EXPERIENCES OF DISTANT PARENTED ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN CHIREDZI SOUTH CONSTITUENCY OF ZIMBABWE

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that **The experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe** 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.

SIGNATURE   DATE: October, 2022

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the distant parented adolescent girls in Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. May their voices be heard so that they will be able to achieve what they want to achieve in life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ACRWC   African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

AFP   Agence France-Presse

ANSA   Agencies Network for Scientific Advice

BEAM   Basic Education Assistance Module

BRAC   Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee

CORMSA   Consortinum for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa

CRDC   Chiredzi Rural District Council

ESAP   Economic Structural Adjustment Programme

HIV/AIDS   Human Immune Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

ILO   International Labour Organization

IOM   International Organization for Migration

NRC   Native Recruiting Cooperation

NGO   Non-Governmental Organization

PTA   Parents Teachers Association

STD   Sexually Transmitted Disease

UN   United Nations

UNCRC   United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNICEF   United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UK   United Kingdom

USA   United States of America

WHO   World Health Organization

WNLA   Witwatersrand Native Labour Association

ZAPU   Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZANU PF   Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front

ZLHR   Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. The phenomenon focused on the experiences that distant parented adolescent girls go through in the absence of the migrant parents. The study was underpinned by the bio-ecological systems theory to bring to the fore the role of different environmental systems surrounding a distant parented adolescent to her development. Qualitative methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation were used. The study employed a purposive sampling approach to select the twenty-five (25) distant parented adolescent girls who participated in the focus group discussions and interviews from five secondary schools. Data were collected and recorded. A thematic analysis was used. Some of the findings were that the systems surrounding a distant parented adolescent girl are not supportive of her development; distant parented girls experience labour and sexual exploitation, communication challenges with the migrant parents; they are bullied, feel lonely, lack access to the remittances and experience stigmatisation. Based on the findings, the study recommends collaborative support to the distant parented adolescent girls residing in Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe.

KEY WORDS

Parenting

Distant parenting

Diaspora orphans

Migration

Parental migration

Children left behind

Distant parented adolescent girls

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

1.1 Introduction and background

This study explored the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. It was prompted by a surge in the exodus of many parents into other countries in search of employment. Most of such parents left behind their children as they migrated outside the country. In the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe, the majority of these parents have migrated into South Africa due to its proximity to the Chiredzi district of Zimbabwe. They use different parenting methods; one of which is distant parenting, a part of the subject matter for this study. Children of different age groups are left behind and are distant parented. This chapter presents the background to the study, the rationale of the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions and objectives. It briefly reviews the literature to put this study into context. The theoretical framework guiding this study was also unpacked, and the significance of the study was highlighted. The chapter closed with the scope and the highlight of the structure of the study.

This study explored the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. The age group and gender attracted the attention of the researcher because of the vulnerability of adolescents to abuse. Adolescent years are critical time of childhood development. This is the stage where children develop from childhood to adulthood and experience massive biological, psychological, and social transformations (World Health Organization, 2020; Allen & Waterman, 2019; Cleveland Clinic, 2018). These studies observed that adolescent children, and girls to be specific, need close and reliable monitoring by their parents so that they are properly guided for a healthy development in self-confidence and a positive self-esteem.

The studies further observed that parents are critical in shaping the adolescent individuals' expectations and roles of maturing individuals. These factors facilitate and direct children's development by supplying appropriate opportunities, resources, support and feedback to promote maturity and the ability to cope with life challenges. It is important at this tender

age that parents are available to give such support and guidance to their children. However due to the economic meltdown bedeviling the nation, the parents are forced to seek employment far from their homes, some of them leaving their children behind; thus they become distant parents, a phenomenon that became the concern for this study. The study assumed that distant parented children, including adolescent girls, go through a plethora of challenges in their homes with absent parents. This development attracted the attention of the present researcher.

Children Bureau (2017) states that the family environment is an influential context for raising children because it provides a critical terrain for their development. Within the family, the parents act as role models as well as disciplinarians to the developing child (Roostin, 2018). Their absence in the home creates a void that is difficult to fill. Apart from role modelling, parents also offer shelter, food security, financial support and protection from all forms of abuse and danger to the children. They are a reliable and dependable source of livelihood to their children. However, studies such as (Mavaza, 2021) have shown that in Zimbabwe, many parents have left the country in search of greener pastures. These have been pushed out of the country due to the economic meltdown which resulted in critical shortages of basic commodities and liquid cash since the early 2000s. Some parents migrated due to political reasons while others wanted to further their studies (Rupande, 2014). Many a time, it has been observed that some parents leave their children in the custody of some relatives or by themselves. This comes with a price to the left behind children whose social and psychological welfare are put at stake. These left behind children have to endure the challenges of living in a home without their parents (Yanovich, 2015). Children are left behind because in most cases the parents do not have work and/or temporary resident permits which would enable them to migrate with their children. The challenges of being left behind and being distant parent are worse for the girl child who, by nature, becomes vulnerable to all forms of abuse. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to explore the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe with a view of developing mitigating strategies to arrest the situation.

Human migration is a worldwide phenomenon (Chamie, 2020). Muhamed and Abdul-Talib (2020) have shown that there are many impetuses which act as push or pull factors to human migration. These factors may either be economic (where people migrate in search of greener pastures) or political (where people run away from political instability in their countries of

origin) or due to natural disasters such as internecine droughts, floods, volcanoes and other related natural catastrophes. International Organization for Migration [IOM], United Nations [UN] Migration (2019) and Sahin-Mencutek et al. (2022) report that migration has become part and parcel of human life. The migrants are both legal and illegal and, because of their situation, it becomes difficult for them to migrate with their families or children. Thus, this study was intended to find out what these left behind children, particularly the adolescent girl children go through in the absence of their parents.

Migration may be internal or transnational (where parents move to another country) (Madziva, 2015). According to IOM UN Migration Report (2020) statistics, there are about 272 million people who are living in countries other than their own. This entails that migration is a global concern and that families, particularly children, suffer as a result. McAuliffe and Katimbo (2018) as well as Agencies Network for Scientific Advice [ANSA] (2020), estimate that over 20 million African men and women are migrant workers. In Southern Africa, migration is more prevalent in Zimbabwe, Angola, Malawi and Mozambique, among others (Mlambo, 2016).

In Zimbabwe, migration has a historical background. It dates back to the period well before the establishment of colonial borders, around 1850s (Crush & Tawodzera, 2016). People wandered across Southern Africa due to political upheavals such as the Mfacane and in search of pasture lands (the Ngunis and the Boers) or for trade, first with the Asians and later with the Portuguese along the coastal areas. The discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1867 and gold in Transvaal in 1884 became an impetus for the migrant labourers into the South African mines. Thus, the South African gold mines became the regional employer of migrant labour as early as 1911 (Mlambo, 2016). To facilitate the recruitment of the migrant labourers in Southern Africa, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association [WNLA] and the Native Recruiting Cooperation [NRC] were established. These organisations formally recruited the labour from Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Botswana, Zambia and Malawi. Most Zimbabweans joined WNLA for financial gains to enable them pay tax and to raise money for *lobola*. The nature of the labour contract with the labour bureaus and the nature of accommodation accorded to the mine workers, made it difficult for them to migrate with their families. Hence, distant parenting has a historical background. However, during these early periods, women (wives) were also left behind. Some of the migrant labourers who thronged the South African mines did not have travel documents and were termed 'border

jumpers.' As a result, they had to walk for days and to cross the crocodile infested Limpopo river which was risky (Bolt, 2016; Fisayo-Bambi, 2020). A study by Mlambo (2016) showed that such migrants were mostly employed on contract basis and were accommodated in hostels which did not allow them to take their families along. Thus, in this study the interest was to explore the experiences of the left behind adolescent girl children.

Around 1970, more than 20 000 Zimbabweans were recruited to work in the gold and diamond mines in Transvaal and Kimberly. A sizeable number of Zimbabweans were also employed on the farms and in the construction industry (Mlambo, 2016). With the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe in 1980, the rush to South Africa for employment temporarily came to an end. However, it soon resurfaced in the late 1990s when most Zimbabweans migrated to South Africa for work, business, medical attention, holiday, family visits and for study purposes (Crush & Tawodzera, 2016). According to the South African Immigration (2018), the estimates of the Zimbabweans in South Africa range from one to three million but they may be more than that because some of them gain entry through illegal means and are undocumented. In most cases they leave their children behind. This is why this study was intended to explore the experiences of the left behind adolescent girl children of the Chiredzi district of Zimbabwe.

In their study, Madebwe and Madebwe (2017) observed that Zimbabwe is amongst those countries hardest hit by parental migration as a result of the deteriorating economic situation which arose out of the economic sanctions imposed on the nation by the United States and its allies (Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Amendment Act, 2018. Due to the economic meltdown, unemployment rates skyrocketed; there was a shortage of liquid cash and basic commodities; this situation became the norm in Zimbabwe. It pushed many Zimbabwean parents outside the country where they became economic refugees and migrants in different parts of the world, leaving their children behind. It is difficult to give the exact figures of the migrants as the numbers increase on a daily basis. Unverified statistics has it that about one quarter of the population of Zimbabwe is outside the country (Filippa, et. al, 2013). Many parents from Zimbabwe have been forced to leave their country because of different circumstances. They live in the neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana, Namibia while others have gone as far as the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, Canada, the United States of America (USA), Ukraine, Cuba, Russia and other countries (Chikanda & Crush, 2018). These parents now practise

distant parenting and this study assumes that this has an effect on the left behind adolescent girls. Cell phone parenting is commonly practised to maintain family connections thereby replacing the physical parent although the frequency of calling varies (Pan, et al., 2013).

Various scholars have tried to establish some of the reasons why parents leave their children behind. Jordan (2018), IOM (2020) and UNICEF attributed this to lack of formal employment, lack of proper documentation in the form of work permits and travel documents, political violence, hyperinflation and migrant restrictions in the countries of destination such as Britain, Canada, Australia, USA, South Africa and Botswana. Due to the situation of many left behind children in Zimbabwe, Kufakurinani et al. (2014) prefer to call them 'Diaspora Orphans'. They observe that the left behind children are at a high risk of experiencing a number of challenges which include, among others, lack of parental care and support, rape, physical emotional and other forms of abuse, loneliness, inappropriate responsibilities, hunger, emotional distress, stress and depression.

The studies that were conducted in Southeast Asia reveal that the youth left behind have high levels of depression and resentfulness towards their parents who leave them behind (Lam & Yeoh, 2019). Mohamad Ali-Matalka (2014) maintains that parents are influential elements on the lives of their children. They shape, sustain and develop the children through being involved in day to day living and learning processes. Their presence in the home plays a significant role in the development of the children. Children's success at school largely depends on the home environment. Enabling environments are those headed by a physically available and caring parent. Thus, parental migration results in child headed families (Rupande, 2014) and this is not a healthy environment for the proper development of children who need the presence of a biological parent for a healthy development. In some cases, parents do sent remittances but these may be abused by the children themselves or by those taking care of them, so they are not channeled where they are supposed to go and are used for something else. Children do not benefit if the remittances are not used appropriately.

This study focused on the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe and it was prompted by the increase in the number of parents who migrate into South Africa or to other countries leaving their children behind. The present researcher noted that in the Chiredzi South Constituency it has become fashionable for most parents to cross the border through illegal means into either South

Africa or Mozambique due the proximity if these countries. Another motivating factor is that the presence of the Tsongas (Shangaans) in the Chiredzi South. They have relatives on either side of the border and they speak a common language. Thus, the study was intended to explore the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe.

1.2 Rationale for the study

Several Zimbabweans have left their country due to the economic meltdown although the exact figures cannot be ascertained (Chikanda & Crush, 2018). The estimates put the figures at between three and four million of Zimbabweans who have left the country (Ndlovu, 2013). Despite the efforts of the government of Zimbabwe to lure them back, the majority, if not all, are still outside the country (Mavaza, 2017). The Majority of these migrants have left their children behind and a significant number of those children do not have guardians. The researcher observed that distant parenting is a prevalent phenomenon in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe and became interested to explore how the adolescent girl children are affected. Thus, it was assumed that the study would identify the experiences of the distant parented girls.

Despite the studies which have been carried out on the effects of distant parenting elsewhere, there is still a gap on the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. A few studies which have been carried out did not focus on adolescent girls' experiences. Many of them focused on the statistics of the left behind children and /or the challenges that they faced. Thus, little is known about the experiences of the left behind girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. Adolescence stage is critical for every developing child and is characterised by transition from childhood to adulthood. Therefore, parental guidance is of paramount importance at this stage. The researcher observed that some of the distant parented adolescence girls reach this stage in the absence of their parents due to parental migration. Thus, this study focused on their experiences because they grow up as distant parented girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe.

1.3 Statement of the problem

A significant number of Zimbabweans have left and others are still leaving the country for greener pastures due to economic hardships that befell the nation. The phenomenon of going into the diaspora leaves children living alone or in the hands of relatives and/or caregivers. A phenomenal number of adolescents, in this case adolescent girls, are left to head the households in the absence of their parents. The literature reports that distant parenting has its own weaknesses when it is taken into cognisance that adolescence is a critical stage in the development of a human being (Wang et al., 2019). Many adolescent girls end up lacking parental guidance, advice and protection because they live in the homes with absent parents. In many cases they are absent from school and teenage pregnancy becomes rife in this category of children; some of them are abused while others go for early marriages (UNICEF, 2020; Makhubu, 2019). Others are comfortable because they receive remittances from their parents on time. Money, however, does not replace the presence of a biological parent. Thus, absent parents resort to various distance means to parent their children. This includes what Wang and Lim (2021) call mobile phone parenting where parents use phones to manage children's lives in their countries of origin. Other means include the use of relatives for parenting where there is arranged guardianship while sibling parenting girls are put in a position of parenting younger siblings (Deng et al., 2022. Thus, this study sought to explore the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe.

1.3.1 Main research question

What are the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe?

1.3.2 Sub questions

1. Which experiences do distant parented adolescent girls go through due to the absence of both parents?
2. What are the challenges faced by distant parented adolescent girls?
3. How do distant parented adolescent girls cope with their situation?

1.4 Aim of the study

The main aim of this study is to explore the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives were generated to guide the study:

1.5 Objectives of study

1. to ascertain the experiences that distant parented adolescent girls go through due to the absence of both parents.
2. to establish the challenges that are faced by distant parented adolescent girls.
3. to examine the coping strategies used by distant parented adolescent girls.

1.6 Preliminary Literature Review

1.6.1 Experiences of distant parented adolescent girls

Parental migration has led to the phenomenal increase in the cases of distant parented children the world over. Humans, migrate for different reasons. These may include the search for greener pastures, furthering studies, economic instability and the shortage of basic commodities among other things. When parents migrate, children are left behind and this leads to distant parenting. In most cases, the left behind children are exposed to a wide range of risks and challenges.

Currently, in USA, about 2342 children of illegal immigrants have been separated from their parents by immigration officials at the border where they are taken care of in detention centers (Domonoske & Gonzales, 2016). The fact that these children are not staying with their parents has long term consequences. The separation impacts on their health; they are traumatised by craving to see their parents and they experience toxic stress because of lack of parental relationship (Keller, 2018). In addition, to that the separated children experience hunger, gang violence, fear, sexual assault and deprivation of essential resources. Furthermore, adolescent girls face risks such as pregnancy, rape and psychological trauma from assault.

Studies reveal that in South America, Ecuador to be specific, adolescents experience distress and emotional ambivalence because of their relationships with migrant parents (Jerves et al., 2018). A UNICEF report (2015) showed that children are affected by parental migration. Their negative experiences include lack of access to education and health care, psychosocial problems, teenage pregnancies and becoming new breadwinners or care givers.

A study conducted by Nazridod et al. (2019) in Tajikistan on the experiences of the left behind adolescents and their coping strategies found that the left behind adolescent girls express emotional upset, receive less remitances and are overwhelmed with household chores.

In Ghana, a study conducted by Owusu (2013) revealed that the left behind adolescents develop multiple attachments. They may be left in the hands of relatives who make up for the parental absence. However, they are able to access resources due to the availability of remittances.

A study conducted by Filippa (2013) in Harare, Zimbabwe with adolescents, whom he called 'diaspora orphans,' focused on their experiences of parental absence due to the diaspora revealed that adolescents feel depressed, abandoned, rejected, lack social support and have the challenges of relationships with the caregivers; they are vulnerable to sexual abuse. Tawodzera and Themane (2019) also carried out a study in Zimbabwe focusing on the schooling experiences of the left behind children. The findings of their study were that the left behind adolescents experience several challenges due to parental migration. They have excessive household chores, limited help from the guardians with homework, inadequate representation at school meetings and non-payment of school expenses.

According to the study carried out by Bvunzawabaya (2015), the left behind adolescent girls form a very vulnerable group as they are affected by various psychosocial problems. Filippa (2013) finds out that distant parented adolescents have a lot of psychological problems. Thus, their development in adolescence is affected.

Ndlovu (2018) conducted a study in the rural district of Gweru which focused on the economic migration and socio-economic impact on the emigrants' family. The findings of the study revealed that the school fees were not paid up as the money was used by the

caregivers to cater for their personal needs, thus, the quality of the girls' lives did not change. Ndlovu further observed that the left behind adolescents experience a shortage of remittances, poor academic performance and behavioral problems. It is against this background, therefore, that this study sought to explore the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe which is rural and the setting is therefore different from the ones for the previous studies.

1.6.2 Theoretical Framework

To carry out this study, the Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory was used as a theoretical framework to inform the present study.

1.6.2.1 Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory

The purpose of a theoretical framework is to position the research study in the discipline or subject in which the study is being carried out (Kivunja & kuyini, 2017). The theoretical framework enables the researcher to theorise about the research study and to make explicit assumptions of the research about the interconnectedness of the way things are related in the world that negatively affect the distant parented adolescent girl child. Given the observation by UNICEF (2017) that the home environment forms part of a child's "bigger whole," it was important to investigate the aspects of the environment which is supposed to give the child a shelter, security, dignity and self-esteem since a descent and dignified home is a source of self-esteem.

The bio-ecological systems theory is based on the interdependence between different organisms and their environment, with every part as important to ensure the survival of all the systems (Laff & Ruiz, 2019). The theory looks at a child's development within the context of the system of relationships that form his or her environment. Bronfenbrenner's theory defines the complex 'layers' of environment, each having an ecological systems theory to emphasize that a child's own biological set up is a primary environment fuelling her development. The interaction between the factors in the child's landscape fuel and steer his/her development. The changes or conflicts in any one layer may ripple throughout other layers. To study the child's development, we must look not only at the child and his/her

immediate environment but also at the interaction of the larger environment (Guy-Evans, 2020).

Based on these observations, the bio-ecological systems theory was relevant to inform this study because it emphasizes the interaction between an individual's development and the systems within the general social context. For this study the immediate environment, which is the family (father and mother included) constitute the microsystem where the child has direct contacts and also where the child is at the center. Bronfenbrenner's theory is an example of a multi-dimensional model of human development which posits that there are layers or levels of interacting systems which result in change, growth and development. These are the physical, biological, psychological, social and cultural changes. What happens in one system affects and is affected by the other systems (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017). Thus, human behaviour, experiences and actions cannot be understood outside of the contexts in which they occur. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory explains the direct and indirect influences on a child's life by referring to the many levels of environment or contexts that influence a person's development. A major challenge to the distant parented adolescent girls lies in understanding the complexity of the influences, interactions and interrelationships between the individual adolescent girl and multiple other systems to which she is connected.

The bio-ecological systems theory has dire implications for distant parented adolescent girls. Knowing about the breakdown families occurring within children's homes makes it possible for one to understand the experiences through which these distant parented adolescent girls go. Yet, Bronfenbrenner believed that the primary relationship needs to be with someone who can provide a sense of caring that is meant to last a lifetime. This relationship must be fostered by a person or people within the immediate sphere of the child's influence. Such important primary role can only be provided by the parent or principal care giver. Unfortunately for the distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South district of Zimbabwe, the parent is not within reach, but is replaced by a cell phone, relatives and/or other elder siblings.

The ecological theory, according to Ashiabi and O'Neal (2015), examines the major theories of processes by which economic deprivation culminates in children having many experiences including the psychological as well as the psychosocial ones amongst others.

The theory showed the effects of economic deprivation because of distant parenting. According to Urie Bronfenbrein's ecological systems theory, the home plays a critical role in the development of the child (Guy-Evans, 2020). Parents have a direct influence on the development of an individual according to this theory and absence of which negatively impact on their lives.

The family is the immediate relationship and falls under the microsystems. This means that the home is the immediate relationship that they interact with. Economic deprivation due to the absence of parents may lead to stressful life events. In addition and due to stressful events, cognitively, the child is likely going to be affected. Family interactions are the key factors to the development of the child. They foster and support the development of the child (Guy- Evans, 2020). The family is the basic unit in the human ecosystem and is the heart of the social system. As a result of distant parenting, the child with no close adult relation has difficulties in developing good relations with the teachers because of lack of the link that the parents provide. Distant parented children have difficulties in exploring other parts of the environment as a result of the absence of proper parental care, attention and love. Thus, distant and unaffectionate parents have a negative effect on child development as they may engage in inappropriate behaviours such as prostitution, drug abuse and other crimes.

Bronfenbrenner identified five structures or environmental systems in which human beings develop. These are micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono systems. Their diagrammatical illustration is shown in Figure 1.1.

Chronosystem
Environmental changes that occur over the life course

Macrosystem
Attitudes and ideologies of the culture

Exosystem
Extended family and neighbours

Mesosystem

Microsystem

Parents' economic situation

School board

Family

School

Health services

CHILD

Peers

Mass media

Religious organization

Neighbourhood playground

Government agencies

Daycare facility

Social services and health care

Figure 1.1: Diagrammatic illustration of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory
Source: Guy-Evans, (2020)

1.6.2.1.1 The microsystem

The microsystem is the layer closest to the child and contains the structures with which the child has direct contact. The microsystem encompasses the relationships and interactions that a child has with her immediate surroundings (Guy-Evans, 2020). The structures in the microsystem include the family, the school, the neighbourhood and/or the childcare environments. At this level, the relationships have an impact in two directions, both away

from the child and towards the child. For example, as shown in Figure 1.1, a child's parents may affect his/her beliefs and behaviour; however, the child also affects the behaviour and beliefs of the parent. Bronfenbrenner calls these bi-directional influences and he shows how they occur among all levels of environment. The interaction of structures within a layer and interaction of the structures between the layers is the key factor to this theory. However, distant parented adolescent girls lack this influence. At the microsystem level, bi-directional influences are strongest and have the greatest impact on the child. However, interactions at outer levels can still impact the inner structures. This becomes very difficult for the left behind adolescent girl who has distant parented experience transitions of being left behind and separated from the parents although the family is important for the adolescent girl to explore other environments. Thus, the adolescents in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe had challenges in that regard. Academic success partly depends on parental involvement in school life and the extent to which academic learning is carried over into the home. The home environment has to be supportive for academic success to occur and with distant parented adolescent girls, it is not the case. In addition, distant parented adolescent girls lacked the basic requirements which are crucial for nurturance and guidance as a result of parental migration. Instead, the neighbourhood shapes the lives of distant parented adolescent girls; they can be supportive by availing financial assistance, being role models and informing the parents in the event of any eventualities.

1.6.2.1.2 The mesosystem

The mesosystem provides the connection between the structures of the child's microsystem (Guy-Evans, 2020). For example, the connection may be between the child's teacher and her parents or between her church and her neighbourhood. Distant parented adolescent girls have low chances of developing positive attitudes towards the teachers and they resort to withdrawal because migrant parents fail to encourage and support their children due to their absence. Due to parental migration, the interaction between the parent and the teacher is almost impossible. As shown in Figure 1.1, there should be interaction between the adolescent girl, her neighbourhood, religious affiliations, the school and the family. Due to the disintegration of the relationships within the microsystem the distant parented adolescent girl experiences difficulties in interacting with other parts of the environment, thus the girl may resort to becoming anti-social and and experiencing lack of self-discipline.

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1.6.2.1.3 The exo-systems

The exo-systems define the larger social system in which the child does not function directly. The structures in this layer impact on the child's development by interacting with some structures in her microsystem (Zhou & Brown, 2021). The parents' workplace schedules or community-based family resources are examples of such structures. The child may not be directly involved at this level, but he/she does feel the positive or negative force involved with the interaction with his own system. Distant parented adolescent girls lack parental protection and resources for her up-keep.

1.6.2.1.4 The macro-systems

The macro-systems are the cultural, ideological and institutional contexts in which all the systems are embedded (Guy-Evans, 2020). This layer may be considered the outermost layer in the child's environment. While not being a specific framework, this layer comprises cultural values, customs and laws (Zhou & Brown, 2021). The effects of larger principles have a cascading influence throughout the interactions with other layers. For example, if it is the nature of the culture that parents should be solely responsible for raising their children, that culture is less likely to provide resources to help the parents. This, in turn, affects the structures in which the parents function. The parents' ability or inability to carry out that responsibility towards the child within the context of the child's microsystem is likewise affected. Hence, distant parents cannot provide affectionate parenting due to the distance between them and their children as a result of migration.

1.6.2.1.5 The chrono-system

The chrono-system encompasses the dimension of time as it relates to a child's environments. Elements within this system can be either external, such as the timing of a parent's migration, or internal, such as the physiological changes that occur with the aging of a child. As children get older, they may react differently to environmental changes and may be more able to determine how that change influences them (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). The present study was intended to identify the changes that take place from childhood to adolescence during the absence of the parents. Bronfenbrenner sees the instability and unpredictability of family life as the most destructive force to a child's development

(Paquette & Ryan, 2015). Distant parented children do not have the constant mutual interaction with important adults such as parents who are necessary for development. According to the ecological theory, if the relationships in the immediate microsystem break down, the child does not have the tools to explore other parts of his/her environment. Children looking for the affirmations that should be present in the child/parent or child/other important adult relationship may look for attention from inappropriate places. This makes the distant parented adolescent girl child vulnerable to abuse. The result of this is the development of anti-social behaviour, lack of self-discipline and inability to provide self-direction (Paquette & Ryan, 2015).

1.7 Significance of the study

It is hoped that the present study may be of benefit to many stakeholders. To the families of the left behind children, it is hoped that the study may increase knowledge and understanding of the challenges which distant parented adolescent girls go through. This may influence the promotion of family cohesion through constant parental visits to foster mutual interaction and communication which are important for the adolescent girl child. It is also hoped that educators may benefit from this study by knowing and understanding the experiences of distant parented learners in the classroom and how these impact on their academic activities. This situation, in turn, raises people's awareness on the plight of the distant parented adolescent girls across the school life and the wider life spectrum of the left behind adolescent girl learners. In addition to that, the community and the peers may be sensitised on the effects of stigmatisation which lowers the self-esteem of the distant parented adolescent girls. If the community is sensitised, labeling and stigmatization of distant parented adolescent girls may be minimised. For the government which is an organ which institutes the legislation and measures that govern the education system in the country, it is hoped that the results of the study will significantly inform the policy that can be used to address the plight of distant parented adolescent girls. This may also assist the government to put in place a piece of legislation which governs distant parenting in order to protect the left behind children.

1.8 Contribution to the body of knowledge

1.8.1 Policy

The study identified some gaps in the Constitution of Zimbabwe and the national policies on child protection. These need to be addressed. The Constitution of Zimbabwe and some NGOs should seek to protect the rights of all children, the distant parented adolescent girls included. This could be done by clearly and explicitly stating their rights and the implications of violating them. Such a policy is vital in the development of the distant parented adolescent girls. The bio ecological framework formulated may inform policy makers in the government and other stakeholders to adopt aspects of the framework when addressing the needs of the distant parented adolescent girls' social, cognitive, moral, personality, physical and emotional development.

1.8.2 Theory

The study employed the bio-ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner which contributed to an understanding of the support that the distant parented adolescent girls need during their development. The bio-ecological systems framework illuminates an understanding of how the distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe should be supported during their development. The theory clarified how collaborative support to the distant parented adolescent girls aids their development. It is hoped that the findings of the study and the bio ecological systems theory will highlight the effect of the absence of support on the development of distant parented adolescent girls. The theory which was initially developed to explain the development of the American children is now used in a new context, date and setting. In this study, it is used to explain the development of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. It is rejuvenated by being used to explain the development of children in contemporary societies and in a third world country.

1.8.3 Practice

The study may further increase the knowledge of the collaborative approach in supporting

the development of a distant parented adolescent girl. This is knowledge on how different systems surrounding the distant parented adolescent girl can influence the girls' development and how the systems can improve the support that they give in an African context. Based on this information, the government and other relevant stakeholders may propose the policies which ring fence the left behind adolescent girls in their development. Workshops on the improvement of support to the distant parented adolescent girls can be held. Thus, the recommendations can be used by the relevant stakeholders to support the distant parented adolescent girls' development in the Chiredzi district of Zimbabwe.

1.9 Methodology

1.9.1 Research approach

The study explored the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe using a qualitative approach. This gave the participants the opportunity to explain the phenomenon according to how they experience it. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), a qualitative research approach is more based on constructivism, which assumes that multiple realities are socially constructed through individual and collective perceptions or views of the same situation. The researcher in this study solicited the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. Creswell (2012) asserts that there are several advantages of using a qualitative research approach. Among them is the fact that the qualitative approach may be more appropriate in explaining causal relationships. This is possible through tracing the processes that have contributed to the different participants' experiences and by collecting the participants' own explanations of what has happened to them. It is also possible to understand why people behave as they do in particular situations or in response to certain stimuli or interventions. The present researcher sought to understand the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. Knowledge of such experiences may be used to design a model to arrest the situation and to influence policy on how the government and other stakeholders may assist in the plight of the children.

1.9.2 Methods and design of the study

This study adopted a qualitative approach which allowed the participants to express themselves and to talk about their personal feelings on the phenomenon under exploration. Hence a phenomenological research design was adopted. The study made use of the phenomenological research design to explore the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls hence, Brynard et al. (2015) posit that it focuses on real life experiences. Yin (2016) mentions that a phenomenological research design has the ability to adapt a wide range of frameworks and is appropriate when studying social phenomena. Creswell (2019) posits that a phenomenological research design allows the use of multiple sources of information such as interviews, observations, documents and reports. In this study, individual interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data. It is a phenomenological design which, according to MacMillan and Schumacher (2014), is concerned with the current status of a phenomenon and involves studying things in their natural setting. Data from the distant parented adolescent children of the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe were collected from the children's local environment. This allowed for in-depth research and it produced first-hand information (Sarantokos, 2013). De Vos et al. (2015) observed that a phenomenological design is intended to provide a description of the human experiences from the point of view of the research subjects. It became suitable for this study which sought to interpret the meaning that people bring to them. It provided the data by fully describing the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls.

1.9.3 Population, sample and sampling techniques

De Vos et al. (2015) define population as the totality of persons, events, organization units, case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned. Creswell (2019) defines it as a group of individuals with some common defining characteristics that the researcher can identify and study, thereby drawing conclusions. Distant parented adolescent girls from the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe were selected to participate in this study. A significant number of adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency have their parents in the diaspora. This study focused on the girls who were aged between 12 to 21 years during the data collection period. The study sought to find out their experiences on being distant parented. However, since the number of such girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe seemed to be huge, the researcher resorted to

sampling to select a manageable and sizable number of participants which gave trustworthy results. In this case, purposive sampling was used.
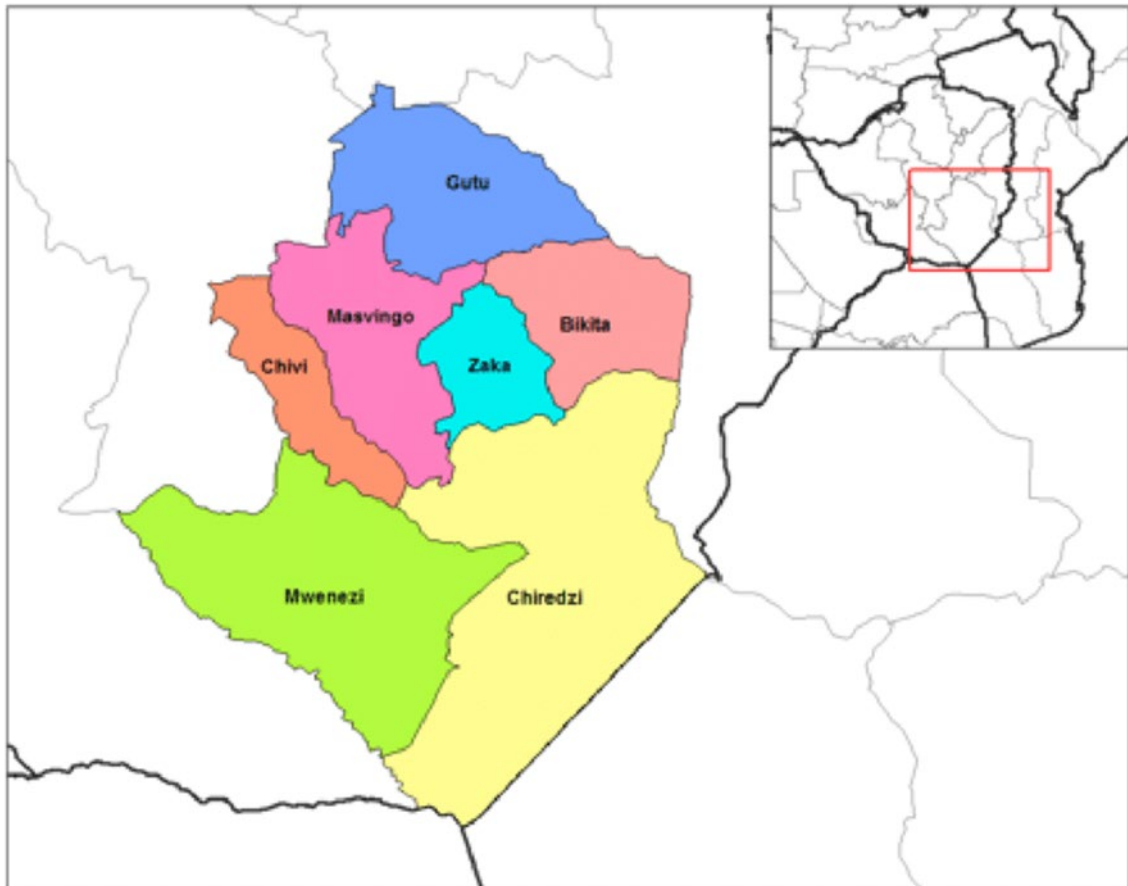
Figure 1.2 Map of Masvingo province showing the position of Chiredzi district

Purposive sampling technique was used since it involves the selection of information-rich cases (Palinkas et al., 2015). Sampling was deliberately done, based on the researchers' judgment of an adolescent girl who is distant parented (Punch, 2014). The study purposefully selected the participants with the help of the school headmaster to identifying distant parented adolescent girls, sometimes called the left behind children. The study selected five schools and a total of 5 participants were selected from each school. This made a total of 25 adolescent participants of the ages between 12 to 21 years. The participants were informative about the topic of interest (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2014). They were selected on the basis of being girl, aged between 12 – 21 years, having parents in the diaspora and either living on their own or with a maid or a grandmother. Permission to carry out research was sought from the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture. A letter written to the school headmaster was used to seek permission to study the phenomenon of

adolescence. A letter of consent was written to the guardians of adolescents who were below 18 years of age.

Table 1.1: Number of participants

Number of participants per school					
School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	Total
5	5	5	5	5	25

1.9.4 Data collection instruments

The study made use of interviews and focus group discussions for data collection. This was done to get detailed information from the personal experiences of the distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe.

1.9.4.1 Individual interviews

Interviews allowed both the researcher and the participants the opportunity to probe and get clarifications on an issue. Therefore Gray (2021) says probing is a way for the interviewer to explore new paths which were not initially considered. Finn (2021) contends that interviews are useful for acquiring an insight and context into a topic. Moreover, the interview method allowed the participants to describe what was important to them. According to Keller and Conradin (2019) semi-structured interviews are conducted with a fairly open framework which allows focused, conversational and two-way communication. The researcher followed a guideline but where necessary, followed topical trajectories in the conversation that strayed from the guide because it was necessary to do so. Thus, some of the questions were generated during the interview, allowing both the interviewer and the interviewee the flexibility to go into details when necessary. The researcher prepared an open ended interview guide with the questions generated from the research questions of the study.

George (2022) acknowledges that the flexibility of semi-structured interviews gives the researcher some room to ask follow-up or probing questions, based on the participants'

responses to the pre-constructed questions or to change the questions based on the participants' responses to previous questions in each interview experience.

1.9.4.1 Focus group discussion

For triangulation purposes and to reinforce the data collected through individual interviews, in this study, focus group discussions were also used to collect the data. George (2022) explains a focus group as a data collection instrument in which a small group of participants gather to discuss a specific topic to generate information in a moderated setting. Focus groups were used in this study because they allowed for the participants to share their experiences in a social setting. They helped the participants to consider their own cases in relation to the other members of the group (Patton, 2014). This helped the researcher to gain a wide and deeper understanding of the opinions of the group on the phenomenon (Kruger & Casey, 2014). Therefore, the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls of the Chiredzi South Constituency were explored as a collective. They formed groups and the discussions took place in private rooms within the schools environment. Thus, data were collected from the participants' natural settings in order to ensure that the participants remained comfortable and confident enough to discuss the issues that affected them as distant parented adolescent girls.

1.10 Ethical considerations

The researcher was cognisant of the fact that each research methodology and every study has its own ethical implications. Therefore, the study adhered to the ethical principles proposed by Leedy and Ormrod, (2019). They consisted of informed consent, protection from harm, confidentiality or the right to privacy, anonymity, honesty and autonomy. Ethical obligations require avoiding deception, asking permission to record and being honest about the intended use of the research study (Creswell, 2019).

The study adhered to the research ethics. Informed consent was sought from every participant and, at initial contact, they were provided with the copies of the consent forms. Consent was sought from the distant parented adolescent girls who were above eighteen years of age. Consent for those who were below eighteen years of age was sought from the

school head who consented on their behalf. Permission to carry out the study was sought from the Chiredzi Rural District Council (CRDC) and from the Ministry of Education, Art, Sport and Culture because some of them were school going adolescents.

The study ensured that the participants were not subjected to any physical and/or psychological harm. The researcher was careful to ensure that human dignity was upheld when the data was collected. No risks and no psychological discomfort were caused; the interview and discussion questions were keenly reviewed to avoid any emotional discomfort. To ensure the participants' comfort, counselling by professional counsellors was offered before and after the interviews.

The researcher continuously safeguarded participants' identities and responses from public disclosure. The participants were assured that their privacy would be respected and guaranteed at all times and that there was no way in which they were identified or identifiable. The researcher did not invade the participants' privacy.

The researcher assured the participants that the data that they provided would not be traceable back to them in the reports, the presentations and other forms of dissemination. The primary method that the researcher used to preserve anonymity was the use of pseudonyms or codes for the participants and the location of the research. This was done in order to protect the participants as well as to ensure human integrity and honesty of the research findings and conclusins (Shamoo & Resnik, 2015).

1.11 Limitations

The study was carried out in one constituency of Zimbabwe, the Chiredzi South Constituency. The adolescent girls were selected from five (5) schools in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe and were purposefully chosen to ensure the authenticity of the findings. By its nature, this study was qualitative and the limitations of a qualitative study obviously impacted the study. The composition of the sample and the age group is naturally a limitation because the participants may not be comfortable with the interviewer who may be an unfamiliar person in the areas under study. However, to ensure that the results of the study remained trustworthy, the researcher was self introduced to the participants and took

time to gain rapport with them. Uncooperative behaviour of some participants towards academic research negatively impacted on the quality of the responses. However, efforts were made to ensure that the results of this study remain trustworthy by informing participants about the purpose of the study and counselling them before and after the data colletion process.

1.12 Delimitations

The study was confined to distant parented adolescent girls of secondary school going age who are between 12 years and 21 years of age. The phrase distant parented adolescent girls in this study refer to the girls whose parents have migrated legally or illegally and who were parented through either the cell phones or via the relatives (grandparents and/or older siblings). The participating girls were attending school in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Masvingo province in Zimbabwe. The participants were drawn from distant parented adolescent girls in the rural area of the Chiredzi South Constituency and not those who stayed in urban areas and who might have different experiences. The study covered the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe because of its proximity to South Africa which is the main host for the migrants from this area. Most people find it easy to go to South Africa even without legal documentation by using illegal routes. As a result of that, there are many children who are distant parented and who are sometimes called 'the left behind children.'

1.13 Concept clarification

Adolescence: is an important stage in the human life span and it ranges from 12 -19 years of age. Physiological changes associated with puberty manifest themselves in often complex and bizarre ways to which girls react differently (Csikszentmihalyi, 2020). It is also defined as a period when important developmental experiences which include physical and sexual maturation, occur in a teenager. They are at a stage when they move towards their independence and form identity (Allen & Waterman, 2019).

Parenting: refers to an act of taking care of children until they are above 18 years of age and can take care of themselves.

Distant parenting: refers to the rearing of the children who are not physically staying with or whom one is not sharing the same geographical location with.

Diaspora orphans: are the children and youth who have one or both parents living abroad and whose life experiences are synonymous with those of orphaned children.

Migration: refers to the movement of people from their place of usual residence, within the country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently and for various reasons (IOM, 2022).

Parental migration: is a process whereby the biological parents or guardians leave their country of origin and move elsewhere in search of jobs, an escape from political persecution or in pursuit of educational programmes their children behind (Fellemith et al., 2018).

Children left behind: are minor children who are left in their home country when one or both of their parents emigrate for work for at least six months or more (Beh, 2014).

1.14 Chapter division

Chapter 1
Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter, which contains a general introduction and background, the rationale for the study, the statement of the problem, the aim of the study, the delimitations and limitations of the study, a definition of the concepts and the summary to the chapter.

Chapter 2
Chapter 2 covers the theoretical framework that is intended to explore the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in Zimbabwe. The study is informed by Urie Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory. The chapter consists of a review of the related literature available on the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls. Several studies were consulted and scrutinized. It concludes with a summary to the chapter.

Chapter 3

This chapter outlines the research methodology and design followed in this study. They include the population and the sample, sampling procedures, research instruments, credibility and trustworthiness, data-collection procedures, data presentation, and the analysis procedures as well as the chapter summary.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 presents the analysis and presentation of the findings.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the study.

Chapter 6

The chapter presents a general overview of the study, the bio-ecological framework, the conclusions drawn from the study and the recommendations related to the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe.

1.15 Chapter summary

In this chapter the introduction and background to the study and the rationale for the study were described. The problem, aims, objectives, research methods, limitations and the demarcations of the study were outlined. Related terms were contextually defined. The next chapter presents the reviewed literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Parenting or child rearing is the process of raising children. This process includes the provision of protection, a nutritious diet, education, access to health care, descent accommodation, social life and other basic needs of a growing person. As Labuzan-Lopez (2015) posits that parenting involves the provision of certain techniques, methods and skills which a child requires; these include the provision of direction, teaching family values, discipline and responsibilities in order to ensure that the individual develops into a healthy and responsible adult (Kretchmar-Hendricks, 2019). Therefore, parental discipline is crucial for building a free, responsible and independent citizen. The biological parents, the mother and/or the father, are mostly the principal caretakers of the developing child. Their influence is very crucial to the developing child hence their absence may have a rippling effect (Nair, 2018; Landry, 2014).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's (2004) Bio-ecological systems theory is a refined and revised version of the original (1979) Ecological Systems Theory. It places emphasis on the concepts of the environment, the person, proximal processes and time as they relate to human development (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Ashiabi & 0'Neal, 2015). On the other hand, the original ecological systems theory overlooked the individual and gave prominence to the environment, which is divided into microsystem, mesosystem, macrosystem and exosystem (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Bronfenbrenner's (2004) bio-ecological system theorises that there is interconnectedness between child growth, development and environment. According to Excell et al. (2015), the environment is a system of circles nested inside each other with the child at the centre. These circles interact with and influence each other as well as develop the child. The bio-ecological systems theory places special emphasis on the impact of

various aspects of the environment on child development (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017; Brown, 2017). The Bio-ecological systems theory aims at explaining how different types of environmental systems influence human development although the child's own biology is a primary force fuelling his/her development (Levine & Munsch, 2018). Berk (2017) argues that biological dispositions join with environmental forces to mould development of an individual. Implicit in the above mentioned system is the fact that ones' biology also contributes to one's development. Roundy (2018) supports the proposal of Rosa and Tudge (2013) that one's development is affected by everything in their surrounding environment. Thus, the environment of distant parented adolescent girls facilitates the understanding of their experiences. Thus, the child's environment is looked at in terms of its quality and context (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015). One's environmental features either foster or interfere with the child's development and a person can be compelled by the environment to adapt to its conditions and restrictions (Berk, 2017). In the absence of the parents, there is interference of the development of the child (Sincero & Sincero, 2015).

Parents should therefore act as the facilitators of their children's development by supplying appropriate opportunities, resources and support to promote their children's growth, and ability to cope with life challenges. This study explored the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls' development within the context of the systems of the relationships that form their environment. The bio-ecological systems theory looks at the interaction between an individual and the environment. The theory therefore views the child's development in terms of reciprocal influences which occur between the child and the multiple levels of the surrounding environment (Magwa & Magwa, 2016; Rosa & Tudge, 2013). The kind of relationships that exist is that of interdependence between different organisms and their physical environment. The Bio-ecological systems theory provides a framework from which multiple contextual factors influence the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls.

The bio-ecological systems theory views an individual as developing within a complex system of the relationships which are affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment (Sincero & Sincero, 2015). This theory is quite relevant in explaining how the adolescent girl child is influenced by both biological and environmental factors as she grows up in the absence of her parents. Berk (2017) alludes to the fact that the environment is a series of nested structures including but extending beyond the home, the school, the neighbourhood and the workplace settings in which people would spend their everyday

lives. According to Brown (2017) as well as Levine and Munsch (2018) each environment is inside the next just like the spider web. Thus, the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls have to be understood in the context of the environment in which they grow up.

Interactions between overlapping ecosystems influence each other (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017). According to Christensen (2016), there are a lot of interactions between a developing organism and the enduring environments and contexts in which it lives its life. It is also important to note that each layer has a powerful impact on the development. Levine and Munsch (2018) posit that to understand the life course of an individual one has to understand how that person interacts with all the different facets of his environment. Bronfenbrenner (2004) further argues that the development of the child, therefore, is a process that unfolds within a complex of relationships occurring in multiple environments. All the environments have a role to play in the development of a human being which helps in understanding the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the absence of the father/mother figure. Some writers call these children "diaspora orphans" a term the researcher will also use in this study. Furthermore, the environments are many and unique to different individuals and societies. This study is interested in exploring the distant parented adolescent girls in Chiredzi South by focusing on those nested environments and their influence on the development of the distant parented adolescent girl. Thus, they provide a useful theoretical framework for exploring their experiences as each layer has a powerful impact on the development of the child (Berk, 2017).

It is important to understand children within the context of the community in which they grow up. These communities are also influenced by the culture and time. The ecology of distant parented adolescent girls has to be explored in order to understand their experiences of being distant parented. Some scholars also call it transnational parenting.

The relationship between systems changes as one develops and grows. If one thing is changed it affects everything else in the system (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017). This is because of their interconnectedness. Thus the bio-ecological systems theory further implies that in case of distant parented adolescent girls, parental migration affects many things in their lives hence the need to explore their experiences in the absence of parents. The effects of parental migration are complex and transect across many contexts hence the need to explore the

experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi constituence South of Zimbabwe. Furthermore, human beings are social beings, and they cannot develop in isolation. Children need to grow and interact with the family, the home, the community and the society that are the key to human development (Sincero & Sincero, 2015).

Ettekal and Mahoney (2017) report that proximal processes have a powerful impact on the development of a child. Proximal processes have been defined as the mechanisms through which developmental potentials are actualised and exert a more powerful influence on developmental outcomes than on contextual factors (O'Neal, 2019). Thus these reciprocal interactions between a child and his or her environment are the primary engine of the development of the child (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015; Roundy, 2018; Strauss, 2021). They fuel child development. In the context of distant parented adolescent girls; these reciprocal interactions are affected because the parent is not there to reciprocate hence, the development of distant parented child is affected because the interaction needs to be on a regular basis and over an extended period. For distant parented or transnational parented adolescent girls, the parents are always absent and this disables the reciprocal interactions which should be regular to aid the development of the child. For proper proximal processes to take place, therefore, the child has to be engaged in activities on a regular basis and these interactions could also be with the objects, shapes and symbols. Distant parented adolescent girls or "the diaspora orphans" whose parents do not remit them may experience a variety of socio-emotional difficulties due to poverty. Some of them may also have problems with peer relations and develop disruptive classroom behaviours (O'Neal, 2019).

There is a mutual relationship between an individual with his or her environment in such a way that how the system interacts with the child affects the growth of that child and how the child reacts to the system affects how they react to the child. In the context of distant parented adolescent girls where the family is the immediate context, the absence of the parents due to migration may impact negatively on the development of the child. Berk (2017) alludes to the fact that the individual development is a product of many direct and indirect influences which either facilitate or impede the individual's potential. What happens directly or indirectly affects the development of the child. Thus, there should be mutual accommodations between the developing individual and the environment hence the interaction should be reciprocal. How the distant parented adolescent girls think, feel, behave and develop is among several reasons linked to their social groupings, forces and

relationships that make up their environment where change in one layer affect every other layer (Kamenopoulou, 2016). Absence of the parents due to migration may adversely affect the development of the child throughout.

Magwa and Magwa (2016) argue that the complex layer of the environment has an effect on a child's development. The norms and rules of the family are different from those of the school or the community but they all contribute to the development of the child. These systems also vary in terms of their proximity to the individual child; some of them are close, as is the case with the microsystem while others are not. However, they all influence the development of the child.

Development takes place through the process of progressively more complex interactions between an active child and the persons, objects and symbols in the immediate environment (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017, Brown, 2017). These experiences which children encounter in a setting where they develop has a bearing on their development. The interaction may be at different levels and they culminate in the growth, development and change of an individual. The support, guidance, and structure of the society in which one lives, account for the individual differences.

Figure 2.1 represents a diagrammatical summary of Urie Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Systems Theory. In 2004 the word bio was added to depict the central influence that the individual's characteristics have on development (Kamenopoulou, 2016).

CHRONOSYSTEM

MACROSYSTEM

EXOSYSTEM

TIME

MESOSYSTEM

MICROSYSTEM

Values

Social welfare

School

School board

Home

Laws

TIME

Customs

Culture

Home
Child
Siblings Parents

Tradition setting
Child
Peers Adults

Religious
setting
Child
Peers Adults

Cultural
Setting
Child
Peers Parents

Chief's kraal

Childcare

Traditional and religious settings

School
Child
Peers Teachers

Community
Child
Peers Adults

DIMENSIONS OF TIME

Mass media

Dominant beliefs

Workplace

MICRO-COSMOS

MESO-COSMOS

EXO-COSMOS

MACRO-COSMOS

CHRONO-COSMOS

Municipality

Ideologies

TIME

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Figure 2.1: The bio-ecological approach and the African perspective approach

2.2.2 Microsystem

The microsystem is the layer closest to the child and contains the structures with which the child has direct contact hence it is the direct environment that human beings have in their lives (Berk, 2017). According to Ettekal and Mahoney (2017) the microsystem is the most proximal ecological level and it includes the settings in which individuals directly interact. It also encompasses the relationships and interactions that a child has with the immediate surroundings. The family, peers, school, relatives, adults, siblings and neighbourhood or

childcare environments fall in the microsystem. The child's parents may affect the beliefs and the behaviour of the child just as the child influences the parents' beliefs and behaviour. According to Bronfenbrenner (2004), human beings are not only recipients of the experience that they accumulate in the process of socialising with other people but they also contribute to the construction of such environment. The relationships are bi-directional (Strauss, 2021). One's reaction to other people may, in turn, affect how they treat one. In the case of distant parented adolescent girls such bi-directional relationships or influences are not available because of the absence of their parents. If the parents are present and the child does not behave well, the parents may condemn such behaviour and reward acceptable behaviour. Distant or transnational parented adolescent girls are left with no one to either approve or disapprove of their behaviour and actions; this absence of either approval or lack of it may affect their development negatively. The microsystem is thus the most influential level of the bio-ecological systems theory. If both parents are available, they encourage each other in acceptable child rearing roles (Berk, 2017), the absence of which may influence the development of the distant parented adolescent girls. According to Levine and Munsch (2018), the microsystem level face to face interactions influence the development of an individual but are absent for the cross border distant parented adolescent girl children.

Ettekal and Mahoney (2017) contend that the microsystem is the small immediate and closed environment in which an individual operates. Individuals are constantly shaped by their encounters with other individuals that they come in contact with; amongst the interactions are the parental support, the school, the peers and culture. In the absence of the parents, the distant parented adolescent girls may lack support from the parents and this may affects their education, health, later relationships, behaviour and development as a whole, hence the family, as the basis of the social system, has to be nurtured in order to thrive (Magwa & Magwa, 2016).

In their study on the challenges of schooling faced by child headed families, Magwa and Magwa (2016) found that in the microsystem, children who are distant parented do not learn the values and attitudes of the society. Parents cannot give help to the children in their school work. Instead, the distant parented children adopt parental roles thereby bypassing most stages of childhood development. More nurturing, supportive interactions and relationships may enhance the children's development.

According to Gray and Anderson (2016) the fathers' behaviour and roles, though socio-culturally biased, have an intense influence on the total development of children. Distant parented adolescent girls lack parental support, protection, guidance, love and care and this may have a negative impact on their development. These extra roles culminate in a lot of challenges in terms of their school work; their social life may also be affected. The school work of distant parented adolescent girls may be affected negatively if the extra roles are too many. They may not have adequate time to do their home work. They may be too tired to concentrate hence their poor academic achievement. Furthermore the extra roles may take too much of their time to the extent that they cannot have time to look after their siblings. Thus, according to Santrock (2015) the more encouraging and nurturing these relationships and places within the microsystem are, the better the child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social growth.

Distant parented adolescent girls who grow up in an unsupportive environment may have negative growth physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially because of lack of parental support. Rosa and Tudge (2013) argue that instability of family life destroys the child's development as they lack constant mutual interactions with important adults such as the parents which is necessary for development. Thus, this instability is a destructive force to the child's development as there is lack of constant mutual interaction with important adults. In the event of the relationships break down, the adolescent girl may fail to explore the environment. She may become anti-social and may lack self-discipline. Family breakdown as a result of parental migration may mean that the child does not have the tools to explore other parts of the environment that are necessary for human development. Parental absence may also mean lack of basic requirements and necessities of nurturance which results in distant parented adolescent girls engaging in risky behaviours.

2.2.3 Mesosystems

The mesosystem provides the connection between the structures of the child's microsystem (Berk, 2017). According to *Psychology Notes* (2019) on the mesosystem, microsystems influence and affect each other and this means that what happens in one microsystem affects what happens in another microsystem when it comes to child development. Ettekal and Mahoney (2017) observed that there are a lot of interactions although they are not direct to the child but they have an influence on the child's development. The families and schools

interact and the parents are more likely to support and encourage their children. Ettekal and Mahoney (2017) further indicate that there should be communication between the teacher and the parents. With distant parented adolescent girls, such interactions are not possible due to the absence of the parent. The fact that the parents are absent means that they are not able to help their children with homework. The connection which should be provided between the structures of the child's mesosystem may not be available in the case of distant parented adolescent girls as the parents may not be there to support and encourage them (Berk, 2017).

Santrock (2015) found that the rejected children may have low chances of developing positive attitudes and relationships towards the teachers because of the unavailability of interaction between the teacher and the parent. Distant parented children may be rejected in the sense that there are no close and warm relationships with the parents. This may lead them to withdraw from their peers and classmates. Berk (2017) noted that cross border parents cannot be involved in their children's school life because they are away. The same view was also shared by Roundy (2018) who states that the experiences at home also influence the progress at school. In turn, experiences at school influence interactions at home. Implicit in the above situations is the fact that children whose families maintain close and warm relationships with the school can be expected to do well in their classroom work.

Bronfenbrenner (2004) theorised that the family is the most influential part of the mesosystem. In the absence of the parents and other adults there may be no interactions and this spils over to the school setting thereby affecting the child. Parental absence constitutes a breakdown in the ecological system that results in the child developing deviant behaviours. In their study Magwa and Magwa (2016) observed that parental absence also leaves the distant parented adolescent girl without adult supervision and the girl has difficulties tackling homework and developing positive relationships. The active role that the parents can take in supporting their child is through attending parent-teacher meetings and school open days which motivates and ensure the child's general growth. This is however impossible in the absence of transnational parents, thus distant parented adolescent girls' development and growth are negatively affected. Their growth and development maybe hindered and the distant parented adolescent girl may develop a negative attitude towards the teachers. This situation may result in the girl's decline in school performance amd may further result in the child withdrawing from her classmates. The study assumes that parental involvement in the education of their children enhances motivation and stimulates

enthusiasm as it projects a renewed sense of responsibility in children. Collaboration between the parents and the distant parented adolescent girl's teachers improves her chances of achievements and a positive attitude towards school. For the distant parented adolescent girls such links are not available and the child may be labelled negatively and isolated. This, in turn may affect her academic progress (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015).

In the mesosystem, the church and the community have distal processes that work as they help the family to provide the necessary support for the child. This implies that raising a child is not an individual effort; it takes into account other stakeholders. Thus, it takes a community to raise a child (Reupert et al., 2022).

2.2.4 Exosystems

The exosystems defines the larger social system in which the child does not function directly. Development in this system is influenced through other people who are involved in the individuals' lives. According to Ettekal and Mahoney (2017), the parents affect their children's activities. They further assert that because of their experience, parents expose their children to the activities that they are familiar with. Distant parented adolescent girls are left with no choice but to do whatever they wish to do because the parents are not involved and are not available to influence their daughters in any way. Interactions, such as those in the parents' work place schedules in the exosystem take place with some structures in the microsystems (Berk, 2017). Thus, when parents are in diaspora, the patterns of interaction with the child are changed, hence the development and growth of the child may be affected. Berk (2017) further points out that in socially isolated families, there is an increased rate of conflict and child abuse.

The settings that are in the exosystem are external to the child but they affect the child's development. They include the community, the health services and the social support groups that provide resources to a developing child. Levine and Munsch (2018) argue that what happens at the work place of the parents may have an indirect influence on the child. Ettekal and Mahoney (2017) explained that if a child is growing up in a weak or broken exosystem, with no one to talk to, may have some negative connotations due to the forces such as economic pressures, political decisions and distant parenting. Schooling may be a challenge as well. For example, some parents may not have school fees and money to pay for rent if

they are staying in a rented house. Magwa and Magwa (2016) pointed out that such children may end up engaging in prostitution in order to raise the funds when the parents take too much time to remit.

According to Kamenopoulou (2016), children may also interact with the extended family and neighbours at the exosystem level. Due to some economic hardships some of the relatives who are expected to take care of the children that are left behind fail to do so. Therefore the distant parented adolescent girl may become passive in class and perform poorly because they may experience hunger. Rosa and Tudge (2013) further observed that circumstances around a child's life   directly or indirectly influence a child's development either positively or negatively. Due to parental absence, the older sibling may assume parental responsibilities and over work, thus affecting their own classroom performance. The distant parented adolescent girls may further develop stress, anxiety and depression which may negatively impact on her academic performance.

2.2.5 Macrosystems

Macrosystems are the cultural, ideological and institutional contexts in which all the systems are embedded (Landsberg et al., 2019). According to Ettekal and Mahoney (2017) the macrosystem acts as a filter or lens through which an individual interprets future experiences where social class and culture are important. Berk (2017) posits that social class refers to the individual family's economic, cultural and educational positions. Culture refers to a set of values, beliefs and practices. Of importance in the macrosystem in this study, is the fact that the environment is not static. It is dynamic and ever changing. Berk (2017) further mentions that these changes or ecological transitions such as going to school, marrying and becoming a parent are the turning points for development. People become products and producers of their own environments. The study assumes that distant parented adolescent girls experience strain in their development due to the absence of the parents. They may fail to get the assistance that they need in terms of food or health services because they may not receive any remittances from their parents who have migrated. The same observation is made by Magwa and Magwa (2016) who argue that distant parented adolescent girls experience may experience some strain in their development because they struggle to get such services.

Ettakal and Mahoney (2017) point out that the macrosystem involves dominant social and economic structures, values, beliefs and practices that influence all the other social systems. Cultural values may influence proximal interactions in the miscrosystem and the whole mesosystem of distant parented adolescent girl. Therefore, consistency in the other systems such as the micro, meso and exo form the backbone on which individuals and families structure their lives. The laws and values of the parent's work place may affect the child's immediate setting. For distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe, the majority of employed parents are in diaspora due to the poor economic conditions in Zimbabwe. They therefore leave their children behind since many of them crossed the border and go to the neighbouring countries illegally; they do not have work permits. Some of those who cross legally may also not have work permits hence it becomes difficult for them to process dependents' permits for their children. This problem is assumed to affect the development of distant parented adolescent girl children as they mature in the absence of the parents.

2.2.6 Chronosystems

The chronosystem encompasses the dimension of time as it relates to a child's environments. Ettakal and Mahoney (2017) posit that chronosystems focuses on the changes and events over the child's life courses. It describes the changes which are made by the changing environment and life altering events that affect the individual. Sincero and Sincero (2015) observe that chronosystems are the changes that occur in the environment over time and have an effect on the development of the child. The changes such as parental divorce, historical events, social conditions and life transitions within a developing person can occur (Psychology Notes, 2019). Many parents migrate from Zimbabwe due to economic hardships. These changes which occur in Zimbabwe modify the existing relationship between the children and their environment, thereby creating new ways of development. Distant parented adolescent girls have relationships with their parents changed due to the latter's absence. The parents are not physically present to guide, support and protect the children. Therefore distant parented adolescent girls try to remain resilient but suffer some uncertainties about their future. Furthermore, they find themselves heading families and taking new roles and responsibilities in order to keep the homes and families on their feet. These new responsibilities are an addition to the extra burden for these girls as they are

already trying to come to terms with parental absence (Magwa & Magwa, 2016). These factors may disturb the normal development of the distant parented adolescent girl.

2.3 The world overview of the prevalence of the left behind children

The prevalence of the children who are distant parented is a cause for concern in many countries the world over. According to Kufakurinani et al. (2014) and Lu (2015), for example, by 2010 there were more than 214 million international migrants. Similar figures were also observed by Williams and Graham (2014) who estimated that about 232 million people (or three percent (3%) of the world population live outside their countries of birth. These figures imply that a greater number of children are left behind and are distant parented.

Statistics show that in the UK there are about thirteen (13%) Mexicans and the majority of them have left their children behind. Statistics in Romania further indicate that over 92 million children have one of the parent working abroad as of 2009. In Albania the situation is somehow different as children are mainly left at home with their fathers although there is a high percentage of out migration (Botezat & Pfeiffer, 2014). These figures are worrisome, especially on the part of the children who are left behind during their critical developmental stages which require the presence, guidance and assistance of the parents.

Zimbabwe is one of the countries hardest hit by parental migration resulting in several children left behind. The unavailability of statistics in Zimbabwe is further noted by Filippa et al. (2013) who argue that it is a mammoth task to estimate the figures of distant parented children in Zimbabwe because of the different methods and criteria which are complicated in each country. The task is further compounded by different migratory channels which encompass illegal and legal ones. Although data on the actual figures is currently unavailable, the estimates made by Zirima (2017) are that as of 2009 more than 200 000 children have been left behind by their parents.

2.4 The Zimbabwean migration

Zimbabweans have been hard hit by political and economic challenges since 1990 when the government adopted the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme [ESAP] and the Land Reform Programme (Mlambo, 2018). The ESAP has resulted in many civil service

Zimbabweans losing their jobs through retrenchment as the government tried to reduce the expenditure. This had dire implications for the families as the cost of living skyrocketed. It was further worsened by the removal of the subsidies on the basic commodities, corruption and other social challenges such as the prevalence and rise of HIV/AIDS pandemic and the depreciation of the Zimbabwean currency (Madziva, 2015). As a result of this, many people struggled to make ends meet. To further complicate the situation, inflation shot to unprecedented levels; more than 80% of the people were far below the poverty datum line. They further argue that the high inflation resulted in the deterioration of the living standards and shortage of basic needs, a condition which has and is still unfavourable to most families in the country as many parents were failing to meet their children's basic needs (Burke & Chingono, 2019). With this scenario, many Zimbabweans were left with no option but to leave the country either to the regional or international countries in search of better working and living conditions which culminated in a massive brain drain and unskilled workers.

According to Zirima (2017), after 1990 the accelerating social, political and economic unravelling of the country led to the rush for the exits. Thus, a number of factors have contributed to the out-migration of many Zimbabweans. These factors impacted heavily on the gains which have been made in the health, education, agriculture and rural infrastructure sectors. In trying to rectify the situation, the USA dollar was adopted but it did not do much to save the situation as it also continuously became unstable. According to Kufakurinani et al. (2014) there was lack of fairness in the distribution of resources, unemployment, socio-economic instability and political unrest which have greatly contributed to massive out migration of many Zimbabweans.

Many Zimbabweans migrated into South Africa, resulting in the South African Department of Home Affairs issuing permits under the Zimbabwean Dispensation Project which regularized the migrants from Zimbabwe with the target of documenting them outside the asylum system (CORMSA, 2017). However, a sizeable number remain undocumented, hence it becomes a mammoth task to estimate the figures of the Zimbabwean parents who migrated to South Africa as well as the number of children who have been left behind. Dube (2014) also observes that the political and economic decline that took place resulted in mass emigration to South Africa. Chakombera and Mubika (2018) add that the economic decline forced many people to migrate to other countries to do skilled and unskilled jobs in order to support their families. The main destinations were the neighbouring countries, the UK, USA

and Australia. Ndlovu (2013) posits that the International Organization for Migration [IOM] office in Harare estimated that between 500 000 and 4 000 000 Zimbabweans are outside the country. According to a report by AFP (2019), millions of Zimbabweans have fled abroad in the last 20 years to seek work. Many others want to leave the country due to the worsening conditions of living. Credible statistics are, however, lacking in this regard.

With the prevailing current situation in Zimbabwe, the incidences of out migration have risen considerably. This implies that a great number of children is left behind. The Majority of people are not satisfied with the status quo, hence they migrate to other countries. The Zimbabwean migration is viewed as a regional problem by the neighbouring countries (Madziva, 2015). Madziva reports that Zimbabwe is experiencing a number of out migrants, some of whom have migrated beyond the African borders to as far as the American, European and Asian countries. Migration statistics shows that there are over 500 000, 20 000, 50 000 and 100 000 Zimbabwean migrants in Australia, UK, Canada and Botswana, respectively. South Africa is, however, the main receiving country and the estimation is that it hosts over three million (3 000 000) Zimbabweans. It is against this backdrop that parents leave their children behind to be distant parented. The high Zimbabwean migration statistics led to the present researcher's interest to explore the experiences of the Zimbabwean distant parented children, with a special focus on adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe.

2.5 Reasons for parental migration

Scholars have arrived at various conclusions about why parental migration has become a global issue (Betts, 2015). According to IOM's (2020) report, migration has become an integral part of the daily lives of human beings who migrate because of different reasons. Migration explains the distribution of the world's population (Arbour et al., 2017). There are two main forms of migration, internal (that is migration within the country) and transnational (where people move from one country to another) (Drishti, 2019).

In most cases, the trend is transnational migration where people move from developing countries (the global south) to the developed countries (the global north) (Owusu, 2013). Thus, the pursuit of better lives may be another reason for migration. This kind of migration is normally driven by the economic meltdown in the people's countries of domicile. Thus,

people move to areas where they can access better living conditions and standards. They want to improve their economic status at household level. This is probably why the Zimbabwean economic meltdown has forced many people to leave the country (Madziva, 2015). According to Gonese (2014) many people left Zimbabwe in a bid to beat poverty and seek employment in countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Britain, the USA, Australia, Canada and many more. The majority of them left their children behind. The study assumed that these children left behind also known as 'diaspora orphans' go through varied experiences because of being distant parented and hence it attracted the attention of the reseacher to explore the experiences of the distant parented, also called the 'cell phone parented' adolescent girl children.

Other reasons for parental migration are finding a safe place to stay after being displaced due to environmental factors such as natural disasters that is floods, erosion, earthquakes, volcanos, tsunamis and droughts (Nunez et al., 2014). These people become climatic refugees moving to areas which are safer and habitable. However, in such instances, they do not leave their children behind; they migrate with the children. Other reasons for people who choose to migrate are businesses, furthering studies and marriage.

Madziva (2015) posits that as far back as World War 2, people migrated because of being persecuted, tortured and subjected to a lot of suffering. Thus, people may migrate because of insecurity. In Zimbabwe some people may have migrated because of political instability and economic crisis coupled with cash shortages and high unemployment rates (Chakombera & Mubika, 2018). Furthermore, in Zimbabwe some people migrated because they were escaping from the past and future persecution. There were sour relationships between the Shona speaking people and the Ndebele speaking people after the Ndebeles had been forced out of South Africa by the amaZulu. They occupied Matebeleland thereby pushing the Shonas in the 1800s. Zimbabwe gained independence under the leadership of two major political parties, namely Zimbabwe African People's Unioin [ZAPU] led by Joshua Nkomo, a Ndebele, and the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front [ZANU-PF] led by Robert Mugabe, a Shona. The second party was led by Ndabaningi Sithole, a Ndau. Between 1983 and 1987, there was Gukurahundi which, according to Body-Evans (2019), was an attempted genocide of the Ndebele speaking people by the former president Robert Mugabe's fifth brigade trained by North Korea. This was a period immediately after the nation had attained its independence. *Gukurahundi* is a Shona word

which means 'early rain that washes away the chaff'. Mugabe became the Prime Minister and Nkomo was given a ministerial post which, however, did not last long as he was accused of plotting to overthrow the government (Doran, 2015). Doran further states that a campaign of terror was then waged against the Ndebeles beginning of 1983 and lasting for four years where between 20 000 and 80 000 people were killed and others tortured. Thus a number of people migrated as a result of this political instability in Matebeleland.

After the year 2000, the Zimbabwean government came up with deliberate and destructive policies which climaxed in livelihood destruction one of which was expropriation of white commercial farms (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2015). The white owned farms were replaced by black small-scale peasant farms (A1 Farms) and (A 2 Farms) allocated to black African farm owners. This resulted in many farm workers losing their jobs and resorting to out migration either within the country or outside. This is confirmed by Solidarity Peace Trust report (2015) which posits that between one thousand eight hundred (180 000) and two hundred thousand (200 000) farm workers lost their jobs. According to Madziva (2015) some of the affected parents went as far as UK. Some parents were associated with white commercial farmers whose land had been taken away during the land invasion. As a result of that they suffered torture. The teachers in Zimbabwe became a target group as they were believed to back up the opposition party; they suffered a lot of torture and psychological trauma.

Operation Murambatsvina (Restore Order/ Clear out the Trash) was another government clear up campaign which occurred around 2005 and was against informal houses and jobs. 'Murambatsvina,' a move by the government, rendered many people homeless as illegal residential structures were destroyed (Madziva, 2015). The motive of Operation Murambatsvina may have been to reduce the urban population for political and economic reasons (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2015). The same sentiments are also shared by (Madziva, 2015) who contends that it was a government strategy of pushing urban dwellers for shifting loyalty and support to the opposition party. Operation Murambatsvina contributed to out migration of many Zimbabwean parents as back as 2005. Furthermore to this Madziva found that some people migrated as far as the UK because of failing to comply with the orders of the ruling party's. AFP (2019) states that hyperinflation which is now nearing one hundred (100%) has wiped out people's savings and formal employment has collapsed in Zimbabwe, leaving many people to flee out of the country.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that people migrate due to several reasons. In the event that the parents leave their children behind, the children are exposed to many experiences and the study was intended to explore the experiences of the distant or transnational parented adolescent girls of the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe.

2.6 Parent migration and leaving children behind

Multiple reasons have been identified for the parents leaving their children behind when they migrate to other countries. According to Kufakurinani et al. (2014), in more than one case, migrant parents leave their children behind because they would have calculated and seen that the remittances that they send back home make them have better life styles. This also concurs with Asis and Ruiz-Marave (2013) who argue that parents migrate to enhance their children's life chances. Thus, it appears that parents leave their children behind because they are comfortable with the remittance that the parents send. They assume that it covers all their expenses.

Asis and Ruiz-Marave (2013) further explain that some state regulations have limited and restrictive conditions and durations of the visit and this may force the parents to leave their children behind. The same was also previously noted by Beneria et al. (2013) who posit that as people migrate to potentially attractive receiving countries, they are met with tightening laws and border controls which are meant to stem the flow of people into the new countries and to force such people to leave their children behind. In such instances, it becomes very difficult for the parents to migrate with their children; this is why they leave the children behind.

Kufakurinani et al. (2014) found that the rapid collapse of formal employment in Zimbabwe since 2000, coupled with political violence, have forced many parents to seek better opportunities abroad but restrictions in host countries forced them to leave their children behind as they did not have the legal rights to enter those countries. Furthermore, Kufakurinani et al. (2014) observed that financial situations forced them to leave their children behind as many destinations were said to be impractically expensive for raising children. Besides, children were not interested to go, either. Kufakurinani et al. (2014) found that in the Western countries such as Britain, issues such as the parenting cultures, children's

rights and gender equality are contrary to African values. This has forced parents to leave their children behind as they can foresee a clash of cultures and parenting styles.

In some instances, Kufakurinani et al. (2014) observed that children are left behind by parents who migrate because of the risks and dangers of travel such as immigration restrictions where the immigration officers may require a lot of documentation for one to cross the border with the child. Furthermore, these researchers have observed that in some instances children are left behind due to lack of proper travel documentation. The parents resort to cross the border through illegal means. This is the case in the area that the researcher is studying, the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. Here the majority of job seekers cross the Limpopo River into South Africa illegally and the exercise is risky because of the crocodiles. The alternative route, the forest route, is infested with dangerous wild animals since it passes through the Kruger National Park. The parents cannot travel with the children under such harsh conditions. They leave the children behind. This practice prompted the researcher to carry out this study, focusing on the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls.

2.7 The experiences of distant parented adolescent girls

2.7.1 Health challenges and opportunities experienced by the left behind adolescents

Remittances have gone a long way in making some positive contributions to the lives of some adolescents left behind and are, therefore, distant parented. A comparative study by Gao et al. (2013) in Southern China on the impact of parental migration on health status and behaviours among the adolescents who are left behind showed that adolescent boys were at a higher risk of skipping meals such as breakfast, higher levels of physical activity, smoking tobacco, suicide ideation and being overweight. They further revealed that adolescent girls, on the other hand, were more likely to drink excessive sweetened beverages, to watch more TV, to smoke tobacco, to drink alcohol and think of planning suicide. These negatively impact on the children's health. A similar study by Wang et al. (2019) in rural China on self-injury among the adolescents who were left behind indicated that there was a higher prevalence of self-injury among the adolescents with both parents migrating than the non-left behind adolescents. They also revealed that there is an association between parent child attachment security and adolescent self-injury. The Prevalence of self-injury was found to

be lower where there was high parent child attachment security. Thus, these studies concluded that parental migration is a risk factor for the health of the adolescents who were left behind.

A systematic review and meta-analysis, by Fellmeth et al. (2018), of various countries such as China, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Mexico, Gautemala, Peru, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Trinidad, Jamaica, Tobago, Romania, Moldova on the health impact of parental migration on the left behind children revealed that such children and adolescents increased the risk of depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, conduct disorder, wasting and stunting underweight, overweight and obesity. They also found that there were no significant differences between the children and adolescents who were left behind and those of the non-migrants on nutrition outcomes, unintentional injury and diarrhoea. Thus, the review established that parental migration is detrimental to the health of the children left behind as well as on adolescents. The unavailability of parents results in the health of adolescents left behind being compromised. The honours may be upon those who have to take care of the adolescents. If they fail to provide nutritional food, it also means that the adolescents may suffer in terms of nutritional health.

A study by Aryal (2019), in Nepal, on the adolescents who are left behind by migrant workers showed that adolescents experience an increase in psychological and emotional stress and feel lonely. Being left behind affects their psychosocial health. The findings further revealed that there are higher chances of suicide attempts and anxiety among both adolescent boys and girls. These findings are contrary to the findings of a study by Arcinas (2018) in the Filippines on self-related health conditions of school going adolescents left behind, they are generally in good health although the social and spiritual health were moderately normal compared to the physical and psychological health conditions which were very good. The study further revealed that female adolescents have better overall health condition compared to the male adolescents. Thus, evidence on the health experiences of the adolescents who are left behind is conflicting.

2.7.2 Educational challenges and opportunities experienced by the left behind adolescents

Studies have shown that the education of the adolescents who are left behind has been deeply

affected as a result of transnational parenting. A study by Wang (2014) in rural China revealed that parental migration negatively affects the distant parented adolescents' school enrolment which was found to be more sizable and significant on the enrolment of adolescent boys than that of girls. This was more common in the families with absent fathers for boys and the fact that mothers who remained behind failed to fill the father figure role successfully, especially in disciplining the the boys. A study by Yeung and Gu (2016), also done in China, but focusing on internal migration and adolescents' wellbeing revealed that the adolescents who were left behind performed worse academically in numeracy related subjects when both parents were absent for short- and long-terms. Thus, the adolescents who were left behind exhibited lower academic achievement in China than those who stayed with both of their parents. A different picture was, however, presented by a study by Sun et al. (2015), again in rural China. In their study, Sun et al. (2015) showed that the adolescents who were left behind but whose distant parents frequently contacted them had a greater school engagement. Such adolescents were reported to enjoy school activities, doing their homework and following school rules. Consequently, the findings of the two studies presented above and conducted in China give different pictures on the distant parented adolescent learners.

In a similar study, conducted by Hu (2018) in rural China, on how parental migration shapes the adolescents' transition to high school, the findings show that there were positive as well as negative effects of parental migration on adolescents. It improves the educational attainment of the left behind adolescents through the remittances that they send. The study showed that the left behind adolescents used their remittances towards their educational activities. On the other hand, it was also found that parental migration leads to a decline in academic achievement. It was also noted that migration increases the chances of divorce which may have a negative impact on the educational outcomes of the adolescents who are left behind as it exacerbates their social of problems.

A study by Halpern-Manners (2013) in Mexico revealed that only 59% of the youths aged between 15-18 years in migrant families make transitions from lower secondary to senior secondary scools. This suggests that the migration of the parents has a large negative impact on the educational attainment of the adolescents who are left behind. The findings of the study by Halpern-Manners (2013) shows that quite a number (41%) of the left behind

children does not proceed to senior secondary schools. These findings are similar to those of other studies such as Wang (2014), Hu (2018) and Yeung and Gu (2016).

A comparative study by Rendeza (2017) in the Filipines showed that there were no differences between the adolescents with Filipino overseas worker father or mother and those those who had both parents working abroad. All had good grades in school despite the absence of people who could assist them with homework, projects and additional responsibilities. A similar study by Clifton-Sprigg (2018) done in Poland revealed that parental migration had a minimal positive and immediate impact on educational attainment of the adolescents. It was further found that parental migration has no impact on adolescents' grades at school. The study concluded that parental migration is not detrimental to the left behind adolescents' education. This implies that adolescents have good or, possibly, bad grades whether one or both parents live with them. Thus, the above mentioned studies find that parental migration has a positive effect on the academic performance of the adolescents who are left behind.

A similar study by Pantea (2018) in Romania showed that the adolescents who are left behind are prone to absenteeism from school, teenage pregnancy and criminal activities which affect their academic achievement. This is attributed to lack of adequate adult supervision as the parents are away. The study also revealed that in some cases the adolescents begin to have discipline problems at school. These impact negatively on their performance and they can be expelled from school. Thus, parental migration is detrimental to the school performance of the adolescents who are left behind.

A study by Cebotari and Mazzucato (2015) in Ghana, Nigeria and Angola revealed that international parental migration in Ghana, internal parental migration in Nigeria and migration of both parents in Ghana and Nigeria are the likely predictors of the decreased school performance among the secondary school children and youths who are adolescents. They further indicated that the overall relationship between parental absence and education varies according to the transnational context and the dimension being analysed.

Numerous studies were carried out in Zimbabwe on the adolescents who were left behind (Kufakurinani et al., 2014; Filippa et al., 2013, Tawodzera & Themane, 2019). A study by Tawodzera and Themane (2019) in Zimbabwe on the experiences of adolescents who were

left behind and their interaction with teachers revealed that the children face numerous challenges which negatively affect their academic performance so that they do not have adequate time for schoolwork due to additional work. It was further indicated that poor academic achievement was a result of lack of concentration in class due to tiredness. The study further found that adolescents who are left behind do not get help in doing their homework and this contributes to their poor academic achievement.

The study also showed that since none of the parents attended the school meetings due to their absence, the adolescents' academic progress could not be traced; they do not have anyone to assist them with homework. Thus, the findings on the negative impact of parental migration on the educational outcomes of the left behind adolescents have a lot in common with those of other studies.

2.7.3 Experiences of the left behind adolescents on parental guidance

Parental guidance is crucial to the development of the adolescents since they are at the transitional stage from childhood to adulthood and go through a lot of physical and mental changes. Thus, parental absence has some implications on the adolescents who have been left behind. It results in an increased risk of abuse, especially among the girls who maybe sexually abused. Parental migration continues to impact negatively on the lives of the adolescents who are left behind. A similar study by Cuaton et al. (2019) using ideas from China, Sri Lanka, Guatemela, Philippines and Poland revealed that lack of parental guidance and care of the adolescents affects their psychological development. They also found that mothers were usually considered to be the primary caregivers for the children and their absence may result in the adolescents getting lost as they lack guidance. A similar study by Liu et al. (2020) in China found that adolescents who are left behind fail to manage their negative emotions because they lacked parental guidance. Parental guidance is important for behaviour modification. A similar picture was also shown on the findings of a study by Fu et al. (2017) in China whose findings were that adolescents with distant parents were at a much higher risk of having suicide ideation when compared to those with at least one parent present. Suicide ideation is attributed to lack of parental guidance. This implies that adolescents face certain challenges which they fail to resolve on their own hence they need guidance from their parents.

In a study done by Xiong et al. (2019) in China on adolescents who come from father-migrant and mother caregiver families, the findings are that parental guidance and monitoring are crucial to the adolescents as they are still not fully mature. Adolescents are at a transitional stage. They develop from childhood to adulthood and they need behavioural control. Thus, parental control and guidance are crucial in the socialization of adolescents and their absence may lead to externalised problems such as school drop-out, drug abuse, girls falling in love with elderly men for girls and other forms of unruly behaviours. A study by Aguilar (2020) in the Filippines found that adolescents who were left behind failed to handle the problems which were related to the school, the home and their own personal lives hence, they required parental guidance.

In a study done by Ndlovu and Tigere (2018) in Zimbabwe, the findings were that adolescents who lacked parental guidance, supervision and control exhibited behavioural problems such as absenteeism, school drop-out, drug and alcohol abuse and disrespect for the elders and teachers. The same picture of the negative effects of lack of parental guidance is presented by Tawodzera and Themane (2019). In their study Tawodzera and Themane (2019) in Zimbabwe found that the adolescents who were left behind lacked parental guidance and help when they did their homework. This forced them to seek help from the neighbours and, in the process, some of them became victims to sexual abuse.

2.7.4 Mental health of the left behind adolescents

A comparative study, by Tang et al. (2018) of the mental health and psychological problems of the left behind children in China showed that the children's separation from migrant parents threatens the mental health of the children. The study further showed that the prevalence of mental health problems and the psychological symptoms were higher among the adolescents who are left behind as compared to those who are not left behind. A similar comparative study by Wang et al. (2019) in rural China on the mental health of children who are left behind found that both the current and the previous left behind adolescents are associated with significantly high levels of mental health difficulties which include emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity and total difficulties. The results further revealed that the difficulties of communicating with parents were associated with the adolescents' mental health which includes emotional conduct problems, loneliness,

depression and anxiety, all of which have a negative and long lasting effect on the adolescents who are left behind.

In a study done by Ruin (2014) in Lithuania the findings were that adolescents who were left behind develop some problems such as bad tempered, sad, worried and absent mindedness. The study also revealed that many teenagers are found in juvenile prisons while others were in the institutions for the children whose parents have lost custody over them. These findings show the extent of the experiences of the adolescents who are left behind.

The studies which are carried out in Mexico revealed that the left behind youths had high levels of depression and resentfulness towards their parents who had left them behind. In another study conducted by Lu (2015) in Mexico the findings also revealed that the adolescents who are left behind experience major transformations in their family life. The study assumed that this may have a psychological impact on the adolescents who are left behind.

The Zimbabwean studies by Filippa et al. (2013), Kufakurinani et al. (2014) and Chakombera and Mubika (2018) found some psychological effects on the children who were left behind, especially on the adolescents who had extra responsibilities. Kufakurinani et al. (2014) found that teenagers experience a sense of powerlessness and abandonment which resulted in deviant behaviour such as teen- motherhood, depression, low self-esteem and anxiety. It is for this reason that Kufakurinani et al. (2014) called these the distant parented adolescents, 'diaspora orphans'. Furthermore, the study established that migrant-parent child separation is traumatic on its own. Most of the findings from the studies carried out in Zimbabwe and elsewhere seem to show that the adolescents who are left behind are psychologically affected.

2.7.5 Family relations of the distant parented adolescents

Studies have shown that distant parenting affects family relations in a number of ways. For example, a study by Cuaton et al. (2019) using ideas from China, Sri Lanka, Gautemela, Poland and Philippines found that there were changes in caregiving practices and upbringing in families as a result of parental migration. It further revealed that some families broke down due to separation when the either parent entered a new marriage. Thus, family

relationships are affected by migration. Cuaton et al. (2019) also found that deprivation of parent-child relationships influences the negatively psychological development of adolescents. A similar study by Cortina (2014) in Ecuador and Albania showed that parental migration led to family disintegration, separation and unhappiness. In another study by Hershberg (2017) in Gautemela, the findings were that the adolescents who were left behind resisted distant parenting. They either refused to answer the phone calls when the parents called or expressed discontentment when their parents talked to them on the phone. This implies that distant parenting affects the parent-child relationships negatively. The studies also established that the duration of the parents' stay away from the adolescents who are left behind has a noticeable impact on the relationship between the parents and the children, thus implying that the longer the parents stay away the more the children experienced the challenges in their relationships.

A study by BRAC (2017) in Bangladesh revealed that adolescents face stress and anxiety as they are incapable of dealing with the situations and they experience a low self-esteem and that they are at a high risk of different types of abuse, amongst them sexual and drug abuse.

In a study by Rendeza (2017) in the Filippines, on the impact of parental migration on the life of the left behind Filipino adolescents, the findings were that the majority of the adolescents who were left behind felt deeply sad, abandoned, lonely and longed for the physical presence of their parents. This explains why Kufakurinani et al. (2014) called these children 'diaspora orphans.' They also expressed tiredness of the routine scenario whereby their migrant parents go home and then leave again to work abroad. A similar study conducted by Aguilar (2020) in the Filippines found that constant communication between the migrant parents and their adolescent left behind children built a strong and honest relationship between them. Various means of communication were used to maintain close relationships. The adolescents who were left behind indicated that they longed for parental care and that their parents' absence contributed to untold emotional turmoil. Aguilar further found that they long for greater intimacy that they would receive if their parents were present. The adolescents who are left behind also mentioned that they felt lonely during important events such as Christmas, birthdays, school prize giving days and graduation ceremonies. Thus various studies show that distant parenting affects the emotional well-being of the left behind adolescent learners.

Another study by Paduraru (2014) in Romania showed that adolescents who are left behind lack parental affection, feel distressed and abandoned. They may further develop aggressive behaviour because they feel unattended by their migrant parents at the adolescence stage, a period which is considered to be the most difficult in psychological development. Lack of parental affection stresses them. Hall (1904) called it 'a period of storm and stress'. These studies show that family relations are affected because of the social distance created by migration (Paduraru, 2014).

A study by Adumitroate and Dafinoiu (2013) in Romania showed that parent-child relationships were negatively affected by mothers' leaving them behind, especially at the adolescent level. They found that adolescents whose mothers had migrated experienced less warmth and material affection. They felt neglected and abandoned by their mothers despite the material gains. This feeling implies that they value their mother's presence more than the material benefits. However, the fathers' migration is not perceived as paternal rejection but as caring for the family as the fathers are considered to be economic supporters of the family. This implies that there is estrangement between the children who are left behind and their migrant parents.

Similarly, a study conducted in Poland by Clifton-Spigg (2018) on the education outcomes of adolescents with parents working abroad indicated that migration results in role changes within the household, thus making other siblings to support and positively have an influence on the younger ones. The findings further revealed that if the duration of the separation is short, a strong bond within the family is maintained. Implicit in the above statement is that if it is longer, then it results in family disintegration. However, the findings of the study by Clifton-Spigg (2018) confirms the findings of the studies done in Latin America where a long period of separation results in family breakdown.

A study conducted in Harare by Filippa et al. (2013) revealed that the adolescents who are left behind do not feel the importance of their parents; they feel that their friends are closer to them than their parents. They are also not happy that their parents are not available to congratulate them if they have done something good at school. The parents cannot attend their events at school, so they lose out. Further, the parents cannot check their children's overall schoolwork and home work; they lose touch of the general lives of their children, who, in turn, lack parental love and feel insecure. The love they get from the care givers is

not adequate and cannot substitute parental love. Kufakurinani et al. (2014) found that parental migration results in a crisis in the families. Some parents neglect their families and the responsibilities they have at home. These studies revealed the negative effects of parental migration on the families.

2.7.6 Communication with the distant parented adolescents

A number of studies which were conducted in China have showed that communication during parental migration has a dual effect on the left behind adolescents (Su et al., 2013, Shen et al., 2015, Wang et al. 2019). For example, Su et al (2013) find that parent-child communication is important for the development of children. There was a higher level of life, school satisfaction and happiness as a result of parent- child communication. This implies that the adolescents do not feel the gap between them and the migrant parents much as long as there is some form of communication. Thus, the study concluded that parent-child communication is crucial for the development of all the children including those who are left behind by migrant parents. A similar study by Shen et al. (2015) in China revealed that adolescents who are left behind have better living conditions because of communicating with their parents. They indicated that communication with the parents is frequent and instant; the family ties are maintained despite the physical separation by migration. Communication with the adolescents who are left behind enables the migrant parents to continue parenting from afar. The studies cited above show positive effects of communication of migrant parents and their adolescent children who are left behind. A study by Wang et al. (2019) in China presented a different picture of the impact of communication. Parental migration was associated with higher mental health difficulties among the left behind adolescents when they had difficulties in communicating with their parents. These studies find that the absence of parent-child communication impacts negatively on the mental health of children. Thus, parental migration affects the children negatively where communication with them is poor.

A study by Aguilar (2020) in the Filippines on technology-mediated parenting of the left behind adolescents found that migrant parents rely heavily on the communication mediated through technology as is the case with Skype, Facebook and messenger for parenting. Technology is used as a way of maintaining family connections and addressing certain problems that adolescents face in the absence of the parent/s. Communication channels and

opportunities that are facilitated through technology have contributed immensely in maintaining the intimacy between the migrant parent and the adolescents who are left behind. It was further found that despite the consistency and frequency of communicating, the adolescents thought that there were areas and times when they preferred a face to face communication with the parents, especially the mothers.

In the Indonesian study, Umami and Turnip (2019) showed that communication from significant others acts as a protective factor for the adolescents to cope more effectively with their emotional and behavioural problems. It was further revealed that adolescents who engaged in frequent communication with migrant parents were happier and displayed higher scores for life satisfaction when compared to those who experience infrequent communication with their parents. Such communication has a shared impact on the problems that the adolescents encounter. Umami and Turnip (2019) found that rare communication between the migrant parent and the adolescents left behind is one of the predictors of loneliness. They also established that the left behind adolescents were lonelier than the non-left behind due to rare communication. Thus, communication with migrant parents is very important for the adolescents; absence of it may have a negative impact.

A study by Nazridod et al. (2019) in Tajikistan found that migrant parents regularly communicate with their left behind adolescents through various online internet platforms such as viber. Communication between migrant parents and their children is sustained but the regularity of the calls varies; they can be once or twice per week. Some left behind adolescent girls indicated that they did not have mobile phones to enable them to communicate with migrant parents. The study pointed out that cell phones are the most common means of communication between the migrant parents and their children.

Using ideas from China, Sri Lanka, Guatemala, Philipines and Poland, a qualitative study by Cuaton and Teguihanon (2019) found that deprivation of parent-child relationships and communication influence the left behind adolescents' growth but negatively impact on their psychological development. It was further found that constant communication with the migrant parents allowed the adolescents to avoid disconnection with the family members. Thus, continued communication is essential and the use of modern technology is considered to be the most efficient way of communication.

A study done in Nigeria by Owusu (2013) revealed that technology enables migrant parents to be in touch with the left behind adolescents in form of mobile phones and internet as they found these methods reliable. Further he indicated that some parents send telephone and mail gifts to the adolescents who are left behind. It was also established that the calls are frequent. For example, one girl confessed that her parents always call her. Owusu (2013) concluded that many away parents remain in constant touch with their left behind adolescents with the help of the increase in technological advancement.

A study by Poeze (2019) in Ghana on transnational fathering revealed that more than three quarters of migrant fathers try to nurture intimate relationships and fatherly love through frequent long distance communication. The study further indicated that intimate communication is facilitated through online communication using webcam, sharing videos, photos as well as messaging, all of which give the fathers a presence in their adolescent's lives. It was also found that fathers bond with their left behind adolescents through phone calls. The study further found that picture exchange keeps the presence of others alive in the absence of face to face contact. These findings show that communication prevents the gap which would have been created by parental migration.

Filippa et al. (2013) found that the global communication technology has alleviated the distress of separation. The global communication technologies such as the telephones, cellphones and Skype allow easy communication among the family members. Filippa et al. (2013) further found that technology overcomes international borders and makes the painful experiences less painful, especially on the adolescents who rely heavily on the means of keeping in touch. This means that the adolescents who are left behind do not feel any gap of separation due to the use of cell phones. Thus, communication through mobile phones has made a way for distant parents to redefine their parental role in the upbringing of their adolescent children. It is a way of empowering them to partially reconstruct their roles as parents. The study noted that through mobile phones, migrant parents know their left behind adolescents' schooling and general wellbeing.

Kufakurinani et al. (2014) found that mobile phones have the capacity to reconstitute effective parental roles although they sometimes give the expectations of the visits or gifts that may or may not be met. They also indicate that in Zimbabwe not all the families depend on phones, especially those families which moved across the regional borders during the

crisis period as they could not afford the charges. A study by Madziva (2015) on transnational parenthood and forced migration in Zimbabwe revealed that access to communication technologies can be a problem for those families which do not have the resources. Migrant parents text messages and use whatsapp and relatives communicate often any suspicious of the adolescents left behind under the guise of collective responsibility. The study also indicated that fathers are reluctant to maintain constant communications with the left behind adolescents. They mention that it may trigger expectations of remittances on the part of the adolescents and they may not be in a position to guarantee that, unlike the mothers who maintain regular communication.

2.7.7 Remittances to the distant parented adolescents in selected countries of Latin America and Asia

Research has shown that remittances have an influence on the lives of the left behind children and on the development of the nation as a whole. A study done by Cortes (2015) in the Philippines, Ecuador, El Salvador and Bolvia revealed that remittances can improve the income, food consumption, access to health services and schooling of the left behind adolescents. Thus, Cortes (2015) found that they go a long way towards improving many things in migrant families. Cortes (2015) further revealed that in El Salvador, remittances contribute to reducing the school dropout rate. Thus, the above studies have revealed some positive effects of remittances on the lives of the adolescents who are left behind.

Cortina (2014) found that adolescents who are left behind receive remittances (at least once a month) which they later on spend on health, education, their daily needs and clothing. The study further revealed that remittances have a positive impact on the lives of these adolescents as they increase their purchasing power and access to essential services. On another note, the adolescents reported that the remittances they got did not compensate or make up for the absence of the parents despite the fact that they were benefitting financially. Thus, the physical presence of the parents is important for the adolescents. Cortina (2014) concluded that remittances increase the family and the adolescents' opportunities to achieve a better life. In another study by Rojas et al. (2013) in Philippines, Ecuador and Moldovia the findings were that remittances change the consumption patterns of some family members as they end up with access to quality goods and services. The findings of the above studies indicate that there is a positive impact when the remittances are sent home in time.

Nazridod et al. (2019) showed that adolescent boys who are left behind receive more benefits from remittances as compared to the girls who feel overwhelmed with domestic chores that are expected of them. They also indicated that adolescent girls left behind felt they were less valued as compared to the opposite sex because the remittances were send to their brothers. This shows that adolescent girls receive less financial support compared to boys. Besides the gender gap, the study concluded that remittances have contributed immensely to the lives of the adolescents left behind by reducing child labour, improving health and nutrition.

2.7.8 Remittances to the distant parented adolescents in West Africa

Studies on distance parenting were also done in Africa, Ghana to be precise, by Owusu (2013). Owusu found that remittances constitute the earnings made by migrant workers that are sent to their home countries. He also established that some adolescents left behind receive remittances whereas some are completely dependent on themselves or random help from relatives. He thus, found a number of the benefits of the remittance which includes the fact that they allow these adolescents access to the necessary resources. The care givers care better if they have remittances; they are able to reduce the labour of the adolescents who are left behind, encourage school attendance and allow them to pay school fees. However, Owusu reported that other adolescents complained that remittances are not adequate. They fail to cover all the needs of the adolescents. Others left behind girl adolescents afford various goods and services. Agyei (2016) indicated that remittances play a critical role in supporting the lives of the adolescents. The bulk of remittances is used to buy food, settle health care and educational bills. They also use them to hire farm labour in order to reduce the burden on the adolescents who are left behind. Agyei (2016) concluded that the remittances ensure the welfare of the adolescents. However, the remittances are not enough. Thus, the remittances sent by migrant parents are meant to care for the adolescents left behind and also covering their living expenses in general.

2.7.8.1 Remittances to the distant parented adolescents in Southern Africa

In the Mozambique study by Chae et al. (2016) on the association between the father's migration and the adolescent child's leaving the parental home, the remittances were shown to delay home leaving for the adolescent girls. The longer duration of parental migration was found to be negatively associated with the transition out of home on the part of the

adolescents. The financial gains from migration play a critical role in delaying home leaving among adolescent girls.

Filippa et al. (2013) found that the left behind adolescents appreciate the remittances, especially the fact that they can afford to buy luxury goods. They tolerate parental absence as it gives them the opportunity to access certain materials that they need. Kufakurinani, et al. (2014) found that remittances are a way through which the migrant parents maintain intimacy and retain control over the lives of their adolescent girls through the threat of withdrawing the remittances. They established that some migrant parents use remittances to discipline their adolescent children in the event that they disobey. Some adolescents experience financial grandeur with big houses and several cars bought with the remittances send by their parents. For some, the life status changes while others abuse the remittances by holding parties. These findings are similar to those of Filippa et al. (2013). Ndlovu and Tigere (2018) found that secondary school adolescents argue that their school fees and development levies were not paid in full each term. This also applies to their school uniforms and stationery. The caregivers misuse the remittances, sent by the migrant parents, to meet their own needs. This shows that there are some economic gains for the caregivers from the remittances that are meant to support the adolescent girls.

2.8 Challenges faced by the left behind adolescents

2.8.1 Challenges faced by the adolescents left behind in the United States of America

In a longitudinal study to find out the challenges faced by adolescent girls who lacked fatherly care was conducted by Santrock (2019) in New York. The findings were that adolescent girls who lack the attention of their fathers at an early age were not stable in their future relationships. They moved from one boyfriend to another. The study further indicated that instability in sexual relationships could lead to other forms of misbehaviour.

Neilson (2013) provided an insight into the girls' regular contact with their fathers who were likely to participate in rebellious acts and to be arrested for breaking the law. They intended to find out the challenges faced by adolescent girls who lacked fatherly care, engaged in sexual activity at an early age and were more likely to become pregnant as teenagers. The fathers had great self-esteem issues and took part in substantial drug and alcohol use. Neilson

adds that it is a crucial part of a young girl's development to womanhood that she develops a stable relationship with her father. Girls are emotional beings who crave intimacy and closeness. If the relationships with their father are affected, they may have profound psychological problems in future. Low levels of father interactions with the daughters may result in insecurity and promiscuity at a tender age.

In a study by Musalo and Frydman (2015) in Central and North America, the findings were that adolescents who were left behind in Honduras were targeted by gangs. They were without parents who could protect and support them, hence they became vulnerable and easy targets by gangs. This problem was compounded with inefficient public social policies which could protect them. Musalo and Frydman (2015) further found that some adolescent girls who were left behind were abused by their caregivers. In El Salvador the adolescents who were left behind were vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and neglect. These studies imply that the adolescents left behind lack parental care, protection and nurture in their lives.

2.8.2 Challenges faced by left behind adolescents in China and other Asian countries

In China, Xi (2013) conducted another study on the challenges of the children who had recently been left in the rural areas when their parents migrated to the urban areas in search of jobs. It was found that such children and adolescents faced multiple challenges. These included psychological and emotional problems, vulnerability to physical and emotional hurt, a high death rate and the burden of farming. Xi (2013) further established that the left behind adolescent girls face a challenge of sexual assault which, according to Professor Shang Xiaoyuan of the Research Centre for Children at the Bejing Normal University, is a result of lack of parental custody. Furthermore, the study indicated that those adolescents who went to stay at boarding houses in order to complete school were subjected to poor conditions. In the end they abandoned school. Xi (2013) concluded that the adolescents who are left behind become victims.

The study on victimization of children who are left behind in China found that chronic absence of the father has a unique and damaging effect on the adolescents' development. It leads to further victimization. The levels of victimization among the adolescents who are left behind by a migrant father are higher than those of the non- migrant parents (Chen et al., 2017).

The Economist (2015) reports on a study conducted in China on the left behind children. The findings are that the left behind adolescents face a number of challenges one of which is loneliness as they live in boarding schools which are very far from their homes. Furthermore, such children are vulnerable to bullying, the state of anxiety as well as depression. They are also vulnerable to abuse where girls are raped by relatives. They are subjected to other forms of abuse such as ill treatment from grandparents and lack of reliable and constant communication from the parents. Furthermore some of them no longer want to see their parents while others do not remember them. In another study which was conducted in China by Shen and Shen (2014), such children and adolescents are isolated from their parents for long periods of time and they develop inferiority complex as well as psychological inversion.

In a study by Liu and Leung (2016) it was found that in recent years there has been an influx of migrant workers into the first-tier cities of Chinese mainland and Hong Kong. The adolescents that they left behind attracted public attention although in-depth studies of the pattern of communication between these trans-regional parents and their adolescents are still limited. These left behind adolescents face the absence of stay-at-home parents this leads to the decline in the school performance, communication disorders and psychological problems.

2.8.3 The challenges faced by the left behind adolescents in Southern Africa

Studies show that adolescents from broken families face multiple challenges which include teenage pregnancy, single parenting and being teenage mothers. These challenges are similar those of Makhubu, (2019) on abandoned teens who were forced into sexual trade and a number of other challenges which include; loneliness, destituteness, engaging in intimate relationships at a young age, social isolation working in the neighbourhood and mental effects of parental absence.

Furthermore, these adolescents face financial constraints which impact heavily on their education; they fail to purchase any learning materials in form of books and stationery. Some adolescent girls end up engaging in prostitution in order to provide for the family (UNICEF, 2020). They face the challenges of stigmatization. They are socially excluded at school and

within the society because some parents do not want their children to associate with the children from the child headed families.

2.8.4 Challenges faced by left behind adolescents in Zimbabwe

Filippa et el. (2013) observe that in Zimbabwe the challenges faced by the adolescents whose parent have out migrated, leaving them behind, find that distant parented adolescents face a number of challenges which include the age inappropriate responsibilities, feelings of anxiety, loneliness and psychological problems. Kufakurinani et al. (2014) find that the unruliness of the adolescents who are left behind is a result of the absence of an authority father. The teenage girls with a parental responsibility had problems in asserting authority over other teenagers in the family. Magwa and Magwa (2016) found that the adolescents who are left behind are stigmatized and socially excluded. Parents do not want their children to play with them and peers mock them. This implies that they are isolated.

From the reviewed literature which is related to this study, it can be concluded that adolescents experience a plethora of challenges which include exploitation, abuse in its variations as well as psychological and emotional challenges. Distant parenting may present some challenges such as those faced by child headed families.

2.9 Coping strategies employed by the left behind adolescents

Coping strategies refers to the thoughts and behaviours that a person uses to manage the internal and external demands of a stressful situation (Muthukrishnan & Xian, 2019). Each problem requires a specific coping strategy. Adolescents who are left behind adopt these strategies to make life bearable for them in the absence of their parents. Thus, coping strategies are ways through which the adolescents exhibit and utilize their agency for survival.

Owusu (2013) found that the extended family system is a mechanism that the adolescents who are left behind rely on in order to cope with parental absence. They rely heavily on the support from the members of the extended family. In Nigeria, children are viewed as common property. Thus, the extended family makes the life of the left behind children easier

than it would otherwise be. The extended family provides them with emotional support and other basic resources that they may need in the absence of their biological parents.

Some left behind adolescents engage in activities that generate money or work in order to support themselves (Owusu, 2013). They are not in touch with the parents who have migrated. Owusu (2013) further found that part of their earnings is given to the care givers. Based on Owusu (2013) and other studies, it can be concluded that some of the adolescents who are left behind depend heavily on their own survival strategies because they do not get adequate support from the migrated parents. Some of them depend on tips and get very little money for the work that they do. Research shows that they are active. They do some menial jobs such as cleaning shops, carrying lads, working as cobblers and selling some things. Girls engage in light activities such as selling food.

Thus, the adolescents who are left behind engage in all sorts of activities in order to cope up with their situation. However some of the coping strategies may ruin their future life.

2.10 Chapter summary

The Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory was applied to explain the phenomena of the adolescents who are left behind in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. The literature on the experiences of distant parented adolescents was explored and tied back to the adolescent girls, especially as they are the focus of this study. The review was done globally and it took a funnel shape. That is it looked at the reasons for parental migration, the reasons for leaving the children behind, the prevalence of migration, the Zimbabwean context, the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls, the challenges and the coping strategies of the adolescents who are left behind globally. This situated the study and put it into the context which helped the researcher to identify the gaps which this study seeks to address. In addition, to that, the review of the literature assisted the researcher in identifying the global debates and controversies on distant parenting. The next chapter presents the research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The phenomena of migrant labour goes as far back as 1850s when families were broken as men left their families behnd to seek employment. They left the children with their mothers to raise them (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016). However, with poor economic conditions in Southern Africa, the focus of this study, women began to enter the labour market to augment the meagre income that their husbands were earning. Children were either left with their extended families such as the grandparents or other family members. However, in some instances and in the absence of extended families, adolescent children were left to head the households and to raise the younger siblings, a phenomenon called child headed households. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. The study was conducted to answer the following research question which guided the study:

- What are the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe?

3.2 Research approach

3.2.1 The Research Paradigm

The nature of this study calls for the interpretivist naturalist paradigm which seeks to study human life in its natural setting. Human life is social, fluid, formidable to observe and hard to measure precisely with laboratory instruments in a natural setting. De Vos et al. (2021) argue that the strength of qualitative naturalistic inquiry is that it approaches a setting without a predetermined hypothesis. The approach is rooted in the empathetic understanding of the everyday lived experiences of people in specific historical settings (Neuman, 2014). It maintains that all human beings are engaged in the process of making sense of their worlds and continuously interpret, create, give meaning, define, justify and rationalize daily actions

(Babbie & Mouton, 2014). Thus, reality should be interpreted through the meaning that research participants give to their life world.

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) assert that a paradigm is the researcher's worldview which is the perspective or thinking, a school of thought or a set of shared beliefs that inform the meaning or interpretation of the research data. This study used an interpretive paradigm because the researcher intended to get an 'insight' and an 'in-depth' information on the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe (Creswell, 2019). The researcher relied upon the participants' views of their situation and recognised their impact on the research of their own background and experiences (Creswell, 2019; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2014). This, it was hoped, may lead to a better understanding of the phenomenon studied, as the researcher was interacting with the participants. Therefore, the interpretive paradigm assisted the researcher to get an in-depth and rich data because the researcher captured the data through the process of deep attentiveness and of empathic understanding.

3.2.2 The Qualitative Research Process

According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2014) a qualitative study is a descriptive research approach study that is concerned with the current state of something. Thus, the study was concerned with the experiences of adolescent girls who are distant parented as it was used to gain an in depth insight into the matters that affect human behaviour (Rajeev, 2018). As a qualitative approach inclined study, it provided data by exploring the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls from the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe as described by the chosen participants. In a qualitative research, researchers look at human events in a holistic way that attempts to locate individual actions in their natural cultural contexts. Human activities ought to be investigated in terms of the meaning that they portray, how they do it, how they act and then interpret what they say (Maree, 2016).

In this qualitative study the focus was on understanding the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls. The researcher was interested in how distant parented adolescent girls live in the absence of the father/mother figure. Rajeev (2018) observes that this approach reflects on the why and how of decision making by studying the girls' culture, attitudes, behaviour, motivation, concern and experiences. Patton (2014) is of the contention that in such

instances, the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest but enters the world of others and attempts to achieve a holistic understanding rather than a reductionist one (Maxwell, 2013).

Personal interest and curiosity are the major sources of a qualitative topic as one would seek to explain how and why a particular social phenomenon operates as it does in a particular context (Mohajan, 2018). In the light of that, the researcher has observed that parental migration has affected many families in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe, which is the home district of the researcher. This culminated in the effect of distant parenting whose effects on the adolescent girl child were of interest to the researcher. Thus, in this qualitative research inquiry, the researcher was directly involved with the distant parented adolescent girl participants who shared their experiences on the phenomenon under study (De Vos, et al., 2021). Thus, in this qualitative study, the researcher considered a six phase framework which guided the enquiry as it is rendered flexible by incorporating the views of various authors including Leedy & Omrod (2019), Cohen et al. (2018) and Creswell (2019).

3.2.3 The Phenomenological Research Design

A research design is the plan and structure of the investigation which is used to obtain evidence to answer the research questions (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2014). De Vos et al. (2021) describe it as the overall strategy that is chosen to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring or effectively addressing the research problem.

The study employed the phenomenological research design because it describes the meaning of the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls. It was an explorative study of how the distant parented adolescent girls experienced the phenomenon of being distant parented. A phenomenological research design works well with a focus group discussion and interviews which have been selected as data gathering instruments in this study.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014) a research design is the plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence that answers the research question/s. Phenomenology originated from Alfred Schutz (1967) who aimed to explain how the life world of the research participants is developed and experienced by them (Scwandt, 2015).

By the 'life world' De Vos et al. (2021) mean one's conscious experience of everyday life and social action. Thus, the researcher tried to access the world of experiences of distant parented adolescent girls (Creswell, 2019).

Creswell (2019) regards a phenomenological study as a study that describes the meaning of lived experiences of a phenomenon under study. This understanding concurs with that of McMillan and Schumacher (2014) who posit that the purpose of phenomenological study is to describe and interpret the experiences of the participants regarding a particular event to understand the participant's meaning ascribed to that event. Thus, a holistic understanding of the phenomenon was obtained by building a complex and detailed description of the lives of the participants, including interaction, thought, reasoning and norms (Mohajan, 2018) and the meaning that they ascribe to it (Daniel, 2016; Kalu & Bwalya, 2017).

De Vos et al. (2021) state that in a phenomenological study, the researcher is bias free to describe the reality from an objective perspective where the researcher should bracket his/her own experiences and knowledge concerning the challenges associated with the phenomena in order to understand the participant's experiences. The phenomenological research design sets aside the pre-conceived assumptions about human experiences, feelings and responses to a particular situation (Yuksel & Yildirim, 2015). A phenomenological study attempts to understand peoples' perceptions, perspectives and experiences of a particular situation. Thus, distant parented adolescent girls were assumed by the researcher to have first-hand information. This is why they became suitable participants for the study. The experiences of distant parented adolescent girls were understood in their own perspectives hence the design was suitable for studying intense human experiences (Merrian, 2015).

The phenomenological research design also helped to unravel the unique issues as the researcher tried to get to the core of what happened (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017) and to make the experiences and plight of distant parented adolescent girls to be known through the use of such methods as interviews and focus group discussions. Furthermore, Yuksel and Yildrim (2015) argue that phenomenological research seeks reality from the individuals' narratives and produce deep descriptions and rich content in human complexities as experienced by people living those experiences. Experiences of distant parented adolescent girls were

understood from the girls' narratives as they provided an insight into their experiences (Sairo, 2015).

The researcher went into the school environment in order to understand the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls. Issues were presented the way distant parented adolescent girls experience them. The research study therefore sought to remain true to the facts as the researcher explored the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls. A Phenomenology study aims to understand the social and psychological phenomenon from the perspectives of people involved; these are the distant parented adolescent girls in the present study. A phenomenological research design makes the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls be understood.

3.3 Population and sampling process

3.3.1 Population

A population is defined as the individuals (in the universe) who have specific characteristics and are of interest in the researcher (De Vos, 2021). Creswell (2019) also defines a population as a group of individuals who have the same characteristics. The population of this study was the distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe.

3.3.2 Target population

The population for this study was made up of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe who were between 15 and 21 years of age. The group was homogenous in that the participants shared the same language and cultural practices; both parents had left the girls behind and the girls had siblings to look after. They were adolescent girls.

3.3.3 Sampling Procedure

This qualitative study used purposive sampling techniques. Patton (2014) posits that in a qualitative study, the selection of a sample is purposeful. Purposive sampling is also known

as judgmental or subjective sampling and is a non-probability sampling technique (Bryman, 2021). According to Crossman (2019), a non-probability sample is selected based on the characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. With the non-probability sampling technique, the units under investigation are selected based on the researchers' judgment. In this study, the sample was selected based on the researchers' judgment and the purpose of the research study which was the exploration of the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls.

Richer sources of data are targeted with purposive sampling with the aim of yielding an insight and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Yin, 2015; Cohen, et. al., 2018). Thus twenty-five (25) distant parented adolescent girls were chosen for this study. There was a deliberate selection of the participants as a result of their qualities. Targeting distant parented adolescent girls helped to bring their experiences to the surface. In addition, it was the researcher's intention to describe a particular context in depth and not to generalize it to other contexts. A homogeneous sampling technique was used in order to get a homogeneous sample with almost similar characteristics in terms of gender, age and situation i.e., adolescent girls aged between 16-21 years and whose parents have migrated and are distant parented (Cohen et al., 2018). Expert sampling was done to get information from the individuals with expertise. In this study, adolescent girls who are distant parented were targeted (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

3.3.3.1 The sample

According to Brynard et al. (2014) a sample is a small group or portion selected from the population. Bless, Higson-Smith (2013) defined a sample as a subset of the whole population investigated by the researcher and whose characteristics are generated to the entire population. The researcher ensured that the participants were adolescent girls whose parents have migrated outside the country. They are distant parented. They are residing in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe, are living on their own or with their siblings but without a caregiver or guardian in the same house. This criterion was important in assisting the researcher to identify twenty-five (25) distant parented adolescent girls. Purposive sampling technique has its own limitations which are that it is highly prone to researchers' bias (Neuman, 2014) since it is based on the judgment of the researcher. In addition, it is also subjective again when in the selection of the participants.

According to Punch and Oancea (2014), in a qualitative study, two (2) to ten (10) participants are enough to reach saturation. Creswell (2019) is of the view that ten (10) people in a phenomenological study are adequate. Leedy and Omrod (2019) recommend six (6) to nine (9) for focus group discussions. Based on this background, in this study a sample of twenty-five (25) participants who were information rich were purposively chosen to participate. The twenty-five (25) distant parented adolescent girls who were chosen are those who met the criteria for the study.

Five secondary schools in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe were selected, based on them having a number of distance parented children and being accessible to the researcher. That is, convenience sampling was used to select the schools which were given pseudo names. The participants were coded to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. The figure 3.1 shows the sample of the study.
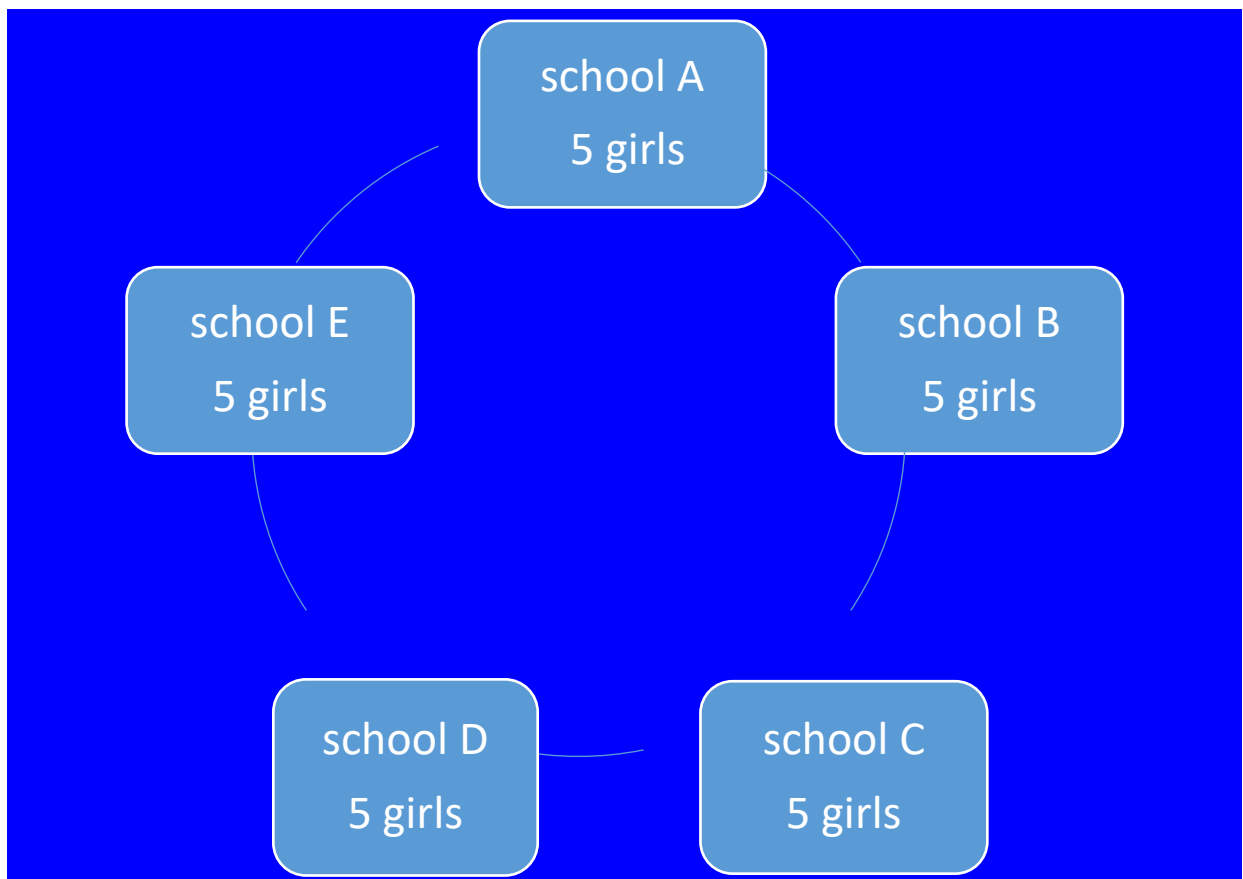
Figure 3.1: Sample of the study

Permission to conduct the study in selected schools was sought from the Ministry of

Education, Arts, Sport and Culture. The researcher then approached the Head teacher of each of the selected schools and gave him/her a letter which explained the purpose of the study and, at the same time, asked for assistance in identifying the distant parented adolescent girls whose parents had out-migrated. Participant selection was also done with the assistance of the class teacher as the schools keep a social record book with biographical data of every learner in Zimbabwe. When the distant parented adolescent girls had been identified, the researcher then explained the purpose of the study and established rapport with them. To those who showed interest, the researcher explained in detail the purpose of the study and they were assured of confidentiality and protection from any form of dehumanization. Participants were also informed that participation in the study was voluntary and that they were free to pull out of the study at any time should they feel that their rights and privacy were being violated. Since the selected participants were minors, consent forms were signed for them by the chairperson of the Parents Teachers Association of School Development Association, the parents/guardians or the head of the school. Interviews were arranged as soon as the consent forms were signed and returned.

3.4 Data collection Instruments

3.4.1 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were also used to augment the data collected through the interviews. Bell (2018) posits that focus group discussions are forms of group interview that capitalise on communication between and among the research participants in order to generate data. It is a carefully planned group discussion data collection procedure of about six people meant to get diverse ideas and or perceptions on a topic in a relaxed environment (Bernard, 2017).

The researcher in this study made use of the focus group interview schedule to guide and direct all the proceedings during the focus group discussions. The guide encompasses an introduction, the research topic, ground rules and concluding remarks (Bryman, 2021). The guide further comprised a series of questions and prompts for the researcher to use (Bell, 2018). Questions were clarified by the researcher to get more details as the participants engaged and shared life experiences of being distant parented adolescents.

In this study, there were at least two (2) focus group discussions comprising 5 girls from each school. Discussions were facilitated and coordinated by the researcher to ensure focus on the discussions in order to generate the necessary data. The focus group discussions were held at schools and lasted approximately 45 minutes per session. Creswell (2019) posits that a focus group interview comprised four to six participants.

3.4.2 The interview

Interviews are the most used data collection tools for phenomenological research and are open or semi-structured (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). According to De Poy and Gilson (2016), the researcher obtains information through a direct interchange with an individual or a group that is known to have the knowledge that he/she it seeks to obtain. Busetto et al. (2020) define an interview as a way of getting data through asking them rather than observing their behaviour, hence the use of interviews in this study. With interviews one tends to get a picture of what one thinks and is enabled to measure his or her beliefs. Unstructured interviews were used in this study because they allowed the researcher to explain his or her questions if the interviewee was not clear on what was being asked (Brynard et al., 2015).

With interviews, participants get involved and talk about their views on their experiences. This interaction between the participants and the researcher is one of the strengths of unstructured interviews; it allows for richer and more valid data as probing or follow up questions are asked (Kabir, 2016).

In this study twenty-five (25) distant parented adolescent girls who had been interviewed in the focus group discussions were the same girls who were interviewed individually. The interview lasted approximately 30 minutes per interviewee depending on the willingness of the interviewee to provide data. During the interviews, the researcher took some notes and guided the flow of the interview at the same time in order to collect the relevant data. Voice recording captured every word that was uttered by the participants.

3.5 Trustworthiness in this study

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is critical and is about how qualitative researchers

establish the credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability of the study (Lincolin & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness in this study was achieved through the pursuance of its fundamental facets. These are discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

3.5.1 Credibility

Credibility is important because it assures the researcher that the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data and that they were a correct interpretation of the participants' original views (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore, the goal of credibility is to demonstrate that the inquiry is conducted in such a manner that ensures the subject's accuracy in identification and description (De Vos et al., 2021). In this study, credibility was achieved through prolonged engagement with the participants to ensure that the information gathered on the distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency South of Zimbabwe remained the same. Individual interviews were also conducted. Thus, triangulation of data collection techniques enabled the researcher to check whether the data collected from the participants was credible. In addition, identification of emerging themes was done during data analysis to further achieve high credibility. The researcher took about 45 minutes to an hour conducting the semi-structured face to face individual interviews in which facial expressions and other forms of body language were observed and recorded.

3.5.2 Transferability

In order to ensure transferability of data, a thick description of the sources of data was made. Thick descriptions involved the researcher elucidating all the research processes from the data collection, the context of the study to the production of the final report. This helps other researchers to replicate the study with similar conditions (Lincolin & Guba, 1985). Yin (2016) concurs that transferability is the extent to which the reader can generalize the findings of the study to her or his own context and address the core issues of how far a researcher may make claims for the general application of their theory. Thus, the findings of the study were also compared with similar studies conducted in other countries as a way of triangulation.

3.5.3 Dependability

In trying to maximise dependability, the researcher clearly stated the research design and its implementation in order to allow transferability of the results to similar contexts. The researcher ensured that the results of the study were easily traceable to the sources by making it a point that the interpretations and recommendations are as reliable as possible while at the same time practising anonymity and confidentiality of the sources (Cohen et al., 2018).

3.5.4 Conformability

A reflective journal, which is a reflective document which the researcher kept to reflect on, to tentatively interpret and to plan data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), was used. The reflective journal which was kept by the researcher included all the events that happened in the field and the personal reflections (in relation to the study) such as the 'ah' phenomenon that arose during the investigation. It was based on the perspective that the integrity of the findings lies in the data and that the researcher must adequately tie together the data, analytic process and findings in such a way that the reader is able to confirm the adequacy of the findings. In this study, all the collected data from the different participants was adequately tied together in the summary of each theme after all the participants had presented their data. The researcher also kept in mind the findings of other studies in the field and allowed the data to speak. To achieve this, the researcher had an open mind and was not restricted by the identified categories in the literature reviewed previously.

3.6 Triangulation

In qualitative research, triangulation is an essential methodological issue which is used to control any bias. According to Cohen et al. (2018), triangulation is the use of two or more methods of data collection for the study on some aspect of human behaviour. Patton (2014) argues that triangulation strengthens a study by combining different methods. Multiple techniques such as interviews and focus group discussions led to a more reliable construction of reality. According to Yin (2016), triangulation is a valid procedure whereby researchers search for convergence among the multiple and different sources of information in order to form themes in a study. Creswell (2019) defines it as the process of corroborating the

evidence from different individuals, types of data or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research.

Data triangulation refers to various sources of data in a study. Apart from interviewing the participants, in this study the researcher carried out some focus group discussions where different viewpoints of the participants on the phenomenon under study, migration of parents and remittances for the left behind adolescents, were gathered. The reviewed literature also provided some data on similar studies which had been conducted by other researchers on the phenomenon under exploration. However, the literature review was not used as a data gathering tool; it informed the researcher about the debates, controversies, contradictions, gaps and the commonalities on the topic under exploration.

3.7 Data analysis

In this study, focus group discussions and interviews were used as the main data generation and collection instruments. The focus group discussions and interviews were conducted by the researcher who audio recorded the voices and took notes of the behavioural gambits and other forms of body language. The researcher was listening and also observing some non-verbal cues during the focus group discussions and interviews. Data transcription into the written narratives was done after the focus group discussions and interviews. The recorded data was taken from the audio recordings, visual recordings, jotted and field notes.

In this study Tesch's method of analyzing the data was adopted to identify the themes (Creswell, 2019). A thematic analysis is the process of identifying the patterns or themes within the qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The process involves capturing, sorting, classifying, coding and analyzing the collected information into themes.

The researcher transcribed audio recorded data leading to various transcripts each with a topic. These transcripts were then reviewed separately. The topics from the transcript were then clustered, coded and scrutinized. Each of the themes was given a title describing the content. Identification of emerging themes led to the deeper understanding of the individual views of the distant parented adolescent girls and their experiences of being distant parented.

3.8 Ethical considerations

The researcher submitted a formal request to all the relevant authorities in order to have access to all the research sites. The request was submitted in the form of a letter specifying the purpose of the study and its design, the research sites, the participants and types of activities to be engaged in, the protection of human subjects and the informed consent forms for adults and/or assent forms for minors (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

For this study, ethical clearance certificate number 2020/02/19/64041794/24/AM was first obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of South Africa (UNISA) (see Appendix F). This was followed by an approval letter which was sought and obtained from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education for the collection of the data after the presentation of the relevant documents from the supervisor supporting the application to undertake the research were submitted (see Appendix G & H).

The researcher was concerned with exploring the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe as some of them may be facing some challenges in the absence of the parents. As a result of that, a number of ethical considerations were considered in order to safeguard the twenty-five (25) distant parented adolescent girls from emotional abuse. Vital ethical aspects such as confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent and protection from harm were taken care of.

Ethics refers to the study of moral standards and how they affect the conduct of an individual or a group. Ethics has also been defined by De Vos et al. (2021) as a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group; it offers the rules and behavioural expectations about the correct conduct towards the respondents, employers, sponsors and other research assistants. In a nutshell, ethics refers to the standards through which the researcher ought to evaluate his or her conduct towards the participants.

The researcher took into cognizance the fact that people, and especially children, have the rights which ought to be respected. This is also muted by Babbie (2021) who argues that every person has the right to privacy and dignity of treatment. The researcher therefore explained to the participants the aim of the study which was to explore the experiences of

distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. This means that the participants participated in the study voluntarily and they were told that they may withdraw their participation if they felt that their dignity was being compromised.

With confidentiality, the researcher explained to the participants clearly and adequately the reason for withholding information. All the information about the research was kept confident. Furthermore, the codes and pseudo names were used to conceal the identities of the participants on the final report. The participants were also assured that all the details that they were going to provide would not be shared without their permission.

The participants were informed that there was no specific answer to the questions which were going to be asked. The researcher also explained (to the participants) how the information would be used from the interviews and focus group discussions. In the event that no participants were emotionally affected (since it was a sensitive issue), counselling was offered by professional counsellors who were sought by the researcher prior to to the data collection process. Anonymity of the participants was preserved in the final write up and field notes to prevent the identification of the respondents the event that they needed to be inspected (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

Permission to conduct the study was sought from the UNISA Ethics Board, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the Masvingo Provincial Education Office of Zimbabwe, the head teachers of the schools which fell within the targeted schools and the Chairperson of the Parents Teachers Association [PTA] because some of the participants were school going adolescents. The chairperson of the PTA, the head teachers and the parents were asked to consent on behalf of the minor adolescent girls. These adolescent girls below the age of 18 years signed assent forms to show their approval for the minor adolescents to participate in the research study.

The participants were made to understand that their participation was voluntary and that there were no consequences for refusing to take part in the study or to answer specific questions. The nature of the study was explained openly and honestly in a way that the participants understood it. The researcher ensured that the participants understood the purpose of the study, the potential risks, the benefits to the participants and the fact that they were free to withdraw from participating any time.

3.9 Summary

This chapter has presented a detailed description of the qualitative research methodology, the research paradigm for this study and the phenomenological research design. The target and accessible population were also discussed. The chapter also showed that the participant sample was made up of twenty-five (25) distant parented adolescent girls who were purposefully selected. It also showed that that two data collection methods were used; these were the focus group discussions and the interviews. These methods were used to gather the data which was used to form the basis of the next chapter on the data presentation, analysis and discussion. The chapter also showed that data was reviewed against the reviewed literature as well as the emerging themes. Issues of trustworthiness such as credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability were also discussed. The chapter closed with the ethical considerations. The next chapter focuses on data presentation, interpretation, the data analysis techniques employed by the study and a discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The major informants were the twenty-five (25) distant parented adolescent girls from five (5) secondary schools in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. For ethical reasons, the names of the schools and those of the participants are not revealed. Personal information of the participants was given before analysing their experiences of being distant parented. Data were categorised first. The themes from data analysis were first presented in sentences and later discussed in detail. The data presentation, analysis and discussions were in the form of detailed descriptions, using direct quotes from the focus group discussions and interviews in order to support the study findings.

4.2 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process that converts data into emerging themes. Yin (2016) and Leedy and Omrod (2019) assert that data analysis is a systematic process of examining, selecting, categorising, comparing, synthesising and interpreting the data to address the initial propositions. In this study, the data analysis procedure involved the capturing, coding and analysing of the gathered data into themes. De Vos et al. (2021) explain that data analysis is a strategy used to take a complex whole and resolve it into its parts. The researcher listened attentively to the information from the audio tape recorded data from the focus group discussions and from the interviews and fully transcribed it into written information. According to Brady (2021), transcription is the process of converting research findings recorded through audio or visual means into formal text format for the purpose of further analysis. Transcription involves typing the data, proofreading and examining it thoroughly in order to describe the meaning of what is being studied (Creswell, 2019). Thus, the researcher read the transcripts carefully and compared them to the tape recordings for accuracy. The topics were arrived at for each transcript which was later coded (De Vos et al., 2021). Friese (2022) asserts that, coding is about naming the segments of data with a

label that simultaneously categorises, summarises and accounts for each piece of data. After coding, the emerging themes were given a title which described the content of the theme. Creswell (2019) refers to thematic analysis as a method that allows researchers to identify and organise the relevant themes and subthemes which can then be used as the units of analysis. Kiger and Varpio (2020) further define a thematic analysis as a process of identifying the themes in the data which capture meaning that is relevant to the research questions and making some links between such themes. In this study, a thematic analysis is employed to identify the patterns in the data that are important and use them to say something about the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls from their narratives, based on how they experienced it. The identified themes were further broken down into small units, that is, the sub-themes which were then described.

A qualitative thematic analysis is flexible in terms of research questions, the type of data, the volume of data, the sample size and the ability to analyse the data with an inductive data drive approach (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Thus, it is a method and not a methodology. A thematic analysis is a flexible method for analysing qualitative data that could be used within a variety of paradigmatic or epistemological orientation which is not tied to any theoretical perspective (Maguire & Delhunt, 2017). It emphasises the social context that influence an individual experience thereby enabling the development of knowledge that is constructed through the interactions between the researcher and the participants, revealing the meaning that are socially constructed. In this study, the thematic analysis is used in order to understand the experiences of the participants after a thorough analysis of a data set. Table 4.1 shows how the focus group discussions and the schools were coded during the collection of data.

Table 4.1: Codes of focus group discussions and schools with distant parented adolescent girls

CODE	EXPALNATION
FGDA	Focus group discussion, school A
FGDB	Focus group discussion, school B
FGDC	Focus group discussion, school C
FGDD	Focus group discussion, school D
FGDE	Focus group discussion, school E

FGDA means focus group discussions school A.

The distant parented adolescent girls from five (5) secondary schools in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe were put in groups comprising five distant parented adolescent girls from each school to make up five (5) focus groups, code named FGDA, FGDB, FGDC, FGDD and FGDE as shown in Table 4.1. The five (5) secondary schools were also coded as School A, School B, School C, School D and School E to represent the five (5) schools from where the researcher collected the data. See Table 4.1.

Table 4.2 shows how the participants, namely the 25 distant parented adolescent girls were also given code names in individual interviews.

Table 4.2: Codes of individual interviews with distant parented adolescent girls

CODE	EXPALANATION
AG1 A	Adolescent girl number 1 school A
AG2 A	Adolescent girl number 2 school A
AG3 A	Adolescent girl number 3 school A
AG4 A	Adolescent girl number 4 school A
AG5 A	Adolescent girl number 5 school A
AG1 B	Adolescent girl number 1 school B
AG2 B	Adolescent girl number 2 school B
AG3 B	Adolescent girl number 3 school B
AG4 B	Adolescent girl number 4 school B
AG5 B	Adolescent girl number 5 school B
AG1 C	Adolescent girl number 1 school C
AG2 C	Adolescent girl number 2 school C
AG3 C	Adolescent girl number 3 school C
AG4 C	Adolescent girl number 4 school C
AG5 C	Adolescent girl number 5 school C
AG1 D	Adolescent girl number 1 school D
AG2 D	Adolescent girl number 2 school D
AG3 D	Adolescent girl number 3 school D
AG4 D	Adolescent girl number 4 school D
AG5 D	Adolescent girl number 5 school D
AG1 E	Adolescent girl number 1 school E
AG2 E	Adolescent girl number 2 school E
AG3 E	Adolescent girl number 3 school E
AG4 E	Adolescent girl number 4 school E
AG5 E	Adolescent girl number 5 school E

AG1 means Adolescent girl 1

Table 4.2 shows the code names of twenty five distant parented adolescent girls who participated in this study. The researcher coded each participant to ensuring anonymity that was promised the participants during the collection of data.

4.3 Research Findings

4.3.1 Demographic data from individual interviews

In the interviews, the participants reported that both of their parents were in diaspora. Table 4.3 shows the data on the distant parented adolescent girls whose parents had migrated.

Table 4.3 Number of distant parented adolescent girls who participated in the study

Parent(s) migrated	Number of participants	Total	Percentages
Both parents	25	25	100
One parent	0	0	0
No Parent	0	0	0
Total number of participants	**25**	**25**	**100**

All the twenty five participants (N = 25) which is (100%) of those who participated in the study had both of their parents in diaspora, as illustrated in Table 4.3. From Table 4.3, it can be obseved that in most cases (N = 25) both parents migrated leaving their children behind. This has resulted in many adolescent girls being distant parented and some actually heading the families.

Table 4.4 Initial period of parents' migration

Period	Number of participants	Percentage
Before 2009	3	12.0
Between 2010 - 2013	8	32.0
2014 -2020	14	56.0
Total	**25**	**100.0**

From Table 4.4 it is observed that the majority (56.0%) of the participants became distant parented in the recent years. Their parents migrated between 2014 and 2020. For quite a sizeable number (32.0%) of the participants, the parents migrated between 2010 and 2013. It seems that parental migration was not a common phenomenon before 2010 because a small number (12.0%) of participants reported that their parents migrated a long time ago, before 2009. Table 4.4 indicates that the majority (84 .0%) of the parents migrated from

2010. Thus, the participants seem to attribute parental migration to the worsening economic situation in Zimbabwe. During the focus group discussions and the interviews, the distant parented adolescent girls mentioned that most of them have experienced parental migration from 2010.

4.3.2. The experiences of distant parented adolescent girls

The experiences of the distant parented adolescent girls were found to be varied in the absence of both parents. When they were interviewed both in focus group discussions and individually certain themes emerged and these are outlined in Table 4.5. These themes are corroborated by the verbal quotes from the focus group discussions and the interviews with the distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. The sub- themes were also transcribed from the data after listening to the participants during the focus group discussions and interviews.

Table 4.5 The themes emerging from the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls

Objective	Themes
To ascertain the experiences that distant parented adolescent girls go through due to the absence of father/ mother/father and mother figures	1. *Being neglected* 2. *Abused by guardians or caregiver* 3. *Forced marriage* 4. *Used as sex slaves by guardians or caregivers* 5. *Bullied* 6. *Poor communication with parents* 7. *Teenage pregnancy* 8. *Absence of father/ mother figure* 9. *Heading the family*

4.3.2.1 Theme 1: Being neglected

The themes that emerged are loneliness, having no one to support, a feeling of having been abandoned and being gossiped about by peers and community members are shown in Table 4.6.

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Table 4.6: The sub– themes emerging from Theme 1

Theme	Sub-themes
Being neglected	▪ *Feeling deserted*
	▪ *Overwhelming household chores*
	▪ *A feeling of having been abandoned*
	▪ *stigmatized by peers and community members*

4.3.2.1.1 Feeling deserted

The findings from both the focus group discussions and the interviews with distant parented adolescent girls are that the participants report being lonely most of the times. They do not know whom to associate or share their problems with. The community members view them with different lens. They explained that none of their close relatives guides them properly. They further reported that even some of their peers behave in the same manner. They viewed them as girls who are misguided. They reported that the community members stopped to interact with them when their parents migrated. They expressed concern that this was so hurting that they wished the parents had not migrated.

Participant AG4A mentioned:

> *My aunt stopped to visit me the moment my parents migrated to South Africa. Before then, she would come every weekend and spend time with my family. The situation is not the same now. She avoids me as much as she can.*

Similarly, Participant AG2C said:

> *I am always alone at home. There is no one to share my problems with. My parents have left me in the care of my aunt and her family but I just feel I am lonely. I can see I am not welcome so I feel I am just an outcast.*

Participant AG3D shared the same concern and went on to say:

I do not like my home. It does not feel good for me. I am lonely there. There is no one to talk to. My friends whom I thought would be closer to me are not always by my side.

The study finds that loneliness is one of the experiences that distant parented adolescent girls go through. The same observation was made by Lobos et al. (2019) and Liu et al. (2020) who mentioned that adolescents that are left behind have negative emotional problems such as loneliness because of the absence of their parents. In the absence of the adolescents' parents, Nazridod (2021) found that the left behind adolescents lack someone to talk to or to give them emotional support. From the responses of participants AG4A, AG2C and AG3D, it is clear that the distant parented adolescent girls feel lonely. Participants AG2C and AG4A further confirm the extent of the loneliness that they experience even when in the care of some close relatives. These statements mean that the presence of the parents play an important role in keeping their children emotionally supported. Some studies show that emotional displacement created by the absence of the parents can have some detrimental effects on their health, education and emotional stability (Mavaza, 2021). How they are viewed by other people in their community, including the peers and relatives widens the rift between them and other community members. As a result of this rift, the participants reported that they are emotionally hurt. They have no one to share their problems with and this is coupled with the thinking of the geographical separation between them and their parents. Thus, the researcher notes that it is critical for parents to take into consideration the emotional needs of their children when they decide to migrate.

4.3.2.1.2 Overwhelming household chores

The participants reported that they did not get support with their schoolwork at home. They also reported that they are overwhelmed with household chores. It emerged from the study that they have several household responsibilities most of which would have been their parents' responsibilities if they had not migrated. They reported that the household chores continuously interfered with their schoolwork and other social activities. They reiterated that the time to study or do homeworks is not adequate. They found it hard to strike a balance between their schoolwork and household chores hence their academic achievement is affected negatively.

Participant AG1D reflected:

> *I was left in the hands of my aunt. She does not want me to do anything at home other than the household chores. On some days she is aware that I come back from school very late but when I reach home I have to start from scratch to make the fire and run to fetch the water before its too dark. Then I start to cook and prepare supper. She does not even bother to assign other duties to her daughter who is at home waiting to go to college.*

Participant AG5E echoed the same sentiments when she highlighted the amount of work that she is expected to do despite her age. She feels that it is too much for her and states:

> *I am given so much work at home by my aunt that I cannot handle it anymore considering my age. I am overworked and being exploited, while her kids just roam the streets and, sometimes, do their schoolwork. I do all the household chores, such as washing the clothes, cleaning the house, feeding the young one and looking after the sick relative, cooking for the entire family and fetching firewood and water before I go to school or church. I do not have time to study and to do my own errands.*

In addition, participant AG4E revealed that her situation compels her to handle the situation on her own although she and her siblings needed the support of the parents. She said:

> *There is too much pressure on me to do the household responsibilities which even a much older person may not be able to handle. I cannot stand the pressure anymore. Household responsibilities are overwhelming. I am tired. Unfortunately my younger siblings do not see what I am going through and cannot even help me.*

Throughout their responses, it became clear that the participants lack support from adults and they are overwhelmed with household chores. However participant AG1D and AG5E mentioned that the guardians are not doing anything to assist; neither do they want their biological daughters to assist them with the household chores. Although participant AG4E agrees with them, her scenario is slightly different because she stays with her sibling only. However, she acknowledges that, she too, is overwhelmed with household chores. The feeling of being overwhelmed with household chores is well documented in similar studies such as Aguilar (2020); Nazridod (2021); Carranza, (2021); Chakombera and Mubika (2018) who mention that overburdening house chores result in poor academic achievement. From the participants' reflections, the researcher deduced that the participants are immensely overwhelmed with lack of support and the absence of their biological parents. This has a

bearing on their academic achievement and physical wellbeing. The daily challenges that they go through need the support of the parents. Thus, the findings indicate that the situation of the distant parented adolescent girls is a triple burden of school, work and household chores which make them vulnerable (UNICEF, 2021).

4.3.2.1.3 A feeling of having been abandoned

The participants expressed that their parents' decision to migrate, leaving them behind, was hurtful. They indicated that they do not understand why their parents left them behind. The participants reported that it has been long since the parents visited them and this was hurtful. According to Carranza (2021), Rendeza (2017), Paduraru (2014) and Kufakurinani et al. (2014), the left behind adolescents equate parental migration to abandonment. However, parents might not know that in migrating they are inviting emotional pressure on their children who are left behind. The fact that the distant parented adolescents feel abandoned makes them bitter at the migrant parents.

Participant AG4E shared:

> *I remember very well that when my parents migrated to the United Kingdom, I was in grade seven (7). Now I am in form four (4). They do not know how I am at the moment. I have to tell them on the phone.*

The same sentiments were also shared by participant AG3D who echoed:

> *I am not happy staying without my parents. It has been five (5) years now since they went to work in South Africa. I love to be with them. If there is not enough food it is difficult to get help anywhere. I feel this was their responsibility but unfortunately, they are not here any more.*

Participant AG3C expressed her bitterness for having been left behind for no valid reason and the following are her sentiments:

> *I do not understand why my parents left me behind to stay behind with my aunt. I was ten (10) years old when they left for Dubai. By then I had known what it is like to be with my parents. Now that they are not available, I feel they have abandoned me. I cannot cope with everything since I have tested how it feels to be with them.*

From the above sentiments by AG4E, AG3D and AG3C, the researcher observed that participants are hurt by their parents' migration, especially because they take a long time to visit. Participant AG3C went on to express how she feels abandoned and is even failing to cope. They all complained that it has been long since the parents left them behind and this is affecting them negatively. Participant AG3D highlights the fact that provision of food is the parents' responsibility absence of which is synonymous with abandonment. A possible interpretation of the complaint is that the absence of parents for many years is viewed by participants as abandonment because parents are expected to cater for the needs of their children. Their relationships are loosely knit; they are only expressed through the exchange of materials. This is not what they experience, hence a feeling of abandonment. Participant AG4E further expressed concern that her migrant parents have no knowledge of how she looks now. From what the participant said, the researcher deduced that the duration of the parents' absence has been so long that it is interpreted as abandonment.

4.3.2.1.4 Stigmatised by peers and community members

Participants reported that community members and peers gossip about them. They are regarded as children without guidance and without direction. They are afraid of making mistakes because they are stigmatized as disobedient children and without manners. The researcher notes that this may lead the so labelled participants to identify with the stigma. The participants said that they are stressed by stigmatization.

One participant, namely AG1C, had this to say about stigmatization:

> *Today I could not believe my ears when I heard some two (2) women from my community gossiping about me at our local borehole. They could not immediately notice that I was approaching them. At first I thought I did not hear their conversation properly. Later on I confirmed that I was really the agenda of their discussion. I overhead them saying something about my morals since my parents are not around. I did not greet them because I was bitter about what they were saying.*

Some participants further expressed their anger towards their peers who go around gossiping about them. They thought that they had confiding in their friends only to be surprised when

they learnt that the information they shared with their peers in confidence was common knowledge to everybody in the community.

Participant AG3A expressed her concern:

> *I learnt very late that my best friend was going around gossiping about me. All along as a friend I trusted her and would tell her all my secrets. I would confide in her about the problems and the ill treatment that I am encountering from my grandmother in whose custody I was left when my parents went out of the country. I got a shock of my life at school when almost everyone was talking about me.*

Stigmatization has led them into having fewer opportunities for upward mobility and social interaction as the society was reluctant to promote someone with wayward behaviour.

Participant AG5D said,

> *Everyone shuns me now that my parents are in diaspora. My friends are gossiping about me. They say that I do not have proper guidance, I have bad manners and that's why I am struggling without resources. I am just on my own. This is hurting because I need company and help.*

From the above statements, the researcher observed that stigmatization can have a negative impact on the left behind adolescents. It leads to feelings of shame, loneliness, reluctance to ask for help, lack of understanding by others and fewer opportunities of social interaction. This is what the participants in the study are experiencing. The climax of it is when the adolescent identifies with the label. Magwa and Magwa (2016) show that the distant parented adolescents are socially excluded from the community because they do not want their children to play with distant parented children. This social exclusion further affects them emotionally as they are already feeling the absence of the parents. What the participants highlighted shows the need for the community to support them in order for proper development to take place. Participant AG3A and AG5D indicated the psychological impact of having learnt that their friends revealing their secrets to the public. They do not take it lightly as this exposes them. Participant AG1C concurs with AG3A and AG5D although her main problem is with the community members. The participants are highly concerned about what is happening around them. At the end of it, it may lead to the development of a lower

self-esteem which may have a bearing on their academic performance and personality development.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Abused by caregiver and/or guardian

The emergent sub-themes, namely the source of cheap labour and working as a part timer were derived from the participants being abused by caregivers and/or guardians, as indicated on Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Sub–themes emerging from Theme 2

Theme	Sub-themes
Abused by caregiver and/or guardian	• *Source of cheap labour*
	• *Made a part-time workers*

4.3.3.1 Source of cheap labour

The participants feel as if they are used as a source of cheap labour. This tires them and takes away much of their time. Nazridod (2021) mentions that the distant parented adolescent girls feel abused because of the unavailability of their parents and overuse by guardians. They find themselves having difficulties with coping with their schoolwork. They feel like the people whom they stay with use them as semi-slaves and make them work for their own benefit. This led to the creation of a rift between them and their caregivers. Thus, the absence of parents exposes them to such abuses.

Participant AG5B had this to say:

> *My grandmother has a tendency of not paying people whom she hires for work. People are no longer willing to be hired by her. Instead of her casual workers, she is now overusing me. She cannot do much of the work by herself because of her age. She is solely depending on me now that I am staying with her as my 'parents' have migrated to South Africa. Her children, who are even older than me, just sit at home doing nothing. I am sick and tired of being overworked.*

Sharing the same sentiments, participant AG3E highlights that her aunt is even employed but does not want to hire a maid. She laments:

My friend at least you get to do your homework, prepare for the tests and even do anything you want at your own pace. For me, the moment I reach home I am in trouble. I am not allowed to touch anything to do with my school work. I run up and down doing a lot of work in the house. What surprises me is that my aunt is a nurse but she does not hire a maid.

On a similar note, Participant AG1E reported:

I have to wake up as early as 4.00 am to water my aunt's garden, which is about 1km away. I fetch water from far away. I don't enjoy this. It's terrible when I'm menstruating because l have 'jeko' (abdominal menstrual period pains). By the time I reach class, I am exhausted and in severe pain. I then have problems concentrating in class and, indeed, I don't learn anything that day.

The responses of the participants show that they are compelled to do a lot of work at home. From their sentiments, it is clear that they are treated as the sources of cheap, if not free, labour. The kind of work which they are forced to do is extremely tiring. Having woken up early and doing a lot of house chores and then proceeding to school when one is already tired, has some daunting effects on a child's academic work. From their responses, the researcher observed how the participants are subjected to a lot of exhaustive labour by the guardians who take advantage of their absent parents. Badea (2020) asserts that the left behind adolescents are vulnerable to exploitation. The researcher observed that these children are vulnerable. The work they are subjected to is too much, exhaustive and affects their learning when they are in class. The mind must be fresh and free from distractive issues for one to pay attention in class. This research study participants are exposed to the opposite.

4.3.3.2 Made part-time workers

The study shows that the absence of a parent does not only expose the participants to ill-care from the adult family members or caregivers but it also exposes them to forced labour, a "new form of slavery," by their guardians. They are compelled to work in other people's homes, a practice called '*maricho*' in Shona or '*kuluvela*' in Tsonga. The payment for the service goes to the caregiver. This is normally done on weekends. Payment is made to either the aunt or the grandmother or whoever is staying with these children. The arrangement is usually made without seeking consent from the actual service provider (The distant parented

adolescent girl). The participants reported that they do not get any financial benefits from the service. The researcher observed that the participants are terribly stressed by this practice. One participant reported that she lost a lot of weight due to this new form of slavery.

Participant AG4E lamented;

> *Today is Friday. Shame on me! My aunt told me that this weekend I will be working at her neighbour's homestead, weeding and sweeping the yard. She has already finalised everything including the payment. Unfortunately my siblings are too young to help me. I am going to be in trouble because it's very hot. It is going to take me the whole day because the yard is full of grass and it will be so hot. It's not the first time that she made such arrangements. Most of my clothes are no longer fitting well because I have lost weight because of doing that kind of work. What pains me is that I am quite convinced that my aunt is not going to give me even a single cent.*

Participant AG5B agreed with the sentiments expressed by Participant AG4E and added:

> *While others are excited about the approaching weekend, I am the only one who is not happy most of the time. My grandmother makes it a point that three siblings and I are always working in people's fields to raise money, mostly during the weekends. We are now labourers in our community. From the looks of it, she seems to be sitting pretty because she seems to be buying everything she wants using our sweat and hard earned money.*

The responses of participant AG4E and AG5B prove that the left behind adolescnts are treated as 'slaves'. They explain that they are made to work at people's homesteads and they are overwhelmed with work. However, they do not benefit financially.

The same sentiments were shared by some participants who feel overworked for material gains by the caregivers through moulding farm bricks for re-sale. They recall the cumbersome process of moulding farm bricks as it involves digging the soil, fetching water, mixing it with soil and water to form mortar, moulding the bricks, fetching firewood and heating the moulded bricks in the end. The participants reported that after doing all this, they are not paid when the bricks are sold. Accordingly, participant AG3A indicated:

I was busy over the weekend counting and packing some bricks which I molded last time alone. Unfortunately, I did not have any protective gloves to wear. My grandmother wanted to sell 1000 bricks to someone who is building a house. I could not finish the work on Saturday and had to continue on Sunday. Had she allowed her other grandchildren who wanted to help me, it was going to be better. After selling I was not given a single cent after all that I went through. I could not even get the chance to do my laundry. Come Monday the teachers were hard on me as I did not get the chance to do my homework and was putting on dirty uniforms. I am even failing to write properly because the palms of my hands got hurt.

Participant AG5B responded by saying that;

Some people are making a lot of money by molding and selling the farm bricks. With me it's different. I am always told to come help my aunt but not for my own good. My aunt just sells and pockets all the money for her personal use. What pains me most is that I will have done most of the work as she will be telling me that I am young and vibrant so she expects me to do most of the work.

From the above sentiments by participants AG5B and AG3A, the researcher notes that the distant parented adolescent girls are overworked and the thought of the process of moulding farm bricks worsens their situation of coming to terms with parental migration. This kind of work exhausts them and leaves them with limited time to study. This has a bearing on their academic achievement as this kind of work is done during the weekend and leaves the participants with no time to do their home work or personal study.

In addition to what participant AG5B and AG3A have pointed out, participant AG2E and AG2B highlighted another area where they feel that they are physically abused. They report that they are forced to do work in people's fields and that this is unfair as the guardian's own children are spared from this kind of work. Sometimes they reported missing the classes as they are forced to work in the fields. Accordingly, participant AG2B explained:

When I reached home from school around 5 pm, I did not expect my aunt to tell me to go to the fields, bearing in mind the amount of homework I had. For the past days, I was working in our neighbour's fields, weeding. The work was not yet complete. This is the work that my aunt wanted me to go and finish. Wearing a serious face she instructed me to go and finish the task because the days by which they had agreed to have the work done

were running out. As it was the end of the day I thought I would do the work the following day. However, I had to rush there and do what I could before it was too dark. I managed to complete the task the following day.

Participant AG2E echoed these sentiments;

It's time to knock off from school. I am not excited at all. There is a portion in my grandmother's field which I did not finish weeding. She is very angry with me. She has given me up to Saturday to finish it up. I am very tired because I have been participating in sports at school since it was sports day. I wonder why she does not want her own children to go and work too.

The findings indicated that the participants experience forced child labour. ILO (2017) defines child labour as work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally harmful to children and interferes with their schooling. Child labour is prohibited in domestic, regional and even international law. The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No.20 of 2013) Section 81 (1) (e) stipulates that every child, boy or girl, under the age of 18 years should be protected from any form of child labour (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO, 2015). Furthermore, the Children's Act and Labour Relations Act (Chapter 28.01, 2019) makes it an offence to exploit children under the age of 18 years through employment, especially regionally, The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) of 1990, Article 15(1), states that every child should be protected from all forms of economic exploitation and performing work that is likely to be hazardous or that interferes with their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. From the findings of this study, it seems that the participants experienced forced child labour which has devastating effects such as robbing them of their childhood play time, limiting reading time, harming them physically, emotionally and socially. Physically, at their age, they are not yet mature for the kind of laborious work that they are subjected to. Socially, they are robbed of the time to go and interact with peers and friends. As children they need time to play and this contributes to their emotional and social development.

4.3.4 Theme 3: Forced marriage

The emergent sub-themes such as being matched with men working in South Africa, forced marriages to evade hunger or abuse are shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: The sub–themes emerging from theme 3

Theme	Sub-themes
Forced marriages	• *Matched with men working in South Africa* • *Forced marriage to evade hunger or abuse*

4.3.4.1 Matched with men working in South Africa for marriage

The participants reported that they were matched with some men working in South Africa for marriage. They further reported that they were not ready for marriage hence they consider it as some form of forced marriage. They pointed out that these marriages are not a solution to their problems. Instead, they worsened their situation because these arranged child marriages violate their rights as children.

Participant AG4A said:

> *My aunt has found a man for me. I am going to get married in December when he comes. He is already sending me his pictures and everything is being arranged right now. I think my aunt is getting some benefits in cash or kind from this man. I am not willing though. I feel I am still too young to get married. My aunt is however encouraging me. She is even giving herself as an example that she was married at a young age.*

Participant AG2E also mentioned:

> *A marriage is being facilitated for me by my aunt. She knows somebody who is desperate and wants to get married if possible before the end of the year. I do not know that person; neither do I want to get married. I want to finish my school and get a job. My aunt is saying if I do not get married to this man I would have missed an opportunity. She is pestering me every day. She is getting some presents from this man.*

From the responses, the researcher gathered that the participants are not willing to get married as they have their own plans for their future. However, they have to comply with their guardians who are taking advantage of their situation. Participant AG2E further highlighted that she feels that the guardian is letting her down as she is not protecting her against such kind of marriages.

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The researcher observes that arranged child marriages are a common practice among the distant parented adolescent girls who are in the care of guardians. In their case, since both parents have migrated, they become vulnerable to different forms of abuse one of which is forced or arranged marriages. Chimwa Murombe Legal Practice (2020) found that forced marriages in most cases are considered as money making schemes as some people would benefit from the bride price (lobola) paid by the groom. The guardians or caregivers are only concerned about getting money out of it. This supports what participant AG4A revealed that the guardian who happens to be the aunt is benefiting. However, the Zimbabwean Constitution, 2013 Section 78 and 81 stipulates that anyone below the age of 18 years is a child and marriage with children below the age of 18 years is prohibited (Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, 2021). Section 78 (2) further stipulates that no person shall be compelled to enter into marriage against their will. It is evident that these forced or arranged marriages are not legal and the participants expressed lack of readiness to be married. This means that as adolescent children, they have the right to be protected from economic, sexual and any form of abuse (Chamwa Murombe, 2020). Arranging marriages for the distant parented adolescents is a violation of their rights. The deplorable effects that accompany forced marriages are deprivation of the right to choose, dropout from school, unwanted pregnancies, vulnerability to STIs and HIV/AIDS.

4.3.4.2 Forced marriages to evade hunger or abuse

The participants' interviews revealed that they are forced into early marriages with the teachers, soldiers or policemen. They reported that early marriages are common in the Chiredzi South Constituency. The participants enter into these early marriages to evade hunger and abuse. They indicated that early marriages are believed to be an effective tool for security purposes. They are seen as ultimate protection from hunger and abuse. They also believe they will be safer in the hands of a financially stable male figure. By so doing, the distant parented adolescent girls reported that they drop out of school and get into marriage. They also revealed that this is stressful because they get married because of circumstances they are facing in their homes.

One participant, AG4E, mentioned:

> *I was constantly requesting for some items from my aunt as both of my parents have migrated and this did not go down well with her. She ended up making an arrangement that I get married to a policeman whom she believed was going to look after me. She found it a solution rather than keep on asking for things from her. I was so stressed because I was not expecting such a resolution from her.*

Similarly participants AG4E and AG4C echoed the same sentiments when they explained that her educational endeavour was cut short as she got into an arranged marriage. She revealed that this is stressful because she got married because of circumstances that she was facing at home.

Participant said:

> *My grandmother is not treating me well and the unfortunate part of it is that I was left under her care when my parents migrated to South Africa. She is denying me most of the things that I ask for. She wants me to get married to a certain teacher whom she thinks is going to look after me. I do not agree to that but I have no option. Life is becoming unbearable for me.*

From the above description, the researcher concludes that it is important to have the interessts of children at heart. The distant parented adolescent girls aspire to achieve certain things. Their educational endeavours will be shattered once they are forced into early marriage. Section 81(2) of the Zimbabwean Constitutional Amendment Act No. 20 of 2013 states that a child's best interests are paramount in every matter concerning children. They should be respected in every way. The findings of the study revealed that the participants are experiencing nonconsensual arranged early marriages. Participant AG4C felt that she is compelled to drop out of school to get married due to lack of resources and an uncaring guardian. From what the participant said the researcher grasped that her rights to autonomy, education, protection and to consent are violated. The same scenario of uncaring guardians was also highlighted by participant AG4E. The researcher observes how vulnerable the distant parented adolescent girls are. There is need for the guardians to step in place of the biological parent and care for adolescents who are left behind, thereby filling in the gap of the absent parents.

4.3.5 Theme 4: Used as sex slaves by caregivers or guardians

It also emerged from the study that some of the distant parented adolescent girls were given out as sex slaves to some men in exchange of the favours by caregivers or guardians. Table 4.9 summarises the scenario.

Table 4.9 Sub – theme emerging from theme 4

Theme	Sub- themes
Used as commercial sex slaves by caregivers or guardians	• *Given to some men in exchange of some favours*

4.3.5.1 Given to some men in exchange of favours

The participants highlighted the fact that they were given out to some men in exchange of favours. They reported that they are sometimes used in the 'village brothels'. They complained that this traumatized them emotionally. Some men are invited by aunties to sexually abuse the girls for a fee paid to the aunt (and not to the girls). The participants revealed that the experience comes with Sexually Transmitted Diseases, sometimes, with HIV and AIDS. They further contended that they are not comfortable with the arrangements. They alluded to being convinced that their parents would not agree to that kind of arrangements. However, they are left with no choice except to give in. They revealed that the trauma they suffer impacts negatively on their academic achievement.
Participant AG5B stressed:

> *I am not happy with how my aunt is treating me. She brings men during the weekends to sexually abuse me. Moreover, she is paid for that. This she normally does when she is broke and it has become a trend now. She has turned our home to a 'village brothel' with me as the victim. I am traumatised. She is doing that to me without even my consent. I do not even know whom to report to because when my parents migrated to South Africa they left me in her care.*

Some participants further expressed the fear of reporting their guardians who invite men to sexually abuse them. They indicated that they cannot visit the clinics if they contract STDs for fear of exposing the guardians. Accordingly, participantAG2E reported:

I am not feeling well. I feel that I have contracted some STDs. There are men who are invited by my aunt, especially when she is broke, to come to abuse me. I am even scared of going to the clinic because they are going to ask me questions and in the process I will be exposing my aunt and those men. If I do that they will be mad at me and chase me away from home. Last week I did not even go anywhere because I was not able to walk properly. Aunt was even threatening me not to tell people what is happening. I am deteriorating both academically and healthwise.

Similarly, participant AG2D responded:

My aunt told me that I just have to get used to being abused because she gets money. As if this is not enough, if I fall sick she is not eager to let me visit the local clinics for fear of being exposed in the event that I am diagnosed with sexually transmitted diseases. My situation is tricky in the sense that my parents have entrusted me to her hands and if I report such cases there is going to be hatred between my parents and aunties and she may expel me from home.

From their responses, the researcher understands how the participants AG5B, AG2D, AG2E are traumatised by being treated as sex slaves without them consenting and having an option. It is clear from the responses of participants AG2D and AG2E that they fear exposing themselves and the embarrassment that comes with it. They also indicated that they contract sexually transmitted diseases and it is not easy to be treated at the local clinic. This shows how complicated their situation can be.

In sharing her experiences participant AG4D reported:

I have a hard time. My aunt is always on the road to South Africa. Sometimes she does not have money for transport. In such instances she arranges with some truck drivers to come and sexually molest me so that she can get free transport. This they usually do when they come to collect her. She has already told me that she is doing that in order to get free transport. I do not understand why that is the option. I am so traumatised that I cannot even concentrate on my studies.

It was clear from participant AG4D's voice that some of the gains that the guardians get encompass free transport to South Africa and finance. The participants blamed the migration of their parents for all the abuses, such as the sexual exploitation, that they are going through. Sexual exploitation, according to the Sexual Offences Act, is a crime of statutory rape. Section 70 of the Criminal Law (Codification and reform) Act (Chapter 9: 23 of 2006) states that any person who has intimate relations with a person below the age of 16 with or without

consent shall be guilty of rape. The guardians are committing an offence, according to the Children's Act (Chapter 5.06 of 1972), which stipulates that any parent or guardian of a child or young person who exposes the child in a manner which is likely to cause unnecessary suffering or pain to the body and/or the mind is guilty of an offence. From their extracts some of the distant parented adolescent girls have lamented that their guardians are abusing them by facilitating such practices. These practices are affecting them psychologically and educationally.

4.3.6 Theme 5: They are bullied

Some of the emerging sub-themes are that the bullies ransack their food and groceries and loot their washing detergents. These offense are illustrated in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Sub–themes emerging from theme 5

Theme	Sub – themes
Abused by bullies	• *Bullies ransack our food and groceries*
	• *Looting of our washing detergents*

4.3.6.1 Bullies ransacking our food and groceries

Data showed that most of the participants felt that they are bullied by community bullies. Their safety is sometimes at stake. They go to eat their food without their consent. This strains the resources as they would have just received enough food parcels for the month from their parents. They indicated that the food sent to them was meant to feed a few people but now it's like our home is a community kitchen for the bullies. They indicated that the bullies pretend to keep them company and yet they have a hidden agenda. They mostly ransack after they have seen the delivery van '*malaicha*' or '*chidhilivha*' at their homes. This acts as a sign that they have received some food parcels from their South African based parents. The participants further highlighted that it makes their situation very difficult to handle as they would have got enough for the month and finishing early before month end means that they are going to starve and the bullies will not be there to help them. Participant AG3B lamented:

> *Each time my parents send us some groceries we know that we are in trouble. There are some community bullies who frequent our house for food. During the week they usually come at supper time because during the day we   are at school. On weekends they come for breakfast, lunch and supper. On some days, they even demand some groceries to take home. I am left with no choice except to give them because I am scared of them. I have to cook more than what I usually cook when I am with my younger siblings because if I do not do that we will starve the whole day. The situation is so dire.*

Still on the same note, participant AG5A expressed lack of knowledge on the part of the migrant parents who are not in the picture of what we are going through. She said:

> *My mother always shouts at me when I call her to inform her that we no longer have enough food. She thinks I am wasteful and yet our neighbour is always sending her kids to come and eat with us. I do not have the power to deny them. They just come and sit waiting for the food. If they are not full, they even ask for more. I cannot tell my mother. Our food does not last even three weeks. If they see that we no longer have food, they stop coming but the moment they see the delivery van at our house, they start coming.*

Participant AG5B also echoed the same view of parental ignorance on what they are going through. She explained:

> *Our parents do not know the challenge that we go through each time they send some groceries. Many people who do not have relatives working abroad suffer and are desperate. Therefore each time our parents send something, we are forced to share with these people whether we like it or not. Some of them are older than us and simply demand from us what they want. Our age mates just come to eat our food. It is like we are now running a village kitchen. What is only left is for those people to rob us at night.*

Bullying is rampant against the distant parented adolescents. The absence of the parents exposes them to untold suffering as the children lack protection. A study conducted by The Economist (2015) found that the left behind adolescents are vulnerable to bullying because of the absence of their parents. From this finding, the researcher concludes that there is need of some form of protection for such children from the community as well as the government. From the findings, it was clear that the left behind adolescents have a hard time with the bullies who take advantage of them since they stay on their own and bullies loot their food.

The adolescents are not at peace, especially when they receive food parcels from their parents. The bullies violate their rights such as the right to autonomy. This is why they fail to manage their resources properly. Their resources are strained and cause them to suffer until the parents remit them again.

4.3.6.2 Looting our washing detergents

In addition to ransacking the children's food parcels, the bullies go to do their laundry at the children's homes and demand to be given the detergents. They do not understand the situation of the distant parented children. They put a strain on the children's limited resources and these get depleted before the end of the month.

Participant AG1B expressed her concern when she said:

> *My younger brother came from school crying today. He has been scolded by the class teacher for putting on dirty uniforms on a Monday. I could not do our laundry over the weekend because our laundry soap is finished. Our neighbours have been asking for it ever since my parents sent us some groceries. I could not deny them. Now that it's finished, I do not have anyone to ask from.*

Similarly, Participant AG4E also complained:

> *I do not know where to go and ask for laundry soap. My mother has told me that she is punishing me by not sending either the money or washing soap because it got finished before month end. Unfortunately, she is not aware that some community members are always here to do their laundry using our soap. Now I am stranded because mom has decided to punish me.*

From these reports, the researcher noted that the participants are bullied by people in their community who demand food and to use their washing detergents. In such instances, their right to protection is violated. Looting of the washing detergents puts their lives at a disadvantage in a number of ways. Participant AG4E pointed out that the mothers punish them for finishing detergents well before the stipulated time. This report shows how these community lootings impacts negatively on them. Participant AG1B elaborated the inconveniences which are caused by the bullies; the left behind children put on dirty clothes, including their uniforms, because the community take the detergents away. They no longer

have privacy in their homes; the bullies are always hovering around their home to take advantage of them. Badea (2020) reports that the adolescents who are left behind are often subjected to bullying by some community members. Thus, it is clear that bullying aggravates their painful situation in the sense that besides struggling to make ends meet with few or no resources as a result of looting, they end up getting punished by the migrant parent who are ignorant of what is happening at home and, thus, they end up going through a double tragedy.

4.3.7 Theme 6: Poor communication with parents

The emergent sub-themes such as keeping parents abreast, being mobile phone parented, limited and delayed communication with parents and delayed communication with parents are derived from poor communication with parents and are shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Sub – Themes emerging from theme 6

Theme	Sub-themes
Communication with parents	• *Keeping parents abreast*
	• *Mobile phone parented*
	• *Limited communication with parents*
	• *Communication with parents takes time*

4.3.7.1 Keeping parents abreast

The participants revealed that communication with migrant parents is vital. It maintains family ties with the distant parents. The participants conceded that communication was done mostly through the cell phones. They reported that they can use WhatsApp and sms messages or make video calls. These channels keep their parents well informed about their welfare. The participants said that the cell phone bridged the gap between them and their parents. Owusu (2013) found that technology enables migrant parents to be in touch with their children who are left behind.

Participant   AG3C commented:

> *When my mother calls me, there are important issues that I would love to tell her. Right now the outstanding fees are due in two (2) weeks' time.*

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> *The headmaster announced that at the assembly. That is the first thing that I will tell her. I am expecting a call from her today after school.*

Participant AG2B also stated:

> *In a weeks' time, the Form four (4) students are going on a trip to the Great Zimbabwe Monuments. I have already informed my parents about it; they promised to send me money as soon as they get paid. I hope I will meet the deadline. They told me to expect it from the delivery van which will come this weekend. I am excited about it. I have never been to any trip since grade one. This is the chance now.*

Participants AG2D and AG3C shared the same sentiments that their parents get to know of how they are doing through cell phones when they send sms them and WhatsApp messages or video call. A possible interpretation of the findings is that the parents are up to date with what is happening to their children who are left behind but who use technology. However, some children decide to conceal their challenges for fear of victimization by either the bullies or some guardians. Parent-child communication is very important mostly for the distant parented adolescent girls' parents who have migrated. There is a need for communication in order to close the geographical and social gap created by migration. This need was also noted by Wang et al., (2019) who posit that parent-child communication is important even for the development of the left behind children. The absence of communication such children and their parents affects them psychologically. It is through WhatsApp, sms or video call that the participants find it easy to make their parents know how they are doing. Cellphones become vital tools of communication for the distant parented adolescent girls with the migrant parents. However, the participants also revealed that they do not share everything with their parents; they are scared of being victimised by the bullies and some guardians. They also report that they conceal some of the abuses caused by the guardians because they do not want to create a rift between their parents and their (abusive) relatives.

4.3.7.2 Mobile phone parented

The findings in this study also showed that the participants receive mobile phone parenting as their parents call to instruct them on what to do, instill discipline or advise them. The participants said that their parents enquire about their welfare through mobile phones. They

found the cell phones to be user friendly as parents can monitor their whereabous. With the mobile phones, the left behind children feel the presence of their parents.

Participant AG3A indicated:

> *I had a problem yesterday with my younger siblings. They refused to carry out some duties that they are supposed to do. I then called my mother to report the situation. She called and shouted at them and they later on complied. I could tell from her tone that she was fuming. I If she were present I think she would beat them up.*

Another participant AG5D shared the same sentiments of the use of cell phones in parenting. She further highlighted the peace of mind that children have after informing the parents that tthe family is doing well.

Accordingly participant: AG5D reported:

> *My parents called yesterday evening. They were just enquiring on how we are doing. I told them that we were ok. They were grateful to hear that. I could tell that there was a sigh of relief from them because they were hearing a lot of stories about some people who are terrorising our community.*

In sharing her experiences on how cell phones are used to parent them, one participant pointed out that the parents also use the cell phones to give advice.

Participant AG5C shared:

> *My younger sister who is in grade seven (7) has just started her menstrual periods. I had no idea on how to help her. I had to call my mother and ask her what I should do. With me when I started she was there so I did not experience any hustles. What my mummy told her was helpful because from there on she is not complaining about anything.*

Distant parented children experience mobile phone parenting. The findings indicated that this has become the easiest way for distant parents to reach up to their distant children. Aguilar (2020), Filippa et al. (2013), Kufakurinani et al. (2014) and Nazridod (2021) indicate that migrant parents rely on technology (cell phones in particular) to parent their left behind children. They also mentioned that they use cell phones to nurture close relationships with their children. Thus cell phones enable easy communication for parenting

purposes. They are used to administer discipline, to give advice and to solve problems in addition to the other parenting roles. The distant parents found them to be helpful.

4.3.7.3 Limited communication with parents

Some participants report that they have some communication challenges with their distant parents. They explained that they have limited communication with them in the presence of the guardians hence they become stressed. They indicated lack of freedom of expression in the presence of the guardians. This adversely affects them emotionally too. They fail to say what they would have loved to say. They are not afforded the privacy that they require, therefore they become psychologically traumatised.

Participant AG4D had this to say about it;

> *Sometimes there are certain issues that I wish to tell my mother because I feel that they are important. I cannot do so when my aunt and her family are there listening to our conversation. I have burning issues but I cannot air them. . It's so frustrating, you know. You are left helpless. I also sense that they are not happy at all with our conversation.*

Participant AG3E uttered similar sentiments when she said:

> *I am not able to speak freely with my parents when they call me. I see that my grandmother is sort of jealous. She listens attentively so I do not say anything negative on her part. When I see that some issues are sensitive I end up being quiet. Sometimes they want to enquire whether I got my pocket money and it is such issues that I fail to respond to appropriately if she is present.*

Participant AG3E is not comfortable to talk to her parents in the presence of her grandmother and others (in the house) who may be eager to hear the conversation. She said:

> *Every time my parents call, everyone in my grandmother's home are eager to hear my conversation with them. I feel uncomfortable and I cannot even move from them because it will raise their curiosity further. I end up just saying 'yes' and 'no' and nothing more. I can even tell that my parents are sensing it because they expecting to hear more but to no avail.*

The difficulties in the efforts of the left behind children's efforts to communicate with their migrant parents are a thorn in the flesh. According to Zhou (2019), they results in great total

difficulties among the distant parented children. In other words they further complicate the situation of being distant parented. Similarly, the findings of this study are that from the participants' voices it is clear that they cannot talk freely to their parents when they call in the presence of the guardians. Nazridod (2021) states that the caregivers' presence makes it difficult for the distant parented children to talk openly about the challenges that the adolescents encounter as they are scared of being victimised thereafter. This means that it affects them a lot and, worse still, they do not see their parents regularly. The pain is exacerbated by the fact that the children cannot say what they want to say to their biological parents in the presents of their care givers. Lobos et al. (2019) also observes that the left behind adolescents experience limited communication opportunities with their parents. They seem to lack privacy when talking to the parents through the cell phones and it hurts them.

4.3.7.4 Delayed communication with some migrant parents

A delay by some parents to communicate with their distant children was raised as one of the serious concerns. It may keep them psychologically unsound. They reiterate that the delay worsens their situation of being distant parented as they miss their parents a lot. It may further lead them to thinking that they are no longer loved.

Participant AG5A said that;

> *It has been almost a month now without my parents calling me. I wonder what is happening or what they are thinking about me. I have a lot of things that I need to share with them. Could it be that they are punishing me? But I have not done anything wrong. Whom should I ask? Maybe things are not well with them that side. I am failing to focus on my schoolwork now.*

Participant AG5B also said:

> *The days are flying. I am anticipating a phone call from my parents. It has been long since I heard from them. Could it be that they have been affected by covid-19 since I heard that cases are on the rise in South Africa? Even if it is the case one of them was supposed to call. They are aware that my little brother was not feeling well but they are not even checking on us. Let's hope they will call anytime soon.*

On the same note, Participant AG4E uttered;

My maths teacher is worried about my performance. He called me to his office at break time and I told him my problem that my parents are not calling me and I am worried now. I needed some exercise books to replace the filled up ones but I can't tell them because they are not calling.

Frequent communication between the migrant parented or the distant parented children and their parents is crucial. It leads to better psychological resilience among the adolescents who are left behind (Zhou et al. 2021). Frequent communication closes the physical distance that exist between the distant parented adolescent girl and the migrant parent. Nazridod (2021) also noted that frequent communication reduces the feeling of distance between the children and the parents. In other words, both the distant parent and the distant parented adolescent would not realise any geographical distance between them and would even feel connected (Cauton & Teguihanon, 2019). Frequent communication makes the adolescents feel happy. From the above extracts, both participant AG5A and AG5B agree on the anxiety caused when parents delay to call the children. Participant AG5A further explains that the delay in communication adversely affects her performance at school and makes her lose focus.

4.3.8 Theme 7: Teenage pregnancy

Table 4.12 shows the theme that emerged when the participants were asked about why some of them fell pregnant while at school.

Table 4.12 Sub – themes emerging from theme 7

Theme	Sub- theme
Teenage pregnancy	• *Improper association with boys*

4.3.8.1 Improper association with boys

The findings from the focus group discussions and the interviews with distant parented adolescent indicate that some distant parented girls have improper association with boys. They do not see anything wrong with that. They engage in intimate relationships with the boys and then say that they lack parental guidance. They do realise that improper association with boys has some detrimental consequences such as early pregnancies. They reported that

it leads to the increase in the cases of teenage pregnancies and teenage motherhood in the constituency.

Participant AG3B had this to say on the issue:

> *All along I was close to these Form Four (4) boys. I am in form three (3). These boys were close to me and I consider them as my best friends. Our friendship was like that until n they said something which did not go down well with me. It had some sexual connotations. I stopped playing with them.*

In justifying her improper association with the boys, participant AG5B remarked:

> *It's news to me that one cannot have a friend of the opposite sex. I do not see anything wrong with that. I am surprised that people are gossiping about me on that at school and in the community. No one has inducted me on the dangers of having intimate relationships with boys. I am now a bit worried now because I skipped my periods for 2 months now and I am noticing some changes with regards to my appetite.*

The participants clearly indicated that improper association with boys has some negative consequences such as unwanted pregnancies. They still go to school and are not ready to get married. When they fall pregnant, that pregnancy is said to be unwanted. Pregnancy results in the girls being excluded from schools.

Participant AG2B lamented:

> *Do you know how embarrassing it is to fall pregnant when you are still young and, worse of all, going to school? I regret. I wasn't expecting it and did not even want the pregnancy. I am stranded now and do not know what to do.*

Participant AG5D also bemoaned that; she said:

> *I do not know where to start. I am pregnant and so far I think no one knows. I haven't told my parents yet because I know that the moment they know about it, they won't spare me. I have done a shameful thing in the eyes of everybody. I might be excluded from school. I do not want this pregnancy. Even John who is responsible for the pregnancy is encouraging me to abort.*

The findings of the study are that teenage pregnancy is common among the distant parented adolescent girls. A study by Pantea (2018) finds that teenage pregnancy is prevalent among the left behind adolescent girls which he went on to say that it disturbs their academic progression which affects their academic achievement. This may be attributed to the absence of parents and parental education on developmental issues. In this study, some distant parented adolescent girls fall pregnant due to improper association with boys. A study by Badea (2020) revealed that teenage pregnancy is a result of lack of parental education, undeveloped social skills and poor sexual education. Thus, distant parented girls fall pregnant at an early age. Participants AG2B and AG5D report that it is embarrassing to fall pregnant while one is still going to school. In addition, participant AG5D went on to explain that the consequences of falling pregnant at that stage are dire as the girls may be excluded from school and be shunned by friends and the community members. Participant AG2B added that it is embarrassing. It can be concluded that the participants do not welcome the consequences of teenage pregnancy.

4.3.9 Theme 8: Absence of father/mother figure in the home

Craving for a biological mother and/ or father figure in the home constituted one of the emerging themes as shown in Table 4.12.

Table 4.13 Sub – themes emerging from Theme 8

Theme	Sub – theme
Absence of biological father /mother in the home	• *Craving for a biological mother in the home* • *Craving for a biological father in the home*

4.3.9.1 Craving for a biological mother in the home

The findings are that one's mother is a critical figure in dealing with the household responsibilities and guidance to an adolescent girl. Mothers act as role models to their developing adolescent girls and they give emotional support. The participants also mentioned that mothers mold them to be responsible human beings. They indicated that they

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value the presence of the mother most as a result of the emotional bond between them. The participants further revealed that in the home the mothers look after their children, do household chores, take care of the children when sick and, above all, guide them. The importance of the mothers in the home cannot be over emphasized. The participants reported that the absence of the mother figure affects them a lot emotionally.

Participant AG4E reported:

> *It's time to knock off at school. I am not happy at all. It has been raining today and there is no one at home to put the firewood at a safe place where it will not get wet. How am I going to cook? I cannot sleep without eating because I usually cook a decent meal at supper it. My young brother loves his food and cannot sleep without eating otherwise he won't go to school tomorrow. If only my mother were here, I know that I would be at home and dry because obviously she was going to put the firewood at a safe place and even cook.*

In sharing the same sentiments participant AG3A also remarked:

> *My mother used to make my life easy before she migrated to Eswatini with daddy. I know that when coming from school I would find everything in place. She would have done the laundry, household chores and, above all, prepared supper. If I had encountered any problems, including my monthly periods, my mom would quickly attend to them. She would also advise me on the way forward. I miss her a lot because some of the problems that I encounter need her physical presence.*

Similarly, Participant AG1E also reported:

> *I used to have all the time to concentrate on my schoolwork before my mother migrated to South Africa with daddy. I did not have to run around the house when coming from school. Everything was in place. She would just want me to concentrate on my studies. Gone are such days. I have a lot before me in the house.*

Mothers play a very crucial role in child, especially the girl child, rearing. A study by Cauton et al. (2019) showed that mothers are considered to be the primary caregivers because they guide their developing children. In their absence, the children may get lost. Adolescent girls need constant guidance when they develop. Adumitroate and Dafinou (2013) found that distant parented adolescent girls value the presence of the mother more than the material benefits because of the role that they play. The findings of the study are that mothers play

a critical role in the development of the girl child and need to be present in their lives. Both participants AG4E and AG3A miss their mothers who used to help them with the household chores. Without the mother in the home, they become emotionally affected. A study by Carranza (2021) found that the adolescents who are left behind feel the mother's absence in the day to day routines that embodied the mother-child relations. The participants' responses show that it is the mother who plays most of the roles in the home. In her absence, they really feel the difference. Hence, the participants mention that friends, care givers or material benefits cannot replace the biological parent.

4.3.9.2 Craving for a biological father in the home

Data from both the focus group discussions and the interviews indicates that distant parented adolescent girls miss the sight of their biological fathers, being loved and cared for in the home. They indicated that the absence of their fathers creates a vacuum in their lives and they felt unprotected. They further mention that they long for a relationship with the father who can teach them about respect. Absence of the father is a source of insecurity. They experience depression due to longing for the absence of their fathers. Participant AG4A reported:

> *Life has never been the same ever since my parents migrated to South Africa. I miss my daddy so much that I am even failing to concentrate in class. I don't want to interact with people. I just feel it's not proper to do so. I feel that I am not adequately protected.*

Participant AG3B shares the same sentiments when she says:

> *I miss my father too much. I used to stay with him. He loved me so much. Now that he is working in South Africa many things have changed for me. He would, here and there, call but that will not make up for his physical presence. He used to buy me everything that I wanted especially when I achieved a good grade at school. I would know that I will be his angel on that day. My father would never miss any event at my school which required the presence of the parent. Now none of that is happening.*

Similarly Participant AG2B responded:

> *These boys are harassing me. They know that my daddy is working outside the country. During the night I do not sleep well because I am afraid that they might come to attack and rape me.*

The findings disclosed that fathers have a duty of moulding their developing children. Their absence creates a vacuum in their children's lives (ZN, 2021). Some fathers play an active role in the lives of their children by giving direction. Santrock (2019) observed that absence of the father at an early age of a girl child's life affects the future relationships between them. He went on to say that they would never be stable in their future relationships because there is no established and secure base for such a relationship. The researcher noted that a stable relationship with the father is important for the proper development of a girl child. However, this can only be possible if the fathers are present and staying with their children. In this study, it became clear that the participants long for the presence of their fathers in the home when they develop. They further reported that their learning is being affected by the absence of their fathers, as fathers play a critical role in that regard, as reported by participant AG3B. Poor academic achievement is partly attributed to the absence of a father in the home. This suggests that fathers should be involved in the lives of their girl children for them to realise academic success.

4.3.10 Theme 9: Heading the family

The sub-themes which emerged under this theme include having to look after the siblings, looking after the livestock, managing resources and family budget and living without adult supervision (accounting for immoral behaviour). Table 4.12 summarises these sub-themes.

Table 4.14 Sub–themes emerging from Theme 9

Theme	Sub – theme
Heading the family	• *Having to look after my siblings* • *Looking after the livestock* • *Managing resources plus budgeting* • *Living without adult supervision*

4.3.10.1 Having to look after my siblings

Distant parented adolescent girls are forced to exercise sibling parenting. The participants indicate that looking after the siblings is not an easy thing for adolescents. They are substitute mothers. They report that part of their responsibility is to ensure that the siblings are health and safe. They revealed that instilling and effecting discipline was one of the most

difficult things to do with ones' younger siblings. The participants reported that they are subjected to a lot of stress when the siblings do not cooperate.

Participant AG5E asserted:

> *I ended up beating Tiyiselani on that day. She came home very late from school. I almost went to look for her because it was getting late and I thought she might have met some people who kidnapped her. She is in grade 3 and her school ends at 1:00 o'clock. She said she had been playing with her friends all the way from school. I was so cross that I could not help I but beat her. Our place is infested with human traffickers so I was getting worried of what could have happened to her.*

In addition, participant AG1B stated:

> *Each and every day I have to make sure that my siblings are well fed, have been bathed and are clean before they go to school. This has been the norm since my parents migrated to South Africa.*

Participant AG1C also commented:

> *These days there is an outbreak of corona virus. My young brother woke up with a very hot body. I had to take him to our local clinic. I had to miss school because there was no one who could take care of him. He too could not go to school because he wasn't well. The nurses tested him for Covid 19 and, thank God, found him negative and then just gave him an injection and some pain killers.*

When parents migrate, reconfigurations of the parental roles take place in the family. In most cases the eldest child in the family assumes the parental roles. The three participants, AG5D, AG1B and AG1C concurred on the challenges they go through with assuming the parenting roles and heading the families at a young age. Their roles range from disciplining their siblings if they misbehave, to making sure that they take their meals adequately, are clean and to look after them when they are sick. From their responses, it is evident that the participants face some challenges in heading the families. However, they soldier on with their responsibilities because there is no option. The same view is shared by Aguilar (2020) who avers that the oldest child, most often the daughter, becomes the pseudo-parent when parents migrate. In the study, it was also found that this new responsibility comes with emotional difficulties and interferes with one's academic activities both at school and at home. Thus, it is not easy for the distant parented adolescents to manage their responsibilities.

Participant AG2C further highlighted that she was looking after the siblings and assigns them duties. She stated:

> *I came up with a duty roster at home. I found it to be very effective. My siblings were troublesome but once I did that it was solved. Things are working well for me. My duty is to make sure that they stick to the roster.*

Similarly, participant AG4E also said:

> *Whilst I am trying to make sure that everyone in the house does his or her own duties, my young brother is stubborn. He does not want to take my orders. I am always fighting with him. Sometimes he wants to go to school without bathing and fights about that.*

The above extract from participant AG2C and AG4E clearly show that their parental roles extend to ensuring that their younger siblings are doing their household duties. Sometimes they are not be willing to take instructions from each other. In such instances, it is the older one who has to bear all the challenges of monitoring the siblings. They indicate that it is not an easy task considering that they are also still young. This shows the parents' role in bringing up their children. In their absence, older sibling exercises the duty of looking after the siblings.

4.3.10.2 Looking after the livestock

The distant parented adolescent girls report that sometimes they have to look after the livestock. They indicated that they have to open the kraal for the cattle to go out before the go to school and close them in after school. They find this stressful, taking into consideration that they are girls. Among the VaTsonga/Shangani communities, that is a duty of males only. They highlighted that this role was previously played by their fathers before they migrated. Participant AG5C lamented:

> *Every day before and after school I have to make sure that I open the kraal for the cattle to go out and also close them at the end of day. Before closing them I need to count and make sure that they are all there. On weekends, when I have more time, I milk them in the morning with the help of my younger brother so that we get milk. What I am doing to the livestock was previously done by my father.*

Participant AG2B responded:

> *Today I did not manage to go to school. Our cattle did not come back yesterday; the whole kraal. I think they were disturbed by a lot of rains yesterday. I have to go and look for them together with my brother. I was scared that if my father hears about it he would be angry with me. We finally found them when we were almost giving up. At least we missed school for something positive.*

From their concerns, the participants find the role of looking after the livestock stressful and cumbersome because they are females. The participants found the role of looking after the animal to be more of masculine than feminine hence the stress. Such responsibilities are incongruent with their gender the participants found it (Badea, 2020). Participant AG2B further reported the impact that this role is negative on their learning. They miss school if the cattle get lost.

4.3.10.3 Managing resources and budgeting for the family

The findings from this study indicated that one of the roles of distant parented adolescent girls who head the families is serving food and budgeting what the parents have sent. The participants reported that it was not an easy task; failure to budget appropriately may lead to depleting their coffers within a short space of time, leading to starvation before the end of the month. The money is allocated to different things at home including the groceries, electricity and school fees in some instances. The participants reported that this can be a source of stress, especially if the money is not sufficient.

Participant AG2A explained that;

> *From the food parcels and groceries that my parents send, I have to know the amount of food to be cooked and when. If they send us money to buy here, which they normally do, I would come up with a lot of the items that we would want. I usually go to Chiredzi on a Saturday to buy when I am not going to school. Sometimes I do not budget properly and we find ourselves struggling before the end of the month.*

AG3A further reported:

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> *My parents send us half of the money that they used to send us each month. They say that it is because of Covid-19. They are not working as much as they did before and where they are working 'it's no work, no pay'. My head aches because the money is not adequate. My siblings are young t and they do not understand what I try to tell them that we do not have money.*

Participant AG3D further reported:

> *I love rice and the same applies to my siblings. Last month I cooked it every day. Within two weeks we had finished the month's allocation. I could not tell my mother because I was scared that she might shout at me. Now it's 'sadza' (thick porridge) throughout and it's not nice.*

Budgeting is not easy for the adolescents who are left behind by their migrant parents. The study finds that the participants lamented lack of foresight when budgeting. This leaves them starving for the rest of the month. This may be attributed to lack of maturity and experience in that area. Participant AG2A pointed out that she sometimes fails to budget properly. This leads them into struggling in order to make ends meet. Thus they lament the difficulties of managing certain situations that require parental presence and handling (Aguilar, 2020). This is where budgeting is expected. Participant AG3A went on to explain that due to the Covid-19 pandemic they are not getting adequate money from their parents. This further exacerbates their situation with younger siblings who fail to come to terms with the situation. Participant AG3D highlighted that because of their poor budgeting, now they are left with no option except to cook sadza throughout and she cannot tell her mother. They further indicated that they are not getting enough remittances; it is difficult for them to squeeze the budget to cover all their daily needs.

4.3.10.4 Living without adult supervision accounted for immoral behaviour

The participants also revealed that failure to make morally acceptable decisions on their own accounted to ill informed decisions. They indicated that they are unsure of some of the decisions that they make. This, they said, accounted for the feelings of insecurity and indecisiveness. Participant AG5C had this to say on this issue;

> *My mother used to correct me many times if she saw that I was on the wrong. She made sure that I was right. . We used to be together most of the times. Now she is staying in South Africa with my father. I have*

become my own role model. I am staying with my younger siblings and I do not have anyone to model. Instead, I am a model for my siblings. They look up to me.

The same sentiments were shared by participant AG4E who reported:

I turned into prostitution after my parents went to work outside the country. I could not get some of the things that I needed in order to survive and prostitution was the only thing which could make me get money fast, fast. There is not even a single person who told me that what I was doing was bad. Then I was stranded.

Data from the utterances of participant AG4E showed that she blamed her engagement in prostitution to lack of adult supervision. Participant AG5C lamented the absence of her parents, particularly her mother who used to correct her if she did anything wrong. Now she is doing as she pleases. From their responses, the participants link the lack of parental guidance for the uninformed decisions that they make. Carranza (2021) found that misbehaving among the distant parented adolescents is a result of parental absence which also means absence of proper guidance and support. It is assumed that in the absence of parents they do not have people who advise them properly in some instances. Their understanding of the close environment helps them to overcome the problems that they encounter (Mavaza, 2021). Failure to do so leads to bad decisions. Lack of adult supervision leads them to wrong decisions which affect them in the long run.

4.4 Challenges faced by distant parented adolescent girls

The findings of the study revealed that distant parented adolescent girls face a plethora of challenges which could have been taken care of by their parents if they were available at home. Their greatest challenge was lack of parental guidance and support. The distant parented adolescent girls also had a difficulty in taking instructions from the local community leaders and caregivers since they believed that only their biological parents had the right to do so. As a result, they found it difficult to resist peer pressure. Moreover, there were poor relationships between the parents and the distant parented adolescent girls. This led to wrong decision making as negative peer pressure set in. A number of themes emerged from this objective as outlined in Table 4. 14.

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Table 4.15 Themes emerging for the challenges faced by distant parented adolescent girls

Objective	Themes
Establish the challenges faced by distant parented adolescent girls	1. *Lack of parental care and support*
	2. *Lack of access to remittances*
	3. *Wrong choice of friends*
	4. *Poor relationship between the parents and distant parented adolescent girl.*
	5. *Barriers to learning*
	6. *Delayed remittances (of money) by parents*

4.4.1 Theme 1: Lack of parental care and support

The sub-themes such as having depression, engaging in risky behaviour and having no social support emerged from the theme; lack of parental care, support and guidance are shown in Table 4.16

Table 4.16 Sub – themes emerging from theme 1

Theme	Sub-themes
Lack of parental care, support and guidance	• *Having depression*
	• *Engaging in risky behaviour*
	• *Having no social support*

4.4.1.1 Having depression

From the gathered data, it transpired that distant parented adolescent girls are depressed by their failure to balance household responsibilities and school activities. They reported that these factors subjected them to severe emotional trauma leading to the state of depression. They lack support from the parents. They have household responsibilities which would normally have been done by their parents. This causes unnecessary strain on their part as they have to do everything on their own. They also explained that their day to day activities become more hectic when their parents are in diaspora. Participant AG3C said that;

> *I sometimes wish my parents, particularly my mother, were here; to help me with the cooking while I wash my school uniforms. I would have ample time to rest and to study. She is not here and I have to do everything by myself. It is so tiring to do every household duty which could be done by my mother or father. Physically, I feel unwell.*

Participant AG1B went on to report:

> *When it's time to knock off from school, I am always depressed, knowing what awaits me at home. I fetch water from the community borehole. I also fetch firewood since there is no electricity. Sometimes I have to wash my uniform and that of my other two siblings who are at primary school before carrying on with other household chores. It is quite depressing. I wish mum were here. She would assist me.*

Based on their sentiments, the participants make it clear that the duties that await them at home, coupled with school activities, are a source of stress for the distant parented adolescent girls. In responding to the same question, participant AG3A reported:

> *I miss my mother so much. She is open-hearted and a good role model. Before she went to work in Eswatini where daddy is also working, she used to keep me straight and teach me how important school is for me. She would go to church with me. We were doing our things together but now I do not have a role model in my life. I feel disoriented and depressed because I do not have anyone to admire. I just do as I wish.*

In their studies, Nazridod (2021) as well as Botezat and Pfeiffer (2019) show the prevalence of depression and sadness among the distant parented adolescent girls because of having been left behind by migrant parents. Despite affecting their learning, depression is detrimental to their health. They may end up being disabled or committing suicide. The researcher concluded that the relationship between the distant parented adolescent girls with absent parents tends to be strained. Nazridod (2021) further confirmed that the distant parented adolescent girls expressed anger and sadness towards their migrant parents because of excessive burden of household chores which they are expected to carry out. This study also found out that the adolescents left behind by migrant parents are depressed by the overwhelming household chores that they are expected to do and which interfere with their school activities and negatively impact on their academic achievement. They fail to balance the household chores and the duties that were supposed to be done by their parents. The overburdening household chores rob them of their time to learn as they end up getting very

tired. Participant AG3A highlighted that her mother was a role model whom she worked closely with, correcting her where she did not do the right thing. Now her mother is not directly involved in her life. Badea (2020) also reported that many left behind children become depressed, withdrawn and isolated because of the quality of the relationship which they now have with their parents. Thus, they become depressed.

4.4.1.2 Engaging in risky behaviours

The findings of this study are that the distant parented adolescent girls lack parental care, support and guidance. They engage in risky behaviour such as sexual abuse, early marriage and having sugar daddies. No one offers them parental care and support. It is at such time that risky behaviour such as early marriage comes in to fill the void created by parental absence. They also disclosed that being in the transitional stage to adulthood changes their experience. They need guidance, especially from their mothers who are, in most cases, absent. They resort to taking advice from peers. Some of the distant parented adolescent girls indicate that they sometimes fall in love with old men, 'sugar daddies,' in order to get the much needed extra cash. Others also say that they consider getting married at an early age so that they get somebody to take care of them. They say that they need proper guidance and role models. Participant AG2C explained:

> *I remember very well that I started being involved in love affairs when my parents went to South Africa. This is because they were not sending me money. I had nothing to put on the table. My younger siblings did not understand when I told them that I did not have anything to give them. I found some big men, 'sugar daddies,' who were willing to help me in return for sexual favours. This I found to help me financially.*

In sharing her experiences, participant AG5D asserted:

> *I tabled my problems before my friends and they encourage me to hang around with some old man. They allege that old men have a lot of money. Since I did not know whom to approach, they are assisting me to find some. I thought that this was going to solve all my monetary problems.*

Participants justify their bad behaviour. They blame it on lack of parental care and guidance. This means that they do not feel bad about such actions. From the above extracts, the researcher understood that although participant AG2C concurs with participant AG5D on

lack of parental guidance and care, she was involved in love affairs with sugar daddies in exchange for money which was then used to meet her financial needs. Participant AG5D valued the advice from friends.

4.4.1.3 Having no social support

The distant parented adolescent girls lamented lack of social support from their biological parents. They mentioned that they miss the physical and emotional presence of the father in the house. It pains them that their parents are not there to witness their achievements at school. This demotivates them. Some participants mention that they miss the role of the trusted confidant that mothers play in the life of their daughters. They would need someone to talk to. They feel more free to talk about their personal issues with their mothers than with any other members of the family. The absence of their parents makes them socially uncomfortable and insecure. They lack support and protection from their parents. Participant AG5B lamented;

> *I feel lonely in the absence of my parents. I miss their support and encouragement. Life will never be the same without them. My mother used to say, 'Well done my daughter. I am proud of you', if I had done something good. Now that she is in diaspora together with my father, who is going to say such words?*

Participant AG2C supported the observation and said;

> *Many challenges come up when my mother is absent. She is someone I can talk to and chat with. She is my role model and without her I do not have anyone to turn to. One needs a mother to tell one what to do, especially when one is growing up. There are many problems that one can encounter so how am I going to solve them? Her emotional support and presence meant a lot in my life because some things cannot be solved over the phone.*

From the above responses, the researcher gains the information that both participants miss the presence of their parents. Participant AG2C went on to mention that as a developing adolescent she would need her mother to be close by to confide in. Participant AG5B also pointed out that she needs her parents to cheer her up. The researcher gathered that the absence of parents affects their development as they do not have anyone to approve of what

they have done. Mavaza (2021) found that a complete family, with the mother and father, is fundamental in the development of children emotionally, socially and morally. Both parents should be available and be involved in the development of their children. Thus, the participants' holistic development is affected when parents migrate and leave the children behind.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Lack of access to remittances

In this theme, the sub-themes such as remittances are invested for profit by the guardians. Being denied access to remittances emerged as a theme and the sub-themes are shown in Table 4.16.

Table 4.17: The sub–themes emerging from theme 2

Theme	Sub-themes
Lack of access to remittances	• *Remittances are invested for profit by guardians or caregivers* • *Being denied access to remittances at all*

4.4.2.1 Remittances are invested for profit by guardians or caregivers for profit

The participants indicated that the guardians invest or do some business with their remittances. They 'spin the money' first for profit before giving the children some. The participants reported that this stresses them a lot. They pointed out that sometimes the guardians sometimes fail to generate any meaningful profit. The guardians do not mind that the participants need the money to buy groceries, school stationery, sanitary pads, toiletry and sometimes pay school fees. In addition, report that it pains them most because the parents inform them that they have sent some money. Participant AG1D said:

> *My parents are not sending money directly to me. They send it to my aunt who happens to have a market where she sells second hand clothes. She is also taking care of us. When she receives the money, she goes to Mozambique first to beef up her stocks. After selling her things she gives me the money. My parents tell me, through the phone, when they have sent the money and how much it is. It is difficult for me to tell them that I do not get it on time.*

The same sentiments are also echoed by participant AG4B who mentions that she never knows when her parents have sent the money. She lamented:

> *I discovered that the money which my grandmother was lending out to people was the money that my parents had said should go towards my school fees. My grandmother never tells me when she gets the money. I just notice that there is a new development at the house. People go to her house frequently to borrow money. I was wondering what was happening with my parents because I had informed them that the fees were due and there was no response. They had sent the money a long time before. It was only after I had told her that the following day I was not allowed to go to school if I had not paid fees that she told me the truth that she was 'spinning' it so as to generate some profit. She had to run up and down collecting money from those who had borrowed it to make sure that I go and pay before the news reached my parents' ears.*

Remittances have been found to positively influence the lives of the adolescents left behind by their migrant parents in a number of ways which include improvement in their daily lives, purchasing power, payment of school fees, accessing health facilities, among other things. The present study found that adolescents do not access the money that is send by the migrant parents easily and timeously. The guardians use the money that their parents send. They generate profit for their own use. A study by Ndlovu and Tigere (2018) revealed that the caregivers misuse the parents' remittances which are meant to meet the needs of their children. The remittences do not serve their purpose on time. An interpretation of the findings is that their situation of being distant parented becomes unbearable. They struggle to make ends meet yet their parents send them money. Participant AG4B highlighted that in the end the money does not get to be channelled where it is supposed to go on time. Thus, the effects of not getting the money on time are far reaching.

4.4.2.2 Being denied access to remittances at all

Some participants revealed that guardians deny them access to the money sent by their parents at all. The guardians take full control of the money. The participants indicate that this emotionally traumatises them. They do not get the chance to buy what they need. This puts unnecessary strain on them. They struggle to make ends meet and yet their have sent the money. ParticipantAG4C indicated:

When my parents left for South Africa, arrangements were made that we would stay with my grandmother. My grandmother is just a small scale farmer who survives by farming only. Her farming is seasonal so she does not be getting money throughout the year. She has money after the sale of the produce. It becomes a problem when my parents send money to us through her. She doesn't give us the money because she is broke.

The same sentiments were echoed by participant AG5E who reported that the guardian does not give her the money and alleges that she will misuse it. She said:

My aunt does not give me the money that my parents send through her. She is always alleging that I will waste the money and she thinks she is the right person to keep it. Her argument stems from the fact that there are some learners whose parent are in diaspora who were recently expelled from my school for holding a party and getting drunk. The incident was so serious that the whole community was not amused by such behaviour. From then onwards, my aunt just keeps the money and uses it the way she pleases.

This shows that participant AG5E feels that the guardian's claims are not justifiable as the aunt is basing her argument on what other children who are in the same situation do. Participant AG4C feels that the money that her parents send to her has become the grandmother's source of income. That is why she does not give to the left behind children. The situation of the distant parented adolescent girls in such instances is dire as they do not enjoy the positive effects of the remittances sent to them by their migrant parents. They live miserable lives although remittances are sent to them monthly (Cortina, 2014; Cortes, 2015). Guardians or caregivers deny them access to the money. From this study it is clear that the left behind adolescents suffer although their parents remit the money.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Poor choice of friends

The findings of the study are that a poor choice of friends is also one of the challenges distant parented adolescent girls go through. From this theme, other sub-themes emerged and they included; risky behaviour and teenage motherhood, as summarised in Table 4. 18.

Table 4.18 Sub – themes emerging from theme 3

Theme	Sub-themes
Poor choice of friends	- *Risky behaviours*
	- *Teenage motherhood*

4.4.3.1 Risky behaviour

Participants revealed that they have a tendency to choosing wrong friends who influenced them into antisocial behaviour, such as drinking alcohol, abusing intoxicating substances, engaging in premarital sex and having sugar daddies. The participants report that they acquire the behaviour of taking intoxicating drugs and other substances from friends. They report that they are exposed to dangerous drugs. They are drug abusers and drug traffickers hence they developed uncontrollable behaviour. Some participants revealed that some of their friends are old men and women in the community who take advantage of them and use them as drug drivers. They associate themselves with friends who were in a similar situation. Most of the time, their friendship is more sentimental than genuine. This tarnished the good behaviour of some of the distant parented adolescents.

Participant AG4C said:

> *I have friends who do not struggle when it comes to having cash and other things. I always wondered where they get so much money from. One of my friends hooked me up with an elderly man who happened to have money. We were taken out on Fridays.*

Participant AG2B expressed that;

> *Playing truant has become our second nature. When it is sports day, we never think twice. For me and my friends it is always time for fun since our sugar daddies take us out and buy us booze. Nice time and books r do not meet.*

In sharing her experiences, participant AG3E, highlighted that she was punished simply because she was associated with wrong friends who are known to be notorious although she does not do anything wrong. Participant AG3E had this to say;

> *I remember being punished at school for a crime I did not even do. That day I was quiet and sick. Our class teacher found the class making noise.*

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She did not even ask but just called out the names of my naughty friends. Mine was included too. My friends could not let me off the hook since the teacher was convinced I was one of the noise makers too. I suffered because I belong to the wrong pool of friends.

The three participants mention that the risky behaviour that they engage in results from choosing wrong friends. In addition, participants AG4C and AG2B indicated that they are involved in love affairs with some old men, 'sugar daddies,' because of being influenced by friends while participant AG3E just associates with naughty friends. Xiong et al. (2019) also find that in China some distant parented adolescent girls abuse drugs, fall in love with elderly men and are involved in other forms of unruly behaviours because they are influenced by friends. Friends may influence them into making wrong decisions. Carranza (2021) explains that these distant parented adolescents no longer care about their lives because of they are distant parented. All the deviant behaviour is attributed to choosing friends who do not guide them properly. At their stage, adolescents listen to their friends better than they do to their parents. For the distant parented adolescents, it becomes worse due to the total absence of the parents for the greater part of the children's development.

4.4.3.2 Teenage motherhood

According to the participants, some distant parented adolescent girls fall pregnant at an early age and may drop out of school. They are influenced of wrong friends who advise them wrongly and this culminates in pregnancy. They report that this further disturbs their schooling. They suffer some stress; they do not know how to handle the situation and the fear of being shouted at by parents. The participants do not take this lightly as they might even think of aborting.

Participant AG1E lamented that;

> *I do not want boys to ever deceive me into having sex with them again. I now understand that males are not interested in loving us but they are only concerned with the gratification of their sexual desires. It was all because of my friends who introduced me to this boy. Now I miss school because I am pregnant. What is the community going to say about it? I am young but I am carrying a baby in my womb and I am going to give birth. It's too much. In addition, I am losing school. This is an uncommon thing. I have done a shameful thing.*

Participant AG3D also bemoaned:

> *Had it not been for the pregnancy, by now I would be doing Form Four but now I am going to spend a year sitting at home while my friends are carrying on with their schooling. They are now laughing at me but they are the ones who advised me wrongly.*

From their extracts, the researcher understands that the participants blaming their friends for having influenced them badly resulting in them falling pregnant and dropping out of school. Both participants regret the unfortunate behaviour and situation they find themselves in.

4.4.4 Theme 4: Poor relationships between the distant parent and the distant parented adolescent girl

It also emerged from this study that wrong decision making as well as psychological and emotional problems are common problems associated with distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency. Table 4.18 summarises the sub-themes that emerged from the fourth theme.

Table 4.19: The sub–themes emerging from theme 4

Theme	Sub-themes
Poor relationships between the distant parent and the distant parented adolescent girls	• *Wrong decision making* • *Psychological and emotional problems*

4.4.4.1Wrong decision making

Most of the participants mentioned that their parents do not have time to talk to them over the phone, through WhatsApp or zoom. This causes the problems that they are encountering. They lamented that this situation widens the distance between the children and their parent and, in turn, creates a rift between the two parties. This social rift leads them to take advice and to find solace from other adolescents, particularly those who are in the same situation. The study finds that after experiencing what they considered as neglect from their parents, the teenagers then try wrong and risky avenues to close the gap caused by the poor relationship between them and their parents. Participant AG1A lamented:

My parents do not even care to call or WhatsApp and ask me about my schoolwork or my general welfare. However, whenever I do not perform well, after sending them the report card, they always shout and complain about my performance. To me, that is not justified because if they were interested in my schoolwork and my general welfare, they would call me or the school on a regular basis to find out how I am doing.

Participant AG4C complained that;

At home I am not allowed to leave the yard. I'm a prisoner in my own home because of the strictness of my grandparents. As an adolescent, I feel that I need space to explore and experiment with life. My friends can help me better because they understand my situation. I do not mind what people say about them.

The distant parented adolescent girls feel their relationships with their parents have been strained due to the geographical distance. Jerves et al. (2018) found that the relationships between the adolescents and their migrant parents are a source of distress and there is even the potential of parent-child separation. The parents seem not to be involved in the lives of their distant parented children. There is no emotional bond as expressed by participant AG1A. She highlighted lack of parental affection at a very critical stage of development. Cauton (2019) found out that the changes in care giving practices and upbringing in the families due to parental migration affect the parent-child relationships as indicated by participant AG4C who says that her guardians are very strict with her. Filippa et al. (2013) observe that the adolescents who are left behind feel closer to their friends when theirp arents are absent. The same view comes from participant AG4C who remarked that her friends understand her better.

4.4.4.2 Psychological and emotional problems

The distant parented adolescent girls reported that they develop a low self-esteem when they encounter some challenges in their day to day living experiences such as poor relationships with their migrated biological parents. They indicate that this traumatizes them. They reported that they quit playing with friends and shun participating in class for fear that they may be laughed at. As a result, they prefer spending most of the time on their own. They are stigmatized by teachers and community members and this subjects them to more stress as some people end up shunning interaction with them. The participants report that some

community members discourage their children from playing with them. This makes them to be on their own and this exacerbated their situation of being distant parented culminating in poor academic achievement.

Participant AG1E revealed that;

> *Life will never be the same without my parents. I wish they had taken me along with them when they went to U K. I have so many problems around me that I feel it's too much. I do not know how to handle such problems like friends teasing me, lack of food and stationery and, above all, poor health especially during this period of Covid 19.*

One distant parented adolescent girl who participated in the study, pointed out that community members shun interacting with distant parented adolescents and ban them from playing with their children. Accordingly, participant AG1B said:

> *This other day I wanted to go and play with my friend on a Saturday afternoon this did not go according to our plan. The moment I reached her house I was greeted by her mother who told me that she was not there and told me frankly that I should not play with her again. I was embarrassed. Apparently she is not the only one. Rumors are circulating that my morals are bad. This even affects my relationships with my other peers in the whole community.*

Both participants say that they were stigmatised either by the community, peers and/or teachers when their parents migrated. Participant AG1E indicated that she was living comfortably before her parents migrated but now life has changed greatly and this affects her learning negatively. She even wishes that her parents had not have left her behind because of the problems that she is encountering. The participants realize the relationship gap that exists between them and their migrant parents (Lobos et al., 2019) and this traumatises them a lot. Close family relationships can no longer be maintained due to parental migration. Poor relationships between the distant parent and the adolescent who is left behind creates several problems, some of which affect them psychologically (Cauton & Teguihanon., 2019; Mavaza, 2021). This means that parents should avail themselves in the lives of their children so that their children are not negatively affected in their development.

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4.4.5 Theme 1: Barriers to learning

The following sub-themes which emerged include, lack of parental care, overwhelming out of school activities, labelling and stigmatisation and lack of close monitoring and supervision are summarised in Table 4.19.

Table 4.20 Sub – themes emerging from theme 5

Theme	Sub-themes
Barriers to learning	• *Lack of parental care and support*
	• *Overwhelming out-of-school activities*
	• *Labelling and stigmatisation*
	• *Lack of close monitoring and supervision*

4.4.5.1 Lack of parental care and support

Participants reported that they did everything as they pleased and that they were easily influenced by non-academic activities outside the school. Therefore, they could not pay utmost attention to their schoolwork. They said that they were not focused. Both their business and school time were dominated with play and mischief. They also indicated that parents do not buy them smart phones which they need to access online lessons during these days of the Covid-19 pandemic. This impacted on their academic performance and relationship with their distant parents.

Participant AG5D asserted:

> *When I am tired, I just sleep with the hope of waking up through the night. As I stay alone, no one wakes me up. My mom used to be my wake up clock. She would wake me up in the middle of the night and I would study till morning. I was always on my toes with my schoolwork, hence my good grades. It is no longer like that.*

In responding to the same question, participant AG1A indicated:

> *I am really behind with my schoolwork. Most of the lessons are done online due to Covid 19 and I do not have a smart phone. The other day I*

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tried to go and attend online lessons at my friend's house and I could see that her parents were not amused at all; I was not welcome. I tried to explain to my parents but they are doing nothing about it perhaps they do not understand because they left before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Parental care and support are very important for the academic success of their children. Participant AG5D mentioned that her parents, in particular her mother, is the one who used to wake her up so that she could study. Participant AG1A blames her parents for not having bought her a smart phone to use when having online lessons during the period of Covid 19 pandemic. Yeung and Gu (2016) found out that adolescents who are left behind performed worse academically when both parents are absent because they lack support. This implies that in the absence of parents, there is no support afforded to the distant parented children in terms of educational needs and this contributes to their poor academic performance. Carranza (2021) concurs says that they become disconnected to their schoolwork because of lack of support from the migrant parents. Thus, from this study, it is clear that in the absence of parents due to migration, the distant parented adolescent girls do not do well academically.

4.4.5.2 Overwhelming out of school activities

The participants also contend that they suffer fatigue resulting from doing out of school activities on their own. They reported that it was quite unlikely that they pay utmost attention to their schoolwork after doing tiring household duties that their parents would do on a normal close-knit family structure. They said it was mentally draining even to think of it, hence that anxiety worked against their academic performance at school. They reported that having no one as a parent to monitor and put controls on what to be done was their main cause of dismal academic performance at school.

Participant AG4E lamented:

> *I am failing to concentrate in class because I am always thinking of how to make ends meet as I live alone and my parents hav delayed to send my remittances for this month. Maybe, they were disturbed by these lock downs due to the Corona Virus. I am also distracted by the thoughts of having to fetch water, cooking and other things which my mother used to do. It becomes stressful, hence my academic performance is negatively impacted on.*

Sharing the same sentiments, participant AG2B remarked:

> *I fail tests now and then because my schoolwork time is taken by household activities that my mom would do if she were here. I cook during the time I should be studying. By the time I get to study, I am usually exhausted and the next thing I want to do is sleep.*

The participants share the same sentiments that house hold activities are too many for them, therefore they lack time to focus on their schoolwork. Participant AG2B went on to explain that the absence of her mother makes her exhausted. The household chores leave no time for schoolwork. Participant AG4E also testifies that the things which stress her the most are those which used to be done by her mother. The researcher observes that overwhelming out of school activities affect the academic performance of the distant parented adolescent girls. These findings are similar to those of the studies done by Aguilar (2020) and Tawodzera and Themane (2019) who revealed that household chores take most of the distant parented adolescents' time which they would have used to do their homework. Instead, they did a number of chores. Tawodzera and Themane (2019) further explain that after doing the chores, they are exhausted physically and mentally to the extent that they fail to concentrate in class. The researcher agrees that overwhelming out of school activities can pose as a challenge to the distant parented adolescent girls as their learning is disturbed by such activities. The results of this study are very clear on that note.

4.4.5.3 Labelling and stigmatisation

Participants revealed that they run short of personal household necessities such as toiletries and food from time to time due to delayed remittances, insufficient or no remittances at all. When such things, usually mid- month, they are forced to get money using other means even if they are not acceptable to the society. Some distant parented adolescent girls reported that they get help from their 'sugar daddies'. They thus get identified with not so pleasing names such as prostitutes, gold diggers or loafers. They also reported that they are stigmatised and treated as such by both educators and other learners. Being labelled and stigmatised had a lot to do with delinquent behaviour which affects the way they are treated and relate to others. This leads to the development of self- fulfilling prophecy; they identified with the label. According to them, it does no help to hide what the community thinks they do because everybody knows that they are known to be prostitutes and gold diggers.

Participant AG3B had this to say:

We do get stigmatised and marginalised, possibly because our parents are not close by. One teacher even told us that all we know is vagabonding instead of doing our schoolwork. It appears as though all of us who live by ourselves are loose and uncontrollable loafers. No matter how hard one tries, one is always   in the same bracket. Well, we are human beings and for that, we tend to relax a bit, hence our performance drops.

Participant AG5D further explained:

We do perform poorly when compared to those who live with their parents. Come on, the extra household chores we have out of class are not a joke. To be labelled lazybones and be compared with someone who does not fetch water, cook and sometimes collect firewood, is not fair. That unfair comparison is so rife that we are marginalised in the classroom while focus is given to the girls who come from homes with parents and subsequently our grades drop.

From Participant AG3B AND Participant AG5B's sentiments, the distant parented adolescent girls are labelled and stigmatised because of how they behave and the way they decide to resolve problems such as falling in love with sugar daddies. They feel that teachers are not treating them fairly. Participant AG5D found it unfair to be called such names or be compared to those people who stay with parents, taking into consideration what they are going through. Stigmatization and labelling of the distant parented children is a common practice which has affected how they are viewed by many. The study finds that due to the absence of parents, the participants use unacceptable means to get money which, in the end, leads to them being labelled and stigmatised. However, this is not acceptable to them. It can be concluded that stigmatization and labelling have some negative impact on the well-being of the distant parented adolescent girls.

4.4.5.4 Lack of close monitoring and supervision

The distant parented adolescent learners indicated that all the learners need close monitoring and supervision for them to succeed in their educational endeavour. It was found that a rapport between the distant parented adolescent learners and the parent was vital to their success at school. This included the teacher who, in the absence of the parent, is in *loco parentis*. Nonetheless, these learners reported that the authoritarian type of relationship between the teacher and the learner was toxic to the distant parented adolescent learners as

it did not create a friendly atmosphere for discussion but a negative judgment. Thus, the participants reported that some teachers acted in "loco draconis" since they always unleashed their wrath on the distant parented adolescent learners who are sometimes called 'diaspora orphans'.

Participant AG5B noted that;

> *It is painful when your parents just call to tell you to pass without explaining or being exemplary to what they say. I expect my parents and teachers to enlighten me with love why school is deemed important. When my parents are back for vacations, they never have a jolly good time with me. All they do is instruct me on the dos and don'ts. Instead, I need them to sit down with me and talk about what they expect me to do in a friendly and encouraging manner. In that way the love for school will be sustained through their support.*

On the same point, participant AG3C elaborated on how her teacher motivates them. She reported:

> *I wish all teachers were like Mr Maluleke (not his real name) who always says, "It's nice up there," meaning at the university. This has made a lot of us to want to go where he says it is nice. Every time he comes to our class, we feel motivated. It never matters even if he can say the class is at eight at night; one has no reason to complain. His work is marked and prompt feedback given to us. That's the teacher and parent we need to supervise us. Love is always visible in his eyes.*

For academic success to take place, children need adults such as teachers and parents who support them and act as role models. Participant AG5B pointed out that the parents do not create time to explain to her what she is expected to do in order to perform well at school when they call her. This could be worsened by the distance between them so that when they call, they will not prioritise other things like the education. The same observations were made by Pantea (2018) and Tawodzera and Themane (2019) who found that distant parents are not directly involved in the education of their children because they are absent whereas the distant parented children need to be helped with the schoolwork and be given encouraging words which they lack due to the absence of their parents. Participant AG3C also indicated that there are some teachers who act like their parents by encouraging them and showing them love which motivates them into wanting to learn and achieve better. Lack of close monitoring also results in them having some disciplinary issues at school which

impact negatively on their academic performance (Pantea, 2018). This observation also came out in this study.

4.4.6 Theme 6: Delayed remittances by parents

The sub-themes such as lack of money for essentials, expulsion from school due to non-payment of fees and early employment emerged under this theme and are summarised in Table 4.20.

Table 4.21: The sub–themes emerging from Theme 6

Theme	Sub-themes
Delayed remittances of money by parents	• *Lack of money for essentials* • *Expulsion from school due to non-payment of fees* • *Early employment*

4.4.6.1 Lack of money for essentials

Some parents delay in remitting money to their children; the delay has dire consequences to their day to day living experiences. The participants disclosed that they sometimes run short of money to buy food hence they sleep on empty stomachs. This, they said, results in them being desperate and destitute. They find it difficult and embarrassing to move from house to house begging for food. Furthermore, they are busy all the time thinking of where they are going to get food from. This becomes a source of stress. They spend most of the time trying to figure out the way forward rather than learning and doing other things.

Participant AG1A said:

> *On some days I go to bed with an empty stomach when I do not have money to buy food. Two weeks ago I spent some nights sleeping without having eaten anything. The little that I had was finished. I understand that by then my parents should have sent some food or money for me to to buy food but there was nothing. I now survive on begging food from my relatives. The situation is bad.*

These sentiments were also shared by participant AG4E who also bemoaned:

> *I do not know the next step to take. All the food and money are finished. A few food stuffs such as porridge, beans, sorghum and cooking oils that we received from World Vision are now depleted. To make matters worse, my parents haven't sent money yet. For the past two days we have been surviving on porridge only. You know with porridge it does not stay in the stomach for long. At school, there is nothing learnt when the stomach is empty.*

Some girls such as AG5C and AG3D who participated in this study also muted the same sentiments when they pointed out that when they reached puberty, there was an added cost of sanitary pads during menstruation and that access to sanitary pads remains a challenge. They make use of tissue papers, papers from old books, newspapers or rags as protection and this makes them feel uncomfortable in class.

Participant AG5C stated:

> *My menstrual days are just by the corner. My mother has not yet sent me money or groceries which include toiletries. I am desperate. I do not know what I am going to use in the event that she delays sending the money. I have never experienced such a problem in my life. Before she used to make sure that I had my sanitary pads earlier. Since there is some lockdown due to Covid-19 maybe that explains why. The delivery vans are not operating these days so maybe she is finding it difficult to send the groceries.*

Participant AG3D shared similar sentiments when she reported:

> *I got so embarrassed this other day at school. I spoiled my uniform. I had only one sanitary pad left which I was wearing. I had nothing to change so it got soaked such that I ended up spoiling my clothes. My guidance and counselling teacher is the one who came to my rescue at school. I told her my situation and she ended up giving me the whole packet instead of just one to change. I think my mother forgot to send me money.*

The participants mention that they face problems associated with their menstruation and lack of sanitary pads which become a source of discomfort. Because of this, their academic performance is affected due to poor attendance culminating in poor academic performance.

One participant admitted to not having money to buy some stationery as she disclosed lack of learning materials such as exercise books, pens, pencils, rulers and rubbers. She reported

that lack of these learning materials hinders her overall performance and motivation to learn. AG5D said:

> *Today I was disappointed. I failed to write a maths test because I did not have a maths test exercise book. The one I used to have is now used up. I cannot buy a new one because I do not have money. I was thinking of borrowing from my friend but I know she want it soon since hers is also getting used up. She even indicated that so I might be in trouble because I do not know when my parents are going to send money so that I can give her back.*

Accordingly, participant AG4E reported:

> *My young brother came crying to my school this other day. He is learning at the neighbouring primary school. The teacher had sent him out of class to go and get a pen. I also had one but I had no option except to give him because I think he lost his on his way to school. Unfortunately at home we had run out of stock of some stationery. If I had money I was going to buy him a pen but I do not have it.*

In the above sentiments, both participants admitted to having challenges with stationery which culminates to poor academic results at the end of the term or year. Participant AG5D reported that she could not write a test because she did not have a maths exercise book. Participant AG4E also highlighted that some teachers are hard on the learners if they do not have such materials thereby worsening their situation of being distant parented.

Other participants also revealed that sometimes they absent themselves from school a lot due to lack of money for bus fare. They pointed out that there are a very few secondary/ high schools in the constituency they have to walk very long distances to get to school and as such would need money for transport. They do not always have money for transport so they have to walk long distances and reach school late or absent themselves from school if they do not have money.

Participant AG3B pointed out:

> *In January I missed school for two weeks. My parents had delayed sending me money. My school is so far that I cannot walk to it. If I do, I get there very late. Even if I try to start the journey early, it is too much and risky walking all the way for a long distance alone. It's scary. If I had money I would just pay to get to school and on my way back I would*

walk. All the same I would reach home very late when it's almost dark, especially inwinter time. Missing school for two weeks is too much. It pains me a lot.

The same sentiments were shared by participant AG5D who however pointed out that she later on got assistance from some teachers who understood her situation and were concerned. She reported:

> *There are some teachers at my school who had promised to assist me. They have noticed a drop in my performance and when they enquired why. I told them that I do not have bus fare to come to school every day. My parents, in most cases, delay sending me money. They know the area I stay at and they felt pity on me. This has been raised by my class teacher who has observed that the days I absent myself from school are too many. I am glad that at least I am going to get some form of assistance from well-wishers.*

From their responses the participants report that delay in sending remittances by parents erratic meaning to say they will be missing out lot. This will impact on their overall school achievement. They are also affected emotionally because they have the motivation to learn but cannot make it each day because of the distance.

4.4.6.2 Expulsion from school due to non- payment of fees

It is found that distant parented adolescent girls do not perform well academically because they are sometimes expelled from school due to non-payment of fees. They highlighted that their parents sometimes delay in sending remittances; this results in the delay in the payment of school fees. They reported that once expelled from school, they lose out a lot as they can take days or weeks at home waiting for the money to be sent. In some instances, the time spent out of school is long and has detrimental effects on the girls'academic achievement.

Participant AG1E reported:

> *Each time I see the headmaster getting into my class holding a paper, my heart starts to beat. I am always on the list of those with outstanding fees each and every term. I do not even know what to do. I do not even study well because I miss school a lot. I am always in and out of school. My situation was not the same when my parents were still working here. I am quite disturbed by the thought of not having paid school fees and owing*

the school large sums of money. I don't even understand what they are doing in the diaspora?

In agreement with the above participant, participant AG5C indicated;

My teacher is a bit worried. I used to be in position one in class but things have changed. This started when my parents went to work in South Africa at the beginning of 2018. They are not frequently sending money on time. This has resulted in me failing to pay school fees on time. I am in and out of school many a time. I can see that I am losing out a lot. A lot of new things are covered in my absence in all the subjects and I find it difficult to catch up when I return to class. My science teacher is a witness to this.

The researcher notes that delay in remittances by migrant parents which they use to pay school fees affects the academic achievement of the adolescent girls. Ndlovu and Tigere (2018) also made similar observations that distant parented secondary school students complain that their school fees and development levies were not paid in full each term. This implies that they will be expelled from school when the deadline for payment has passed. During their absence, the distant parented adolescent girls miss a lot. As a result they achieve poor results. Absenteeism affects the learning progress of these girls.

4.4.6.3 Early employment

The distant parented adolescent girls say that they get employed in retail shops as part-time workers in order to raise money for survival. This they alluded to the delayed remittances by the distant migrant parents. They highlighted that during their spare time and mostly on weekends they go to work in shops. This, they pointed out, has dire implications for their schooling as they do not have enough time to study. In addition, they report that they may get carried away with the money that they get after working and forget that they need to go to school and work hard.

Participant AG2B remarked:

I will be very happy on the days that I knock off at school early. I will know that I have time to go and sell at the shop where I am working part time. Working for more hours means more money. I need money to buy some groceries and school stationery. Unfortunately on weekends I end up not having time to study and do other duties at home because I want

to take advantage and work for as many hours as possible. I can see that this is helping me a lot to raise such money for use.

Participant AG1A also revealed that;

I am excited that one of our local businessmen offered me a job after I had approached him and explained my problems. It was not easy because he could not understand how I am going to manage since I am going to school. I begged him and he finally accepted. At least the money I will be getting will go a long way in helping me and my siblings. It is only on Saturdays and Sundays that I will be working so I will make sure that on those two days I will spend sleepless nights studying to make up for the lost time.

Both participants agree on the relief that they get when they are employed as part-time workers because they are able to use the money that they get to cover up for missing essentials. They both blamed delay in getting their remittances as the cause of them looking for part-time work. However, participant AG2B pointed out the negative side of such a move as having poor academic achievement.

4.5 Coping strategies of distant parented adolescent girls

The findings are that the distant parented adolescent girls engage in different activities to sustain themselves and retain sanity. The themes in Table 4.21 emerged from the focus group discussions and the individual interviews. The study revealed that involvement in youth activities in church is a means to cope with issues of loneliness. Others thought that hanging out with friends gave them company, a social family and time to reflect and cope with life challenges which came with being distant parented. The participants also revealed that their friends related more with their predicaments than the teachers and other community leaders. However, they did point out the dangers of solely relying on what the friends suggested. Others still thought engaging in extra mural activities was a source of refreshing their minds and forgetting about the challenges that they encountered as a result of not staying with their parents. From the interviews with them, the themes summarised in Table 4.22 emerged. These were; engagement in church youth activities, hanging out with friends, unhealthy soothing, escape, resilience, involvement in extra-mural activities.

Table 4. 22 Emerging themes on coping strategies used by distant parented adolescent girls

Objective	Themes
Examine the coping strategies used by distant parented adolescent girls	*Engagement in church youth activities* *Spiritual counselling* *Hanging out with friends* *Engaging in extra mural activities* *Relying on social media to connect with friends and migrant parents* *Resilience*

4.5.1 Engagement in church youth activities

The participants revealed that they went to church because they thought the church was a safe place to be in order to maintain sanity and for fellowship. Some of them went on their own accord while others went upon invitation by their friends. Regardless of how they ended up in church, they indicated that they felt a sense of belonging since the church is like a hospital and is accommodative without discrimination. Moreover, they indicated that there is power for soul searching inherent in the word of God. They reported that the church gave them a different perspective concerning life and promotes fellowship. The pastor and other elders in church gave them emotional and spiritual support. Thus, they became the adolescents' spiritual and emotional parents in the absence of their biological parents.

Participant AG4B had this to say about going to church;

> *Church has always played an important role in my life since I was a small child. I have attended Sunday school and I used to enjoy the Sunday school teacher's lessons. When I strayed a bit in life, those lessons brought me back on track. I therefore fully attend church and I am very active, especially in the youth activities. I have got new moms and dads in church in the absence of my biological parents. These make up for my absent biological parents who are stuck in the United Kingdom. I am able to share my pains and let the brethren pray for and with me.*

AG5D shared that;

> *I attended church on invitation by my friend who lives with her parents. At that time, I was confused as another gang of delinquents wanted me to*

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join them. I thought only those friends of mine loved me. It was l when I went to church where I learnt that a man named Jesus loved me in my sinful nature. The warmth that I received from the other members of the church compelled me to join that church permanently. It feels like the pastor and the elders in church are now my parents in the absence of my biological parents.

Participant AG4B went to church on her own ever since she was young and is testifying that she gets comfort as she has 'mothers' and 'fathers' who make up for the absent biological parents. She also made it clear that she valued the church in her life with the vital role that it is playing. In sharing the same sentiments with participant AG4B, participant AG5D mentioned that pastors and elders in the church are more of her parents in the absence of her biological parents.

4.5.2 Spiritual counselling

The participants also indicated that they were referred to church for spiritual counselling. They highlighted that their connection with God is enhanced when they seek spiritual counselling. They reported getting satisfaction in receiving spiritual counselling. They feel that their burden has been lessened. This boosted their self-esteem. Participant AG4E had this to say;

Each time I receive counselling from my pastor I feel that I am myself. I become comforted after such encounters. To me sometimes life does not mean anything. This is because of the problems that I am encountering. If only my parents were around it would have been a different story.

Participant AG2D said:

The help that I get from church after presenting my problems from the priest helps me a lot. Sometimes I feel like just taking my own life but the priest helps me see its value. He also makes me understand the importance of getting connected to God.

The responses show that participants felt that the counselling they receive from the priests and pastors makes their problems light. They feel that when they have problems it is better to be close to God. For them, seeking such counselling is the best strategy to deal with their situation. Participant AG4E explained that she founds comfort from receiving spiritual

counselling. Participant AG2D also pointed out that she shares her problems with the priest who help her to value life.

4.5.3 Hanging out with friends

Some of the distant parented adolescent girls who participated in this study also reported that their friends were the ones whom they trusted more than anyone else. They alluded to the fact that some of their friends never judged them, but they understood their position all the time. They further reiterated that friends provide them with the support that they need. Though they got into mischievous acts most of the time, their friends remained a source of support and inspiration in dire times.

Participant AG4A had this to say about her friends:

> *It is always a pleasure hanging out with one's friends since they resonate more with what one is going through compared to any other person. Sometimes we just chill with a little booze to keep our spirits high. It makes us relax and forget our problems for a moment. When one's biological parents go outside the country and leave one behind, one feels abandoned.*

In addition to the above, another participant remarked that her friends understand her better. Participant AG3D echoed:

> *When I am stressed, I need my friends only next to me. They always know how to cheer me up the way we always do it. I must admit though that we always do some things we regret at the end. But how can I just leave these people? They know me and my problems very well. They empathise and sympathise with me all the time.*

The findings of the study are that friends mean a lot in the life of the distant parented adolescent girls. They offer support and understand their situation. Participant AG3D reported that she was comfortable in the company of her friends, especially when she has problems. They comfort her in times of distress more than anyone else when parents are not available. Participant AG4A indicates that she takes alcohol (because of the influence of friends) which she thinks will help her to temporarily forget the problems that she is encountering.

4.5.4 Engaging in extra mural activities

From the study, the distant parented adolescent girls highlighted that extra mural activities keep them mentally and physically sound. These activities include playing cards, netball, volleyball, basket ball, girls' soccer, jogging and gardening. Some of these activities started out as experiments; however, these girls contend that they ended up getting addicted to them. The study indicates that there were clashes with those in charge, especially in the physical sporting activities.

Participant AG4E reported:

> *I play netball during my spare time. The way I love it, has made the coach declare her love for my talent. She is a nice person and I enjoy her sessions. The only problem comes when she thinks I am not pushing hard enough. She is always on my case and that does not go down well with me. Last week I missed training because I did not feel like it. She punished me by training on my own and I could not take it any longer. This sport gives me company and during that time I forget that my parents are in the diaspora.*

Participant AG1B added that;

> *I have just joined the group of people who run every morning and evening. Not only does it help with my body fitness but it also refreshes my mind and I sometimes forget about my absent parents. In addition, the girls I jog with have become a part of my emotional support system. All we talk about is our sessions which we always look forward to. Though I started lightly, it is now a hobby; there is no more time for idleness.*

Participant AG5B further indicates that she goes out with friends to fetch firewood and wild fruits. She stated:

> *On weekends when I am home, I like to fetch firewood from the forest. I always invite my friends so that they accompany me. We also look for wild fruits. It refreshes our minds such that when we come back home for study we are fresh.*

The findings of this study are that there are different ways in which distant parented adolescent girls deal with their challenges. All the participants have found something that keeps their mind busy and helps them to forget about the challenges that they face.

Participant AG4E indicates that she engages in sporting activities, in particular netball but she does not like it when the coach punishes her. Participant AG1B joined a fitness group which jogs in the morning and in the evenings. Nazridod et al. (2021) found out that distant parented adolescents feel that it is better to stay longer at school in order to avoid the chores at home and other problems that they are facing. The researcher notes that engagement in these activities is a way of reducing the time that they are going to spend at home where they encounter a number of challenges. Participant AG5B also explained that she enjoys going out on weekends to fetch firewood.

4.5.5 Relying on social media to connect with friends and migrant parents

Some participants indicate that they rely on social media, WhatsApp in particular, for company. They report having been on WhatsApp most of the times when not at school chatting with friends and their migrant parents. They highlighted that they feel connected and occupied even if they have problems on something that stresses them. They also indicate that WhatsApp helps them because chatting with friends makes them forget their problems and bridges the gap of loneliness.

Participant AG3A asserts:

> *I get to know a lot about people through Facebook and WhatsApp so that when I am at home alone I do not feel the loneliness. Some people post a lot of information on their status and this help me to forget the problems that I am currently facing. My problems only get to surface when I am already in bed but I will quickly forget them once I fall asleep.*

When responding to the same question, participant AG5C echoed the same sentiments; she says:

> *WhatsApp helps me a lot. It keeps me busy all the time so that I do not have time to go and play outside. My parents send me some money to buy data bundles every month so I can afford to be on WhatsApp 24/7. Even if I am stressed at school, when I reach home I become fine once I get on WhatsApp. My mother is not employed so she is always free so I get a chance to chat with her anytime I wish to do so.*

Participant AG3A and AG5C report that WhatsApp helps them a lot in preoccupying their minds so that that they do not focus on the challenges of loneliness. Participant AG3A went on to indicate that being on WhatApp keeps her company. She does not feel lonely even

when she is alone. Participant AG5C also mentions that being on WhatApp keeps her busy as she chats with her mother and other people. However, this is a negative coping strategy. She end up addicted to it and suffers from the 'I am missing out syndrome'. This keeps the distant parented adolescents glued to the cell phone and other sectors of their lives suffer.

4.5.7 Resilience

The findings of the study indicate that the participants have developed a thick skin. They can sustain a home and have resorted to accepting the status quo and accepted the responsibilities that come with it. This they said helps them to make life move on despite the challenges that they face. They further said that they can manage their lives well by doing things on their own without adult assistance. Some of the participants alluded to the fact that they are the eldest in their family and have younger siblings who look up to them and they understand their responsibility. They further highlighted that they can protect their siblings and sustain their homes as children cum heads of their child-headed families. They disclosed that even if most of the time they do not get enough rest due to overwhelming household chores and they end up accepting their situation.

ParticipantAG5B said that;

> *Beauty came home very distressed yesterday. She did not do well in her end of term tests and her class teacher beat her. I counselled her. She was thinking of not going to school today; however, after a long talk with her she seems to have understood and promised to go to school the next day.*

Participant AG5D reported:

> *These days I am used to staying without my parents. During the first days I did not know how to deal with any problem when it arose. I remember crying one day when my younger brother was not feeling well and was crying. Now I am fine. I know what to do since I am the eldest and I tell myself that I have to head my family through thick or thin. I have accepted the situation that for now we stay on our own as our parents work in South Africa. Life has to move on.*

Participant AG2C also indicated that;

Our parents left the family in my hands. I have the responsibility to look after my siblings. I do all the household chores.

From their sentiments, the participants have accepted their situation and have adjusted to it. This shows that they have adjusted and accepted the responsibility of heading the family. Participant AG5B stated that she counselled her younger sibling and it worked. Participant AG5D testifies that she has adjusted now although during the ealy days it was not easy. Participant AG2C stated that she has a responsibility of doing all the chores at home. It is clear that the participants have found a way of dealing with the absence of their parents and life goes on. Accepting the responsibilities has helped them to cope with being distant parented. The fact that some of them are the oldest children leaves them with no option except to look after the younger siblings and to take up other responsibilities.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings of this study and also analysed the data. Twenty-five participants from five secondary schools in Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe participated in the focus group discussions and interviews in this study. The Analysis and interpretation of data were presented by giving rich descriptions of the experiences of the participants who are distant parented. The collected data was classified into patterns which categorised into the themes which emerged from the study. The main themes which emerged from the data were neglect abused by guardians or caregivers, being given out to men for marriage, abused as sex workers, being abused by bullies, poor communication with parents, teenage pregnancy, absence of father/ mother figure and heading the family.

The next chapter presents a detailed discussion of the findings of the study substantiated with the literature and the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The study explored the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. The study used individual interviews and focus group discussions to collect data. From the study, several themes and sub-themes which characterised the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in Chiredzi South of Zimbabwe emerged. These were identified and arranged in themes for discussion. The discussion of these findings also embraced Urie Bronfenbrenner's bio–ecological systems theory which is the major theoretical framework illuminating this study. The reviewed literature was also brought into the lime light to identify the gaps and other patterns in this area of study.

5.2 Themes that emerged from the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls

5.2.1 Being neglected

5.2.1.1 Feeling deserted

From the main theme and sub-themes, it emerged that sometimes distant parented adolescent girls feel deserted and abandoned by their parents. Participant AG3D reported; "*Home does not feel good for me. I am lonely there. There is no one to confide in.* Based on this and other extracts, the distant parented adolescent girls long for their biological parents and, hence, equate the migration of their parents to desertion and abandonment. It was observed from this study that although the migrant parents sometimes send goodies and make telephone calls, these adolescent girls still feel deserted and abandoned; their situation remains the same; the biological parent to whom they are bonded is still physically absent. It was observed from this study that the distance created as a result of migration by the parents also created a huge social rift between the children and their parents. The participants showed that the closer the parent is, the easier it becomes for them to confide in him or her

on pertinent issues which are closer to their heart and are require quick emotional support from somebody that they trust and believe in. It emerged from this study that such a person could be a biological parent. However, the situation is not the same among the distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South of Zimbabwe. The findings indicate that the distant parented adolescents are on their own most of the time. They lack and miss emotional support from their biological parents. They want to be like other children who are growing up under the care and emotional support of their parents. As Participant AG5B states: *"I feel lonely in the absence of my parents. I miss their emotional support and encouragement. Life will never be the same without them"* it is clear that the distant parented adolescent girl lacks parental affection and emotional support.

The provision of emotional support from the parents fosters trust which is necessary for the development of a positive self-regard on a growing child. Thus, it emerged from this study that lack of emotional support from the migrant parents does not only affect them socially but has a bearing on their academic performance too. This has a rippling effect because failure at school may lower one's self esteem while the opposite is true. Yeung and Gu (2016) found that the left behind adolescents performed badly academically in the absence of their migrated parents because of the unavailability of emotional parental support among others. Thus, this study shows that emotional support for the distant parented adolescent girls of Chiredzi South is lacking. However, the researcher notes that emotional support is critical in the smooth development of children from adolescents to adulthood. As said above, absence of it has a bearing on the development of one's positive self-regard which is necessary for a young and successful adult.

Distant parented adolescent girls feel neglected and deserted by their parents because of the time the parents have taken without coming back and, sometimes remitting them. The results of the study show how they sometimes become desperate for help because they experience shortage of basic resources owing to the delayed remittances or none at all. As stated by participant AG3D; *"It has been five (5) years now since they went to work in South Africa. I love to be with them. If there is not enough food, it is difficult to get help from anywhere"*. Thus, when the distant parented adolescent girl experience shortage of the basic resources 00000and parents take long to visit, the girls feel that the parents have neglected or abandoned them. They look up to their parents for the provision of these basic needs.

This concurs with the bio-ecological systems theory, which says that the environment of the distant parented adolescent girls should be supportive enough so that the adolescent girls do not feel abandoned or neglected. The relationship between the parents and developing adolescent should be encouraging and nurturing in order for the distant parented adolescent girl to grow emotionally and socially stable (Santrock, 2015). A positive relation between the children and the parent is cohesive and closes the social rift that may be created by the distance. From the narratives of the participants, it is evident that distant parented adolescents expect the emotional support, comfort and financial support from their biological parents. However, Schapiro et al. (2013) opines that in the absence of the biological parents, the caretakers who are left with the custody of the distant parented adolescents need to bridge the gap by providing the required emotional connections to mitigate the adolescents' feelings of neglect and abandonment. Thus, the availability of the caretakers, in some instances, would go a long way in the provision of the much needed emotional support among the distant parented adolescent girls who so dearly miss their migrant parents.

The feeling of being neglected among the distant parented adolescent girls is also exacerbated by peers, the community members and/or their teachers who do not want to interact with them in a more meaningful way. Being marginalised and isolated in the communities that they live in causes a lot of stress to the distant parented adolescent girl. The study also shows that it lowers their self-esteem. The findings revealed that the distant parented adolescent girls go through stressful experiences where even some of their peers shun interacting with them since they are considered to be bad examples in the communities that they live in. Participant AG1B said:

> *"I wanted to go and play with my friend.on a Saturday afternoon when I reached her house I was greeted by her mother who told me that she was not at home and told me frankly that I should not play with her again. I was embarrassed. Apparently she is not the only one ...."*

The participant highlights the experience of social isolation that she is going through and their inability to deal with several challenges that she has. Neilson (2013) showed that the distant parented adolescents have greater issues of self-esteem which, however, result in them becoming stressed. Being stigmatised, marginalised and neglected by others is one

such an experience which is stressful among the left behind adolescent girls. The fact that in some instances they are looked down upon by almost every sector in the community, including friends, teachers and others, worsens their situation when their parents are away. Thus, these negative attitudes from others who should be supporting them induce a lot of pain and suffering to the distant parented adolescent girls. BRAC (2017) established that adolescents who are left behind by migrant parents experience stress and anxiety; they are incapable of dealing with the situations such as being socially isolated by almost everyone in the community. These are stressful.

Tajfel (1979) theorized that the social groups that people belong to are a source of pride and boost one's self-esteem. The social groups in any part of the world divide people into 'us' and 'them'. In this study, the distant parented adolescents are viewed as 'them' while their peers and other communitiy members are considered as the 'us'. The categorization widens the social rift between the two groups when the 'us' group members may want to find faults or negative aspects of the 'them 'group (McLeod, 2019). By so doing, they isolate the 'them', label them, stigmatise them, and above all, magnalise them. Thus, in this study the distant parented adolescent girls are labelled as immoral adolescent girls who lack parental guidance.

The participants highlighted that they lack social connections which are very important in their lives because they are expected to lead the girls to a happy life. The findings suggest that the more time one spends with other people, the happier one becomes. Human beings are gregarious creatures. They like living and sharing with other people but the situation of the distant parented adolescents in Chiredzi is pathetic. Those who are around them stigmatise and isolate them and this affects them emotionally.

The bio-ecological systems theory (2004) proposes individuals need a mutual relationship between them and their environment. The development of the distant parented adolescent girl is affected negatively because of the absence of their biological parents. Bronfenbrenner (2004) further postulates that how the distant parented adolescent girl reacts to the microsystem affects how she reacts to the wider community. The social exclusion that they are exposed to has an effect within the wider community (mesosystem) and a bearing on their social life. The distant parented adolescent girls are not directly involved in the parental migration but it has some negative implications on her as she experiences desolation.

Societal influences also affect her development because of the negative behaviour that is expressed by others in the form of social exclusion. Bronfenbrenner, (2004) notes that the family is the most important environment for a developing child because it is where he/she spends most of his/her time and has a direct influence on him or her. In this study, the situation is different since the child grows up in the absence of the parents who are the major players in keeping the family together.

5.2.1.2 Overwhelming household chores and being used as the sources of cheap labour

The participants describe their situation as unbearable. They sometimes lose out on education because of the overwhelming household chores and informal labour. Some of them said that they are compelled by the guardians and/or the caregivers to do a number of out of school household chores. Referring to her caregiver, participant AG1D said: "*She does not want me to do anything related to schoolwork at home other than the household chores*". The findings of the study showed that some guardians or caregivers do not consider that these children have schoolwork to attend to. This is why they are overwhelmed with the domestic duties that they are expected to carry out on a daily basis before and after school. Since this study targeted the adolescents in a rural area, their duties included making a fire, cooking, cleaning the house and the yard, fetching water and firewood, doing laundry, among others. The distant parented adolescent girls felt that they are exploited by their guardians or caregivers. Similarly, Nazridod (2021) observed that the left behind adolescent girls feel overwhelmed with the domestic chores expected of them.

Chakaombera and Mubika (2018) observed that the left behind adolescents have extra responsibilities in their homes. Based on the findings of the present study, it can be argued that the amount of work which the left behind children are expected to do exceeds the amount that they would do under the care and guidance of their biological parents where they would do some household chores but the parents would give them time to do homework. The present study finds that the left behind adolescent girls are expected to do all the domestic duties on their own. They are not given time to do their schoolwork. This is tantamount to abuse and exploitation of the girls.

The study notes that mothers are the primary caregivers. When they are available, they help and guide the girl children in doing the household duties. Participant AG3A reported: "*My*

mother used to make my life easy before she migrated to Eswatini with my daddy. I knew that when I came from school I would find everything in place. She would have done the laundry, household chores and, above all, prepared supper". Participant AG1E echoed the same sentiments. She said; "*I did not have to run around the house when coming from school. Everything was in place".* The participants indicated that in a normal home set up, there is division of labour and responsibilities are shared. Mothers would make their lives easy since they do the household chores. They anchored their girl children in relation to the feminine responsibilities in the home.

Some of the distant parented adolescent girls mentioned that their duties are sometimes overwhelming. Some of their activities are not age appropriate and are done without the help of the guardian or other members of the family. Participant AG5E had this to say; "*I am given so much work at home by my aunt that I cannot handle it anymore, considering my age".* The study finds that some of the participants do not have the capacity to carry out some of the duties because they are underage. According to the Zimbabwean Constitution of 2013 Amendment Number 20 Section 81(1) (e) child labour is illegal. Therefore, using the left behind adolescents for labour is illegal according to the Zimbabwean laws because most of them are below the age of eighteen. In addition, it is a criminal offence to employ anyone below the age of 18, as stated in the Labour Relations Act (Chapter 28.01). What the distant parented adolescent girls are experiencing is a violation of the constitution. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1990 mandates the governments to protect children from harmful and exploitative work which endangers their health and hinders their educational progression. Thus, the work that the distant parented adolescent girls are compelled to do is overwhelming. It interferes with their schooling, compromises their academic performance and interferes with their normal intellectual development. Participant AG5E reported: "*I am given so much work at home by my aunt that I do not have time to study and to run my own errands".* The experiences of overwhelming household responsibilities enervate the left behind adolescents, leading to their physical and mental exhaustion which culminate in poor academic achievement. Thus, the environment of the distant parented adolescent girls should be conducive and anchored by the necessary support structures which include the parents, family, peers, school, church, polity and others so that the left behind children may grow up in a normal way.

Based on the findings of this study, it can be argued that the distant parented adolescent girls are subjected to a plethora of challenges, one of which is depression caused by lack of parental support in carrying out the household duties. Body language and facial gambits summed it all during both the interview and focus group discussion. Some of the participants shed some tears during the interviews and they had to be counselled for the interview to continue. Participant AG3C commented *"I sometimes wish my parents were here, particularly my mother, to help me with the cooking while I wash my school uniforms. I would have ample time to do my studies and to rest. She is not here, and I have to do everything by myself"*. This shows that the participant longs for the presence of her mother whom she believes was key person in helping her with household chores. The absence of the mother overwhelms the participants with household activities and the latter become depressed. According to *Medical News* (2022), depression affects how people think, feel and act. Thus, such children find themselves underperforming in class because they are emotionally affected.

According to the bio-ecological systems theory, there is a breakdown in the distant parented adolescent girls' microsystem which leaves them with no tools to explore other parts of the environment (Berk, 2017). Being overused at home results in them not excelling at school because they are exhausted and less focused on schoolwork.

Based on these observations, the researcher recommends that the caregivers or guardians need to provide an enabling environment for the children to grow and develop and to explore the environment. Bronfenbrenner proposed that the developmental potential of any one's context is enhanced when individuals are accompanied by other known and trusted individuals as they transit between the settings (Guy-Evans, 2020). Implied in this is the fact that the distant parented adolescent girls fail to reach their developmental potential because the trusted guardians or caregivers do not give the girls the support that they need to fully develop but exploit them by physically abusing them and giving them too much work to do.

5.2.1.3 Stigmatised and labelled by peers and community members

The study shows that the left behind adolescent girls consider the situation unbearable and aggravated by being gossiped about by their peers, teachers and other community members time and again. This exacerbates the feeling of loneliness. They reported that they are often

labelled as prostitutes because when they run short of the essentials, as a result of delayed remittances or none at all, they use socially unacceptable means such as hanging around with 'sugar daddies' in order to get the money. This kind of behaviour is unacceptable in the community in which they live, hence they are isolated by the people who live around them. This leads to severe stress, isolation and a feeling of alienation in the community. The community views them as 'wrong and immoral adolescent girls'. Participant AG5D said: "*Everyone shuns me now that my parents are in diaspora. My friends gossip about me. I am just on my own. This is very hurting and disturbing because I need company and help.*" The girls' experience is deplorable, taking into cognizance the fact that their parents have migrated. Parental migration seems to lead to the children's unruly behaviour which is the cause of stigma and isolation. The participants reported that because of this situation, the adolescents are not even able to take part in social activities. Neither can they seek help because some community members believe that they may influence other adolescent girls negatively. This means that the participants experience social exclusion in the community which they call 'home'. Shen et al. (2015) found that the left behind adolescents suffer from stigmatization. They are sometimes rejected by other groups due to their unfavourable status. Being distant parented, staying alone and immoral behaviour displayed by some of them makes them be perceived in a negative way by the community which sees them as directionless and immoral individuals without proper guidance.

UNICEF (2020) also reported that the left behind adolescents face challenges such as stigmatization. They are socially excluded at school and in the society where they live. Some parents do not want their children to associate with them. This means that these children suffer from alienation and the pain that comes with it. The study reveals that stigmatization by educators is a result of their ignorance on the plight of these left behind adolescent girls. They are not aware of some of the negative experiences that these children go through. Thus educators should understand the challenges these children go through so that they can mitigate in their situation. This could be done by treating the children with love and care so that they can look at the school as their home away from home (Makhubu, 2019; Filipp et al, 2013; Wang et al, 2019).

Where the left behind adolescents have someone taking care of them, Poeze and Mazzucato (2013) as well as Cebotari and Mazzucato (2015) observed that these adolescents

behave well and are not stigmatised. Based on the findings of the study, lack of parental care may lead to unruly behaviour leading to labelling and stigmatization.

Evaluated against the bio-ecological systems theory as propounded by Bronfenbrenner (2004), the adolescent girl child's development is a culmination of a myriad of direct and indirect influences which either facilitate or impede her individual behavioural developmental potential. The stigmatization that she goes through sometimes impedes her smooth development because she does not get the emotional support that she requires from anyone and is prone to social isolation which leads to alienation. This may, in the long run, lower the child's positive self-regard and may affect her self-esteem. Once these left behind adolescents are stigmatised, they experience stress and trauma which affect their potential to explore other parts of the environment. It is therefore important that these children should be left with someone responsible and caring who will guide them in the event that the parents decide to migrate.

5.2.2 Forced marriage

The results of the study also showed that the distant parented adolescent girls are forced into marriage by being matched with men working in South Africa who are affectionately known as the 'MaJoni-Joni' in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. For instance, the participants revealed that they are forced into marriage when they are not ready, young and still want to pursue their studies. Participant AG4A had this to say; "*The man is already sending me his pictures and everything is being arranged right now. I think my aunt is getting some benefits in cash or kind from this man. I am not willing though. I feel I am still too young to get married*". The participant indicates that she is entering into marriage involuntarily. It was not her wish to be married at such a young age. The idea of matching these children with men puts them into a negative lifetime relationships, the majority of which are short lived. The study further establishes that they are matched with these men because the guardians or caregivers want to cushion themselves against the economic turmoil quagmire that the nation is in. The guardians or caregivers also believe that marrying them off will ease the problems that they are going through yet, in the process, they are infringing their rights to choose a man of their choice and to decide when to get married. Thus, the left behind adolescent girls are sexually exploited by greedy guardians or caregivers who want to benefit financially from such arranged marriages.

The bio-ecological systems theory shows that human beings are affected by everything in their environment and the left behind children need support from other adults in the absence of their biological parents. The wider community is expected to provide support to the distant parented adolescent girls whose parents are away due to work commitment. Instead, the caregiver facilitates the child marriage so that she/he can benefit financially. The African philosophy emphasises the 'Ubuntu' and believes that 'being human is human through other people'. It emphasises the principle of collaboration, solidarity and teamwork in raising children. Different stakeholders that include the chiefs, village heads, Members of Parliament (MP) for Chiredzi South, ward councillors, teachers, pastors and other community leaders are expected to rescue the situation (Gyekye, 1997). The African philosophy provides that children be supported by the whole community. Child marriages have harmful consequences for the health of the left behind adolescent girls who do not understand what marriage entails. In addition, child forced marriages prevent the girls from enjoying their rights to freedom and autonomy in Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, 2021). Section 78 (2) of the 2013 Zimbabwean Constitution states that no person shall be compelled to enter into marriage against his/her will. Children have the liberty to choose what they want. Forcing them into marriage violates their rights. Children should be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation and this should be a collective responsibility (Mukahanana-Sangarwe, 2022). This study shows that the phenomenon of being forced into arranged marriages is a very common practice in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe and it is the opinion of the present researcher that it seem to be unique to this part of Zimbabwe. The reviewed literature review done shows that such findings are scanty.

These early marriages throw the left behind girls out of school because they have to care for their husbands and children. In addition, the young distant parented girls are subjected to early and unplanned pregnancies, still births, miscarriage, hemorrhage, HIV/AIDS and vulnerability to STIs which undermine their health (ZLHR, 2021). All this has a bearing on their future lives as adults. Plan International (2016) reports that child marriages are forced marriages because there is no consent. At their age, they are still too young to consent to marriage. The Zimbabwean Constitution of 2013 Section 78 (Marriage Rights) insinuates that no one should be coerced into marriage against his/her will. One of the interviewees, Participant AG4E, lamented: *"My grandmother wants me to get married to a certain teacher whom she thinks is going to look after me. I do not agree to that but I have no option"*. The

participant is not in agreement with the arrangement but had no option except to go by the arrangement because she is young. The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Constitution of Zimbabwe (N0. 20) intimates that the interest of the child should be considered in decisions that affect them. What the above participant is alluding to is a violation of her rights to take part in decisions that affect her. The Zimbabwean Constitution of 2013 Section 26 (1) requires appropriate measures to be taken to ensure that no marriage is entered into without free and full informed consent between the two individuals who intend to get married. Thus, although consent the key factor in any marriage, with the distant parented adolescent girls there is no consent. The girls report that they are forced into these marriages while they are still below the age of 16. Legally, such children cannot consent. Hence, anybody who marries an underage child is liable to prosecution. The same applies to the facilitator; that is, the law rules against his or her favour because it is unconstitutionally to facilitate such marriages. Such a person is liable to prosecution. Chapter (5:11) Number 22 of the Zimbabwe Marriage Act of July 2020 says,

> *"(1) No boy under the age of eighteen years and no girl under the age of*
> *sixteen years shall be capable of contracting a valid marriage except with*
> *the written permission of the Minister, which he may grant in any particular*
> *case in which he considers such marriage desirable ..."* (p. 6)*.*

Unauthorized solemnization of marriage ceremonies is forbidden in Zimbabwe. A marriage may be solemnized by a marriage officer only and any person who is not a marriage officer but who purports to solemnize a marriage shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding level seven or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years or to both such fine and such imprisonment (Marriage Act, July 2020). However, this is not happening because many such cases go unreported because of fear of victimization. The researcher also observed that even whistle blowers are not forth coming for fear of involving themselves in issues that do not concern them. This leaves the left behind adolescent girls at the mercy of the uncaring aunties and grandmothers.

5.2.3 Used as sex-slaves by caregivers or guardians

One of the experiences reported by participants in this study was that they were given out as sex slaves to men as a means of gaining some favours by aunties or grandmothers. This

means that these left behind adolescent girls are used as a source of income by their guardians or caregivers who would want to cushion themselves from the economic hardships. The participants reported that these experiences are traumatising. Participant AG5B reported that; "*aunt is bringing men during weekends to sexually abuse me and she is paid for that. She has turned our home to a 'village brothel' with me as the victim*". The study finds that the participants are sexually exploited by people who should protect them from such malpractices in the absence of their biological parents. According to the Zimbabwean Criminal Law Codification and Reform Act (2004) Chapter 9:07 Section 87, anyone who allows a child to be a prostitute commits a crime. This means that what the guardians or caregivers are doing is illegal and they are committing a criminal offence.

According to Mushohwe (2018), this practice is one of the most sinister and horrific acts that children are subjected to and made to endure. The practice presents serious violations of human and child rights on distant parented adolescent girls who are among the most vulnerable and impressionable in society. The experience is a serious form of abuse and may leave a lifelong scar on the left behind adolescents if proper counselling is not instituted. Children have the right to be protected from any form of exploitation (UNCRC, 1990, Article 19). Thus, the guardians or caregivers had a role to protect the distant parented adolescent girls but some of them tend to be the abusers; they take advantage of the absence of the children's biological parents.

Based on the bio-ecological systems theory, the development of the child is a process that unfolds within a complex of relationships occurring in multiple environments; the microsystems, exosystems, mesosystems, macrosysytem and chronosystems have a role to play in the development of a human being (Bronfenbrenner, 2004). Thus, for the distant parented adolescent girl to develop in a healthy manner, both parents and the guardians or caregivers should play a supportive role. The findings of the study are that the distant parented adolescent girls lack proper care and are vulnerable to all forms of abuse due to the absence of the biological parents. The guardians or caregivers do as they wish to the left behind adolescent girls because the parents are not there to protect their children. The repercussions of this are gross violation of their rights as they are forced into the circumstances that they did not choose and are hardly ready for.

5.2.4 Being bullied

Apart from being used as sex slaves, some left behind adolescent girls complain about being bullied by some community members who consume their food stuffs and demand for their groceries. Consequently, the participants end up running out of food stuffs before the end of the month and are subjected to a lot of pressure, desperation, confusion and strain. Participant AG5A stated:

> "*My mother always shouts at me when I call her to inform her that we no longer have food. She thinks I am wasteful and yet our neighbour is always sending her kids to come and eat with us. I do not have the power to deny them'.*

The bullying tactics used by some community members and experienced by distant parented adolescent girls are in the form of instilling fear or intimidation. They put the girls at a risk of depleting their resources before the end of the month. This is because the budget that was meant to support five people, for example, now supports ten. This creates misunderstanding between the migrant parents and the distant parented adolescent girls. The parents suspect that their children are careless and wasteful. The bullies take advantage of the absence of parents of the victims and, in particular, the father who has the role of protecting the family. Some of the left behind adolescent girls feel unprotected in the absence of the father. Bullying is a violation of human rights. The bullies just come to consume or even loot their food stuffs and invade their privacy (Benque, 2021). This leaves the distant parented adolescent girls with no food to eat and in dire shortage of other resources to use in their homestead. They become desperate laughing stock in the community.

A father has a role to protect his family from bullies. The findings highlighted that the absence of a father in the home exposes the left behind adolescent girls to the village deviants. Participant AG2B said:

> "*These boys harass me. They know that my daddy is working outside the country. During the night I do not sleep well because I am afraid that they may come to attack and rape me*".

The study finds that the left behind girls feel vulnerable and unprotected in the absence of their fathers. Chen et al. (2017) show that the chronic absence of the fathers has severe consequences on the left behind adolescents. This means that the presence of the father is crucial in the lives of adolescent children; they protect their children from any form of danger such as harassment and bullying.

The bio-ecological systems theory states that the settings in the ecosystem are external to the child but they affect the child's development. Community support in terms of provisioning of the resources is beneficial to a distant parented adolescent girl although the family is the immediate environment which contributes towards her development and growth. The Ubuntu philosophical thought says that it takes the whole village to raise a child. Thus, the community of the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe has a role to play in terms of the development of the left behind adolescent girls (Sincero & Sincero, 2015) and has to protect them from the bullies rather than turn a blind eye or bully them too. This also resonates with Ubuntu framework of interdependence of the community in order to support the left behind adolescent girls (Mbiti, 1969). The African philosophy is characterised by communal interdependency. The communal interdependency is based on the existence of an individual in the extended family and the community (*'Umuntu umuntu ngabantu'* in isiNdebele, "*munhu, hi munhu, hi vanhu*", in XiTsonga). In the African traditional philosophy, an individual lives in and is part of a wider family that is interdependent to a community. That is called 'Ubuntu' (Mbiti, 1992). In this regard, migrant parents should make thorough investigations and establish good relations with the community and their left behind children so that they are able to open up and talk about the challenges that concern the welfare of their children. From the literature reviewed, the researcher noted that these observations are unique to the distant parented adolescent girls of the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe.

Distant parented adolescent girls further explained that they have their toiletry and washing detergents misused or looted by bullies. Participant AG4E said: "*My mother has told me that she is punishing me by not sending either the money or washing soap because it got finished before month end. Unfortunately, she is not aware that some community members are always here to wash their clothes with our soap*". The bullying of such nature is quite prevalent among the distant parented adolescent girls because they lack protection from an adult caregiver in the absence of their biological parents (Yan et al., 2019).

In order to understand the plight of the distant parented adolescent girls, it is critical to consider the influence of the mesosytems, exosystems and the proximal processes as described in the bio-ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (2004). Parental presence, affection and interaction affect child development. Migrant parents and unsupportive community members contribute to the breakdown of the ecology of the distant parented adolescent girls. These may create psychological distress because the distant parented adolescent girls are often overstressed in trying to come to terms with parental migration, lack of security and bullying. The way in which the distant parented adolescent girls function in the absence of their parents is affected. They experience the shortage of critical and basic resources such as washing detergents and other forms of toiletry which are sometimes looted or used extravagantly by bullies. Similar observations were noted by Badea (2020) who found that the left behind adolescents are often subjected to bullying by some community members. Thus, the distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency are left at the mercy of abusers, bullies and 'madams' who run village brothels for a living.

The findings of this study concurs with the bio-ecological systems theory which states that interactions that are within the microsystems should be more encouraging and nurturing for the child to develop social and emotional stability. The distant parented adolescent girl's microsystem is not encouraging; the absence of the father leaves her exposed to harassment and missing some important things that are necessary for child's proper development to take place. Thus, it is clear that the father plays an important role in the protection and development of the adolescent girl.

In another study, Adumitroate and Dafinoiu (2013) indicated that the left behind adolescents do not see the fathers' migration as paternal rejection but as caring for the family since fathers are economic supporters of the family; however, in the present study, the girls see their fathers as having created insecurity in the home. Participants expected their parents to take them along when they migrate. It is however not possible for the fathers to migrate with their children because some people migrate illegally. Therefore, it is not possible for them to skip the border with the whole family. The children need to remain behind and attend school. However, parental migration has exposed them to various forms of abuse because of lack of protection from their biological parents.

5.2.5 Teenage pregnancy

5.2.5.1 Improper association with boys

The findings of the study are that distant parented adolescent girls who had improper association with boys because of lack of parental guidance, supervision and affection in the absence of their biological parents. Participant AG5B said:

> "*... one cannot have a friend of the opposite sex? I am surprised that people are gossiping about me on that at school and in the community. No one has inducted me on the dangers of having intimate relationships with boys*".

The participant testifies that not even one person had told her how she should relate boys. The study reveals that the left behind adolescents hang around with boys as they please. Part of it is that they lack adult advice on such matters and also that boys find it easy to visit girls who stay by themselves. Cauton and Teguihanon (2019) notes that the absence of parents, especially mothers who are the primary caregivers and a guides, may result in the adolescent girls getting misguided. Mothers have an important role to play of guiding their adolescent girls during their development. This is because the distant parented girls are at the adolescence stage of development which is a sensitive stage where and when they experience a number of developmental changes.

Sooki et al. (2016) indicated that the mother is the primary guide and counsellor for her daughter on the challenges that come with puberty, menarche and menstruation. These are some of the physiological changes that an adolescent girl experiences as she enters the adolescence stage. The mother is the most suitable person for that as she assists her daughters with matters pertaining to their development. In traditional Zimbabwe, this was the responsibility of aunties and grandmothers, but in modern Zimbabwe, this has changed. The mother has taken over the responsibilities of aunties and grandmothers since the extended families are broken due to urbanization and employment. Families no longer live together in one large compound. Consequently, in this study the left behind adolescent girls view the migration of their mothers as a blow in their lives.

Xiang et al. (2019) found that, because they are at a transitional stage, adolescents need parental guidance and close monitoring. He argues that the absence of parents may result in unruly behaviour. The findings of this study further revealed that parental guidance is the key factor in the development of the adolescent girl child and that its absence impacts negatively on their behaviour. The left behind adolescent girls learn the values, norms and ethos of their society from other members of the community but not from their parents. The study finds that some members of the community misguide the girls while others abuse them. Mclnerney and Mclnerney (2013) opines that parents of the same sex as the child serve as role model on socially and culturally appropriate behaviour. In the case of the distant parented adolescent girls, the presence of the mother is significant for proper development. This means that parental presence is critical because parents monitor and support their adolescent girls as they develop.

5.2.5.2 Engaging in risky behaviour

The findings of the study also indicate that the socio-economic challenges that the left behind adolescent girls go through pose a major predicament on their general welfare. The findings illustrate that the distant parented adolescent girls rely on the remittances sent to them by their parents. Participant AG4C said:

> *"I have friends who do not struggle when it comes to having cash and other things. I have always wondered where they got so much money. It was until one of my friends hooked me up with an elderly man who happened to have money. We would be taken out on Fridays".*

When the remittances got depleted before the arrival of the new ones or when the parents delay remitting, the adolescent girls try other avenues of stabilising their socio-economic standing. Some of them said that they get involved in love affairs with 'sugar daddies' while others engage in prostitution and drug trafficking just to have money for a living. The participants reported that the delay in remittances also justifies their involvement in love affairs with 'sugar daddies' because of lack of parental guidance and giving heed to friends' advice. The study found that such negative experiences of threatening factors in the lives of the distant parented adolescent girls also result in poor school attendance which has an

impact on the overall academic achievement. The participants become desperate and destitute in the absence of their parents.

Some of the distant parented adolescent girls reported that they grapple with the problem of unwanted pregnancies and becoming teenage mothers due to engaging in improper relationships with friends of the opposite sex. They report that this is because of lack of adult or parental guidance. Participant AG2B lamented;

> "*Do you know how embarrassing it is to fall pregnant when you are still young and, worse of all, going to school? I regret. I wasn't expecting it and did not even want the pregnancy*".

It also emerged from this study that the distant parented adolescent girls have a negative perception of teenage pregnancy since they view it as unwanted pregnancy and a cause for school dropout. Teenage pregnancy eventually leads to teenage motherhood and child rearing. Participant AG3D lamented:

"*Had it not been for the pregnancy, by now I would be doing Form Four but now I am going to spend a year sitting and raising the baby while my friends are carrying on with their schooling. They are now laughing at….*"

The participant indicated that falling pregnant while she is still going to school makes some of the participants fail to complete schooling because of the responsibilities which come with child rearing and, sometimes, early marriage. In addition to that they are shouted at by parents and others end up aborting. In most cases, the consequences are severe.

Although adolescents fall pregnant while the go to school, they are not robbed of their right to education because they are protected by the international and national laws. The Convention on the Rights of the Child 2003 comment No 4 stipulates that girls have the right to education regardless of their pregnancy. This means that they can continue with their schooling even if they are pregnant. Allowing girls who have fallen pregnant to continue with their schooling is also enshrined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDS) agenda whose policy is that 'no one is left behind' (Kiswahil, 2018). This means that the girls who fall pregnant have the right to continue with their education. In Zimbabwe the

Amended Education Act allows pregnant girls to attend school. The Education Amendment Act, 2019 Act 15 Section 4 Sub – Section (2) (b) states that

> "*no child shall be discriminated against by the imposition of onerous terms and conditions in regard to his or her admission to, suspended, excluded or expelled from any school on the grounds of his or her nationality, race, colour, tribe, place of birth, ethnic or social origin, language ………pregnancy, disability, economic or social status or whether born in or outside wedlock*" (p. 3).

Thus, their interests of the girls completing their education are taken into consideration. Education Amendment Act 15, 68C N0. (1) stipulates that,

> "*No pupil shall be excluded from school for non- payment of school fees or on the basis of pregnancy*" (p. 626).

Although they are legally protected, they may still bear the social risks associated with teenage pregnancy. On that ground, not all the learners who fall pregnant return to school after delivery. Some of them are caught up in the responsibility of having to nurse a baby while others eventually get married. It is common practice in Zimbabwe that when one impregnates a girl, he is liable to marry her as soon as it is discovered that she is carrying his baby. It goes without saying that the girl eventually quits school and becomes a housewife.

From the perspective of the bio-ecological systems, the pregnant left behind adolescent girls violate the norms and values of the society. Furthermore, interruptions in the different environments which are nested around the developing child, affect everything in his/her development. The study observes that falling pregnant at an early age may be caused by the absence of the biological parents of the adolescent girl as there would be no one to approve or disapprove of her actions, behaviour or decisions which maybe detrimental to their lives. Neilson (2013) found that lack of regular contacts with fathers by the left behind adolescents results in them experiencing greater self-esteem issues and becoming pregnant. He further says that girls wish for intimacy and desire close relationships with their fathers. Low levels of interaction may result in promiscuity at a young age. Thus, the researcher

further notes that improper association with boys by the left behind adolescent girls results from lack of interactions with the migrant father.

5.2.5.3 Unwanted pregnancies

The findings of this study also show that some of the left behind adolescent girls endure carrying unwanted pregnancies because they feel they hinder their educational progress since they will be excluded from school for the duration of their pregnancy. The study also shows that the left behind adolescents may feel that their peers do not want to interact with them anymore. In addition, pregnancy strains their relationships with their migrant parents and they suffer from social exclusion by the community and peers, embarrassment and a feeling of guilty on their part among others. In Zimbabwe, teenage pregnancy, particularly for the unmarried girls, is not taken lightly. It is taken as an ugly and negative development. It becomes worse if the boy or man responsible for the pregnancy refuses to take the responsibility for it. Such girls are often treated as societal misfits and bad examples to the other girls. Hence, most responsible parents would not encourage their girl children to interact or play with such girls or teenage mothers.

The findings of the study are also that the left behind adolescent girls depend almost entirely on their peers on decision making because of lack of parental guidance. This leads them to engaging in risky behaviour whose results are dangerous for their lives. The study also showed that the left behind adolescent girls make wrong choices of friends some of whom are even old people in their community. The results are that they are wrongly advised by these friends and they end up engaging in deviant behaviour such as premarital sex with sugar daddies and/or going out partying, among other things. Participant AG4C said:

"*I have friends who do not struggle when it comes to having cash and other things. I had always wondered where they got so much money from. It was when one of my friends hooked me up with an elderly man…*"

The participant got influence, from the friend, to engaging in love affairs with older men, 'sugar daddies'. She believed that engaging in such relationships is the only way out of her problems. Neilson (2013) insinuates that the distant parented adolescent girls may face risks in their psychological development because they face many challenges and do not have

parents nearby to help them with decision making. In the end they make wrong decisions based on their friends' advice which, in the end, affect them negatively. The study shows that involvement in love affairs with some older men is one of the wrong decisions that one makes after having been advised by peers because they believe that they will get money from the 'sugar daddiess'.

The study shows that the relocation of the parents due to migration has negative repercussions on their left behind adolescent girls. Based on these observations, the participants need close monitoring and supervision because some of their decisions throw them into social problems. Bronfenbrenner (2004), in his bio-ecological systems theory, contends that the family is the most influential part of the mesosystem. This means that parental absence affects the development of the adolescent girls because proper guidance is not within reach. Without guidance from the adults, the left behind adolescent girls find themselves in very difficult situations.

Kufakurinani et al. (2014) call the distant parented adolescents 'the diaspora orphans'. This is because their parents are long distances away. These children live a life akin to that of the orphans as they seem to be all by themselves and feel abandoned and neglected. On the basis of this, there is a need for support in order to deal with the negative effects of parental migration so that the children are able to adapt properly to a new life. The findings of this study reveal that although friends try to help in that regard by offering support, they sometimes offer wrong advice which worsens the situation of the left behind adolescent girls who end up engaging in risky behaviours. These include early pregnancies, teenage motherhood, school dropout and contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Carranza (2021) observed that the distant parented adolescents no longer care about their lives because of being distant parented and living in homes without parents. This means that they have lost hope and trust in their parents' return and just do what they think is appropriate for them at that point in time to earn a living. Based on these observations, the researcher recommends that migrant parents try and find themeans to have an influence on their left behind adolescent girls' lives so that they may not heed the pressure coming from their friends.

Some of the left behind adolescent girls say that they give heed to the advice from friends because of poor relationships with their migrant parents. Participant AG1A says:

"My parents do not even care to call or WhatsApp and ask me about my school work or my general welfare. However, whenever I do not perform well, after sending them the report card, they always shout and complain about my performance".

The study indicates that the parents seem not to be concerned about the lives of their left behind children; they only express their disappointment when the girls underperform at school. The study also showed that poor communication between the child and the parents is responsible for poor child-parent relationships that exist in some of the families. Jerves et al. (2018) notes that the relationships of the left behind adolescents with their migrant parents are the source of distress and there is the potential of parent-child separation because the parents seem not to be concerned with the lives of their left behind adolescent girls. Migrant parents should thus maintain sound relationships with their left behind adolescent girls so that they are not misguided by other people who want to take advantage of them. The bio-ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner (2004) suggests that the microsystem is the immediate and closed environment within which an individual operates and is shaped by their encounters with the significant others. Thus, in the absence of their parents, the significant other of the left behind adolescent girls are their peers, aunties and/or grandmothers and this study revealed that some of them are not genuine caretakers.

Bio-ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (2004) provides a better understanding of how children develop. Parental absence means that the distant parented adolescent girls may not be shaped by their parents but by the readily available friends or peers. Furthermore, the reciprocal interactions which are crucial in fuelling development for a distant parented adolescent are affected by the absence of the parents as there is no reciprocation, hence their development is affected. In addition, it is noted that the bi-directional relationship lacks for the left behind adolescent and the migrant parent who is supposed to be in the vicinity to either approve or disapprove of the actions of their child. Thus, the child may adopt a way ward behaviour and culture from her peer group.

The bio-ecological systems theory stresses the need for a supportive environment for a developing adolescent girl. Parents who offer the appropriate support to their adolescent children equip them with the necessary tools to navigate through this turbulent period of adolescence. Thus, the bio-ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner (2004) seems to be a relevant theory to inform this study. It emphasizes the value of effective and stable

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environment which stands as the necessary support structure for the developing adolescent. For the adolescent child to grow up in a healthy manner, there should be constant mutual interactions between her and the migrant parent. Apart from sending remittances, constant interaction between the migrant parents and their left behind adolescent girls play a major role in ensuring that the gap between the distant parent and the distant parented adolescent girl is closed.

5.3 The themes that emerged the challenges encountered by distant parented adolescent girls

5.3.1 Lack of support

Lack of emotional and material support for the distant parented adolescent girls also extends to and affects their educational achievement. The study finds that distant parented adolescent girls are easily carried away by non-academic activities which impact on their academic achievement. The findings indicated that, because of the absence of the parents due to migration, there is no one who is keen to offer meaningful support to them, even on educational matters. Participant AG5D said:

> "*When I am tired, I just sleep with the hope of waking up at the night. As I stay alone, no one helps me with waking me up. My mom used to be my wake up clock. She would wake me up....*"

The findings mean that the girls bemoan the absence of their parents who migrated, leaving their girls without help and support that they are used to. Participant AG1A complains of not having a smart phone which enables her to access online lessons during this period of Covid 19 where they sometimes learn online and from home. Lack of such important gadgets negatively impacts on the academic achievement of the distant parented adolescent girls who would miss a lot of lessons from the teachers. Yeung and Gu (2016) found that the left behind adolescents perform poorly at school because of lack of parental care and support. Thus, it is worth noting that parents should be available in the lives of their adolescent girls to provide the necessary support for them to realise academic achievements and smooth development. Like any other children, the distant parented adolescent girls also need emotional and social support from both their parents for them to excel academically.

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However, the findings of this study are that living in the absence of the parents has negative repercussions for a growing child.

The participants also mentioned that they are used as sources of income by their guardians or caregivers. They are made to work at people's homes and fields to raise cash for their caregivers or guardians. These participants find themselves under such predicaments as vulnerability because their biological parents are absent and the guardians and/or caregivers take advantage of their situation. This leaves the distant parented adolescent girls exhausted at the end of the day. They are also frustrated as they do not benefit from working in people's homesteads and fields. Participant AG4E lamented; "*My aunt told me that this weekend I will be working at her neighbour's homestead, weeding and sweeping the yard*". The girls do not volunteer to do the work. The ILO and UNICEF (2021) agree with the observations of this study when they blame the breakdown of the family unit as one of the reasons for child labour. In this study, parental migration due to the economic quagmire bedevilling the nation, culminated in the breakdown of the family units, thereby exposing the left behind children to untold suffering due to forced labour and a feeling of neglect and/or abandonment. UNICEF (UN040906/Pirozzi) reported that some left behind children and adolescents are physically, mentally and sexually exploited by their guardians. The researcher observes that most of the left behind children are in a deplorable situation due to different forms of exploitation.

The present study established that the participants are not willing to be engaged as part-time workers in people's fields because it is not of economic benefit to them. It robs them of their time to rest so that they can be fresh for study, for home work and other personal errands such as washing their uniforms. The amount of work that they are subjected to, and the timing, does not give them a chance to do their schoolwork and this is worrisome to them. Participant AG2B stated:

> "*When I reached home I did not expect my aunt to tell me to go to the fields bearing in mind the amount of homework I had. For the past days, I was working in our neighbor's fields, weeding*".

The participant indicates that she has been working in the fields for some days and has no space to do her homework because of the amount of work she is given by her aunt. It is

unbearable. Participant AG5B echoed the same sentiments when she said:

"My grandmother makes it a point that my three siblings and I are always working in people's fields to raise money for her, mostly on the weekends. We are now labourers in our community".

The participant went on to highlight that her guardian does not allow her biological children to help her to do the work. The Zimbabwean law prohibits adults to engage children in labour practices. This is a violation of their rights, as enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe and its labour laws. Chapter 28:1 of the Zimbabwe's (2002) Labour Act prohibits employers from hiring anyone under the age of 18 to perform hazardous work. The Children's Act also makes it an offence to exploit children through employment. Thus, the guardians and caregivers committing a crime which, however, go unreported and therefore nothing is done to address the plight of these distant parented adolescent girls.

In addition, and according to the U N Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) of 1990 and The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) of 1990 Article 6.1, children need to be protected from all forms of violence. Child labour violates the children's right to freedom. The government has the responsibility to take appropriate legislative measures to protect children from labour exploitation (United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child, 1990, Article 19). The findings of the study are that distant parented adolescent girls fall prey to such forms of exploitation because of lack of protection from their biological parents who have migrated. Thus, the distant parented adolescent girls, just like any other children, need protection from all forms of exploitation.

Mbiti (1992) posits that the African philosophy is characterised by communal interdependency which locates an individual within the extended family and, ultimately, the community. The African philosophical thought posits that, an individual lives in and is part of a family that is interdependent to a community. This philosophy proposes that it takes the whole village to raise a child and that is the 'Ubuntu' way of raising children (Mbiti, 1992). Children belong to the whole community and it takes the whole village to raise a child. In Chinese, they also practise the collaborative approach in raising children. This is done in context collectivism which emphasises the dependence of the individuals on the group of which they are part (Bernstein, 2016). President (2014) found that in China parents,

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grandparents, community members, peers, caregivers, volunteers and others support the left behind children and adolescents in their development in a number of ways including the establishment of children's clubs in the communities. The bio-ecological systems theory also states that there should be a mutual relationship between an individual with his or her environment (Bronfenbrenner, 2004). The left behind adolescent girl reacts to the system and this affects how she reacts to the wider community. The abuse that the girls are subjected to has an effect within the wider community as well (mesosystem). It also has implications for the the girls' social life. This study showed that the distant parented adolescent girls are subjected to untold abuse by the people that they were left with. Thus, the practice of 'ubuntu' is not observed by other people surrounding the left behind adolescent girl. This means that her development is affected as she is reduced to a source of cheap labour.

Owusu (2013) reported that some caregivers use the remittances that are sent by their parents in order to hire appropriate labour and reduce child labour. However, this does not seem to concur with the observations made in this study. The guardians and/or caregivers do not use the remittances to hire adults and spare the left behind adolescent girls from labour so that they can focus on their schoolwork. Instead, they subject them to labour exploitation by making them work on peoples' fields and homesteads for their own financial gains.

5.3.2 Poor communication with parents

5.3.2.1 Keeping parents abreast

It emerged from this study that some distant parented adolescent girls keep their migrant parents well informed about their welfare through constant communication through the cell phones. Participant AG3C said:

"w*hen my mother calls me, there are important issues that I love to tell her. Right now the outstanding fees are due in two (2) weeks' time. The headmaster announced that at the assembly. That is the first thing that I will tell her"*.

It is through communication by cell phone that the distant parented adolescent girls engage their migrant parents and tell them about what is happening. The findings of the study are that the cell phones play the critical role of bridging the gap between the migrant parents

and their distant parented adolescent girls. They enabled the girls to furnish their migrant parents with the details of their wellbeing. Filippa et al., (2013), as well as Kufakurinani et al. (2014) established that cell phones make communication between the migrant parents and the adolescent children who are left behind easy. One can argue on such grounds that the distant parented adolescent girls view technology mediated communication between them and the migrant parents as vital because that is the only way their migrant parents may get knowledge of how they are doing. Fillipa et al. (2013) further observes that through cell phone communication, the migrant parents know about their adolescent's schooling and general well-being. This shows the importance of communication between the migrant parents and their left behind children. Owusu (2013) noted that many parents remain in constant touch with their left behind adolescent children with the help of technological advancement. Thus, the distant parented adolescent girls found technology to be useful in bridging the gap between them and their migrant parents.

Contrary to the findings of the present study, it appears that although communication with the migrant parents through whatsapp is important in keeping the migrant parent well informed about their left behind adolescent children, not all the children are satisfied with the arrangement. They find it to be an unsatisfactory way of keeping in touch with their migrant parents. It does not provide them with the necessary emotional connection for their physical absence. Children need the physical presence of their parents. Aguiler (2020) showed that the left behind adolescents long for face-to-face communication with their parents. They are not satisfied with the current way of communication. Thus, most distant parented adolescent girls value the physical presence of their parents than communicating with them through phones. It is thus critical for the migrant parents to find time to visit their left behind adolescent girls so that they have face to face interactions which they long for and are important for their development.

Contrary to the tenets of the bio-ecological systems theory which proposes that constant mutual interaction between the child and his or her environment is necessary for smooth development to take place, communication between the distant parented adolescent girl in this study and their parents is not constant. Mutual interactions through the cellphones are not existent. Communication that can contribute to the girls' development is not adequate. The left behind adolescent girls long for physical interaction with their migrant parents (Aguilar, 2020).

The distant parented adolescent girls' migrant parents use cellphones and other means of communication to communicate with their children. This makes them able to execute parental roles such as instilling discipline despite poor monitoring due to the separated distance between them. Participant AG3A said:

> "*I had a problem yesterday with my younger siblings. They refused to carry out some duties which they are supposed to do. I then called my mother to report their action. She called and shouted at them….*"

Thus, the participant highlighted that her migrant parents try to use cell phones to execute disciplinary measures on their left behind children. Shen et al. (2015) found that communication between the migrant parents and their left behind adolescent enables the parents to continue parenting from afar. Communication through the gadgets such as cellphones facilitates the institution of parental roles to their left behind adolescent girls. Aguilar (2020), Umani and Turnip (2019) show that migrant parents make use of technology to addressing certain problems faced by their left behind adolescents. Although migrant parents try to execute disciplinary measures through the cellphones, the researcher observes that it is difficult for them to monitor whether their instructions are taken and followed as given.

Poeze (2019) noted that migrant fathers nurture intimate relationships and fatherly love through frequent cell calls. Communication gives the migrant fathers some form of presence in their left behind adolescent girls' lives. They try to make up for his physical absence which has a bearing on the distant parented adolescent girls' future relationships. Low levels of interaction between the father and the adolescent girl may result in promiscuity at a young age (Neilson, 2013). Frequent communication between the distant parented adolescent girl and the migrant father fosters attachment between the migrant father and the distant parented adolescent girl. This is the basis for stable future relationships. The findings of this study are that communication between migrant parents and their distant parented adolescent girls is important for their development as the parents may try to maintain constant monitoring of their left behind adolescent girls and make up for their physical absence. Thus, there is a need for the connection between the parents and their children through communication as it fosters emotional development of personhood.

The bio-ecological systems theory states that interactions between a developing individual and the environment are important. In the microsystems, the migrant parents interact with their distant parented adolescent girls through mobile phones in order to maintain family connections and have their presence felt in the family as parents, thereby aiding to a smooth development of their distant parented adolescent children.

Some of the distant parented adolescent girls reported that they are dissatisfied with how they communicate with their migrant parents. The findings show that in the presence of caregivers or guardians, they fail to freely express themselves because the environment not conducive enough for them to do so. Participant AG4D said;

> *"Sometimes there are certain issues that I wish to tell my mother because I feel that they are important. I cannot do so when my aunt and her family are there listening to our conversation".*

The participant fails to communicate effectively with the migrant parent because of the presence of the aunt and her family members because some of the issues may relate to how she is treated by the aunt and this may create some tension between her and the aunt. This implies that the girls need privacy when talking to their parents. Nazridod (2021) found that the caregivers' presence makes it difficult for the adolescent children to openly talk about the sadness they endure due to their parents' absence. When they fail to communicate what they wanted to, they become emotionally disconnected to their biological parents. Expressing one's concerns is therapeutic and liberating. Freud, cited in McManus (2017) calls it a talking therapy.

This implies that the parents and their children need some privacy, taking into cognisance that they have been living away from their parents for quite some time. In addition, the children are at a critical stage of development and they may have some issues that they may want to consult or share with their biological parents. Failure to do so has some detrimental effects to their development. Umani and Turnip (2019) argue that it may lead to some emotional challenges which may interfere with the children's social and academic life, often reflected through low scores in life satisfaction and loneliness. Failure to communicate has some psychological effects as well. If children fail to tell their developmental challenges that they are encountering, the problem persists. Considering the children's situation of

being distant parented, the situation can be worse. Thus, their health can be affected and their normal development be interrupted. According to the bio-ecological systems theory, communication between the parents and their children is very important. It influences the child's development because it yields some positive effects on their development (Guy – Evans, 2020). Thus migrant parents have to maintain constant communication relationships with their distant parented adolescent girls in order for them to develop properly.

5.3.2.2 Erratic or delayed communication

The findings of the study are that some migrant parents' communication is erratic and this becomes a problem to their left behind adolescent girls who may have urgent issues to relay; the delay may complicate things. Participant AG5A said:

> "*It has been almost a month now without my parents calling me. I wonder what is happening or what they are thinking about me. There are a lot of things that I need to share with them. Could they be punishing me? But I have not done anything wrong. I cannot focus on my schoolwork now.*"

If migrant parents take a long time before they communicate with their left behind children, their distant parented adolescent girl is subjected to some psychological stress which also impact negatively on her academic performance. She is not sure why her parents are quiet. Wang et al. (2019) found that poor communication between the migrant parents and the left behind adolescents leads to health problems which include emotional challenges, conduct disorders, loneliness, depression and anxiety. Some of the left behind adolescent girls end up thinking that they are abandoned by their parents. This delay may lead to some wayward behaviour. Thus, migrant parents should communicate with their distant parented adolescent girls frequently in order to close the social gap created by their migration and to foster proper development.

Frequent communication has been found to yield positive results as the left behind adolescents who frequently communicate with their parents are found to be happier, healthier and had strike higher levels of life satisfaction than thos whose parents do not communicate frequently (Umani & Turnip, 2019). Thus, good communication eases the pressure which comes with being distant parented. It helps to maintain family ties and

relationships between the migrant parent and the distant parented adolescent child. Infrequent communication with parents worsens the situation of the left behind adolescents since they are already grappling with the absence of their biological parents. They cannot relay their needs and problems in the shortest possible time. For the distant parented adolescent girls whose parents' communicate erratically, family ties are loosely connected and the children become psychologically affected. Thus, the whole ecological system of the distant parented adolescent girl is disturbed.

Delay in communication may make the life of the distant parented adolescent girl miserable and unbearable as she may be in dire need of some resources from her parents. Madziva (2015) noted that some migrant fathers are reluctant to maintain constant communication with their left behind adolescents. They fear to trigger expectations of remittances. This finding may help to explain why in this study the communication between the parents and their left behind adolescents takes a long time. However, the consequences of such behaviour have some negative consequences to the left behind adolescent girls. The researcher opines that there should be regular or constant communication of the migrant parents and their left behind adolescent children so that the young girl does not become desperate and behave in a wayward manner. The majority of the distant parented adolescent girls interviewed in this study, reported that the communicate wirh their migrant parents through cell phones. The fact that some girls report their frustration or are dissatisfied with the amount of contact that they receive from their parents confirms that communication can, to some extent, close the gap of the negative effects of the parental absence due to migration.

5.3.3 Heading the family

5.3.3.1 Having to look after my siblings

The study showed that distant parented adolescent girls have many responsibilities; amongst them is looking after the siblings and heading the family which they say   is taxing. The findings revealed that the girls have to stand for the migrant parent and carry out the responsibilities within the house and the family. Participant AG1B said; "*Each and every day I have to make sure that my siblings are well fed, have bathed and are clean before they go to school. This has been the norm and routine since my parents migrated to South Africa*". Clifton-Spiggs (2018) observes that parental migration results in role changes

within the household where some siblings are left to head the families. The distant parented adolescent girls have to look after their siblings, this is a responsibility taken over from their migrant parents. The findings of the study are that the adolescents grapple with the roles and responsibilities which are not age appropriate and are a burden to the girls who are also trying to come to terms with parental absence. Gray and Anderson (2016) found that the extra responsibilities that the left behind adolescent girls are expected to do make it difficult for them to looking after their siblings accordingly. Their responsibilities are not limited to looking after their siblings. They have other duties to perform in the home. Their inability to look after their siblings properly   may result from the fact that they are not old enough to head the families. In this study, all the participants report that this is a strenuous task. It is overwhelming and is exacerbated by the meager resources in the home since the provisions sent by their parents are neither adequate not punctual.

According to the bio-ecological systems theory, the development of mutual trust and understanding is absent from the distant parented adolescent girls' immediate environment as the family should be the first socializing agent. In these girls' case, the family is not intact. The bio-psychological characteristics of the individual that is the thought, feelings, and the environment in which the proximal process occurs and in this instance, the left behind adolescent girl and her parents may affect the adolescent girl's development. Furthermore, these environmental occurrences affect normal human development over time. Lack of affection from parents due to migration may affect the children in the long run. It may teach them not to value parental love and affection. Sigmund Freud assumed that personality formation is critical during the first years of life and that the ways in which parents or other caregivers interact with children, have a long-last impact on children's emotional state (Slavin, 2020). Thus, it is important to establish a good loving culture for the adolescents early in life so as to inculcate the values of love and affection for the developing child.

The distant parented adolescent girls assume the parental roles at an early age, have to also ensure that their younger siblings do the duties that have been assigned to them. Participant AG2C said:

> "*I came up with a duty roster at home and I found it to be very effective. My siblings wanted to give me a headache but once I did that it was solved. Things are working well for me*".

The role of monitoring younger siblings when doing their duties is not an easy for adolescent girls because the siblings look at them as children as well, hence they do not want to take orders from them. It becomes a challenge to the senior left behind adolescent girl because she is the eldest and has to ensure that the family thrives. In addition, some of the left behind adolescent girls are the senior siblings who assume the parental role and they are compelled to supervise and monitor their younger siblings. Kufakurinani et al. (2014) found that teenage girls with a parental responsibility situation have problems in asserting authority over other teenagers in the family. This may be because the younger siblings look down upon the elder sister since she is also young. They do not want to take orders from her. Bronfenbrenner (2004) postulates that in the microsystem which is the immediate environment, the family, the neighbours and the school should help the child in his or her development. The left behind adolescent girls end up adopting parental responsibilities due to the absence of parents thereby by-passing most of their stages in their development (Magwa & Magwa, 2016). From the findings of this study, it can be ascertained that distant parented adolescent girls become heads of families at an early age. They also guide their siblings even though they also need guidance. Their interaction with their siblings is responsible for early maturity and the development of a strong bond between themselves and the other left behind children. However, handling disciplinary issues remains a major challenge for the senior and leading child.

5.3.3.2 Looking after the livestock

The findings of the study are that distant parented adolescent girls have to balance their school work with taking care of their livestock. This is a taxing responsibility which also stresses them because it takes too much of their school time. Looking after cattle is a responsibility for the males among the Tsonga communities of Zimbabwe. However, in the absence of males in the home, females take over the responsibility. Because of the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe, an array of systems is negatively affected and among them is the changing of roles. This is because many parents left the country for greener pastures. As a result of that, responsibilities which used to be done by parents are now done by the left behind children. One such responsibility is heading cattle. Participant AG2B had this to say:

> "*Today I did not manage to go to school. Our cattle did not come back yesterday; the whole kraal. I think they were disturbed by a lot of rains yesterday. I had to go and look for them*".

The study shows that looking after the livestock has challenges such as the one highlighted by the participant that in the event that they get lost she has to miss school to search for the lost cattle. She has to account for them, hence the reason for missing school. The migrant parents become angry with their left behind adolescents if they do not look after the livestock properly.

Bronfenbrenner (2004) observes a relationship between the systems. Change in one thing affects everything else in the whole system because of their interconnectedness (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017). Thus, parental migration leaves a void which needs to be filled and the left behind adolescent girl is the one who has to fill it in the absence of a grown boy child. This exposes the left behind adolescent girl to a plethora of challenges some of which are too complex to imagine. Looking after the livestock is traditionally a male duty in Chiredzi South and now that it has been transferred to a left behind adolescent girl, it becomes an extra burden for her. It is a violation of the Tsonga norms and values since women in the Tsonga culture are not even allowed to go to the kraal and to drive cattle. This phenomenon did not come out in other studies. Due to scarcity of literature on the phenomenon, it makes it unique to this study.

5.3.3.3 Managing resources and budgeting

The study shows that the distant parented adolescent girls struggle with managing the resources at home. The findings indicate that the left behind adolescents face some challenges on how to properly allocate the money on the basic requirements of the home. Participant AG2A reported:

> "*If they send us money to buy from here, which they normally do, I would come up with a lot of the items that we would want. At times do not budget properly and we find ourselves struggling before the end of the month*".

The study finds that sometimes there is an overspending on some other items at the expense of others; in the end the children spend the rest of the month struggling with minimum resources or with no basic resources at all. Participant AG3D confirmed:

> "*I love rice and the same applies to my siblings. Last month I was cooking it every day so that within two weeks we had finished the month's allocation. I could not tell my mother because I was scared that she might shout at me. Now it's 'sadza' (thick porridge) throughout and it's not nice*".

This shows that the children are not mature enough to know how to balance their food and as a result they do not budget accurately. They are influenced by what they like most and forget that they would also need to have it the next day. This also means that when they have money, they spent it on items which are not important because they do not have an adult to assist them in that regard.

When related to the bio-ecological systems theory, it can be argued that the distant parented adolescent girls are affected by the circumstances surrounding them as they have to assume parental roles and responsibilities early in life and have to fend for the siblings. It is observed in this study that managing the resources is tricky for the left behind adolescent girls; they fail to prioritise and budget properly and end up spending the rest of the month struggling with limited resources. This shows that they lack decision making skills and this lends them in very difficult situations.

5.3.4 Lack of access to remittances

5.3.4.1 Remittances are invested for profit by guardians or caregivers

Failure to access the remittances send by their migrant parents was one of the challenges experienced by the participants. The study finds that the guardian or caregiver may invest (spin) the money sent by the migrant parents for personal gains first, before handing it over to the distant parented adolescent children. This subjects the children to a lot of suffering since they may not have of the basic resources for survival. Participant AG1D reported: "*When she receives the money she goes to Mozambique first to beef up her stocks. After selling her things, that is when she remembers to give me the money*".

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The participant explained that the money which is sent by migrant parents is first used for something else before it lands in her hands. This makes the life of the distant parented adolescent girl unbearable and difficult. The girl struggles yet her parents have sent the money. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that she does not disclose such problems to the parents for fear of straining the relationships between her guardians and her parents.

Ndlovu and Tigere (2018) showed that there are little financial gains for the distant parented adolescent girls because the remittances are diverted by the adult who stays with them. However, it has been established in this study that, if received in time, remittances go a long way towards improving the lives of the left behind adolescent girls.

Cortina (2014), Cortes (2015), Agyei (2016), Nazridod et al. (2019) show that remittances benefit the distant parented adolescent girls a lot. These are the benefits such as improvement in health and nutrition reducing the school dropout rate, improvement in income, access to health services and schooling. Failure to access remittances may have some detrimental effects on the life of the distant parented adolescent girl. For example, she develops and grows up in a home without parents; this is an environment which is not conducive for proper development to take place. Remittances are important in the sense that they appeal to the key aspects of their lives, health and education.

Bronfenbrenner (2004) embraces the belief that one's development is affected by everything in one's surrounding environment. In this study, the distant parented adolescent girl is disturbed by the absence of her parents due to migration and failure to easily access the remittances. This affects her development. When the distant parented adolescent girl does not get remittances in time she may end up engaging in all sorts of antisocial behaviour in order to access money.

5.3.4.2 Delayed remittances

Some distant parented adolescent girls fail to access their remittances in time and this may account for their engagement in immoral behaviour. The findings indicated that the guardian or caregiver invests (spin) the money sent by their migrant parents for personal gains before handing it over to the distant parented adolescent girl. The study reveals that this practice

by the guardian subjects the girls to a lot of stress because of the shortage of the basic resources for survival. Participant AG1D reported:

> "*When she receives the money, she goes to Mozambique first to beef up her stocks. After selling her things that is when she remembers to give me the money*".

The participant mentioned that the money sent by the migrant parents is first used for something else before it gets to her. Thus failure to access the remittances on time makes the life of the distant parented adolescent girl miserable; she struggles even though her parents have sent the money. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the girls do not disclose such problems to their parents for fear of straining the relationships between guardians and their parents. Ndlovu and Tigere (2018) show that the distant parented adolescent girls have limited financial gains from their parents' remittances. The money is diverted by the adult guardian. However, it has been revealed in this study that, if received in time, remittances go a long way improving the lives of these left behind adolescent girls. Cortina (2014), Cortes (2015), Agyei (2016), Nazridod et al. (2019) found that remittances benefit the distant parented adolescent girls a lot. They highlighted benefits such as improvement in health, improvement in nutrition by buying food, reducing school dropout rate, improvement in income, access to health services and schooling. These benefits make the distant parented adolescent girl to experience a smooth development. Failure to access remittances may have some detrimental effects on the life of the left behind adolescent girl because she is developing and growing up in a home without parents, an environment which is not conducive for proper development to take place. Bronfenbrenner (2004) embraces the belief that one's development is affected by everything in one's surrounding environment. In this study, the distant parented adolescent girl is disturbed by the absence of her parents due to migration and failure to access the remittances easily. This affects her normal development. When the distant parented adolescent girl does not get remittances in time, she end up engaging in all sorts of antisocial behaviour in order to mobilise money for her and her siblings to live a normal life.

The study shows that the need to put food on the table makes the girls vulnerable. The left behind adolescents become stressed as they try to figure out where to get the next meal. The findings of this study are that the distant parented adolescent girls sometimes do not receive

their remittances in time and find themselves in this trajectory, they become anxious and end up engaging in antisocial behaviour. The bio-ecological systems theory intimates that exchange of money and other gifts between the parents and their left behind children should be consistently and constantly done to avoid the development of anxiety and adoption of ill behaviour. Such a practice encourages and reassures the left behind adolescent girl that she is loved and cared for and has not been abandoned by her parents. This assurance lowers anxiety and depression among the left behind adolescent girls and enables them to function well.

The distant parented adolescent girls highlight that they experience an added cost of sanitary pads during menstruation and they have to budget for this. This is different from a boy's budget. However, when parents delay in remitting them it becomes difficult for the girls to acquire sanitary pads and some of them resort to using anything that can help them. Participant AG3D stated; "*I got so embarrassed this other day at school. I spoiled my uniform. I had only one sanitary pad left which I was wearing. I had nothing to change to so it got soaked so that I ended up spoiling my clothes.*" The distant parented adolescent girls reported that sometimes they have to make use of papers from old books, tissues, newspapers and rags as protection. This makes them feel uncomfortable and embarrassed in class. The Zimbabwe Education Amendment Act 15 of 2019 section 4 (a) 1a) states that

> "*...the state shall ensure the provision of sanitary ware and other menstrual health facilities to girls in all schools to promote menstrual health*".

Although such statutes have been put in place by the government, there is need to put in place a committee which monitors whether such services get to all the adolescent girls, especially those in the rural areas. From the participants interviewed in this study, they expressed ignorance of the availability of such services. From the findings of the study, it is noted that menstruation and its accompanying physical, psychological, health and hygiene requirements, have financial implications for the adolescent girls. Most studies on the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls tend to allot less attention to sanitary towels and other aspects that surround menstruation. There are also other important factors that need to be addressed if the left behind adolescent girls are to fully function and enjoy their education in an emotionally healthy environment.

Sometimes the adolescent girls do not have money to buy stationery. Participant AG4E reports:

> "*My young brother came crying to my school the other day. He goes the neighbouring primary school. The teacher had sent him out of class to go and get a pen. I also had only one pen...*"

The participant shows that unavailability of resources hinders their schooling. UNICEF (2020) also highlighted that distant parented adolescents do not get money to buy learning materials in the form of books and stationery in time. Consequently, they miss a lot at school. Sometimes they do not do school assignments and exercises. This may lead to failure or poor performance in class. Ndlovu and Tigere (2018) reported that distant parented adolescents lack school stationery and uniforms because the parents have not remitted in time; sometimes they do not remit at all. Delayed remittances impact on their educational achievement negatively because these left behind adolescent girls lack the necessary resources which help them navigate through their academic pathway. Remittances go a long way towards improving the educational attainment of the left behind adolescent girls. Hu (2018) pointed out that those who receive them use the money for educational activities. Thus, failure to get the remittances may jeopardise their chances of the girls to financing their school activities in time and this may culminate in erratic school attendance and poor academic performance.

The delay in remitting by migrant parents to their left behind adolescent girls impacts negatively on their education as they fail to go to school on some days. This is because of lack of money for bus fare. This is one of the reasons why absenteeism is more prevalent among the distant parented adolescent children. Participant AG3B had this to say:

> "*In January I missed school for two weeks. My parents had delayed sending me money. My school is too far for me to walk or else I get there very late. Even if I try to start the journey early, it will be too much…*".

Thus, the findings show that lack of finances among the distant parented adolescent girls contributes to poor results. According to Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological system theory, disturbances in one layer have a rippling effect on the other layers. The fact that some of the

distant parented adolescent girls are not getting remittances from the migrant parents on time influences their school attendance which also affects their overall school performance. Thus, migrant parents should remit to their left behind children on time to avoid such problems.

The study also shows that distant parented adolescent girls are often sent away from school due to non-payment of school fees. Participant AG1E said:

"Each time I see the headmaster getting into my class holding a paper, my heart starts to beat. I am always on the list of those with outstanding fees. I do not even know what to do".

This embarrasses the young fellows who also lose a lot of lessons. This results in them performing badly at school. A report by UNICEF (2020) reveals that financial constrains faced by the left behind adolescent girls impact negatively on their education. They fail to pay fees in time because migrant parents may not have remitted them. Delays and/or unavailability of remittances shutters their educational endeavours. This disturbs attendance and the flow of learning because they are usually sent out of school due to non-payment of school fees. Ndlovu and Tigere (2018) also observed that the distant parented adolescents complained of their school fees and development levies not being paid in full each term. Measured against the bio-ecological systems theory, it can be highlighted that the distant parented adolescent girl is growing up in a broken or weak exosystem with no one to voice their problems, hence the negative implications on their academic achievement.

5.3.4.3 Failure to access remittances at all

One of the experiences of the distant parented adolescent girls that emerged from the study is the failure to access remittances at all. The study found that sometimes the guardians or caregivers take full control of the monies sent by the migrant parents to meet the needs of their distant parented adolescent children. Participant AG5E said:

> *"My aunt does not give me the money that my parents send through her. She is always alleging that I will misuse the money and she thinks that she is the rightful person to keep it".*

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The findings of the study indicate that the guardians or care givers sometimes divert the remittances and channel them to their own personal needs thereby denying the rightful owners access to their money. Poeze et al. (2016) reported that these left behind adolescents complain of not accessing the remittances sent by their parents because they are not given to them by the guardians or caregivers. The adolescents become anxious when they discover that the parents have sent the monies but they are incapable of engaging the guardian or caregiver in that issue. In such instances, the ecology of the distant parented adolescent girls is disturbed in the sense that people who are supposed to stand in place of their absent parents become the abusers. This leaves the distant parented adolescent girl stranded, vulnerable and strained in terms of resources due to the unscrupulous and selfish behaviour of the guardians or caregivers. Cortina's (2014) and Cortes's (2015) find that some of the left behind adolescents live miserable lives yet the migrant parents remit them on monthly basis. The findings of this study thus reveal that some of the distant parented adolescents suffer because of the greediness and selfishness of the guardians. Thus, absence of remittances jeopardises the left behind adolescent girls' chances of having a steady and reliable supply of basic resources for their basic survival.

5.4 Themes that emerged from coping strategies used by distant parented adolescent girls

5.4.1 Engagement in church youth activities

To cope with stress caused by being left behind and the challenges that come with it, some of the distant parented adolescent girls indicated that they appeal to spirituality and that makes them feel better. They report that they joined youth activities in the local church as the key coping strategy for combating the challenges that come with being distant parented. Separation from their parents and unreliable communication with them made them feel like they are abandoned. As a result they resolved to turn to God through engagement in church activities. Pargament et al. (1997) postulate that people turn to religion in search of meaning related to the sacred and it becomes an approach to understanding the World of God and to interact with others. It was revealed in this study that religion has the capacity to provide meaning and purpose in people who are stressed and living an unbearable life. The participants collaborated with others and engaged in church activities in order to deal with loneliness and a barrage of other negatives that come with being distant parented. This

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helped them to approach and to interpret life as meaningful and it yielded positive results; it lessened their stress of being lonely as a result of being left behind by their migrant parents. It also taught them that a problem shared was a problem halved. To lessen the burden of boxing-in their problems, they needed someone of credible status to talk to or share their problems with. In this case, it was the pastors and priests in church. Participant AG5D said:

> "*The warmth that I received from the other members of the church compelled me to join that church permanently. It feels like the pastor and the elders in church are now my parents in the absence of my biological parents*".

The findings indicated that the adolescents are consoled by going to church and engaging in its activities. In this way, it also helps them to take the migration of their parents positively. Thus, positive interactions at church are a mitigating factor to lessen their problems and situation of being distant parented.

The long-time separation with their parents and the limited communication with them made the distant parented adolescent girls suffer from a deep longing for their migrant parents whom they felt had abandoned them. Participant AG4B said:

"*I have got new moms and dads in church in the absence of my biological parents. These make up for my absent biological parents who are stuck in the United Kingdom. I am able to share my pains*".

The participant highlighted that she felt relieved that she had found new parents from church. This shows how distant parented adolescent girls feel when parents migrate and leave them behind. Most of them felt they were abandoned by their parents. However according to the bio-ecological systems theory, religious groups have an influence on the development of a child although it might not be direct (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017). Implied in this is that if they get warm relationship in church, they develop well despite the absence of their biological parents. Thus, they employ a religious coping strategy to deal with their situation.

5.4.2 Spiritual counselling

Some of the distant parented adolescent girls indicated that they were referred to the church for counselling. Bleecker (2021) defines spiritual counselling as a mode of healing that looks

at an individual's beliefs and values in search of meaning. It deepens the connection between one and God. The established connection helps in the healing process. Participants reported that the counselling in church reached the innermost parts of their spirits, hence they felt like a burden was lifted off their shoulders. Such encounters helped in boosting their self-esteem. Although the distant parented adolescent girls reported to have found solace by engaging in church activities which yield positive results, this has the possibility of a negative effect as well. There are many instances of females being sexually abused by the clergy under the pretence of being priests or pastors. This means that the path taken by distant parented adolescent girls to cope with being distant parented is not as safe aas it looks although such things do not come out of the present study.

5.4.3 Hanging out with friends

Some of the participants contended that going out with friends served as a way of retaining sanity. The study indicates that some of the participants turned to their friends who provide them with the necessary company and support. They also turn to their friends in trying to forget their unhappiness. Participant AG3D reported:

"*When I am stressed, I need only my friends next to me. They always know how to cheer me up the way we always do it*".

The support that they need may be the one to do with their development and they see friends as more relevant and helpful than adults in that regard. The study gathered that in the absence of their parents, they value the support that they get from their friends in order to deal with any developmental issues that may occur. However, the researcher noted that some of the friends were not mature while others were emotionally unstable. The distant parented adolescent learners felt secure and free in the company of their colleagues despite their shortcomings. Participants considered their friends very handy in this regard because they have a lot in common. Friends are closer to the participants and understand their challenges more than anyone else. Participant AG4A had this to say:

"*It is always a pleasure hanging around with your friends since they resonate more with what you are going through compared to any other person*".

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Nazridod et al. (2019) found that the left behind adolescent girls chat with their friends as a way of coping with their situation of being distant parented. Getting in touch with their friends gives them company in the absence of their biological parents. For adolescents, friends play a significant role in the provision of emotional support. The researcher observed that this may happen because their interest and solutions to problems resonates very well. They are of the same age. Hanging around with friends assisted them to destress and to feel better. This is therapeutic on the left behind adolescent girls.

Adolescents found the sharing of experiences to be an important aspect in their lives. However, it does not replace the biological parents. However, the participants report that when they hang around with their friends, they do not experience loneliness and other challenges. In most instances they hang around with friends who are in the same situation as theirs. They feel that such friends understand their experiences better than other people. Hence the saying, 'A problem shared, is a problem solved'. In this regard, Participant AG3D had this to say:

"*But how can I just leave these people? They know me and my problems very well. They empathise and sympathise with me all the time".* Thus, the distant parented adolescent girls have faith in their friends when they lonely and challenged. Talking with others becomes an effective mitigation strategy and is therapeutic on its own. Walton (2017) calls it the talking therapy.

5.4.4 Engaging in extra-mural activities

It also emerged from the interviews and the focus group discussions with the distant parented adolescent girls that taking part in sporting activities is a form of socialization, relaxation and therapy which worked well for most of the participants. Some of the participants say that they engage in extra–mural activities in order to manage their situation of being lonely and the feeling of being abandoned. Participant AG1B reported:

"*I have just joined the group who run every morning and every evening. Not only does it help me with my body fitness but it also refreshes my mind and I sometimes forget about my absent parents".*

The findings suggest that one of the best ways to cheer themselves up is to engage in extra-mural activities. This diverts their attention from worrisome issues concerning their absent parents. Participant AG4E said, "*This sport gives me company and during that time I forget that my parents are in the diaspora*". It can be inferred from the findings of the study that some of the participants were emotionally affected by the migration of their parents; particularly that their parents left them behind. Most of them report that the sporting activity replaced idle time which allows them to engage in risky behaviour and to allow their minds to think about their parents. The findings of the study also suggest that engagement in extra mural activities reduce stress. It is a recommended anti-depressant which means that the left behind adolescent girls who engage in extra mural activities are doing the right thing. Engagement in extra mural activities boost their physical and mental well-being (Medicalnews, 2022).

5.4.5 Relying on social media to connect with migrant parents and friends

It also emerged from this study that some distant parented adolescent girls rely on social media to cope with their situation. One of them is whatsapp and other social media activities. They spend much of their time chatting with friends, parents and relatives. Through connecting with others, they get to share their interests, ideas and happy moments (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2018). They reported that this may ease their situation of loneliness since it helps them to engage with friends and parents. This helps them to deal with their situation of being left behind. Through Whatsapp, Facebook and other social media platforms, they can engage with significant others and this brings them closer emotionally. It can also be inferred that they get the support that they need. This strengthens their relationships. Participant AG3A said:

"*I get to know a lot about people through Facebook and WhatsApp such that when I am at home alone I do not feel the loneliness.*"

Although social media such as Whatsapp may help in bridging the gap between the left behind adolescent girls and the migrant parents, it has its own negative effects. Many people report that they now suffer from the 'I am missing out syndrome'. This keeps them glued to Whatsapp and Facebook at the expense of other responsibilities.

Social media can allow the left behind adolescents to access information about other people's lives and they start spreading negative information about people. It can be used to bully, threaten or harass other people. Thus, they can be exposed to cyber bullying which may affect them psychologically, leading to depression.

Social media is addictive. Some distant parented adolescent girls may end up addicted to social media and spending a great deal of time on it (Genomind, 2021). The distant parented adolescent girls who are without adult supervision, may sleep very late and wake up in the middle of the night to chat with friends, thereby losing sleep. The time spent on social media may also eat into their time to study. This further contributes to poor academic achievement. Some participants reported that the cell phone takes a lot of their study time and this affects their academic achievement. Dyer (2018), Elsayed (2021) and Paakkari (2021) argue that the addiction to social media leads to devastating long term mental health problems such as depression, suicidal thoughts, anxiety and low self–esteem. These illnesses hinder the smooth development of a distant parented adolescent girl as they may affect her health and general physical well-being. Thus, reliance on social media can be good and bad at the same time for the distant parented adolescent girls.

5.4.6 Resilience

The study establishes that some participants cope with their situation despite coming from distant parented homes. These distant parented adolescent girls demonstrated resilience and are able to accept their adversity. Resilience is defined by Hurley (2020) as the capacity to recover from difficult life events. One would bounce back and learn from the challenges (Anonymous, 2021). The distant parented adolescent girls who are resilient have recovered from the challenges of being left behind by migrant parents. Life a distant parented child is characterised by shortage of resources, being isolated, heading the family among others. Thus, the distant parented adolescent girls adjusting to a change in their lives of staying in homes with absent parents due to migration. Resilience has provided them with the strength that they need in order to process and to overcome the hardships (Hurley, 2020) of being distant parented by migrant parents. The study finds that the participants have accepted the trajectory of being left behind and everything which comes with it. Participant AG5D stated:

" I am now used to staying without my parents. During the first days I did not know how to deal with the problems when they arose. I remember crying when my younger…."

The findings are that the left behind girls find life to be moving on smoothly in the context of many challenges. They have now established some ways to deal with them as they arise. Thus, they have developed a thick skin and are emotionally so resilient (Hurley, 2020) that they now control their feelings and are able to manage their emotions in a positive way. They highlight that talking about the relocation of their parents prepares them mentally for the coming situation and what they should expect. This gave way to the acceptance of the situation.

Some distant parented adolescent girls acknowledged to have accepted the responsibility of heading the families in the absence of the parents because they are the eldest and there is no option. This also involves ithlooking after and protecting the siblings from all forms of abuse. Participant AG5B reported:

"Beauty came home very distressed yesterday. She did not do well in her end of term tests and her class teacher beat her. I counselled her. She was thinking of not going to school the next day, however…."

This narration indicates that some participants and multi-task. They assume the role of counsellors to their siblings and act as parents in the absence of parents. The study finds that although they sometimes feel overwhelmed with household duties. They have accepted the situation and have to soldier on. Participant AG2C has this to say:

"Our parents left the family in my hands. I have the responsibility to look after my siblings. I do all the household chores for them".

Thus, the study shows that the participants have accepted their situation and have developed a thick skin. In order for them to cope with their situation, their environment has to be conducive and caring enough. It has to foster resilience among the left behind adolescent girls.

5.5 Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed the presented data. The discussions of the findings were done in relation to the findings which emerged from the data collected from the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. This was done objective by objective. The next chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study in relation to the results and aims to answer the main research question as well as the sub-questions. The bio-ecological system theory which was used as the theoretical framework will also be used to propose the intervention model that can mitigate the situation under which the left behind adolescents finds themselves. The recommendations for action and for further studies will also be proposed.

CHAPTER SIX

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY, THE BIO-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS FRAMEWORK, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This study explored the experiences of the twenty-five (25) left behind adolescent girls, from the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe, who provided their experiences of being distant parented by migrant parents. It established that the left behind adolescent girls go through a plethora of experiences in the absence of their migrant parents. The implications of the findings are that more has to be done by the systems surrounding the distant parented adolescent girl which she has direct or indirect contact with, pertaining to her development that includes parents, peers, guardians or caregivers, communities, teachers, government, non-governmental organisations, among others. This chapter also gives an overview of the study, discusses the strengths of the study, highlights, and discusses its contributions to the body of knowledge. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the limitations, conclusions and recommendations for practice and further research on the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls. It also suggests a framework for supporting the distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. The framework describes the insight into the study on how the distant parented adolescent girls' cognitive, social, emotional and physical development can be supported.

6.1 Overview of the study

This study focused on the experiences of the left behind and distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. It also explored the challenges and coping strategies which the left behind adolescent girls employ to mitigate their situation of being distant parented and everything else which comes with it.

The findings from the focus group discussions and interviews show that the distant parented adolescent girl's development is influenced by multiple environmental systems surrounding her. A healthy and holistic development of an adolescent girl is a product of a supporting

environment which encompasses the parents, peers, neighbours, guardians or caregivers, teachers, the school, the church or religion, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education, the government, NGOs and other stakeholders.

The findings from the girls' experiences are that out of school activities such as overwhelming household chores and working in people's homes and fields (part time work) negatively impact on their academic, physical and emotional well-being, while lack of resources such as stationery and bus fare contribute to poor academic achievement. The study indicated that lack of support from the parents and the other surrounding systems increases the distant parented adolescent girls' vulnerability. In addition, the experiences such as stigmatization, being deserted by peers as well as the community members and the feelings of being abandoned by parents, impact on their academic success and hinder their proper emotional development. The study also shows that stigmatisation is responsible for causing a lot of pain to the distant parented adolescent girls, thus culminating in increased social isolation. In the absence of their migrant parents, the distant parented adolescent girls head the families, manage the resources, look after the younger siblings, take care of the livestock and perform other duties which, under normal circumstances, would be done by the parents. The study showed that the distant parented adolescent girls are faced by a plethora of challenges as they execute such roles. They lack leadership skills and, in many instances, find themselves in very difficult positions such as instilling discipline in younger siblings. They find the roles such as looking after the livestock and siblings to be age and /or gender inappropriate. For instance, looking after the animals is a male responsibility among the Tsonga (Shangani) people of Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the study also showed that the left behind adolescent girls experience various forms of abuse, ranging from sexual and labour exploitation and bullying the girls because of absent or inadequate protection from their parents and/or guardians or caregivers. This, in part, makes the girls long for the presence of their parents who have migrated.

The findings from the study on distant parented adolescent girls indicate that they encounter some challenges in their day-to-day lives. These include, among other things, lack of parental care, unavailability of someone to help them with the homework, limited resources as due to delayed remittances or none and looting by village bullies, communication challenges where sometimes the girls do not hear from their parents at all. In addition to that, they also face social challenges such as inappropriate choice of friends, some of whom

mislead them. In the midst of all these challenges, the participants report that the situation is not better at school. Some teachers fail to understand or conceptualise the situation in which the distant parented adolescent girls are. This further worsens and intensifies their stressful situation. Thus, being distant parented has some rippling effects. It comes with a barrage of other challenges which hinder their emotional and physical wellbeing.

To survive under such challenges, distant parented adolescent girls developed a number of coping strategies that they use in dealing with the negative experiences of being distant parented. Some of the coping strategies that the distant parented girls adopt include engaging in church youth activities, extra mural activities and resilience as well as hanging out with friends. Such strategies are healthy. The left behind adolescent girls' manifest resilience as they continue to carry out their household roles even without an adult figure who is usually the most suitable person in ensuring effective management of the activities in the household. They also rely on social media to engage with their parents and friends. However, some of them reported that social media is sometimes an unhealthy coping strategy because it may have addictive problems and abusive information. Some girls report to have been victims of cyber bullying and harassment.

Finally, with all the challenges reported, a bio-ecological systems framework is proposed to mitigate on the challenges experienced by the distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe.

6.2 Strengths of the study

6.2.1 Contribution of the bio–ecological systems theoretical framework

The study used the bio ecological systems theory as its theoretical framework to illuminate the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. The theory was critical in this study to gain a deeper insight into the influence of different systems surrounding the distant parented adolescent girls and their contribution to their own development. The theory assisted in exploring the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls. The role of parents and other stakeholders around a developing child are highlighted. People encounter different experiences throughout their lives and that may influence their development. Thus, a person's development is affected by everything in

his/her surrounding environment. The theory helped the researcher to perceive how the bio-ecological environmental systems influence the support and promotion of the development of a distant parented adolescent girl in her everyday life. The distant parented adolescent girls indicated that they did not get emotional, financial, information and appraisal support from their migrant parents. This affects their healthy development. The theory also helped the researcher to understand how lack of support influences change in the development of a distant parented adolescent girl. Thus, the theory emphasizes the active roles that different environmental systems play in facilitating the development of the distant parented adolescent girls.

The theory was also used to gain knowledge on how the distant parented adolescent girl view and perceive support from others such as peers, guardians, caregivers, community members and teachers. The distant parented adolescent girls highlighted that they are discriminated against by some peers and members of the community and have, thus, become social outcasts in the communities that they live in. This situation has negative implications for the psychological well-being of these children. The diversity of the interrelated influence forms on adolescent girls' development are highlighted. Different environmental systems have a role to play in supporting the development of the distant parented adolescent girl. For instance, the participants indicated that they are physically and sexually exploited by the guardians and/or caregivers. These guardians and/or caregivers should have been taking care of them but, instead, they become their abusers. The abuses that they experience affect their smooth development. The bio-ecological systems theory asserts that all the people in the community should contribute towards the development of the adolescent girls by way of giving support in her development in the absence of their parents.

The study therefore recommends a collaborative approach to assist in the development of a distant parented adolescent girl in Zimbabwe. The bio-ecological systems theory also shows that the adolescent girls need to have constant interactions and relationships with the parents and guardians or caregivers, which are necessary for their development. The breakdown of the interactions and relationships in the distant parented adolescent girls' lives make them fail to explore other parts of the environment when looking at their experiences that the bio ecological systems theory could assist.

Thus, the study used the bio-ecological systems theory to unravel the roles of a variety of different environmental systems surrounding the distant parented adolescent girl and their influence on her development. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory views child development as a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment, from immediate settings of family and school to broad cultural values, laws and customs (Kamenopoulou, 2016). This was evident in this study as it also surfaced that there is a need for the systems surrounding the distant parented adolescent girls to take a collaborative approach by practising 'Ubuntu'. It was clear from the study that most of the elements in the environment did not practise 'Ubuntu' from their behaviour and attitude. There is a need for it to be emphasized in the policies so that all the people who contribute to the development of the distant parented adolescent girl may be conscientised and trained on it. Those who tried to practise it did not do so effectively.

6.3 Contribution of the study to the body of knowledge

The study contributed to the existing body of knowledge in terms of policy, theory and practice.

6.3.1 Policy

The study sensitises the policymakers, mainly the government, and other relevant stakeholders to be cognisant of the gaps in the policies on child support and this should be extended to explicitly address the plight of the distant parented adolescent children, whose number is increasingly swelling in Zimbabwe. The findings of this study show that parental migration is prevalent in Zimbabwe due to the economic quagmire bedevilling the nation. This has left many children unattended or in the hands of relatives. It is against this backdrop that this study recommends that the policy on Child Protection should be extended to also explicitly address the plight of the distant parented children whose figure is becoming phenomenal in Zimbabwe and in Chiredzi South to be specific. Child protection is the safeguarding of children from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. It includes all the sets of services designed to protect the children and young people who are under the age of 18 years. The government of Zimbabwe and other concerned stakeholders should put in place a piece of legislation protecting the left behind children. The policy should stress the need for the parents who migrate to ensure that children are left in the care of responsible,

trustworthy and caring adult guardians to minimise child headed households. Although the Constitution of Zimbabwe of 2013 seeks to protect the rights of the children, (the distant parented adolescent girls included), it only refers to how they should be treated. Follow up strategies on how it should be fully implemented are not clearly stated.

A policy on engaging social workers to check on the welfare of the children who are distantly parented by migrant parents should be put in place. The social workers should work hand in hand with the village heads to identify the children who are distant parented due to parental migration and to keep an up to date register of such children. At school, class teachers should keep such information in their social registers which may be available to the social workers and other stakeholders if they require it for intervention purposes. Further to this, the policy on orphans should be extended to the distant parented adolescent children who are often termed 'diaspora orphans' because some of them live a life synonymous to that of orphans. The government's policy should enforce that they be automatically immersed in the extended family and community just like what happens to the orphans.

This study has shown that distant parented adolescent girls do not get adequate support from the various systems surrounding them in the absence of their migrant parents. The study has used the bio-ecological framework to explain how different systems surrounding the distant parented adolescent girl, whether directly or indirectly, should contribute to her smooth and holistic development. It is against this backdrop that the study hypothesises that the framework and the suggested recommendations will assist the policymakers and other stakeholders to adapt some of the recommendations and amend some policies to also address the plight of the distant parented adolescent girls who now constitute a phenomenal number of children in Zimbabwe.

6.3.2 Theory

The study used the bio ecological systems theory as a theoretical frame in a new environment and in recent situations. It assumed that the theory is rekindled and rejuvenated as it is used in a new environment. The theory posits that all the environmental systems surrounding the developing adolescent girls are critical in supporting their development. It further reinforces the need for understanding their influence on the development of the distant parented adolescent girl. The bio ecological systems theory further accentuates the need to consider

all the contexts or systems surrounding the child and which have a bearing on the holistic development of the distant parented adolescent girl. Emphasis is given to the view that the development of a person is an integrated or collaborative task hence every system is important to their development. The distant parented adolescent girl does not receive enough support from her surrounding systems, since her biological parents are at a distant place, to play their part accordingly. Some of the adults who are nearby are doggy, while others are even exploitative and/or abusive. Thus, collaborative responsibility through the support of all the stakeholders is important as the systems nested around the developing adolescent girl are interconnected. The bio-ecological systems theory also emphasises the importance of the immediate environment which consist of the family as key unit for them to reach their full potential of development. The theory is thus used to explain the development of the left behind adolescent girls of Zimbabwe which is a new set up and period for which the theory was developed.

6.3.3 Practice

It is anticipated that the study may contribute to practice in the following ways:

- Policies can be adapted to highlight the importance of different environmental systems in the development of the distant parented adolescent girl.
- Various stakeholders who contribute to the development of the child may use the research to reflect on their way of operation in dealing with distant parented adolescent girls.
- It is assumed that the framework and research will guide teachers on drawing up all inclusive methods and strategies relevant to teach distant parented adolescent girls and support their development.
- From the study recommendations, the teacher can identify the opportunities for collaboration to counteract the challenges that have become barriers to learning and that are experienced by distant parented adolescent girls in learning.
- It is also hoped that the Ministry of Education will use the recommendations to support the schools, to frequently monitor assessment and to promote adequate support for the left behind children in the schools.
- The Ministry of Education may also use the recommendations to develop and put in place a framework in the curriculum which is meant to increase the support of the

distant parented adolescent girls since they are phenomenally prevalent in the Zimbabwean schools.

- Through engagement and involvement of the educators in supporting the distant parented adolescent girls' development, the study resonates with the bio-ecological systems theory principles of collaboration. Support programmes may be put in place on the provision of adequate funding to meet the needs of the distant parented adolescent girls. To date, such programmes do not exist in the area under study.

- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) may be alerted so that they may propose and implement some mitigating strategies to arrest the plight of the left behind adolescent girls.

6.4 Limitations of the study

The study espied several unanticipated developments that may be useful in further studies.

- The study did not involve other stakeholders as participants by means of interviews. This could be important for further study on the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls from all settings, instead of only hearing from their own perspective.

- Only adolescent girl participants from the rural Chiredzi South Constituency participated in the study. It may also be critical to look at the experiences of those in the urban areas.

- On the composition of the sample, only distant parented adolescent girls participated in the study. Other distant parented children who are not adolescent may have their own experiences which are unique to them. In addition to that, the study focused on the adolescent girls, perhaps exploring the experiences of distant parented boys may yield interesting results.

6.5 The bio ecological systems framework for the support of the distant parented adolescent girls' development

The bio ecological systems framework was adopted to guide the study. The findings of the study led to the adoption of the bio ecological framework for the support of the development of the distant parented adolescent girls. The framework describes the insight into the study on how the distant parented adolescent girls' physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and social development can be supported by the surrounding environment. It was shown in this

study that the distant parented adolescent girls' environment plays a major role in the girls' development because there are systems that she is directly involved with.

The systems such as family, neighbours, peers, community, government, media, NGOs and other stakeholders should work in collaboration to support the development of the distant parented adolescent girl. The negative experiences of distant parented adolescent girls are a result of lack of collaborative support from all the systems. This can be arrested if they take a collaborative approach in addressing this issue. The study notes that the distant parented adolescent girls indicated lack of support from their surrounding environment in the absence of their migrant parents.

The findings of the study and the reviewed literature then led the researcher to propose the adoption of the bio ecological systems framework for the support of the distant parented adolescent girls. The proposed framework shares a lot with the principles of 'Ubuntu' though this is not directly spelt out. The proposed framework seeks to highlight the contributions that can be made by different systems and sub-systems to promoting the development of the distant parented adolescent girls. Figure 6.1 shows the bio ecological systems' framework that may be adapted and integrated into the promotion of the smooth development of the distant parented adolescent girls.

Figure 6.1: Bronfenbrenner's bio ecological systems framework

6.6 Implementing the bio ecological systems framework

6.6.1 The role of parents in implementing this framework

From the bio ecological systems' framework, it is clear that parents constitute part of the nucleus family; this is very important to a developing adolescent girl. According to Figure 6.1, parents are first in the environment of the developing child hence they should directly interact with her to accelerate her development. They are expected to do this and facilitate the development of their children by constantly supplying the opportunities and resources

that promote the smooth growth of a child. Thus, the framework suggests that migrant parents should ensure that they involve their left behind adolescents when making decisions about migration. It is important for the parents to ensure that they have organised some care arrangements for their left behind adolescent girls before they migrate. In a family set up parents have a number of roles that they play. Therefore when they migrate they should ensure that they have made some arrangements with some trusted person to take up these roles. These could be the members of the extended family or trustworthy relatives who are also expected to contribute towards the upbringing and development of the adolescent girls. This is much expected in the African communities where it is believed that 'it takes the whole village to raise a child' and this also supports the bio ecological systems theory.

At adolescence, the girls experience a number of changes in their bodies. Therefore the mothers should frequently visit their adolescent girls to check on them and advise them on the matters pertinent to their development. A child's first teacher is a mother. Mothers have a role to instil some values and norms in their adolescent girls. This will make them behave in an acceptable manner in society.

Parents should ensure that they have influence in the lives of their children through having knowledge of the type of friends that their developing adolescent girls have. The distant parented adolescent girls reported that they hang around with friends and with people who influence them into dating 'sugar daddies'. According to the bio ecological systems theoretical framework, friends constitute a critical part of the environment in which the distant parented adolescent girls live. Parents are expected to help their own children to choose good friends. The study shows that bad friends have a negative influence on the behaviour of adolescents.

Part of parenting is to offer support and care on the education of the developing children. According to the bio ecological systems theory, in facilitating the intellectual development of their children, parents need to interact with teachers of their children through the attendance of school meetings and gatherings. They also need to help the children with their homework. The participants highlighted that they do not have anyone at home to help them in that regard. Attending school-organised functions is very crucial in supporting the education of children. Such functions include, among others, prize giving days, consultation days and any other functions organised by the school. They must ensure that their children

get all the basics that they need by remitting them more often and timely so that they have constant supply of learning resources.

Emotional support is important to distant parented adolescent girls. Therefore they should find the means to ensure that they are emotionally supported. The parents should further ensure that there is consistent communication with their distant parented adolescent girls to reduce anxiety. Close relationships and constant interactions with their children should be maintained.

6.6.2 The role of the community in taking care of the left behind adolescent girls

This framework suggests that the community should play a very critical role in supporting a developing left behind adolescent girls. The community must ensure that the distant parented adolescent girls are supported in all aspect by taking the responsibility of looking after them. Good relationships between them and the distant parented adolescent girls should be ensured for their psychological, emotional, spiritual and cognitive development which will be reflected in their academic success and physical outlook. The community is important to a distant parented adolescent girls' life and should ensure that they give the girls the necessary support that they need to feel safe, assist with the necessary services that they need so that they stay healthy and encourage them so that they realise their goals by practising 'Ubuntu' in their approach. Ubuntu calls for a collective responsibility in supporting the development of children the distant parented adolescent girl included. In the African communities, children belong to the whole community. The African communities believe that a person is a person because of other people. In Tsonga, the saying goes, '*Munhu, hi munhu hi mhaka ye vanhu'*. In Ndebele the saying goes, '*Umuntu, umuntu ngabantu,*' in Sepedi the saying goes '*motho ke motho ka batho'*. This shows that humans need other people for development and to be recognised as people. The Ubuntu principle has a lot to share with the bio-ecological systems framework which emphasises the interrelationships and interdependency of human beings (Mbigi, 1997). It also stresses interconnectedness, reciprocity, humanity and compassion as some of its values that have to be adhered to in the interest of supporting the left behind adolescent girls. Thus, in this framework, I propose that everyone has a role to play in the development of the distant parented adolescent girls. The community should work together in order to nurture and protect the well-being of the distant parented adolescent girls by also lobbying for political and economic policies that support the

inclusion of the left behind adolescent girls' education and welfare. The community should treat the distant parented adolescent girls like any other child in the community by not using them as sourcees of cheap labour and labelling them negatively. The community should render the necessary help to these children and should allow them to partake in community organised functions. The distant parented adolescent girls indicated that the community socially excludes them and bullies them. Isolating, alienating and bullying them is against the principles of Ubuntu which are premised on the notion that, '*It takes the whole village to raise a child*'. Thus, the community has the responsibility to partaking in the development of the left behind adolescent girls.

6.6.3 The role of peers and friends in the implementation of this framework

The study proposes that in using the framework, peers may play a pivotal role in the development of each other. They are part of the immediate environment which the distant parented adolescent girl should interact with. Interactions with peers shape their lives in a number of ways. By their interactions, they provide an important context for intellectual and socio-emotional development. They should ensure that they create close and harmonious relationships with the distant parented adolescent girls to enhance their social and academic development. Social interactions with peers may help the left behind adolescent girls to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance which may influence the development of a positive self-esteem. The distant parented adolescent girls indicated that their peers stigmatise them. They further showed that peers advise them. In the bio-ecological systems framework, the peers must ensure that there is close peer relationships and support to facilitate a positive and healthy development of the left behind children. This will translate into a feeling of self-worthy in the community in which they live. Human beings are gregarious creatures. They like living harmoniously with other people and to belong to the community in which they live. Labelling, stigmatising, isolating and alienating them may lead to the development of deviant behaviour by way of identifying themselves with the label.

6.6.4 The role of the school and teachers in the implementation of this framework

From the bio-ecological systems framework, the school is another environment the distant parented adolescent girls interact with directly. It has its norms and values that the distant parented adolescents have to adhere to and which contribute to her development. Teachers

should ensure that they have knowledge of their learners' home environment, provide them with direction and shape contexts that fit their needs. The teacher should ensure that there is frequent contact with parents through phones and/or email. Teachers should continuously support the distant parented adolescent girl by ensuring that the diverse needs including academic, emotional, physical, economic and social ones are met. Thus, the teacher is one of the focus persons in the implementation of this framework. The findings of the study show that the teachers were not aware of the trajectory of the distant parented adolescents. Thus, they treated the girls like any other learner and yet they had challenges in coping with schoolwork in the absence of their migrant parents.

Every learner has to be accommodated in the classroom by including, in the curriculum, the topics such as effective stress management, interpersonal skills and effective communication, among others, in order to help the distant parented adolescent girl. Educators must ensure that they make up for the absent parents in schools by accommodating the distant parented adolescent girls. After all, teachers are supposed to be in '*loco-parentis*'. Working in collaboration with their parents and other teachers within the school for those teaching the distant parented adolescent girls is vital, teachers may request for the cell numbers of the migrant parents and engage with them should there be the need for that. Those in the guidance and counselling department may play a critical role in helping the distant parented adolescent girls to deal with their challenges. The findings of the study show that they struggle with resources such as exercise books, pens and pencils. They also struggle to get sanitary towels the absence of which may affect their attendance and concentration in class. The school administration should lobby for support from various stakeholders such as the government, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and NGOs in order to help the needy distant parented adolescent girls.

6.6.5 The role of the church or religion in implementing this framework

The support of distant parented adolescent girls goes beyond the school, the community and the peers. It links the development of the distant parented adolescent girl to religious groups too. The churches need to support and enhance the development of distant parented adolescent girls. The church should ensure that they reinforce religious coping mechanisms to distant parented adolescent girls that reduce stress. The church must encourage participation of the distant parented adolescent girls. It is good for both spiritual and moral

development. In addition, financial, moral and social support can be accessed at churches. They should provide an environment in which the distant parented adolescent girls can freely express themselves. One participant in this study acknowledged that when she went to church, she felt that she belonged to a family. The elders in church stood in for her migrant parents and the longing for parents became a thing of the past.

6.6.6 The role of media in implementing this framework

According to the bio ecological systems theory, all the ecological systems surrounding the distant parented adolescent girl influence her development either directly or indirectly. The media is one such an environment that indirectly influences the development of distant parented adolescent girls. It may play the key role in helping her development. The media reaches out to many people and it should ensure that it raises public awareness and advocacy on the promotion of adolescent girls' rights and the effects of abusing them. The findings of the study indicated that the cases of physical and sexual exploitation and arranged early marriages among the left behind adolescent girls go unreported. It also came out from the study that they are on the rise. The media should keep on bringing to the front issues of child marriage. When reporting issues, responsible reporting should take the centre stage. Propagation of information should be done without fear or favour for the public. Subjects such as child marriages, sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and other forms of abuses to the distant parented adolescent girls should be covered by the media in order to minimise their occurrence. Stories covering the consequences of perpetrators of the violation of distant parented adolescent girls' rights must be published. It is important that the media be guided by principles when reporting issues to do with the distant parented adolescent girls without jeopardizing their rights. The distant parented adolescent girls must be given space in the media to voice their concerns on matters affecting their lives.

6.6.7 The role of the Ministry of Education in the implementation of this framework

The Ministry of Education is in the larger social system, the exosystems which the distant parented adolescent girl indirectly interacts with. It also has a stake in the development of children. It is the responsibility of people in this system to support the developing distant parented adolescent girls. Thus, the Ministry of Education should ensure that it holds workshops with educators to conscientise them on how to handle the distant parented

adolescent girls in the classroom. The ministry of Education, in partnership with other relevant stakeholders such as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as Econet, UK AID, Apostolic Women Trust, Plan International, Save the Children, among others, should target the distant parented adolescent girls in order to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives. Some participants indicated that they struggle with school fees and other school related resources. The Ministry of Education in its capacity must lobby for support from all the interested parties to help the distant parented adolescent girls and to support the projects that are meant to improve the lives of these girls. Further to this, after having been made aware of the plight of the distant parented adolescent girls, the Ministry of Education should direct the heads of schools to accommodate them and monitor the implementation of their mitigation strategies.

6.6.8 The role of guardians and caregivers in the implementation of this framework

The bio-ecological systems framework shows that the distant parented adolescent interact with the extended family members who are in the exosystem. The family members also influence their development. Due to the economic quagmire that the nation is going through, the extended family members may be entrusted with looking after the children who are left behind children by migrated their biological parents. Some participants reported that they are financially, sexually, emotionally and physically abused by the guardians and caregivers. Guardians and caregivers should instead play a pivotal role in the development of these left behind adolescent girls. They should not exploit the girls. The children are left in their care. They must give the children minimal household chores which are age appropriate. The participants reported that the work that they are given is too much and it jeopardises their education and general well-being. Since the caregivers and guardians contribute to the development of the distant parented adolescent girls, they should provide an enabling environment for proper development. This can be done by supporting them when doing household chores and other tasks. It is important that they respect and protect the distant parented adolescent girl's right by not marrying them off to people or facilitate forced marriages. Guardians and caregivers must not misuse the remittances meant for the distant parented adolescent girls. Instead, they should assist them to make good use of the remittances.

6.6.9 The role of neighbourhood in the implementation of this framework

The neighbourhood should ensure that positive interactions with the distant parented adolescent girls are maintained because they impact on their development. The neighbourhood should ensure that it supports the distant parented adolescent girls, hence the proverb, 'It takes the whole village to raise a child'. They must ensure that they do not segregate and bully these girls. Instead, they should make them feel safe through the way they interact with the girls. Neighbours must get connected to the distant parented adolescent girls' migrant parents to help foster the girls' development.

6.6.10 The role of NGOs and other stakeholders in implementing the bio-ecological systems framework

The framework shows that Non-Governmental Organisations also indirectly influence the development of the distant parented adolescent girls. Through their operations they help her development in many ways. This could be done through advocacy for their rights and provisioning of basic resources. The study shows that there are many instances where the rights of the left behind adolescent girls are violated. Because the children feel vulnerable, they are timed to report such cases or even speak out. As the mouth piece of the left behind children, the intervention of the NGOs may be critical in redeeming them out of this catastrophe. Furthermore, some distant parented adoelsecent girls indicated a shortage of resources. NGOs such as Plan International, World Vision, Oxfam, UNICEF and others may come in with provisions necessary for the education of such children.

Ending child marriages is one of the goals of UNICEF, therefore UNICEF should ensure that it plays its role to eradicate it. This study shows that the practice of child marriages is rampart in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe and therefore, fighting for its eradication will save the girls. The government and other relevant organizations such as UNICEF must ensure that the capacity to protect the distant parented adolescent girls from all forms of abuse is increased. They should also ensure that the distant parented adolescent girls also access quality education regardless of their circumstances. That education should focus on the development of their social, emotional, mental, physical and cognitive abilities. Likewise, they should conduct campaigns that enforce behaviour change. The Child Protection Unit should try to reach out to distant parented adolescent girls in the rural areas

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for them to report the cases of abuse. They should conscientise the community on the dangers of exploitation and the plight of the distant parented adolescent girls. They should make sure that the community is aware of the services that they offer. Furthermore, they can help in the identification of distant parented adolescent girls and link them to where they can get help. In addition, they should help in the provision of stationery and sanitary towels.

6.6.11 The role of the government and its various organs in the implementation of the framework

The government should come up with policies that protect the left behind adolescent girls from abuse. Some participants have highlighted that they are abused by people who have been entrusted to look after them in the absence of the migrant parents. The study further finds that the girls experience emotional abuse from people who surround them. These include peers and community members. Thus, it is also important that the government proposes the policies that minimize various forms of abuse such as teenage pregnancy, early marriages and prioritise the education of the left behind girls. The government has a mandate to protect its citizens from all forms of abuse. In that regard, it should ensure favourable working conditions for other players who want to assist distant parented adolescent girls. These maybe the NGOs and others stakeholders. The ward councilors, as the organs of the government, must ensure that they offer free social services (in their communities) which the distant parented adolescent girls can easily access. They should also help to advocate for the rights of the children, including the distant parented adolescent girls. The village heads must ensure that good morals are promoted in their communities. They should check on the social conduct of the villagers. They should keep an up-to-date register of all the members of the village and their permits so that they can help in identifying the distant parented adolescent girls who should get assistance. Such a register would also help to know whether there are any intruders in the village who may abuse the distant parented adolescent girls. Thus, the village heads should help to protect the distant parented adolescent girls.

6.7 Conclusions

6.7.1 Experiences of distant parented adolescent girls

The study concludes that distant parented adolescent girls go through several experiences in

the absence of their biological parents due to migration.

6.7.1.1. The findings shows that the environment surrounding the distant parented adolescent girls is not supportive enough. It negatively impacts on their development. The left behind children feel deserted and abandoned by their migrant parents who had developed a strong bond with them prior to their migration. Because of the absence of the paarents, they feel abandoned.

6.7.1.2. The distant parented adolescent girls are overwhelmed with the household chores and being subjected to informal labour. They are expected to carry out several duties all by themselves. The duties leave them with no time to focus on their schoolwork or their own personal errands. They are made to do work that they could not have done if their parents were still around.

6.7.1.3. There are gaps in terms of policy, theory and practice on how they can effectively support distant parented adolescent girl children. The relevant authorities should formulate the policies that protect the distant parented adolescent girls. The findings indicate that the distant parented adolescent girls are not protected in the absence of their migrant parents. They are exploited sexually, emotionally, physically and financially. Some of them are forced to get married at an early age by the guardians and caregivers. This forces them to drop out of school, contract STIs and experience miscarriage among others. Their future dreams are shattered. Physically they are made to work for people for the financial benefit of the guardian or caregiver. This leaves them physically exhausted. It further impacts negatively on their academic achievement.

6.7.1.4. The study concludes that there is a phenomenal number of left behind children due to migrant labour. They are stigmatised and labelled negatively by their peers and community members. They are labelled on the basis of their immoral behaviour in order to get money to buy the essentials. They are labelled as prostitutes.

6.7.1.5. Bullying by the community members is rampant among the distant parented adolescent girls: The study concluded that some members of the community demand food and other resources such as washing detergents from the distant parented adolescent girls. This makes the girls struggle with limited or no resources at all till the end of the month. It also makes them be punished by the migrant parents who are not aware of the bullying that they are going through.

6.7.1.6. Another conclusion is that the rights of the distant parented adolescent girls, such as the right to consent to marriage are violated by the guardians and caregivers. The girls are forced to work as sex slaves and to get into early marriage with men who are not of their personal choice. This affects their future aspirations. They fail to complete school and becoming teenage parents. Such acts also traumatise them. Some of them report to have contracted some STIs or had complications with pregnancies. Thus, their lives are in danger once their rights are violated.

6.7.2 Challenges faced by distant parented adolescent girls

The study concludes that one of the challenges that the distant parented adolescent girls experience is failure to easily access the remittances send by their parents.

6.7.2.1 The girls either get their remittance very late or do not get them at all. Such delays interrupt their normal operations in the day to day living. It also stresses them a lot. Consequently, they experience a shortage of resources because of not being able to easily access the remittances.

6.7.2.2 The distant parented adolescent girls do not get emotional, financial and/ or material support. Accessing certain resources such as sanitary towels, food, school fees and stationery is not easy for them. That makes it difficult for them to operate in their day to day lives. The learners who are economically disadvantaged are entitled to get assistance from the government through a programme known as Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), but they rarely get such assistance because the beneficiaries of such schemes are left at the discretion of the school head teachers who are some times less interested or corrupt. Some-times these children may not qualify as financially needy children because their parents are working in the diaspora.

6.7.2.3 The study also concludes that in the absence of their parents due to migration, the distant parented adolescent girls head the families. This task is difficult for them to carry out because of its associated responsibilities such as managing resources, looking after the siblings and taking care of the livestock. Because they are young, they have some challenges in asserting the position of parents. For instance, they get carried away with things which are not important when budgeting. This depletes their resources and money and leaves them struggling with less resources.

6.7.2.4 In educational settings, support from some teachers may be limited if teachers are unaware of their plight of being distant parented. Some of the problems that they have are that they do not get support with schoolwork; they have a shortage of resources and lack adult support. This means that they do not get support from their teachers and this affects their emotional and academic development.

6.7.2.5 Communication with the migrant parents does not go without its own challenges. The study concludes that delayed and erratic communication by migrant parents results in them getting stressed. The study further indicates that in some instances the environment in which they are to answer the phone calls from the parents are not conducive. They long for privacy when conversing with their migrant parents. The presence of guardians and/or caregivers poses as a threat to their privacy. This leads to emotional harm if they fail to communicate their concerns to the migrant parents.

6.7.3 Strategies of coping used by distant parented adolescent girls

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that the left behind adolescent girls devise some ways to cope with their trajectory of being distant parented.

6.7.3.1 The study showed that they end up engaging in church youth activities. Turning to religion helps them cope with their situation better. They feel relieved of their stress and problems. Besides turning to religion, the study concludes that the distant parented adolescents also seek spiritual counselling to cope with their situation. They indicated that spiritual counselling is therapeutic. They are trying to come to terms with parental migration and being distant parented.

6.7.3.2 Distant parented adolescent girls hang out with their friends in coping with being distant parented. Friends provide the company and support which the disant parented girls find to be helpful in managing their situation. The study shows that friends understand them better.

6.7.3.3 Engaging in extra mural activities is another coping strategy used by the distant parented adolescent girls. These activities help the girls to relax as they socialise with others. Thus, they manage their situation better.

6.7.3.4 The study concludes that some distant parented adolescent girls are resilient. They have accepted being distant parented and thus have developed a thick skin. This helps them to soldier on despite the challenges that they encounter. They have found a way of dealing with the challenges.

6.8 Recommendations

Throughout the interviews, it was clear that providing support to the distant parented adolescent girls may contribute positively to the girls' development. For that reason, the following recommendations are made with the intention of improving the lives of distant parented adolescent girls. The recommendations are directed to the policymakers, the schools, the parents and the society.

6.8.1   Before they leave their daughters behind, parents should be well-equipped on how best to mentally prepare their adolescent girls about their intention to migrate and how they are going to deal with the gap that is created. In this way, the girls become prepared for their parents' migration and do not feel abandoned. Parents should make arrangement for their children's care with a trusted member of the family to sustain their role of looking after the siblings.

6.8.2   Distant parenting parents should continue to fulfil their roles as parents to their left behind adolescent girls. They can do so through remitting them on time, visiting them often and advising them on matters pertaining to their development. In this way they will create a better relationship between themselves and their left behind adolescent girls. They should maintain constant and consistent communication with their adolescent girls whom they have left behind. This may minimise the geographical gap that has been created by migration.

6.8.3   Parents should have knowledge of their distant parented adolescent girls' friends as some friends may influence them into engaging in anti-social behaviour.

6.8.4   Guardians and caregivers should be provided with information on the challenges that the distant parented adolescent girls may encounter so that they may be able to solve them amicably, as some have indicated that they are being exploited.

6.8.5   The government should ensure that programmes to conscientise community members on distant parenting are put in place to promote a better understanding of the distant parented adolescent girls. This could be done by coming up with more support programmes for supporting the disadvantaged children including the distant parented adolescent girls.

6.8.6   The government should come up with the legislations that protects the left behind adolescent girls from all forms of abuse and violations of their rights. The study, therefore, emphasises that the Ministry of Education should collaborate with other stakeholders such as NGOs, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, and other

organizations that advocate for the rights of children. The bio-ecological framework proposes an approach to support the distant parented adolescent girls.

6.8.7 Based on the findings of the study, teachers, peers, NGOs, government and community members should work in collaboration to help distant parented adolescent girls. They should provide sufficient support for the development of the distant parented adolescent girls, particularly those located in the rural areas. The distant parented adolescent girls' needs should be addressed.

6.8.9 The study recommends that, schools should have support teams such as the school guidance and counselling department. The department should be aware of the plight of the distant parented adolescent girls and create a friendly environment that will also help them with the problems they encounter by counselling them. This may make their experiences positive by providing support and guidance. Counselling also helps them to cope with the experiences of being distant parented.

6.8.10 Teachers should have information on the unique needs of distant parented adolescent girls, be aware of their plight and not make demands that put them under a lot of pressure. Teachers therefore need to be conscientised on the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls and their roles as educators in filling in the gap for the absent parents.

6.8.11 Schools and churches may also work together so that issues that have to do with the distant parented adolescent girls may also be referred to spiritual counsellors in order to help the distant parented adolescent girls.

6.8.12 Extra curriculum activities are important at schools so that the distant parented adolescent girls may find something that entertain them so that chances of them engaging in antisocial behaviours may be minimised.

6.8.13 In the community, support groups can be formed to deal with issues affecting the distant parented adolescent girls. Through these groups, health coping strategies can be instilled in the distant parented adolescent girl so that they may be able to deal with their situation and avoid unhealthy coping strategies.

6.8.14 Thus, all the people who contribute towards the development of the distant parented adolescent girl children should be made aware of their crucial role. Therefore, through the Ministry of Education the government should provide skills needed to deal with distant parented adolescent girls to educators and other various stakeholders who should collaborate and network for the assistance or support of the left behind adolescent girls. The Ministry of Education does not adequately provide

support to schools and in the communities on issues to do with distant parented adolescent girls that suit their trajectory of being distant parented.

6.9 Recommendations for future research

The study explored the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. In the study, it was the voice of the distant parented adolescent girls on their experiences of being distant parented. The study also highlighted the influence of different systems surrounding the distant parented adolescent girl to their development.

6.9.1 Future studies may focus on the voice of distant parented adolescent boys too and children below the age of 12 years.

6.9.2 Emphasis on future studies should focus on hearing the experiences of other stakeholders such as the government, NGOs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare who contribute to the development of the adolescent girls their experiences. This would help to assess the effectiveness of the framework.

6.9.3 Future studies must be done with the distant parented adolescent children in the Chiredzi Urban to enable a holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

6.9.4 A quantitative study may be done so that statistics may be generated to how many children are left behind by their parents who are in diaspora. This is necessary for intervention purposes.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: **LETTER SEEKING PERMISSION FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

Email address: makondopv@gmail.com

Contact cell number: +268 78674021

13 January 2020
The Permanent Secretary
The ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture
P O Box CY 121 Causeway
Harare

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN THE CHIREDZI SOUTH CONSTITUENCY: Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology (Ph.D) (Psychology of Education), Student Number: 64041794

I am a Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology (Ph.D) degree student specializing in Psychology of Education at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I kindly seek your permission to undertake research in the Chiredzi South Constituency for my doctoral studies in five secondary schools.

My topic is centred on; 'Experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe'. The study will involve secondary school learners (in particular distant parented adolescent girls). Listed below are the data collection tools I intend to use with the nominated participants.

- Assent forms for distant parented adolescent girls (English, Tsonga or Shangani and Shona version)
- Interview Guide for distant parented adolescent girls
- Focus group discussions Guide
- Consent Form for Legal Guardians of distant parented adolescent girls

The information obtained will be treated with confidentiality. I also undertake to observe stipulated ethical considerations pertaining to researching with human subjects. I hope that the information I will obtain will assist in that it can address the root problem of distant parenting.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs Paula V Makondo

Ph.D Student (UNISA-College of Education)

APPENDIX B (I): **CONSENT FORM FOR DISTANT PARENTED ADOLESCENT GIRLS ABOVE 18 YEARS**

Consent form for distant parented adolescent girls above 18 years in Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe

*Study this form carefully before you fill it in.

Name of the researcher: Mrs Paula V Makondo

Designation : Student

Student Number : 64041794 University of South Africa (UNISA)

Research Topic : Experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in Chiredzi South

Constituency of Zimbabwe

Purpose of study

I humbly ask your permission to participate in my study by responding to an interview and focus group discussion on issues related to the above topic. The aim of the study is to explore the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls. This is in line with trying to document and recommend how best to address the root problem of distant parenting.

Benefits and your freedom

There are neither direct nor financial benefits but you are assured of safety, anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research process. At the end of the study, I promise to present the findings where only pseudo names (not your real names) will appear in order to protect your identity. Please feel free to ask questions and clarifications from me if something may not be clear as we work together. The questionsing may cause any emotional discomfort here and there please bear with me; my intention is not to cause any harm. I promise to remain helpful and patient with you at all times.

Your information will not be shared with anyone unless you feel otherwise. You have the right not to answer any of the questions or to withdraw your participation without any penalty if you so wish.

Your signature will indicate your understanding of this agreement to participate. You may return the form unsigned if you do not wish to continue.

Commitment

I ………………………….aged…………….years hereby voluntarily wish to participate in the study individual interview and focus group discussion for as long as I remain assured of safety and security during the research operations. Thank you.

Signature……………………………………Date………………………

APPENDIX B (II): CONSENT FORM FOR DISTANT PARENTED ADOLESCENT GIRLS (Xitsonga)

Papila ro pfumela ku teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso hi vanhwanyana va khume-nhungu wa malembe kuya ehenhla

Hlaya papila leri hi vuenti ungase hlamula

Mulavisisi: Mrs Paula Varaidzai Makondo

Xiyimo: Mudyondzi

Nomboro ya mudyondzi: 64041794, Yunivhesithi ya Afurika Dzonga (UNISA)

Nhloko mhaka ya ndzavisiso: Swiyimo leswi vana va vanhwanyana lava va nga tshameki na vatswari va xiviri eku suhi a Chiredzi, a ndzhawini yale Zimbabwe.

Xikonngomelo xa ndzavisiso

Hi mina Paula Varaidzai Makondo. Ndzi mudyondzi wa tidyondzo tale henhla ta vudokodela bya swa tidyondzo e Yunivhesithi ya Afurika Dzonga (UNISA). Ndzi endla ndzavisiso leswaku ndzi ta twisisa hi vuenti swiyimo swa vana va vanhwanyana lava va kurisiwaka hi vatswari lava vanga kule na vona a tikweni ra Zimbabwe, a Cheredzi. Ndzavisiso lowu, ndzi wu endla tani hi xiphemu xa tindyondzo ta mina. Hikokwalaho, ndzi kombela leswaku u teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso lowu. Ndzi kombela leswaku undzi pfuna hiku hlamula swivutiso swo hlaya nyana mayelana na nhloko mhaka ya ndzavisiso lowu. Xikonngomelo nkulu iku andlala swiyimo swa vana va vanhwanyana lava va nga tshameki na vatswari va vona eku suhi.

Mbuyelo na nthsuxeko

Tiva leswaku ku teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso lowu a swinga ku vuyerisi nchumu hi tlhelo ra swa timali. Ntsena, uta hlayiseka hi minkarhi hinkwayo. Hi leswaku, mavito ya wena na mabulo hinkwawo yata tumbetiwa leswaku kungavi na munhu na un'we loyi anga ta switiva leswaku u tekile xiphemu eka ndzavisiso lowu. Loko ndzi andlala vumbhoni bya ndzavisiso lowu, ndzi ta tirhisa masivi ematshan'wini ya mavito. Nthsuxeka, vutisa swivutiso loko unga twisisi. Swivutiso swa mina swinga pfuxa mabibi ya mbilu laha na lahaya, ntsena, ndzi

kombela undzi lehisela mbilu, hikuva xikongomelo xa mina ahiku ku twisa kuvava. Ndzi tshembisa leswaku ndzi ta lehisa mbilu hi minkarhi hinkwayo.

Hiku vuyelela, mavito ya wena i xihundla, handle ka loko wena utsakela leswaku ndzi ya paluxa. Tiva leswaku una mfanelo yo ala ku hlamula swivutiso swa mina. Nakambe, unga hlawula ku suka tani hi xiphemu xa ndzavisiso lowu. Kuhava loyi anga taku vona nandzu.

Nsayino wa wena laha hansi wu tiyisisa leswaku wa pfumela ku teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso lowu. Loko unga pfumeli ku teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso, vuyisa papila leri ri ri hava nsayino.

Kuti boha hi nsayino

Mina…………………………………………………. wa malembe ya……………………….ndzi pfumela ndzi nga bohiwanga ku teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso lowu. Ndzi pfumela ku vutisiwa swi vutiso ndzi tlhela ndzi teka xiphemu eka njhekanjhekisano. Ndzi endla leswi hiku tshembha leswaku mavito ya mina i xihundla. Ndza khensa.

Nsayino……………………………. Siku…………………………………

APPENDIX B (III): CONSENT FORM FOR DISTANT PARENTED ADOLESCENT GIRLS (CHISHONA)
Gwaro rechibvumirano chokuita tsvagurudzo inobata mudunhu reChiredzi South, kuMasvingo, muZimbabwe (chiShona) *Verenga gwaro rino rose usati wapindura

Zita romutsvagurudzi: Amai Paula V Makondo

Basa : Mudzidzi- University of South Africa

Email: makondopv@gmail.com   Nhamba yorunharembozha: +268 78674021

Nhamba yomudzidzi: 64041794   University of South Africa (UNISA)

Musoro Wetsvagurudzo: Zviitiko zvinosanganikwa nazvo nemhandara vanorerwa nevabereki vakabuda kunze kwenyika mudunhu reChiredzi South muZimbabwe.

Chinangwa chetsvagurudzo

Ndinokumbirawo nenzira yakatsanangurika, kubatikana kwako nokusunnguka kupa mhinduro pamibvunzonyorwa uye panhaurirano panyaya dzinobata musoro wenyaya iyi. Chidzidzo chino chakanangana nokuongorora uye kutsvaga kunzwisisa ziitiko zvinosangana nemhandara mukurarama kwavo vachirerwa nevabereki vari kunze kwenyika. Mukuita tsvagurudzo iyi ndine kariro yekuti pamwe pachava nezvinyorwa zvinoratidza ziitiko zvinosangana nemhandara dzinorerwa nevabereki vari kunze kwenyika.

Mibairo nekusunnguka panyaya iyi

Hapana chinobatika kana mari yaunowana asi ndinovimbisa kuchengetedzwa kwakakodzerena, kukudzwa uye tsindidzo youmbowo hwauchapa mutsvagurudzo ino. Pakupedzisira ndinovimbisa kubudisa zvandinenge ndawana nemazitasiri (nemazita asiri chaiwo) kuitira kuti urege kuzvidzwa nevamwe. Iva wakasunnguka kubvunza mibvunzo kwandiri pane zvisina kukujekera patinenge tichishanda pamwe chete kudai. Kana mibvunzo yangu isingakubati zvakanaka, ndapota usaora mwoyo nekuti chinangwa changu hachisi chokukurwadzisa pamwoyo. Ndinovimbisa kuramba ndichibatsirana newe nguva dzose.

Mashoko ako haazobudiswi pachena kunze kwekunge wazvitendera iwe. Une kodzero yekusapindura imwe mibvunnzo iyi kana kubuda mutsvagurudzo iyi pasina zvaungaitwa.

Kusaina zita rako zvichataridza kunzwisisa uye kubvuma kubatikana munyaya iyi. Iwe uchapiwa gwaro iri raunenge wasaina. Unogona kudzosa fomu risina kusainiwa kana wafunga kusapinda mutsvagurudzo iyi.

Kuzvipira

Ini……………………………………..,ndine   makore……………………………… okuberekwa ndinozvimisira kubatikana muboka renhaurirano yetsvagurudzo iyi, uye munhaurirwa kana ndichinge ndakachengetedzwa nokudzivirirwa pane zvichaitwa zvose. Ndinozviziva kuti ndakasunung uka kubuda mubasa iri pamadiro angu chero papi zvapo pandadira. Ndatenda.

Chisainwa chemwana………………….   Zuva………………………………….

APPENDIX C: (I) ASSENT FORM FOR DISTANT PARENTED ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Assent form for distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe

*Study this form carefully before you fill it in.

Name of the researcher: Mrs Paula V Makondo

Designation   : Student

Student Number   : 64041794 University of South Africa (UNISA)

Research Topic   : Experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in Chiredzi South

                           Constituency of Zimbabwe

Purpose of study

I humbly request you to participate in my study by responding to an interview and focus group discussion on issues related to the above topic. The aim of the study is to explore the experiences of distance parented adolescent girls. This is in line with trying to document and recommend how best to address the root problem of distant parenting.

Benefits and your freedom

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

Tell your legal guardian

I will require that your education officer, headmaster or the chairperson of the Parents Teachers Association be consulted on your intention to participate in this study so that you may be granted permission.

Your information will not be shared with anyone unless you feel otherwise. You have the right to deny answering any of the questions or to withdraw your participation without any penalty.

Your signature will indicate your understanding of this agreement to participate. A copy of the signed assent form will be forwarded to your headmaster or the chairperson of the Parents Teachers Association. You may return the form unsigned if you do not wish to continue with the study.

Commitment

I ……………………………aged…………….years hereby voluntarily wish to participate in the study individual interview and focus group discussion for as long as I remain assured of safety and security during the research operations. Thank you.

Signature   ………………………………………

Date…………………………………………….

Details of Person Giving Consent

Name of Person Giving Consent…………………………………………

Designation……………………………………………………………….

Cell/ Phone Number …………………………………………………….

(3 signed copies to: the researcher, child and person giving consent)

APPENDIX C (II): ASSENT FORM FOR DISTANT PARENTED ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Papila ro pfumela ku teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso hi vanhwanyana lava ntsongo lava van ga thsamiki na Vatswari eku suhi

Hlaya papila leri hi vuenti ungase hlamula

Mulavisisi: Mrs Paula Varaidzai Makondo

Xiyimo: Mudyondzi

Nomboro ya mudyondzi: 64041794, Yunivhesithi ya Afurika Dzonga (UNISA)

Nhloko mhaka ya ndzavisiso: Swiyimo leswi vana va vanhwanyana lava va nga tshameki na vatswari va xiviri eku suhi a Chiredzi, a ndzhawini yale Zimbabwe.

Xikonngomelo xa ndzavisiso

Hi mina Paula Varaidzai Makondo. Ndzi mudyondzi wa tidyondzo tale henhla ta vudokodela bya swa tidyondzo e Yunivhesithi ya Afurika Dzonga (UNISA). Ndzi endla ndzavisiso leswaku ndzi ta twisisa hi vuenti swiyimo swa vana va vanhwanyana lava va kurisiwaka hi vatswari lava vanga kule na vona a tikweni ra Zimbabwe, a Cheredzi. Ndzavisiso lowu, ndzi wu endla tani hi xiphemu xa tindyondzo ta mina. Hikokwalaho, ndzi kombela leswaku u teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso lowu. Ndzi kombela leswaku undzi pfuna hiku hlamula swivutiso swo hlaya nyana mayelana na nhloko mhaka ya ndzavisiso lowu. Xikonngomelo nkulu iku andlala swiyimo swa vana va vanhwanyana lava va nga tshameki na vatswari va vona eku suhi.

Mbuyelo na ntshuxeko

Tiva leswaku ku teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso lowu a swinga ku vuyerisi nchumu hi tlhelo ra swa timali. Ntsena, uta hlayiseka hi minkarhi hinkwayo. Hi leswaku, mavito ya wena na mabulo hinkwawo yata tumbetiwa leswaku kungavi na munhu na un'we loyi anga ta switiva leswaku u tekile xiphemu eka ndzavisiso lowu. Loko ndzi andlala vumbhoni bya ndzavisiso lowu, ndzi ta tirhisa masivi ematshan'wini ya mavito. Nthsuxeka, vutisa swivutiso loko unga twisisi. Swivutiso swa mina swinga pfuxa mabibi ya mbilu laha na lahaya, ntsena, ndzi

kombela undzi lehisela mbilu, hikuva xikongomelo xa mina ahiku ku twisa kuvava. Ndzi tshembisa leswaku ndzi ta lehisa mbilu hi minkarhi hinkwayo.

Tivisa va kulukumba lava u tshamaka na vona

Ndzi ta langutela leswaku va swa tidyondzo, nhloko ya xikolo, na vurhangeri byo yimela vatswari va tivisiwa hi xikongomelo xa wena xo teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso lowu leswaku vaku nyika mpfumelelo.

Hiku vuyelela, mavito ya wena i xihundla, handle ka loko wena utsakela leswaku ndzi ya paluxa. Tiva leswaku una mfanelo yo ala ku hlamula swivutiso swa mina. Nakambe, unga hlawula ku suka tani hi xiphemu xa ndzavisiso lowu. Kuhava loyi anga taku vona nandzu.

Nsayino wa wena laha hansi wu tiyisisa leswaku wa pfumela ku teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso lowu. Nkandziyiso wa papilla leri wu ta nyikiwa va swa tidyondzo, nhloko ya xikolo, na vurhangeri byo yimela Vatswari. Loko unga pfumeli ku teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso, vuyisa papila leri ri ri hava nsayino.

Kuti boha hi nsayino

Mina…………………………………………….   wa   malembe ya……………………….ndzi pfumela ndzi nga bohiwanga ku teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso lowu. Ndzi pfumela ku vutisiwa swi vutiso ndzi tlhela ndzi teka xiphemu eka njhekanjhekisano. Ndzi endla leswi hiku tshembha leswaku mavito ya mina i xihundla.

Nsayino……………………………. Siku………………………………

APPENDIX C: (III) ASSENT FORMS FOR DISTANT PARENTED ADOLESCENT GIRLS (CHISHONA)

Gwaro rechibvumirano chokuita tsvagurudzo inobata mudunhu rechiredzi South, kuMasvingo, muzimbabwe (chiShona) *Verenga gwaro rino rose usati wapindura.

Zita romutsvagurudzi: Amai Paula V Makondo

Basa : Mudzidzi- University of South Africa

Email: makondopv@gmail.com   Nhamba yorunharembozha: +268 78674021

Nhamba yomudzidzi: 64041794   University of South Africa (UNISA)

Musoro Wetsvagurudzo: **Zviitiko zvinosanganikwa nazvo nemhandara vanorerwa nevabereki vakabuda kunze kwenyika mudunhu reChiredzi South muZimbabwe.**

Chinangwa chetsvagurudzo

Ndinokumbirawo nenzira yakatsanangurika, kubatikana kwako nokusun, nguka kupa mhinduro pamibvunzonyorwa uye panhaurirano panyaya dzinobata musoro wenyaya iyi.Chidzidzo chino chakanangana nokuongorora uye kutsvaga kunzwisisa ziitiko zvinosangana nemhandara mukurarama kwavo vachirerwa nevabereki vari kunze kwenyika. Mukuita tsvagurudzo iyi ndine kariro yekuti pamwe pachava nezvinyorwa zvinoratidza ziitiko zvinosangana nemhandara dzinorerwa nevabereki vari kunze kwenyika.

Mibairo nekusununguka panyaya iyi

Hapana chinobatika kana mari yaunowana asi ndinovimbisa kuchengetedzwa kwakakodzerena, kukudzwa uye tsindidzo youmbowo hwauchapa mutsvagurudzo ino. Pakupedzisira ndinovimbisa kubudisa zvandinenge ndawana nemazitasiri (nemazita asiri chaiwo) kuitira kuti urege kuzvidzwa nevamwe. Iva wakasununguka kubvunza mibvunzo kwandiri pane zvisina kukujekera patinenge tichishanda pamwe chete kudai. Kana mibvunzo yangu isingakubati zvakanaka, ndapota usaora mwoyo nekuti chinangwa changu hachisi chokukurwadzisa pamwoyo. Ndinovimbisa kuramba ndichibatsirana newe nguva dzose.

Taurira muchengeti kana akakumiririra

Ndinoda kuti uwane tendero kubva mukuru wechikoro. Mashoko ako haazobudiswi pachena kunze kwekunge wazvitendera iwe. Une kodzero yekusapindura imwe mibvunnzo iyi kana kubuda mutsvagurudzo iyi pasina zvaungaitwa.

Kusaina zita rako zvichataridza kunzwisisa uye kubvuma kubatikana munyaya iyi. Iwe pamwe chete nomukuru wako wechikoro muchapiwa gwaro iri raunenge wasaina. Unogona kudzosa fomu risina kusainiwa kana wafunga kusapinda mutsvagurudzo iyi.

Kuzvipira

Ini…………………………………..,ndine makore…………………………… okuberekwa ndinozvimisira kubatikana muboka renhaurirano yetsvagurudzo iyi, uye munhaurirwa kana ndichinge ndakachengetedzwa nokudzivirirwa pane zvichaitwa zvose. Ndinozviziva kuti ndakasunnguka kubuda mubasa iri pamadiro angu chero papi zvapo pandadira. Ndatenda.

Chisainwa chemwana………………. Zuva…………………………………….

Muchengeti anomirira mwana

Zita………………………………………………………………

Basa romuchengetedzi…………………………………………

Namba yerunharembozha…………………………………

(Mashizha matatu akasainwa anoenda kuna: mutsvakurudzi, mwana nemukuru wechikoro)

APPENDIX D (I): **FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DISTANT PARENTED ADOLESCENT GIRLS**

Welcoming remarks by the researcher

My name is Mrs Paula Varaidzai Makondo and currently I am enrolled as a Ph.D student with the University of South Africa (UNISA). I want to welcome all of you in this research-related discussion. I am also kindly asking you to assist me in my research study by participating meaningfully during the discussions on your experiences as a distant parented adolescent girl. With your permission, the discussion interview will be audio-taped. I will also write brief notes as the discussion progresses. You are free to contribute in Tsonga (Shangani), English, Shona or mixed languages. We will identify one another by code numbers as our pseudonyms when referring to one another even though we know each other's real names. Everyone should stick a label on her chest with the code that we will use to identify him/her. Feel free to express your opinions. One person will be allowed to talk at a time. The collected information will be treated with confidentiality. The discussion topic is: 'Experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe'. We will sit in a round table style so that we can be able to see one another easily. The session may last 45 minutes to one hour. You are allowed to clarify some points which may be unclear to other people.

Questions that guided the researcher

Experiences of distant parented adolescent girls

1. How do you feel when you stay without your parents and do you want to be with them?
2. In what way are your parents looking after you?
3. What social experiences do you face because of the absence of your parents?
4. How did your parental migration affect your education?
5. What other changes did you experience which were prompted by the departure of your parents?
6. How do your parents communicate with you and how often? Do you think that communication with them is adequate or too much?
7. Do you think that those who are looking after you at home are taking good care of you? If not, how are they treating you?

Challenges of distant parented adolescent girls

8. What is the attitude of the community that you are living with towards you?
9. Do you have siblings whom you are staying with? If so, do they assist with household chores?
10. What living arrangements were made for you by your parents prior to their departure and were they discussed with you?
11. Who is monitoring/looking after you in the absence of your parents? How are you related to that particular individual?
12. Are there people who take advantage of you because of the absence of your parent? If so how?
13. Do you sometimes feel vulnerable because of the absence of your parents?
14. How often do you feel abused because of the absence of the parent?
15. How often do your parents visit home?
16. How do you spend the money that your parents send you?
17. How are things needed in school provided?
18. What are some of your basic needs and how are they met?
19. In what way does/did distant parenting affect your academic performance?

Coping strategies employed by distant parented adolescent girls

20. What do you do if you do not get all your basic needs?
21. What do you do if your parents do not send your monthly remittances in time?
22. Were you ever employed as a part time worker to raise money for your survival? If so, were you properly paid?
23. How do you deal with abusive people if there are any?
24. In the event that you feel insecure, what do you do?
25. If you do not like your situation, how are you planning to get out of it?
26. Explain how you are coping with the absence of your parents?
27. Is there any additional information that you would want to tell me in relationed to this topic?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

APPENDIX D (II): FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DISTANT PARENTED ADOLESCENT GIRLS (Xitsonga)

Njhekanjhekisani hi nhkokomhakanyonkongoma: swiletelo eka vana va vanhwanyana lava va nga tsameki na vatswari eku suhi.

Mario yo amukela ku suka eka mulavisisi

Hi mina manana Paula Varaidzai Makondo. Ndzi mudyondzi wa tidyondzo tale henhla a YunuvhesitinyabAfrurika Dzonga (UNISA). Ndza mi amukela eka nhlengeletano lowu wa swa ndzavisiso. Ndzi kombela leswaku mindzi pfuna hi ndzavisiso lowu. Ndzi kombela leswaku mi teka xiohemu hiku ti yimisela. Ndzi kombela leswaku minofulekabtimbilu mind I byela Swiyimo swa n'wina hi vuenti mayelana na mhaka yoka minga tshami na vatswari hi xiviri. Loko mi pfumela, ndzi kombela ku kandziyisa marito ya n'wina loko hiri nkarhi hi bula. Tirhisa hambi kuri rihi ririmi ku hlamula, hambi Xitsonga, English, kumbe Shona. Kahle kahle, ungabkatsa katsa loko uswi tsakela. Ndzi ta mi nika masivi lawa mibfanelaka kuya tirhisa loko mi vitanana leswaku mavitubya n'wina ya ngabpaluxeki. Tirhisani masivi law ntseka hi minkarhi hinkwayo. Ntshuxekani, vula I hambi yini kumbe yini. Ndzi kombela leswaku hinga kavanyetani loko hi hlamula.

Nhloko mhaka ya njhekanjhekisano: Swiyimo swa vana va vanhwanyana lava va nga tsameki na vatswari va xidzi eku suhi na vona a Chiredzi, endzawini yale Zimbabwe.

Ahibtsameni hibxirhendzevutana etafuleni leswaku hita voana kahle. Njhekanjhekisano lowu wuta heta nkarhi wo ringa a 45 wa timinete. Una moufumelelo wo basisa laha van'wana vanga twisiseki.

Swivutiso

1. Utibtwa njhani loko Unga tshami na vatswari va wena? Swona, wasinlava ku tshama na vona?
2. Vatswari va wena vaku Hlayisani ndlela yihi?
3. Ku a swiyimu muni leswi u hlanganaka na swona hikokwalaho kakuka Unga tshami na vatswari?
4. Ku famba Ka vatswari va wena vata tshama endzawini yin'wani swiku khumbhisa ku yini?
5. Hi kwihi ku cinca kun'wani unga ku vona hikokwalaho kaku famba Ka vatswari va wena?

6. Mu burisa ku yini na vatswari, Ka ngani, na swona wa enela hi mabulelobya kona?

7. U ehleketa leswaku lava u tshama Ka na vona vaku hlayisa kahle? Hlamusela leswaku vaku khomisa ku yini?

Mintlhotlho yo fambisana naku tshamelankule na vana

8. Vaku khima njhani va aka ndhawu lava u tshamaka na vona?

9. Una vamakwavo lava utshamaka na vona? Swona, vaku pfuna hi mintirhonyale kaya?

10. Vatswari va wena vaku lunghuserise ku yini swa hanyelo loko va ngari kona? Va bile na wena xana kee?

11. Imani loyi aku kayidzaka? Una vuxaka bya njhani na munhu loyi?

12. Va kona vanhu lava vaku xanisaka hiku a vatswari va wena vangari kona?

13. Utitwa Unga hlayiseka hi hukuva vatswari va wena vangari kona?

14. Utitwa ongebubxanjsiwa Ka ngani hiku a vatswari va wena va ngari kona?

15. Vatswari va wena va vhaka Ka ngani ekaya?

16. Utirhisisa ku yini Mali leyi vatswari vaku rhumela Ka yona?

17. Swilaveko swale xikolweni swi xavisiwa ku yini?

18. Hi swihi leswi uswi lavaka, na swona u xaveriwa hi mani?

19. Ku a va tswsri va wena va ngari kona swinkhimba njhani ma paselo ya wena exikolweni?

20. I endla yini loko ubheleriwa hi swilaveko, ntsena uri hava Mali?

21. U endla yini loko vatswari va hlwelanku rhumela Mali?

22. Utshama u kuma ntirhu wa nkarhi nyana leswaku uta kuma Mali yo ti hanyisa? Loko utshame u kuma ntirhu, ava ku hakela kahle?

23. U endla yini hi vanhu lava vaku xanisaka, loko vari kona?

24. Loko utwa Unga hlayiseka nga, u endla yini?

25. Loko kuri hiku Xuyimo xa wena axiku khomi kahle, Uta suka njhani eka xona?

26. Hlamusela leswaku u swikotisa ku yini ku tiyiselanku hanya vatswari va wena vari kule.

27. Kuna timhaka tin'wana na tin'wana leti utsakelaka kuti paluxa?

NDZA KHENSA SWINENE

APPENDIX E: (I) INTRODUCTORY NOTE FOR THE DISTANT PARENTED ADOLESCENT GIRL PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE

My name is Paula Varaidzai Makondo a registered bona fide Ph.D student of the University of South Africa (UNISA) who is currently conducting a study on the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. The study is purely academic and is part of my Ph.D requirements. I am therefore appealing to you to kindly assist me in my research endeavours by responding as truthfully as possible to my interview questions concerning my study. I wish to inform you that participation is voluntary and one is allowed to withdraw from the study at any stage should she feel that her rights are being interfered with or for any other reason which may be of concern to her. No penalty will be executed towards such behaviour. The information that you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used for academic research purposes only. There are no monetary benefits for participation. If you are agreeable to participating in this enquiry, please read and sign the attached consent form. Those who are under eighteen years of age will have their consent forms signed for them by the school head or the Chairperson of the Parents-Teachers Association.

Thank you

The Interview Guide for distant parented adolescent girls

Introduction:

This section of the interview seeks to elicit information on the experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in the Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe. Please try to answer as truthfully as you can. Your answers and identity will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Personal data

1. Do you have a parent/parents who have migrated outside the country?
2. For how long have they been outside the country?

Experiences of distant parented adolescent girls

3. How do you feel staying without your parents and do you want to be with them?
4. In what way are your parents looking after you?
5. What social experiences do you face because of the absence of your parents?
6. How did your parental migration affect your education?
7. What other changes did you experience which were prompted by the departure of your parents?
8. How do your parents communicate with you and how often? Do you think it is adequate or too much?
9. Do you think that those who are looking after you at home are taking good care of you? If not, how are they treating you?

The challenges of distant parented adolescent girls

10. What is the attitude of the community that you are living with towards you?
11. Do you have siblings whom you are staying with? If so, do they assist with household chores?
12. What living arrangements were made for you by your parents prior to their departure and were they discussed with you?
13. Who is monitoring/looking after you in the absence of your parents? How are you related to that particular individual?
14. Are there people who take advantage of you because of the absence of your parent? If so how?
15. Do you sometimes feel vulnerable because of the absence of your parents?

16. How often do you feel abused because of the absence of your parents?

17. How often do your parents visit home?

18. How do you spend the money that your parents send you?

19. How are things needed in school provided?

20. What are some of your basic needs and how are they met?

21. In what way does/did distant parenting affect your academic performance?

Coping strategies employed by distant parented adolescent girls

22. What do you do if you do not get all your basic needs?

23. What do you do if your parents do not send your monthly remittances in time?

24. Were you ever employed as a part time worker to raise money for your survival? If so, were you properly paid?

25. How do you deal with abusive people if there are any?

26. In the event that you feel insecure, what do you do?

27. If you do not like your situation, how are you planning to get out of it?

28. Explain how you are coping with the absence of your parents?

29. Is there any additional information that you want to tell me in relation to this topic?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

APPENDIX E (II): INTRODUCTORY NOTE FOR THE DISTANT PARENTED ADOLESCENT GIRL PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE (Xitsonga)

Mabulu na vana va vanhwanyana lava va nga tsameki na vatswari eku suhi: Manghenelo

Hi mina Paula Varaidzai Makondo. Ndzi mudyondzi wa tidyondzo tale henhla a Yunivhesithi ya Afurika Dzonga. Ndzi endla ndzavisiso mayelana na swiyimo swa vana va vanhwanyana lava va nga tshamiki na vatswari va vona eku suhi lava va humaka a Zimbabwe, a Cheredzi. Ndzavisiso lowu ndzi wu endla tani hi xiphemu xa tidyondzo ta mina. Ndzi kombela leswaku mindzi pfuna hiku hlamula swivutiso swa mina hi vuenti. Ku teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso lowu aswi bohi. Unga tshika nkhari wihi kumbe wihi. Kuhava na munhu na un'we loyi anga ta ku vona nandzu loko wo tshika ku teka xiphemu eka ndzavisiso lowu.

Tiva leswaku a wunge vuyeriwi hi nchumu hi tlhelo ra swa timali hikuva uteke xiphemu eka ndzavisiso lowu. Loko u pfumela, Hlaya papila ro pfumela laha hansi, ivi u sayina. Loko uri ahansi ka malembe ya khume-nhungu, uta fanela ku kombela munhu lonkulu ekaya kumbe exikolweni leswaku aku sayinela.

Ndza khensa

Swivutiso

Laha, ndzi vutiso swivutiso mayelana na swiyimo swa vana va vanhwanyana lava vanga tshamiki na vatswari va vona eku suhi. Ndzi kombela leswaku u hlamula swivutiso leswi hi vuenti.

Vuxokoxoko bya wena

1. Xana una Vatswari lava vanga famba va tshama etikweni rin'wana?
2. Inkarhi wo tani hi kwihi va fambile?

Swiyimo leswi unga hundza/hundaka eka swona

3. Uti twa njhani loko unga tshami na vatswari va wena? Swona, wa swilava ku tshama na vona?
4. Vatswari va wena vaku hlayisani hi ndlela yihi?
5. Ku na swiyimu muni leswi u hlanganaka na swona hikokwalaho ka kuka unga tshami na vatswari?
6. Ku famba ka vatswari va wena vaya tshama endzawini yin'wana swiku khumbhisa ku yini?
7. Hi kwihi ku cinca kun'wana loku unga ku vona hikokwalaho kaku famba ka vatswari va wena?
8. Mi burisa ku yini na vatswari, ka ngani, na swona wa enela hi mabulelo ya kona?
9. U ehleketa leswaku lava u tshamaka na vona vaku hlayisa kahle? Hlamusela leswaku vaku khomisa ku yini?

Mintlhotlho yo fambisana naku tshamelankule na vana

10. Vaku khomis ku yini va aka ndhawu lava u tshamaka na vona?

11. Una vamakwavo lava utshamaka na vona? Swona, vaku pfuna hi mintirho yale kaya?

12. Vatswari va wena vaku lulamiserise ku yini swa mahanyelo loko va ngari kona? Va bule na wena xana kee?

13. Imani loyi aku kayidzaka? Una vuxaka bya njhani na munhu loyi?

14. Va kona vanhu lava vaku xanisaka hikuva vatswari va wena vangari kona?

15. Utitwa unga hlayisekanga hikuva vatswari va wena vangari kona?

16. Utitwa onge xanisiwa ko tani hi kwihi hikuva vatswari va wena va ngari kona?

17. Vatswari va wena va vhaka ka ngani ekaya?

18. Uyi tirhisisa ku yini mali leyi vatswari vaku rhumelaka yona?

19. Swilaveko swale xikolweni swi xavisiwa ku yini, hi mani?

20. Hi swihi leswi uswi lavaka, leswi swi kayivelaka, na swona u xaveriwa hi mani?

21. Ku va vatswari va wena va ngari kona swi khumbha njhani ma paselo ya wena exikolweni?

22. U endla yini loko u heleriwa hi swilaveko, ntsena uri hava mali?

23. U endla yini loko vatswari va hlwela ku rhumela mali?

24. U tshama u kuma ntirhu wa nkarhi nyana leswaku uta kuma mali yo ti hanyisa? Loko utshame u kuma ntirhu, ava ku hakela kahle?

25. U endla yini hi vanhu lava vaku xanisaka, loko vari kona?

26. Loko utwa unga hlayisekanga, u endla yini?

27. Loko kuri hiku xiyimo xa wena axiku khomi kahle, uta suka njhani eka xona?

28. Hlamusela leswaku u swikotisa ku yini ku tiyisela ku hanya vatswari va wena vari kule.

29. Kuna timhaka tin'wana na tin'wana leti u tsakelaka kuti paluxa?

APPENDIX F :A UNISA ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2020/02/19

Dear Mrs PV MAKONDO

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2020/02/19 to 2025/02/19

Ref: **2020/02/19/64041794/24/AM**
Name: Mrs PV MAKONDO
Student No.: 64041794

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs PV MAKONDO
E-mail address: makondopv@gmail.com
Telephone: +268 25184747

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof R Tabane
E-mail address: tabanrj@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012 429 2056

Title of research:

Experiences of distant parented adolescent girls in Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe

Qualification: PhD Psychology of Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2020/02/19 to 2025/02/19.

The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2020/02/19 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

APPENDICES G: APPROVAL FROM THE MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY

APPENDIX H: APPROVAL LETTER MASVINGO PROVINCE

ALL communications should be
addressed to
"The Provincial Education Director for
Primary and Secondary Education"
Telephone: 263585/264331
Fax: 039-263261

ZIMBABWE

Ref: C/426/3

Ministry of Primary and Secondary
Education
P. O Box 89
Masvingo

07 May2021

Paula V Makondo
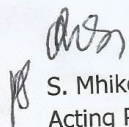University of South Africa
P. O. Box 392
UNISA, 0003
South Africa

**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN CHIREDZI DISTRICT:
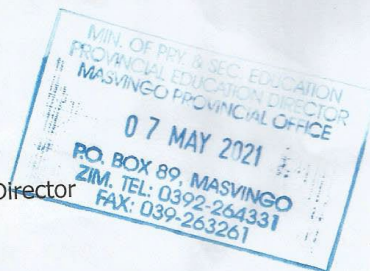MASVINGO PROVINCE**

Reference is made to your application to carry out a research in Chiredzi District of
Masvingo Province

**"EXPERIENCES OF DISTANT PARENTED ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN CHIREDZI
SOUTH CONSTITUENCY OF ZIMBABWE"**

Please be advised that the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education has
granted permission to carry out your research.

You are also advised to liaise with the District Education Officer who is responsible
for the schools which are part of the sample for your research.

S. Mhike
Acting Provincial Education Director
MASVINGO PROVINCE

MIN. OF PRY. & SEC. EDUCATION
PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR
MASVINGO PROVINCIAL OFFICE
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APPENDIX I: EDITOR LETTER

The National University of Lesotho
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Africa

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3 October 2022

Professor Tabane
Department of Psychology
University of South Africa
Pretoria
RSA

Dear Professor Tabane,

Re: Editing of Paula Varaidzai Makondo's PhD Thesis

I hereby confirm that I have edited Paula Varaidzai Makondo's PhD thesis titled:

Experiences of Distant Parented Adolescent Girls in Chiredzi South Constituency of Zimbabwe.

Sincerely,

Liaki Francina Moloi (Professor)

APPENDIX J: TURNITIN REPORT

Paula Makondo | Complete Dissertation for Examination   -- /0

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EXPERIENCES OF DISTANT PARENTED ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN CHIREDZI

by

PAULA VARAIDZAI MAKONDO

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the subject

PSYCHOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR R. TABANE

OCTOBER 2022