THE EFFECTS OF DOUBLE ORPHANHOOD ON THE LEARNING AND COGNITION OF CHILDREN LIVING WITHIN CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN ZIMBABWE

by

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DECLARATION

STUDENT NUMBER: 47300205

I, Emily Ganga, declare that the thesis entitled: The Effects of Double-Orphanhood on the Learning and Cognition of Children living within Child-Headed Households in Zimbabwe, is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature___________________ 30 August, 2013

Mrs. E. Ganga  Date
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the orphans and vulnerable children residing in child-headed households in and outside Zimbabwe. May your desires for enhanced academic excellence, be heard. God bless you all!
ABSTRACT

Among the many undesirable phenomenon within developing countries is ‘orphanhood’ that seems to be precipitated by the escalating parental deaths mostly rooted in the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS and poverty. The phenomenological descriptive case study investigated the effects of double orphanhood on the cognition and learning of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) living within child-headed households (CHHs) in Chipinge District of Manicaland, Zimbabwe. The qualitative enquiry is tethered on a multi-dimensional concept of constructivism.

The triangulated data were collected through participant observations, open-ended questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions held at four secondary schools. The purposefully selected participants comprised 20 double orphans and vulnerable children, four headmasters, eight teachers, one Education Officer and one Social Welfare officer, making a total sample of 34.

The study employed the Tesch’s qualitative model of data analysis that led the findings into five major themes, each differentiating into sub-categories. The findings revealed that though most OVC try to remain resilient within their orphanhood predicament, they continue to suffer loneliness, inferiority complex, stresses, anxieties, low self-esteem, lack of concentration in class and more negativity that militates against effective assimilation and accommodation of learning materials within their ecological environment. The situation affected both sexes and was exacerbated by poverty, need deprivation and overwhelming household and parenting responsibilities. As such, most of the children’s voiced responses expressed great despondence over their predicament. Other older OVC were contemplating dropping out of school in order to work, earn and look after their siblings. Even though some OVC reported occasional receipt of aid through donors and the government’s facilities such as the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), not all OVC were lucky to remain beneficiaries up to the end of their secondary schooling.
Orphanhood was found to be a psychological deterrent to cognition and learning. Therefore, the local community, education administrators, policy makers, children’s rights advocates together with the children’s representatives should map out life-lines ideal for enhancing the cognitive learning of double OVC residing in CHHs.
KEY WORDS

- Orphanhood
- Child-headed household
- Orphans and vulnerable children
- Learning
- Cognition
- Constructivism
- Policy
- Life-line
### ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

<table>
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<tr>
<td>ARV</td>
<td>Anti-retro-viral</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEAM</td>
<td>Basic Education Assistance Module</td>
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<td>CHH</td>
<td>Child-Headed Household</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>DEO</td>
<td>District Education Officer</td>
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<td>EF</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<td>FE</td>
<td>Free Education</td>
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<td>GDD</td>
<td>Grassroots Democracy Decree</td>
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<td>GoZ</td>
<td>Government of Zimbabwe</td>
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<tr>
<td>HELP</td>
<td>Hope, Love, Educate, Protect</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immune Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MDM</td>
<td>Medicin Du Mont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoEASC</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Art, Sport and Culture</td>
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<td>MoHCW</td>
<td>Ministry of Health and Child Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAC</td>
<td>National AIDS Council</td>
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<td>NAP</td>
<td>National AIDS Policy</td>
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<td>NATF</td>
<td>National Aid Trust Fund</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>OVC</td>
<td>Orphans and Vulnerable Children</td>
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<td>PDL</td>
<td>Poverty Datum Line</td>
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<td>PS</td>
<td>Programme Support</td>
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<td>RAAAPP</td>
<td>Rapid Assessment, Analysis and Act Planning Process</td>
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<td>SAATHII</td>
<td>Solidarity and Action Against HIV Infection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Socio- Economic Status</td>
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<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish Development Agency</td>
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<td>SPS</td>
<td>Schools Psychological Service</td>
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<td>SWO</td>
<td>Social Welfare Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations International Children Emergency Fund</td>
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<td>UNAIDS</td>
<td>Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCEFA</td>
<td>World Conference on Education for All</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
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<td>ZNOCP</td>
<td>Zimbabwe National Orphan Care Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZNASP</td>
<td>Zimbabwe National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan</td>
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<td>ZPD</td>
<td>Zone of Proximal Development</td>
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CHAPTER ONE
THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The study examined the effects of double orphanhood on the learning and cognition of children residing in child-headed households of Chipinge district in Manicaland, Zimbabwe. It was a self motivated endeavor in which the researcher got attracted through observations and readings about the plight of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) that opted to reside as siblings in child-headed households (CHHs). The phenomenon, CHHs, is quite prevalent in many of the developing countries, especially in Africa. The first chapter presented an Orientation to the study area, Motivation (Rationale of study), Statement of the problem, Major research questions followed by sub-problems, Aims of the Study, Definition of terms, Abbreviations(Acronyms), Assumptions, Delimitations, Plan of study (Chapter Division) and finally a Summary for the chapter.

1.2 ORIENTATION

Since time immemorial, the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) and many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been grappling with ways in which they could best assist OVC to live a more or less normalized family life. In fact, one of the eight millennium development goals (MDGs) called for care and support for orphans (MDG 6 in The Zimbabwe Millennium Goals, 2004 progress report). Many of the OVC come from parents who died of the HIV/AIDS pandemic especially before the multiple introductions of the Anti-Retroviral Drugs (ARVs) to every needy case including the poorer populace.

Taking the HIV/AIDS epidemic from a continent such as Asia, the situation was found to be rapidly growing. An estimated 7.4 million people were living with HIV in the region and 1.1 million people became newly infected in year 2011 alone up to 60% of the world’s population (UNAIDS, 2006). The UNICEF Global Estimate (2004) report confirms that the epidemic had
huge global implications. The OVC in a child-headed household (CHH), for instance, was one such implication.

In Zambia, a study by the International Labour Organization in several districts showed that the majority of children in prostitution were orphans who were living in the streets. In Ethiopia, the majority of child domestic workers in the capital city of Addis Ababa were orphans too. In Uganda, focus group discussions revealed that girls orphaned by AIDS were especially vulnerable to sexual abuse in domestic housework because of the stigma attached to their orphaned status. Studies from numerous regions showed that orphaned children had substantially lower levels of education than children who were not orphaned (UNICEF, 2010).

Though a correct estimation was not available, the number of affected children and CHHs seemed to be increasing. Children in such conditions are deprived of their childhood and the opportunity to go to school. Economic hardships led them to look for means of subsistence that increased their vulnerability to HIV infection, substance abuse, child labour, sex work and various forms of delinquency.

In South Africa, one of Zimbabwe’s neighbours, an analysis of the 2006 General Household Survey found that 0.67% of children lived in CHHs, an equivalent of approximately 122000 children of the 18.2 million children in South Africa. Most of these children, approximately 90%, were located in Limpopo, Kwazulu Natal and Eastern Cape (Meintjes, Hall, Marera and Boulle, 2009). The researchers urged more researchers to understand CHHs better in order to ensure that policies and programmes were well focused and formulated for orphans. They also suggested that more research in the form of longitudinal surveys was needed to shed light on events leading to formation and duration of the CHHs (BuaNews online, 2012).

In addition, Mogotlane, Chauke, Van Rensburg, Human and Kganakga (2010) also established that in South Africa families and communities were currently unable to cope with the effects of HIV and AIDS, especially in the areas of care and support of OVC. The OVC seemed to be compelled to formulating a new family type, the CHH.
In recent studies by the Zimbabwe National AIDS Council (2011), it was claimed that there was a dramatic increase in the number of orphans in Zimbabwe where an estimated 240,000 were believed to be operating in CHHs. The Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) funds seemed to have been overwhelmed by the demands and cost of living for the affected children. Slightly more than 50 registered child-care centres made efforts to care for some of the children. The Zimbabwe National AIDS Council (2011) executive in Zimbabwe was encouraging extended families to intervene as well as implementing the idea of fostering children orphaned by AIDS. HIV/AIDS remains incurable, however. The researcher observed that many older OVC preferred to head their households when their parents died.

Orphanhood caused by HIV/AIDS was found to be an increasingly long term chronic problem affecting developing countries throughout the world. In mid 2002, more than 13 million children under the age of 15 had lost one or both parents in sub-Saharan Africa. Some estimates had guessed that in year 2010 more than 25 million children were to become orphans (Smart, 2003). This was confirmed by the Zimbabwe Human Development Report (2009) affirming that there was a growing number of OVC in Zimbabwe.

HIV/AIDS was found to be an exceptional cause of orphanhood in that if a parent was infected with HIV, the probability that the spouse was also infected was very high meaning that children faced a high risk of losing both parents over a very short space of time, resulting in double orphanhood. UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAIDS (2004) cited in Ganga and Chinyoka (2010) echoed the same sentiments by contending that the proportion of orphans whose parents died from HIV/AIDS was rising hence the mushrooming of CHHs.

The phenomenon described as ‘child headed’ was first noted in the late 1980s in Rakai District of Uganda (World Health Organisation (WHO), cited by Plan GDD Finland, 2005). Earlier researchers thought that there was no such construct as ‘child headed’ in Africa because culturally orphaned children were looked after within their extended family households which acted as social security systems for the OVC (Foster, 2000 in Abebe, 2009). CHHs required newer thinking and understanding because it seemed some extended families were failing to cope. Many orphans resided in extended family homes soon after the death of their parents, but
the researcher has observed that very few stayed in the new homes for long. Instead, the poorer ones usually chose to stay as siblings and took care of themselves or lived and begged from the streets. Few were institutionalized in areas where infrastructural provisions were availed well before the economic hardships that the country was facing.

Unless they were lucky to meet the services of the community and psychosocial counselors, many OVC were left to deal with the trauma of multiple family deaths because there seemed to be a tug-of-war between OVC who opted to live in CHHs and their extended family securities. Most OVC felt safer by themselves because the continued family unit enabled brothers and sisters to stay together in their familiar home than to be separated into different homes. Of course the move held its own pitfalls especially in poverty-stricken situations. Households headed by children represented a new coping strategy in response to the impact of HIV and AIDS (Plan GDD Finland, 2005).

The United Nations Children Fund cited by Schelein report (2007) claimed that Zimbabwean children were suffering from orphan crisis that was depriving them of the chance for education and good health. Most of these children were adolescents aged between 12 and 17 (Youth net, 2005). Demographic and Health surveys showed that the prevalence of orphanhood increased with the youths’ age. Personaz of UNICEF (2007) declared that within a population of about 15 million people, 2 million were vulnerable children. UNICEF (2007:1) went on to say, “We know that one in every four Zimbabwean children is an orphan….talking about 250 000 children being orphaned…” The prevalence has dropped in recent years due to helpful intervention programmes such as ‘Behaviour Change’ but the number of orphans remained the same. Hence, there was need to find ways of intervening in needy cases such as education. The school was found to be the safest place for any orphan (Smart, 2003).

The Policy for OVC in Smart (2003) confirmed that schools and teachers were critical to the development of OVC. It was the school system that provided psychosocial support. Already the government of Botswana declared the problem of orphanhood, a crisis (Smart). The Legal and Policy Frameworks for OVC Responses (2003:9) stated that part of the world’s millennium development goals for children was ‘…universal primary education by 2015’. In concurrence,
Zimbabwe’s MDGs aimed to achieve this specific goal among other MDGs by year 2015. Everyone, including orphans, has the Right to Education (Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 2003). The Zimbabwe National Orphan Care Policy (ZNOCP, 1999) also stipulated that guidelines and legal frameworks were required to ensure education for all the children.

On the other hand, many social psychologists tried to understand the relationship between family characteristics and cognitive performance of children so as to fully assist every learner to learn purposefully countrywide. Questions on cognition and orphanhood were also raised as subject of debate amongst researchers with reference to many nations including Zimbabwe. Earlier research studies had favoured families where both parents were still alive. This study related orphanhood to the learning and cognition of OVC residing within CHHs in Chipinge district, Zimbabwe.

Orphanhood refers to a child’s situation where he/she has lost a parent or one becomes parentless. Smart (2003) attached ages into this definition where she placed parental or primary guardian loss for children up to age 15 or up to 18 depending on the particular country. For Zimbabwe, Botswana, Ethiopia, Namibia and Uganda, one remains a child if 18 or below. Orphanhood could be maternal (where one has lost a mother), paternal (where one has lost a father) or double orphanhood (where one has lost both parents). This study worked with double orphans most of whose parent(s) died of HIV/AIDS. Although a research in rural Zimbabwe by Nyamukapa, Foster and Gregson (2005) has already noted that orphans have lower primary school completion rates than non-orphans, more needed to be researched on the impact of double orphanhood on the cognition and learning of OVC residing in CHHs.

In fact, Cluver and Gardiner (2007) were justified on their claim that the psychological well being of children was under-researched. Observations indicated that orphaned children suffered mental stresses and anxiety which are manifested in the manner in which they socialized or isolated themselves. They (Cluver and Gardiner) contended that very little was known about factors that affected orphans’ mental health, hence the need for such a study.
Of course the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), so far in place countrywide (The Zimbabwe Millennium Goals report, 2004), endeavored to assist OVC in payment of tuition, but educational psychologists were even more concerned about how double orphanhood affected OVC’s cognition. Cognition is the process of organizing information in the mind in order to help accomplish some desired end. The desired end in education is learning which refers to the relatively permanent change in performance potential due to experience (Mwamwenda, 2004; Bhatt, 2007; Berk, 2007). The two concepts seemed to be interrelated in the manner they functioned; hence the researcher selected the combination.

The decision to take up this study also considered the importance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations (signature, ratification and accession by the General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November, 1989, in UNICEF and SIDA, 2010). It then came into force in 1990. It specified clearly the universal children’s rights to include the OVC. Through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations (2002) proclaimed that childhood was entitled to special care and assistance in all spheres of life including learning as in education. Among other articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF and SIDA (2010) stated that parties should recognize the right to education with the view to achieving the right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity from primary school levels up to higher levels.

This study was delimited to the effects of double orphanhood on the learning of orphaned secondary school children (from 12 to 18 years) who were residing in CHHs in Chipinge district of Manicaland province in Zimbabwe. Though age 18 was the legal age of majority in Zimbabwe (SIDA and UNICEF, 2006), in this study, one was regarded as a child for as long as he/she was aged 18 or below and was still in school at the time of this study. See the contextual definition of a child under definition of terms, 1.6.1.
1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

This topical study within the area of Psychology of Education, in particular HIV/AIDS, cognition, learning and orphanhood, was motivated by the escalating number of orphaned children in Zimbabwe, particularly in poorer districts of Manicaland such as Chipinge. Most of the orphans observed within the district seemed to carry many cognitive and psycho-social difficulties as they tried to cope with everyday assimilation and accommodation of new schemes. Though all orphans faced life crises, the paternal and maternal orphans seemed to be in a better situation since their meta-cognition, self-esteem and self-efficacy were less affected by the orphanhood predicament. In each of the two mentioned orphan categories above, the remaining parent still provided parental care unlike double orphanhood in a CHH where the OVC looked after each other. The situation was however, viewed differently in the case of a CHH where there were ailing parents.

A double orphan confined to a CHH seemed to have been facing more risk factors in the learning process because his / her growth was without proper parental guidance. Like many other educators and other stakeholders, the researcher needed to be fully informed about the OVC in order to render proper assistance in both formal and informal learning situations.

Observations and reviewing of studies on orphanhood has established that not much research has been reported in the area of OVC (Cluver and Gardiner, 2007), in particular the double orphans in child-headed homes. According to Plan GDD Finland online (2005), on the impact of HIV/AIDS and CHH;

...many communities - based assistance programmes report an increase in child-headed households headed by children, or consisting only of children.
...no additional data on child headed households has yet been reported.

As such the above contention implied limited research data on the CHHs. Researches by stakeholders such as UNICEF tended to group together the needs of all types of OVC yet there were some categories that seemed to suffer more than the others within the orphan lot. Hallman
(2004) claimed that the body of knowledge on OVC was beginning to emerge. Observations in Zimbabwe seemed to indicate that more needed to be done in research around this subject. Rigorous work on cognition and learning of double orphans from CHHs had not yet been fully documented hence the need to conduct this study. The findings established could then be used to inform government, countrywide programmes for affected children, advocates for child rights and other stakeholders so that appropriate intervention strategies could be established to benefit the true orphanhood sufferer.

Nyamukapa and Gregson (2004) cited an increase in the number of paternal, maternal and double orphaned children hence they carried out a research centered on orphanhood and primary school completion in Manicaland, Zimbabwe. The orphans were found to be having difficulties in school completion due to various factors such as poverty, lack of guidance and inability to make informed decisions at a tender age. The present study particularized further the extent of orphanhood and established the effects of double orphanhood, on the learning and cognition processes of OVC residing in CHHs where orphans took up both parental and learner’s roles. The issue of double orphans in CHHs evoked the emotions of many child advocates leading them into finding out best ways of making parentless children cope with storms and stresses in their efforts to learn something.

Foster and William (2000) and Wood (2009, in Wood and Goba, 2011) claimed that teachers struggled to balance the already challenging business of teaching disadvantaged children whose additional demands were hiked by high anxiety levels, limited concentration span, severe trauma, poverty and disease. As such, many countries in Southern Africa developed a multi-sectoral approach to cater for all learners with mingled backgrounds. Findings of this study added on to the body of knowledge, some strategies that educators could employ to assist the disadvantaged double orphan in a difficult life circumstance. It was therefore quite prudent to unveil the effects of double orphanhood on the learning and cognition of OVC residing and attending school from CHHs within one of the poorer districts of Zimbabwe, namely Chipinge, in Manicaland Province.
The research process was made possible by documenting activities within the CHHs and interactions with the wider society so that any irrational practices or abuses could be eliminated through awareness activities that involved both the OVC and those who were found to perpetuate suffering of OVC in CHHs. Opportunities for better care and guidance to the rather neglected OVC had been anticipated by the researcher. Once data was obtained from the actual sufferer, that is the OVC, it was also the researcher’s hope that materials could be written to allow the orphaned learners to learn and be assessed in less stressful situations. If properly monitored in their parent’s original homes, the OVC’s idea of remaining in their parents’ homes as siblings could be an ideal psychosocial environment to enhance good learning and cognition of school tasks.

The results of this study helped to establish means of empowering OVC with learning skills that helped them to cope in their CHHs. The research outcomes also benefited not only the orphans, but also the policy makers, policy implementers, curriculum planners, the schools, local communities, the law enforcers, advocates of orphans and vulnerable children, teachers as well as potential orphans in establishing favorable ways of assisting in the learning and cognition of OVC. The government, through its various ministries, could also help to emancipate the orphan, reduce academic and psychological exploitation of minors and perhaps take much more seriously the plight of orphaned learners countrywide.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The HIV and AIDS pandemic has brought about multiple deaths within most Zimbabwean families leaving many school children orphaned and vulnerable. The growing trend (orphanhood) seems to be perpetuating the mushrooming of CHHs where some school-going OVC were observed opting to reside on their own, resulting in both positive and negative interferences in their cognition and learning. In their CHHs, older OVC shared parental roles in addition to their own roles as school children. They were often reported to sometimes fail cognitive tasks, absent themselves from school more often than other children and in worse situations they dropped out of school even if they were on BEAM funding. Thus, the study investigated the effects of double
orphanhood on the cognition and learning of secondary school going OVC living within CHHs in Chipinge district, so as to envisage ways of best care and education for the affected minors.

1.4.1 Major Research Question

How does double orphanhood affect the cognition and learning of school going OVC residing in child- headed households?

1.4.2 Sub- Questions

1.4.2.1 What is the social construction of the concepts; cognition and learning, within child headed households (CHHs)?

1.4.2.2 What are the developmental experiences encountered by orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in CHHs as far as their cognition and learning are concerned?

1.4.2.3 How does double orphanhood affect the manner in which OVC build schemes/schemata?

1.4.2.4 What aspects promote or deter both cognition and learning of OVC within CHHs?

1.4.2.5 How can the schools, local communities and policy makers be academically and emotionally prepared to assist orphaned children to achieve their intended goals?

1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aims of the study are as follows:

- To establish the social construction of the concepts; cognition and learning, within child headed households (CHHs) in Chipinge, Zimbabwe.
- To determine how the developmental experiences encountered by orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) affect their learning and cognition.
To determine how double orphanhood affects the manner in which OVC build schemes/schemata.

To find out the various aspects in CHHs that can promote or deter the cognition and learning of OVC.

To establish how the schools, local communities and policy makers can be academically and emotionally prepared to assist orphaned children to achieve their intended learning goals.

Therefore, this study endeavored to join hands with all child advocates in trying to establish best ways in which family life, learning and cognition are normalized in CHHs.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are defined contextually;

1.6.1 Child

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which came into force in Zimbabwe on 2 September 1990 (UNICEF 2006), a child refers to every human being below the age of 18 years, unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. In concurrence, Smart (2003) asserts that most international and national instruments define boys and girls up to age 18 as children. Age 18 is the accepted age of majority in Zimbabwe and other countries. In the context of HIV and AIDS, the definition of a child also has relevance to age at which education ends including other variables such as differences between boys and girls in issues of marriage, legal capacity to inherit and conduct property transactions as well as ability to lodge complaints or seek redress. As such, this study takes cognizance of both boys and girls who are 18 years and below as children.

1.6.2 Double orphanhood

The definition of the word ‘orphan’ differs from country to country covering such variables as age and parental loss implied (Smart, 2003). UNAIDS UNICEF and USAID (2004) in a report
entitled, *Children on the Brink*, also define a child orphaned by HIV and AIDS as a child under age 15 who has lost at least one parent due to AIDS. The authorities here concur on a breakdown of orphans as maternal, paternal or double orphan. This study is hinged on a double orphan (one who lost both parents). Therefore, *double orphanhood* is a situation in which children have lost both parents mostly due to HIV and are vulnerable. Because the government of Zimbabwe extends its definition of a child to 18 years, this particular study is with regards to double orphans aged 18 years and below.

### 1.6.3 Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC)

A person regarded as an *orphan and vulnerable child* (OVC) is one whose level of vulnerability (meaning extremely susceptible to various forms of abuse) has increased as a result of HIV/AIDS and could include any child under the age of 18 who has lost one or both parents (Smart, 2003). Wood and Goba (2011) concur with Smart whilst adding on the fact that the term, OVC, includes neglected, destitute, abandoned and abused, with sick parent(s), has suffered increased poverty levels, a victim of human rights abuse and could be HIV positive. Such children usually suffer emotionally, psychologically and socially and are sometimes stigmatized by the society including their own age mates. The majority of the learners in Zimbabwe are OVC considering the impact of the HIV pandemic on the child-bearing populace and its offspring. This study rather delimits this populace to double orphans who have been forced by life circumstances to reside as siblings in the CHHs, be it their parents` original home, the street, new settlement areas or other forms that this study might unveil.

### 1.6.4 Child-headed household

Plan GDD Finland (2005) defines a *child headed household* (CHH) as a home set-up where the children are double orphans and the home is headed or led by a child, usually the older child. The early cases of CHHs were discovered during programme implementation when Plan GDD Finland was giving aid to victims of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The child heading the household is recognized as being independent, responsible for providing leadership and making major decisions in running the household. He/she is responsible for feeding, maintaining the household
along with the other children and caring for young siblings, thus adopting parents` roles. In Plan GDD programme areas (where Zimbabwe is also involved), it was established that AIDS related illnesses were the causes of death for 65% of the fathers and 73% of the mothers (Plan GDD Finland, 2005). The recorded percentages could be higher now that many more families are well informed about HIV/AIDS and are able to share confidentiality in as far as the cause of their family member’s death is concerned. This study considers both registered and unregistered CHHs in Chipinge District of Manicaland, Zimbabwe.

1.6.5 Learning

The simple meaning of the term learning is mere acquisition of knowledge (O’Neil, 2011). The authority also provides a much more explicit psychological definition that learning is a relatively permanent change in knowledge. However, another explicit psychological definition of the term is; a relatively permanent change in behaviour that results from experience (Kosslyn and Rosenberg, 2008). Woolfolk (2005) concurs, saying that it is the process by which experience causes permanent change in knowledge or behaviour. In other words learning refers to a permanent change in performance potential that comes about as a result of experience within the individual’s phenomenal field. Many other variables such as orphanhood can affect the process of learning. All children try to learn in their varied environmental status where certain variables can be manipulated and others cannot. Orphanhood, for instance, is one natural phenomenon that places a learner in a predicament that can easily affect the learner’s meta-cognition (mental-functioning). In this study, the researcher considers double orphans` learning experiences in CHHs and how these can affect the way the orphan tries to acquire knowledge from his/her environment.

1.6.6 Cognition

The psychological term specifies the ability to acquire knowledge or the mental capacity or the process of acquiring knowledge by use of reasoning intuition or perception (O’Neil, 2011). Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010) concur with O’Neil’s definition, regarding cognition as a process to do with intellectual activities like perceiving, thinking, problem-solving,
understanding and remembering. In other words, it refers to the process of organizing information in one’s mind to help accomplish desired goals. The term is very closely related to learning since one is supposed to accomplish both at the same time. As one acquires knowledge, he/she should be able to organize it appropriately to achieve the desired end. The challenge comes in double orphan hood, which is an intervening variable that can easily distort a child’s mental functioning or meta-cognition resulting in failure to achieve.

1.7 ASSUMPTIONS

1.7.1 Children orphaned by the HIV and AIDS pandemic have complex learning challenges and needs that communities need to understand and respond to.

1.7.2 A child who has lost both parents (a double orphan) is bound to face more difficult life challenges than the one who has one living parent (single orphan).

1.7.3 When parents die, older siblings usually take up parental roles within a CHH.

1.7.4 The learning moral is sometimes low amongst orphans living within a CHH.

1.7.5 Being the focal learning centres, schools have the mandate to understand, respond to and address the learning needs of every child including OVC.

1.7.6 Orphanhood affects the cognition and learning of orphans in both formal and Informal learning situations.

1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study focused on double orphans of secondary school going age, probably aged between 12 and 18 years. The boys and girls involved were attending schools in Chipinge district of Manicaland province in Zimbabwe. Both urban and rural OVC in CHHs were purposefully sampled. Chipinge district is situated in the Eastern side of Manicaland and is regarded as one of
the poorest districts in Zimbabwe (Medicin De Mont, Chipinge report, 2009). Most families and households around this part of Zimbabwe are believed to be living below the country’s Poverty Datum Line (PDL). Some of the children here erratically attended classes due to their low socio-economic status (SES). Figure 1 below tried to locate Chipinge district in Manicaland province within the Eastern part of Zimbabwe, bordering Mozambique.

![Map of Zimbabwe showing the location of Chipinge District](image)

**Figure 1** Location of Chipinge District in Manicaland, Zimbabwe

On theoretical boundaries, the study was hinged on a multi-dimensional theoretical framework encompassing mainly the views on constructivism as propounded by cognitivists like Vygotsky’s (1978) Socio-cultural theory, Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1979 online) Ecological System’s Theory and selected aspects from the Information Processing theorists. Being in Constructivism too, the psychoanalyst, Erik Erikson’s (1968) first five life crises within the Psychosocial theory, helped readers to comprehend the developmental life cycle of OVC in the CHHs. Views from the Rutter’s Pathway Model (Unger, Brown, Armstrong, and Gilgun, 2007; Ganga and Chinyoka, 2010) helped to explain the importance of establishing a life-line for the OVC through education.
(See figure 2 below). Most of the OVC in poorer parts of Zimbabwe like Chipinge district are growing in difficult life circumstances where they make efforts to remain resilient.

The study also made reference to perspectives from various government and non-government policies concerning HIV/AIDS, OVC and CHHs. The major policies consulted were the Zimbabwe National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (ZNASP 2006-2010), the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC, 2006-2010), the Zimbabwe Education Act Chapter 25:04, 26/1991, 24/1994 and the Zimbabwe Millennium Goals (MDGs) covering goals for Education for All (EFA).

1.9 LIMITATIONS

1.9.1 Ethical Considerations

There are moments in life when individuals prefer to preserve their privacy especially about their homes. The status of the major participants, which was orphanhood, raised attitudinal fears that would have inhibited orphans from becoming participants in this study. Initially, the researcher noted expressions of fear for the unknown or rather the OVC mistrusted the motive behind the research process. To curb this limitation, efforts were made to promote autonomy, beneficence and maleficence among participants at all times. The issue of signed consent and assent forms remained vital from the beginning.

An effort was made to allow the participants to go through some individual and group psychosocial counseling where the major purpose of the study was explained. Note that at the time of working on this thesis, the researcher was a tutor for the Bachelor of Science (BSc.) in Counseling with Zimbabwe Open University. Again a conducive atmosphere for administering the instruments and debriefing was created without making participants too suspicious of the proceedings of the study. A collegial relationship was built with school heads, teachers, some community leaders and the OVC through familiarization visits to the schools and some disadvantaged areas of the community well before the data was collected. More detail on ethical considerations can be read in Chapter three under 3.7
1.10 PLAN OF STUDY/ CHAPTER DIVISION

The research study is divided into five chapters.

10.1.1 Chapter one places the problem into perspective by covering orientation or background information, motivation for the study, statement of the problem and sub-problems, aims of the study highlighting the purpose of the study, delimitations, limitations, operational definition of terms, and plan of study or chapter division.

10.1.2 Chapter two discusses review of literature covering issues on key concepts such as OVC, CHH, cognition and learning as guided by sub problems formulated. The theoretical framework provides major tethers of the study, all rooted in constructivism.

10.1.3 Chapter three provides the research methodology covering the research design, ethical considerations, population, sample and sampling procedure, instruments used, validity and reliability of the instruments, pilot testing, data collection procedures and data analysis plan.

10.1.4 Chapter four deals with data presentation, interpretation and analysis as guided by qualitative data analysis procedures propounded by Tesch 1990 in Creswell (2002). Findings are fully discussed in relation to themes, sub-themes and categories from findings of initially stated sub-problems and or aims in Chapter one. Any concurrences, contradictions, relationships, etc. with the theoretical framework and reviewed literature are noted in the discussions of findings.

10.1.5 Chapter five presents the thesis overview/summary, conclusions, recommendations and limitations noted.

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The section endeavored to orientate readers on the problem that was under investigation, delimiting it theoretically and geographically and providing focus of the sessions to come. Related terms were defined contextually. Though this was a sensitive topic, the ethical limitations noted held minimal effects. They were handled with care and did not jeopardize the reliability or the validity of the enquiry. The whole thesis is made up of five chapters.

The next chapter presents literature review.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

By a review of literature, researchers basically refer to an essay or collection of essays endeavoring to present issues that are related to the task at hand. In this thesis, the review involved envisaging how double orphanhood affects learning and cognition of children living in child headed households (CHHs). CHHs are mostly prevalent in developing countries, including Zimbabwe.

According to Shuttleworth (2009), literature review is a precursor in the introduction of a research paper or research project. In other words, it is a critical and in depth evaluation of previous related research. It expands upon the reasons for selecting a particular research problem (Sidhu, 2003). It is a body of the text that aims to review critical points of current knowledge including substantive findings and methodological contributions to a particular topic. The literature reviewed in this enquiry served to provide a summing up of what had already been written about the topic (Chilisa and Preece, 2008; White, 2005; Bell, 2011). It helped to avoid information duplication whilst acknowledging the strengths of previous findings and legitimizing the assumptions. Any gaps in knowledge were established as the researcher assessed strengths, weaknesses or omissions in previous findings. The accumulated detail was then utilized to provide a theoretical basis for analyzing the findings and deducing meanings from established findings (Bailey, 2007; Mertens, 2010). Having read widely on the topic, the researcher was able to then choose a focus for the stated research questions. The present researcher was able to reflect on how orphanhood, has affected the learning and cognition of children in various states or countries in and outside Africa.

The review of literature begins from a Theoretical Framework covering informants on the research problem under investigation. The study was centered on envisaging the effects of double orphanhood on the learning and cognition of children residing in CHHs of Chipinge district in Manicaland, Zimbabwe.
The Theoretical Framework of the problem took an eclectic approach covering perspectives in constructivist views of cognitivists such as Levy Vygotsky’s Socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Chailkin, 2003; Duncan, Dowsett, Claessens, Magnuson, and Huston, 2007; Feldman, 2010), Urie Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979 online; Oswalt, 2008), a bit on Merzenich’s Neuro-plastic study (Merzenich and Wood, 2009) and the Information Processing perspectives (Meyer, Moore and Viljoen, 2003; Mwamwenda, 2004; Santrock, 2009; O’Neil, 2011). The psychoanalyst, Erik Erikson’s life crises (Erikson, 1968; Niolon, 2007; Berk, 2007) within his Psycho-social theory (up to stage five marking end of childhood), helped in explaining developmental experiences of OVC within the CHHs. The researcher anticipated that Rutter’s Pathway model (Rak and Patterson, 1996; Unger, Brown, Armstrong and Gilgun, 2007; Rutter, 2002, 2005 and 2008) was also a vital component of the study since it explained the issue of resilience and the possibility of establishing a profitable life-line if the OVC’s learning activities are closely facilitated and monitored.

After defining and presenting the Theoretical Framework, the rest of the literature review encompasses the following subtopics; government policies explaining OVC and HIV/AIDS issues; social construction of the concepts of orphanhood and CHHs; the concepts of learning and orphanhood; related studies on orphanhood and learning; developmental experiences encountered by OVC in CHHs; and efforts to prepare OVC for better learning and livelihoods in CHHs.

2.2 DEFINING AND JUXTAPOSING THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Both the theoretical and conceptual frameworks are structures or tethers that can hold or support the basis of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory which explains the research problem under study, concepts, and definitions. An explicit statement of theoretical assumptions is essential in order to permit the reader to evaluate the study critically. It connects the researcher to the existing knowledge and provides the basis of hypothesis or research methods to follow. According to Rudestam and Newton (1992 online)
and Rudestam and Newton (2007), a theoretical framework provides some of the following functions:

- Expounding the framework or structure within which the study will be investigated i.e. giving a rationale or stating the theory from which the investigation will be done. Most studies are informed by some psychological theories. In this study, a multifaceted theoretical framework, mainly based on *constructivism*, is the major informant.

- Validating the particular framework’s pros and cons in the investigation, building the structure, minimizing irrelevances and tightening the focus on constructs. Various forms of validity such as construct, content and criterion are achieved this way. It embodies the ontological and epistemological character of the study and anchors the methodological phases of the enquiry.

It remains a map for the investigation. Efforts were made to synthesize structures and postulate a new and more comprehensive structure in cases of complementary multiple structures. For instance, a study could be based on ‘cognitivism’ and obviously supports ‘constructivism’ as in this cognitive learning research. The multi-dimensional theoretical framework for this study could be presented diagrammatically as indicated in figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: A multi-dimensional view of OVC learning and cognition**
Some authorities suggest that both the theoretical and conceptual frameworks can be used synonymously but in this study, the researcher tried to differentiate the two though when juxtaposed they seemed to be serving almost the same purposes. The terms, *theoretical* and *conceptual* frameworks may not mean the same thing. A *theory* is a discussion of related concepts whilst a *concept* is a word or phrase that symbolizes several interrelated ideas.

A conceptual framework is a set of coherent ideas or concepts organized in a manner that makes them easy to communicate to others. It explains how and why the thesis has to take place through providing an overview or ideas and practices that shape the way work is done in a study or explaining why the thesis is being carried out. A conceptual framework is described by Reichel and Ramey (1987 in Smyth, 2004) as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation. When clearly articulated, it has a potential fullness to scaffold research and assist a researcher to make meaning of subsequent findings (Smyth).

It is the conceptual framework that acts as a starting point for reflecting about the research and its context whilst enabling the researcher to develop an awareness of the situation under scrutiny. Smyth (2004), in concurrence with Goetz and Lecompton (1984 in Smyth, 2004), summarizes the use of a conceptual framework as a means of providing a clear link from literature to the research goals and questions, providing a reference point for discussing literature, methodology and analysis of data whilst contributing to the trustworthiness of the study.

A conceptual framework explains the relationship among the concepts whilst a theoretical framework is an essay that stipulates the theories involved in the study (Yin, 2003; Maree, 2007; Macmillan and Schumacher, 2010; De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, Delport, Bartley, Greif, Pate, Rosenberg, Schulze and Schurink, 2011). In this study, for instance, the concepts ‘Constructivism and Cognitivism’ contain the theories utilized by this study as a multi-dimensional theoretical framework. On contrast, a theoretical framework is a set of terms and relationships within which the problem can be formulated and solved. A conceptual framework is a concise description of the major variables operating within the arena of the problem to be
pursued together with the researchers` emphasis of how the variables interact to produce a more powerful and comprehensive model of relevant phenomena (Rudestam and Newton, 2007).

A conceptual framework is meant to guide the research covering that which measures the relationships among variables. It guides the researcher on what she or he will notice or see through different lenses whilst providing focus and subsequent steps in planning and carrying out the enquiry (Borgatti and Foster, 2003; Borgatti, 2006). It provides a procedural plan and choice from initial design selection through instrument development and adoption, organization, analysis and interpretation of data (Rudestam and Newton, 2007).

Without a clear theoretical or conceptual framework, it is likely that the research project will be flawed by uncontrolled extraneous variables, over-looked variables, faulty instruments and haphazard procedures (Borgatti and Foster, 2003; Schram, 2006). Therefore, it is quite worthwhile to utilize either the theoretical or conceptual frameworks in a single study and not both.

Though this study’s theoretical framework takes an eclectic stance by being multi-dimensional, it is mainly centered on constructivism taking some cognitivists` views on learning and the psycho-social development theory. The constructivist approach is concerned with establishing universal principles that lie behind thinking (Mwamwenda, 2004; Berk, 2007; Bhatt, 2007; O’Neil, 2011). Most educational psychologists that support the concept of constructivism by Piaget, Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner and Erikson’s work, assume that learners of normal intellect are normally faced with the same adaptation processes within their environment as they move towards more and more abstract learning details.

A multi-dimensional view of constructivism, as a theoretical framework of this study was fully justified in this enquiry because no one theory is a panacea to psychological issues that affect OVC in Zimbabwe. Problems can then be articulated within a particular system and not from all perspectives simultaneously and so for this study, selected theories here helped as tethers to place the problem into perspective. The theories became informants or a set of lenses from which
the researcher viewed the problem. This study is centered on the effects of double orphanhood on the cognition and learning of orphaned children in CHHs of Zimbabwe.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.3.1 Constructivism and Cognitivism

*Constructivism* is a theoretical perspective that appreciates that people including children continue to construct knowledge as individuals, groups or societies (Berk, 2007; Driscoll, 2009; Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2010). It challenges the positivist’s traditional scientific methods that knowledge exists somewhere, that it is absolute and unchanging and therefore there is need to unveil it and prove its existence.

The condition of being orphaned is linked to learning and constructivism because even if children are residing in sort of an awkward situation such as a CHH, they continue to construct knowledge as they learn everyday as individuals, siblings or groups. Cognitivists, namely Piaget (1953) and Bruner et al (1966) cited in Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010) assert that children actively construct knowledge leading to higher levels of *cognition*. As such, the brain is continuously learning how to learn as it assimilates and accommodates new schemes that sensation brings about minute by minute (Piaget, 1953 in Ganga, 2011). Even in distorted pieces, orphans continue to construct information and learn from it like any other children.

Atkinson and Shifflin (1968) cited in Huitt (2003) contend in their information processing theory that information is stored in memory and processed in three stages hence the label `stage theory’.

The level of processing theory holds the major assumption that learners, to include OVC, utilize different levels of elaboration in processing information. All this takes place from a continuum that start from perception, through attention, to labeling, then meaning is established (Huitt, 2003). When the demands for accessing information more closely match methods used to learn the information, more is remembered. Therefore, it becomes vital for educators to make note of Huitts ideas that memory has a limited capacity. A control mechanism is essential to monitor the
encoding, transformation, processing, storage and utilization of information (Santrock, 2009; Slavin, 2010a) especially for OVC where little or no parental guidance may be available.

In an information processing model, there is a two way flow of information that helps educators to remember the need for enhancing a stable status of the learner`s mind in order to allow effective cognition and learning to take place. Therefore, even if the human mind is said to be genetically prepared to process and organize information in a specific way (Huitt, 2003), the environment should be made conducive for any young mind to remain resilient enough to organize, chunk or process information efficiently even in difficult life circumstances.

Although the works of Jean Piaget are not a major portion of this study’s theoretical framework, it is vital to comprehend his viewpoints as part of major assumptions on cognitivism. In a review of Piaget`s cognitive development theory, Bhattacharya and Han (2009) wrote that the Swiss cognitive psychologist contributed immeasurably to the development of learning in children. Four of his key learning concepts were assimilation, accommodation, equilibration, and schemata. He had two major principles namely adaptation and organization. Assimilation and accommodation are part of a learner’s adaptation processes. The two capabilities of a child assist the progressive building up of new schemes one upon the other during active learning. They interact continuously during cognition with accommodation opening up for further assimilation and vice versa. This organization of schemes helps to keep a balance or equilibration within one`s cognitive map. The process may not run smoothly in an OVC`s cognitive map due to a number of variables that this study found out.

Accommodation refers to a cognitive moment when a child adjusts or reshapes his/her cognitive map so as to fit in the new information during the learning process (Woolfolk, 2005; Kosslyn and Rosenberg, 2008; O’Neil, 2011). In other words, accommodation refers to the process of changing internal mental structures to provide consistency with external reality. It occurs when existing schemes should be modified to account for new experiences. Accommodation influences assimilation and vice versa. Assimilation is a Piagetian term referring to when one adds to one`s cognitive map by fitting upcoming or new information into existing schemes (Cole, Cole and Lightfoot, 2009). Assimilation occurs when a child perceives new objects or events in terms of
existing schemes. Schemata refer to mental representation of an associated set of perceptions, ideas or actions. In other words, these are building blocks of thinking. When the learners are satisfied with their mode of thought through assimilation and accommodation, then equilibration is said to have occurred (Papalia, Olds and Fieldman, 2002; Mangal, 2004; Woolfolk, 2005; Sprinthall, Sprinthall and Oja, 2006; Bhattacharya and Han, 2009).

Doidge (2007), in line with the neuro-plastic research by Merzenich (2001, cited in Wood, 2009), explains fully brain flexibility and cognitive development in his localization theory. The localization theory gives specific areas of brain function. Though this may not be the major focus of this study, it also becomes significant in the sense that being an unwanted construct, orphanhood can lead to defects in a learner’s cognitive growth. Orphanhood at childhood can adversely affect the brain’s specific areas of function especially in situations where the child is living in poverty as was observed in most CHHs that the researcher came across in a baseline survey conducted in 2010.

Therefore, the neuro-plasticity perspective on cognitivism (Merzenich and Wood, 2009) can assist educationist to focus on the portion of the OVC’s functioning that should be stimulated more than the other in order to allow learning and cognition to take place effectively even in situations of learning difficulties such as being parentless. Piagetin his cognitive developmental theory mentions a neuro-plasticity principle that development and growth of specific areas of the brain may be stimulated through intensively exercising cognitive function of the particular area concerned (Donald et al, 2010). Any new learning in cognitive functioning, therefore, is somehow dependent on how cognitive maps (schemes) are established and developed through active assimilation and accommodation.

Just like in any other child, it is vital to assist the OVC to build up new schemes that can help to formulate cognitive maps on which the child will progressively develop ways of organizing and adapting to his/her environment. During learning and cognition it is vital to comprehend what takes place when the OVC faces a cognitive conflict. This is where the OVC is faced with information or an experience which he/she is unable to deal with. A cognitive conflict merely refers to a developmental process where a present or current cognitive map is unable to problem-
solve (Macleod, 2010; Skinner, 2009; Driscoll, 2009). It challenges the child to modify his/her mapping structure in order to reach a good equilibration or *homeostasis*. Homeostasis occurs when the learner (in this case the OVC) is now able to solve more problems than he/she was able to deal with earlier on. If it occurs successfully within an older orphaned learner, then there is a possibility that scaffolding on a younger sibling may be possible especially if the OVC is the oldest within the CHH.

A responsible OVC who is able to perform *operations* which are logical may find it easy to assist others with school work, homework, etc. though time and pressures could be reducing factors in all efforts to enhance cognition and learning of others. Knowledge can be constructed throughout the four stages of Piaget’s cognitive development, that is sensory motor, pre operational, concrete and formal operation stages (Mangal, 2004; Santrock, 2009).

Like Jean Piaget, Levy Vygotsky the Russian neuropsychologist also understood the neuroplastic theory and he eventually incorporated central principles such as the *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)* and the role of *scaffolding* in assisting children to learn much more. As the children learn, they reach higher levels of understanding or building of new neural circuits (Hammond and Gibbon, 2001; Driscoll, 2009; Newcombe, 2010; Durojaiye, 2006; Donald et al, 2010; Feldman, 2010).

According to Vygotsky, the following assumptions, all linked to constructivism, try to explain the process of learning and cognition. He assumes that learning is a social process, where cultural symbols and signs help to develop concepts as children construct new ideas. The child’s interactions and socialization with other individuals in the environment assist in the total human development, especially cognitive development. Learning is contextualized and situated within the child’s culture and experiences. New connections are made through mediation, scaffolding and interaction. Language within the child’s culture can be used to facilitate learning and cognition (Vygotsky, 1978 in Chailkin, 2003 and Feldman, 2010).

Through culture children acquire or construct much of the content of their knowledge. The surrounding culture provides the child with the process of means of thinking, or what Vygotsky
calls *tools of adaptation* (Duroijaiye, 2006). He resolved that cultural signs and symbols were essential in initiating progress towards complex thinking. For Vygotsky, the individual in the society has to apply the symbol system of one’s culture to develop the related tools of reasoning. The role of symbols, such as human speech, written language, algebraic as well as mathematical symbols serve as carriers of both meaning and socio-cultural patterns (Donald et al, 2010). Above all, *language* is an indispensable tool of culture. Culture enables interaction and interrelations. However, Vygotsky emphasized that the role of signs and symbols is that of assisting individuals to master complex functions that are not fully developed. A hindrance can occur in cognition where nothing worthwhile is available for learning in one’s culture. A situational example could be a twelve year old child who could be manning a CHH with much younger siblings and ailing adults. One wonders who is likely to learn from the other and what really, is the culture to be learnt.

The theory has developed three basic elements. The elements among others include guidance, structure and support (Vygotsky, 1978 in Slavin, 2010b; Feldman, 2010). The aspects are evident in all forms of interactions. The individual develops in response to the contact and interaction between human beings and their material, social and intellectual environment. Thus, as people interact, they think, decide, evaluate, analyse, commit to memory practice, construct knowledge and most importantly gain knowledge. However, Vygotsky’s theory rests mainly on cognitive development, leaving out emotional, social and physical development. The ZPD defines skills and abilities that are in the process of developing (Berk, 2005). However, due to hindering factors such as orphanhood, some children may fail to yield worthwhile knowledge from the guidance that is offered by capable individuals resulting in limited learning.

Scaffolding aims at extending understanding of concepts and learners would be able to develop an understanding and will successfully complete tasks that they would not have done independently (Berk, 2007; Brooks, 2008; Cole et al, 2009; Donald et al, 2010). According to Vygotsky in Chailkin (2003) and Driscoll (2009), scaffolding is the sequencing of learning activities, getting connected with existing knowledge and developing new knowledge, skills and understanding. Scaffolding involves the input that gives children access to new information that extends their understanding well beyond their knowledge base. The process of scaffolding
requires repetition, recasting and elaboration of concepts being taught. However, it is quite necessary to note that the scaffolds are always based on the learner’s existing knowledge and skills.

The concept of scaffolding describes the role of the tutor in helping the children solve problems beyond their cognitive level (Papalia, Olds and Fieldman, 2004). It can be explained as a process through which a teacher or more competent peer gives aid to the other. Brooks (2008) and Atherton (2011) explain scaffolding as the way the adult guides the child’s learning via focused questions and positive interaction. These guiding aspects include questions, clues, hints and contextualization that would facilitate learning. This process takes place within the Zone of Proximal Development. To reach the Zone of Proximal development, individual OVC need guidance, supervision and an adult or more competent individual to scaffold or support them as they learn new things.

Interaction with the surrounding culture and social agents such as parents, teachers and more competent peers, contribute significantly to a child’s intellectual development. The interaction process entails that, siblings, parents and friends hand over cultural tools such as language through socialization (Duncan et al, 2007; Atherton, 2011). The social, physical or cultural contexts help to develop cognitive skills. Vygotsky (1978 in Feldman, 2010) realize that cultural content and daily experiences are important in acquisition of skills and knowledge. The researcher’s observations indicate that play and social functions among children and adults in a society helps to propagate cultural values necessary for cognitive development.

Vygotsky in Chailkin (2003) emphasizes the issue of familiarity in all educators’ efforts to stimulate and guide learners in working out what is unfamiliar in their ZPD. By doing so, the educators can help or facilitate the growth of understanding that represent the development of new or extended neural circuits around a learner’s cognitive function. The double orphan in a CHH may need much more scaffolding than the normal-parented child since the OVC’s cognitive function can easily be distorted by the orphanhood predicament. OVC in CHHs may need teaching and learning situations that help to exercise their brains in ways that disguise stress...
and anxiety but would promote effective setting up of new neural circuits thereby allowing the learner to assimilate and accommodate more in everyday informal and formal learning.

According to Vygotsky in Atherton (2011) and Santrock (2009), meanings are social constructions passed on between people each of which has a history and culture. It is through values, laws, practices and information that one would be able to understand the world. When the meanings are filtered to a wider society or other levels in society they are regarded as distal meanings (Donald et al, 2010).

Proximal meanings are directly transferred through immediate and sustained interpersonal transactions. According to Donald et al (2010) the proximal are shaped by distal meanings. Meanings are socially constructed and so are ever changing and developing. When one’s meaning is understood then this becomes an evidence of learning and cognition having taken place.

Vygotsky’s idea of proximal social interactions, aids development (Duncan et al, 2007 and Driscoll, 2009). He believes that a child may not be able to construct knowledge on his own and may require significant others such as parents, caregivers, teachers, peers or any other more competent persons. He explains the mediation process in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) illustrated in figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (Adapted from Donald et al, 2010)
The ZPD is the critical space where a child may not understand something on his or her own but has the potential to do so through proximal interaction (Donald et al., 2010). One wonders how proximal interaction is possible in an adult-free CHH where someone has to tender aid so that the OVC is able to connect familiar to the unfamiliar.

The OVC has to engage in the critical space of potential development. The content and how it is delivered are vital aspects to remember as a child engages in adapting from the present meaning to new meaning as he or she actively interacts with ZPD in an effort to construct a new level of meaning. And so like other constructivists, Vygotsky believes that knowledge is passed on through social interactions when one continuously constructs and reconstructs it. There is need for educators to then connect with each learner’s potential within the ZPD by eventually scaffolding or mediating the learner into newer levels of cognition. In instances of OVC living in CHH, teachers may sometimes consider their loco-parentis position in assisting learners to learn.

The whole idea of trying to incorporate views of Piaget and Vygotsky in enhancing learning and cognition of OVC in CHHs is to allow them to involve active exploration and equilibration that the OVC will eventually encounter suppose there is adequate cognitive challenge to allow him or her to adapt even if their present understanding might differ with that of the peer or facilitator of learning. Zimmerman (2007) emphasizes Vygotsky idea of social interaction and that it helps in peer mediation and cooperative learning. The neuro-plasticity perspective is vital in cognition as it explains fully the roadmap to construction of knowledge within one’s environment. It is within the environment that the double orphan finds constraints in the development of an active cognitive map and may possibly need the intervention of well wishers to accomplish the cognitive goals. Even in the stresses and anxiety caused by orphanhood, orphans continue to construct knowledge whether positive or negative throughout their childhood.
2.3.2 Ecological Model (Urie Bronfenbrenner)

Figure 4: Urie Bronfenbrenner’s levels or nested systems as related to the OVC’s education process (Levels/Systems adapted from Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2010)

Another major informant of this study is Urie Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological systems theory illustrated in figure 4 above. The assumptions are based on the fact that relationships or interdependence between organisms or people are seen holistically where every part is vital in sustaining the life cycles of those concerned. In other words, there has to be a balance within the ecological concept (Donald et al, 2010). Ideas emanating from Bronfenbrenner’s theory have been used in a variety of other studies concerning families (Meyer et al, 2003; Case and Ardington, 2005; Berk, 2007; Venter and Rambau, 2011).

The theory views different individuals as interacting systems. For instance, a child-headed household (CHH) is a system with different individuals residing as siblings or other vulnerable children who might decide to join the OVC already in a CHH. The head or older child usually
takes up parental roles with the help of extended family members if available as overseers (Chirwa, 2002; Foster, 2003).

Based on Bronfenbrenner`s Ecological theory, there are components that characterize any human system, a structure almost similar to Bandura`s reciprocal determinism. According to Bandura (2001) cited in Kosslyn and Rosenberg (2008), there exists in human behaviour an interaction process involving both psychological and social forces. Factors such as thought, expectancies and feelings all influence the environment and behaviour. In turn behaviour influences the environment and personal factors. A reciprocal relationship, that Bandura in Kosslyn and Rosenberg (2008), calls reciprocal determinism is established. And so an OVC, like any other human being within the environment, may be influenced by the environment in which he/she is surviving and in turn the environment influences the OVC bringing in a reciprocal relationship. It is reciprocal determinism that explains the learner`s desire to engage in certain thoughts and feelings that are eventually influential to the environment. Therefore behavior, environment and cognitive factors all influence one another.

The CHH as a whole system can interact with other systems (other CHHs) around them in the form of children`s informal play centres, the school, the church, the chiefs homesteads or other systems that may be found in an OVC`s vicinity. As one subsystem interacts with the next, the learning that takes place may eventually affect the whole CHH system. All that is related to the main CHH affects the whole system.

In CHHs, the individuals are shaped by patterns of interactions within the system. For instance, if one OVC gets sick, the whole system (i.e. of the children) is bound to sympathize and empathize with each other and this can psychologically affect the whole OVC household. Older children may fail to attend school in order to allow them to take care of the sick child or taking, him/her to hospital. Neighbours and caregivers in the extended family are also affected by the invalid`s case and may want to offer meal service for the day. The church pastor too as well as the government Social Welfare Officer (SWO) can be affected by the situation thus offering to assist at the time of need.
The goals and values within each CHH influence the whole system in different ways up to having both negative and positive effects on the learning and cognition of each subsystem. Even if effective learning is a higher and powerful goal for every OVC in the CHH, it can be disguised by more powerful goals in the form of obtaining the status of a CHH from retrogressive members of the extended family. If the OVC are residing in a poor CHH, eradicating poverty may tend to override the education goals of the individuals in the CHH.

As far as communication in a system is concerned, some hindrances may surface between subsystems. A situation where a dysfunctional CHH is unable to communicate well may result in situations where learning and cognition of each OVC is affected negatively. The psychological effects may end up placing the learners in distressful life circumstances that can result in a dysfunctional system, if prolonged. Performance at school if affected may result in failure, anxiety, and stress. Eventually one may decide to leave school. Staying at home exposes the learner to perpetrators of child abuse who may impregnate the girl child, or teach drug trafficking as in the case of a male OVC. Simply from poor communication within the system’s network, the whole system’s function can be disrupted.

The CHH tries to place individual roles to members within each section. For instance, female OVC gather relish, go to the grinding mill, wash clothes and prepare family meals. The male OVC gathers family income as in cases where they may decide to combine schooling with work in order to make ends meet within the CHH. A good example of the ‘Earn and Learn system’ is run by Tanganda Tea Company in Chipinge district. Older adolescents are regarded by the whole CHH subsystem as much more mature and able to look after the rest. Therefore, some become income earners, nurturers, problem solvers, child-parents, blame takers, etc (Donald et al, 2010) just like any other normalized family system.

There are boundaries within sub-systems, the openness or rigidity of the boundaries affects the system’s functioning in as far as time and development are concerned. Any system is bound to develop and change overtime. Any one part influences the whole system e.g. a developing orphaned adolescent in a CHH might begin to experience growth that forces him or her to change behaviour for the bad as in role confusion (Erikson’s psycho-social theory in Berk, 2007). Any
inconsistencies in the manner in which the developing adolescent behaves, may affect the rest of the other children in it, e.g. the girl child may start to be intimate with opposite sex partners, get pregnant and bring in an additional child or what Ganga and Chinyoka (2010) referred to as ‘zvana zvevana’ literally meaning ‘children from children’. The coming in of a newer off-spring brings changes on family budget, relationships, and changes in emotional interactions between siblings and eventually this filter into the school and the rest of the community. Therefore, development in one section of the system influences development in many other sections.

Bronfenbrenner called these relationships, the proximal interactions, referring to interactions occurring between each other e.g. between child to child, child and teacher or child and a friend all in social contexts. There are reciprocal influences in families, peer groups, classrooms, schools and local communities. Bronfenbrenner (1979 cited in Donald et al, 2010) believes that development occurs in four nested systems namely micro-, meso-, exo- and macro- that interact with the chrono-system. Microsystems involve roles, relationships patterns of daily activities that shape aspects of cognitive, social, moral and emotional and spiritual development (Shumon, Smith and Smith, 2009). A child, for instance, in a CHH, can be surrounded and become influenced by a microsystem that involves family relations, peers and her religious society (Bronfenbrenner).

Microsystems interact with each other e.g. families and peer groups can influence how children respond to school. Therefore, it becomes vital to understand how children’s development is shaped by their social contexts (Berk, 2007; Dawes, Bray and Van Der Merwe, 2007). If Chido is supported more from neighbours peers and teachers, the helping situation can make her anxious and insecure because of the influence from the outer environment. She eventually may change the way she interacts in her own CHH. Therefore, occurrences in the microsystem of her family peer groups and school may interact negatively with her mesosystem to reinforce developmental difficulties. Meso-systems are the neighbourhood or local community.

Cultural values that involve obedience to senior community members and authority may also influence the proximal interactions in a child’s microsystem and the whole mesosystem. Take for instance, how the government or non-governmental organizations distribute resources in
society, the procedures can affect every level of the system. An adolescent OVC heading a household can be denied access to food rations due to his political affiliation and may be forced by such a circumstance to steal from community members who have. Eventually the adolescent can get arrested. His whole CHH and the whole community can be negatively affected by this move. The OVC’s macro system is equivalent to a wider community or a whole social system covering economic, social, cultural, families, local communities and schools (Broderick, 1993; Lamanna and Riedmann, 2006; Oswalt, 2008).

Developmental time affects the interaction between the ecological systems and may influence an individual’s development e.g. if the CHH, extended families and all other systems in which the child is developing are involved, they continually change and develop themselves. These changes interact with a child’s progressive stages of development which, in away, affects the child’s learning and cognition. The ecosystem helps to see how things might change, develop and be healed (Donald et al, 2010).

The Rutter’s Pathway model also reiterates the fact that where a good life line is given, a child growing in poverty and difficult life circumstances can eventually become liberated through education. It is vital to concentrate on levels of systems that count in an OVC’s situation. Education counts for the OVC, so is the learning and cognition. Learning may also be influenced at family level by some factors such as resources, language (home language versus medium of instruction at school), values and degree of cognitive and the emotional support a learner receives from the family (Eberstadt, 2003; Case and Ardington, 2005; Evans and Miguel, 2005; Musengi, Ganga and Mugwani, 2011).

2.3.3 The Psychosocial Perspective (Erik Erikson)

Related to the interaction mentioned within the constructivists’ perspectives, is the work of Eric Erikson a psychoanalyst, who integrated psychoanalytic perspectives into social insights and how people are active in their own development (Mwamwenda, 2004; Mangal, 2004; Sprinthall, Sprinthall and Oja, 2006; Berk, 2007; Niolon, 2007; Berth, 2010; Chauhan, 2010). Eight stages make up Erikson’s psychosocial theory.
The enlisted authorities above present Erik Erikson’s (1902-1994) psychosocial stages beginning from basic *trust versus mistrust* that is observed in 0-1 year olds noted in figure 5. The stage assumes that when parents/caregivers present consistent, adequate and nurturing care, the child develops basic trust and realizes that people are dependable and that the world can be a safe place. The child develops a sense of hope and confidence. In cases of parents/caregivers failing to provide basic needs, the infant develops mistrust leading to depression, withdrawal and even paranoia (that is complete distrust), that can lead to psychiatric disorder involving systematize delusion (Mangal, 2004).

The second of Erikson’s stages involves *autonomy versus shame and doubt*. If parents guide their children gradually and firmly, praise and accept them, independence may develop. This helps to build self-esteem up to adulthood. If caregivers become too permissive, harsh or demanding, a child may feel defeated and experiences extreme shame and doubt. The child may grow to engage in neurotic attempts to try and regain control, power and competency. Age ranges between 2 and 3 years.

The third stage is *initiative versus guilt*. The child becomes curious about people where caregivers are supportive; the child shows initiative purpose and is able to set goals that he/she will endeavor to accomplish. If punished, children tend to develop a sense of guilt that can worsen to inhibition and ruthlessness (Niolon, 2007).

The fourth stage takes place between 6 and 12 years and that is *industry versus inferiority*. The child begins school and tries to develop competency in a number of areas. If not supported by caregivers, an inferiority complex may develop. If excessive inferiority is experienced, the child is led to helplessness and inertia (Niolon, 2007). The stages up to this level tend to figure out the child’s world or environment whilst the next four stages try to figure out the ‘self’.

Berk (2007) and Sprinthall et al (2006) posit that according to Erikson, identity versus role confusion falls within 13-19 years or adolescence. The young adults may become more involved in their sexual identity and gender roles. They can even try learning different roles, may go through identity crisis, and can sometimes use their friends to reflect back to themselves. If the
adolescents succeed in resolving the life crisis, they may develop fidelity but if they fail to resolve the crises, they may develop identity diffusion where their sense of the self is unstable and threatened. This and other stages mentioned afore are areas where the OVC in this enquiry are placed. The rest of the stages are significant too as they help readers of this thesis to understand the teacher/caregiver or older members of the community who interact more with the OVC.

The sixth stage covers *intimacy versus isolation* between 20-24 years. The stage is based on identity development and the virtue gained is usually intimate love. According to Niolon (2007), failure to develop intimacy with the opposite sex may lead to promiscuity.

In Chauhan (2010), *creativity versus stagnation* marks the seventh of Erikson’s stages at age range 25-64. The adult is concerned more about the next generation and care for family life and other people. The opposite of generativity is stagnation where one may become self-absorbed, which if extended, may lead to self rejection or failure to afford time for one self.

The final stage is *ego integrity versus despair* (65 to end of life span). In concurrence with Chauhan (2010), Berth (2010) contends that in ego integrity, many people may tend to accept their life successes and may develop a sense of wisdom. The opposite is a feeling of despair and dread for death yet it may be too late to change their lives. Too much integrity may lead to presumption whilst too much despair leads to disdain for life (Nilon, 2007).

Erikson’s (1968) theory covers a whole life-span and it is prudent to discuss the theory from stage one up to stage eight because being a psychoanalyst, Erikson agreed with Freud that early life experiences may shape the later life personalities. Therefore, studying the whole life span may also alert adults/caregivers of their roles in the care of OVC, even if they view them from their CHH. This thesis’s population sample of children is concentrated much on the first five stages as part of the theoretical framework because the researcher delimited the definition of the child to age 18 and below. Even if the theory does not directly focus on cognitive development, it helps to explain and interpret the OVC’s developmental experiences within their CHHs through socialization and how this may affect the sense of the self.
Within the psychosocial stages of development are life crises that relate to people’s emotional needs and social interactions (Berk, 2007). The OVC face life challenges or crises like any other persons that are critical in their lives. How each one of the children resolves these life conflicts may certainly affect cognitive function. The manner in which the OVC resolves each challenge has a bearing on upcoming challenges. For instance, an OVC who has learnt not to trust his/her environment due to previously experienced sexual abuse might find himself/herself continuing to doubt the environment at a later stage of life such as the adolescence stage.

Donald et al (2010) reiterates the fact that people’s capacity to confront their psychosocial challenges throughout life, and to modify and develop the way they worked on them originally, is characteristic of Erikson’s viewpoint. All people have positive and negative life experiences. The challenge that OVC have is how to best resolve the life tensions and opposite experiences especially where the experiences maybe resulting in developmental difficulties like learning difficulties. Figure 5 below provides a diagrammatic representation of Erikson’s psychosocial theory and how the first five crises can militate against effective learning and cognition of parentless children living as siblings in a CHH. The numbered box on each left hand side symbolizes a normal child’s environment whilst the one to the right hand side of each box tries to reflect life experiences of an OVC in a CHH.
Figure 5: Erik Erikson’s first five psychosocial developmental crises in a normal family with parental support juxtaposed to a parentless CHH situation

(Stages adapted from Berk, 2007)

Figure 5 above tries to present the first five of the eight psychosocial conflicts in a normal home (Berk, 2007), whilst juxtaposing these with a possible situation in a CHH. The selected five stages demarcate boundaries of the study where the researcher has defined a child up to age 18. The rest of the psychosocial stages are not evident on the diagrammatic representation but are vital to understand the implications on learning, cognitivism and later development of a child reared by another child. This study accepts the psychoanalytic fact that early experiences have a bearing on later life personalities (Meyer, Moore, and Viljoen, 2006; Bee, 2007).
Within Erikson`s psychosocial development theory, the infants, are usually dependent on their caregivers for all nurturance and care from birth (Ormrod, 2000). Misfortunes such as parental death or a caregiver`s death brings about change in the environmental experiences for the infant. The sudden change of an infant`s environment may result in unexpected life experiences. Whilst infants with normal parent set ups may experience quality life and learning, the infant OVC in a CHH usually experiences the opposite. In other words learning and cognition takes place in difficult life circumstances.

The infant that trusts the environment because of proper care-giving usually prepares for the next stage with hope and trustfulness whilst the opposite is true with OVC who may remain anxious and unable to trust the future. Other variables may also reinforce either negative or positive psychosocial experiences on an inexperienced child parent. The particular lot of OVC in CHHs in Chipinge, where this study was carried out, were seen both in rural as well as urban dwellings.

At stage two (autonomy versus shame and doubt), a toddler experiences psychosocial crises linked to attachment with peers, siblings and some role models (Berk, 2007). In a normal home, a child experiences some independence as he/she starts to make movements around the home. He/she may cope in a normal home because of gentle encouragement (Darling and Steinberg, 2004), whilst one in a CHH might experience inconsistencies or maltreatment from the inexperienced child parents. The manner in which he/she is encouraged or discouraged may enhance autonomy or induce shame and doubt coupled with anxiety that is carried over due to mistrust of the environment from infancy (Mangal, 2004).

In the third stage i.e. early childhood, the child experiences imitativeness versus guilt orientation (Ormrod, 2000). In a normal home, the child explores the environment with the aid of parental guidance and support from the rest of family members, whereas in a CHH the infant might ask questions that other sibling is able to answer because of inexperience. In the CHH, age counts. The older a sibling is, the better the listening capacity one receives from the other children. The child may try out things where they may fail and feel guilty or pass and feel contended. A child`s status at this level, usually enables him/her to feel a sense of purpose and continue to take initiative. On the other hand, anxiety and lack of encouragement can cause the child to feel guilty.
all the time and may not want to try out anything new. Such children are sometimes reserved, isolated and may not want to be incorporated in tackling anything new.

As the child grows older in the fourth stage of industry versus inferiority (middle childhood), he/she is ripe for school or is beginning to be productive depending on his/her social context (Berk, 2007). The one in a normal home begins social relations from a mother, father, siblings, members of the extended family as well as peers and teachers. The double OVC begins his/her social interactions from siblings and extends relationships to other relatives, peers and teachers i.e. if they are lucky to be in school. A sense of industry results from success in a number of tasks whilst failure brings about inferiority. Erikson believed that the child carries either competence or lack of it depending on one`s socio-economic status. OVC in poverty-stricken CHHs are sometimes faced with continual failure due to ridicule from siblings or their inexperienced child-parents. Failure affects learning and cognition (Jinga and Ganga, 2011).

The fifth of Erikson`s stages that rounds of childhood is identity versus role confusion which is experienced by the adolescent. Research has shown that in a CHH the older adolescent usually takes the place of the care giver whose duties are that of a mother and a father (Lewis, 2000; UNICEF, 2001; Ward and Eyber, 2009). Most of the time the central challenge is to balance up one`s role as a child and the extra role of being a child parent. In the CHH and normal family set-ups, the adolescent faces stresses from physical maturation, fitting into peer groups (peer pressure) and making lasting friends. They wonder who they are and what particular place they should take within their environment. The major burden of the OVC in a CHH is how to be ‘a good big brother’ or a ‘good big sister’ to the rest of the siblings. No matter what status or socio-economic status, all adolescents search for identity seriously either as individuals or as groups. In a school set-up, the teacher becomes a powerful role model and so is encouraged to be empathetic with all learners.

If the life crises are adequately resolved at each stage, then the child might be able to enter into adulthood and move with the sixth, seventh and eighth stages without too many hassles. Erikson`s theory is significant as part of the theoretical framework in this study for it specifies the experiences that some children receive and how each child experiences the impact on
development. The plight of the OVC in the CHHs remains food for thought for any OVC advocate. The psychological and social development of a child is centered on proper parental guidance without which development and learning can be distorted here and there. The double orphanhood situation is one variable that can bring about constraints in learning and within social settings.

The theory is also significant in that Erikson, in this study, sees people, including OVC, as active in their development. No matter what crises or the intenseness of orphanhood, the theory believes that one is able to modify and handle challenges the best way they see fit. To enhance learning and cognition of double orphans discussed in this study, an educator needs to create opportunities for the OVC to explore and confront any psychosocial challenges that might come their way. Unlike Piaget and Vygotsky who dealt with cognition, Erikson brought about an interdependence of different life aspects (Ormrod, 2000; Driscoll, 2009; Cole et al, 2009) that can affect learning.

Erikson brings about cognitive, emotional, social, physical, moral and spiritual aspects of development as integrated variables in the whole life cycle (Niolon, 2007). Even if this study tried to search for learning and cognition alone, it was vital that the whole child or whole OVC is dealt with fully so that any obstacles that may hinder cognition and proper learning are dealt with in all efforts to assist children living in difficult life circumstances.

2.3.4 Rutter`s Pathway model

To augment his psychoanalytic viewpoints, Erikson cited briefly the transitional model propounded by Semeroff (1991) in Santrock (2009). The interpersonal transactions faced by the double OVC in a CHH are individual influences. The cognitive, emotional and social capacities throughout his/her developmental experiences are responsible for shaping his/her existing capacities. Significant people, like teachers, can help to tender hope and a life-line that the OVC can eventually trust and learn from, without any further anxiety, shame, guilt nor doubt. The transitional model suggests that lasting effects are the result of consolidating earlier transactions.
at successive critical points (Donald et al, 2010). Different social contexts exert different influences on a child’s psychological development.

In line with such thinking is the Rutter’s Pathway Model that specifies that given a life-line, a child who has experienced very difficult life circumstances can eventually trust and hope in an education in which all is geared toward a better future, even without parents (Rutter’s Pathway Model, cited in Ganga and Chinyoka, 2010; Unger et al, 2007; Rutter, 2008).

Some poor children have self writing tendencies that make them more resilient to pressures of poverty and orphanhood. Children learn to survive in overlapping settings or circles; hence we find that once born of poor parents, one may end up poorer especially if orphaned too early in a lifetime. Because of self writing tendencies, some OVC end up succumbing to poverty so they become resilient to it and live with it. Having helped the OVC into a good life-line, it is hoped that even the process of cognition is enhanced during learning.

Orphanhood places most of the affected children into a situation of maternal deprivation, a condition that originated from John Bowlby’s attachment theory in Rutter’s (2008) where infants were separated from their mothers or mother substitutes. The formation of an ongoing relationship with the child is vital in parenting but may not be evident in a situation of double orphanhood where parental deficiency is seen as a vulnerability factor. According to Rutter (2002), Bowlby’s ideas on maternal deprivation experiences of interpersonal relationships are crucial to psychological development. Orphans miss the continued relationship with their parents. Therefore, something may need to be done to try and normalize family life when biological parents pass on.

Michael Rutter made a significant contribution to Bowlby’s maternal deprivation hypothesis by highlighting the forms of deprivation, the extent of separation distress and assert that anti-social behaviour is linked to maternal deprivation (Rutter, 2008). Rutter goes on to label separation as a risk factor related to poor cognition and emotional development. A number of subsequent studies have confirmed Bowlby’s concept of cycles of disadvantages especially from unhappy disadvantaged homes. Rutter reports a series of pathways through childhood and influences that
determine which pathway a child can follow. The school is regarded as a life-line for any child (UNICEF, 2009). The OVC therefore, can benefit if at all the school curriculum becomes conducive enough.

The term, *resilience* mentioned earlier on, denotes the idea that an individual is able to cope with stress and diversity (Unger, 2008). In this study, the stress and diversity is centered on failure to procure sufficient support to enable the OVC to cope. As such, the OVC tries to make ends meet using the minimum resources available. The coping may result in the individual bouncing back to a previous state of normal functioning using the experience of exposure to diversity (Rutter, 2004a). A child is able to resist a great decline in functioning even though he/she may appear to be getting worse. This differs from culture to culture, community values, geographical setting and history of resilience in communities (Ungar, 2008). By looking back at Bronfenbrenner’s perspectives within the person’s ecological system, an OVC may require the influence of others within his/her ecological system, that embraces aspects of culture, community values, etc., if he/she should find learning processes manageable.

Most researches now show that resilience may be due to an individual’s ability to interact within their environments and the process that promotes well being or protect them against overwhelming influence of risk factors (Rutter, 2005; Ward and Eyber, 2009). It could be psychological resilience, emotional resilience or mental toughness or others describe it as ‘invulnerable child’. It may be both psychological and emotional resilience that OVC may require if proper cognition and learning should take place. The vulnerability has evolved into many more perspectives building up theories such as the ecological theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner (Ungar, 2008; Rutter, 2008).

Resilience is a process whereby individuals exhibit positive behavioral adaptation when they encounter significant diversity, trauma, threat or significant sources of stress. Orphans are identified as children at risk of both biological and environmental factors. Researchers have identified a number of factors that can contribute as stressors where sibling caretakers in childhood or another young person serves as a family caretaker despite poverty and stress that dominate the households (Bee, 2007; Brooks, 2008; Rice, 2006; Berk, 2007). This becomes a
common trend in most under-developed countries that are ravaged by the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Coupled with the effects of the pandemic, the situation of poverty, household discord, disorganization, violence, abuse, over crowdedness, sick siblings sometimes disrupt proper care giving processes.

As they go through the learning process, orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) also engage in cognition and so there is need to analyse aspects of cognition that can be enhanced or be deterred by orphanhood. Tools of cognition are vital in constructivism. Cognition is concerned with thinking, planning, remembering, problems solving and a range of activities that go on in the mind (Mwamwenda, 2004). They are the basis by which humans actively shape, transform and reflect on their experiences. Use of language for instance (spoken, read or written), is a powerful symbolic form of cognition. Language can be regarded as the most important symbolic form of cognition since it takes over the enactive and iconic modes during growth (Bruner in Skinner, 2009). The orphaned child might have language related difficulties that should be monitored by an educator. Therefore, it is vital that the educator considers fully aspects such as the process, content, active learning, connectivity, between familiar and unfamiliar, guided discovery and scaffolding as vital constructivist principles of practice (Donald et al, 2010).

Above all, an OVC, like any other child deserves a dignified living and learning environment that can lead to fulfillment of one’s own life goals. Society, including educators, need to respect OVC’s need for self worth and positive regard, as in humanism, if they are to accomplish all life goals within their phenomenal fields.

2.4 POLICY ISSUES

2.4.1 The Zimbabwe National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (ZNASP 2006-2010)

The Policy issues covered in the Zimbabwe National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan(ZNASP, 2006-2010), the National Action Plan for Orphan and Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC 2006-2010), the Zimbabwe Education Act, Chapter 25:04 and the Zimbabwe Millennium Development Goals (2004) were also discussed and implications thereof. The major purpose was
to ascertain the main root cause of orphan crises that led to the mushrooming of CHHs in most sub-Saharan African countries including Zimbabwe. It is assumed in this study that policy may assist in efforts to enhance the learning and cognition of OVC in difficult life circumstances.

According to the Zimbabwe National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (ZNASP 2006-2010), Zimbabwe now has two decades since the first AIDS case was reported (ZNASP, 2010). Though a decline on HIV prevalence has been recorded from 26 to 18, 1%, the number of orphans and vulnerable children remains alarming. The President of Zimbabwe reiterated the need to make note of emerging challenges encountered due to the rise in OVC. To this note a National Plan of Action or Policy for OVC was established to mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS on OVC. At the time of writing this thesis, the 2006-2010 OVC policy was under review. The theme of ZNASP is based on commitment that should be placed into action by both the government and all stakeholders involved in issues of HIV and AIDS. The ZNASP (2006-2010) specifies among other roles of researchers and consultants in preparing working documents and analysis that help to focus on key issues at various stages of the strategic process (ZNASP 2006-2010). This study, therefore attempts to join all other advocates of better education for OVC in trying to locate the effects of orphanhood, where children reside alone as siblings in CHHs. The researcher hopes to make meaningful contributions to the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) and other stakeholders on how learning of OVC, especially double orphans, can be enhanced in CHHs. Presently, Zimbabwe falls among the many Southern African countries where it is part of the epicenter of the HIV and AIDS epidemic (UNICEF, 2007).

The label ‘orphan’ in Zimbabwe captures a number of influencing vulnerability factors that can deter cognition and learning. Children with some unfulfilled rights are included as orphans in the ZNASP (2006-2010). These vulnerability factors according to ZNASP (2006-2010:2) include the list below:

- Children with one parent
- Children with disabilities
- Children affected and infected by HIV and AIDS
- Abused children (sexually, physically and emotionally)
• Working children
• Destitute children
• Abandoned children
• Children living in the streets
• Married children
• Neglected children
• Children in remote areas
• Children with chronically ill parents
• Children with conflict with the law

All of the above require the attention of the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) ministries especially that of education, non- governmental organizations and many other advocates of children’s rights in order for each child to accomplish his/her life-line and education goals. The study, however, delimits the lot of vulnerable children to studying the effects of orphanhood on the cognition and learning of double orphans residing in CHHs. Most of the double orphans observed within the district carry many of the attributes highlighted above. One OVC, for instance, may carry double orphanhood, HIV/AIDS, could be working, neglected, and cares for terminally ill parents. It is assumed that the extent of orphanhood has some effects on the learning and cognitive processes of any learner including the OVC. There is need to enquire more into these issues in order to establish best ways of enhancing the learning of OVC especially the parentless who may at times act out parental roles without much experience nor guidance.

About 19% of the 1.3 million child’s population in Zimbabwe is orphaned by AIDS (UNAIDS, 2010). Current surveys countrywide estimate that there are about 30% of the child’s population in rural and urban high density Zimbabwe who are orphans (ZNASP, 2006-2010). The impact of the pandemic goes beyond families and communities to commerce, industry, health services and education because life expectancy has been greatly reduced (UNICEF Global Estimate, 2004). Presently, the mitigation strategies include programmes to support OVC in as far as food and nutritional support in CHHs and women- headed- households where there are chronically sick family members. As such, the launch of the National Action Plan for Orphans and other
vulnerable children (NAP for OVC, 2006-2010) in 2005 became a significant milestone with regards to mitigation against the impact of HIV in Zimbabwe. With the aim of reaching at least 25% of the OVC (USAIDS, 2010) through educational medical, legal and psychosocial assistance, this study endeavors to join partners in the multi-sectoral response by identifying the effects of orphanhood on the meta-cognition processes of OVC so that any interventions become more meaningful and are directed towards the real needy OVC such as the double orphan.

The OVC fall amongst groups and many high risks that includes challenges in receiving ideal educational opportunities (Chinyoka and Ganga, 2011). It has been noted that 20-30% of the registered OVC are receiving some kind of assistance. Many fall within the hard-to-reach populations (NAP for OVC, 2006-2010) who are often excluded from aid. For instance, ZNASP (2006-2010:14) mentions the fact that children have largely been excluded from the anti-retroviral therapy (ART) roll out programmes. This study would try to implement the ZNASP evidence and results based strategies through the rigorous procedures in working with the OVC as part of the participants in the enquiry. USAIDS (2010) mentions through ZNASP that operational research would be necessary if Zimbabwe is to identify further the needs of the OVC. This could be possible through working with regional and international HIV and AIDS initiatives such as conventions which include the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2004); United Nations General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, and many others that aim to ensure that set goals are achieved.

Among the key strategies and targets of the ZNASP is the need to consolidate and expand the in-school life skills programmes where the Zimbabwe Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture (MoEASC) is making efforts to finalize a life skills strategic plan (ZNASP, 2006-2010). All the young people are to benefit from this strategic plan including OVC in CHHs.

In addition to the above, specific needs of OVC will be addressed through equitable accessibility of OVC to the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), National Aid Trust Funds (NATF) and external funds available to the National Plan of Action for OVC. According to ZNASP (2006-2010:25), programmes will include the provision of basic health and social services, including schooling, administrative assistance and shelter.
Above all, ZNASP places great importance on evidence-based interventions to ensure initiatives are demand-driven and relevant. This researcher joins hands with other stakeholders in the multi-sectoral response, led by NAC, in contributing to studies, reviews, assessments and research that will become necessary from time to time in the areas of HIV and AIDS covering prevention, treatment, care and support (Zimbabwean Demographic Health Survey, 2005-2006). This study views support and care issues as vital aspects in research that concern orphaned children. This part of research on the marginalized and most-at-risk groups in Zimbabwe forms one part of the seven recommended areas of research by ZNASP (2006-2010).

If the learning needs of OVC are established and appropriate intervention rendered, perhaps the Zimbabwean National AIDS Council can be able to realize its second goal i.e. to improve quality of life for the infected and affected. The OVC in CHHs may not all be infected by the virus but obviously are affected by the ravaging effects of the pandemic. Learning and cognitive need research may help as an intervention strategy so as to provide appropriate care and support necessary to children in distress.

### 2.4.2 The National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC)

The NAP for OVC by the Ministry of Labour and Social Services was started in 2003 in response to the challenges faced by increasing number of OVC in Zimbabwe (NAP for OVC, 2006-2010). In line with ZNASP, the vision for NAP for OVC is to reach out to all OVC in Zimbabwe with basic services that positively impact on their lives. The NAP for OVC (2006-2010) document has two versions to include a simpler Child Friendly Version meant for affected children.

In the NAP for OVC- Child- Friendly version (2009:13-15) the major focus is on education of children where it promises an increase in the number of children who go to primary and secondary school. The NAP for OVC was developed to include the situation of children living with the disadvantages of HIV and AIDS, lack of resources to respond and the availability of many but fragmented interventions (NAP for OVC, 2006-2010). Noted were opportunities for a policy and legislative framework for child-care and protection. The NAP for OVC was built on
opportunities such as the MDGs and the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNIGASS) on HIV and AIDS goals 65, 66 and 67.

In line with the ZNASP (2006-2010), the Rapid Assessment, Analysis and Act Planning Process (RAAAPP, 2004) for OVC suggested that the situation of OVC in Zimbabwe is an increasing threat to socio-economic development. Even though there seem to be a number of organizations providing aid to OVC, very little is known about the resources available, number of children reached and geographical coverage of the services (NAP for OVC, 2006-2010).

To support children, the Government of Zimbabwe has two key National policies and a legal framework. Legislation for children include Children’s Act (Chapter5:06), the Guardian of Minors Act, Education Act, Maintenance Act, the Child Abduction Act and many other statutes meant for children. The NAP for OVC for instance, runs along a child-friendly version (2009:13-15) that clearly states to children that every child is promised an opportunity for schooling.

The National policies include the Zimbabwe National Orphan Care Policy (ZNOCP, 1999) and the NAP for OVC (2006-2010). The two policies reflect Zimbabwe’s strengths in traditional ways of caring for children at community level. However, due to other variables, there seem to be a paradigm shift where the children themselves are opting to stay alone after loss of parents in what is popularly known as child headed households (CHH). Whilst more and more children are opting to reside in CHHs, the ZNOCP recognizes the traditional leader’s role in the care and the significance of supportive programmes such as Zunde Ramambo/Insimu yeNkosi and Dura Ramambo/Isiphela seNkosi (Chief’s Granary) that is known to provide food security to all marginalized and poor groups within the community (NAP for OVC, 2006-2010).

The NAP for OVC in Zimbabwe defines OVC from a variety of factors that influence vulnerability. Besides looking at those whose parents have died, the ZNOCP and NAP extend the definition to children who have unfulfilled rights. The policy makes little mention of types of orphans such as ‘single’ and ‘double’ orphaned. It regards orphanhood as just one portion of vulnerability yet many children fall in numerous categories that communities identify. See
categories enlisted by ZNASP (2006-2010) under 2.4.1. It is however, pleasing to note that the NAP for OVC budget for 2006-2010 included quite high budgets for education of children among other expenditures. The funds, managed by UNICEF, are mobilized through Programme Support (PS) mechanisms from varied international donors namely DFID (UK), New Zealand AID, SIDA (Sweden), Germany CFW, Australia AID and European Commission (NAP for OVC, 2006-2010). This study assumes that once the learning needs of OVC are fully understood by every stakeholder, then the rightful beneficiaries of the NAP funds may be assisted.

Some guidelines for NAP are then developed by GoZ ministries and the National AIDS Council in liaison with UNICEF, DFID and SIDA (NAP for OVC, 2006-2010). The guideline help to specify roles and responsibilities of key institutions involved in the management, disbursement and use of mobilized resources. Therefore, NAP for OVC is a programme that is being implemented collaboratively whilst PS is the vehicle through which resources are mobilized to support programme implementation. Clear cut goals, objectives, purpose and principles are specified by the ZNOCP in NAP for OVC (2006-2010:5-6). Once the learning needs of OVC are stipulated by the OVC themselves then it may be possible for stakeholders to reach out and assist in enhancing the learning and cognition of orphaned children.

The organizational structure of NAP for OVC has hierarchical structures that pulls from the State Cabinet National, Provincial, District up to community level. Each component has its own task (NAP for OVC 2006-2010:7). The implementation modality is double-barreled covering state and non-state sectors. State sectors are governed ministries such as MoEASC whilst non-state sectors are organizations registered with authorities and are implementing programmes for childcare. In this belief, UNICEF is responsible for the release of funds and managing it.

In as far as research is concerned, the NAP for OVC document encourages both quantitative and qualitative procedures but more of the latter procedures because of its ability to make stakeholders understand both positive and negative processes, outputs, outcomes and policies during implementation (NAP for OVC, 2006-2010).
In addition, the OVC policy document encourages qualitative research since it focuses on unique knowledge, competencies, capabilities etc., hence the idea of embarking on this phenomenological case study. When all these outcomes are combined, the information may lead to better understanding of what stakeholders can do to improve OVC programmes and suggest best procedures to implement. This study, taking more of qualitative procedures, endeavors to work in line with the NAP for OVC policy initiatives to try and come up with the situation of double orphans operating in CHHs in Chipinge, Zimbabwe. Perhaps findings of such a study will recommend appropriate intervention in the area of education to ensure that learning of OVC in CHHs can be enhanced. The NAP for OVC (2006-2010:15) encourages institutions with capacity and research experience to undertake operational research (OR) in an effort to help the child at risk or one living in difficult life circumstances.

The child friendly version of the NAP for OVC (2006-2010) endeavors to make the OVC understand all intervention procedures, the children’s rights, how and where to get aid in a number of areas, issues of abuse, education, including a number of government and non-governmental plans for all OVC. It is pleasing to note that the child friendly version of the NAP for OVC was worked out with many child representatives from a number of child-run organizations in Zimbabwe hence the note by child representatives in the document that says that ‘Anything for us, without us, is against us”. Therefore, Zimbabwe takes heed of Nelson Mandela’s dictum in the NAP child-friendly version (2006-2010:1) that ‘There can be no keener revelation of society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children’.

2.4.3 The Zimbabwe Millennium Goals and the Education Act, Chapter 25:04

The Education for All (EFA) movement aims to provide quality education for all children irrespective of their neither socio-economic background, culture nor creed (Dakar Framework of Action, 2000). A total of 164 governments including Zimbabwe met at the World’s education forum in Dakar, Senegal where they pledged to achieve quality Education for All (EFA) and six goals were identified. All governments agreed to achieve these by year 2015. Like any other nation, the Government of Zimbabwe is working hard to achieve these goals where UNESCO was mandated to coordinate UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank. According to Dakar
Framework of Action (2000), UNESCO focuses on five key areas covering policy, monitoring, advocacy, mobilization of funds and capacity development.

The six EFA goals aim to meet the learning needs of all children and even adults by 2015 (Dakar Framework of Action, 2000). Amongst the mentioned children were the OVC in CHHs who need special guidance in the absence of adults and parents. In fact, the older OVC stand on their own as parents for the rest of the younger ones within the CHH. In the area of expanding and improving early child care and education (Goal 1) many of the OVC from victims of AIDS remain vulnerable. They may fail to receive appropriate formal or informal learning. Goal 2 focuses mainly on educating children especially girls in difficult life circumstances who include OVC belonging to various ethnic groups. Quality free compulsory education is a prerequisite but the issue of fees becomes a hindering factor. Education is not free for all unless one is lucky and is enrolled under BEAM or NATF where a portion of the school fees is catered for (Jinga and Ganga, 2011). The number of items to be provided freely by BEAM may not cover up all that the OVC needs for learning and survival.

Goal 3 for EFA encompasses the need to meet the learning needs of all children and adults through equitable access to basic and continuing education for all. The idea of aiming to achieve at least 50% improvement in adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, allows young mothers, who include OVC who could have been disadvantaged by early pregnancies and failed to go through school to become literate. This stance was noted by Ganga and Chinyoka (2011) as they explored the psychological disorders caused by poverty among OVC. The idea of eliminating gender disparities as in Goal 5 augments Goal 4 in favor of young women who could have been abused, got pregnant and forced to leave school early. These can also have access to basic education. Finally, Goal 6 reminds nations of improving all aspects of quality education and ensuring excellence and recognition of all learning outcomes in areas of numeracy, literacy and life skills.

Though BEAM funding may be overwhelmed (NAC report, 2011), the Government of Zimbabwe endeavors to take heed and educate the populace including the marginalized child like the OVC. The 2004 Zimbabwe Millennium Development Goals Progress report is an endeavor
to adapt the eight MDGs adopted by the fifty-fifth session of the United Nations Assembly to the capacities values and aspirations of the populace (MDGs Progress report, 2004).

The progress report on MDGs is the response to the UN series of world summits and global conferences aimed to lay out a rights-based development agenda. Again, Zimbabwe was among the 189 Heads of State and Government which agreed on the Millennium Declaration at the Millennium Summit of September, 2000. Among the MDGs were issues related to education and more others on health, HIV/AIDS, gender equality and other aspects concerning welfare of Zimbabweans. The goals focused mainly at providing developmental challenges to government and various stakeholders. The report emphasizes collaboration at both implementation and monitoring of MDGs. The issue of developmental challenges within the MDGs encompasses the OVC predicament that requires intervention and close monitoring by all stakeholder representatives if at all family life and education should run well after parental death.

Each of the eight (8) MDGs seem to be catering even for the OVC whose education could be disturbed if no one places a watchful eye on their progress. The power of OVC needs to be catered for. For instance, there is interconnectivity in the functioning of the eight goals to the learning and cognition of the OVC e.g. the power to eradicate extreme poverty, as in MDG 1, in order to allow MDG 2 to help the OVC achieve his/her universal primary education. Since most of the OVC in the CHH are from parents who died of HIV/AIDS it becomes prudent to consider MDG 6 that aims to combat HIV/AIDS and other related diseases. Once the OVC in the CHH is made aware of the consequence of faulty sexual practices, his/her learning and cognition runs smoothly in order to ensure achievement of MDG 7 that stipulates environmental sustainability. Any psychological disturbances in one OVC’s meta-cognition may have detrimental effects on the rest of the OVC household if their learning needs and life-styles are not monitored from time to time. This study, therefore, attempts to pick up some of these effects of orphanhood on the learning of OVC residing in CHHs of Chipinge in Zimbabwe, all in an effort to envisage best channels to liberate the OVC and shape a better life-line for them.

The Education Policy in Zimbabwe tries to go in line with EFA goals as well as the prescribed MDGs that do not segregate children. According to the Zimbabwe Education Act, Chapter
25:04, 26/1991, 24/1994, a child of school-going age is one of an age within such limits as many school children may be described. In other words the Act does not prescribe a specific age. Part 2 of the Education Act specifies fundamental rights and objectives of the education in Zimbabwe. First and foremost, every child in Zimbabwe shall have the right to school education. Admission does not segregate in whatever manner including social status of parents. Each parent should ensure that his/her child attends school. Perhaps at the time of assembling this Act, there were not many child-parent families as it is today, hence the need for the constant review of the Act and continuous research involving the affected OVC.

A number of educationists and researchers are presenting researches on EFA goals, MDGs and the area of HIV/AIDS, but not much of a phenomenological type of activity has been documented on OVC and their learning in Zimbabwe. In an assessment of the efforts towards attainment of education for all (EFA) in Zimbabwe, as agreed in the World Conference on Education for all (WCEFA), held in Dakar Senegal in 2000, Mavhunga, Madondo and Phiri (2009) advise on the need to take stock of progress and to increase access to education for previously marginalized Zimbabweans. He noted an increase in school fees, economic turn down and ravaging effects of HIV/AIDS that left a number of children orphaned. More research is therefore necessary in as far as learning of OVC in Zimbabwe is concerned.

2.5 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE CONCEPTS OF ORPHANHOOD AND CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

In all countries where prevalence of HIV/AIDS is high or low, AIDS hinders development. According to UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAIDS (2004) the pandemic has been found to reduce life expectancy of individuals, deepening poverty and contributing to food shortages. The HIV/AIDS Alliance (2006) in India showed statistics that measured the plight of children and orphans affected by the AIDS epidemic and the figures are alarming where AIDS related deaths caused more than 2,3 million children to become orphans at a rate of one in every four seconds in 2000 (UNICEF, 2006).
According to HIV/AIDS Alliance (2006), the epidemic has caused various numbers of children into precarious circumstances that expose them to exploitations, abuse and at high risk of getting infected. Due to premature death of their parents, many children are left with very limited financial and social support. The OVC especially in extended families are sometimes prone to discrimination and stigmatization in the areas of health, education and social services. By seeing their parents to death from HIV-related illnesses, most OVC suffer psychological stresses that are exacerbated by stigma from the community. They then resolve to reside on their own in the CHHs (PLAN GDD Finland, 2005). In the CHHs there are possibilities of such children being exposed to unsafe, poorly socialized environments, where young and inexperienced child-parents make efforts to become good care-givers. As such, more should be studied on the OVC especially, the learning aspect since education has been found to liberate the child in many life circumstances (Jinga and Ganga, 2011).

Many children in developing countries seem to be grappling with ways to make ends meet in their CHHs. Whilst in some countries there seem to be no such increase in the number of CHHs, in some developing countries like Zimbabwe, there is an increase due to the escalating numbers of OVC facing numerous difficulties after parental death.

In sub-Saharan Africa the number of CHHs has increased the extended family’s capacity to provide social support to affected children (Ward and Eyber, 2009). Like in Rwanda, Zimbabwean OVC experience great depth of social isolation (Roalkvam, 2005). Isolation is a major, obvious characteristic of a CHH. Among the psychosocial and socio-economic challenges faced by children in CHHs are issues of security, acceptance, poverty, lack of access to social services and education, abuse and neglect (Roalkvam, 2005; Germann, 2005). Depending on where these children are staying, the children sometimes suffer stigma. Due to various life challenges observed by researcher, most of the upcoming researchers are dedicated to CHHs since the group requires special attention. Many OVC seem not to know their rights in society.

A number of collaborative studies in Rwanda have proposed that a small amount of social capital should be tapped as a potential resource to avoid a deficit-only perspective as in researches in
South Africa about CHHs (Donald and Clacherty, 2005 in Ward and Eyber, 2009). Like in Rwanda, this study shall enable enhancement of more care and support as it endeavors to listen to the voices of the OVC and the views of the selected community stakeholders on the best that Zimbabweans can do to enhance care and support of OVC in the area of learning and cognition. The study then becomes more qualitative and participatory as both the OVC and the community in which CHHs are found, shall be allowed to present their perspectives in a social phenomenological study on the problem at hand.

In response to the call for care and support of OVC, Mogtlame, Chauke Van Ransburg and Kganakga (2010) also established that the concept of CHH type of family requires the government to explore safety nets for children in CHHs. The researchers used an explanatory and descriptive research design where the sample consisted of OVC in CHHs. The findings denoted that the rights of children were compromised where most of the children heading the households were most of the time out of school because their CHH needed food, clothes and shelter besides education.

In a study of the effects of poverty on academic achievement, Lacour and Tissington (2011) contend that poverty is now a growing culture even in the United States. It has affected academic achievement due to lack of resources. Numerous studies too have documented the correlation between low socio-economic status and low achievement. As such, most of the OVC are bred in poverty stricken CHHs where they survive in dire poverty or well below prescribed Poverty Datum lines (Ganga, 2011).

In a qualitative writing about self-care on the latchkey system of rearing children, Rambau (2008) and Venter and Rambau (2011) in South Africa confirm that self care, where we find most children in CHHs, is quite detrimental to the development and academic performance in children. The researchers also indicated that in other studies, children under self-care have been found to be doing just fine in academic work (Shumow, Smith and Smith, 2009). Though Venter and Rambau’s study was mainly focusing on negative effects of self-care in South Africa, this study endeavors to look at the positive and negative effects of orphanhood especially for children (OVC) residing in CHHs using a phenomenological case study design in Chipinge district of
Manicaland, Zimbabwe. To this effect, some longitudinal studies were also carried out in United States and United Kingdom on how children at risk can utilize environmental variables to promote resilience (Rak and Patterson, 1996; Phillips and Flashmon, 2007).

In South Africa, about twenty nationally representative surveys running from 2000-2007 indicated no increase in the proportion of children in CHHs (BuaNews online, 2012). The government of South Africa has intervened by increasing the child support agent. However, it was established in the country’s surveys that most of the children in CHHs have a living parent. For instance, only 8% in the mentioned surveys were double orphans where it is claimed that kinship networks enable provision of care and support for the children. It is therefore, the purpose of this study to establish on authentic situation in Zimbabwe on the issue of the learning of the OVC in the CHHs, where children have been observed tackling parental roles and schooling concurrently.

In Rwanda, a different picture from the South Africa one prevails. Ward and Eyber (2009) carried out a study on resiliency of children in child-headed households where the researchers learnt that the children have developed coping strategies and capacity to thrive in extreme hardships. The children displayed resourcefulness, responsibility and a sense of maturity. They recommended the establishment of clear policies that can bring about a distinction between orphans and vulnerable children in CHH. Most policies related to OVC in Zimbabwe presently; place both orphans and vulnerable children into one group.

In Rakai district of Uganda, a study by several non-governmental groups working with OVC established that many of the children are living in poverty and hunger that is exacerbated by the AIDS epidemic and the issue of CHHs is a reality (Monk, 2001; Save the Children, 2010). On the same issue of developed resilience, Mogotlane et al (2010) also observed that it is evident that in a number of CHHs, the OVC endeavor to care for themselves and their siblings.

Schoan (October, 2001), in a study on the long term effects of the socio-economic disadvantage on the psychosocial adjustment of women, established that the psychosocial adjustment across the life span of an individual’s interactions have a bearing on the health of the future adults
(Freudian perspective). She contends that children raised in socio-economically disadvantaged families are at risk from a variety of adjustment problems, thus increasing problems. Therefore, persistent social disadvantage can have detrimental outcomes in later lives of affected OVC, especially in the way they construct knowledge at school. This study adopted a developmental-contextual perspective as formulated by Bronfenbrenner (1979 in Donald et al, 2010), describing human development as a dynamic interaction between a changing individual in a changing context. The model from early childhood up to adolescence and adulthood explains fully how social risks such as HIV can eventually bring about depression in the individual. The OVC’s life-style, especially the one in CHH, places the future at a health risk as explained by Schoan.

In his study on how the environment affects mental health, Rutter (2005) explains how risky environments are related to mental disorders. He established that the risks of depressive disorders in adult life were a result of impaired parenting than the parental loss. He, Rutter, explains how impaired parenting constituted a distant risk for the child’s mental disorder because it made good parenting more difficult. A number of research challenges were noted in the study covering common features seen in a CHH; namely the effects of severe disruptions such as neglect, humiliating experiences, rejections, peer groups, malfunctioning of schools, quality of adult-child interactions and communications.

The origins of risk factors should be identified as well as determining the changes that provide the basis for the persistence of the environmental effects on psychological functioning of an individual (Rutter, 2005). Thus, it is vital to scrutinize the effects of orphanhood on the meta-cognition of the OVC in order to protect the future adult whose childhood is parented by another child in the CHHs. What effect does child to child parenting have on the cognition and learning of orphans today? This and other issues in orphanhood are to be studied fully where the OVC in the CHH is the central figure of the enquiry. Such studies need to be carried out so that the best learning opportunity for the child can be established in a country like Zimbabwe where it is claimed that there is an increase in the number of CHHs and efforts by BEAM to assist the escalating figures seem to be overwhelming (NAC, 2011).
2.6 THE CONCEPTS OF LEARNING AND COGNITION AS RELATED TO ORPHANHOOD

Learning is a psychological term referring to a relatively long-term change in behavior that result from experience (Kosslyn and Rosenberg, 2008). The simplest way of learning is when an individual or organization is exposed repeatedly to a stimulus that continuously alters the individual’s responsiveness. When the repeated exposure to a stimulus is increased responsiveness, sensitization occurs (Ormrod, 2000; Berk, 2007; Kosslyn and Rosenberg, 2008). Behaviorists entrust that all forms of learning are by association or relating one object or event with another. This behaviorist principle is known as associative learning. There are behaviorist types of learning such as classical conditioning and operant conditioning. Both agree that learnt behaviour is reinforced. This study is centered mainly on cognitive learning though it appreciates greatly the works of pure behaviorists mentioned afore.

In simple terms cognitive learning concerns acquisition of information that is often not immediately acted upon, but stored for later use. It involves listening, watching, touching or experiencing (Huitt, 2003; Kosslyn and Rosenberg, 2008; Driscoll, 2009; Feldman, 2010; O’Neil, 2011).

Information that is obtained through cognitive learning is usually used for planning, evaluating, synthesizing and other forms of thinking. Any learner, including the OVC, is engaged in cognitive learning when he/she tries to tackle a scientific, language, mathematical task or learning new schemes. Cognitive learning involves more than simple associations between stimuli and response as in Tolman and Honzik’s (1930) classical studies with rats in Kosslyn and Rosenberg (2008). The two authorities discovered and described this as latent learning, referring to learning that occurs with behavioral signs but without reinforcement. By wondering around the environment the organism can develop a cognitive map that helps to store information. It is latent learning that can help to distinguish learning something and performing it (Meyer et al, 2003). Latent learning is a form of cognitive learning that relies crucially on how information is stored in memory.
Atkinson and Schifrin (1968, 1971) cited in Kosslyn and Rosenberg (2008) identify basic types of memory stores and explain how information flows among them. Basically information flows from a sensory memory to short term memory up to long-term memory. Later discoveries were that information can move from sensory memory straight into the long term memory and that by repeating items over and over again helps memorization (Kosslyn and Rosenberg, 2008; Slavin, 2010; Snowman and Beihler, 2011). With this background further studies on memory came up. All remembering involves tapping into the right fragments of information stored in the long term memory (Slavin, 2010a). This happens through recalling and recognizing when the learner then matches the encoded stimulus to one that has been stored in memory. Therefore, the issue of information processing is vital in any learner’s situation in order to ensure that all obstacles that militate against effective learning are reduced especially in orphaned children.

*Insight learning* consists of a situation where one grasps what something means and eventually incorporating the new knowledge into old knowledge. Some authorities call it the ‘ah –ha experience’ (Kosslyn and Rosenberg, 2008). Unlike other types of learning, insight learning is accompanied by a flash of awareness that one has learnt something. For instance, an orphaned child living in an environment of children alone, may suddenly realize that the other older orphans have knowledge in a subject content he/she is ignorant of and as they play in their CHH, insight learning can occur to a younger orphan before he/she realizes it.

The OVC learn a lot from one another. Sometimes the products of their learning are profitable yet in other instances they drag the OVC into hot soup. This type of insight learning is rather negative and may necessitate early intervention by well wishers. The origins of insight learning were with works of Wolfgang Kohler, a German gestalt psychologist (Kosslyn and Rosenberg 2008). Children in difficult life circumstances can soon find out solutions to some parenting difficulties if they are allowed to think of solutions. This study endeavors to get to the roots of orphanhood and establish its effects whilst working towards a remedy in a home where there are no real parents but child-parents.

Piaget (1962, in Mangal, 2004) describes a situation of observational learning on his own daughters, where the daughters were able to experience other people’s behaviours and were able
to reproduce copied behaviour. Bandura and associates (1966 cited in Mangal, 2004; Snowman and Beihler, 2011) also talk of a social context. As OVC socialize amongst themselves in a CHH, they continue to learn each other’s culture, likes, dislikes, beliefs and expectations. The type of learning may not depend on reinforcement and is described as observational. It helps people to learn how to behave in their cultures. One wonders however, where and what OVC observe and learn in their CHHs, at school and in the rest of the community surroundings. The OVC may learn how to cook by watching others and eventually practicing, making mistakes in the first instance and eventually understand the task.

Most of Bandura’s work was focused on modeling. Other people function as models in various instances of life. The most famous of Bandura’s experiments were with Bobo, the doll (Ormrod, 2000; Mangal, 2004; O’Neil, 2011). The experiment signifies situations of observational learning. OVC may observe aggression on watching other children’s behaviour and eventually modeling it. By observing others, children can produce desired and undesired behaviours. The reason is that many may say one thing and then model another, as in the case of a peer educator who may wish to counsel an OVC on matters related to sexual activities, yet most of the time the peer is engaged in premarital sex. This may leave the observer in an awkward situation, pondering whether to copy or not. There are other forms of cognitive learning worthy discussing. Situated learning theory proposes that learning is maintained and situated within an authentic activity context and culture (Slavin, 2010b). It is regarded as unintentional where knowledge should be presented in authentic contexts that would involve the perceived knowledge. It involves social interactions and collaboration components where learners are said to be involved in a ‘community of practice’ involving certain beliefs and behaviours to be acquired. The assumption is that the learner moves along into becoming more active and engaged in the particular culture. He/she eventually becomes more competent and assumes the role of an expert (Slavin, 2010b). Authorities writing on situated learning are in concurrence with Vygotsky’s social cultural perspective. They have developed the situated learning theory, into believing that both formal and informal learning advances through collaborative, social interactions hence the social construction of knowledge.
The situated learning theory is significant here as it explains to readers fully how both formal and informal learning can be enhanced amongst the OVC if proper collaborative activities are planned for the less privileged learners in their CHH and or when they join other learners at school in formal learning set ups.

According to Ausubelonline (2003), learning theory is concerned with how students learn large amounts of meaningful material from verbal/textual presentations in a learning activity based on the representational and combinational process that occur during the reception information. Like in assumptions of cognitivists, new material is related to relevant ideas in the existing cognitive structure on a non-verbatim basis (previous knowledge). Meaningful learning results when new information is acquired by linking the new detail with existing details in a learner’s cognitive structure, as explained by cognitivist sin assimilation and accommodation. Ausubel proposes four processes by which meaningful learning may take place i.e. derivative, correlative, subsumption super ordinate learning and combinational learning (Ausubel).

The derivative subsumption describes the situation in which the new information pupils learn is an instance of a concept that pupils have already learnt. In other words new knowledge is attached to older detail without substantially altering the concept (Ausubel). The correlative subsumption enriches the higher level concept where the learner alters the older idea to accommodate the new information. The learner learns to extend one’s knowledge to the same but more sophisticated concept. The learner now knows the new concept examples but may not know the concept itself until it is taught. Ausubel calls this the super ordinate learning example where all was well acquainted after this was taught through various dimensions of the concept.

Combinational learning describes a process by which the new idea is derived from another idea that comes from previous knowledge. For instance, a learner learns from previous knowledge in a different but related manner. Ausubel then advises that general ideas of a subject must be presented first before differentiation of context matter. New instructional material should integrate with previously presented information through comparisons and cross referencing.
Advance organizers are deductive in nature and help to compare new material with older material. They become the basis for any new learning. Educators as facilitators of learning should incorporate organizers when teaching a new concept i.e. teaching the learner from what he/she already knows. Related to Ausubel’s views on learning, is the concept of mastery learning.

The basic assumption of mastery learning is that almost all students can learn the essential knowledge and skills within a curriculum when the learning is broken into parts and presented sequentially (Slavin, 2010a). Teachers will need to know the quality of students’ learning in order to determine the beginning of the curriculum of instruction. The quality of instruction helps to link instructional activities to student needs. Variations in students should be assessed, when the educator should allow higher level activities for faster learners and extending learning opportunities for slower learners. An ongoing formative evaluation is essential if learners and educators are to have an effective reciprocal teaching and learning interaction. Only key concepts of the curriculum need to be selected for procedures in mastery learning because time is a great limiting factor (Slavin, 2010a).

Cooperative learning, also known as collaborative learning, is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning (Johnson and Johnson, 1999 in Jacobs, Power and Loh 2002:1). Basically, it entails helping students to make learning experience as successful as possible. It offers many benefits that include elevated self esteem, greater love for school, enhanced inner ethnic ties and improved abstract thinking (Johnson, Johnson and Stanne, 2000).

Related to learning is the concept, cognition (Mwamwenda, 2004). It refers to the mental processes of gaining knowledge and comprehension, including thinking, knowing, remembering, judging and problem-solving. These are higher level functions of the brain that encompass language, imagination, perception and planning that can be influenced by good and bad variables in the life of an OVC.
OVC in a CHH face cognition challenges as evidenced by the vast number of organizations countrywide trying to make the OVC gain education and learn. Examples of such organizations are Ndoro Children’s Charities (2012). The organization aims to support underprivileged children in the poorest parts of the world with an initial focus on Zimbabwe. The Hidaya Foundation Report (2011) also aims to meet the basic survival needs of orphaned children, provide support for basic and continuing education, monitoring progress in educational goals and removing obstacles that hinder progress. This study is, therefore, quite significant as it tries to unpack effects of orphanhood on the cognition and learning of affected children in Zimbabwe.

2.7 RELATED STUDIES ON EFFECTS OF ORPHANHOOD ON LEARNING AND COGNITION

The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has killed over 25 million people since it was first recognized in 1981, making it one of the most destructive epidemics in recorded history. Despite recent improved access to antiretroviral treatment and care in many regions of the world, the AIDS pandemic claimed 3.1 million lives in 2005 and more than half a million (570,000) were children (UNAIDS, 2006).

Orphans and vulnerable children fall among the many children with cognition and learning difficulties. The group takes up a greater number of children in the mainstream schools today. Though there are some generic approaches meant to help learners to learn, they may be need for further scrutiny in the handling of the many children who seem to be living under very stressful conditions such as double orphanhood.

In a study by HIV/AIDS Alliance (2006), researchers noted that the vulnerability of AIDS orphans begins well before the death of a parent. The researchers recommended empowerment of the OVC by regarding them as active members of the community instead of taking them to be victims that only await aid from donors. They also recommended the need for children’s support groups alongside with the adult ones so as to look into ways of coping with parental terminal illnesses and recurring family deaths. Effective measures that were meant to help to mobilize the
communities to provide immediate and long term support to the families affected by HIV/AIDS were to be initiated.

The researchers also prescribed mental health research for affected OVC, life skills training, psychological support services and education for most children who were engaged in multiple burdens of labour at home and were not concentrating on school work. Affected children would be referred to non formal education with flexible education services whilst the OVC worked for their livelihoods (HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2006). The researchers indicated that their study was not about conclusive CHH and that there was need for an in-depth study concerning OVC in CHHs since it is evident that the concept of a child heading a household goes against all rights that are due for children.

In the past two decades, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has seen many transitions. During the initial years of the epidemic the focus kept shifting from one high risk group to the other. Initially emphasis was given to targeted interventions, but later, as the number of women victims increased, there was a shift to society at large. Even in Zimbabwe, the emphasis has been largely on adults because the majority of the people affected by HIV belong to the productive period of their lives (UNICEF, 2001; UNICEF Global Estimate, 2004). It has taken many years to understand the devastating effect HIV/AIDS has on children`s lives. Recently, there was a growing concern over the number of orphans HIV/AIDS is creating. Children in affected families are deprived of their childhood and the privileges of living in a safe environment.

Some OVC forego their education to take up jobs and shoulder the burden of their families. Apart from malnutrition, other problems related to the increase in demands and the problems arising from being orphaned are noted. The number of OVC is likely to increase, posing serious threats to existing socio-economic structures. What is required is a proactive response by all stake holders so as to scale up support and care services for children orphaned by AIDS. Such children often grow up deprived of emotional and material needs and the structures that give meaning to social and cultural life. They are also at a greater risk of neglect, violence, sexual assault and other abuses. The concept of foster families for children orphaned by AIDS has emerged as a positive approach for supporting children at risk. It provides a continuity of care
in family and community settings thereby providing a more natural, personal, and affectionate environment for children to survive (HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2006).

The role of the research remains to provide evidence that can provide guidance to policies and programmes. In this case it is the learning and enhancement of cognition of OVC in CHHs. A number of orphaned children were discovered in Romania soon after Communism, where many orphans were neglected. Scientists wanted to study effects of deprivation and how much recovery was possible and what happens inside the brains of children (cognition) from orphans who suffered sensory and social deprivation. Romania today re-united the orphans with their birth families (extended families), or sending orphans to foster care, adopting them domestically or allowing at least 12 children to live on their own together under supervision (Aslanian, 2006). Therefore, whilst some children in Africa opt to formulate CHHs, some governments such as the Romanian one, are actually initiating the idea of monitored CHHs for the orphans. A number of anecdotal records were produced for the children to air out their views and it was noted that the construct of orphanhood does deter cognition especially if the orphan is neglected or abandoned.

In an effort by leaders to care for the estimated 143,000,000 orphans and abandoned children worldwide, global policy makers in the developed countries are advocating that institutionalized orphans be moved quickly to residential family settings and the institutions be used as a last resort (Whetten and Ostermann and Whetten, 2009). The Positive Outcomes for Orphans (POFO) research employed a quantitative analytical survey across five countries where, in addition to other orphans, 658 were double orphans. Analytical survey techniques were used to compare cognitive functions, emotions, behaviour, physical health and growth. They discovered that health, emotional and cognitive functioning were no worse in institutional living than community living. The major conclusion was that methodologically rigorous researches must be conducted in countries facing orphan crises in order to comprehend fully, the orphan’s well-being. They recommended family homes more than anything else.

In another study of over 15000 women, Schoan (October, 2001) examined the long term effects of socio-economic adversity on psychosocial adjustment where she drew data from two British cohorts born twelve years apart. She employed within her methodology, a contextual developmental perspective to analyse the connection between childhood experiences to adult
functioning in a changing socio-historical context. The outcome of the study suggested a behavioral maladjustment in adolescence that in turn triggers depressive symptoms in adulthood. The link and conclusion to orphanhood was that it is better to understand psychosocial adjustment across the life span where caregivers and researchers need to consider interactions of a changing individual in a changing context. The implication therefore, was that the impact of the environment, even in the CHH, should be monitored fully and studied to assist the populace as they learn throughout their life span experiences, beginning from childhood.

Knowledge of African responses to problems is needed in order to make any interventions culturally appropriate. In line with this assertion, Beard (2005) carried out an assessment of 73 programmes caring for 10000 vulnerable and orphaned children in Malawi. Primary care strategies were found in the form of community-based orphan care, institutional and self care. Most Africans preferred the community-based care because it kept the child in their own village or tribe. The researcher recommended that one has to work with the community in order to learn how to work with them.

A team of developmental practitioners involved with orphans and other vulnerable children in Rakai district, Uganda, studied the situation in CHHs (Plan GDD Finland, 2005). The rationale was to get a better understanding of the magnitude of the child-headed household’s situation in Rakai. Many of the children were living in poverty and hunger, exacerbated by AIDS epidemic, which has had a serious impact on the Rakai District. The study recognized very strongly that the existence of CHHs is a reality and showed that priority needs of these children included shelter, food, reliable source of income, education and health. It was dedicated to the hundreds of CHHs who exhibited enormous energies and resilience in providing care and protection for themselves and siblings (Save the Children, 2010).

In Rwanda, Ward and Eyber (2009) study on the resilience of children in CHHs developed innovative and profitable coping strategies. The OVC displayed resourcefulness, responsibility and a sense of morality. In situations where the stressors were overburdening them, the children tended to become negative and employed potentially harmful strategies to cope. A community-based approach to intervene was recommended in order to strengthen the overall community
well-being and building capacities for coping mechanisms and resilience characteristics, whilst addressing their areas of vulnerability.

According to De Bruin Cardoso (2010), writing on behalf of Save the Children, South Africa, and Mogotlane et al (2010) also of South Africa, the aftermath of the HIV and AIDS pandemic has resulted in great suffering in terms of income loss, quality of life, mobility and notability resulting in children becoming destitute and orphaned at an alarming rate. In an effort to respond to the call for care and support of OVC, Mogotlane et al embarked on a study whose purpose was to provide a broad picture of the location, prevalence, compositions, functions, needs and challenges of CHHs in South Africa. The researchers also explored available and required services, resources and safety nets for children in CHHs. An explanatory and descriptive design was used for this purpose. The sample consisted of children heading households and those living in the households that were headed by children, government departments responsible for child welfare such as the Department of Social Development, Health, Education and Agriculture, non-profit organizations and communities where these households were predominant.

From the data collected, it was found that the rights of the affected children were compromised. Those heading the households were often not at school and were responsible for domestic chores. The households needed food, clothes, money, shelter and education. The government of South Africa is attempting to address these needs through clear cut policies which will provide a distinction between OVC and CHHs. The study recommended a collaborative approach as it was shown that there was no single model of best practice to approximately and effectively address the needs of CHHs.

Beegle, Weerdt and Dercon (2006), in a study on orphanhood and the long run impact on children in Tanzania, claimed that it is a major risk factor whose prevalence among children has been exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The researchers predicted a rise in health and school problems hence the need to research and establish ways that educationists could utilize in dealing with the crisis.
Another related study in Uganda by Sengendo and Nambi (1997), examined psychosocial effects of orphanhood on 193 AIDS-orphaned children in Rakai district of Uganda. The two researchers also claim that studies on orphaned children have not yet examined the psychological impact. On a positive note, research around the area of CHH and OVC seem to be thriving in South Africa where a summary to the surveys carried out so far suggest that the majority (95%) of the children in CHH attend school. This is the same attendance rate as reported for children in mixed generation households (Save the Children online, 2010).

The main sources of income for the CHH are remittances or money sent by family members or other adults living elsewhere, meaning the majority of the OVC are not forced into self sufficiency as in other states such as Rwanda (Ward and Eyber, 2009). A few of the children in CHHs of South Africa receive social grants but few fall within the eligible age threshold (i.e. up to 14 years) for child-support grants. Only about 6% of the CHH have an employed household member above age 15 (BuaNews online, 2012). It was also noted that very few of these CHHs are in formal settings that allow adequate sanitation facilities.

Like in any other country, South African children in CHHs are at risk of copying without adults. Supplies are not regular yet the number, i.e. 122 000 children in CHHs, is cause for concern. More research is encouraged in order to ensure that policies and programming are focused and properly formulated. The Social Development section of the government of South Africa on BuaNews online (2012) recommended further longitudinal survey and qualitative researches that shed light on duration and circumstances leading children into CHHs.

Recently, Wood and Goba (2011), in their study on the care and support of orphaned children at school acknowledged that teacher training programmes around HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa appear not to have been very effective in helping teachers to respond to the demands placed on them by the HIV pandemic. The same notion was also confirmed by Mugweni (2012) in a related study in Zimbabwean schools.

At the same time, Cluver and Gardiner (2007) claim that not much research has been done in as far as care and treatment of OVC is concerned. The studies by organizations such as UNICEF
(2003), USAIDS, UNAIDS and UNICEF (2004) seemed to be unveiling the fact that orphanhood is a risk factor for unsafe behaviours and experiences. They also claim to have a plethora of anecdotal evidence in South Africa but very few studies have actually documented the relationship (Hallman, 2004).

Coming back to Zimbabwe, an investigation on the psychosocial wellbeing of OVC in sub-Saharan Africa by Roalkvam (2005) revealed the depth of social isolation experienced by children in CHHs. He established that isolation is a serious drawback on all children residing in CHHs. He commented that the CHHs seem to be invisible to their kinsmen, surrounding community and even some sections of the state, yet they do exist. Perhaps it is lack of documented evidence that fellow kinsmen seem not to realize existence of CHHs.

Specific researches mentioning the plight and learning of orphaned children have not yet been fully reported except the national surveys ran by the GoZ. Most of the participation studies on CHHs in sub-Saharan Africa are documentary work on issues of social isolation, marginalization and stigma. Most of the findings were centered around lack of a sense of security, belonging and acceptance, consequences of the past affecting psychosocial well-being, extreme poverty characterized by insufficient food, clothing and shelter, exploitation and abuse, property grabbing, denial of children’s rights and lack of democracy, neglect, emotional abuse, lack of advocacy and finally lack of access to social services such as health and education (UNICEF, 2001; Roalkvam, 2005; Donald and Clacherty, 2005).

There is need to accomplish EFA goals within the stipulated times and perhaps more of research work in the country can help to identify areas of need among OVC in CHHs countrywide. Therefore, this particular study joins other educationists and researchers in investigating the effects that double orphanhood has on affected children’s cognition and learning.

In an effort to enhance the area of education and well being of OVC, this study tries to intervene into EFA goals by catering for the rather neglected lot of children striving to learn where sometimes the cognitive maps are distorted by intervening variables. Once the effects are
established, perhaps the findings will open up for future researches that will facilitate the emancipation of OVC in the CHHs.

2.8 DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCES ENCOUNTERED BY OVC IN CHHS

Before the introduction of formal education in various parts of Africa, there existed traditional child-rearing patterns. Clear-cut roles, obligations, rights, expectations and sanctions were prescribed (Mwamwenda, 2004). With the advent of formal education and the influence of different cultures, the traditional parent-child relationships and child-rearing practices have been altered. Few African traditional communities still retain certain aspects of the rearing patterns intact but many have been diluted by the Western culture.

Duroijaiye (2006); Papalia, Olds and Fieldman (2004) and Cole et al (2009) further affirm that evidence from some African countries shows that there are no clear-cut child-rearing patterns but rather a combination of both African and Western styles. Perhaps this is due to changes in parental roles, for example, orphaned children are now taking up parental roles especially when both parents die, creating a home made up of double orphans. Whose values and norms are likely to be instilled onto the child as he/she develops?

Though Nyandiya – Bundy (2000) country-side survey in Zimbabwe contends that most parents in Zimbabwe are authoritarian types, the child-parent, who is usually the older OVC within the CHH, may have no fixed format for parenting siblings because of inexperience. Instead, the child-parent advances from one parenting style to the other depending on the situation at hand, hence the term chameleon representation of parenting styles in CHHs. As children grow, they are usually conscious of the fact that they need to obtain positive regard from others. As such they tend to act in ways that may distort whom they really are, all in an effort to gain acceptance from peers and other siblings.

Children may also engage use of defense mechanisms that resultantly seem to indicate a positive self-concept in most of the African children, yet in reality the actions may not be the true reflection of the orphans’ desires. The challenge to the child-parent then is that one may not
notice the disguised feelings and thoughts that are embedded in the child’s inner psychic structure, unless one finds time to probe. In this phenomenological enquiry, the researcher intends to probe into the affairs of OVC in order to allow the children to unpack their developmental experiences around the area of their meta-cognition. What impact does this have on learning? Mwamwenda (2004) advises teachers to select positive aspects to be emphasized and negative ones to de-emphasize when a child comes to school. The thesis endeavors to unveil the effects of double orphanhood on the learning and cognition of OVC in CHHs. Perhaps the most appreciated way of enhancing their learning can be located.

The term ‘learning’ is regarded by many as a relatively permanent change in performance potential that results from an individual’s interactions with the environment (Woolfolk, 2004; Mwamwenda, 2004; Santrock, 2006). In this context, the environment of the OVC is the other sibling, family members, teachers, etc, from whom he/she learns every day. The size of a CHH can either limit learning or enhance it. The school is also a learning environment that augments the CHH learning endeavors in influencing the child’s learning outcomes at school. How one learns depends on a number of variables.

Parenting of any format is meant to make a child learn something (Case and Ardington, 2005). How the child ends up learning becomes an issue when a child’s concept of the ‘self’ is altered as in orphanhood. There are various forms of learning but how one learns depends mainly on what is available in the environment. Having been conditioned to a particular parenting style, most children begin to get involved in cognitive learning that involves formation of schemes and concepts. For instance, after having been exposed to a complete laissez faire type of parenting for too long, a child may begin to think that life is meant to rear him/her to be care-free. He/she deal with it in the best way possible, regardless of what society might prescribe.

Cole et al (2009) reviewed research findings on how parenting styles affect school performance. Numerous research studies link a positive self-concept to a high academic achievement in subjects such as Mathematics and Languages (Mwamwenda, 2004; Case and Ardington, 2005). The studies showed that the high correlation between positive self-concept and achievement in particular school subjects seem to be that students who enjoy a given subject are likely to spend
more time and energy gaining mastery of the subject. Achievement becomes the greatest reinforcing tool. Greater interests can be stimulated by a parenting style that conveys interest and positive attitudes in a child’s work. One wonders what specifics are in place in an African CHH and what effects these hold on the learning of OVC concerned. Not many researches of this nature are available for readers hence the need to embark on one now.

The researcher has also observed that the number of extended families in Zimbabwean homes makes a reduction in the number of orphaned children staying in CHHs. The rise on financial demands in some instances may cause some OVC to contemplate suicide, suffer depression, academic failure and getting involved in drug abuse. Such childhood experiences have later effects on the future of an adult (Mol, 2004). Psychoanalysts in Pervin and John (2003) and Santrock (2006) affirm that what an individual experiences in childhood may affects future adult personality shaping.

Whilst Smith (1982) in Brooks (2008) asserts that as long as the environment in which children are placed is stimulating and curiosity is encouraged, their cognitive development proceeds at a very high rate. On the other hand the children may become discouraged, learnt details might face extinction and intellectual ability may be deterred. In contrast, Rice (2006) states that, once their surrounding becomes sterile, changing and uninteresting, or their human contacts and experiences are limited, growth stops or slows down because of intellectual deprivation. Hence, there is a need to take caution in child-rearing.

The idea of bonding may not be fulfilled once a child becomes an orphan. Berk (2007) defines bonding as the formation of a strong relationship or something that unites two or more people. Families should be protective of each other. They want to eat together, play and share ideas, just like components of a system aiming to output something. All these strengthen ties between members of a family. OVC may fail to get an opportunity to experience adequate bonding with their families. In fact, some researchers have shown that some HIV/AIDS orphans may suffer distress even when their parents are still sick (UNICEF, 2009). The rise in parental deaths seems to have brought in many negative aspects and insecurity into the family’s living system.
Perrino, Gonzalez, Pantinm and Szapocznic (2000) concur with Rice (2006) that a family’s task is to fulfill emotional needs so that the children can grow to become emotionally secure and stable persons. If children’s needs for love, affection, security, understanding and approval are not met, they are likely to develop negative feelings (Cooper, 1983 in Rice, 2006). If children are deprived of their emotional needs due to orphanhood, they may become fearful, hostile, insecure, anxious and rejecting persons. Orphanhood can leave children isolated and sometimes unprotected (Enew, 2005). French and Berlin (2000) mention the fact that some children may end up being isolates in social settings and may lose their self esteem. On the other hand, Donald, Dowes and Loux (2000) assert that exposure to anti-social malpractices, drug abuse, prostitution, and other delinquent behaviours are some of the negative effects of orphanhood especially where the children are allowed to socialize with any peer group regardless of their behaviours.

Domestic violence is a common phenomenon that seems to be taking a centre stage in hindering sustainable development in many homes today (Harner, 2005). Children may fail to agree and fight within the CHHs. The life of an orphaned learner nurtured within violent CHHs could be disastrous. The study further exposes some inherent challenges and abuses faced by OVC in unsuitable living conditions. The implications of such situations are that learning institutions should ascertain possible ways of liberating the affected learner and educate the child-parents, caregivers and teachers on the negative effects of perpetuating domestic violence.

Victims of domestic violence suffer multiple psychological injuries that can deter learning. They suffer psychologically because they are not quite certain of when next violence would occur and harm them (Harner, 2005). Perpetrators of violence in CHHs can be older children, man or woman within or outside the extended family set-ups. In a CHH, children stay independently as siblings, they suffer the heavy loss of parents but are able to pick up the pieces and continue with life albeit under difficult conditions. The siblings share emotional, social and spiritual support unlike in an extended family set-up where breadwinners might want to share the orphans for care and support.
The separation of siblings has been found to break up family ties and at the same time has its own drawbacks in the form of exposure to abuse, problems of lack of resources to sustain family life, challenges in effective behaviour-shaping and lack of direct guidance on acceptable cultural values and norms. The care of orphaned children has its challenges that necessitate proper planning on the part of the caregivers. This phenomenological descriptive survey attempts to establish the effects of orphanhood on the learning and cognition of OVC in Chipinge district of Manicaland in Zimbabwe.

2.9 EFFORTS TO PREPARE OVC FOR BETTER LEARNING AND LIVELIHOODS IN CHHS

According to the Save the Children (2010), the key needs of CHHs are:

- Interventions to reduce child carer’s expenses for medication and other essentials to support carers to continue or return to school.
- Education of Principals (School heads) and teachers about carer’s financial and scheduling constraints and enforced legislation to make school more accessible
- Education, information, training and support for child carers to care for older and sick family members through home-based care programmes
- Psychosocial support for carers in the form of peer support groups for child carers.

In India, a number of African studies were reviewed indicating interventions which have addressed the plight of OVC in Africa. Like in many developing countries such as Zimbabwe, OVC in India have not yet received adequate attention that they deserve especially as far as poverty reduction is concerned (Kumar and Schofield, 2008). A phenomenon known as ‘de facto orphans’, similar to the OVC situation in Zimbabwe does exist in India whereby some children drop out of school to take over parental roles when their parents fall ill (Kumar and Schofield, 2008). The vulnerability of children is rather a complex issue where HIV/AIDS is implicated as a main causal factor until such a time when an AIDS free-generation is in place.
Non-governmental organisations have played a vital role in the prevention, advocacy and care but there is need for the provision of rehabilitation services for OVC. India runs the Solidarity and Action Against the HIV Infection in India (SAATHII) which provides care and homes for OVC. In the homes, the OVC are provided with medical care, nutrition and psychosocial support (SAATHII in Kumar and Schofield, 2008). To further alleviate the plight of OVC especially in CHHs, SAATHII created a network of 10 NGOs through which affected children are reintegrated into schools, families and communities. Most governments and NGOs in developing countries are concerned more about getting involved in psychosocial support, socio-economic assistance and human rights protection for the parentless child.

Governments and civil societies in developing countries are challenged with a burden to mobilise resources in providing education and other basic needs to OVC. Literature seems to indicate that most developing countries facing the HIV/AIDS scourge tend to emphasise community care rather than institutional care. They find ways to strengthen coping capacities of communities by involving the children in activities that benefit them most. They try to build broad collaboration among key stakeholders and integrate more with HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, care and support services. The latter involves life-skills programmes, more support programmes for OVC, community-based approaches for OVC in CHHs and more school initiatives. Governments may learn from the experiences of one another so that appropriate laws and policies are in place for children in distress (Kumar and Schofield, 2008).

On the other hand, the Zimbabweans National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (2005-2010) aims to accelerate progress towards equality, equity and empowerment through education for girls, orphans and other vulnerable children. UNICEF (2009) also writes about promoting quality education for OVC for eastern and southern Africa, touching on case examples from Kenya, Rwanda, Swaziland, Uganda and Tanzania. The cases were compared touching on challenges and obstacles of cognition. The goals for each country were specified as a chance to accelerate momentum towards the goal of getting all children in schools of acceptance quality.

Within each country’s report, it was noted that rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be done to ensure that any gaps are noted. These case studies do shade light on the
consequences of HIV/AIDS for teaching and learning in schools due to the large numbers of teachers who are infected and sometimes fall ill (UNICEF, 2009). The above authority contends that education is critical to the future of all children especially the OVC. It gives hope for life and work and it remains a very strong protector against HIV to which most children are susceptible. A relevant curriculum is therefore necessary in any African state including Zimbabwe (Wright in UNICEF, 2009).

It is therefore vital to address the educational rights and needs of OVC in sub-Saharan Africa today. On a positive note, provision of basic education has shown remarkable improvements since the Dakar, Senegal conference on EFA in year 2000. To this effect, about 14 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have abolished school fees. Zimbabwean schools still charge fees though the fee structures are controlled by GoZ to an extent. The UNAIDS Report (2006) on the Global AIDS Pandemic reiterates the fact that in Zimbabwe, children who have lost their mothers are less likely to complete primary school education than those who have lost their fathers. The pandemic continues to exacerbate vulnerabilities and contributes greatly to instability of households and communities including CHHs. Instability is likely to cause obstacles in the learning of OVC especially those residing in CHHs.

A UNICEF (2009) study claims that the number of OVC is growing. In concurrence, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF (2009) estimates that a total of 1, 629, 547 people in Africa may die of AIDS, resulting in many children also remaining as OVC. In an effort to highlight current innovations on the issue of OVC, a number of case studies were held by UNICEF in eastern and southern Africa covering Kenya, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Zambia. The case reports mainly focused on the preparation for better learning and livelihoods for OVC, taking a multi-sectoral approach in all efforts to assist the OVC. The case reports were centered on some intervention approaches that were meant to allow children access to quality education. Provision of basic education was an effort to address educational rights and needs of OVC. UNICEF claims that the provision of basic education has shown great improvement ever-since the 164 governments met and agreed on EFA in Dakar.
In Kenya a programme known as Free Education (FE) policy enabled children access to education. In Rwanda, a Community Child Monitors Programme is assisting in areas of psychosocial and community support to CHHs, whilst the Children’s Learning and Development Programme allows OVC to benefit from vocational education.

In Swaziland the Neighbouring Care Points (NCP) programme helps on community based care of the OVC. NCP is geared towards promoting OVC’s access to education. In the same state, the All Children Safe in School Programme allows bursary schemes that pay school fees for the OVC. In Uganda, the Kitgum Concerned Women’s Association (KICWA) programme enables children to return to the community and school after education. In addition, Uganda also runs an intervention programme known as Opportunities for Reducing Adolescent and Child Labour through Education (ORACLE) programme that supports access to education of conflict-affected vulnerable children (UNICEF, 2009).

The Most Vulnerable Child programme in Tanzania intervenes in community identification and assistance for the most vulnerable children. The Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET) programme is a complementary basic education programme that provides a condensed curriculum to OVC.

In Zambia, UNICEF (2009) presents the Zambia Open Community Schools (ZOCS) programme where community schools allow low cost education to OVC. Zambia also runs the Interactive Radio (IR) programme which enables interactive radio instruction or learning to OVC by community facilitators. Lastly, Zambia also runs the Better Education and Life Opportunities through Networking and Organizational Growth (BELONG) programme which runs a school feeding programme and enhances education of OVC. The above interventions are evident in both formal and non-formal education settings where the governments, communities and volunteers all work together to assist in quality education for the learning and social protection of OVC.

More and more projects are being initiated for the support and care of OVC in many nations. The HELP (Hope, Educate, Love and Protect, 2011) is also a Malawian non-profit-making
organization dedicated to sustainable primary education in impoverished African Regions. Help to orphans comes in the form of life-skills education, empowerment programmes, provision of teachers and etc.

Though not mentioned in the UNICEF (2009) report, Zimbabwe runs the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) and NATF meant to support the education of the underprivileged and OVC. The National AIDS Council Report (2011) however, reported that the BEAM fund seems to be overwhelmed by the high demand from the populace it is meant to serve. This study aims to assist all child advocates, the GoZ and non-governmental stakeholders in the area of learning and cognition of OVC especially the double orphans running and residing in CHHs.

Literature has established that some extensive intervention practices are being tried in a number of nations worldwide where the CHHs are quite prevalent (Coombe, 2002). Such good practices are in the form of life skills programmes, support programmes, community based approaches and school initiatives. The Horizons programme for instance, included Zimbabwe, Uganda, Malawi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and Zambia (Schenk, Michael, Sapiano, Brown, and Weiss, 2010). The studies under the Horizon programme were diagnostic in nature and explored circumstances of families and communities affected by HIV and evaluations of pioneering intervention strategies. The interventions included succession planning for families, training and support for youths as care-givers, youth mentorship for CHH and support for volunteer care givers.

Save the Children (2010) identifies ways in which Life Skills programmes can permit better learning livelihoods in CHHs. Such Life Skills may equip the OVC with information on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted illnesses in order to allow the children to join hands with stakeholders in carving an AIDS-free generation. Yankah and Aggleton (2009), in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific, observed that learners who participated in Life Skills programmes reported an increase in knowledge and improved attitudes towards HIV/AIDS thus leading to positive behavior change.
In his PhD thesis, Germann (2005) explored the quality of life and copying strategies of OVC living in Bulawayo city, Zimbabwe. He cites distressing consequences of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and of the increasing numbers of OVC in CHHs. He suggested the need for a change in perspective as far as quality of life is concerned. He reiterates the fact that community-childcare activities, non-governmental organisations and statutory support, child care and protection policies are vital if ever the dreams of an orphaned child are to be realized. Germann suggests that sufficient care and support capacity may enable CHHs to function fully. Governments are therefore urged to recognize that an adequately supported CHH is an acceptable alternative care arrangement for children in communities with high adult AIDS mortality.

On behalf of USAID-Nigeria’s community-based initiatives, Oku and Nsa Cobham (July, 2010) have documented a response to the OVC challenge that involves multiple stakeholders including government ministry’s departments, civil society organisations, the private sector and development partners. Deters (2008) also analyses Ghana’s Early Childhood Development (ECD) initiative response to the rising OVC situation citing an official shift towards deinstitutionalization and towards developing community-based approaches. Like Nigeria, Ghana involves NGOs, faith-based organisations and community-based organisations where the government of Ghana supports heavily the alternatives valuing an early investment in its children, thus securing a healthy future for its nation.

HIV/AIDS affects the learner’s access and quality of learning, particularly for OVC. The notion of a community school is one flexible school initiative that is attempting to meet the needs of children in AIDS-affected areas. It is popular in Mali, Malawi and Uganda. The local communities or churches run schools and do not charge school fees. The children wear no uniforms. The school provides education materials and use local leaders as teachers, often on a voluntary basis.

They also partner with the Ministry of Education for financial and administrative support (Hepburn, 2001). In support of Hepburn’s notion, Kelly (2000) adds on to suggest that education in the world of AIDS must be different from education in an AIDS-free world. The content, process and methodology have to be examined and altered before being used. In other words, the
two are advocating for a situation where a responsive education system should be sensitive enough and revise the curriculum’s role and content then explore the cost effective community based initiatives.

Many more intervention programmes are in place mostly in developed countries. From the review of literature, some African countries are being initiated into some of the programmes. However, there is need to also focus more closely on the need to place a watchful eye on the plight of OVC particularly those residing as siblings in CHHs. Nations are making efforts to run education programmes, but what goes on in the human psyche in as far as cognition and actual learning are concerned, needs to be unveiled through rigorous research activities, hence the need for this phenomenological case study.

2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Being one of the nations that ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Zimbabwe needs to be assisted to enable better learning of every child, no matter what status. The research results will enlighten stakeholders on the effects of double orphanhood on the learning and cognition of OVC in CHHs, where a phenomenological descriptive case study, will allow the affected children to air out their life experiences in learning and cognition.

Aided by a comprehensive, multi-dimensional theoretical framework, the review of literature has tried to remind researchers that the issues concerning the learning and cognition of OVC in CHHs is really a topical issue. The review was done in areas of social construction of the concepts of orphanhood and CHHs; the concepts of learning and orphanhood; related studies on orphanhood, cognition and learning; developmental experiences encountered by OVC in CHHs; efforts to prepare OVC for better learning and livelihoods in CHHs; and policy issues related to OVC and HIV/AIDS. In brief, the chapter has tried to review literature related to the study problem.

The next chapter presents the research methodology.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The study aimed to establish the effects of double orphanhood on the learning and cognition of parentless children residing and attending school from child-headed households (CHHs) in Chipinge district, Zimbabwe. Five research questions guided the researcher as follows:

- What is the social construction of the concepts; cognition and learning, within the CHHs?
- What are the developmental experiences encountered by OVC in CHHs as far as their cognition and learning are concerned?
- How does double orphanhood affect the manner in which OVC build schemes/schemata?
- What aspects promote or deter both cognition and learning of OVC within CHHs?
- How can the schools, local communities and policy makers be academically and emotionally prepared to assist orphaned children to achieve their intended goals?

A review of literature in the previous chapter revealed that OVC in many developing states faced difficulties whose effects needed further scrutiny if ideal mitigation strategies were to be implemented. This chapter presents the methodology that led the enquiry covering the selected research design i.e. a phenomenological case study, the qualitative process, methodological triangulation, the population, sample and sampling procedures, data collection procedures, pilot study, instrumentation (focus group discussions, observations, interviews, open-ended questionnaire), data processing and analysis plan, data verification (credibility or validity and reliability), ethical considerations, as well as a chapter summary.
3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.2.1 The Qualitative Research Process

The researcher considered a six-phase research framework presented by de Vos et al (2011) as a guideline into this enquiry because it delineated the qualitative research process in detail with respect to the specific phases and also because of its flexibility as it incorporated the perspectives of various authors, amongst them being Creswell (2007), Rubin and Babbie (2010), Leedy and Ormrod (2010) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011). In choosing the problem, the study took into consideration the area, major research question, sub-research questions and aims of the study as stated in the first chapter of this enquiry.

MacMillan and Schumacher (2010) contend that a qualitative study is a descriptive research paradigm mainly concerned with the current status of something. This enquiry was qualitative in that it did not involve manipulation of any independent variables but only provided data by first describing fully the learning of OVC from child-headed environments as described by selected participants. Whilst quantitative research is based on highly formalized procedures, the qualitative paradigm is based on triangulation, a multi-method approach (Chilisa and Preece, 2008).

The focus in this qualitative research was on understanding OVC`s interpretations of their own social reality in CHH situations, where the researcher was more interested in how the OVC felt, lived or acted as they learnt. No particular theory was tested in this qualitative research (Bryman, 2004), but certain living and learning patterns emerged during the research process. Interviews, focus group discussions, audios and observations were employed where purposefully selected double orphans were allowed to air out their views during data collection.

This qualitative research mainly focused on phenomena that occurred in natural learning settings of OVC from CHHs and it involved studying the phenomena in its complexity (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). In this qualitative research, the researcher followed an issue in a multi-faceted format (a post-positivistic perspective) in order to establish the truth. In
other words, various data collection tools and different participants, who were assumed to be fully informed about the topic, were involved. The researcher too became an instrument that interpreted and made sense of what she saw critical in comprehending the social phenomenon. As was advocated by Creswell (2009) and Lincoln and Guba in de Vos et al (2011), multiple perspectives amounted to equal validity or truth about the phenomenon concerning effects of double orphanhood on learning of OVC from CHHs.

In this qualitative research design, the researcher was directly involved with the participants to the point of sharing perspectives and assuming a caring attitude in what participants said (de Vos et al, 2011). In fact, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) claim an ontological belief that personal interest and curiosity are major sources of a qualitative topic. The researcher wished to work with what struck her most from her own biography. The researcher had observed that orphanhood had actually affected many families and households in and around Chipinge district, the original home district for the researcher. An empathetic understanding of the participant’s meaning to one’s own life was essential (Bogdan and Biklen), hence it became prudent for this researcher to investigate this topical situation within the district.

This qualitative study involved thick descriptions, interpretations, verifications and evaluation of large volumes of data (Creswell, 2007; Rubin and Babbie, 2010) from in-depth interviews, open-ended questionnaire response, rigorous observations and focus group discussions from the 34 participants i.e. 20 OVC, 4 school heads, 8 teachers, an Education Officer and a Social Welfare Officer. The selected case study design fell among the five qualitative research designs that Leedy and Ormrod (2010) provided as practical research designs. These included ethnographical studies, grounded theory studies and content analysis. This researcher, backed by methodological triangulation utilized a simple descriptive case study with aspects in phenomenology or the interpretive approach (de Vos, 2011), into what she creatively coined a phenomenological descriptive case study, a purely qualitative approach. The ontological and epistemological hope here was that the researcher believed that techniques drawn from both phenomenology and descriptive case techniques would certainly answer the research questions from Chapter one.
Presented below is a pictorial overview of the qualitative research design and methodology employed. The process involved six steps as noted in Table 1 below.

### Table 1: The Qualitative Research Process

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Research Design</th>
<th>Qualitative in Nature</th>
<th>Phenomenological Descriptive Case Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Strategies (Methods)</td>
<td>Triangulation in Data Collection Tools</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews/Open-ended Questionnaires, Observations, Focus Group Discussions, Audio-recording</td>
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<td>Validity (Credibility) and Reliability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Collection Strategies (Participants)</td>
<td>Purposive Sampling in 4 Secondary Schools (3 rural and 1 urban)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Triangulation in Participant Selection</td>
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<td></td>
<td>20 OVC, 8 Teachers, 4 Headmasters, 1 Social Welfare Officer, 1 Education Officer = 34</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pilot Study</td>
<td>Each instrument tested in 2 schools (not used in main study)</td>
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<td>Transcriptions and Member-checking</td>
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<td>Ethical Considerations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Analysis Plan</td>
<td>Tesch’s Qualitative Data Analysis Tool (Tesch, 1990 in Creswell, 2002)</td>
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#### 3.2.2 The Phenomenological Descriptive Case Study

The qualitative research design employed here was the *phenomenological descriptive case study* meant to explore and present an authentic situation on the effects of double orphanhood on the learning and cognition of OVC. The case study mentioned here involved an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ either by time, context or place or a single or multiple cases over a period of time (Creswell, 2007). The effects of orphanhood on the learning and cognition of OVC in CHHs of Chipinge district was regarded as one such case that was bound by time/period and context (a period and context where many are dying of HIV/AIDS—an incurable disease at the moment; that is leaving many children parentless and in dire poverty).

Authorities in de Vos et al (2011:321) contend that a case can be ‘…a process, activity, event, programme or individual, or multiple individuals.’ Detailed explorations, descriptions and multiple sources of rich information were some of the qualities that led to choosing the case study research design. The researcher chose a descriptive variation of the case study design.
because the context in question aimed to describe, analyse and interpret a rather topical phenomenon, orphanhood and learning of affected children from CHHs. Thomas (2004) advises that some extreme or unique cases may justify an intensive study to produce detailed descriptions of the situation at hand. The researcher employed a *phenomenological descriptive case study* because the case study design had the ability to adapt to a wide range of frameworks such as phenomenology in which it strived to describe, analyse and interpret a phenomenon (Yin, 2003; Schram, 2006). This case study endeavored to explore and present an authentic situation on the effects of double orphanhood on the learning and cognition of OVC.

The phenomenological descriptive case study worked well with multiple research instruments in the form of observations in schools and CHHs, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews all meant to triangulate data collection. The researcher was aware of the case study limitation on generalisability (de Vos et al, 2011), but readers should take note of the fact that this particular phenomenon, orphanhood, is a unique, topical issue that requires particularization more than it would require generalisability (Stake in de Vos et al, 2011:322). Emphasis was therefore on the need to understand the particular case itself in order to allow the outcomes to generate meaningful conclusions and recommendations for the needy and vulnerable OVC such as those opting to reside and learn from CHHs.

*Phenomenology* is regarded as an alternative to positivism since it is more of subjectivity, than objectivity (Denscombe, 2007). As advised by Denscombe, this study was descriptive and interpretative. It dealt with OVC’s perceptions and meanings, attitudes and beliefs, feeling and emotions. Many such attributes affected the learner especially the orphaned and vulnerable learner living in difficult life circumstances. Of course, authorities such as Schram (2006) advise that phenomenological researchers should distance themselves from making own judgments and preconceptions about people’s everyday experiences. Therefore, data was presented in raw form as in anecdotal case reports to demonstrate authenticity of the learners’ livelihoods. The idea was found to work well among others in areas of education by researchers such as Groenewald (2004), Denscombe (2007), Sandelowski (2007) and Sibanda (2010). It placed special emphasis on the individual’s views and personal experiences as in the case of OVC, their developmental experiences and effect on everyday learning and cognition. However, different types of
phenomenological studies exist depending on which principles of phenomenology are being emphasized.

The advantages to the phenomenological approach were that it provided a description of how situations were experienced, for instance, orphanhood and learning were issues of concern in this study. A phenomenon is described as a thing that needs explanation (Denscombe, 2007). The phenomenological approach, also known as the interpretive approach (de Vos et al, 2011) concentrated on human experiences that were pure, basic and raw like the concept of learning of OVC living in CHHs; because they had not yet been subjected to analysis nor theorizing (Denscombe, 2007; Creswell 2007; de Vos et al, 2011). It was found worthwhile to allow the area of orphanhood and its effects on learning and cognition to be best explained by the orphans themselves since they were the ones experiencing the effects as they operated as learners from the various CHHs.

Phenomenology within this study was characterized by its link with basics in social existence, like how some OVC managed to do the roles they took as child-heads or child-parents. It aimed to present issues the way people experienced them. It elevated the importance of OVC’s thinking, giving them credibility, rationality and respect (de Vos et al, 2011).

In order to provide a description of OVC’s authentic experiences, this phenomenological researcher needed to provide a description that covered the complexity of orphanhood situation by dealing with issues in depth, making descriptions detailed; even if some of the phenomenological descriptions became self contradictory and irrational. Therefore, the researcher did not impose order in the way the participants expressed themselves though some responses showed inconsistencies. Instead, the case study concentrated on how OVC’s learning experiences were constructed by themselves.

The descriptive phenomenological enquiry relied on tape-recorded interviews especially during the focus group discussions. Through probing, the researcher was able to go through in-depth interviews whilst exploring the matter in greater depth. Groenewald (2004), Chilisa and Preece (2008), Denscombe (2007), and Sibanda (2010) assert that there are numerous versions of
phenomenological research. They offer both contrasts and differences in opinions. Crotty (2003) places all the types of phenomenological researches into two major groups covering the New Phenomenology and the European traditions.

However, the type of phenomenology in this study is linked to ‘social phenomenology’, a type of northern American phenomenology commonly used in Psychology and other areas (Denscombe, 2007). It emanated from Afred Schultz (1962, 1967 cited in Denscombe, 2007; Leedy and Ormrod, 2010; de Vos et al, 2011), who was mainly interested in mental processes through which humans made sense of the things they experienced. Taking it from Schultz, this enquiry allowed OVC to give meaning to their experience by interpreting social phenomena. Through use of social phenomenology, this research provided insight into what OVC thought about orphanhood and how it affected their acquisition of knowledge and the functioning of their cognitive maps.

Being a descriptive phenomenological case study, data was based on real life events as in the case of double orphans who seemed to be both the bread winners and school children in today’s communities, be it urban or rural. Therefore, empirical data was unveiled into the body of knowledge. Since this study employed the methodological triangulation technique, the case study research design was used with appropriate data collection methods such as a questionnaire mainly made up of open-ended questions for OVC, observations on OVC by the teachers and the researcher, semi-structured interviews for stakeholders and focus group discussions mounted at each venue agreed upon by the researcher and the children.

This researcher was aware of the few drawbacks that affected case studies and the fact that if not properly monitored, they could lead to relegation of data or its significance especially where generalizations of findings was concerned (de Vos et al, 2011). Even though, there seemed to be more advantages of case studies than disadvantages. Therefore, the researcher focused on the main gist of the study which remained as sincere objectivity to construct social reality on the plight of OVC in CHHs in as far as their learning and cognition was concerned. At the same time, this researcher was also concerned with envisaging avenues that enhanced these attributes.
3.2.3 Methodological Triangulation

The research design selected for this study was a descriptive phenomenological case study, details of which were presented under 3.2.2. The methodology was mainly qualitative. Though not mixed, the methodology also entailed aspects of methodological triangulation. The notion of triangulation in this study involved the practice of viewing issues from more than a single perspective (Denscombe, 2007; Leedy, 2010), through the methods used in data collection, the variegated participants involved and the theoretical triangulation that was discussed at length in Chapter 2. It enabled the researcher to get a better understanding of the problem that was being investigated through use of different theories, methods of research and methods of data collection. All this was in an effort to enrich the qualitative enquiry (de Vos et al, 2011). Note the fact that triangulation employed here did not refer to mixed methods. De Vos et al (2011; 434) cite Williamson (2005) differentiating triangulation from mixed methods saying that;

“...triangulation commonly uses a multi-method approach to data collection to avoid errors and biases inherent in any single methodology...and thus is more multi-method in nature... whilst a mixed method refers to a separate methodology in which both qualitative and quantitative approaches, methods and procedures are combined or mixed to come up with a more complete picture of the research problem.”

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) and Denzin (2012) describe methodological triangulation as the use of either the same methods on different occasions or different methods on the same object of the study. In this study, the methodological triangulation aspect was reflected through the combination of the data collection tools that were described and justified fully in later sections of this chapter. A purely mixed method, therefore, was beyond the scope of this study; hence the study remained mainly qualitative. The major task of this study was to examine some effects of orphanhood on the learning and cognition of children (OVC) in CHHs as lived experiences were explained by the OVC themselves. By employing some methodological triangulation techniques, the researcher expected to come up with the social reality about the learning and cognition of OVC attending secondary school from CHHs.
It was, therefore, vital in this study to briefly look at the advantages and short comings of methodological triangulation used here. The qualitative methodologies assume that social reality is constructed by the participants in it (Creswell, 2009). In this case the selected lot of OVC in CHHs of Chipinge District in Zimbabwe became the main participants. Besides being methodological, the idea of triangulation was further implemented as Theoretical, Data, Time and Investigator triangulation (Nachmias and Nachmias, 2007). Theoretical triangulation was already noted in the multi-dimensional theoretical framework in Chapter 2 of this study. The main form of triangulation here was in data collection through the number of data collection tools used, number of participants involved and triangulated procedures in the processing of the data. Coupled with data collection was the time and investigator triangulation where the headmasters and teachers working with the OVC operated as continuous OVC observers in both formal and informal learning settings.

As reflected in Chapter 2, theory triangulation in this enquiry encompassed a reflection on the various theories in 'constructivism' that was viewed from an ecological, psychosocial and socio-cultural perspective. Data triangulation (i.e. use of contrasting sources of information) ensured validity of data. The data for this study was collected through individual interviews open ended questionnaires, focus group discussions, and observations, all of which were employed at various stages of the study. Denscombe (2007) merges data, time and space triangulation. Investigator triangulation also took the form of teachers assisting the researcher in observations of OVC/double orphans in the schools and CHH settings. The teachers received some brief training during the pilot study to try and ensure accuracy of data collection proceedings.

The practice of triangulation enhanced confidence in the validity of the findings (Creswell, 2007), thus making an effort to provide accuracy and a fuller picture on the effects of orphanhood on the learning and cognition of double orphans who resided in CHHs. Refer to data matrix (Table 3) for details of which tool collected which data. The research became more comprehensive and clearer because links were established between different types of data and that there was good use of triangulation and a practical problem-solving approach to research within the enquiry (Teddlie and Tashkkori, 2007; Johnson and Owuegbuzie, 2004).
3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

3.3.1 Participants

A population is defined as a specific group of people to which subjects or characteristics of subjects are being referred, compared and generalized (Groenewald, 2004). Tuckman (2011) also defines a population as the target group from which the researcher wants to get information about the problem or phenomenon of interest and then draws conclusions. The choice of the sample was mainly determined by the characteristics of the population and its size (Chilisa and Preece, 2008). Such characteristics as age, gender, social class, location and ethnicity of selected population were important.

The population in this study was made of double orphaned Zimbabwean children (14-18 years), who opted to reside and attend secondary school from CHHs when their parents died. A sample of 20 OVC was purposefully picked from the population. Four (4) school heads, eight (8) teachers, one (1) Education Officer and a Social Welfare Officer were the stakeholder representatives who, together with the 20 OVC made a total sample of 34 participants. The children came from some poverty-stricken areas of Chipinge district. According to a report by Medicin Du Mont (2009), Chipinge district was noted to be one of the poorest districts in Manicaland. The OVC residing in CHHs were selected because they seemed to have been facing diverse learning and cognition challenges if compared with OVC who were staying with relatives after the death of their parents. Their teachers too, headmasters, Education Officer and the Social Welfare Officer were chosen on the basis that they were mostly linked to the welfare of all vulnerable learners in the four purposefully selected secondary schools.

By defining the population, the researcher was in the process of establishing boundary conditions that specified who was to be included or excluded from the population. The idea of defining the population may restrict the researcher on conclusions and generalizations, but facilitates selection of a suitable sample (Rubin and Babbie, 2010).
There exist two types of populations namely the *target* population and the *accessible* population (Macmillan and Schumacher, 2010). The former is a wider network of prospective and non-prospective participants of the study which included all the OVC as defined by the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ). At the time of carrying out this enquiry, the researcher established that about twenty percent (20%) of school children registered at the social welfare office in the district were orphaned and vulnerable. The accessible population for this study was made up of all the secondary school going double orphans (OVC), residing in CHHs, most of who were orphaned by HIV and AIDS in Chipinge District. The major participants of the study were aged 18 years and below. Their livelihoods had been altered by effects of parental deaths that led them to situations of distress.

When their parents died, a number of the OVC opted to converge into CHHs due to various factors that seemed to segregate them from other members of their extended families (Foster, 2003). The new phenomenon, CHH, seemed to be a growing trend in Zimbabwe and other developing countries as was observed in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

Both Bernard (2006) and Sandelowski (2007) concur that by selecting from a more narrowly defined population, one would be saving on generalisability. Being a qualitative study, the researcher was aware of the clue, hence a much more accessible population of double orphans was selected from the target population in four purposively selected secondary schools (3 rural and 1 urban secondary schools) in Chipinge district. The researcher had learnt from the district education office that within these four secondary schools, the prevalence of CHHs was much higher than in other schools within the district.

From the registered orphans within the four schools, double orphans living in CHHs formed the accessible population. From this accessible group, a manageable sample was selected randomly in order to minimize any form of bias. This population consisted of orphans whose learning and cognition was directly influenced by double orphanhood mainly due to HIV/AIDS pandemic. The group was quite homogeneous in that most of the participants shared the same language, cultural practices, psychosocial challenges and probably more or less similar academic challenges (Royse, 2008; Marlow, 2005; Teddlie and Yu, 2009).
Being a social phenomenological enquiry, the researcher assumed that the OVC would enhance validity of data obtained since they were allowed to air out their lived experiences in orphanhood and how this eventually affected learning and cognition. In addition to the OVC population, the enquiry also involved teachers, school heads, and Social Welfare Officer and MoEASC district education officer as stakeholders working with the OVC within the four schools. The stakeholders were meant to help triangulate and authenticate findings from the main participants, i.e. the OVC lot.

3.3.2 Sampling Procedures

3.3.2.1 The sampling frame

A sampling frame is an objective list of the population from which the researcher can make his/her selections (Denscombe, 2007). It should contain a complete up-to-date list of all those who comprise the population of the study. For this study, OVC registers were obtained from the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) registers at the Ministry of Education, Art Sport and Culture (MoEASC) district offices and the Social Welfare Office to match and authenticate data on the prevalence of OVC in the CHHs in Chipinge District. Four schools, each with a dense OVC population were purposively selected as the target population and the researcher pseudo-named them schools A, B, C and D because some of their learners were to participate in the study if selected. The purposely selected double orphan group came from both rural and urban CHHs, with more coming from the rural sector because Chipinge is just a district with only two (2) urban and thirty two (32) rural secondary schools.

From this sampling frame, a sizable representation was purposively selected to come up with an accessible population from the four secondary schools representing the highest prevalence of OVC living within CHHs. The sampling frames for this study encompassed, in addition to the list of OVC attending schools in Chipinge district, the headmasters of the selected schools, the District Education Officers, the Social Welfare Officers and the lists of teachers. Both groups were purposively sampled from the frames.
The researcher ensured that the sampling frames obtained for each set of participants was not outdated so as to provide the most authentic data needed for the study (Denscombe, 2007). Authorization to access participant’s lists was obtained from the Chipinge District Administrator’s office under the Local Government Ministry (Appendix 5) and MoEASC(Appendices 2, 3 and 4) as main responsible authorities for all learners including OVC. Thus the sampling frames appeared as indicated below.

Table 2 (a): OVC sampling frame in the four Selected Secondary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Gender and Totals</th>
<th>Paternal Orphans</th>
<th>Maternal Orphans</th>
<th>Double Orphans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Male (M) :223 Female(F) :211</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>M : 217 F : 242</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>M : 217 F : 218</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>M : 237 F : 205</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>87</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OVC Details from Chipinge District MoEASC (March, 2012)

Table 2 (b): Stakeholder Sampling Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School /Station and Stakeholder’s Designation</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A: Teachers +Headmaster</td>
<td>22+1</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B: Teachers +Headmaster</td>
<td>24+1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C: Teachers +Headmaster</td>
<td>23+1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School D:Teachers +Headmaster</td>
<td>32+1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOESAC : Education Officer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare Department Officers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stakeholder details from Chipinge District MoEASC (March, 2012)

3.3.2.2 The Sample and Sampling Procedures

There are several sampling procedures used to draw a representative or unbiased sample from a population. Whilst quantitative researches make use of random, systematic, stratified, cluster and multi-stage sampling procedures, this qualitative study used purposive sampling (Chilisa and
Preece, 2008). This qualitative research used non-probability sampling methods which were centered on discovering facts more than testing a hypothesis (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). This phenomenological case study employed purposive sampling in order to extract a working sample beginning from the target OVC population to an accessible population of double orphans.

In the first instance the researcher had planned to utilize purposive sampling procedures (non-probability) only, as is the norm in qualitative enquiries (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010; Desai and Potter, 2010; Babbie, 2010; Cohen et al, 2011 and de Vos, 2011) but the large turnout in each accessible sample necessitated randomization at each of the four schools. The dilemma was on how to eradicate bias and allow each double orphan noted at each of the four schools, an equal opportunity to be selected for the study (Macmillan and Schumacher, 2010). The researcher was aware from the review of literature that orphaned and vulnerable children, easily noticed instances of unfair treatment (Foster, 2003; Nyamukapa and Gregson, 2004).

Because the researcher had an idea of the number of children she was to work with, she then decided to employ the technique of randomization at each school in order to end up with five percent (5%) of the OVC from the available OVC stratum at each school (Cohen et al, 2011). Concealed ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ papers, amounting to the number present at each school, were placed in a small bucket, shuffled and picked by each OVC. There were five ‘Yes’ papers at each school which amounted to 5% of the OVC that the researcher required as representation from each school. The other lot of ‘No’ papers represented the rest of the OVC identified in the accessible population (Macmillan and Schumacher, 2007), but were eliminated by randomization and did not participate in the rest of the study. The randomization was repeated at each school and 20 OVC made up the study sample as demonstrated in figure 6 below.
Figure 6: Double Orphan Representation in the Four Schools through Stratified Random Sampling

Efforts were made to reduce gender bias by purposively picking a proportional representation of each gender as reflected in figure 6 (3 males and 2 females in schools A, C, D and 2 males and 3 females in school B). Since this was a qualitative enquiry, the researcher needed to get a small and manageable group (Smith, 2007; MacMillan and Schumacher, 2010) of OVC from the defined population of OVC and stakeholders.

For the lot of stakeholders, purposive sampling was quite easy to implement because the populations were small as noted on the sampling frame shown in table 2(b).

Research authorities such as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) contend that purposive sampling is a key feature of the qualitative research and it allows the researcher to hand pick ideal cases to be included in the enquiry mainly on the basis of the researcher’s judgment of the typical characteristic of double orphanhood sought within the study, hence some authorities call it judgmental sampling (Rubin and Babbie, 2010). The sample was hand-picked because the
researcher knew the specific OVC group that could produce the most valuable data. As propounded by Denscombe (2007), the researcher centered her sample selection on double orphans which allowed her to obtain critical points within the research problem. These were characteristics that displayed extreme cases of OVC in CHHs that helped to answer the major research question at hand. Being purposive, the procedure remained economical and fully informative up to until the full set of participants was obtained.

Sidhu (2003) advises that purposive sampling can be considered as a form of stratified sampling in that the selection of the cases for study is governed by some criterion that act as a secondary control and so the researcher ensured that selected cases were OVC from CHHs. The criterion was suggested after having noted practices of OVC in and outside their classes. In an endeavor to carefully determine the most appropriate sample characteristics, the researcher identified a criterion (Maree, 2007) that was most important and purposeful from the accessible population in order to extract a sample of 20 double orphans.

The criteria entailed being a double orphan, residing in a CHH and aged between 14 and below 18 years. The researcher purposively picked on double orphans since most of these were the ones who were found to be residing in CHHs and were experiencing unique learning and cognition hardships emanating from being orphaned. Orphaned households headed by either a mother or a father (maternal and paternal) were purposively left out because the orphan in here seemed not to suffer the same degree of challenges faced by the former because at least they still had an adult care-giver unless the caregiver was also terminally ill. The single caregiver issue, however, was not the major direction followed by this enquiry.

Since purposive sampling was controlled by the investigator, it became easier and more manageable because the researcher knew her objectives and was able to judge whether the selected group was representative enough for the detail needed. In doing so, unnecessary variables were omitted thus saving on time and costs (Sidhu, 2003).

To try and extract an even much richer data, the researcher considered implementing a further variation of purposive sampling i.e. the extreme and deviant case sampling (Teddlie and
Tashkkori, 2007; de Vos et al 2011 and Cohen et al, 2011) by picking up only double orphans who were not staying with their extended family members ever since the death of their parents. Perhaps these would come up with even more hidden orphanhood experiences unlike double orphans in extended family homes. The selected double orphans provided issues on the topic in question which were of wider concern to the OVC population.

The researcher also believed that the sample of double orphans represented a ‘knowledgeable people’ (Cohen et al, 2011) of those that were experiencing the effects of orphanhood on their own learning and cognition hence calling the enquiry a phenomenological case study. By working with OVC experiencing the orphanhood crises, strong and rich data was obtained.

The total double orphan sample came to twenty (20) purposefully selected OVC resembling the four secondary schools where more OVC attending school from CHHs had been noted. The total number of participants was thirty four (34), comprising twenty (20) OVC/double orphans, eight (8) teachers, four (4) school heads, one (1) Education Officer and one (1) Social Welfare Officer. Each one of these participants was vital for a number of reasons as was discussed earlier in this section of the descriptive phenomenological case study.

3.4 PILOT STUDY

Royse (2008) contend that it is vital to run a pilot study even in a qualitative enquiry in order to determine whether data can be obtained from the respondents though statistical tools may not play a role in a qualitative enquiry. For this purpose, the researcher selected and tested some of the interview and focus group questions in order to check on any ambiguities that needed modification (Grinnell and Unrau, 2008; Rubin and Babbie, 2010).

Initially, some internal validity was checked through pilot testing in Chimanimani District. Chimanimani district (see map under delimitation, figure 1) is near Chipinge, where the researcher resides, and making pilot-testing quite convenient. The environment around Chimanimani holds almost similar characteristics as Chipinge District, suggesting that it was feasible for trying out the instruments. It was also vital to carry out pilot study in settings almost
similar to where the main study was to be conducted as advised by most researchers (Monette, Sullivan and Delong, 2005). After the initial pilot study in Chimanimani, the researcher noted the need for a ChiShona version of the OVC assent form (See appendix 8). Further validation was carried out on all instruments through trying the instruments again in Chipinge, the district where the main study was to be carried out, but not at any of the schools where the main study was to be conducted. This time the researcher wanted to seek permission from authorities, further check her instrument quality and at the same time establish relationships in the community where she was going to carry out the main study (Monette et al, 2005). The preliminary discussions with experts, reviewing literature, checking feasibility of study and testing the research tools all helped to ascertain the fact that the study was a noble attempt.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION AND INSTRUMENTATION

3.5.1 Data Collection Procedures

The qualitative phenomenological case study made use of multiple research instruments once again involving triangulation in data collection. See data matrix in Table 3.

The 20 OVC were involved in some focus group discussion interviews (Appendices 12) and responding to an open-ended questionnaire (Appendices 9a and 9b). The questionnaire allowed each OVC some access to the instrument just before and during the interviews. Views of the District Education Officer, Social Welfare Officer, 4 school heads and 8 teachers were obtained through a stakeholder's interview guide (Appendices 10a and 10b). Teachers conducted observations (Appendix 11). The researcher had to train teachers as assistant researchers within their schools before the data were collected. This was in line with ethical requirements stipulated in Newcombe (2010) and the UNISA Policy on Ethics (2007). The teachers helped to observe targeted OVC as they taught them and made recordings on an observation checklist stipulated by the researcher. Here, participant-observation options were utilized. Observation procedures involved listening to orphan’s case stories and learning problems and possibly interviewing them to probably get the extent of their traumatic and non-traumatic learning experiences.
Prior to visiting the schools and CHHs, the researcher needed to obtain permission to do research in Chipinge district. Permission by UNISA had been granted tentatively on the onset when the researcher got registered for the D.Ed programme and the proposal was accepted. (See appendix 1a). Some senior Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) ministry’s authorities had to be consulted, starting from the Chipinge District Administrator at the Chipinge Local Government Office, to seeking consent of the Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Sport, Art and Culture (MoEASC) at the Zimbabwe MoEASC head-office, as well as the Provincial Education Director in Manicaland and the Education Officer at the MoEASC Chipinge district office. Even if the Local Government ministry is not ‘education’ it was prudent and necessary to first seek permission here to avoid instances where the research endeavors would be misconstrued as politically motivated. Permission was, however, granted without any challenges; first verbally through the phone, followed by written permission posted from each of the four offices that needed to give their consent for the researcher to embark on the study (See Appendices 1b, 2, 3, 4 and 5).

A baseline survey helped to check on the feasibility of the study within Chipinge district and to get an idea of the total target and accessible population of OVC within the CHHs and significant stakeholders in Chipinge district. Refer to sampling frames in tables 2(a) and 2(b). The gathered baseline data confirmed the research questions, the theoretical framework, and assumptions thereof (Desai and Potter, 2010; Cohen et al, 2011). The base-line survey also enabled the researcher to find out more on the ethical and legal needs of orphans in relation to their learning, cognition and research involvement. The collection of data began from interviews with OVC, to those with stakeholders and eventually the mounting of focus group discussions. Observations remained a continuous process up to end of data analysis.

A preliminary visit to some CHHs and schools was also necessary to establish the total number of schools visited as well as their distances apart. The preliminary survey helped to locate the greater prevalence of OVC in both urban and rural Chipinge district. Four out of the thirty four (34) secondary schools were purposefully picked up because details given proved that the greater numbers of the OVC found here were attending schools from CHHs. In each of the four schools (3rural and 1 urban); 5double orphans (making a total of 20), the school head (4 in all), 2
teachers (8 in all), 1 Education Officer and a Social Welfare Officer were purposively selected to make a total sample of 34 participants.

An application letter was prepared for both the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) stakeholders who granted the researcher permission to work with OVC. A letter addressing participants was used as a cover note for each instrument. This was one other means of trying to enhance a conducive atmosphere for the fieldwork. Appointments to schools were confirmed through telephoning.

Pilot testing was done in two secondary schools in nearby Chimanimani district to check on the validity and reliability of research tools meant for the study. The pilot results from the interview schedule items indicated that most of the OVC who participated blamed both orphanhood and low socio-economic status variables as affecting their learning and cognition adversely. This was followed by a further blame on parenting responsibilities and loneliness that was caused by being parentless. Few amendments were done on the data collection instruments after the pilot study. The researcher needed to insert a column for comments on the observation guide. The results at pilot level also assisted the researcher to strategise best ways of presenting the results when the actual fieldwork was completed. Instruments were then sent to the research supervisor for overall expert validation before main data was collected.

After all the necessary corrections, modifications and further validation by the supervisor, instruments were reprinted and the actual fieldwork conducted. Working with OVC was scheduled in such a way that there was no major disruption of school lessons. The researcher targeted sessions meant for class study and extracurricular activities to save valuable time in the learning of OVC within the schools. Each focus group discussion, observation session and audio recording needed about 1 hour 45 minutes per day, outside data transcription times.

The idea of triangulation was utilized during data collection procedures to cross-check the various data sources enlisted. The use of more than one method of enquiry yielded substantial advantages (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000). The triangulation of research procedures and techniques was necessary in researching real life situations as in the case of this descriptive
phenomenological case study on the effects of orphanhood on learning and cognition of OVC from CHHs, because of the multiple causes that accounted for portrayed OVC behaviour. The *Tesch’s open coding method of qualitative data analysis* (Tesch, 1990 in Creswell, 2002), that makes use of data analysis to identify themes and categories, was used as the data analysis tool. According to Tesch cited in Yin (2003), Creswell (2002), and (White, 2005), the model is a systematic process of examining, selecting, categorizing, comparing, synthesizing and interpreting data to address the initial sub-problems.

The idea of carrying out the study’s fieldwork in closer consecutive dates was to ensure that the responses remained valid and reliable before the end of the fieldwork. It would have been unwise to allow too long gaps in between the fieldwork for there was a possibility of participants discussing and distorting participants’ views and perceptions beforehand. Closer dates also catered for climatic conditions in which the researcher wanted participants to be exposed. The same climatic conditions for all participants was ideal, to ensure uniformity and no bias within the interviewing sessions (Denscombe, 2007), hence the use of warm afternoons in the schools. The sitting arrangement for focus group discussions necessitated a circular arrangement or a row-system to encourage sharing amongst participants during focus group discussions. Weaning of participants or termination of data collection procedures was quite easy and all participants cooperated because they had been informed right from the beginning that the research procedure was eventually going to be terminated after the debriefing processes.

### 3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion interviews with OVC

The study utilized focus group discussion interviews as a means of establishing how the OVC viewed their orphanhood status and its effects on learning whilst reflecting on viewpoints of stakeholders as group members. Krueger and Casey (2008) define a focus group as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions in a defined area of interest in a permissive non-threatening environment. It implied a qualitative research in which each group of OVC was asked about its perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitude towards the research concept or idea.
The researcher facilitated and coordinated the discussion ensuring that participants were discussing necessary details in a safe environment. One and a half hour focus group discussion sessions were conducted at each of the four schools with the researcher as facilitator, five selected OVC and two teachers as assistant facilitators. As advised by Krueger and Casey (2008) and Nyamathi and Shuler (1990) cited in Vos et al (2011), both the facilitator and the assistant were vital in each session to help with directing the discussion, keeping the discussion flowing and handling possible disruptions as well as enhancing taped communication and other logistics.

A focus group interview schedule (Appendix 12) was used at each meeting to guide the proceedings. The guide entailed an introduction, the research topic, ground rules formulated by the participants, stimulus questions under a specific theme meant to kick-start the discussion and concluding remarks (Maphalala, 2006; Sibanda, 2010). The open-ended questions allowed participants to develop their responses (Desai and Potter, 2010).

As advised by Sibanda (2010), each of the focus group discussion interview sessions took an active interactive and participatory method in which participants acted as co-researchers by combining the investigation with learning and group action. The focus group discussions enabled the participants to share and compare views as they experienced life and learning from CHHs. Denscombe (2007) assumes that focus groups make use of dynamics. They consist of small groups of people brought together by a ‘moderator’, that is the researcher, to explore attitudes, perceptions, feelings and ideas about a certain topic.

Quite a number of authorities give distinctive points about focus groups where they take the forms of exploratory, clinical, and phenomenological approaches (Calder in de Vos et al, 2011). The latter became more evident in this phenomenological survey. There had to be a focus to the session in which all participants had similar knowledge and experiences. Emphasis was placed on the interaction within the group as a means of eliciting information and that the researcher or moderator`s role was to facilitate group interactions.

The stimulus that trigged the discussion was usually shared experience in the form of personal backgrounds as children residing as siblings alone in a CHH. The children suffered similar life
challenges and shared same life experiences. In each of the four focus group discussion sessions, the stimulus that trigged the sessions were questions that were hinged onto the themes formulated from the research objectives. The stimulus questions enabled participants and moderator to then focus on the topic in question that was eventually channeled into a more specific and concrete discussion.

As each group interacted, the researcher was able to understand the reasoning behind the views and opinions expressed by group members. This helped the researcher to then investigate participant’s reasoning by exploring underlying factors to participants opinions and feelings (Morgan, 2010). A collective opinion about the topic was thus obtained through questioning and reflection.

The role of the researcher /moderator was to create a comfortable atmosphere for the discussion and including the stimulus for the discussion to kick-start. The researcher then kept field notes relating to the discussion and also had an audio-recording session of each focus group discussion. The point to note for the researcher was that she should encourage participants to talk to one another. Taking this from a counseling perspective, ‘talking on its own was therapy’. It helped participants on their own without the researcher leading. However, Denscombe (2007), Krueger and Casey (2008) and Morgan (2010) all advise that larger groups may be a bit difficult to manage as compared to smaller groups. This was ideal for CHHs as the stipulated size coincides with an average or typical African household size. Two or more households may want to share their experiences together as combined households as was the case at one of the rural schools the researcher worked with. It was also vital to emphasize a climate of trust among group members so that each group member felt at ease and was comfortable in the company of the other.

Confidentiality was taken to be another vital ingredient in the effective focus group discussions. Group members were reminded to assure one another that any personal feelings revealed remained confidential in order to protect personal dignity. Therefore, mutual trust among group members was vital and was emphasized at the beginning and at the end of each focus group discussion (Krueger and Casey, 2008). The researcher was aware of the fact that ordinary focus
groups often exacerbate the problem of confidentiality of statement privacy. The researcher ensured that no confidential data leaked unnecessarily by conducting the sessions away from busy or noisy classroom blocks.

As for advantages of the focus groups discussions and transcribing the notes, the material presented for interviews (Appendices 9b and 10b) also applied. The researcher found the advantages of focus group discussions outweighing the disadvantages as summarized by Morgan (2010). Reasons for using focus groups were as follows; they were self-contained methods in this study where they served as principal data sources; and they were appropriate for use within this multi-methods means of collecting data. Above all, the method proved to be time and cost efficient in giving results. Because of socialization sessions of story-telling as in most African home settings, participation in a focus group discussion seemed to be a familiar task to most OVC who were once reared in an African cultural context.

3.5.3 Interviews for Stakeholders

The teachers and the headmaster at each of the four schools as well as the district education officer and social welfare officers were involved in individual semi-structured interviews. According to de Vos et al (2011:352), an interview schedule or guide is ‘…a questionnaire written to guide interviews. It provides the researcher with predetermined questions or themes concerning what one hope to cover.’ They vary in purpose, nature and scope, from individuals and group interviews, single and panel interviews, structured and unstructured non-directive and focused interviews, etc. (Sidhu, 2003; Desai and Potter, 2010; Gray, 2011: Cohen et al, 2011).

This study utilized the semi-structured interview approach where the researcher followed both open and closed questions which were tailored to get clarifications (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010; Gray, 2011) stakeholders. Semi-structured interviews were ideal for use in this phenomenological approach where the main objective was to explore subjective meaning that the respondents ascribed to events that they experienced (Gray, 2011). It allowed probing where the interviewer/researcher was allowed to improvise using own judgment and the participants were able to expand their views and opinions.
The sequence and wording were determined by means of an interview schedules (Appendices 10a and 10b). As advocated by Denscombe (2007), the interviews were carried out with the consent of the participants. Both Leedy and Ormrod (2010) and Cohen et al (2011) echo that the consent of first and foremost stakeholders should be sought in advance. Feasibility as a major consideration in data collection tools was noted. The content and procedures were organized around a particular area of interest in advance, with the major purpose of allowing further questions to check on reasoning and clarity. In this study, the area of interest was related to OVC learning and cognition experiences as the children operated from CHHs.

The interviewer (researcher) exposed the predetermined list of questions to which the participants responded (Monette, Sullivan and Delong, 2005). Each respondent was faced with identical questions for purposes of standardization. The researcher allowed each participant to read the interview schedule together with the researcher in order to allow participants to choose where he/she wanted to start from, and also allowing some considerable flexibility in the depth and scope required by the study (Smith et al, 1995, in de Vos et al, 2011). Flexibility was necessary where participants indicated different developmental experiences than those specified in the schedule. The interview schedule for each set of participants was constructed to guide the conversation, probe and make follow-ups in order to pursue the implications of the responses supplied by participants (Rubin and Babbie, 2010). In each interview session, the researcher was careful enough to minimize dross rate (Field and Morse, 1995 in de Vos et al, 2011) in order to keep the interview focused and save time for both the researcher and the interviewees.

Desai and Potter (2010) as well as de Vos et al (2011: 353) add on to say that both structured and unstructured interviews follow a pre-set list of questions which are often standardized across interviewees. In fact the latter authority advises that some aspects used in both interviews maybe similar. The procedure of using a predetermined interview schedule was justified in this study to ensure that each participant was exposed to the same type of treatment thus making an effort to make findings valid and reliable.

It was vital to obtain permission to collect interview data from the 14 stakeholders. Adequate time for collection and analysis was availed. The whole process of data collection and analysis of
results required careful organization. The interview schedule was provided with background information for the benefit of the respondents. The details on the schedule mentioned the sponsor (UNISA being the responsible institution), the purpose of the data that was to be obtained, return address and date, assurances on issues of confidentiality and the fact that participation was to be voluntary (Crotty, 2003; Bryman, 2004; Nachmias and Nachmias, 2007; Babbie, 2010; Cohen and Manion, 2011).

Besides the background information, the interview schedule contained instructions to the respondents and serial numbers or the individual codes since the interview guides were to remain anonymous and did not carry respondent’s real name (Denscombe, 2007). Precautions were taken that only key issues were to be asked. Most of the questions were open-ended to allow respondents to provide high qualitative data. The few closed questions provided mostly demographic details of participants.

The interview schedule remained economical on time and other resources just like a questionnaire (Gay, 2010). It was easy to administer but its construction required careful thought. The disadvantage that the respondents may confer with others as in a questionnaire (MacMillan and Schumacher, 2010; Gay, 2010; Babbie, 2010) was not experienced with each interview since the data collection procedure was on one to one basis.

Throughout the interviewing process, the researcher took a rather passive and neutral stance in order to minimize the impact of the researcher on the research outcome (Denscombe, 2007:179). He, Denscombe, contends that:

‘Passivity and neutrality are the order of the day. The researcher’s ‘self’, adopting this approach, is kept firmly hidden beneath a cloak of cordiality and receptiveness to words of the interviewee....the researcher..... is thereto listen and learn, not to preach .... not to provoke hostility or put the interviewee on the defensive.’

All necessary arrangements for interviews in the form of times, location of the interviews and seating arrangements required proper planning. As advised by Denscombe (2007) the researcher
remained attentive, made sensitive use of probes and prompt checks while remaining non-judgmental. The advantage to the researcher was the fact that she sometimes counseled where such interviewing skills are a must. During the sessions, the researcher made field notes during the interviews whilst events were still fresh in the memory. Some audio recording took place and these were backed up by field notes (Macmillan and Schumacher, 2010; Cohen et al, 2011).

Though laborious, the process of the transcribing also needed to be recognized as a substantial portion of the interviewing process. It helped the researcher to eventually come up with an end product that was easier to analyse than the original audio recorded detail (Denscombe, 2007). Annotations too were vital during transcribing so much that the researcher created a column in which to include observations about the ambience of the interviews.

A qualitative data analysis tool coined by Tesch (1990, in Creswell, 2002) allowed live numbering and coding that helped to locate parts of the transcripts (Bryman, 2004; Mertens, 2010; de Vos et al, 2011). In the research report some interview extracts were used in the form of anecdotal records and vignettes. To check on the validity of the interview data, there was need for member-checking and corroborating context brought in by interviews with data collected through focus group discussions and observations (data triangulation).

Interviews were found to be advantageous in this study because of the depth of information they brought into analysis of findings. The researcher gained insight into the views and wisdom of informants. Informants were allowed to expand their ideas as they prioritized them. Procedures were flexible and held a high response rate since they were pre-arranged and scheduled. In terms of validity, interview data was checked for accuracy and relevance during the data collection process. Though findings may not be fully reliable, the drawback was overcome by triangulation where detail was verified using details from other data collection tools (Denscombe, 2007; Leedy and Ormrod, 2010; de Vos et al, 2011; O’Neil, 2011).
3.5.4 The Open-Ended Questionnaire for OVC

According to Babbie (2010), a questionnaire is a document containing questions designed to solicit information appropriate for analysis. In concurrence, Sidhu (2003) takes a questionnaire as a form prepared and distributed to secure responses to certain questions. Questionnaires may be in the closed or open format. The open-ended type selected for use in collecting OVC data allowed greater freedom of response unlike in others where one is forced to choose one of the given alternatives. See appendices 9a and 9b.

The open-ended questionnaire was chosen because of a number of advantages that seemed to outweigh the disadvantages. Maphalala (2006), Nachmias and Nachmias (2007), Macmillan and Schumacher (2010) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) all seem to concur on a number of advantages noted below.

Advantages of a Questionnaire

- It was quite affordable as the main tool for collecting untapped developmental and learning experiences from the 20 OVC.
- The tool permitted the OVC sufficient amount of time to consider answers before responding.
- Unlike the interviews, they provided a greater uniformity across the measurement. Each OVC responded exactly to the same questions because standard instructions were given to the respondents.
- The data or content provided by questionnaires could be more easily analyzed and interpreted than the one obtained from verbal responses. The results of what OVC presented became a basis for further understanding and planning on OVC cognition and learning.
- Through the use of the questionnaire approach the problems related to interviews were avoided. Because some interview "errors" may seriously undermine the reliability and validity of the content obtained, the questionnaire was meant to produce more reliable and valid results.
• The researcher anticipated the fact that respondents would comfortably answer questions of a personal or embarrassing nature more willingly and frankly on a questionnaire than in a face to face situation with an interviewer who may be a complete stranger.

• Respondents were allowed to complete questionnaires in their own time and in a more relaxed atmosphere in their CHHs.

• The administration of questionnaires, the coding, analysis and interpretation of data was done without many difficulties.

**Disadvantages of the questionnaire**

Although the OVC questionnaire had numerous advantages, it also had significant disadvantages, hence the need for triangulation in data collection tools.

• Questionnaires do not provide the flexibility sometimes noted in interviews. In an interview an idea or comment can be further explored and developed.

• Some OVC were better able to express their views verbally than in writing, hence the use of the questionnaire in conjunction with interviews and focus group discussions in this study.

• Questionnaires can be answered only when they are sufficiently easy and straightforward to be understood with the given instructions and definitions. For this purpose the researcher simplified the language.

**3.5.5 Observations**

Nachmias and Nachmias (2007) present two major divisions in observations i.e. the controlled and the non-controlled observational systems where a non-controlled system poses fewer commitments on the researcher thus allowing greater flexibility. A least controlled observation method employed in this study was participant-observation in which the investigator was devoted to attaining some kind of membership in or getting a close attachment to the OVC group that she wished to study (Nachmias and Nachmias). An observation guide was prepared for this
purpose (Appendix 11). It contained sections indicating observed OVC’s behaviour and brief comments in sections A and a section B meant to insert any other observed details that might have been left out by the behaviour listed in section A.

The observers participated in the daily lives of people under study openly, taking the role of a researcher observing, listening and questioning people concerned (Becker and Geer in Denscombe, 2007). The researcher managed to establish a close collegial relationship with the OVC especially the heads of the CHHs in Chipinge district where she directly got involved in their daily activities in schools and within the communities where the OVC came from.

Due to some ethical considerations that any educational psychology research would entail, the researcher preferred the participant-as-observer-role option of observations (Nachmias and Nachmias, 2007; de Vos et al 2011). The participants were informed about the researcher’s purpose of involvement in the daily activities of the schools and the communities where the OVC came from. The participant-observer role allowed the OVC and other stakeholders to know their scientific roles whilst minimizing problems of role pretence. By allowing the researcher’s identity to be recognized by participants, the researcher found it easier to gain informed consent of all those involved in the study (Denscombe, 2007).

In the participant–as–observer–role, the researcher endeavored to establish a close relationship with members of the group who, subsequently became informants and study respondents. The major aim was to find resourceful and reliable informants where eventually the researcher got accepted as a categorical member of the group (Nachmias and Nachmias, 2007). The two authorities also advised on procedures to follow when weaning or terminating the relationship with the group as was explained under data collection procedures. The observations were later analyzed.

Denscombe (2007) and Bell (2011) however, warn researchers that participant observations can pose ethical problems for the researcher. The researcher herewith, was fully informed about issues of confidentiality and informed consent hence the decision to take up the stance as participant-as-observer-role. On a more positive note, participant observation was advantageous
in that it used basic equipment such as the ‘self’ as the main research instrument. The researcher here operated as a primary research instrument in the qualitative enquiry, where she used her qualities and experiences as an educator to observe and interact with participants all in an effort to help unveil and provide authentic data on the effects of orphanhood on the learning and cognition of OVC coming in to school from CHHs.

The observations in participant-as-observer capacities helped to uncover raw data whilst retaining the natural setting of the respondents unlike controlled observations (Nachmias and Nachmias, 2007). It was suitable for dealing with complex realities such as the fast-sprouting CHH issue at hand in Zimbabwe. The data obtained was context sensitive and ecologically valid in as far as OVC in CHHs were concerned (O’Neil, 2011). It enabled the researcher to study the link and relationship between various factors. It enhanced the major aim of the phenomenological or interpretive research by allowing participants to air out their points of view (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010).

The continuous observations took place in schools, during focus group discussions and within the OVC child-headed households and communities. Teachers assisted as observers using an observation guide.

3.6 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

3.6.1 Data Analysis Plan

Scwandt (2007) asserts that qualitative data analysis is a process of inductive reasoning. As such, the researcher here seemed to be rather ambiguous, yet aiming to be creative and fascinating (Scwandt) in presenting and analyzing the findings. This qualitative enquiry went through the process of analyzing qualitative data; through descriptions from open-ended data where the process of data triangulation involved during data collection also included verbal analysis. Mwenje (2001) defines data analysis as the corroboration of data gathered. For analyzing the data, procedures were augmented by the Tesch’s open coding method of qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2002) illustrated below. It is important to note that data collection here occurred
simultaneously with data analysis, as described by Tesch (1990 in Creswell, 2002 and Punch, 2011) all in an effort to deduce the meaning in an informed way.

**Figure 7: The iterative and simultaneous data analysis process (Levels Adapted from Tesch, 1990 in Creswell, 2002)**

The researcher got involved in several iterative and simultaneous activities during the qualitative data analysis as shown in figure 7 above. The first steps were provided by Tesch in Creswell (2002) to analyse the data systematically, by segmenting it into words or categories that subsequently formed the basis of the emerging story of the phenomenon under scrutiny before the recommendations were made. The activities included collecting the data; displaying it; reflecting on it; coding and distilling it into themes; sorting the data into categories and sub-categories; formatting the data into a coherent story or picture, and writing the qualitative text through the stories’ interpretations (Tesch, 1990 cited in Creswell, 2002). Lee and Fielding (2004), Leedy and Ormrod (2010) and de Vos et al (2011) advise that the process of moving from data to conceptualisation and theorisation is the most distinguishable aspect of qualitative research.
Denzin and Lincoln cited in de Vos et al, (2011:398) contend that there is no one way to do interpretive, qualitative enquiry. Therefore, the researcher did not really present data in a linear or rigid fashion but was creative (Vos et al, 2011) without really distorting the stance that OVC reflected as their social world of learning experiences in CHHs. The analysis of data followed a spiral image, giving analytical circles as data was analyzed from the various raw sources thus leading to data reduction and interpretation that involved coding and categorizing up to building themes (Creswell, 2007; Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). Most data involved descriptive and cross tabulations. In analyzing, interpreting and presenting the findings, the researcher was also aware of some clues on qualitative data analysis as given by Rapley (2008) covering the following:

- Reconsidering the initial research questions which of course may change as the study progresses.
- Transcribing the text into sufficient detail giving summative notes of key aspects within the conversations.
- Familiarizing one-self with the non-textual data by re-reading the text or replaying the audio recordings.
- Being attentive to words and phrases in participants own vocabulary that capture what they want to say.
- Identifying different topics/themes and descriptive codes encountered through line-by-line analysis of each interview transcription codes.
- Using a constant comparative method to develop a comprehensive coding scheme. It covers naming of categories and adding more transcribed interviews and comparing new data incidents with conceptual categories already identified.
- Looking for underlying similarities between different themes, identifying deviations from the room or creation of a pattern that will lead the conforming or disconfirming initially formulated themes.
- Analyzing the data regularly throughout the research process.

Whilst a quantitative enquiry produces numerical findings, the qualitative analysis transforms findings (Patton, 2002; Babbie, 2010). As advocated by de Vos et al (2011), transforming the raw data from the OVC and other selected stakeholders, reducing the raw volumes of
information, sifting it, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework to reveal and communicate what the OVC were experiencing as effects of orphanhood in their learning and cognition in their CHHs, the enquiry confirmed its qualitative stance.

The researcher also kept a research or project diary (Flick, 2009) to show steps taken to conduct the study. Member-checking (Patton, 2002) was done where, by returning to research settings during the writing of the research report, the researcher managed to check on ambiguities, gaps, clarifications and getting new observations that enriched the descriptions. The member-checking process involved both the researcher and participants; hence a good collegial relationship between the participants and the researcher was maintained.

3.6.2 Data Verification

3.6.2.1 Validity

The term validity indicated whether the research items measured a description of what it is supposed to measure (Bell, 2011). The researcher attempted to measure some content, constructs, predictions, etc about the effects of orphanhood on the academic performance of double orphans in CHHs. In this study, the OVC semi-structured questionnaire, for instance, measured the effects of orphanhood on learning and cognition of OVC in CHHs. Whilst the quality of a study is usually measured by its validity and reliability; some qualitative researchers assume that other criteria could be more appropriate. Four alternative constructs to assess qualitative enquiries, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Vos et al, 2011) were proposed to check on validity of this study.

In this study,’ credibility’ was taken to be the most important of the four because it is linked to internal validity. For the purposes of credibility, this enquiry clearly stipulated the parameters of the study throughout the research process covering issues of triangulation and prolonged engagement in the field. In addition, Campbell and Fiske in Cohen et al (2011) contend that it is through triangulation that concurrent validity in qualitative research is demonstrated.
On the issue of ‘transferability’ or generalisability the researcher was aware that qualitative research findings may be problematic in as far as other settings, populations, and treatment arrangements (external validity) is concerned. To counter such drawbacks, the theoretical and geographical boundaries mentioned in chapter one clearly stated how the theoretical framework and the issue of triangulation on data-collection greatly strengthened the vitality of the study.

Validating the content of the interview schedules was necessary to check whether each question was meant to answer the stipulated research questions. Gay (2010) asserts that content validity is usually determined by expert judgment. Therefore, the research supervisor, Dr. MC. Maphalala at UNISA and other specialists in Psychology of Education assisted in validating the instruments. Cronbach in Nachmias and Nachmias (2007) assert that construct validity involves relating the instrument to an overall theoretical framework in order to determine whether the instrument is tied to concepts and theoretical assumptions within the study. The main construct in the study was orphanhood. Construct validity was also ensured by asking simpler questions at the beginning and moving to more difficult ones towards the end. The language used in the interviews, however, remained simple for more accessibility for Zimbabwean second language speakers. In fact the participants were allowed to respond in the language each preferred to use, be it English or ChiShona. Transcriptions were then made by the researcher herself as someone who is competent and fluent in both languages.

Being present during the exercise was quite beneficial as it was possible to respond to any queries the respondents presented. To some extent, the interview schedule ensured proper construct validity by explaining in simple terms like what orphanhood, learning and cognition meant. From the results, predictions were made possible on how orphanhood status affected learning and thinking processes. Any replication of this study may enhance future generalisations which Gay (2010) call predictive validity.

Validity for the qualitative aspects of the enquiry was also enhanced by adopting a social phenomenological research design which led to the establishment of some truth since details came from the concerned OVC experiences. The audio-recordings and the transcriptions also enhanced the truthfulness of the enquiry. Triangulation on instrumentation also assisted in
ensuring that the resultant findings were the truth about the OVC learning in CHH of Chipinge district. Data sources were also varied (see data matrix- table 3), in order to enhance validity of the study.

3.6.2.2 Reliability

Reliability in research refers to the degree to which procedures give results of the same kind under constant conditions on all occasions (Bell, 2011). In concurrence, Nachmias and Nachmias (2007) contend that reliability is an indication of the extent to which a measure contains variable errors, i.e. errors that differ from observation to observation during the measuring stance.

Similar to reliability is Lincoln and Guba’s (1999 in de Vos, 2011) concept of dependability. Replication of the study may not be problematic as such, but what might differ are the manners in which participants may present their lived experiences since anyone’s social world is always being constructed. The study can also be assessed on the basis of its conformability or objectivity (de Vos et al).

Being more qualitative than quantitative, the enquiry did not require statistical reliability computations, though the aspect of using reliable instruments remained a pre-requisite. The test–retest reliability procedures for data collection instruments was carried out at pilot level where pilot participants assisted in identifying sections of the instruments that sounded vague or ambiguous. Corrections were made and instruments were retested until they became more user-friendly. A few printings that showed threats to reliability were corrected for readability purposes as well as clarity. The idea of working with a slightly larger number of participants (Denscombe, 2007) and sorting several experts’ scrutiny on the open-ended questionnaire, observation guide, etc (Gay, 2010), was one other strategy planned to ensure reliability of instruments before and after the pilot testing.

As noted by many qualitative researchers, it can be difficult to accomplish reliability in naturalistic events (de Vos et al, 2011) such as the CHH situation involving different household
sizes and many other variables affecting OVC. Most of these aspects are not static. The qualitative process can also be subjective for no investigator studies a phenomenon exactly like the other. The idea of pilot testing the instruments with participants of an almost similar background in Chiranimani district was a noble idea in order to ensure use of more accurate instruments. In addition, instrument triangulation as well as allowing more time in field work helped to enhance validity and reliability of instruments (Creswell, 2009; Strong and Hensley, 2009; Morgan, 2010).

A visiting schedule was prepared for each school and CHHs so that respondents were not rushed into the procedures taken for data collection. Afternoons were noted to be more ideal times for working with the OVC at each school just to make sure that respondents were exposed to similar situations and that the participants’ responses to the individual and focus group interviews were not directly influenced by too many external variables.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher was concerned with envisaging avenues that could possibly enhance the learning and cognition of OVC in their CHHs, noting the fact that most of these children were surviving under very difficult life circumstances. Being a sensitive case study, a number of ethical considerations took precedence in order to safeguard the 20 orphaned children, the researcher and the 14 selected stakeholders. Among other ethical considerations discussed here were vital ethical aspects such as *autonomy, justice, beneficence and non-maleficence* of human research participants as stipulated in the UNISA Policy on Ethics (2007).

By ethics, researchers refer to the study of moral standards and how they affect conduct or a system of moral principles governing the appropriate conduct of a person or group. According to Hansen, Rossberg, Cramer (1994), in Chireshe-Urombo (2000:6), ethics refer to ‘…a moral philosophy that deals with making judgments, good or bad, proper or improper, approval or disapproval, right or wrong.’ De Vos et al (2011:114) also define the term ‘ethics’ as;
‘...set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioral expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other research assistants and students’.

The authorities here imply standards upon which the researcher ought to evaluate one’s conduct with participants. In other words, these are guidelines for professional conduct or behaviour (UNISA Policy on Ethics, 2007). The researcher was aware of a number of such ethical standards that affected the qualitative enquiry; covering avoidance of harm, voluntary participation, informed consent, deception of participants, violation of privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, compensations of participants time and costs incurred as well as debriefing of the participants, competence of researchers and publishing of the research outcomes as was read in the policy.

Nachmias and Nachmias (2007) advise researchers to aim to strike a balance between demands placed on them and the rights and values of participants that may be threatened by research, a concept referred to as ‘cost benefit ratio’ by Cohen et al (2011). It was vital for the researcher to consider likely social benefits against personal costs to the participants. The researcher took cognizance of the fact that no one person was above the law hence it was vital to consider other people’s rights especially the rights of the child, in particular, the OVC. Every person has the right to privacy and dignity of treatment (Ebel and Frisbie, 2004; Babbie, 2010; Newcombe, 2010). It was vital for the researcher and assistant researchers (teachers) to explain fully, to all participants, the major aim of the study. This study tried to find ways to enhance learning and cognitive performance of OVC living within CHHs in Chipinge district of Manicaland, in Zimbabwe.

Participation in the study was voluntary meaning anyone was free to withdraw at any given moment suppose he/she felt that they were no longer interested midway through this study. Rubin and Babbie (2010) advise that no one should be forced to participate in a study. However, this researcher was quite conscious of the fact that OVC may be affected psychologically by the whole research process and so the researcher interjected the research process with some
psychosocial counseling techniques to try and minimize unnecessary regressions and minimize possible harm to participants.

Grinnell and Unrau (2008) advise researchers on the importance of ‘beneficence’ where the aim was to maximize possible benefits and minimize possible harm to participants in the study. No significant personal harm was inflicted on participants in this enquiry. The process of debriefing (UNISA Policy on Ethics, 2007; Ebel and Frisbie, 2008; Desai and Potter, 2010) helped the researcher to maintain a collegial relationship with the participants from the beginning up to the end of the research process. It remained ethically upright to disclose full procedures of the study, whilst safeguarding the OVC and the stakeholders.

For instance, where there was an instance of an OVC working with an extended family member who might have been secretly abusing the OVC within the CHH, strict confidentiality was observed whilst establishing ways of intervening in the situation in order to safeguard the minor. As such, it was vital to take caution as the researcher interacted with participants so that confidentiality (de Vos et al, 2011; Cohen et al, 2011), was observed and the OVC disclosed for purposes of safety (Chireshe-Urombo, 2000). Participants certainly received adequate explanations for the researcher’s decision to withhold information. The researcher kept in confidence all information about the research participants. Pseudo names and codes were used to conceal identities of written reports or discussions with fellow researchers.

Participants were assured that any details provided were not to undergo shared confidentiality without the permission of all participants. Here some behavioral counseling procedures were explained prior to data collection suppose the researcher needed to impose shared confidentiality (Hough, 2004) in order to safeguard the OVC. The researcher, however, promised not to withhold any information that she felt might harm them (deception) right on the onset of my study, during the research process or at the end (Ebel and Frisbie, 2004). The research interactions between the participants and the researcher went well without hindrances.

All efforts were made to adhere to the major research aim which was basically to ensure scientific objectivity throughout the study (Morris, 2006; Leedy and Ormrod, 2010; Cohen et al,
The researcher assured all participants that she was not to use her prerogative, in any way, to obtain information beyond that which was needed for professional research purposes.

As advocated by the UNISA Policy on Ethics (2007), Grinnell and Unrau (2008) and Babbie (2010), the need for a signed statement of willingness to cooperate (use of consent and assent form) in order to safeguard the participants, the researcher and assistant researchers was of paramount importance. The researcher drafted a consent form for the selected stakeholders and an assent form for the OVC (see appendices 6, 7 and 8). This researcher was aware that all ethical codes depended on what was morally upright than what might be legally enforceable. Therefore, great precautions were taken to safeguard all those involved in the study. The established consent and assent forms were signed before the participant’s involvement in the research process.

Non-harmful procedures were followed in this study where least stressful operations were followed especially with the OVC. In instances where the diagnostic and therapeutic procedures benefited the child but at the same time unavoidably exposed the child to stress, (e.g. when an OVC narrated the developmental experiences in the CHH), the researcher took precautions to show the empathy, love and warmth necessary at each level. Like most phenomenological researches, this study carried with it some humanistic attributes (Denscombe, 2007).

Since there were no biological parents to take the place of a legal guardian or those acting in loco parentis positions; the headmasters, teachers and officers in the Ministry of Social Welfare under the GoZ helped to give parental consent. Informed consent required that the legal guardian, usually a responsible adult, be informed of the research that may affect their willingness to allow the child to participate. The responsible adult was also informed that they may deny the opportunity to participate without any penalty to them or the OVC. All questions posed by prospective participants were answered in the most truthful way possible, so that participants felt free to either participate or not.

The researchers’ obligation was to respect the child’s freedom to choose at all times by giving the child assent to participation. The term, ‘assent’ means that the child shows some form of
agreement to participate without necessarily comprehending the full significance of the research necessary to give informed consent (Desai and Potter, 2010; Newcombe, 2010). As such all the minors involved here were directly under the care and guardianship of the selected Social Welfare Officer, school headmasters and Education Officers at the time of this study. The researcher had to seek the consent of authorities before the children signed the assent forms. The assent form also carried the name and signature of the officer offering his or her consent.

The participants were informed beforehand that they should not expect any tangible rewards. The researcher was cautious of hints by Royse (2008) and Desai and Potter (2010) that participants might fabricate information in order to remain involved in the study if offered too much money, thus altering the process and scope of the study. It remained the researcher’s duty to ensure that the greater the possible effects of the investigation on the child, the greater was the researcher’s obligation to protect the child’s welfare and freedom (Newcombe, 2000).

From the beginning of the times when this researcher collected data, there was a clear set agreement between the researcher, responsible authorities and the OVC on the particular duties or mutual responsibilities of each party (Chireshe-Urombo, 2000). These were honored by the researcher, her assistants and all other participants. Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 show such agreements. Appendices 6, 7 and 8 also indicated the stakeholder’s consent form as well as the minor’s assent form in both English and ChiShona.

Any worthwhile research should be published as advised by many authorities including the UNISA Policy on Ethics (2007), Creswell (2009), Desai and Potter (2010) Vos et al, (2011) and Cohen et al (2011). General findings of this study were to be reported to the participants in an awareness workshop that was to be hosted with OVC, representatives of the GoZ officials and local caregivers towards the end of the study, unless withholding of such research outcomes became the only option to safeguard participants. A most careful manner in which to report the findings was ensured, where caution was exercised in statements made by the researcher without impairing the principle of confidentiality (Bless, Higson, Smith and Kagee, 2007). Great care was also taken to ensure that social, political and human implications of the study did not cause any havoc.
In any research involving human beings, it is vital to safeguard the welfare, dignity and rights of all participants. This remained the primary obligation for the researcher because the qualitative process engaged human subjects (Newcombe, 2000).

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The qualitative research methodology described by this chapter rested on methodological triangulation within a descriptive phenomenological case study. Some pros and cons of methodological triangulation were highlighted. The research paradigm chosen was qualitative. Therefore, the research design provided aspects of the descriptive phenomenology. Two types of populations were discussed, i.e. the target and accessible populations from which the sample of thirty four (34) participants was selected, where twenty (20) were double orphans/OVC picked up through purposive sampling. The rest of the participants comprised four (4) headmasters, eight (8) teachers, one (1) Education Officer and one (1) Social Welfare Officer. Selection procedures entailed non-probability sampling methods mostly because the case study required particular characteristics to envisage the effects of orphanhood in CHHs. Finally, the instruments; namely open-ended questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and observations, their reliability and validity as well as the data collection procedures and data analysis plan were discussed.

The data presentation, interpretation, analysis techniques employed by the study and a discussion of findings are all part of the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The study attempted to examine the effects of double orphanhood on the learning and cognition of children living and attending school from CHHs within Chipinge district of Manicaland in Zimbabwe. The qualitative data were collected from 34 participants comprising 20 OVC, four school heads, eight school teachers, one education officer (DEO) and a social welfare officer (SWO). Participant observations were conducted on OVC by the researcher and the eight teachers as assistants. Semi-structured questionnaires were completed by each of the 20 OVC, followed by a focus group discussion mounted at each of the four schools with the OVC. The eight teachers, four school heads, one DEO and one SWO were all consulted as stakeholders through an individual semi-structured interview guide.

Focus group discussions were transcribed using some notes and audio recordings conducted during the focus group discussions. The participants and schools were coded to conceal identity of participant as was promised in the initial stages of the enquiry under ethical considerations. See tables 5(a) and 5(b). The data were presented through an eclectic use of descriptive qualitative features involving excerpts, anecdotal reports, narratives, tables and graphs all falling within some specified themes as guided by the Tesch’s model of qualitative data analysis (Tesch, 1990 in Creswell, 2002; de Vos et al, 2011). Since the response rate was very high at each school visited, it was hoped that the rich data collected was representative of the learning and cognition situation as experienced by OVC in CHHs located in both rural and urban parts of Chipinge district, in Zimbabwe. The following research questions guided the study from the start:

- What is the social construction of the concepts; cognition and learning, within the child headed households (CHHs)?
- What are the developmental experiences encountered by orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in CHHs as far as their cognition and learning are concerned?
• How does double orphanhood affect the manner in which OVC build schemes/schemata?
• What aspects promote or deter both cognition and learning of OVC within CHHs?
• How can the schools, local communities and policy makers be academically and emotionally prepared to assist orphaned children to achieve their intended learning goals?

Table 3: Summary of selected methods and the nature of data collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Collection Methods</th>
<th>Data obtained/value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the social construction of the concepts of learning and cognition within child-headed households?</td>
<td>- OVC questionnaire.</td>
<td>In-depth understanding of OVC’s (anecdotal records and vignettes), teacher’s and officials’ knowledge on the concepts of learning and cognition in CHH.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Participant observations on OVC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Focus group discussion sessions with OVC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Stakeholder open-ended interviews.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the developmental experiences encountered by orphans within CHH as far as learning and cognition are concerned?</td>
<td>- OVC questionnaire and focus group interview schedules.</td>
<td>Unpacking some of the OVC encounters in CHHs that impact on learning positively or negatively. Data to be obtained as case presentations, anecdotes and vignettes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Teacher’s observations on OVC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Researcher–as-participant-observer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does double orphanhood affect the manner in which OVC build up schemes/schemata?</td>
<td>- Focus group interview schedules for OVC.</td>
<td>Soliciting and understanding OVC’s and teacher’s knowledge on how a learner’s cognitive map can be altered by being parentless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Teacher’s open-ended interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- OVC questionnaire.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Observation on OVC by teachers and researcher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What aspects deter or promote cognition and learning in CHH?</td>
<td>- Teacher’s OVC observation guide.</td>
<td>Acquiring details of what enhances or deters learning as observed by teachers and as explained by the OVC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Focus group interview schedules for OVC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Researcher as participant observer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can schools, local communities and policy-makers be academically and emotionally prepared to assist orphaned children achieve their intended learning goals?</td>
<td>- Stakeholder’s interviews.</td>
<td>Soliciting information leading to recommendations that can advance effective formulation and implementation of policies meant to assist OVC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- OVC questionnaire.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Focus group discussions with OVC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 THE TESCH’S QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS TOOL

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the data collection and analysis took place iteratively and simultaneously as summarized in figure 7 in chapter three. The researcher got involved in several activities during qualitative data analysis. These included collecting the data; sorting the data into categories; its distillation and reduction; theme building and formatting the data into a coherent
story or picture, and eventually writing the qualitative text (Tesch in Creswell, 2002; Miles and Huberman, 1994 in Punch, 2011). Both Leedy and Ormrod (2010) and de Vos et al (2011) advise that the process of moving from data to conceptualisation and theorisation is the most distinguishable aspect of qualitative research. The enquiry employed the steps provided by Tesch in Creswell (2002) to analyse the data systematically, by segmenting it into words or categories that subsequently formed the basis of the emerging story of the phenomenon under scrutiny.

During the data collection process it was essential to place the four secondary schools into codes that disguised their real names mainly for ethical reasons. The following codes A, B, C and D were used to represent the four schools from where the researcher collected the data. See table 4 below. Three were rural and one was urban. The alphabet codes were pseudonyms meant to protect the researcher, schools and the participants just as was discussed under ethical considerations in chapter three.

### 4.2.1 School Codes A, B, C and D

**Table 4: School Codes and their meanings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Codes</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>School code A in an <em>Urban</em> setting. Therefore, AU1 – AU5 in subsequent sections of this chapter represent all the 5 OVC from Chipinge urban schools and CHHs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR, CR, DR</td>
<td>School codes B, C and D all in <em>Rural</em> settings represented by letter ‘R’. Therefore, BR6 –BR10, CR11-CR15 and DR16-DR20 are all the 15 representing OVC from the rural schools and CHHs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUS</td>
<td>Refers to <em>Stakeholder’s</em> codes in <em>Urban</em> school A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRS, CRS, DRS</td>
<td>Refers to <em>Stakeholder’s</em> codes in <em>Rural</em> schools B, C and D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>Refers to the <em>Urban Stakeholders</em> from the district education and social welfare offices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.2 The Research Themes, Sub-themes and Categories

The researcher reduced and placed the findings into five main themes. The process of categorizing and theme building followed a combination of themes embedded in the reviewed literature, research questions and questions within the instruments that were used to collect data (Punch, 2011). The reduction of data began from generating categories and codes from the numerous findings. The numerous transcribed text data were divided into many segments or codes. The codes were further reduced until the researcher managed to collapse them into the five (5) themes enlisted below (Creswell, 2002). To represent the themes and their relationships, some visual images of information, tables, and graphs were utilized as illustrated under each theme’s detail. The process of data reduction yielded five main themes that led to further sub-themes as the thematic discussion of findings unfolded. The themes read;

**Theme 1**: Developmental experiences encountered by OVC in CHHs in as far as cognition and learning are concerned

**Theme 2**: The social construction of the concepts; cognition and learning, within CHHs

**Theme 3**: Effect of orphanhood on the building of OVC’s schemes/schemata

**Theme 4**: Learning Needs of OVC and Aspects that promote or deter both cognition and learning of OVC within CHHs

**Theme 5**: Improving Policy and Preparing OVC and the Communities to assist orphaned children to achieve their intended life-line goals.

However, the researcher begins from presenting and analysing biographic details of the 34 participants, before presenting the main findings and thematic discussions of the phenomenological descriptive case study.
4.3 BIOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS

Table 5 (a) and 5(b) below depict biographical profiles of the 20 OVC and the 14 stakeholders who participated in this research study from both urban and rural areas of Chipinge district. Note that the researcher has coded each participant for purposes of confidentiality as part of ethical considerations that were promised to participants during data collection.

Table 5 (a) Biographical profile of the key participants (20 OVC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Code</th>
<th>Age in Years</th>
<th>Gender (F/M)</th>
<th>School Code and Location</th>
<th>Position in CHH</th>
<th>Class or Form</th>
<th>Total no. of OVC in CHH</th>
<th>Status of older members under care of OVC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AU1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A-Urban H/D</td>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A-Urban H/D</td>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A-Urban H/D</td>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>Five</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A-Urban H/D</td>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>Five</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 sister with a baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A-Urban H/D</td>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>B-Rural</td>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>B-Rural</td>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 sister with a baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B-Rural</td>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B-Rural</td>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 old grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B-Rural</td>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 old grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>C- Rural</td>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>C- Rural</td>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 old grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>C- Rural</td>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C- Rural</td>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C- Rural</td>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>D- Rural</td>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>Five</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>D- Rural</td>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>D- Rural</td>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>D- Rural</td>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 sister with a baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>D- Rural</td>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:
R - Rural OVC
U - Rural OVC
F - Female
M - Male
H/D - High Density
A, B, C, D - School Codes
Refer to Table 5(a) above. Twenty (20) OVC or double orphans from four (4) Chipinge urban and rural secondary schools responded to a semi-structured questionnaire, followed by focus group discussions mounted at each school for the purposively selected double orphans. Gender distribution was considered as was explained earlier on figure 6. In Chapter 3, the researcher was quite aware that each one of the OVC was facing a critical life stage that needed great psychological support for coping with school work and managing households.

During the OVC interviews, the researcher observed that most of the rural children were rather in despairing moods and this necessitated some group psychosocial counseling to comfort the children, de-traumatize the situation and re-assure them of their great importance as everyone’s children and respected citizens of Zimbabwe. After the psychosocial counseling sessions, all participants displayed some emotional stability up to the end of the interviews and focus group discussions. No one shed tears during the interviews. They all seemed to show resilience to their orphanhood situation, thus making the data collection procedures more manageable. All the boys and girls were above puberty with ages ranging from 14 to minus 18 years.

Fifteen (15) OVC (i.e. BR6 –DR20) on table belonged to rural secondary schools whilst five (5) OVC (AU1-AU5) belonged to urban secondary school. All the (20) OVC were literate and attending school (form 2-5) within their locality. Most of their parents had some liabilities and had left no big assets for their children except for either a 2-4 roomed house or hut(s).

The researcher noted that nineteen (19) of the CHHS were staying with siblings and old grandmothers. Only one was staying on his own. Three (3) of the rural households had old and ailing or incapacitated grandparents where the child remained the overseer of all the CHH activities.

Only six cases from the rural schools acknowledged occasional support from both government and non –governmental organizations namely BEAM, Social Welfare Office, Capernaum Trust, Farm Orphan Support Trust (FOST) and Christian Care in the form of fees and food rations. Members of the extended families were also reported to be erratically giving limited basic physiological needs and psychosocial counseling and support. Two of the five (5) OVC from the
urban secondary school had received fees aid from BEAM at the time of the researcher’s visit to
the school. On distribution by position in CHHs, 14OVC reported that they were the oldest of the
siblings in the OVC sample, each manning a household of 3-6 OVC, some of whom were
siblings and others were members of the same extended family. Only one boy child in one of the
rural schools was reported to be staying alone.

Important to note is that the orphaned children were in dire need of aid in various formats since
they were receiving minimal and occasional food aid from local well-wishers. A number of the
OVC i.e. 16 out of 20 relied heavily on weekend and holiday work on other people’s plots in
order to get money for basic physiological needs and school fees. Not all older children were
taking up the role of heading the household. Some older children in three CHHs were reported to
have been impregnated but not married thus bringing in more minors into the household and
forcing younger male OVC to take over as heads of households.

From the interview schedules, it appeared that most parents of the 20 OVC had died. The GoZ
regards all children in distress as OVC, whether their parents are still living but may not be
looking after their children (NAP for OVC; ZNOCP; ZNASP, 2006-2010). To a large extent, the
OVC reported more problems of stigma and discrimination from some members of their
extended families. The children appreciated more psychosocial support that came from their
friends, teachers and some neighbours.
Table 5 (b) Biographical profile of the research participants (14 Stakeholders)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Code</th>
<th>Age in Years</th>
<th>Gender (F/M)</th>
<th>Location in Chipinge</th>
<th>Designation under MOESAC</th>
<th>Experience with OVC</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUS21</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Head(H)</td>
<td>16years</td>
<td>B.Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUS22</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Teacher(Tr)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>B.Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUS23</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Tr</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>B.Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRS24</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>B.Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRS25</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Tr</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Dip.Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRS26</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Tr</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Dip.Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRS27</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>B.Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRS28</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Tr</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>B.Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRS29</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Tr</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Dip.Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRS30</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>B.Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRS31</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Tr</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dip.Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRS32</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Tr</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dip.Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US33</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>District Education Officer</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>M.Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US34</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Social Welfare Officer</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>B.Sc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:
A, B, C, D - Codes for the four schools
AUS- School A Urban Stakeholder
F - Female
M - Male

The table 5(b) above shows biographic details of fourteen (14) stakeholders whom the researcher found quite necessary in the study to help authenticate data from the OVC, basing on the stakeholder’s responses to an interview guide and an observation guide for OVC. The 14 stakeholders comprised four school heads coded AUS21, BRS24, CRS27 and DRS30. Eight secondary school teachers were coded AUS22, AUS23, BRS26, BRS26, CRS28, CRS29, DRS31 and DRS32. One DEO and one SWO were coded as US33 and US34. The 14 adults were aged between 34 and - 61 years. They had had an opportunity to interact with the general OVC populace at varying degrees for periods ranging from seven to 18 years. Gender distribution was balanced for teachers where the researcher purposively picked on two women and two gentlemen from each of the four secondary schools.
In two of the schools the pairs of teachers were part of a committee named OVC Support Committee (OVCSC) which was an advantage in as far as authenticating details from the children was concerned. As for the school heads, the gender representation was 1:4 due to the particular regional staffing procedures used within Ministry of Education, Sport, Art and Culture. Both the DEO and SWO were male, again due to staffing structure at the local district offices.

Both the urban and rural based school heads and teachers resided in the same communities with the OVC. The Social Welfare Officer knew most OVC policy issues and interacted with both rural and urban OVC as they came to the district office for registration and in search of survival needs. The District Education Officer also knew more about issues related to the Basic Education Assistance Module or BEAM. Therefore, all stakeholders recruited for the study were necessary participants. All were affiliated to the government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) as permanent employees. The lot of fourteen officers held both diplomas and degrees in Education except for the SWO who held a degree in Social Work.

The stakeholders were requested to complete an observation guide and to respond to an interview guide on issues related to what they normally observed as part of learning and cognition within the OVC that they interacted with within the community or at work place. Generally, all stakeholders were very willing to assist throughout the research process.

Even if the two tables above reflect a total of 34 participants, many more OVC were observed in the CHHs and schools that the researcher visited. A number of these children were noted to be surviving under difficult life circumstances as was noted in many of the literature items that the researcher had initially reviewed (Ward and Eyber, 2009; Wood and Goba, 2011). Most of these findings denoted the fact that something needs to be done in order for any orphaned child to live and learn from a more or less normalized family life.

Findings falling within each of the above themes and accompanying sub-themes, categories and sub-categories are discussed in the remainder of this presentation of findings which is subjected to a literature control (Creswell, 2002) and rigorous synthesis of participant’s views within the multi-dimensional theoretical framework of constructivism. As advocated by Dey (2003) and
Leedy and Ormrod (2010), the iterative qualitative data analysis endeavored to describe, classify the findings and making connections in between.

4.4 THE FINDINGS AND THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS

The Tesch’s interactive data analysis technique utilized in this study yielded five themes and many categories and sub-categories of each theme in order to portray an authentic picture of the OVC’s learning and cognitive experiences in CHHs and schools. The information presented below is in matrices, pictorial and spatial formats, from theme one to theme five.

4.4.1 Theme 1: Developmental Experiences of OVC in CHHs in as far as cognition and learning are concerned.

![Figure 8: Theme 1: Developmental experiences of OVC in CHHs](image)

Numerous factors were identified as contributing to the developmental experiences encountered by OVC in CHHs as is indicated in figure 8 above. Literature review has ascertained the fact
that as long as the environment in which children are placed is stimulating and curiosity is encouraged, their cognitive development proceeds at a very high rate (Smith in Brook, 2008). Teachers and the researcher noted that if learning does not take place in a conducive environment, the learnt detail can easily be forgotten or it may face extinction (a behaviorist perspective). A number of constraints seemed to hinder effective intellectual development of their ideal growth and proper development due to circumstances that were beyond their control. Most of the OVC’s surroundings were noted to be uninteresting and sterile, a situation that matches Rice (2006) description of a non-stimulating environment within the review of the literature in Chapter 2.

The numerous responses rose from OVC open-ended questionnaires, focus group discussions and the observation guide. Findings on this first theme included both negative and positive OVC’s developmental experiences which were categorized into the following as shown on figure 8 above:

- OVC’s major sources of supplies.
- The socio-economic status of OVC and cognition
- Ecological encounters within CHHs.
- Psychosocial experiences of OVC in and outside class.

Generally, from the main theme and sub-themes or categories, the findings revealed the fact that children continue to construct knowledge or process it during assimilation and accommodation with the hope of settling for equilibration in scheme formulation (Piaget 1932 in Bhattacharya and Han, 2009). In most of the difficult situations encountered by the OVC, it was noted that the older OVC, encountered much more difficult times than the younger. Observations were also made that on its own, orphanhood, can lead to defects in OVC’s cognitive growth because the children expressed different feelings from being orphaned. Effects were noted to be hindering the learner’s brain function. Poverty for instance, was observed in most of the CHHs that were visited by the researcher. The OVC’s roles as children were observed as altered and rather dominated by parental roles especially in heads of the CHHs. Literature had noted that the neuro-plasticity perspective on cognition (Merzenich and Wood, 2009), can assists educationist
to focus on the portion of the OVC brain functioning that should be stimulated more than the other in order to allow learning and cognition to take place effectively.

The developmental experiences encountered by the OVC led them into immense cognitive conflicts (Macleod, 2010; Driscoll, 2009), meaning sometimes the children failed to handle the problems they encountered and this resultantly affected their school and learning attendance. A recurring problem in both urban and rural CHHs that the researcher found to be major among others was the issue of lack of fees or late payment of such fees by well-wishers resulting in most of the OVC failing to learn effectively.

Moreover, even if fees were paid, the children expressed dismay over the absence of parents so much that the scaffolding, a social process that all children needed, was not available all the time, especially after school and during the vacations. Vygotsky (1968) in Chailkin (2003) reiterates the importance of a child’s cultural experiences which involve new connections. All such cultures and learning encounters seemed to be incomplete or unavailable in CHHs where the OVC spent most of their home time. It was culture that enabled interrelations and learning to take place, yet hindrances on learning and cognition seemed to be disabling worthwhile learning activities from the children’s culture.

The subthemes displayed in figure 8 afore, tried to demonstrate from the OVC phenomenological experiences that Vygotsky’s constructionist thought of proximal social interactions (Duncan, 1995; Duncan, Dowsett, Claessens, Magnuson and Huston, 2007) aids development yet the OVC being studied here may not be able to construct knowledge on his/her own. More competent people, such as one’s parents are not available to help the meta-cognition process within the zone of proximal development (ZPD). See figure 3 showing the ZPD in Chapter 2. Educators may need to connect more with each learner’s or OVC’s potential within the ZPD in order to allow each learner to meditate more into newer levels of cognition.

Theme one further disintegrated into some ecological perspectives within the OVC’s phenomenal fields where the researcher noted that generally the OVC was at the centre of it all beginning from his/her encounters within the micro, meso, exo, up to the chrono system (Oswalt, 2008; Bronfenbrenner, 2008; Donald et al, 2010). Some encounters made the OVC
smile whilst some made them sad. The reciprocal interaction within the learner’s systems was noted in the anecdotal excerpts presented by the learners as responses to the open-ended questionnaire and focus group discussions.

Different patterns emerged from both urban and rural CHHs. To some OVC, the absence of parents placed a huge gap in their ecological systems whilst in others it created more reciprocal interactions with the children’s chromo-system or the outside world. For instance, some mentioned the fact that even if they are now parentless, their orphanhood predicament connected them to the wider world where they now have well-wishers who help in paying fees and supply support materials that enhance the children’s learning. However, this should not be misconstrued to mean that the OVC were happy without their parents. The gap was noted as the researcher and teachers picked some psychological crises that still seemed to be unresolved even if the children were attending school.

Therefore, Erikson’s psychological viewpoints (Nilon, 2007; Berth, 2010; Chauhan, 2010) within other constructionist matched well with the findings where the OVC seemed to be holding on to unresolved life crises beginning from lack of trust and sometimes trusting, up to role and identify confusion of the adolescents. The adolescent OVC were the major participants of the enquiry. In some instances the adolescents succeeded in resolving their life crises yet in most cases they suffered identity diffusion, a situation of lack of stability and feelings of being threatened by various life encounters. The encounters were noted to be ruled by both rational to irrational childhood experiences.

4.4.1.1 Sub-Category 1: Major Sources of OVC Supplies

Responding to the question on their major sources of household supplies, the 20 OVC provided the following details as shown on Table 6 below.
# Table 6: Sources of Household Supplies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of household supplies</th>
<th>No. out of 15 Rural OVC</th>
<th>No. out of 5 Urban OVC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-governmental Organizations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government rations(social Welfare)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Collection</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppliers from Extended Family</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming as Siblings</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased Parental Estate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (Buying and selling, Church supplies, parents’ friends)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 indicated that out of the 20 OVC most of the children’s survival supplies came from extended family members showing 10 from rural and five (5) members in urban CHHs. Of interest was the other sources of supplies where the children received aid from the church and late parent’s/ family’s friends. This became a clear indication that people do not live in isolation, but they are part of an ecological chain that supported each other in order to allow a family system to function fully. Urie Bronfenbrenner’s constructivist thought (Bronfenbrenner, 1979 online), within the theoretical framework was clearly demonstrated by this finding. Both government and non-governmental organizations were giving aid to the rural OVC, a notion which was found to be noble given the fact that most of the poorer OVC were located in the rural parts of the country.

On type of accommodation for the urban and rural CHHs, three of the 15 rural OVC were left residing in huts whilst the majority (14) of both rural and urban OVC resided in 2-3 roomed houses. All of the 14 OVC indicated that they did not have any belongings that were left in their homes except for beds and radios. The remaining three (3) OVC were left residing in 6-7 roomed houses. Televisions were mentioned in OVC cases from the urban CHHs. All the five urban CHHs used both electricity and firewood as fuel. All the 15 OVC from the rural CHHs used firewood.
Of interest, were the responses on the number of meals taken by the OVC each day of their lives. The children described their meal types as:

1-1-1 Referring to 3 meals per day, namely breakfast, lunch and supper.
1-0-1 Breakfast, no lunch but supper.
0-0-1 No breakfast, no lunch, but supper only

The following pie chart (Figure 9) below tried to illustrate further how the twenty OVC received their daily meals depending on availability. Each of the three groups echoed the fact that they were used to their feeding routines though it had a bearing on class performance.

![Pie Chart showing Basic Meals received by the OVC in their CHHs](image)

**Figure 9: Pie Chart showing Basic Meals received by the OVC in their CHHs**

A worrisome figure was that 28% of the 20 learners who indicated that they relied heavily on one major meal at night and during the day, they settled for snacks such as maputi (dried, roasted meal-grains), mangayi (dried, boiled meal-grains), groundnuts, sugarcane, maheu (traditional
African drink from malted grain) and other African snacks and fruits which are nutritious but not always available. Hunger and food shortages affected many learners negatively. Most were however, learning to endure the hardships. I quote one urban OVC (AU2) saying,

| I am used to the 0-0-1 meal time table. It is kind of hard for me but because I am keen to learn, I need to manage the situation. The situation is aggravated by the need to fetch firewood for cooking, since there are too many power–cuts these days. |

Failure to procure adequate resources resulted in many complaints such as lack of concentration during lessons, psychological issues that seemed to be affecting every OVC in both urban and rural CHHs. It is also possible that the recurring problem of stomach aches and headaches from the OVC especially in the rural part of the district could be related to their hunger and number of meals, 0-0-1 and 1-0-1 taken each day by the greater number of the OVC. The poor diet had a bearing on cognition and learning of children because the brain needed energy to run all its functions efficiently.

4.4.1.2 Sub-category 2: Socio-Economic Status of OVC and Learning.

The children made efforts to survive but they seemed not to cope well especially in poorer places of rural areas. Some reported that they got weekend and holiday piece-jobs for fees but it was not enough. Both urban and rural OVC complained heavily of lack of school fees. It was not available. If, by chance, it became available, it was often paid late thus leading to absenteeism and loss of learning times. For those who relied on extended family systems, relatives often defaulted in fees payments. Another OVC (BR6) complaining heavily of fees said,

| They are not reluctant to pay our fees, but very often they fail to get enough resources to sustain their own families and ours. If they pay, it is usually late. Most of the times we are sent back home to collect fees and because there is no one at home, we end up loitering on the way home until other children join us from school. Most of us miss school especially during the first 2 weeks of school term because we are tired of being sent home to a parentless home. We fail to sleep because we do not have. |

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As such lack of one commodity leads to a chain of other problems that eventually got embedded into the learning and cognition of the OVC. Another child (CR12) added on to say that orphanhood placed them into positions of responsibility that seemed to be exceeding their capabilities as children. The child wrote to say,

\[I \text{ have to work as a house girl during weekends and school holidays in order to earn cash for school fees. Even if my mother’s friend tries to assist, she might not be able to handle my family and hers too since she’s only a teacher, who is earning not much for all that a family would need for survival.}\]

Therefore, most of the children spent most of their spare times trying to find means for survival through working in people’s plots/gardens or food- for- work projects from donor organizations. Not much was left as family estate besides the homesteads. The 20 OVC appreciated their residential sites but were going to be happy if repairs by well-wishers were done in good time. Some of the residential places were dilapidated and needed attention urgently. The ones in town were complaining of noisy neighborhoods while those in rural areas were lamenting over crowdedness that interfered with study moments.

The children expressed gratitude over the support in the form of text books that were left by family members and were passed on to the needy children. In fact, this move seemed to encourage some learners. One of the urban OVC (AU5) said:

\[Even \text{ if our relatives took away our parents’ possessions, they remembered to live behind text books ‘which they labeled (nhaka youpenyu) referring to ‘estate for orphans’. They edged us to study hard so we can also buy our own belongings. It is culture that stipulates that belongings for the dead should be shared amongst one’s relatives lest the dead will not be happy suppose some of their belongings are not shared amongst one’s relatives. So some possessions may not worry me much. In fact, the absence of parental possessions and the sudden shift into a poverty- stricken life style encourages me to work and aim higher in my studies.}\]
Such resilient thoughts among OVC had been noted earlier on in children who decided to reside in CHHs in Rwanda (Ward and Eyber, 2009). Most of the children’s parents had died well before the introduction of immune boosting medication now available as anti-retroviral drugs (ARV) worldwide. For the child, securing a promising life line (Rutter, 2008), even after living in dire poverty, was the major aim. As such, many of the children implied the need for resilience in learning if ever they should live a much more comfortable life after childhood.

4.4.1.3 Sub-category 3: OVC’s Ecological encounters within CHHs

The OVC reported that they faced a lot of life line challenges that affected their performances in school work or even the manner in which they tried to construct meaning in class. Most of the developmental encounters faced by one particular OVC in the CHHs seemed to hold repercussions on another OVC as is explained in the reciprocal interactions between individuals in Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory in figure 5 taken as part of the multi-dimensional theoretical framework adopted by this study in Chapter two. It was observed that as children tried to develop their intellect, their independence or proximal interactions can either aid in knowledge construction or its destruction. The ecological environment can enhance construction of knowledge if it remains cognitive enough (Oswalt, 2008). The first and foremost developmental effect of orphanhood was the devastating situation in which youngsters expressed the excruciation as they watched their parents die and no one was able to stop this from happening. For a long time the children longed for parental care and guidance especially when they compared their ordeal with what other children whose parents were still alive seemed to be enjoying. The feelings of loss were expressed by one OVC, AU4, as a response to the open-ended questionnaire item that:

You know, as you watch other kids being dropped off at school by their parents; you just feel it that they are better off and luckier. You just have this mentality that life is unfair and the more you think about it, the more it eats you inside, corrode you and make your heart numb. This affects my learning activities and participation deteriorates because you feel like everyone is better than you are and you are nobody. You know sometimes when you hear someone saying something like, ‘hey, my mum and dad sent me this “wish you good luck card” for my exams,’ you can’t help crying and thus your concentration on learning is heavily affected.
The child was lamenting over developmental experiences in orphanhood that placed the child in just too difficult life experiences. If concentration in class work was disturbed, eventually the result of such studies may not have been as good as what the entire ecological system would wish for, beginning from the child’s immediate environment of the CHH members as the micro system. When the whole CHH was so upset, the local community (meso-system) and wider community (exo-system) watched and were consequently affected too by the OVC’s excruciating circumstances.

This did not stop here but penetrated into the child’s social system or micro system. For instance, the researcher, as part of OVC’s macro system was touched when she read the AU4 excerpt above. Orphanhood eventually creeps into the child’s chrono-system, where, with development over time, the effects of orphanhood during the OVCs childhood may eventually creep into the entire family system of development. For instance, the OVC’s failure to learn and pass during childhood may eventually deal with the family’s entire system when the OVC then grows into an unsuccessful or poor adult whose financial base is dwindled by life’s early encounters. In the review of literature, poverty was noted as having detrimental effects on the development of children (Ganga and Chinyoka, 2010).

Other OVC added on the following excerpts that seemed to be agreeing with AU4’s negative developmental experiences caused by orphanhood. A female OVC, DR16, who was also leading a rural CHH said;

*The state of being an orphan is tough: you have to strive to get your needs. Even if the extended families lend a hand in needs such as school stationery, they will never be in a position to provide you with everything because they have their own children to look after. And so the state of being orphaned can never be a conducive environment. I bet, given a choice, no one person would ever choose to live as an orphan.*

Another OVC, CR11, complained of recurring stresses from CHHs that filtered into the learning situation. He wrote:
On further probing during the focus group discussions the researcher noted that most of the household responsibilities that the children were meeting in their CHHs were related to lack of finance and extreme poverty that actually manifested in the type of life styles that were observed at school and within the CHHs. When juxtaposed, more of the financial difficulties were more in rural CHHs than the urban ones, where it seemed to be a growing trend that the households were less-privileged than the urban ones. Eradicating poverty remained a first and foremost task for all children residing in rural CHHs.

Another child explained difficulties in adjusting after parental death. The child, AU5 wrote;

\begin{quote}
Being an orphan is unavoidable but it pains so much because I used to be someone who lived well before my father died. It is so painful to adjust to a life style I was not used to. My mum passed away when I was only two and my father took over from there but in 2009 my father died and things just got changed unexpectedly. The people who used to love me now hated me. Those who used to sympathize are the ones causing more pain. But one thing for certain, I want to thank you mum for coming to our school for I did not know that there are so many orphans at our school.
\end{quote}

And so the children went on and on explaining their developmental experiences especially those that hindered ideal knowledge construction. From the excerpts the researcher received from the interviews and open questionnaires, she was able to probe further during focus group discussions where it appeared that most of the OVC were really living in difficult life circumstances that grossly placed implications on the learner’s cognition and learning process. The interactions between the OVC as children staying alone, between the OVC and the teacher or the church, all held implications to the child’s learning. The reciprocal influences or proximal
interactions as referred to by Bronfenbrenner (1979, online) all seemed to interfere grossly with the learning of the child as explained within Bronfenbrenner’s nested systems within this study’s theoretical framework.

Children’s proximal encounters with community members can affect the children’s micro-systems and eventually their meso-systems. Take AU5’s case above, who explains a situation where those who used to love now hated her. If hated, a child may be unable to trust his/her proximal relationship especially if the hatred now comes from those who used to love them. Literature had indicated that extended families were overseers of CHHs (Chirwa, 2002; Foster, 2003), yet with change overtime, society may change, orphan caregivers change too, so it was important to plan how best the OVC’s life situation could be developed and be healed. Proper cognition and learning should be perpetuated after parental death because it is the living and learning pattern within the CHHs that eventually shapes the OVC or learner living within it.

4.4.1.4 Subcategory 4: The Psychosocial encounters of OVC in and outside class.

On a positive note, one OVC (AU2) from an urban CHH narrated what the researcher called ‘urban positives’. He explained:

\[
\text{I am treated well, like a child of their own. There are no negative effects on my learning though sometimes I wish if my parents were alive to see my progress in school. I take adequate food at 1-0-1 which is a normal trend in our location. However, the issue of late payment of school fees also affects me. Through I receive adequate food, my relatives always take time to decide to sell my parent’s stock in our rural home for my fees, citing the fact that the whole chain of relatives or extended family members should be notified and agree first. Unfortunately, culture stipulates that children may not make major decisions to sell properties without the consent of elders of the extended family.}
\]

The repercussions of such a finding were that some children may be living comfortably in their CHHs, but were not free to make decisions that they saw fit. Such an ecological developmental
experience may eventually penetrate into problems of cognitive conflicts even if the OVC was gifted and eager to progress with learning.

Sentiments expressed by both rural and urban learners indicated that the OVC could be living with a lot of psychosocial challenges that affected their cognitive learning process as they tried to assimilate and accommodate what the learning environment provided. Some statements expressed by learners showed that all the children in the CHHs were not receiving adequate parental nurturing that could enable them to learn to trust their environment as a learning base.

As far as learning was concerned, the boys and girls seemed not to have full preparation for the parenting roles that they got engaged in when they opted to reside in CHHs. Circumstances beyond their control pushed them into adult roles that forced them to assume greater responsibility than what available resources allowed. This finding was consistent with many of the studies that were reviewed in literature on CHHs. As a result of the exaggerated roles, the children’s education was affected resulting in a negative impact on the learner’s mental health. The psychological encounters were aggravated by incidences of stigma and discrimination from various zones of their proximal relationships including extended family members, peers and neighbours.

- **Threats to dropping out of school**

The 20 children that the researcher interviewed mentioned the fact that the first and foremost psychological problem faced by the OVC was continued absenteeism that eventually filtered into school dropouts. They narrated their ordeal but were even much more concerned about those OVC that had already dropped out of school and were engaged in very hard physical work as farm laborers, housemaids and many more difficult options. The issue of school dropouts by OVC was also noted by Nyamukapa and Gregson (2004). Because the children had to earn and learn, they then received marginal or no help at all from their extended family relatives, whom they accused of great stigmatization and discrimination.

Some OVC had to work in the fields before school each day. They were accused of dishonoring the norms and values prescribed by culture in which extended family members should oversee
the welfare of the deceased’s children. Therefore, the decision to reside without interferences from the extended family members placed them into recurring situations of neglect from their relatives. Therefore, managing household chores and learning at the same time still seemed a better option but the children were not settled psychologically.

Within the pie-chart that follows, the researcher endeavored to demonstrate the status of the children whose formal learning was swiftly running to a halt because facilities in most of the CHHs seemed not to allow learning to continue.

![Pie Chart showing OVC threatened to drop out of school due to lack of sufficient support.](image)

Figure 10: Pie Chart showing OVC threatened to drop out of school due to lack of sufficient support.

Of the 20 OVC, involved in this thesis, 16 could be out of school by year end if no immediate intervention was found. See figure 10 above. Asked about BEAM funding, the OVC in the focus group discussion concurred that sometimes the funds were not available for all. One could have fees paid over one term and the rest of the terms were not funded. The finding was rather in agreement with literature in which a NAC officer confirmed that the BEAM funding was overwhelmed (NAC, 2011) because the number of OVC needing aid was very high.
Loneliness affects Learning

The majority of the children in each focus group discussion admitted that stigmatization had somehow decreased due to awareness campaigns especially from the various government ministries and NGOs within the district. Many people now knew and understood the fact that the increasing number of OVC was due to lack of cure for the commonest cause of parental death i.e. HIV/AIDS. However, the children complained of loneliness. Below is a list of statements which the researcher picked from the focus group discussions as the OVC (AU5, BR6, BR10, CR13, CR15, DR16, and DR20) interacted on the issue of learning and loneliness.

- ‘My father was more of a friend to me since my mother was long gone’.
- ‘Isolation at family gathering affects me so much’.
- ‘No one is really prepared to listen to me when I call’.
- ‘I feel inferior sometimes when I fail to match the status of my peers at home and at school’.
- ‘I miss my parents and concentration sometimes becomes a problem.’
- ‘I find it hard to cope with inner loneliness’.
- ‘My siblings are sometimes a problem, especially if they decide not to co-operate’.

It was however, pleasing to note that the children appreciated the fact that some of their peers empathized with them and were always ready to assist with books and any necessary scaffolding in the learning process.
• **Some responsibilities lead to psychosocial problems**

All the children faced responsibilities where they indicated that many thoughts led to distress. The thoughts of responsibilities tended to overpower learning thoughts. A 15 year old OVC (BR10) narrated such issues as:

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Kufunga kuti nhasi ndodyei (The thought that I need to look for food), is a problem on its own. It becomes worse when I also need to look for not only my food but that of my little brothers and sisters. I spend time worrying about how to make them happy. When they fall sick, I fail to attend school because if I do, I find it difficult to concentrate. Our aunts do not feel comfortable to leave their homes in order to come and take care of the sick. There is just too much work at home and I have no reading time.
```

Too many household chores interfered with the learners’ cognition activities so much that many of the OVC concurred that leaving school was a better option. However, if for instance, the proper strategies to assist the real needy cases are established, the community can liberate the suffering OVC. In some countries, societies have opted for institutionalization and foster homes with adult caregivers (HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2006). Some good practices were also noted in the form of life skills programmes, support programmes, community based approaches and school initiatives (Schenk et al, 2010). These literature clues can help in charting the way forward for the OVC.

• **Abuse and Neglect**

Some children reported abuse and neglect by their extended family overseers. It was sad to note that whilst the children suffered so much financially, they were totally unaware of some assets that some of their parents left behind for them. What they inherited as surprises were sometimes the hospital bills, balances of loans taken by their parents so much that what their parents used to own was usually sold in order to settle the bills before the OVC’s school fees and general welfare were considered by the CHH’s extended family overseers. They mentioned the fact that
what extended families did best was to help locate ‘piece jobs’ for the older OVC, especially if they failed to get NGO support.

In other situations, some children complained of some community members who exploited the children’s lack of security and chose to steal from them at night because they were unable to get out into the dark to chase the thieves. The community was reported to be turning a blind eye toward such criminal acts as was narrated by CR14;

*We hear our ducks quack, chickens cluck and goats bleat but we are unable to help it. We cannot follow the thief; because we are too young and afraid of the unknown. If at all people would desist from stealing the little we have left, we would then have a starting point. As a result, we sometimes try to beg but not much comes out of the trouble that begging entails.*

The children also reported that there were no sexual abuses, but they sometimes experienced neglect by local extended family members. A female child-head (DR17) explained;

*‘Uncle had promised to pay my fees but whenever I ask; he mentions other silly issues to disrupt the request. No one seems to notice when we complain. Other women in the society accuse me of prostitution especially when I happen to purchase anything nice from the local shops. They really want to know the source of the money because they feel orphans do not have money for luxuries such as a full chicken for our household meal. We are invited by most of the local elite to work a lot in their gardens and fields but for very little payment. Perhaps my parents should have remained living till we become much older.’*

All these psychological problems filtered into the young minds and resultantly held an impact on their learning and cognition.

The data reported so far was evidence that when parents died, some OVC developed helplessness overtime. They then got angry, bitter, frustrated and sometimes felt unnecessary guilty (Erikson, 1968 in Woolfolk, 2004; Nilon, 2007) because they felt that their parents died too soon. A lot
of tension and lack of inner peace was observed in the learners as the researcher interacted with them. The children no longer behaved like children, as they took up household responsibilities without adult guidance. Some OVC had developed anger over their relatives and some community members, blaming them for initiating home treatments and conditions within the extended family homes that ended up driving OVC off into CHHs. The excerpts, when fully scrutinized, seemed to indicate the fact that the children felt insecure and longed for parental love and affection.

The problems such as illnesses, familial deaths, negative attitudes of some relatives and neighbors all created a negative impact on the psychological well-being of orphaned children in CHHs. The researcher noted the ‘why me phase’ of depression in three quarters of the OVC who were surviving under difficult life circumstances. Early signs of depression over-time had been noted earlier on by teachers during lessons and even outside classes. In fact, the poor OVC manifested feelings of inferiority that seemed to lead them to feelings of hopelessness and inertia that many of them were trying to cope with.

Perhaps the adolescence stage in which these children were experiencing, tended to confuse them further as they tried out different roles and going through identity crisis. According to Erikson in Woolfolk (2004), when adolescents succeed in resolving crises, they develop fidelity. Society needed to then scrutinize the OVC issues in which the children had in most cases, failed to resolve their life crisis and had developed identity diffusion where their sense of the self-seemed to be unstable and threatened (Erikson). The portion of Erikson’s work within the theoretical framework indicated that when the OVC situation is juxtaposed to a normalized family situations (see figure 5), it appears that there seem to be much more that needs to be done in trying to normalize living and learning situation in CHHs. Society needs to have a relook into the orphan crises that seem to be having detrimental effects on the cognition and learning of children from CHHs.
4.4.2 Theme 2: The Social Construction of the Concepts; Cognition and Learning within CHHs

![Diagram of cognitive learning experiences]

**Figure 11: Theme 2: The Social Construction of the Concepts ‘Learning’ and ‘Cognition’ (Types of Learning adapted from Woolfolk, 2004; Kosslyn Rosenberg, 2008; Feldman, 2010)**

The following findings and discussion helped to highlight the cognitive learning experiences and challenges that OVC encountered in and outside their CHHs. Pseudonyms and codes were used in the anecdotal records presented. The section covered findings on each form of cognitive learning used as a sub-theme covering latent, insight, observational, situated, meaningful and cooperative learning, illustrated in figure 11 above.

4.4.2.1 Sub-category 1: Latent Learning

The learners expressed difficulties in cognitive learning where in simple terms they could not handle work inside and outside the classes due to the degree of difficulties that went beyond their
They longed for parental aid just as was expressed by many OVC in the focus group discussions. All 20 OVC considered themselves marginalized and unrecognized in as far as learning aid was concerned. For instance, in a focus group discussion at the urban school, coded school A, all the children coming from the high density locations nodded their heads as one OVC coded AU4 aged 17 expressed her concerns over acquisition of learnt information:

*It is quite difficult to live as an orphan where one is unable to consult especially on homework since we all reside as parentless children, with none of us who is well informed about wanted detail in each subject. Neighbours seem to be too busy to help.*

Another child, coded AU2 added on to say,

*They always say- Hatizivi (We don’t know). It is the teacher who sometimes takes time to help but unfortunately our teachers are too busy and stay far away from our various homes. Tinoshaya wekubvunza sezvaungaita uine mubereki wako (We fail to get people who are always ready to assist like what one’s own parent would do).*

They all seemed to be referring to hindrances in accessing cognitive aid such as latent learning where it was most needed. Tolman and Honzik in Feldman (2010) maintain that in latent learning, a new behavior is learnt but not demonstrated until some incentive or aid is provided for displaying it. It is latent learning that can help to distinguish learning something and performing it. It is a form of cognitive learning that relies crucially on how information is stored in memory (Meyer, Moore and Viljoen, 2003; Feldman, 2010). The OVC wondered around their environment to develop a cognitive map that helped to store information, without much success. Another child, coded AU1 also expressed sentiments over their inability to store and process learnt detail in the absence of immediate scaffolding agents like parents. He lamented saying,
Even if I try to recall what they teach, it becomes difficult because my mind is always centred on my little brother’s and sister’s welfare. Hazvigari mupfungwa. Zvinotobuda tisati tanyora matests (Nothing learnt really settles in my mind for long. In fact, it expires before we even write tests).

He implied lack of memory retention and the fact that learnt detail quickly got into extinction before assessment of work was done by school authorities. As such, learning from a CHH was hindered by circumstances that seemed to be unavoidable for an OVC.

Atkinson and Schifrin (1968, 1971) cited in Kosslyn and Rosenburg (2008) identify basic types of memory stores and explain how information flows among them. Basically information flows from a sensory memory to short term memory up to long-term memory. Later discoveries were that information can move from sensory memory straight into the long term memory and that repeating items over and over again helps memorization (Kosslyn and Rosenburg, 2008; Slavin, 2010; Snowman and Beihler, 2011). With this background, memory retention was not so easy for children in CHHs where the researcher observed that most of the family interactions were influenced more by limited family resources and a decreasing socio-economic status. This was in congruency with many observations in reviewed literature where OVC were left with very little resources after the death of their parents (Nyamukapa and Gregson, 2004). The researchers established that this was due to very high hospital expenses incurred by CHHs after the death of terminally ill parents.

4.4.2.2 Sub-category 2: Insight Learning

In another instance, a younger OVC in rural Chipinge, coded BR9 praised her elder sister saying,

It is my sister, who is always helping me with school tasks whenever my teacher is not around. Therefore, I find it easier to learn any new work even if mum and daddy are long gone. We work together as family in order to make sure that we achieve something in life.
The learner here implied insight learning from an older sister. Asked why he headed the home where there was an older sister, he explained issues of culture that even when too young; the oldest boy-child remained heading the family when parents died. According to Kosslyn and Rosenberg (2008), insight learning consists of a situation where one grasps what something means and eventually incorporating the new knowledge into old knowledge, the ‘ah –ha experience’, as was noted by Woolfolk (2004) in Chapter 2.

In one instance, an OVC explained a learning situation in which she suddenly realized that the other older orphans had knowledge in a subject matter in which she was ignorant. Insight learning had occurred to the younger orphan before she realized it. This indicated a positive side on the part of a younger OVC under the care of an older child-parent residing and learning from a CHH. The OVC learned a lot from one another. The researcher noted that at each of the four schools visited, the set up in a CHH was viewed by all OVC as one of the greatest options after parental death. On the other hand, some teachers expressed lack of access to effective control over what the children might learn especially when they were outside school grounds. In response to the stakeholder interview, one school head, coded BRS24 said,

> It becomes unbearable when a child as young as 14 is engaged in peer pressure that eventually leads to addicted drinking and smoking. If our community fails to monitor the OVC’s activities outside school premises, then we may never be able to control our children’s moves. Some collaborative efforts between the school and the members of the community are essential if at all we should give full care and support needed by OVC.

Erikson (1968) in Woolfolk (2004) within the theoretical framework in Chapter 2 advises that age 14 is linked to a life crisis that manifests itself as the adolescent searches for identity. The adolescence age involves great ‘storms and stresses’ (Mwamwenda, 2004) where caregivers should intervene and guide appropriately. Any negative insight learning necessitates early intervention by well wishers. This study endeavored to work towards a remedy in homes where there were no biological parents but child-parents.
4.4.2.3 Sub-category 3: Observational Learning

In another encounter, an OVC coded DR13 mentioned the fact that they also learned a lot by observing others at school and older learners within their phenomenal fields.

*I must admit that even if we are orphans some teachers and other children try to assist us a lot. We watch how they tackle some mathematical concepts and follow suit. On the other hand, some children may want to teach me behaviours that I do not agree with and I rely on my aunt’s occasional visits and messages that some behaviour is harmful.*

Another one, coded AU4 also indicated situations of observational learning as she expressed her experiences in practical skills saying, “I learnt how to cook, type, polish and do all sorts of things from friends around our home.” As the OVC socialized amongst themselves in CHHs, they continued to learn each other’s culture, likes, dislikes, beliefs and expectations. It helped them to learn how to behave within their cultures.

On a negative note, OVC were reported to sometimes model aggressive behaviours in and outside school. By observing others, the children portrayed both desired and undesired behaviours vicariously (Bandura in Driscoll, 2009). At each of the four focus group discussions, the children expressed dismay over misrepresentations of the ideal behaviour expressed by their peers. An OVC coded DR19 for example, hinted at the fact that many may say one thing and then model another; as in the case of a peer educator who constantly wished to counsel another OVC on matters related to sexual activities yet most of the time the peer was engaged in premarital affairs leaving the observer in an awkward situation, pondering whether to copy or not.

4.4.2.4 Sub-Category 4: Situated Learning

The situated learning theory proposes that learning is maintained and situated within authentic activity context and culture. It is regarded as unintentional where knowledge should be presented in authentic contexts that would involve the perceived knowledge. It involves social
interactions and collaboration components where learners are said to be involved in a ‘community of practice’ involving certain beliefs and behaviours to be acquired. This was evident in many recurring anecdotal pleas given by both the rural and urban orphans and vulnerable children (AU5, BR6, BR10, CR11, CR13, DR18, and DR20).

Some of the excerpts ran as follows:

‘With the help we receive from our teachers and relatives, we hope to achieve our parent’s set goals even if they are long gone’,
‘Ndikashingirira ndichakunda (I will make it if I remain focused)’,
‘Pandimire senherera panotoda kushanda (My status as an orphan requires me to work hard)’
‘If at all I get to know more in line with what lies ahead, I would work even harder at each subject’,
‘I wish teachers would give us more practice on areas where we desperately need parental help’
‘Tibatsirei tirege kudzokera shure (Help us so that we may not falter)’,
‘We need everyone’s assistance, especially on fees, books, pens, rulers and food if we should make it up to the end’.

The assumption in situated learning is that the learner moves along into becoming more active and engaged in a particular culture. He/she eventually becomes more competent and assumes the role of an expert (Lave, 1988). These authorities in concurrence with Vygotsky’s social cultural perspective have developed the situated learning theory, into believing that both formal and informal learning advances through collaborative social interactions hence the social construction of knowledge noted earlier within the theoretical framework.

The cognitive learning theory is significant here as it explains to readers fully how both formal and informal learning can be enhanced amongst the OVC if proper collaborative activities were planned for the less privileged learners in their CHHs and when they join other learners at school in formal learning set ups.
4.4.2.5 Sub-category 5: Meaningful and Mastery Learning

According to Ausubel (2003) the cognitive learning theory is concerned with how students learn large amounts of meaningful material from verbal/textual presentations in a learning activity based on the representational and combinational process that occur during the reception information. Like in assumptions of cognitivists, new material is related to relevant ideas in the existing cognitive structure on a non-verbatim basis (previous knowledge). Meaningful learning results when new information is acquired by linking the new detail with existing details in a learner’s cognitive structure, as explained in assimilation and accommodation.

In the focus group discussions, the OVC lamented over many more learning drawbacks that included poverty, loneliness, ill relatives, overworking, responsibilities over younger siblings and lack of perfect security. In all four schools both the teachers and headmasters confirmed that the OVC from the CHH faced problems of resources especially extra reading and revision materials whilst at home. Any meaningful learning would entail availability of sufficient learning aids for both assimilation and accommodation to take place without hiccups. Responding to the question on readiness for new learning, the OVC mentioned lack of a home base that gave them a chance to prepare for new class work. Perhaps teachers should take seriously the use of advance organizers as stimulants for adequate assimilation and accommodation of concepts. Advance organizers are deductive in nature. They help to compare new material with older material. They are common basis for any new learning.

In responding to how best the OVC would prefer to be assisted in their learning, one OVC coded AU4 said:

If it were at all possible we would appreciate a situation where our teachers would allow us more learning time with them kuti tinyatsobata zvidzidzo (so that we are able to grasp all given concepts.) There is no one at home who can help us fully besides our subject teachers. Many out there in the community are not so willing to give us extra assistance especially in Mathematics and Science assignments that are done out of school.
They were all murmuring concurrences as the child narrated her story; an indication that many OVC needed more contact time with the subject teacher for them to tackle tasks given as extra work. This implied a need for teachers to implement mastery learning principles. The basic assumption of mastery learning is that almost all students can learn the essential knowledge and skills within a curriculum when the learning is broken into parts and presented sequentially (Slavin, 2010a).

Teachers will need to improve the quality of the curriculum instruction by helping to link instructional activities to student needs. Variations in students should be considered, where educators should allow higher level activities for faster learners and extending learning opportunities for slower learners who may need more time. An ongoing formative evaluation is essential if learners and educators are to have an effective reciprocal teaching and learning interaction.

4.4.2.6 Sub-category 6: Cooperative/Collaborative Learning

The advantage in learning when children stay as siblings was mentioned by one younger child-head, coded CR14, who expressed advantages in,

| We like it sometimes when we learn to share after meals as family even if our parents are no more. Tinogona kuronga kusangana nedzimwe nherera tichitodzidzisana (We sometimes arrange to visit other orphans in order to share ideas). My brothers and sisters keep me company too and a lot is explained to me in learning many subject materials including how to protect our homes from enemies out there. |

This collaborative learning or cooperative learning was noted as one consolation process amongst the OVC that the researcher visited in the CHHs. In their small groups the children worked together to maximize their own and each other’s learning as was described by Jacobs and Hall (2002). The children helped each other in cognitive tasks all in an effort to make learning experience as successful as possible. The observations proved that collaborative learning activities amongst learners in the CHHs offered many benefits that included elevated self-
esteem, greater love for school, enhanced inner ethnic ties and improved abstract thinking (Johnson, Johnson and Stanne, 2000) and of course a sense of security.

In an interview with one stakeholder (US34), it was noted that OVC in a CHH faced cognition challenges as evidenced by the vast number of organizations countrywide trying to make the OVC gain education and learn cooperatively. This study was quite significant as it tried to unpack cognitive learning challenges on affected OVC in Zimbabwe with the hope of finding avenues that can enhance their learning.

4.4.3 Theme 3: The Effects of Orphanhood on the building of OVC’s Schemes/Schemata

Presented below in figure 12 are levels of cognitive learning in which the OVC try to build new knowledge or new OVC schemes. The theme entails cognitivist terms involving assimilation, accommodation, adaptation and equilibration processes that take place during cognitive learning.

Figure 12: Theme 3: Effects on Scheme Formulation at each Level of Cognitive learning following levels propounded by constructivist cognitivists such as Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky.
The idea in this phenomenological case study was to extract experiences of the OVC in as far as effects on learning and cognition were concerned. The previous themes indicated that even if the OVC encountered various drawbacks in their efforts to learn, they still constructed knowledge or schemes which eventually liberated them from the various life atrocities that came from their environment. Reviewed literature described a number of living conditions for orphaned children as awkward but even in awkward situations, constructionists like Piaget and Bruner cited in Donald et al (2010) concur that children are in a constant state of assimilation and accommodation of knowledge up to the time they feel the adapted detail has reached a state of equilibration.

The processing of information relies heavily on the well-being of the individual and the way in which the information is accessed. Previous themes have unveiled the fact that most of the OVC in Chipinge district had difficulties in accessing information for learning due to variables in orphanhood that cover poverty, financial draw backs and often, the communities’s negative attitudes.

The stakeholders confirmed the voices of learners noted in theme one (1) where it became evident that orphanhood was an undesirable construct that disrupted cognition and learning up to an extent of placing the victims (orphans) in situations that eventually disrupted their learning. Both the observation guide and open-ended questionnaire data from stakeholders confirmed that the children were living in distressful conditions that had a very heavy bearing on the learners’ education.

The 14 stakeholders unanimously agreed that the manner in which OVC constructed knowledge tended to differ greatly with that of non-orphans. Learning for the OVC was distorted mostly by the stress of being parentless because the information processing was hindered by many variables from encoding, retrieving up to utilization of schemes formulated. As such all the stakeholders confirmed that the desired interaction between assimilation and accommodation was rarely noted in cognitive learning of orphaned children. Theme one(1) has noted that many of the OVC that the researcher interacted with, did concur that whilst many child-heads may
want to help the young, scaffolding of siblings was usually shattered by the many responsibilities in and outside the CHH.

The stakeholders observed and reported that a lot of constructive characteristics also aided cognition among orphaned children in a CHH. There were strong attachment bonds between the young and the old OVC. Most of the OVC had gained resilience to pressures of life in an effort to try and match their lives with that of fellow parented children. The stakeholders noted role confusion among some OVC as they tried to take up both parenting and childhood characteristics and duties. The stakeholders strongly agreed that the ecological pattern in an OVC’s case certainly did not match that of a parented child, given the poor socio-economic status in which most orphaned children remained in after the death of their parents.

Of great concern was the fact that the broken parent-child attachment continued to manifest separation anxiety among OVC in early days of their stay in CHHs. As time passed by, the children then got conditioned to the new life style but numerous obstacles, which included lack of perfect security, were believed to continue to hinder the cognitive learning of OVC even if learnt concepts were familiar.

The following excerpt was from stakeholder (AUS21) in an attempt to confirm the above claims on the effects of orphanhood on OVC’s learning and cognition in CHHs;

> Problems in child headed households have a lot of bearing on the learning of affected children. Play, for example, is meant to widen a child’s scope of knowledge on several life issues but an orphaned child has very little play time because of family responsibilities. Resources within the household are limited. Many come to school after having done lots of work and without having eaten anything and all this negatively affects their learning.

The stakeholder’s observation here was in concurrence with the voices of the OVC reported in themes 1 and 2. Stakeholders US33 and US34 also echoed the voices of other stakeholders and the children as they described the children’s situation as disheartening and that they certainly
needed adult support in their getting basic needs and education. Even if one wanted to remain resilient, hunger on its own, did not allow one to concentrate, hence there was an issue here. All stakeholders should find ways of liberating the orphaned child in distress and hunger. Psychological schemes/schemata could only be formed successfully if the body was physically enabled. Another officer, US33 confirmed the fact that the OVC’s learning was disturbed by great anxiety and that the children usually concentrated more on their day to day living demands, hence their cognitive learning became secondary and was slowed down.

Judging from the numerous OVC and stakeholder responses, it seemed it was a recurring notion from both the OVC and the stakeholders that the OVC lacked essential basic needs such as enough food, clothing, decent shelter and security that all culminated into lack of concentration during learning. The OVC’s failure to concentrate during learning was emphasized by all the 20 OVC in theme 1.

Another stakeholder BRS24 added on to say;

\[
\text{Loss of parents may lead children to extreme introversion; they lose confidence and are sometimes reluctant to participate in class activities. Furthermore, they are affected by poverty among other issues which lead them into psychological traumas.}
\]

Many more stakeholders hinted a lot on the plight of the vast number of OVC who opted to drop out of school when their parents died. Generally, the permanent absence of parents in the home has not been advantageous. Perhaps the two out of twenty OVC who seemed to want to raise some positives of such a predicament had accumulated excessive resilience due to recurring family deaths and that they were weaned off from care giving of terminally ill parents. The receipt of educational sponsorship opportunities from well-wishers too could have over-comforted them. On the whole, learning and cognition from both the OVC and stakeholders perspectives had not been easy for children living in these circumstances.

DRS30 also said,
An insecure child is a stressed child. Stress makes the brain fail to assimilate and accommodate learnt information properly. Children become withdrawn from every activity and many drop out of school if not properly counseled. The home background and its adversity affect the learning of any child.

The study noted that the two terms, assimilation and accommodation are the learner’s major adaptation processes disrupted when children faced too many psychological difficulties such as abuse and neglect noted in theme 1. A normal process of both assimilation and accommodation should allow existing schemes to be modified in order to accommodate new experiences. The OVC’s life encounters were found to be leading the children to defects in cognitive growth. Orphanhood can easily alter brain functioning (Doidge,2007), when it allows the child to bother much about the poverty he/she is immersed in, instead of tackling mathematical concepts that can enable him/her to pass. The teachers explained this in many instances giving many practical examples in which the construct, orphanhood, deters the adaptive process of assimilation and accommodation during information processing.

Teachers observed that, quite often the children from the CHHs tended to report for classes much later than the children from parented households. All of the teachers confirmed that the children engaged more in household chores which took most of their study times. The findings confirmed some of the complaints that the children cited as drawbacks in their efforts to learning. Many of the children isolated themselves especially when it came to group work though some tended to use their status of being orphaned as a defense mechanism especially when the teachers demanded their homework. They remained withdrawn. One teacher (CRS28) working with the orphaned children under the committee for the care and support of OVC in one of the schools, had this to say about some of the OVC who were fortunate to have helpful extended family members to assist them.

Those orphans, who are fortunate to receive aid from their extended family members, may also become unruly and sometimes unthankful. They may turn out to be difficult to deal with as they always harbor suspicion of their benefactors. They have the tendency to compare themselves with their benefactor’s children and if they get better treatment, they think that they are being ill-treated and vice-versa.
The above excerpt from the teacher linked well with some of the complaints launched by the OVC. There seemed to be a tug of war between OVC and their benefactors. Where the benefactors seemed to want to supply more to their own children, the OVC saw that as neglect. Every child would want to be treated in the same way as the other no matter what status. If a mismatch occurred in the way the OVC was treated, the processing of information in cognitive learning became disrupted. The teachers confirmed that most of the OVC living under stressful CHH conditions manifested stress symptoms, were withdrawn and closed up so much that it became difficult for the teacher to tell whether the class concepts were being assimilated and accommodated during learning. However, most OVC were reported to be co-operative in learning activities especially in the company of their peers.

Where siblings learn at the same school, the younger ones were reported to cling to elder brother/sister during break and lunch times. This confirmed one finding in theme 2 from a younger OVC when he praised his brothers and sisters for good co-operative learning at home. They wanted to empathize with one another so much that an elder brother/sister became a source of security for the much younger. Teachers echoed the fact that for the OVC who were determined to learn, resilience manifested itself so much that any teacher wanted to assist such a learner to accomplish his/her learning and life goals. This confirms literature in which Rutter (2002) contends that Bowbly’s ideas on maternal deprivation experiences of interpersonal relationships are crucial to a person’s psychological development. Therefore, teachers need to recall the fact that they are the OVC’s immediate source of motivation and security, which when fully monitored can help enhance a learner’s meta-cognition processes.

A worrisome finding was that all the stakeholders working with the OVC confirmed the OVC’s claim that they did not have funding especially for fees. One teacher (DRS31) wrote:

**BEAM funding does not suffice and most children who have access to NGO funding such as Capernaum Trust and FOST all cling to NGO personnel as secure bases. The problem comes when the NGO contracts close down, the affected funded OVC may remain out of school unless some members of the extended families decide to help.**
Both senior stakeholders US33 and US34 confirmed the teacher’s observation and urged the GoZ responsible departments to release BEAM funds early enough. ‘Sponsor the poorest of the poor’, one of them lamented. In brief, there seemed to be a dire need for an immediate relook, by all stakeholders into the learning situation of OVC. Their predicament seemed to be holding many more negative variables than what stakeholders anticipated. One of the teacher’s (i.e. DRS31) observation confirmed the fact that very little or no help at all came from extended family members of the children who decided to stay alone in CHHs.

An ontological assumption in African culture says that the extended family members would prefer to rear the orphaned children in their homes as this was said to please the spirit of their deceased relatives. The unfortunate bit was that once orphans received ill-treatment, they tended to mistrust the environment and they became helpless, thus leading to hindrances in cognitive learning.

As such, one teacher (AUS23) advised saying that:

For effective learning to take place, issues related to parental deaths must be handled with care especially when dealing with OVC because this may evoke past, sad memories that can disrupt the learning process. Children can eventually develop a negative self-concept.

Another finding from the teachers was that the OVC were noted to be vulnerable to sexual abuse especially by strangers. The children did not mention this in their reports. However, the demographic chart presented earlier on in this chapter indicated that two 17-year olds were looking after their sisters who already had babies within the CHHs. The older OVC were reported to suffer more in planning survival tactics for all siblings in the CHHs. Another teacher (BRS26) confirmed the fact that:

Early marriages are prevalent in child headed households owing to greater household responsibilities. In rural areas it becomes common that the older boy or girl gets married earlier even if he/she is still attending school all in an effort to co-opt another member into the CHH who will help upbringing the younger siblings.
Another teacher (DRS32) added to say:

**Female OVC may pursue schooling for some time with some support from the church and NGOs, but may eventually give up school in order to get married before attaining an academic certificate. They think that there is more security in marriages hence there is need to counsel the orphaned children.**

The findings in the above excerpts matched well with some of the findings in African countries where it was confirmed that early marriages were quite prevalent amongst orphaned children (Action Aid International, Kenya, 2011). As the head of most CHHs, the girl child faced more challenges in the CHHs. They learnt to accept ill-treatment, neglect and even violence which eventually led to exploitation by unscrupulous people. Many a times, no action was taken against such perpetrators of child abuse because the children failed to report these incidents since they were afraid of further maltreatments.

Failure to have a conducive learning environments led to cognitive conflicts which to some extent disabled the functioning of the learners’ cognitive maps in scheme formulation, in and outside class. If at all cognitive conflicts were eliminated in careers of young OVC, then it may become much easier for the older OVC to assist the younger in resolving cognitive conflicts that may erupt during learning. Already the observed children, particularly those in rural Chipinge were not settled because they displayed signs of hopelessness, low self-esteem, discouragement and exhaustion, signs which had been noted earlier on by Ganga and Chinyoka (2010) on poverty in farming areas of the district. Therefore, there was a possibility that it was not only the rural and urban CHHs that were affected by orphanhood but even other residential places like farming areas where the children flocked to when they decided to work and learn from CHHs.

All what the enquiry seemed to be establishing from both the OVC and school staff/stakeholders was inclined towards the fact that orphanhood psychologically affects thinking process in orphaned children to an extent that the majority of the children manifested a lot of signs and symptoms of psychological disorders that certainly disrupted concept formation as the young minds tried to go through the adaptive processes of assimilation and accommodation in each and
every school subject. When matched with findings in both theme1 and 2, it seemed the predicament in which the OVC fell under, was aggravated by the fact that most OVC were reared in poverty-stricken homes within the district. Taking it up from theme 1, it was only a pair out of the 20 OVC who seemed to be surviving under less harsh home conditions. The lack of adequate resources exacerbated the negative effects of orphanhood on the poor and orphaned.

4.4.4 Theme 4: Learning Needs of OVC and Aspects that promoted or deterred both cognition and learning of OVC within CHHs

![Diagram showing learning needs and aspects]

Figure 13: Theme 4: Aspects that deter or promote Learning and Cognition

This theme disintegrated into needs of OVC, aspects that promoted and those that deterred learning of OVC, as is represented on the figure 13 above. The illustration tried to consolidate the numerous needs that the OVC and selected stakeholders mentioned throughout the discussions handled under themes 1, 2 and 3 within this chapter. The collaborative views of the 14 stakeholders and voices of the 20 OVC gave rise to quiet a number of learning needs ranging from physical, psychosocial, emotional and academic.
4.4.4.1 Sub-category 1: The Learning Needs.

It is the satisfaction of one’s needs that the rest of the cognitive functions run well within the body and mind. Themes 1, 2, and 3 have already noted the fact that need deprivation led OVC to situations of stress, anxiety and loss of concentration during learning. In addition, literature reviewed in chapter 2 has cited a very important dictum by Nelson Mandela in NAP Child Friendly version (2006-2010:1) that ‘there is no keener revelation of society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children’. Therefore, it becomes vital for the Zimbabwean society to recognize the parentless children and chart way forward in as far as enhancing their learning is concerned. One way was to know the children’s needs and the best ways of striking a balance for the disadvantaged children.

Below is diagrammatic representation of the OVC’s needs that the researcher noted as she went through the interviews, administration of the open-ended questionnaires, observations and the focus group discussions.

![Priority Needs of OVC](image)

**Figure 14: Bar graph to show priority needs of OVC**
The figure 14 above demonstrated the fact that vast numbers of parents who died left behind many OVC whose basic needs were so numerous (Roalkvam, 2005). Looking at such a scenario, one would wish for advocates of children’s rights to work together and come up with best ways in which to fulfill such needs that other children with living parents seemed to be enjoying. The failure to procure basic needs whilst the children watch other parented children enjoy their lives was one of the reasons why most of the children suffered from great anxiety and stresses that culminated into more complicated depressive behaviors that eventually caused problems in the way the learners processed information within their cognitive maps. Literature has reiterated the fact that orphans fall among the many children with cognition and learning difficulties (Wood and Goba, 2011). Some countries such as South Africa do give social grants to OVC though the teacher training programmes around HIV/AIDS do not appear to be effective in helping the educators to respond to demands from the OVC (Wood and Goba, 2011).

Failure to have sufficient resources led the OVC to some psychological difficulties in their interactions as was noted by the teachers and the researcher. A lot of psychological and academic needs were noted. Figure 15 looked into how many of the 20 OVC were in dire need for psychological and academic support at the time the researcher collected the data in year 2012.
Most of the OVC displayed great desire for a number of psychological needs. It seemed the demands were quite high even if the researcher was looking at only 20 children which was quite a small percentage of the OVC within the district. However, though the 20 OVC were purposively sampled using the deviant option, the double orphans were assumed to be the ones living in the most difficult life circumstances. The large number of demands that the OVC sought was supported fully by many researches on OVC in CHHs which found the same fact that OVC around Africa and other developing countries required aid in various formats. Literature reviewed mentions Whetten and Ostermann (2009) who worked on an analytical survey where 658 double orphans were involved in what was called the POFO research by some global policy makers. They discovered a lot of orphan crises on health, emotional and cognitive functioning of double orphans. Therefore, advocate groups need to scrutinize each of the OVC’s difficulties if ever the orphaned child should be emancipated from factors that militate against their cognition and learning.
Within the focus group discussions, it was noted that the children’s poor socio-economic adversity also culminated into other child deprivation situations that eventually led to lack of concentration. This was overemphasized by the OVC earlier on under the theme 1 on developmental experiences. A related study by Schoan (October, 2001) established the fact that behavioral maladjustment in adolescent triggers depressive symptoms up to adulthood. Hence, the advocates of children’s rights countrywide should take heed and intervene early enough. Take lack of play, for instance, where 14 of the 20 OVC in figure 16 were complaining about lack of opportunity for such a worthwhile childhood experience that is known to enhance cognition (Piaget in Kosslyn and Rosenberg, 2000).

In addition the OVC were concerned about care-givers for their sick and maimed and also foster care for younger siblings. Perhaps this implied the notion of community based support that was found to be advantageous in other countries because it kept the child in his/her own village (Beard, 2005). This same notion was expressed by many of the stakeholders including the DEO and SWO in Chipinge district.

By looking at both figures 14 and 15, the needs of orphans in CHHs seemed to be the same ever since the discovery of CHHs in Rakai district of Uganda and even recently in South Africa (Mogotlane et al, 2010). The Rakai priority needs were noted as shelter, food, reliable income, education and health. Without these, the OVC reported that they did not find their life journey enjoyable after parental death. Most of what the children were murmuring with regards to these priority needs was highlighted under Theme 1. The sad part is that besides observation by stakeholders, the children voiced their discomfort that was exacerbated by poverty. Linked to multiple familial deaths, like in Rwanda, resilience of children played a big part (Ward Eyber, 2009) in helping the children to cope, but any human cognition would function well if obstacles were removed and needs were gratified.

Whilst it was pleasing to learn from two of the 20OVC that the GoZ, through the Social Welfare department, and some NGOs was trying to provide for the needy children’s priority needs, the children were much concerned about continuity in provisions. In some cases the children reported that community helpers may decide to change beneficiaries of NGO rations which
placed the OVC in very difficult situations especially because the children were not fully informed about communication systems with their benefactor organizations. As a result, 12 of the 20 OVC really supported the issue of establishing ways of availing information for every OVC even in the rural CHHs.

4.4.4.2 Sub-category 2: Aspects of Orphanhood that deterred learning of OVC

As the OVC continued to unveil their learning life experiences, the researcher noted in focus group discussions, a number of issues that rather deterred the children’s learning and cognition instead of promoting it. The fact that the parents who were the general overseers of a child’s welfare were no more, brought the child into stress and anxiety that when supplies ran short, the situation became worse bringing the minors into situations of hopelessness. The children explained that the prolonged hopelessness eventually led to depression which was noted by many teachers who interacted with the children. As far as class participation was concerned, learners tended to become too withdrawn. Test results of most orphans were noted to be deteriorating each term as they tried to get accustomed to a new life without parental guidance and support.

The children explained need deprivation ranging from lack of basic priority needs to psychological needs, which when combined left the minors in a great desire to drop out of school to seek jobs. Most of the available jobs were noted to be the manual type where older children were recruited without much payment for the heavy work on the farms, plots and inside rich people’s homes. A number who had seen others already out of school were also contemplating to do the same citing lack of trust (Erikson psychosocial crisis) for some individuals, relatives and even some organizations which promised them fees and other needs but failed to fulfill their obligations. Combined with role confusion (Erikson in Niolon, 2007), the older heads of the CHHs were observed seeking employment first whilst attending school but eventually got tired and decided to work for younger siblings, got married too soon and abandoned school.

The teachers confirmed that the predicament, in which the OVC fell under, exposed them to neglect and abuse where many people who sought cheap labor targeted the OVC in CHHs because no one really blocked perpetrators of abuse. Already it was noted in the review of
literature that most extended family members tended to neglect OVC who forcibly decided to stay in CHHs, citing the fact that they disregarded cultural norms and values concerning how Africans should look after their orphans.

The situation was aggravated by HIV/AIDS and poverty which continued to make people poorer and less able to support them. The too many parenting responsibilities in the life of a learning OVC confused, tortured, depressed, stressed and offered other discomforts associated with being poor and orphaned yet trying to attend paid schooling.

4.4.4.3 Sub-category 3: Aspects of Orphanhood that promoted Cognition and Learning of OVC

Already lower school achievement was generally implicated by all 34 participants in this study as one consequence that led the minors into decisions to drop out of school. However, the same participants noted a lot that promoted learning of the orphaned child. Resilience of the children, who were still in school even under difficult life circumstances, was one major hope for the OVC. By listening to the children’s voices and observing the interplay between the children’s resilience and vulnerability, the researcher noted that a resilient OVC may want to remain in school, as long as they were motivated and encouraged to stride on. Ward and Eyber (2009) in a research study in Rwanda established that the resiliency of children facing extreme hardships and adversity in CHHs has been the pillar of strength for promoting the psychosocial wellbeing for the learners because the Rwandan’s community rendered a listening ear to the children’s voices. A number of protective factors were identified and implemented to allow the minors to cope even in their learning.

The communities implicated for community based interventions for improved learning situations of OVC were extended families, local church organizations, donor communities, government ministries and OVC support groups. Literature has however, noted that the Zimbabweans OVC policy has a child-friendly version which allows the children to get involved in policy formulation that help them (NAP Child Friendly version, 2006-2010). The question was how many of the OVC out there were aware of an OVC policy. The researcher noted in her findings
that very few had come across the contents of the policy that concerned them, let alone the child friendly version. As such, more researches could be carried out alongside how much the orphaned children now knew about policy issues that concerned them.

To the teaching staff, the two senior stakeholders (US33 and US34) were advocating for the promotion of improved teaching strategies that accommodated any child with diverse needs. Already Wood and Goba (2011) in South Africa claim that the greater number of the children we teach in sub Saharan African schools today are vulnerable children. Therefore, teaching strategies should penetrate into the needs of the child. The children that the researcher interviewed even suggested extra free tuition during weekends and vacations to help them to cope.

Lately, a number of teachers in Zimbabwe had disregarded the needs of the poor children and their families. The teachers initiated private and paid vacation school lessons to those who could pay the exorbitant extra fees that they freely charged per day (Jinga and Ganga, 2011). Of course the GoZ tried to correct the situation but the OVC confirmed that many were still proceeding with private extra lessons that demanded private tuition fee first. Teachers are the main stakeholders in enhancing the learning of all children. If they are to improve and promote the learning of OVC, perhaps the teachers too may need some loco-parentis workshops and conferences that can prepare them fully to handle issues raised by OVC.

From discussing issues that deterred or promoted the learning of OVC, both the 14 stakeholders and the 20 OVC unanimously agreed that communities can work together to improve the livelihoods and learning of the OVC. The next theme tried to look at ways of improving policy and preparing both the OVC and communities to assist the learning situation of orphaned children.
4.4.5 Theme 5: Improving Policy, Preparing OVC and the Communities to assist orphaned children to accomplish their intended life-line goals

Figure 16: Theme 5: Preparing OVC and Communities for OVC aid to OVC’s Life-Line Goals

I refer to figure 16 above indicating ways in which OVC and the rest of the community can be prepared to allow OVC some pathways to achieve their life line goals. Chapter 2 reiterated the fact that policy issues covered in the Zimbabwe National HIV and AIDS strategic plan (ZNASP, 2006-2010), the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC), the Zimbabwe Education Act, chapter 25: 04 and the Zimbabwe Millennium Goals were noted to be significant when dealing with OVC because each included the welfare of OVC. The number of OVC remains the same even if a decline in HIV prevalence was recorded in Zimbabwe from 26 % to 18, 1%. Therefore, it became prudent for NAP for OVC to establish ways of mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on OVC.
By interacting with the 14 stakeholders in this study, the researcher noted commitment to help OVC by both government and non-governmental organizations because earlier researchers (UNAIDS, 2010) had established that Zimbabwe falls among the many Southern African countries which are part of the epicenter of HIV/AIDS. The basic vulnerability factor picked for this qualitative enquiry was doubled orphanhood. It has been noted already from the voices of the 34 participants in Themes 1 to 4 that double orphanhood was a devastating situation faced by many minors mainly due to the ravaging effects of HIV/AIDS which has not spared any race or gender. Its effects on children moved from depleting family resources up to initiating great suffering of minors especially in as far as learning and cognition were concerned.

4.4.5.1 Sub-category 1: Improving OVC Policy Formulation and Implementation

All the 14 adult stakeholders agreed that policy can help the general populace to plan and implement best ways of supporting learning of suffering children. If surveys through ZNASP (2006-2010) claim that the 30% of the child population in rural and urban high density Zimbabwe are orphans, then the launch of NAP for OVC in 2005 was a noble mitigation strategy on the impact of HIV in Zimbabwe. The pandemic goes beyond families and communities, even education. All 14 stakeholders stood for the idea that if policies were to prepare the OVC and communities fully, then the MoEASC ‘in school life skills programmes should definitely be finalized so that all young people and OVC from CHHs would benefit. They also added that BEAM and the National Aid Trust Funds meant to be availed to children would require re-assessment so that the intended beneficiaries of the funds would gain access.

If all learning needs of OVC are carefully investigated, as in this enquiry, then it would be easier to effect appropriate mitigation strategies for the OVC. The sections that follow tried to establish best ways in which stakeholders could be prepared for intervention into the learning of OVC so as to minimize any negative effects of double orphanhood on the learning and cognition of the learner. It was noted in this phenomenological study that the majority of the OVC the researcher interacted with in this enquiry were among the ‘hard to reach populations’ (NAP for OVC, 2006-2010) who were often excluded from aid. This is because only two out of 20 OVC involved as study participants were believed to be receiving full aid in their learning. Others
hinted that they used to receive aid from FOST but were removed from the beneficiary roll without prior notice. Therefore, it is vital that stakeholders find ways in which all community members are prepared to help orphaned children learn better.

It was vital to first re-check the missing cognition and learning needs that the orphans had presented in Theme 4, under figures 15 and 16. The requirements noted by the 14 stakeholders matched those mentioned by the 20 OVC. The lengthy list included material needs in the form of food, stationery, clothing, shelter, school fees, etc and psychological needs to include security, motivation, parental guidance and care, moral support, love and empathy. The rather sad notion learnt from the OVC’s pleas for need gratification was the fact that lack of these needs culminated into psychological drawbacks such as lack of concentration in school work by the affected children.

On responding to a question on how stakeholders felt about the sad stories told by OVC, the following response came up from one of the teachers (CRS29):

I sympathize with the children. Though the African culture believes in extended family systems, many feel they are already overloaded with their own social and economic responsibilities and so may not be ready to assist. I feel churches, NGOs and individuals should be sensitized about the plight of OVC so that they become more willing to render help.

All the teachers and heads present had something of concern about the OVC situation and they wished people could work collaboratively to assist the children in good time. Another stakeholder (AUS23) said the following:

It is saddening given the fact that most of them are left out in programmes meant for them because patrons or leaders of such groups opt to assist people who may even be more privileged and fortunate than the ones in a CHH.
The implication here was that NAP for OVC should continue to make efforts to reach out to all OVC in Zimbabwe with basic services. This operation should be extended to the more needy cases that may not be known even at the GoZ Social Welfare offices. Stakeholders suggested that schools should take chances within their busy curriculum schedules to run awareness campaigns to allow more children to know about the documents that protect them. Both the NAP for OVC (2006-2010) and its Child- Friendly version should be known by all children for no one child knows when they may become an orphan.

In line with policy, the stakeholders were happy that the Child- Friendly version of NAP’s major focus was on education where plans were underway to allow every child a chance to go to school. However, though the NAP for OVC (2006-2010) was developed to respond to the children’s situation where resources seemed to be limited and still fragmented, some ‘hard to reach children’ were in dire need for help as noted by their voices presented in Theme 1. In response to such a claim, stakeholders suggested that the present policies and laws concerning OVC may be improved in some of the following ways in order to relieve the suffering minors. The recurring views were as follows:

- CHHs should be registered with both the social welfare and local government departments so that they may not be missed when others receive aid meant for OVC.
- All OVC in CHHs should get free medical care and free education unconditionally if at all their learning needs are to be met from all angles.
- Policy should put all harsh offenders of the OVC behind bars without bail.
- On distribution of resources, plans should be clear at local levels so that rightful OVC beneficiaries gain from available resources.

Therefore, the general feeling of the stakeholders was that the OVC should be helped and be protected more. The clue was in line with Rapid Assessment, Analysis and Act Planning Process (RAAAPP, 2004) for OVC, a research conducted in Zimbabwe, in 2004 that suggested that the issue of OVC can be quite stressful and was bound to be a great threat for the socio-economic development of Zimbabwe. The issue of policy implementation was found to be quite stressful for implementers in a study by Maphalala (2006) in Kwazulu Natal. Therefore,
stakeholders need to take heed if the OVC’s learning issue in CHHs is to be effectively monitored through policy. Perhaps it is high time that the Children’s Act, Education Act, Maintenance Act and Child Abduction Act, be fully known by all children and members of the community.

The researcher also noted that generally OVC and some teachers were not aware of the legislative measures meant to protect the child. It was anticipated that if all OVC were provided for, then there was going to be less stress and anxiety in their learning patterns. In addition, the two National Policies that is ZNOCP and NAP for OVC should be published more because they seem to reflect strengths in the traditional ways for the care of children at community level. The general feelings of the 14 stakeholders was that the idea of ZNOCP that recognizes the role of the traditional leaders role in caring for the under-privileged need to be supported fully since it looks into marginalized groups including the OVC. A stakeholder (DRS30) added on to say that;

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Zunde RaMambo should go beyond food security activities even up to receiving and distributing school fees on behalf of donor organizations, GoZ departments and church groups to the real needy OVC. There seemed to be misappropriation of the resources here and there in what should be gained by the real children in need of help. Some leaders tend to want to benefit their own clan children even non-orphans.
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Perhaps the stakeholder was of the view that the older traditional leaders who were well known by the communities were bound to be impartial than office distributors who may be biased and may not know the real vulnerable child in need of help. The NAP for OVC’s plea for qualitative researches helps to empty out the voices of the need. However, from mere observations, the real OVC may want to be involved more in any further amendment, adjustments, corrections, etc of policies that affect them. The 20 OVC sampled in Chipinge district seemed to be less informed about the policies that may help them to exercise their rights as true citizens and children of Zimbabwe.
In commenting on the Education Act, Chapter 25: 04, most of the stakeholders were glad that the tool is quite clear on its mandate to assist every learner to learn. They were very aware that among the learners who should be educated by 2015 (MDG 6), was the OVC who required special guidance. The following excerpt from one school head (AUS21) confirmed the stakeholders’ views that the OVC should be considered in her/his education.

*Policy should be much more practical and channel its focus towards helping the marginalized OVC especially in poorer districts such as Chipinge. The OVC should be fully involved in policy formulation and its implementation up to evaluation phases so that the child’s needs are told and settled by the children themselves. Free education should be considered for the needy child, such as a vulnerable double orphan.*

The school head’s pleas here coincided with Jinga and Gangas (2011) research finding that education was not free for all unless one was enrolled under BEAM where a portion of the learner’s fees were catered for by the GoZ. The issue of lack of fees was one drawback voiced by the 20 OVC taken in this research. BEAM funds may need other helpers to argument it because this study has noted just from the 20 OVC that the fund is overwhelmed just as NAC (2011) had indicated in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

4.4.5.2 Sub-category 2: Improving OVC Academic Preparedness

In an effort to prepare the OVC for educational or academic work in which we find learning and cognition, responses from the stakeholders on the open-ended questionnaire indicated that most of the present interventions were concerned with satisfying basic needs of the children without much emphasis on specifics that were meant for OVC education. Once BEAM paid fees, not much was mentioned about the little but important learning accessories that the OVC requested. These included uniforms, shoes, pens, exercise books, readers, text books, satchels and many more types of stationery. At one school, it was disturbing to learn from a teacher (BRS26) that:
The above excerpt was a clear indication that some school authorities required awareness on the presence of OVC, in particular double orphans, who do not have parents to act as sureties in instances such as the above excerpt. The teacher reminded other teachers to remain empathetic to OVC and provide necessary assistance when the children required it. A teacher can certainly sign on behalf of parents other than denying the OVC their opportunities to receive donated textbook just because they do not have parents to sign on their behalf. As such there was a possibility that books may rot in offices whilst pupils have no textbooks to read and pass their examinations. Many more of the teachers were of the view that the OVC should be treated in the same manner as all other children.

Another school head (CR27) mentioned that proper counseling and provision of the basic needs was essential as is indicated in the Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs (Mwamwenda, 2004). Literature stipulated the fact that failure to attain basic needs hindered gratification of all other needs that the OVC required. Teachers too should be prepared for the teaching and learning of OVC. The community should be supportive of all the activities they engaged in. In fact, all the stakeholders were of the view that the OVC should feel secure and welcome in their ecological environment.

The children also raised within the focus group discussions the fact that schools should recognize their presence by motivating them when they falter. The children required reassurance that there were chances of succeeding in learning. Adults should be seen as good leaders who should not lead the OVC into irrational activities. In fact, they lacked protection from abusive adults. Teachers did not appreciate fully the minimum effort the OVC placed into their school work. As such, the teachers should be much more humanistic and show love and appreciation. The
children reported teachers’ and the communities’ failures to help the OVC cope with grief and sometimes the stigma and discrimination they encountered in their efforts to learn well.

4.4.5.3 Sub-category 3: Motivation for the child-parent

The qualitative enquiry managed to identify various avenues in which stakeholders could further assist the OVC. Being phenomenological, the enquiry specified from participant’s own views, the ways in which the school, community, NGOs, GoZ and OVC could handle issues related to motivation of learning for the pupils from CHHs. Literature reviewed in chapter 2 reiterated the issue that OVC were every stakeholders concern. To motivate the OVC to learn, the children urged local communities to suggest and implement ways that can motivate them to learn well. Among the numerous factors raised by the children, was the need to identify the different children’s learning styles and help them to cope. Avail learning materials that enhance learning in both urban and rural places of the country. The children also raised a plea that they failed to afford paid extra lessons during the vacation and weekends.

The school heads echoed sentiments expressed by all teachers that the OVC seemed to be facing learning difficulties that was perpetuated by the difficult life circumstances. They added the fact that most of the OVC displayed learning difficulties across the curriculum even with some doses of psychosocial counseling here and there. Some extrinsic motivation was essential if the children were to become intrinsically motivated in their learning processes (Bruner in Skinner, 2009). One teacher supported so much, the children’s plea for foster parents as an intervention strategy that could motivate learners in school. The children required parental care and guidance in the absence of their biological parents.

4.4.5.4 Sub-category 4: Emotional and Psychosocial Preparedness

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 contends that the cognitive, emotional and social capacities throughout an orphan’s life experiences are responsible for shaping existing capacities. As such teachers as significant others can help to tender hope and a life-line that can be trusted by the OVC (Rutter, 2008). Teachers can easily remove the anxiety, the feelings of shame, guilt and
sometimes doubt that the OVC sometimes felt. Therefore, the social environment can exert different influences on the child’s emotional and psychosocial development. Asked about how society may perfect the OVC’s psychosocial preparedness to learn, the stakeholders unanimously agreed with one officer (US34) who said:

Enhanced learning can help an OVC to trust and hope in good education so much that psychosocial difficulties in life can be eliminated once the child attains academic freedom. All that is required is for society to tender hope and empathy to the growing child until the OVC can become much more mature and independent. All that is required is resiliency on the part of the learner.

Research has established the fact that poor children have self-writing tendencies that can make them resilient to pressures of orphanhood in poverty-stricken CHHs (Rutter’s Pathway Model in Ganga and Chinyoka, 2010). The self-writing tendencies were observed among many OVC who seemed to want to succumb to poverty because they were living in it. It was noted that maternal deprivation especially among the many child-heads within the CHHs placed the OVC into emotional instability as most of them showed fatigue, homeliness and grief. The orphans manifested signs and symptoms that they missed continued relationship with their parents. Evidence of such psychosocial difficulties was expressed through their developmental experiences recorded under Theme I.

The emotional instability among OVC could be eliminated through schooling (UNICEF, 2009) that allows learning and cognition to take place even in difficult life circumstances. The stakeholders concurred that learning can be possible if the children were assisted to cope with stresses in their developmental encounters. Resilience has been found to protect the OVC from being overwhelmed by risk factors (Rutter, 2005). Most of what came from the 14 stakeholders was meant to encourage resilient behaviors on life stressors that dominated the CHHs. The life stressors have been noted to be obstacles that hindered learning and cognition of children in CHHs. It is cognition that is vital to constructivism and once knowledge is constructed then it has been learnt. Educators and the rest of the community members are therefore, urged to work collaboratively in minimizing the effects of orphanhood.
4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Though it entails lengthy qualitative procedures, Tesch’s idea of analyzing and displaying the research findings in a simultaneous and interactive fashion (Creswell, 2002), helped to bring about the true story that this particular phenomenon wanted to tell. This phenomenological case enquiry reflected clearly the lived and learning experiences of OVC in CHHs in Chipinge district of Manicaland Province in Zimbabwe. The study also portrayed the clue that the OVC in Chipinge district were surviving and learning under very difficult life circumstances in which any advocate of children’s rights would wish if something could be done urgently to help the OVC in need. The children needed help on refocusing their learning and cognition experiences in order for them to achieve their intended life-line plans (Rutter, 2008). Although the researcher is not closing up for upcoming research around this topical issue, she is glad that the research questions that she had noted at the commencement of this study, have received substantial answers from which she can comfortably conclude and make recommendations as in the last ladder of Tesch’s iterative model of data analysis. Therefore, the next chapter focused on the study’s overview, synthesis of findings, limitations encountered, recommendations and conclusions.
CHAPTER FIVE
OVERVIEW, SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Data collected, analyzed and displayed (Tesch 1990, in Creswell, 2002) was thematically discussed in Chapter 4 in an effort to give the story told about the effects of orphanhood on the learning and cognition of children living in CHHs. The presentation of this chapter begins from an overview or summary of each chapter in which the conceptualization and theorization of the thesis events were guided by research questions asked at the commencement of this work.

The greater part of the findings in this descriptive phenomenological case study came from 20 purposively selected OVC who provided their developmental experiences as they made efforts to live and learn from CHHs. The children’s voices in the phenomenological case study aided in illuminating the plight of the orphaned and vulnerable child faced with a lot of difficult life circumstances that seemed to be exacerbated by instances of poverty and need deprivation. For purposes of data triangulation and authenticating findings from the young research participants, some 14 stakeholders were also purposively selected to participate in the enquiry.

There were concurrences in as far as the findings from both groups (20 OVC and 14 stakeholders) were concerned. The implications pointed to the fact that something more still has to be done by governmental departments, non-governmental sections, local communities, and the orphaned children if at all the learning and cognition of the orphaned and vulnerable children should be enhanced.

After the synopsis of each chapter, some conclusions and recommendations for significant stakeholders and for further researches are provided followed by encountered limitations. The limitations are mainly for note since they did not grossly affect the credibility of the study.
5.2 THE THESIS OVERVIEW/SUMMARY

This section endeavors to provide a synopsis of each of the first four chapters all in an effort to guide readers into the main gist of the enquiry. It other words, it gives a summary of the proceedings within each chapter. Like in many enquiries, the summary or overview serves as a background to the synthesis and recommendations of the study as suggested by Mugweni (2012).

5.2.1 Chapter one

Among the many undesirable phenomenon within developing countries is ‘orphanhood’ that seems to be precipitated by the escalating parental deaths that are mostly rooted in the devastating effects of HIV and AIDS. As it stands now, the pandemic is still not curable. The sixth millennium development goal (MDG 6) proposes that care and support be afforded to OVC, particularly the ones who, due to unavoidable circumstances, ended up residing in CHHs. The first chapter deliberated on the foundation for the enquiry encompassing a general orientation of the construct orphanhood and its link with the devastating scourge, HIV/AIDS. A motivational note or rationale of this topical study was also highlighted sighting the fact that OVC faced life crises that seemed to be adversely affecting their cognition, self-esteem and self-efficacy among other drawbacks. The researcher noted the fact that by being confined to a CHH, the double OVC faces more risks than the paternal and maternal orphans.

Moreover, this study is justified because researchers have noted that the area of double orphanhood and CHHs has not yet received much attention in as far as research is concerned (Hallman, 2004; Plan GDD Finland, 2005; Germann, 2005; Cluver and Gardner, 2007). Educators then struggle to balance the already challenging business of teaching disadvantaged children suffering from high anxiety levels, limited concentration span, poverty, trauma and sometimes diseases (Wood and Goba, 2011). It was also the researcher’s motivational glory to hope that the results of such a study might empower the OVC in CHHs with learning skills that can help them to cope with their parentless situation.
The first chapter also explicitly defined the problem of orphanhood as it is manifested by many signs and symptoms on the learning and cognition of double OVC attending secondary school from CHHs in Chipinge district of Manicaland province in Zimbabwe. Five research questions, well aligned to five objectives, were constructed following a major research question that helped to clarify the stated problem. It was noted from the numerous aims of the enquiry that the study’s major aim was to join hands with other children’s rights advocates in establishing avenues in which the family life, learning and cognition can be normalized in a CHH. Terms and acronyms related to the study i.e. child, double orphanhood, orphaned and vulnerable, child headed household, learning and cognition were operationally defined (Smart, 2003; UNICEF, 2006; Wood and Goba, 2011; Kosslyn and Rosenberg, 2008; Woolfolk, 2005; Donald et al, 2010).

A phenomenological descriptive case study was adopted after having noted the need to allow the OVC to empty their developmental and learning experiences. It remained qualitative and data analysis plan encompassed Tesch’s data analysis tool. Both the theoretical and geographical boundaries of the study were presented under the delimitations. A few limitations were anticipated in the form of ethical limitations and response rate. The study was organized into five chapters.

5.2.2 Chapter two

The review of literature on the effects of double-orphanhood on the learning and cognition of children from CHHs entailed a lot of concepts beginning from a multi-dimensional theoretical framework of constructivism and cognitivism linking Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems perspectives in complementing the developmental experiences of OVC, Erik Erikson’s psychosocial theory covering the life crises experienced by OVC and cognitive perspectives of Levy Vygotsky and Information Processing, all geared towards paving a better life-line for OVC as advocated by Rutter in his pathway model and the issue of resilience (Meyer, Moore and Viljoen, 2003; Mwamwenda, 2004; Bronfenbrenner, 2008; Santrock, 2009; Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2010; O’Neil, 2011).
In an effort to try and comprehend both a theoretical and conceptual framework of the study, the researcher endeavored to juxtapose the two frameworks basing on how various authorities view the two tethers in research. Both seemed to be providing almost similar functions in an enquiry though they can be differentiated (Reichel and Ramey 1987 in Smyth 2004, Rudestam and Newton, 2007; Borgatti and Foster, 2003; Borgatti, 2006). The theoretical framework touched on constructivism as a multi-dimensional theoretical framework summarized in the figure two.

Within the review of literature, it was necessary to also explore what different government policies say about the OVC, CHHs, and the learning of the disadvantaged child. As such, the researcher explored some Government of Zimbabwe Policies, that are linked to the welfare and support of OVC, all in an effort to comprehend the topical issue that holds devastating effects on the learning of the country’s orphaned minors. The fact that the major cause of orphanhood is HIV/AIDS and is still not yet curable, it becomes worthwhile to find how effective learning could reduce negative effects of the construct especially on children. The statutes noted were ZNASP 2006-2010, NAP for OVC, 2006-2010 policies and its Child-Friendly Version; Zimbabwe Millennium Goals and the Education Act, Chapter 25:04. All these GoZ policies seem to be fighting hard to plan for the disadvantaged child especially the orphaned and vulnerable within the normal home, extended family homes and in CHHs or the street.

All the policies seem to imply that Rutter’s idea in the Pathway Model is ideal for shaping the child’s life-line through proper learning in and outside class. Though they were being reviewed at the time of this study, it is clear that the policies reflect the fact that the intended goals such as Goal 3 of EFA, for instance, reiterates the need to meet the learning needs of all through equitable access to basic and continuing education (UNICEF Global Estimate, 2004; USAIDS, 2010; UNAIDS, UNICEF, USAID, 2004; Zimbabwe Demographic Survey, 2005-2006; NAC report, 2011; MDGs progress report, 2005; Ganga and Chinyoka, 2010; Jinga and Ganga, 2011).

Having viewed the policies in detail, the researcher then went on to review literature and related researches covering the construction of the concepts orphanhood and CHH; the concepts ‘learning and cognition’ and the relationship to orphanhood; developmental experiences of OVC in CHHs; local and external efforts to prepare OVC for better learning and livelihoods in CHHs.
5.2.3 Chapter three

This study falls within a qualitative research paradigm in which forms of triangulation such as data, theoretical, investigator and time triangulation (Nachmias and Nachmias, 2007) were engaged. Methodological triangulation techniques (Denscombe, 2007; Leedy and Ormrod, 2010; Cohen et al, 2011; de Vos, et al, 2011 and Deport, 2011; Punch, 2011) were utilized in an effort to enhance creativity and enrichment within the enquiry. The term triangulation was fully defined in Chapter 3. As such, individual in-depth interviews, an open-ended questionnaires, focus group discussions and participant observations were used to collect data needed to find out the effects of double orphanhood on the learning and cognition of OVC living in CHHs. The phenomenological descriptive case study combined well with the multiple research instruments all meant to triangulate data collection.

Being a purely qualitative enquiry involving a focus on the complexity of a particular phenomenon in its natural setting (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010), this study tried to describe situations, interpret them and allowed the researcher to gain an insight into the phenomenon under scrutiny. It is therefore, immersed in phenomenology. Specifically, the researcher employed a phenomenological descriptive case study. The OVC in CHHs were allowed to tell their experiences in as far as cognition and learning were concerned. The teachers, headmasters and other stakeholders working with the OVC most of the time also assisted in observations that aimed to authenticate learning experiences presented by the OVC from CHHs.

Prior to visiting the schools and CHHs, the researcher obtained permission to do research in Chipinge district from the Chipinge District Administrator at the Chipinge Local Government
Offices, the Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Sport, Art and Culture (MoEASC) at the MoEASC head-office as well as the Education Officers at the MoEASC Chipinge district offices. The permission was granted without any challenges. An initial baseline survey was carried out to determine the exact population of OVC in Chipinge district and check the feasibility of the study.

The preliminary survey also helped to locate the greater prevalence of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in both urban and rural Chipinge. Four secondary schools were purposefully picked up because details given proved that the greater numbers of the OVC found here were attending schools from CHHs. In addition, the four selected schools were noted to be holding the highest number of OVC settling in CHHs in the district. In each of the four schools (3 rural and 1 urban); 5 double orphans (making a total of 20), the school head (4 in all), 2 teachers (8 in all), one District Education Officer and a Social Welfare Officer were purposively selected to make a total sample of 34 participants. The idea of purposeful sampling was to obtain a most characteristic representation of attributes that served the purpose of the study (Grinnell and Unrau, 2008).

Piloting procedures were taken to ensure valid and reliable instruments. To enhance the quality of the research tools, the researcher considered the issues of credibility (Lincoln and Guba in de Vos et al, 2011) or validity as well as reliability as vital even if the study is qualitative. For data analyses, more of thematic procedures (O’Neil, 2011), involving cross tabulations, descriptions, narratives, anecdotal records, vignettes, excerpts and other manual procedures were augmented by use of the Tesch’s qualitative data analysis tool (Tesch, 1990 in Creswell, 2002). The analysis procedures here occurred simultaneously with data collection and interpretation (Creswell). This led to reduction of data and creating particular codes and clues for themes that the researcher followed in presenting the qualitative data.

Being a sensitive study, a number of ethical considerations took precedence in order to safeguard the orphaned child, the researcher, teachers, government and non-governmental stakeholders and any other participants. The ethical considerations included issues of autonomy, beneficence and non-maleficence of human research participants as stipulated in the UNISA Policy on Ethics (2007). Details of ethical considerations were explained fully in Chapter 3.
5.2.4 Chapter four

The presentation of findings was guided by the initial research questions picked up from chapter one as follows:

- What is the social construction of the concepts; cognition and learning, within child headed households (CHHs)?
- What are the developmental experiences encountered by orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in CHHs as far as their cognition and learning are concerned?
- How does double orphanhood affect the manner in which OVC build schemes/schemata?
- What aspects promote or deter both cognition and learning of OVC within CHHs?
- How can the schools, local communities and policy makers be academically and emotionally prepared to assist orphaned children to achieve their intended goals?

Following the Tesch’s model of data analysis (Creswell, 2002), the five research questions above were merged to yield five main themes within which the researcher presented the research findings in the form of vignettes, anecdotal statements, narratives and excerpts from the participants. Each of the five main themes carried sub-themes or categories, details of which are analyzed and displayed in chapter four afore. The main themes ran as follows:

**Theme 1:** Developmental experiences encountered by OVC in CHHs in as far as cognition and learning are concerned

**Theme 2:** The social construction of the concepts; cognition and learning, within CHHs

**Theme 3:** Effect of orphanhood on the building of OVC’s schemes/schemata

**Theme 4:** Learning Needs of OVC and Aspects that promote or deter both cognition and learning of OVC within CHHs
Theme 5: Improving Policy and Preparing OVC and the Communities to assist orphaned children to achieve their intended life-line goals.

5.3 SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS AS PER MAIN THEMES

5.3.1 Theme 1Synthesis of findings: Developmental experiences encountered by OVC in CHHs in as far as cognition and learning are concerned

The study noted that the concept of CHHs has become a growing trend in many poorer districts of Zimbabwe including Chipinge. It was vital to study the effects of orphanhood on the learning and cognition of affected children living within CHHs in order to assess and document the rather harsh and scary predicaments in which many of the OVC were surviving. Listening to the voices of OVC enabled various stakeholders to strategize on best ways in which care and support could be given to children in difficult life circumstances.

The lives of OVC in CHHs around Chipinge (Zimbabwe) entailed numerous versions found in both rural and urban set-ups. Some of the double orphans were heads of households whilst some were siblings under the welfare of another child. The situation was similar to most CHH establishments in other countries where the same trend was noted (Ward and Eyber, 2009; Mogotlane et al, 2010). Some OVC also carried the burden of looking after their grandparents even if they had to do their school work as pupils at school. Most of the children failed to cope with a household’s daily duties mainly due to lack of adequate resources and the general limited capacity of children. This was demonstrated in the despondence expressed in the children’s voices within the excerpts presented in Chapter 4.

Many of the orphans were unable to fit completely into extended family set ups due to a variety of reasons also noted in earlier studies by Foster (2002) and Nyamukapa and Gregson (2004). The children’s experiences made them vulnerable thus exposing them to unbearable environmental atrocities that seemed to infringe so much on their academic work.
The ecological impact of orphanhood in poorer situations was found to be much more detrimental than helpful because the children’s anecdotal reports cited instances of need deprivation, emotional and economic abuse as well as neglect. The process factors (referring to family interactions) as noted by Bronfenbrenner in Donald et al (2010), may not be complete in a child-headed home. Child development, for instance, is greatly influenced by children’s social contexts which eventually hold an impact on the whole macro-system. In some instances, children were left with no option but to confine themselves to poverty-stricken child-headed homes because circumstances they lived in forced them to take up the child-headed family option.

The finding here was quite consistent with many a finding such as the one by Roalkvam (2005) in Zimbabwe where he mentions the issue of social isolation as a derailing factor in the development of OVC in CHHs. Both Roalkvan and this study’s findings seemed to be affirming the fact that the children’s ecological environment requires adult intervention if at all learning in CHHs is to be enhanced.

Unlike some developed countries, the OVC observed and interviewed in this enquiry suffered extreme poverty and physiological need deprivation mainly in the form of lack of adequate food. The government of Zimbabwe and organizations such as UNICEF, Save the Children and Childline-Zimbabwe all assert that someone must tender hope, belief and trust for the child to grow properly. Literature reviewed has ascertained the fact that countries such as India have embarked on foster care for CHH situations that the government found pathetic (HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2006).

Of course Table 6 depicted the fact that the extended family community seemed to be helping a lot even if the children were reluctant to move into their relative’s homes. Perhaps an enabling environment, that is more homely and rather humanistic in nature, should prevail in any household that opts to take care of orphaned children.

The socio-economic hardships noted in CHHs sounded so alarming where, for instance, the children in figure 9 expressed contentment over a meal type they labeled ‘1-0-1 meals a day’. Perhaps it was mere manifestation of resilience on the part of the OVC yet, indicating that the
children were slowly getting malnourished. The situation of the 28% relying on 0-0-1 meals denoted a risky living environment where failure to get nourishment may eventually lead to malnutrition. The creeping situation of malnourishment was evidenced by the continuous headaches and stomach aches that most of the children were complaining about. Even if the children seemed to be succumbing to the poverty-stricken situation, they still required adult intervention, hence the need for collaborative efforts in the care and learning of OVC.

More of the children’s developmental issues in CHHs pointing toward negatives, e.g. the failure to procure enough school fees on time, dilapidated homesteads, recurring stress filtering into their learning environments and other risky situations that seemed to be common in most poverty-stricken CHHs. The assumption is quite consistent with Rutter (2005) who contends that risky environments are related to risk factors. By following the children’s stories, perhaps one may like to predict the fact that perhaps the risky environments that the children encountered might be the major causes of the reason why the greater number of the OVC in figure 10 were threatening to drop out of school in order to find means of survival through work.

Even though some aid was poured into the OVC situations by well-wishers, the fact still stands that not all of the deserving OVC received the aid that enabled them to match the status of their age mates who had living parents. Perhaps the failure to produce adequate resources for the OVC could be one of the facts noted in the literature review where a NAC officer hinted that the BEAM funding available country-wide was rather overwhelmed because the OVC prevalence was high (NAC, 2011).

As such, the children felt that the community at large was rather neglecting the OVC because a lot was left for the child to handle alone. The older grandparents living in some CHHs, provided a sense of security and moral support for the children, but the aged required material support yet most children’s efforts could not suffice in providing all that a household needed. The poverty situation confirmed risk factors noted earlier on by Rutter (2005).

Therefore, the findings denoted the fact that poverty was becoming a growing trend in the established CHHs. Many of the poor CHHs placed the blame on the welfare of the affected child and this sad predicament culminated into the cognition and learning environment as was noted
within the other four themes in Chapter 4. Lacour and Tissington (2011) have already ascertained the fact that poverty was a growing trend even in the United States, a developed state. Therefore, it was vital for all stakeholders to note that it was not only the OVC’s micro-environment, but the rest of the orphan’s ecological map that induced negatives leading to crises that most of the minors in CHHs were failing to handle.

5.3.2 Theme 2 Synthesis of findings: The social construction of the concepts, cognition and learning, within CHHs

In an effort to enhance the area of learning and wellbeing of OVC, this study tried to intervene into Education for All (EFA) goals by catering for the rather neglected lot of children striving to learn where sometimes the cognitive maps were distorted by intervening variables. Once the effects were established, perhaps the findings would open up for future research that will facilitate the emancipation of OVC in the CHHs.

From the study findings, the researcher deduced some consistency in the manner in which some OVC portrayed certain behaviours. In a number of cases, the results matched or went beyond literature findings especially in as far as interference on academic work and behaviour was concerned. For instance, Venter and Rambau (2011) warn that children left alone for very long hours may present low self-esteem, low academic efficacy and high levels of depression. This trend was noted in the 20 OVC who resided in CHHs.

The children were deprived of emotional and material needs and the structures that gave meaning to social and cultural life. They were also at a greater risk of neglect, violence, sexual assault and other abuses. A number of anecdotal records were produced in which the children aired out their views. It was noted that the construct of orphanhood deterred cognition especially if the orphan was neglected or abandoned. The implication therefore, was that the impact of the environment, even in the CHH, should be monitored fully and studied to assist the OVC as they learn through their life span experiences. Nevertheless, the OVC displayed resourcefulness, responsibility and a sense of morality.
From the data collected, it was found that the rights of the affected children were compromised. Those heading the households were often not at school and were responsible for domestic chores. The households needed food, clothes, money, shelter and education. They suffered lack of a sense of security, belonging and acceptance. Consequences of the past were observed to be affecting their psychosocial wellbeing. Extreme poverty characterized by insufficient food, clothing, shelter and exploitation all seemed to hinder children’s progress in learning.

The situation in the CHHs seemed to reflect some neglect, denial of children’s rights and lack of democracy, emotional abuse, lack of advocacy and finally lack of access to social services such as health and education. This scenario matched many other studies in developing countries as was narrated in the review of literature (UNICEF, 2001; Roalkvam, 2005; Donald and Clacherty, 2005; Germann, 2005).

5.3.3 Theme 3 Synthesis of findings: Effects of orphanhood on the building of OVC’s schemes/schemata

The ecological impact of child-parenting in poorer situations seemed to be much more detrimental than helpful because the children’s anecdotal reports and observations noted instances of need deprivation in various formats. Therefore, educators have a role to play in dismantling oppression of children (Francis andle Roux, 2011) and generating a vision for ameliorating a more socially just future for the OVC.

The findings alongside Theme 3 depicted the fact that many areas of an OVC’s cognitive learning were disrupted as the child continued to face challenges surrounding being parentless and residing in a CHH. Each of the areas of learning was grossly affected especially due to the OVC’s inability to procure adequate learning resources especially the recurring issue of lack of fees, stationery, uniforms, etc as was noted within the findings presented in Chapter 4. The OVC’s display of learning difficulties especially due to a lack of resources seemed to be congruent with findings in a number of studies on children’s experiences in CHHs especially in developing countries (Mogotlane et al, 2010; Venter and Rambau, 2011; Ward and Eyber; 2009). The situation left the OVC in a desperate situation that eventually culminated into cognition and
learning defects as was unpacked by the 20 OVC. The fact that all the consulted stakeholders confirmed the instances of disruptions of a child’s concentration span and formulation of schemes, it became evident that many of the OVC were surviving in very difficult life circumstances. These required every stakeholder’s intervention if at all care and support mentioned in MDG 6 was to be fully realized by every OVC.

The despondence expressed by three quarters of the children over their inability to access full opportunities to stay in class, left every stakeholder in an awkward situation, bearing the fact that the attainment of all EFA goals lies in the hands of all citizens of a country especially the government, non-governmental and civic organizations that advocate for the rights of all children.

Orphanhood in CHHs seemed to hold lifelong effects on the would-be adults because it deprived the learners of an ideal opportunity to process information that was required for retrieval when the child tried to engage in learning every school subject. Reviewed literature confirmed the fact that once a child’s memory store became so disrupted, one can easily predict possible failure in academic work unless the child was strong enough to remain resilient and cope with learning stresses and anxieties as he/she grows into adulthood. The implication confirmed the psychoanalytic claim that the would-be adult may realize an uninteresting adult life because failure in school may place one into a low socio-economic status. This is in line with how Lacour and Tissington (2011) explain how poverty is now becoming a growing culture even in developed states as the United States of America.

It is also possible that the storms and stresses (Erikson’s theory) that the OVC continue to face as adolescents may not only affect learning and cognition per se, but may filter into their ecological environment and resultanty affecting the entire child’s chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 2008). This denotes a fact that the present difficulties faced by the OVC may not be their own baby but a baby for every citizen because eventually the effects may catch up with every Zimbabwean, bearing in mind the fact that ‘Ubuntu, Ubuntu ngaBantu’.
The implications therefore, is that as the double OVC tried to construct knowledge in and outside class, they require aid in various formats if at all they should enjoy their right to quality learning among other children. Though they may want to remain resilient to the orphan crisis, they seem to be surviving in indeed, a risky environment that carries with it a number of risk factors (Rutter, 2005) that are evident now but may hold wide-spread repercussions to the individual and his /her ecological environment as he /she grows into adulthood. Therefore, Rutter’s idea of shaping a positive life-line (Rutter in Ganga and Chinyoka, 2010) for OVC is indeed in line with Mandela’s contention that there can be no keener revelation of society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children (Mandela in NAP Child-Friendly version, 2006-2010:1).

5.3.4 Theme 4 Synthesis of findings: Learning Needs of OVC and aspects that promote or deter both cognition and learning of OVC within CHHs

Both the stakeholders and the OVC concurred on the notion that orphanhood deterred cognition and learning. There is need to identify programmes for OVC in CHHs which can help prevent negative consequences of child-to-child care. The negatives can be replaced by more worthwhile activities (Freudian catharsis hypothesis) in the form of supervised, free sporting activities and academic club activities among many. In fact, the OVC hinted on such a request adding on the need for a free internet café as noted in figure 14. Perhaps this endeavor may minimize the risks that most unprotected children are exposed to. At the same time, children might learn to share their experiences, difficulties, happiness and start talking about their feelings. Talking is therapy as in the psychoanalytic perspective of ‘free association’ (Santrock, 2009).

The findings also construed the clue that most OVC are eager to learn but they seemed to be hungry for the educator’s extra scaffolding. Taking it from Venter and Rambau (2011) in South Africa, teachers were also encouraged to extend their loco -parentis duties to weekends and vacations in order to afford each learner the care and support that she/he continuously required and searched for. Looking at the high poverty levels noted within the CHHs, it is advisable that the government establishes ways of controlling or eradicating the extra tuition for extension work that some teachers charge over the weekends and vacation times. In a study on the effects of holiday lesson on learners from low-income families, Jinga and Ganga (2011) raised the fact
that many children wanted to attend extra lessons but were incapacitated due to poor socio-economic backgrounds. The search for the intended after-school activities should go beyond catering for the child whose parents still live, towards poorer learners who are orphaned and are vulnerable.

It is essential that every effort must be made to ensure that affected children have stable family based care and adequate social support. Various policies and interventions can help to attenuate the child-parenting system’s negative influence on child development especially in poverty stricken CHHs. The community should be involved fully in the welfare of children especially the ones in CHHs whose micro-systems are without biological parents.

The extended family should take a pivotal role and device means of enabling an effective reciprocal influence between the OVC and immediate family members, peers, school authorities, neighbours and others within the OVC’s phenomenal field. Many stakeholders recommended intervention programmes for marginalised groups. It was however noted that implementation of such programmes remained at pilot level, resulting in the intended beneficiaries continuing to suffer within their micro to macro-system interactions.

The excerpts from the participants suggested that for enhanced learning to prevail, some sustainable effort should be put in place so that that the OVC is eventually weaned off donor dependency syndrome. The notion of food support programmes for children in schools, by some Non-Governmental Organisations were noted to be gateways that promoted livelihoods and learning of all minors including the OVC. Such nutrition programmes have gone a long way in alleviating developmental problems in children living under difficult life circumstances in many developing states. The major issue was sustainability of donor efforts. Stakeholders needed to establish means of maintaining continuity in all efforts to assist OVC to learn better.
5.3.5 Theme 5 Synthesis of findings: Improving Policy and Preparing OVC and the Communities to assist orphaned children to achieve their intended life-line goals.

The researcher has read through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in UNICEF (2010). There seemed to be some infringement of such rights where the blame was not necessarily centered on one stakeholder but all adults in civic organizations. Like any other human rights, the child’s rights needed to be respected, hence all should appreciate Mandela’s dictum that there can be no keener revelation of society’s soul than the way in which a nation treats its children (NAP for OVC, 2006-2010). The child’s age should be considered when deciding on which right is right for each age group and which orphan-care alternative can be ideal. Parental guidance should, therefore, accompany the child always. Parents in Zimbabwe and other countries should plan well to avoid negative consequences of the child-parenting system.

Perhaps stakeholders should take heed on ideas raised by participants on OVC Policy formulation and implementation where all the stakeholders were encouraged to be sympathizers of the OVC living and learning situations. The idea of children crying out for help depicts a need for their involvement in formulation of polices that affected them especially the rural OVC that are hard to reach (NAP for OVC, 2006-2010). A common instance mentioned by the participants was described as a situation whereby the rural OVC might have needs that a child representative from an urban dwelling might not know. Therefore, there was need to involve different backgrounds as the nation planned for the well-being of all minors.

Many children especially from within rural areas were not quite aware of the policies that protected them, yet if consulted they could air out how they wished to be assisted by civic organizations within their ecological systems. The numerous views raised by stakeholders required conferencing so as to chart a way forward in which the learning of affected OVC could be enhanced.

The messages from stakeholder data confirmed the RAAAPP (2004) finding within the review of literature that the issue of CHHs could be a great threat for the socio-economic development of
Zimbabwe, hence the need for civil organizations to act swiftly. The ideas of ZNOCP, where traditional leaders’ roles should be realized fully, seemed to be a noble fact bearing in mind that if the community leaders became aware of their parentless OVC, then they could become much more focused in directing aid to the needy.

They all were advocating for a stress free livelihood for all OVC hoping that it might eventually lead them to better learning and eventually liberating them from hardships that they were presently encountering. This is in line with Rutter’s (2005, 2008) idea of moulding a pathway for all marginalized individuals so that eventually one can be liberated from life atrocities. Therefore, policy might help to talk to all advocates and non-advocates of children’s rights in an effort to advance a better life-line for OVC through quality learning.

The issues encompassed in policy planning on OVC were centred on availing adequate resources for all OVC in the form of school fees and other learning resources as these were found to be lacking and sometimes minimally availed. Preparing the learner fully in academic work became significant since it had been already noted in the review of literature that the school was found to be the safest place for all children at risk. In fact, this study also added on to say that the school seemed to be the child’s place of finding peace and solace because it is a place where the children converged and shared life experiences. The teachers and peers within the school were viewed by all participants as shoulders on which the OVC could cry on. This was evidenced by the responses established within the focus group discussions where all OVC seemed to appreciate the idea of having talking sessions with children facing the same predicament.

5.4 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This qualitative enquiry has brought forth quite a substantial amount of data that is quite worthwhile. It has ascertained the fact that the OVC who are affected by orphanhood are usually left with minimal resources that rendered them to environmental exploitation. To some extent, policy guidelines seemed to fail to protect the OVC due to the fact that many OVC may not be aware of the policies that protect them because they reside in the ‘hard to reach zones’ of the district. On the part of the community, a lot of effort is being made to alleviate some of the
negative effects of orphanhood on the learning of OVC but the effort becomes less noticeable due to the escalating number of parentless children, mainly due to HIV/AIDS.

Some studies have ascertained the fact that children can be empowered by making them much more active in the community rather than remaining as victims. The notion was found functional in local and international studies reviewed in Chapter 2, where the scourge of OVC in CHHs is extensive. These included Kelly (2000), Germann (2005), Alliance for HIV/AIDS (2006), Kumar and Schofield (2008), Deters (2008), and Save the Children (2010).

5.4.1 The Proposed Model to help dealing with the plight of OVC

Based on the data received, through the research questions that led to the establishment of the five themes, several recommendations, grouped into four categories below, are enlisted for various stakeholders including the OVC. The proposed comprehensive model below (Figure 17) tried to look into how a developing country such as Zimbabwe could enhance the learning of OVC from CHHs. It summarizes the four categories proposed as ways in which the learning of OVC can be enhanced. It begins with identifying the needs (needs analysis) of the OVC learning situation summarized as monitored orphan-care, empowerment of OVC, policy review and the need for continued OVC research. An implementation process (Maphalala, 2006) then follows a step by step format as in figure 17 below.
Figure 17: A proposed model for use in dealing with the plight of OVC

- **Monitored Orphan Care**
  - District charity/foster homes
  - Monitored original homes for OVC
  - Safe inclusion into extended family homes
  - Monitored traditional leader’s homes

- **Empower the OVC**
  - Free tuition for confirmed OVC in a CHH
  - Automatic inclusion as BEAM beneficiaries
  - Improved teaching & learning strategies
  - Monitored after school programmes

- **Policy Review**
  - Involvement in OVC Policy Reviews
  - Combined efforts of urban & rural OVC
  - Workshopping on the significance of the ZNOCP & NAP for OVC
  - Registration of all OVC under their various categories

- **Research on OVC**
  - Engage both Qualitative and Quantitative research processes
  - Involve both Micro and Macro Organisations
  - Make decisions based on research outcomes
  - Engage the OVC

Plan for each notion, refine & Train right personnel

Pilot test suggested care giving programme

Review and refine procedures

Train educators/caregivers & other stakeholders

Implement working programmes

Support, Monitor and Evaluate
The sub-categories of the recommendations from figure 17 are discussed further here-under as follows:

- Recommendations for meeting the OVC’s learning needs and enhancing their ideal development
- Recommendations for enhancing sustainable cognition and learning in OVC’s efforts to build their schemata
- Recommendations for Policy Formulation and Implementation
- Recommendations for further Research

5.4.2 Recommendations for meeting the OVC’s needs and enhancing their ideal development

- The researcher recommends empowerment of the OVC by regarding them as active members of the community instead of taking them to be victims that only await aid from donors. The children can form support groups alongside adult ones so as to look into ways of coping with parenting and schooling at the same time. Effective measures to help to mobilize the communities to provide immediate and long term support to CHH should be initiated by both governmental and non-governmental sectors.

- There is need for mobile counselors who give psychosocial support to all children especially the ones taking the position of child-heads. The children may need to air out their suppressed emotions or just getting a shoulder to cry on. They may require knowledge on the effects of dubious behaviours that may disrupt learning and which sometimes leads them to more vulnerability factors such as AIDS. Community members should work collaboratively to guide and counsel OVC on issues of early marriages, ‘sugar daddies/mummies’, prostitution and bullying. There is a need to cultivate in every OVC, a good mental health by eliminating the emotional distress that seem to cause learning difficulties.

- Every effort must be made to ensure that all children have stable family based care and adequate psychosocial support (Darlington and Steinberg, 2004). The community should be involved fully in the welfare of all children especially those whose micro-systems are without biological parents. Teachers too should be fully prepared to deal
with issues related to OVC (Wood and Goba, 2011). The orphaned children in CHHs remain a concern for every parent in Zimbabwe and other countries where CHHs are prevalent. The government, non-governmental organizations and members of the community should make collaborative efforts to plan best ways to normalize the upbringing of all minors including the parentless.

- Both the Government and non-governmental organizations should ensure that stringent measures are taken to reduce stigma and discrimination noted amongst the poorer OVC. This study has established that most of the OVC learning is disrupted by feelings of fear, inferiority complex and low self-concept.

- Members of the community should maintain a positive attitude towards every child, including the parentless. Perhaps workshops and conferences for educators, community members and OVC on effective loco-parentis strategies and ideal child-parenting styles can be mounted by GoZ Social Welfare department. This may enable a pleasant communal living to prevail among communities.

- NAC for Zimbabwe should establish means of channeling procured resources for the marginalized or needy OVC without prejudicing the real sufferers. The study has already established that in some instances wrong recipients gain from what is meant for the orphaned and vulnerable.

- Perhaps it may benefit the children if civic organizations try and cultivate and promote the culture of extended family’s care and support for the OVC. The children may benefit from the existing family child-rearing practices and a sense of belonging may be instilled in the orphaned child. A sense of security is also instilled when relatives fill in the gap on parental loss. All stakeholders should find means of preventing instances of a doomed society by finding better ways of luring OVC into their extended family homes, even if it means rotating periods of stay in each household.

- The concept of foster families such as the Ndoro Children’s Charities for children orphaned by AIDS in Zimbabwe has emerged as a positive approach for supporting children at risk. More such homes are essential. The notion provides a continuity of care in the family and community settings thereby providing a more natural, personal, loving and affectionate environment for children to survive. A similar model is working in India (HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2006).
• There is need for provision of parenting education to all child-parents and care-givers in order to enhance the academic and social performance of children. Improved parenting can lead to better child outcomes, but only if other needs in a family’s life are also addressed.

5.4.3 **Recommendations for enhancing sustainable cognition and learning in OVC’s efforts to build their schemata**

• Teachers are encouraged to extend their loco-parentis duties to weekends and vacations in order to afford each learner the care and support that she/he continuously requires and searches for. Looking at the high poverty levels in CHHs, the policy-makers should establish ways of controlling or eradicating the extra tuition for those that are incapacitated due to poverty. The children should receive necessary support in order to stay in school. Educators should be empathetic enough to give the OVC free academic assistance even during the vacations and weekends.

• Maintaining all children’s schooling is an important intervention in several ways. It retains children’s connectedness to peers, familiar adults and to an institutional identity. Schooling provides children and society with knowledge and skills. Keeping children in school could also help to prevent vulnerability to HIV infection, by protecting children and reducing the child’s need to seek shelter, food and clothing through risky encounters with unscrupulous adults. In fact schools should become sustainable learning environments for all minors including the OVC (Mahlomoholo, 2011).

• All stakeholders such as heads, teachers, DEOs and SWO should mobilize NGOs working with OVC to give academic aid in the form of stationery, fees and uniforms in addition to the food rations that they normally give to the marginalized.

• The GoZ could try to empower the OVC through free education from AIDS levies for double orphans so that the children may realize their life goals. Learning should be available to the double OVC freely up to university as was suggested by the majority of OVC and stake holders. Teach the OVC skills for survival for purposes of sustainability. Rationing may be stopped by teaching the children how to fish instead of giving fish daily.
5.4.4 Recommendations for Policy Formulation and Implementation

- Both government and non-governmental stakeholders should encourage formulation of children’s support groups in order to allow the young learners an opportunity to interact freely and separately from older people. In such support groups, the OVC can then devote time to plan their own learning and avoid imposed learning policies that they may not find user-friendly. Perhaps it is also important to also assist OVC beyond age 18 because observations within the CHHs noted that many of the OVC within the 19-22 years age range still look incapacitated.

- Civic organizations need to mobilize the populace to provide both immediate and long term support in the learning of the OVC, e.g. the best way to distribute NATF or BEAM funds so that the real sufferers gain.

- Policies that children formulate together with the policy makers should empower and protect them. Further training could be in areas of self assertiveness, decision making and vocational training to much more mature OVC, especially the heads of the CHHs.

- The GoZ and civic organizations should set up child care centers to allow younger OVC an opportunity to receive emotional support without instances of abuse and neglect. This gives an opportunity for the older OVC to attend school every day.

- Food rations by NGOs and social welfare should be channeled through a stipulated protocol to avoid instance mentioned by the OVC whereby names of beneficiaries for donor funding are transferred from one child to the other without prior meetings between the OVC and field coordinators of the CHHs.

- Respective ministries should make sure that policies on inheritance and the rights of the children should be broadcasted through workshops, conferences and NGO community members and relatives, cinemas shows, posters etc.

- The GoZ Ministry of Health and Child Welfare need to find ways of monitoring the development of children in the CHHs, covering physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of children in order to plan interventions early enough.

- As much as possible, it is important to keep OVC from the same biological family together in order for them to keep expressing love, trust and care for each other.
5.4.5 **Recommendations for further Research**

- Very often; university academics, researchers, governments, civil societies and other well-wishers recommend intervention programmes for marginalised groups yet implementation may not take off or it remains at pilot level, resulting in the intended beneficiaries continuing to suffer within their micro to macro system interactions. More of action researches are encouraged to help the child in need. It may be necessary to place the OVC issue on a high research agenda as was initiated in Rwanda and Kenya.

- It is vital that enquires be carried out with children in order to find the best alternatives to the biological family. Perhaps cooperative research could be carried out on existing children’s homes country wide where foster parents substitute the biological parent and the life in CHHs. There could be a monitoring mechanism for events in the CHHs so that the real needy areas could be noted before well-wishers flood the CHHs with goods that may not be needed at a particular time.

- There is need for an in-depth study concerning OVC in CHH since it is evident that the concept of a child heading a household goes against all rights that are due for children in the Convention on the Rights of the Child proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations.

- The plight of orphaned children remains a concern for everyone in Zimbabwe. There might need to research further into the needs of such children and come up with best ways to assist them in their academic work. The government, non-governmental organizations and members of the community should take collaborative efforts to plan best ways to normalize the upbringing of all minors no matter what status.

- Further researches need to be embarked on in other parts of the country all in an effort to envisage how best the children surviving under self-care could be assisted. Mental health research is essential for affected OVC as well as, life skills training, psychological support services and education for most children who are engaged in multiple burdens of labour at home.
5.5 LIMITATIONS

As is the case in many qualitative case studies, this phenomenological case study carried minimal limitations that may not be a threat to the credibility of this enquiry but are worth mentioning. The careful planning right from the onset of this enquiry rendered this study its worthiness in adding on to the existing body of knowledge on the effects of double-orphanhood on the cognition and learning of OVC who opted to reside within CHHs. The researcher endeavored to approach the research process without any biases though the selected research area falls amongst the researcher’s main research interests. The idea of working on a topic where one holds great interest is supported fully by many authorities (Sidhu, 2003; de Vos et al., 2011). Even though some assurances on strict confidentiality had been promised to the human subjects involved in the study, it was not easy to ascertain how much confidentiality would prevail among the 34 participants since the participants involved in the focus group discussion and the individual interviews were of different ages, backgrounds and life-line connections that may want to disregard strict confidentiality.

The study also faced minimal ethical dilemmas because it involved issues of HIV/AIDS and minors. Through the researcher wanted primary data from the OVC and had assured the boys and girls of safety and security, she could only console and comfort the children through group and individual psychosocial counseling but certainly would not replace the psychological loss that they carried every day in their CHHs. She gave love and empathy but she could not immediately solve situations of need deprivation that they repeatedly reported as the researcher carried on with the interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher’s instinctual knowledge too could have affected the participants as she went along collecting data. The plight of the OVC remained a dilemma which a number of stakeholder communities may need to resolve collaboratively, if the OVC in a CHH should realize his/her life-line goals.

Most qualitative enquiries use smaller sample sizes when compared to quantitative studies. Therefore, the small sample of 20 OVC and 14 stakeholders within this qualitative case enquiry may not allow for wide generalisability except the population from which the researcher purposively sampled 34 participants, who then provided the required data. The issue of lack of
wide generalisability is a common feature in most qualitative researches (Macmillan and Schumacher, 2010). Readers should however, note the fact that the major purpose of the phenomenological descriptive case study was not to work with large numbers that would test statistical significance as in quantitative researches but to present social reality (Rubin and Babbie, 2010) in as far as the effects of double orphanhood on cognition and learning are concerned. As such, findings of this study may be generalized to OVC residing in CHHs of Chipinge district.

Despite the above limitations, it is pleasing to note the fact that the stories told by participants (Tesch, 1990 in Creswell, 2002) from the presented data, seem to be reflecting some answers to the initial research questions that guided the study from Chapter one. This was greatly enhanced by the constructivist views raised within the theoretical framework and the rigorous review of literature in Chapter 2. The various civic organizations should take heed and rectify the difficulties and faults noted in the upbringing of children (OVC) by other children who are also orphans.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

This study has raised quite a significant number of issues pertaining to how orphanhood directly and indirectly influences the way OVC try to construct schemes during learning. On juxtaposing, there seemed to be more negatives of the orphan crises than positives in the learning of affected children because quite a number of the OVC expressed situations of incapacitation. A lot still has to be done in order to empower the OVC in a CHH. Orphan care in CHHs might need close monitoring by both government and non-governmental stakeholders as part of the OVC’s ecological system. The results of this study are not exhaustive but may just be a tip of the ice-bag on the plight of double-orphans in as far as learning in their meta-cognition is concerned.

Therefore, there is need for more in depth studies on the topical issue, ‘Orphanhood and learning’, not only in Zimbabwe but many more states in and outside Africa, for example India, Romania, Rwanda, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Swaziland, South Africa and other countries that are still developing but have already noted an increase in the number of
orphaned children and CHHs due to the devastating effects of the dreaded disease, HIV/AIDS. Such studies may help to unveil some of the predicaments in which we find minors after the death of both their parents. In doing so, perhaps the goals of the EFA may be realized so that each and every OVC may eventually realize his/her life goals especially through education.

If every child is afforded the opportunity to realize fully the opportunity to become educated, then there is likelihood that the threats to a country’s socio-economic situation through effects of orphan crises may be reduced as in the cases of emerging CHHs. Every child should be afforded quality cognition and learning experiences regardless of their status within the community. Therefore, if properly monitored in their parent’s original homes, the OVC’s idea of seeking solace by remaining in their parents’ homes as siblings, could be an ideal psycho-social tool to enhance good cognition and learning of school tasks.
REFERENCES


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Mol, M. 2004. Stand in the gap. Available at: Info@youth.co.za (accessed on 30/07/2011).


Oku, A. and Cobham Nsa, O. July 2010. Community Based Support (CUBS) Project for OVC in Nigeria: Developing a Programme Framework, Approach and Activities to address the


*Policy Project*: United States Agency for International Development.


Zimbabwe Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), December, 2004 Progress Report, Harare: Government of Zimbabwe and UNDP.


APPENDIX 1A

To Whom It May Concern

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

University of South Africa encourages responsible research that will be beneficial to the researcher, the University, and the community at large by exploring new ideas, broadening understanding of a particular field of study and seeking solutions to existing problems.

On behalf of the College of Education (UNISA), I hereby request permission for our student to conduct academic research in your organization. The details are as follows:

1. Name of Researcher: Mrs Emily Gongo
2. Address of Researcher: Great Zimbabwe University
   Faculty of Education
   P O Box 1235, Masvingo
   Zimbabwe

3. Email Address: emilygongo@gmail.com

4. Telephone Numbers: Mobile: +263 774143816

5. Reason for conducting research: Necessary to fulfill the requirements for the degree Doctor of Education in Psychology of Education


Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need further details about this research project.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr M.J. Maphalala
Appendix 1b: Letter seeking permission to carry out the research study in Chipinge District

12 January, 2012
The Permanent Secretary
The Ministry of Education, Art, Sport and Culture
P. O. Box CY 121Causeway, Harare
Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN CHIPINGE DISTRICT: UNISA -Doctor of Education (D.Ed) Psychology of Education, Student Number: 47300205

I am a Doctor of Education (D.Ed) degree student specializing in Psychology of Education at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I kindly seek your permission to undertake research in Chipinge district for my doctoral studies in four secondary schools.

My topic is centred on; The Effects of Double Orphanhood on the Learning and Cognition of Children Living within Child-Headed Households in Zimbabwe’. The study will involve secondary school teachers, the school heads, learners (in particular, Orphans and Vulnerable children or OVC) and District Education Officers in Chipinge District. Listed below are the data collection tools I intend to use with the nominated participants.

- Consent Form for Legal Guardians of OVC
- Consent form for participating stakeholders e.g. teachers, heads, DEO and SWO
- Assent Forms for OVC (English and ChiShona versions)
- Questionnaire for OVC
- Interview Guide for stakeholders
- Observation Guide
- Focus Group Discussion Guide

The information obtained will be treated with confidentiality. I also undertake to observe stipulated ethical considerations pertaining to researching with human subjects.

I hope that the information I will obtain will assist in identifying ways in which the learning of OVC from child-headed households can be enhanced.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs. Emily Ganga

D.Ed Student (UNISA- College of Education)
Letters granting permission to do research in Chipinge;

Appendix 2: MoEASC-Head Office -Harare

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

Reference is made to your application to carry out research in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture institutions on the title:

The effects of domestic violence on the learning and cognitive development of children living in child-headed households

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director responsible for the schools you want to involve in your research.

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Ministry since it is instrumental in the development of education in Zimbabwe.

L. Gweme
FOR: SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SPORT & CULTURE
Appendix 3: MoEASC- Manicaland Provincial Office -Mutare

Ref: C/426/3

Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture
Manicaland Provincial Office
Cabs Building, Cnr H. Chitepo &
R. Mugabe Road
P.O Box 146
Mutare
Zimbabwe
31/08/12

All communications should be addressed to
"The Provincial Education Director Manicaland"
Telephone: 64216, 64279, 64220
Telegraphic address: "EDUCATION"
Fax: 68316
http://www.moeasc.gov.zw

Re: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN
PRIMARY/SECONDARY: NAME: Ganga, Emily
COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY: Great Zimbabwe University

The above matter refers.

Please be advised that the Provincial Education Director has granted you permission to carry out research in Primary/Secondary schools on the effects of child headed households.

Ms. Ganga is advised to liaise with the District Office and Heads of targeted schools before embarking on the research.

S. Sithole
A/PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR MANICALAND

Disciplinary Forms/cmnr
Appendix 4: MoEASC- Chipinge District Office

GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Education
Dean of Education’s Office
P.O. Box 1235
Masvingo
ZIMBABWE
Tel 263 039-253667
Fax 263 039-253504

12 January 2012

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Mrs. Emily Ganga is a bonafide lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University currently studying for a Doctor of Education degree with the University of South Africa (UNISA). She is specializing in Psychology of Education and is currently doing her thesis on the following topic:

THE EFFECTS OF DOUBLE ORPHANHOOD ON THE LEARNING AND COGNITION OF CHILDREN LIVING WITHIN CHILD HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

May you kindly assist her in her research activities.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Mr. T. I. Chimoona
Chairperson, Department of Educational Foundations

Permission to visit schools granted.

[Signature]

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
D.E.O. CHIPINGE

16/08/12

C. BETAH
Appendix 5: District Administrator-Chipinge District

Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development

Correspondence should not
be addressed to individuals

Telephone: 0227-2546, 2547, 2285
Telefax: 0227-2546
Reference: SMO

Friday, August 17, 2012

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Mrs. E Ganga is a student with the University Of South Africa (UNISA) doing her thesis on the topic:

THE EFFECTS OF DOUBLE ORPHANHOOD ON THE LEARNING AND COGNITION OF CHILDREN LIVING WITH CHILD HEADED HOUSEHOLDS.

May you kindly assist her in her research activities, she has been granted permission to do the research in the district.

FM MAVHIZA
ACTING DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR
CHIPINGE
Appendix 6: Consent Form for Legal Guardians of OVC

**CONSENT FORM FOR: LEGAL GUARDIANS OF OVC OR OTHER OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH THE OVERALL WELFARE OF A PARTICIPATING OVC LIVING WITHIN A CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLD IN CHIPINGE DISTRICT, MANICALAND PROVINCE, ZIMBABWE**

*Take your time to study this form carefully before you make a decision to fill it in or not to. I also suggest that you discuss the issue with the minor before telling me your decision. Feel free to ask questions and clarifications from me if something may not be clear as I explain the procedure.*

Name of researcher: Mrs. Emily Ganga

Designation: Lecturer-Great Zimbabwe University

Email: emilyganga@gmail.com Cell: +263774143916

Student Number: 47300205 University of South Africa (UNISA)

Research topic: The Effects of Double Orphanhood on the Learning and Cognition of Children living within Child- Headed Households in Zimbabwe

Purpose of Study

I humbly ask your permission to co-opt your child, ......................(name of child) in my research work by allowing him/her to respond to an open-open-ended questionnaire and a focus group discussion on issues related to the above topic. The study will also involve non-obtrusive observations of selected participants at school and in their child-headed households. The study aims to find out how the learning and cognition (thinking and reasoning processes) of OVC in school are affected by loss of parents. This is in line with trying to document and recommend how best care and support can be afforded to children in unavoidable situations such as ‘orphanhood’ particularly in the area of how learning and cognition can be enhanced in and outside class.
Benefits, freedom, discomfort and the right for help

There are neither direct nor financial benefits but I assure you of child safety, autonomy, respect and confidentiality throughout the research process. At the end of my study, I promise to present my findings where only codes or pseudo names (not real names) may appear in order to protect the child’s identity. If my questioning might cause any emotional discomforts here and there, I will afford the minor his/her right for help or the necessary psychosocial help at the most opportune moment.

Please bear with me that my intention is not to cause any harm, but my findings are likely going to inform and influence various stakeholders on the plight of OVC in as far as their learning and cognition are concerned so that any mitigation strategies can be proposed to help accomplish MDG 6 concerning the appeal for care and support for OVC. I promise to remain helpful and patient with the child at all times.

Sampling the OVC

I decided to select double orphans living in child-headed households (CHHs); for this enquiry knowing that they are in an extreme case of orphanhood status and they may be receiving more learning and developmental challenges than the paternal and maternal orphans. However, participation remains voluntary and your decision together with the minor’s is welcome at your convenient time.

Period of Study

The interview sessions, focus group discussions and observations will run over a period of two months, where I intend to visit the child after classes and in the CHH for at least four times. The focus group interviews will run for 2 hours where the minor will join other 4-5 OVC at the same school. The first visit is meant for individual interviews at a convenient time for the OVC. Effort shall certainly be made to avoid disturbing lessons.

Sharing the findings

At the end of my study, the children’s voices will be heard and the rest of the selected participants will be informed about the findings. I intend to run a workshop in the district. A
written report will be availed at the Ministry of Education Sport, Art and Culture offices for sharing with participants and other interested stakeholders.

**The right to deny participation**

The child has the right to ask questions, deny answering any of the questions or to withdraw without any penalty. Your signature will indicate your understanding of this agreement and granting the minor permission to participate. A copy of the signed assent form shall be returned to you for your future reference. Another copy of the signed form will be retained by the child. You may return the form unsigned if you do not wish to continue.

**Commitment**

I,………………………………being the…………………… (designation) responsible for the general welfare and security of ………………………….(name of OVC) hereby give my consent that the bearer, Mrs. Emily Ganga, goes through her research work with the orphaned and vulnerable child for as long as the child remains physically, psychologically, emotionally and socially safe. I have read the foregoing information, asked for necessary clarifications and I am satisfied that the child can choose to participate. Thank you.

**Details of Guardian(s) /Person(s) Giving Consent**

Name of Guardian/Person giving consent: ……………………………

Relationship to child/Designation: ……………………………

Cell / Phone number: ……………………………

Witness…………………… Signed…………………… Date……………………
Appendix 7: Consent Form for Teacher, Heads, DEO and SWO (Stakeholders)

**CONSENT FORM: FOR THE STAKEHOLDERS (TEACHERS, SCHOOL HEADS, DEO and SWO) PARTICIPATING IN INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS**

*This consent form is directed to the school heads within the four schools, teachers, district education officer and the social welfare officer. Take your time to study this form carefully before you make a decision to fill it in or not to. Feel free to ask questions and clarifications from me if something may not be clear.*

Name of researcher: Mrs. Emily Ganga

Designation: Lecturer-Great Zimbabwe University

Email: emilyganga@gmail.com Cell:  +263774143916

Student Number: 47300205 University of South Africa (UNISA)

Research topic: *The Effects of Double Orphanhood on the Learning and Cognition of Children living within Child-Headed Households in Zimbabwe*

Purpose of Study

I humbly ask your permission to respond to an interview and also to be involved in non-obtrusive observations of selected OVC (participants) at school and in their child-headed households. The study aims to find out how the learning and cognition (thinking and reasoning processes) of OVC in school are affected by loss of parents. This is in line with trying to document and recommend how best care and support can be afforded to children in unavoidable situations such as ‘orphanhood’ particularly in the area of how learning and cognition can be enhanced in and outside class.

Benefits, freedom, discomfort and the right for help

There are neither direct nor financial benefits but I assure you of safety, autonomy, respect and confidentiality throughout the research process. At the end of my study, I promise to present my
findings where only codes or pseudo names (not real names) may appear in order to protect your identity. I do not anticipate any discomforts or risks during and after the research process. The Ministry of Education, Sport Art and Culture (head office, provincial and district offices) as well as the local District Administrator under the Ministry of Local Government have all allowed the study to take off. However, if my questioning might cause any emotional discomforts here and there, I will afford you your right for help and necessary psychosocial help at the most opportune moment; otherwise, bear with me that my intention is not to cause any harm, but the findings are likely going to inform and influence various stakeholders on the plight of OVC in as far as their learning and cognition are concerned so that any mitigation strategies can be proposed to help accomplish MDG 6. The Millennium Development Goal 6 appeals for care and support for OVC. I promise to remain helpful and patient with you at all times.

**Sampling the participants**

By targeting educationists as part of the sample, I am hoping to obtain rich data to augment that which is supplied by the OVC on the effects of orphanhood on the learning and cognition of OVC residing and attending school from child-headed households. The educationists can observe behaviours that may help to explain some of the experiences of OVC.

**Voluntary participation and period of study**

The stakeholder’s interviews will run over a period of two months, where I intend to visit selected teachers during their free periods or after classes. Each session will last for one to one and a half hours. Effort shall be made to avoid disturbing interviewees at work or in lessons. Participation is voluntary.

**The right to deny participation**

You have the right to ask questions, deny answering any of the questions or to withdraw without any penalty. Your signature will indicate your understanding of this agreement and willingness to participate. A copy of the signed consent form shall be returned to you for your future reference. You may return the form unsigned if you do not wish to continue.
Sharing the findings

At the end of my study, I intend to run a workshop in the district. A written report will be availed at the Ministry of Education Sport, Art and Culture offices for sharing with participants, other significant stakeholders and the local community. I will also publish the results to allow others to learn from the findings. Your identity will remain confidential and protected in codes and pseudo names.

Commitment

I have read and understood this consent form and I volunteer to participate in this research study. I have also asked all necessary questions and these were answered to my full expectation by the researcher. Thank you.

Stakeholder’s Details:

Name: ..............................  Designation...........................................

Stakeholder’s signature: ............................

Date.....................................................
Appendix 8a: Assent Forms for OVC (English)

ASSENT FORM FOR THE ORPHAN AND VULNERABLE CHILD (OVC) IN CHIPINGE DISTRICT, MANICALAND, ZIMBABWE (ENGLISH)

*Study this form carefully before you fill it in.

Name of researcher: Mrs. Emily Ganga

Designation: Lecturer-Great Zimbabwe University

Email: emilyganga@gmail.com Cell: +263774143916

Student Number: 47300205 University of South Africa (UNISA)

Research topic: The Effects of Double Orphanhood on the Learning and Cognition of Children living within Child-Headed Households in Zimbabwe

Purpose of Study

I humbly ask your permission to participate in my study by responding to an open-ended questionnaire and a focus group discussion on issues related to the above topic. The study aims to find out how your learning and cognition (thinking and reasoning processes) in school are affected by loss of parents. This is in line with trying to document and recommend how best care and support can be afforded to children in unavoidable situations such as ‘orphanhood’ particularly in the area of how learning and cognition can be enhanced in and outside class.

Benefits and your freedom

There are neither direct nor financial benefits but you are assured of safety, autonomy, respect and confidentiality throughout the research process. At the end of my study, I promise to present my findings where only pseudo names (not your real names) shall appear in order to protect your identity. Feel free to ask questions and clarifications from me if something may not be clear as we work together. If my questioning might cause any emotional discomforts here and there, please bear with me that my intention is not to cause any harm. I promise to remain helpful and patient with you at all times.
Tell your legal guardian

I will require that your guardian(s)/social welfare officer/education officer or headmaster should be consulted on your intention to participate in this study so that you may be granted permission. Your information will not be shared with anyone unless if you feel otherwise. You have the right to deny answering any of the questions or to withdraw without any penalty.

Your signature will indicate your understanding of this agreement to participate. A copy of the signed assent form shall be returned to you for your future reference. Another copy of the signed form will be forwarded to your guardian. You may return the form unsigned if you do not wish to continue.

Commitment

I ………………………………………………, aged………….years hereby voluntarily wish to participate in the study’s focus group discussions and in the individual interview for as long as I remain assured of safety and security during the research operations. I am aware that I am at liberty to withdraw as I wish during any stage of the research process. Thank you.

Child’s Signature: …………………………… Date……………………………………

Details of Guardian(s) /Person(s) Giving Consent

Name of Guardian/Person giving consent: ……………………………

Relationship to child/Designation: ……………………………

Cell / Phone number: ……………………………

(3 signed copies to: The researcher, child and guardian)
Appendix 8b: Assent Forms for OVC (ChiShona)

GWARO RECHIVUMIRANO CHOKUITA TSVAGURUDZO INOBATA NHERERA MUDUNHU RECHIPINGE, KUMANICALAND, MUZIMBABWE (CHISHONA)

*Verenga gwaro rino rose usati wapindura.*

Zita romutsvagurudzi: Amai Emily Ganga

Basa : Mudzidzisi- Great Zimbabwe University

Email: emilyganga@gmail.com Namba yorunharembozha: +263774143916

Nhamba yomudzidzi: 47300205 University of South Africa (UNISA)

Musoro Wetsvagurudzo: Zvinoita unherera pakudzidza nemundangariro dzevana vanotungamira vamwewo vana kana vabereki vashaya muZimbabwe.

Chinangwa chetsvagurudzo

Ndinokumbirawo nenzira yakatsanangurika, kubatikana kwako nokusununguka kupa mhinduro pamibvunzonyorwa uye panhaurirano panyaya dzinobata musoro wenyaya iyi.Chidzidzo chino chakanangana nokuongorora uye kutsaga kunzwisisa kuti unherera hunokanganisa sei kudzidza nemafungiro uye nemaonero anoita vana vasisina muberekve vanovatungamira. Mukuita tsvagurudzo iyi ndine kariro yekuti pamwe pachava nezvinyorwa nekuridziro yekunatsiridza machengeterwo nekubatsira vana vari kurarama muupenyu hwenherera, kunyanyanyanya mukudzidza nemundangariro muchikoro nekunze.

Mibairo nekusununguka panyaya iyi


Taurira muchengeti kana akakumiririra

Ndinoda kuti uwane tendero kubva kumuchengetedzi wako munharaunda, kana mukuru wechikoro. Mashoko ako haazobudiswi pachena kunze kwekunge wazvitendera iwe. Une kodzero yekusapindura imwe mibvunzno iyi kana kubuda mutsvagurudzo iyi pasina zvaungaitwa.
Kusaina zita rako zvichataridza kunzwisisa uye kubvuma kubatikana munyaya iyi. Iwe pamwe chete nomuchengetedzi wako muchapiwa gwaro iri raunenge wasaina. Unogona kudzosa fomu risina kusainiwa kana wafunga kusapinda mutsvagurudzo iyi.

**Kuzvipira**

Ini…………………………………..ndine makore……………………………. okuberekwa ndinozvimisira kubatikana muboka renhaurirano yetsvagurudzo iyi, uye munhaurirwa kana ndichinge ndakachengetedzwa nokudzivirirwa pane zvichaitwa zvose. Ndinozviziva kuti ndakasununguka kubuda mubasa iri pamadio angu chero papi zvapo pandadira. Ndatenda.

**Chisainwa chemwana………………. Zuva…………………………………….**

**Vachengeti/Muchengeti anomirira mwana**

**Zita………………………………………………………….**

**Ukama nomwana/Basa romuchengetedzi…………………………………………………...**

**Namba yerunharembozha……………………………….**

(Mashizha matatu akasainwa anoenda kuna: mutsvakurudzi, mwana nemumiriri womwana)
INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO THE ORPHAN AND VULNERABLE CHILD QUESTIONNAIRE

Great Zimbabwe University

Faculty of Education

PO Box 1235

Masvingo, Zimbabwe

14 February 2012

Dear Child

My name is Mrs. Emily Ganga, a lecturer at the above mentioned university. I am currently enrolled as a PhD student with the University of South Africa (UNISA). May you kindly assist in my research work by completing the attached questionnaire that tries to find out the effects of double orphanhood (loss of parents) on the learning and cognition (concerning thinking processes) of children living in Child Headed Households (CHHs).

The information you give shall be used mainly for academic research purposes and with strictest confidentiality. Participation is voluntary meaning you are free to withdraw at any stage of the research process. You are also assured of safety and security as we go through this work.

If you are agreeable to participate in the study, please first read, consult legal guardian and sign the attached assent form. Thank you in advance.

Yours Faithfully

Mrs. Emily Ganga  Cell No: +263774143916  email: emilyganga@gmail.com
**Appendix 9b: Questionnaire for OVC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN (OVC) IN CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS (CHHs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Pseudonym/ Code of participant**……………………………………………………

This is not a test, and so there is no wrong or right answer. The questionnaire seeks to elicit (find out) information on what and how learning and thinking processes at school are affected by being orphaned and residing in a child-headed household (CHH). Try to answer as honestly as you can. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential. Do not write your name. Place a tick or an ‘x’ in the appropriate box or fill in the blank space provided.

**SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF OVC**

**NOTE:** Have you read and signed the assent form?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) **Age:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11-12years</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13-14years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-16years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) **Gender:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) **Where do you live permanently?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural Home</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4) **What is your position in the family/households?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Older boy</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Older girl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Youngest boy  
Youngest girl  
Oldest of all  

5) What is the total number of children staying in your household including yourself?
2-3  
4-5  
6-7  
8-9  
10 and above  

6a) Besides looking after children (i.e. 18 years and below), do you also look after other family members?
Yes  
No  

b) If `Yes` to 6a) above, state who these other people are.
..............................................................................................................................................................................

Give the reason for shouldering the duty above.
..............................................................................................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................................................................................

7) Where do you place yourself?
Literate (can read and write)  
Illiterate (cannot read and write)  

253
8a) Do you attend school regularly?
Yes
No

8b) If `Yes` to 8a) above, tick your school level
Form 1
Form 2
Form 3
Form 4
Form 5
Form 6

8c) If `No` to 8a) above, tick your two main reasons for not being in school
Now working as a bread winner
Out of school due to lack of fees
Out of school due to disciplinary problems
Decided to continue running family business
Impregnated
Decided to marry
Failed school tasks daily
Other reasons, specify

..................................................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................................................

SECTION B: OVC’S DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCES IN CHHs

9) What is your major source of household supplies?
Non-Governmental Organizations’ (NGO) rations
Government rations through the department of Social Welfare
Street Collection
Supplies from extended family members
Farming as siblings
Deceased parents` Estate
Other resources specify:
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

10a) Where do you stay?
High density suburbs
Medium density suburbs
Low density suburbs
Rural homestead
Other places specify:
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

10b) How big is your place of residence excluding ablution rooms?
1 room/hut
2-3 rooms
4-5 rooms
6-7 rooms
8 rooms and above

11) Place a tick or star on every item that your family/household remained owning after parental death.
Television Refrigerator Radio sets Dining room suites
Computer and accessories Two or more beds Shops
Large Stove Large land Car Refrigerator
Other big items please specify:

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

12 What type of fuel do you use?

Electricity
Paraffin
Firewood
Others please specify:

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

13) How many meals (breakfast, lunch, supper) do you take per day?

3 or more meals
2 meals
1 meal
0 meals

14) By answering questions 10-13, you were trying to tell me your socio-economic status, meaning what you have and do not have. In the space below, explain how each aspect of your socio-economic status affects your learning and reasoning capacity at school.

Support services:

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Source of income:

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
15) Besides the aspects I suggested in questions 10-13, explain how other aspects listed below seem to be affecting your learning and thinking processes in school.

Loneliness:

Absence of parents:

Extended family influences:

Handling siblings with disabilities and illnesses:
Forms of violence within the CHH:

Abuse:

Politics:

Health Issues:

Parenting roles:

Stigma and discrimination:

Discipline of siblings:

Others specify:

16) Learning can take place at home, within the community in which you live or at school. Try to list as many challenges and advantages you encounter in your CHH in as far as learning is concerned.
SECTION C: LEARNING AND COGNITION EXPERIENCES OF OVC

17) I shall be glad if you complete the following table as honestly as you can, by answering or explaining to me how each of these variables (aspects) affect your learning and thinking processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question or Task</th>
<th>Answer/Explanations/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17a) Explain how the absence of parents affects your thinking and learning processes in school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Do you find it easy/ difficult to concentrate on class activities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Do you easily remember/ forget your answers as you try to respond to class tasks?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) What issues promote/ disturb your progression from lower levels to higher levels of reasoning in class tasks?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Do incoming learning tasks find their way easily into my mind?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Do you have problems storing learnt subjects into your mind?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Do you find meaning in what the teacher teaches in your school subjects?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) What keeps you attentive in class?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) Explain how easy or difficult it is for you to process learning information simultaneously.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j) Is it easy or difficult for you to adapt to a new school subject?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k) What hinders or promotes your learning progress?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l) Comment on how life in the community affects your learning experiences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m) Do you sometimes fail to problem-solve?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
n) Comment on time usage within your home and at school.

o) Do you learn from others during play?

p) What challenges, if any, do you sometimes face in learning?

q) Comment on the learning environment within your home?

r) Would you say that most children here are becoming more resilient (accustomed) to life pressures that affect their learning and thinking processes.

s) Would you regard failure in school work as inevitable (unavoidable) or vice versa?

18) Feel free to share more on how the status of being orphaned affects your learning and thinking processes.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
Appendix 10a: Introductory Note for the Stakeholder’s Interview Guide

INTRODUCTORY NOTE FOR STAKEHOLDER’S INTERVIEW (school heads, teachers, D.E.O. and social welfare officer)

Great Zimbabwe University
Faculty of Education
PO Box 1235
Masvingo, Zimbabwe
14 February 2012

Dear Participant
I am Mrs. Emily Ganga, a lecturer in Educational Psychology at the above mentioned university. I am currently enrolled as a PhD student with the University of South Africa (UNISA). May you kindly assist in my research endeavors by responding as truthfully as possible to my interview questions concerning the effects of orphanhood on the cognition and learning of OVC in CHHs. Participation is voluntary and one can be allowed to withdraw at any stage of the research process without any penalty. The information you provide shall be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used for academic research purposes with the University of South Africa (UNISA). There are no monetary benefits for participation. If you are agreeable to participating in this enquiry, please read and sign the attached consent form. Thank you.

Yours Faithfully
Mrs. Emily Ganga Cell No: +263774143916 email: emilyganga@gmail.com
Appendix 10b: Interview Guide for use with Stakeholders

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAKEHOLDERS (teachers, school-heads, DEO, SWO)

Introduction:
The semi-structured interview seeks to elicit information on how orphanhood affects the learning and cognition of children living in Child Headed Households (CHHs). Please try to answer as truthfully as you can. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential. Feel free to check psychological terminology and meanings with the researcher as we converse.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF STAKEHOLDERS

NOTE: Have you read and signed the consent form?

Pseudonym/ Code of Participant……………

1) What is your age in years?
3) Which organization are you affiliated?
4) In years, what is your working experience with Orphans and Vulnerable children in CHHs?
5) What is your professional qualification? Qualifications:
6) Are you a voluntary or permanently employed officer?

SECTION B: EFFECTS OF ORPHANHOOD ON LEARNING AND COGNITION

7) Have you ever interacted with children from a child-headed household (CHH) before?
8) From your knowledge and interactions with OVC from CHHs, how do certain variables affect learning and thinking processes (cognition) of OVC in school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8a) Does the manner in which an OVC constructs knowledge differ with that of a non-orphan? Explain your answer.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b) Is the learning of OVC distorted by being parentless? Explain your answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Explain how information processing in orphanhood is hindered by various variables from encoding, retrieving and utilization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Comment on how chunking of information in OVC living in difficult life circumstances differs with OVC living with foster parents/guardians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) What deters an OVC’s schemata or building blocks of thinking?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) How does orphanhood affect assimilation of ideas or fitting in new of new information to existing one?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Comment on how the interaction between assimilation and accommodation in an OVC’s mind can be influenced by other variables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) Comment on how cognitive conflicts (inability to problem-solve) differ among OVC?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) How do OVC gain much from scaffolding within their CHHs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j) What interrupts the OVC’s interactions with other siblings most?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k) Comment on family ties or bonding evident among OVC’s interactions in CHHs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l) Explain quality of attachment between the younger and older OVC in a CHH.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m) How resilient are OVC to pressures of life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n) How does familiarity with learning concepts influence an OVC’s cognition?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o) Differentiate the ecological pattern in an OVC’s case from that of a parented child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p) How do psychosocial crises affect OVC’s decision making skills and self-identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q) Comment on the broken parent-child bond</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
and the resultant separation anxiety (if any) among OVC in a CHH.

r) Explain how numerous obstacles hinder the CHH security and learning of an OVC.

SECTION C: PREPARING STAKEHOLDERS FOR INTERVENTION

10) From your own observations of OVC in CHHs, what would you say are the lacking learning and cognitive needs of the OVC residing in CHHs?

11a) How does the living situation of OVC in Chipinge district make you feel?

11b) Being a community leader, how would you mobilize the community to help OVC from CHH learn better?

12) How can each of the sectors below assist parentless children achieve cognitive learning outcomes?
   a) Government ministries
   b) Non–governmental organizations
   c) Local community elders
   d) Extended families of OVC

13) Suggest ways in which the present policies or laws concerning OVC can be improved in order to cater for the learning and cognition needs of OVC from CHHs?

14) What would you recommend for both the OVC in the CHH and the local populace observing the rapid trend of children opting to reside and attend school from CHH bases?

15) List any other vital notes that can help out as effects of double orphanhood on the learning and cognition of children living in CHHs?

Give any further recommendations that can help the OVC to learn better?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
**Appendix 11: Observation Guide**

**OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR USE BY THE RESEARCHER AND TEACHERS**

(For use in CHHs, during lessons in four selected schools involving OVC in term 1 of year 2012 and during four focus group discussion sessions with OVC)

**SECTION A**

**Instruction:** Place a tick or star in the appropriate space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OVC BEHAVIOUR TO OBSERVE IN AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Reporting for classes late almost every day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Prefers to isolate himself/herself when it is time for cooperative learning.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Uses defense mechanisms to cover up for homework not done.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Attention span varies throughout the lessons.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Slower to present answers for oral given tasks.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Stressed outlook.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Fails to complete class tasks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Complains mostly of home responsibilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Assimilation process of learnt concepts not evident in class revision tasks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Accommodation of learnt concepts not evident in class revision tasks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Unable to problem-solve quite simple cognitive tasks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12) Can cooperate if scaffolded during group work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
13) Play with peers does not last for long due to sibling interruptions.

14) Younger siblings cling to elder brother/sister during break and lunch times at school.

15) Good at manual tasks.

16) A number of psycho-social difficulties such as guilt manifest much faster in OVC than those learners with living parents.

17) Mature adult thought on social challenges seem to emerge much faster in OVC than in those learners with living parents.

21) OVC labour so much in order to pay fees if not on BEAM funding.

22) OVC clings to NGO staff as secure bases.

23) Learning topics related to HIV/AIDS induce anxiety in the OVC.

24) A number of OVC end up discontinuing school.

25) Very little support comes from the extended families if children decide to stay on their own.

26) Helplessness and mistrust is evident in orphaned learners.

27) Negative academic self-concept quite evident.

28) Special needs cases such as those with physical disabilities do not report to school every day.

29) OVC are vulnerable and anxious about sexual abuse especially by strangers.

30) Hunger and ill-health affect performance.

31) The older OVC suffer more on planning survival tactics for all siblings in the child-headed household.
SECTION B

Write any other observed effects of double orphanhood not noted in Section A above.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
Appendix 12: Focus Group Discussion Guide

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR OVC FROM CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS (CHHs)

Introduction:

I welcome you all to this discussion meeting. I am Mrs. Emily Ganga, a lecturer in Educational Psychology at Great Zimbabwe University. I am currently enrolled as a PhD student with the University of South Africa (UNISA). May you kindly assist in my research endeavors by participating fully during this discussion on how, from your experiences, orphanhood affects the thinking processes (cognition) and learning of OVC from child-headed households (CHH).

With your permission, the discussion interview will be audio-taped, I will write brief notes as the discussion flows. You are free to contribute in English, ChiShona or mixed language. We will identify one another by coded numbers as our pseudonyms just for the purpose of this focus group. Kindly pick a label and stick it on your chest. We should all use the pseudonyms when referring to each other throughout the discussion even when you know the person’s real name. I will call upon each of you to speak, using your pseudonym, in order to facilitate the transcription process. Please feel free to express your opinions openly and honestly. I will treat all information collected from this discussion confidentially. The topic for discussion is as follows;

‘The Effects of Double Orphanhood on the Learning and Cognition of Children Living within Child-Headed Households in Zimbabwe’

We shall be guided by five themes, each carrying stimulus questions.

Discussion themes and stimulus questions

Theme 1: Developmental experiences encountered by OVC in CHHs in as far as cognition (thinking and reasoning) and learning are concerned

Question a: What are some of your developmental and learning experiences in CHHs?

Question b: How do some of your developmental experiences in CHHs positively affect your cognition and learning?
Question c: How do some of your developmental experiences in CHHs negatively affect your cognition and learning?

Theme 2: The social construction of the concepts; cognition and learning, within CHHs
Question a: What is your meaning to proper cognition in learning of school subjects?
Question b: What is your meaning to improper cognition in learning of school subjects?

Theme 3: Effect of orphanhood on the building of OVC’s schemes/schemata
Question a: How does being orphaned affect your building of new schemes (simply learning ideas) in school?
Question b: What promotes cognition and learning in CHHs?
Question c: What hinders cognition and learning in CHHs?

Theme 4: Learning Needs of OVC and Aspects that promote or deter both cognition and learning of OVC within CHHs
Question a: What are your learning needs in CHHs?
Question b: What aspects promote cognition and learning of OVC within CHHs?
Question c: What aspects deter both cognition and learning of OVC within CHHs?

Theme 5: Improving Policy and Preparing OVC and the Communities to assist orphaned children to achieve their intended life-line goals.
Question a: How can the schools be academically and emotionally prepared to assist orphaned children to achieve their intended learning goals?
Question b: How can the local communities be academically and emotionally prepared to assist orphaned children achieve their intended learning goals?
Question c: What are some of the Policies that affect an OVC’s wellbeing?
Question d: How can Policy be improved to assist orphaned children to achieve their intended learning and life-line goals?

We have discussed a lot of issues today relating to the cognition and learning of OVC in CHHs. In your opinion, what do you think must be done in order to enhance quality learning for children in CHHs?

Theme 6: Recommendations:
Question: What recommendations can you offer towards enhancing cognition and learning of all OVC in CHHs?
CLOSURE
Thank you very much for sharing your views on this topic. We will listen to a vote of thanks from…………………..(one of the participants). Have a blessed day.
Appendix 13: Curriculum Vitae

Mrs. Emily Ganga (nee Zuweni) is a Full-Time, Tenured Lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) in the Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Foundations, lecturing in Educational Psychology at Undergraduate and Master’s Degree levels. She joined GZU in July, 2006. Since then, she has had massive experience in academic research, lecturing, examining student’s work, supervising research projects/dissertations and coordinating Educational Psychology programmes from year 2009 to June 2012. Prior to joining GZU, she taught extensively in Zimbabwean high schools from January 1983 to 2003 and at Mutare Teacher’s Training College (MTC) from 2003 to July 2006.

During her 20-year time as teacher / Head of Department in high schools and the three years at MTC, she operated as an examiner under the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council and the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Zimbabwe as an External Examiner. She also got engaged as a Part-Time tutor in Psychology at the Central African Correspondence College (C.A.C.C.) whose courses were, by then, running at MTC. Besides her lecturing duties at GZU, Mrs. Ganga also assists in tutoring, project supervision and examining student’s work in BSc and MSc Counseling at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU).

To-date, she has co-authored and published more than ten research articles in refereed journals and has more research papers that have been accepted for publication. She authored a book in Psychology entitled, ‘The Influence of Home Variables on the Urban Learner’s Cognitive Performance: A Case of Mutare Urban’. She also co-authored aZOU Module entitled ‘Advanced Principles and Strategies in Counseling’ and a monograph in ChiShona that aims to assist people living with diabetes-mellitus. More of her research articles are being reviewed including a book chapter entitled, ‘The Questionnaire Technique’ in a textbook entitled; ‘In Search of Techniques for Effective Teaching: Methods and Approaches Revisited’.

Mrs. Ganga has also presented numerous research papers at local conferences and nine others at international conferences ever since she joined Great Zimbabwe University. Her research interests are in Adolescent Development, Human Learning and Performance, Orphans and Vulnerable Children, Child-Headed Households, HIV/AIDS, Poverty and Gender issues in Education.