about going to seek employment, they mean diaspora.” (T4 FGDSN).

In view of the reality that migration is now common in the larger section of Zimbabwe, it is recommended that teachers be inducted into migration studies so that they cascade the knowledge to the learners. Again noting the expansion of numbers of learners left behind by emigrants and those learners’ minimum participation in school

curricula due to reportedly provision of inadequate learning resources by the biological parents, it is recommended that the schools should not only rely on educational welfare programmes offered by the government and non-governmental organisations but should also initiate school-based programmes to assist learners left behind.

In response to the concern raised by some respondents that communication in the area studied was stalled by poor communication infrastructure, one would recommend that communication webs be set in schools to connect schools to the community and the parents in the diaspora so that frequent communication is made possible among schools, guardians and biological parents of the learners left behind for challenges to be solved early for the benefit of the learners..

The biological parents should be in regular contact with the school to ensure that they are informed of the experiences and challenges their children would be facing and show that they were responsible parents unlike the cases of some who were reported to abandon their children; *“once they crossed into South Africa their numbers become inaccessible.”* (G3SS). Since it was reported that some guardians were inadequately educated and failed to provide appropriate educational advice to the learners, they are advised to attend school meetings and seek advice on the homework of learners from the teachers. It was also reported that in some situations, there was poor communication among the guardians, teachers and biological parents of the learners, a situation that complicated the management of the learners both at home and at school. To redress the challenge of the dearth of communication among the above-identified stakeholders, it is recommended that school authorities open up communication platforms such as WhatsApp groups to engage one another openly and speed up strategies of assisting the learner in cases of challenges. Guardians should also attend community awareness programmes on parenting

especially on the management of remittances because one finding pointed to the distressing fact that;

“sometimes they misappropriate the money.” (L2SS).

Some of the learners left behind were reported to be undisciplined and lacked a positive attitude towards education since;

“very few respected teachers...because of the influence of their parents.”
(T1 FGDSS).

Learners are advised to submit themselves to the guardians and seek the guardians' and teachers' counsel whenever they face challenges. The teacher participants bewailed the level of violent behaviour among some of the learners with parents in the diaspora citing some cases where the learners could;

“bring knobkerries and stones to stone the teachers.” (T3 FGDSN).

On this note, it is recommended that the learners should desist from accessing violent films on their phones because it was established that some of the bad behaviour emanated from exposure to such. Again in line with the negative influence of the social environment to which the learners were exposed such as sporting galas which were reported to be characterised by violence, it is recommended that the learners stop frequenting such events especially when the sports were for the adults.

Even though the present study covered a lot of ground on the educational experiences, challenges and welfare of learners left behind, there is still a need for research to gather more comprehensive data on the subject area if appropriate policies pertaining to the educational welfare of learners left behind and implementation mechanisms are to be realised. The suggested topics for interrogation may include:

- Comparative analysis of educational needs provision to rural and urban learners left behind by emigrants.

- Disaggregating educational needs male and female learners left behind by emigrants.
- Formulating an educational policy for learners left behind by emigrants.
- Assessing the knowledge gap on educational policy provisions between school administrators and teachers.
- Strategies to improve linkages among schools, guardians and biological parents of learners left behind.

In line with the input of all the participants in relation to the experiences and challenges faced by learners left behind and the suggested recommendations, a model for the learners is hereby proposed.

Table.7.1: Learners left behind `s status checklist

	Comments			
	Guardian	Community leader	Class teacher	School head
Section A				
Biological parents details				
Parental departure period				
Both parents emigrated				
Father migrated				
Mother migrated				
Reasons for parental emigration				
Parent(s)' level of education				
Parent(s)' occupation				
Parent(s)' returning patterns				

Parent(s) remitting patterns				
Parental engagement with school authorities				

Table.7.2 Learners left behind`s status checklist

Section B Learners left behind details	Guardian	Community leader	Class teacher	School head
Number of learners left behind in the family				
Learner`s position in the family				
Gender of learner left behind				
Age of learners left behind				
Class/ Grade/ Form of learners left behind				
Learner`s participation in schoolwork				
Behaviour of the learner				
Learner`s sources of school fees/levies				
Learner`s source of food				
Section C Guardian`s details				
Guardian`s relationship to the learners left behind				
Sex of guardian				
Age of guardian				
Level of education of guardian				
Guardian`s history of engagement with school				
Status of guardianship (Same household/ different households)				
Guardian`s economic status				

The motivation for the study namely the continued emigration of parents into the diaspora from the Mwenezi District and the dearth of research on the experiences, challenges and educational welfare of primary school learners left behind is given.

The study revealed that learners from as early as ECD were left under the care of house girls, self-care or under the care of old guardians most particularly grandmothers. Most of the biological parents of the learners left behind rarely returned or remitted and the few who returned did so for a very short time during the festive season which means the learners' contact with their parents was very minimum. To worsen the situation for the learners left behind, the biological parents of the learners were reported to rarely consult their children on parental departure resulting in the affected learners suffering anxiety problems as they remained unsure when they would reunite with their parents.

The participants reported that a good number of learners left behind did not relate well with teachers since the learners rarely participated in the school curriculum. The academic performance of most the learners left behind was said to be below average. It also emerged from the study that parents in the diaspora tended to commit themselves more to the education of children in the upper primary than to those in the infant level.

The learners with absent parents were reported to grapple with inadequate educational materials. The major challenges were none or late payment of fees which led to the learners sometimes being sent back home or paraded at school and all that negatively affected their schooling experiences. The other challenge was that the provision of stationery and uniforms was in some cases inadequate again impacting negatively on the education of the learners since;

“a kid can spend the whole term without a book...” (T3 FGDSN).

L3SN lamented that he found schooling cumbersome because;

“I come to school without food.”

Other than educational material needs challenges, the learners left behind were also reported to be undisciplined and to have a negative attitude towards education since;

“ they are pushed to go to school.” (T5 FGDSS).

Considering the harsh learning experiences and the challenges encountered by the learners with the parents based in the diaspora, most study participants opined that the learners ought to be considered in welfare programmes such as the BEAM because some of the biological parents were irresponsible. It was also suggested that schools needed to initiate income-generating projects such as gardening from where the proceeds could be channelled towards assisting vulnerable learners such as those with non-returning parents.

It appears out-migration of the biological parents of the learners who participated in the present study emotionally affected the learners because L1SS and L3SN cried uncontrollably when asked to comment on their parents` decision to migrate. L3SS who managed to verbalise her predicament of staying without her parents said that even though the parents were remitting;

“I just want to see them often.”

The reactions of the learners to their parents` absence is better explained by the family systems theory concept of anxiety that postulates that family separation causes uneasiness among family members as they become uncertain whether they will reunite and is analogous to the ambiguous loss theory by Boss (Filippa, 2011). It was also revealed that learners with absent parents deteriorated in academic performance as they grow older, probably because of maturity they begin to be able to relate their schooling challenges to

their parental absence which means that their schooling life is now dominated by emotions rather than by reason. In the family systems theory proposition, one's adherence to the use of emotions ahead of reason indicates one's deteriorating level of differentiation and in-class, learners begin to perform poorly because of low concentration. Again, while the participants in the present study revealed that most of the emigrants went out of the country to reduce family economic poverty, the poverty in most such families was transferred to the learners as one respondent revealed that;

"My son has never remitted since he went, I must engage in piece jobs if his daughter is to have books." (G2SS).

Literature from earlier studies shows that most developing countries were losing citizens into the diaspora and in the process leaving learners under different arrangements ranging from staying alone or under the guardianship of other people either relatives or nonrelatives (Moreno, 2013; Tawodzera, 2019). Literature also revealed that most uneducated and undocumented emigrants had challenges securing well-paying jobs in the diaspora which in most cases led them to fail to support the education of their children back home (Dube, 2014). The literature findings on the movement of people from less developed countries into the more advanced ones for anticipated economic emancipation were similar to what subsists in the present study where the participants revealed that;

"he went to look for employment..." (L3SS).

Contrastingly it was also learnt that in situations where the emigrants were educated, well documented, had paying jobs and were returning and remitting, their children had improved in academic work.

The chapter also summarises the research methodology which incorporated the interpretive paradigm, qualitative approach and the case study design where face-to-face key participant interviews, focus

group discussions and document analysis was used to collect data from school heads, teachers and guardians, learners left behind and from admission registers, academic reports, attendance registers and exercise books of learners left behind. The thematic content analysis technique was used to analyse the qualitative data that was collected (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2016).

Considering reports of non-returning and remission by some emigrants that normally lead to some learners left behind inadequately accessing education, the present study recommends that the government enact laws that accommodate all learners with absent parents in educational welfare programmes irrespective of the type of migration associated with the biological parents similar to what is done in other countries such as the Philippines and Sri Lanka (UNICEF, 2013). Schools were recommended to intensify counselling programmes and initiate income generating projects so that some assistance could be availed from within the schools. The study also recommends that migration studies be introduced at all learning levels so that both teachers and learners appreciate the circumstances of the learners left behind by emigrants and assist them accordingly. To mitigate some reported cases of illiterate guardians and those who modelled bad behaviour on learners, it was also recommended that there be set minimum academic and social qualifications for one to be considered for guardianship of learners with absent parents.

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Synopsis

This study, captured in the form of a monograph that embeds in the family systems theoretical and conceptual framework was conducted in the Mwenezi District of Zimbabwe with the primary view to critically evaluating educational needs provisions for primary school learners with parents in the diaspora. An interpretive research methodological paradigm that incorporated an embellishment of qualitative research approach and case study design was adopted to gather data through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis techniques. The study had a sample of 27 participants namely 2 primary school heads, 13 teachers, 6 learners and 6 guardians who were drawn equitably from the two schools studied. Data were analysed using the thematic content technique. One of the findings brought to the fore in this study is that most learners left behind were not considered as vulnerable by the communities and hence were excluded from any educational assistance provided by the government. Additionally, schools had no programmes in place to cater for the welfare of learners left behind by parents who had gone to the diaspora. It was established, too, that while in some few cases, the learners left behind were spoiled materially, the majority were spoiled socially and as a result despised education and authority. Sporting activities, harvesting Mopani worms and initiation ceremonies were also found to impact negatively on the education of learners left behind. Drawing from these findings and others reported in this study, it was recommended that counselling programmes be improved in schools by employing qualified counsellors at every school. Migration studies could be introduced at all learning levels. Thirdly, learners left behind should be registered with the Department of Social Welfare with a view to ensuring that anyone interested in their welfare would access information about them easily.

About the Author



Dr Shepherd Gumbo is an educationist with vast experience in school administration and in teaching across all levels. His area of specialty is Educational Sociology. He holds a Dphil in Educational Sociology, MED in Sociology and BED in Sociology, all obtained from the Great Zimbabwe University. Dr Gumbo's research interests include child/learner protection and welfare, education of vulnerable groups, gender and education and inclusive education. Currently he is serving as a sociology of education lecturer at the Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University.