

GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE GIRL CHILD IN THE WAKE OF
THE NEW CURRICULUM: A SURVEY OF TWO SCHOOLS IN MAKONI DISTRICT,
ZIMBABWE**

**IRINE TSVARA
(Reg. Number: M140009)**

**A thesis submitted to the Robert Gabriel Mugabe School of Education and Culture, Great
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**MASTER OF EDUCATION
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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

1.1 Introduction

Girl-child education is more than just about getting girls into schools. It is about ensuring that girls feel supported, safe and learn while in schools, complete all levels of education with the skills and competencies to secure jobs, make decisions about their own lives, and contribute to their communities and the world. Girl-child education is a strategic development priority in most developing countries nowadays and Zimbabwe is not an exception. Better educated women tend to be healthier than uneducated women, participate more in the formal labour market, earn higher incomes, have fewer children, marry at a later age, and enable better health-care and education for their children. All these and many other factors combined can help lift households out of poverty hence girl-child education has been highly debatable in Zimbabwe and world over. Considering the number of girl-children in schools and how parents view their education, governments should play an important and strategic role to make sure that policies have been developed to meet this dire need of educating a girl-child hence the need to investigate the challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe.

1.2 Background of the study

Educating a girl is one of the best investments her family, community, and country can make. One of the goals of education is to have gender parity in primary and secondary education thus educating girls is one of the most important investments that any country can make in its own future.

Education has a profound effect on girls' ability to claim other rights and achieve status in society, such as economic independence and political representation. As the following examples demonstrate, having an education can make an enormous difference to a girl's chances of finding well-paid work, raising a healthy family and preventing the spread of diseases such as HIV and AIDS. Girl-child education in Zimbabwe is crucial as in any modern society. This is because education is one of the most effective instruments a nation has at its disposal for promoting sustainable social and economic development (Dawo & Simatwa, 2010). It leads to increased productivity of the educated as a means of human resource development for communal benefit (Dawo & Simatwa, 2010). Girl-child education raises economic productivity, reduces poverty and fertility rates, lowers infant and maternal mortality, and improves health, nutrition and environmental management (World Bank, 2002).

Several challenges and opportunities influence girl-child education. These challenges include:

- Cost of schooling which affect girls only (Mawere, 2012). Schooling is more costly for girls. The direct costs (e.g. school fees where they exist, uniforms, transportation) and opportunity costs (e.g. time could have spent working or helping family) of school often impact boys and girls differently. Many non-experimental studies using household survey data find that girls' schooling is more sensitive to cost, however defined, than is boys' schooling (Glick & Sahn, 2007). For example, in both Zimbabwe and Kenya, higher school fees increase dropout probabilities for girls but have no effect on boys (Lloyd, Mensch, & Clark, 2000). A study in Ethiopia finds that boys are less likely than girls to combine work and schooling or to be engaged in work only, and are more likely to be involved in leisure activities only compared to girls, so

the sum of domestic and non-paid work for girls is higher for girls (Woldehanna, Jones, & Tefera, 2008).

- Restricted space and expectations limit girls' ability to reap the returns to education. Social norms define the roles that women and men have in the family and the community, the expectations they have about their futures, their individual preferences and the kind of relationships they form. For example, in West Bengal, Beaman et al. (2011) find that, in places where no woman had ever been the local leader, 86 percent of parents wanted their daughters to be either a housewife or whatever their in-laws would decide for her, compared with less than 1 percent for their sons. Also, twice as many parents reported that they wanted their teenage sons to graduate from secondary school or college as those who wished the same for their daughters. In all, the degree of autonomy and empowerment that girls and women possess affects how much they can expect to gain from schooling.

- Early marriage and teen pregnancy keep girls out of school. Today, one in three girls in low- and middle-income countries (excluding China) continue to be married before the age of 18 and one in nine girls are married before their 15th birthday. While countries with the highest prevalence of child marriage are concentrated in Western and sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. in Niger 76 percent of girls marry before age 18), due to population size, the largest number of child brides reside in South Asia. Child marriage imposes heavy costs for girls socially, physically, and emotionally and undermines efforts to improve girls' education. In rural Bangladesh, for example, each additional year that marriage is delayed between ages 11 and 16 could add 0.22 year of schooling and 5.6 percent higher literacy (Field & Ambrus, 2008).

- Sponsorship which favors boys (Puffall, Nyamukapa, Eaton, Campbell, Skovdal, Munyati, & Gregson, 2014); poverty, pregnancy, early marriage and traditional beliefs devaluing girls' education (Mawere, 2012).

1.3 Opportunities for the Girl-Child Education

There are several identified opportunities for the girl-child education - from governments to civil society to the private sector—should care about educating girls. Ultimately, girls' education is a powerful force for catalyzing a virtuous circle of positive development outcomes. More educated girls aspire to become leaders and thus expand a country's leadership and entrepreneurial talent. One of the pernicious features of gender inequality is that it feeds on itself; parents may have lower aspirations for their daughters than for their sons, and so their daughters too have lower aspirations for themselves. Yet, if given the chance, girls can have the confidence and skills to be change-makers. A recent review of the literature on women's leadership found that most women leaders started early, engaging in education and leadership activities as adolescents (O'Neil, Plank and Domingo, 2015). A number of cases—from India to Rwanda—have shown that having women leading in their communities can make a difference, driving policies and programs that improve family and community well-being (Abbott, 2008).

1.4 Opportunities for the Girl-Child in the Wake of the New Curriculum In Zimbabwe

Evidence from evaluations of programs and policies, mostly in Zimbabwe, that have been undertaken to increase girls' and women's education point to, among others, several important strategies:

- High-quality and gender-sensitive curricula and learning materials.

Textbook provision is almost universally accepted as an important tool for teaching

and learning when the textbooks are used. But thumbing through textbooks used in primary schools in many countries around the world, one gets an immediate sense of the traditional and accepted gender roles in those countries. Over the past three decades, an increasing number of studies have been undertaken to examine the gender content of textbooks: females tend to be greatly underrepresented; males and females are associated with certain personal traits; they are depicted in stereotyped ways in both occupational and domestic spheres (Blumberg, 2007). The content of textbooks has been slow to change, so they do not reflect actual progress in women's empowerment and changing roles in society and the economy. Ensuring gender equality is reflected in teaching and learning materials and across the education system "may represent the strongest source of counter messages to traditional norms learned in the family, community, and national media" (Blumberg 2007).

- Girl-child friendly infrastructure. Programs that focus on improving infrastructure and school inputs should be designed with incentives for girls in mind to ensure that they improve girls' education outcomes. In Burkina Faso, a government program, the Burkinabé Response to Improve Girls' Chances to Succeed (BRIGHT) program, which placed well-resourced schools in 132 villages, is an example of such a program. The package of interventions included, among other things, school construction, teaching and learning inputs, teacher support and housing, gender sensitivity training for officials, incentives to children to attend school, and a mechanism for mobilizing community support for education in general and for girls' education in particular. The program results are promising. Enrolment of all children rose by 19 percentage points, and scores improved by 0.41 standard deviations, a test

that covered Mathematics and French subjects (Kazianga, Walque, & Alderman, 2012). The program increased girls' enrolment by 5 percentage points more than boys' enrolment, but boys' and girls' test scores increased by the same amount. "Girl-child friendly" amenities were found to be especially impactful in doing this.

- Cost-reducing mechanisms. Demand side interventions, which reduce the costs of schooling, tend to have the clearest gender-differentiated results on enrolment (Glewwe, 2002). Conditional cash transfer programs (CCTs) that offset a family's opportunity cost of sending girls and boys to school have been shown to increase enrollment, although only half of available studies of the educational impacts of CCTs actually report results by gender. Who receives the transfer for the family, not just the size of the transfer, also appears to make a difference in CCT programs. One study of a CCT program in Nicaragua shows that impacts of CCTs are higher when the woman holds more power in the household (Gitter & Barham, 2008). Scholarship programs can reduce the direct costs of schooling but the design of the program is essential to get right if scholarships schemes are going to be effective. Perhaps the best known scholarship scheme is the Bangladesh Female Secondary Stipend Program, which dates back to 1982 and to which researchers attribute the country's impressive increase in girls' education. To continue to receive the stipend, each girl must maintain a minimum 75 percent attendance rate, at least a 45 percent score in the annual school exams, and must remain unmarried until she obtains the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) or reaches age 18 (Raynor & Wesson, 2006).

Studies from various researchers have shown that girls who stay in school are less likely to engage in sexual activity and marry as teenagers (Hallfors, Cho, Rusakaniko, Iritani, Mapfumo, Zhang &

Miller, 2015), and are more likely to have a better economic future and better health (Miller, Hallfors, Cho, Luseno, & Waehrer, 2013), including protection from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (Jukes, Simmons, & Bundy, 2008) and intimate partner violence (McCloskey, Williams, & Larsen, 2005). Positive effects of education may occur through many paths, including changing attitudes about gender (Macintyre et al., 2013) and facilitating learning of HIV/AIDS information (Jesmin, Chaudhuri, & Abdullah, 2013). Girl-child (defined by UNAIDS, UNICEF, USAIDS, 2004 as persons under 18 years old with one or both parents deceased) are vulnerable to being out of school (UNICEF, 2006), being old for grade (Bicego, Rutsetin, & John, 2003), and having social and health problems (Gregson et al., 2005).

Researchers and policymakers have identified potential in programs that subsidize schooling costs for achieving public health and human rights objectives for the girl-child in Sub-Saharan Africa (Adato & Bassett, 2009). Paying for school fees (STEM program) and policy provision for not sending any child home for non-payment of fees have been shown to be promising opportunities for the girl-child reducing school dropout, reducing HIV/STI risk, and preventing child marriage among others. However, the present research intends to find out whether the introduction of a new curriculum brought some challenges and/or opportunities for the girl-child in Zimbabwe.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

Considerable evidence showed that nationally in Zimbabwe, the education of the girl-child is notably affected by gender disparity with regard to access, retention, and completion of the schooling cycle (World Bank, 1995). Girl-child education is critical given that it prepares girls for tertiary education, career choice, and for overall effective community roles, survival and

development. Available data on girl-child education in Zimbabwe revealed that; lack of access to resources, multiple roles of women, family commitment, low self-esteem, lack of support, gender stereotypes, cultural beliefs, family socialization and peer influences have affected greatly the education of the girl-child in Zimbabwe. In light of these acknowledgements, the government of Zimbabwe went on to introduce in education a new curriculum that would facilitate girl-child education in schools. This new curriculum is instrumental in promotion and support of girl-child education. It is, therefore, necessary for this study to find out challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum: a survey of two schools in Makoni District, Zimbabwe.

1.6 Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to find out what are the challenges and opportunities that exist for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Makoni District, Zimbabwe.

1.7 Research Objectives

The empirical survey is guided by the following objectives:

1. To find out the challenges that exists for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe.
2. To find out the opportunities that exists for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe.
3. To find out strategies that can be used by heads of schools and teachers to cope with challenges and opportunities that exists for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe.

1.8 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What challenges for the girl-child are there in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe?
2. What opportunities for the girl-child are there in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe?
3. What strategies can be used by heads of schools and teachers to cope with challenges and opportunities that exist for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe?

1.9 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it sets out to find out challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in the Zimbabwean education system. The new curriculum (2015-2020) has already indicated the need for curriculum change while implementing the curriculum in various grades. The recommendations made in this study will add knowledge and provide a basis for other researchers, conferences and debates on the challenges and opportunities of the new curriculum in the Zimbabwean education system.

1. Theoretically

- The study provided an understanding of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe.

2. Practically

- The study explored the views of the heads of schools and teachers on the challenges and opportunities that exist for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe.

3. Academically

- The study generated knowledge with regard to the new curriculum in Zimbabwe.

According to Brunner's theory (1966), what is taught should be in keeping with the learners' cognitive structures and understanding so that they can derive benefits from it. As far as possible, new curriculum should have a bearing on challenges and opportunities for the girl-child.

The study availed information that was useful in advancing the researcher's knowledge horizons on this topic and subsequent contribution to designing as well as reviewing curriculum issues in education.

1.10 Basic Assumptions of the Study

The present study was based on the following assumptions:

- There are challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwean education system.
- There are various views held by heads of schools and teachers on challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwean education system.

The study was, predicted upon the following practical assumptions:

- All participants responded to the interview and that they did so honestly and sincerely.
- It was possible to establish the challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum using interview instruments.

1.11 Limitations of the Study

The primary goal of this study is to find out the challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum from the perspectives of heads of schools and teachers. The primary limitation of the study relates to the use of non-probability research method and the small size of the sample typical of qualitative research (a survey of two schools in Makoni District, Zimbabwe). This implies that the results coming from the research may not be confidently extrapolated to the population of every school, as circumstances in other environments may differ from the sample size, unmatched gender ratios and the fact that the sample will not be randomly selected (Tsvara, 2013). Another technical limitation of this study was in transcribing the data from audio to text, inevitably a part of the richness, meaning and cultural flavour which could be lost in questionnaires (Sango, 2014).

1.12 Scope and Delimitations of the Study

The study will be a survey of challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwean education system in Makoni District in Zimbabwe. Data will be generated from heads of schools, teachers and girl-children in two primary schools. The findings of this study will be only one endeavour to find challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe.

1.13 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework (Figure 1) was used to help focus on the variables in the study. These variables included: the girl-child (student), Ministry of Education Policy, school and

environment. All the variables will have perceived challenges and opportunities that the schools are bound to have in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwean education system.

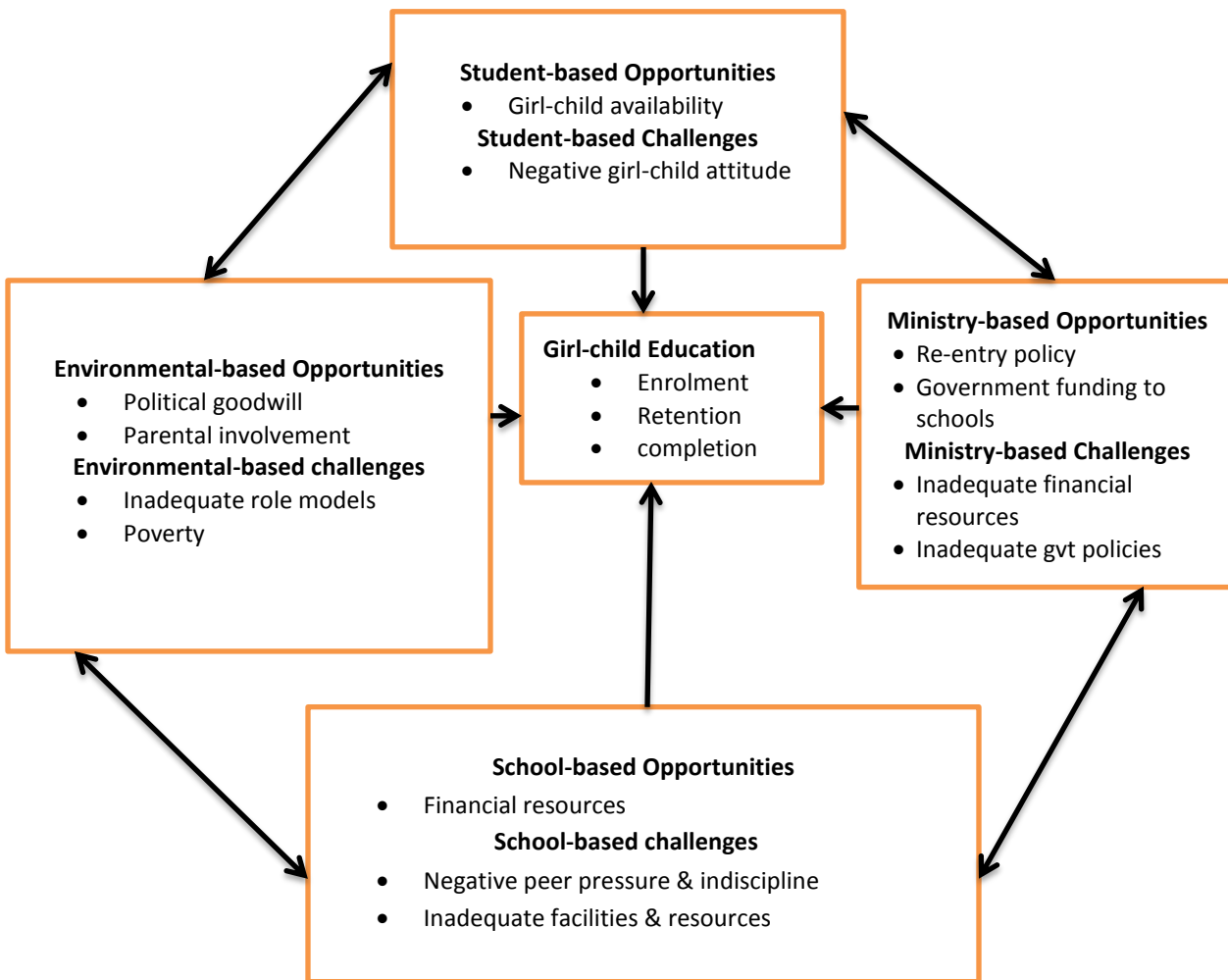


Fig. 1.1: Conceptual framework showing challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum

Source: Field Data (2018)

The aim of the conceptual framework on Figure 1.1 above was to bring together existing challenges and opportunities in the context of the student, environment, school and Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, where they overlap, where they mutually inform one another

and where there are gaps in literature (Sibert *et al*, 2008). This framework analysed content of each challenge and opportunity summarising them with the aim of placing the thesis into context. In this study the girl-child education was measured through the following indicators: enrolment of girls, their rate of retention in the school, and their completion rate at Grade 7, Form 4 and Form 6. Firey (1960) takes recognition of four value factors namely student, environment, school and Ministry that interact with each other and play a role in determining challenges and opportunities towards girl-child education. The student factors in the framework consists of opportunities (girl-child availability and cognitive ability) and challenges (negative girl-child attitude and low entry mark); environmental factors consists of opportunities (political goodwill, socio-economic background, and parental involvement) and challenges (inadequate role models, cultural negative stereotypes, poverty and domestic chores); school factors consists of opportunities (financial resources, guidance and counselling services) and challenges (negative peer pressure and discipline, inadequate facilities and resources); and ministry factors consists of opportunities (girl-child re-entry policy, girl-child funding to schools) and challenges (inadequate funding, inadequate policies) which affect girl-child education.

As such Figure 1.1 above is a conceptual framework developed to analyse the challenges and opportunities of girl-child education in the wake of the new curriculum. Firey (1960) this conceptual framework consists of four models that are interrelated: student based challenges and opportunities represent external forces that influence girl-child participation in education. These opportunities and challenges emanate from the students themselves. Environmental based challenges and opportunities represent external forces that emanate from the environment. School based challenges and opportunities represent external forces from the school itself. These challenges and opportunities are in the context of policies that govern school operations.

Ministry based challenges and opportunities represent external forces that emanate from the education policies on girl-child participation.

1.14 Operational Definition of Terms

Girl-child: is a female under the age of 18 years who is expected to be still going to school.

Girl-child Challenges: refers to situations in which girls are being faced with that seem to stand in their way and obstruct them from achieving their goals in life.

Girl-child Opportunities: refers situations in which girls are faced with which makes it possible for them to achieve their goals in life.

Environmental-based Challenges: denote challenges from where they live, that is, social and cultural forces or beliefs.

Environmental-based Opportunities: denote opportunities that arise from where they live, that is, social and cultural beliefs.

Ministry-based Challenges: denote challenges that arise from ministerial propositions and policies governing education in general.

Ministry-based Opportunities: denote opportunities that arise from ministerial propositions and policies governing education in general

School-based Challenges: denote challenges that arise from the school itself.

School-based Opportunities: denote opportunities that arise from the school itself.

Girl-child Participation: denote the extent to which a girl-child is involved in the education or state of taking part in something usually on a formal basis with specified rights and obligations.

1.15 Abbreviations

AIDS: Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome

AU: African Union

BRIGHT: Burkinabe Response to Improve Girls' Chance to Succeed

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

DFID: Department for International Development

ECD: Early Childhood Development

ECE: Early Childhood Education

FGM: Female Genital Mutilation

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

HIV: Human Immuno-deficiency Virus

ICRW: International center for Research on Women

MDG: Millennium Development Goals

MOE: Ministry of Education

MOPSE: Ministry of Primary & Secondary Education

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

STI: Sexually Transmitted Infections

SSC: Secondary School certificate

UNAIDS: United Nations AIDS programme

UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Emergency Fund

UNESCO: United Nations Education and Scientific Organization

USA: United States of America

ZIMDEF: Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund

1.16 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided the background to the study and thus putting the research problem into context. The research questions have been articulated and assumptions, significance, delimitations and limitations have been discussed. A summary of the conceptual framework was given, in which the variables formed the guiding framework for the study. Finally, this chapter has identified the research gap that will be clarified further through literature that is reviewed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This study focuses on challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwean education system. The chapter will be accordingly organized around these two main concepts: Challenges and opportunities for the girl-child and work of the new curriculum in education. The chapter will presents a summary of the general discourse on challenges and opportunities for the girl-child so as to lay the foundation for a more informed understanding of literature on girl-child education. Furthermore, the chapter will presents a conceptual framework analysis through which the study is to be understood and executed. Four models, (i) Student-based challenges and opportunities; (ii) Ministry-based challenges and opportunities; (iii) Environmental-based challenges and opportunities; and (iv) School-based challenges and opportunities for understanding girl-child education. Lastly, literature on girl-child education has to be reviewed so as to identify the challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of education.

2.2 Overview of Girl-child Education

The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that all countries shall respect and ensure the rights set forth to protect the education of each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind. Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), governments committed themselves to the right to a free education to everyone at the elementary level. Most States in Southern Africa (Gwagwa, 2014) are party to the Convention on the

elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) which defines discrimination against girl-child as

"...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by girls....., on a basis of equality of boys and girls, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." P. 23

At the turn of the 21st century, in 2000, the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan delivered a speech at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, stating that, of the 110 million children in the world who should have been in school but were not, two-thirds were girls (Gwagwa, 2014). As it was then, for the world's girls, the denial of the right to a free education is a double blow. In their daily lives, girls are often denied equal rights as proclaimed in international norms and standards. This means a life of poverty for most of the world's girls. In 2005, the OECD found out that while the overall picture for gender equality was still gloomy, changes in family institutions that had occurred in some countries provided an enlightening example. Developing countries were starting to reform cultural barriers to gender equality that limited their growth prospects. This included countries like Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Ghana and some states of India that were trying to reform institutional frameworks that limit girl's participation in the labor force and their education and training as a way of enhancing their growth prospects.

However, during the same year (2005), UNICEF found that despite measures that had been taken both at the state and societal levels in most developing countries, failure to address the inclusion of girls due to inadequate educational policies meant that girl's education remained a highly prominent and unresolved issue. Female participation in education in most of the developing regions of the world had been much lower than the participation of their male counterparts. 10-

14 years down the line today, it is necessary to evaluate and see if any progress has been made and if so, ascertain what other challenges and opportunities still stand for girls to enroll and remain in education.

In July 2014, the UK Government & UNICEF held a Summit to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child Marriage. The summit showed the need for urgent action to end the two related practices that stand as some of the challenges identified in preventing girls from accessing education. It provided a platform for everyone around the world- organizations, individuals, and government- to commit to eradicating harmful practices.

Data presented at the Summit revealed that these practices are on the decline. However, if governments worked only to sustain current rates of decline as seen over the last three decades, the number of women married as children will remain flat to 2050. Examples of FGM reduction is found in Kenya and Tanzania where the rates of FGM have dropped to one-third of levels experienced three decades ago. Today, a girl is a third less likely to be cut than she was 30 years ago in these countries, which shows that change is possible but a lot more has to be done on the local level to achieve the goal of halving occurrences of FGM and child marriages. Increased local community activism is important in changing local perceptions and reducing FGM practices. That activism can also encourage young girls to stay in school and complete their secondary education. Change is a social process that happens from the inside out. The issue requires collective change and must be initiated by community leadership.

In 2013, Zambia and Canada co-led a resolution on child, early and forced marriage at the UN. The resolution has since been adopted by consensus by the Third Committee of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, with 116 co-sponsors from around the world. However

more still needs to be done on the issue to achieve the millennium development goals, and the issue should be part of the post-2015 development goals.

2.3 Challenges of Girl-child Education

This section will highlight both continuing and imminent challenges that girls face in accessing education. The purpose of this briefing is to draw attention to the damaging effects of these ongoing challenges and to call for them to stop.

2.3.1 Child, Early and Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation

Child marriage remains one of the main challenges that girls face in accessing education. This practice, which is prevalent in many countries across Africa, is driven by strong social and cultural traditions. Despite the practice being illegal, Mozambique, for example, has one of the world's highest rates of child marriage. UNICEF (2003) Demographic and Health survey indicates that 56 per cent of girls aged 20-24 had been married before the age of 17. These practices are driven by very strong patriarchal attitudes where girls are seen as wives and not citizens. Girls are not getting married to boys; girls are getting married to adult men who are supposed to be responsible.

The facts are glaring and speak for themselves- more than 700 million girls in the world today were married as children and more than 130 million girls in Africa and the Middle East have experienced some form of female genital mutilation (FGM). In Africa, the problem of child marriage exists in countries such as Malawi, among others, where the existing marriage law allows girls to marry as early as 15 years provided they have parental consent. The revised

marriage bill would put the minimum of 18 years as a marriage age, which conforms to international standards.

In Zimbabwe, child marriage is also prevalent, especially in certain religious sects, notwithstanding the prohibition in the constitution. This means many girl children fail to continue with their education as they are married off at tender ages. Also when a girl falls pregnant to a boy of the same age, she is removed from school but the responsible person, usually a fellow schoolboy, is allowed to continue.

2.3.2 Child Labor

Records show that school enrollment for girls, is still lagging behind in some areas in the Asia and Pacific region, which posed challenges for the region to achieve Education for All (EFA) by 2015 and the Millennium Development Goals. Girls' labor in the Asia and Pacific region continues to constitute a major obstacle towards gender parity in education, another EFA target. Girls' labor is often hidden, unvalued and uncounted. Girls involved as household and commercial labor are often exposed to abuse and exploitation. Both poverty and the tradition that females are generally low in status contribute to female child employment. Although child labour also affects boys, girls are usually seen as more resourceful than boys therefore they tend to take more responsibilities in the home.

2.3.3 Poverty, Teen Pregnancy and HIV/AIDS Scourge

A lack of employment and lack of money means that some parents cannot afford to buy food and to pay school fees, leading to school dropouts. This has been a major issue in Zimbabwe for over a decade. For example, according to reports on 16 January 2014, the government failed to pay

fees for its 167 000 pupils (only managing 83000 of the targeted 250000) under the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) due to inadequate budgetary allocations and the pull-out of donor assistance, especially the UK Department for International Development (DFID). Also many children went to school hungry, and this contributed to school dropouts and absenteeism. In Zimbabwe, nationally, 11% of girls of school-going age were not attending school in 2013; Mashonaland West had the highest proportion of girls (14%) not in school (ZimVac Report 2014).

The Education Act does not however discriminate against girls but the general factors that impact on the learning environment for girls in Zimbabwe includes distance to school - girls are more vulnerable to time and space risks and school attendance can be affected by long distance to school and travel during early morning and evening hours due to the society's perceived notions that they need to be protected. Some schools have provide services for radius that extends to 15km and demand 2 - 3 hours of foot travel that can inhibit girls access to school. Girls are also more affected by such issues as flooding rivers than boys. For example in Africa, boys herd cattle and tend to be good swimmers than girls, therefore when rivers between one's home and the school floods, girls are affected more.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has been one of the major challenges despite the recent improvements. In Zimbabwe, the extended family ends up being responsible for raising orphaned children and the preference of the boy child means that in instances where there is a girl and a boy, but with limited resources, the extended family prefers to send the boy to school over the girl.

2.4 Opportunities of Girl-child Education

2.4.1 Inter-governmental and NGO level

The African Union has pledged to stop all child marriages within a generation. The body has underscored that child "marriage" should not be an option out of poverty and that girls deserve access to education and opportunities. The AU good will ambassador for girls, Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda said that current social traditions in Mozambique to initiate girls into womanhood should not be banned, but rather adapted with more positive age-appropriate messages to equip girls with vital skills so they do not have to depend solely on marriage. In countries such as Malawi, Human Rights Watch has pushed to end early marriages.

On the international level, on 21 November 2014, the Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird issued the following statement on a resolution led by Canada and Zambia on child, early and forced marriage at the United Nations that was adopted by the Third Committee this morning: "The overwhelming support of the international community for this resolution is a clear signal that there is a global movement toward eradicating a practice that threatens the lives and futures of 15 million girls who are forced into marriage each year. "To the 700 million girls and women around the world who were forced to marry as children, Canada stands with you and will continue to work with partners around the world to ensure that your daughters and granddaughters will not suffer the same fate".

2.4.2 Family and Local level

In Mozambique, attitudes are slowly changing in Pemba as men and women are progressively exposed to information through media and better education. Child-to-child radio programs debate issues pertinent to young people, giving them a stronger voice in the community. National

campaigns raising health awareness are helping parents learn about the detrimental impact of early marriage.

In Malawi, government is working with chiefs while waiting for the revised marriage bill would put the minimum of 18 years as a marriage age. Dialogues are being used as the first step in changing the attitudes of village elders and religious leaders, who often play an important role in determining what is and isn't appropriate for the children of the community. In the case of Senegal increasing communication on the local level is bringing awareness to the issue.

2.4.3 Empowering Girls is Key to Ending Child Marriage

A new report highlights strategies to end child marriage, a harmful practice that turns millions of young girls worldwide into child brides. The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) launched the report in Washington and hosted a panel discussion that included international NGOs and humanitarian agencies. The ICRW said the groups explored successful programs in Bangladesh, Egypt, Ethiopia and India that focused on empowering girls, preventing child marriage and mitigating its harmful effects among an estimated 15 million girls. The information the girls receive helps them to see themselves as contributors to the welfare of their families and communities. The programs also help to change the perceptions of others in their communities about the benefits of letting girls grow up and make their own choices about learning and contributing to the community. The programs also introduce alternatives for girls such as going back to school or staying in school, or seeking economic opportunities like small income-generating activities, or doing savings and loans with their peers.

In supporting girls' education, no developmental strategy is better than one that involves women as central players. It has immediate benefits for nutrition, health, savings and reinvestment at the

family, community, and ultimately, country levels. Educating girls is a social development policy that works. It is a long-term investment that yields an exceptionally high return. Gaining access to learning and successful participation in education is becoming essential for all. As a result, most countries have set goals to increase the access to girl-child education for individuals that are under-represented. Schools need to adopt gender sensitive approaches to education, for example employing more female teachers, building female friendly toilets and being always sensitive to sex differences. In a recent conference on access to Internet, held in South Africa, it was found out that, for example, what hinders women's access to the Internet education in Muslim countries is the shortage of female instructors.

2.4.4 Exploring innovative learning methods such as Online Learning Environment

Online distance education acts to democratize access to education. A study carried out in Mauritania, based on interviewees' experiences and perceptions concludes that online learning can enhance and democratize women's access to education for personal development--but only if the power relationships in the two "social spaces" are well understood and well negotiated by these women. The findings in the study shed light on the importance of understanding learner spaces when establishing and setting-up open learning organizations.

2.5 Challenges for the Girl-child Education in Zimbabwe

There are various challenges affecting the girl-child in Zimbabwean schools. Key among these is:

2.5.1 Lack of Access to Resources

Genene (2003) points out that due to their secondary or low status in the society; women have been denied the right of access to different resources and benefits. Resources such as land ownership are so important for the empowerment of women. This is a disadvantage to the single parent women who then find it difficult to send their girl-child to school. Additionally reasons such as triple roles of women and boy child preferences and various traditional practices, affect enrolment, and access to education. For instance, in Zimbabwe the school enrolment ratio of girls at secondary schools was 34.7% in 1997 and 57.4% in 2000. It also grew from 43% to 67.3% and from 26% to 47% for boys and girls respectively in the same period 2000-2001. The gender disparity in gross enrolment rate in secondary schools is still very high (Genene, 2003). In general lack of access to education for girls results in girl-child facing a lot of life challenges.

2.5.2 Multiple Roles of Women

Laden (2000) observes that in most African cultures including Zimbabwe, socio-cultural traditions tend to assume that women`s public roles are just an additional activity to their primary and secondary roles. Apart from spending most of their time in productive activities, women in Africa are also engaged in reproductive and community work. It is known that women are mothers, wives and breadwinners in their homes (Genene, 2003). So, to some female students, there is no need to work hard academically as their roles in life are pre-determined by “society”.

2.5.3 Family Commitment

Several studies have proved that family commitment is one of the reasons why female students shy away from performing at their best academically. Women are not prepared to take up

positions away from their families. As such given a choice between career developments in places away from their families and staying with one's family most women appeared to prefer the latter. It was also noted that from an early age, daughters are groomed for their marriage roles of wife, mother and food preparers and they are conditioned from an early age to believe that a woman is inferior to a man and that her place is in the home. It can be argued that because of cultural expectations and socialization, women tend to shy away in working hard academically. In Zimbabwe there has been debate on low performance of girls. However, it has not been clearly established why the low performance of girls at "O" Level results in schools still persist (Logan 1999; Peterson & Runyan, 1999; Davidson & Burke, 1994; Cabana, 1999; Dorsey, 1996).

2.5.4 Low self-esteem and Lack of Confidence

The low performance of girls is a result of concerned women's low self-esteem and lack of confidence. Myths, stereotypes and prejudices related to the abilities and attitudes of women were seen as obstacles leading to girls' low performance in school. In a survey by Smith (1984), many women have, to a certain degree, internalized the attitudes and role expectations about women, that they have learnt to fit neatly into the stereotypes. This can be a major handicap in the development of their individual personality's ability and career potential. Gender socialization was practiced, not to prejudice the child against the other sex but to let it grow naturally into its predestined role and make the child look forward with pleasure to its allotted task. This suggests that although gender socialization in a particular society creates discrimination between men and women it takes place in such a way that it is acceptable. It was also noted in other researches that women teachers' perceptions on gender roles and what women

can and cannot do are influenced by gender socialization. This phenomenon affects female educational achievements (Sebakwane, 1994; Coleman, 2004 Cabana et al, 2009).

2.5.5 Lack of Support

Gender imbalances in schools are caused by the fact that women are not getting the necessary material and social support from their families and from the education system. Another observation made in Canada suggested that the greatest cause of low performance in educational circles was due to gender discrimination. If hiring committees preserved and promoted sexist attitudes towards women, it would be impossible for women to break the glass ceiling which exists within educational administration. The above can lead to some female students avoiding working hard academically as there is no support from the society (Wallin, 1999; Chabaya et al, 2009). Teachers are role models in schools and society. As such, their proper conduct at all the times is crucial. Teachers should not be anti-role models who behave so badly that they serve as good examples of what not to do (Orstein, et al. 2003). In situations where male educators engaged in sexual and love relationships with girls they set a very bad example as such moves are tantamount to abuse of office and they are gross acts of corruption and immorality, (Thaw 2010). In order to perform to their full potential, girls need appropriate role models in their teachers and not teachers who cause them to underperform in school or to even hate school.

2.5.6 Gender Stereo Types

Research has found that women depicted themselves as individuals who could not hold leadership roles and who did not have the qualities to be leaders as is expected in the feminine gender roles. As a result women did not apply for leadership positions. Thus, women are

socialized to believe that it is difficult to hold public office such as being a school head. With this in mind, there is no external motivation to work hard in school. The stereotypical notion of women as inadequate beings has gradually become entrenched in their collective consciousness. This affects the way in which girls comprehend and interpret the world around them. If the collective conscience is affected by these gender stereotypes, it reflects the distorted assumptions about the role of women and their capabilities. This leads to female students underrating their performance in school. Gender inequalities and stereotypical attitudes have a negative influence on the female students' performance. If women are socialized into society where patriarchal relations predominate, they can have limited individual choices about their performance. Such an ideology can render women inferior and society can seek to perpetuate this hierarchy (Chabaya et al, 2009 Van Deventer & Van der Westhuizen, 2000; Davidson & Burke, 1994).

2.5.7 Family Roles

Women's prioritization of family roles at the expense of their career advancement is not new. Culturally defined desirable feminine behavior was nurturing and caring for others, placing importance on relationships and the quality of life. The role is driven by conformity with social norms and stereotypic gender roles among others. All this is maintained by the socialization and sex role stereotyping which can lead to females not associating them with hard working students (Peterson & Runyan, 1999; Logan 1999; Richies, 1988).

2.5.8 Family Socialization and Peers Influences

The family is the major location where a child grew up from infancy. Whatever contributions any other setting made towards the all-around development of the female child, social, emotional

and intellectual, they were dependent on the foundation laid down by her parents. According to Ezewu (1980), it is due to this assumption in most people that low performance of the girls within the district is from their background as their parents were failures in education hence never encourage their children to take school serious. Similarly, many girls who are active but dual in education may influence others not to work hard in class affecting girl's performance hence pass rate. By this many female students are interested in visiting friends and sometimes dropping out of school. Sometimes they engage in prostitution to earn money to buy petty things. This compromises both academic performance and health as there are high chances of contracting sexually transmitted infections.

2.5.9 Cultural Beliefs

Cultural perceptions sometimes degenerates a woman in the African culture leading especially the rural women to be confined to the domestic sphere with little or no exposure to the public domain. Sayings such as, "The wisdom of a woman and the lights of stars do not take you far" often reinforce the negative attitudes towards female students performance. Due to the deep rooted traditional beliefs about the subordinate role of women in society, both women and men may find it difficult to accord girl's proper education... Thus, these cultures and traditions that invest superiority in men are widely acknowledged as draw-backs to female students' performance. While many reasons have been identified for gender imbalance in governance, the most common argument is that the division between public and private spaces has created a barrier to women's participation in governance.

Politics and leadership have traditionally been considered a male arena, because men operate in the public domain, while in many societies women are expected to restrict their activities around

the home and immediate community. Even though distinctions between private and public domain are not given, they are themselves part of a set of accepted ideas about male and female places in society. However, these have been frequently used as justification for women's absence from public life. This affects their academic performances (Logan, 1999; Genene, 2003; Rai, 2005; Tambia, 2003; Brody, 2009). Mosley (2004), reported that in Ethiopia, cooking, cleaning and fetching water are considered feminine activities, whereas agricultural activities, such as ploughing with oxen are considered masculine roles.

In another study, Mwaba (1992) found that a sample of South African secondary school boys and girls characterized housecleaning as predominantly women-only jobs. This invariably negatively affects girls' performance and participation in society (Hurley and Pitamber 2009). It is in this light that many researchers (including Dorsey 1996; Gaidzanwa 1997; Gordon 1995; Mutekwe 2007; Nhundu 2007) are agreed that in Zimbabwe girls are educated for domesticity. Therefore, school curriculum should be responsible for the deconstruction of the gender roles and stereotypes embedded in it.

2.6 Opportunities for the Girl-child Education in Zimbabwe

Opportunities of the girl-child in School come in various ways as shown later in the discussion. It is important for the school heads and teachers in consultation with learners and parents, to review and tackle stereotypical constructions of masculinity and femininity which exacerbate gender differences and impact on girls' engagement with the curriculum. The emphasis on boys' underachievement can lead to a situation where all boys are seen as, and see themselves as, underperforming. Similarly, assumptions that all girls are academically successful could mean

that those girls who lack confidence or whose achievement is not couched in academic performance might be marginalized (Myers et al, 2007).

Several studies advocate the use of a wide variety of approaches as means for deconstructing and challenging stereotypes. Since gender stereotypes impede the involvement of girls, there is need to re-socialize individuals into a new order where gender equality is the norm. Programs to assist in modifying stereotypical conceptions of femininity and masculinity need to be introduced quite early in childhood. Children at an early age would realize that they are equal and they grow up with the idea that no gender group is superior or inferior to the other. Similarly, teachers are imitated a lot by learners in the schools. The implication is that the need for their proper conduct all the times is crucial. Teachers should not be anti-role models who behave so badly that they serve as good examples of what not to do (Orstein et al. 2003). In situations where male teachers engaged in love relationships with girls they set a very bad example as such moves are gross acts of corruption and immorality. In order to perform to their full potential girls need appropriate role models in their teachers and not teachers who cause them to underperform in school or to even hate school.

Teachers need to play an important role in closing the ranks and gaps created by the gender role stereotyping experienced by pupils in the home and those incorporated in curricular and reinforced through the hidden curriculum of the school. Research shows that there is a serious need for teachers, parents and older siblings and other significant others to bring to the attention of children that the social behavior, roles and characteristics associated with different genders are nothing but products of gender socialization and that there is nothing to stop them from performing well in school (Thaw, 2010).

Teachers and parents need to constantly expose pupils to programs based on selected life stories and experiences of successful female role models of relevant social and cultural backgrounds so that they can positively influence the occupational aspirations of girls in non-traditional careers trajectories. Girls need to defy the odds by taking up school subjects, careers or occupations traditionally stereotyped as masculine to prove to society that gender differences are not intellectually different and that girls and boys can perform well in school (Mutekwe, et al, 2012; Chikuvadze & Matsvetu, 2013).

2.7 Zimbabwe's New Curriculum Framework

At the heart of any New Curriculum Framework is the classroom set-up, in which the teacher is given the latest technology to facilitate learning in an environment that captures diversity and inclusivity and leads students to work towards personal growth, an understanding of the values of solidarity and social justice, formal qualifications and employability (Runza, 2012). To Zimbabwe, the New Curriculum is:

- (a) a reference for action based on general consensus and the contribution of stakeholders as well as those committed to its implementation;
- (b) a policy instrument as well as information on the implementation strategy, actions and benchmarks for implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- (c) a response to the changing demands of individuals and society, rapid changes in our education system driven by globalization, ICT development, competition, shift of traditional values and new paradigms.

After a process of nationwide consultations, on Friday 25 September 2014 the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education announced the release of a draft education curriculum, meant

to update and introduce major changes in the school system in the country. With effect from the 10th of January 2017, the Ministry has started implementation of this updated school curriculum. Implementation is guided by the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022 (MOE, 2017). The Framework outlines in detail learning areas for the three learning levels. These include areas such as Agriculture, Languages, Information Communication Technology, Science, Maths, Science, Statistics and Physics, all which are going to be introduced in school at an earlier stage. Feedback from public consultations and from experts has strongly suggested that learning areas like Mathematics, Science and Technology should be taught from Early Child Development.

2.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed literature that has revealed that the new curriculum has challenges and opportunities for the girl-child. The four key terms, student based challenges and opportunities, environmental based challenges and opportunities, school based challenges and opportunities and ministry based challenges and opportunities, which are critical concepts in this study, and contribute significantly in directing extended analysis of research data and subsequently shaping of the study conclusions and recommendations (Bezeley, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994) have been discussed

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on explaining the methodology that was adopted in this study. Challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in education, by nature, is an interactive process in which people engage in cooperative tasks aimed at improving girl-child education. This chapter dealt with the research approach, research design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection and analysis procedures and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Approach

For the researcher to understand the challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe, qualitative data from the people who are directly involved in the participation process were the most relevant in answering the research questions developed for this study. For that reason, this study was carried out under the influence of the qualitative research approach. Creswell (2013) postulates that qualitative research is chiefly concerned with the “generation of categories for understanding human phenomena and the investigation of the interpretation and meaning that people give to events they experience”. Furthermore, qualitative research emphasizes the socially constructed nature of reality and the context that influences the inquiry. In light of the above, this approach was aiding in finding out the challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum: A survey of two schools in Makoni District, Zimbabwe.

3.3 Research Design

The qualitative research paradigm works with several research designs. Creswell (2003) identifies survey, case study, grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography, and narratives as some of the research designs that comply to qualitative research. These research designs have special characteristics that make them more appropriate for particular purposes in research. This study adopted a survey design. A survey design presents facts in a narration of words. It dealt with data that were primarily verbal and based on a naturalistic phenomenological philosophy which believes that multiple realities are socially constructed through individual and collective definitions of the situation (Welman & Kruger, 2001).

3.4 Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of 56 secondary schools in Makoni District. A total population of 23744 comprised of 56 heads of schools, 1288 teachers and 22400 learners was used in this study.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample of the study was two secondary schools. The sample had 26 participants consisting of 2 heads of schools, 12 teachers (6 from each school) and 12 girl children (6 from each school) which is 13 participants per school comprising of 1 Head, 6 teachers and 6 Form 4 girl-learners. Heads of schools and teachers were conveniently sampled. The sampling method for teachers and heads of schools was suitable from a geographical perspective and the researcher's easy access to them as they live in the same working area. This convenience sampling technique, which is sometimes referred to as accidental sampling (Babbie, 2010), involved choosing the

nearest individuals to participate in the study and continuing the process until the required sample is attained. Thus, the sampling technique can have significant benefits in situations when the researcher has limited travelling time and money. And, more so in qualitative research where extended stay and visits to research sites are crucial for seeking additional data or verification of data and research findings (Babbie, 2010; Tsvara, 2013).

Girl-learners were purposively sampled. The purposive sampling technique, which is sometimes referred to as judgmental sampling (Babbie, 2010), is when the researcher picks individuals to be included in the research sample on the basis of his or her judgement of their typicality (Welman & Kruger, 2001). The cardinal advantage of this sampling technique was that the researcher had to build up a sample that can deliver the best information to address the needs of the research questions satisfactorily (Cohen & Manion, 2012).

3.6 Research Instruments

The study employed interview data generation instruments (focus group interviews, individual interviews, observations and narratives) to elicit data from participants. There were two individual interviews for the two heads of the schools and two focus group interviews for teachers and learners. Interviews yield more data than most kinds of methods to solicit data hence why they were used. Interviews give more insight into concepts which might come across as vaguely expressed or not properly answered, in this respect interviews are used as the main type of data collection tool in this study.

3.6.1 Individual Interview (see Appendix C)

Individual interviews were conducted with a fairly open framework that allows for focused, conversational, and two-way communication. They are used for giving and receiving information. The role of the researcher in an open-ended interview was to facilitate and guide rather than to dictate exactly what would happen during the encounter. The interview schedule merely indicated the general area of interest and provided general information to participants. Therefore, the researcher asked questions such as the following: What are the challenges for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe? Please give practical examples.

3.6.2 Focus Group Interview (see Appendices D and E)

In this study, focus group interview was a major research instrument used because it involved many participants at one time to discuss the topic under study. A focus group interview is a technique that brings together a small homogenous group of participants for a discussion under the moderation of the researcher to ensure adequate focus on the research question (Tsvara, 2013). Beside, this focus group interview became a useful instrument for soliciting information about the challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum. Hess-Biber and Leavy (2006) are of the opinion that focus group interviews are an important tool for accessing the experiences and attitudes of people including professionals.

3.6.3 Observation (see Appendix F)

It is almost obvious that once the researcher makes a visit he or she is bound to make some observations that are relevant to the phenomenon being studied. However, formal observation takes place in two forms, participant observation and non-participant observation (White, 2000;

Yin, 2003). Participant observation is when the observer becomes part of the activities he or she is observing (White, 2000). Non-participant observation is when the observer is not involved in the activities he or she is observing (Yin, 2003). This study employed a non-participant observation technique.

3.6.4 Non-Participant Observation (see Appendix F)

Non-participation observation activities have been understood “to range from formal to casual data collection activities” (Yin 2003), thus the researcher created an opportunity for observing each time he or she visits the research site. Data could be gathered through observations of meetings, buildings, routine activities such as school assemblies and participant’s reactions during interviews (White, 2000; Yin, 2003). The main advantage of using the observation technique is the first-hand experience that provides a better insight when interpreting data (Babbie, 2010). In addition, observation represents reality as it covers events in real time (Yin, 2003). However, observations might be time consuming, and may be subjected to bias when the observer does not agree with some of the situations that may arise (White, 2000).

3.7 Validation of Research Instruments

The research instruments used in this study have been chosen because of their nature to yield more data and offer room for explanations, clarifications and room for improvement of responses by asking improperly answered questions.

3.7.1 Pilot study

Before pilot testing the research instruments of this study, the interview schedules were sent for moderation by the supervisor as a way of ensuring trustworthiness and authenticity of the procedures and data to be collected. After moderation by the supervisor, the interviews were pilot tested with one head of school, one group of teachers and one group of girl-learners for focus group interviews. These participants were purposively sampled from the population considered in the study.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

In this study, data was done through individual and focus group interviews, observations and narratives on heads of schools, teachers and the girl-children. The researcher got an introductory letter from Great Zimbabwe University which was used to seek permission from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to carry out the research in two schools in Makoni District. Two individual interviews were held with the Heads of schools and two Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) comprising six participants each were conducted with both teachers and girl-child learners respectively. The FGIs for teachers comprised of participants of the two sampled schools, with approximately equal representation from different socio economic background and learners were composed of equal representation of girls from Form 4 classes. Informed Consent was sought before engaging with participants in this research. Since, the concern of most qualitative researchers is factual accuracy of the data (Tsvara, 2013) and as such, to assure factual accuracy, all interviews were audio-taped and then transcribed verbatim and rechecked for accuracy. Also, note taking was done by a note-taker and these reflective notes were used in the study.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis in this study was done using a mix of the content and thematic analysis approaches. These two approaches are inductive methods of data analysis in which written texts, sentences, phrases, paragraphs or narratives are examined and broken down into meaningful units or bits of data (Tsvara, 2013). Brink (2000) is of the opinion that data analysis is a process of describing data into meaningful terms, developing categories and making comparisons. In this study, the process by which data analysis was undertaken was important in determining the credibility of the research findings. According to Ryan, Coughlan and Cronin (2007), data analysis essentially involved the transformation of raw data into a final description, narrative, or themes and categories. The process of data analysis in this study followed the collection of data mainly by means of individual and focus group interviews. It involved coding (reducing) the data, then presenting it as an integrative diagram (organizing), and drawing out themes and concepts (patterns). In order for relationships between themes to be identified and collated into a thematic conceptual matrix (Miles & Huberman, 1994), the researcher used a mix of the content and thematic analysis approaches simultaneously.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

3.10.1 Informed Consent forms

The researcher visited all sample school sites and discuss with the heads of schools, teachers, and learners separately. The discussions focused on issues relating to the nature and purpose of the study, explaining why those schools were chosen for the study, negotiating entry and access to the participants, as well as seeking permission to carry out interviews with heads of schools, as

well as focus group discussions with teachers' and learners' groups (Hossan, 2008; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In all cases permission was sought.

3.10.2 Anonymity

In this study, names of participants were not used (Pope, 2000). Further, the research sites were identified by pseudo names that do not relate directly to any school that is known to this researcher. Also, the names of respondents were not, in any way, linked to any of the data that was generated, presented and discussed in this study.

3.10.3 Confidentiality

The researcher always assured the participants that all information obtained during the study will be used for the purposes of the research only (Babbie, 2010). In addition, the researcher made sure all data that was used in this study had no names of participants or detail that could link back to the participants. Moreover, the research materials were handled in such a way that the participants were not identified.

3.10.4 Voluntary Participation

All participants in the study voluntarily participated and there was no undue force or coercion used to foster participation.

3.10.5 Protection of Harm

The safety of the participants was of importance therefore all interviews, FDGs were done on the school site.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the methodologies that were used in this study. The study focused on the challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwean education system. The study adopted a qualitative survey study framework that was steeped in the constructivist and interpretative research paradigm. Two school sites were conveniently and purposely selected from the study and data were generated through individual interviews, focus group interviews and observation techniques. Interview and focus group data were transcribed onto transcripts that formed the platform for data coding and identification of emergent challenges and opportunities. The findings and conclusions made were presented and discussed in chapter four of this research report.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on presenting the findings that emerged from the data that were collected during field work in Makoni District. The presentation started by providing a background to each of the secondary schools and the respective communities that participated in this study. This presentation of the background details was followed by the presentation of the findings. The research findings are being presented in the context of the research questions that guided this study.

4.2 Coding of Participants

All participants in this study were allocated alphabetic letter for confidentiality and anonymity as follows:

- Schools SA and SB:
- Head of School HSA and HSB
- Teachers TA – TF
- Girl-learners GL1 – GL6
- Focus Group Interview FGI(1) and FGI (2)

4.3 Research Question One: What challenges for the girl-child are there in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe?

In response to this question, heads of schools, teachers and girl-learners were asked to explain the challenges for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe. Their responses were tailor made to exhume the envisaged challenges under the following aspects:

Inadequate Government Policies: Both heads of schools and teachers cited that the heads of schools do not apply the re-entry policy in their schools which was meant to give the girl-child opportunities to get back to school after suffering a social setback of being impregnated. For instance, girl-mother re-entry policy was not fully supported by heads of schools who preferred that their affected girl learners relocate to other different schools to deter other girls from emulating them, and to save them further embarrassment of being mocked by their schoolmates. One of the Heads of Schools had the following to say,

“I don’t want these kids who are misguided in my school because they will influence my good girls to focus on boys even male teachers will take advantage of them....” (HSA)

Furthermore, another teacher also confirmed that,

“... these loose girls are a problem in class, they think every male teacher is a potential boyfriend....so it becomes difficult to handle and discipline them in class.... I don’t want to teach them or see them in my class...” [FGI (1): TA; TD]

One of the girl-learners expressed the following sentiment on same issue,

“...our male teachers take advantage of us, they openly propose us for love and if you refuse, they tell you you’re afraid what because you already have a child... female teachers also feel threatened and always shout at us calling us prostitutes who came to disturb in the school’

[FG (2): GL5]

Another girl-learner had the following to say,

“...us the pre-mature mother suffer mockery and shame in the hands of other learners. They openly call us in front of other in Shona saying imi mvana munonetsa/mahure ngaagare kumba. At times we’re called by our kids’ name which embarrasses us among others...so I am

forced not to come or attend school every day. Also we're forced not to play well in the sporting games because they laugh at us saying that's what mothers do...." [FGI (2): GL2]

On the other, some of the participants responded to inadequate government policies with reference to the Constitution on the marriage of minors. One head of school expressed the following with regard to child marriage, early marriages, and forced marriages:

"...most girl-children from some religious faiths are getting married too early when they are in school notwithstanding the prohibition in the constitution..." [HAS]

The above assertions that came from participants were supported by Gwagwa (2014) who said two-thirds of girls in Senegal who should be in school are not.

Inadequate Financial Resources for Infrastructural facilities: This was indicated by every participant and attributed partly to poverty and the economic conditions in the country. Most of the girl-learners in the schools come from less privileged families hence rely upon well-wishers and guardians for their up-keep in school. Both heads of schools and teachers agree that these girl-learners who come from long distant places come and lodge in the communities around the schools which subject these learners to the social vice in the community.

One of the Heads of Schools on this matter had the following to say,

"In my school, in a bid to address long distance travelling of learners to school (both girls and boys) and its effects such as insecurity for the girl-learner who leaves home very early in the dark and returns very late in the evening, I created a makeshift dormitory that was inappropriate for girls limiting their privacy and possibly exposing them to naughty boys".

[HSB]

The other Head, also expressed that,

“The girls who are lodging in the surrounding community of the school are subjected to all sorts of misbehaviours such as co-habiting with boyfriends (prostitution), drug abuse, fighting, poor dressing and other forms of distracters outside the school setting, in the evening, weekends and even during the holidays...” [HSA]

Some of the teachers exclaimed that,

“The permissive environments in and around the schools were these girl-learners are exposed to which are not controlled by policy, expose these girl-children to lack of amenities and time to carry out extra studies in the evenings. The other challenge is that some significant personalities to be emulated by the girl-child in the community as role models, particularly women, are not educated or had become outstanding through crime or sheer luck hence disorienting the girl-child from virtues such as hard-work, goal setting and commitment to education...” [FGI (1): TC]

The views of these participants were supported by literature in Chapter two which identified poverty, teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS scourge as impediments to girl-child education (ZimVac Report 2014).

4.4 Research Question Two: What opportunities for the girl-child are there in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe?

In response to this question, heads of schools, teachers and girl-learners were asked to explain the opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwean schools. Their responses were compared to find the major issues that would point to opportunities for girl children in schools. A number of opportunities were cited by participants, as being at the

disposal of the new curriculum to enhance girl-child participation in education. One head of school had the following to say:

“I see the current Zimbabwean new curriculum having several issues in it which favour girl-children, if we want to be honest....” (HSA)

In the subsequent discussions by the participants, the following were raised as some of the opportunities:

Financial Resources: availability of financial resources was cited as opportunity for girl-child to be able to continue in school. The funds are from government through Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund (**ZIMDEF**) in the auspices of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (**STEM**) which saw many girl-children going for Advanced Level (**“A” Level**) even if they were coming from poor families. This opportunity was due to political goodwill, and other well-wishers.

When the Heads of Schools and teachers were interviewed concerning STEM programme funding, they expressed that the money was used to provide textbooks, equip laboratories and libraries and pay school fees for deserving students regardless of gender.

One of the teachers expressed that,

“STEM funding came at the right time when parents were segregating the girl-child and give priority to the boy child when it comes to affording the opportunity to proceed with education. Now girls can afford to be in school without parents’ support on fees...thus stematising Education...” [FGI (1): TB]

On the other hand, the girl-learners who were interviewed expressed that,

“These days, with the STEM funding, we’re going to acquire education equally as the boys since money is there to cater for our school fees and we’ll also become engineers and dominate the field of engineers...” [FGI (2): GL6]

Government policies and political goodwill: policies as opportunities were identified by participants. One of the teachers in response identified the **girl-child re-entry policy** that would ensure that the girl-child who was once disadvantaged by getting impregnated is not only available in school, but also benefited meaningfully from teaching-learning process,

“...the re-entry policy ensures that the girl-child is not only available in school but also benefited from policy support”. [FGI (1): TA]

Another Head of School raised the issue of **school fees policy** which came along with the new curriculum. He expressed the following:

“...it’s now easy for poor parents to pay the fees of their children in school through providing labour in the school, or paying through livestock/grain which the school can convert into cash later but the child will be learning in the process”. (HSB)

One of the girl-learner interviewed expressed that,

“...these days we’re no longer suffering from not paying school fees from our parents, they’re paying goats and/or maize or coming to the school and work for our fees.” [FGI (2): GL2]

The above statements from participants revealed that the new dispensation has got opportunities the girl-child has now with regard to fees payment which promotes girl-child education.

4.5 Research Question Three: What strategies can be used by heads of schools and teachers to cope with challenges and opportunities that exist for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe?

The participants were asked to suggest the strategies that can be used by Heads of Schools and teachers to cope with challenges and opportunities that exist for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe. Their views were presented below:

All participants suggested that there is need for the formulation of girl-child appropriate policies and implementation of existing ones as a measure for enhancing value addition and beneficitation to the girl-child in school matters. One of the teachers felt that,

“...there should be a policy to spread bursaries and scholarship with specific ratio to girl-children as a means of encouraging them to be involved in education programmes...provide sanitary pads in schools.” [FGI (1): TA]

All participants suggested that it was important to involve parents more in the education of the girl-child. One of the Heads of Schools had the following to say,

“...parents should be involved because they should know the importance of the girl-child education so that they will be able to reduce domestic chores to create study time for the girl-child, motivate girls to go to school, pay fees, offer guidance and counselling, provide some of the learning resources, treat all children equally, provide adequate meals at home, participate in school activities, enforce discipline, follow-up on drop out cases and be role-models as a step towards promoting girl-child education....” [HAS]

The learners involved in this study expressed that it was necessary for that schools should improve on instructional resources so as to maintain 1:1 student-text-book ratio, construct and

expand school library to improve and optimize girl-child education. One learner said the following,

“The schools should improve the student-text-book ratio to 1:1 because boys they bully girls when they find us with the textbooks they want.” [FGI (2): GL4]

These findings are well considered by girl-learners who exclaimed that if their parents were involved in their education, they would get the support needed to go to school, the time needed at home to do academic homework.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

The research findings have been given an analytical review of the challenges and opportunities available for the girl-child education and strategies that can be used by both Heads of schools and teachers to cope with them. The study revealed that there are many opportunities and challenges for the girl-child education. The findings on challenges for the girl-child education revealed that inadequate government policies, inadequate financial resources for infrastructural facilities, financial resources and government policies and political goodwill were identified as the prominent challenges facing the girl-learners in school. These findings are in line with Genee (2003) who states that students need to be supported by policies and resources in order to participate in their education. Such findings are also supported by Bogonko (1992) which has the assertion that inadequate government policies and resources help the girl-child to cope with uncertainty and anxiety that comes with puberty in society with high levels of permissiveness. Proper policies encourage girl-child to realize their potentialities and goal-setting. Besides, inadequate policies and resources present challenges in promotion of girl-child education in the wake of the new curriculum. Thus, the Heads of Schools and teachers can only take advantage of

adequate policies and resources to support the girl-child education. The findings on re-entry policy, lack of female role models and ineffective government policies as challenges facing girl-learners in schools agree with the findings of Juma (1994) who in a related study in Kwale and Taita-Taveta Districts in Kenya found out that lack of educated mothers and female role models impedes girl-child participation in education.

The findings on opportunities for the girl-child education revealed that in order for the girl-child to perform to their full potential they require appropriate role models of women in society which the new curriculum provide through the SASAF games and mass displays (Mutekwe, et. al, 2012; Chikuvadze & Matsvetu, 2013), thus, promoting girl-child participation in schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarized the major findings and activities revealed by the research study on challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum: A survey of two schools in Makoni District, Zimbabwe. The researcher also highlighted the responses of participants to the research questions. Conclusion will highlight the salient messages drawn from the analysis of data given in chapter four. It makes suggestions for further studies. Lastly, some practical recommendations and suggestions to cope with the challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum shall be made.

5.2 Summary

This research study was focused on the investigation of challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in secondary schools in Makoni District, Zimbabwe. There were two secondary schools that were used in this study. Qualitative research approach was used in this study in order to identify the challenges and opportunities from the participants. The study adopted a survey design which was supported by carrying out individual interviews to Heads of schools and focus group interviews to teachers and girl-child learners. Convenient and purposive sampling was used to heads of schools, teachers and girl-learners respectively. The total number of participants was 26.

The research findings were:

- Inadequate government policies and inadequate financial resources were found to be the main challenges faced in girl-child education.

- Financial resources, government policies, political good will, facilities and resources emerged as the main opportunities afforded to the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum.
- Formulation of girl-child appropriate policies, parental involvement in girl-child education and provision of appropriate instructional resources were observed to be the best strategies that can be used to cope with the challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum.

5.3 Conclusions

Considering the findings of this study, it was concluded that there challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe. Inadequate government (Ministry) policies and inadequate financial resources for infrastructural facilities appear to be the baseline challenges which impacts negatively on girl-child education in Zimbabwe. For instance, these challenges cause the girl-child absenteeism alongside inadequate infrastructure. They lead to indiscipline as they motivate negative attitudes, prostitution, drug abuse and other distracters besides determining the conduciveness of the home environment to facilitate undertaking take-home academic assignments and personal study.

The government (Ministry) policies, political good will, financial resources and facilities availability are some of the opportunities afforded the girl-child in the new curriculum. The policies for STEM education with full funding, government's re-entry policy and the provision of libraries as basic infrastructure in schools saw the girl-child being afforded the opportunity to go further with education.

The provision of instructional resources, formulation of girl-child appropriate policies and parental involvement is more likely to engage the parents and the community at large to support girl-child education. Educational policies are the means through which government agenda can be enforced to achieve set goals hence the need to formulate and implement girl-child policies strategically considering the challenges and opportunities that face girl-children in schools. Continuous monitoring and evaluation procedures need to be effective so as to get feedback from stakeholders for further appropriate strategies to enhance girl-child education in Zimbabwe.

5.4 Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- The government should consider more funding to schools to avert the impact of inadequate financial resources for infrastructural facilities, and in-service teachers to address girl-child education needs; co-curricular and personal needs for enhancement of girl-child participation in education.
- The parents especially women should be good role models and counsellors for the girl-child in the community.
- Schools should supervise the proper implementation of government policies to achieve goals of the girl-child education, should source funds for infrastructural facilities and instructional resources to create conducive environments for girl-child education.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Studies

The findings of this study will hopefully make a contribution to the general understanding in education of the challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe. The following is suggested as areas which require further research:

- The study involved two Heads of schools, twelve teachers and twelve girl-learners, and therefore its findings cannot be generalized to other Zimbabwean schools. It is recommended that a comprehensive study be done that include different types of schools and communities to establish the challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe.
- This study was designed to gather qualitative data on challenges and opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe. It is recommended that a follow-up study be conducted to generate quantifiable data on the same topic.

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APPENDIX C: Interview Guide for Heads of schools

Introduction

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet me today. My name is Irine Tsvara. I am a student with the Great Zimbabwe University. My topic focuses on *challenges and opportunities of the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum: A survey of two schools in Makoni District, Zimbabwe*. I would like to talk to you about your experiences in participating in providing basic education. The interview should take about an hour. I shall be taping the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. So, because we are on tape, I ask you to speak loud enough so that I do not miss any of your comments. Also, I shall be taking notes during the session. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that responses will be used for purposes of this research only. You do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you may end the interview at any time. Do you have questions on what I have just said?

Warm up question

You are one of the important stakeholders in the provision of education to the girl-children of this community, may you tell me a little about yourself (when did you become the Head of School, how big is your school, how many girls are in this school)

- How are you and other teachers involved in the girl-child education in the life of this school?
- In your opinion, what challenges for the girl-child are there in the wake of the new curriculum in this school? Elaborate your answers
- What opportunities for the girl-child are there in the wake of the new curriculum in this school? Elaborate your answers

- How is the student/environment/school/ministry creating challenges and/or opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum?
- What are the views of Heads of Schools and teachers on the challenges and opportunities of the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in their schools?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

Conclusion

We have come to the end of our interview. I will be analysing the information you and others gave me and submitting a report to the university in due course. I will be happy to share the findings of this study with you if you so wish. I may come back to verify some points if need arises.

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX D: Focus Group Interview Guide for Teachers

Introduction

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet me today. My name is Irine Tsvara. I am a student with the Great Zimbabwe University. My topic focuses on *challenges and opportunities of the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum: A survey of two schools in Makoni District, Zimbabwe*. I would like to talk to you about your experiences in participating in providing basic education. The interview should take about an hour. I shall be taping the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. So, because we are on tape, I ask you to speak loud enough so that I do not miss any of your comments. Also, I shall be taking notes during the session. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that responses will be used for purposes of this research only. You do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you may end the interview at any time. Do you have questions on what I have just said?

Warm up question

You are one of the important stakeholders in the provision of education to the girl-children of this community, may you tell me a little about yourself (when did you become a teacher in this school, how big is the school, how many girls are in this school)

- How are you and other teachers involved in the girl-child education in the life of this school?
- In your opinion, what challenges for the girl-child are there in the wake of the new curriculum in this school? Elaborate your answers
- What opportunities for the girl-child are there in the wake of the new curriculum in this school? Elaborate your answers

- How is the student/environment/school/ministry creating challenges and/or opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum?
- What are the views of Heads of Schools and teachers on the challenges and opportunities of the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in their schools?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

Conclusion

We have come to the end of our interview. I will be analysing the information you and others gave me and submitting a report to the university in due course. I will be happy to share the findings of this study with you if you so wish. I may come back to verify some points if need arises.

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX E: Focus Group Interview Guide for Learners

Introduction

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet me today. My name is Irine Tsvara. I am a student with the Great Zimbabwe University. My topic focuses on *challenges and opportunities of the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum: A survey of two schools in Makoni District, Zimbabwe*. I would like to talk to you about your experiences in participating in receiving girl-child education. The interview should take about an hour. I shall be taping the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. So, because we are on tape, I ask you to speak loud enough so that I do not miss any of your comments. Also, I shall be taking notes during the session. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that responses will be used for purposes of this research only. You do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you may end the interview at any time. Do you have questions on what I have just said?

Warm up question

You are one of the important beneficiary in the recipient of girl-child education of this community, may you tell me a little about yourself (when did you become a learner in this school, how big is this school, how many girls are in this school)

- How are you and other girls treated in the girl-child education in this school?
- In your opinion, what challenges for the girl-child are there in the wake of the new curriculum in this school? Elaborate your answers
- What opportunities for the girl-child are there in the wake of the new curriculum in this school? Elaborate your answers

- How is the student/environment/school/ministry creating challenges and/or opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum?
- What are the views of Heads of Schools and teachers on the challenges and opportunities of the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum in their schools?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

Conclusion

We have come to the end of our interview. I will be analysing the information you and others gave me and submitting a report to the university in due course. I will be happy to share the findings of this study with you if you so wish. I may come back to verify some points if need arises.

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX F: Observation Guide

Introduction

I want to thank you for taking the time to allow me to be today. My name is Irine Tsvara. I am a student with the Great Zimbabwe University. My topic focuses on *challenges and opportunities of the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum: A survey of two schools in Makoni District, Zimbabwe*. I would like to observe the experiences of girl-children in your school. The observation should take about an hour. I shall be taking notes during my observation session.

Things to observe:

- Behaviour of girl- children in the school
- Challenges for the girl-children in the wake of the new curriculum in this school
- Opportunities for the girl-children in the wake of the new curriculum in this school
- The student/environment/school/ministry creating challenges and/or opportunities for the girl-child in the wake of the new curriculum
- Heads of Schools and teachers on handling girl-children in the wake of the new curriculum in their schools