

CHAPTER THREE: STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter dealt with the literature review and canvassed the theoretical perspectives informing the study. This chapter outlines and explores the methodological standpoint and paradigm in which this research is located. This segment covers the research paradigm, research approach and research design. It also discusses highlights sampling issues and procedures and techniques for data collection and analysis. The section ends by discussing a summary of the research ethics. A research paradigm is a set of assumptions on how things work. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) conceive of research paradigm as a set of shared beliefs that informs the meaning or the interpretation of data. They go on to argue how the paradigm defines a researcher's philosophical orientation and this has significant implications for every decision made in the research undertaking. This study adopted a transformative emancipatory paradigm but also utilised elements of the pragmatic paradigm.

For the purposes of this research, the researcher made inferences to both perspectives to encompass the unique perspectives that each provides to this study. Transformative emancipatory approach to research in victimology is research that transforms the lives of individuals by hopefully inventing or pushing for the creation for legislature that can transform the outlook and circumstances of vulnerable groups; in this case girls and women with disabilities.

The Transformative Emancipatory approach was borne out of the need to collaborate research with minority and marginalised groups. As argued by Mertens (2010), this approach is used in disability studies that focus on power and voice dynamics at community levels that so often depict power and voice dynamics at most levels in a national setup. Shannon Baker (2017) provides another notion, arguing that this approach responds to the need of the researcher to that enables working to achieve social justice with marginalised groups. Thus, this approach was appropriate for this study

whose purpose was to explore access to justice for girls and women with disabilities, a largely marginalised group.

The researcher drew aspects from the pragmatic stance to emphasise and identify practical solutions to research findings. Creswell (2003) posits the pragmatic perspective places the research question at the centre of the study, by taking a few core tenets of the aforementioned perspectives the researcher seeks to give. In addition, Kivunja (2017) reiterates the pragmatic approach as a realistic and unique individual interpretation of one's reality. Furthermore, Kivunja (2017) also observe that its combines well with the Transformative Emancipatory approach, one of whose aspects is that it is biased towards the examination of conditions and individuals in a situation, based on social positioning.

A research approach is the structure of the research, the glue that holds the research together (Trochim, 2006). Meanwhile, Maree (2007) goes on to identify three different types of research approaches; namely the qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach, to which Creswell (2003) comments that the difference in the research approaches comes as a consequence of answers sought by the researcher to the following three questions:

- ☐ What knowledge claims does the researcher make?
- ☐ What strategies of enquiry will inform the procedures?
- ☐ What methods of data collection and analysis will the researcher use?

The mixed method approach to research is what Creswell (2009) has aptly described as, a pragmatic worldview that combines both qualitative and quantitative views to research. In the current study, the researcher sought to analyse the context under a transformative emancipatory mixed methodology. This approach as argued by Creswell (2009), seeks to examine issues of discrimination and oppression, a relevant element in relation to girls and women with disabilities who are victims of crime.

Flick (2018) observes that the mixed method approach is the continuous collection of both sorts of data. Kumar (2019) observe that mixed methods are the process of collecting data using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The overall purpose and central premise of mixed methods studies is that it provides a better understanding of research problems and complex phenomena than either approach alone (Creswell, Klassen, Smith & Plano Clark (2007) cited in Molina-Azorin (2016). The rationale for this approach as argued by Molina-Azorin (2016) was to enhance validity and complementarity.

In this monograph, the larger share of use went to the qualitative with the quantitative playing more of a supportive role, due to the desire to 'listen to the voices of the participants' (Shumba 2021,105). Additionally, this was also influenced by more reliance on qualitative research questions over the quantitative aspect of research to deeply understand the phenomena under study. Quantitative data was used to test a hypo monograph and in this study the focus was on crimes against girls and women. Quantitative data in this study assisted the researcher to access a more reliable form of data that could generalise findings from the largest component of the research population, Victim Friendly Unit officers.

Quantifiable data in this research was generated in the form of survey questionnaires to obtain information pertaining to the knowledge of justice trends and of issues affecting GWWD. Survey questionnaires were administered to VFU officers. After data collection it became easier for the researcher to arrange the large amounts of data into graphs, tables and charts making it easier to categorise information and at the same time present information that directly responded to the research questions. The mixed method approach was a good fit for this study which was premised on getting a deeper understanding of the “**what**” and “**how**”, when it came to access to justice for GWWD in Mashonaland Central Province of Harare.

A research design essentially answers to the question: how is the study to be carried out? (Trochim, 2006). It is the backbone of the study that provides a

clear picture of what the researcher seeks to study and how he or she will carry out the study. Creswell (2006) observe that, rigorous research designs are important because they guide the methods and decisions that researchers must make during their studies and set the logic by which they make interpretations at the end of their studies. Kumar (2019) contends that a research design is the flow of the research that joins all elements of research together from inception to completion of the research process. On another note, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) identify four basic mixed method designs, namely: explanatory design, the exploratory design, the triangulation design, the embedded design and concurrent triangulation design. This study adopted the concurrent triangulation design that is briefly explained in the following paragraphs.

In this design both qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently as illustrated in Figure 3.1. This ensured that neither of the designs was given precedence over the other. The use of two different methods was an attempt to confirm, cross- validate or corroborate findings within a single study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This enhances the researcher's understanding of the phenomena under study due to the fact that the researcher would look at the phenomena from various angles.

Alexander (2020) insinuates that the concurrent triangulation design enables the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time to better understand the phenomena under study. Gul (2018) suggests that the concurrent triangulation design is premised on the notion to paint a clear picture of the intended subjects and at the same time portraying an empirical juxtaposition of the data collected. Gul (2018) further contends that it is imperative to have concurrent triangulation to achieve clearer research. In unison, Pardede (2019) notes that mixed methodology is quickly growing as a preferred method of inquiry. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis in these designs effectively facilitates triangulation that offers a fuller account of the research problem and, thus, enriches a study's conclusions.

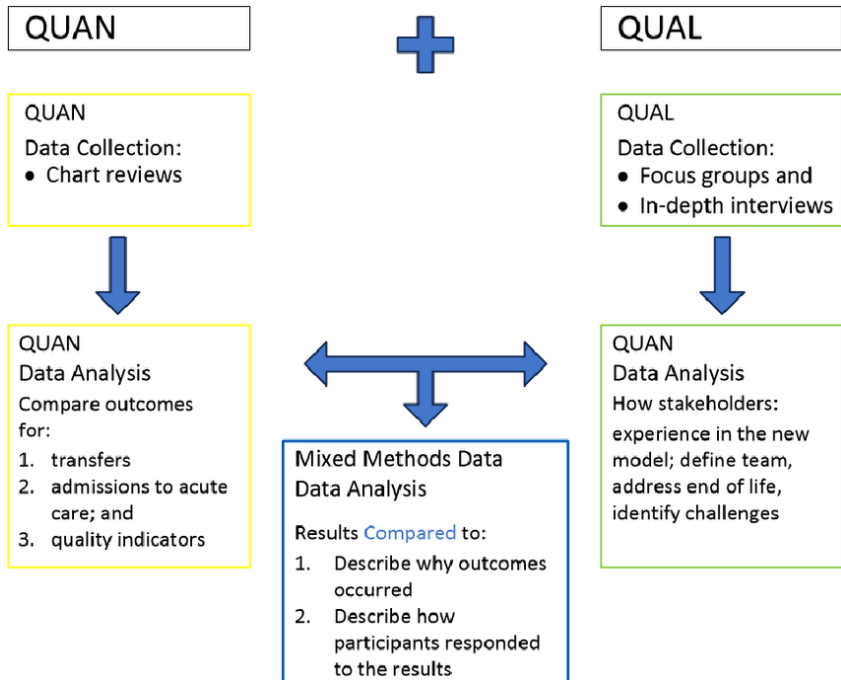


Figure 3.1: Concurrent Triangulation (Marshall *et al.*, 2011:4)

From what figure 3.1 depicts, concurrent, triangulation indicates that this mode of data collection allows for a plethora of data collection tools and methods. Scholars such as Noble and Heale (2019) have defined and explained triangulation as a method used to increase the credibility and validity of research findings. While, credibility refers to trustworthiness ‘believability’ of a study; validity is concerned with the extent to which a study accurately reflects or evaluates the concept or ideas being investigated.

Kelle, Kuhberger and Bernhard (2021:10) portray triangulation in two different ways: as a validation of results by applying different methods and as a combination of methods and/or data with the aim of describing a research field or topic more comprehensively and explaining it better with the help of different but complementary results. Noble and Heale (2019) depict a plethora of weaknesses in triangulation and state, triangulation offers

richness and clarity to research studies but also has limitations. Firstly, it adds to the complexity of the research, making it more time-consuming. Additionally, researchers may not adequately explain their techniques for blending results when used as a method for combining research methodologies. However, Alexander (2020) denotes that concurrent triangulation allows the researcher to collect both qualitative and quantitative data and that it allows for a wealth of data collected differently. Noaks and Wincup (2004) provided the illustration shown in Figure 3.2 below which is more conversant to criminological research. Method, triangulation depicted in Figure 3.2 depicts the collection of data by different tools or methods.

Table 3.1 Forms of triangulation (Noakes and Wincup 2004:96)

Form of Triangulation	Alternative names (if any)	Definition
Data triangulation		Collection of Different types of data on the same topic using the same method or different methods
Investigator Triangulation	Researcher triangulation, team triangulation	Collection of data by more than 1 researcher
Method Triangulation	Technique Triangulation	Collection of data by different methods
Theoretical Triangulation		Approaching data with multiple perspectives and hypothesis in mind

Fig 3.2 depicts multiple forms of triangulation in research and denotes the ‘method triangulation’ that is adopted by this study. Method triangulation was used in this study to collect data with different methods in a fluid relationship with data triangulation that saw different types of data collected on the same topic. Noaks and Wincup (2004:11) argue how, the literature advances numerous advantages to persuade researchers to adopt a multi-method approach, and the overarching theme is that combining methods increases the validity of the findings. The researcher for the purposes of this research used the mixed method approach to increase validity and apply fitting data collection methods to different facets of the research population.

The adoption of both methodologies maintained a check and balance system where the study complimented the strengths and weakness of each individual methodology.

1. What knowledge claims does the researcher make?
2. What strategies of enquiry will inform the procedures?
3. What methods of data collection and analysis will the researcher use?

This ensured that collection and analysis of data provided a holistic interpretation of findings in the study.

Majid (2018) observe that the population of interest mainly refers to the entire target group that research intends to study. The same view is shared by Kombo and Tromp (2006) who define population as the “*entire group of persons or elements that have at least one thing in common*” (p135). Thus, a population can refer to a group of people that share one or more characteristics from which data can be gathered and analysed. In the case of the current that focused on GWWD in Zimbabwe, the common interest would be their roles and interest in the access of GWWD to justice when crime is perpetrated against them. The geographical area of interest is three policing districts in Mashonaland Central, one of the ten provinces of Zimbabwe.

In the context of the current study, the population of prime interest was that of girls and women with disabilities. Efforts to get statistics of this group did not yield much as neither the police nor the court would provide accurate figures, a result of gaps in record keeping. Besides, even if they had the records, these would only be for those that had come forward and not those who, though violated, would not be in their records. The researcher was only able to get some numbers after reconciliation of numbers from the Disability Organisation and Victim Friendly Office that showed a total of 15 GWWDs (6 girls and 9 women). This was the defined population for this critical group. with an understanding of possibility of more still unreported in communities.

For other respondent groups, the populations (as per records) comprised of the following: 112 VFU officers, five senior police officers; one Regional Magistrate, 1 Disability Organisation representative and 1 Disability specialist, an officer from Social Development.

Majid (2018) defines a sample as part of a defined population that selected for purposes of the study. Often, the researcher selects a portion of the population because the entire population may consist of too many individuals for any research project to include all of them. Sampling then becomes the process of selecting that portion of the population for purposes of carrying out the study. A good sample should allow the researcher to relate the finding from the sample to the population (Creswell, 2009). For quantitative studies, statistical representation is usually a major preoccupation. However, for the more qualitative studies, only a few can be chosen since the focus is on in-depth narratives and experiences of participants (Majid, 2018). Sampling usually falls into two distinct categories: probability and non-probability sampling (Given, 2008).

A sampling technique normally associated with quantitative studies (James & Simister, 2017) undertaken in such a way that every member of a population has an equal chance of selection into the sample (Etika and Bala, 2017), suggesting there is less reliance on human judgement. If the sample is done correctly, the researcher can have greater confidence in generalising findings to the general population. Given that the population in the area of study was largely fluid, the study did not use this sampling method. This is associated with qualitative studies, and arises because the research requires in-depth understanding of certain issues. Lawrence (2015) posits that purposive sampling becomes the most direct technique associated with nonprobability sampling. The thrust is analytics rather than statistical generalisability. Non probability sampling also includes convenience sampling.

The study used purposive and convenience sampling methods to select participants that advance GWWD issues for the qualitative component of the data. These would provide in-depth narratives and experiences. Convenience sampling was used to direct the researcher to those wards and villages with GWWD, whereas purposive sampling was mainly used to recruit representatives from state and non-state actors that are familiar and knowledgeable on disability issues.

As argued by Etikan, Mussa and Al Kassin (2016), purposive sampling technique, also called judgmental sampling, is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience. This type of sampling is typically used in qualitative research. Additional insights on purposive sampling include: reliance on the judgement of the researcher when it comes to selecting the units (people, case/organisations, events, pieces of data) that are to be studied (Sharma, 2017) and researcher strategy on whom, where and how one does their research (Palys, 2008).

With reference to the current study, purposive sampling was used to select most of the participants for the study due to their knowledge of and experience in the subject of the study. Their roles in the justice sector were well known, thus giving them good authority to speak about issues related to access to justice for GWWDs. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the five senior police officers, the Regional Magistrate, Disability Expert, Department of Social Services officer.

Etikan and Alkassim (2016:2) define convenience sampling (also known as Haphazard or Accidental Sampling) as:

a type of non-probability or non-random sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purposes of the study.

In a support, Alvi (2016:29) provides typical characteristics of convenience sampling as:

- ☐ Any member of target population who is available at the moment is approached;
- ☐ He or she is asked for participation in the research;
- ☐ If the person shows consent, the investigation is done

So, convenience of respondent selection has much to do with accessibility and availability. The researcher chooses the method to select participants with ease, such as avoiding excessive movement, and limiting financial strain. Convenience sampling was used to identify GWWD participants and VFU officers whose availability was determined by circumstances such as availability at a given time.

For GWWDs, diversity of disabilities was an important consideration and age to ensure inclusion of those less than 18 years (girls) and those above 18 years (women). Challenges of interfacing with some of the participants were faced in the case where they could not communicate effectively and caregivers would assist during interviews. For GWWDs informed consent was sought for minors and granted to the researcher by the participants' caregivers in this study. A total of 6 GWWDs were selected using this method where the source was VFU provincial databases and information from the disability organisation. Room was left for snowballing, in case of the community indicating knowledge of any other GWWD victims of crime in their area.

The selection of VFU officers was concluded through a combination of both convenience as they were conveniently located within their stations but also purposive in that they had been 'information rich' as they were key players associated with the subject of the study. Although paper records show that there are 112 VFU officers in the three policing districts of Mashonaland Central Province, a lot of these were dropped from consideration on the basis of doing duties other than those designated for a VFU officer. These included clerical, administrative and managerial duties at police stations. Effectively, therefore, they were not performing VFU duties that entailed field activities and direct victim interaction and assistance. The target came down to 50 VFU officers deemed to be doing VFU Officer duties across the three policing districts.

To seek access to the information the researcher needed at both levels without facing any challenges, initial consultations were done through meetings with gatekeeper representatives at both district and provincial levels. Meetings were conducted with the Senior Police Officer Commanding Mashonaland Central Province and the Victim Friendly Unit Provincial Coordinator in the provincial Capital Bindura. Such an initiative was

undertaken as introductory and gate keeping protocols. Subsequently, introductory meetings were done at each police station with the officer in-charge before the researcher was allowed to speak to the District VFU Coordinator and his/her subordinates.

Data Collection is the process by which data is obtained for the research through the use of different data collection tools (Kumar, 2019). The researcher employed concurrent triangulation (mixed methods approach) technique throughout the data collection process. Use was made of Interviews (in-depth interviews and semi-structured key informant interviews). In addition, the researcher used a questionnaire, in-depth case interviews and personal experience of introspective life stories as an integral part of the data collection process.

For the purposes of this research, interviews were conducted at varying levels. The process of key informant interviews involves talking to select group of individuals who are likely to provide needed information, ideas, and insights on a particular subject. Kumar (1989) and Jill, Petticrew, Yoganathan, Petkovic, (2018) emphasise that, key informant interviews are conducted with knowledge users that contribute to a better understanding of the effects of an intervention. Key-informant interviews were conducted with high-ranking police officers, the Regional Magistrate, DSDO, Disability Organisation Representatives and Public Prosecutors in Mashonaland Central Province. This was done to bring out key issues at senior official level, and to get a gist of their perceptions/ understanding of issues pertaining to access to justice for girls and women with disabilities.

The study employed in-depth interviews during the data collection process. As argued by Gabler (2013), this is a form of non-standard or semi structured interview with a large freedom base afforded by the interviewer. Cox and Adams (2008) support this assertion by stating that researchers use interviews when they seek to gather thorough and more detailed information. In depth interviews are a form of data collection that calls for direct questions that necessitate sub questions borne out of responses given by the participants. Brouenèu (2011) observes that in depth interviews are done to learn of one or an individual's perspective. In-depth interviews were

conducted with girls and women with disabilities who were victims of crime. This was done to give the girls and women and, in some cases, their guardians freedom to answer without unnecessary 'intimidation' from paper work. In some cases, it was possible to do these interviews face-to-face. That interaction permitted the researcher to see nonverbal cues communicated by the research subjects.

Such interviews are personal by nature and necessitate an exploration of a participant's thoughts and feelings about the topic at hand. In-depth interviews were conducted with GWWD and GWWD caregivers. Six (6) GWWD were selected for in-depth interviews, where 3 GWD participants with varying disabilities (mental and physical) were aged below 18 years of age and another 3 WWD participants with varying disabilities that include; mental and physical impairments were aged 18 years or older.

In some instances, interviews were collected over the phone due to inaccessibility of some areas arising from COVID-19 induced lockdown experienced during the period of data collection. As argued by Lobe, Morgan and Hoffman (2020) this posed a unique set of challenges for the qualitative researcher.

Interviews, if conducted face to face, capture verbal and non-verbal cues. This provides the researcher an innermost view on the body language and emotions and behaviour which cannot be seen through other modes of interviews. Alshenqeeti (2014) highlighted that, "interviews compared to questionnaires are more powerful in eliciting narrative data that allows researchers to investigate people's views in greater depth" (:39). Berg (2007) in Alshenqeeti (2014) paints a positive attribute of interviews when he observes that, "participants in interviews speak in their own voice and express their own thoughts and feelings" (:39). Therefore, part from giving a narrative directly from the source of the information, interviews enable the researcher to denote their feelings.

Face to face interviews have a few disadvantages, one of these is that the nature and setups of interviews may be time consuming. Doody and Noonan (2013) indicated that interviews take place in a social context and this affects

the relationship between the interviewer and participants. Haralambos and Holborn (2008) contend that interviews have many setbacks and that the responses given may not be accurate and may not reflect real behaviour. Doody and Noonan (2013) suggest that an interview should take place in a suitable, familiar environment for the participant to express their feelings freely.

This may not be the most convenient setting for the researcher if the participant is far away or due to restrictions enforced such as the lockdown during the COVID 19 pandemic. In this study, the researcher had to travel long distances to conduct interviews due to network challenges that restricted telephonic interviews in some places. Oltman (2016) is of the opinion that, "many authors hold face-to-face interviews to be the gold standard, or the assumed best mode in which to conduct interviews" (:1). Oltman (2016) further indicated that, there is an increase in telephone interviews for various reasons. Scholars such as Novick (2008) imply that the use of the telephone could undermine quality when reporting. However, due to the prevailing circumstances imposed by the pandemic, telephones were used in place of face-to-face interviews only, when necessary, coupled with strict adherence to measures to curb the spread of the pandemic. Four telephonic interviews were conducted due to Covid 19 lockdown restrictions, contact numbers were provided via the databases provided by the VFU and from VFU offices for senior officers who were not physically available. The researcher made use of this type of interview partially, due to the global pandemic.

Interviews, as highlighted by Alshenqeeti (2014), offer researchers a powerful tool for gathering rich, in-depth data. The interactive nature of interviews allows for flexibility, enabling researchers to adapt questions and delve deeper into interesting responses, fostering a personal connection with participants and facilitating clarification of any ambiguities. However, interviews are not without their drawbacks. They can be time-consuming and costly, potentially introducing interviewer bias and the risk of social desirability influencing responses. Additionally, the findings from interviews may not be generalizable to a larger population Alshenqeeti, (2014) contends that there are a significant number of advantages and disadvantages in

interviews. They can provide rich information sourced from participants but it may take time to get the returns from participants that may restrict time available for other activities. Wincup (2017), implies that in depth interviews allows for full detailed accounts of events.

A questionnaire is a document that seeks to ask direct questions concerning the issue under investigation. A questionnaire can be structured, unstructured and semi structured (Huerta, Goodson, Beigi & Chlu: 2016). To fully explore the issue at hand the researcher adopted a semi structured, self-administered questionnaire. This was primarily targeting relevant stakeholders (VFU officer) who in one way or the other influenced access to justice for girls and women victims of crimes with disabilities, 50 of the 112 VFU officers were targeted through questionnaire.

A questionnaire provides a large amount of quantifiable data that can be analysed. Roopa and Rani (2017) are of the contention that a questionnaire is a series of questions asked to individuals to obtain statistically useful information about a given topic. In light of this, the researcher used the questionnaire to obtain pertinent information from police officers in the VFU section on access to justice for girls and women with disabilities.

Haralambos and Holborn (2008) postulate that the use of a questionnaire is a practical way to collect data and this can be used to collect large quantities of data from a considerable number of people over a relatively short period of time. In this study, this aspect was useful in that the researcher managed to target 50 VFU officers located within different geographical areas. This was time-saving (Maree, 2007).

The other advantage of using questionnaires was that the results from this research could be easily quantified, analysed quickly and easily through the aid of computers (Creswell, 2002; Leedey and Ormroad, 2005). It was easy to administer group questionnaires since it was quick (time saving) and at the same time it was easy to clarify issues to participants as observed by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007). It was convenient and fast to collect completed instruments back from police officials. During the course of this study the

researcher managed to collect rich information VFU officers and that also gave a leeway for statistical representation of data.

Muzenda (2014) observes that despite the reliability of questionnaire data, one major disadvantage is that it lacks validity since some participants may be unwilling or unable to give full and accurate responses to questions or they can simply provide false information. Participants may interpret questions differently or wrongly if the researcher is not careful enough with wording (Cohen et al., 2000; Merrian, 1998). It is also an expensive method of data collection especially if the data is to be collected from a large number of participants. The use of questionnaires in this study proved to be an expensive and time-consuming exercise. For the larger part, the researcher had to physically move around police stations handing out questionnaires and collecting them due to the unavailability of courier or postal services during the Covid-19 pandemic. Other questionnaire copies were left with the Officer in Charge for distribution and collection.

As argued by Yin (2018), case studies come into the fold when the questions why and how come into play in research. Yin and Davis (2007) in Yin (2018) argue how a case study is an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be evident. In other words, a case study is conducted to understand a real-world case with the assumption that such an understanding is likely to involve important contextual conditions pertinent to one’s case.

Cases studies have also been defined by Creswell (2013) as phenomena that “explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case themes”. (:93)

Gustaffson (2017) observes that there are two types of cases studies, single and multiple cases studies. Furthermore, Gustafsson (2017) has indicated that the difference between a single case study and a multiple case study is that in the latter, the researcher studied multiple cases to understand the differences

and the similarities between the cases. For the purposes of this study, two case studies were brought about and given a real, world picture of the issues and challenges faced by girls and women with disabilities as victims of crime seeking justice. For the purpose of this research, the researcher found it important to illustrate two case examples of GWD and WWD victims using firsthand experience with crime. These cases were special interest stories that emerged during engagements with the communities and VFU officers during informal conversations. The intention was to draw one from each district due to their unique characteristics, however only two stories were told. In the absence of case studies from courts which are not released to the public, cases from special interest stories give in depth insight into the participants' experience. This was done to give an in-depth look into the victims and enhance the study of victimology. The first case study represented the unique experience of a girl with disabilities seeking justice and the second case represented the unique experiences of a woman with disabilities who, as a victim of crime, seeks reprieve in the form of justice.

Owen (2014:8) observe that document analysis is, like Bardach (2009) reminds us, "almost all likely sources of information, data, and ideas fall into two general types: documents and people". The researcher determined that document analysis was a good source for data collection. Yanow (2007) cited in Owen (2014) asserts that document reading can also be part of an observational study or an interview-based project. Documents can provide background information prior to designing the research project, for example prior to conducting interviews. They may corroborate observational and interview data, or they may refute them, in which case the researcher is 'armed' with evidence that can be used to clarify, or perhaps, to challenge what is being told, a role that the observational data may also play. The great relevance to this study is to access documents that focus on access to justice for GWWD in Zimbabwe. The study used reports from implementing partners, crime reports, journal articles, policy and legislative documents. It also used Internet sources, giving thorough consideration before selection.

Creswell *et al.* (2007) have highlighted that primary sources of data are unpublished. These include a letter in a newspaper or a company report that the researcher has gathered from the participants or organisations directly

(for instance, minutes of a meeting, reports, correspondence). In other words, these are the original sources of data. Secondary sources refer to any materials (books, articles) based on previously published works. The researcher checked for evidence of GWWD as victims of crime and their processes in seeking justice. The researcher further checked for documents on rights violations for GWWD in Zimbabwe. All the documents stated above served to substantiate the evidence from other sources.

The main advantage of documentary research is that it is economical in both monetary and time terms. In the context of the current Covid-19 pandemic, document analysis provided a safer non-contact way of gathering information on the perceptions and experiences of participants. This study used both primary and secondary sources of data to enhance understanding of issues of girls and women with disabilities covered by the study. As argued by Owen (2014) the use of documents as a data collecting technique enables the researcher to obtain a lot of data on the perceptions, values and beliefs of participants. Document analysis in this study complemented interviews and questionnaires in the data collection process and informed the researcher on pertinent issues.

Bowen (2009) observes that documents are sometimes not retrievable. As Yin (1994) has noted, access to documents may be blocked as often happens on Internet sources. An incomplete collection of documents suggests 'biased selectivity' (Yin, 1994, 80). In an organisational context, the available (selected) documents are likely to be aligned with corporate policies and procedures and with the agenda of the organisation's principles. However, they may also reflect the emphasis of the particular organisational unit that handles record keeping (e.g., Human Resources). The time factor was also an important variable that could influence decisions on documents that one can use in the study. Maree (2007) posits that before selecting which documents to use, the researcher has to verify the publication date, lest one will be dealing with a phenomenon that has changed in recent years. This is particularly true when it comes to study of victimology, policies, and pieces of legislation that affect victims.

Whereas validity and reliability are important considerations in conducting quantitative research (Trochim, 2006), qualitative research should prioritise trustworthiness and credibility. Having opted for mixed method design, the researcher provides brief insights into both validity and reliability and trustworthiness and credibility.

Validity has to answer questions as to whether the instruments used in the study are measuring what they ought to measure (Silverman, 2010). The research questions to be answered by the study become an important source in developing the instruments; so that there is a connection between provide direct answers to the research questions. That connection is important (Zohrabi, 2013).

In the current study, development of research instruments was based on the specific research questions as guides in such a way that each questionnaire or interview question provided a contribution to answering the research question. In addition, the researcher shared the developed instruments with people knowledgeable in research and used comments obtained to improve on the questions, hence improving the validity.

When instruments are used repeatedly with similar samples, each time producing consistent results, then the instruments are said to be reliable (Creswell, 2014; De Vos *et al.*, 2013). The research piloted the instruments once their development was complete, allowing similar participants to give feedback. This led to improvement of the instruments, thus increasing reliability.

In simple terms, Baloyi & Naidoo (2016) explain trustworthiness and credibility as having to do with whether or not we can believe the results we have found. Guba and Lincoln (1988) stated that trustworthiness in research included the other criteria of credibility, transferability and dependability of research results.

Credibility is very important and is measured from the perspective of the participant, making him/her best placed to answer the question of whether the results can be believed. One strategy used to check for credibility was

bouncing the finding off some selected participants. For confirmation that they reflected what had transpired during data collection (Creswell, 2014). No respondent raised any queries on the research findings, so the researcher took the findings to be credible. The study also achieved credibility through use of various data collection methods (triangulation). Bwalya and Kalu (2017) suggest that as a sound strategy to balance data obtained through interviews and questionnaire.

Dependability was a key consideration in this study. It has to do with consistency of research findings and resembles the reliability aspect in quantitative research (Rossouw, 2003). The emphasis is on the researcher accounting for the context in which the research takes place. Responsibility for describing those changes and how they affect the way the research approached the study rests with the researcher. As argued by Finlay (2006), this can provide the evidence needed should outsiders want to scrutinise at a later time. To achieve dependability, the researcher followed all standard laid down procedures for carrying out a study, including providing a thick description of the research methods and an audit of data consistency. Dependability shows that the findings are consistent and can be repeated (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Triangulation in research occurs when a researcher seeks convergence and corroboration of results from different methods when studying the same phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). This can substantially increase the credibility or trustworthiness of a research finding. The study employed key informant and, in-depth interviews and questionnaires and observations and document analysis in carrying out the study processes. The use of multiple sources of data helped to deal with the problem of unclear issues as these provided answers to the main research question through responses from research instruments. The researcher regularly discussed any issues arising during the research with the supervisor.

Akaranga and Makau (2016) indicate that during research, a researcher must promise to protect the information given by the respondent in confidence. If any information has to be revealed, consent must be sought from the respondent. This enhances honesty towards the research subject by

protecting them from physical and psychological harm thereby ensuring that the researcher does not pose awkward questions.

Participants have the right to privacy whilst participating in research. Goodwin and Goodwin (2016) highlighted the need to keep participants anonymous as a matter of right. This protects them and their way of living. The researcher ensured participants' right to privacy and participation through exclusion of their actual names and providing pseudonyms or nom de plumes instead.

It is necessary for the researcher to ensure confidentiality for the research participant. Madhushani (2016) observe that in almost all research the participant is guaranteed confidentiality, to ensure that identifying information will not be available to anyone who is not involved in the research.

In research, the right to confidentiality and the right to anonymity puts the participants at ease to give information that might otherwise be regarded as sensitive. Hence, it was important in this study that participants were given an assurance of the researchers' adherence to issues of confidentiality and anonymity. As argued by Cohen *et al.* (2000), confidentiality means protecting the privacy of participants by keeping the data sources as confidential as possible while anonymity deals with disguising the identity of the participants. Fleming (2018) observe that it is important that the identity of participants is kept confidential or anonymous and that such assurances extend beyond protecting their names but should also include the avoidance of using self-identifying statements and information. Anonymity and confidentiality are an important step in protecting the participants from potential harm.

As a result, this study ensured that no names of participants were taken or recorded. This was done to protect the respondent's identities and give them an opportunity to give their honest opinion without the fear of victimisation. Akaranga and Makau (2016) contend anonymity refers to keeping secret by not identifying the ethnic or cultural background of participants, refraining

from referring to them by their names or divulging any other sensitive information about a participant.

It is imperative that during the research process no participants are harmed in any way. Vanclay, Baines and Taylor (2013) suggest that this means participants must not be exposed to pain or danger in the course of the research. Bwalya and Kalu (2017) further argue that, "research can present risks to participants and therefore the researcher has an obligation to ensure that their wellbeing is safeguarded throughout the research process" (:32). This is particularly important in cases that include victims of crime and minors.

Informed consent is often referred to as the cornerstone of research particularly when it comes to minors and persons with mental disabilities that require caregiver assistance. This has to be sought particularly where minors are concerned in the research process. Ryen in Silverman (2016), observe that codes and consent particularly 'informed consent' are essential for research. Therefore, prior to the commencement of research, participants were fully informed about the research and were told that they could choose to participate and have the freedom to withdraw.

Promoting the wellbeing of all the persons involved in the research is imperative. To ensure adherence to this, the researcher at all stages of the research was considerate of the wellbeing of the participants and did not coerce them to answer questions that they were not comfortable with. As argued by the Ethical Guidance for Research with People with disabilities (2009), promoting wellbeing is achieved by upholding the rights of the participants of the research at all times. Fleming and Zegward (2018:210) states, the aspects of 'informed consent' should include clear explanation on:

- ☐ Who the researcher(s) are,
- ☐ What the intent of the research is,
- ☐ What data will be collected from participants,
- ☐ How the data will be collected from participants?
- ☐ What level of commitment is required from participants?
- ☐ How this data will be used and reported, and
- ☐ What are the potential risks of taking part in the research? (

The informing aspect of consent is often undertaken using a short introduction by the researcher on who they are and introducing the purpose of their research. This is an important step that places emphasis on obtaining truthful information. Akatanga and Makau (2016) indicate that, for example, when executing a questionnaire or employing focus group discussions, the participants are at liberty to respond to issues raised on their own volition. In this regard, a researcher must affirm to the respondent the need for observing the principle of voluntary consent or willingness to participate in research. And, for a respondent to make informed consent, a researcher should explain clearly the truth about the purpose of the research being conducted.

Research allows for participants to emanate from vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities amongst them GWWD. If data is to be collected from vulnerable groups, it is important to note that, "If this is done, then the researcher must obtain due consent from their parents or guardians to involve them in the investigations" (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The researcher sought the permissions of parents and primary caregivers of GWWD to access information from them. Permissions were also sought to gain insight from Police officers in reference to GWWD and their cases which are of a sensitive nature.

The researcher should respect and accommodate the difference of persons with disabilities during the course of the research. As argued in the Ethical Guidance for Research with People with Disabilities (2009), the researcher should by all means provide interview spaces that are accessible and comfortable for persons with disabilities and should provide interpreters in sign language to promote effective commission. This was done to ensure accessibility and adequate communication. The researcher had to create a concrete sample and be sure of the persons that participated and what special needs that they had. The researcher in this study ensured that there was ease of communication by allowing caregiver presence to ensure a smooth flow of information where the respondent was not able to adequately answer.

The chapter has focused on the methodology that was used in this study. The mixed method approach was identified and justified for use in this study. The chapter also explained the population of interest and how and why the

sample was drawn u: Consistent with mixed methodology, the study employed use of a questionnaire and key informant and in-depth interviews for data collection and explained data analysis techniques that were to be used. The chapter concluded with a discussion of credibility and trustworthiness and how ethical considerations were taken into account.