



**TOWARDS A MODEL TO ENHANCE THE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
ERA IN CHEGUTU, ZIMBABWE**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

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DECLARATION

I, TauraiMakuvaza, hereby declare solemnly that this thesis titled Towards a Model to Enhance Holistic Development of Secondary School Learners during the COVID-19 Pandemic Era in Chegutu, Zimbabwe, is my original work. This Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Educational Psychology submitted to the Great Zimbabwe University has not been submitted previously for any degree at this or any other university. It is my work in design and execution, and all reference materials contained therein have been duly acknowledged.

Signature.....

Date.....

(i)

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I also wish to thank the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education for granting me permission to carry out the study. My special thanks also go to selected school heads, teachers, health workers and the learners who participated in the study.

Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to members of my family, particularly my wife, Sheron Dondo, my lovely daughter Tanyaradzwa, and my son, Salem. I am grateful for their support and assistance.

(ii)

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Sheron Dondo and my two children, Tanyaradzwa and Salem

(iii)

ABSTRACT

The study examined the holistic development of secondary school learners in the face of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) in Chegutu, Zimbabwe. The study was informed by Urie Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory, Erik Erikson's psycho-social theory and the Five-Factor Model of Personality development by Robert McCrae and Paul Costa. This study was guided by interpretivism and adopted a qualitative research approach in collecting and analysing data. A multiple case study design was employed. The qualitative research method gave participants the chance to express their opinions and experiences through in-depth interviews and open ended. The qualitative descriptive design was also taken on board for use in this study. A purposively drawn sample of eight secondary school learners doing Forms 4 to 6, eight secondary school teachers and two health workers were used to collect data. The researcher employed the Tesch's open analysis method through which themes were isolated. The results of the study showed that during the COVID-19 pandemic period, learners experienced academic anxiety, examination fear, stress, monophobia and depression as they cloistered themselves in their homes to avoid social contact. The results also showed that the frequency, with which clothes were sanitised, and fruits and vegetables were washed with detergents and warm water resulted in the development of neurotic disorders and stigma among secondary school learners. During the COVID-19 pandemic era, learners lost peer relationships as well as collaborative learning and engagement as they strove to maintain social distance. The study recommended that the Government of Zimbabwe provide free education to the secondary school learners who had been affected and infected by COVID-19, given that some had lost their parents. It was recommended that the Government also identify bed-ridden parents of secondary school learners so that they can be provided with palliative care and be financed in order that secondary school learners who attend school instead of providing care for the ailing parent may be assisted. There was need to regularly organise workshops, seminars, educational tours and in-service courses to equip teachers with necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes on how to manage secondary school learners who had been affected by monophobia, anxiety stress, and depression due to the COVID -19 pandemic.

(iv)

ACRONYMS

BEAM-Basic Education Assistance Module

COVID -Corona Virus Disease

CDC -Centre for Disease Control

CEE- Centre for Environment Education

CASEL- Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning

CIS- Council of International Schools

C.R.C- Convention on the Rights of a Child

D.E.O- District Education Officer

HIV Human Immune-deficiency Virus

MDG- Millennium Development Goals

MOH- Ministry of Health

NGO- Non-governmental Organisaations

NEA- National Education Association

SPSS- Statistical Package for Social Sciences

UNICEF- United Nations International Children’s Education Fund

UN- United Nations

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

USA-United States of America

WHO- World Health Organisaation

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

The study examines the holistic development of secondary school learners in the face of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) in Chegutu, Zimbabwe. The research emanated from the challenges which the education fraternity was facing. The researcher found it critical to understand the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic to the development of secondary school learners. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic radically changed the way learners were educated around the world. According to UNESCO (2020), the global scale of education disruption was unprecedented, with more than 1.5 billion learners being affected by the closure of schools. Secondary school learners were among the most affected by the predicament posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in the world in general and Zimbabwe in particular. WHO (2020) points out that 30% of secondary school learners in sub-Saharan Africa failed to enroll in secondary schools due to the severe impact of the pandemic hence the significance of this study. The first chapter of the study presented the background to the study, the statement of the problem, major research questions, sub-research questions, objectives, aims of the study, definition of terms, assumptions, delimitations as well as chapter divisions, and, finally, a summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background to the study.

COVID-19 is an infectious disease that is caused by the Corona Virus. This virus was unknown before 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic started in China before shifting to Europe, the United States of America and, lastly, to Africa (Piopiunik, Schwerdt, Simon & Woessman, 2020). The

disease was mostly known to have common symptoms such as people having fever, experiencing breathing difficulties and having a dry cough. Secondary school learners in Zimbabwe, Africa and the whole world were among the most highly infected and affected by COVID-19. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic radically changed the way learners were educated around the world with more than 1.5 billion secondary school learners affected by schools closure (UNICEF, 2021). According to UNICEF (2020), during the peak of the COVID-19 outbreak, most secondary school learners were failing to enroll in secondary schools because of the severe impact of the pandemic. Despite the preventive strategies implemented by governments to curb the challenges, tools such as social distance, school shutdowns and closure of schools contributed much to the stress the learners suffered and contributed to the buildup of risk factors that threatened learner growth and development and compromised the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

According to the World Bank (2020), the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) caused great fatality rates in the education sector in China when it started. For Chinese learners to acquire knowledge and skills, the country resorted to the use of online methods of teaching and instruction, which proved not to be very useful mostly because the teachers lacked the skills needed (Cheng & Wilkinson, 2020). A study by Duan and Zhu (2020) showed that during the COVID-19 pandemic many teachers and secondary school learners experienced anxiety regarding their competencies and skills, making them more vulnerable mentally, socially and psychologically. A study carried out by Figlio and UmutÖzek (2019) among health workers working in the clinics which treated COVID-19 patients during the outbreak showed that half of the respondents identified at least mild depression, one-third reported insomnia, whereas

14% of the physicians and nearly 16% of the nurses described experiencing moderate or severe depression symptoms.

The United Nations (2020) indicated that in Europe, the pandemic caused mass hysteria, economic burden and financial losses. The COVID-19 pandemic became much more feared and the most dreaded pandemic ever across the continent (Frieden, 2020). The disruptions in education were uncontrollable and became even worse when countries declared national lockdowns to curb the spread of the virus.

In 2020, the reports from the United States of America indicated that about 13.6 million people had been affected and some infected by the COVID-19 pandemic across the country. UNICEF (2020) stated that mass fear of COVID-19 created a plethora of challenges in the education system in America and that the pandemic was ranked as the worst pandemic ever to hit the country in the past years. Schools were no longer hubs of social activity and human interaction, yet secondary schooling is the most rapid phase of learners' physical, mental and emotional growth. Teachers conducted classes through video telephony software such as Zoom in order to improve the learning of learners during the COVID-19 era (Bacher-Hicks, Joshu Goodman & Mulhern, 2020).

In India, COVID-19 pandemic caused fear and desperation for protective measures as more than one hundred thousand people died within the first four months of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. Besides, the pandemic caused the reduction of human freedoms such as that of mobility and association (Anderson & Nielsen, 2019). Cluver et al. (2020) posited that the

education system in India was then struggling with how learners learn as they kept distracted in their homes and at school. Studies by UNICEF (2020) suggested that the pandemic had the potential of causing high levels of stress among learners and that it had brought about several potential mental and emotional consequences among secondary school learners such as severe anxiety, depression, disorder, and post-traumatic stress. Carycruz (2020) posits that most disadvantaged learners were those who were the under-privileged who tended to have fewer educational opportunities beyond school.

In Nigeria, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the education system the same way as in Europe and other countries. Apart from learners losing quality secondary education that could get them good grades for college and university entries, learners also lost vast amounts of important education due to COVID-19 pandemic (Cohoes & Sarah, 2020). A study by Jordan (2020) showed that learners gained literacy slower during school closures than in a business-as-usual academic year. Homeless learners in most parts of Nigeria could not return to school after the closure of schools ended in the first phase of lockdown due to the displacement caused by COVID-19 pandemic. Barnum's (2020) study found out that 80% of learners in Nigeria had experienced some negative emotional and psychological and developmental impact due to COVID-19 pandemic. 20% of the learners showed that their mental health had significantly worsened because of the emergence of the pandemic. This was because the demands and regulations required to curb the spread of the pandemic were a problem among learners.

In South Africa, families and communities were unable to cope with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and, hence, imposed lockdown restrictions (SA Broadcast 21 March 2020). South

Africa recorded 576000 people who had been infected within the first three months of the outbreak. But the figures were constantly increasing (WHO, 2020). The closure of schools in South Africa put a strain on the parents and guardians who had to provide childcare and manage distance learning while the children were out of school. Those learner adverse experiences created problems such as cognitive impairment, lack of social skills, substance abuse, depression, and many non-communicable diseases (UNICEF 2022). It was established that in South Africa, families and communities were then unable to cope with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequently imposed lockdown restrictions (SA broadcast 21 March 2020).

Zimbabwe was on a national lockdown since 30 March 2020. The lockdowns were initially imposed in phases. Each phase lasted for more than five weeks and some mobility restrictions were imposed to curb the spread of COVID-19. The initial abrupt announcement of the lockdown restrictions gave the secondary school learners no time to prepare for their educational studies. In Zimbabwe, these secondary school learners could not afford to be home since most rural schools did not have the money to support access to online learning.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, secondary learners experienced stressful circumstances that affected their social development, cognitive development, personality development and moral development (Wang, Di, Ye, & Wei, 2020). This was confirmed by studies that demonstrated the social and psychological impact of COVID-19 on learners' mental health. Quietal (2020) reported that the most recommended protective measures against COVID-19 such as self-isolation had negative effects on learners' mental health, inducing conditions such as panic disorder, anxiety and depression.

Basing on the dilemmas faced by secondary school learners because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it became critical to explore on the holistic development of secondary school learners and such an exploration might result in sensitive debates among researchers as to how the plight of those learners could be addressed amicably. The National Health Commission of China (2020) argues that when viewing the vulnerability of learners intentionally created opportunities for relief aid workers to address the arising pathology. This could have resulted in the actual design and implementation of culturally relevant programs and strategies that would have enhanced the strength and well-being of the secondary school learners.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The emergence of the COVID -19 pandemic has exacerbated the quagmires that hold many secondary schools back. This scenario has an impact on the holistic development of secondary school learners. The education fraternity was obliged to meet these challenges, but there was no doubt that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic made that more difficult to achieve. For secondary school learners, the task of balancing their education expectations and responsibilities in the face of the COVID -19 pandemic demanded even more strenuous efforts as learners and teachers would spend longer and disruptive periods away from the classroom. The situation was not merely a shot term challenge but posed the danger of creating and expanding structural exclusions and inequalities that hampered the development of most secondary school learners. Above all, inclusive, expansive and high quality education which would have ensured that learners' potential holistic developments were guaranteed became a challenge. The dilemmas and positive developments brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic to secondary school learners in their development presented themselves as important issues to explore, and such exploration led to sensitive debates among researchers as to how the plight of these learners

could be addressed. As many organisations were calling for researches around the COVID-19 pandemic, this study focused on stimulating a broad based discussion on the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

1.4 Rationale of the study

The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (2020) observed that some learners were not performing well in class, while others kept away from play because they were being discriminated against by their friends and even teachers because they had been confirmed as victims of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was an illustration of the adverse effects of the pandemic on secondary school learners' holistic development. This meant that unless there was urgent intervention, more countries would be left with very few secondary school learners who would be resilient in the face of the pandemic. This implies that very intelligent learners might die thereby having a deep and long-lasting effect on the education fraternity (Harwell, 2020).

1.5. Research objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1.5 .1 establish the social construction of the concept COVID-19 among secondary schools learners

1.5.2 determine how the developmental experiences encountered by secondary school learners were affected by the COVID-I9 pandemic

1.5.3 assess challenges faced by secondary school learners in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic era

1.5.4 determine aspects in the COVID-I9 pandemic era that promoted or deterred the holistic development of secondary school learners

1.5.5 establish how schools, communities and policy makers could be prepared to assist secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era.

I. 6 Major Research question.

1.6. How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the holistic development of secondary school learners in Chegutu, Zimbabwe?

The following research questions guided the study from the start:

I. 6.1 Sub Research question

1.6.1.1 What was the social construction of the concept COVID-19 among secondary school learners in Chegutu?

1.6 .1 2What were the developmental experiences of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era?

1.6.1.3 What were the challenges faced by secondary school learners in their holistic development during the COVID-19 pandemic period?

1.6.1. 4What aspects of life promoted or deterred the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic period?

1.6.1.5 How could schools, communities and policy-makers have prepared to assist secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic period?

1.7 Significance of the study

The findings of the study may address issues pertaining to the holistic development of secondary school learners and to develop stable personalities regardless of the challenges they face in their academic lives because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers might understand that secondary school learners need the psychological, emotional and physical support at school in the era of pandemics such as the COVID-19 one. The heads of schools as administrators may schedule

learning programmes which facilitate the promotion of desirable life skills to those secondary school learners. Moreover, stakeholders such as policy-makers and administrators may benefit by way of drawing up policies that ensure secondary school learners are fully equipped with resources in order to have proper learning in schools. The findings might assist the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to establish positions in all schools in Chegutu districts which would support secondary school learners.

1.8 Assumptions

1.8.1 Secondary school learners had multiple holistic developmental challenges and needs in the COVID-19 pandemic era and required teachers and communities to understand and respond to.

1.8.2 Secondary school learners faced holistic developmental challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.8.3 In the COVID-19 pandemic era secondary school learners needed assistance to develop holistically.

1.8.4 The moral, physical, emotional and psychological developmental aspects of secondary school learners should be monitored during pandemics such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.8.5 Being the focal learning centres, schools ought to have the mandate to understand, respond to and address the holistic developmental needs of secondary learners in the face of COVID-19 pandemic era.

1.9 Delimitations of the study.

The study explored the holistic development of secondary school learners in the COVID-19 pandemic era in Chegutu District, Mashonaland West province, Zimbabwe. Only secondary school teachers and learners were involved. Chegutu District is 60km west of Harare and is along the Harare to Bulawayo highway. The study was carried out in four secondary schools, two

secondary schools in the urban areas and two secondary schools in the rural areas where the COVID-19 pandemic was most experienced. Population boundary included both male and female teachers and learners who were purposefully sampled from Chegutu District, Mashonaland West Province, in Zimbabwe.

The theoretical boundary anchored on three tethers for this inquiry. These were the Psychosocial Theory by Erik Erikson, the Ecological Systems Theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner and the Five factor model of personality development (Slavin, 2018). The theoretical boundary of the study was influenced by Erik Erikson's Psychosocial theory throughout the stages affecting the holistic development of learners (Lacani, 2015). Critical is the fifth stage of identity versus role confusion that falls in within the 13-19 years period or adolescence. The stage suggests that when each task is resolved and there is a change in personality, then the individual can move on to the next stage (Phillips, 2015). Roundy (2015) went on to say that if a conflict is not dealt with in the stage in which it arises, it will either be carried through or may crop up at a later stage. Yalow and Josselson (2010) add that Erikson was interested in how social interaction and relationships played a role in the growth and the holistic development of individuals

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the secondary school learners lived in a stressful environment. Many of them struggled with unmet basic holistic developmental needs. Secondary school learners carried an imbalanced personality because of the effects of COVID 19 in their personalities (Goldberg & Short, 2016). Spiegler (2018) agrees that secondary school learners may face situations and difficulties which require support. Parchure et al (2016) state that when

not helped, learners might feel like taking their lives because of the distress and social isolation they experience because of problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The researcher anticipated that the Five-Factor Model of Personality (Slavin& Robert 2018) *was* a vital component of the study since it explained the issue of personality factors that were also important variables that affected the academic achievement of the secondary school learners in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Personality factors played a key role in the secondary school learners' personalities by identifying and directing the learners' behavior and the extent of their interaction in educational situations during the COVID-19 pandemic (Salehi &Saeeda, 2013).

Price and McCallum (2015) argue that Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems theory may be thought of as a societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture. Adapting the levels of Bronfenbrenner's theory suggests that COVID-19 has effects on a person's surroundings (home, school, work, church, neighbourhood, culture and government (Tudge et al., 2016; Ganga, Chinyoka & Mugweni, 2019). Secondary school learners should be recognised as powerful agents to be involved in early intervention programs in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic (Marsh& Higgins, 2018).

The methodological boundary was anchored on the interpretive paradigm and the qualitative approach. A multiple case study design was used. The Qualitative research was exploratory and verbal research. It provided an insight into the problem, giving reasons, opinions and motivation (Jamshed, 2014). Minimal quantitisation was used to augment the qualitative data. The

qualitative case study research design focused on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group (Creswell, 2019).

1.10 Contextual definition of terms

The following terms were defined:

1.10.1 Holistic development:

focuses on the nurturing aspects meant to lead one to a more balanced individual, focusing on the development of intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional, social, aesthetic as well as the relationships between the individual and other people, the individual and the natural environment, and the individual with the inner self. This study will cover mostly the physical, intellectual, social and the moral development of secondary school learners.

1.10.2 Corona Virus:

According to Garcia and Weiss (2020), Corona virus is a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. WHO (2020) posits that the corona virus caused a respiratory illness called COVID-19, a disease that was severe and caused the death of more than ten millions of people.

1.10.3 COVID-19 Era:

It is the time line that provides information about the selected moments in the COVID-19 pandemic period around the world, beginning from its known origins to today (UNICEF,2020)

1.10.4 Secondary School Learners:

These are the learners enrolled in secondary schools, including students attending a secondary school designated by the local school board through a board action and known as junior high school or middle school (UNESCO, 2015)

1.10.5 Physical development:

Garza (2020) defines physical development as the growth of gross motor skills, which involves the movement and control of large muscle groups for walking, running, jumping and climbing. The physical nature also includes sensory development, the information received into the brain from the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, perception and balance.

1, 10.4 Intellectual Development:

Riordan (2014) posits that intellectual development is the development of the part of the brain used for recognising, understanding and reasoning and making sense of what is seen, touched and heard. Language development is to do with the skills of communication and how learners understand receptive speech and how learners express expressive speech.

1.10.5 Emotional and Social Development:

Hyland (2011) alludes that emotional and social development has to do with how children feel about themselves and others, and is about a growing understanding of how and why they feel in a particular way and how to interact usefully with others.

1.10. Moral and Spiritual development:

Ergas (2016) asserts that moral and spiritual development is the understanding and cherishing of values and ethics such as honesty, integrity and fair play, and the consequences they bring, leading to developments of responsibility and empathy.

1.12 Organisation of the Chapters

This research study is organised into six chapters.

Chapter One is an introductory chapter, which contains a general orientation of the inquiry. The chapter contains the analysis of the background of the study and the statement of the problem,

the research objectives and questions. The research purpose for the study is also discussed in Chapter One. The chapter also focuses on the limitations and delimitations of the study. The scope of the study and definition of the terms and concepts are discussed in the chapter, and the summary of the chapter highlighting the covered areas is also given.

Chapter Two covers the theoretical frameworks which guide the study. The study is informed mainly by Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, Erikson's psychosocial theory and The Five-Factor Model of personality development.

Chapter Three consists of a review on the literature available on the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era. **Chapter Four** provides the research methodology covering the research design, ethical considerations, population, sample and sampling procedure, instruments used, validity and reliability of the instruments, pilot testing, data collection procedures and data analysis plan.

Chapter Five deals with data presentation, interpretation and analysis as guided by a thematic qualitative data analysis procedure propounded by Tesch (1990) in Creswell (2013). Findings are fully discussed in relation to themes, sub-themes and categories from findings of initially stated objectives and or aims in Chapter one.

Chapter Six presents the thesis overview and summary, conclusions, recommendations and limitations noted.

1.13 Summary of Chapter

The first chapter presented the background to the study, statement of the problem, major research questions followed by the sub sub-research questions, objectives, definition of terms, assumptions, delimitations, and finally chapter division. The second chapter will cover the theoretical framework which will be guided by Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, Erikson's psycho social theory, and the five factor model of personality development.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The chapter focused on the theoretical framework, covering perspectives in constructivist views as espoused in Urie Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory (Hayes, Toole, & Halpenny, 2017; Guy-Evans, 2020). The psychoanalyst, Erik Erikson's life crises (Lacani, 2015; Slavin & Robert, 2018), within his psycho-social theory helped in explaining the holistic developmental experiences of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era. The researcher anticipated that the five-factor model of personality (Slavin & Robert, 2018) was also a vital component of the study since it explained the issue of personality factors which are also important variables that could have affected the academic achievement of the secondary school learners in the time of COVID-19. Personality factors play a key role in the secondary school learners' personalities by identifying and directing their behaviour and the extent of their interaction in educational situations during the COVID-19 pandemic (Salehi & Saeeda, 2013).

2.2 Theoretical framework of the study

According to Latham (2017), theoretical framework portrays the path of a research study and grounds it firmly in theoretical constructs. Ganga (2013) posits that theoretical framework is a structure or tether that can hold or support the basis of a research study. The overall locus of the framework is to enable the research findings to be more meaningful and acceptable to the theoretical constructs of the research field and it critically ensures their generalisability (Akintoye, 2015).

Grant and Osanloo (2014) define a theoretical framework as a guide for a research which is based on an existing theory in the field of inquiry that reflects the hypothesis of a study. According to Latham (2017) a theoretical framework is a blueprint that is often borrowed by the researcher to build his/her own research inquiry. This is because most inquiries are based on psychological theories to some extent.

The foundation of this research is constructed upon the hinges of the holistic development of secondary school learners in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, taking ideas from the Ecological Systems theory, the Psycho-social theory and the Five-factor model of personality development as major theories. In other words, the researcher can compare the role of the theoretical framework to that of a map or travel plan which guides one when travelling to a particular location. The map guides the path and likewise, a theoretical framework guides the researcher so that he would not deviate from the confines of the accepted theories to make his final contribution in a scholarly and academic manner.

The theoretical framework is important in a study because it maps the structure in which a researcher will define the study philosophically, analytically and methodology. Theoretical framework also helps the researcher to contextualise formal and situational theories into the study as a guide. The theoretical frameworks of this research serve as the locus points for the research which is aligned to the research problem under study. This helps the researcher to make a choice on the data that is to be gathered, the research design to be used and the data analysis plan. A theoretical framework is also important in this study in order for the researcher to make a choice on the research approach and the analytical tools and procedures for the research inquiry that would enable the researcher to make research findings more meaningful and generalisable

(Brondizo, Lemans & Solecki, 2014). Imenda (2014) posits that a research without a theoretical framework lacks a clear direction and appropriate literature and thus lacks strong scholarly discussion of the findings. The study undertaken sought to explore on the holistic development of secondary learners in the COVID-19 pandemic era.

2.2.1 The Theoretical Framework

The study's theoretical framework took an eclectic approach, deriving its perspectives from Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory (Hayes, Toole & Halpenny, 2017; Guy-Evans, 2020), to compliment the developmental experiences in this study. It also harnessed Erik Erikson's life crises within his Psycho-social theory (Erikson, 1968; Ganga, 2013; Lacani, 2015; Leong, 2015) to understand the developmental crisis of secondary school learners as well as the Five-Factor Model of Personality to appreciate personality traits attending learners' development (Miller et al., 2018). By applying these theories, it became imperative to note that the developmental experiences, developmental crisis and personality traits are key in this study. This could enable an understanding of how secondary school learners's holistic development were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic

2.3 The Ecological Systems Theory.

Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory is grounded within the ecological movement of the 1970's. The framework illustrates the complexity of reciprocal interactions between growing persons and their multilevel socio-ecological milieus (Lippard, Paro, Rouse, & Crosby, 2018). This framework centres on the depiction of systemic impacts on child development as affected by manifold bio- ecological systems (Hayes et al., 2017). The objective in this section is to

analyse the application of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model to understand the challenges faced by secondary school learners in the COVID-19 pandemic era during their development.

This theory might offer useful theoretical framework and practical implications for practitioners to consider the type of education to be offered in environments where the COVID-19 pandemic is ubiquitous. This might acquaint the secondary school learners with skills such as critical collaboration, thinking, creativity and communication which would enable the formulation of a holistic model that would assist secondary school learners (Lippard et al., 2018). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems theory views child development as a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment, from the immediate settings of the family and school to broad cultural values, laws and customs (Guy-Evans, 2020). The knowledge on how to assist learners from diverse socio-linguistic backgrounds in order to enable them to successfully develop holistically in the COVID-19 pandemic era should be entrenched within the comprehensive bio-ecological model (Lippard et al., 2018).

This theory provides a holistic approach which is inclusive of all the systems that affect the children and their families. It also accurately reflects the dynamic nature of actual family relationships (Hayes & O'Toole, 2017). This theory can reasonably contribute to our understanding of how human development is shaped by the complex systems in which a person grows, and shape the socio ecological environments in reciprocal fashion. To study a child's development in the COVID-19 pandemic era, we must look not only at the child and her/his immediate environment, but also at the interaction with the larger environment as well. Lippard et al., (2018) define human development as a lasting change in the way in which a person perceives and deals with his or her environment.

The development of secondary school learners in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic is seen to be influenced by various features, which Bronfenbrenner divides into five sub-systems, namely; micro, meso, exo and macro systems as shown in Figure 1.1 below (Guy-Evans, 2020). Lippard et al., (2018) conducted and investigated the teacher-learner relationships through teacher reports and classroom observations. They found out that these relationships were significantly related to the learner's academic achievement and classroom behavior. The results suggested that the relationships between the learners and the teachers were important for learners development and supports the Ecological Systems Theory. On the other hand, the revised bio ecological theory postulates that human development is a joint product of four defining components, namely; the person, context, process and time (Borstein & Leventhal, 2015).

This contemporary theory typically challenges the classical debates of the importance of nature versus nurture issues in the desire to determine human development (Guy-Evans, 2020). Lee and Woods (2017) argue that human development is preferably determined by the individual's genetic blueprint and multilevel sociocultural variables.

The theory suggests that a growing person is nested at the innermost center of the ecological systems. The theory accentuated that the characteristics of the learner have a bearing on the proximal interactions within socio-ecological systems in which the learner grows (Tackman & Monetti 2011). In fact, the learner affects his or her own development by controlling his or her own behavior. These include the coping strategies under stress, acquiring knowledge and skill, establishing and maintaining mutually-rewarding relationships with the others and modifying and constructing one's own symbolic, physical and social environment (Kelly & Coughlan, 2019).

The figure below illustrates how Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory explains the influence of social, cultural and environment on the holistic development of learners.

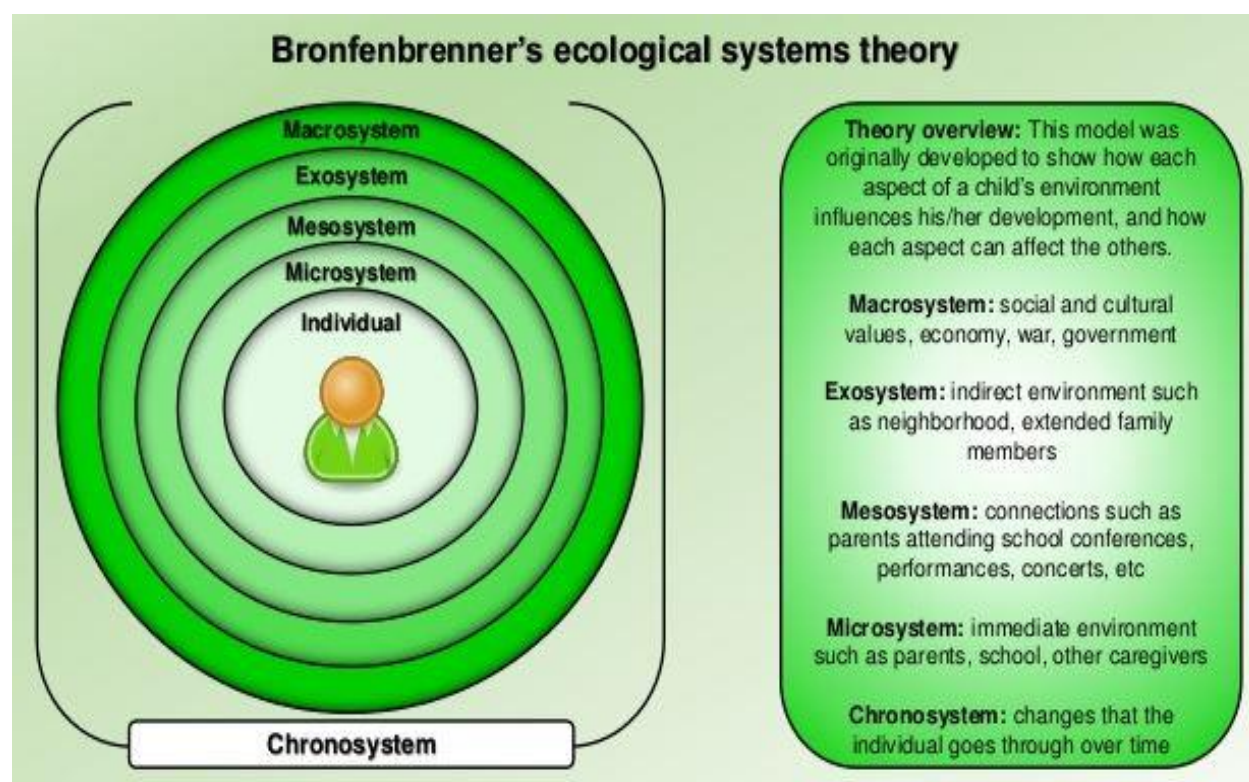


Fig 1.1 Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory (Adapted from Bronfenbrenner 1994)

To understand the development of the secondary school learner in the COVID-19 pandemic era, the researcher looked not only at the learner and his/her immediate environment, but also at the interaction of the larger environment as well (Hayes, Toole & Halpenny, 2017).

2.3.1 Micro-system

A close study of the theory indicates that the micro-systems involve the individual's interaction with the immediate environment such as the parents, the school, caregivers and other immediate family members, which affect the learners on daily basis (Guy-Evans, 2020). The micro systems

are the innermost social system that constitutes the learner's immediate setting in which he or she is actively involved (Hayes et al., 2017). This system promotes a vigorous bi-directional relationship in which a growing learner's behaviour is shaped by the environments and, in turn, shapes the environments in reciprocal fashion. In this research these interactions may occur in families, during sports, in faith based groups, at clubs, and in the community service projects. All these interactions help shape their cognitive, spiritual, social and overall holistic development (Arnett, 2013). Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron and Osher (2020) state that relationships in a micro-system are bi-directional, meaning that the secondary school learner can be influenced by other people who are in their environment and that the learner is also capable of changing the beliefs and actions of other people.

Kelly and Coughlan (2019) used a constructivist grounded theory analysis to develop a theoretical framework for the youth's mental health recovery and found that there were many links to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory in their own more recent theory. In other words, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the reactions of the learner to the pandemic affected individuals in their micro systems and could have influenced how they treated them in return. The interactions within the micro-system are often very personal and are crucial for fostering and supporting the learners development (Hayes et al., 2017). If a child has a strong nurturing relationship with their parents, this is said to have a positive effect on the learner whereas distant and unaffectionate parents will have a negative effect on the child. If secondary school learners are separated from their parents for quarantine purposes it may affect the learner.

2.3.2 The meso-system

The meso-system connects with the learner's innermost social ecology that involves the interconnections and processes taking place within the micro-systems (Hayes et al., 2017). Bronfenbrenner (1979: 209) defined the meso-system as a "set of interrelations between two or more settings in which the developing person becomes an active participant with the parents attending school meetings, conferences, performances and sporting activities and school curricular activities". Webster and Blatchford (2017) state that the meso-system comprises the linkages and processes that take place between two or more settings that contain the developing learner. According to Romano, Bachishin, Marquisand and Frechette (2015) meso-system involves the relationship between the home and the schools, the workplace and the school, decision making by parents and teachers and similar variables. Guy-Evans (2020) concurs with the view that the meso-system involves the settings where their parents live such as the parents' world of work, friends and social networks that could have positively or negatively affected the development of the child. Krieger (2014) posits that what happens in a home, for example, influences what happens in the school and incorporates the interrelations between two or more micro settings in which the developing individual actively participates.

The main issue here is to appreciate that what happened during the COVID-19 pandemic era in one system affected another system. In as far as secondary school learners are concerned, the family and schools are the most central systems interacting with the individual in shaping their holistic development. If the child's parents and teachers get along, and have a good relationship, this should have positive effects on the child's development, compared to the situation where the teachers and parents do not get along resulting in negative effects on the development of the learner (Guy-Evans, 2020).

2.3.3 The Exo-system

The next outermost level in Bronfenbrenner's theory is the exo-system which implies the settings that do not directly involve the individual as an active participant, but in which events that occur have an effect on, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the individual (Guy-Evans, 2020). Grant and Guerin (2014) claim that according to Bronfenbrenner, the exo-system comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person but can indirectly have a strong impact on the individual's development, for example, the relationship between the home and parent's work place (Guy-Evans, 2020).

Hayes et al., (2017) postulate that the exo-system is the indirect link of the learner with an environment such as the neighborhood, the extended family, and issues such as school policies, curriculum, parents' work place, health policies and community agencies which have influence on the secondary school learner's holistic development. Kelly and Coughlan (2019) assert that the influence of parents and other people's perceptions and attitudes on the learners effects the learners' development. Hence, even the views of those who surrounded the learners during the COVID-19 pandemic period matter, as learners tended to inherit their beliefs, perceptions and assumption on the pandemic from these environments.

In some cases, a parent who had been directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic may likely develop positive perceptions on the use of sanitisers and face masks. The parent could therefore, take the initiative to protect their children. Often, parents and teachers expose their children to their perceptions, attitudes and beliefs, which affect their children's holistic development (Guy-

Evans, 2020). put differently, exo-systems may include how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the workplaces, friendships and how the mass media updated the news on the COVID-19 pandemic. These are environments in which the child may not have been involved, and are external to learner's experience, but nonetheless affected them anyway. More clearly, exo-systems affected the child's development; especially if one of the parents had a dispute with their boss at work. The parent would have gone home and expressed a short temper with the child as a result of something that had happened at the workplace. This could have resulted in the negative effects on the holistic development the learners (Hayes et al., 2017).

2.3.4 The Macro-system

According to Bronfenbrenner, the macro system is the cultural and social aspects in the country which have great influence on the learner (Guy-Evans, 2020). These aspects include wars, the economy and the government of the country in which the learner lives. Price and McCallum (2015) allude to the fact that Bronfenbrenner's macro system is considered as a societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture that focuses on how cultural elements affect a child's development, such as the socioeconomic status, wealth, poverty, and ethnicity of the child. Thus, the culture that individuals are immersed within may influence their beliefs and perceptions about events that transpire in their lives (Hayes et al., 2017). Johnson (2019) points out that the macro system encompasses a change or consistency overtime, not only in the characteristics of the person but also of the environment in which that person lives, for example, a change in the life course in the family its structure, the socio economic status, the place of residence or the degree of heftiness and other abilities in everyday life.

Rosa and Tudge (2013) had an assumption that the macro-system had to do with the economic, political and social stability of the country. In other words, the macro system is made up of beliefs, values, and norms as reflected in the cultural, religious and socioeconomic world surrounding individuals. It also includes facets such as government policies, the political ideologies and historical events (Guy-Evans, 2020). These spheres affect the holistic development of secondary school learners within and among other systems and serve to help an individual predict future experiences. An understanding of the macro system could help the researcher understand how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the holistic development of secondary learners and predict their responses and perceptions on the matter under study (Hayes et al., 2017).

Social class and culture are important macro systems that influence an individual's holistic development towards health issues such as the one under study (Guy-Evans, 2020). Social class here is taken to mean one's economic and educational standing within a wider society in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is likely that individuals from the lower social classes and lower educational levels had negative and orthodox perceptions and beliefs on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and hence, that could have affected their social, physical, emotional and psychological development and, inversely, learners from the higher social classes were more likely to be inclined towards more progressive and liberal ideas. That could be because they were more likely to rid themselves of myths and misconceptions surrounding the matter due to their level of education (Hayes et al., 2017).

Culture can be defined as a given group's values, norms and practices (Berger, 2014). In the present study, within culture were also myths, misconceptions and stereotypes about the COVID-

I9 pandemic. It was also anticipated that secondary school learners were likely to have perceptions aligned to their cultural beliefs and norms. Cultural values and norms could have deterred the beliefs on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and hence, had great effects on learners' holistic development (Guy-Evans, 2020).

2.3.5 The chrono-system

The chrono-system level contains lifetime experiences of the learner and it can also involve events in the environment or in history or in the life of the individual that changes him or her (Tudge et al., 2016). In other words, chrono-system represents the changes that occur over a period of time in any one of the systems such as during adolescence, entering the school system, or the death of a friend as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Guy-Evans, 2020). The changes occurring over time transform the existing schemata, beliefs, perceptions and relationships and influences between an individual and their environment, while generating new and progressive ways of development (Guy-Evans, 2020). Deaths caused by COVID-19 could help modify an individual's way of thinking towards the COVID-19 pandemic and suggest measures that could be instituted to reduce deaths (Kelly & Coughlin, 2019). It is anticipated that a person who has once experienced the death of a relative due to the COVID-19 pandemic-related complications would likely change their initial views on ways of preventing the contraction of the pandemic (Hayes et al., 2017).

The rational approach of the whole theory indicates that various systems in a specific context can have an effect when a child is developing and all the relationships in these systems mold a specific person to be unique. Moreover, the development of learners is influenced by the

environment, the past and his or her culture. It is evident that these ecological factors can influence secondary school learners and teachers in schools and how they interact and relate. This includes relationships with other fellow learners and teachers and also by major life changing events (Berger, 2014). An understanding of these interactions is the key to understanding how the surroundings, namely; home, school, neighbourhood, culture and government of the children could have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Botha and Herselman (2016) allude to the fact that the ecological systems theory looks at learners's environments in terms of their quality and context and their capacity to dictate the development of learners. However, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the surroundings, including the learners' home, school and work. Bronfenbrenner emphasises the point that learners should be recognised as powerful agents who should be involved in early intervention programmes directed at improving the learners 'social environments and ultimately their lives (Hayes et al., 2017).

Secondary school learners' personal characteristics such as learners' level of maturation, interest, health conditions, disability, major life-events, ability, sex, religion, learning styles and similar variables should be strongly considered as crucial determinants when learners are developing in these situations of the COVID-19 pandemic (Kelly & Coughlan, 2019). As a result, secondary school learners might be susceptible to anti-social behaviours and psycho-social problems such as stress and depression due to COVID-19 (Berger, 2014).

In this regard, a safe and supportive environment is fundamental to maximise the holistic development of secondary learners for effective coping with peer pressures, and creating vibrant

and stimulating school environments that promote social, emotional physical and mental health fitness in COVID-19 pandemic situations.

2.4 The Psycho-social theory

The study is influenced by Erikson's psycho-social theory but of most importance are the fourth and fifth stages where secondary school learners are mostly found (Phillips, 2015). However, for the benefit of the readers and for them to understand fully what child development entails, the researcher discusses all the eight stages (Lacani, 2015).

Erikson was a psycho-analyst who integrated psycho-analytic perspectives into social insights and how people are active in their own development. His theory focused on the social, cognitive, physical, moral, and emotional and personality development and established that it was more societal and cultural oriented. Erikson views mankind as a social being, who, in nature has a desire to belong. According to Feldman (2010), Erikson has eight stages of child development with different conflicts that must be resolved at each stage. The person normally has two choices in handling each crisis and task; being adaptive or maladaptive when each task is being solved, and that there is a change in personality before the individual can move on to the next stage. If a conflict is not dealt with in the stage in which it arises, it will either be carried through to, or might crop up at a later stage.

According to Ganga (2013), Lacani (2015), and Leong (2015) Erik Erikson's stages began from trust versus mistrust which is observed among the 0-1 year olds. The first stage assumed that when caregivers presented consistently what is adequate during the nurturing and caring for the child, the child will develop basic trust and will realise that the people are dependable and the world can be a safe place to be. The child will develop a sense of trust, hope and confidence. In

cases where parents or caregivers are failing to provide the basic needs, the infant will develop mistrust and this will lead to anxiety, depression, withdrawal and even paranoia, which may lead to psychiatric disorder involving systematised delusion (Flis, van & Eck, 2018).

Erikson's second stage involves autonomy versus shame and doubt. If caregivers are always guiding their children gradually and firmly, praising and accepting them, the children may develop independence. This will automatically help the children to build self-esteem until adulthood. If parents are too permissive, harsh or demanding, the children may feel defeated and experiences extreme fear, shame and doubt. The children may grow and be engaged in neurotic attempts in order to regain control, competency and power. The age ranges between two and three years (Borstein&Leventhal, 2015).

Erikson's third stage is initiative versus guilt, where children become curious about whether caregivers are supportive or not. This whereby the children show initiative purposes and are able to set goals that they may endeavor to accomplish them. If children are punished, they tend to develop a sense of guilt that may lead them to become ruthless.

The fourth stage is industry versus inferiority and it takes place between the ages of six and twelve years. At this stage the child begins school and tries to develop competencies in a number of areas. If not supported by caregivers, an inferiority complex may develop in the child. If excessive inferiority is experienced, the child is led to having feelings of helplessness and inertia (Ganga, 2013). Erikson's first stage up to the fourth level tend to involve the child in trying to figure out the child's world or environment whilst in the next four stages the child tries to develop the self.

According to Erikson, identity versus role confusion falls within the thirteen to nineteen years age range or adolescence. The young adults may become more involved in their sexual identity and gender roles. They can even try learning different roles, may go through identity crisis, and can sometimes use their friends to reflect back to themselves. If the adolescents succeed in resolving the life crisis, they may develop fidelity but if they fail to resolve the crises, they may develop identity confusion where their sense of the self is unstable and threatened (Ganga, 2013). Most secondary school learners are found in stages four and five and other stages mentioned before are important as well as they help readers, teachers and caregivers as they interact with the secondary school learners.

The sixth stage covers intimacy versus isolation that happens between the ages of twenty (20) and twenty-four (24) years. The stage is based on identity development and the virtue gained is usually intimate love. According to Ganga (2013), failure to develop intimacy with the opposite sex may lead to promiscuity. In Spiegler (2018), creativity versus stagnation marks the seventh of Erikson's stages at the age range of twenty-five (25) to sixty-four (64) years. The adult is concerned more about the next generation and cares for family life and other people. The opposite of generativity is stagnation where one may become self-absorbed, which if extended, may lead to self-rejection or failure to afford time for one self.

The final stage is ego integrity versus despair, which begins at the age of sixty-five(65) till the end of one's life span. In concurrence with Lucas, Chidothe and Wilson (2019), in ego integrity, many people may tend to accept their life successes and may develop a sense of wisdom. The

opposite is a feeling of despair and dread for death. Yet, it may not be too late to change their lives. Too much integrity may lead to presumptions whilst too much despair may lead to disdain for life. Erikson's (1968) theory covers a whole life-span and it is prudent to discuss the theory from stage one up to stage eight because being a psychoanalyst, Erikson believes that early life experiences may shape the later life personalities. Therefore, studying the whole life span may also alert caregivers of their roles in the care of the secondary school learners in eras of pandemics such as the COVID-19 one.

During pandemics such as the COVID-19, if learners fail to develop self-identity because they have failed to accomplish demanding circumstances they may in fact be doomed in their quest to develop and achieve their goals (Leong, 2015). The situation may lead learners to despairing since the challenges may remain unmet. The despair they experience may lead to regrets, self-reproaches and self-disgust, leading such learners to fail to affirm either their own life cycles or those of others. Neither will they feel any sense of affirmation, affiliation with others, nor affection. This might lead to psychosocial estrangement, including the sense that nobody understands them. This condition may be worse in a situation where the learner is either infected or affected by COVID-19. Those learners who grew up in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, for the most part, were fearful, unsocialised and doubtful in their lives (Spiegler, 2018).

For Harper and Averi (2020), by applying Erikson's theory, it becomes evident that the forming of the ego identity was something that affected learners during the COVID-19 pandemic. If secondary school learners are burdened by the unresolved residues of previous stages of

development, they find it hard to complete the process of being children and life appears terrifying rather than inviting (Lucas, Chidothe & Wilson, 2019).

Leong (2015) asserts that our senses of personal identity are shaped by our experiences and interactions with others. It is also the identity that helps us to guide our actions, beliefs and the behaviour we develop during the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondary school learners were unfortunate that during the COVID-19 pandemic because they found it difficult to interact with others and resultantly, lacked basic social competencies. Erikson's theory makes it clear that the sense of competence motivates behavior and the actions at each stage.

According to Erikson's theory, a learner is concerned with becoming competent in any area of life. Marsh and Higgins (2018) assume that, given the fact that during the COVID-19 pandemic era, secondary school learners had limited endurance, some could have taken multiple drugs, and could have had multiple medical appointments and tests, and their tolerance and cooperation for complicated exercises and therapy regimes might likely have limited their development and affected their ego identity. Spiegler (2018) observed that in each stage, Erikson believed that people such as these secondary school learners experienced conflicts that served as turning points in their development, and that these conflicts were centred on either developing a psychological quality or failing to develop that quality. The time of the COVID-19 pandemic had the potential to affect the holistic growth of learners, and, as a result of the conflicts that emerged from these stages, may have led the learners to fail to deal with these conflicts (Crawford & Percy, 2020).

Marsh and Higgins (2018) assert that circumstances surrounding an individual's life, coupled with social context, can increase and shape their personality traits and that if there is no cure but persistence of the infections such as those of the COVID-19 pandemic, learners may lack emotional support when confined in secluded places. That would result in feelings of rejection from either school or peer support. The feeling of rejection contributes to feelings of mistrust in the learner as they grow up (Gore, Lloyd, Smith, Bowe, Ellis & Lubans, 2017).

According to the current researcher, Erikson's psycho-social theory maintains that during the COVID-19 pandemic era most secondary school learners lived in stressful environments and many of them struggled with unmet basic needs such as the recommended face masks, sanitisers, testing kits and online education and they also experienced poorer holistic development and thus, had an imbalanced personality. UNESCO (2020) emphasised that the descriptions of these learners' situations and the difficulties they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for support to those learners because the situation was made worse by the fear and rejection that often surrounded them.

2.5 The Five factor model of personality development

As we work to handle the influx of these predicaments of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative to look at the ways by which secondary school learners' personality traits may be affected in the face of the crisis. Personality is defined as a multifaceted prism through which we understand our reactions to the world (Meheisen & Awn, 2013). It is shaped by genetic and environmental factors that determine the pattern of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that arise within us. An individual's personality is relatively stable, though still flexible, and allows us to grow from our experiences while maintaining a level of continuity (DiNapoli & Michael, 2020)

One of the most widely accepted and established personality theories is the Five-factor model, also known as the “Big Five” personality traits model, defined by Costa and McCrae in 1985 (Crawford & Alisa, 2020) theory posits that there are five domains that characterise human personality across cultures, ethnicities and backgrounds. Each domain is built as a scale, ranging between two dichotomous extremes. These scales are openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness and neuroticism (Babic & Ortlieb, 2019).

2.5.1 Openness experience

Openness experience relates to an individual’s intellect, openness to new ideas, cultural interests, educational aptitude and creativity as well as an interest in varied sensory and cognitive experiences (Crawford & Alisa, 2020). Traits commonly associated with this factor include being curious, perceptive, broad-minded, imaginative, creative, intelligent, artistically sensitive and cultured (Babic & Ortlieb, 2019). This factor reflects the way secondary school learners interact with others and their openness to other learners’ feelings and emotional habits and experiences. Agreeable secondary school learners can be described as altruistic, gentle, kind, sympathetic and warm. Openness to experience explains that secondary school learners are willing to explore their external surroundings, show intellectual curiosity, imagination and emotional reaction (Agrba, 2020). Their openness ranges between a natural curiosity, to a cautious and avoidant attitude towards life (Eaton, 2020). Openness to experience is generally not considered to be related to anxiety or depression. However, among secondary school learners who are low on trust, openness has been found to protect against social anxiety. The correlation between the two is particularly relevant due to the strict isolation policies that were put into

effect due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so that a high level of openness to experience could protect this sector against social anxiety (Guardian staff, 2020).

2.5.2 Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is defined as an individual's self-discipline, forethought and diligence. It ranges between a conformist position, a hard-working, goal-oriented, dependable and, to a more spontaneous, laid-back and even anti-social approach (Agrba, 2020). A high level of conscientiousness has been shown to be related to tenacity in the face of anxiety-related stressors. Specifically, high levels of conscientiousness are negatively correlated with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), due to this dimension's relation to hard work and reliability (Greeley, 2020). This ties low levels of conscientiousness to obsessive-compulsive disorder, and as such, can characterise secondary school learners whose pre-existing cleanliness obsessive-compulsive disorder has been triggered over calls to spend more energy on sanitising and personal hygiene (Eaton, 2020) during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

A low level of conscientiousness has also been shown to indirectly relate to depressive disorders, causing secondary school learners to experience failures in different life arenas, such as academically. This suggests that those with already lowered levels of self-efficacy, or a negative self-image, could have been particularly vulnerable to experiencing the obtaining situation of COVID-19 pandemic as hopeless and never-ending (Duan, &Zhu, 2020). Low conscientiousness has also been shown to predict the development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms following a traumatic or highly stressful event (Goldstein, 2020).

2.5.3 Extraversion

Extraversion refers to how outgoing an individual is. Extraverts tend to be more physically and verbally active whereas introverts are independent, reserved, steady and like being alone (Greeley, 2020). Extraverts are adventurous, assertive, frank, sociable and talkative. A high level of extraversion is defined by high energy, friendliness, and talkative nature. A low level of extraversion, also known as introversion, is defined by a more reserved and solitary nature of the individual (García & Weiss, 2019).

High levels of extraversion indicate a stronger resistance to social anxiety (Gottfried & Ehrlic, 2018). This suggests that extraverted secondary school learners are less likely to develop social anxiety when they do come in contact with other individuals, even during necessary excursions in the face of pandemics such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Figlio, David, Kristian, Holde & Umut, 2018). Additionally, extraverts could experience increased levels of stress due to isolation policies separating them from their loved ones who would have been infected by the COVID-19 pandemic and systems of support (García, 2018).

On the other side of this spectrum, low levels of extraversion have been shown to partially account for the appearance of social phobias. The implementation of self-isolation as a protective measure during the COVID-19 pandemic could validate existing beliefs that social interaction poses a threat to their well-being. Introversion also indicates a vulnerability to developing PTSD following a traumatic event (Figlio, David & Özek, 2019).

2.5.4 Agreeableness

Agreeableness consists of one's characteristics that can define an individual's approach to the needs of others, such as kindness, cooperation and empathy (Figlio, David &Özek. 2019). The scale of agreeableness ranges from a warm and accommodating personality, to selfishness and a tendency toward manipulation. A high level of agreeableness protects against social anxiety, which is considered to be on the rise due to warnings to avoid social gatherings for fear of contracting the corona virus (Clark et al., 2020).

2.5.5 Neuroticism

Neuroticism is a measure of affect and emotional control. Low levels of neuroticism indicate emotional stability whereas high levels of neuroticism increase the likelihood of experiencing negative emotions (Cluver et al., 2020). Secondary school learners with high levels of neuroticism are reactive and more easily bothered by stimuli in their environment. They more frequently become unstable, worried, temperamental and sad. Resistant persons on the other hand need strong stimuli to be provoked. Secondary school learners high on neuroticism during COVID-19 tended to experience and express a number of negative emotions including anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability (Clark et al., 2020).

Robert McCrae and Paul Costa's personality aspect is sensitive to stressors and anxiety. These include fear, envy, loneliness anger, depressed mood, frustration from delayed gratification and loneliness. Low neuroticism secondary school learners who are resilient in the face of adversity, and are not easily taken aback (Cluver et al., 2020). High levels of neuroticism mark an increased vulnerability to depression and anxiety-based disorders, both of which have been shown to increase as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the precautions put in place due to the pandemic. A secondary school learner's level of neuroticism has also been shown to predict

the development of (PTSD) learners with low levels of neuroticism will develop less PTSD symptoms once the most stressful stage of a pandemic such as the COVID-19 pandemic scare is over (Centre for Disease Control, 2020).

Apart from the Five-factor personality development model, Adler described the social interest tenet as an individual's inborn potential to cooperate with other people for the achievement of personal and societal goals (Oberle&Schonert-Reichl, 2017). This idea of getting along with others is an individual's first encounter in life. Success in levels of social adjustment which is at the core of human style of life could model learners' approaches to all life's problems. The extent to which our potential for social interest is realised depends on our early social experiences. This implies that no one can avoid other people or obligations towards them entirely (Karp & McGowan, 2020).

Normally, people have been seen to congregate as families' ethnicities and even nations, as a result of this innate desire to connect with others. People gather as communities for survival and protection. In order to express one's social interest one has to cooperate with others in whatever form (Oberle&Schonert-Reichl, 2017). For example, a secondary school learner may find herself in a situation that requires cooperation first from the teacher then from other students. The situation of the COVID-19 pandemic can thwart the development of learners through behavior change (Karp & McGowan, 2020)

To protect themselves, secondary school learners may develop safeguarding tendencies which include withdrawal or learners avoiding sharing of classrooms and learning tools with others to

avoid contracting COVID-19. (Cao,Fang & Zheng,2020). Learners may move backwards, psychologically reverting to a more secure place. Some secondary school learners may develop hesitation, procrastination and vacillation as a result of the fear of contracting the pandemic from others (Baker, Bruce& Matthew, 2020). Anderson and Allison (2020) affirm that during the COVID-19 pandemic, secondary school learners were experiencing stressful circumstances. That has been confirmed by recent studies that demonstrate the social and psychological impact of COVID-19 on learners' mental health. According to Albert (2020) the most recommended protective measures against COVID-19, such as self-isolation have negative effects on the learners' mental health because they induce conditions such as panic disorder, anxiety, and depression.

2.6 Summary of Chapter

This chapter discussed the theoretical framework that helped the researcher to formulate a model to enhance an understanding of the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era. Such a discussion might help explain the challenges faced by secondary school learners in their development that necessitated the need to craft strategies and interventions that would limit these challenges. The Bio-ecological theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner, the Psycho-social theory by Erik Erikson and the Five-factor model of personality development by Eyesenck and Goldberg were described and discussed, showing how they applied to the current study. The next chapter focuses on the review of literature related to the study.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.0 Introduction

Chang and Taylor (2016) assert that literature review basically refers to an essay or collection of essays endeavoring to present issues that are related to the task at hand. In this study, the literature review focuses on the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic beginning 2019.

The discussion of the literature review hinges on the subtopics: the social construction of the concept COVID-19 among secondary school learners, the holistic developmental challenges faced by secondary school learners in responding to COVID-19, aspects during the COVID-19 pandemic which promoted or deterred the holistic development of secondary school learners and the preparedness of schools, communities and policy makers to assist secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Literature review is basically a discussion and summary of the literature that is of general and specialised relevance to the particular area and topic of the research problem (Miles, 2020). According to Boyd and Solarino (2016), literature review is a body of the text that focuses on critical points of current knowledge, including substantive findings and methodological contributions to a particular topic. Chang and Taylor (2016) argue that literature review is important as it helps to establish consistency in knowledge and relevance of existing schema. Lacani (2015) states that literature review is important in the study because it is used in calculating the impact of the latest information in the field by mapping the progress of

knowledge so as to provide contradictions between various schools of thought within the field and to establish facts (Antons&Breidbach, 2018).

The literature reviewed in this enquiry served to provide a summary of what has already been written about the topic (Ganga, 2018; Bell, 2019). It helped to avoid information duplication whilst acknowledging the strengths of previous findings and legitimising their assumptions. Any gaps in knowledge will be established as the researcher assesses the strengths, weaknesses or omissions in previous findings (Creswell, 2020)

3.1The social construction of the concept COVID-19 among secondary school learners

According to Albert (2020), COVID-19 is an infectious disease that is caused by the most recently discovered corona virus. This new pandemic virus and disease was unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan city, China, in December 2019 (Aaron,2020).The disruptive disease has common symptoms which have been proven to cause learners to have fever, difficulty in breathing, and to experience dry cough. Some learners would suffer excruciating aches and pain, feelings of tiredness, and having extensive and continuous runny nose, sore and dry throat as well as diarrhea (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020).

Most secondary school learners have recovered from the pandemic disease naturally. According to research, an average of one learner out of six secondary school learners who contracted COVID-19 becomes seriously sick and develops breathing difficulties (UNICEF, 2020). UNICEF (2020) states that individuals with underlying medical conditions such as high blood pressure, asthma, heart problems or diabetes were more likely to be affected by COVID-19 and develop serious illness. The disease could be spread if infected learners got into proximity with

others (Pollán et al., 2020). The virus could be spread through droplets from the nasal cavity or the mouth where saliva droplets could spread when the learner infected with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or exhales, and the droplets land on objects and surfaces that the other learners might get into contact with. Learners would possibly contract the COVID-19 disease when they touch the contaminated surfaces and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth (UNICEF, 2020).

Learners suspected of having contracted the COVID-19 virus were advised to immediately seek medical attention from the Ministry of Health and Child Care and were advisable to stay at home so as to avoid spreading the disease (UNICEF, 2020; World Bank, 2020). To curb the continuous spreading of the COVID-19 pandemic, learners were supposed to wear face masks (Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 2020a).

Where face masks were not available, the secondary school learners were encouraged to temporarily use what was available or to use one's hands to cover one's mouth and nose when among others (Jordan, 2020). It became a regulation for every learner to avoid coming into close contact with other learners by keeping a distance between the learners. They were also told to avoid visiting public places (Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 2020b). Learners were advised to monitor the COVID-19 symptoms and if the condition of the learner deteriorate the extent that he or she had difficulties in breathing, the learner would quickly seek medical attention (UNICEF, 2020; World Bank, 2020).

Learners had to wash their hands with soap and water after sneezing or coughing and even when caring for the sick and especially before and after preparing food and eating food (WHO, 2020). It was imperative to self-isolate for fourteen (14) days if somebody had just come from a country with recorded COVID-19 cases or had been in proximity with those infected with COVID-19.

Most importantly, secondary school learners were advised to avoid travelling to countries, cities or local areas where COVID-19 was spreading (UNICEF, 2020; World Bank, 2020).

3.2 The holistic development of secondary school learners in the COVID-19 pandemic era.

To understand better how COVID-19 affected the holistic development of secondary school learners, the researcher is going to critically analyse at least four facets of holistic development, namely; cognition, social, physical and moral development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2.1 Cognition development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic

The psychological term cognition specifies the ability to acquire knowledge or the mental capacity or the process of acquiring knowledge by the use of reasoning intuition or perception (Lacani, 2015). Flis and vanEck (2018) define cognition as a process to do with intellectual activities such as perceiving, thinking, problem-solving, understanding and remembering. In other words, it refers to the process of organising information in one`s mind to help accomplish desired goals (Carroll, 2017). The term is very closely related to learning since one is supposed to accomplish both at the same time. As one acquires knowledge, one should be able to organise it appropriately to achieve the desired end (Lacani, 2015).

According to cognitivists such as Piaget (1953), cited in Carroll (2017), children actively construct knowledge leading to higher levels of cognition. As such, the brain is continuously learning how to learn as it assimilates and accommodates new schemes. Bjorklund (2018) contends that learners utilise different levels of elaboration in processing information. This takes place from a continuum that starts from perception, through attention, to labeling, then meaning

is established (Feldman, 2010). When the demands for accessing information more closely match methods used to learn the information, more is remembered.

In an information processing model, there is two-way flow of information that helps educators to remember the need for enhancing a stable status of the learner's mind in order to allow effective cognition and learning to take place. Therefore, even if the human mind is said to be genetically prepared to process and organise information in a specific way (Carroll,2017), the environment should be made conducive for any young mind to remain resilient enough to organise, chunk or process information efficiently even in difficult life circumstances.

In a review of Piaget (1950) cognitive development theory, four of his key learning concepts were: assimilation, accommodation, equilibration, and schemata. He had two major principles, namely; adaptation and organisation. Assimilation and accommodation are part of a learner's adaptation processes (Bjorklund, 2018). According to a research by Cara (2020), chronic stress as result of COVID-19 changes the chemical and physical structure of the brain, impairing cognitive skills such as attention, concentration, memory, and creativity. The challenge among the secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic included the ability to regulate emotions in adaptive ways as a result of stress. Stress disturbed concentration, which led to failure among the secondary school learners. That greatly affected assimilation, accommodation and information retrieval and the processing of information. Stress caused by COVID-19 affected the memory of the secondary school learners. In a research, Wellman (2020) discovered that chronic stress caused the connections between the brain cells to shrink, leading to cognitive deficiencies in the prefrontal cortex. As a result educationists should focus on the teaching and learning processes that allow learning and cognition to take place effectively even in situations of learning difficulties such as in the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic secondary school learners faced challenges that did not allow them to modify their mapping structure in order to reach a good equilibration or homeostasis (Flis& van Eck, 2018). Homeostasis occurs when secondary school learners are able to solve more problems than what they were able to deal with earlier on (Eaton, 2020).

Losses in learning and increased dropout rates in most countries have very unequal education systems, and these negatively impact the cognition of secondary school learners (Hubler, 2020). According to UNICEF (2020), in order to develop appropriate means to assist secondary school learners being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, adequate measures must be put in place to avoid infection and to deal with the fear and discrimination derived from the epidemic which requires careful attention to a range of cultural, social, religious, health and education issues, as well as the ethical and moral ramifications of the interventions. Brooks, et al. (2019) posit that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, learners faced isolation and anxiety because of the fear of the deadly virus and uncertainty about their future (Azad at el., 2019).

3.2.2 Social development of secondary school learners in the COVID-19 pandemic era.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused many secondary school learners to spend most of their time at home, with limited opportunities to socialise or gain critical relationship skills. During the COVID-19 pandemic, secondary school learners had limited social interaction and play-based learning. According to Albert (2020), young learners who have experienced pandemic-related chronic stress and trauma without the buffer of a supportive relationship faced an increased risk of developing emotional, behavioral, and cognitive problems.

For secondary school learners, schooling is not just about academics but is also important for social interactions. Through their interactions with teachers, learners are exposed to a variety of different perspectives and ways of living that may be different from their own cultures (Duan& Zhu, 2020). According to Andersen and Nielsen (2019), secondary school learners enjoy participating in sports, music and a variety of other activities. Participation in these activities helps learners to be more attractive applicants to colleges, universities and future employers; hence the COVID 19 pandemic disrupted the participation of learners in these activities.

According to Vygotsky in Carroll (2017), the learner's interactions and socialisation with other individuals in the environment assist in the total development of the human. He assumes that learning is a social process, where cultural symbols and signs help to develop concepts as learners construct new ideas. Learning is contextualized and situated within the child's culture and experiences. New connections are made through mediation, scaffolding and interaction. Elements such as guidance, structure and support are aspects which are evident in all forms of interactions (Duan& Zhu, 2020). Most secondary school learners' development is in response to the contact and interaction between human beings and their material, social and intellectual environment. Thus, as secondary schools learners interact, they think, decide, evaluate, analyses, commit to memory, practice, construct knowledge and most importantly, gain knowledge (Carroll, 2017). These skills and abilities are important in the process of development (Bjorklund, 2018). However, due to hindering factors such as those caused by COVID-19, some secondary school learners failed to yield worthwhile knowledge from the guidance that was offered by capable individuals, resulting in limited learning.

When learners are socialising, they are able successfully complete tasks that they would not have done independently. According to Vygotsky in Carroll (2017), learners learn through

scaffolding. Scaffolding involves the sequencing of learning activities, with learners getting connected with existing knowledge and developing new knowledge, skills and understanding. Scaffolding involves the input that gives children access to new information that extends their understanding well beyond their knowledge base (Andersen & Nielsen, 2019)

The concept of scaffolding describes the role of the tutor in helping the children solve problems beyond their cognitive level (Andersen & Nielsen, 2019). It can be explained as a process through which a teacher or more competent peer gives aid to the other. Carroll (2017) explains that scaffolding is the way the adult guides the child's learning via focused questions and positive interaction. These guiding aspects include questions, clues, hints and contextualisation that would facilitate learning. This process takes place within the Zone of Proximal Development (Andersen & Nielsen, 2019). To reach the Zone of Proximal development, secondary school learners need guidance, supervision and an adult or more competent individual to scaffold or support them as they learn new things.

Interaction with the surrounding culture and social agents such as parents, teachers and more competent peers, contribute significantly to the secondary school learners' social development. The interaction process entails that siblings, parents and friends hand over to the learner, cultural tools such as language through socialisation (Carroll, 2017). The social, physical or cultural contexts help to develop important social skills. Vygotsky (1978) in Feldman (2010) realises that cultural content and daily experiences are important in the acquisition of skills and knowledge.

3.2.3 Physical development of secondary school learners during the COVID -19 pandemic

According to WHO (2020) a total of about sixty (60) minutes a day for exercise is required for a healthy mental and physical development of learners. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe recommends that secondary school learners should do physical activities for at least sixty (60) minutes per day and they should engage in activities such as soccer, volley ball, netball, athletics and many others.

Kinosita (2017) reports that high intensity of sporting and physical activities are correlated with secondary school learners' fundamental movement skills. It is important to ensure that secondary school learners are given opportunities to participate in physical activities to maintain their lifelong health and improve their physical strength and athletic abilities. However, in 2020, secondary school learners physical activity environment changed dramatically because of the emergence of the COVID-19 infection. Many countries declared a state of emergency and requested people to restrict their activities, including refraining from nonessential and non-urgent outings(Naito et al., 2020).

Because of the above conditions, secondary school learners and teachers have become concerned about learners' mental and physical health and the degree of physical activity. Moreover, various considerations were required to prevent infections such as limiting the number of participants in activities, which confused teachers and learners.

3.2.4 Moral development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic

According to a study by Noveni, Putra, Utami, Rahmawati, Susilowati, Diawara and Alyadini (2021), the moral development of children during the COVID-19 pandemic was determined by the role of adults in the formation of learners' moral rules. The study results on moral reasoning showed that during COVID-19 pandemic 75% of children followed regulations related to social

distancing, while 25% did not follow the regulations related to social distancing. Basically, the study showed that adults had a big influence on the learners moral's reasoning about social distancing.

Gazzaniga et al., (2015) explains that morality has an important role in human life, because it affects consequences and actions. Moral reasoning involves cognitive processes and develops moral emotions. According to Santrock (2011), Piaget's theory of moral development focuses on attitudes, feelings and influences of an individuals cognition of the rules. The morality of the learner, is, according to Piaget, divided into three stages, firstly; the pre moral, secondly; the heteronomous morality (ages 7 to 10 years)stage of moral development, where learners see rules as an authority possessed by God, parents, and teachers. Here, the learners understand that rules cannot be changed but must be obeyed as much as possible, and thirdly, the morality of autonomous cooperation stage (11 years and over). Morals develop through the child's realisation that people can choose different views of moral action.

During the COVID-19pandemic, families and teachers had a very important role as role models for secondary school learners, models who could shape the moral character and ethical conduct of learners. In this case, moral reasoning also played an important role in determining the behaviour of secondary school learners. Setiono (2009) states that moral reasoning is not something good or bad but how someone comes to a decision that something is good or bad.

The pandemic situation forced the government to issue policies related to social distancing, rules or efforts to maintain distance and avoid crowding (Minister of Health Regulation No. 11 of 2020). All these rules were intended to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Both parents and secondary school learners needed to understand and implement the policies that had been

issued. Social distancing regulations, such as school activities being closed, and being replaced by an online system, the reduction of activities that promoted crowding in public places, including religious activities affected the moral development of secondary school learners.

According to Aristovnik and Keržič (2020), an altered emotional state can modify the way people reason. In the case of secondary school learners, there was a constant fear of becoming sick or dying because of COVID-19. That kind of fearful situation had a negative influence on the learners' moral reasoning. Starr and Joshua (2020) observe that the intensity of the crisis, quantified by the number of COVID-19 deaths, significantly affected the moral reasoning of secondary school learners. The correlation of COVID-19 deaths had direct correlation responses to learners' dilemmas (Calargo & Jessica, 2020). Therefore, it is important to understand that the relationship between the severity of the pandemic and people's responses to individual dilemmas has a bearing on learners' moral development. Broadwater and Luke (2020) assert those learners' individual differences in decision-making predicted judgments about moral problems during the COVID-19 crisis in Zimbabwe.

3.3 Aspects in the COVID-19 pandemic era that promoted or deterred the holistic development of secondary school learners

Salari et al., (2020) posit that mental health during the pandemic period was worse among younger people although older people had a higher mortality rate from COVID-19 infection than the younger. Young age and unstable school environment were associated with increased suicidal ideation. However, the presence of teachers at school and family members protected learners against poor mental health conditions during the COVID -19 pandemic period (Cao et al., 2020). Depression was a cause for concern among secondary school learners. Loneliness

during the COVID-19 pandemic period, an increased lack of hope, and a general melancholic perspective contributed to depression as many individuals remained separated from their loved ones' support systems (Ueda et al., 2020).

Studies by Qiongni and Chen (2020) on the possible harmful developmental impacts of the infectious epidemics on the learners were carried out. It was reported that having relatives infected with COVID-19 heavily affected the relatives' daily lives, as well as affecting learners' academic activities as it increased the anxiety levels among secondary school learners (Wenjun et al., 2020). Also, in a previous COVID-19 study, Nigerian university students were found to have higher anxiety levels than normal people (Qiongni, Chen, 2020). This may have been due to the fear and anxiety of death from COVID-19. The pandemic outbreak had generally increased panic, anxiety and depression among both the secondary learners and adult population (Qiongni& Chen, 2020). Wenjun et al. (2020) posit that post-traumatic stress disorder was likely to affect learners well after the corona virus pandemic had subsided, and the world would begin to experience a sense of instability due to the symptoms of PTSD despite regaining.

3.4 The developmental experiences encountered by secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era

For secondary school learners, schooling is not only about learning, reading and Mathematics; it is also about the development of social, emotional and cognitive structures which are critical to success in life (Griffith, 2020). School closures eliminated the most critical and imperative aspects of school life beyond academic activities. These include the development of personal relationships among learners and between learners and teachers. Some school activities support learners' mental, physical and emotional well-being as well as skills development (Goldstein,

2020). However, because of the cessation of learners' normal activities at school during the COVID-19 pandemic, secondary school learners lost impersonal contact with their relatives and friends. At home, they however, witnessed so many daily life realities from their parents who were not sure where they could get money for the next meal or for rent since they were then working at odd jobs in order to survive. The parents and other family members were anxious about their loved ones whom they feared might be in danger of serious illness or even death(Eaton,2020).

According to UNICEF (2020), social interaction changed among secondary school learners, teachers and communities due to the discriminatory attitude and behavior towards the people infected with the corona virus. The organisation Forum states that secondary school girls faced the severe risk of sexual exploitation at schools and in the community when some of them spent most of their time with uncles and step fathers (Stratford, 2020; Morsy & Rothstein, 2019).

Most secondary school learners from low-income families suffered academically because of the physical and mental health problems that were not addressed in a consistent manner (Menas, 2019). Many learners relied on school-based health centres, a critical resource that was no longer available in the schools since teaching and learning was no longer being conducted on site. When the COVID-19 pandemic affected Zimbabwe, access to doctors' offices was limited and hospitals were overwhelmed and perceived as unsafe even for diseases other than the COVID-19.As a result, some diseases went untreated (Stratford, 2020).

Some school activities support learners' mental, physical and emotional well-being and skills development (Goldstein, 2020), but because of the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic,

learners lost in-person contact with their relatives and friends and witnessed so many daily life realities from their parents (Eaton, 2020).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more secondary school learners became more stressed as learners lived in cramped homes that were not ideal because having all family members always together in the home created the regular challenges in their daily lives (Stratford, 2020). In South Africa, increased incidences of abuse were recorded in first phase of the lock down due to such confinements, stress, and lack of access to the outside world. This further affirms the urgency of addressing the stressors that were affecting families and, in turn, affected the secondary school learners' development (Stratford 2020).

3.5 Challenges faced by secondary school learners in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

Secondary school learners who were made vulnerable by COVID-19 threatened the attainment of Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in Zimbabwe. Policy recommendations agreed that schools should meet the needs of secondary school learners. The case study by Cluver et al. (2020) researching on schools affected by the COVID-19 pandemic showed that schools were not materially and symbolically well-positioned to serve as institutional bases to meet the demands of learners. Research by Kuhfeld (2019) on home schooling showed that teaching and learning works well for learners for whom resources were sufficiently available. But the crisis-induced delivery of the home schooling lacked sufficient time to plan around for secondary school learners' learning styles and circumstances, and that affected many learners during the COVID-19 pandemic period. The COVID-19 pandemic affected learners in ways that diminished childhood development and limited their choices of

learning styles and opportunities for successful survival throughout their lives (Dorn et al., 2020).

UNICEF (2020) asserts that education in a world with the COVID-19 pandemic could not be compared with the same education in a world without the pandemic. A study by Schanzenbach and Tomeh (2020) stipulates that in many countries, secondary school learners were growing up in the midst of multiple challenges that were exacerbated by the direct threats of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study by Dorn et al., (2020) also noted that the challenges facing those secondary school learners were particularly dramatic because nearly 100% of all the learners infected by COVID-19 could not attend school.

According to Baker and DiCarlo (2020) during the COVID-19 pandemic the number of secondary school learners who had dropped out of school increased. Again, school attendance had dropped due to various COVID-19 related symptoms that affected learners such as coping with personal illness, trauma-related illness and the sudden death of a member of the family. Research on chronic absenteeism and on remote learning reinforced the urgency of providing appropriate support to learners who were least prepared and especially those who were at the risk of becoming disengaged (Torres, 2020).

The literature available on learner absenteeism shed light on the relationship between learning and instructional time. The results indicated negative core relationship between absenteeism and learners 'outcomes because when the pandemic intensified most learners missed schooling days (Torres, 2020). Using data from public schools in Chicago, Allenworth and Evans (2016) note that each week of absence per semester in the ninth grade was associated with a more than 20% decline in the probability of graduating from high school. Referring to learner performance, the

disadvantage associated with absenteeism grows in proportion to the number of days the learner missed lessons (Garcia & Weiss, 2018).

When secondary school learners got lower grades and test scores they exhibited behavioral issues, and sometimes, dropped out of school (Balfanz, 2017; Gottfried & Ehrlich, 2018). Indeed, the risk of learners dropping out of school was of greater and particular concern for secondary school learners whom the pandemic had driven away from the schools (Fontdeglòria, 2020; United Nations, 2020). In addition to challenges faced by secondary school learners in the COVID-19 pandemic, literature on the use of devices reveals that not all learners had access to appropriate digital devices.

Moreover, it was hard to plan effectively for the teaching instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic period when teachers and school authorities did not have an explicit framework to accommodate what they were doing during that period (Rothstein, 2020). Research on home schooling as the result of COVID-19 pandemic shows that home schooling worked well for learners under narrow circumstances. Parents who home-schooled their learners cited a number of challenges which emanated from doing that. Most educators were concerned about the school environment, including the safety measures, drug abuse, negative peer pressure, and dissatisfaction with the type of academic instruction available at the schools as well as the desire to provide religious instruction (Grady, 2017).

Thompson (2019) explains that school days lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the learners' performance and cognitive development. The study by Belfield (2019) looked at the data on reading, math, and science test results of fifteen (15) year old learners in countries around the world and from the Programme for International Student Assessment

(PISA). From these studies, it was established that learners advance in their academic development by about 0.3 standard deviations (SD) and 0.5 SD to 0.7 SD per year, respectively, depending on their ages and subject/skills. These benchmarks helped the researchers understand the various ways the learners have been interrupted and disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figlio, Holden, and Özek (2018) found that extending the school holiday because of the COVID-19 pandemic provided literacy instruction which reduced the reading scores by 0.05 SD in elementary schools. Thompson (2019) explains that school days lost due to COVID-19 inversely impacted the performance due to the longer school holiday. From these researches it becomes imperative for the researcher to stress that due to closure of schools learners lost much of their time for learning and development.

Discrimination and stigma from among peers affected learners, especially when other learners realised that a member of their family had succumbed to the pandemic. It is estimated that about 10 million learners exacerbate such problems of discrimination and stigmatization in the African region (Gould & Shierholz, 2020). Studies have shown that the value of education deteriorated as parents perceived that letting their children go to school could only lead to early death. They were, thus, unwilling to spend their limited resources on education which resulted in negative implications on some secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic period (Dinarski, 2020).

Most importantly, the corona virus crisis resulted in increased numbers of secondary school learners who faced serious illness or experienced the death of a relative. It seemed as if a large share of low-income secondary school learners has suffered major trauma as a result of losing family members to the pandemic. The corona virus pandemic was causing the death of many

people in many communities (Harper 2020). For instance, in Georgia, where African Americans make up just 30% of the state population, they recorded over 80% of COVID-19-related hospitalisations and more than 50% of deaths (Weiner 2020).

According to Streicher (2020) the COVID-19 pandemic caused families to lack adequate dietary needs, medical support and clean habitats. These essential requirements were important for the active performance and development of a secondary school learner. Because of strenuous situations learners suffered improper growth due to their parents' financial difficulties. That resultantly affected their cognitive, social, physical and emotional development.

Studies by UNICEF (2020) showed that the corona virus pandemic had affected the education fraternity which is a pillar to learner development and the economic growth in schools and at societal levels. The closure of schools and economic degradation affected the overall demands of quality education, enrolment rates, performance and completion. UNICEF (2020) indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic induced anxiety in learners through trauma, discrimination and stigma by constantly disturbing the secondary school learners' concentration in the class. Cooper and Worker (2020) observe that these sentiments of secondary school learners who had been quarantined and isolated by stigmatisation and sickness were associated with mass dropouts.

UNICEF (2020) concurred that once COVID-19 had infected learners they stood the high risk of being denied access into the school premises until they had been tested again. Bivens and Zipperer (2020) contend that learners need love, care and support in order to develop well and perform well in school. Isolation and being rejected by other learners could lead to poor psychological, social and emotional development among learners.

Studies by Gould (2020) indicate that among secondary school learners there were some learners who were heads of families. Child-headed households had their own challenges which included greater economic vulnerability and lack of funds to cater for academic needs and nutrition. This sometimes forced learners out of school and thus affected learner development.

3.6 Ways in which schools, communities and policy makers could be prepared to assist secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era.

There was need for careful attention to a range of cultural, social, religious, health and educational issues, as well as to the ethical and moral ramifications for successful prevention and intervention against COVID-19 infection, as well as against discrimination (Newton, 2020). Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, schools, communities and policy makers struggled to provide help to the education system (Shierholz, 2020). Ideally, every member of the community should take the responsibility to rebuild and support the education system which has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, how well people can rebuild the education system depends on how the authorities and communities address the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic (Heald-Sargent, Muller, Zheng, Rippe, Patel&Kociolek, 2020).

UNICEF (2020) proposed a set of targeted educational interventions. These are comprehensive services that should be provided by educators and communities in order to uplift the disadvantaged learners whose education had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This could reduce the inequalities created in the education system by the pandemic. This plan would facilitate the relief, recovery, and rebuilding that would also be properly funded at each stage (Kim& Tammy, 2019).

To execute the necessary investments that would promote educational delivery for a holistic development, there should be a solid footing in the provision of effective online instruction and support to the secondary school learners. Support should be scaled up to address the crisis (Strauss, 2020, 22). New investments in the communities should be devoted to helping schools and secondary school learners to compensate for the lost time and ground. At the moment the government and communities should lay the foundations for a shift towards an education system which tries to understand the complexity of education production in a COVID-19 pandemic era (Scott, 2020). The education provided should offer multiple components of developmental needs, unleash learners' talents, work towards the equality of all learners, regardless of whether they are from affluent or disadvantaged communities. A society should reflect the values of education they deem necessary in pandemic times such as the COVID-19 one, hence the plan should be backed by strong collaboration and effort in collecting substantial amounts of resources (Hubler, 2020).

It is imperative, therefore, to be more prepared than ever to meet the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic. People should be informed by the intention to win against any pandemic. All the evidence on the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates that a lot of spending is required so there is need for investment into the holistic development of secondary school learners (Crawford, Butler-Henderson & Kerryn, 2020).

To upgrade the system so that it meets the needs of secondary school learners requires the government to urgently organize resources so that they can provide effective remote instruction and support in schools to cater for the recurrence of the pandemic (Harper, 2020). During the pandemic, secondary schools experienced challenges of not adequately fulfilling their roles of educating learners although serving as key safety havens. Most importantly, schools should not

just provide online education but also support secondary school learners with meals, health services, counseling, and, in some instances, housing to the homeless learners (Hodges, Charles, Stephanie, Barb, Torrey & Bond, 2020). In the case where lockdown restrictions might last long, standard operating procedures should be foreseeable for future education transformation. Policies that foster and ensure more learners holistic development should be enforced and all schools should provide effective online instruction (Idele et al., 2020).

Every school should be equipped with the necessary resources, in conjunction with public and private community institutions, so as to feed learners and their families for as long as the pandemic crisis demands. Schools should provide counseling and psychological health support and should expand and extend to meet the developmental needs of secondary school learners (Jordan, 2019).

In times of crisis, every district should develop systems that monitor secondary school learners' needs in order to be able to learn online (Jordan, 2020). The sudden closure of schools meant that many secondary school learners lost access to most of their basic needs. School districts should cooperate with state and local agencies and partner organisations in order to assess learners' needs so that districts may understand their learners' predicament and respond accordingly (Jordan, 2020).

Schools should be furnished with requisite resources and the technical support so as to narrow the gap of the digital divide and undertake diagnostic assessment of the technology that is critical for the secondary school learners' regular instruction (Kamenetz, 2020b). The online learning instruction that the learners receive must be of high-quality, and address the critical needs of the secondary school learners, especially the special-needs learners. District and school authorities

should provide educators with the necessary training and techniques to avoid unstructured instruction and avoid trial-and-error instruction that many employed during the pandemic (Jordan, 2020b).

In every school and district they should establish a plan to meet the safety measures required for COVID-19 pandemic, following guidance from public health experts and educators (Kamenetz, Anya, 2020b). These plans should include communicating, monitoring, educating, and reinforcing appropriate hygienic and social distancing practices in ways that are developmental and appropriate for secondary school learners, teachers, and authorities. It should also include maintaining healthy environments and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, repurposing unused or underutilised school or community spaces to create classroom space so as to facilitate social distancing, including outside spaces, where feasible, as well as developing proactive plans for learners and staff member COVID-19 tests (Kirk, 2019).

Educators and community health workers should receive training on interpreting diagnostic assessments so that they can use them to enhance instruction (Kostyo, Jessica & Darling-Hammond, 2018). This would ensure that secondary school learners are safe during pandemics such as COVID-19. Understanding diagnostic testing is also an important benchmark for testing, project-based learning, and performance assessments, with a focus on depression and trauma-based assessment (Kraft, David & Dylan, 2018). Schools and teachers should provide more personalised instruction especially during pandemics with the intention of emphasising on secondary school learners who would have experienced the most interrupted learning (Kuhfeld, 2019).

Teachers and authorities should be aware that learners have different learning styles, and that they underwent different predicaments during the pandemic. Online learning is less effective for secondary school learners who are less prepared and who neither have full access to internet and computers, nor the experience of using the devices for school work (Leachman, Michael & Figueroa, 2019). Intensive interventions are crucial in order to help secondary school learners who can be identified as having heightened risks of dropping out altogether because of COVID-19 (Lee, 2020a).

It is important for the provision of more flexible interventions for secondary school learners who will require more, better, and targeted holistic development. For all this to happen teachers need to be equipped to deliver and support learners to develop social and emotional learning (Lee, 2020b). The corona virus crisis created serious problems for secondary school learners' well-being and development linked to social and emotional learning, health, and well-being (Lerner, 2020). Teachers' positive relationships with learners, enabled specialised knowledge about psychological, social and emotional learning helps them to contribute to the social and emotional learning of secondary school learners. Therefore, it is critical to improve training and support for teachers and other school authorities.

3.7 How to curb stress, anxiety and depression among secondary learners.

The epidemic has brought not only the risk of death from infection but also unbearable psychological pressure. A study with the college students from Changzhi medical college (2020) was done using cluster sampling. A total 7,143 student responses to the questionnaire packet which inquired on the participants responses to the anxiety disorder caused by the COVID-19

pandemic. The results showed that 0.9% of the respondents were experiencing severe anxiety, 2.7% moderate anxiety, and 21.3% mild anxiety. Moreover, having relatives or acquaintances infected with COVID-19 was a risk factor that increased the anxiety of college students. Cheng, Albert and Michael (2019) suggested that during teaching, teachers needed to be both emotionally and academically methodical. Teachers should focus on the relationships first in order to deal with the fear and anxiety about the pandemic coupled with the uncertainty about the future. However, this could be disruptive to a learner's ability to come to school ready to learn. Teachers should act as a powerful buffer against the adverse effects of trauma by helping to establish a safe and supportive environment for learning. From morning meetings to regular check-ins with learners, strategies that centre on relationship building are crucial (Cheng, Erika & Wilkinson, 2020).

Secondary school learners may respond to stress in different ways. The common responses include having difficulties in getting sleep, bed wetting, having pain in the stomach or head and being anxious, withdrawn, angry, clingy or afraid to be left alone. Responding to learners' reactions in a more supportive way and explaining to them that their reactions are normal in abnormal situations is paramount (Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 2020b). It is important to listen to learners' concerns and take time to comfort them and show them affection. It is also important to reassure them that they are safe as well as praise them. If possible, create opportunities for learners to play and relax. Regular routines and schedules should be adhered to as much as possible, especially before learners go to sleep so as to create conducive environments (Cheng, Albert & Donnelly, 2019).

It could help to provide age appropriate facts about what has happened, explain what is going on and give learners clear examples on what they can do to help protect themselves and others from

infection during times of pandemics such as COVID-19 (Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 2020a). Educators should share information about what could happen in a reassuring way. For example, if a learner is feeling sick and staying at home or the hospital, educators could tell the learners the importance of staying at home (Bueno, 2020). Secondary school learners with disabilities may have underlying conditions which may increase the risk of serious complications from COVID-19. Those who depend on care givers may need extra support to maintain hand and other hygiene (Calargo, 2020). In addition, they may be vulnerable to infection because of many barriers. It is therefore important to properly explain to the learners with disabilities so that they can understand (Century Foundation (TCF), 2020).

It was important for individuals to reduce stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it is normal to feel sad, distressed, worried and scared or angry during a crisis learners should be encouraged to talk to someone they trust and to contact friends and family (Brookings Institution, 2020). At home, parents should encourage learners to maintain a healthy lifestyle, including having a proper diet, enough sleep, exercises and social contact with loved ones at home. It is important to keep in touch with family and friends through email, phone calls and social media platforms. Learners should avoid using tobacco, alcohol or other drugs to cope with emotions (Bivens, Josh&Zipperer, 2020).

Learners should be advised that when overwhelmed with stress and anxiety they should talk to a health worker or another trusted person in the community or a religious or community elder. People should have an idea of who to contact when they need help, whether physical health, mental health, emotional or psychological health. Families should avoid entertaining, watching or listening to upsetting media (Balu, 2019). It is imperative to put in place measures that prevent the sexual exploitation of minors in affected families since minors may sometimes be left alone

due to quarantined parents. People should seek help to deal with conflict in the home. If learners experience sexual and gender-based violence during the times such as those of COVID-19 they should readily access assistance from government clinics and other organisations (Bakeman, 2020)

3.8 Summary for the chapter

The chapter looked at the social construction of the concept COVID-19 among secondary school learners and the challenges faced by secondary school learners in their holistic development during pandemic times such as that of COVID-19. The chapter highlighted aspects which either promoted or deterred the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also assessed the preparedness of schools, communities and policy makers to assist secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic. The next chapter describes the research methodology, specifically the research paradigm, research approach, research design, the population, sample and sampling procedures, data collection procedure, data presentation and analysis procedure, data verification and, lastly, ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

As indicated above, this chapter presented the research methodology. It specifically addressed the research paradigm, research approach, research design, the population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection procedure, data presentation and analysis, data verification, ethical considerations and finally a chapter summary.

A research methodology describes the techniques and procedures used to identify and analyse information regarding a specific research topic (Palinkas et al., 2015). It is a process by which researchers design their study so that they can achieve their objectives using the selected research instruments (Andrade, 2019). It includes all the important aspects of research, including research design, data collection methods, data analysis methods, and the overall framework within which the research is conducted. Furthermore, according to Creswell (2019), a research methodology is a structured and scientific approach used to collect, analyses, and interpret quantitative or qualitative data to answer research questions or test hypotheses. In it, we study the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his or her research problem along with the logic behind.

A research methodology was important in this study because it functioned as the path through which the researcher needed to conduct the research. It shows the path through which the researchers formulated the problems and objectives and presented their results from the data obtained during the study period. A research methodology was also important as it provided a

framework and guidelines for the researcher to clearly define the research hypotheses, objectives and questions. The researcher can identify the most appropriate research design, sampling technique, and data collection and analysis methods. A sound research methodology helps the researcher to ensure that the findings are free from biases and errors and in this case, this was done through planning the research efficiently, and by ensuring optimum usage of the time and resources. It also helped to ensure that ethical guidelines were followed while conducting the research.

There are three types of research methodology based on the type of research and the data required, namely qualitative research methodology, quantitative research methodology, and mixed-method research methodology (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Qualitative research methodology examines the opinions, behaviours, and experiences of people. It collects and analyses words and textual data. This research methodology requires fewer participants but is still more time consuming because the time spent per participant is quite large (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). Quantitative research methodology focuses on measuring and testing numerical data. This approach is good for reaching a large number of people in a short amount of time. This type of research helps in testing the causal relationships between variables, making predictions, and generalising results to wider populations (Welch & Piekkari, 2017). Mixed-method uses the characteristics of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Both methods are complementary and explain any unexpected results obtained from one method by using the other method (Reiche, Lee & Allen, 2019).

This study adopted the qualitative research methodology in order to assess the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic in Chegutu, Zimbabwe.

4.2 Research paradigm

The term paradigm is derived from a Greek word which means 'pattern' (Creswell, 2014) and has been widely defined by many academics. For example, paradigm is defined as a way we see and perceive the world around us. A paradigm also frames a research topic and influences the way researchers think about the topic (Mukherji&Albon, 2015). Furthermore, Bobbie (2014) claims that a paradigm is a set of beliefs about the way particular problems exist and a set of agreements on how such problems could be investigated. From the above definitions, we can safely say a paradigm is a set of beliefs which guide action that is embedded in all educational research.

It is also argued that all social scientists approach their subject via explicit or implicit assumptions about the nature of the social world and the way in which it may be investigated (Kivunja&Kuyini, 2017). Every researcher has particular understandings on what is knowledge and what is truth. Such understandings shape, in general, a paradigm which is best described as a whole system of thinking (Creswell, 2014). In this sense, a paradigm denotes the established research traditions in a particular discipline or a philosophical framework (McNulty & Selmer 2017). More specifically, a paradigm includes the accepted theories, traditions, approaches, models, frames of reference, bodies of research and methodologies, and could also be seen as a model or framework for observation and understanding (Welch & Piekkari, 2017).

Scientific research uses a positivist paradigm. This paradigm contends that there is an objective reality out there to be studied, captured and understood. For this very reason, positivist researchers specifically tend to use quantitative methods to gather measurable numerical data. In this way, their work is aimed at the provision of numerical illustrations (descriptive studies), discovering relationships between components (correlation studies), or attempting to change some aspects of the phenomena studied (experimental studies) (Cresswell, 2014).

This current study is conducted within the interpretive paradigm and the researcher is relying on participants' views on the phenomenon being studied. Interpretivists believe that reality is constructed and in this case, by secondary school learners and the community at large in a social setting as they learn and interact (Henning, Hutter & Bailey, 2017). The interpretive paradigm is also called the phenomenological approach. According to Marx Weber, humans are ever attempting to make sense of their worlds, and in so doing, they incessantly construe, create, give meaning, define, justify and rationalise daily actions (Babbie, 2014). This means that by using interpretivism the researcher can obtain more diverse, detailed and multifaceted information that has the capacity to take into account various viewpoints and versions of the truth which frequently results in a more thorough knowledge of the issue at hand.

Andersen and Nielsen (2019) affirm that the interpretive paradigm attempts to understand the subjective world of human experience and selects information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest, in which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. Interpretivism supposes that the subject matter of the social sciences

should rather be interpreted through the meanings that the school, teachers and learners give explanation to their everyday social life as they experience it (Yanow&Dvora, 2014).

The study of the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic in Chegutu, Zimbabwe, relied on empirical information where teachers and learners were involved to collect qualitative data. According to Aguinis and Solarino (2019), an interpretive paradigm research has the intention of understanding the world of human experience and its aim is to describe how people make sense of their world and the contexts in which they live. Data collected using the interpretive paradigm provides the researcher with insights into the behaviour displayed and the meanings and interpretations that participants give to their lives.

The first assumption shared in interpretivism entails looking at a phenomenon from different angles (Yanow& Schwartz-Shea, 2015). The primary advantage of interpretivism is that the process of interpretation is conducted systematically so that the study is characterised by communicative trustworthiness (Welch &Piekkari, 2017). This entails that what the researcher understands and interprets consistently align with what is meant by the participants being studied (Yin, 2018).

This attempt to understand the world from the perspective of its participants is very important while using the interpretative paradigm because interpretivists believe that reality is constructed. In this case the construction was done by secondary school learners and the community at large and this was done in their social setting as they learned and interacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Aguinis and Solarino (2019) posit that interpretivism is an approach based on

philosophical phenomenology. Its objective is to make sense of the meanings and subjective intentions of particular individuals in a given context, without imposing prior analytic categories. In contrast to positivism, which assumes that there is an objective world that can be represented by concepts and propositions, the interpretivist phenomenological paradigm asserts that we do not live in a singular social reality but rather in multiple socially-constructed views of social reality (Babones, 2016). This paradigm aims to understand people, and in this research, it was to comprehend secondary school learners' holistic development in the COVID-19 pandemic era. When understanding events by discovering the meaning human beings attribute to their behaviour and the external world, the focus is on meanings and understanding contextual variables. The motivation of this research was from an interpretive stand point to understand and interpret everyday challenges that affected or hampered the holistic development of secondary school learners as a result of the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the interpretivist's perspective, social reality is subjective because it is shaped by the perceptions of the participants, as well as the values and aims of the researcher. Flick (2018) describes interpretivism as being directed at understanding the social interactions of human beings. Accordingly and in line with this, Harsch and Festing (2020) contend that the mind interprets events and experiences, and constructs meanings from them. Put differently, meaning does not exist outside the mind.

Interpretivism thus centres on exploring the intricacy of human social experiences with a view of gaining understanding (Harsch&Festing, 2020). The social experiences here were the living experiences of secondary school learners in the COVID-19 pandemic era. There was repeated

school closures and the increasing numbers of school dropouts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. There were also high infection rates and related problems, among the secondary school learners. As a result there was the introduction of online learning and home schooling to curb the spread of the corona virus pandemic (Andersen & Nielsen, 2019). The motivation of this research, from an interpretivism standpoint, was, thus, to understand and interpret related holistic developmental effects of the COVID-19 pandemic among secondary school learners in Chegutu district in Zimbabwe.

Moreover interpretivism supposes that the subject matter of the social sciences within secondary school learners is essentially grounded, therefore, different from that of the natural sciences (Cooke, 2018). In other words, an interpretivist reality should rather be interpreted through the meanings that the community members gave to their everyday social lives as they experienced these circumstances in the COVID-19 pandemic era.

4.3 Research Approach

A research approach is a plan and the procedure for a research that spans the steps from a broad assumption to a more detailed method of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Silverman, 2018). There are three main research approaches, that is, quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches. Quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures (Flick, 2019). Qualitative research is an approach used to explore and understand the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems (McNulty & Brewster 2019). Mixed methods

research is an approach to inquiry that involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical framework. The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of the research problem than either approach alone could (Brooke, 2019).

The researcher used the qualitative research approach to explicitly analyse the holistic development of secondary school learners in the COVID-19 pandemic era. This approach is in line with the interpretivism paradigm adopted in this study. It is also a more suitable approach for exploring and understanding the development of secondary school learners in the COVID-19 pandemic era. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define qualitative research approaches as an array of techniques which give interpretation through decoding, describing, translating and giving the meaning that is naturally occurring and not the frequency phenomena. Creswell (2020) describes a qualitative research approach as a process where a research problem is analysed in its natural setting rather than to have subjects studied in a laboratory.

Denzin and Lincoln (2017) present qualitative research as an inquiry process into an understanding of a social human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants and conducted in a natural setting. Flick (2018a) adds the view that qualitative research or qualitative inquiry has been widely applied in the anthropology and sociology fields and beyond, including education with numerous ways of adopting the qualitative study approach. "Qualitative research can be interpreted as an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human

problem” (Creswell, 2020: 32). The collection of information using this method allows the researcher(s) to gather information from multiple sources and is aimed at understanding the meaning of the problems from the respondents’ or involved audiences’ perspectives (Reiche, Lee & Allen, 2019b).

Collection of information through qualitative procedures is not subjected by categories but allows for in-depth and detailed information. The information is also subjective in nature and its meaning and experiences are always described verbally (Drisko, 2016). Vickers (2016) sees qualitative data as records of observation or interaction that are complex and cannot be easily reduced to numbers. People’s behaviour can be understood through observation and interviews using qualitative approaches. Qualitative approaches give room to a deeper understanding of the subject matter as they exist in their own unique environment (Miles et al., 2020). Qualitative data can be obtained through open-ended questions and in-depth interviews which give participants the opportunity to give information that does not restrict the participants’ opinions (Creswell & Clark, 2020).

This current study was rooted in the qualitative approach as it sought to understand and describe the qualitative nature of the holistic development of secondary school learners in the COVID 19 pandemic era in Zimbabwe. The qualitative approach was chosen for its characteristics that suited the phenomenon. Flick (2018a) reiterates that qualitative research attempts to produce findings that are arrived at from real-world settings where the phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally.

A qualitative approach was also considered suitable for this study since it presents facts in a narration of words (Mesly, 2015). In addition, Drisko (2016) observes that a qualitative approach is ideal if the current literature explores issues concerning human beings. It is important to note that human beings are constantly creating meanings and meanings shape the way people view others, the world and themselves. Denzin and Lincoln (2017) argue that the qualitative approach explores individual worlds through the participant's eye while the researcher actively takes part in assessing the views of the participants.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) further affirm that the aims of qualitative research are to reveal the meaning of an occurrence for people who are involved in it. In conducting this study qualitatively, the researcher was concerned with identifying how secondary school learners described their own experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Denzin and Lincoln, (2017) suggest that the best way to understand how humans construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences is through a qualitative approach. Creswell (2020) contends that a qualitative study is a descriptive research paradigm mainly concerned with the current status of something such as the situation with COVID-19 in the world and the holistic development of secondary learners.

This enquiry was qualitative in that it did not involve manipulation of any independent variables but only provided data by first describing it fully. This is different from a quantitative study which examines the relationship among measured variables to test objective theories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The data in a quantitative study are then analysed statistically to produce the results of the study (Creswell, 2020) whilst qualitative research is chiefly exploratory research. It

is mainly used to acquire an understanding of fundamental reasons, opinions and motivations. Little numerical data are used to answer the research question (Flick, 2018a). Qualitative research has been described as that which produces outcomes not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of qualification (Vickers, 2016).

There are several benefits that the researcher derives from using qualitative techniques. Data collection through qualitative approach establishes rapport between the interviewee and interviewer (Andersen, 2019). Through this, the researcher directs the attention of the interviewee to the material and motivates them to carefully answer the questions. It gives room for the researcher to provide further and better explanation on questions whenever he realizes that the interviewee has misunderstood a question. The advantages of a qualitative research approach include conveniences of the researcher and the respondents, the opportunity of taking place at any time, at any place such as the respondent's home, on the street, in a respondent's shop or office (Andersen, 2019).

The qualitative technique has other advantages which are face-to-face contact between the researcher and the respondents. The process also takes place in a relaxed and conducive atmosphere, where the identification of respondents' body language and expressions is enhanced. The researcher is also in control over the pattern of discussion and high response rate thus guaranteeing accuracy of the data (Welch&Piekkari, 2017).

In this qualitative framework, the current researcher took time together with the participants and shared their feelings, thoughts and perspectives. In fact, in any qualitative topic an ontological belief is that personal interests and curiosity are major drives in carrying out the study (Merriam,

&Tisdell, 2016). Since COVID-19 was a topical issue, the researcher was motivated to understand the developmental challenges of secondary school learners, especially those which emanated from the education department. From experience in the teaching fraternity, the researcher observed the challenging conditions that learners had to pass through as the result of COVID-19, hence the topic was critical.

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2016) classify the qualitative research approach into exploratory research and attitudinal research. The exploratory research approach is a statement of problems to be cleared and is precise when the amount of knowledge on the researched topic is limited (Creswell, 2020). Data gathering is usually through interviews or focus group discussion technique with the intention to determine a situation, screen the alternatives and discover new ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Exploratory research presents the raw data exactly as participants have explained them. The study of the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era was a topical phenomenon which centred on the actual living and learning conditions of the learners. This was better achieved by using the qualitative method since it had the potential to provide in-depth and all-embracing information through in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires (Kivunja&Kuyini, 2017).

It was vital to note that the qualitative research method allowed for the motivation of the relations of different variables (Antwi&Hamza, 2015) such as the role of policies, religious beliefs, norms and values, among other things. The use of the qualitative method enabled the researcher to understand the circumstances within which the learners passed through (Kivunja&Kuyini, 2017). First, the aim of the study was to understand the experiences that

secondary school learners were facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This qualitative research sought to understand the social phenomenon within its cultural, social and situational context. It focused on the construction of social reality (Creswell, 2020). Indeed, qualitative approaches are concerned with stories and accounts, including subjective understandings, opinions and beliefs of the research participants. From the discussions engaged in this qualitative approach, the researcher hoped to gain a complete picture of the teachers' assessment and the learners' views on the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era.

4.4 Research design

Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) define research design as the overall strategy utilised to carry out research that defines a succinct and logical plan to tackle established research questions through the collection, interpretation, analysis and discussion of data. According to Reiche, Lee and Allen (2019), research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between the research question and the execution and implementation of the research. What is incorporated in the design of a research study depends on the standpoint of the researcher over the belief in the nature of knowledge (epistemology) and reality (ontology), often shaped by the disciplinary area the researcher belongs to. The design of a study defines the study (descriptive, correlation, semi-experimental, experimental, review, meta-analytic) and the subtype (e.g. descriptive longitudinal case study), research problem, hypothesis, independent and dependent variables, experimental design and applicable data collection methods and statistical analysis plan. A research design in general is a framework that has been created to find answers to research questions.

Examples of descriptive research designs are case studies, observation and survey. Correlational research designs include case control study designs and observational study designs. In some researches, experimental research designs include field experiment research designs, controlled experiment research design and quasi-experiment designs.

The present study utilised the multiple case study design. There are several different definitions and kinds of case studies used by various researches and because of those different reasons case studies can be either multiple or single case studies. In a multiple case study, the researcher is studying multiple cases to understand the differences and similarities between the cases and is able to analyse the data both within each situation and across situations. Creswell (2017) emphasises that the greatest advantage of multiple case study is that they create a more convincing theory when the suggestions are more intensely grounded empirical evidence. Thus, multiple cases allow wider exploration of the research question and the theoretical evolution. But, it is important to put under consideration the fact that when the researcher does multiple case studies they come with advantages, disadvantages and difficulties. Multiple case studies can be enormously expensive and time consuming.

On the other hand, if the researcher only wants to study one single thing, for example, a person from a specific group or a single group, for example, a group of people, a single case study is used and the best choice. This also allows the researcher to get a deeper understanding of the subject. Creswell (2017) posits that the existence of a phenomenon can be described by use of single case studies. Single case studies are better than multiple cases in creating high quality theory because a single case produces an extra and better theory. Also, the more case studies a

scientific study has, the less observation time the writer has studied the case. The researcher can choose to make a single case study with embedded units. This means that the researcher is able to explore the case with the intention to analyse the data within the case analysis, between the case analyses as well as make a cross-case analysis. This gives the researcher the power to look at subunits that are located within a larger case.

Although case studies are considered to be part of a qualitative research and methodology, they may also be quantitative or contain a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approach (Mukherji&Albon, 2015) In this study, the researcher conducted a multiple case study that looked at how secondary school learners were affected in their holistic development during the COVID-19 pandemic period in four different schools in Chegutu district.

A multiple case study was used in this study because it can be described as the in-depth study of instances of the phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon. A multiple case study technique enabled the researcher to investigate the problem in its environmental setting, proving an understanding of participants' behaviours and ideas in the context of the organisation. According to Rosenthal (2018), a case study is a term used for the exploration of an individual's or group's experiences. Denzin, and Lincoln (2016) posit that a case study is a comprehensive description of an individual case and its analysis. Babbie (2014) adds that a case study is a description and analysis of an individual matter with the purpose of identifying variables, structures, forms and ways of interaction between the participants. In order to assess the progress in the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic period, a multiple case study was used to

describe secondary school learners' activities, special needs, and life situations during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

A multiple-case study allowed wider discovering of the theoretical evolution and research questions. When the suggestions are more intensely grounded in different empirical evidence, this type of case study also provides and creates a more convincing theory. A multiple case study research involves selecting and analysing two or more cases that share some common characteristics or features. The cases can be chosen based on different criteria such as typicality, diversity, replication, contrast, or theory testing. The main goal of the multiple case studies was to compare and contrast the case, and identify the similarities and differences among them as the patterns that emerged from the cross case analysis.

One of the main advantages of using multiple cases in a single study was that it allowed the researcher to explore the complexity and richness of the phenomenon under investigation. It allowed the researcher to capture the multiple dimensions, perspectives and facets. By comparing and contrasting different cases, the researcher gained a deeper and broader understanding of the phenomenon, and uncovered the underlying mechanisms, causes, and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the multiple case study enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the research by providing more evidence and data to support the findings, and allowed the researcher to test and refine the hypotheses or theories that guided the study. Furthermore, the study increased in transferability and applicability of the research by showing how the findings were relevant and useful for different audiences. Creswell (2020) notes that a multiple case study improves the results by duplicating the patterns, and enhancing the robustness of the findings.

Literal replication is important where the cases are meant to corroborate each other and theoretical replication where the cases are designed to cover diverse theoretical situations. The two techniques were meant to establish replication logic. Because case studies rely on analytical rather than statistical generalisation, using replication logic gave the findings external confirmation. Each instance helped to validate or refute the findings reached by others.

More importantly, the use of a multiple case study was influenced by the need to understand the perspective of the participants who experienced the phenomenon. Thus, the interpretation and the reporting thereof required an interpretivist approach. The interpretive paradigm bases its interpretation on multiple realities and truths because individuals, groups and communities interact socially, which resulted in multiple realities. In this study, an understanding regarding how secondary school learners from four various schools interpreted their experiences regarding the emergence of COVID-19 was imperative. According to Rubin and Babbie (2014), the focus of gaining an empathic understanding of how people feel inside, interpreting their experiences, feelings and seeking reasons for certain attributes happens through case study. Creswell (2020) argues that when a situation emerges that focuses on the complexity of human sense, making an attempt to understand the phenomena is through the meaning that people assign to them. The researcher used a multiple case study as research design because it had some additional advantages in this study.

Furthermore, multiple case studies aim to understand the phenomena in context-specific settings, such as a real world setting, where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest. This study focused most importantly on developing different views of

reality, including the understanding of secondary school learner's behaviour that could not be understood merely as an act that was being driven by a rule or a theory (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2016).

Case studies in general examine in detail the operation of mechanisms in individual cases. Within a single case, they look at a large number of intervening variables and inductively observe any unexpected aspect of the operation of a particular causal mechanism or they help identify the existing conditions in a case that activate the causal mechanism (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016). Casual mechanism referred to those challenges that secondary school learners were experiencing because of the COVID-19 and those challenges profoundly affected the holistic development of secondary school learners. Case studies can accommodate the critical analysis of complex relations among individuals and learners. The greatest advantage of the multiple case study is its ability to allow for an in-depth study of a particular situation rather than a sweeping statistical survey, a method used to narrow down a very broad field of research into one that is easily researchable (Creswell, 2017).

Braun (2017) asserts that a multiple case study gives the story behind the result by capturing what happened to bring attention to a particular challenge. In the same vein, Creswell (2017) states that a multiple case study is highly effective, representative, and typical, or of special interest because the study would assist the researcher to describe what happened, when, to whom and with what consequences in each case. Multiple case studies generate context-dependent knowledge which is an appropriate form of knowledge base in social sciences and disciplines based on observation and understanding of human behaviour and interaction (Silverman, 2018).

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2016), a multiple case study is a type of a qualitative research in which in-depth data are gathered relative to a single individual, program or event. The purpose is to learn more about an unknown or poorly understood situation (Silverman, 2018). For this current research, the closeness of the case study to real-life situations and its multiple wealth of details were important in two respects. First, it was important for the development of a nuanced view of the reality, including the views found at the lowest levels of the learning process and because human behaviour cannot be meaningfully understood as simply rule-governed acts.

Lincoln (2017) believes that the primary advantage of a multiple case study is that it provides much more detailed information than what is available through other methods. It also allows the researcher to present data collected from multiple methods such as surveys, interviews, document review and observation to provide the complete results. In a nutshell, a multiple case study was adopted mainly to provide the researcher with an understanding of complex social realities of the phenomenon while preserving the holistic and meaningful characteristics of everyday events and it was a valuable tool for an understanding of secondary school learners' behaviour patterns in the COVID-19 pandemic in depth.

4.5 Population

Pernecky (2016) defines population as any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. According to Brooke (2018) population is defined as a specific group of people to which subjects or characteristics of subjects are being referred, compared and generalised. Reiche, Lee and Allen (2019) also define a

population as the target group from which the researcher wants to get information about the problem or phenomenon of interest and then draws conclusions.

Thus, the population for this study comprised all district education schools inspectors (DSIs), secondary school teachers, secondary school learners and social health workers in Chegutu district. Chegutu district has sixty-two (62) secondary schools with a total of 991 teachers, 23361 secondary school learners, one (1) district education officer (DEO), five (5) district schools inspectors and forty-two (42) social health workers. This group of potential respondents was the target population. A target population is a group that possesses the exact qualities which are of interest in the study. It is not always possible in most research studies to investigate on and every member of a given population because of the constraints of time, space, resources, urgency and practicability (Creswell, 2020).

4.6 Sampling and sample size.

According to Reiche, Lee and Allen (2019) sampling is a process that enables information to be collected from a small number of individuals or organisations within a project or programmes, and then used to draw conclusions about a wider population. Flick (2018) defines sampling as the selection of a subset of the population of interest in a research study. In a research, sampling is imperative because in the vast majority of research endeavours, the participation of an entire population of interest is not possible, so a smaller group is relied upon for data collection. The main goal of sampling is to approximate the characteristics that are relevant to the research question about a larger population. The sample must be representative so that researchers can make inferences about the larger population.

There are several different sampling techniques available and can be divided into two groups. The two different types of sampling methods are probability sampling and no probability sampling. Probability sampling methods utilise some form of random selection. This method is more time consuming and expensive than the non-probability sampling. Probability sampling methods are further classified into different types such as simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and clustered sampling (Creswell, 2020).

In a simple random sampling technique, every item in the population has an equal and likely chance of being selected in the sample. The item selection entirely depends on chance and this method is known as a method of chance selection. For example, suppose we want to select a simple random sample of two hundred form four secondary school learners who can answer a questionnaire. We can assign a number to every form four learner in the database from one to two hundred, and then use a random number generator to select twenty learners (Kabir, Mostafa, Chowdhury & Salim, 2016).

In systemic sampling method, the items are selected from the target population by selecting the random selection point and a fixed sample is made. It is calculated by dividing the total population size by the desired population. For example, the names of three hundred (300) secondary school learners are sorted in reverse alphabetical order. To select a sample in a systematic sampling method, we have to choose some fifteen (15) learners by randomly selecting them from a starting number, say from number five (5) onwards, and will select every 15th learner from the sorted list. Finally, we can end up with a sample of learners (Rubin & Bobbie, 2014).

In clustered sampling method, the cluster or group of people are formed from the population set. The group has similar significant characteristics. Also, the group has an equal chance of being part of the sample. This method uses simple random sampling for the cluster of the population. For example, an educational institution has ten branches across the country with almost similar number of students. If some data is to be collected regarding facilities, only three institutions may be selected at random to represent all other institutions (Creswell, 2020).

The non- probability sampling method is a technique in which the researcher selects the sample based on subjective judgement rather than the random selection. In this method, not all the members of the population have the chance to participate in the study. On non-probability sampling, the sampling methods are further classified into different types such as convenience sampling, consecutive sampling, quota sampling, judgemental sampling, snowball sampling (Aguinis&Solarino, 2019).

In convenience sampling methods, the samples are selected from the population directly because they are conveniently available for the researcher. The samples are easy to select and the researcher does not choose the sample that outlines the entire population. For example, in researching learner support services in a particular school we ask the learner to complete a survey form. This is a convenient way of data collection (Creswell, 2020).

In purposive sampling or judgemental sampling the samples are selected only based on the researcher's knowledge. As their knowledge is instrumental in creating the samples, these are the chances of obtaining highly accurate answers with minimum errors. It is also known as

judgemental sampling or authoritative sampling (Aguinis&Solarino, 2019).Snowball sampling is also known as a chain referral sampling technique. In this method, the samples have traits that are difficult to find. So, each identified member of a population is asked to find the other sampling units. Those sampling units also belong to the same targeted population (Babbie, 2014).

The purposive sampling procedure was used to select participants for this study. Mpofo and Chimhenga (2016) suggest that the logic and power behind purposive selection should be information richness. Research authorities such as Flick (2018c) contend that purposive sampling is a key feature of the qualitative research and it allows the researcher to hand pick ideal cases to be included in the enquiry mainly on the basis of the researcher's judgment, hence some authorities call it judgmental sampling. The dilemma was on how to eradicate bias and allow two learners to be selected at each of the four schools have an equal opportunity to be selected for the study. The researcher was aware from the review of literature that secondary school learners had experienced challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic era.

Efforts were made to reduce gender bias by purposively picking a proportional representation of each gender. In this study, the researcher needed to get small and manageable group and stakeholders. The researcher centred his sample selection on secondary school learners which allowed him the opportunity to obtain critical points within the research problem. Being purposive, the procedure remained economical and fully informative until the full set of participants was obtained.

In this study, four secondary schools were involved and in those schools. Eight (8) learners, eight(8) teachers, two (2) education inspectors from the district offices and two (2) social health officers were purposefully sampled to match and authenticate data. The researcher gave pseudo-names to those schools as A, B, C and D. The purposively selected secondary school learners came from both rural and urban schools .In Chegutu, however, there are more rural schools than urban ones. In every school two senior male and female teachers were purposively selected to answer openended questionnaires, and eight secondary learners participated in interviews. Creswell (2014) substantiates this view when he argues that a sample size of this nature will suit the qualitative study. Two education inspectors answered in-depth questionnaires and two social health workers answered interviews.

Mukherji and Albon (2015) advise that purposive sampling can be considered as a form of stratified sampling in that the selection of the cases for study is governed by some criterion that act as a secondary control and so the researcher ensured that selected cases were secondary school learners from the most affected schools. The criteria entailed being a secondary school learner residing in Chegutu and aged between sixteen (16) and twenty-three (23) years. The researcher purposively picked on secondary school learners since most of these were the ones who were found to understand and experience unique developmental challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.7 Pilot study

Kabir (2018) argues that it is imperative to run a pilot study even in a qualitative enquiry in order to determine whether information can be obtained properly from the respondents. This is despite

that statistical tools may not play a role in a qualitative enquiry. For this purpose, the researcher selected and tested some of the interview and focus group questions in order to check on any ambiguities that needed modification.

Initially, some internal validity was checked through pilot testing in Zvimba district in Mashonaland West province. Zvimba district is where the researcher resides, and made pilot-testing quite convenient. The environment around Zvimba district holds almost similar characteristics throughout and trying out the instruments was feasible. It was also vital to carry out a pilot study in settings almost similar to where the main study would be conducted as advised by most researchers. After the initial pilot study in Zvimba the researcher noted most respondents felt comfortable using their mother language.

Further validation was done on all instruments through trying the same instruments in Chegutu district where the main study was to be carried out. However, this was not tested at any of the schools where the main study would be conducted. This time the researcher wanted to seek permission from authorities, to further check the instruments' quality and at the same time establish relationships with the community where he was to carry out the main study. The preliminary discussions with experts, reviewing literature, checking feasibility of study and testing the research tools all helped to ascertain the fact that the study was a noble attempt.

4.8 Data collection

Data collection or data gathering is the process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables in an established system, which then enables one to answer relevant questions

and evaluate outcomes (Flick, 2018a). Data collection is a research component in all study fields, including physical and social sciences, humanities, and business. While methods of data collection vary by discipline, the emphasis on ensuring accurate and honest data collection is the same. The goal for all data collection in a research is to capture enough information and evidence that allows data analysis (Flick, 2018a). Data collection is imperative in any research in order to lead to the formulation of credible answers to the questions that have been posed. Regardless of the field of preference for defining data, accurate data collection is essential to maintain research integrity (Kabir, 2018). The selection of appropriate data collection instruments and delineating instructions for their correct use reduce the likelihood of errors.

In this study, a credible data collection process was necessary to ensure that the data gathered was both defined and accurate. This process provided both as a baseline from which to evaluate the data collected and to maintain data integrity so that errors in the data collection process were easily identified and minimised. In the data collection process, errors can be made by deliberately falsifying information or by making random or systemic errors (Creswell, 2020).

The result of failing to identify problems and errors in the research process is often caused by poorly written guidelines (Creswell, 2020). In this study, quality assurance in the process of data collection was guaranteed in actions carried out before data collection. Quality assurance focuses on prevention, which was primarily a cost effective activity to protect the integrity of data collection. Standardisation of protocol, with comprehensive and detailed procedure description for data collection were central for the prevention of vague descriptions of data collection instruments. Instead, a step by step instruction on administration was followed. In this study,

research instruments such as interviews and an in-depth questionnaire were used. The use of more than one method of enquiry yielded more substantial advantages (Yin, 2019).

4.8.1 Interviews

An interview is generally a qualitative research technique that involves asking open-ended questions to converse with respondents and elicit data about a subject (Flick 2018a). The interviewer, in most cases, is the subject matter expert who understands the respondents' opinions and proceeds in a well-planned and well-executed series of questions and participant responses. An interview is a question and answer session where one person asks questions and the other person answers those questions (Yin, 2019). It can be one on one, two way conversation, or there can be more than one interviewer and more than one participant. There are three fundamental types of interviews in a research and these are structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured or indepth interviews (Flick 2018a).

Structured interviews are defined as research tools that could be more flexible in their operations that allow more or no scope of prompting the participants to obtain and analyse results (Flick, 2018c). It is thus also known as standardised interviews and is significantly quantitative in its approach. Questions in this interview are pre-decided according to the required detail of information (Welch &Piekkar, 2017). This can be used in a focus group interview and an in-person interview. These interviews are excessively used in survey research with the intention of maintaining uniformity throughout all the interview sessions. Advantages of a structured interview are its ability to focus on the accuracy of different responses, due to which extremely organised data can be collected. They can also be used to get in touch with a sample of the target

population. More importantly, the interview procedure is made easy due to the standardisation offered (Welch & Piekkar, 2017). Publication across multiple samples becomes easy because the interview has the same structure. However, structured interviews in the scope of assessment offer results that are accurate but the information overpowers the detail because respondents are forced to select from provided answers and options (Flick, 2018c).

Semi-structured type of interviews offer a considerable amount of leeway to the researcher to probe the respondents, along with maintaining a basic interview structure, even though it is a guided conversation between researchers and interviewees (Brooke, 2023). Appreciable flexibility is offered to the researchers. A researcher can be assured that multiple interview rounds will not be required in the presence of structured interviews. In this type of research instruments, questions from semi-structured interview are prepared before the scheduled interview and this gives the researcher time to prepare and analyse the questions. It is flexible to an extent while maintaining the research guidelines. This is unlike a structured interview where researchers can express their interview questions in the preferred format (Yin, 2019).

Lastly, in-depth interviews are usually described as conversations held with the purpose in mind, that is, to gather data about the research study (Andersen & Nielsen, 2019). These interviews have the least number of questions as they lean more towards a normal conversation but with an underlying subject. The most important reason for most researchers using unstructured interviews is to build a bond with the respondents. This creates a chance that respondents will be hundred percent truthful with their answers. There are no guidelines for the researcher to follow.

Researchers can, therefore, approach the participants ethically to gain as much information as possible about their research topic (Creswell, 2020).

Since there are no guidelines for these interviews, a researcher is expected to keep their approach in check so that the respondents do not sway from the main research motive (Andersen & Nielsen, 2019). This type of interview makes it extremely easy for the researcher to try and develop a friendly rapport with the participants. This can lead the researcher to gain insights and detail without much conscious effort. The participant can clarify all their doubts about the questions and the researcher can take each opportunity to explain his or her intention for better answers (Antwi&Hamza, 2015). There is no question that the researcher has to abide by, and this usually increases the flexibility of the entire research process.

Besides the three basic interviews types mentioned above, there are other interview types that are commonly used, for example, in job interview. Other types of interviews are behavioural, panel, group, case, technical and stress interviews (Creswell, 2020). From the enlisted types of interviews the researcher selected in-depth interviews.

The researcher used in-depth interviews because of their flexibility. Creswell (2020) asserts that to gain a detailed picture of what a participant believes, their perceptions or accounts of a particular topic, in-depth interviews are the most appropriate. When the interviewer has to dig deeper in search of critical comments, design requirements, and other insights, the use of in-depth interviews in a case study is very important because of its flexibility. Additionally, the researcher can ask questions to a respondent for correct recording (Jefferson, et al., 2014). Mesly

(2015) posits that face-to-face in-depth interviews offer the researcher a chance to restructure the items in questions in order to suit the interviewee's level of understanding. In-depth interviews are ideal for use in qualitative research where the main objective is to explore subjective meanings that the respondents ascribe to events that they experienced (Flick 2018a). People tend to speak the truth when they see the interviewer in a face-to-face situation.

Pernecky (2016) posits that in-depth interviews allow the researcher to follow up on interesting responses, thus allowing an investigation of underlying motives in a way questionnaire cannot do as compared to interviews and face-to-face discussion. An in-depth interview schedule was used to allow similar questions to be administered rather than to ask varying questions which could be difficult to analyse. To avoid too much varying of questions, an interview guide was made. According to Welch and Piekkari (2017), an interview guide is a questionnaire written to guide interviews. An in-depth interview guide provides the researcher with in-depth predetermined questions or themes concerning what he hoped to cover. Yin (2018) asserts that in-depth interviews carry the purpose, nature, scope and sequence from individual interviews, whether single or panel interviews, structured or unstructured, and non-directive or focused interviews

Bobbie (2014) argues that the interviewer can pursue in-depth information around a topic and also may be useful as follow-up to certain responses. It was also true that during the interviewee's responses, facial and bodily expressions, tone of voice, gestures, reactions, feelings, attitudes, evasiveness and non-cooperation were easily detected and recorded during interviews. The use of in-depth interviews had an advantage in this study because of the depth of information extracted for critical analysis of findings.

This study made use of the in-depth interview approach where the researcher followed open-ended questions which were tailored to get clarifications. The secondary school learners, education officers and health workers at each of the four schools were involved in individual in-depth interviews. Beforehand, the interviewer exposed the interview question which the participants were going to respond to, so that they had ample time to think over the gist being studied. The researcher allowed each participant to go over the interview schedule together with him in order to help participants to choose areas where they wanted to start from. Flexibility was necessary when participants indicated different presentation versions since not all participants shared the same developmental experiences.

While holding the interview session, the researcher was careful enough to minimise drop rate and to keep the interview focused while saving time for both the researcher and the interviewees. Besides providing background information, the interview schedule contained instructions to the respondents and each had serial numbers for individual codes since the interview guides had remained anonymous, without real names. Precautions were taken to make sure that only key issues were asked. Most of the questions were open-ended to allow respondents to provide highly qualitative data. Only a few closed questions which provided mostly demographic details of the participants were asked. The interview scheduled remains economical until the time of holding and other resources just like in a questionnaire. During the interview process, the researcher took a rather passive and neutral stance in order to allow the participants to freely express their feelings, thoughts and reactions. All interview arrangements in the form of time, location of the interviews and seating arrangements required had properly been planned.

As advised by Flick (2018a) the researcher attentively and sensitively used probes and prompt checks while remaining non-judgmental. Of most importance was that during the sessions, the researcher made field notes whilst events were still fresh in the memory. Some audio recordings were necessary to back up the field notes. In the research report, some interview extracts were used in the form of anecdotal records and vignettes. By gaining insights from the informants' views, the participants were allowed to expand their ideas as they portray them.

On the interview day, clear rules were formulated following the statutory rules of maintaining distance so as to avoid exposing the learners to COVID-19 infection. The guide also entailed introductions, the research topic, and the ground rules that were formulated to safely guide participants.

Closer dates assisted the researcher to plan and schedule sessions with the participants, taking into consideration the prevalence of COVID-19 infection and environmental conditions. The researcher wanted participants to be exposed to better environmental conditions. Climatic conditions for all participants were also ideal so as to ensure uniformity and no bias within the interviewing sessions and COVID-19 regulation which do not allow proximity of learners.

4.8.2 Open ended Questionnaire

According to Andersen and Nielsen (2019) open-ended questionnaires allow research participants to express their attitudes, beliefs and feeling towards a topic of interest and are used by researchers to gather qualitative data. Participants can respond in any way they please,

allowing free sharing of information. This allows the collection of qualitative data from a large number of people in a short time. In this study the researcher used open ended questionnaires to gather information and responses from education officers, secondary school teachers, secondary school learners and school health workers on the holistic development of secondary school learners in covid-19 pandemic error.

Open-ended questionnaires were used because of their potential to provide qualitative data derived from the participants 'views. Andersen and Nielsen (2019) state that open-ended questionnaires can gather as much information needed as possible and respondents can answer them in their private time and without any push. Questionnaires can reach out to many people if correctly distributed and are less expensive to design. They also bring with them anonymity. Rosenthal (2018) asserts that open-ended questionnaires enable a wide range of highly structured and open questions to be asked and gives respondents enough room to manoeuvre through airing their thoughts with little limitation. Teeter and Sandberg (2016) acknowledge that the use of open-ended questionnaires allows for a free style of investigation, pursuing particular issues in greater detail.

Moreover, unlike the interviews, in this study open-ended questionnaires provided a greater uniformity across the measurement because every participant attempted similar questions with standardised instructions. Furthermore the data or content that was provided by open-ended questionnaires could be more easily analysed and interpreted than the one obtained from verbal responses (Yin, 2019). To add more, the researcher anticipated the fact that respondents could be more comfortable to answer open-ended questionnaire more willingly than in a face-to-face

interview situation and this could lead to information that was more trustworthy. It is more important to note that participants were allowed to complete open-ended questionnaires in their own time and in a more relaxed atmosphere, which significantly provided trustworthy results. The presentation of results and interpretation was done without many difficulties.

The open-ended questionnaires were used in this study because of a number of advantages that seemed to outweigh the disadvantages. The use of open ended questionnaire was quite affordable as the main tool of collecting information about the holistic development of secondary school learners in the COVID-19 pandemic era. Although the questionnaire had numerous advantages but they did not provide the flexibility sometimes noted in interviews. In an interview an idea or comment can be further explored and developed (Antwi, &Hamza, 2015). Some teachers were better able to express their ideas verbally than in writing, hence, the combination of open-ended questionnaire and the in-depth interviews in this study produced the much needed data.

Eight teachers responded to the open-ended questionnaire. The researcher allowed each teacher to have access to the instrument so that those that responded had ample time to respond to the questionnaire. The researcher requested assistance from teachers and heads of schools before the data was collected. The researcher was sure that the participants had ample time to complete their open-ended questionnaire. In each case, stimulus questions were employed and those questions were hinged on the themes formulated from the research objectives.

As each participant interacted, the researcher kept field notes relating to the discussion and also audio recording session of each interview discussion. An important point to note for the researcher was that he encouraged participants to talk freely using any language they seem good.

Open ended questionnaires required participants to express their views without their researcher leading.

5. 9 Data processing and analysis

Creswell (20120) asserts that qualitative data analysis is a process of inductive reasoning. He describes the notion of content analysis as an objective and neutral way to secure qualitative descriptive data, where specific words of participants are counted. The analysis of data from this qualitative enquiry was through the process which included data logging, data coding descriptions from open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Cooke (2018) defines data analysis as the collaboration of data gathered. Procedures were augmented by Tesch's open coding method of qualitative data analysis illustrated below (Creswell, 2020). It is important to note that data collection here occurred simultaneously with data analysis, as described by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017),all in an effort to deduce the meaning in an informed way.

Iterative-simultaneous-process

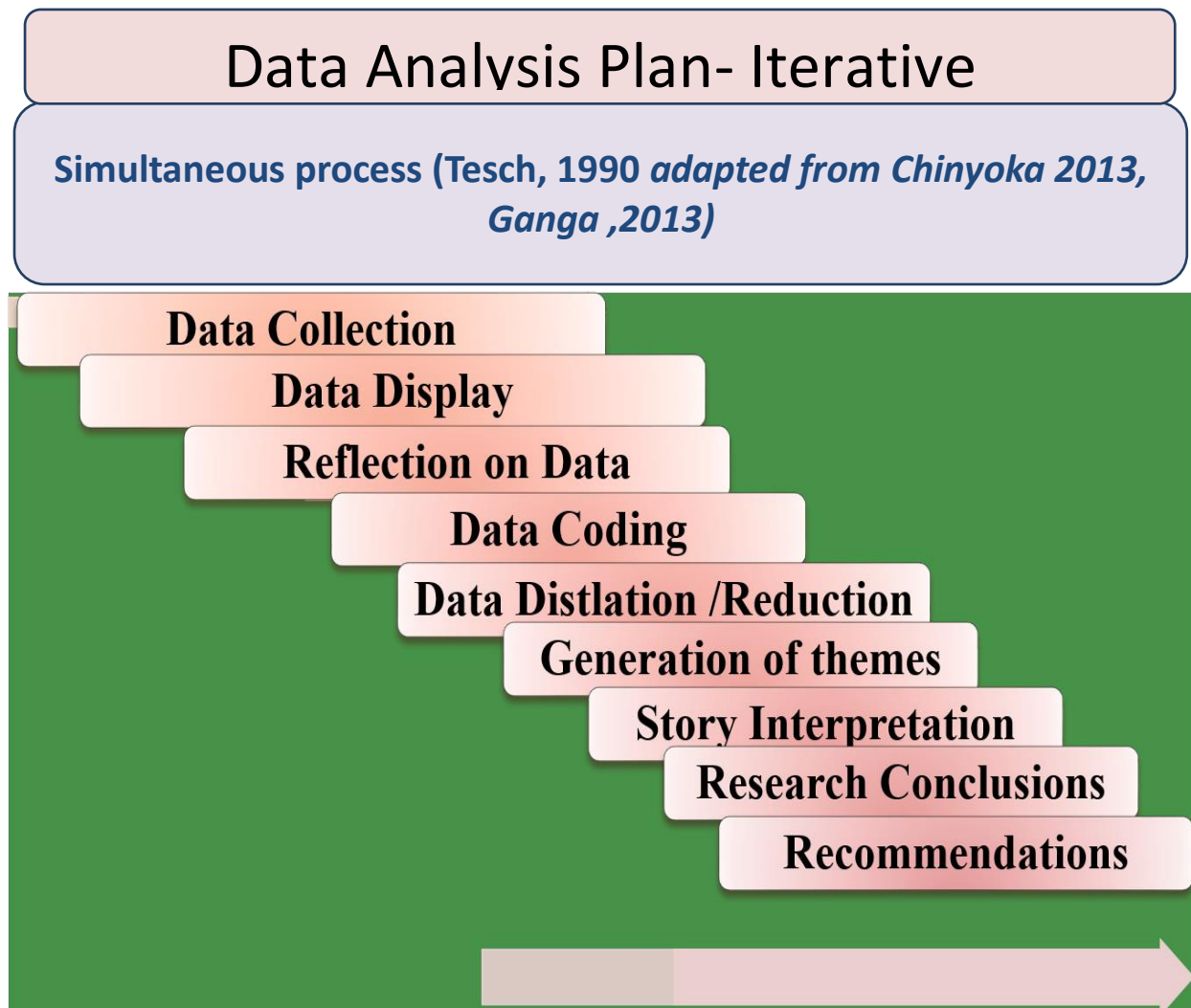


Figure 7: The iterative and simultaneous data analysis process (Levels Adapted from Tesch, 1990 in Chinyoka (2013); Ganga (2013)).

The researcher was involved in several iterative and simultaneous activities during the qualitative data analysis as shown above. The first steps were provided by Tesch (1990) in Chinyoka (2013), and in Ganga (2013) to analyse the data systematically, by segmenting it into words or categories that subsequently formed the basis of the emerging story of the phenomenon under scrutiny before the recommendations were made. The activities included collecting the data;

displaying it; reflecting on it; coding and distilling it into themes; sorting the data into categories and sub-categories; formatting the data into a coherent story or picture, and writing the qualitative text through the stories, interpretations (Tesch, 1990 cited in Creswell, 2014).

Miles et al. (2014) advocate that the process of moving from data to conceptualisation and theorisation is the most discernable aspect of qualitative research. In qualitative data analysis, data collected passes through data encoding which is a process through which raw data collected using open ended questionnaire and in-depth interviews were recorded on a sheet of paper (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The data that was documented or data-logged was meant to serve the purpose. The process was highly interactive and necessitated the researcher to go back to check against original data to compare occurrences in order to identify specific issues.

To critically analyse and streamline the data logged the researcher made a comprehensive note of the data that was collected. It took the narrative form of writing, taking into consideration the feelings, assumptions, and thought patterns of the participants. This guided the researcher in generating feelings and building the themes. The researcher wrote anecdotes by summarising the chronological order of the narrative explanation given by the respondents on the subject matter. The report was complemented by the researcher's field notes, observation and other forms of data collection including ethnography.

The researcher represented the qualitative data in a narrative or story format. The in-depth description of the setting, participants and themes of qualitative research were the focus of the vignettes so as establish the credibility of the study. In recording, analysing, interpreting and presenting the findings, the researcher was also aware of some clues on the qualitative data

analysis. As given by Creswell (2014) they covered the following: firstly considering the initial research questions and then transcribing the text into detailed summative notes of the key aspects within the conversations. Most importantly the researcher was able to familiarise with the non-textual data by re-reading the text or replaying the audios.

Moreover, the researchers paid attention to words and phrases of the participants and recorded participants' own words that captured what they said. At this point the researcher identified different themes and descriptive codes established through critical analysis of the data portrayed from each interview transcription codes .By using a constant comparative method to develop a comprehensive coding scheme, the researcher named categories and transcribed interviews and compared new data incidents with conceptual categories already identified. Then the researcher looked for underlying similarities between different themes, and identified deviations from the norm or the creation of a pattern that led to the conforming or disconfirming of initially formulated themes. The data were then regularly analysed throughout the research process. The researcher transformed the raw data from selected stakeholders by sifting the information, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework to reveal and communicate what secondary school learners experienced as they developed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The researcher kept a project diary to indicate the steps that were taken during the conduct of the study. The researcher did member checking by returning to the research places during the writing stages of the research report. This helped the researcher to check on ambiguous gaps, and make clarifications to ensure enriched descriptions. The process of member-checking cemented the relationship between the participants and the researcher.

4.10 Data Verification

Data verification refers to the process of ensuring that data is accurate, complete, and consistent (Cooke, 2018). It is a critical step in data quality management and involves comparing data against a known and trusted source to check for errors and inconsistency (Welch & Piekkari, 2017). Data verification is a process in which different types of data are checked for accuracy and inconsistency after data migration is done.

Data verification helps to determine whether data was accurately translated when data was transferred from one source to another and was complete and supports processes in the new system. There are three methods of data verification, which include double data entry, proof reading and automated verification of data (McNulty & Brewster, 2019). Proofreading of data was done through engaging someone to check on the data entered against the original data collected from the field.

The central issue in this qualitative research was trustworthiness of the data collected. When measuring quality assurance in this qualitative enquiry, alternative constructs such as member checking, interviewer collaboration, peer debriefing, transferability, prolonged engagement and conformability, negative case analysis, bracketing and balance were vital (Welch & Piekkari 2017). The purposes of trustworthiness in this enquiry was clearly mapped up and drawn by the parameters of the study throughout the research process. This was done through a prolonged engagement in the field study.

Transferability was also a pertinent issue in this qualitative research (Yin, 2019). Establishing transferability was attained through purposive sampling of appropriate participants and a rich

description of the methodology that was used in the study. The content of the interview schedules was imperative to check whether each question was meant to address the stipulated research objective.

Trustworthiness was ensured in this study by asking simpler questions at the beginning of every interview and using an open-ended questionnaire and moving to more difficult questions only towards the end. The language that was used in the interviews remained simple for more clarity and accessibility for Zimbabwean second language speakers. In fact, the participants were allowed to respond in the language which they felt comfortable to communicate, whether English or ChiShona.

4.11 Ethical considerations

According to Ganga (2013) ethics are a set of moral principles which are suggested by an individual or group, subsequently widely accepted, and which offer rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other research assistants and students. According to Aguinis and Solarino (2019) the notion of ethics is closely linked to the idea of morality. Ethics concerns the system of moral principles, that is, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, when conducting a research study. By ethics, researchers refer to the study of moral standards and how they affect the conduction of morally upright research and the principles governing the appropriate execution of a study.

Among other things, quite a number of ethical principles are taken into account when conducting a research enquiry, particularly covering avoidance of harm, voluntary participation, informed consent, deception of participants, violation of privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, compensations of participants' time and the costs incurred, as well as debriefing the participants. It also includes the competencies of the researchers and the publishing of the research outcomes as was read in the policy (Akinyode, 2017).

According to Akinyode, (2017) being a sensitive case study research, a number of ethical considerations took precedence in order to safeguard the eight secondary school learners and the two health workers who participated in the interviews, the eight teachers who answered the open-ended questionnaire and the two schools inspectors. Nazmy (2016) advises researchers to make sure that the demands that are placed on them did not infringe on the rights and the values of the participants. Participants should not feel threatened by the research, or a concept referred to as cost benefit ratio. It was vital that the researcher considered likely social benefits of the study against personal costs to the learners and other participants.

The researcher considered that most of the COVID-19 pandemic regulations maintained as vital, social distance, the wearing of face masks and hand washing and sanitisation. It is important to note that the researcher took precautions of the requirements and regulations of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to eradicate the circumstances that resulted in the spreading of the COVID-19 virus. The researcher first got assistance from professional counseling in order to minimise on unnecessary regressions and to reduce possible harm to the participants.

To conduct the research, permission to conduct the study commenced by asking for a letter of introduction from the Great Zimbabwe University. Following this, permission to carry out the study in Chegutu district of Mashonaland West Province was sought through visiting the district offices in Chegutu and Chinhoyi province. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education presented the researcher with a written permission letter to go into the field and finally permission to involve them in interviews was granted by the teachers and the schools selected.

Leshan (2012) posits that informed consent is a bench mark for social research ethics where voluntary consent of the human subject is essential. In a simplified version, informed consent means seeking permission from prospective participants to take part in the concerned study (Gill, 2014). In the current study, the researcher briefly explained to participants, the purpose, aims and objectives of the study. The process of debriefing helped the researcher to maintain a collegial relationship with the participants from the beginning up to the end of the research process. It remained ethically upright to disclose full procedures of the study.

Another practical component of research ethics was the principle of confidentiality. According to Savin-Baden and Major (2013) each person who partakes in a research study is entitled to confidentiality and privacy and each person has the freedom to withhold or share information as they see fit. Pernecky (2016) suggests that in any research, participants can only be willing to divulge accurate data, especially in cases where sensitive topics like quality assurance in assessing the views of teachers on learners are researched on. The researcher displayed beyond reasonable doubt that the information that was gathered would be treated with a high degree of confidentiality. Mesly (2015) also added that research participants had a right to anonymity even

in the final report, hence, their identity had to be protected at all times. In this case, the researcher informed the participants that all their responses were kept strictly confidential and were only going to be used for research purposes only.

According to Creswell (2014), if respondents are not interested and they want to withdraw from the study at any stage of the research process, they should be free to do so. In this study, any senior teachers who were participating and wanted to withdraw were free to do so. Participation in this study was voluntary, meaning anyone was free to withdraw at any given moment. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) advise that no one should be forced to participate in a study. Babbie (2014) advocates that there is need for participants to sign a consent and assent form in order to safeguard the participants. The researcher drafted a consent form for the selected stakeholders. The researcher was aware of that all ethical codes depended on what was morally upright and legally acceptable.

The researcher ensured that participants were free from harm. Accordingly, social research should never injure the people being studied, regardless of whether they volunteer for the study or not (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). The researcher did not subject the participants to any form of harm psychologically or physically. Non-harmful procedures were followed in this study.

4.12 Chapter summary

The chapter focused on qualitative research methodology that used a descriptive phenomenological case study. The research used an interpretive paradigm and a qualitative research design. The research approach provided aspects of the descriptive phenomenology. Two types of populations were discussed, that is, the target and accessible population from which the

sample of twenty participants was selected. The participants comprised eight teachers, eight secondary school learners, two health workers and two district education inspectors. Selection procedures entailed purposive sampling methods mostly because the case study required particular characteristics. Finally, the instruments, namely; the open-ended questionnaire, in-depth interviews as well as the data collection procedures and data analysis plan were discussed. The data presentation, interpretation, analysis techniques employed by the study and a discussion of findings are all part of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presented, analysed and discussed data that were generated from a study that was conducted in Chegutu district, Mashonaland West province on how the COVID-19 pandemic era had affected the holistic development of secondary school learners. The chapter discussed the data immediately after the presentation and analysis in order to avoid repetition which is often observed in work where the discussion of the data constitutes a separate chapter. The data were collected using in-depth interviews and an open-ended questionnaire. The qualitative data were collected from eighteen participants comprising of eight secondary school learners, eight secondary school teachers and two health workers. An equal distribution of gender was considered, where both male and female participants were considered.

The participants and schools were coded to conceal their identities as was indicated in the initial stages of the enquiry under ethical considerations. This qualitative enquiry analysis was through the process which included data logging, anecdotes, vignettes, data coding and descriptions from open-ended questionnaire and in-depth interview responses. The data were presented through an eclectic use of descriptive qualitative features involving narratives, all falling within some specified themes as guided by Tesch's model of qualitative data analysis (Tesch, 1990 in Creswell, 2020; de Vos et al, 2014).

The objectives of the study were to:

5.2.1.1) establish the social construction of the concept COVID-19 among secondary school learners

5.2.1.2) determine how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the developmental experiences of secondary school learners

5.2.1.3) assess the challenges faced by secondary school learners in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic era

5.2.1.4) determine aspects in the COVID-19 pandemic era that promoted or deterred the holistic development of secondary school learners

5.2.1.5) establish how schools, communities and policy makers could be prepared to assist secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era.

The aim of the study was to provide an answer to the following key question: How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the holistic development of secondary school learners in Chegutu, Zimbabwe?

The following research questions guided the study from the start:

5.2.2.1) What was the social construction of the concept COVID-19 among secondary school learners in Chegutu?

5.2.2.2) What were the developmental experiences of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era?

5.2.2.3) What were the challenges that secondary school learners faced in their holistic development due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

5.2.2.4) What aspects of life promoted or deterred the holistic development of secondary school learners during COVID-19?

5.2.2.5) How could schools, communities and policy-makers be prepared to assist secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic?

What emerged from the data collected was an assortment of sentiments and feelings on the topic. The research was carried out in four selected secondary schools in Chegutu district. The schools were coded W, X, Y Z.

5.2 Data Presentation

Results and discussion

The results were presented, analysed and discussed under the following five themes which aligned with the sub-research questions: knowledge and understanding of the social construction of the concept COVID-19 among secondary school learners; developmental experiences of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era; challenges that secondary school learners faced in their holistic development due to the COVID-19 pandemic; aspects of life that promoted or deterred the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic, and, how schools, communities and policy-makers could be prepared to assist secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.3.1 Knowledge and understanding of the social construction of the concept COVID-19 among secondary school learners

As already indicated, the data collected were presented, analysed and discussed in line with the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. The first research question wanted to establish the social construction of the concept COVID-19 by the secondary school learners. In essence, the question aimed at finding out how secondary school learners understood the concept of COVID -19. From the findings, it was established that secondary schools teachers from Schools X and W generally seemed to have a reasonably correct idea of the concept COVID-19. Interview participants

argued that COVID-19 was an infectious disease that was caused by a corona virus. During the interview, one learner WXL said:

This virus was unknown before 2019 and the disruptive disease was mostly known as having common symptoms which were manifested in people as having fever, breathing difficulties and experiencing dry cough.

The above statement correlates with the findings of Jordan (2020) who observes that COVID-19 causes excruciating aches and pain, feelings of tiredness, having extensive nasal congestion, continuous runny nose, sore dry throat and diarrhoea. The literature findings of Aristovnik and Kerzic (2020) also revealed that these symptoms gradually become extensive. UNICEF (2020) also confirmed that learners who contracted COVID-19 became seriously sick, experiencing vomiting and excessive heat.

The majority of secondary school learners who had been infected with COVID-19 indicated that they had experienced excruciating aches and pain. Very few learners stated that they had been exclusively exposed to the fourteen (14) days of isolation.

When teachers responded to the open-ended questionnaire, they also confirmed that during the COVID-19 pandemic learners at their schools suffered excruciating aches and pain, and that some experienced extensive sore dry throats and breathing difficulties. One participant, ZWF2 said:

The infected learners couldn't stand on their own feet or eat, and most of them would spend their time sleeping, and at times, sweating and vomiting. Some learners said they

were experiencing dry cough and sour throat. The affected learners were supposed to seek medical treatment.

The above quote indicates the severity of the corona virus infection on some of the secondary school learners and how the learners were affected in their learning process. According to UNICEF (2020), when learners spent their time sleeping, sweating and vomiting, it would mean they have lost out on learning. The response above revealed that there were a number of physical effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on a learner's holistic development, especially because of the impact of the continuous illness. One teacher indicated that due to COVID-19 some learners developed an impaired growth and showed signs of poor and slow growth. James (2019) asserts that failure to acquire psycho-motor skills during the era of the COVID-19 pandemic led the learners to have poor bone formation and poor classroom participation, which led to poor mental and physical growth.

According to Alfred Adler's theory of Individual Psychology (1937) in Clin sock work (2022) organ inferiority has a negative impact on the child's development. The concept stems from the presumption that because one has physical challenges, one is likely to feel inferior to those who are perceived as wholesome (Leak, 2019). Adler felt jealous of his brother who was vigorous and healthy and could engage in the physical activities which he could not take part in. Adler (1937) asserts that if learners fail to compensate for their inferiority complex, they develop safeguarding strategies such as moving backwards by regression and reverting to a more secure place, standing still and not doing anything, and hesitating to move forward. Adler's contribution clarifies the issue that when learners fell ill due to COVID-19, it affected them holistically, especially since they failed to accomplish the activities assigned to them. This became worse when learners stayed at home and parents struggled to take care of them while balancing work

and other responsibilities. During the COVID-19 pandemic many secondary school learners spent most of their time at home. They, thus, had limited opportunities to socialise or gain critical relationship skills. While many learners experienced academic learning losses, the impact on social development among the learners also became severe. WXL said:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, secondary school learners had limited social interaction and play-based learning due to regulations and restrictions imposed by the Government to curb the spread of the virus .During that time, many learners experienced high levels of stress.

According to Tamrat and Teferra (2020), many young children experienced delays in gross motor, fine motor, and social-emotional development during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Lee, Savedra and Chakroun (2021) assert that learners with poor or under-developed social and emotional skills display more challenging behaviour, including anger, withdrawal, anxiety and aggression. Many skills are gained and strengthened in interactions with others and in learning settings, and these skills are also key predictors of school readiness, future academic achievement, and positive life outcomes.

There are many unknowns about what developmental challenges affected the social, emotional and mental health of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic period. The research findings of this study emphasised the need to ensure that the COVID-19-induced harms are addressed for the future holistic development of the secondary school learners. Most secondary school learners from Schools W,X,Y and Z pointed out that secondary school learners affected with underlying medical problems such as high blood pressure, asthma, heart problems or diabetes were the more seriously affected. According to teachers and health workers, the

disease spread quickly when the learners who were infected got into proximity with others. One of the teachers highlighted that the virus spread through droplets from the nasal cavity or saliva droplets from the mouth which spread when a learner with COVID-19 coughed, sneezed or exhaled. The droplets landed on objects and surfaces around the other learners. Learners could get infected with COVID-19 when they touched these surfaces and then touched their eyes, noses and mouths. UNICEF (2020) points out that COVID-19 is an air-borne disease which can be spread when individuals without the virus breathe in the virus droplets from an infected person who would have coughed, sneezed or exhaled these droplets. Baker, Bruce and DiCarlo (2020) also state that COVID-19 was primarily transmitted from symptomatic people to others who came into contact through respiratory droplets or through direct contact with infected persons or contaminated objects and surfaces.

According to health workers, teachers and secondary school learners who were suspected of having contracted the COVID-19 virus were advised to immediately seek medical attention from the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare. They were also advised to stay at home to avoid spreading the virus. To curb the continuous spreading of the COVID-19 infection, secondary school learners were supposed to wear a face mask each to cover the mouth and nose while among others. WXL1 at School W once said:

It becomes a regulation for people to avoid close contact with others by keeping a distance from each other and avoiding visiting of public places. All learners were supposed to wash their hands when eating and after eating. It was imperative to self – isolate for 14 days if any of the learners had come from a country with infection cases or had been in proximity with those with COVID-19.

From the above words, it can be deduced that learning and development of secondary school learners had been interrupted and disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Learners were supposed to maintain social distance to avoid the spread of the corona virus, yet learners learned as they shared ideas. According to Smith and Flaherty (2013), social interaction enables the development of a sense of belonging that motivates learners to develop their own learning in collaboration with their peers. Social interaction has been shown to have positive effects on the development of a collaborative learning atmosphere. By placing learners in an environment that encourages interaction, learners are even encouraged to work collaboratively. The results are consistent with past work by Molinillo et al. (2018) who argue that social interaction facilitates interpersonal communication through the creation of a warm learning environment, media and a user-friendly and interactive situation which encourages learners to make use of technology to interact with others and to strengthen cooperation among group members.

How social distance affected secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic period

Fig 5.1 below illustrates that due to COVID-19 regulations whereby learners were supposed to maintain social distance, learners lost opportunities for collaboration and sharing of ideas, and they could not develop socially fully.

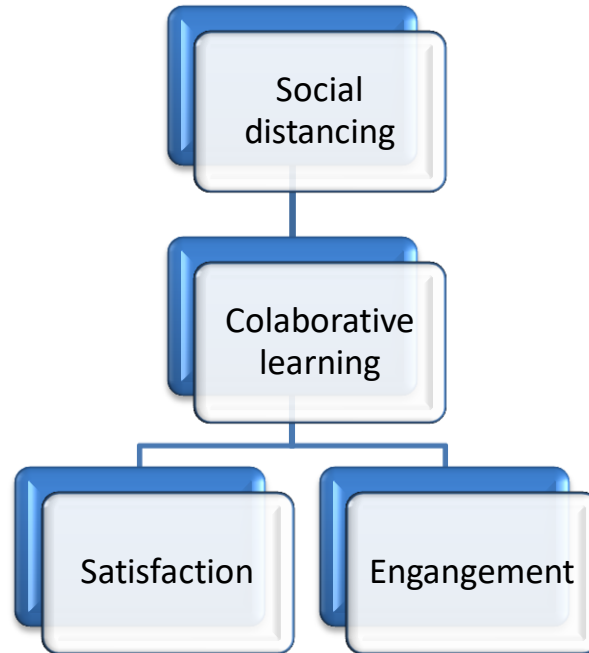


Fig 5.1 shows how social distance affected learning

The figure 5.1 indicates regulations seriously affected secondary school learners's cognitive, socio-emotional and physical domains. The cognitive domain refers to thinking, reasoning and problem-solving abilities. Cognitive develops that learners work collaboratively in groups when they argue and defend their ideas in debates thereby developing critical thinking. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all this was restricted. Furthermore, when learners work collaboratively they develop satisfaction as they accomplish the tasks assigned.

According to Zhan and Mei (2020), social interaction improves learning experience, motivates learners and strengthens their sense of belonging to an active community. This, in turn, promotes their satisfaction and their engagement and provides a more or less, never-ending learning environment.

Research by Rahami and Zeki (2017) indicates that work satisfaction positively influences learner's academic performance. The results are consistent with the work of Rueda et al. (2017)

which explained that the more the learner is satisfied with the performance the more the learner is motivated to learn and improve his or her academic performance.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic brought behaviour change among secondary school learners. The behavior that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic involves the growth of intellectual abilities such as memory, attention, language and perception and how individuals process and understand information. Cognitivists such as Piaget say cognitive development occurs through, among other things, interaction with the environment and other people. When interacting with others, children learn to argue, defend their own opinions and views and to share their ideas. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all this was not allowed. This meant that the learners' cognitive development was hampered.

The socio-emotional domain refers to changes in social and emotional abilities, including emotions, relationships and personality. Socio-emotional development involves the growth of social skills such as communication, empathy, cooperation as well as the development of identity, self-esteem and emotional regulation. Due to the prevalence of COVID-19 pandemic secondary school learners could not share ideas due to the stipulated restrictions. They could not cooperate and contribute positively. Positive identification of individual secondary school learners difficult because they were concealed behind the face masks. Learners could not share ideas in various disciplines or subject areas due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Secondary school learners were affected by lack of self-identity. This was because of the limited time for learning and limited resources. It was also imperative to note that learners could not collaborate in their learning, which resulted in a low pass rate in the year 2022.

The physical domain refers to changes in growth such as height, weight, motor skills and sensory abilities (Duan&Zhu, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, clubs, sports and educational tours were banned. Secondary school learners normally develop their motor skills when they interact in sporting activities. Lack of interaction in these activities results in retarded motor skills development. If secondary school learners fail to go for educational tours they are likely not to learn new things and might not interact with other learners. Secondary school learners in this study could not express their opinions, nor analyse problems and present their thoughts. They could not argue their opinions, express emotions, think critically, present or analyse problems, present their thoughts logically and elegantly, speak confidently in public, analyse and carefully interpret information or develop a wider world view.

The school administration, teachers and education stakeholders could not contain the pressure that was put on the education fraternity in order to help the secondary school learners develop holistically following the COVID-19 pandemic. Watson cited in Marsh and Higgins, (2018) note that a learner's behaviour is caused by a response to a stimulus. The stimulus (COVID-19) initiates the learner to respond or behave in a manner that corresponds to the gravity of the stimulus or pandemic (Burman, Green &Shanker, 2015). The COVID-19 pandemic caused learners to withdraw their participation in sporting activities, group work and touring for fear of contracting the corona virus, hence, the learners were conditioned to behave that way, which in turn hindered their holistic development (Carroll, 2017).

Behaviourism views people and animals as controlled by their environment and specifically, learners and people are the result of what they have learned from the environment (Chen & Yao,

2018). If the environment is fearful, learners become fearful and hesitate to approach life challenges with an open mind.

Figure 5.2 below demonstrates how the COVID-19 pandemic (stimulus) affected the secondary school learners' behaviour.

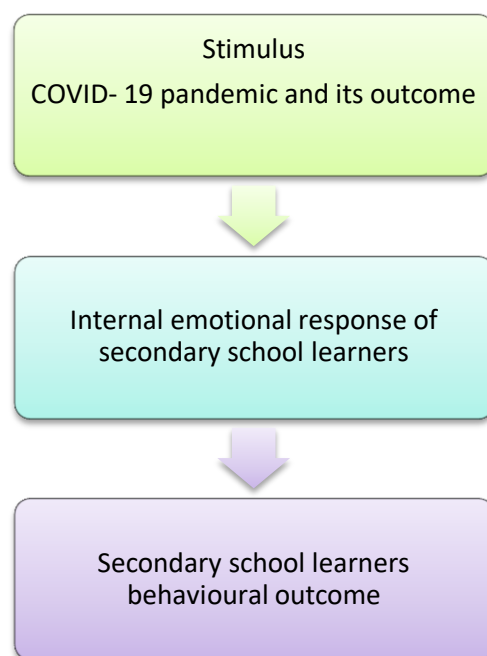


Fig 5.2 Behavioural change of secondary school learners due to the COVID-19 pandemic

As indicated above, the secondary school learners' behaviour was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a stimulus which triggered internal emotional responses of secondary school learners such as fear, monophobia, and anxiety as well as neurotic disorders. These behavioural actions affected how learners performed in their academic activities.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic secondary school learners were restricted in their movements, which, in turn, affected their holistic development. One learner WXL2 said:

It was very difficult to even think of travelling in public transport due to travelling disruptions and restrictions or sharing services with other people. You wouldn't know what they were carrying within themselves. The fear of sitting next to someone who is infected restricted my movements and affected my school work.

During the time of the lockdowns, secondary school learners were also concerned about their academic activities. They were uncertain about their final performance, and, as a result, some of them suffered from academic anxiety. One learner, WXL1 said:

During the COVID-19 pandemic period I spent the entire day in my room and there was no internet connection at home when I needed to do my school work. I felt that I was wasting my time which should have been utilized doing various academic activities. This impacted heavily on my performance in the final examinations.

It was very stressful for secondary school learners to be isolated from their social circles and families. One learner, WXL3, a boy from School X said:

We spend the whole day hiding from the police who would chase us whenever we played outside. It became very boring for us to remain inside the house all the time. The situation was very stressful as I remained isolated in the house, away from my social friends whom I mostly shared ideas, facts and knowledge.

It has been found in the study that during the COVID-19 pandemic, secondary school learners developed some fear of contracting the virus. One learner, WXL2 said:

The COVID-19 pandemic caused me to develop fear of contamination and of the corona virus. The fear affected my learning in the classroom when I sat next to someone and got hold of the books that someone had been using. Due to that fear, I frequently sanitised my clothes, and washed my fruits and vegetables using detergents and warm water.

Data collected from secondary school learners, teachers and health workers indicated that many psychological factors such as fear, stress, monophobia, academic anxiety and depression affected the behaviour and performance of many secondary school learners. The Figure 5.3 below illustrates this view point.

The pectoral below illustrates that due to the closure of schools, learners were affected in various ways. The closure of schools created examination anxiety, depression, and these feeling resulted in the creation of fear and anger among the learners. During the COVID-19 pandemic, secondary school learners would sanitise every day in order to kill the corona virus. This process led learners to develop stigma, neurotic disorders and stress. Social distancing also created monophobia loss of peer relationship, distracted ambition and lost passion.

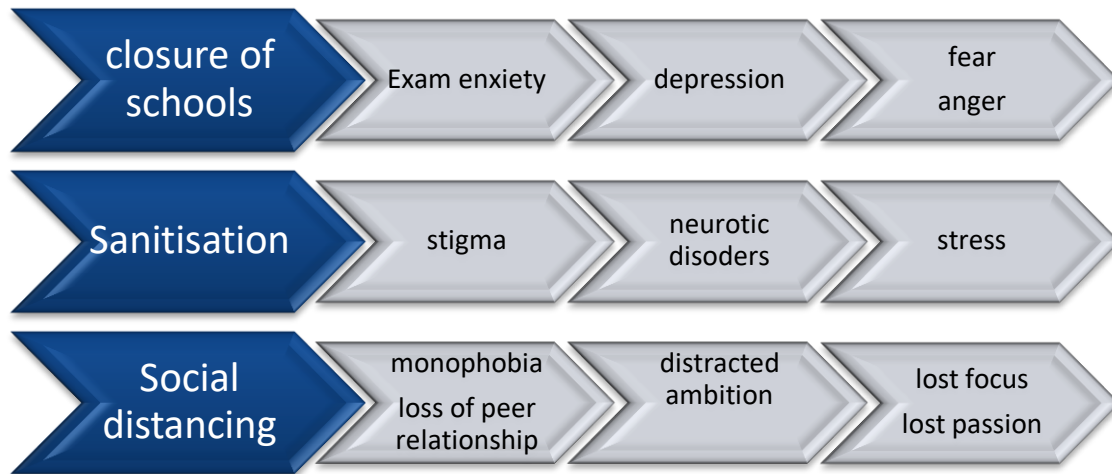


Fig 5.3 Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic as revealed by teachers, health workers and secondary school learners

A rather comprehensive study in India, which was carried out in 2020 adapted the S-O-R model so that the psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the students could be examined. The study provided insights about the COVID-19 as a stimulus as well as its impact on the emotional responses and behavioural outcomes from the students. According to behaviourism, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis caused learners to suffer from lockdown regulations, economic meltdown and transport disruptions. In response, secondary school learners showed signs of academic anxiety, lockdown stress, fear and monophobia.

5.3.2 Developmental experiences of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era

The second research question wanted to establish the experiences of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Specifically, the question aimed at finding out the

developmental experiences that secondary school learners encountered during that COVID - 19 pandemic period. From the questionnaire, some of the secondary school learners who took part in the research indicated that their academic performance was so deplorable because of the loss of parents to COVID-19. One of the girls from School Y. who was an orphan, said:

When my parents were sick due to COVID-19, I suffered many things. For example, I failed the exams because I was not attending lessons. I spent most of the time at home. The situation worsened when my parents died. We were left alone with no one to give us support.

From the above response, it can be noted that the secondary school learner 's poor academic performance was exacerbated by the fact that affected learners' parents often got ill causing some learners to live alone, without an adult. Maslow cited in Kelly and Coughlan (2019) asserts that the ideas of love and belonging are crucial for learners in their learning. Learners need to be loved and accepted by parents, teachers, peers, the school in general and the community, among others. They also feel happy and motivated to learn if they feel that they belong to their families, the school and the community at large. In the same vein, most of the teachers and health workers who took part in the current research study consolidated the views by the children saying that children who had been orphaned and vulnerable had been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in their academic work. They emphasised that even some children who were very gifted in their academic work were performing poorly then due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Piaget's cognitive development theory, cognitive development occurs as we move from infancy to adulthood. Learners develop from the interplay between innate capabilities (nature) and environmental influences (nurture). Learners progress through four distinct stages, each stage representing varying cognitive abilities and world comprehension: the sensori- motor stage (birth to 2 years), the pre-operational stage (2 to 7 years), the concrete operational stage (7 to 11 years), and the formal operational stage (11 years and beyond). As children progress through these stages, they acquire different experiences through, as already noted, interacting with their environments. Given the restrictions in interactions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic regulations, it meant learners missed a lot in their development.

During the COVID-19 pandemic period learners faced challenges that could not allow them to modify their mapping structure in order to reach a good equilibration or homeostasis (Flis&vanEck, 2018). Homeostasis occurs when secondary school learners are more able to solve more problems than what they were able to do earlier on (Eaton, 2020). It is imperative to assist secondary school learners to build up new schemes that could help them formulate cognitive maps on which the learners would progressively develop the ways to organise and adapt to their environment. Participant ZML1 said:

Secondary school learners lost a lot of learning time when schools were closed. Increased loss of learning time and dropout rates in secondary schools which increased due to COVID-19 resulted in unequal learning opportunities. These negatively impacted on the academic achievements of secondary school learners.

As indicated above, secondary school learners in the study lost learning time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to low pass rates and high dropouts for both boys and girls. Brooks et al. (2019) posit that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the overall demand for secondary school education dropped as a result of absenteeism caused by the fear of contracting the pandemic.

Both learners and health workers alike shared the same sentiment that learners at secondary school level had been affected by COVID-19 because of the stigma. Acquaintances always pointed fingers at those who had either been infected or affected. This agrees with Garcia and Weiss's (2020) argument that learners who had previously been active, for instance in playing games, suddenly became passive spectators or on-lookers. In the case of secondary school learners, the most affected began to engage in solitary play because of the stigma. Since stigma is usually associated or accompanied by calling of derogatory names or labeling, and learners being allergic to that, such affected learners began to lose interest in their academic work and their performance became affected negatively.

The above observation finds support in a study by Evans-Amalu and Claravall (2021) that found that some secondary school learners suffered mentally, socially, physically and morally during the COVID-19 pandemic period. According to the information gathered from the open-ended questionnaires, teachers indicated that learners suffered mentally due to chronic stress that was caused by excessive fear of the virus.

Participant MP2M said:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, secondary school learners developed fear of contamination and the virus. Fear led learners to stress themselves because of anxiety.

When learners become fearful, their concentration is disturbed and this leads to the failure of the learners in their final examinations.

The above statement shows that due to the stress and fear of the COVID-19 pandemic, secondary school learners lost concentration, which led to poor performance. According to Albert (2020), learners who have experienced pandemic-related chronic stress and trauma because they lack a supportive relationship can face the increased risk of developing emotional, behavioural and cognitive problems. According to Piaget's cognitive development theory, stress and anxiety greatly affect learners' assimilation, accommodation and information retrieval as well as processing,

Data obtained from the learner-participants from School W revealed that learners who showed signs and symptoms of COVID-19 infection were sometimes wrongly suspected of being infected. They were thus left alone by members of the community in general and their peers in particular. One of the secondary school learners said:

During the COVID -19 pandemic, I feared to sit next to someone who was sneezing because we had been told that the virus was an air-borne disease and could only be avoided by maintaining social distance. I could not even hold someone's hands for fear of contamination.

This observation concurs with the results of a research study done by Alrashidi (2020) which concluded that COVID-19-related stigma had very serious consequences on the academic performance of the victims, especially learners who were orphans who had no one and nowhere to turn to for advice and assistance. The origin of COVID-19-related stigma lies in the fear and the resultant isolation that shaped the negative perceptions of those secondary school learners

who had been infected or affected by the pandemic. One health worker revealed during the interviews that:

The stigma suffered by COVID-19-affected learners was because they were deprived of the love, care and support of their school associates or peers. Peer relationship among learners accelerates interaction and facilitates participation among learners. In peer relationships, learners can converse with their peers, present and defend ideas, exchange diverse beliefs, and questions, all of which foster holistic development..

The above quotes how that learners were deprived of crucial privileges and rights due to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and their academic performance suffered an irreparable blow because the teaching and learning process was affected negatively. The psycho-social theory emphasises that circumstances surrounding an individual's life coupled with social context can increase and shape the individual's personality traits. UNICEF (2020) points out that, if there is no cure but persistence in the infections of the COVID-19 pandemic, the learners would lack emotional support when confined to a secluded place, which resulted in feelings of rejection from school and peer support. This feeling of rejection contributed to the feelings of mistrust in the learner as they grew and lacked self-initiative. Those learners might turn out ruthless and develop feelings of inadequacy.

Marsh and Higgins (2020) argue that given the fact that during the COVID-19 pandemic, learners demonstrated limited endurance, some turned to taking multiple drugs, and had multiple medical appointments and tests. Their tolerance and cooperation in complicated exercises and therapy regimes was likely to limit their development and affect their ego identity. According to Erikson,

people have a conflict that serves as a turning point in their development. In this view, conflicts are centered on either developing a psychological quality or failing to develop that quality. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the potential for the holistic growth of secondary school learners was disturbed because of the conflicts of resolution that emerged. Learners had difficulties in dealing with those conflicts that emerged because of the COVID-19 pandemic. They found it difficult to develop the essential skills for a strong sense of self-identity, given their restricted explorations and interactions with both the physical and social environments.

According to teachers and health workers, during the COVID-19 pandemic era, most secondary school learners lived in a stressful environment and many of them struggled with unmet basic needs such as the mandatory face masks, sanitisers, testing kits and online education. They, therefore, went through a poorer holistic development experience. UNESCO (2020) describes the learners' situations as difficult and highlights the need for support and reduction of the fear and rejection that often surround the secondary school learners.

Carrie (2020) affirms that since we care for our learners' development, it is imperative to understand that personality traits might have caused learners to develop poor mental health conditions due to the corona virus pandemic. Among other factors, learners' personality traits might have contributed to the development of certain mental health conditions such as corona-related mental health reactions. From the observation made by the researcher, poor mental health conditions were most likely to occur due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, the study was important in its exploration of the relevant disorders and their correlating

personality traits. This would enable a better understanding of, and support for each secondary school learner's needs.

From the findings, it can be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic initially triggered anxiety because of the immediate threat to the health of the learners and their loved ones, and the instability that was introduced into the learners' lives. Salari et al. (2020) posit that during this pandemic, mental health was worse among younger people, although older people had a higher mortality rate from the COVID-19 infection. Young age and unstable living conditions were associated with increased suicidal tendencies (Cao et al., 2020). There arose an urgent need to implement a system of care for those at-risk groups, particularly if suicide numbers would begin to rise in the near future.

Participant MP2M said:

Depression effects affected secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic as people cloistered themselves in their homes, avoiding social interaction and finding themselves isolated with their personal worries for hours each day. Those learners were overburdened by unsolved challenges.

According to Cooper and Worker (2020), depressive symptoms are more likely to set in loneliness, especially when there is increasing lack of hope. Additionally, a general melancholic perspective contributes to depression as many learners remain separated from their loved ones, support systems and everyday sense of balance. Studies by Qiongni and Chen, et al., (2021) on the possible harmful developmental impacts of infectious epidemics on the learners were carried out and they revealed that having relatives infected with COVID-19 impacts heavily on the daily lives of the learners. They also affect them in their academic activities and worsen anxiety levels

among secondary school students. In a study on the COVID-19 pandemic carried out in a Nigerian university, students had higher anxiety levels than normal people and when tested, nearly half of the students were found to be positive with the corona virus (Ueda et al., 2020). This was due to the fear and anxiety of death surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic outbreak increased panic, anxiety and depression levels among both secondary school learners and the adult population (Qiongni and Chen, et al., 2021).

5.3.3. Challenges secondary school learners faced in their holistic development due to the COVID-19 pandemic

The third research question wanted to find out the challenges that secondary schools learners were facing in their holistic development due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In general, a number of challenges emerged as indicated by teachers, health workers and learners.

One participant said: MP2M

COVID-19 has affected the learning processes of secondary school learners in many ways, including disruptions in the family system due to the illness of parents or death, financial instability and educational disruption due to closure of school. In these predicaments, learners lost social interaction with others in the process. This exacerbates the pandemic's negative impact on learners.

Health workers highlighted that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, secondary school learners were forced to change environments that they were living in. for example, they transferred from urban to rural schools after the death of their parents. Apart from that, the learners had serious lack of resources. Chief among these resources was money for school fees. Poor academic performance was also noticeable in such cases. This observation concurs with what was said by

Alase (2021) who noted heavy adult responsibilities as contributing greatly to the poor performance of those unfortunate learners at school. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the orphaned and vulnerable children were expected to run the day-to-day activities of the family which included putting food on the table on daily basis, and various other parental roles. Many studies by UNICET (2020) reveal that the COVID-19 pandemic affected learners in many ways. For example, learners had no time for school work, and hence, performed poorly in their academic work.

The study findings from the questionnaire also revealed that during the COVID-19 pandemic period, secondary school learners were not participating in both in- and out-door activities like sports. A study by Ueda et al. (2020) also notes the withdrawal among learners in motor activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers in this study concluded that, indeed COVID-19 interfered with learners' learning and normal development. Cooper and Worker (2020) also found that social interaction had become a problem because of the discriminatory attitudes and behaviour towards the COVID-19-infected individuals since some learners were sneezing and showed signs of weakness in their activities.

According to teachers' responses, the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the demand for schooling and enrolment rates, and performance and completion of the syllabus. This was also caused by the high rate of absenteeism. Moreover, learners affected by COVID-19 were prone to many threats. Participant YFL2 said:

I often got ill during the COVID-19 pandemic. And because I was physically weak, on our way home, some of the boys would beat me and leave me behind. The situation was a

worry every day. I only got help when my parents managed to buy a bicycle for me. The problem is that I am a heart patient and I constantly take drugs.

The majority of teachers felt that there was a need to assist learners who had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to overcome self-created obstacles and develop their self-esteem and prestige. Sometimes learners who were ill stayed at home and lagged behind in their studies.

Equally important among secondary school learners was the development of personality which was a challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Research by Bilohur (2019) demonstrates that different work, marital and family experiences are associated with personality change among learners. Teachers and health workers indicated that family dynamics and childhood experiences had a significant impact on the development of a secondary school learner's personality during the COVID-19 pandemic. Given that in most cases, learners were isolated, it meant that personality-wise, many learners did not become what they were supposed to become.

Childhood experiences of COVID-19 pandemic, which included trauma caused by the pandemic, abuse of learners, neglect, or exposure to violence, could have significantly long-term effects on personality development. Secondary school learners who experience trauma may be more likely to experience mental health issues such as anxiety and depression and may also struggle with relationships and trust. Understanding the impact of these experiences was essential for the promotion of healthy development and provision of support to secondary school learners.

Teachers and health workers pointed out that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the formation of peer relationship was a challenge as learners were afraid to work with others or in groups

following the COVID-19 pandemic regulations. All this significantly impacted on the holistic development of secondary school learners.

During interviews WXY1 said:

Peer relationships provide opportunities for socialisation, which is the process of learning and internalising social norms, values and expectations. As learners work in groups they learn to share ideas, defend them and argue. This is important because learners would learn and develop intellectually.

Prothero (2020) asserts that through interactions with peers learners learn how to behave in social situations, develop communication and negotiation skills, and learn to regulate their emotions and behaviours in ways that are acceptable to others. Given that learners were restricted in their peer relationships, it meant that the development of learners' personality and identity was negatively affected, hence, a real challenge.

Apart from peer relationship, learners lost vast amounts of class activities, and outdoor activities and relations among themselves as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the health workers said:

With the lack of regular education amongst all secondary school learners, learning seems harder to manage. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, learners would have in-person classes and in-person extracurricular activities but due to the emergency of the pandemic all this was stopped.

Starr (2020) posits that the pandemic has created an atmosphere where secondary school learners who have an idea about their future occupations are learning essential information behind a screen. These challenges were changing the focus built around the secondary school learners as they were not experiencing what they were passionate about to the fullest extent (Stratford, 2020). The result of this was that secondary school learners lost passion for specific subjects and the ability to focus on crucial information, and tainted academic integrity (Bowe & Gore, 2017). Maslow's self-actualisation process believes that the holistic development of learners should assist each learner to strive to be all that they can be in life (Snell, 2020). There are no deficits in learners, just differences. The potential of learners remain undefined as they are developing to the ultimate extent of their capabilities, thus, moving towards the highest aspirations of their human spirit (Strauss & Valerie, 2020). To foster the holistic development of secondary school learners in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the curriculum needed to offer transformational learning where the instruction recognises the wholeness of the learner (Streicher & Stan, 2020).

Many teachers who answered the open-ended questionnaire indicated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, families and learners reacted to life changes differently and this affected their personality development. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, learners' manner of attachment with other family members and teachers changed since appropriate social distancing was supposed to be observed. Attachment refers to the emotional bond that an infant develops with their primary caregiver (Guy-Evans, 2020). The quality of this attachment influenced an individual's personality development during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

The other challenge that affected secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic was the parenting and teaching styles. Parenting style refers to the way in which parents interacted

with their children during the COVID-19 pandemic. Different parenting styles can have different effects on an individual's personality development during crises (Price & McCallum, 2015). During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, authoritarian parents, who were highly controlling and demanding were likely to produce children who were less independent and less self-confident, while authoritative parents, who were warm and supportive but also set clear expectations and limits, produced children who were more self-confident and had better social skills.

The cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of secondary school learners posed a big challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic period and influenced personality development. For example, secondary school learners from collective cultures, which emphasise on the importance of group harmony and interdependence, developed different personality traits to those from individualistic cultures which emphasise independence and self-achievement (Berger, 2014). Similarly, secondary school learners from low-income backgrounds were more likely to experience stress and adversity which affected their personality development during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overall, family and childhood experiences play a critical role in personality development. Research Lee and Woods (2017) suggests that the development of personality occurs in relation to one's environment, and the interaction between one's self and environment (Botha & Herselman, 2016). The life experiences may accentuate and reinforce the personality characteristics of an individual. This principle illustrates how environmental interactions maintain and reinforce personality throughout the individual's lifespan.

Research findings by James (2019) revealed that infected school learners were not stable emotionally in some cases due to prolonged sickness. This resulted in absenteeism from school, which also led to bullying by fellow learners. Learners who had been infected by COVID-19 performed badly as they were stigmatised and labelled by others to the extent of losing confidence in themselves. According to Mussen (2016), Karen Horney a feminine psychologist distinguishes two pivotal needs that are fundamental in the unfolding of personality development of children. These needs include security or safety, and the need for satisfaction. In Horney's view, if security or safety and the needs for satisfaction are provided properly, learners do not develop feelings of inferiority. Such feelings must be compensated for later in adult life, but if correctly handled, they may promote growth (Roundy, 2016). An atmosphere characterised by love, genuine interest in the child, warmth, and respect for the child, reliability and sincerity, results in growth. In contrast, COVID-19 infection prevented the fulfillment of such needs, which led to basic hostility and basic anxiety followed by neurosis.

5.3.4 Aspects of life that promoted or deterred the holistic development of secondary school learners during in the COVID-19 pandemic era.

The fourth research question wanted to find out aspects of life that were promoting or deterring the holistic development of secondary school learners in the COVID-19 pandemic era. Most teachers, who responded to the open-ended questionnaire indicated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, most learners, particularly those from child-headed families lacked adequate resources and nutrition and, hence, became more emotionally unstable. Guy-Evans (2020) argues that if learners are poor and lack a balanced diet they perform less and cognitively develop at a very

slow rate. Kelly and Coughlin (2022) state that poverty and COVID-19 are closely linked. Health is improved by getting out of poverty, having access to clean water and basic needs. Slavin (2022) argues that poverty affected the infected learners because it widened the economic disparities as poor children were driven even further down. Oberle and Schonert-Reichl (2020) posit that those learners who do not have enough food, school fees, clothes and shelter, items which are considered basic needs according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, suffer psychologically. According to Omodan (2020) infected and affected learners had fewer opportunities to earn a living therefore lacked access to information about COVID-19.

Some teachers revealed that due to poverty some secondary school learners engaged in promiscuous activities in order to fend for themselves during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participant YFL2 said:

Poverty also led to school dropouts because learners could not have sufficient resources they needed to use at school. Lack of resources caused learners to have tension and anxiety in their life hence; it affected their holistic development and progress in education.

Rank (2019) asserts that anxiety is the apprehension caused by a threat to some value which the individual holds essential to his existence as the self. Kierkegaard (2019) explains anxiety as dizziness for freedom. When learners are not free to explore as others in the learning process because of lack of the basic needs and they observe the others have all the things they need, they actually feel deprived. From the findings, it was noted that lack of financial resources affected

learning during the COVID 19 pandemic. Teachers indicated that lack of financial resources led to non-payment of school levies, lack of proper nutrition for the infected learners and lack of financial assistance to learners which led to the learners failing to access medical attention. Learners failed to get the resources to use at school such as books, and proper clothing. Most of the resources were channeled towards seeking medication.

Information gathered during interviews with learners and health workers indicates a positive correlation between lack of resources and poor holistic development as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participant XML1, said:

Most secondary school learners who tested positive with COVID-19 were separated from their family members and some lost their parents. This caused them to suffer and continuously fear, living with no one nears them to give them support on their needs. Everyone was afraid of contracting the virus.

Lee, Saavedra and Chakroun (2021) highlight that losing parents due to COVID-19 was the birth of academic predicaments for children left without care-givers. After having suffered in their lives because of the COVID-19 which they had seen taking their parents away, learners expressed the nature of continuous suffering they had experienced. Health workers also brought to light the fact that suffering continued since resources remained scarce. All this had a large dent on their holistic development of the learners and their learning process.

Data from the interviews has also shown that, among other things, resources such as money for school fees play a major role in the teaching and learning process.

Participant ZML1 stated:

If you do not have school uniform, good clothes to wear and money for school fees because your parents are dead because of COVID-19, you cannot concentrate on your learning. As a result of such situation, we failed in our final term examinations.

All the above statements agree with the findings of Swearer (2016) who observes that resources such as clothes, uniforms in particular; food, shelter and parental care, love and guidance, are not to be overlooked as they have a large bearing on how learners learn. Visits to the schools during data collection revealed that some of the secondary school learners who had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic wore tattered and torn uniforms and jerseys, despite that it was at the peak of the winter season.

This study found that attendance for those secondary school learners had been compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic. A lot of time had been lost as the infected learner could not attend school on a regular basis. Affected learners were also stigmatised by fellow learners. In the classroom, teachers revealed that COVID-19 led learners to be lonely and withdrawn and to have negative social and emotional impact on them. When learners became sick they absconded lessons and failed to catch up with others. UNICEF (2019) indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic induced anxiety through trauma, discrimination and stigma, which affected the secondary school learners' concentration in class during the learning process.

Learners could not have proper interaction with other classmates nor even participate in games such as sports. The learners were sometimes stressed and absent minded in class and also looked sickly and unable to cope with the challenging situation. Erikson (1963) cited in Slavin (2018) stresses that both past and present social settings have effects on the development of personality. Mama (2019) suggests that children should be protected from social and mental exploitation because these cause social disruption and confusion among children.

According to Vygotsky in Carroll (2017), the learner's interactions and socialisation with other individuals in the environment assist in the total human development. Vygotsky claims that learning is a social process where cultural symbols and signs help to develop concepts as learners construct new ideas. Learning is contextualised and situated within the child's culture and experiences. New connections are made through mediation, scaffolding and interaction. Elements such as guidance, structure and support are aspects which are evident in all forms of interactions.

Most secondary school learners' development is in response to the contact and interaction between human beings and their material, social and intellectual environment. Thus, as secondary schools, learners interact, think, decide, evaluate, analyse, and commit to memory practice. They also construct knowledge and, most importantly, gain knowledge (Carroll, 2017). These skills and abilities are important in the process of development (Bjorklund, 2018). However, due to hindering factors such as those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, some secondary school learners failed to yield worthwhile knowledge from the guidance that was offered by capable individuals. This resulted in limited learning. Participant ZML2 noted:

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the cognitive development of learners as there was learning loss and gaps in knowledge due to disrupted instruction. Secondary school learners were not able to complete their syllabus and some failed the final examination and others got very poor grades.

According to the data collected through interviews, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most learners spent most of their time at home, where they had limited opportunities to socialise or gain critical relationship skills. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, learners enjoyed participating in sports, music shows, school plays, and a variety of other activities. Questionnaire respondents raised the issue that participation in these activities helped students to be more attractive applicants to colleges, universities and future employers, hence the COVID 19 pandemic disrupted learners' participation in these activities.

Teachers from schools X and W stated that during the COVID 19 pandemic, moving to online learning was not an achievable goal. For the disadvantaged ones, learning was interrupted and became a difficult task for the duration of the lockdown. Those secondary school learners from disadvantaged schools were at the risk of losing a great deal of learning time, all of which would set them up for failure in the future. The majority of schools were disadvantaged due to lack of resources such as computers, internet, skilled teachers, and digital learning devices. Participant ZML1 observed that:

Schools failed to provide and develop robust online learning platforms and resources. Learners spent their time trying to connect to the internet but due to poor network connection learning was very unsuccessful.

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has led all institutions across the country to find various online pedagogical techniques. Institutions endeavored to make better use of technology but due to the abrupt lockdown restrictions, the institutions failed to develop and implement remote learning plans.

Many institutions across the country have digitalised their operations, recognising the critical need of technology under such situations. During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions, the face-to-face instruction was not working well and online education in schools and colleges grew at an exponential rate. This new development required that practitioners had to modify their entire pedagogical approaches in order to navigate through the new market conditions and adapt to the changing scenarios.

During this difficult period, the main question was not whether online teaching and learning environments could provide high-quality education, but, rather, how academic institutions could be able to adopt online learning on such a large scale. Any educational institution, anywhere in the country, was affected by the resistance to change. They were judged on how quickly they had adjusted to changes in such a short period of time and how well they had retained quality work delivery. Their ability to adapt was demonstrated by how effectively they behaved and preserved the quality of their education in the face of crisis. A Form Six girl, ZFL1 said:

The performance of secondary school learners at the end of the year indicated that learners were not adaptive to the methods of online instruction that were used during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Most learners were not able to meet or attend to zoom meetings due to weak network. Such learners failed at the end of the term.

The study by Rank (2019) on learners' performance at higher level learning showed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, learners were not concentrating on their learning due to the lockdown restrictions and the disruption of school terms. This situation led to less innovative and productive mindsets.

Human beings are capable of making decisions about good and bad, right and wrong. This capacity is formed throughout life and constitutes the morality of people. Moral reasoning is defined by Kohlberg as judgments about right and wrong (Roche &Thoma, 2017). Moral reasoning is important because it allows people to act freely and responsibly in all aspects of their lives. Moral reasoning is expected to be greater in some professionals, such as teachers because they must place the interest of the learners above their own to help the learners and contribute to the common good and society.

Starr and Joshua (2020) observe that the intensity of the crisis, quantified by the number of COVID-19 deaths, significantly affected the moral reasoning of secondary school learners. The COVID-19 deaths have direct correlation with responses of the learners' dilemmas (Calargo&Jessica, 2020). Therefore, it is important to understand that the relationship between the severity of the pandemic and the people's responses to individual dilemmas has a bearing on learners' moral development. Broadwater and Luke (2020) assert that learners' individual differences in decision-making predict judgments about moral problems during the COVID-19 crisis period.

According to the data collected through in-depth interviews, learners who have experienced pandemic-related chronic stress and trauma without supportive relationships faced an increased risk of developing moral and emotional challenges.

In early cognitive development, according to Piaget, children are in the pre-operational and concrete operational stages. During the COVID-19 pandemic the learners' understanding of the rules of social distancing involved the role of teachers and adults in recognising the consequences of the rules related to social distancing.

During the COVID-19 crisis, secondary school learners were exposed to factors that negatively affected their personal life such as long working hours in indoors shifts from their living places that were far from their place of origin, insufficient support networks, stress, and difficulties in making clinical decisions. That kind of situation led to moral distress and anxiety. The mental health of learners was often affected during the pandemic due to reactions such as fear of becoming sick and fear of dying, or that a loved one had become sick or died, uncertainty about the economic situation, boredom, loneliness, and depression due to isolation. Moral reasoning depends on cognitive skills, including general reasoning, and social interactions.

5.3.5 How schools, communities and policy-makers could prepare to assist secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic

The research question five wanted to find out how schools, communities and policy-makers had prepared to assist secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era. In essence, the question wanted to find out how various institutions, administrations and policy makers were geared to deal with the demands of the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic, and how this could reduce the fear, discriminatory attitudes, depression, anxiety and suicidal tendencies among secondary school learners during that period.

Participant YFL2 stated that:

Most school institutions could not adequately provide relief aid to the education system and could not urgently manage to amass the resources needed to effectively support the scaled rate of the pandemic.

Participant YFL2 said:

Most schools could not provide online education and did not support secondary school learners with health services and counselling. During the COVID-19 pandemic, secondary school learners needed counselling and advice so that they could be redirected when they went astray due to the pressure from the pandemic.

Lee (2020) argues that, given the fact that schools could not quickly open, standard operating procedures were not laid down for future education transformation and policies that fostered more on learner development. Leachman and Figueroa (2019) add that schools were not equipped with necessary resources commensurate with the demands of public and private community institutions. Loewus' (2019) survey revealed that most districts were not able to develop systems that monitored learners' needs in order for them to learn online. The literature findings of James (2020) also revealed that in places where online learning instruction was offered, the nature of instruction could not attend to the critical needs of learners, especially special-needs learners. Cherry (2021) also confirms that online learning was less effective for learners who were less prepared and those who did not have full access to the internet and computers and those with no experience of using the devices for schoolwork. Moreover, the school authorities could not provide educators with the necessary training and techniques to avoid unstructured instruction and avoid trial-and-error instruction that yielded unfruitful results during the pandemic.

According to the holistic pedagogy by Smart, the education system should develop in learners multiple facets or abilities of the human brain (Abrams & Primack, 2011). During the COVID-19 pandemic era, the intention of the education system was to understand the variables in education which had been brought as a result of the pandemic. The analysis could have demonstrated the need for comprehensive strategies to successfully handle the aftermath of the pandemic in learners' holistic development. Holistic development, according to Smart (1953) aims at the development of physical capabilities, intellectual abilities, cognitive or mental abilities, emotional abilities, and social skills (Shabani, 2017). The researcher can argue that during the COVID-19 pandemic, learning was only done in pockets, and, in most schools and districts, a procedural plan had not been made to adequately meet the COVID-19 pandemic safety measures. Geffner, Loring and Young (2019) confirm that these plans did not include communicating, monitoring, educating, and reinforcing appropriate hygienic and social distancing practices in ways that were developmental and appropriate for secondary school learners, teachers, and authorities.

According to teachers and health workers, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the education offered was not in line with the all-round development of the secondary school learner. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2020), the development of every learner's intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative and spiritual potential was hindered during the COVID-19 pandemic because of the unpreparedness of most academic institutions. The education system could not engage learners in the teaching and learning process that encouraged personal and collective responsibility due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Wilber, 2019). Respondent ZML2 said:

Schools, administrations and teachers were not able to adequately provide the more personalized instruction, especially during the pick of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lovat, (2019) asserts that the type of education cannot be quoted as a particular method or technique but must be taken as a paradigm, a closed set of basic assumptions that have principles which can be applied in different ways. In this assumption the education should seek to address the broadest development needs of the whole learner at the affective, physical and cognitive levels (Murphy, 2018). The education should aim for the fullest possible learner development that enables the learner to become the best and finest learner who could develop fully and in all capacities (Bowe & Gore, 2017).The thrust of the above provision was thwarted because of the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic era.

As indicated in figure 5.4 below, poor infrastructure, poor teaching instruction methods, lack of internet services in other educational institutions and unqualified personnel affected the education system during the COVID-19 crisis period.



Fig 5.4 How institutions failed to handle the influx of COVID-19

For the holistic development of the secondary school learners, the education system should attempt to include every aspect of human experience. It must adopt an eclectic approach and an inclusive framework whose main ethos is the idea that educational experiences should foster an education that promote a more balanced development of the learner and cultivate more relationships among different aspects of an individual (De Grasse 2017; Narvaez, 2014).

Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory illustrates the complexity of reciprocal interactions between growing persons and their multi-level socio-ecological milieu (Lippard, Paro, Rouse & Crosby, 2018). The development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic was influenced by various features which Bronfenbrenner divides into five sub-systems; namely; micro, meso, exo and macro systems (Guy-Evans, 2020). Teachers' observations were that these relationships were significantly related to the learner's academic achievement and classroom behaviour. The results suggested that the relationships between the learners and the environment were a joint product of four defining components namely; the person, context, process and time (Ettedal & Mahoney, 2017). In fact, the learner affects one's own development by controlling one's own behavior, coping strategies under stress, acquiring knowledge and skill, establishing and maintaining mutually-rewarding relationships with the others and modifying and constructing one's own symbolic, physical and social environment.

The microsystem is the innermost social system that constitutes the learner's immediate setting in which he or she actively involves in it (Hayes et al., 2017). This system promotes a vigorous bidirectional relationship in which a growing learner's behaviour is shaped by the environments and shapes the environments in reciprocity. In this research, these interactions occurred in families, sports, faith based groups, clubs, and community service projects all of which helped shape learners' cognitive, spiritual, social and overall holistic development (Ettedal et al., 2017). In other words, the COVID-19 pandemic affected learners in their microsystems as they could not interact properly in their groups.

Bronfenbrenner (1979: 209) defines mesosystem as a “set of interrelations between two or more settings in which the developing person becomes an active participant with the parents attending school meetings, conferences, performances and sporting activities and school curricular activities. The results of the study show that during the COVID-19 pandemic, there were inadequate interactions within the system in shaping learners’ holistic development. A Form Five boy from school W said:

Closure of schools during the lock-down periods caused discontinuities in the school term and the learners were unable to interact with their teachers. Most secondary school learners were forced to work alone and that meant that learners were not having guidance in their school work.

Kelly and Coughlan (2019) assert that the indirect link of the learner with environments such as the neighborhood, extended families, school policies, curriculum, parents’ work place, health policies and community agencies influence the secondary learner’s holistic development. The perceptions, views and attitudes of the people that surrounded the secondary school learners matter as learners tend to inherit those beliefs, perceptions and assumptions about the pandemic. Often, parents and teachers expose their children to their perceptions, attitudes and beliefs; hence, it affects their holistic development (Guy-Evans, 2020). Put differently, how COVID-19 affected parents’ workplaces, parents’ friendship and the mass media news affected the holistic development of secondary school learners. The environs in which the learner was not involved, and were external to the learners experience affected the learners anyway.

Moreover, the development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic was influenced by the environment, the past and the culture and it was evident that these ecological

factors contributed negatively during the COVID-19 pandemic in the holistic development of secondary school learners. The environs affected the relationships between fellow learners and also with teachers as well as the major life changing events (Patton et al., 2013). An understanding of these interactions is the key to understanding of how the surroundings, namely; the home, school, neighborhood, culture and government of the learners were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Botha and Herselman (2016) allude to the fact that the ecological systems theory looks at the learner's environment in terms of its quality and context and the environment with its capacity to dictate the development of learners. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the surroundings, including the learners' home, school and work. This study has emphasised the point that learners should be involved in early intervention programs that are directed at improving learners' social environments and ultimately their lives. Secondary school learners' personal characteristics such as learners' level of maturation, interest, health conditions, disability, major life-events, ability, sex, religion, learning styles, and similar variables should be strongly considered as crucial determinants because secondary school learners are susceptible to antisocial behaviors and psychosocial problems such as stress and depression due to COVID-19.

In this regard, a safe and supportive environment is fundamental to maximise the holistic development of secondary school learners for effective coping with peer pressure and creating vibrant and stimulating school environments that promote physical and mental health fitness in this post- COVID-19 pandemic era.

The study findings reveal that health workers and learners indicated that free school education could solve all the underlying problems that secondary school learners faced as they went through their learning process. Participant ZML1 observed:

Most learners who had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic needed food, school fees assistance, clothes and psychological support because they were affected by worry, stress and anxiety.

Schools feeding programmes should be introduced because all secondary school learners who come to school hungry could benefit. Feeding could enable them to participate in classroom learning processes. From the study, health workers indicated that financial assistance by the government was needed to assist learners to finish their school. BEAM and other well-wishers could assist with the payment of fees. Counselling by professional counsellors may help learners to cope with related challenges.

The figure 5.5 below illustrates the strategies used to improve the lives and learning processes of the COVID-19 victims so as to reduce the gaps that had been created during the COVID-19 pandemic among secondary school learners.

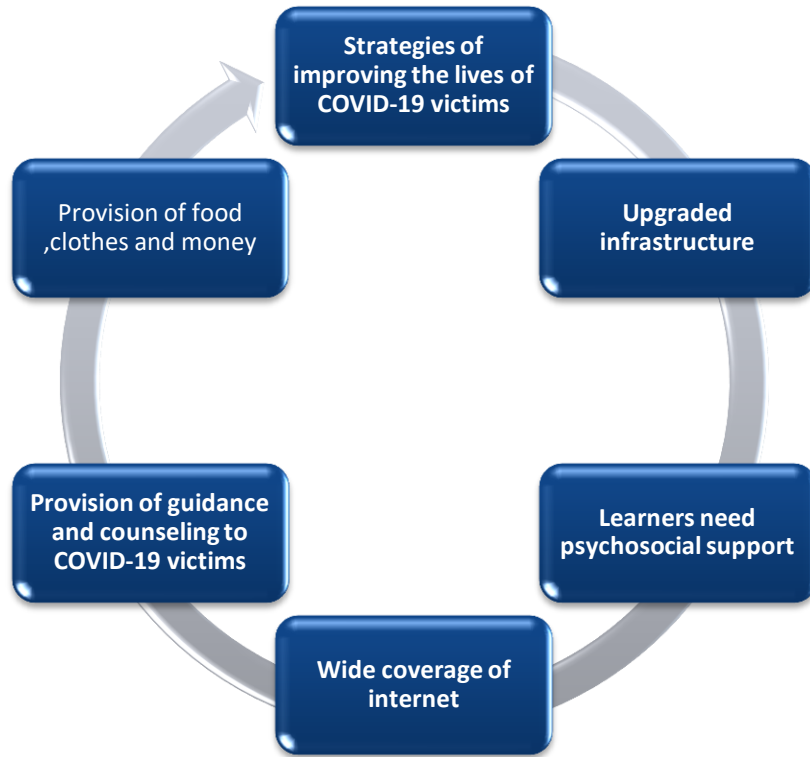


Fig 5.5 shows strategies of improving the lives of COVID-19 victims.

During the COVID-19 pandemic era, many secondary school learners were orphaned because the pandemic caused high mortality rate among the elderly people. Orphans caused by the COVID-19 pandemic should be assisted to complete their education. UNICEF (2020) stresses that some orphaned learners lack parental care and love, and that the number of orphans whose parents died of COVID-19 had risen from 3,5% in 2001 to 32% in 2020 . This is supported by the Zimbabwean Orphans and Vulnerable Children Policy (2022) which says that OVC caused by COVID-19 was a long term problem that affected the developing countries where more than 13 million children are below the age of fifteen(15) and have lost both parents. From the study’s findings, teachers indicated that counseling of the affected secondary school learners was crucial.

There is need for quality assurance in the teaching about COVID-19 and in guidance and counselling so as to impart knowledge and life skills in those learners. In light of the aforementioned findings, this study would recommend the urgent need for capacity development workshops in order to equip learners with computer and ICT skills, knowledge, and strategies for online teaching delivery and increased provision of adequate learning and teaching facilities in all public educational institutions, including those in the rural areas. It is also important to organise training sessions on innovation and the effective use of digital technologies for secondary school learners and how to benefit maximally from virtual learning activities. More importantly, teachers and learners should develop the right mindsets and attitudes towards the adoption and use of ICT facilities for the attainment and sustainability of the country's educational goals.

5.4 SUMMARY

This chapter presented, analysed and discussed research findings on how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the holistic development of secondary school learners in the Chegutu district of Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe. Data were presented, analysed and discussed following the research questions. An analysis of the qualitative research data collected through in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires revealed that most teachers were aware of the causes and effects of COVID-19 and how the pandemic could be spread. In the teaching and learning process, secondary school learners who learned during the COVID-19 crisis period experienced lots of problems, both in school and at home. Learner absenteeism was realised whereby the learners absented themselves either to attend to medical care, attend to an ailing parent or due to lack of learning resources.

The present study also found out that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, secondary school learners lost their passion for learning, and developed varied personality traits because of exam anxiety, depression, stress, monophobia, and neurotic disorder, fear and a general melancholy caused by challenges which emerged as a result of the COVID-19. Possible solutions such as the need for the provision of guidance and counselling, assistance to the most affected secondary school learners, provision of basic needs to the vulnerable learners were identified. The next and last chapter gives a summary of the study, draws conclusions from the findings of the study and makes recommendations based on the findings of the study as well as for future research.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the whole study was summarised, conclusions were made and recommendations were given. The study was summarised in the first section by emphasising important ideas from each of the five previous chapters while taking into account the study's research questions and objectives. The second section drew conclusions from the study's findings. The third section proffered recommendations based on the study's findings as well as recommendations for future research and suggestions stemming from the research conclusions. In the fourth section the study's limitations were outlined as well as the contributions to knowledge.

6.2 Summary of the study chapters

The study examined the holistic development of secondary school learners in the face of the corona virus disease (COVID-19) in Chegutu district, Zimbabwe. **Chapter one** highlighted the setting of the problem, concentrating on the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the research objectives and questions as well as the significance of the study. The chapter drew attention to, and explained the working terms which appear in the study. The study revealed that secondary school learners in Zimbabwe, Africa and the whole world were among

the most highly infected and affected by COVID-19. The background to the study highlighted that the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic radically changed the way learners had been educated around the world, and the global scale of education disruption was unprecedented with more than 1.5 billion secondary school learners affected by the closure of schools (UNICEF, 2021). In this predicament, secondary school learners were among the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was highlighted that in Africa, most secondary school learners were failing to enroll in secondary schools because of the severe impact of the pandemic.

It was also noted that despite the preventive strategies implemented by the governments to curb the challenges, tools such as social distance, school shutdowns and school closures contributed much to stress learners. This builds up to become risk factors that threaten learner growth and development and compromised achievement of the sustainable development goals (Aristovnik&Keržič, 2020). The assumptions of the research were also stated in the first chapter. The study's assumptions included that secondary school learners had multiple holistic developmental challenges in the COVID-19 pandemic era and that this required teachers and communities to understand and respond to their needs. It was further assumed that the moral, physical, emotional and psychological developmental aspects of secondary school learners were crucial to monitor in the COVID-19 pandemic era.

Chapter Two was on the theoretical framework which under-pinned the study. The theoretical framework covered perspectives in constructivist views of UrieBronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory, Freud's psychoanalytic theory and Erik Erikson's psycho-social theory. These theories helped to explain the holistic developmental experiences of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era. The Five-Factor Model of Personality theory was also a

vital component of the study. To this effect, it was also used to explain how the COVID-19 pandemic differently affected learners of different personalities.

The third chapter looked at the literature review in an effort to establish and determine what was known and what was unknown about the issues which were supposed to be addressed in the study. The literature review was largely based on the research questions in order to, see what was known and not known about the questions raised in the study. The reviewed literature revealed that globally, most research studies reported that during the COVID-19 pandemic, learners in general, experienced stressful circumstances that affected their social, cognitive, personality and moral development. Some studies such as those by Aristovnik and Keržič (2020) reported that even some of the most recommended protective measures against COVID-19 such as self-isolation had negative effects on the learners' mental health, inducing conditions such as panic disorder, anxiety and depression

Chapter Four of this study dealt with the methodology adopted for the study. The chapter discussed the research paradigm, the research approach, and the research design. This study was guided by interpretive and it adopted the qualitative research approach in collecting and analysing data in line with the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism centres on exploring the intricacy of social experiences with a view to gaining understanding (Ashton, 2018). The qualitative research method gave participants the chance to express their opinions and experiences through in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires. The chapter also discussed research sites, the population of the study, the sampling techniques, the study sample and highlighted how data were going to be presented and analysed. The researcher was aware of the need to ensure conformability and transferability throughout the research.

Chapter Five focused on data presentation, analysis and discussion. The researcher coded the research participants and research sites so as to ensure confidentiality as part of ethical consideration as promised to participants during data collection. The chapter discussed the data immediately after the presentation and analysis in order to avoid the repetition which is often observed in work where the discussion of the data constitutes a separate chapter. The data were collected using in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires. The results from the interviews were supported by information from open-ended questionnaires. The data were triangulated using the information obtained from the three instruments to reduce the possibility of drawing erroneous conclusions and to guarantee the conformability and verification of results.

6.2.1 Major findings of the Study according to each theme

The study found out that most secondary schools teachers; health workers and secondary school learners understood the concept COVID-19. Participants argued that the infectious corona virus that emerged in 2019 caused many people to have fever, breathing difficulties and dry cough. The participants noted that the virus spread when learners with COVID-19 coughed, sneezed or exhaled. To curb the spreading of the COVID-19 pandemic, learners were supposed to wear a face mask to cover the mouth and nose among others.

The results also showed that secondary school learners failed examinations because they were not attending lessons due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the lockdown most secondary school learners were deprived of their learning in classes, of love, care and support of their school associates and hence the learners experienced academic anxiety, examination fear, stress, monophobia and depression as they cloistered themselves in their homes, avoiding social interaction.

The results also showed that during the COVID-19 era, secondary school learners frequently sanitised their clothes, washed fruits and vegetables with detergents and warm water. This action has resulted in the development of neurotic disorders and stigma among secondary school learners. To avoid the spread of COVID-19, secondary school learners were supposed to maintain social distance and this led to loss of peer relationships, collaborative learning and engagement. Most secondary school learners spent their time sick during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some spent fourteen (14) days under quarantine, resulting in loss of focus, passion and ambition to school work.

Among other responses, participants revealed that lack of financial resources led to non-payment of school fees and proper nutrition for the infected learners. Failure of secondary school learners to afford school uniforms, good clothes to wear and money for school fees resulted in loss of concentration during learning. It was noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, moral reasoning was affected due to reactions such as fear of becoming sick and dying among the learners. Secondary school learners who had experienced pandemic-related chronic stress and trauma without the supportive relationship faced increased risk of developing moral and emotional challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this predicament the schools and institutions could not adequately provide help to the education system and urgently manage to amass resources that were needed to assist the affected and infected secondary school learners.

6.3 Study conclusions according to the study themes

The study ascertained that the learning and development of secondary school learners had been interrupted and disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Social interaction was hampered and

learners lacked collaboration with their peers. Social interaction has been shown to have positive effects on the development of a collaborative learning atmosphere. When interacting with others, children learn to argue, defend their own opinions and views, and to share their ideas. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all this was not allowed, hence, learners' cognitive, socio-emotional and the physical domains were hampered. During the time of the lockdown, secondary school learners were also concerned about their academic activities.

They were uncertain about their final performance. As a result, learners developed academic stigma, anxiety, monophobia, stress, fear, and depression. Some learners developed neurotic disorders due to constant use of sanitisers. Some secondary schools learners begun to engage in solitary play because of stigma. The challenge among secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic was the ability to regulate emotions in adaptive ways as a result of stress.

6.4 Recommendations

The researcher makes the following recommendations based on policy, practice and further research:

6.4.1 Recommendations for policy and practice

- The Government should provide free education to the secondary school learners who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic such as the orphans and vulnerable learners. This would increase access and retention of the many learners who have been disadvantaged by the pandemic.

- There is need for the Government, in partnership with other charitable organisations, to provide help to the learners who have been affected and infected by COVID-19 so that these learners are not negatively affected in their learning.
- The government should identify parents of secondary school learners who are bed-ridden and who should be provided with palliative care and financed by the government. This would avoid the scenario of secondary school learners absenting themselves from school in order to care for their ailing parents.
- There is need for education authorities and organisations, such as UNICEF, to regularly organise workshops, seminars, educational tours and in-service courses to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes on how to manage secondary school learners, who are affected by mono-phobia, anxiety stress and depression due to COVID - 19.
- Stigmatisation and discrimination lower learner performance and create disinterest in learning. Training sessions should be organised by District administrators, Government authorities and non-Governmental organisations such as NGOS, in zone divisions and district levels. Such transactions would offer teachers the opportunity to share experiences and change their attitudes towards learners affected and infected by the pandemic.

6.4.2 Recommendations for further research study

The study recommends the following for further studies:

- There is need for a comparative study involving rural and urban environments to assess the extent to which learners from these environments.
- Assuming that the COVID-19 era will come to pass, there would be a need for a post-COVID-19 study to assess the effects of the pandemic on our education system as well as the effectiveness and preparedness of the education system to respond to such pandemics.

6.5 Limitations of the study

The following were the major limitations of this study:

- Given that movements and interactions were seriously curtailed during the pandemic, it was difficult for the researcher to get hold of some of the intended participants. In this regard, it is possible that a lot of information was missed out, thus, consequently affecting the sample size, the results and conclusions of the study. This challenge was overcome by applying for two days special leave.
- In some cases, participants were not free to interact with the researcher, even from a distance, fearing to “catch” the corona virus. These research shortcomings occasioned by the pandemic amounted to weaknesses that negatively influenced the validity of the results.

6.6 Contributions to knowledge.

This study recognizes the need for proactive leadership from various education stakeholders to coordinate and prepare for appropriate responses during a pandemic such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The need to identify sufficient sources of funding to ensure implementation of a safe environment for everyone was critical.

The study also has some great contribution to knowledge in that it shows the need for communities, schools, countries, among others, to work together in solving problems and challenges that threaten their lives. Without proper co-ordination, COVID-19 has the potential to annihilate human existence.

The proposed comprehensive model in Fig. 6 below tried to look into how a developing country such as Zimbabwe could enhance the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era. It summarises the needs of secondary school learners as proposed from the findings of the study, and suggest ways in which the learning and development of secondary school learners could be enhanced.

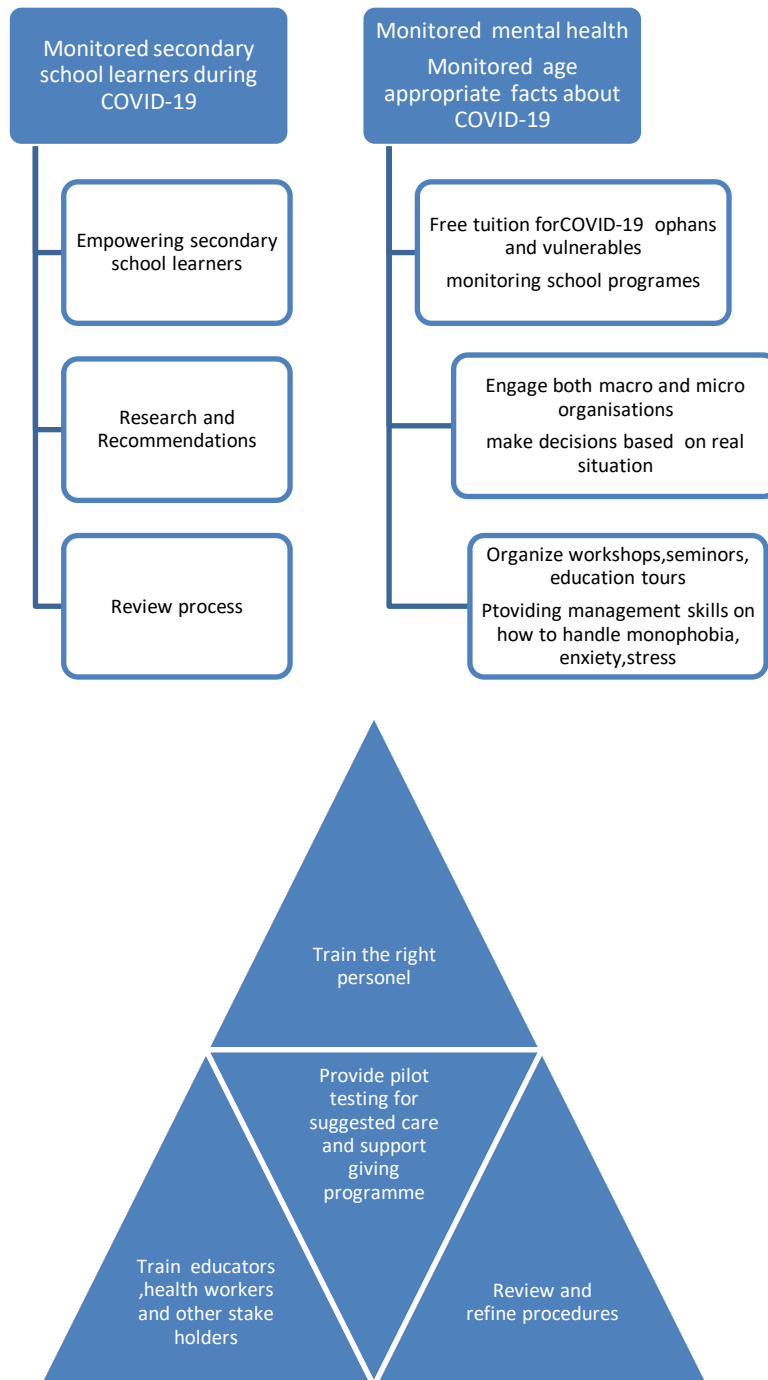


Figure 6.1: A proposed model for use in dealing with the plight of secondary school Learners during the COVID-19 pandemic

The model above indicates that monitored mental health, physical, social and emotional support system can monitor secondary school learners during the COVID-19 crisis. Monitored provision of age appropriate facts about COVID-19 could also help secondary school learners and protect them from COVID-19. Free tuition for orphans and vulnerable learners due to the COVID-19 crisis, could go a long way in assisting the learners to develop holistically. Inclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic orphaned secondary school learners as BEAM beneficiaries could also be a key to helping the learners. Improved teaching and learning strategies that all secondary school learners might benefit from in times of crises such as COVID-19, was imperative.

Involvement of policy reviews in the monitoring of secondary school learners' holistic development could also be of great help. Workshops, seminars, educational tours and in-service courses to equip teachers with necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes on how to manage secondary school learners who had been affected by mono-phobia, anxiety stress and depression could be of great help if organised.. It is important to engage both qualitative and quantitative research processes in research in order to monitor secondary school learners during pandemics such as COVID-19 one. It is very important to involve both micro and macro organisations in research studies.

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GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY

NAME OF APPLICANT: TAURAI MAKUVAZA M130243
DEPARTMENT: SCHOOL OF HERITAGE AND EDUCATION
PROJECT TITLE: TOWARDS A MODEL TO ENHANCE HOLISTIC
DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS
DURING THE POST-COVID-19 ERA IN CHEGUTU, ZIMBABWE

APPROVAL No: 2024/08

COMMENCEMENT DATE: MAY 2024

APPROVAL VALID TO: MAY 2027

COMMENTS:

The researcher must report immediately to the School Ethics Review Committee anything that might affect ethical acceptance of the protocol. This includes adverse reactions of the proposed changes in the protocol, and any other unforeseen events that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

In issuing this approval number, it is required that all data and consent forms are stored in a secure location for a minimum period of five years. These documents may be required for compliance audit processes during that time. If the location at which data and documentation are retained is changed within that five-year period, the School Ethics Review Committee should be advised of the new location.

SIGNATURES:

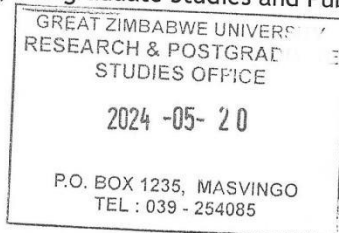
Chairperson, School Ethics Review Committee

Date: 17/05/2024

W. Machufwa

Director, Postgraduate Studies and Publications Office

Date: 20-05/2024



All communications should be addressed to
"The Provincial Education Director"
Telephone: 067-23043/25655
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Ministry of Primary & Secondary Education
Mashonaland West Province
P.O Box 328
Chinhoyi
18/06/2024

The District Schools Inspector
CHEBUTU District

AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH: SCHOOLS IN
CHEBUTU DISTRICT: MR/MRS/MS. TAURAI MAKUYAZA
EC.NO/IDNO. 0941445 J STATION WICKLOW PRIMARY
DISTRICT CHEBUTU INSTITUTION ZU
REG.NO. M130243 PROGRAMME PHD (EDUCATION)

The above named student has been granted authority by the Provincial Education Director to carry out a research in CHEBUTU District. The student has been advised to visit your office before entering the schools.

Research Topic: TOWARDS A MODEL TO ENHANCE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS DURING THE POST-COVID-19 ERA IN CHEBUTU, ZIMBABWE

Period of research: MAY 2024 to 2025

Targeted school/s: 2 SECONDARY SCHOOLS URBAN & 2 SECONDARY (RURAL)

Method of research: Questionnaires and Interviews

Please ensure that the learning and teaching programmes at the targeted schools are not interrupted in any way; the student strictly adheres to the activities and topics specified in his/her letter of request and that the research should be conducted according to the given time frame.

The District Schools Inspector is requested to liaise with the researcher on the specific schools where the research will be conducted and advise the Provincial Office of the chosen schools. Furthermore, the District Schools Inspector should ensure that a copy of the research findings is submitted to the Provincial Education Director once the research is completed.

T. Makeni
FOR ACTING PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR
MASHONALAND WEST PROVINCE

MIN. OF PRY. & SEC. EDUCATION
MASHONALAND WEST PROVINCE
HUMAN RESOURCES (DISCIPLINE)
18 JUN 2024
P.O. BOX 328, CHINHOYI
ZIMBABWE



GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY

ROBERT MUGABE SCHOOL OF HERITAGE AND EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND CURRICULUM

DEVELOPMENT

Towards a Model to Enhance Holistic Development of Secondary School Learners

during the post-COVID-19 Era in Chegutu, Zimbabwe

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Great Zimbabwe University

By

Taurai Makuvaza M130243

Supervisors:

Prof T. Mushoriwa (Main –Supervisor)

Prof E. Ganga (Co-Supervisor)

MIN. OF PRY. & SEC. EDUCATION
MASHONALAND WEST PROVINCE
HUMAN RESOURCES (DISCIPLINE)

18 JUN 2024

P.O. BOX 328, CHINHOYI
ZIMBABWE

Letter requesting permission from District Schools Inspector

Researcher Name: MAKUVAZA TAURAI
Great Zimbabwe University
Masvingo
Zimbabwe.
Mobile +263775300914
E-mail address: tauraimakuvaza@gmail.com

20 September 2023

The District Schools Inspector
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P O Box 223
Chegutu
Zimbabwe

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: RESEARCH TOWARDS A MODEL TO ENHANCE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS DURING THE POST-COVID-19 ERA IN CHEGUTU, ZIMBABWE

I hereby seek permission to carry out a research study in four of the schools in your district Chegutu. The study examines the holistic development of secondary school learners in the face of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) in Chegutu, Zimbabwe. The research emanates from the challenges which the education fraternity was facing. The researcher saw it critical to understand the consequences which emerge in the development of secondary school learners. In fact the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic radically changed the way learners were educated around the world. According to UNESCO (2020), the global scale of education disruption was unprecedented, with more than 1.5 billion learners affected by school closure. In this predicament, secondary school learners are among the most affected by COVID-19.

Given the severities of the issue, the study seeks to explore holistic development of secondary school learners in the post- COVID-19 era in Chegutu, district

The study will involve schools teachers, learners and health workers. They are going to participate in in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires. The researcher will also carry out document analysis.

The participants will have the choice to withdraw from participation if they wish to do so and they can inform the researcher. There will be no penalties against them and they will not be prejudiced in any way. Data collected will remain anonymous and confidential. No names will be recorded anywhere and their answers will not be traced back to them. The participants will not be linked to any data that maybe published by Great Zimbabwe University. All schools will be assigned pseudo names.

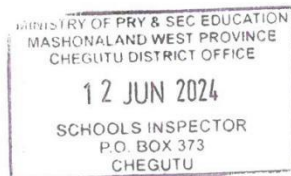
The supervisor, Professor Mushoriwa, can be contacted on +263786768457 taruvingamushoriwa762@gmail.com. You can also contact my co-supervisor at Great Zimbabwe University on +263774143916 or eganga@gzu.ac.zw. Whenever there is need, you may contact the University's Research Department.

Your authorization for schools to participate in this study will be highly appreciated.

Should you allow your schools to participate in this study, kindly complete the following consent form. I MAKONI SENZIWE (Full name and surname) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of the document and nature of the research study. I therefore consent on behalf of Chegutu District primary schools to take part in this study. I understand that participants are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time if they so wish.

Signature ...makoni

Date 12-06-24





GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY

ROBERT MUGABE SCHOOL OF HERITAGE AND EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND CURRICULUM

DEVELOPMENT

Towards a Model to Enhance Holistic Development of Secondary School

Learners during the post-COVID-19 Era in Chegutu, Zimbabwe

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Great Zimbabwe University

By

Taurai Makuvaza M130243

Supervisors:

Prof T. Mushoriwa (Main –Supervisor)

Prof E. Ganga (Co-Supervisor)

Letter requesting school heads to participate in the study

Researcher Name: Makuvaza Taurai

Great Zimbabwe University

Masvingo

Zimbabwe

Mobile: +263775300914

E-mail address tauraimakuvaza83@gmail.com

20 September 2023

The School Head

..... School

Chegutu

Zimbabwe

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: RESEARCH TOWARDS A MODEL TO ENHANCE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS DURING THE POST-OVID-19 ERA IN CHEGUTU, ZIMBABWE

This letter seeks permission to carry out a research study in your school. The study examines the holistic development of secondary school learners in the face of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) in Chegutu, Zimbabwe. The research emanates from the challenges which the education fraternity was facing. The researcher saw it

critical to understand the consequences which emerge in the development of secondary school learners.

The study will involve the schools, teachers, health workers and learners. They are going to participate in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires. The researcher will also carry out document analysis.

The participants will have the choice to withdraw from participation if they wish to do so and they can inform the researcher of their decision. There will be no penalties preferred against them and they will not be prejudiced in any way. Data collected will remain anonymous and confidential. No names will be recorded anywhere and their answers will not be traced back to them. The participants will not be linked to any data that maybe published by Great Zimbabwe University. Your school will be assigned a pseudo name.

The supervisor, Professor Mushoriwa, can be contacted on +263786768457 or taruvingamushoriwa762@gmail.com. You can also contact my co-supervisor at Great Zimbabwe University on +263774143916 or eganga@gzu.ac.zw. Whenever there is need, you may contact the University's Research Department

Your preparedness to participate in this study is highly appreciated. Your contributions as a school will significantly add value to the aforementioned study. Contact details have been provided. For more information concerning the study, feel free to ask.

Declaration of informed consent

Consent form for participants

I am a student at Great Zimbabwe University doing a PhD Degree in Educational Psychology. I am carrying out this study in fulfillment of requirement of the program. The study focuses towards a model to enhance holistic development of secondary school learners during the post -COVID-19 era in Chegutu, zimbabwe.

The study will involve schools teachers, learners and health workers. They are going to participate in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires..

I hereby seek your consent to participate in this research study. You have the choice to withdraw from participation if you wish to do so and you can inform the researcher. There will be no penalties against you and will not be prejudiced in any way. Data collected will remain anonymous and confidential. No names will be recorded anywhere and your answers will not be traced back to them. You will not be linked to any data that maybe published by Great Zimbabwe University. All schools will be assigned pseudo names.


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I can be contacted on 0775300914 or email tautaimakuvaza83@gmail.com. My contact address is Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo, Zimbabwe..

I, Manjengua S.....confirm that I have understood the contents of this document and the nature of the research study. I understand that participants are allowed to withdraw at any time as they wish without any negative consequences.

I hereby consent/do not consent to have this interview recorded

Signature of School Head.....[Signature].....THE H.....
Date 04/06/24.....



Consent form

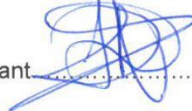
I hereby agree to participate in the research study which examines the holistic development of secondary school learners in the face of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) in Chegutu District, Zimbabwe. I understand that I am participating freely. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point and that this decision will not negatively affect me in any way.

I understand that I will not benefit personally from this research project.

I have received contact details of the person to contact should I have any inquiries to make regarding this study.

I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the interview and my answers will remain confidential. I understand that if possible, feedback will be given to my school on the result of the completed research.

Signature of Participant.....



Date.....

28/06/24

Consent form for participants

I am a student at Great Zimbabwe University doing a PhD Degree in Educational Psychology. I am carrying out this study in fulfillment of requirement of the program. The study focuses towards a model to enhance holistic development of secondary school learners during the post -COVID-19 era in Chegutu, zimbabwe.

The study will involve schools teachers, learners and health workers. They are going to participate in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires..

I hereby seek your consent to participate in this research study. You have the choice to withdraw from participation if you wish to do so and you can inform the researcher. There will be no penalties against you and will not be prejudiced in any way. Data collected will remain anonymous and confidential. No names will be recorded anywhere and your answers will not be traced back to them. You will not be linked to any data that maybe published by Great Zimbabwe University. All schools will be assigned pseudo names.

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I can be contacted on 0775300914 or email tautaimakuvaza83@gmail.com. My contact address is Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo, Zimbabwe..

Consent form

I hereby agree to participate in the research study which examines the holistic development of secondary school learners in the face of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) in Chegutu District, Zimbabwe. I understand that I am participating freely. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point and that this decision will not negatively affect me in any way.

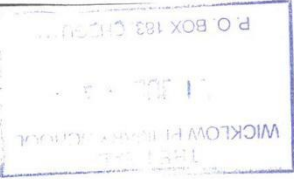
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I have received contact details of the person to contact should I have any inquiries to make regarding this study.

I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the interview and my answers will remain confidential. I understand that if possible, feedback will be given to my school on the result of the completed research.


Signature of Participant..... *JM* Date *24/06/24*

Consent form



I hereby agree to participate in the research study which examines the holistic development of secondary school learners in the face of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) in Chegutu District, Zimbabwe. I understand that I am participating freely. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point and that this decision will not negatively affect me in any way.
I understand that I will not benefit personally from this research project.

I have received contact details of the person to contact should I have any inquiries to make regarding this study.
I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the interview and my answers will remain confidential. I understand that if possible, feedback will be given to my school on the result of the completed research.

Signature of Participant.......... Date 25/06/24

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

APPENDIX: OPEN ENDED QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

I am a student at Great Zimbabwe University doing a PhD Degree in Educational Psychology. I am carrying out this study in fulfillment of requirement of the program. The study focuses towards a model to enhance holistic development of secondary school learners during the post-COVID-19 era in Chegutu, Zimbabwe

You are kindly requested to complete this form, no names should be indicated and all the information you will provide will be strictly confidential and will be used for academic purposes only.

Research questions

- How do secondary school learners in Chegutu understand the social construction of the concept COVID-19?
- What are the developmental experiences of secondary learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era?
- What aspects of life promote or deter the holistic development of secondary school learners during COVID-19 ?
- How were schools, communities and policy makers be prepared to assist secondary school learners during COVID-19 pandemic era

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONNAIRES GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

1. What is the social construction of the concept COVID-19 to secondary school learners in Chegutu?

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2 What were the developmental experiences of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era?

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3 What were the challenges that secondary school{s} learners were facing in their holistic development due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

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4 What aspects of life were promoting or deterring the holistic development of secondary school learners during COVID-19 ?

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.....5 What were the effects of COVID-19 on learners :

- a) cognitive development?
- b) social development?
- c) physical development?
- d) personality development?

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6 What were the barriers or challenges faced by secondary school learners during COVID-19?

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7 How were schools, communities and policy-makers prepared to assist secondary school learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era?.....

8 Were communities and schools provided with adequate resources to improve learners' holistic development during COVID-19?

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9 What could have been done to mitigate barriers affecting secondary school learners during COVID-19?

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10 What were the areas that needed improvement pertaining to the delivery of education during COVID-19 among secondary school learners?

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APPENDIX 1: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS GUIDE FOR THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

I am a student at Great Zimbabwe University doing a PhD Degree in Educational Psychology. I am carrying out this study in fulfillment of requirement of the program. The study focuses towards a model to enhance holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 era in Chegutu, zimbabwe

Research questions

- How do secondary school learners in Chegutu understand the social construction of the concept COVID-19?
- What are the developmental experiences of secondary learners during the CCOVID-19 pandemic era?
- What aspects of life promote or deter the holistic development of secondary school learners during COVID-19 ?
- How were schools, communities and policy makers be prepared to assist secondary school learners during COVID-I9 pandemic era?

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS GUIDE FOR THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

1 What is the social construction of the concept COVID-19 to secondary school learners in Chegutu?

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2 What were the learning experiences of secondary school learners during the CCOVID-19 pandemic era?

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3 What were the effects of the COVID-19 on the academic achievement of secondary school learners in Chegutu District?

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4 What are the challenges that secondary school {s} learners were facing in their holistic development due tothe COVID-19 pandemic?

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5 How did COVID-19 affect {ed} the cognitive, social, physical and personality development of learners ?

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6 How does COVID-19 affect the holistic development of secondary school learners in Chegutu, Zimbabwe?

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7 What aspects of life were promoting or deterring the holistic development of secondary school learners during COVID-19 ?

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8 How were schools, communities and policy makers be prepared to assist secondary school learners during COVID-19 pandemic era.?

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9 How did the school administration and individual teachers assist{ed} secondary school learners to overcome the challenges that they faced during the era of COVID-19?

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10 What strategies were used to enhance the holistic development of secondary school learners during the COVID-19 era?

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