

**EXPLORING RESILIENCE IN THE NARRATIVES OF ZIMBABWEAN
ADOLESCENTS AFFECTED BY PARENTAL OUT-MIGRATION AND
THE DIASPORA**

by

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DECLARATION

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Exploring resilience in the narratives of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration and the Diaspora

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



Olga Filippa

6 January 2016

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SUMMARY

Zimbabwe's economic and political instability has resulted in the migration of over four million of its people. Many of those who join the Diaspora leave their children behind in the home country, a phenomenon known as "Diaspora orphans". Little is known of the experiences of these Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration. A Pilot Study in 2011 highlighted emergent themes and explored the use of defence and coping mechanisms, by thematically analysing in-depth interviews carried out with these youngsters. This study re-examined these interviews and carried out follow-up ones, with a view to establish whether longitudinal changes take place. Resilience levels of participants were also measured, using the Child and Youth Resilience Measure – 28, in individual, relational and contextual areas, to establish whether high resilience results in better coping and adjustment to parental absence. Findings confirm this and evidence that multiple stressors result in lower resilience levels and seem to indicate that a reciprocal relationship exists between resilience levels and optimal coping. Recommendations on how best to help these youngsters to cope with their altered circumstances, with special emphasis on the role of educational establishments, and suggestions for further research in this field conclude this study.

KEY TERMS

Adolescence; Coping mechanisms; Defence mechanisms; Diaspora; Educational establishments; Migration; Positive Psychology; Resilience

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Migration and the Zimbabwean Diaspora

For over a decade Zimbabwe has been a country plagued by economic and political instability. On the 14th of November, 2008, it achieved the second highest annual rate of inflation ever recorded in the world of 89.7 sextillion (10^{21}) per cent (Hanke & Kwok, 2009). Living conditions, for most people, became intolerable and long queues were a common sight in the country as desperate Zimbabweans tried to obtain commodities in short supply. Even the most basic goods, such as food and gasoline were either unavailable or unaffordable for the majority of the population. At the same time, the escalation of political violence fuelled by the country's controversial land reforms and disputed elections (Ndlovu, 2010), caused an exodus of people of vast proportions.

Although no official figures are available of the number of Zimbabweans who joined the Diaspora, it is generally believed that one quarter of the population, approximately four million people, may have left the country during the last decade (Shaw, 2008). The destinations have varied from neighbouring countries, such as South Africa and Botswana, to further afield to the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Although Zimbabwean Diasporas, some of considerable proportions, can be found all over the globe, by far the most significant ones are those found in South Africa and in the United Kingdom. At the end of 2009, the Zimbabwean migrant population in South Africa was estimated at 2.12 million and that in the United Kingdom at 500 000 (UNDP, 2011).

Although the official adoption of hard currencies for transactions in early 2009 has helped stabilize prices, improved revenue performance, and imposed fiscal discipline, it has not brought about much relief to the ordinary person, as wages and salaries have not adjusted to the high cost of living and inflation rates on U.S. dollar prices. Furthermore, despite the formation of the Government of National Unity in February 2009, the political situation remains volatile. Dr. Festo Kavishe, chief representative in

Zimbabwe of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), speaking to Angus Shaw of Associated Press said that many adults were unable to provide normal care, food and schooling for their children (Shaw, 2008). Thus, in a climate of continued political and economic instability, the out-migration trend from Zimbabwe has continued (UNDP, 2011).

1.2 “Diaspora orphans”

Not all those who migrate from Zimbabwe take their families with them. This has given rise to a population of “Diaspora orphans”, a term used by Shaw (2008) which refers to children of people working outside Zimbabwe left behind in the care of only one parent, or even relatives and friends.

In Zimbabwe, the reasons for leaving children in the home country when joining the Diaspora are diverse. Some of the host countries do not permit family migration; many who leave do not use “official” channels but resort to dangerous illegal routes; whilst others feel that it would be easier to go ahead and have the children follow. There are also those who see the Diaspora as a temporary solution, not considering the move a permanent one warranting the relocation of their offspring. For some, the standard of education that their remitted external earnings can provide for their children in Zimbabwe makes it a good reason to leave them behind.

Estimating the number of children affected by this phenomenon is not easy, in view of the diverse context of the Zimbabwean out-migration but, in other countries, some researchers, such as Whitehead, Hashim and Iversen (2007) tried to circumvent the problem by deriving the number of children left behind from the number of labour migrants through household surveys. By following this system, they found that in South Africa 25 per cent of all households had a member who was a migrant worker, a figure which increased to 40 per cent for rural areas. Regardless of methodology, the figures are staggering not just in Zimbabwe but world-wide: Bryant (2005) estimated that in Thailand some half a million children up to the age of fourteen are left behind by their migrant parents; in the Philippines, three to six million children are affected,

representing 10 per cent to 20 per cent of Filipino children; and approximately one million children are left in Indonesia by migrant parents.

1.3 Pilot Study

In 2010, I conducted a qualitative study exploring the way in which Zimbabwean adolescents view parental absence, by identifying themes, structures of meaning and the coping or defence mechanisms that these young people employ to deal with their circumstances (Filippa, 2011). This research was guided by the question “How do Zimbabwean adolescent Diaspora orphans view and cope with parental absence?” The study employed qualitative methodology as I felt that it was the most suitable to gain insight and understanding into the lives and experiences of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental migration and to obtain as much rich information as possible. This study was the result of my inability to find any information relating to these adolescents and the consequent need to acquire a better understanding of their world and perceptions of it. According to Loxton (2004), it is of fundamental importance to incorporate the child’s point of view into caring systems, social policies and professional practice before any contribution of significance targeted at developing and optimising human potential can be made. In view of this, any information gathered could be used to inform and facilitate the inception of systems to better serve the needs of these Zimbabwean adolescents.

A small sample was obtained for this study which consisted of seventeen adolescents ranging in ages from 12 to 21 years, four males and thirteen females, who attended secondary school in Harare, Zimbabwe. Their selection was based on the criteria that either one or both parents of these adolescents were working in the Zimbabwean Diaspora. Although the sample of this research was not representative of the broader population of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration, as it was drawn from a fairly high Socio Economic Status (SES) group, it nevertheless revealed that the experiences of these adolescents are similar to those in other countries. By this, it can be surmised that even less privileged Zimbabwean adolescents whose parents have joined the Diaspora are affected by parental absence in similar ways.

The seventeen participants were interviewed using in-depth, semi-structured interviews which were analysed using the steps proposed by Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006). Trustworthiness and credibility of the study were based on the guidelines proposed by Stiles (1993). Various forms of triangulation were also applied, such as data, investigator, theoretical and methodological in order to provide further trustworthiness and credibility to the research.

Although the study had some limitations, such as the small size and composition of the sample which is skewed towards a higher SES, female gender and the fact that only one interview was carried out with each participant, it succeeded in highlighting a number of themes emerging from the experiences of these adolescents. It also provided some insight into their ways of coping with their circumstances.

The themes that emerged from the interviews were categorised as follows: depression; abandonment and rejection; conflicting feelings; role changes and role additions; lack of social support; the importance of communication; materialism; relationships with caregivers; and sexual abuse and molestation. The findings of the study were also compared with the findings of other studies on out-migration carried out in other parts of the world, such as those by Silver (2006) and Schmalzbauer (2004) which point to both the commonality and divergence of experiences of children affected by parental migration globally.

In its conclusion, the study proposed areas for future research due to the unavailability and unreliability of information and the dearth of studies on these adolescents in Zimbabwe. In particular, the study pointed out that carrying out further research would greatly enrich the knowledge base on children left in Zimbabwe by migrant parents, in turn promoting awareness into their plight and enabling relevant authorities to develop intervention strategies to maximise the integration and wellbeing of these young people.

1.4 Repatriation

As mentioned in 1.1, there has not been sufficient change in Zimbabwe to curb out-migration or to encourage repatriation. On the surface, the situation appears to have changed considerably. In the supermarkets, the shelves are full of goods from all over the world and fuels are plentiful and readily available. The queues of Zimbabweans trying to obtain scarce commodities which characterised the last decade are finally a thing of the past.

Below the surface, however, the issues that drove so many to join the Diaspora remain unchanged. The cost of living has soared and the prices of the now plentiful commodities are beyond the reach of the majority of the population. The rate of unemployment in the country continues to be exorbitant. In the absence of official figures, it was estimated at 95 per cent in 2009 (Barrientos & Soria, 2012). According to Global Finance Magazine (2012), inflation rates on the United States Dollar grew from three per cent in 2010 to an estimated 4.8 per cent in 2011 whilst most salaries remained unchanged. The International Human Development Indicators (HDI) issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on 2 November 2011, gave Zimbabwe a rank of 173 out of 187 countries with comparable data. The HDI provides a composite measure of three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and income that describe a country's well-being. The HDI of Sub-Saharan Africa as a region increased from 0.365 in 1980 to 0.463 today, placing Zimbabwe below the regional average.

Whilst no official statistics are available, it appears that most of those who out-migrated in the last decade have not returned to Zimbabwe. Consequently, the issues relating to the offspring who are left in the home country by migrant parents continues to be of topical interest.

1.5 Positive Psychology

At the dawn of the new millennium, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) hazarded a prediction with regard to the direction that psychology would likely take in the new

century. They believed that “a psychology of positive human functioning will arise that achieves a scientific understanding and effective interventions to build thriving in individuals” (p.13). They called on the behavioural and human sciences to move away from a pathology model and provide a vision of “the good life” (p.5) that is empirically sound but, at the same time, understandable. They urged for enquiry into what results in well-being, and fosters positive individuals and thriving communities.

Psychology should be able to help document what kind of families result in children who flourish, what work settings support the greatest satisfaction among workers, what policies result in the strongest civic engagement, and how people’s lives can be most worth living. (p.5)

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi’s call was heeded and resulted in an upsurge in interest and research in the field of Positive Psychology which has grown from strength to strength.

Park and Peterson (2006, p. 292) define Positive Psychology as “an umbrella term for theories and research about what makes life most worth living”, whilst the Positive Psychology Centre of the University of Pennsylvania (2007) proposes that it is the scientific study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The centre holds the belief that people want to lead meaningful, fulfilling lives, nurture their best traits and enhance their experiences of love, work, and play. Accordingly, Positive Psychology focuses on three central aspects: positive emotions, positive individual traits, and positive institutions.

Understanding positive emotions entails the study of contentment with the past, happiness in the present, and hope for the future. Understanding positive individual traits consists of the study of the strengths and virtues, such as the capacity for love and work, courage, compassion, resilience, creativity, curiosity, integrity, self-knowledge, moderation, self-control, and wisdom. Understanding positive institutions entails the study of the strengths that foster better

communities, such as justice, responsibility, civility, parenting, nurturance, work ethic, leadership, teamwork, purpose, and tolerance. (Positive Psychology Centre, 2007)

Positive Psychology has applications in many contexts as it endeavours to support:

- Families and schools that encourage children to flourish
- Work environments that promote job satisfaction and high productivity
- Communities that foster civic involvement
- Therapists who identify and nurture patients' strengths
- The teaching of Positive Psychology
- The dissemination of Positive Psychology interventions in organizations and communities

Positive Psychology's strength based approach is a valid way to explore the lives and experiences of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration. Identifying the positive emotions these young people experience and the positive individual traits they possess will provide a framework for developing both individual strengths as well as interventions to assist those who are less well adjusted to parental absence. Exploring resilience is one way of understanding individual positive traits.

1.6 Resilience

Why is it that when individuals are exposed to the same stressor, some break down whilst others remain healthy and even thrive? The answer may well be resilience. Etymologically, the word "resilience" comes from the Latin "salire" to spring, spring up and "resilire" to spring back (Lewis, 1964). This means that resilience can be regarded as the capacity to recover or spring back. Like Positive Psychology, in the past 15 years, the subject of resilience has attracted much interest with a considerable upsurge in publications on the topic (Friborg, Barlaug, Martinussen, Rosenvinge & Hjemdal, 2005).

Various approaches have been adopted in researching resilience including that of developmental psychology and research into the effects of traumatic events and experiences on the psyche. The fields of study are diverse, for example, individual, family, community, policy, social work, cross-cultural and even military deployment (Van Breda, 2001). It is, therefore, a multi-faceted field of research that has been addressed by psychologists, sociologists, social workers, educators and many others.

Resilience theory has its roots in the study of children who proved resilient, in other words who flourished, despite adverse childhood environments, such as poverty, parental physiological or mental illness and other “unfavourable” circumstances and the recovery process following a traumatic event (Davidson et al., 2005). Resilience theory addresses the strengths that people and systems demonstrate that enable them to rise above adversity.

The upsurge in interest in the study of resilience represents a reduction in emphasis on pathology and an increase in emphasis on strengths (Rak & Patterson, 1996). O’Leary (1998) noted that it is a move away from the vulnerability/deficit models and a paradigm shift towards triumphs in the face of adversity, thriving and protective factors with significant implications for theoretical, empirical and policy work and stated as follows:

Psychologists have recently called for a move away from vulnerability/deficit models to focus instead on triumphs in the face of adversity. This call for a focus on strengths parallels that of a number of other investigators in child development, medical sociology, and education. The potential theoretical, empirical and policy significance of the proposed paradigm shift from illness to health, from vulnerability to thriving, from deficit to protection and beyond ought not be underestimated. The precedent for this paradigm shift is growing in the scientific literature. (p. 426)

Hawley and De Haan (1996) also note that, as a result, family therapy has been affected:

In recent years there has been a movement in the family field toward strengths-based and away from deficit-based models. For example, in family therapy the solution-focused and narrative models assume that clients possess resources that will allow them to resolve their difficulties... An emphasis on resilience in clients has often accompanied this focus on strengths. (p. 283)

1.6.1 Defining resilience

Defining resilience is not an easy task as many definitions are cited in the relevant literature. Vaillant (1993, p.248) defines resilience as the “self-righting tendencies” of the person, as “both the capacity to be bent without breaking and the capacity, once bent, to spring back”. Egeland, Carlson and Sroufe (1993) propose that resilience is the ability to adapt successfully, function positively and display confidence in spite of being considered at high risk, suffering from chronic stress or chronic stress, or following prolonged or severe trauma.

The Resilience Research Centre (2009) proposes an ecological definition of resilience, that is one which implicates those mandated to help, such as psychologists, social workers, educators, nurses, as well as those expected to provide support to communities, families and peer groups in the process of intervening to provide a child opportunities to realize his or her potential, as:

- I. The capacity of individuals to navigate their way to resources that sustain well-being;
- II. The capacity of individuals’ physical and social ecologies to provide those resources; and
- III. The capacity of individuals, their families and communities to negotiate culturally meaningful ways for resources to be shared.

Regardless of the different approaches to defining the concept, the various definitions appear to indicate that resilience is primarily defined in terms of the “presence of protective factors (personal, social, familial, and institutional safety nets)” which enable individuals to resist life stress (Kaplan, Turner, Norman, & Stillson, 1996, p. 158).

1.6.2 Patterns of resilience

Four patterns of resilience emerge in literature (Van Breda, 2001, p.5):

- a. **Dispositional Pattern:** The dispositional pattern relates to physical and ego-related psychosocial attributes that promote resilience. These entail those aspects of an individual that promote a resilient disposition towards life stressors, and can include a sense of autonomy or self-reliance, a sense of basic self-worth, good physical health and good physical appearance.
- b. **Relational Pattern:** The relational pattern concerns an individual’s roles in society and his/her relationships with others. These roles and relationships can range from close and intimate relationships to those with the broader societal system.
- c. **Situational Pattern:** The situational pattern addresses those aspects involving a linking between an individual and a stressful situation. This can include an individual’s problem solving ability, the ability to evaluate situations and responses, and the capacity to take action in response to a situation.
- d. **Philosophical Pattern:** The philosophical pattern refers to an individual’s world view or life paradigm. This can include various beliefs that promote resilience, such as the belief that positive meaning can be found in all experiences, the belief that self-development is important, the belief that life is purposeful.

1.6.3 Resilience in children

Investigation into resilience in children has been conducted mainly through longitudinal studies into the lives of those born into adverse conditions, enabling researchers to identify the features that are associated with the children who rose above their circumstances. These studies followed individuals into their 40's and 50's (Dahlin, Cederblad, Antonovsky, & Hagnell, 1990) generating much rich information.

This research has challenged some of the main ideas that were prevalent in psychology and other fields, namely that:

There are fixed, inevitable, critical, and universal stages of development;

Childhood trauma inevitably leads to adult psychopathology;

There are social conditions, interpersonal relationships, and institutional arrangements that are so toxic they inevitably lead to decrements or problems in the everyday functioning of children and adults, families, and communities, (Saleebey, 1996, p. 299)

by showing that around 50 per cent of children who should not have developed into well-adjusted adults did so in spite of their circumstances.

Although some have argued that adversity experienced during childhood does increase the incidence of psychopathology in later life (Cederblad, Dahlin, Hagnell, & Hansson, 1995), they also generally recognise that this is moderated by certain protective factors, such as a high sense of coherence, high mastery and an inner locus of control.

Rak and Patterson (1996, p.368) propose that resiliency in children who are able to overcome adverse circumstances is "the capacity of those of who are exposed to identifiable risk factors to overcome those risks and avoid negative outcomes such as delinquency and behavioural problems, psychological maladjustment, academic difficulties, and physical complications".

1.6.4 Measuring resilience

A number of measures are now available to evaluate resilience and related traits in children and youth, including life strengths, hardiness and protective/risk factors. Kordich Hall (2010) identifies 38 in a compendium and discusses the suitability of each according to type and age from pre-school to adolescents/young adults.

Ungar and Liebenberg (2011), however, caution that most of these measures are based on studies of resilience that employ subscales of standardised measures to identify behaviours and cognitions believed to be associated with successful development or have been developed by using largely Western-centred approaches. Although these measures do provide information on resilience, they do not take into account the context or degree of adversity the children face.

The Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM – 28) was developed by an international team of investigators in eleven countries across the world who worked collaboratively. More under-developed, non-Western countries were included in the research, in order to reflect the experiences of non-Western youth who, globally, outnumber their Western peers. With this multi-cultural and multi-ethnic approach, the development team successfully produced a measure that facilitates the understanding of aspects of resilience across culture (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011). One of the countries which participated in the studies for the development of the CYRM – 28 is South Africa, where research was done in Cape Town. This makes the measure particularly suitable for use in a neighbouring country, such as Zimbabwe.

Both quantitative and qualitative stages were applied to the development of this measure. This mixed methods approach was informed by Merten's (2003) transformative-emancipatory research paradigm which emphasises respondent participation in all stages of research in order to understand the meaning and values that constitute the research process and individual experiences of the phenomenon. The use of mixed methods of research also facilitated the identification of emic factors, such as community values, that are found in diverse cultures and contexts. Frequently,

these factors are under-represented in literature. Ungar and Liebenberg (2011, p.128) point out that the qualitative findings of the research informed the quantitative analysis affecting the structure of the CYRM – 28 in a way “that allows good content validity within each research site in which it was piloted while still sharing enough homogeneity to make it useful for cross-national comparisons”.

In view of the cross-cultural nature of the CYRM – 28, certain steps are required in order to prepare the measure for use and administration that ensure that it remains contextually relevant to the community involved in the research. These include establishing a local advisory committee who will provide input on the research implementation and who will assist in formulating site specific questions for inclusions in the CYRM – 28, as well as examining the research findings to ensure that interpretations of the data will reflect a local context; carrying out focus group interviews to make sure that the questions included in the measure make sense locally; and translating and back-translating the CYRM – 28 into the local language, if deemed necessary.

Assessing resilience in children can be particularly useful as both a predictor of adaptation and in order to provide direction for interventions aimed at helping specific groups. Investigating the resilience of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration will provide much needed information that could be used to build on these existing strengths to optimise their adaptation to their unique circumstances.

1.7 Aim and methodology of this study

The aim of this study is to explore the way in which Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental migration cope with parental absence by assessing individual resilience and by analysing their narratives. In line with qualitative methodology, the study will be kept deliberately open to emerging possibilities but the starting question could be, “How do resilient and non-resilient adolescents differ in coping with parental absence?”

By making use of qualitative methodology and an interpretive/phenomenological approach the researcher proposes to collect a rich spectrum of information regarding these adolescents from their subjective perspectives. A number of semi-structured, in-depth interviews will be carried out with each participant, Zimbabwean adolescents identified as having either one or both parents working outside the country. The participants will be selected using purposive and snow-ball methods.

It is anticipated that the adolescents found to have high resiliency will be better adapted to their circumstances and will generally hold a more positive outlook of their situation.

Due to the current socio-economic and political situation in Zimbabwe, it can be surmised that the migration trend will not reverse in the foreseeable future and that, consequently, the number of children affected by parental out-migration will increase. This trend will not be restricted to Zimbabwe, as the world-wide financial crisis continues affecting even countries previously exempted from migration, as unemployment rates skyrocket everywhere.

Due to the dearth of information on the children who are left in the home country by migrant parents, it is important to gain greater insight into the problem by investigating how resilience affects these adolescents. Increased knowledge of these children's life view and ways of coping will enable researchers to formulate recommendations aimed at facilitating the development of interventions, on the part of parents, caregivers and educational establishments, for dealing with these adolescents' unique needs.

1.8 Following chapters

In the following chapters, an in-depth literature survey will explore research in the field of Positive Psychology and resilience providing a theoretical framework for the study. In addition, it will highlight how parental absence can affect children during adolescence and how resilience can moderate negative factors of their experience. Information regarding the CYRM – 28, its development and validation will be examined in detail.

The aims and methodology of the study will be presented, together with a step-by-step account of how the research was carried out, including participant selection, interview procedures and administration of the resilience measure. Some quantitative data emerging from the administration of the CYRM – 28 to the participants of the study will be included.

Representative narratives based on the transcripts of the interviews carried out with the participants will be presented and analysed. Selected transcripts of the interviews will be included in order to present the data in a manner that is most congruent with the participants' words, in order to let them speak for themselves as much as possible. Themes and structures of meaning emerging from these interviews, with a special focus on resilience, will be presented and discussed. Comparisons will be carried out between the data obtained, with a particular view to highlighting the differences between levels of resilience as a moderator of adaptation and coping of the adolescents interviewed.

In conclusion, recommendations will be made aimed at facilitating the integration of adolescents whose parents have out-migrated leaving them in Zimbabwe into their environment and at maximising the positive aspects of their experience. Special attention will be given to the role of educational establishments and how they could be used to teach resilience to all adolescents and, in particular, how they could be involved in providing effective support systems for Zimbabwean adolescents.

1.9 Conclusion

Since the beginning of the Pilot Study carried out in 2010, to the researcher's knowledge, no further studies on Zimbabwean adolescents whose parents have out-migrated leaving them behind in the home country have been carried out. The lives of those who participated in this Pilot Study have not been significantly altered as support systems available to them continue to be restricted to their school counselling services.

Although some progress has been made with regard to public awareness, the gathering of additional information with a view to increasing the knowledge base and sensitising

people to the plight of these adolescents is crucial to the development and implementation of systems aimed at optimising their integration in society and affording them the support systems that they may require to deal with their unique circumstances.

Many children whose parents have joined the Diaspora are in mainstream education, but their plight remains unvoiced. Educational establishments could play a key role in nurturing and boosting resilience in these children by introducing existing programmes aimed at building resilience into their curricula. Caregivers and societal structures could also become more conducive to providing environments that foster resilience, not just in adolescents affected by this phenomenon, but to the younger generations as a whole.

The aim of this study is, thus, to explore the way in which Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental migration view and cope with their circumstances by identifying themes and structures of meaning, with a particular emphasis on resilience. By making use of qualitative methodology and an interpretive/phenomenological approach, we propose to collect a rich spectrum of information regarding these children from their subjective perspectives.

Due to the present world-wide financial crisis and migratory labour trends, the incidence of children left behind in their home countries by migrant parents may become progressively more widespread. In Zimbabwe, no short-term solution appears in sight as the current socio-economic and political problems are far from being resolved and this could mean an increase in the number of migrant parents and, consequently, in the children left behind.

As little information is available in this regard, it is therefore important to gain greater insight into the problem by investigating how parental absence is experienced by secondary school students and how these children view their circumstances. Increased knowledge of these adolescents' life view and resilience levels will contribute to the body of knowledge and enable invested parties to formulate and implement

interventions for dealing with these adolescents' unique needs and bolstering their resilience.

Chapter 2

Theoretical framework and literature review

2.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework of this study is inherently linked with the Positive Psychology movement and, in particular, the construct of Resilience. Positive Psychology is especially suitable because of its focus on what is healthy and good in individuals and in life and using this to build strength. The adolescents whose parents have joined the Zimbabwean Diaspora should not be considered as young people in need of being cured or viewed as if something were wrong with them rather, they should be viewed as strong individuals who are trying to cope with a unique set of circumstances. Studying them through a positive lens should provide us an insight into their strengths and into what makes them who they are.

2.2 Introduction to Positive Psychology

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's call for "a psychology of positive human functioning" (2000, p.13) aimed at fostering thriving individuals has been heeded by the psychological community who has responded with a wealth of research in the field now known as Positive Psychology. The areas that have been explored and benefited from the study and application of Positive Psychology are wide and far reaching showing that a move away from a pathology model towards one based on strengths has appealed to the mental health fraternity.

The mind map presented in Figure 2.1, featured on the Positive Psychology UK Web site (nd), shows the extensive variety of topics studied by positive psychologists and provides an overview of the field of Positive Psychology.

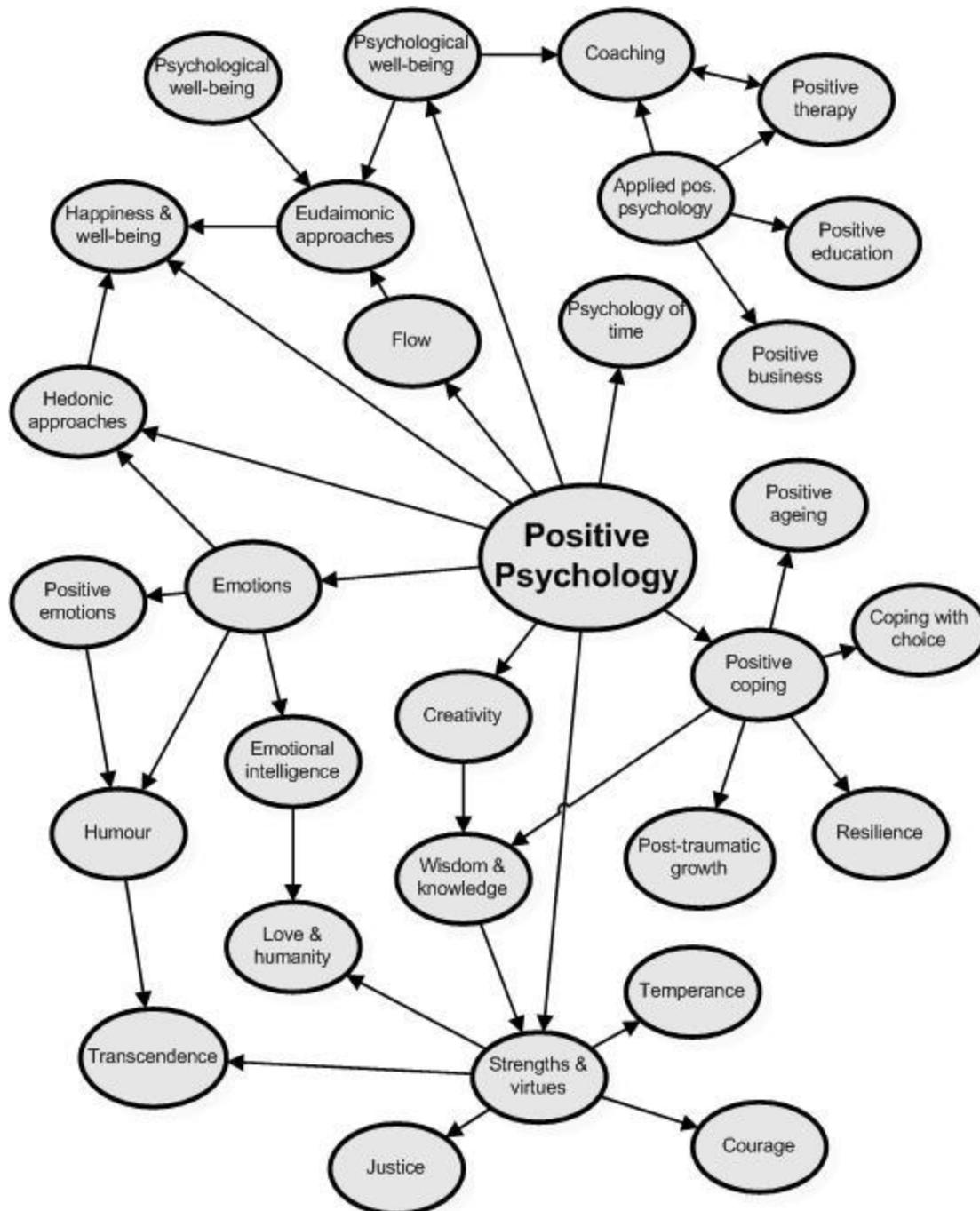


Figure 2.1. A mind map of the field of Positive Psychology (Positive Psychology Centre UK website, nd-a).

2.2.1 Origins and roots of Positive Psychology

Martin Seligman is generally regarded as one of the founding fathers of Positive Psychology (Klug, 2011). Seligman was inspired by his daughter, who pointed out to

him that “raising children was far more than just fixing what was wrong with them. It was about identifying and amplifying their strengths and virtues, and helping them find the niche where they can live these positive traits to the fullest” (Seligman, 2002, p. 28). This prompted Seligman to ask himself if there could be a “psychological science that is about the best things in life” (Seligman, 2002, p. 29) and to begin his research in this field.

Positive Psychology does not exist in a vacuum. Its birth can be attributed also to the works of other theorists who inspired Seligman into founding this new school of thought. Possibly the earliest source of inspiration is the Greek physician and philosopher Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) as Seligman said that “the time has finally arrived for a science that seeks to understand positive emotion, build strength and virtue, and provide guideposts for finding what Aristotle called the ‘good life’” (Seligman, 2002, p. xi).

Positive Psychology also has much in common with the theories of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Seligman (2002) points out that Humanistic Psychology and Positive Psychology both emphasise a number of premises, such as will, responsibility, hope, and positive emotion. Maslow’s concept of self-actualization is very similar to Csikszentmihalyi’s (1991) flow or optimal experience, which is described as an exhilarating experience of being in control of one’s actions and master of one’s own fate, giving rise to a profound sense of enjoyment. This state generally arises when “a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991, p. 3). Keyes and Haidt (2003) share these sentiments, stating that Maslow, as well as other Humanist psychologists’ theories can be regarded as forerunners of Positive Psychology as they share many goals and concerns. This has had a wide appeal which has been enthusiastically heeded as shown by the growing body of literature in the field of Positive Psychology (Keyes & Haidt, 2003).

Positive psychology also overlaps some of the tenets of existential theories. Seligman illustrates this point with a vivid metaphor:

Positive psychology takes seriously the bright hope that if you find yourself stuck in the parking lot of life, with few and only ephemeral pleasures, with minimal gratifications, and without meaning, there is a road out. This road takes you through the countryside of pleasure and gratification, up into the high country of strength and virtue, and finally to the peaks of lasting fulfilment: meaning and purpose. (Seligman, 2002, p. xiv)

In addition, both theories refute the deterministic view of human nature proposed by orthodox psychoanalysts and radical behaviourists (Corey, 2001) whilst stressing the individual freedom to make choices on how we experience subjective reality. Cook states that Positive Psychology believes that individuals can find ways to live their lives optimally, whatever the circumstances (Cook, 2004). Positive psychology has also been influenced by Allport's (1937; 1955; 1961) work in positive individualistic characteristics which he termed *Central traits*, that is common traits that make up personality, such as kindness, honesty, and friendliness.

Seligman challenges Freudian beliefs of analysing at length past mistakes and that humans are controlled by their past. He states that Freud and those who follow his lead view every life event which has a psychological impact, as being solely determined by what happened in an individual's past (Seligman, 2002). He contends, however, that "it has turned out to be difficult to find even small effects of childhood events on adult personality, and there is no evidence at all of large — to say nothing of determining — effects" (p. 67). He further believes that this approach "imprisons people in an embittered past" (p. 68). Seligman further disagrees with Freud's view of emotions by pointing out that research shows that venting feelings is not helpful and that, in fact, can cause problems.

Csikszentmihalyi (1997, p.136) echoes this by saying that "the habit of rumination that our narcissistic society encourages actually might make things worse". Freud's "Pathogenic Psychology" which "assumes the worst about us, seeing us as basically selfish beings driven by animistic impulses pulsating just beneath a thin veneer of social politeness" (p. xxxix) and that "we are governed by a selfish id barely controlled by a fragile ego" (Pearsall, 2003, p. xxxviii) are also in net contrast with the principles of Positive Psychology which believe in a strength-based approach.

From the time Seligman was in graduate school, he disputed Behaviourism from his observations of experiments on dogs when he noticed that conditioning did not work on some subjects that appeared to have given up and learned helplessness (Seligman, 1998). In his view, this was in net contrast with behaviourist theory which states that all behaviour is determined by an individual's experience of rewards and punishments, as actions that have been rewarded can be expected to be repeated whilst those that have been punished are generally repressed. Seligman felt that it is incorrect to assume that consciousness does not affect actions and that individuals are wholly shaped by their environment, rather postulating that the guiding force is driven by internal thoughts.

This view led Seligman to subsequently become interested in demonstrating the role of cognition on conditioning by demonstrating how it is easier to condition people to fear certain types of objects that are generally regarded as threatening than to fear those that are not as threatening, further disputing behaviourist views (Schultz & Schultz, 2004).

Although Seligman (1998) does not always agree with a cognitive approach and its claim that cognition produces emotions by stating that "the imperialistic Freudian view claims that emotion always drives thought, while the imperialistic cognitive view claims that thought always drives emotion. The evidence, however, is that each drives the other at times" (p. 65). He still draws from the therapies of Aaron T. Beck and Albert

Ellis to combat depression, as well as the ABC approach of confronting negative thoughts in order to increase optimism and hope (Seligman, 2002).

Figure 2.2 depicts the roots of Positive Psychology like those of a tree, illustrating the theories and influences that contributed to its origins.

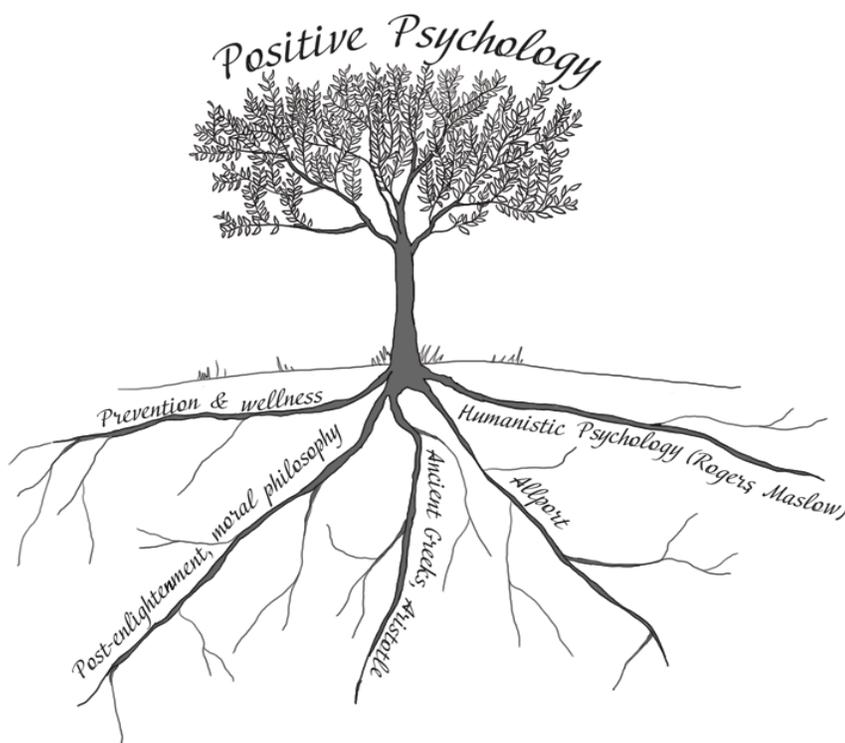


Figure 2.2. The roots of positive psychology (Boniwell, nd).

2.2.2 What is Positive Psychology?

Positive Psychology is “an umbrella term for theories and research about what makes life most worth living” (Park & Peterson, 2006, p.292). The focus of Positive Psychology is on strengths and virtues that promote thriving in both individual and communities (Positive Psychology Centre, 2007) based on the belief that ultimately what people want is to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives which enhance the way they experience love, work and leisure.

Sheldon and King (2001) suggest that Positive Psychology is “simply psychology”, that is, an attempt on the part of psychologists to describe “the typical structure and natural functioning of their topics of interest” as is done in other scientific fields (p.216). They also see Positive Psychology as a call to psychologists to be more open and appreciative to human potentials, drives and abilities. In their article, they point out that problem-focussed frames of reference are not satisfactory in explaining human functioning, as most people are still able to attain a reasonable state of happiness and satisfaction. Sheldon and King felt that, at that point, little was known about thriving, due to the fact that not enough emphasis had been placed on finding out what caused it. They continued by illustrating the negative bias that prevailed in traditional psychology by showing how clinical psychologists had, up to that point, focussed mostly on diagnosing and treating pathologies as a source of “cures” whilst neglecting psychological health and a strength-based approach.

The upsurge of interest in the field of Positive Psychology at the dawn of the new millennium and the attempts at defining it, saw questions being asked such as “why are positive emotions so important?” where Frederickson (2001) proposed that positive emotions trigger the creation of skills and resources. Myers tried to find out why worldwide most people are satisfied with their lives in spite of their objective difficulties, ascribing it to “the ordinary magic of human resilience” (Sheldon & King, 2001, p. 216) whilst Masten (2001) attempted to find an answer to the question as to why some people are even happier than the rest.

Seligman (2002) felt that, since World War II, a model of pathology had ensconced itself into the approach to psychology, with too much emphasis on understanding human problems and their causes. The target of interventions had generally become the prevention or remediation of damage, making people look flawed and delicate, as a result of genetic or environmental factors. Positive Psychology, he argued, does not dispute the fact that problems do exist but shifts the emphasis on identifying qualities such as goodness, strength and achievement, placing what is not working in a secondary position. Seligman called on researchers to take more seriously these

positive aspects that make people strong and functional. He further stated that it is incorrect to presume that what is good about people is not important and that it should be considered secondary and even dubious, challenging that if it is instead taken seriously it would lead to significant consequences for research (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Sheldon and King (2001) propose that Positive Psychology is “the scientific study of ordinary human strengths and virtues” (p.216). Positive Psychology explores the nature of individuals who appear to function effectively and who are able to adapt easily. In addition, it attempts to explain the fact that most humans manage to live lives that are filled with dignity and purpose.

A more recent definition is provided by Wong (2011) who states that it is challenging to obtain a comprehensive definition of Positive Psychology, partly due to its fast growth rate and partly because of the commitment to earlier definitions which required adherence to the “three-pillars”, namely positive emotions, positive character traits and enabling institutions. Wong argues that some of the definitions, erroneously put forward, suggest that Positive Psychology is about exploring what is good about people only in good times, those characterised by peace and affluence. Wong continues by citing Seligman who said that “a complete science and a complete practice of psychology should include an understanding of suffering and happiness, as well as their interaction” and that alleviation of suffering and enhancement of happiness should not be seen as mutually exclusive (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005, p. 410). As such, it is vital to also look at how to maximise human experience also in difficult times and regardless of individual limitations. In line with this, the new definition of Positive Psychology, according to Wong (2011, p. 72), should be “the scientific study of virtue, meaning, resilience, and well-being, as well as evidence-based applications to improve the life of individuals and society in the totality of life”.

What all the definitions appear to have in common, however, is Positive Psychology's interest in what makes people thrive and cope well with their individual circumstances, whatever these may be.

2.2.3 Aims of Positive Psychology

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) made a call for a shift from the prevailing focus of psychology on fixing what is considered wrong in life to one that aims to build on what is good and worth-while. They stated that, consequently, the aim of Positive Psychology should be to redress previous imbalances, by emphasising the building of strengths in the treatment and prevention of mental illness. This reflects Seligman's concerns regarding the prevailing pathology focus of psychology and laying the roots of his philosophy of an approach based on building strengths rather than defining and treating mental illness.

Seligman (2003, p. xviii) further proposes four long term aims of Positive Psychology. These are:

1. Fostering better prevention by buffering, that is building positive traits and positive subjective experiences;
2. Supplementing the available techniques for therapy by training practitioners to identify and build strengths explicitly and systematically;
3. Curtailing the promiscuous victimology that pervades the social sciences;
4. Moving psychology from the egocentric to the philanthropic.

Seligman explains that at the subjective level, Positive Psychology is about subjective experience. He divides this into three time frames, namely past, present and future. The past is about well-being and satisfaction; the present is concerned with flow, joy, sensual pleasures and happiness; and the future focuses on constructive cognition about optimism, hope and faith. He further expounds about individual traits that are associated with these states: the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal

skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future-mindedness, high talent, and wisdom.

As Positive Psychology is not just about individuals, it purports that, at a group level it is about civic virtues and the institutions that help the movement of individuals toward better citizenship. These virtues are: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic (Gillham & Seligman, 1999; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Wong states that, ultimately, the mission of Positive Psychology is to answer “the fundamental questions of what makes life worth living and how to improve life for all people” (2011, p. 71).

2.2.4 Fields of study

Rather than merely treating mental illness, Positive Psychologists study what makes normal life more fulfilling by finding and nurturing genius and talent (Compton, 2005). Positive Psychology does not deny the value of studying pathology and how things go wrong nor does it purport to replace the rest of psychology, instead it shifts the focus on the importance of determining how things go right by applying scientific methodology. Accordingly, Positive Psychologists believe that focussing uniquely on pathology will only yield partial understanding of mental illness (Peterson, 2009).

Positive Psychology has grown into an enormous field of study and determining all the areas which have been researched is an ominous task, particularly as the field is broadening constantly. Peterson (2006) suggests that research has targeted areas such as states of pleasure or flow, values, strengths, virtues, talents, as well as the ways that in which they can be applied in the contexts like social systems and institutions.

Cook (2004) proposes that an overview of what Positive Psychologists study can be found by looking at the topics of the presentations of the First Summit of Positive Psychology of 1999:

- Flourishing and resilience;
- Turning points as opportunities for growth;
- Meaning, personal goals, virtue;
- Relationships;
- Creativity and Genius;
- Altruism; and
- Elevation (positive feelings elicited by acts of virtue or moral beauty).

Each of these fields of study has been extensively researched and a rich body of literature is available with applications in several contexts, such as education and personal growth.

The Positive Psychology UK Web site (nd-a), lists a number of theoretical topics and includes sample research items for each. These topics are:

- Eudaimonia
- Flow
- Gratitude
- Happiness
- Hope
- Optimism
- Positive emotions
- Post-traumatic growth
- Resilience
- Self-esteem
- Strengths

A comparison of the two lists of topics proposed by Cook (2004) found on the Positive Psychology Centre UK website (nd-a) shows that in a decade topics have been refined and new terminology, such as “eudaimonia” have been coined.

Some of these topics need to be defined in order to better comprehend what is the focus of the studies in these fields.

2.2.4.1 Eudaimonia

According to Robinson (1989), the word Eudaimonia originates from the Greek “εὐδαιμονία” (eudaimonia), usually translated as happiness or welfare; however, it has been suggested that human flourishing may be a more accurate translation. Etymologically, it is made up of the words "eu" (good) and "daimōn" (spirit). It is generally associated with Aristotle's works, where it is used to mean the highest human good.

According to Aristotle's philosophy, people can only achieve eudaimonia once they have developed their ultimate potential, as it is only then that they can live by the excellence and virtue they have learned. Aristotle believed that people enjoy behaving in a virtuous manner because society teaches us that this is a valuable skill, due to the fact that when we do so, we benefit not just ourselves, but all those in our realm of influence. He compiled a list of virtues that individuals should strive to achieve, such as courage, suitable ambition, restraint, patience, truthfulness, a sense of humour, friendliness and modesty. Eudaimonia, for Aristotle, was in the eye of the beholder, and could be evaluated when a person died in terms of whether others considered that he or she had lived a good life characterised by virtuous behaviours (Kashdan, Biswas-Diener & King, 2008).

Aristotle's concept of eudaimonic happiness is the foundation of a number of theories of happiness, as it is seen as mirroring objective social values as opposed to subjective feelings. This objectivist view posits that there is much more than just pleasure, for example, values such as ethics, friendship and knowledge which all contribute to the quality of one's life (Brulde, 2007). According to McMahon (2006), happiness is not a function of feeling but one of virtue. Ryff (1989) suggests that, in modern psychology, models of eudaimonia emerged from early works on self-actualization and how to achieve it, by Erikson, Allport and Maslow.

Building on Aristotelian ideas including flourishing, thriving and excellence, Ryff (1989) conceptualised eudaimonia as a six-factor structure, made up of:

1. Autonomy
2. Personal growth
3. Self-acceptance
4. Purpose in life
5. Environmental mastery
6. Positive relations with others

According to Kashdan et al. (2008), several constructs have been proposed to represent eudaimonia, namely self-acceptance (sometimes called self-esteem), autonomy (sometimes called locus of control), vitality (sometimes called energized positive emotions), and self-concordance or personal expressiveness (sometimes called authenticity).

Multiple definitions of eudaimonia show that research and interest in the concept is far from waning and that this broad term for living by excellence and virtue will continue to draw the attention of academia. The growing body of literature on the subject of Positive Psychology shows how it is being studied in the most diverse range of contexts and topics.

2.2.4.2 Flow

According to Boniwell (2008), flow is a state of being which she compares to an experience of being totally concentrated and involved in an activity to the point where you lose awareness of yourself and of time.

This phenomenon was investigated by Csikszentmihalyi (Boniwell, 2008) by interviewing thousands of people involved in a range of activities, like ballet dancers, surgeons and chess players. He concluded that flow is a universal experience characterized by an almost total absence of emotions in addition to the following:

- *Clarity of goals and immediate feedback on the progress.* For example, in a competition you know what you've got to achieve and you know exactly how well you are doing, that is whether you are winning or losing.
- *Complete concentration* on what one is doing at the present moment, with no room in one's mind for any other information.
- *Actions and awareness are merged.* A guitar player merges with the instrument and becomes the music that he plays. The activity becomes almost automatic, and the involvement seems almost effortless (though far from being so in reality).
- *Losing awareness of oneself or self-consciousness* is also a common experience but, interestingly, after each flow the experience of the sense of self is strengthened and a person becomes more than he or she was before.
- *Sense of control* over what one is doing, with no worries about failure.
- *Transformation of time.* Usually, time passes much faster than expected. However, the reverse can also be true.
- *Activities are intrinsically rewarding.* This means they have an end in themselves (you do something because you want to), with any other end goal often being just an excuse. (Boniwell, 2008)

Activities that cause an experience of flow are inherently pleasurable and enthused and are not done with another end result in mind. Examples of these activities are: sport, dancing, hobbies, socialising, reading, sex and even working, as many daily activities can lead to a flow experience (Boniwell, 2008).

Boniwell (2008) notes that flow is reminiscent of Maslow's *peak experience*, a term which he used to describe intensely joyous and exciting moments in life when an individual feels more complete, aware and profoundly happy. Maslow postulated that during these experiences a sense of transcendence is felt and that there is a spiritual essence about them. Both Maslow and Csikszentmihalyi believed that everyone can attain peak experiences, however, those who have achieved a state of self-actualization are more likely to experience them.

2.2.4.3 Post-traumatic growth

In accord with Positive Psychology's shift from a pathology model to one of strength, the concept of post-traumatic growth is diametrically opposed to that of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Haidt (2006) proposes that literature is starting to address the hypothesis that stress and trauma, instead of being bad for individuals, may actually be good for them. This notion, referred to as the *adversity hypothesis*, suggests that individuals need trauma, setback and adversity in order to develop, grow and find fulfilment and interior strength. This literature evidences that a wide range of trauma and stress, such as bereavement, illness, combat and sexual assault can lead to post-traumatic growth (Park & Helgeson, 2006).

Relevant literature shows that the benefits of post-traumatic growth can be grouped into three categories (Haidt, 2006; Joseph & Linley, 2005):

- A sense of increased strength and the ability to find hidden abilities and strengths;
- A strengthening of good relationships after a traumatic experience; and
- Altering of priorities and philosophies regarding how each day is experienced and how we view others, for example, putting loved ones first.

Helgeson, Reynolds and Tomich (2006), carried out a literature review and a meta analysis on the link between post-traumatic growth and health outcomes. They found three major trends. Firstly, that individuals who experience trauma, tend to make positive life changes following the event; secondly, that trauma leads to life changes, which can be experienced as stressful and lead to negative health implications; and lastly, that post-traumatic growth is actually a way of coping with distress and its success or lack thereof that mediates its relationship with health.

2.2.4.4 Resilience

Resilience is a crucial and essential component in the field of Positive Psychology. Hardy, Concato and Gill (2004, p. 257) describe resilient individuals as those who possess “the capacity to remain well, recover, or even thrive in face of adversity”. Masten (2001) argues that they are just ordinary people dealing with the obstacles and challenges of everyday life.

As resilience is at the core of this study, it will be reported in much more detail in the following section.

2.2.5 Positive Psychology’s relevance to the present study

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) hoped that Positive Psychology would promote the inception of families that provide environments that encourage children to flourish. Using Positive Psychology to explore the lives and experiences of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by the Diaspora will help to increase knowledge into the positive emotions that they experience and identify individual traits that they possess. This knowledge will greatly assist in the development of individual strengths in those who lack them, as well as further bolstering those who are coping well with parental absence.

In addition, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) believed that Positive Psychology could help to build societies and structures that promote individual growth. Looking at both the familial and the educational environments of these adolescents through this lens will generate knowledge that could be used to build environments that maximise the positive aspects of their situations, further bolstering individual strengths.

2.3 Introduction to resilience

Definitions of resilience abound in relevant literature but what they all appear to have in common, however, is that it is the ability to cope well with adversities in life. In other words, definitions encompass the notion of exposure to risk which is followed by positive outcomes (Masten & Powell, 2003). Consequently, resilience theory addresses

and investigates the strengths that people and systems exhibit that enable them to rise above adversity (Van Breda, 2001).

Early research focussed on the individual, in order to identify characteristics and support systems that protected children from circumstances which could result in poorer life chances, such as abuse, low economic status and other traumatic events (Garmezy, 1974; Werner & Smith, 1982). More recently, research appears to have shifted towards seeing resilience not just as an individual trait but as processes that allow individuals to cope well and adjust to, not just traumatic life events, but to the more mundane daily stresses (Cummings, Davies, & Campbell, 2000; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker describe resilience as “a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity” (2000, p. 543). Resilience is thus viewed as the normal functioning of adaptation systems (Masten & Powell, 2003).

Increasingly important in these definitions is the concept of context. Arrington and Wilson’s (2000) definition of resilience states that consideration must be given to the context in which the process occurs, emphasising that both risks and outcomes may vary accordingly. They state that a person shows resilience when he or she “exceeds the expectations that is warranted by an individual’s (or community’s) biographical field” (2000, p. 225). Masten and Obradovic (2006) point out that to avoid confusion, any research in the field of resilience should operationally define the variables of risk, positive outcomes and resilience itself according to the specific settings in which they take place, acknowledging the uniqueness of each study of resilience.

Further consideration has been given to individual perception. Given the uniqueness of each person, it follows that multiple experiences will arise from the same circumstances. For example, two adolescents who have been left behind in their home country by their parents who have out-migrated, a situation that could arguably be perceived as adverse, may not be seen in the same light by each one, as one could feel abandoned whilst the other might view it as being given opportunities otherwise not available to

him/her through parental remittances (Filippa, 2011). Therefore, in order for definitions of resilience to be valid, they need to include both context and individual perception.

One definition that takes into consideration both the context and the perceptions of the individual who has experienced the risk is the one offered by Ungar (2004a, p.342) which states that resilience is “the outcome from negotiations between individuals and their environments for the resources to define themselves as healthy amidst conditions collectively viewed as adverse”. The comprehensiveness of this definition is that it takes into consideration how the individual who has experienced risk views his/her environment, what resources he/she can access and personal resilience.

Criticisms of these broader definitions is that identifying positive outcomes may become difficult as some positive outcomes may be viewed as such by an individual but not by society as a whole (Ungar & Teram, 2005). They state that “an extreme postmodernist stance suggesting that youth are healthy as long as they perceive themselves as such and convince others that they are, will not advance the interests of youth” (Ungar & Teram, 2005, p. 156). They further point out that, as a result, although these self-definitions should be respected, they should still be viewed within a context of full participation in their society and its norms and values.

The importance of an inclusive definition that takes into consideration context and individual perceptions so that risks, protective processes and positive outcomes can be understood in the fullness of unique experiences cannot be sufficiently stressed, as they allow research to identify differences between individuals exposed to the same set of circumstances. In this way, resilience can be identified not just within the spectrum of mainstream definitions but in the broadest possible sense. Furthermore, risks and protective processes can be viewed and interpreted in more depth by analysing first hand experiences (Luthar, Sawyer & Brown, 2006).

Context and individual perceptions are especially relevant in this study as they will help to identify what constraints and resources characterise the experience of the

Zimbabwean adolescents whose parents have out-migrated and increase understanding into the individual pathways to resilience within this context. Knowledge of multiple routes to resilience will also assist in maximising the scope of interventions targeted at optimising the integration of these adolescents into their society and ensuring that they cope successfully with their circumstances.

2.3.1 Origins and history of resilience

As an integral component of Positive Psychology, resilience was initially identified as part of the movement away from a pathology model towards one that focussed on strengths, by studying the resources of individuals who appeared to cope well in the face of adversity (Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999).

Early research focussed mainly on children exposed to acute adversity and those in highly vulnerable situations whose outcomes were generally regarded as being poor, like that of Rutter (1966) on children of schizophrenic parents. Rutter found that some of these children appeared not to have been negatively affected by their circumstances and displayed none of the expected negative outcomes. One of the earliest studies is Werner's longitudinal study of 698 children born on the island of Kauai in 1955. These children were born and raised in risk environments experiencing poverty, material deprivation, neglect and maltreatment. Many of the children were born prematurely and experienced perinatal stress. The aim of the study was to examine the effects of the environment of children's development (Werner, 1993; Werner & Smith, 1982). When the children reached eighteen years of age the negative effects of the environment were significant: fifteen per cent of the group had committed serious offences, ten per cent had mental health problems, and twenty per cent experienced severe problems with coping. More importantly, however, Werner and Smith identified ten per cent of the cohort who "worked well, played well, loved well, and expected well" (1982, p. xv). These adolescents were considered resilient.

From their findings, Werner and Smith (1982) identified a number of factors that characterised these resilient adolescents. Some of the factors are listed below:

- They had a strong bond with their primary caregivers;
- They were socially responsive, physically strong, and had high activity levels;
- They were not separated from their mothers often;
- They had access to other caregivers;
- They were responsible, caring, gentle, sensitive;
- They had good social awareness and maturity;
- They had an internalised set of values
- They had a strong need to achieve;
- They were able to draw out positive reactions from others.

A review of literature by Barnard (1994) identified certain phenomena that appear repeatedly to correlate with resiliency in individuals. These findings echo some of the findings of Werner and Smith (1982). For example,

- From infancy, being considered more affectionate and cuddly;
- An interval of at least 20 to 24 months spacing before other siblings being born;
- Higher intelligence;
- The ability to develop intimate relationships;
- Being achievement oriented both in and out of the school environment;
- Being able to see positive and constructive meaning of events that affect one's world and to develop an understanding thereof;
- The ability to move between home and the outside world with discernment and ease;
- An internal orientation and locus of control; and
- No serious illnesses in adolescence.

Anthony (1974) proposed a theory of vulnerability identifying certain children whom he termed "invulnerables" because in spite of growing up in extremely chaotic and deprived circumstances, developed into healthy, loving adults displaying great resilience. After exposure to stress, the invulnerable children bounced back, becoming

increasingly resilient. Conversely, those he termed “hypervulnerables” failed to cope even with ordinary, expected stresses, whilst the “pseudovulnerables” were those who appeared resilient but required extremely protective environments to cope. As a result of Anthony’s study, research turned its attention to the invulnerable children who seemed unscathed in spite of being repeatedly exposed to risk (Anthony, 1987; Masten, 2001).

From the work of these early studies, subsequent resilience research evolved. The evolution of research into resilience included changes on how it is studied, defined, conceptualised and measured. For example, the more traditional views, like those of Pianta and Walsh (1998), point out that resilience is generally viewed as something that is inborn, a form of biological hardiness that individuals are either born with or acquire solely by their own initiative and good luck, whilst others see resilience as a process. Garmezy (in Saleebey, 1996) explains that resilience can be understood as the skills, abilities, knowledge, and insight that accumulate over time as people struggle to surmount adversity and meet challenges, an ongoing and developing fund of energy and skill that can be used to cope with struggles. This shows how individual resilience is increasingly becoming viewed as a process rather than purely an internal phenomenon, even though, traditionally, this has not been the case.

Resilience is also seen as a state of mind by some, therefore, the focus when trying to build resilience, should be on how individuals perceive their world (Goldstein, 1997). This aspect of resilience theory is especially helpful when looking at developing interventions aimed at building and bolstering resilience, as how someone sees their circumstances or life difficulties can greatly affect their experiences and reactions (Van Breda, 2001).

2.3.2 Risk processes and protective processes

Risk processes and protective processes are essential elements in the conceptualization of resilience. Risk processes can be defined as events that increase the probability of negative outcomes, whilst protective processes are those that assist

those who have experienced risk to attain positive outcomes (Carbonell, et al., 2002; Masten 2001; Rutter 1992). Initially, research into resilience focussed on risk and protective processes at the individual level as in the studies of vulnerable children whose outcomes were expected to be negative due to their high risk environments, like those of Rutter (1966), Werner and Smith (1982) and Anthony (1987). Certain children were identified during the course of these studies who appeared to possess particular qualities that enabled them to overcome adversity. These early theorists saw resilience as something out of the ordinary that only some were able to achieve.

The focus of later research shifted towards a view that resilience was a normal part of human adaptation (Masten, 2001) but that it required the availability of resources to overcome the negative effects of risk (Ungar, 2001). This view caused a shift away from individual traits to a broader approach that took into consideration individual context and support systems, such as family and community. For example, Mandleco and Peery (2000) looked at internal and external processes. Internal processes included both biological and psychological factors, such as temperament and cognitive ability. External factors took into account both familial and organizational factors, such as schools and other social services.

Further research acknowledged that risk and protective processes do not appear to have the same impact on everyone, recognising the individuality of experience and the need to take into consideration factors such as the type of risk and the context in which it occurs, as well as individual traits and available resources (McConnell Gladstone, Boydell & McKeever, 2006; Ungar, 2004a). It was further recognised that caution needs to be exercised when labelling processes as risk or protective as they are dependent on various factors and cannot be generalised. For example, parental absence is generally regarded as a risk factor for children, however, in situations where the absent parent is abusive, this can result in positive outcomes for those involved (Filippa, 2011).

More recently, approaches to the study of risk and protective processes as underlying resilience have emphasised context and individual perceptions (Ungar, 2001). This has

resulted in studies that have taken into consideration cultural differences to broaden the spectrum of experiences and further refine concepts such as risk and protective processes. For example, Flores, Cicchetti and Rogosch (2005) who studied predictors of resilience in maltreated Latino school-age children, examining aspects such as personal resources and relationship features, found that maltreated children were found to have fewer areas of resilience. Tools to measure resilience, like the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM – 28), a screening tool designed to explore the resources (individual, relational, communal and cultural) available to youth aged 9 to 23 years old, that may bolster their resilience, was developed as part of the International Resilience Project (IRP), of the Resilience Research Centre, in collaboration with fourteen communities in eleven countries around the world (Resilience Research Centre, 2009) acknowledging the importance of context and individuality in the study of resilience.

Egeland et al. (1993) emphasise the nature of risk and protection as processes by proposing a view of resilience in terms of a transactional process set in an organizational framework. Based on their research, developmental outcomes are determined by an interactional process that encompasses genetic, biological, psychological and sociological factors in an environmentally supportive milieu. Accordingly, behaviour is directly or indirectly influenced by constitutional or environmental factors which can function as vulnerability, risk or protective variables. In this way, “the developmental process is characterized by a hierarchical integration of behavioural systems whereby earlier structures are incorporated into later structures in increasingly complex forms” (p.517). The individual is not viewed as passive but as an active participant in this hierarchical process. By integrating new experiences into their past history of interactions, the individual is able to interpret and organise environmental stimuli in an increasingly complex manner, shaped by past experiences. This interactional perspective helps us to understand the complex relationship between risk and protective processes leading to resilience or a lack thereof.

In children and adolescents, risk and protective processes can have a significant impact on development. Risks can be both a build up of negative and traumatic life events

(Tiet, et al.,1998) or single experiences perceived as negative by the individual, such as divorce (Cryder, Kilmer, Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2006), or even factors like low birth weight and temperament (Masten & Obradovic, 2006). Risks can increase the probability of failure to thrive (Howard, et al., 1999) and disrupt normal development (Masten, 2001). Some risks are considered more harmful than others. For example, Anthony (1987) and Masten (2001) cite factors such as those that affect brain development and cognition, parent-child relationships, emotional and behavioural regulation as being especially detrimental, in spite of individual perception and context.

Protective processes are those that promote positive adaptation and development and moderate the relationship between risk and negative outcomes; they help to build good self-esteem and help individuals navigate their way towards resources and support systems (Masten, 2001; Rutter, 1992). Like risks, they operate at various levels: individual, family and community (Mandleco & Peery 2000; Ungar, 2004b). Protective processes are the key to achieving resilience. However, like for adults, it is not always easy to define processes as being either risk or protective unless the individual and the context are taken into consideration first.

In studying resilience, in both adults and children alike, it is therefore essential to understand the principles of how risk processes and protective processes function in different contexts and levels.

2.3.3 Individual resilience processes in children and adolescents

Individual resilience is directly related to individual level processes that can be both risk and protective processes. These processes are often affected by the environment of the child in a reciprocal manner, thus the environment will affect the child and vice-versa (Mandleco & Peery, 2000). Masten and Coatsworth (1998) caution that this interactional relationship may cause certain processes to be attributed to the individual when, in fact, they may largely be due to familial or community processes. They point out, as an example, that competence is generally regarded as an individual process but it could also be due to a nurturing home environment.

At the individual level, there are both psychological and physiological processes that can act as risk or protective processes in children and adolescents. Based on a review of relevant research, Van Breda (2001) cites the following characteristics which appear to be present in resilient children. At an individual level, these children:

- Have an outgoing, charming, open, cooperative, amiable personality and from infancy on, are able to elicit positive attention from other people. Their behaviour is calm, open and kind;
- Do not suffer from colic as infants;
- Are active, cuddly and good-natured;
- Are of average or higher intelligence;
- Are more likely to be female;
- Are generally the oldest child in the family;
- Have high self-esteem;
- Have good coping skills and problem-solving abilities, including being able to deal successfully with emotionally challenging experiences and flexibility in their approach to their environment;
- See themselves as competent;
- Generally see experiences as constructive;
- Possess good interpersonal skills;
- Have an internal locus of control;
- Have an ability to control their impulses;
- Enjoy school;
- Have a strong sense of faith and the belief that life has meaning and that things will have a favourable outcome in spite of the odds;
- Are autonomous and independent;
- Have hobbies and interests;
- Are able to ask for help and support.

Some of these processes are worth examining in more detail as they are especially relevant with regard their link to resilience.

2.3.3.1 Temperament and personality

A child's temperament and personality are important characteristics to be taken into account in the study of resilience. Temperament is generally understood as referring to characteristic feelings and behaviours of a child that are innate rather than acquired through learning and appear early in development (Calkins, 2012).

Thomas and Chess (1977) identified three types of temperament in children (difficult; easy; and slow to warm up) based on nine temperament traits. These traits are: activity, regularity, initial reaction, adaptability, intensity, mood, distractibility, persistence and attention span, and sensitivity. They proposed that a child's temperament can influence his/her interactions and relationships with parents and peers and affect behaviour and school experience. These early interactional patterns set the tone and influence a child's long term functioning and well-being. Children with difficult temperaments are often considered vulnerable as they are more likely than those with easy temperaments to be treated harshly by parents/caregivers, have less positive ways of coping and tend to gravitate towards high risk environments (Hetherington, Bridges & Insabella, 1998; Wachs, 2006). Thus a difficult temperament can act as a risk process. On the other hand, an easy temperament can be viewed as a protective process because research shows that children with easy temperaments have generally more adaptive and positive outcomes (Olsson, Bond, Burns, Vella-Brodrick & Sawyer, 2003; Sanson & Smart, 2001; Vassallo, Smart, Sanson & Dussuyer, 2004).

Even though temperament is largely considered an individual process with a direct link to resilience, it should still be viewed within a context of the interaction between a child and his/her environment. Thomas and Chess (1977) studied the relationship between temperament and environment by comparing a sample of white, middle class families with a high educational status with Puerto Rican working class families. They found significant differences between the two groups. For example, middle class parents placed great emphasis on early development in the belief that problems in early childhood are symptomatic of later psychological problems and reported more

behavioural problems in their children, whilst Puerto Rican parents believed that children were likely to outgrow early childhood problems, thus reporting less behavioural problems. Parental perceptions of the two groups show how expectations of behaviour differ and could cause a negative child-environment fit. The researchers thus concluded that there needs to be a good fit between a child's temperament and his family environment in order to attain positive outcomes.

Thomas and Chess (1977) further proposed that the temperament dimensions mix of the members of a family can greatly affect family life and relationships. To illustrate this, they explain that a slow paced parent may struggle with a highly active child resulting in conflict. The parent may perceive this as a behavioural problem and act accordingly. In this way, a child's temperament may constitute a risk as a result of the environment. These findings reinforce the importance of individuality when exploring risk and protective processes and resilience.

Personality traits have also been found to act as risk or protective processes in children and adolescents, facilitating or hindering the path to resilience (Carbonell et al., 2002; Olsson et al., 2003). Personality can be broadly defined as the array of dynamic and organised characteristics that an individual possesses and which influence his/her emotions, cognitions, motivations and behaviours. These patterns of feelings, behaviours, thoughts and social interactions are long-term and affect a person's expectations, values, attitudes and how he/she sees himself/herself. Personality can be an indicator of how an individual deals with problems and stress (Krauskopf & Saunders, 1994; Winnie & Gittinger, 1973).

A number of studies have explored the relationship between personality and resilience by looking at indicators such as self-worth and coping, finding that personality can influence resilient outcomes in adolescents and is positively or negatively associated with certain personality traits. For example, adolescents with high self-worth were associated with the traits of agreeableness, extraversion and openness to new experiences; whilst those with low self-worth were associated with emotional instability

and neuroticism (Campbell-Sills, Cohan & Stein, 2006; Davey, Goettler Eaker & Henley Walters, 2003; Harter, 1986; Patterson & McCubbin, 1983).

Like with temperament, the link between personality and resilience should be viewed within the context of the individual's interactions with his/her environment because the personality traits associated with resilience, either positively or negatively, may have emerged as a result of such interaction. Mischel (1999, p.424) states that "what people do depends to a surprising degree on the particular situation and context". Consequently, it is one's experiences that may lead to the emergence of personality traits related to resilience. Therefore, it is necessary to determine if context can alter personality, before concluding that personality is the process that contributes to resilience in young people.

2.3.3.2 Coping

Central to the concept of resilience is the capacity of an individual to cope in times of difficulty. Coping can be defined as "the thing that people do to avoid being harmed by life stress" (Pearlin & Schooler, 1982, p.109), "constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). In other words, coping is how an individual manages the challenges of the environment.

Pearlin and Schooler (1982), through content analysis of 2300 interviews, identified three principal styles of coping. Firstly, what they defined as "responses that change the situation out of which strainful experience arises" (p. 115), a fairly rarely used style of coping where an individual must identify the stressful situation and then act to change it. This is not always possible as it is difficult to identify stressors, there is no guarantee that the action taken to rectify the situation may not cause further stress and that some situations cannot be changed. Secondly, "responses that control the meaning of the strainful experience after it occurs but before the emergence of stress" (p. 115), the most widely used type which involves selectively evaluating the stressful experience by

focussing on the less threatening aspects of it and viewing it in the context of the overall life situation. In this way, the perception of the experience is changed into a more manageable one. Lastly, they identified “responses that function more for the control of the stress itself after it has emerged” (p. 115). This way of coping involves stress management skills to deal with the stress arising from a situation or event.

Pearlin and Schooler’s (1982) model of coping, therefore, entails three main steps, namely confronting the problem, reframing it in a more manageable way and dealing with the resultant stress. This model was tested on a group of employees and researchers found that those who were taught to use the model to cope with stressful situations reported significantly lower stress levels, an increased ability to find support systems, less avoidance and decreased psychological problems (Kline & Snow, 1994). This shows how teaching positive coping skills can result in significantly increased resilience.

How individuals cope is affected by various factors. For example, personal characteristics, such as beliefs systems and personal resources, as well as the ability to draw on those resources can positively or negatively influence the way a person deals with stress; and environmental factors, such as an individual’s home, depending on whether it is supportive or constrictive (Lazarus, 1999). Culture can also play a significant role in coping. For example, societies where an extended family system exists can mediate an adolescent’s experience of parental absence by providing alternate and socially acceptable support systems (Filippa, 2011).

Studies have shown that coping styles are not fixed but they can change over time and that coping in children and adolescents is affected by the specific situation (Campbell, 1996). Lazarus (1999) supports this, proposing that coping is dependent on both the risk and the individual, making it impossible to categorize coping strategies as effective or ineffective, as they need to be viewed in context. The changeable nature of coping is also highlighted by Compas and Epping (1987) who suggests that a young person’s

choice of coping response is directly linked to available resources and thus will change accordingly.

In the Pilot Study carried out by the researcher (Filippa, 2011) on a small sample of Zimbabwean adolescents whose parents have out-migrated, the use of two coping mechanisms was identified, namely “seeking support” and “logical analysis”. “Seeking support”, can be defined as “the ability to identify and make use of an appropriate support system in order to deal with those aspects of a situation that present a challenge” (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen & Wadsworth, 2001, p.92). The adolescents who display the use of this coping mechanism turn mainly to their friends to provide them with the support they need. Those who do so, appear to experience their situation in much more positive terms than those who report not doing so. “Logical analysis” can be defined as “carefully and systematically analysing our problems in order to find explanations and to make plans to solve them, based on the realities of the situation” (Compas, et al., 2001, p.92). The adolescents interviewed who use this coping mechanism to deal with parental absence are realistic about their situation, have thought about their circumstances and found practical ways of dealing with their problems, for example, negative emotions and frustrations. These adolescents do not distort or block their reality but come up with creative solutions that help them to cope. The study concluded that the adolescents who make use of coping mechanisms were generally better adjusted and appeared to be better able to deal with the absence of their parents.

2.3.3.3 Intelligence

Another individual process that can act as both a risk and a protective factor in research into resilience is intelligence. Attempts to define intelligence are numerous and often controversial, however, an editorial statement made by fifty-two researchers proposes the following:

A very general mental capability that, among other things, involves the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex

ideas, learn quickly and learn from experience. It is not merely book learning, a narrow academic skill, or test-taking smarts. Rather, it reflects a broader and deeper capability for comprehending our surroundings —"catching on," "making sense" of things, or "figuring out" what to do. (Gottfredson, 1997, p.13)

Once defined, intelligence can be measured. Gottfredson (1997) asserts that the numerous intelligence tests available measure the concept well, as they are, in technical terms, the most accurate, reliable and valid tests used by psychologists. Various methods are employed to measure intelligence, including tests that measure the Intelligence Quotient (IQ), like the Stanford-Binet and Wechsler Intelligence Scales, and academic achievements tests, like the Wechsler Individual Achievement Tests (Binet, 1916; Luthar, 1991; Wechsler, 1944).

Generally, a high level of intelligence is associated with positive outcomes, whereas a low level is frequently considered as placing an individual at risk (Reis, Colbert & Hébert, 2005). This, however, is not always the case. Vaillant and Davis (2000) found that individuals with a low IQ, as compared with those with a high IQ before the age of twenty, had indeed poorer outcomes and were six times more likely to become unskilled labourers or work in low paying jobs but they also found mediating factors such as age, context and type of risk. For example, they reported that when the participants in their study reached adulthood, their IQ was no longer a reliable predictor of positive or negative outcomes and that there were no significant differences with regard to adjustment, physical health, social competence or depression. Consequently, they stated that a low IQ "is a terrible curse, but it is not a destiny" (p. 221).

Intelligence is more likely to impact individual outcomes in the early developmental stages when relationship skills are still immature or when there are other developmental issues. For example, girls with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) experience more externalising and internalising problems irrespective of their IQ (Mikami & Hinshaw, 2006). Furthermore, in adolescence, a high IQ appears to constitute a protective process only when certain types of risk are experienced. Tiet, et

al. (1998) found that IQ was only protective at high risk but had no impact at low risk. In certain cases, a high IQ, although correlated to higher school grades at low stress, at high stress had no impact on scholastic achievement (Luthar, 1991). Thus, the impact of intelligence must be viewed within a context of individuality and cannot be assumed to constitute a protective or risk process universally. Although cognitive abilities are helpful, viewed in isolation, they may not be sufficient to protect adolescents from risk.

2.3.3.4 Self-esteem

Self-esteem is a significant predictor of resilience in adolescents. As an individual's self-esteem increases, his or her self-confidence and self-worth also increase, resulting in higher levels of resilience (Karatas & Cakar, 2011). Self-esteem refers to "the need to evaluate oneself positively" (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2003, p. 340). Maslow (1970) placed self-esteem high in his hierarchy of needs, dividing it into two sub-categories, namely needs based on a person's achievements and needs related to the self-esteem of others. The first category refers to a sense of achievement, confidence, efficiency, capability, independence and personal strengths based on one's own judgement; whilst the other incorporates social standing, honour, dignity and a sense of appreciation obtained from others' recognition and appreciation of one's confidence. Maslow believed that satisfaction of the need for self-esteem results in confidence, competence and strength, whilst an unfulfilled need can cause feelings of inferiority, weakness and helplessness.

In adolescents, high self-esteem is often identified as a protective process. For example, Carbonell et al. (2002) found that in fifteen and eighteen year-olds, high self-esteem, together with a positive outlook on life, were key protective processes that resulted in resilience. Dumont and Provost (1999) found self-esteem to be an important protective process which resulted in lower stress levels and problem-focussed coping in adolescents who were found to be resilient.

Self-esteem is often measured by using tools such as the Harter Self-Perception Profile (Harter, 1986) which evaluates areas of functioning such as scholastic and athletic

competence, social integration and friendships, physical appearance, self-worth, and behavioural conduct; and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) which is a ten item scale that measures overall self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self.

The relationship between self-esteem and resilience is correlational rather than causative, as it is unclear whether high-self esteem results in positive outcomes and increased levels of resilience or vice-versa. For example, in the study by Dumont and Provost (1999) it is not conclusive whether high levels of self-esteem resulted in lower stress levels or whether lower stress levels cause higher self-esteem. Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger and Vohs (2003) found a modest correlation between self-esteem and school performance which did not denote that an increase in self-esteem necessarily leads to good academic performance. It is therefore difficult to ascertain if resilience is directly related to high levels of self-esteem or whether the processes that contribute to high self-esteem are also causal in the process of resilience.

Harter (1999) proposes that there are many ways to a high self-esteem dependent on the way an individual perceives success and achievement. Multiple processes at the individual, family, and community level affect a person's self-esteem and these processes need to be identified in order to understand the concept. As these processes are generally individual, once identified, they can be enhanced and honed in order to increase levels of self-esteem and contribute to improved resilience.

2.3.3.5 Conclusions on individual resilience

The approach to the study of individual resilience focuses on resilience as an internal process facilitated by personal traits and characteristics, in the context of a supportive environment. Early research concentrated on personal traits considered inborn, such as hardiness. Later research recognised the importance of the context and individual perception and responses to risk as contributory processes to resilience. Individual resilience should not, therefore, be viewed on its own but as only one part of a whole.

2.3.4 Family resilience processes in children and adolescents

Individual qualities and processes are not the only factors that can act as risks or protection in adolescents, as the home environment and the family contribute significantly with regard to resilience. Van Breda (2001) cites the following characteristics which research has shown to be found in resilient children and adolescents which highlight the importance of the family environment:

- Good early bonding with mothers or some other caregiver;
- A variety of alternative caregivers who play important roles as positive identification models;
- Having mothers with steady employment outside the home;
- An expectation of help with household chores and activities (required helpfulness);
- Clearly defined boundaries between members of the family;
- No experience of separations from primary caregiver during the first year of life;
- Strict parental supervision.

Risks and protective processes in the family environment can be numerous and diverse. Of particular relevance to this study are parenting, family support and family separation. In order to be fully understood, these processes have to be viewed from the perspective of the individual as, according to Goldstein (1997), resilience is greatly influenced by a person's state of mind. That means that the primary focus of resilience research should be on how individuals perceive their world and not purely on risk and protective processes *per se*, as it is this perspective that ultimately influences subjective experience and the response to a perceived difficulty.

2.3.4.1 Parenting

Parenting provides adolescents with the support and boundaries they need in order to safely explore the environment, form an identity and become successfully functioning adults. Parents also act as role models, thus, when they are not parenting effectively,

adolescents are at risk of negative outcomes, such as behavioural problems and low self-efficacy (Amato & Booth, 1997; Myers & Taylor, 1998; Reis et al., 2005).

Certain parental factors present more of a risk to adolescents than others. For example, children of parents with psychopathologies are likely to suffer more negative outcomes than other children, thus, early studies on resilience focussed on these children (Rutter, 1966). For instance, Rutter (1966) found that the relationship between a child and a parent with psychopathology is negatively affected, as these parents can have urges to harm the children, can be hostile towards them and even attack them and can hold morbid beliefs regarding their offspring.

Another significant factor is attachment, defined as an emotional relationship that entails an exchange of comfort, care and gratification (Bowlby, 1969). The importance of attachment is discussed in greater detail in Section 2.5.5 but adolescents who fail to develop healthy attachment in infancy, and their families, may encounter difficulties transitioning attachment relationships and balancing autonomy and attachment needs. As these adolescents feel uncertain that their attachment relationships may last in the face of problems or disagreements, they generally tend to avoid dealing with these issues, unlike securely attached adolescents who try to resolve problems and disagreements immediately. This avoidance may become a pattern that could cause difficulties later in life and even lead to depression and other disorders (Lee, 2010; Weiss, 1982).

Healthy attachment is also affected when parents experience psychopathology, as they are frequently emotionally unresponsive to their children, and this can lead to insecure attachment. In addition, these adolescents are also at increased risk of experiencing psychopathology themselves (Rutter, 1966). For example, Kim-Cohen, Caspi, Rutter, Tomás and Moffitt (2006) found that children of depressed parents were likely to experience depression and children whose parents were diagnosed with psychopathologies displayed antisocial tendencies and behaviours similar to those of their parents. Other factors also play a role in this relationship. For example, the home

environments of these children tend to be more chaotic and disruptive leading to poorer child functioning and adaptation and lower levels of resilience (Kim-Cohen et al., 2006; Rutter, 1966).

2.3.4.2 Family support

The family can provide an adolescent with both protective and risk processes. For example, the family can protect against internalising and externalising disorders (Tinsley Li, Nussbaum & Richards, 2007) and facilitate positive adjustment in children (Owens & Shaw, 2003) in contexts of poverty and low SES families. Carbonell et al. (2002) found that the best predictors of resilience in young adults could be linked to increased family cohesion and spending time with the family when an adolescent is fifteen years old. The study found that adaptability and cohesion, social support, a positive outlook and interpersonal relationships were significant protective processes at a family level for maximising positive outcomes in adolescents. This has important implications for children affected by parental out-migration as they may be deprived of such family time with a resultant decrease in resilience, thus turning a protective factor into a risk one.

A significant risk factor in the family context is maltreatment or abuse as it can adversely affect a child's development and prejudice emotional and physical health (Price-Robertson & Bromfield, 2004). Several factors are cited that constitute maltreatment, among which are disregard of emotional/psychological needs, such as isolation and neglect. In adolescents, maltreatment can also have dire repercussions on their academic, emotional, psychological and behavioural outcomes (Flores, et al., 2005). It is interesting to note that studies, such as those of Henry (1999) and Ungar (2004b) found that the family is still viewed as a protective process by maltreated children and adolescents who are at-risk. Ungar conducted research with adolescents with at least three risk factors, namely parental mental illness or addiction, physical/sexual abuse or living with a single parent and found that in spite of their negative familial environments, these adolescents still preferred to be connected with their parents.

Although family processes can be regarded as both protective and risk, findings suggest that this may be dependent on other processes, such as individual ones, which may affect the way a child perceives the support or risk found in the family context (Carbonell et al., 2002).

2.3.4.3 Conclusions on family resilience processes

The family can provide children and adolescents with a source of both protective and risk processes. Risk processes, such as maltreatment and separation, can increase the chances of negative outcomes and adversely affect development, whilst protective processes, such as familial support and cohesion, can contribute to increased resiliency and reduce both internalising and externalising disorders. The importance of the family cannot be underestimated, as even maladaptive families are often regarded as protective factors by children and adolescents, who prefer to maintain contact with parents even in cases of maltreatment and abuse. Familial processes, however, do not exist in a vacuum as they interact on many levels with individual processes which affect perception of unique circumstances.

2.4 The Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM – 28)

The Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM – 28) is the only measure that takes into account and looks at resilience cross-culturally. It was developed as a screening tool to investigate individual, communal, relational and cultural resources that are available to young people aged from twelve to twenty-three years old that may boost their resilience. Not only does the CYRM – 28 incorporate items that are both culture specific and culture generic but it also allows for the inclusion of country/culturally specific items which make it unique. It was developed as part of the International Resilience Project of the Resilience Research Centre, working with fourteen communities in eleven countries across the world (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2009).

2.4.1 Rationale for development

According to Ungar and Liebenberg (2011), before the CYRM – 28, the only measures available to study resilience tended to be either subscales of standardised measures,

like the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 2001), which evaluate the prevalence of certain cognitions and behaviours associated with positive development, or the development and employment of their own specific scales. These measures, however, generally focussed on assessing strengths that are present in all young people and did not take into consideration their individual contexts and any challenges they may be facing. Consequently, when developing the CYRM – 28, particular attention was given to including strengths that were most pertinent to populations under stress. The rationale behind this was that it was felt that both internal and external assets would predict successful child development in a different way, depending on their interactions with individual risks and the context of the interaction (Chen, De Souza, Chen & Wang, 2006).

Ungar and Liebenberg (2011) explain that developing a more culturally sensitive measure with face and item validity was one of the goals of the International Resilience Project. The team wanted a measure that would be relevant to all their partners worldwide and one that was able to show discrimination validity in more than one context. In order to achieve this, a mixed methods approach was chosen to address matters relating to internal validity and generalizability of the construct of resilience. When developing new measures, a mixed methods approach is especially valuable when trying to ensure construct validity with cross-cultural application (Onwuegbuzie, Bustamante & Nelson, 2010). Traditionally, this approach was largely restricted to the earliest part of instrument development and, consequently, was not considered adequate for the CYRM – 28. As such, the development of the CYRM – 28 included qualitative phases of research at every stage of development, with the aim of facilitating inclusion of questions relating to culturally pertinent assets, which had previously been marginalized in favour of cultural bias, favouring Minority World populations and constructs. In order to do this, a mixture of emic and etic approaches was used, ensuring that the measure was not distinct for each culture and that it did not ignore cultural relevance.

Ungar and Liebenberg (2011) propose that the use of mixed methods promoted a more iterative approach to each stage of the development of the CYRM – 28:

- *Defining the problem:* Even though resilience was defined as thriving in spite of adversity, other features of this concept and their contributions were considered and incorporated in light of cultural diversity.
- *Identifying the research design:* Traditional literature on the development of measures generally posits a rigid approach, however, the inclusion of qualitative methods and a more flexible approach to sample variability resulted in increased tolerance of ambiguity. For example, the chronological age of the youth varied, even though they were matched by the developmental tasks they had to carry out.
- *Identifying participants:* Local Advisory Committees were tasked with identifying youths who experienced adversity in their individual contexts but the developers endeavoured not to use notions of risk that were too context specific and not relevant in other cultures. This may have resulted in selection bias in favour of those who show patterns of resilience typical of young people in the Minority World.
- *Construction of the measure:* Questions were all phrased positively. This was done primarily to facilitate the translation and implementation of the measure in multi-cultural and multi-linguistic environments and to address concerns regarding how negative questions might confuse youths who are unfamiliar with formal testing procedures. This may, however, have decreased the reliability of the CYRM – 28.

- *Analysis and interpretation:* The meaning of resilience was built by employing mixed methods, which also helped to refine the selection of items. High validity across cultures was achieved by carrying out face-to-face meetings both within and between sites.

According to Sanchez, Spector and Cooper (2006), language and culture need to be taken into consideration when developing measurement scales, in order to avoid problems with sample comparisons due to the differences in constructs from one country to another. Thus, when developing the CYRM – 28, particular attention was given to making sure that local understanding of each topic was taken into consideration through a more qualitative process that took into account “the target population’s voice” (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011, p.130). In order to do this, Local Advisory Committees contributed to each phase of the research by commenting, reviewing and helping to interpret findings from both qualitative and quantitative data collection activities.

2.4.2 Development setting and team

Ungar and Liebenberg (2011) explain that the countries selected for the purpose of developing the CYRM – 28 were chosen in order to obtain the broadest range of youth populations. The criteria for community selection was based on cultural differences, differences in the type of risk the youth were exposed to (for example, poverty, violence, marginalization), and the availability of a local academic partner to supervise the research. Research sites included the following:

- Sheshatshiu, an Aboriginal Innu community in Northern Canada;
- Hong Kong, China;
- East Jerusalem and Gaza, Palestine;
- Tel Aviv, Israel;
- Medellín, Colombia;
- Moscow, Russia;
- Imphal, India;
- Tampa, Florida;

- Serekunda, the Gambia;
- Njoro, Tanzania;
- Cape Town, South Africa;
- Halifax, Canada; and
- Winnipeg, Canada (two sites, one with urban Aboriginal youth and the other with non-Aboriginal youth in residential care).

When assembling the international research team, attention was given to incorporate as broad a group of individuals as possible, including at least one academic from each of the research sites. Each site also had a local research team comprising, in addition to the local academic representative, a researcher hired from the community and a Local Advisory Committee made up of approximately five community members and professionals, such as parents, teachers, representatives of local programmes and Non-Governmental Organizations, who were deemed to have sound knowledge and understanding of the community's youth. The research from all the sites was coordinated by a principal investigator and project manager based at the Resilience Research Centre in Halifax, Canada.

2.4.3 Development process

Van de Vijver and Leung (1997) explain that preliminary meetings of the development team over represented Majority World participants in order to promote cultural decentering of the research. Initial consultations between all members of the international research team established both the mixed methods design of the study, and the definition of the term "resilience" for the purpose of the research. Thirty-two analogous domains, which were viewed as contributing to the positive development of youth at-risk, were identified as being common across all fourteen sites. These domains were then grouped into four clusters that reflected various aspects of resilience. These groups were individual, relational, community and cultural (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011).

Subsequently, each academic member of the team carried out meetings with two local focus groups in their respective communities, one comprising of adults and one of

youths, in order to generate questions to be included in the measure. The aim was to come up with questions based on Majority World perspectives. The focus of the groups was on factors that promoted growing up well in their community as well as risks faced by the local youth. The questions generated by the local groups were then sorted thematically using the original thirty-two domains and four clusters. These were then merged into one set and a final list was compiled based on the consensus of the team. Questions that were relevant to only one or two sites were included in a site-specific section of the measure. The final fifty-eight common questions were chosen for their applicability to all the contexts and for being representative of the cultural diversity of the target population.

Ungar and Liebenberg (2011) provide a detailed explanation of how some of the questions were refined and re-worded by exploring cross-site underlying meanings. Where necessary, the measure was translated into the local language and back-translated into English to ascertain accuracy (Brislin, 1970). The inclusion of the Local Advisory Committees in the translation process ensured that questions retained the intended meaning whilst still marking certain that subtleties and nuances of language were respected. Thus, the pilot version of the measure included questions that had not previously been the focus of research in the field of resilience, such as items relating to social equality (“Do you have opportunities to show others that you are becoming an adult?”), access to resources (“Do you eat enough most days?”), and cultural affiliation (“Are you proud of your ethnic background?”).

The second phase of development was aimed at establishing which items on the measure were most successful in differentiating between common and unique aspects of resilience. Using non-response rates, variance and factor analyses the measure was reduced from the original 58 to the final 28 items of the CYRM – 28 (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011).

The concurrent use of both quantitative and qualitative methods of research contributed to the development of a resilience measure with high content validity. For example,

Ungar and Liebenberg (2011) explain that the low invariance of the factor analysis of the pilot 58 question version of the measure is synergistic with the dynamic nature of the seven tensions singled out by the qualitative research carried out by the research team. Additionally, the cultural and contextual questions which were kept in the final 28 item version of the measure reflect the political and social themes identified in the course of the qualitative interviews, due to the inclusion of numerous Majority World participants. The interaction between the international team and the Local Advisory Committees, not only guaranteed the authenticity of the findings, but allowed for inclusion in the measure of aspects of resilience previously absent from Minority World publications, due to research bias. Chow (1993) and Smith (1999) suggest that employing purely quantitative methods of research, rather than a mixed methods approach, can result in the inclusion of constructs from dominant cultures into those that are marginalised, by ignoring contextual nuances which may not be relevant to Minority World communities but that have high value in indigenous communities.

2.4.4 Validation

Liebenberg, Ungar and Van de Vijver (2011) discuss aspects of the validation of the CYRM – 28, proposing that results suggest that the measure comprises three subscales which mirror the major categories of resilience, namely individual factors, care-giving and contextual components. In addition, each subscale has groupings of questions that can be used as indicators of the major categories of each construct. Individual factors include personal skills (5 items), peer support (2 items), and social skills (4 items). Care-giving factors include both physical (2 items) and psychological care-giving (5 items). Contextual factors refer to what facilitates a sense of belonging, namely spirituality (3 items), culture (5 items), and education (2 items).

A factor analysis was undertaken on the three-factor structure and clustered items of the CYRM – 28. All three latent variables (individual characteristics, relationship with primary caregivers and contextual components that facilitate sense of belonging) were allowed to covary and all factor loadings were positive. Furthermore, the three latent variables displayed very high and significant positive correlations, pointing to the fact

that, not only all components of resilience in this sample are positively correlated, but that they indicate the presence of resilience as an underlying construct of the model. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was also carried out to test the hypothesis that significant differences exist between different ethnic, gender and age groups of the youth. Significant multivariate main effects were found for gender and visible minority/majority status. The MANOVA thus indicates that ethnoracial status plays a significantly larger role in differences within groups of youths than gender or age (Liebenberg, et al., 2011).

Analyses of reliability show that the CYRM – 28 and its subscales are internally consistent and that no floor or ceiling effects were detected (Terwee et al, 2007). Liebenberg et al. (2011) state that findings demonstrate that the CYRM – 28 provides a reliable representation of common factors related to resilience across all fourteen of the research locations, as well as a an indication of which resources are associated with an outcome of resilience in different contexts. It is, therefore, a reliable measure of resilience across cultures.

2.4.5 Limitations

In terms of conventional practices for scale development, Ungar and Liebenberg (2011) argue that the development of the CYRM – 28 did not follow usual procedures of establishing validity through coefficients or group comparisons. This, however, was done deliberately, as the team felt that it was vital to move away from an Eurocentric approach to resilience measurement, in their efforts to develop a scale that would measure resilience in a global context. As such, the validity of the measure was not tested against existing measures, which are largely developed in the Minority World, but rather through engagement with community partners through focus groups and mixed methods data collection. Even though convergent validity is not yet known, content validity has been demonstrated. Discriminant validity also needs to be established by using samples of youth who are doing well and those who are not.

Another limitation, cited by Ungar and Liebenberg (2011) is the positive wording of all the CYRM questions, dictated primarily by the significant numbers of translations of the measure carried out to facilitate local use.

With regard local validation, according to Liebenberg et al. (2011), a further limitation of the study carried out in Canada to validate the CYRM – 28 is that it was conducted only on a sample of Canadian youth and, therefore, a need exists to carry out the study on other international samples of youth, in accordance with the cross cultural aims of the measure. Moreover, the participants of the study were not randomly selected, even though the sample size was considerable, which may have affected the discriminant validity of the measure. Cut off scores, convergent validity and predictive validity still need to be established (Terwee et al, 2007).

2.4.6 Suitability for use in Zimbabwe

The rationale for the selection of the CYRM – 28 for use on Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration is due primarily to two factors. Firstly, one of the countries which participated in the development of the measure is South Africa. Local Advisory Committees were set up in Cape Town where the measure was used on local populations. As South Africa is a neighbouring country, it shares significant similarities with Zimbabwe, both contextually and culturally. Thus, the use of the CYRM – 28 is particularly suitable for administration to the Zimbabwean adolescents who participated in the study.

Secondly, and in view of the above considerations, the use of the CYRM – 28 is particularly expedient in Zimbabwe as it means that the measure can be used without the need for local adaptation. Such adaptation, although highly desirable, is not feasible as part of the current study, due to the qualitative nature of the research, the size and composition of the population.

The possibility of translating the CYRM – 28 into the local language, Shona, was considered but it was felt that it was not essential, as the participants of the study were

fully proficient in the English language. If the measure is to be used on a larger population of Zimbabwean youths in the future, however, translation into the predominant local languages of Shona and Ndebele would be a priority, as this would ensure that the construct of resilience was fully understood in terms of the local context.

2.4.7 Conclusion

Liebenberg et al. (2011) posit that as the body of research and statistical evidence grow more evidence emerges that shows that the CYRM – 28 is highly suitable for use on a global scale for the measurement of resilience. Furthermore, the use of the subscales of the measure is also proving successful for the measurement of specific processes linked to resilience. The CYRM – 28 is also an effective way of identifying aspects of resilience that can be used in development of interventions aimed at optimising the well-being of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration into the Diaspora.

2.5 Effects of parental absence due to migration

Leaving children behind in the home country by migrating parents can be a voluntary or unavoidable choice, guided by diverse and subjective reasons. In some cases, the decision is based on the fact that the remittances of migrant parents provide the children with a better lifestyle in their home country as compared to their new countries. In other instances, parents have to weigh up the risks and dangers of travel when making such decision (Becker, 1991; Funkhouser, 1995; Stark, 1995), especially those who have to resort to illegal routes. Zanamwe and Devillard (2010) report that those who use these routes are often subjected to many forms of abuse, including extortion, abandonment, theft, physical violence, rape and sexual abuse.

Parental absence due to migration is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, remittances from external earnings augment the family's spending power, resulting in increased educational outlay, a decrease in child labour and improved living conditions (Kandel & Kao, 2001; Lachaud, 1999; Lu & Treiman, 2006); on the other hand, the children left behind may have to deal with age-inappropriate responsibilities, such as fulfilling roles previously held by the migrant parent, feelings of anxiety, loneliness and

other psychological problems which may result in compromised academic achievement and a spectrum of other behavioural and developmental issues (Filippa, Cronjé & Ferns, 2013).

Regardless of the reasons behind the choice to leave children in the home country, the effects of parental absence are far reaching and impact on diverse aspects of the lives of those affected by the experience.

2.5.1 Economic and socio-economic effects of parental absence

Due to its socio-economic impact on both the host countries and the countries of origin of those involved, migration has been extensively researched. A significant example is the Chinese emigrant community who, between 1985 and 2000 accounted for 70 per cent of China's foreign direct investment, boosting the country's rapid economic growth for that period, by working outside the country and remitting portions of their income back home (Sward, 2009). In 2006, migrant workers globally remitted some US\$300 billion to their respective households in countries of origin from their host countries (IFAD, 2007). In spite of the fact that this offers enormous developmental possibilities for impoverished countries, the economic considerations do not necessarily outweigh the cost to the family as the basic structure in society. Regardless, Silver (2006) observed that anticipated financial gains obtained from migration often outweigh psychological and social considerations when families decide whether their members should migrate. Lane's (2000) findings support this, as studies show that individuals from countries where migration is widespread tend to pursue economic gain at the expense of family solidarity and intimacy.

Even though international migration is generally regarded negatively, as it represents the loss of skilled workers by third-world countries, a growing body of evidence points to the fact that it also has positive effects on the social and economic development of the affected third-world countries. For instance, the World Bank (2003) reports that migrants' remittances have become an increasing source of external funding for developing countries. In a paper presented by the Economic Commission for Africa

(2006) at the United Nations Secretariat in Turin, Italy, in 2006, the economic benefits of the Diaspora's remittances to the countries of origin were outlined, including its impact on children's education. In a study carried out on Zimbabwean families, Lachaud (1999) found that families where one (or more) member works outside the country tend to have higher levels of educational attainment as compared to households without migrants. This is due to the fact that foreign currency earnings from Diaspora populations remitted back to the country of origin make a significant difference to a family's income, resulting in the ability of households to pay for food, other necessities and, especially, for schooling and education.

In a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Population Association of America and the World Congress of Sociology, in 2006, Lu and Treiman (2006) reported that receipt of remittances significantly increases the chances that children attend school in three ways: through increased household educational spending, diminished incidence of child labour, and easing of the negative effects of parental absence due to out-migration. They also showed that remittances help reduce within-household gender inequalities and between-household socio-economic status (SES) inequalities as they lead to an increase in the chances of school enrolment for females, rural children, children from poor households, and children whose parents are absent.

Conversely, a joint UNICEF/UNDP (2007) background paper states that school performance of girls of migrant Mexican parents is compromised by their obligations to carry out household duties and having to care for younger siblings. Empirical research on the links of children's schooling to remittances from migrant parents in Latin America and Asia has shown similar results (McKenzie, 2006; Yang, 2004). Kandel and Kao (2001) examined how temporary U.S. labour migration by family members affects the educational performance of children growing up in Mexican migrant communities. Their findings show that parental absence due to migration has a two-fold effect on children. Firstly, it brings earnings into the household, which allows parents to provide more education for their children, and reduces the incidence of children's labour. These higher incomes are also associated with many factors that improve the general well-

being of children, as reflected by various indicators, including higher school grades. Secondly, it was noted that labour migration also impacts negatively on children by increasing family stress and behavioural problems in adolescents.

2.5.2 Psychological/psychosocial effects of parental absence

In addition to economic factors, studies on the effect of parental absence due to migration have investigated several other areas of concern, such as educational achievement, psychological and behavioural anomalies, socio-cultural and linguistic challenges and difficulties experienced by children reuniting with the parents after separation. The affective consequences on the family unit and its culture have also been considered. Many studies have recognised that migration affects more than just the individual but has a significant effect also on the families who suffer strain, have to reorganise and are disrupted by the experience (eg. studies by Willis & Yeoh, 2000; Yeoh, Huang & Lam, 2005). However, these studies have not provided much detail regarding how the lives of the children who are left in their home country by migrant parents have been affected and restructured accordingly.

The negative effects on children of parental absence due to migration have been extensively highlighted. In Zimbabwe, the plight of the children who are left behind in the care of others has also been a target of media attention, particularly in the case of those who, due to unsuitable caring arrangements and unable to join their parents, fall prey to child abuse of every description (Shaw, 2008). James Elder of UNICEF (2007), speaking on the Zimbabwean situation, said that when parents leave their children behind, particularly in difficult times where there is a need to cushion families against poverty, it increases the offspring's vulnerability.

Pottinger (2005) studied migratory separation, when parents migrate and leave their children behind, using a sample of nine to ten year-olds living in inner-city communities in Kingston and St Andrew, Jamaica. Data analyses using descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations show that parents' absence is directly related to poor school performance and psychological problems in children. In Zimbabwe, Betty Makoni

(2007) of the Girl Child Network, points out that the absence of parents has negative psychological effects on children, discernible in a loss of concentration at school, especially evident in older children who have the additional responsibility of heading the family.

In the United States, Engel, Gallagher and Lyle (2006) investigated the effects of parental absence due to military deployment on children's academic achievement, building on work by Pisano (1992), Angrist and Johnson (2000), and Lyle (2006), who looked at how deployments affect military households. Driven by the demands of the Global War on Terror, in conjunction with ongoing security commitments around the world, the United States military, in the last five years, has deployed large numbers of troops overseas. More than 25 per cent of military households have school-age children, and between 2002 and 2006, some 132 154 children of American soldiers have experienced parental absence due to deployment. These absences are becoming increasingly frequent and longer in duration. The authors found that parental absences, especially those due to military deployments to hostile theatres, can induce feelings of anxiety, loneliness, and helplessness in children. Furthermore, their study, which was carried out using standardized test scores and personal characteristics of a sample of approximately 56 000 observations for school-age children, enrolled in Department of Defence schools between 2002 and 2005, found that these children suffer a small but persistent academic set-back when their parents deploy and that the cumulative long-term effects of repeated deployments could become substantial by the time a child reaches the 11th grade.

Parental absence as a result of divorce has also been widely investigated. Although essentially different from separation due to migration, it may still be surmised that parental absence due to out-migration may lead to similar outcomes as those experienced by children affected by divorce. Kunz and Kunz (1995) reported that data from a study of 169 college men and women in the United States showed a significant difference in grade point average between students from divorced and intact homes. He also carried out a review of literature spanning sixty years of 347 experimental

studies confirming that divorce has negative consequences for children's academic achievement and can affect scholastic progress and test results. Divorce also affects other areas of development. For instance, a survey carried out on pooled data from 80 000 adults indicates that those who experienced parental divorce, among other problems, tend to have more behavioural problems, lower psychological well-being, less education, lower job status and standard of living, as well as poorer physical health (Amato, 1994).

Even though some studies, like Dreby (2011), propose that children who remain in the home country and do not join their migrant parent(s) may be better off than those who do not, due to better environments and caring systems in the home countries, most studies report conflicting results. For example, a study by Schmalzbauer (2004), which examined the feelings of adolescents affected by parental out-migration, reported that those who do not migrate with their parent(s) are spared the stress of having to adapt to new cultures but that they experience increased levels of stress, depression and conflicting feelings resulting from separation. These findings are echoed in similar studies carried out in other parts of the world (UNICEF, 2007; UNICEF/UNDP, 2007).

2.5.3 Systemic and relational perspectives

The experiences of children affected by parental out-migration can be viewed in terms of systemic and relational factors. For instance, Dunn, Cheng, O'Connor and Bridges (2004), who carried out a study on children's relationships with non-resident fathers, draw attention to the importance of the association between children's relationships with non-resident fathers and their adjustment. Their findings highlight that, firstly, more frequent and regular contact between children and their fathers is associated with fewer adjustment problems in children, even in the case of communication that is not face-to-face. Secondly, children's relationships with their non-resident fathers are closely associated with children's relations with their mothers. That is, the more affectionate, supportive and companionable the father-child relationship is perceived by the child, the more positive is the relationship with the mother, whilst conflictual relationships with the non-resident father appear significantly correlated with conflictual relationships with

other family members. Thirdly, the researchers consider developmental issues, specifically the link between children's relationships with non-resident fathers and adjustment. They hypothesise that difficult or unaffectionate relationships between children and non-resident fathers would be associated with high levels of adjustment problems. As well as confirming this hypothesis, regression analysis also highlights the significance of the quantity and quality of interactions, finding that positive relationships between children and non-resident fathers are associated over time with more frequent and regular contact, in turn predictors of better adjustment. Although this study was not carried out in the context of parental migration, it still shows the importance of family dynamics and contact when families are divided (Filippa et al., 2013).

A growing body of evidence recognises that migration affects more than just the individual but has a significant effect also on the families who suffer strain, have to reorganise and are disrupted by the experience (Willis & Yeoh, 2000; Yeoh, et al., 2005). Literature on family separation evidences both the commonality and the diversity of individual experiences and various theoretical and conceptual frameworks have been developed globally to study the effects of migration on the well-being of migrants' family members who remain in the country of origin. One example of this is the New Economics of Migration Model (NEM) which proposes explanations for the increase in out-migration by connecting the economics of migration to the intergenerational stress within the family, caused by interpersonal income comparisons within reference groups. These comparisons can give rise to feelings of deprivation resulting in a decision to migrate, in order to attain a state of relative satisfaction. NEM describes how families without migrant relatives witness the economic gains and benefits which families who do have migrants receive from their remittances, which often acts as a catalyst for out-migration in spite of the consequences on the family unit as a whole (Stark & Bloom, 1985).

Suarez-Orozco, Todorva and Louie (2002) also found that separation creates challenges to family relations and child development, that a relationship between separation and depressive symptoms exists and that, although painful, separation is

significantly affected by circumstances and context. Farrell and Barnes (1993) tested various hypotheses regarding the effects of cohesion and adaptability on family members' psychosocial functioning and perceptions of family relationships. Using depression, anxiety, identity diffusion, individuation, self-esteem, deviance, school misconduct and grades, marital agreement and parent-child communication as variables, they concluded that family cohesion has a direct linear relationship to positive outcomes and better functioning of all family members. That is, a family which is more cohesive and characterised by good parent-children communication and marital consensus will result in better psychological functioning, quality of relationships and behaviour of its members, including adolescent children. Some studies (Aguilera-Guzman, Garcia & Garcia, 2004; Collins, 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1992; Schmalzbauer, 2004) found that familial separation can profoundly influence the roles, support structures and responsibilities of members of transnational families, resulting in psychological and emotional stress. For example, adolescents find it stressful to assume roles previously provided by migrant parents, as these responsibilities are normally in addition to previous ones, like "*other-mother*" roles for girls who have become nurturing figures to younger siblings.

2.5.4 Migration and HIV

Studies by Brummer (2002), Leclerc-Madlala (2005) and Thomas, Haour-Knipe and Aggleton (2010) found that separation from a spouse can lead to sexual extra-marital relations that expose the marital pair to health risks, such as HIV/AIDS, and that multiple and concurrent partners tend to be culturally legitimised in southern Africa. Combined with the intensification of population mobility of the past two decades, this has placed both the migrant spouse and the community of origin's health and well-being at risk, compounding stress and concomitant negative feelings of exposed adolescents.

Pembrey (2009) reported that the life expectancy of a woman in Zimbabwe is estimated at 34 years. This means that if a child's father infects the mother, the family could lose both parents, including the principal income earner, fairly quickly. In the Pilot Study, one girl reported experiencing conflicting feelings regarding her mother's absence

because she worries about her parents' marital relationship and would like them to be together, in spite of the need for her mother to earn an income and support the family. She stated her concerns about her father's faithfulness and her knowledge of his positive HIV status and how this would impact on the spousal relationship and the family as a whole (Filippa, 2011).

In Zimbabwe, according to AVERT (2012), an international HIV and AIDS charity based in the United Kingdom, safe sex and HIV prevention campaigns have been spearheaded by non-governmental, religious and academic organizations. Shortages of funding and reported breakdowns of drug delivery have, however, hampered the work of these organizations. Since 2010 and following the dollarization of the economy, it appears that the situation has improved somewhat. Drug delivery seems to have picked up and the Zimbabwe National AIDS Strategic Plan 2006-2010 proposes the promotion of consistent male and female condom use, including in long-term relationships, and the support of sexually active young people to avoid multiple partners and provide access to condoms. This plan, however, does not view long-term relationships as being a protective factor (Fraser, et al., 2010).

2.5.5 Attachment

As discussed in 2.3.4.1, John Bowlby (1969, 1973) believed that an infant's early experiences with the mother (or primary caregiver) and the resultant bonding, which he termed "*attachment*", contribute to later social competence and how a person interacts with others in later life. Through these early interactions, children form internal working models of the self and relationships which are carried forward into new experiences and relationships. These models affect children's subsequent behaviour and their expectations regarding the sensitivity and responsiveness of others (Waters & Deane, 1985) and become more sophisticated and stable with age – they cannot be modified easily (Bowlby, 1969; DeWolff & Ijzendoorn, 1997). Understanding these processes, and any subsequent changes thereto, is important as they provide continuity between early attachment and later functioning. Bonding experiences of children affected by parental out-migration may be shaped by the loss of a primary attachment figure due to

migration and it is therefore important to consider their experiences in view of Bowlby's and other attachment theories.

Attachment is an emotional relationship that entails an exchange of comfort, care and gratification (Bowlby, 1969). It began with Freud's theory about love but it is British psychoanalyst John Bowlby (1907 - 1990), who is generally recognised as the father of attachment theory, as he devoted extensive research to this concept, describing it as a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings" (1969, p.194).

According to Feeney and Collins (2010), attachment bonds have four defining features:

1. *proximity maintenance* — the attached individual wishes to be in close proximity to the attachment figure;
2. *separation distress* — the attached individual experiences an increase in anxiety during unwanted or prolonged separation from the attachment figure;
3. *safe haven* — the attachment figure serves as a source of comfort and security such that the attached individual experiences diminished anxiety when in the company of the attachment figure; and
4. *secure base* — the attachment figure serves as a base of security from which the attached individual engages in explorations of the social and physical world.

Bowlby agreed with the psychoanalytic stance that early experiences influence development and behaviour in later life and felt that attachment styles established in childhood affect those in later life. Together with his colleague, Mary Ainsworth, he formulated a theory of attachment which draws on concepts from ethology, cybernetics, information processing and developmental psychology. This theory emphasises the importance of child-mother attachment and the attachment figure as a secure base from which an infant can explore, as well as the consequences of disruptions to such relationships caused by separation, deprivation and bereavement (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). In conjunction with Robertson (Robertson & Bowlby, 1952) three phases of separation response were identified: protest, despair and denial or detachment (related to the defence mechanism of repression). During the first protest stage, the infant cries

and will not be consoled by others. In the second despair stage, the infant is passive and appears sad. Finally, during the third detachment/denial stage, the infant actively avoids and ignores the parent if the parent returns (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

In a laboratory procedure known as the “Strange Situation”, Ainsworth separated attachment into three types: *secure*, *avoidant* and *resistant*. A baby with secure attachment turns to the mother for comfort or protection and receives loving care without fail from her. Babies with avoidant attachment withdraw from or ignore the mother, who generally rejects them. Resistant (or ambivalent) attachment is characterised by clingy behaviour on the part of the child and inconsistent care from the mother (Fraley & Spieker, 2003). The “Strange Situation” classification has proven consistent over time and is now widely used in psychology, as it postulates that attachment behaviours formed in infancy influence the way people deal with relationships in later life. In Figure 2.3, the difference between secure attachment and other more negative kinds of attachments is illustrated.

Although this theory focuses on infancy and early childhood attachment, in his trilogy, *Attachment and loss* (1969; 1973; 1980), Bowlby points out that in mammals and birds, behavioural systems tend to become organised during specific sensitive developmental periods. Subsequently, he presents an epigenetic model of personality development which could be seen to imply that attachment affects personality development and behaviour beyond infancy and early childhood. In addition, in later work, he states that individuals who grow up to become fairly stable and self-reliant generally have supportive parents, who also know when to allow and encourage autonomy. Bowlby also feels that “the inheritance of mental health and of ill health through family micro-culture is no less important, and may well be far more important, than is genetic inheritance” (1973, p.323). According to Pickover (2002), insecure attachment styles have been linked with psychiatric disorders, especially after the loss of an attachment figure, and these children may additionally develop the inability to form secure attachments and become hostile and rejecting of their environment.

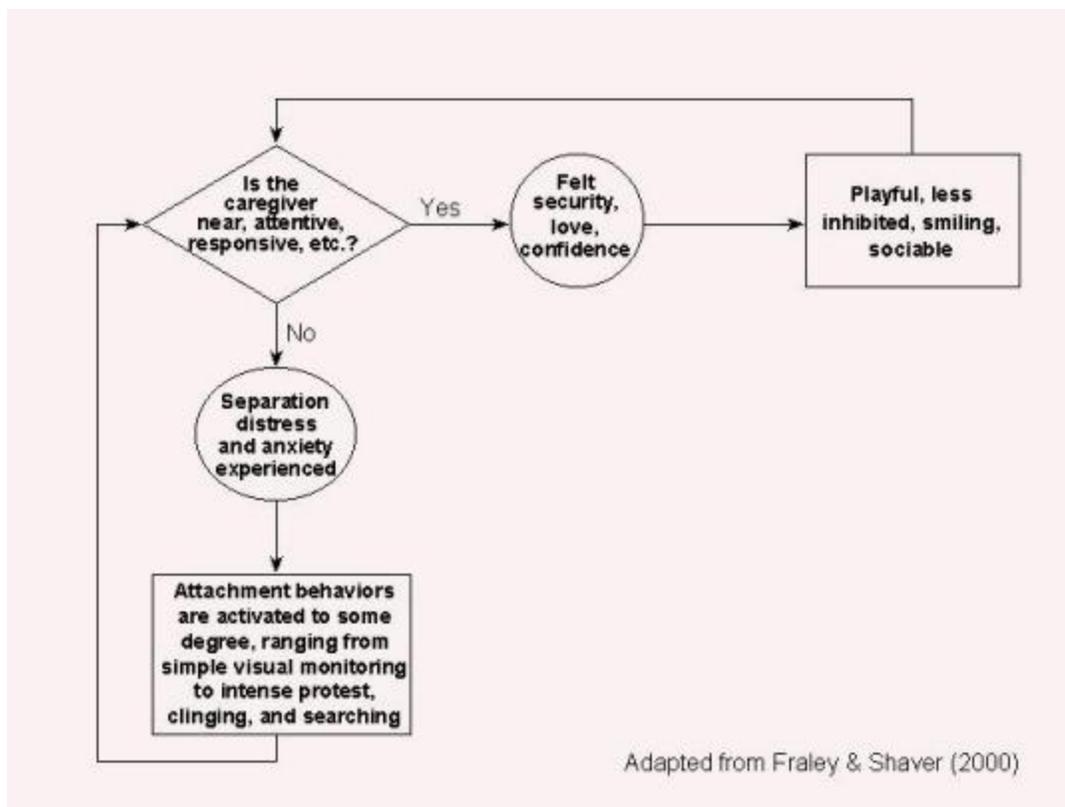


Figure 2.3. Attachment patterns between infant and adult (adapted from Fraley & Shaver, 2000).

2.5.5.1 Attachment in adolescence

In adolescence, attachment relationships with parental figures change, and these bonds can even be perceived by adolescents “more like ties that restrain than like ties that anchor and secure” (Allen & Land, 1999, p. 319). As a key task of adolescence is to develop autonomy and to learn to rely less on parental support, a new way of dealing with attachment is formed. This does not mean that the relationship becomes less important because, as youngsters strive for autonomy, they will become less dependent on their parents. Instead, adolescents will still need to turn to their parents for support and security if they feel overwhelmed, behaviour consistent with infants’ exploratory systems. In fact, adolescents who display autonomy-seeking behaviours generally have a positive and secure relationship with their parents and know that they can rely on them at all times (Weiss, 1982; 1991).

An important process in adolescence is the transfer of reliance from parents to peers, who become the main attachment figures at this developmental stage, in an attempt to attain independence and autonomy. Generally, adolescents find their contemporaries easy to rely on, as they have much in common with each other. Although this process of transference can be difficult at first, it serves the purpose of encouraging the formation of adult attachment styles and long-term relationships with peers, some even of a romantic nature (Weiss, 1982). Adolescents who have insecure attachment styles and their families may encounter difficulties transitioning attachment relationships and balancing autonomy and attachment needs. As these adolescents feel uncertain that their attachment relationships may last in the face of problems or disagreements, they generally tend to avoid dealing with these issues, unlike securely attached adolescents who try to resolve problems and disagreements immediately. This avoidance may become a pattern that could cause difficulties later in life and even lead to depression and other disorders. In her paper, Lee (2010) points out that adolescent depression has also been linked to maternal attachment insecurity and that, in the face of a changing relationship and emotional instability, parents should be aware of the fact that they are needed by their offspring more now than ever before.

2.5.5.2 Attachment in adulthood

Attachment theory does more than help us to understand emotional reactions in infants as it also provides a framework for understanding love, grief and loneliness in adults because attachment styles in adults are believed to evolve directly from the internal working models of the self (as worthy or unworthy of love) and of others (as responsive or unresponsive) that were developed during infancy and childhood. It is thought that these internal working models develop mainly from interactions with important attachment figures and, once established, are believed to shape emotion regulation and social interaction patterns in childhood and adulthood (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1973).

The study of attachment processes in adult relationships only began in the late eighties with the work of Hazan and Shaver (1987) who identified four prototypic adult styles of

attachment analogous to those found by Ainsworth and Bowlby in infants, derived from two underlying dimensions, referred to as *anxiety* and *avoidance*. These underlying dimensions and attachment styles are depicted in Figure 2.4. The anxiety dimension refers to how much a person worries about being unloved or rejected, whilst the avoidance dimension refers to the extent to which a person avoids interdependence and intimacy. The first style is known as *secure* and applies to adults who are low in both avoidance and intimacy and are, therefore, comfortable in intimate relationships, capable of turning to others for support and confident knowing that they are loved and valued. The second style is known as *preoccupied* (anxious-ambivalent) and applies to those high in anxiety and low in avoidance, who have an excessive desire for closeness and high dependence needs and who are also fearful of rejection. The third style is known as *dismissing avoidant* and characterises those who are low in attachment and high in avoidance, who perceive close relationships as unimportant whilst valuing independence and self-reliance. Finally, the fourth style, known as *fearful avoidant* typifies those who are high in both anxiety and avoidance and thus desire intimate relationships and approval of others yet avoid close relationships as they fear rejection. Researchers in the field of adult attachment have argued that these four styles of attachment in adulthood can be understood in terms of rules that direct responses to emotionally distressing situations (Fraley & Shaver, 2000) that evolved partly in the context of parental responsiveness to distress signals (Kobak & Sceery, 1988). A number of empirical measures using self-reports and interviews based on these styles of attachment have been developed, such as Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) "Attachment Styles Among Young Adults: A Test of a Four-Category Model", used to study adult intimate relationships.

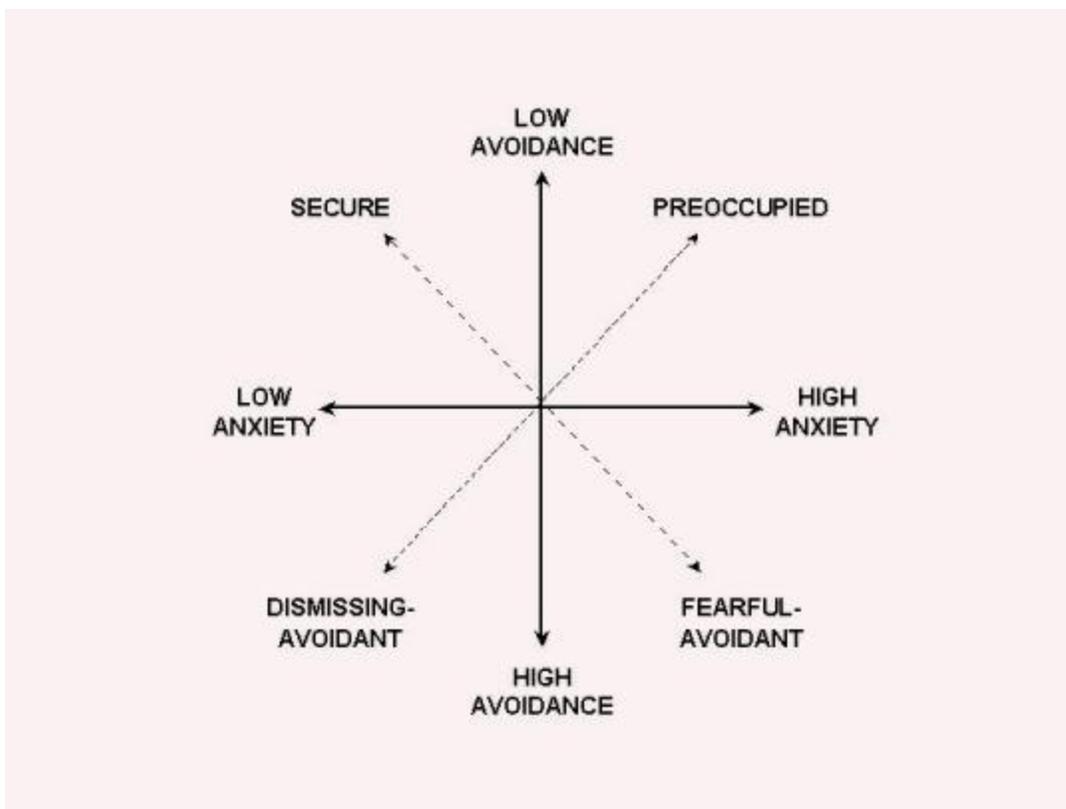


Figure 2.4. Dimensions underlying adult attachment styles (adapted from Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Although studies have shown evidence of stability of attachment styles across adulthood, a number of studies have reflected instability attributed to change in working models over time, shaped by changing inter-personal circumstances (Davila, Karney & Bradbury, 1999; Fuller & Fincham, 1995). This could have serious repercussions in the attachment styles of adolescents affected by parental out-migration and the Diaspora because, for example, a previously securely attached infant who has shown secure attachment during childhood could develop an insecure attachment style in adolescence triggered by the departure or absence of a parent.

Research has also investigated how secure and insecure adults differ in inter-personal behaviour in a variety of contexts. These studies have found that secure adults are generally more effective support-providers and support-seekers than insecure ones (Carnelley, Pietromonaco & Jaffe, 1996; Collins & Feeney, 2000); secure adults use

more constructive ways of dealing with conflicts than insecure ones (Pistole, 1989); secure adults tend to utilise more effective communication styles (Feeney, Noller & Callan, 1994); and secure individuals respond more adaptively to separation than insecure ones (Fraley & Shaver, 1998). Attachment style differences in adult sexual behaviours have also been studied. For example, Brennan and Shaver (1995) found that avoidant adults are more likely than secure ones to engage in “one-night stands” and Feeney, Noller and Patty (1993) reported that they have more accepting attitudes towards casual sex. In comparison to secure and avoidant individuals, anxious/ambivalent ones (especially women) tend to have intercourse at a younger age and to have a greater number of life-time sexual partners (Bogaert & Sadava, 2002) as well as being more likely to experience unwanted pregnancy (Cooper, Shaver & Collins, 1998). Although the participants of this study are still adolescents, one may expect that the attachment style they develop during the period of separation may result in the positive or negative behaviours highlighted above.

2.5.5.3 Attachment in extended families

The structure of families varies significantly according to cultures and societies and has become progressively more diverse and complex, thus, caution should be exercised when applying attachment theories to extended families that do not adhere to Euro-centric Western models, as these models place great emphasis on mother-child attachment. However, as Suarez-Orozco et al. (2002) noted, in many cultures, relationships with extended family members are also significant and, therefore, the loss of the primary attachment figure may be experienced as less traumatic. Because of this, the importance of attachment figures should be seen to extend beyond the mother to other primary caregivers.

In Zimbabwe, the predominant family structure is patriarchal with great emphasis placed on the role of the extended family. Thus, migrant parents generally entrust the care of their children to grandparents or other relatives. Although this can be positive in some cases, in other instances a number of problems can be expected to arise in these caring arrangements, especially when the adolescent becomes part of an existing family group

and feels marginalized, or when inter-generational problems arise with grandparents who live by, what the children consider, old-fashioned and obsolete values.

2.5.5.4 Conclusions on attachment

In conclusion, although Weiss (1982; 1991) believes that bonds of attachment are not found in all relationships, only in those of emotional significance which are crucial to a person's sense of security and emotional stability, he does not negate the importance of attachment figures for optimal development. As presented in the discussion on attachment, research in this field appears to point to the fact that, although not essential, the constant and stable presence of parent and/or primary caregiver figures enhances the chances of a child attaining desirable qualities, such as ego strength, good interpersonal skills and self-definition. For example, Blatt and colleagues proposed that the processes of interpersonal relatedness and self-definition, which operate synergistically, are enhanced by the presence of attachment figures able to provide closeness, nurturing, stability, protection. Disruptions to these relationships can prejudice the development of these qualities and may even result in psychopathologies (Blatt, 1974, 1995, 1998; Blatt & Blass, 1996; Blatt & Shichman, 1983; Blatt & Zuroff, 1992).

2.6 Conclusion

Studying resilience in Zimbabwean adolescents affected by out-migration offers an unparalleled opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge from a perspective of strength rather than one of deficits or weaknesses. Parental absence, in spite of the advantages it offers in terms of monetary gains, brings with it considerable affective and social disadvantages to those who are affected. Attachment, systemic and relational theories show how disruptions to the family unit, brought about by the absence of one or both parents, can have long term and pervasive consequences on the children left behind in their home countries.

The CYRM – 28 is an especially useful measuring tool, given the context of the study, as it has been used in countries with similar cultural mores to Zimbabwe. Its culturally

sensitive nature makes it ideal for the Zimbabwean setting. As little research has been carried out so far on these children, the study aims at enriching the body of knowledge in this field using a strength-based approach and a positive lens.

Chapter 3

Research design and methodology

3.1 Introduction

Producing knowledge through research in the social sciences can be likened to different reporters writing an account of the same event. Each will make factual statements, knowledge claims and moral judgements to refer to an empirical reality and with their writing they will be creating conditions through which reality will be known by their readers. The realities depicted in each individual account may be diametrically opposite to one another or may highlight separate aspects of the social world being described, thus creating diverse pictures (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). Just like accounts of the same event can differ according to the way in which a writer approaches the topic, so can social science research produce multiple accounts depending on the way a researcher approaches a field of study.

There are two widely recognised approaches to research, namely the qualitative approach and the quantitative approach (Fouché & Delport, 2005). The qualitative approach is holistic and its principal aim is to understand social life and the meanings that people attach to it. It is focussed on people as creators of their own reality and researchers who subscribe to this paradigm try to see reality from the eyes of those who are living it, as they generally believe that there is no single reality (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Conversely, the quantitative approach focuses on specific questions or hypotheses and aims to describe reality objectively by measuring specific variables which are quantified through empirical methods (Fouché & Delport, 2005). The social world is seen as relatively stable and researchers who adhere to this approach endeavour to predict and control human behaviour (Creswell, 1994).

To gain insight and understanding into the lives and experiences of children affected by parental migration requires an approach that allows the researcher to study the issue in depth, in an attempt to generate as much rich information as possible. It also requires an approach that is naturalistic, holistic and inductive, in order to increase knowledge of

the unique and individual realities of the research participants. Loxton (2004) feels that listening to children's own views has long been neglected or ignored and that children are relegated to a silent minority being spoken for by others, often well-meaning adults, such as parents or teachers. In order to access their world, it is therefore vital to really hear what these children say in their own words and thus, the most suitable paradigm for this study is a qualitative approach.

3.2 Research question, aims and objectives

The purpose of a study can be largely determined by two factors, namely the research question and its aims and objectives.

3.2.1 The research question

The starting point of the study was the researcher's involvement in counselling adolescents whose parents have joined the Zimbabwean Diaspora leaving them behind and a Pilot Study carried out in 2011. This prompted her to begin investigating the matter in an effort to be more sensitive to these children's needs, followed by the realisation that little information was available regarding their situation. The researcher felt strongly that it was essential to acquire a better understanding of these children's world and their perception of it as, according to Loxton (2004), it is of fundamental importance to incorporate the child's point of view into caring systems, social policies and professional practice before any contribution of significance can be made, targeted at developing and optimising human potential.

In light of the above, the direction of the present research is guided by two questions:

- How do Zimbabwean adolescents left in the home country, whose parents have migrated, cope with and experience parental absence?
- Does resilience play a role in how these adolescents' cope and experience parental absence?

Even though the qualitative methodology chosen for the study requires a flexible research design, the researcher felt that it was important to enter the field with a question in mind to guide the study. The research questions were, however, formulated

in a deliberately broad manner so as to allow for as large a scope as possible and an inductive approach.

According to Ratele (2006), a research question refers to the question that the study wants answered, related to the phenomenon being investigated. Furthermore, they point out that a good question is one that can be answered and one that must be measurable. With regard to measurability, they further point out that it is misleading to think of this concept as only putting a number on something, as it should not necessarily refer to experiments, clinical trials, surveys and statistics. In addition, the authors point out that the question should be important enough to investigate. Attempting to answer the above questions is fundamentally important, as insight into these children's lives is significantly lacking in Zimbabwe. By employing in-depth interviews, guided by a flexible approach, based on qualitative principles, it would be possible to, at least in part, answer the questions and provide relevant measurements, in the form of themes emerging and the influence of resilience on how these adolescents deal with their situation.

3.2.2 Aims and objectives

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the aim of this study is to explore the ways in which Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental migration view and cope with their circumstances, by identifying themes and structures of meaning, with a particular emphasis on resilience. With this aim in mind, the researcher chose the following objectives:

- To obtain first hand information from adolescents who are left behind by their migrant parent or parents by means of in-depth interviews.
- To extrapolate from these interviews emerging themes and structures of meaning.
- To allow the adolescents to speak for themselves by reporting their interviews in a manner that is as close as possible to their own words.
- To identify the presence or absence of resilience traits that may emerge from their interviews, and from the administration of the CYRM – 28.

- To increase available knowledge of the ways in which being left in the home country is viewed by these adolescents.
- To come to conclusions and make recommendations for further research in this field.
- To make recommendations which may be used by parties with vested interests to better understand and assist these adolescents, particularly in the context of secondary education and with special emphasis on the bolstering of resilience.

3.3 Research paradigm and design

In this section, the study's paradigm and design are discussed and their selection justified in terms of the research questions.

3.3.1 Research paradigm

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006, p.6), paradigms are "all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology". Ontology refers to the nature of the reality that is to be studied, what researchers believe exists and is real. Generally, scientists have ideas about the nature and reality of what they intend to study, but these ideas are so obvious that they are seldom consciously questioned (Dooley, 1990; Wilson, 1983). Therefore, ontological questions address the primary issues researchers have to deal with and are especially valuable because they influence all subsequent decisions made regarding the study to be carried out (Chafetz, 1978; Mason, 1996). Epistemology relates to the relationship between the researcher and what is to be studied – how we know and explain something. Epistemological questions make us decide what types of statements are permissible about social reality and what qualifies as being social scientific knowledge (Mason, 1996; Wilson, 1983). Methodology denotes the practical aspects of obtaining the required information. This includes the guidelines that researchers agree on and that can be relied on to give acceptable research practices and that provide us with the necessary techniques and tools (Babbie, 1995; Denzin, 1970; Mason, 1996).

Goldenberg (1992, p.18) posits that “methodological principles in the social sciences ensure that we can defend our findings”. These interrelated paradigms function as perspectives that provide a rationale for the research and compel the researcher to specific methods of data collection, observation and interpretation, in order to ensure the coherence of the study. Their importance rests on the fact that they impact on both what is to be studied and the manner in which this is done.

What paradigms do not do, however, is to exactly define the purpose of a specific study, such as who or what the conclusions are to be about or even what type of conclusions are to be drawn about the field of the study (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

Three dimensions of paradigms are generally quoted, namely the positivist, the interpretive and the constructionist paradigms. Each of these paradigms subscribes to a way of approaching reality along specific ontological, epistemological and methodological tenets. The positivist approach is most suitable if the researcher believes that what is to be studied is a stable and unchanging reality and wants an approach that is objective and detached that relies on the control and manipulation of reality, in order to provide accurate and measurable descriptions of the laws and systems that organise social life. The interpretive approach should be chosen by researchers who believe that the reality to be studied is made up of people’s subjective experiences to be obtained by utilising interactional or intersubjective methodologies, such as interviews, which will fulfil the need to explain individual reasons and meaning that lie behind the social world. A researcher who believes that reality is fluid and changeable and made up of social constructions and discourses and who wishes to deconstruct these socio-politically constructed realities would feel that the most appropriate approach would be a constructionist one. From the above, it is evident that research that adheres to a positivist paradigm will employ a deductive stance, preferring to begin research with a theory about the nature of the world which will be tested and then generalized to whole populations, whilst those adhering to interpretive and constructionist paradigms will emphasise an inductive approach to reality, which begins

with a set of vague speculations and tries to make sense of a phenomenon by observing specific instances (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

Crabtree and Miller (1992) posit that a researcher must decide what assumptions are appropriate and suitable for the topic to be studied and then choose methods that are consistent with the selected paradigm, in order to ensure coherence throughout the study. The most suitable paradigm for the present study is an interpretive one because, according to this paradigm, the ontology is the internal reality of subjective experience, the epistemology is empathetic and the methodology is qualitative, interactional and interpretive (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). In other words, the researcher wishes to learn more about the way in which adolescents affected by parental out-migration experience their reality from their subjective point of view and she will do so by employing in-depth interviews and case studies with an emphasis on interaction with the subject and an empathetic approach, suitable for the developmental stage of the research participants, that is adolescence.

3.3.2 Research design

The research design is a “strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research” (Durrheim, 2006, p. 34). In other words, the research design is a plan that guides the collection and analysis of data that “aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure” (Sellitz, Jahoda, Deutsch & Cook, 1965, p.50). The research study needs to be designed in a way that will supply answers to the research questions and therefore what needs to be decided is the type of research suitable for a study, the persons or situations from which data needs to be gathered, as well as the type of data needed, and how it is going to be collected and analysed (Van Eeden & Terre Blanche, 2000). Research designs vary on a continuum from fixed and inflexible, like an architectural blueprint, to flexible and fluid, depending on the orientation of the researcher and the purpose of the study. For instance, qualitative researchers choose designs that are open, fluid and changeable and not technically bound, as they see research as an iterative process that requires a flexible and non-sequential approach

(Durrheim, 2006). In fact, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.225) state that some qualitative designs cannot be formulated in advance but must “emerge, develop, unfold” as the research question(s) and focus may change according to what emerges from observation and analysis. On the other hand, quantitative researchers prefer “pragmatic guides for action” (Durrheim, 2006, p.36) that specify exactly how the research is to be carried out. Regardless of the approach chosen, research designs should still be seen as strategic frameworks for action and should specify certain activities to be carried out that will ensure that valid conclusions are reached by a study. Mouton and Marais (1989) also state that the aim of a research design is to plan and structure a given project in such a way that the validity of its findings is maximised.

A vital aspect of a research design is that it should be coherent, that is all aspects of the research should fit together logically within the framework provided by a particular paradigm (Durrheim, 2006). Because a paradigm includes specific theoretical assumptions, the focus of the research question(s) and the methods to be used to answer such questions should reflect the chosen paradigm (Van Eeden & Terre Blanche, 2000). For instance, a researcher working within a positivist paradigm will be interested in exposing and confirming laws of causality and should therefore ask questions regarding relationships between measurable variables and strive for accuracy and maximum control of other variables. Conversely, researchers working within an interpretive or social constructionist paradigm may want to ask questions regarding the meaning of a subjective experience and for their design to be coherent they will need to concentrate on observing people in their natural setting, not on the accurate measurement of variables.

3.3.2.1 Approaches to social scientific research

According to Grobbelaar (2000), two main approaches are recognised within social scientific research, each having evolved from a different school of thought. The first, being the quantitative approach, evolved from the positivist school of thought which stemmed from the natural sciences. This approach is concerned with cause and effect of phenomena. However, this approach was found lacking as it did not cover certain

aspects of the social world, for example, man's ability to experience events in a spiritual manner. As a consequence of this, a new school of thought, humanism, appeared which recognised the uniqueness and meaningfulness of human situations and behaviour. From this, the qualitative approach evolved which is concerned with the human spirit, human behaviour and society.

The most significant differences between these two approaches concern the kind of information (data) collected and the analysis techniques employed. According to Mouton and Marais (1989), the quantitative approach is the approach used by researchers in the social sciences that is more formalised in nature, as well as explicitly controlled, with a more carefully defined scope, and that is relatively close to the approach used by researchers in the natural sciences. Grobbelaar (2000, p.88) concurs with this, calling it "more structured and controlled in nature" and points out that its scope is much bigger and more universal. Validity and reliability are vital elements of the quantitative approach and specific scientific methods and techniques are used to ensure that these requirements are fulfilled. According to Nesor, Joubert and Sonnekus (1995), the points of departure of this approach are the following:

- Natural and social realities are observed and studied the same way;
- Scientific knowledge should be factually based on things that can be observed and measured by means of the senses;
- The research process should yield value-free knowledge.

They further point out that preference is given to the following methods and techniques:

- Conceptualisation of concepts that can be operationalised through measuring instruments;
- Data-collection techniques, such as structured questionnaires and schedules;
- Data-analysis techniques, varying from simple cross-tabulation of the data to complex statistical analysis techniques.

Thus, according to Neuman (2006), the aim of the quantitative method of inquiry is to discover and confirm causal laws to predict activity by making use of empirical methods

that allow an independent and objective observation of the world, in order to arrive at a stable and predictable truth. This approach implies that what is to be studied is made up of a stable and unchanging social reality which can be measured by dividing it into its smallest elements which should be studied separately, referred to as reductionism, by adopting an objective and detached stance. Crabtree and Miller (1992, p. 10) assert that the positivist paradigm, which is consistent with the quantitative method of inquiry, “values progress, stresses the primacy method, seeks an ultimate truth of reality and is grounded in a western tradition”. Quantitative methods tend to treat individuals as sets of numbers that can be analysed statistically, and although these methods are considered more reliable, easy to replicate and are believed to yield truthful explanations of phenomena by those who adhere to a positivist stance (Greenberg, 1991), they do not provide the opportunity of experiencing reality as others do, nor do they try to understand or empathise with the people they are studying.

According to Wax (1971), qualitative research methods are as old as recorded history and can be traced to great historians and writers, such as Herodotus and Marco Polo. However, qualitative methods only started being employed in social research in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with works such as that of Frédéric Le Play, who travelled around Europe for almost a quarter of a century collecting vast quantities of material for his study on the social and economic conditions of the working classes, which he published in 1855 as a series of thirty-six monographs, entitled *Les Ouvriers Européens*. His work, which earned him the Montyon prize conferred by the Académie des Sciences (Brooke, 1970; Bruyn, 1966), is one of the earliest examples. Mouton and Marais (1989) define the qualitative approach as one in which the procedures are less formalised and explicated in a less strict manner than in the quantitative approach, the scope is less defined in nature and the researcher investigates in a more philosophical manner. Thus, qualitative methodology can be broadly taken to refer to research that produces descriptive data, consisting of people’s own written or spoken words and observable behaviour (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984) and it is a way of approaching the empirical world. This type of methodology requires an inductive type of research that allows concepts and understandings to stem from patterns in the data, as opposed to

quantitative methods that require the testing of preconceived hypotheses or theories. Furthermore, this approach is holistic as it sees people as being part of a context and does not reduce individuals to sets of variables. Qualitative researchers are interested in all perspectives and often their studies provide a forum for those who are ignored by society, like the poor and the “deviant” (Becker, 1967).

The aim of the qualitative research approach is to study the subject in its unique and meaningful situation or interactions. This approach stresses observation rather than measurement. Although less pragmatic, this approach still adheres to a set of strategies which help to guide the research and set parameters for the collection and interpretation of data. Its points of departure are consequently as follows (Neser et al., 1995):

- Concepts that capture the meaning of the experience (situation), action or interaction of the research object (man);
- Unstructured questionnaires and interviews;
- Participant observation, ethnographic studies and case studies;
- Recordings of life histories, use of autobiographies and diaries;
- Analysis of collected data by means of non-quantitative frameworks and category systems.

As previously stated, the methods used for collecting data constitute a fundamental difference between the quantitative and the qualitative approaches. Mouton and Marais (1989, p.165) highlight these differences as follows:

- “Quantitative researchers use a system as the point of departure of research which is then applied to the phenomenon under investigation. In other words, they apply a specific structure to a phenomenon. On the other hand, qualitative researchers begin with the belief that the phenomenon should be self-evident and needs to manifest itself as it is. The task of the researcher is only to register it.
- Quantitative research looks at a phenomenon from a distance as they prize objectivity highly. A disadvantage of this is that if any behavioural manifestations

emerge that were not anticipated in the research, problems may arise. Conversely, qualitative research is more involved with the phenomenon. Researchers are even willing to become part of what is being studied in order to fully experience a phenomenon. This may facilitate open observation and accurate pinpointing of behaviour”

Borg and Gall (1989) point out that qualitative research has certain characteristics. Firstly, the approach to the research is holistic and carried out in its context. The context is viewed as a whole so as to take into account all its elements and realities involved. Understanding a phenomenon, thus involves viewing it within its social, cultural and historical milieus. Secondly, the researcher collects data by making use of man-generated data and not by using measuring instruments. In this way, the researcher remains adaptable to the fluidity of situations and takes into account individual differences and prejudices. Documents and questionnaires can be, however, incorporated in this approach. Furthermore, subject selection is carried out in a purposeful manner, permitting the inclusion in the research sample of a wide variety of subjects. Qualitative research approaches data analysis in an inductive way, allowing the data to speak for itself which takes into account, and highlights, unexpected results. The starting point of the research is the data, not prior expectations or hypotheses, thus a grounded theory can be developed, diametrically opposed to a quantitative approach. The research design is consequently developed alongside the research and not fixed in advance, allowing for adaptation and inclusion of variables as they arise. Intuitive insights are extensively used, such as the subject’s individual experience of the situation. In addition, the subject’s collaboration in the interpretation of results is taken into account, allowing for the incorporation of the uniqueness of frames of reference, as an important aspect of the research. Finally, qualitative research places great emphasis on social processes and the meanings attached thereto the research participants.

Grobbelaar (2000) points out that it is important to emphasise the strong points of qualitative research and its uses in the field of exploratory and descriptive research, as this approach stresses the importance of the context as well as the subject’s frame of

reference, which is consistent with the above principles. In accordance with the above tenets, Marshall and Rossman (1989) state that several types of research are especially successful when carried out using a qualitative approach. For example, any research that cannot be carried out using experiments, due to ethical considerations, or research that requires obtaining rich and in-depth information on complex situations and processes and where variables have not yet been identified. A qualitative approach is also useful when researching policies and practices that are not working and when a phenomenon is still unresearched.

It is evident from the above discussion that the phenomenological perspective is central to qualitative research, as it views human behaviour and what people say and do as a product of how they define their world. In other words, the aim of this type of research is to try to see things from other people's point of view (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). For the above reasons, the type of research approach most suitable to provide rich, detailed information about the lives of adolescents who have been left behind by parents who work in the Zimbabwean Diaspora is a qualitative one.

3.4 Research methodology

As indicated above, a qualitative paradigm was chosen to undertake the present research because its tenets and inherently holistic nature are best suited to provide the kind of information that the researcher set out to obtain. According to Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2006), qualitative methods allow the researcher to study chosen issues in depth, honesty, and detail, as they pinpoint and try to understand the categories of information that emerge from the data. In addition, as qualitative research is inductive, it enables researchers to develop concepts, insights and understanding from patterns in the data free from predetermined hypotheses or theories. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) also point out that qualitative researchers try to understand people from their own frame of reference in accordance with the phenomenological perspective. This is in line with the aims of this study of trying to increase knowledge about the subjective perspectives of adolescents whose parents have out-migrated.

Summarised below are some of the goals of qualitative enquiry (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Kopala & Suzuki, 1999; Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2006) which confirm its choice as the most suited to capture the subjective experiences of these adolescents:

- A holistic understanding of a phenomenon obtained by building a complex, detailed and in-depth description of the life of the subjects and the meanings they attribute to it;
- To understand the meaning of events, actions and interactions in their context;
- To conduct research in a natural setting; not one that is alien to the participants;
- To understand an event from the subjective perspective of the research participants in order to capture the meaning they attribute to their experience;
- To understand human or social problems from multiple points of views;
- To adhere to inductive principles, letting the information speak for itself in order to expose categories, themes and patterns;
- To recognise the individuality and variability of meaning and to keep the aim of the research away from the principles of generalisability.

3.4.1 Selection of participants and selection criteria/sampling

Durrheim and Painter (2006, p.133) define sampling as the “process of selecting cases to observe”. It is a vital step in the research process, as it entails making decisions regarding which people, settings, events, processes and behaviours are to be observed. Thus, the methods employed to choose a sample will impact on both the results and their interpretation (Van Rensburg, 2000).

In quantitative research, sampling strategies are used to ensure that the cases selected to make up a sample are representative of a larger population so that findings can be generalised (Durrheim & Painter, 2006). This is because, as a rule, the population to be studied is too large and unmanageable. Scaling down the number of subjects to be studied obviously makes it more manageable and, as a result, records should be more accurate. Populations from which samples are to be drawn are consequently carefully defined and described and selection criteria are stipulated in the research design (Van Rensburg, 2000).

In qualitative research, on the other hand, the sampling process is guided by very different sampling concerns and procedures, dictated by the research topic rather than by the extent to which a sample is representative of a population. According to Neuman (2006), this is because qualitative researchers are primarily concerned about how a sample illuminates social life therefore the purpose of sampling is to select participants who can deepen the understanding of a particular phenomenon.

The quantity of material required for a qualitative study varies, but it is generally based on the idea of theoretical saturation. In qualitative research, data collection and analysis often occur concurrently and thus, theoretical saturation is the point when a researcher stops collecting new material because it no longer adds anything to the research, in the way of new information that confirms or refutes the emerging analysis. In other words, theoretical saturation is reached when the information becomes too repetitive (Kelly, 2006a).

As the aim of this study is to explore how Zimbabwean adolescent whose parents have out-migrated experience parental absence, and in view of the fact that a qualitative approach was chosen as the most suitable for this enquiry, non-probability sampling was used to select participants for the study. According to Durrheim and Painter (2006, p.139) this type of sampling refers to “any kind of sampling where the selection of elements is not determined by the statistical principle of randomness”, as the researcher wished to select those who met the criteria for the study, which included:

- being of an age generally accepted as falling within the adolescent phase of development, that is between the ages of 11 and 21 years; and
- having one or both parents working outside Zimbabwe, in its Diaspora.

Inclusion in the sample was, of course, also dependent upon the receipt of a completed and signed consent form on the part of the parent/guardian and of a verbal re-iteration of the adolescent’s willingness to participate in the study.

Van Rensburg (2000) states that purposive or judgmental sampling takes place when a sample is selected by a researcher on the basis of available information or his/her knowledge about the population and judged to be representative of the total population. As such, this type of sampling is influenced more by the subjective considerations of the researcher than by scientific criteria. Convenience or accidental sampling takes place when elements are selected because they can be easily accessed until the desired sample size is reached. Finally, snowball sampling is a technique that involves the participants of a study identifying other potential subjects, a system especially useful when studying sensitive or hidden populations.

In the current study, some of the above-mentioned sampling techniques were employed. Purposive samples were obtained by approaching the secondary schools in Harare, Zimbabwe, who participated in the Pilot Study. Permission to carry out research in the selected schools was requested and obtained from the Provincial Education Director of the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture. The researcher then approached the Headmaster/mistress of each school and gave him/her a letter explaining the purpose of the study and requesting assistance in identifying adolescents who attend the school and whose parent(s) is/are part of the Zimbabwean Diaspora and those previously interviewed during the course of the Pilot Study (see Appendix A).

Once the adolescents were identified, the researcher approached them face-to-face and explained a little about the study and began to establish (or re-establish) a rapport with them by giving them the opportunity of asking questions regarding the research. Those who expressed an interest in participating were given a letter of invitation to join the study and a consent form to be given to their parent/guardian to peruse, sign and return to the researcher via the school office (see Appendix B). Once the consent form was returned to the researcher, an interview times were arranged with each adolescent. Snowball sampling was utilised by asking the research participants if they knew of other adolescents within the school in the same position. At times the adolescents themselves came forward with information regarding others without the need to solicit

such information, in which case the researcher made contact with them via the school authorities.

Included in the sample are six girls who participated in the Pilot Study, who expressed an interest in follow up interviews, as a number of years had passed since they participated in the previous study. The researcher felt that these follow up interviews would provide rich longitudinal information on these adolescents' experiences.

From the above process, the researcher identified the six adolescents which best fitted the requirements of the study and were selected to make up the sample.

3.4.2 Research context

Wilhelm Dilthey, a German philosopher who lived from 1833–1911, proposed a method of understanding which he termed *verstehn* (understanding) whereby the meaning of a text can be established by piecing together the context of the text's conception in order to re-create the author's words (Bleicher, 1980). To do this, knowledge of the socio-historical and linguistic context in which the author worked must be included in the analysis process. In the social sciences this resulted in the idea that the meaning of human words, actions, experiences or creations can only be understood in terms of the personal and societal context in which they occur (Bleicher, 1980). The principle of understanding human behaviour in context is fundamental to qualitative and interpretive research which aims to obtain terms and categories derived from subjective, lived experiences that allow an empathic insight into human phenomena.

The context of the present research is set against a back-ground of social, political and economic instability which has plagued Zimbabwe for over a decade as a result of which an estimated four million Zimbabwean have left the country to join the world-wide Diaspora (Shaw, 2008). Many of these emigrants have chosen to, or been forced to, leave their off-spring behind and remit funds back to Zimbabwe for their maintenance. Many of these children are in main-stream schooling and caring arrangements vary from being taken care of by relatives or friends to boarding at the school they attend.

Although the schools visited by the researcher seemed to be able to identify some of the adolescents who have parents working outside the country, none have accurate records of their exact number (as it seems that many parents choose not to notify the school) and no systems appear to be in place to offer them any form of support. Most schools have counsellors but no specific approach is made towards those whose parents work outside Zimbabwe unless they contact the school counsellors themselves.

The schools visited are all situated in the greater Harare area and not all proved willing to participate, one of them even asserting that there were no children of migrant parents attending their school. Although approaches were made to both private and government schools, the final sample was made up of girls from private schools. These schools cater for fairly affluent families and their fees are beyond the realm of affordability of the majority of the Zimbabwean population. The one government school who participated in the study, but whose students were not included in the final sample, is heavily funded by alumni and offers first class facilities to its students.

3.4.3 Data collection and instruments

In qualitative research the primary instrument for both collecting and analysing the data is the researcher whereas, in quantitative research, tried and tested assessment instruments are used which rely on proven statistical techniques of analysis (Durrheim & Painter, 2006). In order to become the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, researchers need to develop certain skills, such as listening and interpreting, in order to accurately record the phenomena they study. Kelly (2006b) cautions that a researcher employing qualitative methods should not disturb the context in which the phenomenon occurs unduly and, in order to do this, the setting should be entered with care and by interacting with the participants in an open and empathic way.

3.4.3.1 The interviews

Moon, Dillon and Sprenkle (1990) assert that, in qualitative research, information is generally gathered in either a verbal or visual form through interviewing, document

analysis and participant observation. Du Plooy (2000, p.176) defines an interview as “a data-collection method [which] uses personal contact and interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee”. Interviews vary, for example, they can be structured, when a specific list of questions is asked, or unstructured, when specific questions are not present and can take place either face-to-face or over the phone (or other electronic means) (Du Plooy, 2000).

Different types of interviews serve different purposes, for instance, an in-depth interview’s main aim is to obtain detailed information and is thus most suited for qualitative research. According to Pitout (1995, p.112), in-depth interviews have also been called “intensive interviews”, “unstructured, conversational interviews”, “ethnographic interviews” and “focused interviews” and they are used to delve into the reasons behind the answers, opinions or emotions expressed by a respondent (Du Plooy, 2000). Semi-structured interviews, according to Greeff (2005), are interviews that are focused around areas of particular interest yet still allow flexibility. In addition, these interviews are generally used to gain a detailed picture of beliefs and/or perceptions of a subject on a particular topic and are particularly well suited to gain insight into personal issues, one of the aims of this research study.

Du Plooy (2000) cites a number of advantages to using interviews, for example:

- they are flexible and can provide detailed and new information that may not have been anticipated;
- unclear questions and answers can be clarified, as interviews involve a dialogue between two (or more) people;
- follow-up questions can be asked to obtain additional information or clarification; and
- rapport can be established between interviewer and interviewee which enables the researcher to assist with the interpretation and analysis of the data.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were used in this study, which were recorded using a cellular telephone device. The reason why the researcher chose to use a cell phone

as a recording device is because teenagers are especially comfortable using these instruments and find them non-intrusive. The cell phone was activated at the beginning of the interview and, at times, to break the ice, the researcher even asked the students to assist with this task which proved to be very successful.

At the beginning of the interview, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the students and thanked them for participating. They were reassured regarding anonymity and asked if they wished to ask any questions before beginning the interview. The researcher endeavoured at all times to create a comfortable and relaxed interview environment where the participants could feel safe and able to express themselves freely. The interview was started by referring back to the Pilot Study interview and asking questions aimed at obtaining some current background information on the adolescent, such as “how old are you now?” and “what has changed since we last spoke?” as well as questions aimed at obtaining information regarding what the parents currently do and where. These questions served as “ice-breakers” and allowed the participants time to adjust to the interview context. Once the initial part of the interview was completed, the participants were asked to speak about their current situation and then delving into the ensuing period of time. The interviewer had to make use of listening and interpreting skills in order to formulate gently probing and clarifying questions with the aim of eliciting more information. The follow up interviews were carried out in a similar manner after an informal conversation to recap what was talked about in the previous interview.

At the end of the interviews, participants were assured of the availability of the researcher should they feel the need for support or counselling. They were also invited to write down any additional thoughts they may like to share. The interviewer, where necessary, made field notes immediately after the interview in order to capture any non-verbal cues or additional information obtained before or after the formal interview and then transcribed the material onto a word-processing programme on the computer as soon as possible after the interview.

3.4.3.2 The Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM – 28)

The participants were asked to complete the CYRM – 28 in order to establish their current resilience levels in the areas measured by the instrument, namely: Individual, relationships with primary care-givers, and contextual factors that facilitate a sense of belonging. In addition, within each of these sub-scales there are further clusters of questions that provide additional insight into these three dimensions. Confirmatory Factor Analysis conducted on data gathered in three international sites has validated these sub-scales (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011).

Although the CYRM – 28 can be viewed as an empirical instrument by some, in light of the discussion in Chapter 2, the researcher felt that the mixed methods approach employed in the development of the scale, combined with its cultural sensitivity, justified its use in a qualitative study as the most appropriate measure of resilience. Mertens (2003, p.128) stated that “ontologically, sensitivity to the experiences of marginalized, stressed, populations requires methods that capture the diversity of people’s viewpoints with regard to their social locations”. In view of this, development of the CYRM – 28 started with exploratory qualitative data, thus, the questions contained in the measure are grounded in the experiences of individuals. This qualitative data also informed the quantitative analysis and findings, further influencing the structure of the measure. In light of this, the CYRM – 28 was considered appropriate and in line with the qualitative orientation of the study.

3.4.4 Data analysis

According to Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2006) there are numerous qualitative traditions that fall under the umbrella of interpretive analysis that vary along a continuum from quasi-statistical to immersion/crystallisation styles. Whereas quasi-statistical styles use predetermined categories and codes and a mechanical approach to analysis, immersion/crystallisation styles require becoming thoroughly familiar with the phenomenon being studied, reflecting and producing an account based on intuition and emerging themes. They further highlight that, in order to produce a good interpretive

analysis, it is crucial to stay close to the data and to interpret it from a point of empathic understanding.

The purpose of interpretive analysis is to provide a rich description of phenomena, in other words a comprehensive description of the processes, transactions and contexts taking place (Geertz, 1973). Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006) cite an aphorism linked with the purpose of qualitative research, namely “to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange” (p. 321). Thus, interpretive analysis can be looked upon as being a back-and-forth motion between different dimensions and points of view, such as between description and interpretation, part and whole or foreground and background. They point out that at the end of such process people should recognise a phenomenon they know as true but should also be able to see it from a different perspective.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the analytic steps proposed by Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006), not necessarily in the order stated below, as follows:

1. Familiarisation and immersion

This step involved obtaining a preliminary understanding of the meaning of the data by spending time reading through the transcripts of the interviews several times and making notes where appropriate. Because the qualitative approach was used, this step had already begun during the data collection phase, which meant that the researcher, by this stage, had a basic understanding of the material gathered. Furthermore, by the end of this step, the researcher felt that she knew her material well and had a general idea of what could be supported by the data.

2. Inducing themes

A bottom-up approach was used to try to work out what the organising principles are that underlie the material and to begin to get a general idea of the contents

and possible categories and themes. In other words, the researcher looked carefully at the material in order to get a feeling of emerging themes and categories. She also tried to keep the range of categories as wide as possible to allow for diverse and divergent interpretations but, at the same time, she also tried to keep the focus on experiences related to the phenomenon of parental absence and not to include other aspects of the adolescents' experience.

3. Coding

Coding means marking various sections of the text which relate to a particular theme in the same way for example, highlighting a particular word or section in a certain colour if it relates to the theme "peer support". If a section or word applies to more than one theme or category, more than one colour is used to mark it.

Coding the data was done manually using highlighters and coloured pens and by making notes on the text. The cut and paste function of the Word programme on the computer was also used to move bits of text around. Broad categories that were found to emerge from previous studies of the subject were used to guide the process, but room was left for additional categories as they emerged. On the computer, sections were copied from the original interview transcripts and pasted under one (or more) category in order to create clusters of material for further analysis and elaboration.

4. Elaboration

This step is targeted at bringing together steps 2 and 3 above to give a new view of the material. Comparisons were made and text that appeared to belong together was noted. Each of the themes that emerged from coding was further elaborated and additional corroborating evidence was looked for in the transcripts. Clusters of data entered under each category were re-analysed to see if more themes emerged and the entire coding system was also revised at this point. This step was conducted with the principal aim of producing a comprehensive and insightful interpretation of the phenomenon.

5. Interpretation and checking

The final step of the analytic procedure involved putting together the material into a meaningful format using thematic categories. The interpretation was then scrutinised for weak points, for example contradicting data. This step also covered the production of the written account of the experiences of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration as they emerged from the seventeen interviews carried out with the participants during the course of the Pilot study and the ones with the six girls who took part in this study. The researcher also tried to ascertain, at this point, if and how her personal involvement affected the interpretation of the data.

The data obtained from the CYRM – 28 was analysed in accordance with the instructions contained in the relevant manual. In order to score each of the clusters and/or sub-scales the responses to each question are summed. The higher the score, the more these resilience components are present in the lives of participating youth. Participants' scores were then compared against the normative data for the scores on the total measure, the sub-scales and the sub-clusters of questions. Data are presented for youth with complex high needs (n=1071), a comparison sample of low-risk youth (n=1128) and both groups combined (n=2199) (Resilience Research Centre, 2009).

3.4.5 Trustworthiness of the study

Empirical studies rely heavily on the concepts of reliability and validity. Reliability refers to the extent that the measurable features of a theory can be replicated. There are several types of validity, including internal validity, which refers to the degree that an independent variable is responsible for changes in a dependent one, and external validity, which relates to the extent to which the result of a study can be generalised to other studies (Duffy & Wong, 1996).

Although these concepts are essentially quantitative and reflect a positivist epistemology, and in spite of the fact that some researchers feel that these concepts

relate to measurement and that they are not relevant in qualitative research (Stenbacka, 2001), qualitative researchers are still bound to demonstrate that their interpretations are credible. In view of the above, Golafshani (2003) suggests that these concepts should be re-defined to be used in qualitative research, merged and replaced with more encompassing terms such as credibility, transferability and trustworthiness. Hence, reliability and validity are not viewed as separate concepts in qualitative research, however, Stiles (1993) proposes that reliability refers to the trustworthiness of observations of the data whilst validity refers to the trustworthiness of the interpretations of the data and the conclusions drawn from it.

With regard to the trustworthiness of observation of the data or reliability, Stiles (1993) offers a set of guidelines to ensure the trustworthiness of a research study which will be discussed below and related to the present study:

1. Disclosure of orientation

This requires the researcher to disclose any preconception, expectation, theoretical orientation or value that may impact on the study. Such disclosure assists the reader to place the interpretations offered by the researcher into a certain perspective and establishes a specific context. In this study, the researcher used a phenomenological approach and qualitative methodology, as she wished to describe Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental migration's experiences as they emerged from the interviews conducted with them. The approach was empathic and supportive, as the researcher's work brings her into daily contact with a number of these adolescents and she is, therefore, fairly familiar with their plight.

2. Explication of social and cultural context

This refers to making explicit to the readers the social and cultural context of the research study and that of the participants, in order to frame the perspective from which a phenomenon is viewed. Furthermore, the researcher should also inform the reader of the reasons for the study. This was done by obtaining as much

available background information on Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental migration and the socio-economic and political factors that have impacted on the phenomenon in Zimbabwe. The literature review also covered aspects of the phenomenon in other countries, in order to provide a broader perspective and a global background for the researcher to compare findings from a wide range of socio-cultural contexts.

3. Description of internal processes of investigation

This relates to the internal processes of the researcher while conducting the study and providing interpretations. As in qualitative research the main instrument is the researcher him/herself, it is important to share these processes with the reader, as they will impact on the study and become part of the research itself. In the present study, the researcher did not try to remain detached, but immersed herself in the life of these adolescents and tried to reflect carefully on how each interview and contact with each participant impacted on the way in which she viewed the material gathered.

4. Engagement with the material

This relates to the researcher's relationship with the participants and with the information gathered. Engagement also refers to a compassionate view of human experience in order to deepen understanding. The researcher established a close and trusting relationship with the participants by offering support and making explicit her availability on an on-going basis. She also researched the phenomenon extensively and then spent time making several readings of the transcripts of the interviews and making personal notes in order to truly immerse herself in the material obtained.

5. Iteration: cycling between interpretation and observation

This refers to moving between theories, interpretations and the text as "interpretations change and evolve as they become infused with observations" (Stiles, 1993, p. 605). This was done by reflecting the participants' words during

interviews, in a way that offered them the opportunity of confirming or disconfirming the researcher's understanding of their experience and by spending time with the transcripts of the interviews, in order to allow the categories to grow and change naturally as they emerged from the text.

6. Grounding interpretations

This involves linking interpretations, observations and the interviews carried out. This was done by providing the reader with extracts from the transcribed interviews to highlight connections between themes and categories and the actual interviews.

Validity is an integral concept in both qualitative and quantitative research. With regard to ensuring the trustworthiness of the interpretations of the data and the conclusions drawn from it or the validity thereof, it is generally agreed that the use of triangulation is a sound way of controlling bias and establishing valid propositions (Mathison, 1988). Triangulation means collecting material in as many different ways and from as many sources as possible, which helps researchers to understand a phenomenon better by approaching it from various angles (Kelly, 2006a). Denzin (1970) identifies four types of triangulation:

1. Data triangulation

This refers to the use of various data sources in a study. In the present study, the researcher interviewed participants from diverse environments and backgrounds in order to obtain different viewpoints of the phenomenon. In addition, the literature review provided information on similar studies conducted by other researchers on the phenomenon.

2. Investigator triangulation

This refers to using different researchers to draw attention to previously un-noticed researcher effects, such as the effects of a researcher on the context of the study. In this study, the researcher discussed her findings with her

supervisor, co-supervisor and colleagues to obtain their feedback on her interpretations.

3. Theory triangulation

This refers to the use of multiple perspectives to interpret the data. In this study, a number of different theories were used as a basis for the research.

4. Methodological triangulation

This refers to the use of several methods for studying a phenomenon and looking for converging evidence from different sources such as interviews, participant observation and reviewing documentary sources. The researcher tried to study the phenomenon in as many ways as possible by using follow-up interviews, case notes and by making use of available literature.

Stiles (1993) proposes several types of validity in qualitative research that should make the study more credible, which are discussed below and related to this study:

1. Testimonial validity

This refers to checking the accuracy of the interpretations by asking those whose experience is studied for their views. In the present study, this was done by approaching some of the research participants and obtaining from them feedback with regard to the interpretations reached by the researcher after the analysis stage.

2. Catalytic validity

This refers to the degree to which the research process affects the research participants by re-orienting, focusing or energising them, that is, an “interpretation which produces change or growth in the people whose experiences are being described” (Stiles, 1993, p. 611). In this study, the findings were discussed with the participants in order to offer them insight into their own circumstances.

3. Reflexive validity

This term refers to how the theory is changed by the material obtained. In terms of the hermeneutic circle, interpretation and observation should change by re-visiting the data over and over again. In this study, this was done by immersion into the material before, during and after the analysis phase.

In quantitative research designs, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four constructs that reflect the premises of qualitative analysis to replace the empirical concepts of reliability and validity. These were used to assess the trustworthiness of the present research study and are explained below:

1. Credibility: As the alternative to internal validity.

In the current study, the subjects, categories and themes were accurately identified and described.

2. Transferability: As the alternative to external validity (generalisability).

The findings of the study were compared with similar studies carried out in other countries, as a form of triangulation.

3. Dependability: As the alternative to reliability.

The empirical concept of an unchanging social world is diametrically opposed to the qualitative/interpretive approach and, therefore, replication is a problem. However, the researcher endeavoured to create similar conditions for each of the interviews by following the same interview format and using similar settings.

4. Confirmability: As the alternative to objectivity.

In order to remain objective, the researcher kept in mind the findings of other studies in the field and let the data speak, rather than trying to make it fit into preconceived categories. This was done by keeping an open mind regarding other themes that might emerge from the interviews and not being restricted by the categories identified in the literature review.

In this study, the researcher endeavoured to apply all the above criteria to ensure that the research was trustworthy and credible and that similar findings would be found if a similar study were to be carried out. However, all research is not immune from bias and the above criteria are vulnerable to distortion. Stiles (1993, p. 614) states that “the strategy of revealing rather than avoiding involvement is consistent with the broader shift in goals from the truth of the statements to the understanding by participants and readers”. He further asserts that this style needs to be based on “a degree of trust that the investigator and the research consumer will work responsibly toward understanding, even while pursuing personal commitments” (Stiles, 1993, p. 614).

3.5 Ethical considerations

Wassenaar (2006) cites four widely accepted philosophical principles that should be applied to research to ensure that it is ethical, an approach that has become known as “*principilism*”, namely autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons; nonmaleficence; beneficence; and justice. The ethical aspects of the current study need to be discussed because they are particularly important due to the fact that the research involved minors. At all times the researcher ensured that no harm whatsoever was done to the participants of the study by following the four principles of ethical research, as follows:

1. Autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons

This principle was applied by stressing that participation in the research was voluntary and that the parents/guardians of the minors signed an informed consent prior to the interviews. Protection of the participants was also ensured through confidentiality as the identities of the adolescents were kept safely locked away and no real names were mentioned in the research findings. The researcher also reiterated the voluntary and informed aspects of participation by explaining the study to the adolescents before the interview and asking them if they were still happy to take part.

2. Nonmaleficence

This requires that no harm be done to research participants either as a direct or indirect consequence of the research. The adolescents were not placed under any physical risk and, on a psychological level, optional follow up counselling was offered in case the interview might be experienced as disturbing, in as much as it might bring to the fore suppressed emotions and conflicts. In addition, the researcher has experience working with adolescents and closely monitored the participants during the interviews for any signs of distress or discomfort. However, no follow up therapy was requested.

3. Beneficence

This principle requires that the researcher attempts to maximise the benefits of the research to participants. The researcher believes that, apart from the obvious benefits of acquiring more information on the plight of adolescents left in their home countries by migrant parents and making recommendations aimed at improving the care and support these adolescents receive, being able to voice their feelings in the safe context of an interview, can be psychologically beneficial to these adolescents who may have felt isolated and marginalised by society.

4. Justice

The principle of justice requires that researchers have some responsibility to provide care and support of participants and that they be treated with fairness and equity at all times. The participants of this study were all treated in the same manner and were all offered follow-up counselling facilities. The researcher provided the participants with her contact details and ensured them of continued support in the future. Furthermore, each of the schools that took part in the study will be provided with copies of the research findings and recommendations for their information and to be made available to the parents/caregivers of the participants.

In conclusion, the researcher kept the above mentioned four guiding principles in mind at all times to ensure that the study complied with acceptable ethical principles.

3.6 Conclusion

This study is guided by the desire to obtain more information on the lives of Zimbabwean adolescents who are left behind by migrant parent(s). As such, a qualitative, phenomenological, interpretive approach was chosen by the researcher, in order to obtain rich and detailed data. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with secondary school pupils in Harare, Zimbabwe which were then analysed, in order to extrapolate themes and categories. The CYRM – 28 was administered to establish levels of resilience in the participants. The researcher used several guidelines to ensure the trustworthiness of the study and adhered to the philosophical principles of ethical research to protect the participants of the study and their families.

Chapter 4

“I just cry!” Tsungai’s story

4.1 Introduction

Tsungai was one of the participants of the Pilot Study, which involved interviewing Zimbabwean adolescents whose parents have joined the Zimbabwean Diaspora and work outside the country. Tsungai did not emigrate with her mother but was left in Zimbabwe whilst her mother provided for the family through her remittances. She was interviewed in 2009 when she was twelve years old and again six years later.

4.2 The Pilot Study interview – 2009

Tsungai is a big girl for her age, tall and well built. It is hard to believe that she is only twelve years old! She towers over her class mates and tends to be a little clumsy. Her physical appearance, however, is diametrically opposed to her personality. She is shy and softly spoken and tries to make herself as insignificant as possible. Her mother has been working away from home for the past six years. She left the country for the first time when Tsungai was only six years old. Tsungai’s mother is a doctor who works in Australia. Tsungai is the youngest of three siblings and at the time of the interview, she was the only child still living at home with her unemployed father and her mother’s youngest sister, known as the *mainini* in Shona, (an aunt on the mother’s side who is younger than the mother) who cares for them and for the house, even though she is still at school herself. Although her mother visits Zimbabwe occasionally, at the time of the interview, Tsungai had not seen her for just over one year.

The motivation behind her mother’s decision to emigrate was monetary and since she started working in Australia the family’s financial situation has improved greatly. Her remittances have, not only allowed the family to send Tsungai to an exclusive private school, but also to purchase two minibuses. These vehicles are being used for commercial purposes and, in conjunction with her mother’s remittances, provide a good income and a comfortable living for the family. Tsungai’s material needs are very well

taken care of and she lives in a nice house where she has her own room. Her uniform is neat and new and she tells me that she likes to shop for clothes and shoes.

Tsungai describes her life as “kind of hard” especially when she has to face what she considers challenging situations and she feels that there is no one for her to talk to. She relates, for example, that “when there is a situation – like there is a fight at school with your friends or something is happening – and I would like to talk to [my mother] about it because she would tell me what to do, I can’t because she’s not there”. Although Tsungai lives with her father, her relationship with him appears rather complex and it is obvious that she cannot turn to him at these times. She says that she feels he cares but that “he wouldn’t know how to talk about it as he sometimes finds it hard to talk about things”.

The changes in the relationship between her mother and father, due to the altered circumstances, are a cause of great concern to Tsungai. She relates that she worries about “how your mom and dad are” and then adds, “if he being faithful. He told us he has not been faithful and now he has HIV”. At this time, Tsungai becomes very heated and emotional. I try to calm her down but she interrupts me, her words pouring out, as the burden she had been carrying is revealed, “I don’t know if my mom knows! I am so scared there will be problems between them when my mom comes home!” Tsungai is evidently conflicted, anxious and apprehensive, wanting her mother to return but afraid of the consequences. She states, “I miss my mom a lot but I worry what will happen if she comes!”

Compounding Tsungai’s concerns is her implied worry about her own future in view of her father’s condition. Graham Pembrey (2009) reports that, largely due to the economic situation in Zimbabwe, Anti Retroviral Drugs (ARVs) are not easily available or are unaffordable for most and cites World Health Organisation’s figures that estimate that less than one sixth of those requiring ARVs have access to them. In addition, Pembrey (2009) points out that the life expectancy of a woman in Zimbabwe is

estimated at 34 years. This means that if Tsungai's father has infected her mother, the family could lose both parents, including the principal income earner, fairly quickly.

4.2.1 Emerging themes

Conflicting feelings are a theme that emerges prominently in studies on children of parents who have out-migrated leaving them in the home country. For example, Schmalzbauer (2004) found that some children involved in this study displayed concomitantly feelings of gratitude and resentment. When interviewed, they discussed the economic benefits that, according to them, outweigh the psychological and emotional distress caused by the separation from their parents.

Eight of the seventeen adolescents interviewed during the course of the Pilot Study raised issues pertaining to how they benefited from having parents working outside Zimbabwe which, according to them, appear to make up for parental absence from home. "If he [my father] works outside the country then the funding in the family will be more stable, we can get a better living out of it", commented one participant. Whilst another stated, "my mother is away so that I can get a better life", by financing her private education, "she is working so hard to get my school fees and put me through school so that I can have a life that she probably never had – a better life". Tsungai says that she not only has the family gained by her mother's absence in the way of a good standard of living, but also that "I get to go to a really nice school".

Lachaud (1999), reports that Zimbabwean families where one (or more) members work outside the country have higher levels of educational attainment as compared to households without migrants, thanks to foreign currency earnings remitted to the family, permitting them to pay for schooling and other necessities. This is certainly the case of Tsungai who attends an exclusive private school, unaffordable to the majority of the population. In spite of being aware of these benefits, Tsungai and several other participants, still experience feelings of anger as a result of parental absence. She states "you must just know that in life things happen, that life is not fair!"

The interviews conducted with Tsungai and other Zimbabwean adolescents who participated in the Pilot Study also highlight a further aspect of conflicting feelings: an internal personal conflict brought about by trying to understand the reasons behind parental absence but wanting them to return and be reunited with them. Tsungai's case is a good example of how some Zimbabweans utilise the funds remitted back to their home country to purchase means to generate income locally and to assist with supporting the family, especially if the spouse left behind is unable to obtain employment, like Tsungai's father. She recounts that her mother remitted funds to set up a small commuter transport business. "He [my father] quit his job a long time ago, that's why my mom had to go to Australia. [When she visited us] my mom bought a Kombi, a minibus, she bought two of them, so now when he [my father] is short of money he doesn't have to ask my mom!" Tsungai misses her mother a great deal and became very emotional during the course of the interview, saying: "I like, I just cry! ... I have to talk to myself that I must be grown up, that things will be okay". Tsungai is very conflicted emotionally as she wishes she could be with her mother but realises the necessity of her absence because she knows that if her mother was not working in Australia the financial well-being of the family would be severely compromised.

A further theme that emerged from the interviews carried out with Tsungai and the other Zimbabwean adolescents, who participated in the Pilot Study, is "materialism", understood as willingness to justify and accept the absence of a parental figure in return for material (luxury) goods. When asked if she sees anything positive about her mom being in Australia, Tsungai states laughingly, "getting stuff". Another participant expounded further, "when your mom comes back she tends to spoil you, because she is not there she's, like, trying to make up". It seems that these girls feel that their mothers are trying to compensate for their absence by spoiling them. Tsungai laughs when she tells me this and it does not appear to worry her. Another girl concurred, saying that "the shopping is really good [when my mom is here], I can get whatever I want and I get to choose what I want to wear when she is around! My friends think this is really cool! So, it kind of makes up for her being away".

This phenomenon could be in part due to the adolescents' experience of the economic crisis in Zimbabwe, as many of them appear to feel that any sacrifice is worth making in order to have financial well-being and luxury goods, which for a number of years were extremely difficult to obtain locally. In fact, material goods appear to have become important status symbols within peer groups. Tsungai's words epitomise the way some of the Zimbabwean adolescents have come to view material possessions as a substitute for parental presence and love. Talking about what she feels are the advantages of her mother working outside the country, she said: "I get lots of stuff from her, like cell phones and clothes and things, then I know she really love me because some of the other girls whose parents are working outside they don't get all these things". This is a worrying aspect of Tsungai's experience as she may, in the long term, come to see love as purely gift and money related rather than an expression of genuine caring. This could make her an easy prey for negative relationships such as the "sugar daddy" phenomenon, where young girls have sexual relationships with older men who use gift-giving as a means to keep them happy and willing because they believe that receiving gifts means they are loved.

Tsungai's interview highlights how important communication is to these adolescents. She speaks to her mother "twice a week" which she does not feel is adequate and finds it stressful when she cannot call her. When unable to communicate with her mother, Tsungai experiences distress, becoming quite emotional during the interview. She recounted: "I have my own phone, then I talk to her [my mother] but if she is not there, I like, I just cry", and expressed frustration when unable to talk to her. "Normally I get to speak to her twice a week, but sometimes she is not at home when I really want to talk to her and that is really hard!" Almost every adolescent interviewed during the course of the Pilot Study brought up the topic of speaking to their parent(s) over the telephone or via telephone messaging (sms) which confirms how important this link is for them. Schmalzbauer (2004) stresses the importance of communication in maintaining ties in families who live trans-nationally. Silver (2006) asserts that good communication can mediate the negative effects of migration and found this theme to emerge constantly during interviews with adolescents left in their home country by migrant parents.

Silver (2006) found a significant link between stressful life events and depression. The separation from parents experienced by adolescents whose parents have out-migrated, coupled with the need for major family restructuring and adjustments is a stressful life event. The researcher found that Tsungai, as well as other participants of the study, exhibited some of the symptoms required for a diagnosis of depression, according to the criteria of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV-TR) (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

For example, one of the criteria for diagnosing depression is a depressed mood. This can manifest through appearing tearful. Tsungai was tearful during the interview and talked openly about crying. “If she is not there, I like, I just cry!” further pointing out that it is not always easy for her to cry openly, “at school you just have to be carefree, because that is what most people do, be carefree, because you don’t want to cry because that would draw attention to yourself”. This is echoed by another participant of the Pilot Study who said: “What else is there to do? I just cry, I cry it out, then after that I go to sleep” which may indicate that perhaps this is one feeling that is especially predominant in their experience.

A depressed mood can also be diagnosed through subjective reports of feeling sad or empty. Sadness due to feeling lonely is an experience that appears quite common and emerged strongly from the interview with Tsungai and the other Zimbabwean adolescents. Tsungai talked about loneliness, “it gets quite lonely” and “you feel kind of lonely”. It seems that although Tsungai and many of the other adolescents report having friends and even family members that they can turn to, the fact that one or both of their parents work in the Zimbabwean Diaspora still generates a sense of sadness due to feeling lonely.

4.2.2 Defence and Coping strategies

The Pilot Study found that to deal with these conflicting and negative feelings, adolescents make use of defence and coping strategies. Defence and coping strategies

are related terms referring to psychological devices used to deal with adversity. It is generally accepted that coping is flexible, reality-oriented and purposeful (Parker & Endler, 1996), whilst defences tend to be rigid and distort reality (Haan, 1965). Cramer (1998) also proposes that defences involve mainly unconscious automatic processes, whilst coping generally involves conscious, effortful strategies that emphasize cognition.

Tsungai, for example, appears to rationalise the absence of her mother by providing reasons which, according to her, justify the situation. Rationalisation entails finding an acceptable excuse for something which is really quite unacceptable, a “cover story” which preserves your self-image or that of someone close to you, and justifying your own and others’ actions to yourself – and believing it (Gross, 1993). Tsungai comments, “at least [my mother] is in a safe place!”

Tsungai also resorts to the use of denial by refusing to acknowledge certain aspects of reality because they are so painful or distressing (Gross, 1993). For example, she uses denial by not acknowledging that she finds the situation difficult, stating that “it’s not as difficult as you think”, contradicting her own statement, “I just cry”.

4.2.3 Conclusions on Pilot Study

Tsungai’s interview during the course of the Pilot Study highlights a number of emerging themes that illustrate the way she experiences parental absence. Especially prominent are conflicting feelings, materialism, the importance of communication and some indicators of depression. To deal with her situation, Tsungai resorts to the use of strategies such as denial and rationalisation rather than more constructive, positive ones such as peer support and sublimation. Consequently, she did not appear to be dealing very well with the absence of her mother and her altered circumstances.

4.3 Six years later – the follow up interviews

Tsungai has grown up a lot and even though she is still a big girl, she no longer towers over the rest of her peers. She appears much more mature and poised and sits comfortably in my office. She is still gentle and softly spoken and is delighted that I

asked her to participate in the follow up study as she informs me that she has “so much to tell” me.

I start off by asking Tsungai to tell me a little of what has happened in her life since our interview six years ago. She recounts that her mother is still working in Australia as a doctor “but that now it’s different, because my sister is gone”. She has joined their mother in Australia leaving Tsungai is alone with her father. Tsungai feels that she has “grown a lot” and realised how much her sister used to do for her, stating “before I used to think “yeah, I’m all grown up, I can do things by myself” but after my sister left, I realised it was actually my sister who has been taking care of me and stuff”.

Tsungai informs me that the relationship with her father, “at first was still kind of the same” but that she feels that that about a month ago he started talking to her. “He doesn’t really talk to people that much but now we kind of talk. It’s nothing big, we are not close as such, but it’s better than before. He tells me what’s happening in the news or sometimes he asks, he actually asks what I was doing today!” Even though Tsungai feels that their conversations are rather trivial, she appears delighted that her father is taking an interest in her. She tells me that she attributes this change to her father working again. Even though he is still self-employed, he is “doing something” and has “finally found something that’s stable”.

Her father’s health is still a concern to Tsungai who was informed of his positive HIV status before I interviewed her during the course of the Pilot Study. Although she feels that he is taking better care of himself, something that he was not doing six years ago, the onus of his well-being has fallen largely on her shoulders and she feels responsible for him. She relates, “I am looking after him now as well. At first I realised I don’t have to take up the role, but then [I realised] it would help a lot and benefit both of us”.

In addition to caring for her father’s health, Tsungai has had to take on other household chores such as cooking and shopping. She says, “if groceries are short, I am the one who has to go and see what we need, to see if this will last for this long” and “I actually

cook because I want to, because I feel I owe it to my dad, I feel like I kind of have to take care of him". Studies (Aguilera-Guzman et al., 2004; Collins, 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila 1992; Schmalzbauer 2004) have found that adolescents find it stressful having to assume roles previously provided by migrant parents. These new obligations are normally in addition to previous ones, and include household duties and chores and providing support to other family members. Tsungai's words confirm this as she states when speaking of her additional roles and responsibilities, "I don't like that stress, I don't like that responsibility", explaining "because if something is wrong it's all on me".

Tsungai still misses her mother and this absence is compounded by the departure of her sister who has been gone for a year. She tells me, "I used to be very emotional, I used to cry a lot, especially in form two I used to cry and I would feel bad for crying but now I cry when it's necessary and I actually don't feel bad for crying, I feel better for crying". Tsungai does not appear to be coping well with the absence of her mother. The increased roles and responsibilities weigh heavily on her and she still cries when things get to her. In addition, she does not seem to have a strong support system around her, stating "I actually don't have anyone" when asked about it.

When Tsungai was interviewed during the course of the Pilot Study, she used to make extensive use of denial as a way to deal with her situation, for example by believing that her father "is now ok" in spite of his HIV status and of rationalisation, for example that it is alright for her mother to be working away from home because at least "she is safe there". The use of these mechanisms has endured. For instance, she states that "these are the best times of my life" but that she has no one to turn to and that she feels better when she cries.

4.3.1 The CYRM – 28

In order to explore resilience in Tsungai, I administered the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM – 28), a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic screening tool developed by the Resilience Research Centre (2009) to explore the resources (individual, relational, communal and cultural) available to youth aged nine to twenty three years old, that may

bolster their resilience. The findings are summarised below and related to the interview findings when applicable. Each of the three areas itemised by the measure is presented separately. Higher scores indicate higher levels of resilience in the areas addressed by the scale.

4.3.1.1 Individual resilience

Individual resilience is made up of three subscales, which address areas of personal and social skills, as well as peer support. Tsungai scored 40 out of a possible 55 points on this scale, representing 72.72 per cent.

The first subscale addresses “personal skills” and includes statements that investigate the ability to co-operate with others, to self-motivate (for example, “I try to finish what I start”), problem solving skills, one’s perception of how others view them (“People think I am fun to be with”), and awareness of one’s own strengths. Tsungai’s score was high on this subscale, namely 23 out of a possible 25 points. Her interview confirms this, as since her sister’s departure she has become responsible for her own and her father’s needs and well-being and has had to become more self-reliant. She stated that since her sister left, “I became a lot more independent. I did a lot of things by myself”.

The second subscale addresses “peer support” and is made up of two statements (“I feel supported by my friends”; and “My friends stand by me during difficult times”). Tsungai’s score was low on this subscale, namely 4 out of a possible 10 points. This low score indicates that Tsungai does not feel supported by her peers and has been unable to build an adequate support system to help her cope better with the absence of her mother. This is reflected in both the pilot interview, when she was younger and in the interview carried out during the course of this study. For example, in spite of the fact that she has been at school with the same girls for the past six years she says, “I feel that my friends don’t support me” and “I told them what needs to be told but I still don’t feel I get the support that I should be given from my friends”. She also recounted an incident that highlights her perceived lack of peer support, “I was at my friend’s house [whose] mom died and one of our friends said ‘are you ok? You seem lonely, do you

want me to come over?’ and that really hit me that this girl could tell that her friend was lonely and my friends don’t do that for me. It really did hit me that!” Furthermore, when asked if there is anyone she is able to turn to when she wants to discuss something, she replied “I actually don’t have anyone” and “I really do not have anyone to talk to. I mean, I have my friends but they can only understand so much”.

The third subscale addresses “social skills” and is made up of four statements that address issues such as being able to behave appropriately in varied situations, feeling as if one is given opportunities that show others that they are growing up and becoming responsible, knowing where to turn to in the community for help, and feeling like they are afforded opportunities to develop skills that will assist them later in life. Tsungai’s score was low on this subscale, namely 13 out of a possible 20 points, or 65 per cent, indicating that Tsungai is not especially effective at interacting with others in a way that makes her feel like she is supported. In her interview, Tsungai makes no reference to any support from extended family or community and repeatedly speaks of not having anyone to turn to. For example, she says, “this is my problem, I am going to deal with it by myself” when speaking about her mother’s absence. Even at school, where she could take advantage of a range of opportunities to show others how she is growing up and becoming responsible, she has chosen to take a “back seat” and is not especially involved in leadership programmes offered at her school.

4.3.1.2 Relationships with primary caregivers

Relationships with primary caregivers scale is made up of two subscales, which address areas of physical and psychological care-giving. Tsungai scored 22 out of a possible 35 points on this scale, representing 62.86 per cent on this scale.

The first subscale addresses physical care-giving and is made up of two statements relating to supervision (“my caregiver/s watch me closely”) and to basic needs (“if I am hungry, there is enough to eat”). Tsungai’s score was very low regarding being supervised. This is in line with her interview where, repeatedly, she stated that she has to “fend for herself” and that she feels a very definite lack of parental support and

supervision. For instance, Tsungai's physical needs are well taken care of, however, she did not allocate the full five points to the question relating to food, only four, which is surprising, as in her interview she stated that she is the one responsible for the cooking and shopping for herself and her father.

The second subscale addresses psychological care-giving and is made up of statements that investigate inter-personal relationships such as intimacy ("my caregiver knows a lot about me"), communication ("I talk to my caregiver about how I feel"), support and safety ("my caregiver stands by me during difficult times"; "I feel safe when I am with my caregiver"), and family and culture ("I enjoy my caregiver's cultural and family traditions"). Tsungai's scores were low in most areas addressed by this subscale, scoring four out of five only for the statement regarding safety. The lowest score was in relation to the statement about how well her caregiver, in this case her father, knows her. Her interview supports this score as Tsungai's words stress the fact that her father does not know her well and that they are not especially close. With regard her relationship with her father, she says that there is "no relationship at all" and "we are not close".

Furthermore, it appears that Tsungai does not feel supported even in regard to important decisions, such as the choice of subjects for her final years of school. The Cambridge examination system requires that a pupil chooses about three to four subjects which are taken to the final examination. The selection is crucial as it affects and restricts the choice of tertiary education access. Tsungai said, "they really left it up to me to choose the subjects, both my parents did". She added, "they gave me suggestions and they gave me advice but in the end it was my say". This was a major decision for a sixteen year old girl to make and I had the impression that she did not feel adequately supported. Her score on this statement was also low (two out of a possible five points – "a little").

Tsungai's score also highlights the fact that she does not talk sufficiently to her caregiver about how she feels. The fact that she does not communicate much with her

father has already been discussed, but her interview shows that the interactions she has with her mother are also inadequate. She recounts, "I told her [how I feel] and she said 'I was waiting for the day you would come and tell me'. She told me she was wondering why I hadn't told her I miss her". Tsungai also told me that she "sucks it up" rather than speak to her parents because she is afraid that "if I told [my mother] I miss her, maybe it would make her sad".

4.3.1.3 Context

The third scale of the CYRM – 28 relates to the context, the adolescent's environment. This scale is made up of three subscales, namely spiritual, education and cultural. Tsungai scored 31 out of a possible 50 points, representing 66 per cent.

The spiritual subscale assesses religious involvement, presenting statements such as "spiritual beliefs are a source of strength to me" and "I participate in organise religious activities", as well as community involvement, "I think it is important to help out in my community". Tsungai's scores were mixed for this section. The only statement she scored high on is the last one, indicating that Tsungai feels it is important to help out in the community. According to the American Psychological Association (ND), one way of bolstering resilience in children and empowering those who feel helpless, is by helping others. They suggest that parents should engage their children in age-appropriate volunteer work or to ask for assistance from them with some task that he or she can master. They further propose that, at school, teachers should brainstorm with children about ways they can help others. Tsungai's scores on the remaining two statements relating to spiritual and religious involvement are low showing a lack of support in these areas. In her interviews, Tsungai makes no reference to any form of spiritual or religious beliefs and she does not mention attending church or belonging to a religious congregation.

The second subscale relates to education and is made up of two statements, the first asks the respondent to attribute importance to obtaining an education and the second is a sense of belonging to their school. Tsungai scored five out of a possible ten points. As

previously mentioned, Tsungai attends an exclusive private school which offers a broad range of educational opportunities. It was surprising that Tsungai's score was low on this statement as, in the course of her interviews, she discussed matters relating to her education extensively. For example, she mentioned subject choices, especially in relation to what she felt she could or could not cope with. She stated, "I wanted to do maths, physics and accounts, then I saw that with physics I struggled, with maths I didn't get the marks I wanted to get".

The second statement in this subscale is "I feel I belong at my school". Tsungai's score was low in this regard, showing that she does not feel part of her scholastic context. This is a theme that emerged in both the Pilot Study and the current interviews. In the first interview, when she was younger, Tsungai spoke of having to keep up appearances for the sake of her fellow pupils, stating "at school, you just have to be carefree, because that is what most people do be carefree, because you don't want to cry because that would draw attention to yourself" showing a lack of intimacy with her peers. In the interview carried out during the course of this study, Tsungai evidences the fact that she has still not formed an adequate support system with her peers and she is not involved in school life, apart from the compulsory classes and activities she is required to attend and does not have friends that she feels support her.

The third subscale investigates the child's cultural context. It is made up of five statements relating to role models ("I have people to look up to"), ethnic affiliations and sentiments ("I am proud of my ethnic background; and I am proud to be a citizen of Zimbabwe"), and views of one's community and traditions ("I am treated fairly in my community; and I enjoy my community's traditions"). Tsungai's score was mixed in this section, with a total of seventeen out of a possible twenty-five points. Her scores were high regarding having people to look up to and feeling proud of her ethnic background. In her interviews, it is evident that Tsungai looks up to her mother and sees her as a role model. Her words show that she is proud of her mother's work, "I really appreciate what she does because I don't think she feels appreciated". Furthermore, Tsungai is

proud that her mother, by buying the vehicles, has provided a good income for the family and for her unemployed father.

4.3.2 Discussion

Tsungai was chosen as representative of an adolescent who is not coping optimally with parental absence due to out-migration. Her total score on the CYRM – 28 equates to a resilience level of 65 per cent. In the interview carried out in the course of the Pilot Study when Tsungai was twelve years old, certain themes emerged that reinforce this.

Primarily, Tsungai appears sad and shows indicators of a depressed mood. Crying is normal for her and it is how she expresses the longing for her mother and the feeling of abandonment. She is also anxious and worries a great deal about many things: her father's health, her mother's work and the burden this places on her, the lack of support from her friends and issues relating to school life. Like many other adolescents who are trying to cope with parental absence, Tsungai experiences conflicting feelings. On the one hand, she is grateful to her mother because she is aware that due to her mother's absence, the family circumstances have financially improved exponentially. On the other hand, Tsungai misses her mother terribly and wishes that her mother did not have to work away from home.

Materialism is another theme that emerged from the Pilot Study interview but was not echoed in the subsequent interviews. When Tsungai was younger, she attributed status and importance to the material possessions that her mother's absence provided her with as a result of improved financial circumstances. The theme that emerged was that Tsungai was beginning to justify and almost relish the absence of her mother in return for the gifts she received. This was cause of concern at the time, as I felt that it may lead to the "sugar daddy" syndrome, where young girls will exchange sexual favours with older men in return for material possessions. In Tsungai's case, however, no mention was made of material possessions in the interviews carried out six years later. This may indicate that maturity could play a role in moderating the influence of materialism on these adolescents.

The importance of communication, conversely, is a theme that has remained constant across the time frame. Tsungai spoke at length in the earlier and most recent interviews of the crucial role that communication has in making parental absence more tolerable. Not only the frequency of the interactions appears to be important but, at least in the case of Tsungai, now that she is older she appears to have learned to speak more openly to her mother about her feelings, especially when her circumstance get her down and she misses her mother more than she usually does. When she was younger, Tsungai reported being reluctant to tell her mother how much she missed her and discuss daily occurrences with her in case it caused her mother to “worry”. During the course of the current interview, however, Tsungai reports that she finally managed to tell her mother how much she missed her and that her mother said that she had “been waiting for her to tell” her this.

To deal with her circumstances when she was younger, Tsungai used rationalisation and denial. She tended to “make excuses” for her mother in order to feel a little better about the circumstances. In view of her current interviews, I feel that Tsungai still resorts to the use of these mechanisms but in a more positive, mature way. The reasons she gives now for her mother’s absence are linked more to the awareness of the need for such absence in concrete terms, for example, the fact that her father is unable to support them or to find a job. When she was younger, for example, she discussed questions of personal security for her mother, in order to “justify” the situation. Tsungai also appears a lot more realistic about the situation, in particular about her father’s health. Six years ago, she mentioned that her father was “OK” even though he was HIV positive. Now she acknowledges the fact that he is and is involved in ensuring his well-being and adherence to a healthy lifestyle and medication regime.

4.3.3 Conclusions and recommendations

With regard to resilience, Tsungai has not attained optimal scores, indicating moderate to low levels of resilience. She attained a 72.72 per cent score in the individual resilience scale, the relationships with caregivers score is 62.86 per cent and her lowest

score, context is 56.36 per cent. This amounts to an overall resilience score of 63.98 per cent. Looking at each area provides an indication of where interventions should be aimed in order to bolster Tsungai's resilience and equip her with the skills needed to cope better with parental absence.

For instance, in the field of individual resilience, the areas that need the most work are those relating to peer support and relations, as well as social skills. In the case of Tsungai, she could receive counselling sessions aimed at teaching her to seek support from her peers more successfully and how to communicate her needs.

With regard to caregiver relations, interventions targeted at educating both Tsungai and her parents to provide her with the comfort, support and reassurance she requires would improve her scores, and consequently, her ability to cope, significantly. For instance, parents could receive information on how best to prepare their children for migration and for their lives in the home country without their parents.

The importance of communication in the lives of adolescents should also be stressed to their parents. According to the interviews carried out with Tsungai, it is evident that regular contact, in the form of telephone calls, messaging, etcetera, mediates the negative impact of parental absence. Tsungai reported anxiety and other negative feelings when unable to communicate with her mother and father. Sensitising both the parent(s) and the adolescent in this regard would be beneficial to all parties.

The area of context is the most salient one in the educational environment. It is my opinion that educational establishments could play a crucial role in maximising the adaptation of adolescents affected by out-migration to their new circumstances. Schools could be a life-line for adolescents who, like Tsungai, are not coping optimally with parental absence and provide them with support and guidance. For instance, schools are in the unique position of being able to identify and bring together adolescents who share this experience and provide support groups for these children. These support groups could be used as a meeting platform and discussion forum for these

adolescents. Furthermore, positive coping mechanisms, such as seeking support, and problem solving strategies could be taught, thus reducing the use of maladaptive strategies. This would significantly bolster resilience, particularly in the area of peer support.

Issues such as materialism, which emerged as an area of concern when Tsungai was twelve years old, could be addressed both in the context of these support groups and in Life Orientation lessons, in order to equip these adolescents with the tools they need to successfully deal with their situation. In addition, through school programmes, these youngsters could be encouraged to become involved in community projects, a proven way to bolster resilience.

School counsellors could also be educated and sensitised to the plight of these adolescents and encouraged to give them support and guidance. Alternatively, in schools that do not employ counsellors, teachers could be provided with information regarding adolescents affected by out-migration and their unique needs and requested to be sensitive and supportive to these children, particularly in the initial phases of adaptation.

In depth knowledge of the resilience levels of adolescents affected by parental out-migration, can provide invested parties at every level to develop and implement interventions and support systems aimed at maximising and optimising these children's experiences of their unique circumstances.

Chapter 5

“I am with people who help me” – Chiedza’s story

5.1 Introduction

Chiedza was first interviewed by me in 2009, during the course of the Pilot Study. Chiedza’s father first left Zimbabwe in 2004 and was joined in 2006 by the rest of the family, her mother and two younger siblings. Chiedza was placed into boarding school in Harare, Zimbabwe. At the time of the interview she was thirteen years old.

5.2 The Pilot Study interview – 2009

Chiedza is an attractive, slim young lady. She is very poised and well dressed. She exudes confidence and greets me politely. When I invite her to sit, she looks bright and keen. She tells me that when she heard about the study she was eager to join in as she wanted “to share” her experience with others who have found themselves in the same circumstances.

Chiedza’s father, a civil engineer, migrated to Swaziland in 2004 to work in the construction industry. Although this was stressful for Chiedza, she only felt the impact of this decision two years later, in 2006, when her mother, younger brother and sister joined him in. Chiedza was placed in an exclusive boarding school for girls in Harare. In Swaziland, her mother obtained a job as a primary school teacher which made it difficult for her to visit Chiedza in Zimbabwe. This meant that, at the time of the interview, she saw her mother only once during the school term, approximately every three months, and her father and younger siblings during some of the school holidays, when she joined them in Swaziland. When unable to join her family, Chiedza is looked after by her extended family, in particular two aunts, her mother’s sister and her father’s sister.

Although Chiedza did not elaborate, her father’s decision to emigrate was due to the economic and socio-political situation of the early 2000s, a time of hyperinflation and wide spread shortages of all basic commodities in Zimbabwe. Chiedza was left behind in Harare because her parents felt that the secondary education that their remittances

could afford was far superior to anything available to her in Swaziland. The school where Chiedza is a boarder is prestigious and her material needs are well catered for. The grounds and hostels are beautiful and surrounded by manicured lawns and excellent sporting facilities. Academically, it is one of the top schools in Zimbabwe.

Chiedza's parents are a prime example of the significant brain drain that has affected the country from the beginning of the economic downturn and political turmoil which began in 2000, resulting in the emigration of the majority of Zimbabwe's human capital. According to Nyanga, Mpala and Chifamba (2012), Zimbabwe has lost more than a million highly skilled workers, from every sector of the economy, such as health and education. They state that Zimbabwe's intellectual capital can be found "in almost every corner of the globe" (p.141). Even after the formation of the 2009 inclusive government, the Government of National Unity, the situation did not ease and professionals from all sectors of Zimbabwe's economy continue to migrate and do not repatriate, like Chiedza's parents.

In 2009, Chiedza described her life as "a new experience" because she had never lived away from her parents before. Although she felt that "at first it was kind of difficult", she appeared well settled and happy in her new environment. She told me that at her school she is not the only girl whose parents work outside Zimbabwe and that consequently, she feels she is not alone.

Chiedza tells me that she has a good relationship with her parents and siblings and that, although she misses them, she feels that the time she spends with them is enriching and the atmosphere supportive. "My mom and dad are always there for me and my mom comes to see me quite a lot, which is great!"

5.2.1 Emerging themes

The themes that emerged from the interview with Chiedza carried out during the course of the Pilot Study highlight both the commonality and the divergence of the experiences of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by out-migration.

For example, Chiedza's situation confirms Lechaud's (1999) findings that families with members who have out-migrated are able to afford higher and better levels of education for their children, whose academic attainment is also advantaged by the situation. This, of course, is due to the foreign currency earnings remitted to the home country. Although studies show that parental absence brings with it a plethora of negative consequences (Filippa, 2011) and that the brain drain and its resultant acute shortage of manpower weaken a country's capacity for development (Nyanga, et al., 2012), it can be argued that adolescents like Chiedza, benefit educationally from the situation.

Chiedza also discusses the importance of communication in mediating the experience of children whose parents have left Zimbabwe to join the Diaspora. Chiedza says, "I usually get angry with [my parents] when they don't call and they promised to call". Chiedza appears to be coping well with her situation but when she does not hear from her parents regularly she experiences anger. Many of the adolescents interviewed during the course of the Pilot Study mirror Chiedza and Tsungai's feelings with regard the importance of communication, in line with Schmalzbauer's (2004) findings in a study on trans-national families. As Silver (2006) points out, communication is an important factor when attempting to minimise the negative effects of parental absence.

5.2.2 Defence and coping strategies

Chiedza's interview was analysed thematically in the course of the Pilot Study to explore the use of defence and coping strategies employed by adolescents affected by parental out-migration. Chiedza appeared to be coping well with her situation in spite of her young age and the fact that it was her first experience of being away from her mother, father and siblings. For example, when asked if there was anything else she would like to tell me, she stated "I feel normal. I don't file like I am THE special kid, just normal". This shows that Chiedza is able to deal with her circumstances in a positive way and is well adjusted.

The thematic analysis of her interview further confirms this, as it shows that Chiedza relies on the use of coping, rather than defence mechanisms. Haan (1965) suggests that the use of defence mechanisms may be less conducive to positive adaptation, as these defences tend to be rigid and distort reality. From her interview, it appears that Chiedza does not resort to the use of defence mechanisms to deal with her situation. Instead, Chiedza employs more conscious, deliberate coping strategies that are flexible, purposeful and reality-oriented, as proposed by Parker and Endler (1996). Grasha (1983) defines coping mechanisms as ways of consciously adapting to stress and anxiety in a positive and constructive way. In order to do so, individuals employ thoughts and behaviours aimed at problem solving, enlisting the help and support of others, seeking relevant information, acknowledging feelings and setting goals and objectives.

Chiedza makes use of logical analysis to help her cope with the absence of her parents. Grasha (1983) describes logical analysis as a way to examine problems systematically and thoroughly, so as to find reasons and explanations that will enable an individual to find a valid solution based on facts and realities. Chiedza does not make excuses for the absence of her parents. She acknowledges that she “feels normal” and that the absence of her parents is the best solution at the moment in order to afford her the best possible education. She states, “I am very lucky to be at this school. In Swaziland the schooling is not so good and I would not be able to achieve the same level of education as I will here”. She adds, “at times it is not easy for me or my parents, but it is the best way”.

Chiedza, unlike Tsungai, also makes use of the coping mechanism of seeking support. Grasha (1983) defines this as the ability to identify and take advantage of a suitable support system to help one deal with the challenges of a situation. For example, Chiedza informed me that she is not the only one at her boarding school whose parents work outside Zimbabwe. She says, “bear in mind that there are also other people who have parents outside the country who help me”. She has not only successfully identified others who are able to offer her support, but who are also able to show empathy as they

share a commonality of experience. Chiedza feels “close” and “supported” by her school friends and this helps to mediate her experience of parental absence. As a result, she appears much more able to deal with her circumstances than Tsungai, who feels that her friends do not understand or support her.

5.2.3 Conclusions on Pilot Study

The interview carried out with Chiedza during the course of the Pilot Study evidences themes that are not specific to Zimbabwean adolescents whose parents have out-migrated leaving them in their home countries but which are reflected in the experiences of other adolescents world-wide. In particular, what emerged is the ability of families to afford better education for their children and the importance of communication. Chiedza appears to be coping well with her circumstances and to do so, she employs positive coping strategies, such as logical analysis and seeking support and does not appear to resort to the less adaptive use of defences.

5.3 Six years later – the follow up interviews

I met Chiedza for the follow up interviews at the boarding hostel of her school. We sat in the lovely gardens. She is very much at home, and as a senior, you can see that she has status and is well respected by her peers and juniors. She was very much the hostess and made me feel comfortable and welcome. She has grown up a lot from the little girl that I interviewed six years previously.

The interview began by us chatting informally about what Chiedza had told me six years previously, when I interviewed her during the course of the Pilot Study. She laughed and told me that it seemed like such a long time ago and said that a lot had changed since then.

To begin with, she informed me that in 2012, her family left Swaziland and moved to Mauritius. Unfortunately, this meant that Chiedza “wasn’t going home as often” as it was much further. When she couldn’t go home, she spent her time visiting relatives or remained at school. She tells me that she didn’t mind at all as she has many friends in

boarding school and described it as her “home away from home”. Her father has not left Mauritius since 2012, but her mother has travelled back to Zimbabwe to visit her. Chiedza recounts, “[my mother] comes to Zimbabwe when I need her, like during my exam periods”. Chiedza has always felt supported by her parents, especially by her mother, and this appears to have continued during the past six years. For instance, Chiedza tells me that her mother has been back during her examination periods, which is “when I need her”.

Nevertheless, Chiedza says, “something that hasn’t changed is how much I miss home and I still haven’t learnt to cope with homesickness!” The interview with Chiedza shows how significant is the role of communication in mediating parental absence. She tells me, “in sixth form, we are allowed laptops and tablets and so I Skype my family a lot and I guess being able to talk to them whenever I want makes it much better”. Chiedza has noticed that in the last two years of school, having access to communication tools, such as Skype, has significantly improved her experience of being away from her parents. This could perhaps be considered when proposing support and interventions for younger children whose parents work outside the country, as it can be surmised that being younger would make them more vulnerable to the negative effects of parental absence.

Although Chiedza does not refer to this directly, one theme that emerged from the interviews carried out in the course of this study is that she has had to take on additional roles and responsibilities. Her little sister, who is 13 years old – the age Chiedza was when I first interviewed her – has joined her at the beginning of the year, boarding at the same school. Chiedza spoke to me about this, telling me that “it has been much easier for her” because her younger sister has not been alone as she is there to help her with the transition and the adjustment of being away from home. She says, “I chat to her a lot because I know, I remember, what she is going through, and no one should have to go through that!” Chiedza feels responsible for her sister’s well-being and tells me that she wants to make sure that she will be alright the following year when Chiedza will leave the school. “I want to apply to the University of Zimbabwe to study Medicine next

year” she explains, “that way even though I won’t be at school any more, I will be close enough to be there for my little sister if things get to her or if my mom can’t come so much”.

It does not appear, however, that Chiedza views this additional responsibility and role of care giver as a burden, as she is cheerful and proud when she speaks of this. She recounts, “in the beginning [my sister] was homesick and she’d come talk to me about it but now she is becoming quite independent”. She adds, “last holiday she even asked my parents if she could stay in Zimbabwe and not come home for the holiday so I guess for her, she see it as leaving the nest!” When I asked her how she feels about this, she laughs and tells me that she is obviously doing a good job! This attitude, therefore, does not support the finding of Aguilera-Guzman et al. (2004), Collins (1991), Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1992) and Schmalzbauer (2004), who found that adolescents find it stressful having to assume roles previously provided by migrant parents.

Although Chiedza still misses her family, she continues to successfully make use of the coping mechanism of seeking support. She tells me that when things get her down she knows who to turn to in order to feel better. “When I feel down and when Skype calls are not making me feel better, I usually just talk to my best friend or to one of my teachers, Madame M. They are both supportive and they understand”. By using this coping mechanism, Chiedza has adapted much better than Tsungai to her circumstances and the absence of her parents and is flourishing in many aspects of her life, personal, social and academic.

5.3.1 The CYRM – 28

I asked Chiedza to complete the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM – 28), a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic screening tool developed by the Resilience Research Centre (2009) to explore individual, relational, communal and cultural resources available to youth aged nine to twenty three years old, in order to evaluate Chiedza’s resilience levels. The findings are summarised below and related to the interview findings where applicable. Each of the three areas itemised by the measure is

presented separately. Higher scores indicate higher levels of resilience in the areas addressed by the scale.

5.3.1.1 Individual resilience

Three subscales, exploring areas of personal and social skills, as well as peer support, make up the individual resilience subscale. Chiedza's score was 48 out of a possible 55 points on this scale, representing 87.27 per cent.

Personal skills are investigated by the first subscale by proposing statements such as co-operation with others, self-motivation ("I try to finish what I start"), the ability to solve problems without harming oneself, evaluating how they are seen by others ("people think I am fun to be with"), and awareness of one's own strengths. Chiedza scored 24 out of a possible 25 points on this subscale, displaying exceptional personal skills. This score is reflected both in her interview, where she shows maturity of attitude and a realistic approach to her situation. Examples of this are her evaluation of the different ways in which she coped with homesickness six years ago and now, "the way I cope with my homesickness is so different from the previous years" and explaining how she used to deal with the situation when she was younger and how she deals with it now. In addition, she has successfully taken care of her younger sister by helping with her integration into boarding school and being away from home, a task that she enjoys, appears to have done well and is proud of. Furthermore, when I interviewed Chiedza, she told me that she has been very successful in her studies and leadership roles at her school, showing good self-motivation and an ability to work with others.

Peer support is investigated by the second subscale and it is not surprising, in view of her interviews, that Chiedza's score was high, namely nine out of a possible ten points. This subscale includes two statements that explore whether the child feels supported by friends and his/her perception of peer support during difficult times. Chiedza has always been able to successfully seek the support of others and this has positively contributed to her adaptation to parental absence and her circumstances, in spite of having both parents working outside Zimbabwe. Six years ago, when she was only thirteen years

old, she pointed out to me that she was not the only one whose parents were absent, “there are also other people who have parents outside the country who help me” she told me. During the course of the current interviews, she informed me that she talks to her best friend and also has developed a supportive relationships with one of her teachers. She also recounts, “I have friends ... so they understand that sometimes I’ll miss my dad and my brother and I become withdrawn and they just wait until I am ready to talk”. This shows the strength of her relationships with her friends, even in challenging times.

The final subscale in this section explores social skills and comprises statements that investigate issues such as one’s perception of knowing how to behave appropriately in diverse situations, feeling as if one is given opportunities that show others that they are growing up and becoming responsible, knowing where to turn to in the community for help, and whether they feel that like they are being given opportunities to develop useful life-long skills. Chiedza’s score in this section was not as high as in the other sections of the scale, mostly due to the fact that her scoring points to the fact that she does not feel that she is given opportunities to show others that she is growing up and is able to act responsibly. This shows that, at times, individual perception can be significantly different from reality, as Chiedza has a number of responsibilities at her school and is taking care of her younger sister. In spite of this, she feels that this is not sufficient.

Concurrent to her score, Chiedza awarded the maximum of five points to the statement “I know how to behave in different social situations”. This was highlighted during the course of her interview, as she displayed excellent social skills and exuded confidence and poise, showing that indeed, she is able to discern behaviour in different contexts and to interact successfully even outside her normal circumstances and familiar people.

5.3.1.2 Relationships with primary caregivers

The scale that explores relationships with primary caregivers comprises two subscales. These subscales address areas of both physical and psychological care-giving. Chiedza scored 31 out of a possible 35 points on this scale, representing 88.57 per cent.

The first subscale relates to aspects of physical care-giving. Two statements are proposed, the first exploring whether a child feels he/she is closely watched by his/her caregiver/s and the second to the availability of food. Chiedza scored high on both statements, awarding nine out of a possible ten points to these statements. This indicates that she feels that she has sufficient food to eat and that she feels closely supervised. Her interviews confirm this, as she spoke of parental support and contact both six years ago and in the course of the current study. For example, she states, “[my mother] comes back to give me support and be there when I need her”. Her boarding conditions at her school are also excellent, with both staff and house matrons actively involved in the life of the girls.

The second subscale investigates psychological care-giving. Five statements are proposed that consider inter-personal relationships such as how well a child feels their caregivers know them, the ability to communicate feelings to their caregivers, support and safety considerations (“my caregiver stands by me during difficult times”; “I feel safe when I am with my caregiver”), and how a child feels about family and cultural traditions. Chiedza’s scores were quite high on this portion of the subscale, obtaining 22 out of a possible 25 points. Surprisingly, she awarded a low score on the statement “I talk to my caregiver about how I feel”, as she stated repeatedly that she has a good relationship with her parents and extended family, especially with her mother, who visits her regularly. Further investigation is required to clarify this, but it could be surmised that although Chiedza is close to her family, she does not share her feelings with them. This is a theme that emerged from some of the Pilot Study interviews where the participants reported not telling their migrant parent(s) how they feel so as not to worry them, as in the case of Tsungai.

Unlike Tsungai, however, Chiedza reports the availability of parental support with regard to important decisions and transitions in her life. For instance, she told me that her mother joined her during the course of her major examinations and that she would be spending some time in Zimbabwe the following year in order to help Chiedza settle into

university life. She also said that her father will also be involved at that time, “he will come to Zimbabwe just before I start University to help with the registration process” and points out that “I speak to him at least once a week”.

5.3.1.3 Context

The third scale of the CYRM – 28 relates to context, in other words, the adolescent’s perception of their environment. Three subscales are included which explore spiritual, educational and cultural areas. Chiedza’s overall score on this scale was, although high, not as high as the scores she obtained on her other subscales, namely 41 out of a possible 50 points, representing 82 per cent.

The first subscale looks at the spiritual and religious context of the child. It investigates religious involvement and spiritual beliefs by using three statements, namely “spiritual beliefs are a source of strength to me” and “I participate in organised religious activities”. It also explores a youth’s community involvement, “I think it is important to help out in my community”. Chiedza’s scores were not quite as high on this subscale as on the other two and some of her scores were a little mixed. For example, although Chiedza wholly agreed that spiritual beliefs are a source of strength to her, her score was low on the participation in organised religious activities. Although the girls are made to attend Sunday services at their school, this may indicate that Chiedza sees this as part of her school duties and does not feel it as an involvement in a formal activity. Furthermore, she did not award the statement “I think it is important to help out in the community” the maximum score, even though, at school, she is involved in a number of community projects, such as the Interact Society, a junior Rotarian programme aimed at helping underprivileged members of the community.

Chiedza’s score was high on the second subscale which relates to education and is made up of two statements. The first asks the respondent to attribute importance to obtaining an education and the second to rate the sense of belonging to their school. Chiedza awarded nine out of a possible ten points to these statements. Her interviews support this score, as Chiedza is academically strong and very involved in many

aspects of school life. She intends to study Medicine, a demanding course, and so far her examination results have been outstanding and point to the fact that she will be able to pursue her goals in this regard. She informed me, “I did really well in my examinations last year and I am working really hard because it is not easy to get into Medicine”. Getting a good education is, therefore, very important to Chiedza, consistent to her score on this statement.

Chiedza’s score was also high on the second statement in this subscale, namely “I feel I belong at my school”. It is evident both from her behaviour and the way she talks about her school that Chiedza feels a strong sense of belonging and is happy. In her interviews, both six years ago and during the course of the current study, she gives the impression that she feels her school is a “home away from home” where she has friends and supportive relationships. She is also responsible for aspects of her hostel day to day activities and is very involved in helping her little sister and other junior girls settle into this new life. She even mentioned that her little sister now prefers “being in full boarding”, indicating that Chiedza finds this environment supportive and able to meet her needs and those of her little sister.

The cultural context is explored by the third subscale. Five statements are proposed in this section, relating to diverse aspects of a youth’s perception of their culture and country. The first statement relates to the availability of role models. Filippa (2011) points out that for many adolescents affected by out-migration the absence of role models is affecting their quality of life and can also be perceived as an additional role and responsibility in the case of those who are called to fulfil this role for their younger siblings. The second and last statements relate to ethnic affiliations and sentiments, exploring whether a child is proud of their ethnic background and to be a citizen of their country. By wording the last statement in such a way that the child can indicate the country of their choice, it is also possible to see to which country the respondent feels they belong. In the case of the current study, all the participants indicated Zimbabwe as their country of citizenship.

The last two statements explore views of community traditions and whether the participant feels he/she is treated fairly by the community. Chiedza's scores were not as high on this section of the subscale as in the other sections, awarding the statements a total of twenty out of a possible twenty-five points. Although like Tsungai, Chiedza feels that she has role models in her life and is proud to be Zimbabwean, her scores were rather low regarding her ethnic background and traditions. This could be partly explained in terms of the interviews carried out during the course of the current study. Chiedza's family have moved around quite a lot, she stated, "we have moved four times in the past five years". The moves are from Zimbabwe to Swaziland to Mauritius and even within Zimbabwe, they have moved from the capital, Harare to Norton, a smaller town. It can be surmised, therefore, that Chiedza has been exposed to various contexts and ethnic backgrounds, making her less aware and involved in Zimbabwean and Shona traditions.

5.3.2 Discussion

Chiedza was chosen as being representative of an adolescent who is coping well with parental absence due to out-migration and whose resilience levels are high. The interviews carried out with her, both six years ago during the course of the Pilot Study and as part of the current study confirm this, both in the form of emerging themes and ways of coping that Chiedza resorts to.

Chiedza appears happy, well settled and considers herself "normal". This shows that she has accepted her situation as is able to deal with the resultant feelings in a positive and mature way. She is also realistic about her emotions, by admitting to experiencing homesickness and missing her parents but having learned adaptive ways of coping with these feelings. Chiedza, like other participants who appear to be coping well with parental absence, does not resort to the use of less adaptive defence mechanisms to justify her situation but finds ways of making the most out of her life and situation.

A theme that is reflected in all the interviews carried out with Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration is that of communication. This theme is not country

specific to Zimbabwe, but is reflected in studies carried out in other parts of the world. Like most other youths interviewed during the course of the current study, Chiedza discussed at length how frequent and regular contact with her absent parents and members of her family is vitally important in mediating the negative effects of her situation. For example, she informed me that being allowed a computer at school that enables her to use Skype and other ways of communicating with her family more frequently has made a big difference in the last two years. "In sixth form we are allowed laptops and tablets so I Skype my family a lot and I guess being able to talk to them whenever I want makes it much better", she tells me. This is echoed by other participants of the study who discuss extensively how important regular contact with the absent members of their family is. Those who reported having frequent and regular access and contact with their family appeared happier and better able to deal with their circumstances. Chiedza is representative of these adolescents.

Chiedza has also been chosen as she represents the adolescents who attribute great importance, and are grateful for, the education they have been afforded by their parents having joined the Zimbabwean Diaspora. In spite of only being thirteen years old when she was first interviewed, Chiedza was very focussed on her studies and aware that the school she had been placed in offered her the chance of a superior education. She said, "there aren't any schools this good in Swaziland, so it is good that I have been left here, in such an excellent one". Her results have been outstanding and, if her final marks are as predicted by her teachers, she will be able to pursue a medical career at the University of Zimbabwe. This theme is reflected in other interviews carried out with Zimbabwean adolescents. Those who view having been left behind in order to obtain a good education as a positive aspect of their experience seem to achieve better results at school and be more focussed on their career goals. This attitude also appears to mediate the negative emotions caused by parental absence.

The American Psychological Association (ND) proposes that one way of bolstering resilience is to teach children to set and move towards reasonable goals. This is because moving towards and taking steps to achieving such goals focuses a child on

the positive, reinforcing a strength-based approach. It also provides children with tools that allow them to move forward in the face of challenges. Chiedza's high resilience scores and her interviews support these findings, as she has a clear career goal, which she has broken down into academic achievements. Her ability to meet each individual step of her goal contributes to high resilience levels.

As previously indicated, from the time she was first interviewed six years ago, Chiedza has resorted to the use of more positive coping mechanisms and has avoided the use of less adaptive defence mechanisms, as in the case of Tsungai. Chiedza has never made excuses for her parents and has always been realistic about her circumstances. The use of logical analysis was highlighted during the course of her Pilot Study interview and again during the course of the more recent interviews. She recognises that, although not optimal, her situation is unavoidable and is realistic about when her parents are able to visit and communicate with her. She has also not viewed her supportive role of her sister's adaptation to her new circumstances as a burden, but is proud of her achievements in this regard.

Chiedza is also very effective in seeking the support she needs from her environment. In the past six years, she has demonstrated an ability to obtain support from her peers, her teachers and her family. At school, from the outset, she was quick to identify other girls who shared her experience and to draw close to them, in order to deal with her situation. She did not perceive herself as unique but one of many who have to cope with the absence of parents. In the course of the current interviews, Chiedza also mentions that she has developed a supportive relationship with one of her teachers, making her able to turn to this person when in need. She also speaks of spending time with her maternal and paternal aunts when her mother is not in the country and getting on well with them. Finally, Chiedza is able to seek her parents' support both by means of communication, and personally during the course of their visits. She is especially close to her mother and her perception is that her parents are available to her when she most needs them, for example during her examination periods and to settle her into university life. Other adolescents who are effective at seeking support from others, as highlighted

in the course of the interviews, also appear better settled and have higher resilience scores than those who perceive themselves as isolated.

5.3.3 Conclusions and recommendations

Chiedza was chosen as representative of the adolescents who cope well with parental absence and who display high levels of resilience, as measured by the CYRM – 28. She achieved a score of 87.27 per cent in the individual resilience scale, a score of 88.57 per cent in the relationships with caregivers scale and a score of 82 per cent in the context scale, which even though it is her lowest, is still a high score, indicating good resilience in this area. This amounts to an overall resilience score of 85.94 per cent. Even though Chiedza exhibits high levels of resilience, the CYRM – 28 statements highlight areas where interventions can be aimed in order to maximise her resilience. In addition, looking at the results of a child who is coping well with parental absence can provide important information that can be used in the development of support systems and policies targeted at bolstering resilience of those who are not coping optimally with parental absence.

For example, Chiedza's score was rather low on the statement included in the individual resilience scale, namely "I know where to go in my community to get help". This highlights the fact that information systems are not adequate in Zimbabwe and children affected by parental out-migration do not know where to go to obtain the assistance they require to cope with their circumstances. Interventions within the community could address this deficit by providing and distributing relevant information and contact details to those affected by parental absence.

Sensitising communities to the plight of adolescents whose parents have out-migrated could also address deficit areas relating to cultural traditions and ethnic considerations. Ensuring that the children left behind in the home country are included in activities that give them a strong sense of belonging to their culture could bolster resilience, would solidify their roots and avoid role confusion in later life. Community "surrogacy" programs and interventions could take place within the school environment and those

who care for these adolescents in lieu of parents could also be instructed on how best to make the adolescents feel a sense of pride in their ethnicity and encourage participation in community's traditions.

As in Tsungai's case, Chiedza's interviews and CYRM – 28 results show how crucial the educational environment can be in optimising the experience of adolescents in particular, and children in general, who are affected by parental absence due to out-migration. Whereas Tsungai's case shows the areas of deficit that need to be addressed and can indeed be filled by schools, for example by providing support and guidance to these children, Chiedza's case shows the strengths that can be drawn and the resources that can be provided by those who are coping well.

For instance, in the previous chapter I proposed that schools could identify and bring together adolescents who find themselves left behind in their home country by migrant parents in the form of support groups. Administering a tool, such as the CYRM – 28 to evaluate resilience or even using teaching and pastoral staff to identify those who are coping well, could provide an important resource in the form of mentoring and peer counselling for those who find themselves on the other end of the scale.

The qualitative information obtained from the interviews carried out with adolescents whose resilience is high could also be used as a starting point for interventions aimed at those who are failing to cope or who are not coping optimally. For example, the successful use of the mechanism of seeking support has proved invaluable in moderating the negative effects of parental out-migration. Teaching this skill to those who lack it could make a significant difference. Once again, providing counselling and teaching staff with relevant information could assist with the optimal adaptation of those whose parents have joined the Diaspora and have left their children behind with relatives or in the care of educational institutions.

Although each child is unique, certain themes emerge that show the commonality of experience of adolescents affected by out-migration, not just in Zimbabwe, but globally.

This knowledge can be used for the development and implementation of interventions aimed at assisting the increasing number of youths affected by this situation.

Chapter 6

“I survived!” Wadzanai’s story

6.1 Introduction

Wadzanai was the last participant interviewed during the course of the Pilot Study. At the time of the interview, she had just turned fourteen. When her parents left Zimbabwe she was eleven years old and she was left in the care of her grandparents.

6.2 The Pilot Study interview – 2009

Wadzanai is a tall, athletic looking girl. She is one of the oldest in the class but she looks awkward and uncomfortable. I get the feeling that she is not sure about participating in the study but that she desperately wants to talk to someone. When I ask her why she volunteered to join in the study, she informed me that she was not sure but that she was hoping to find out more about others whose parents have also left the country because she is not happy about “how things are”.

We started chatting about her background and she relaxed a little. She is the eldest of three, and has a younger brother and sister who have also been left behind. She told me that her mother left the country almost three years previously, when she was only eleven years old and that her father had followed suit and went to work in the United Kingdom not long after. Wadzanai was left in the care of her grandparents. Initially, her parents visited every three months, but recently the time between the visits has increased. At the time of the interview, she had not seen either of her parents for almost eight months and she did not know when they would next come to Zimbabwe due to “some problems with visas or something”. This is not unusual, as many of those who join the Diaspora do so in a manner that is not always legal and are, consequently, unable to travel back to their home country until their status is legalised.

When asked what her parents do, Wadzanai was uncertain. She said, “Not quite sure, I think [my mother] is a receptionist with this lawyer company” and “I think he is a managing director or something”. Like all the other participants, her parents joined the

Zimbabwean Diaspora for financial reasons. Wadzanai's parents' remittances not only take care of the children who are all in private schools, but also help support her grandparents and other members of their extended family.

Wadzanai is not at all happy with her life at present. During the course of the interview she repeatedly told me, "I don't like it!" and that without her parents "it's not the same". She also emphasised, "life was so much better when we were with my parents!" Furthermore, she appeared very angry and resentful. Wadzanai does not board at her school but goes home every day to her grandparents' house. She perceives her life with them as difficult and she misses the life she had with her parents. This appears to be a significant stressor.

Several of the participants who have been left in the care of grandparents or older relatives, like Wadzanai, discuss the problems they experience trying to bridge the generation gap. They feel that their own parents are much more tolerant and modern and think that the older relatives do not understand their world and that they are too rigid. Wadzanai says, "I feel [my grandparents] treat me like a baby" adding, "they feel I am too irresponsible even if I try to show them I am not". A significant issue in these conflictual, inter-generational relationships is the inability to communicate with older caregivers. Wadzanai explains "I can't really say anything because they'll just say I am being a disobedient child". She is not the only one who feels this way. Another participant echoed her views by stating that she cannot talk to her grandmother because "she is practically from a different generation than me so I can't tell her some of the things I would want to tell my mother. She doesn't understand!"

Wadzanai and several of the other participants told me that the generation gap means that girls who live with older relatives find life especially challenging because, in the absence of their parents, they are subjected to rigid codes of discipline. What appears to make it even harder for them is that these codes are ignored when their parents visit, making it harder for them to revert when they depart. Wadzanai said, "when I go

shopping [with my parents] I am allowed to choose what I want. But with [my grandparents] I can't choose what I want. They have to choose".

Wadzanai attributes some of the challenges experienced in her relationship with her grandparents to cultural factors. Being Shona, she explained that her grandparents still abide by their culture's rules that, for example, adolescents cannot talk openly to their elders, "I wanted to tell [my grandfather] but I don't know how [be]cause ... maybe it's written in the Shona culture ... but if I merely go and complain I could get into trouble according to the Shona culture". She elaborated by saying, "We don't talk openly [to our grandparents]. [My grandmother] would start saying I am just a spoiled child and I would get into trouble". She also told me that she has to adhere to certain dress codes, explaining, "the way I dress is not good enough for my grandparents! I am not allowed to wear trousers and when I go shopping with them I can't choose what I want!" She explained that this is especially difficult to accept because "with my parents I can buy what I want and I don't have to wear dresses!"

Wadzanai's experience of parental absence is not a positive one and many of the challenges she is facing are reflected in the themes that emerged during the course of her interview.

6.2.1 Emerging themes

Feelings of abandonment and rejection were identified by Schmalzbauer (2004) who conducted interviews with Honduran adolescents left behind in their home country by their migrant parents. This study proposes that these emotions may be triggered by a number of reasons, such as a lack of understanding of the motives for not being allowed to migrate with parents and/or sadness at the loss of family ties.

Wadzanai's experience is in line with these results and congruent with those of a number of the other participants in the Pilot Study. Her words confirm this, for example, when she states "I feel [my life] is not the same because they are not my parents!" and "I think it's unfair that we are left here!" Other participants echo her words. "Last time I

saw her I was in eleven and now I am seventeen!” said one girl, who has not seen her mother for almost seven years. Feelings of abandonment and rejection were evident in her words and in the fact that they were tinted with sadness and a sense of loss of the times they could have been together. Wadzanai was very emotional when she exclaimed, “[my mother] is so far away, like there are so many things she is missing out in my life and so many things I am also missing out in her life!” She also appeared very upset by the fact that her parents’ visits are becoming increasingly rare and not as regular as they used to be before her father joined her mother abroad.

Feelings of abandonment and rejection are also manifested by a sense that the adolescent does not feel safe any longer. Wadzanai states, “I just don’t feel quite safe”. Even the male participants in the Pilot Study expressed concerns about their security. For example, a boy openly spoke of his worries about safety in the absence of his father by saying, “we don’t feel safe when there is no dad at home”. He looked very small and dejected when he said this and it was evident that he felt abandoned and vulnerable.

Wadzanai is also representative of adolescents who feel abandoned and rejected as a result of not understanding the reasons behind parental migration, or even why they were not able to leave Zimbabwe with their parents. “I just feel it’s not fair” she exclaimed referring to being left in Zimbabwe and, “I am just so angry ... I just don’t understand why!” Another girl concurred by stating, “sometimes I just don’t understand why I can’t be with [my parents]”, supporting Schmalzbauer’s (2004) findings.

The theme of abandonment and rejection caused by the perceived loss of family ties also emerged from Wadzanai’s interview, resulting in a sense of profound loneliness. For example, she recounted, “at home it’s lonely, there is no one to talk to because usually I am by myself” adding, “I don’t even feel like it’s home, it’s just a house, four walls, not a home!” Even participants who view their caring arrangements as satisfactory come across as lonely. For instance, another girl explained, “well, you feel that [your caregivers] love you but not in the way your mother would, so then you have that longing, that loneliness”. Another concurred, “I feel it’s just not the same, [be]cause

[my caregivers] are not my parents". From their words, it would seem that the sense of sadness and longing for their parent(s) is not quelled by the love and attention these adolescents receive from others. Wadzanai told me that she often thinks that if her mother was there things would be different. She was very tearful when she said this and explained that she felt even more abandoned by her mother after her visits. She recounted, "when my mom goes back, it goes back to the way it was and it's kind of harder just being by yourself".

Abandonment and rejection as a result of a sense of loneliness, which emerged prominently from the interviews conducted with Wadzanai and other Zimbabwean adolescents is not restricted to those who have both parents working in the Diaspora but emerges from the interviews conducted even with those who live with one parent. A feeling of parental abandonment can have profound effects on age-appropriate developmental tasks. According to Allen and Land (1999), in adolescence, attachment relationships with parental figures undergo significant change. For example, Weiss (1982) suggests that a significant task in adolescence is the transfer of reliance from parents to peers, whereby peers become the main attachment figures, in order for individuals to attain independence and autonomy. Adolescents affected by parental out-migration interviewed during the course of the Pilot Study reported experiencing loneliness which could indicate that, possibly due to the absence of one or both parents, they have encountered a setback in their quest for independence. For example, they may have been unable to shift their reliance from parents to peers, indicating a possibly delayed or skewed development in this regard. If the transition of reliance from parents to peers had taken place successfully, it could be surmised that their relationships with friends would, at least in part, compensate for parental absence and these adolescents would not seem so lonely, which does not appear to be the case.

Like Tsungai, Wadzanai discusses the benefits that she derives from parental out-migration and, consistent with the interviews carried out with other Zimbabwean adolescents whose parents have joined the Diaspora, she also appears to experience resultant conflicting feelings. Wadzanai says, "[my mom] is away so that I can get a

better life, but it's not fair ... I wish she was here or that I could be with her again!" Wadzanai was both angry and tearful when she spoke of this, showing that although she is fully aware that her parents' absence does benefit her, she still resents being left behind. These conflicting feelings are also a cause of guilt in these adolescents. Wadzanai, for example, says "you don't want to make your mom feel like you are not properly looked after because you feel she is doing this for you". Several of the adolescents interviewed share Wadzanai's view and hold back when they speak to their parents because they do not want to cause them additional worries. This may be because they feel that their parents are making a sacrifice in order to give them a better life. This is consistent with the findings of Schmalzbauer (2004), showing that conflicting feelings are a theme that is not unique to the experience of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration but that it is a global phenomenon.

Wadzanai also discusses the importance of communication, an aspect that has been shown as vitally important in being able to mediate the negative effects of parental absence (Silver, 2006) and that assists in maintaining family ties across borders (Schmalzbauer, 2004). For Wadzanai, the contact with her parents is not sufficient, "I wish I could speak to [my parents] more often but we are not allowed phones at school so I can only really talk to them at the weekend", she told me. Furthermore, she highlights another aspect of communication, namely the quality of such interactions. Wadzanai experiences constraints in both what she can say to her parents because she does not want to worry them, "I can't talk to my mom" and because she feels that her grandparents are listening to her conversations and do not afford her the privacy she would like. She told me, "I can't talk to [my mom] over the phone ... because [my grandfather] is there listening to my conversation" adding, "I also feel that [my grandparents] don't want me to tell my mom some things so sometimes I can't really say anything".

Not being able to speak frequently and freely to her parents is a cause of great distress to Wadzanai. She reports anger and frustration and the lack of contact, "I am too angry!" she exclaimed when speaking on the subject of communication and added, "when I

can't speak to them I feel really sad and lonely". Wadzanai also repeatedly states that she is not happy without her parents, "if I had a choice to go anywhere else, I would take that choice" and reports feelings that indicate that she is not coping very well. This is consistent with Silver's (2006) findings, because it is evident that, as Wadzanai perceives communication with her parents to be unsatisfactory in both frequency and quality, her experience of parental absence is more negative than that of the adolescents who, like Tarisai, have frequent contact with them.

A further prominent theme that emerged from the interview carried out with Wadzanai is a perceived lack of social support. According to Silver (2006), adolescents rely on their parents for social support and for the fulfilment of every day needs. When this support is absent, in the case of these adolescents due to their parents having out-migrated, daily stressors become exaggerated and cause unnecessary strain on these youth. Although it could be argued that at this developmental stage individuals are more reliant on peers than on parents for social support, studies show that a secure base is vital for the exploration of new identities and for the development of independence. In the absence of parents due to out-migration, this growth may be jeopardised (Erikson, 1963, 1968; Feeney & Collins, 2010).

Wadzanai states, "I don't have anyone", even though she lives with her grandparents and aunt. She feels that she cannot speak freely to her parents and that she is "not properly looked after". Wadzanai is generally not happy with any area of her life, including her school life. She tells me that some of her teachers feel that she is underperforming and is not sufficiently involved in school activities. She longs for her life before her parents left which contributes to her experiencing parental absence as stressful and negative.

Other participants report similar feelings of a lack of social support due to the absence of their parents and many spoke openly of this. "The support, the encouragement is something that I miss a lot" or "the emotional support ... I have really missed a lot", are statements common to many of the adolescents who took part in this Pilot Study. As

Wadzanai said, “it is hard because I am lonely [at home] and there is no one” and “at home it’s lonely, there is no one to talk to [be]cause usually I am by myself”. Wadzanai’s words and those of other participants who concur are heavily laden with a sense of loneliness, in spite of the presence of other family members and friends in their lives. Wadzanai told me that she particularly misses her parents when she plays sport at school because “there is no one there to support me”. Another girl reinforced her sentiment by stating that she misses her mother’s presence, especially when there are “things like Prize Giving, [my mother] doesn’t get to come and cheer me on when I am achieving something good”.

Wadzanai and some of the other adolescents interviewed seem to miss the guidance and role model figure that the absent parent provided. For instance, one boy, speaking about his life in the absence of his father, said, “many challenges come up without my father, someone to talk to, someone to guide me, someone to just have a chat with. He is my role model, my mentor in a way. Without him I just don’t have anyone to really turn to”. Wadzanai seems to miss most of all the role of the trusted confidant that many mothers play in the life of their daughter — someone to talk to. “I want to talk to my mom about problems at school and stuff [be]cause sometimes you can’t really talk to anyone else”, she said. Tsungai’s words are consistent with this, as she states, “when ... something is happening and I would like to talk to [my mother] about it because she would tell me what to do, you can’t because she is not there”. Some of the girls reported that they find it difficult to talk about personal issues with other family members or caregivers and, as a result, miss their mothers even more. One said: “You can’t ask your aunt something [be]cause you feel it’s wrong or something”, whilst another confirmed this feeling of not being able to talk to others in the same way as she can talk to her mother by saying: “When I have problems I don’t have anyone to tell them to, so for me that is the hardest thing”. Many of the participants expressed similar sentiments which are best summarised in the words of Wadzanai, “you need your mother there to be able to talk!”

Wadzanai and many of the adolescents interviewed confirm that the lack of social support, manifested in many guises, is a particularly challenging aspect of their lives which makes their day to day living more stressful than it would be if their parents were not working in the Zimbabwean Diaspora.

Finally, the reason why I chose to include Wadzanai in the current study is because during the course of the interview carried out as part of the Pilot Study she hinted at the possibility of inappropriate behaviour on the part of her grandfather, but did not elaborate sufficiently during the course of the interview to confirm positively that sexual abuse or molestation were taking place. James Elder (2007) of UNICEF points out that leaving children behind in the home country by migrant parents can increase a child's vulnerability. Shaw (2008) concurs, stating that some children, due to unsuitable caring arrangements and unable to join their parents, fall prey to child abuse of every description.

Wadzanai was very distressed and emotional when she talked about her grandfather's behaviour towards her during the course of the interview. She stated: "I feel, especially with my granddad, I just don't feel safe in a way, I actually don't feel safe in a way and I haven't quite told anyone besides my friends that I don't feel safe". When gently encouraged to elaborate, she said: "Well (hesitation) he... you know how you give someone a hug. Yeah, but I think that his hugs are too much... I even try to avoid giving him a hug at all times [be]cause I feel that the hugs just ...". She was unable to continue and she had to be given a little time to regain her composure. When she started speaking again, she said, "no one has ever hugged me like that. Even my cousins who are the same age as me have never hugged me like that, ever! Even my dad has never hugged me like that. And I feel that I shouldn't get hugs like that because even my cousins, we don't hug each other like that!"

I could not get Wadzanai to elaborate much more and she did not directly indicate that she was being sexually abused or molested, however, when transcribing and analysing the interview, I felt that there were further indicators that this may have been the case.

Firstly, Wadzanai repeatedly stated how unhappy she is with her caring arrangements, “I stay with my grandparents but if I had a choice I wouldn’t” and she also discusses safety issues. She says, “I don’t feel safe”. In addition, when she told me about her grandfather’s hugs she exclaimed, “I wanted to talk to my mom about it but I don’t want to talk to her over the phone”. Wadzanai also reports feeling powerless, saying, “I don’t think I can actually do anything”. Petty (2005) proposes that “sexual abuse is an abuse of power” (p. 86) and explains that perpetrators may use their relationship with the child, such as the role of grandfather as in the case of Wadzanai, to “bribe, coerce or threaten the child to fulfil their demands” (p. 86). Wadzanai told me, “I don’t like the hugs. I wanted to tell him but I don’t know how [be]cause in a way ... maybe it’s written in the Shona culture ... if I go and complain I could get into trouble”. Petty (2005) further remarks that because of the imbalance of power between perpetrator and child, there is little the child can do to avoid the abuse. Wadzanai wants to tell her mother what is happening but she is afraid of what she feels may be cultural mores that forbid her from doing so, prescribing her behaviour and forcing her into abiding by a “code of silence”. Petty (2005) further states that this power imbalance gives rise to feelings of powerlessness in the child which severely impact on other areas of their lives. A sense of powerlessness definitely pervades Wadzanai’s words. “I can’t say anything” she told me, “and if a decision is made about me I can’t have a fair say in it”, adding, “I can’t say anything because they’ll just say I am being a disobedient child”. She also told me, “I feel trapped, I don’t even feel like it’s home, it’s just a house, four walls, not a home!”

According to Petty (2005), incestuous families display certain accepted characteristics. For instance, they appear to be emotionally isolated and closed, with members having few supportive relationships outside the family; communication between members is poor; they tend to be patriarchal and authoritarian, with the father displaying an attitude of ownership towards their daughters and wives and strict ideas regarding gender roles and duties. These fathers also display a strong need to dominate and control family members. Furthermore, Petty (2005) points out that incest is kept a secret and seldom reported and that survivors “remain locked into their pain” (p.95). She also points out

that the child lacks support and may be aware of the devastating consequences of disclosure.

In the case of Wadzanai, the grandfather can be seen as having the role of father in the family. Wadzanai appears isolated, saying “I only have one friend” and that “I am not allowed to see her ... [be]cause [my grandfather] thinks I could be naughty. She also recounted that “my grandfather got all angry just because a boy came looking for me” and, “[my grandfather] shouted at me for having friends”. She also stated, [my grandfather] judges my friends, he wants to know every detail about my friends”. In addition, Wadzanai is prevented by her grandfather from having contact with other members of the family thus further isolating her. She said, “I am not allowed to see my other relatives because I don’t know if [my grandparents] find them a threat or something”. This highlights the grandfather’s strong need to control and his authoritarianism. Furthermore, as previously discussed, Wadzanai is unable or unwilling to communicate with her mother regarding what is happening. In the light of the above, a number of indicators exist that point to the possibility that sexual abuse may be taking place.

Wadzanai concluded the interview by saying, “I can’t think of anything else now, I am too angry!” I offered Wadzanai counselling but she did not take it up, although, on a number of occasions, when I encountered her and asked her how she was, she made an appointment to see me which she did not keep. Of the seventeen adolescents interviewed during the course of the Pilot Study, Wadzanai was the one who came across as most negative and unhappy. She was also very angry and frustrated.

6.2.2 Defence and coping strategies

One of the aims of the Pilot Study was to identify defence and coping strategies employed by adolescents affected by parental out-migration. The rationale behind this was to establish whether the adolescents who are better adjusted and thriving in spite of parental absence tend to use more adaptive coping strategies (Parker & Endler, 1996),

such as seeking social support and problem solving instead of more rigid and reality distorting defence mechanisms (Haan, 1965).

Wadzanai is not coping optimally with her circumstances, struggling, in particular, to deal with her care-giving arrangements. Like Tsungai, she rationalises the fact that she is unable to stand up to her grandfather by blaming cultural mores that prevent her from speaking up and by saying that she does not want to worry her mother who has migrated in order to give her a better life. This is her way of coming up with an acceptable excuse for not speaking up and to preserve her self-image and, possibly, also that of her grandfather. She appears to believe her excuses, supporting Gross' (1993) definition of the defence mechanism which he terms rationalisation.

Wadzanai also employs the defence mechanism of denial, as she appears to turn to anger rather than face distressing aspects of her reality, such as the fact that she may be a victim of sexual abuse or molestation. She repeatedly states, "I am fine", but contradicts herself, saying "I am angry" and even ends the interview on that note.

Most noticeably lacking, however, is Wadzanai's ability to seek support from her environment, such as her peers, teachers and other relatives. Grasha (1983) proposes that seeking support entails identifying and using a suitable support system to deal with challenging situations. Although Wadzanai states that her friends at school "sort of help", she contradicts herself later in the interview by stating that she only has one friend and she does not speak of this friend as affording her any support. The restrictions that her grandfather has imposed on her spending time with her friend and other family members are also contributory factors to her failure to forge supportive relationships. Unlike Chiedza, Wadzanai has not succeeded in this respect, thus, as expected she is not coping as well with her circumstances. This evidences that the use of this coping mechanism can significantly mediate the negative effects of parental absence due to out-migration.

6.2.3 Conclusions on Pilot Study

The interview carried out with Wadzanai during the course of the Pilot Study evidences a number of emerging themes, consistent with research findings on other adolescents affected by parental out-migration. Like many others, Wadzanai experiences conflicting feelings, a sense of abandonment and rejection, the importance of the quality, as well as the frequency, of communications and a lack of social support. Most significant, however, is the possibility that Wadzanai may be suffering from sexual molestation or abuse, highlighting the plight of many others who find themselves in the hands of caregivers who take advantage of their position. Although sexual abuse also happens when parents are present, parental absence does increase a child's vulnerability.

Wadzanai is not coping well with the absence of her parents because she tends to resort to the use of less adaptive defence mechanisms, such as rationalisation and denial, rather than more constructive coping mechanisms, such as seeking support.

6.3 Six years later – the follow up interviews

Wadzanai has changed a lot since I interviewed her during the course of the Pilot Study. She is nineteen and is about to finish her last year of school. She is sporty with an athletic build. What has not changed, however, is a sense that she is not totally at ease, that she is not comfortable in her own skin. Her posture is slumped and, as she sits opposite me, her body language is closed, with arms folded across her chest. Her appearance is slightly untidy, as if she does not really care what she looks like and her hair is short and unstyled. She smiles at me and tells me that she was not too sure about taking part in the follow up study but that, after thinking about it, she thought "it might be good to get some things out in the open".

I tell her that I am honoured that she has chosen to speak to me and I ask her where she would like to start. She tells me that so much has changed since she spoke to me, almost six years ago but that she can remember exactly how she felt then, "angry, so angry!" "That hasn't changed much, you know" she continues "because I have not forgotten anything, it is all here inside me". After a while Wadzanai tells me that she

would like to begin with what has happened with regard to her family since we last spoke. Her parents are still working outside the country and “because things here in Zimbabwe are not sorted out yet” they have not been able to return. “They are doing very well and our life is so much better now”, she relates. She continues by explaining that because she is older, about two years previously, her parents decided to purchase an apartment and moved Wadzanai and her younger siblings into it with a housekeeper and a driver.

“It is a big responsibility for me” she continues, “as I am in charge of everything and I have to make sure all is ok for my brother and sister”. She explains that she is responsible for administering the funds that her parents remit, paying bills and shopping for groceries and all other necessities. “My mom comes out about twice a year now and we go through everything, like, how much we will need to live and so on”. Wadzanai appears rather worried when she starts talking about these new responsibilities and frowns as she speaks. Her reaction is consistent with the findings of studies carried out with adolescents affected by parental out-migration (Aguilera-Guzman et al., 2004; Collins, 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1992; Schmalzbauer, 2004) which found that adolescents find it stressful having to assume roles previously provided by migrant parents. One of these roles is that of “other-mother” for girls who have to become nurturing figures to younger siblings and take on household duties (cooking, cleaning, etc.). Wadzanai is now responsible for the well-being of both her younger siblings and for running a household. Even though she does have a housekeeper to help her with some of these chores, a large portion of responsibility falls on her shoulders. These responsibilities are experienced as stressful, as they are in addition to her normal school work and activities.

She remarks, however, that she does not mind at all as it means that she no longer has to live with her grandparents. Since the interview carried out during the course of the Pilot Study, Wadzanai tells me that her grandmother has passed away. “She was quite sweet but practically blind and really she didn’t have much to do with any of us, she couldn’t protect us!” I ask her to tell me what she means by her grandmother not being

able to protect them and that I often wondered after her interview what she meant by some of the things she told me about her grandfather and how he used to make her feel. At this point the words begin pouring out. "You know" she says, "I never ever spoke to anyone about it but what he did to me, what he did was not right, it was too much!" adding, "no one should ever have to go through that". Wadzanai confided to me that she was indeed sexually molested by her grandfather from the time she moved in with them, when her parents out-migrated until she left. "There wasn't anything I could do, you know", she told me, "even later on when I really wanted to, he threatened to do to my little sister what he was doing to me and I could never let that happen to her". Sandler and Sepel (1990) found that between nine and eleven per cent of intrafamilial sexual abusers are grandparents, with the majority being grandfathers. It can, therefore be surmised that children left in the care of grandparents by migrant parents could be at high risk of sexual abuse, as the opportunity would increase due to parental absence.

Wadzanai explained to me that on several occasions she tried to speak to her aunt and even to her grandmother but that she was just not heard by anyone. "They told me I was an ungrateful, spoilt child" she exclaimed. "I am still so angry with [my grandfather] and with my aunts, they just didn't believe me". According to Petty (2005), incest often becomes a "family secret" which sustains it. She states that, even following disclosure, family members pressurise each other to ensure that the abuse is kept a secret from outsiders. In terms of systemic theories, each member does so in order to maintain the status quo of the family. Several reasons are cited by Petty (2005) for this, two in particular are especially salient in Wadzanai's case. Firstly, it is taboo to discuss sexual matters within the family. Wadzanai attributes her inability to speak up to Shona culture. Secondly, the oldest child tries to protect her younger siblings, believing that they are safe as long as she complies. In the course of the current interview, Wadzanai states that her grandmother was not able to protect them. To support this are Wadzanai's own words when she disclosed that if she did not accept her grandfather's inappropriate behaviour he would abuse her younger sister, hence she continued to suffer in silence.

Studies show that it is almost impossible to determine how sexual abuse will affect an individual in the long term due to its pervasive nature but it is generally agreed that it permeates every aspect of a person's existence, such as their sense of self, sexuality, relationships, work and mental health (Bass & Davis, 1988; Sanderson, 1990). Wadzanai appears to experience challenges in several areas of her life which are compounded by the absence of her parents.

During the course of the Pilot Study, I established that Wadzanai had been unable to develop the use of the mechanism of seeking support, in as much as she did not appear to have an effective support system and reported only having one friend. This trend has not changed, as she has been experiencing problems in interpersonal relationships which have resulted in significant problems at school. During the course of her interviews, she told me that she does not "get on" with girls in her own year group. "I am not really close to anyone in my classes, I don't know why, they kind of treat me as if I am different and I always feel like they are talking behind my back, or something", she said. She continues by telling me that the previous year she was in "a whole lot of trouble" with the Headmistress and some parents because they complained that she had forged an inappropriate friendship with a girl that was three years younger than her. "You know, they wanted to expel me and I was so scared I might have to phone my parents, they would have been furious with me". She explains that she made friends with a girl who was "so much like me, we liked the same things and stuff, like playing the drums and the guitar". They used to spend a lot of time together "I could tell her things that I have never told anyone and it was the same for her". When the girl's parents found out "they said it was not natural and that I was a lesbian and that I was trying to make this girl the same!"

In Zimbabwe, being accused of being gay or lesbian is a serious problem both because Shona culture does not accept it and because constitutionally it is illegal and punishable by law. "I was very scared" she recounts, "I didn't know what to do or who to talk to, there was no one there for me". This also shows that Wadzanai still feels a lack of social support. "I don't think I am gay, you know" she confided, "but since what happened to

me, you know, with my grandfather, I don't like being near men and I really, really liked this girl, she was like me". Petty (2005) proposes that "abuse may create anger, bitterness and feelings of worthlessness, but people direct and channel these feelings differently" (p.116). Wadzanai's interviews, both in the course of the Pilot Study and the current research, show that she experiences a great deal of anger which she acknowledges and speaks freely about. She is also bitter and resentful towards her grandfather.

The friendship Wadzanai formed with the younger girl, not only supports Petty's (2005) findings that children who are sexually abused experience problems with relationships, but could also be seen as evidence of the use of the defence mechanism of reaction formation. Gross (1993) defines this mechanism as consciously feeling or thinking the very opposite of what you unconsciously feel or think. Wadzanai appears to be attracted to this girl to the point where the family and school became involved, yet she will not acknowledge her true feelings towards her friend.

Wadzanai also resorts to the use of denial to deal with her circumstances. Although she has evidently not dealt with the sexual trauma, she feels that she is "alright now" just because she has moved away from the abusive situation. When I asked if she had received any form of counselling, she told me, "I didn't need it anyway, I survived".

6.3.1 The CYRM – 28

During the course of the current study, I asked Wadzanai to complete the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM – 28) in order to evaluate her resilience levels and explore what individual, relational, communal and cultural resources she makes use of to cope with parental absence due to out-migration. The findings are summarised below and related to the interview findings, where applicable. Each of the three areas itemised by the measure is presented separately. Higher scores indicate higher levels of resilience in the areas addressed by the scale.

6.3.1.1 Individual resilience

The three subscales that measure individual resilience explore areas of personal and social skills, as well as peer support. Wadzanai scored 23 out of a possible 55 points on this scale, representing 41.81 per cent.

The first subscale, relating to individual resilience, investigates personal skills. The statements that comprise this subscale look at co-operation skills and self motivation, as well as problem solving skills. It also asks respondents to look at themselves by evaluating whether they feel they are “fun to be with” and their strengths. Wadzanai’s score was low, awarding merely 11 out of a possible 25 points to the statements in this section. The low scores Wadzanai awarded to the statements of this subscale are consistent with the themes that emerged from her interviews. For instance, she does not consider herself a “fun” person, stating, “most of the time the other girls at school feel that I am too serious, I don’t talk about boys, clothes and all that stuff”. She also feels that she is not a strong person, in spite of what she has gone through. “I wish I had not been so weak and I had stood up for myself, for what is right”, she told me.

The second subscale evaluates the respondent’s perception of peer support, proposing two statements relating to support by friends in general and in difficult times. Consistent with the themes arising from Wandzanai’s interview, the score was very low, namely 2 out of a possible 10 points. Wadzanai has not been successful in using the coping mechanism of seeking support. She reports that she does not feel that she fits in at school with her peers and that her only friend was the younger girl. This relationship was ended because the family and school felt it was inappropriate, leaving Wadzanai even more isolated and sad. “I was heartbroken” she told me, “because we were not doing anything, we were just friends, she got me!” Wadzanai’s manner and appearance are not stereotypical and she does not “fit in” and the way she is treated at her school is a contributing factor for her lack of bonding with her peers. For example, she recounted an incident when she was accused of being lesbian and shunned by many of the girls. “They say really hurtful things about me that are not true. It doesn’t matter what I do or say, they don’t believe my side of the story. Sometimes when I walk into the room they

just stop talking and just look at me and I know they have been talking about me”. Furthermore, Wadzanai has not learned to share and communicate effectively with others. Like Tsungai, she said “it is my problem and I don’t like to talk about it at school where you have to put on an appearance that everything is ok”. In adolescence, it is expected that individuals be reliant on peers for social support (Erikson, 1963, 1968; Feeney & Collins, 2010) and it could be surmised that Wadzanai’s lack of interaction and bonding with peers could result in skewed development.

Four statements are presented by the third subscale, exploring issues relating to social skills. Included in this part of the measure are statements such as the perception that the adolescent is being offered opportunities to show that she is becoming an adult and behaving responsibly. Wadzanai’s scores were mixed in this section of the measure, resulting in an overall score of 10 out of a possible 20 marks. During the course of the Pilot Study, Wadzanai said “[my grandparents] feel I am too irresponsible” and “they treat me like a baby, I feel they don’t treat me like I am growing up”. During the course of the interviews carried out as part of the current study, she stated that her grandfather has not changed his attitude towards her at all but that at least “I no longer have to live with that!” This shows that, in spite of the numerous responsibilities that she has had to take on with the new living arrangements, where she is in charge of the well-being of her siblings and administering family finances and logistics, her confidence has been undermined to the point where she does not recognise this as opportunities to show that she is becoming an adult.

What also emerged from the social skills scale is that Wadzanai does not know where to go in the community to get help, as she awarded the lowest possible score to the statement relating to the perceived availability of community support. This could indicate that she is still feeling lonely and isolated. This is confirmed by her interviews, as she did not report having much contact or support from other members of her family and did not mention any other community interaction. In this section of the scale, Wadzanai also awarded a low score of two to the statement relating to having opportunities to develop skills that will be useful in later life, such as job skills. This is not consistent with what

she told me about her schools and the programme it offers to adolescents, especially in their last year of school, to take on leadership and other roles that would help them prepare for their future. For example, Wadzanai told me that her school does offer career support and has a leadership programme whereby each student in their upper sixth year (the last year of school) applies for, and is appointed to, a “job” within the school, supervised by a member of staff. Wadzanai said, “I wanted to apply for a position in music but then because of what happened with my friend, I didn’t want to anymore because I know I wouldn’t have got it anyway”. This demonstrates that even though opportunities may be available, some adolescents may lack the confidence to avail themselves of these chances and not view them as paths to adulthood.

6.3.1.2 Relationships with primary caregivers

The scale that deals with relationships with primary caregivers comprises two subscales, which address areas of physical and psychological care-giving. In this scale, Wadzanai obtained the lowest overall score, namely 11 out of a possible 35 points, representing 31.42 per cent. In view of the fact that Wadzanai was sexually abused by her caregiver in the absence of her parents due to out-migration, this extremely low score is to be expected.

The first part of the subscale proposes two statements which address physical care-giving. The first one relates to supervision, asking whether the adolescent feels she is watched closely and to the fulfilment of basic needs, represented by whether a child feels there is sufficient food available to him or her. Wadzanai awarded the lowest possible score to the statement relating to being watched closely. Evidently, she must have interpreted this as being watched in a caring, concerned and protective way because during the course of the interview carried out as part of the Pilot Study she complained that her grandfather was “nosy” and that he “sticks his nose in my affairs”. Furthermore, she felt that she could not speak freely over the telephone to her mother as her grandfather was listening to her conversations. She did, however, award the maximum score to the statement relating to the availability of food. This shows that Wadzanai’s parents provide adequate funding for the family and that she is able to

administer these funds in a way that does take good care of their basic needs, such as food and shelter. What emerges from Wadzanai's responses is a sense that even though an adolescent's needs are well catered for by the funds remitted by their absent parents, this alone is not sufficient to alter a negative perception of their circumstances.

Five statements make up the second subscale, which addresses psychological caregiving. The statements explore aspects of inter-personal relationships, such as how well the adolescents feel their caregivers know them, aspects of communication with caregivers and the ability to express feelings within the bounds of the relationship, support and safety, as well as aspects of one's family's and culture and traditions. Wadzanai awarded the lowest possible score to all five of the statements in this section, namely five out of a possible 25 points, showing that this is effectively the area where her resilience is the lowest. These low scores are not surprising and they are consistent with the interviews carried out both during the course of the Pilot Study and during the current study.

Wadzanai's experience of parental absence is especially challenging in view of the fact that she was sexually abused by her caregiver. This compounds the negativity of her situation and makes it much more difficult for her to cope with the absence of her parents. For example, she does not feel that her caregivers know a lot about her as she did not share with her mother, grandmother or other relatives what was happening to her. During the course of her recent interview, she stated, "my family don't know anything about me that is under the surface, only what I want them to see. They think they know me but they don't". When Wadzanai was younger, she did not want to tell her mother how she felt for fear of worrying her. This has not changed, "[my parents] are so far away, what is the point of telling them how I feel? It's not like they can do anything, they have done their best already by letting us move out of my grandparents' house". This also applies to the statement relating to being supported in difficult times.

Wadzanai, like Tsungai, also experiences the absence of her parents as a lack of support with regard to important decisions. In her interviews, she mentions that she is

responsible for the administration of the funds that her parents remit for the house and finds this stressful, “even though my mom goes through things with me when she is here, I still have to then manage without her help for months!” she exclaimed. She also recounted that, at times she “has to make decisions about my brother and sister’s school stuff and sometimes when I can’t get hold of my parents on the phone I just have to do it alone. Then I really wish they were here!”

The low score awarded to safety issues is consistent with Wadzanai’s experience of sexual abuse. During the course of the Pilot Study, she repeatedly stated that she did not feel safe in the care of her grandparents but that she was unable to tell her mother this because she did not want to worry her. Even though she no longer lives with her grandparents, Wadzanai still feels unsafe to a certain extent. “I really worry that if I make any mistakes, if anything goes wrong, we will be sent back to my grandfather. That would be terrible for all of us” she said. Traditionally, the grandfather has a lot of say in family issues and this could also be a cause of concern for Wadzanai. The statement relating to the family’s cultural traditions was also awarded a low score. Wadzanai feels let down by her own Shona culture, which she blamed when she was younger for her inability to speak up about the abuse and stand up to her grandfather. Even now that she is older, she knows that her grandfather still has a lot of power within the family, which not only worries her but has turned her against the mores of the Shona culture.

6.3.1.3 Context

The third scale of the measure explores aspects of an adolescent’s environment, referred to as the context scale. The three areas addressed are the spiritual, educational and cultural ones. Wadzanai scored 16 out of a possible 50 points, representing 32 per cent.

The first subscale explores spiritual aspects, such as spiritual beliefs and religious activities. It also evaluates the importance that the child attributes to helping out in the community, as helping others is conducive to high resilience levels in children.

Wadzanai's scores were low on all three statements, consistent with her interviews, which did not mention any form of religious involvement since she left her grandparents' house. In the course of the Pilot Study, however, she did say "when I go to church with [my grandparents] I am not allowed to wear trousers ... I have to wear dresses, skirts and things like that" but when asked if she still attended church she stated "now that we don't live with my grandparents any more, we don't have to". Wadzanai appears to feel that it is not important to help out in her community. This may be because since she and her siblings have moved into their own apartment they are more isolated and are not part of an actual community. This could be compounded by the fact that they do not appear to have much extended family contact and support, thus lacking a sense of belonging. It would hence follow that if she does not feel she receives any community support, she would not feel the need to give back.

The second subscale, made up to two statements, relates to education. The first statement asks the respondent to evaluate how important obtaining an education is to them, whilst the second explores whether a child feels that he or she belongs in their school. Wadzanai awarded four out of ten points to these statements. Obtaining an education did not attract as high a score as one would expect considering that Wadzanai is at an exclusive private school, which encourages the pupils to strive for superior academic achievement. Her interview reveals that she is struggling academically and this could be the reason why she does not attribute much importance to achieving good results, and consequently, a good education at school. "I am not doing so well at school" she said, when asked "I have so much to do with the house and my siblings that I never seem to have enough time to study". Many children who have had to assume additional roles and responsibilities, like Wadzanai, find it stressful to cope with their normal age-appropriate tasks as well as their new chores, as proposed by Aguilera-Guzman et al. (2004), Collins (1991), Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1992) and Schmalzbauer (2004). In the case of Wadzanai, this has resulted in a perception that acquiring an education is not as important as one would expect, especially for

Wadzanai, who is in her last year at school and her final results could impact on her future career aims.

In this subscale, Wadzanai also awarded the lowest possible score to the statement regarding whether she feels she belongs at her school. This is consistent with the interview findings, which confirm that she has failed to interact successfully and forge bonds with her peers at school. In addition, she has not become involved in the leadership opportunities that her school offers and has not volunteered for any positions of responsibility, sought after tasks in the last year of schooling. Wadzanai feels alienated and does not see her school as a place that could offer her support and could potentially mediate her negative experience of parental absence.

The third and final subscale explores the adolescent's cultural context. It proposes five statements, looking at the availability of role models, a sense of ethnicity and how a child perceives his or her community, its mores and traditions. Wadzanai's scores were generally low in this section, awarding a total of seven out of a possible 25 points, representing 28 per cent. Wadzanai does not appear to have any role models. It is possible that her perception of adults has been negatively affected by her experience of sexual abuse. Not only she would view adults as threatening and not worthy of trust, but may also feel a lack of support from her extended family and community, in the face of such abuse. This score, however, is in contrast to her interviews which show that she recognises and admires her parents' efforts to provide a better life for her and her siblings. For example, she states "what [my parents] are doing is a huge sacrifice and they are doing it for us" and "it is not easy to live so far away from home, they miss us as much as we miss them".

With regard to the statements relating to perceptions of the community, Wadzanai was once again negative. As seen before, it appears that living alone with her siblings with little contact from members of her extended family has left Wadzanai with a sense of isolation and a lack of belonging. She told me "we only really see the relatives when one of my parents visits" and "I only know a few of my neighbours but not very well".

Highlighting the importance of community involvement in the lives of adolescents affected by parental out-migration, Alvord and Grados (2005) outline several categories of protective factors, which act as buffers in risk situations. One of these categories relates to positive community support, therefore, a lack of perceived support from one's community could impact negatively on a child's experience of parental absence.

6.3.2 Discussion

Wadzanai was chosen because she represents an adolescent whose negative experience of parental absence due to out-migration is compounded by having been the victim of sexual abuse, as a result of her caring arrangements. She thus epitomises those children who have to cope with multiple stressors. Wadzanai is still not dealing well with her circumstances and this is reflected by her low scores on the CYRM – 28, which equate to a very low overall resilience level of 35.06 per cent. This score illustrates the reciprocal relationship of coping and resilience. Is Wadzanai failing to cope with parental absence due to low resilience levels or is parental absence the cause for the low resilience scores? Regardless, it would consequently follow that boosting resilience levels would interrupt the cycle and mediate the negative effects of parental absence.

A number of themes emerged during the course of the interviews carried out during the course of the Pilot and subsequent studies. First of all, it is evident that Wadzanai is not happy with the caring arrangements her parents made when they out-migrated. She experienced problems with her caregivers – her grandparents – which she attributes to both the “generation gap”, with a resultant lack of understanding, and to the attachment of the older generation to what she considers outdated cultural norms and mores. These norms and mores are experienced as especially stressful, in view of the fact that Wadzanai is not subjected to them when her parents visit her in the home country, making it hard for her to conform when they leave again.

Like many other adolescents whose parents have joined the Zimbabwean Diaspora, Wadzanai experiences feelings of abandonment and rejection, consistent with findings

of studies on adolescents in other parts of the world, affected by parental migratory trends. One of the principal causes of these feelings is a lack of understanding of the reasons for being left behind in the home country. Wadzanai speaks of the situation as “unfair” and regrets the fact that she is missing out on her parents’ lives and vice versa.

Feelings of sadness at the loss of family ties are also highlighted by Wadzanai’s experience. She reports feeling lonely and isolated, referring to her grandparents’ house as “not a home”. Conflicting feelings are also triggered by the situation, as Wadzanai realises that parental absence means financial security for the family yet, at the same time, resenting the absence of her parents. This is compounded by the fact that, in Wadzanai’s case and in that of other participants, other members of the family also benefit from the remittances of migrant members.

Wadzanai, like many other adolescents world-wide affected by parental out-migration, has had to assume new roles and responsibilities previously held by her parents. She is now responsible for running a house and its finances and has taken onto the role of “other mother” to her younger siblings. Although she is pleased to have her own apartment, removing her and her brother and sister from the danger of sexual abuse by her grandfather, these roles and responsibilities are experienced as stressful. In addition, it appears that her school work has suffered and that she no longer attributes much importance to obtaining a good education.

Wadzanai, like all other participants in the study, highlights the importance of communication in mediating the negative effects of parental absence, evidencing that it is not just the frequency of the interaction that is important but also its quality. Wadzanai feels that she lacks privacy when she speaks to her parents and is, consequently, unable to express herself freely to them. She also holds back because she is afraid of compounding to her parents’ perceived worries and burdens. In addition, Wadzanai seems to interpret cultural norms in such a way that they prevent her from informing her parents of what is happening to her. This causes feeling of anger and frustration. This

theme has remained constant over time, showing its relevance in the lives of adolescents affected by outmigration.

Most salient, however, is the theme of sexual abuse of molestation. According to Shaw (2008), children who are left behind by parents who out-migrate are more vulnerable to abuse. Wadzanai is representative of these children. Even though she only hinted at what was happening to her during the course of the Pilot Study, she was able to open up and talk about her experience later. Maturity may be a contributing factor in this case, compounded by the fact that she is no longer living with her abusive grandfather. Wadzanai and her siblings are now safe in their own home but the experience of abuse has affected her in many ways that pervade several areas of her life. For example, she has not been able to forge strong friendship bonds with her peers, finds it difficult to communicate openly, experiences feelings of anger and appears isolated and mistrustful.

In order to cope with her situation, Wadzanai resorts mostly to the use of less adaptive defence mechanisms. Defence mechanisms are pervasive and become entrenched over time. This is confirmed by the follow-up interviews which show that Wadzanai is still resorting to the same defence mechanisms she used when she was much younger. Primarily, she tends to rationalise her abusive situation by “making excuses” for not reporting the abuse, citing cultural norms and not wanting to worry her parents. She also uses denial by not admitting to herself and others the reality of the situation, turning it into feelings of anger and resentment. The interviews with Wadzanai not only highlight the use of defence mechanisms but the lack of more positive and conducive coping mechanisms, such as the ability to seek support. Wadzanai lacks the support necessary to cope effectively with her circumstances and has not been able to identify and nurture such relationships, in spite of being significantly older than when she was interviewed in the course of the Pilot Study.

6.3.3 Conclusions and recommendations

Consistent with the themes emerging during the course of her interviews, which indicate that Wadzanai is not coping well with her circumstances, she obtained low scores on the CYRM – 28, evidencing low resilience levels. She attained a 41.81 per cent score on the individual resilience scale, 31.42 per cent in the relationships with caregivers scale and 32 per cent on the context scale. This represents a very low overall resilience score of 35.07 per cent. In the case of Wadzanai and of adolescents, who like her, have low resilience scores and ineffective coping strategies, interventions should be targeted at all three areas. This will bolster resilience and provide them with more effective skills and support systems, in order to help them deal with parental absence more effectively.

In the area of individual resilience, for instance, attention should be given to both peer support and personal skills. Wadzanai could be taught to identify and seek peer support, with a view to help her integrate and feel like she belongs. Reliance on peers in adolescence is an important developmental step, with long term adaptive consequences. Teaching Wadzanai to become part of an age appropriate group would ensure that this developmental stage is successfully completed, as well as providing her with much needed support. Wadzanai also sees herself as not being fun to be with. This may be due to her experience of abuse and, more recently, to the added responsibilities she has acquired. Interacting with her peers would help her to have some fun and relax, thus bolstering resilience in this area.

Because of being sexually abused when left in the care of her grandfather, Wadzanai's scores were especially low with regard to caregiver relations, highlighting the importance of suitable caring arrangements for adolescents left in the home country. Interventions aimed at migrant parents, educating them on the dangers involved when leaving children behind and how to provide them with a "life line" should they need one, would make these children's experiences considerably easier to deal with. Furthermore, providing these adolescents with a support system where they can openly voice their concerns would help to make them feel more secure and reduce the risk of situations, like Wadzanai's, from developing and causing long term damage. Wadzanai's case

study shows that sexual abuse as a result of inadequate caregiving and safety arrangements is a reality in the lives of children who are left in the home country by migrant parents. It also shows that if adolescents of an above average socio-economic status who appear well looked after can fall victim to abuse, those who are not as well cared for and affluent are much more likely to be preyed upon and become victims of sexual molestation and abuse.

The importance of psychological caregiving should also be stressed, especially in the case of children from a higher socio-economic status whose material needs are well catered for. A perceived lack of support, safety and closeness with caregivers results in low resilience scores and compounds the negativity of the experience. Interventions targeted at preparing children, parents and caregivers for parental migration, would assist in cushioning the negative consequences of the situation and bolster resilience in these areas.

Both across the interviews and longitudinally, the importance of the frequency and quality of communication is evidenced. Studies, such as those by Schmalzbauer (2004) and Silver (2006), have demonstrated how important the role of good communication is in mediating the negative effects of parental absence on children left in their home country. Parents should be sensitised to this and urged to ensure that suitable and generous arrangements are made for contact between parents and children. The role of social media in this regard should not be underestimated, as many of those interviewed reported that social media can help in making them feel a little more part of their parents' lives and allows them to share experiences in real time. This would also assist in reducing the perceived lack of social support by these adolescents by bringing families in closer contact.

Much could be done to bolster resilience in the area of context, at both community level and through educational establishments. Communities should be sensitised to the plight of these children and encouraged to identify them, in order to provide support on every level. This would reduce the sense of isolation that emerged from the interviews with

Wadzanai and other Zimbabwean adolescents. Churches, clubs, social and sports establishments in the community could ensure that children are included in activities, reducing the perception of isolation and providing support systems. Furthermore, involving children in tasks that help others has been proven beneficial in bolstering resilience levels.

Highlighted across all the interviews carried out with Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration and the findings of the CYRM – 28 is the role that educational establishments could play in mediating the negative effects of parental absence. This is further evidenced by comparing the adaptation levels of those who obtained high resilience scores in the area of context and peer support to those who attained low scores in these areas. Those with high resilience scores appear to be coping much better, have a sense of belonging and are able to seek and obtain successfully support from their peers and other facilities offered in schools. Thus, educational establishments could be used effectively to identify those who are not coping optimally with parental absence and assisting them by providing support, for example in the form of pastoral or peer counselling.

Wadzanai for example, has been unable to establish successful support systems, especially with her peers. The school could have helped her to find other girls in the same circumstances as her who she could have shared her experience with. They could also have intervened in such a way that would not have made her feel marginalised and victimised with regard with her friendship with the younger girl. Encouraging Wadzanai to attend counselling sessions might also have helped her disclose her abusive situation sooner.

Other agencies, such as the Institute of Migration, could also become involved in a supportive role by providing an input and establishing courses aimed at educators and school counsellors on how to assist children affected by parental migration, educating them to their unique needs. This would help to bolster resilience and adaptation in diverse ways.

Thus, obtaining detailed information on the resilience levels of adolescents who have been left in their home country by migrant parents could help both at an individual and a contextual levels providing knowledge aimed at developing appropriate interventions and support systems.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, conclusions and recommendations for further research in the field will be discussed, as well as the strengths and limitations of the study. Possible areas of intervention aimed at optimising the adjustment of adolescents whose parents have out-migrated leaving them in Zimbabwe are also proposed, where appropriate.

7.2 The research context, questions and aims

My interest in the lives of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental migration started with the realisation that the Diaspora phenomenon was beginning to affect increasing numbers of children, as the socio-political and economic situation continued to deteriorate in Zimbabwe. My counselling work in a private secondary school was the starting point of the research, with a Pilot Study carried out in 2009, in an effort to be better equipped to deal with these children's unique needs, as well as the realisation that little support for, or information about, these adolescents was available in Zimbabwe. Having myself been a "Diaspora orphan" when my father left an impoverished Italy to find work abroad, the plight of these young people was especially close to my heart.

In an attempt to acquire a better understanding of these children's life views, with the aim of incorporating this knowledge into caring systems, social policies and educational institutions, the Pilot Study was carried out. Its principal scope was to investigate themes emerging from the experiences of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration and the use of any defence or coping mechanisms. The findings of this study have been incorporated and expanded into the present study, whose principal aim was to increase the body of knowledge available into the lives of these adolescents, with a particular emphasis on resilience.

The direction of the current study was guided by two broad questions, exploring how these adolescents cope with and experience parental absence and whether resilience plays a role in this. Relevant literature suggests firstly, that there is a commonality of experience across cultures and contexts, with many shared themes; and secondly, that high resilience levels can equip individuals to cope more successfully with adversities and traumas, such as parental absence due to out-migration.

The seven objectives, as proposed in chapter 3, which were chosen to guide the present study, are discussed individually below and related to the findings.

7.2.1 First objective: Obtaining information

The first stated objective was “to obtain first hand information from adolescents who are left behind by their migrant parent or parents by means of in-depth interviews”. This objective was met by reviewing the 17 interviews carried out during the course of the Pilot Study and by carrying out new interviews with six of the participants of the Pilot Study. This allowed for some longitudinal information to be gathered and to evaluate whether time plays a part in the themes that emerged during the course of the Pilot Study interviews in 2009. The longitudinal component made it possible to obtain detailed information on how these adolescents coped with prolonged parental absence and how their lives have changed during the six years that elapsed between interviews. These in-depth interviews were left deliberately open, with the interviewer only intervening to prompt further information and to keep the adolescent talking as much as possible.

7.2.2 Second objective: Emerging themes

The second objective was “to extrapolate from these interviews emerging themes and structures of meaning”. This objective was met by reviewing the themes that emerged in the course of the Pilot Study and by thematically analysing the new interviews, to establish the presence of any recurrent themes and to investigate the emergence of new ones. Structures of meaning were identified by closely examining the language used by the adolescents and by observing other clues, such as body language, facial

expressions, emotions, et cetera. The interviewer remained observant throughout for these additional clues that either supported or conflicted with the words spoken. The themes and structures of meaning were then categorised and compared to those reported in other studies carried out in other parts of the world, to establish whether any were country specific or global.

7.2.3 Third objective: Reporting the interviews in the adolescents' own words

The third objective was “to allow the adolescents to speak for themselves by reporting their interviews in a manner that is as close as possible to their own words”. This objective was met by incorporating the adolescents' words as verbatim quotes in the study and the relevant discussions. Whenever possible, the thematic findings were backed up by the adolescents' own words and other clues were included, for example when an adolescent appeared angry, this was stated so as to give as realistic an impression as possible of the actual interviews.

7.2.4 Fourth objective: Identifying resilience traits

The fourth objective was to “identify the presence or absence of resilience traits that may emerge from their interviews and from the administration of the CYRM – 28”. This objective was met by administering the CYRM – 28 to the participants and by analysing the data obtained therein. Furthermore, resilience was also investigated by looking for any supportive words, behaviours or activities related during the course of the interviews. For example, being able to establish strong and viable support systems is one of the criteria used for evaluating resilience. When such traits were noted in the transcripts of the interviews, they were reported and discussed, whenever applicable.

7.2.5 Fifth objective: Increasing available knowledge

The fifth objective was “to increase available knowledge of the ways in which being left in the home country is viewed by these adolescents”. This objective has been met by obtaining relevant information from the adolescents interviewed and by preparing this study. Furthermore, it is my intention to prepare a journal article on the findings and

propose it for publication. In addition, I have approached several organizations in Zimbabwe in an attempt to both sensitising them to the plight of these adolescents and to try to establish support systems. It is also hoped that one of these organizations will sponsor the administration and data analysis of the CYRM – 28 to large populations of adolescents to obtain much needed empirical data on resilience levels of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration.

7.2.6 Sixth objective: Further research

The sixth objective was to “to come to conclusions and make recommendations for further research in this field”. This objective is met in the final discussion of this thesis where we propose some areas where further research could be carried out in order to enrich the body of knowledge into the lives of these adolescents. As previously stated, the continued instability of the Zimbabwean situation is not conducive to repatriation, thus it can be surmised that the phenomenon will remain topical in the foreseeable future. In addition, the trend appears not to be country specific to Zimbabwe, as research shows that the global recession is now affecting even countries previously unaffected by migratory trends. Therefore, any information obtained into the lives and experiences of these adolescents could provide valuable support to those wishing to develop interventions targeted at these populations.

7.2.7 Seventh objective: Recommendations for bolstering resilience

The seventh objective was “to make recommendations which may be used by parties with vested interests to better understand and assist these adolescents, particularly in the context of secondary education and with special emphasis on the bolstering of resilience”. This objective is met in this chapter where some suggestions are offered that are aimed at any organization with vested interests in the plight of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration and, more specifically, aimed at secondary educational institutions. It is my belief that these institutions could be crucial in facilitating the adaptation of adolescents to parental absence. Furthermore, educational establishments are in the unique position of being able to identify and work

with these young people with the objective of bolstering resilience levels, thus optimising their experience of parental absence.

7.3 Thematic analysis

The thematic findings which emerged during the course of the Pilot Study and which were compared against those of similar studies carried out on adolescents affected by parental out-migration in Central American, Latin American and West Indian countries to ascertain whether these experiences are global or country-specific, were reviewed during the course of the current study. This was done to investigate longitudinally whether these themes remain constant over time or change with maturity in those who do not re-join their parents. It was found that several of the themes which emerged during the course of the Pilot Study were still evidenced by the current interviews. The themes that remained consistent are discussed below.

7.3.1 Depression

In terms of the criteria specified by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV-TR) (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) none of the Zimbabwean adolescents interviewed can be diagnosed with a depressive disorder. However, indicators of depression, a depressed mood manifested in crying, feelings of sadness, loneliness and irritability, are highlighted by the interviews. Tsungai was chosen as representative of adolescents who display symptoms of depression. These symptoms were first noted during the course of the Pilot Study and have persisted over time, as evidenced by the follow up interviews which evidenced the fact that she still cries, feels sad, is lonely and finds the increased responsibilities she has had to take on, challenging. The findings from the CYRM – 28 confirm that these adolescents have lower resilience levels than those who do not display these symptoms and have a more negative view of their situation.

7.3.2 Abandonment and rejection

Many of the adolescents interviewed during the course of the Pilot Study appear to experience parental absence as a form of abandonment and rejection. This theme

remained constant during the course of the follow up interviews, as several participants discussed feeling this way as a result of the perceived loss of family ties and not fully understanding the reasons for being left behind in the home country. These feelings seem to cause a deep sense of loneliness and isolation in these adolescents who, in spite of mediating factors, such as the presence of friends or supportive family members, still experience parental absence in this way. Findings from the CYRM – 28 reveal that some areas of resilience are negatively affected by this, with lower scores, even in those who have high overall resilience scores.

7.3.3 Conflicting feelings

Parental absence due to out-migration gives rise to conflicting feelings, a prominent theme highlighted by the interviews carried out during the course of the Pilot Study. Gratitude and resentment are concomitantly felt and displayed by the participants, stemming from comparing the benefits accrued from what a migrant parent is able to provide for his/her family against the absence of the parental figure. As a result of the Zimbabwean economic crisis of the past decade and its resultant hyperinflation, Zimbabwean adolescents may be especially sensitive to financial issues. More than half the participants of the Pilot Study discussed the economic benefits that, according to them, outweigh the psychological and emotional distress caused by the separation from their parents, in support of this view. This theme resurfaced during the course of the current study in the interviews with those who had manifested these feelings in the past, showing its persistent effect on these adolescents. Those who did not display feeling conflicted, like Chiedza, remained unaffected and their resilience scores are significantly higher than those of adolescents who still experience these feelings.

7.3.4 Role changes and role additions

Most of the participants of the Pilot Study and current study reported having to take on additional roles and responsibilities as a result of their altered circumstances. Some of these adolescents perceive these additional roles and responsibilities as stressful, especially those who attained low resilience scores on the CYRM – 28. Adolescents whose resilience scores are low appear to resent this situation, discussing how these

responsibilities encroach on normal academic commitments, such as studying and homework, and how they do not like the increased sense of responsibility. Those whose resilience scores are higher appear better equipped to deal with the situation and derive a sense of pride from carrying out these roles successfully, like Chiedza, who has become responsible for her younger sister's adaptation to her new circumstances.

7.3.5 Lack of social support

A perceived lack of social support was a prominent theme emerging from the interviews carried out during the course of the Pilot Study. This theme resurfaced during the course of some of the current interviews, especially in the interviews carried out with adolescents whose resilience scores are low, as measured by the CYRM – 28. The perceived lack of social support is experienced in three main contexts: when the absent parent is unable to witness in person his or her child's achievements; when the adolescent is unable to seek support from their mothers when dealing with interpersonal problems in their peer groups; and finally, when needing the presence of role-models. This lack of social support is mediated, however, by a perception on the part of the adolescent that the support is available in times of special need, like important transitions, examinations, et cetera.

7.3.6 Importance of communication

The role of communication, by means of telephone calls, messaging and other forms of social media, is considered vital in maintaining family ties and plays an important role in mediating the negative effects of parental migration. This theme, which emerged prominently from the interviews carried out in the course of the Pilot Study, has remained constant longitudinally, with every participant of the current study discussing this aspect of their experience. All the adolescents interviewed look forward to, and rely heavily on, this form of contact with their migrant parent(s). When access to means of communication is compromised or hindered, stress is experienced. Data obtained from the CYRM – 28 suggests that adolescents whose resilience levels are higher, although still attributing much importance to communication, cope better with any challenges experienced, logically analysing the situation and dealing constructively with the

resultant feelings. The adolescents whose resilience levels are low, experience high levels of anxiety, compounded feelings of abandonment and rejection, frustration and increased isolation. It should be noted, however, that although frequency and quality of communication plays a significant role in mediating the negative effects of parental absence, regardless of resilience levels and degree of adaptation, it does not fully compensate for parental absence.

7.3.7 Relationships with caregivers

Relationships with caregivers, and care giving arrangement in general, are a theme that emerged prominently from the interviews carried out with Zimbabwean adolescents. This theme is consistent longitudinally. Many of those interviewed reported finding relationships with their caregivers not easy to negotiate, generally stressful and often conflictual. The “generation gap” is cited as being problematic for those left in the care of older relatives, such as grandparents, as well as feelings of alienation by those who have been left with extended family who are already caring for their own offspring. The CYRM – 28 explores these relationships, as they impact on resilience levels. Consistent with the interviews, those who report feeling satisfied with their care arrangements in the absence of parents obtain higher resilience scores in this regard and appear better adjusted to, and coping well with, their circumstances.

7.3.8 Sexual abuse and molestation

The findings of this study support Shaw’s (2008) statement that children whose parents out-migrate leaving them in the care of others may be more at risk of sexual abuse and molestation. This theme was hinted at during the course of the Pilot Study but was then confirmed during the interviews carried out during this study. It can be surmised that a child who is the victim of sexual abuse and molestation is likely to experience parental absence in much more negative terms than others who are not subjected to such abuse and is less likely to cope with the circumstances. This is evident from the interviews carried out with Wadzanai and from her resilience scores which are significantly lower than those of any other participant of the study. The “code of silence” that surrounds sexual abuse makes it, however, difficult to quantify the extent of the problem.

7.3.9 Conclusions about emerging themes

The findings of the current study were compared to those carried out during the course of the Pilot Study. This revealed that emergent themes remained constant over time showing that, longitudinally, little change takes place in the way adolescents affected by parental out-migration experience their circumstances. Furthermore, these themes are not country specific but are echoed in studies carried out in other parts of the world, highlighting the universality of these themes. Finally, it should be noted that many of these themes are supported by the findings of the administration of the CYRM – 28 confirming their effects on resilience levels.

7.4 Coping and defence mechanisms

The thematic analysis carried out, both as part of the Pilot Study and as part of the current study, highlights some salient facts regarding the use of coping and defence mechanisms on the part of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration. Although this was not an objective of the current study, coping is closely linked to resilience and thus, mention should be made of these findings.

The Pilot Study proposed that defence mechanisms, due primarily to their rigidity, are less conducive to positive adaptation than more flexible coping mechanisms. Furthermore, according to relevant literature, defence mechanisms may be considered useful in the short term but can become entrenched and maladaptive with prolonged use. Both these findings are supported by the information obtained as part of the current study and by the results of the CYRM – 28. Firstly, the adolescents interviewed who make use of defence mechanisms, such as denial and rationalisation appear less able to cope with parental absence and their resilience scores are lower, whilst those who resort to the use of coping mechanisms, such as seeking support and logical analysis, appear to be dealing better with their circumstances and have higher levels of resilience.

Secondly, with regard to the tendency of defence mechanisms to become entrenched, the findings of the current study support this. When comparing the interviews carried out during the course of the Pilot Study to those carried out six years later, it appears that the participants who were making use of these mechanisms then, still do so now, in spite of a significant time lapse. In addition, these adolescents seem to have become so adept at employing these mechanisms that they are not able to make use of more adaptive coping ones, such as seeking support, which would bolster resilience levels.

The interviews carried out with Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration suggests, however, that the use of defence mechanisms as a means to deal with parental absence is not extensive and mostly limited to the use of three such mechanisms, namely denial, rationalisation and sublimation. The follow up interviews did not highlight the presence of sublimation. Furthermore, it seems that only better adapted participants, with higher levels of resilience, resort to the use of coping mechanisms. The ones identified during the course of the current study were logical analysis and seeking support. Seeking support is particularly salient with regard to resilience levels and is explored by some of the statements proposed by the CYRM – 28.

7.5 Conclusions regarding resilience

This study, although qualitative, proposed that the starting question, “how do resilient and non resilient adolescents differ in coping with parental absence?” Thus, investigating resilience levels of Zimbabwean adolescents whose parents have joined the Diaspora was a crucial aspect of the current research.

Relevant literature, discussed in Chapter 2, suggests that adolescents whose resilience levels are high are better equipped to cope with stressors, such as parental absence, whilst those whose resilience levels are low would not do as well. Although the study investigated resilience in a very small group of Zimbabwean adolescents whose parents have joined the Diaspora, the data obtained confirms this. Six participants were interviewed and completed the CYRM – 28. The two girls who appear to be coping well

and even thriving in spite of the absence of their parents, both as measured by the scale and by analysing the themes emerging from their interviews, obtained high overall resilience scores. Conversely, the girls who are not coping optimally with their circumstances obtained significantly lower scores. Most noticeable, are the especially low scores that the participant who was sexually molested by her caregiver attained and the fact that she appeared to be the one who is coping least well. This may indicate that resilience levels of adolescents who have to cope with compound stressors are lower than those of adolescents who are only coping with parental absence.

With regard the three subscales investigated by the CYRM – 28, namely the individual, relational and contextual scales it would appear that the scores in each of these domains are fairly consistent. If the score is high in one area, the scores are high in the other two areas and vice versa. This could indicate that adolescents who appear to thrive are able to call on internal, interpersonal and contextual resources to obtain what they need to mediate the negative effects of stressors, such as parental absence.

A few of the statements proposed by the CYRM – 28 were awarded particularly low scores across the interviews. The first one was “I know where to go in my community to get help”. This suggests that not having enough information available to facilitate seeking support in this area lowers resilience levels in these adolescents. The statement “I feel I belong at my school” was awarded low scores by four out of the six participants. This could indicate that children whose parents have out-migrated leaving them in Zimbabwe somehow feel “different” and therefore struggle to feel a sense of belonging to their school and peers. In the sample interviews, both Tsungai and Wadzanai awarded low scores to this statement. Both girls are not coping optimally with their circumstances, thus showing a correlation between a perceived belonging to their school, resilience and coping.

Peer support is another area of resilience where scores are especially indicative of adaptation. As discussed, during adolescence, a sense of belonging to a peer group is important for optimal development. Perceived peer support is linked with resilience

levels, thus measured by the CYRM – 28 by proposing two statements, namely “I feel supported by my friends” and “my friends stand by me in difficult times”. From the combined scores of these two statements it is possible to obtain an overall score of the area of resilience related to peer support. The scores awarded by the participants show a linear correlation between perceived peer support and resilience. The participants who obtained high resilience scores in this regard are those who are coping well with parental absence and vice versa. Looking at the case studies, Chiedza, the participant who is coping best with parental absence, awarded a score of 90 per cent to the peer support subscale; Tsungai, who is not coping as well gave this section 40 per cent; whilst Wadzanai, the participant who is coping least well (and who was sexually abused) attained a mere 20 per cent. This confirms the importance of peer support in adolescence as a mediator of parental absence.

High resilience levels, therefore, are clearly linked with improved coping with parental absence and better adaptation to circumstances by adolescents. What is unclear, however, is whether high resilience levels result in improved coping for adolescents whose parents have out-migrated leaving them in their home country or whether coping well results in high resilience levels. I would propose that the two are reciprocal, as coping and resilience are closely related.

7.6 Recommendations

One of the objectives of this study is to make recommendations, where appropriate. Thus, as a result of the findings of this study, the Pilot Study and from the literature reviewed, some suggestions are offered with regard to future research and for areas that could be targeted by interventions aimed at assisting Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration. It is hoped that these suggestions may be viewed as a starting platform by parties with vested interests in Zimbabwean migratory trends and the well-being of children left in the home country by parents who have joined the Diaspora, as trends suggest that this phenomenon will remain part of our society – and may even grow – in the foreseeable future.

7.6.1 Future research

As previously discussed, although research on migration and its effects is available, not much information exists on the experiences of Zimbabwean adolescents left in the home country by migrant parents. Furthermore, reliable statistics on the Diaspora phenomenon in Zimbabwe are also unavailable or questionable.

It is hence imperative to expand the body of knowledge in this regard. The present study, a qualitative one, not only employed a very small sample, but one skewed towards a high socio-economic status and, thus, not at all representative of the Zimbabwean population at large, where the unemployment rate is estimated to be in excess of 90 per cent.

Furthermore, as the findings of the current study and of the Pilot Study are restricted to a privileged sector of the population, namely adolescents who are currently receiving formal education in expensive private schools, thanks to their parents' remittances, it excludes important aspects of the phenomenon. For example, the plight of children who have either been abandoned by migrant parents or who are not being provided for adequately, either due to insufficient funds being remitted for their maintenance or to misuse of funds on the part of those tasked to administering to their needs, has not been investigated.

Two approaches are proposed in this regard. Firstly, carrying out more qualitative studies on different populations, for example on adolescents of both genders, who reside in different locations (high and low density, rural, et cetera) and of varied socio-economic statuses, would provide greater insight and understanding of the lives of children who have been left in Zimbabwe by parents who have out-migrated in order to obtain employment abroad. Different approaches should be employed to obtain such information. For example, research should make use of different qualitative methodologies, such as case studies, in-depth interviews, participant observation and other methods. Secondly, it would be of great value to carry out quantitative studies on large populations to obtain empirical information regarding the incidence of this

phenomenon and related topics, such as number of children affected, resilience levels and so on.

Research in the field of resilience and resilience building should also be carried out, as no information could be found in this regard for Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration, in particular, and Zimbabwean children as a whole. The reciprocal relationship between resilience and coping means that any data obtained regarding the resilience levels of these children could be incorporated and used to inform any interventions designed at optimising the lives of these youngsters. I propose to approach a number of local and international organizations in Zimbabwe, with a view to carrying out the preparation of the CYRM – 28 for local use, including translating it into the two main local languages (Shona and Ndebele) and large scale administration of the measure to diverse populations of children from all walks of life, who have been left in Zimbabwe by migrant parents. Data obtained could then be used by invested parties to develop and implement interventions aimed at bolstering resilience, and consequently coping, in these children in order to mediate the negative effects of parental absence.

Working systems currently in existence in Zimbabwe, aimed at the well-being of children in general, could be explored, such as the police service, health and social workers, statal and para-statal agencies and NGO's (Non Governmental Organisations) with a view to investigating whether they are presently reaching children whose parents have out-migrated, who may be in need of assistance. From the interviews carried out with the Zimbabwean adolescents, and the relevant statement regarding perceived support in the community proposed by the CYRM – 28, it appears that few are aware of any support systems available to them. Identifying these systems and making this information available to children whose parents have joined the Zimbabwean Diaspora could provide a much needed life-line.

As proposed by the Pilot Study, research could be carried out to establish the incidence of depression and other mood disorders in these adolescents. Furthermore, it would be

of value to ascertain whether parental absence due to out-migration could trigger a grieving process, similar to that of the death of a parent. This could be carried out concurrently with the administration of the CYRM – 28, by asking participants to complete depression and grief measures. Such information, which is currently not available, could assist with early intervention measures to prevent long-term psychological and physiological harm befalling these children.

The prevalence of sexual abuse and molestation should also be explored. Even though this is not confined to children whose parents are affected by parental out-migration, it would be valuable to obtain accurate data in this population. Information obtained could be used to direct preventive measure aimed at containing the incidence of sexual abuse and molestation, thus reducing the negative effects of compounded stressors in the lives of these children.

7.6.2 Suggested areas of intervention

A further objective of this study is to put forward some suggestions, on the basis of its findings, of areas that could be targeted by interested parties for the development of interventions aimed at assisting parents, caregivers and, in particular, educational establishments to deal with the needs of adolescents whose parents have out-migrated leaving them in the home country.

Firstly, I will put forward suggestions aimed at migrant parents. Before migrating, support systems could be put in place that would provide parents with information on how best to prepare their children to parental absence and their altered circumstances in the home country. The study highlighted the theme of abandonment and rejection resulting from a lack of understanding as to the reasons that informed the choice to migrate, leaving children behind. Supporting and guiding parents in this regard may result in improved adjustment for the adolescents. Furthermore, in view of the incidence of sexual abuse and molestation, systems could be put in place to both inform parents of this possibility and to provide follow up visits of the children in their new environments. The perceived lack of social support also emerged from the study and

from the administration of the CYRM – 28. This aspect of an adolescent's experience can negatively affect resilience levels and, as a result, coping. Parents could be informed on how to provide much needed support, especially at crucial times. Even though some may not be in the position to return to Zimbabwe to offer such support, they could ensure that their offspring are assisted during key transitions in a vicarious way. The use of communication tools, such as Skype, would also assist in this regard.

Interventions should also be targeted at caregivers, as they play a crucial role in the adaptation of adolescents to parental absence. The CYRM – 28 includes a subsection dedicated to relationships with caregivers, showing how important these are to resilience levels and coping. Firstly, according to the interviews carried out and the responses given to the statements of the CYRM – 28, it appears that many adolescents whose parents have out-migrated experience problems in this regard. Some attribute these difficulties to the "generation gap" whilst others find it difficult to integrate into their new family. Support systems could assist caregivers in better understanding the plight of these adolescents and offer support, in the form of counselling services, to improve communication and provide salient information to help both caregiver and adolescent to maximise the manner in which they experience their new circumstances.

Adolescents affected by parental out-migration could be helped in a number of ways. First and foremost, there is a dearth of organizations that offer psychological support for these children. Not only should there be more options available to these youngsters but there is a need to disseminate information on where to access these resources, especially in the community. Existing structures, such as churches, youth and sports clubs, et cetera, should be sensitised and encouraged to provide this support and become involved in the lives of these adolescents. Drop in or call centres could also take on board this task, which could also assist in the prevention or early reporting of cases of abuse. Feeling supported by and involved in their community is vital, as it increases resilience levels in adolescents.

The importance of communication cannot be stressed enough. Every child interviewed discussed the vital role that communication with their parent(s) plays in mediating the negative effects of parental absence. Many even reported anxiety and other negative feelings when unable to effectively communicate with their parents. Systems could be put in place to make it easier and more affordable for adolescents to contact their parents. For example, cellular providers could offer reduced rates and facilitate access to social media, that would make the children feel more supported by, and closer to, their parents.

Most of all, however, the administration of the CYRM – 28 shows how important the role of resilience is in optimizing adjustment and coping of adolescents whose parents have out-migrated. The information obtained shows that the domains explored by the measure are closely related, thus interventions targeted at bolstering resilience in these adolescents should target all three areas, namely, individual, relational and contextual. The role of the community should not be underestimated, thus communities should be mobilized in order to assist these young people.

It is my opinion that educational establishments could play a crucial role in maximising the adaptation of adolescents, whose parents have out-migrated, to parental absence and in bolstering their resilience in both the individual and contextual fields. In doing so, they could become a life-line for these youngsters by providing support and guidance. At the individual level, the CYRM – 28 and the interviews carried out confirm that peer support plays a crucial role in increasing resilience levels, thus optimising coping. Schools could provide a platform for, and facilitate encounters between, peers who are in similar circumstances. Peer groups could be formed, providing valuable support systems and, as a result, improve resilience and the way adolescents cope with their circumstances. These groups could also be used to encourage discussion and teach positive coping mechanisms, thus reducing the use of less adaptive defence mechanisms.

Schools who offer counselling and pastoral services to their students could ensure that their staff are familiarised with the plight of adolescents affected by parental out-migration and encouraged to identify them and give them support and guidance. In the absence of counselling facilities, teachers could be provided with information regarding adolescents affected by parental out-migration and their unique needs and requested to be sensitive and supportive to them, particularly in the initial phases of adaptation.

Contextually, schools could bolster resilience by ensuring that they provide an environment that is conducive to making these adolescents feel they belong. The results obtained from the administration of the CYRM – 28 highlight the fact that adolescents who are not coping optimally report that they do not feel this sense of belonging to their school. Schools are, therefore, in a position to ensure that these young people participate fully in school life, are a part of their peer group and receive the necessary academic and psychological support they require. This is especially important for schools who offer boarding facilities, as they could become true “homes away from home” for these adolescents.

Schools could also offer life-orientation lessons, specifically targeted at these adolescents and their unique needs. These lessons could be used to equip these children with the tools they need to successfully deal with their situation. Important scholastic transitions, for example subject selection, could be carried out in such a way that those whose parents are not able to be in the country at that time do not feel that they are not supported or “different” and are guided in this regard.

These suggestions are by no means definitive, but were chosen in as much as they could be implemented at a micro level within a fairly short period of time and using existing resources. For instance, as well as educational establishments, other organizations such as the Institute of Migration and religious institutions could be mobilized to disseminate information. Relevant United Nations organizations in Zimbabwe could become involved in both research and development of policies and interventions. Educational establishments, as previously mentioned, are in the unique

position of being able to implement support systems for these adolescents almost immediately just by calling on existing resources.

At a macro level, however, even more could be done to offer assistance and support to Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration and their families, especially those who have been less fortunate and find themselves in dire circumstances. It is my sincere wish that this study will increase awareness into the plight of these young people and encourage others to become involved by contributing to the existing body of knowledge in this field and by developing interventions and policies to assist these children.

7.7 Strengths and limitations of the study

An interpretive paradigm was chosen to conduct this study, in order to provide as much detailed information as possible into the subjective realities of the participants. One of the objectives of the study was to allow the words of these Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration to speak for themselves, in an attempt to afford these young people a voice of their own. Doing so, however, resulted in both strengths and limitations which will be discussed below.

7.7.1 Strengths of the study

The choice of qualitative methodology for the study was consistent with the aim of the research, namely to explore resilience in the narrative of Zimbabwean adolescents whose parents have joined the Diaspora, and is consequently a strength. This approach allowed for the words of the participants to speak for themselves, without any constraints or pre-conceived hypotheses. The use of in-depth, unstructured interviews allowed the researcher to obtain first-hand information so that the topic could be investigated directly from the perspective of the adolescents. No restraints were placed on the participants in terms of time or the direction of the questions and the researcher only prompted to keep the interview going.

A further strength of the study is that I was able to provide a platform for the voices of these young people to be heard. A dearth of research, especially qualitative research, exists on the topic, thus the study enriched the knowledge available into the experiences of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration, providing the body of literature with a further contribution.

The study adhered, at all times, to strict ethical principles, in view of the fact that the participants were minors. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by giving each adolescent a fictional name and all interview recordings, transcripts and completed CYRM – 28 measures were safely stored by the researcher. No one outside the study was allowed access to these materials. Permission was obtained from the relevant government departments, participating schools, parents and the adolescents themselves. Furthermore, participation in the study was voluntary and an option to withdraw at any time was given to the adolescents and their parents/guardians. Being a clinical psychologist and school counsellor, I offered optional, free follow up sessions to the participants and was sensitive to the moods and emotions of the adolescents during the course of the interviews. Results will be made available to the schools who took part in the study, to the Zimbabwean Ministry of Education, Sport, Art and Culture and to local and international organizations with vested interests in these young people.

The reliability of the study is a further strength. In qualitative research, reliability refers to the trustworthiness of the researcher's observations. In the course of the interviews, I remained alert to any non-verbal cues which were reported in the transcripts. In addition, during the analysis phase, I continuously checked and re-checked my interpretations against the data and against existing literature, in order to ensure trustworthiness and credibility. In reporting the findings, the participants' own words were conveyed verbatim as much as possible, in order to record the adolescents' experiences from their own unique viewpoint. I also consulted with colleagues and supervisors to ensure that my interpretations reconstructed the participants' experiences as accurately as possible.

The use of the CYRM – 28 to measure resilience in the participants can be viewed as a strength of this study due to the nature of this tool. Having been developed across countries, cultures and ethnicities, with the inclusion of more non-Western countries than Western ones, makes it especially topical for use in Zimbabwe. Permission to use the measure was obtained from the University of Halifax and data obtained from the administration of the CYRM – 28 was computed and analysed strictly adhering to the instructions provided by the developers of the measure and compared to interview findings, where relevant.

7.7.2 Limitations of the study

The main limitation of the study lies in the composition and the size of the sample. The present study is a qualitative one, as its aim was to obtain information that would illuminate and provide rich detail into the lives of Zimbabwean adolescents left in the home country by migrant parents. This, however, means that the sample used is not representative of the target population.

In addition, the sample was especially small, as the researcher wished to use participants who had taken part in the Pilot Study, in order to obtain some longitudinal information and was only able to track down six of the original seventeen participants. This represents a limitation, as the results cannot be generalised to the Zimbabwean population as a whole.

The socio-economic status of the adolescents is also a limiting factor, as the youngsters interviewed all come from an affluent stratum of the community and attend private schools in Harare, unaffordable to the majority of Zimbabweans. Furthermore, I was only able to carry out interviews with girls, as the boys who participated in the Pilot Study could not be traced, skewing the sample in this regard. As a result, the themes, coping and defence mechanisms and resilience levels that emerged from this study cannot be taken as being representative of all Zimbabweans adolescents whose parents have out-migrated.

7.8 Personal reflections and final words

Like the Pilot Study, this study has been a fascinating journey into the lives of adolescents who, like me, have been affected by parental out-migration. I was so fortunate to have been able to reconnect with these six young ladies, six years after I first interviewed them, and felt honoured that they chose to share their experiences with me. Their bravery in the face of their challenges is awe inspiring and humbling. I feel that everything possible should be done to sensitise communities to the plight of these brave young people and to bolster their resilience. I hope that this study has made a small contribution towards making their voices heard.

I wish each and every one of the participants the very best for their future and thank them for their enthusiasm for, and support of, this study.

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APPENDIX A

167 Enterprise Rd
 Chisipite
 HARARE
 Tel: +263772310361

Date:

The Headmaster/Headmistress
Senior School
 HARARE

Dear Mrs.

RE: Doctoral Thesis: Exploring resilience in the narratives of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration and the Diaspora

I am currently writing my Doctoral thesis through Unisa on the above subject which I feel is highly topical to our country and, especially, to our schools.

As you may remember, I asked for your assistance in 2009 to identify and carry out interviews with some of your students. As you are no doubt aware, due to the current socio-economic climate in Zimbabwe, this phenomenon is not likely to change in the near future, thus I feel it is important to gather as much information as possible of the lives of these adolescents.

I feel that obtaining qualitative information on how these pupils experience their situation will enable educators to take preventive action and formulate appropriate interventions, where necessary, to normalise this experience for all those concerned.

I would be most grateful if you could assist me by allowing me to contact the students I interviewed during the course of my Pilot Study in 2009 and granting me permission to seek consent from their parents/guardians to interview them again. The identity of the children and their parents/guardians will be protected and no names will be used in any part of the study.

I thank you in anticipation of your assistance in this matter and for your support.

Yours sincerely

O. M. Filippa

APPENDIX B

167 Enterprise Road
Chisipite, Harare
Tel: +263772310361

Date:

Dear Parents/Guardians

RE: Exploring resilience in the narratives of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration and the Diaspora

I am currently writing my Doctoral thesis through Unisa on the above subject which, as an educator, I feel is highly topical to our country and, especially, to our schools.

As you may remember, I interviewed your daughter during the course of the Pilot Study in 2009. As you are no doubt aware, due to the current socio-economic climate in Zimbabwe, this phenomenon is not likely to change in the near future, thus I feel it is important to gather as much information as possible of the lives of these adolescents. I am once again asking for your permission to interview your daughter as part of a follow-up study and to administer the CYRM – 28, a measure to evaluate resilience levels. Like for the Pilot Study, real names will not be used anywhere and no one will be able to link your daughter's name with the information obtained.

Please understand that your participation is voluntary and that the choice to participate is yours and your daughter's alone. If you choose not to participate you will not be prejudiced in any way.

The results of my research will be available through the school office on completion of the study for your perusal together with a report on the findings.

If you are willing once again to participate in this study, please return the attached consent form to the School office as a matter of urgency.

If you have any questions or require clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you in anticipation of your assistance.

Yours faithfully

OLGA FILIPPA

PLEASE RETURN THIS CONSENT FORM TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

I, the undersigned, give consent that my daughter (child's name) may participate in the study: **Exploring resilience in the narratives of Zimbabwean adolescents affected by parental out-migration and the Diaspora.** I give my consent freely and without being forced in any way to do so. The purpose of this study has been explained to me and I understand what is expected of my child. I have received contact details of who to contact if I need to speak about any issues regarding the study and I understand that names will remain confidential.

.....
Name and signature of parent/guardian

.....
Name of pupil

APPENDIX C

Sub-scales and question clusters on the Child and Youth Resilience Measure – 28

Individual

Individual: Individual personal skills

- 2. I cooperate with people around me
- 8. I try to finish what I start
- 11. People think that I am fun to be with
- 13. I am able to solve problems without harming myself or others (for example by using drugs and/or being violent)
- 21. I am aware of my own strengths

Individual: Individual peer support

- 14. I feel supported by my friends
- 18. My friends stand by me during difficult times

Individual: Individual social skills

- 4. I know how to behave in different social situations
- 15. I know where to go in my community to get help
- 20. I have opportunities to show others that I am becoming an adult and can act responsibly
- 25. I have opportunities to develop skills that will be useful later in life (like job skills and skills to care for others)

Relationship with Primary Caregiver

Caregiver: Physical Care giving

- 5. My parent(s)/caregiver(s) watch me closely
- 7. If I am hungry, there is enough to eat

Caregiver: Psychological Care giving

- 6. My parent(s)/caregiver(s) know a lot about me
- 12. I talk to my family/caregiver(s) about how I feel
- 17. My family stands by me during difficult times
- 24. I feel safe when I am with my family/caregiver(s)
- 26. I enjoy my family's/caregiver's cultural and family traditions

Context

Context: Spiritual

- 9. Spiritual beliefs are a source of strength for me
- 22. I participate in organized religious activities
- 23. I think it is important to help out in my community

Context: Education

- 3. Getting an education is important to me
- 16. I feel I belong at my school

Context: Cultural

- 1. I have people I look up to
- 10. I am proud of my ethnic background
- 19. I am treated fairly in my community
- 27. I enjoy my community's traditions
- 28. I am proud to be Zimbabwean

Resilience Research Centre (2009). *The Child and Youth Resilience Measure-28: User Manual..*
Halifax, NS: Resilience Research Centre, Dalhousie University.

APPENDIX D
Tabulated resilience scores of participants

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6
Individual Resilience	41.81%	87.27%	81.81%	72.72%	65.45%	43.63%
Relationships with primary caregivers	31.42%	88.57%	68.57%	62.86%	62.86%	51.43%%
Context	32.00%	82.00%	62.00%	66.00%	56.00%	50.00%
Overall Resilience	35.07%	85.94%	70.79%	67.19%	61.44%	48.69%