

## CHAPTER 5: STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

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This chapter focuses on the research methodology and design. A qualitative research approach is adopted because qualitative research allows for inquiry from the inside (Osphina 2004). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) posit that qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach allowing a researcher to study things in their natural setting and attempting to make sense of or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. The thrust of this chapter is to present the research design that is the blueprint of the research while also providing the outline for the data collection.

Qualitative research is about exploring issues, understanding phenomena and answering questions. It is also about gaining a deeper understanding of a specific organisation or event rather than surface description of a larger population sample. To achieve this objective, a case study strategy is adapted for this study. According to Yin (2009), a case study method is a more appropriate strategy when the research questions seek to explain some present circumstance based on “how” and “why” questions. Yin (2009) goes further to state that the case study method is also appropriate if the questions require “an extensive and in-depth description of some social phenomenon. This study is on declining service provision by urban local authorities in Zimbabwe with specific reference to City of Gweru.

Creswell (2003) and Stake (1995) also point to case studies as an appropriate method of inquiry when the researcher explores a programme, an event, an activity, a process or one or more individuals. The chapter further discusses the research design including case selection units of analysis and data collection instruments. The research questions are restated to align them to the research design, because, as Yin (2003) posits, “a research design is the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the research questions of the study.”

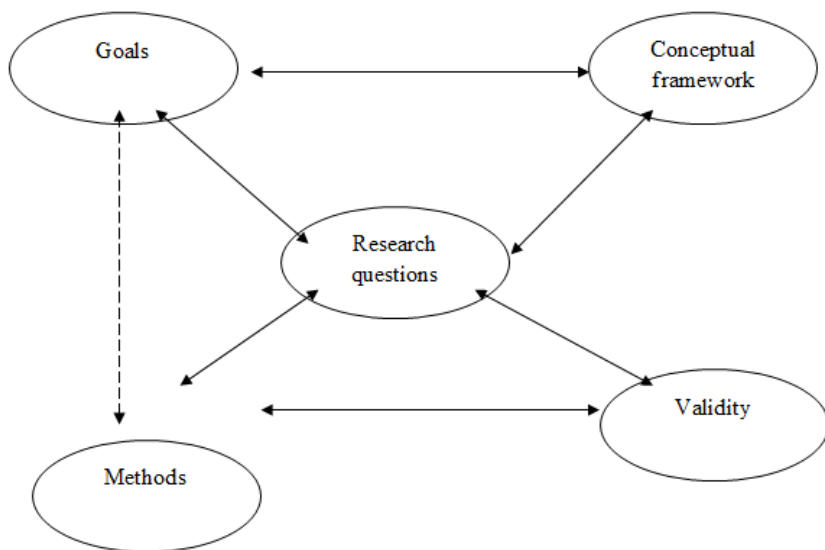
To address the issue of validity, multiple data sources are utilised including interviews, archival sources, visual images and observation. The researcher has been a councillor for City of Gweru and Town Clerk for Redcliff Municipality. The researcher has also held various positions in the ministry responsible for local government as District Administrator, Provincial Administrator and Deputy Secretary for local government administration for the whole of Zimbabwe. Participant observation in the case of City of Gweru becomes an important data collection approach. Personal experience in the local government sector in Zimbabwe also becomes a source of information for this study in the light of positions occupied by the researcher in the local government system in Zimbabwe.

The term 'research methodology' has been handled differently by different scholars. There seems to be diverse scholarship opinion on the general conceptual elasticity of the term, its delimitations and general theoretical boundaries. Some scholars have restricted the term to imply a general research strategy, some equating it to a research philosophy while others have tended to focus more broadly on methods, tools, techniques and approaches for conducting a scientific investigation. According to Howell (2013), the term methodology refers to the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. Howell added that research methodology comprises the theoretical analysis of the body of methods and principles associated with a branch of knowledge and it encompasses concepts such as paradigm, theoretical model, phases and quantitative or qualitative techniques. Marume (1982) defined methodology to mean a science which concerns itself with the totality of methods, procedures, approaches and techniques of acquiring and establishing reliable and valid systems of knowledge of a particular phenomenon or a group of phenomena. To Monday and Ray (2006), the term methodology simply refers to the description, explanation and justification of various methods of conducting research.

While the sum total of the above schools presents a general conceptual view of methodology, it is important to stress that: a methodology does not set out to provide solutions. It is, therefore, according to Creswell (2003) not the

same as a method but rather broader than methods. Franklin (2013) also concurs with Creswell (2013) adding that methods, described in the methodology, only define the means or modes of data collection or, sometimes, how a specific result is to be calculated which is simply an aspect of methodology. Creswell added that instead, a methodology offers the theoretical underpinning for understanding which method, set of methods, best practices can be applied to specific case, for example, to calculating a specific result. Therefore, the views by scholars such as Bruce (2009) confining methodology as the general research strategy that outlines the way in which research is to be undertaken are restrictive and unfair in articulating the intend and extent of the term research methodology. In a nutshell, methodology does not necessarily focus on defining specific methods, even though much attention is given to the nature and kinds of processes to be followed in a particular procedure or to attain an objective. More broadly, Herrman (2009), argued that research methodology refers to the theory of the research and the reasons for the way the research has been designed. Herrman added that methodology explains the research question and why the question is important. It explains the starting point of the research, the directions of the research and the possible implications of the research when it is completed.

A research design according to Yin (2009 p.26) is the blue-print of the research dealing at least with four problems: what questions to study, what data is relevant, what data to collect and how to analyse the results? Maxwell (2005 p.2) observes how “a good design, one in which the components work harmoniously together, promotes efficient and successful functioning; a flawed design leads to poor operation or failure.” Maxwell (2005 p.3) goes further to say “design in qualitative research is an ongoing process that involves ‘tacking’ back and forth between different components of the design, assessing their implications of goals. Theories, research questions, methods and validity threats for one another.” The interactive model he proposes indicated below will be model of reference to throughout this study.



*Figure 5.1* - The interactive model

The upper triangle links goals, conceptual framework and research questions while the lower triangle comprises research questions, methods and validity. Research questions thus occupy a central position in this model and equally so in this study.

The goal of the study is to find out why services have declined and how this trend can be halted and reversed. Many organisation theories are referred including the competing values framework. A case study strategy of inquiry is adopted focusing on City of Gweru. Participant observation, interviews and document analysis are some of the methods adopted in the study as they allow for triangulation in addressing the validity issue. .

In this study a case study approach was utilised as there are specific started cases by the researcher. Johnsson (2003) argues that a case study should have a “case” which is the object of study. In this view the case should be a complex functioning unit, be investigated in its natural context with a multitude of methods, and be contemporary. In line with this study, it can be realised that establishing the relationship between service delivery and the

current economic dispensation and environment hence falling within the whims of the case study approach which focuses more on contemporary issues. Moreover, a prerequisite of the development of case study methodology was the focus on contemporary events characteristic of the social sciences.

Yin (2009 p.19) has a two-part definition of case studies, the scope of case studies and the technical characteristics of case studies.

Case study is an empirical inquiry that:

Investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

Yin (2009) goes further to state that:

The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection.

This definition resonates with Maxwell (2005)'s model as it captures the essential features of the model including the issue of methods and validity. This study is on service delivery, a contemporary phenomenon requiring in-depth investigation in its real-life context. People in cities and towns have erratic water supplies, mountains of garbage and pot holed roads. The causes of this state of affairs cannot be clearly discerned. There is need for evidence from multiple sources to begin to understand why services were efficiently provided ten to fifteen years ago but have now deteriorated.

Yin (2009) observes how the case study is needed "to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organisational, social, political and related phenomenon." In this study, the focus is on the City of Gweru as an organisation providing services to residents. City of Gweru is also a decentralised, devolved political entity with elected councillors making a case study research method more appropriate.

Yin (2009 p.9) further argues that the case study method is more appropriate in answering the “why” and “how” questions which are more explanatory. Such questions according to Yin (2009) deal with operational links which need to be traced over time. Other than the “why” question Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) further posits that: case studies, other than answering the question “why” also generated “what and how” questions. In this instance, service to people like water, garbage collection, street lighting and roads have deteriorated over time.

Creswell (2003 p.105) observes how “in qualitative study inquiries state research questions not objectives (i.e. scientific goals for the research) of hypothesis (i.e. predictions that involves variables or statistical tests). But however, for the study the research design proposed by Yin (2009) is considered appropriate. Yin posits that for case studies, the components of research design are important:

- a study’s questions;
- its position, if any;
- its units of analysis;
- the logic linking the data to the propositions; and
- the criteria for interpreting the findings.

The research questions assume two forms: “a central question and associated sub-questions.”

The central question which inclines this research to the case study method is, “Why has service delivery in municipal areas deteriorated?”

Associated sub-questions in the study are:

“How can the elected and appointed staff of council impact positively on service delivery?”

“What aspects of the legal framework militate against service delivery?”

“How is revenue collected, allocated and controlled to enable effective service delivery?”

“How can service delivery deterioration be halted and reversed?”

The propositions guiding the study include the following:

- Policymakers lack knowledge on how local government works;

- Policymakers prioritise personal interest over citizens' need;
- Service providers (offices) mis-manage councils;
- Financial resources are inadequate;
- Public accountability is minimal;
- The legal framework is flawed;
- Citizens have minimal input in council officials;
- There is too much central government intervention in council affairs

Stake R. In Denzil and Lincoln (1998) identifies three types of case studies, intrinsic case studies, instrumental case studies and collective case studies. Intrinsic case studies are a better understanding of a particular case while instrumental case studies are examined to provide insight into an issue of refinement of a theory. Collective case studies are done jointly to inquire into the phenomenon, population or general condition. This study of City of Gweru is inclined towards instrumental case study to provide insight into service provision in municipalities. A single case study is thus used in this study.

The case according to Stake (1998) is “looked at in depth, its context scrutinised, its ordinary activities detailed, but because this helps to pursue an external interest, in this case, service delivery deterioration by municipalities. The case in this instance is seen as typical of other municipalities mainly because the core business of all municipalities in Zimbabwe is service provision. They are established by the same statutes, have the same functions, the same powers, and the same revenue sources.

The strengths of the case study strategy of inquiry according to Chadderton and Torrence (2012) is that: “it can take an example of an activity and use multiple methods and data sources to explore and interrogate it.” In this instance, the activity is service delivery.

Punch (2001 p.145) goes further to identify four characteristics of case studies, namely that the case is:

1. A bounded system, it has boundaries;

2. A case of something and by identifying that the case is a case of something this helps in determining the unit/s of analysis;
3. There is an attempt to preserve the wholeness of the unit and integrity of the case;
4. Multiple sources of data and multiple data collection methods are likely to be used typically in a naturalistic setting;
5. In this study data sources include interviews, archival records, government and municipal records and minutes, legislation, questionnaires and the researcher as a participant observer.

A single case which is representative of municipal councils in the Midlands Province is purposefully selected. According to Creswell (2003 p.185), “the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (documents or usual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and research question.” Going by Yin (2009) a case is not only representative but also revelatory in that the researcher, as a councillor in City of Gweru from 2009 to 2013 was able to observe and analyse phenomenon which has not been accessed before for inquiry. The researcher set in council and committees of council where he participated and contributed to council deliberations including observing the internal dynamics in council.

City of Gweru, like all urban councils in Zimbabwe, is established and allocated mandates by the Urban Councils Act. The city gained Municipal Status in June 194 and is the third largest city in Zimbabwe with a population of 300 000. City of Gweru has a staff complement of 1 200 employees in the six departments of council namely Engineering Services which is the largest and at the centre of service delivery, Health Services, Housing and Community Services, Finance, Chamber Secretary and Town Clerk's Department (Gweru City Council 2023).

The city is divided into eighteen wards each represented by a councillor. There are four special interest councillors appointed by the Ministry of which the researcher is one of them. The major service provider by the city are provided for in Appendix 2 of the Urban Councils' Act and the Act allocates the council fifty-four powers and also powers to make laws.



Other functions arising from other statutes include, planning authority status from the Regional Town and Country Planning Act, health Mandate from the Public Health Act and Licensing Authority from the Shop License Act. For the purposes of this study emphasis was on water and sanitation, refuse collection, roads, street-lighting and recreational facilities. The organisational structure mandates, financing and powers of City of Gweru are the same as in other municipalities in Zimbabwe.

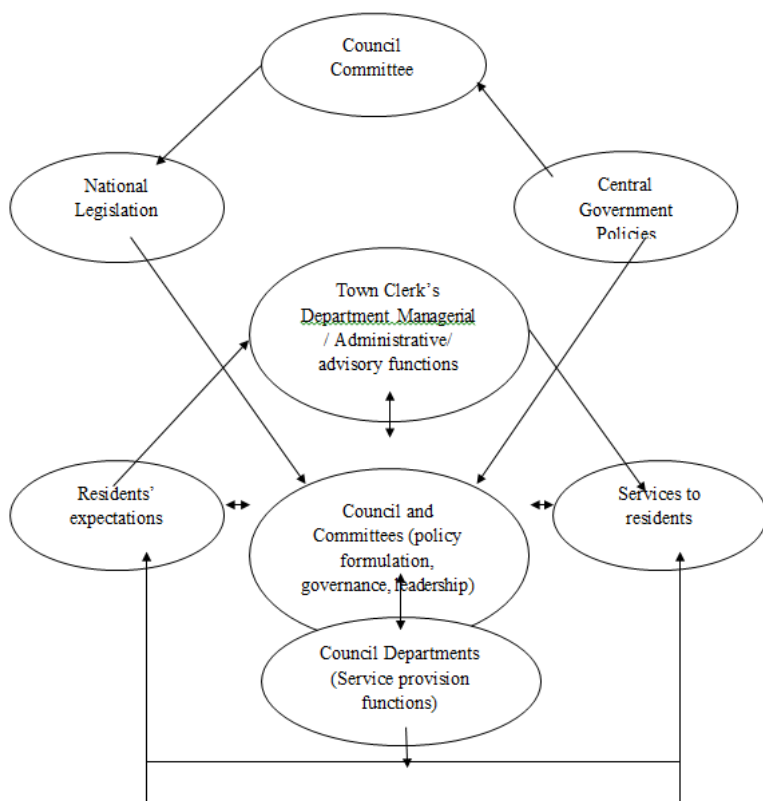
The new Constitution adopted in 2013 has strengthened local government in Zimbabwe by constitutionalizing local government which was not the case since independence in 1980. This means that local government now derives some funding direct from the fiscus where previously such subversions came through line ministries and were not assured. Now the local government sector is guaranteed at least 5% of the national income in terms of Section 301 of the Constitution.

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To effectively address the case, the units of analysis for the study are the:

- Council Committees;
- Town Clerk's Department;
- Council Departments of Finance;
- Council Department of Engineering Services, Health Services;
- Council Department of Housing and Community Services;
- Academia;
- Civil society;
- Residents

The analysis focuses on the mandates of the various entities, their staff complements, financing and challenges. The legal and institutional frameworks are also considered. Residents as recipients of services are a major stakeholder and require consideration.



*Figure 5.2: The Research Design*

The choice of qualitative research as the more appropriate approach to this study on service delivery by municipalities is informed by the definition proffered by Danzin and Lincoln (1998 p.3) when they observe that “qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – a case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interviews, observations / historical, interactional and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter.” The aim of this study is to unravel why service provision has declined in virtually all urban local authorities in Zimbabwe. This study is also

informed by Maxwell (2005 p.523)'s proposition that one of the strengths of qualitative research is in getting at the processes that experimental and survey research are often poor at identifying.

Maxwell (2005) goes further to observe that "quantitative research tends to be interested in whether and to what extent variance x causes variance y. Qualitative researchers, on the other hand tend to ask how x plays a role in causing y, what process is it that connects x and y." This basically is what the study tries to explore, why have services declined? The decline or deterioration in service provision is not an event but has happened over a period of time. Causal issues become important. The next question of course is how can this decline be addressed and reversed. Is it possible to identify the key variables at play? Is it a management issue? Is it a councillor-ship? Can civil society play a role? Or is the legal environment inappropriate for effective service delivery. These basically are the four core questions the research attempts to answer.

As noted by Ospina (2004), an inquiry from inside allows the researcher to explore and interpret what has happened in City of Gweru regards service delivery. Through a qualitative approach, it is possible to explore issues, understand phenomena and answer questions. Creswell (1998 p.22) observes that "a qualitative approach is exploratory and is useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine." This is the case in the study. The important variables emerge as the study unfolds and data is analysed.

Qualitative research has its criticism. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1998), qualitative research is considered unscientific and full of bias. Issues around validity have also been cited over the legitimacy of qualitative research. Maxwell in Huberman and Miles (2000 page 3) argues that "the concern of most qualitative researchers is into factual accuracy of their account." It is for this reason that the study draws extensively on City of Gweru council minutes and reports. Interviews with key informants are also mean to enhance validity of conclusions. The role of the researcher as a councillor in City of Gweru from 2009 to 2013 allows him participant observer status.

A population of study refers to the totality of the variables, objects or people which is the focus of the research and about which the researcher wants to determine some specified and particular characteristics. Ray and Mondal (2006) have defined population as any identifiable and well specified group of individuals whose behaviour the researcher is willing to observe. In the same context Polit and Hungler (1999) define a population as the totality of all subjects that conform to a set of specifications, comprising the entire group of persons that is of interest to the researcher and to whom the research results can be generalised. Therefore, in summary, a population can be understood as all the people or phenomena under study, from whom a sample will be selected for research. Table 1, below, shows the categorised population of the study.

**Table 5.1:** Categorised population of the study

Category	Target population
Mayor and Councillors	18
Management GCC	46
Top management      6	
Middle management    15	
Low management       25	
Officials of the Ministry of Local government in Gweru district	10
Households from wards	6502 Households. This population represents the ward with the highest number of households (ward 5), the median (ward 6) and the lowest (ward 3)
Ward 3 - 638	
Ward 6 - 1980	
Ward 5 - 3884	
Members of the academia and local government experts	40 (Only those strongly perceived by the researcher to hold expert local government views, i.e. lecturers from MSU's department of Local Governance Studies and retired local government service men e.g. former town clerks, mayors and those who once held positions in local government in Gweru)

The difficulties of interrogating the full set of research variables or to totality of the population or research variables requires the researcher to identify a sample or simply do sampling. In addition, time, costs and accessibility often prohibit the collection of data from all the research elements and hence justifying the need to identify a representative sample. Sampling is a method of selecting a fraction of the population in such a way that it represents the

whole population. A sample as defined by Ray and Mondal (2006) is a selected number of units from a population to represent it. In the same vein LoBiondo-Wood and Haber (1998) describes a sample as a portion or a subset of the research population selected to participate in a study, representing the research population. Three distinct sampling techniques (Purposive, stratified and random sampling) were identified as the most appropriate sampling techniques suitable for the quality of data relevant for this research.

Purposive sampling is a non-random sampling method in which the sample is arbitrarily selected because characteristics which it possess are deemed important for the research (Ray and Mondal, 2006). In purposive sampling, the investigator has some belief that the sample being selected is typical of the population or is a very good representative of the population. Thus only those people whom the researcher perceives to have appropriate knowledge of the research area will be selected using this technique and this will be based on factors such as position in government service, qualification, key contributions to local government service delivery improvement and other related factors. The researcher envisages enlisting the views of the following respondents using this approach.

In view of the various categories of the respondents that have been outlined above, a combination of the stratified sampling approach and the simple random sampling will be applied to select other respondents (not selected using purposive sampling) taking into cognisance the quality of the data relevant for this research. This entails that the population will be categorised into various strata (refer to table 1 above as this process has already been done) in line of a clearly delineated criterion. As Mugo (2002) outlines, stratified sampling illustrates characteristics of particular subgroups of interest and facilitates comparisons between the different groups. In view of this assertion it can be realised that the above mentioned population categories encompass unique and distinct characteristics and these have to be treated separately as different groups or strata. The entrenched belief is that the sample is typical of the population.

Simple random sample is a subset of individuals (a sample) chosen from a larger set (a population). Each individual is chosen randomly and entirely by

chance, such that each individual has the same probability of being chosen at any stage during the sampling process and each subset of individuals has the same probability of being chosen for the sample as any other subset of individuals. This technique will be used mainly to select 50% of the councillors (9), 20% of middle management (4), 20% of low management (5) and 5% of households (325). Focus group discussions will be organised to collect data from these various classes of respondents using the criteria developed under the section on research instruments.

A variety of instruments can be used in case study-based research, but this will be conducted using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions and analysis of secondary data sources.

- In -depth interviews
- Participant observation
- Questionnaires
- Focus groups and
- Key informant interviews

As indicated above, the researcher has been a councillor in City of Gweru from 2009 to 2013. The researcher has had the opportunity to participate in council deliberations and has first-hand knowledge of the operations of council.

Both structured and unstructured interviews are conducted including the use of questionnaires.

The researcher collected council minutes over four years which are useful in understanding the operations of City of Gweru. The decision-making process in City of Gweru is discernible from quality of resolution and recommendations made in council and its committees. The researcher also has the relevant legal instruments for service delivery: newspapers and magazines are also an important source of information for the study. Central government policies, memoranda, directives and policy documents are important sources of information.

The researcher used photographs of service delivery in Gweru which show the reality on the ground. The table below from Gweru (2003 p.188) summarises the strength and weakness of each of the data collection methods.

**Table 5:2** Qualitative data collection types, options, advantages and limitations

Data collection types	Options within types	Advantages of the type	Limitations of the type
Observations	<p>Complete participant: researcher conceals role.</p> <p>Observer as participant role of research is known.</p> <p>Participant as observer: observation role secondary to participant role.</p> <p>Complete observer: research observers without participating</p>	<p>Research had firsthand experience with participants.</p> <p>Researcher can record information as it is revealed.</p> <p>Unusual aspects can be noticed during observation.</p> <p>Useful in exploring topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss.</p>	<p>Researcher may be seen as intrusive.</p> <p>“Private” information may not be observed that the researcher cannot report.</p> <p>Research may not have good attending and observing skills.</p> <p>Certain participants (eg children) may present special problems in gaining rapport.</p>
Interviews	<p>Face-to-face: one-on-one, interpersonal interview</p> <p>Telephone: researcher interviews by phone.</p> <p>Group: researcher interviews participants in a group.</p>	<p>Useful when participants cannot be observed directly.</p> <p>Participants can provide historical information.</p> <p>Allow researcher “control” over the line of questioning.</p>	<p>Provides “indirect” information filtered through the views of interviewees.</p> <p>Provides information in a designated “place” rather than the natural field setting.</p> <p>Researcher’s presence may bias responses.</p> <p>People are not equally articulate and perceptive.</p>
Documents	Public documents such as minutes of meetings, and newspapers.	Enables a researcher to obtain the language and words of participants.	May be protected information unavailable to public of private access.

	<p>Private documents such as journals, diaries and letters.</p> <p>Email discussions.</p>	<p>Can be accessed at a time convenient to the researcher-an unobtrusive source of information.</p> <p>Represents data that are thoughtful, in that participants have given attention to compiling.</p> <p>As written evidence, it saves a researcher the time and expense of transcribing.</p>	<p>Requires the researcher to search out the information in hard-to-find places.</p> <p>Requires transcribing or optically scanning for computer entry.</p> <p>Materials may be incomplete.</p> <p>The documents may not be authentic or accurate.</p>
Audio-visual materials	<p>Photographs</p> <p>Video tapes</p> <p>Art objects</p> <p>Computer software</p> <p>Film</p>	<p>May be an obtrusive method of collecting data.</p> <p>Provides an opportunity for participants to directly share their 'reality'</p> <p>Creative in that it captures attention visually</p>	<p>May be difficult to interpret.</p> <p>May not be accessible publicly or privately.</p> <p>The presence of an observer (eg photographer) may be disruptive and affect responses</p>

Ellenberger in Hycner (1999, 153-154) captures it as follows; whatever the method used for a phenomenological analysis the aim of the investigator is the reconstruction of the inner world of experience of the subject. Each individual has his own way of experiencing temporarily, spatiality, materiality, but each of these coordinates must be understood in relation to the others and to the total inner 'world'. Phenomenological studies make detailed comments about individual situations which do not lend themselves to direct generalisation in the same way which is sometimes claimed for survey research.

The procedures, illustrated by Moustakas (1994), Creswell (2003) and Parton (1990) will also be applied, consisting of identifying a phenomenon to study, bracketing out one's experiences, and collecting data from several persons whose experiences with the phenomenon is deemed fundamental. The researcher then analyses the data by reducing the information to significant



statements or quotes and combines the statements into themes. Following that: the researcher will develop a textural and structural description of the experiences of the persons and a combination of the textural and structural descriptions to convey an overall essence of the service delivery challenges at local government level.

In-depth interviewing, according to Boyce and Neale (2006) is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation. To Parton (1990), in-depth interviewing, also known as unstructured interviewing, is a type of interview which researchers use to elicit information to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view or situation. This type of interview involves asking informants open-ended questions, and probing wherever necessary to obtain data deemed useful by the researcher. As in-depth interviewing often involves qualitative data, it is also called qualitative interviewing.

Mugo (2002) stresses that: by means of a thorough composed interview guide, the interviewer ensures that the conversation encompasses the topics that are crucial to ask for the sake of the purpose and the issue of the survey. The goal of the interview, according to Boyce and Neale (2006), is to deeply explore the respondent's point of view, feelings and perspectives. Additional to asking questions, Mugo (2002) added that in-depth interviewing may often require repeated interview sessions with the target audience under study. the researcher is going to use this technique to gather data from only those respondents selected using purposive sampling. The emphasis on depth, nuance and the interview's own language as a way of understanding meaning implies that interview data needs to be captured in its natural form. As explained early, this means that interview data is generally tape recorded since note taking would change the form of the data. Additionally, this also means the interviews are going to be conducted face to face and not over the telephone. A physical encounter in this essence is considered an important context for both parties involves enhancing interaction and generation of new knowledge as meaning and language will be explored in depth.

The primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys. In-depth interviews are generative in the sense that new knowledge or thoughts, are at some stage to be created. The extent this is so, may vary depending on the research questions, but it is likely that the participants will at some point direct themselves or to be directed by the researcher down avenues of thought they have not expressed before. Participants may also be invited to put forward ideas and suggestions on a particular topic and to propose solutions for problems raised during the interview.

The process of transcribing data from a tape recorder is a rigorous and extensive process which must be carefully done with experienced professionals to avoid losing the original structure and meaning of data. In-depth interviews are often time demanding and a small fraction of respondents are covered relative to other instruments such as questionnaires and focus group discussions.

A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a particular discourse. Focus groups differ from informal group discussions in many aspects. First, specific, pre-determined criteria are used for recruiting focus group participants. Second, the topics to be discussed are decided beforehand, and the moderator uses a pre-determined list of open-ended questions arranged in a natural and logical sequence. The moderator may even memorise the questions beforehand. Ray and Mondal (1998) defined a focus group discussion as a form of group interviewing in which a small group of usually 10 to 12 people is led by a moderator (interviewer) in a loosely structured discussion of a particular topic of interest. The course of the discussion is usually planned in advance and most moderators rely on an outline, or moderator's guide, to ensure that the topic of interest is comprehensively covered. To Harding (2013), a focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a product, service, concept or idea. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to walk with other group members.

In the social sciences and urban planning, focus group allow interviewers to study people in a more natural conversation pattern than typically occurs in a one-to-one interview (Lindloff and Taylor 2002). The researcher is going to apply this technique to collect data from selected households and councillors. Each focus group will have at least 10 participants and the voice recorder will be used to capture the different views of the participant. The researcher will identify the leader of each group and discuss the key discussion points with him/her to enhance his/her capacity to maintain the deliberations of the group in with the interest of the research.

The strength of focus group discussion relies on allowing the participants to agree or disagree with each other so that it provides an insight into how a group thinks about an issue, about the range of opinion and ideas, and the inconsistencies and variation that exists in a particular community in terms of beliefs and their experiences and practices.

Responses in a focus group, are typically spoken, open-ended, relatively broad and qualitative. They have more depth, nuance and variety. Focus group can have a comparative strength of generating data that is closer to what people are really thinking and feeling, even though their responses may be harder or impossible to score on a scale.

Another advantage of focus group is depth and complexity of response, as group members can often stimulate new thoughts for each other that might not have otherwise occurred.

Group discussion produces data and insights that would be less accessible without interaction found in a group setting, listening to others' verbalized experiences stimulates memories, ideas and experiences in particular. This is also known as the group effect where group members engage in "a kind of 'chaining' or 'cascading' effect. (Lindlof & Taylor, p.182). Group members discover a common language or describe similar experiences. This enables the capture of a form of native language or vernacular speech to understand the situation. Focus groups help people learn more about group or community opinions and needs. In this respect, they are similar to needs assessment surveys.

A fundamental difficulty with focus groups is the issue of observer dependency and the results obtained are influenced by the researcher or his own reading of the group's discussion that may raise questions of validity. Focus groups can create severe issues of external validity, especially the reactive effects of the testing arrangement. Group think and social disability bias are also massive discounts of focus groups. Focus groups usually take more time per respondent than individual surveys because the group has to be recruited, and because the group itself takes time to organise. Some group members might feel hesitant about speaking openly.

Document analysis, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990) is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic. Analysing documents incorporates coding content into themes similar to how focus group or interview transcripts are analysed. The analysis of pre-existing record forms part of what Aricombe (2007:458) refers to as unobtrusive research methods. In this view the use of unobtrusive research methods is a process of studying behaviour without affecting it. Secondary sources of data should therefore be used to counteract the bias and loopholes found in the primary data collection procedure, therefore playing a complimentary role and driving the data towards validity and reliability. It is imperative for researchers to ensure that no errors should be made in collating and collecting data from documentary evidence. The documents can include archival records, published statistics, election or consensus reports and education data. Institutional publications, historical documents or other forms of scientific data also form part of this research.

Bless and Achola (1990: 106) have argued that in documentary analysis, the respondents are not aware that they are the subject of the study. The major weakness with the unobtrusive data collection methods such as documentary analysis is that the records to which the researcher will be allowed access might contain institutional bias. For example, a council might restrict a researcher to the documents in which it is certain paint a positive picture of the organisation opposite to objective and reliable data which reflects both positive and negative issues.

Given the role of political discourse in the enactment, reproduction and legitimisation of power and domination and for purpose of presentation and analysis of data the researcher is going to use thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis. A software, Stata Version 7 is additional going to be used to technically analyse relationships between coded data sets and in the process produce qualitative analytical tables explaining primarily the measures of central tendency and diversion from notable standards of efficiency to be developed by the researcher.

Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. This method emphasises organisation and rich description of the data set. Thematic analysis goes beyond simply counting phrases or words in a text and moves on to identifying implicit and explicit ideas within the data (Groanewald, 2004). For purposes of this research, coding which is the primary process for developing themes within the raw data by recognising important moments in the data and encoding it prior to interpretation will be used. The interpretation of these codes will include comparing themes frequencies, identifying theme co-occurrence, and graphically displaying relationships between different themes. Most researchers consider thematic analysis to be a very useful method in capturing the intricacies of meaning within a data set (Marume 2013). It minimally organises and describes data set in (rich) detail.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). Fairclough (1993) in his definition perceives CDA as discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of casualty and determination between (a) discursive practice, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power, and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor of securing power and hegemony. CDA tries to avoid positing a simple deterministic relationship between texts and the social. Taking into account the insights that discourse

is structured by dominance, that every discourse is historically produced and interpreted, that is, it is situated in time and space and that dominance structures are legitimised by ideologies of powerful groups, the complex approach advocated by proponents of CDA makes it possible to analyse pressures from above and possibilities of resistance to unequal power relationships that appear as societal conventions.

C.D.A is preferred in this research as it takes an explicit position, and thus wants to understand, expose and ultimately resist social and political inequality because of the following key tenets:

1. It focuses primarily on, social problems and political issues, reconciled with current paradigms and fashions;
2. Empirically adequate critical analysis of political and public administration discourse is usually multidisciplinary;
3. Rather than merely describe discourse structures, it tries to explain them in terms of properties of social and political interaction and especially social and political structure;
4. CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce or challenge relations of power and dominance in society.

This research attaches high regard to research ethical standards as the basis of maximising possible benefits and minimize possible harms. The following are the critical ethical dimensions underpinning this study:

1. Respect for respondents and confidentiality – the researcher will treat views of respondents confidential and shall not disclose their identities or their contributions without their prior written approval;
2. Honesty in reporting data, results and methods and avoid misinterpretation;
3. Objectivity – emphasis will be on avoiding bias in all aspects of the research;
4. Integrity – the researcher shall act with sincerity, striving for consistency of thought and action.
5. Carefulness – avoiding careless errors and negligence;

6. Respect for intellectual property – the researcher shall honour patents, copyrights and other forms of intellectual property and giving credit where credit is due.;
7. Legality – all the process and conduct of the researcher shall have high regard to relevant laws and institutional governmental policies on research and scholarship of Midlands State University in particular and Zimbabwe in general.

This chapter has focused on methodological issues. Justification of the qualitative approach is discussed. The case study design is discussed. Maxwell's interactive model forms the reference point for the study. The research questions and propositions are restated. The chapter also discusses the units of analysis research instruments, population of study and sampling techniques and the data collection procedures. The chapter concludes by discussing data presentation and analysis. The next chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis