

**A SOCIO-RELIGIOUS HYBRIDITY STRATEGY TO RESPOND TO THE
PROBLEMS OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN ZIMBABWE**

By

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Dip. Theol. (TMI); B.Ed. (GZU); BA Theol. (TCZ); M.Ed. (GZU)

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Philosophiae Doctor in Education

(Ph.D. Curriculum Studies)

in the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION STUDIES

(CURRICULUM STUDIES)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

July 2016

BLOEMFONTEIN

SOUTH AFRICA

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DECLARATION

I, Dube Bekithemba, declare that the thesis "A SOCIO-RELIGIOUS HYBRIDITY STRATEGY TO RESPOND TO THE PROBLEMS OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN ZIMBABWE" handed in for the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Free State, is my own independent work and that I have not previously submitted the same work for a qualification at or in any other university.

I also declare that no work of other scholars has been used without the means of proper citation and that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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BEKITHEMBA DUBE

Signed: Date:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I thank God who over the years has given me strength, protection and courage to venture into an academic journey. I owe him my being and existence. I say Ebenezer, this is how far he has taken me, and thus I am grateful for his unconditional love evident through giving me opportunities to excel in everything I do.

I express my sincere and profound gratitude to my promoters, Dr Milton Nkoane and Prof. Godfrey Mahlomaholo, for their support since the beginning of my Ph.D. journey. They have been a source of encouragement in times when this journey appeared too difficult to accomplish.

I also want to thank my beautiful wife, Sikhathele Luphahla Dube for her unwavering support and love during my intellectual journey. She endured a lonely stay in Zimbabwe while I pursued my Ph.D. journey. Ngiyabonga ntombi enhle yako Magutshwa.

Appreciation also goes to my parents for their love and support. They supported me in every possible way. They stood with me when most people did not see any potential in me. Ngiyabonga Ka Dube lo MaNgwenya.

I thank my brother Nqobani Dube and my niece Mpumelelo Tshuma for housing me during my stay in South Africa. They afforded me space and time to engage in my studies. Thanks Magents.

I also express my sincere thanks to the members of Nketa Baptist Church in Bulawayo. I appreciate the scholarship they gave me to study religion. God bless you, good people of God. Special thanks to Vusumuzi Maphosa, Pastor Bekimpilo Mkwebu, Teddy Maphosa and Hloniphani Mathe.

My deepest and heartfelt gratitude goes to Mr R Siziba and Mr C Khumalo who in difficult times taught me Advanced Level studies for free. They dedicated their time to teach me during their extra time and they believed in me against all the odds. Ngiyabonga bobaba, I cannot think of my achievement without you guys. I look back and boldly say that where it all started.

I appreciate the contributions of the SULE/SURLEC team for their advice during my Ph.D. and in particular Dr J Romahai, Dr T Cias. Dr Tlali, Dr BB Moreeng, Dr DM Tshelane, Dr D Hlalele, Dr Pepene, Dr L Malebese and Dr Moloi.

To Dr J Phori, thank you for accommodation, food and comfort during my visit to Bloemfontein. You showed and lived the spirit of ubuntu. Leolebeka ntate Phori.

I extend my thanks to Mr Shupai Machedu, Eunice Machedu, Sitheni, Mlungisi Ngwenya, Tapela Vhulengoma for their support during my days as a teacher at Inyathi High School.

My deepest appreciation also goes to the hybridity team for their love and support which they gave to the success of this thesis.

I also appreciate Dr N Moyo, who mentored and refined my thoughts. Emoyo baba.

My appreciation also goes to the Matabeleland North provincial education officers and in particular Mr N Dube, Mr T Ndlovu, Mr Z Ndlovu and Mr T Sibanda for assisting me to carry out this research successfully. I am very grateful bobaba.

I also appreciate the support of Mrs Novangeli Sibanda Banda for her support in during the study. She played a major role in mobilising workshops to generate data.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work posthumously to Zibusiso Dube, who through his love supported me in my studies. He went to glory before seeing how his contributions touched my life. He was a brother, a friend and a mentor on my conduct, especially in the area of caring for the needy. Thank you, Mfowethu. I am convinced and have the blessed hope that we will meet on the other side of the world. Lala ngokuthula mfoka Dube. Siyakukhumbula.

I also dedicate this work to my parents. I say I have gone around and here I am with this degree. You have also become Doctors. Sengamhlophe.

To my beautiful wife. This is your Ph.D. My success is your success. Thank you, sthandwa sami.

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to design a socio-religious hybridity strategy that attempts to respond to the problems of Religious Studies in Zimbabwean secondary schools. The strategy emerged against the background of several challenges with the current multifaith approach to Religious Studies, which excludes other local religions from the curriculum. The curriculum is largely Christocentric, implying that the Christian religion is extensively covered. The aims of the syllabus seem to indicate that there is a need to teach various religions, but the content of the syllabus does not give space to other religions. This creates a monothelic curriculum that ignores the fact that some of the children have a religious orientation that may not necessarily be Christian. Secondly, the Religious Studies curriculum is not socially responsive to arm learners with knowledge on how to avert religious abuse, which is becoming rampant in Zimbabwean society. Religious Studies is failing to respond to religious abuse. The other challenge is that the indigenous knowledge system is not adequately covered, although it is important for the survival of the local people. The syllabus is silent on the indigenous knowledge system. However, the national examination system gives learners questions relating to indigenous knowledge, with a low mark allocation compared to the mark for Biblical question. This gives learners and teachers the perception that indigenous knowledge is unimportant for their survival. The other significant challenge is that the majority of the Religious Studies teachers in Matabeleland North are not trained to teach the subject, neither are they adequately prepared to teach other religions apart from the Christian faith.

In response to these and other problems, this research study proposes a socio-religious hybridity strategy that will ensure a relevant curriculum that addresses the religious needs of all learners through a hybridity approach. The strategy seeks to ensure that Religious Studies is in line with democratic practices such as social justice, equity, recognition, inclusivity and improvement of human conditions. It will go a long way to contributing towards the peaceful co-existence of various religious groups and consequently improving the lives of people through the study of religion.

The study is grounded on critical emancipatory research, a theoretical framework that dates back to the Frankfurt School of 1923. It has five working principles: the improvement of the human condition, elimination of false consciousness, social

transformation, social justice and emancipation. These principles underpinned the study and they become lenses through which to interrogate Religious Studies in Zimbabwean schools. To complement the framework, I used participatory action research to generate data with the coresearchers. Participatory action research was chosen for its emancipatory tendencies and because it seeks to work with disadvantaged members of the community. The approach values its coresearchers as equal partners and believes that the people with the problems are the ones with sustainable solutions. In the study, I worked with a hybridity team consisting of representatives of various religious groups, such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, African religion, together with local leaders, Religious Studies teachers and learners in Matabeleland North. The hybridity team's shared vision was to develop a strategy that responds to the challenges of Religious Studies in Zimbabwean schools. The team participated in discussions, workshops, and class observations and the focus was to generate data that responded to the objectives of the study. The generated data was subjected to critical discourse analysis, chosen because of its focus on power relations, which are often problematic in the religious environment. Critical discourse analysis complements critical emancipatory research and participatory action research in the fight for the marginalised members of the community. Data was analysed through three lenses, namely the textual, discursive and social practice level. The findings of the research were used to formulate a socio-religious hybridity strategy.

I have found that the hybridity of religions is a desirable way to improve the teaching and learning of Religious Studies. Owing to their lack of comprehensive religious knowledge and prejudice, people tend to be afraid to engage other religions. It further emerged that recognising other religions as valid goes a long way to promote a culture of peace in society, reducing the tendency of people using violence to express their feelings. The study revealed that religious extremists are often the perpetrators of human abuse. Hence, people need to moderate their beliefs to achieve social justice and recognise the good in other religions. Based on the generated data, I formulated a strategy that responds to the challenges of Religious Studies to foster curriculum relevance for the learners. The limitation of the strategy is that it does not address ways in which extremists can be engaged to moderate their religious views, especially those that violate human rights, such as terrorism. My hope is that other researchers

will explore this weakness to improve Religious Studies in Zimbabwean schools. I recommend the use of this strategy in the quest for curriculum relevance in Zimbabwean schools and elsewhere.

KEY WORDS: Hybridity, curriculum relevance, critical emancipatory research, critical discourse analysis, participatory action research, teacher capacitation, religious inclusivism, indigenous knowledge systems, and religious studies.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van die studie was om 'n sosio-religieuse hibridiese strategie te ontwerp wat reageer op die problem van Godsdienststudies in Zimbabwiese sekondêre skole. Die strategie het teen die agtergrond van verskeie uitdagings binne die huidige veelsydige geloofs benaderings van Godsdienststudies ten vore gekom. Die benaderings sluit ander gelowe uit van die kurrikulum. Die kurrikulum is hoofsaaklik Christosentries wat impliseer dat dit hoofsaaklik net die Christengeloof dek. Die doel van die leerplan dui daarop aan dat daar 'n noodigheid bestaan vir die leer van verskeie Godsdienste maar die inhoud van die leerplan laat nie ruimte daaraan toe nie. Dit veroorsaak 'n monolitiese kurrikulum wat die feit ignoreer dat van die kinders se godsdienste oriëntasie nie noodsaaklik Christenskap is nie. Tweedens, is die Godsdienststudie kurrikulum nie sosiaal vatbaar om leerders met die kennis toe te rus om godsdienstige mishandeling af te weer nie wat hoogty vier in die Zimbabwiese samelewing. Die ander uitdaging is dat die inheemse kennisbasis nie voldoende aangespreek word nie alhoewel dit 'n belangrike rol speel in die oorlewing van die plaaslike bevolking. Die leerplan spreek glad nie die inheemse kennisbasis aan nie. Alhoewel die nasionale eksamen sisteem hom daartoe leen om leerders vrae oor die inheemse kennisbasis te vra word 'n lae punt toegeken aan die antwoorde in vergelyking met Bybelse vrae. Dit veroorsaak 'n persepsie onder die onderwysers en leerders dat inheemse kennis van geen belang vir oorlewing is nie. Die ander betekenisvolle uitdaging is dat die meerderheid van die Godsdienststudie onderwysers in Matabeleland-Noord nie opgelei is om die vak aan te bied nie en dus ook nie bereid is om ander godsdienste as die Christendom aan te bied nie.

In antwoord op hierdie en ander probleme, stel hierdie studie voor dat 'n sosio-religieuse hibridiese strategie sal toesien dat 'n relevante kurrikulum ontwerp sal word wat die godsdienstige tekortkominge van alle leerders sal aanspreek deur 'n hibridiese benadering. Die strategie mik daarop om toe te sien dat Godsdienststudies in lyn is met demokratiese praktyke soos sosiale geregtigheid, gelykheid, erkenning, omvattende en verbeterde menslike toestande. Dit sal bydra tot die vreedsame bestaan van verskeie godsdienstige groepe en die lewe van die mense deur religieuse studie verbeter.

Die studie is gegrond op kritiese vrywaringsnavorsing wat 'n teoretiese raamwerk is wat terug dateer na die Frankfurt Skool in 1923. Dit bestaan uit vyf werkende beginsels, naamlik: die verbetering van menslike omstandighede, eliminasië van false bewustheid, sosiale transformasie en emansipasie. Hierdie beginsels onderstreep die studie en hulle word dan lense waardeur die Godsdienststudies in Zimbabwiese skole ondervra kan word. Om die raamwerk aan te vul, het ek gebruik gemaak van deelnemende aksienavorsing om data te genereer tesame met die mede navorsers. Deelnemende aksienavorsing is gekies vir die vrywarende tendense wat dit lewer an omrede dit saamwerk met benadeelde lede van die gemeenskap. Hierdie benadering erken die rol van die mede navorsers as gelyke vennote en glo dat die mense met die probleem ook die mense is met volhoubare oplossings. In hierdie studie het saam gewerk met 'n hibridiese span wat bestaan uit verskeie godsdienstige groepe soos Christene, Islam, Judaïsme, Afrika godsdienste tesame met plaaslike leiers, Religieuse opvoeder en leerders van Matabeleland-Noord. Die hibridiese span se gedeelde visioen was om 'n strategie te ontwerp wat antwoord op die uitdagings van Religieuse Studies in Zimbabwiese skole. Die span het deelgeneem aan besprekings, werkwinkels en klasobservasies en die fokus was om data te genereer wat antwoord op die mikpunte van die studie.

Die genereerde data is blootgelê aan kritiese diskoersanalise wat gekies is omrede dit fokus op kragverhoudings wat gereeld problematies is in die godsdienste omgewing. Kritiese diskoersanalise komplimenteer kritiese vrywaringsnavorsing en deelnemende aksienavorsing in die strewe vir marginaliseerde lede van die gemeenskap. Die data is deur drie lense geanaliseer, naamlik tekstueel, breedvoerig en sosiale praktyk. Die bevindinge van die navorsing is gebruik om 'n sosio-religieuse hibridiese strategie te formuleer.

Ek het ondervind dat die hibriditeit van godsdienste 'n begeerlike wyse is om die opvoeding en leer van Godsdienststudies te verbeter. Weens die gebrek aan uitgebreide godsdienstige kennis en bevooroordeeldheid, neig mense om bang te wees om ander godsdienste te betrek. Dit het verder gebleek dat as ander godsdienste erken word, dit 'n kultuur van vrede in die samelewing te weeg sou bring wat die tendens van geweld as 'n uitdrukking van emosies sou verminder. Die studie het onthul dat godsdienstige ekstremiste gewoonlik die persone is wat menslike mishandeling pleeg. Dus is dit nodig vir mense om hulle geloofsoortuigings te wysig

om sosiale geregtigheid te bereik en die goeie aspek van ander godsdiensgroepe te herken.

Om die kurrikulum relevansie vir leerders te koester, het ek die strategie geformuleer op die genereerde data wat antwoord op die uitdagings wat Godsdiensstudies bied. Die limitasie van die studie is nie dat dit maniere aanspreek van hoe die ekstremiste betrek kan word om hulle geloofsoortuigings te wysig nie, veral met die skending van menseregte deur middel van terrorisme. My hoop is dat ander navorsers hierdie swakheid sal ondersoek om Godsdiensstudies in Zimbabwiese skole te verbeter. I beveel die gebruik van hierdie strategie aan in die strewe na kurrikulum relevansie in Zimbabwiese skole en elders.

SLEUTELWOORDE: Hibriditeit, kurrikulum relevansie, kritiese vrywaringsnavorsing, kritiese diskoersanalise, godsdienstige inklusitiwiteit, inheemse kennisbasis, religieuse studies

PUBLICATION AND CONFERENCE PAPERS DURING PHD STUDIES

Dube, B., Mufanechiya, A., & Mufanechiya, T. 2015. Religious studies and indigenous knowledge in Zimbabwean secondary schools: Bubi district case study, Matabeleland North. *Journal of pan African studies* 8(8):75-89.

Dube, B. 2015. The feasibility of the third: Engaging the 'other' in Religious Studies in Zimbabwe for sustainable social transformation. Paper presented at an International conference for Sustainable Learning Environment. SuLE. Bloemfontein. University of the Free State. October 26-29, 2015.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	
ACS	Academy of Civilization Studies
AMEIA	Archdiocesan Ministry of Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs
AR	African Religion
ASC	Agreed Syllabus Conference
ATR	African Traditional Religion
BERA	British Education Research Association
BK	Bible knowledge
CDA	Critical discourse analysis
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
CER	Critical emancipatory research
CPoZ	Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe
CT	Critical theory
HCM	Hermeneutics communicative model
IKIM	Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia
IKS	Indigenous knowledge systems
IRD	Inter-religious dialogue
LE	Life Education
MCCBCHST	Malaysia Consultative Council for Buddhism, Christian, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCFRE	National Council For Religious Education
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
O Level	Ordinary Level
PAR	Participatory action research
RE	Religious Education
RI	Religious Instruction
RME	Religious and Moral Education
RS	Religious Studies
SRHS	Socio-religious hybridity strategy
TP	Transformative paradigm
UFS	University of the Free State
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nation International Children's Emergency Fund
USA	United States of America
WKS	Western knowledge system
Zimsec	Zimbabwe School Examination Council

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CHAPTER ONE

SYNOPSIS OF STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aims at formulating a socio-religious hybridity strategy (SRHS) to respond to the problems of Religious Studies (RS) in Zimbabwe secondary schools. RS is one of the many subjects taught to learners at Ordinary Level (O Level). The O Level marks the last two years of compulsory education for learners in Zimbabwe. It is a two-year course that starts in the third year of secondary education. In Chapter 1, I introduce the study by giving an overview of what readers should anticipate in this research. I begin with the background of the study by particularly focusing on the rise of RS in the Zimbabwean secondary school curriculum, largely because the problems associated with RS emanate from the colonial legacy and the failure of postcolonial educational reforms to decolonise RS. The chapter also briefly introduces critical emancipatory research (CER), the objectives of the study, participatory action research (PAR) as an approach to generating empirical data, ethical considerations and the chapter layout of this study.

1.2 Background of the study

The introduction of RS as a secondary school subject coincided with the inception of formal education in the pre-Zimbabwean period. The arrival of the missionaries in Zimbabwe established a new form of education (Ndlovu, 2004:48) that stressed the study of the Christian faith as one of the important subjects in the school curriculum. The subject was important during the colonial era to the extent that the evangelists believed that “economic and social change in society was indispensable but also insisted that it must be combined with Christian ideas of individual salvation and individual worth” (O’Callaghan, 1997:68-69). Given this, it became clear that the agenda of the missionaries was that RS should be a monothelic subject, where the Christian faith dominated the curriculum space. RS is a postcolonial term used for the study of religion in school. At some point the subject was known as Religious Instruction (RI), Bible Knowledge (BK) and Religious and Moral Education (RME). For the purposes of this research, RS is used as a collective term for these variations. To

elucidate this further, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009:17) argues that the “missionaries through the RS were not only harbingers of the new religion but were also carriers of Victorian values that were consonant with the imperatives of industrial capitalist culture”.

The missionaries’ control of formal education in the Zimbabwean schools consolidated the position of the Christian faith as the sole religion in the curriculum. Consequently, African religion, culture and epistemologies were negated in the mainstream curriculum. In fact, there were attempts to de-Africanise local people to a new form of civilisation perceived to be associated with prestige and good living standards. Throughout the colonial and postcolonial periods, the Christian religion enjoyed the lion’s share of prominence. It against this background that the problems of RS are embedded in the colonial legacy to the extent that other emerging religious groups have failed to attain space in the curriculum. Marashe, Ndana and Chireshe (2009:38) aver “that soon after the attainment of independence, the Zimbabwean government, through the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, recommended the teaching of AR in the schools”. This was an attempt to create space for African religion into the monothelic religious curriculum. In addition, as stipulated by Zvobgo (1986:120), “on attaining independence, most African countries found themselves loaded with an education system that needed extensive surgery to turn it into a tool that serves the needs and aspirations of the people”. However, RS has remained the same despite calls for restructuring the curriculum in line with the values of democracy such as social justice, inclusion and recognition of other religions. The following section addresses the problems of RS in the Zimbabwean secondary schools, which have propelled the need for a strategy.

1.3The challenges of Religious Studies: Locating the need for a strategy

The monothelic curriculum has led to “a number of undesirable effects such as economic inequality, social stratification, cultural and intellectual servitude, devaluation of traditional culture” (Rwomire, 1995:19), violence and terrorism. It is important to provide for the inclusion of other religions in the curriculum, given the violence and terrorism associated with religion in society by marginalised religions seeking a religious identity and curriculum space. I believe that Zimbabweans do not

have to wait until people become victims of religious violence, as seen in the recent Arab uprisings. The exclusion of other religions from the curriculum is a problem that SRHS attempts to address by ensuring that locally available religions are taught to learners at O Level. This is in line with democratic tenets such as social justice, equity, inclusion and recognition. The implementation of SRHS forms a collaboration or hybridity of religions in the curriculum to respond to social pathologies such as religious exclusion. The hybridity of religions is necessary because, as stipulated by Gwaranda, Masitera and Muzambi (2013:221), the current approach to RS is inadequate, misplaced and insensitive to the virtue of religious respect in the globalised world. In support of the above, Museka (2012:55) argues that the current RS is “cosmetic, haphazard, scissor and paste multi-faith appendages to the syllabi, examinations and the general classroom interactions”. In view of the challenges in RS, the “classroom has remained one of the most important battlegrounds in the broader conflict over the religious role in public life” (Lupu, Elwood, Davis, Masoi, Tuttle & Berz, 2007:1).

The other problem is the failure by RS to address religious abuse, which has led to the suffering of people in society. The critical question that I pose, is why people who are religiously inclined and also learn religion are abused by religion? Undubitably, religious abuse in various facets is becoming a common phenomenon in the Zimbabwean society and worldwide, where some religious leaders and their followers use religion to exploit, dehumanise and kill other people. According to Zuze (2014:4), some beliefs have “become a great cause of concern especially since they lead to unnecessary loss of human life” and they constitute classic abuse. It is, therefore, conceivable to the public that faith schools should be centres that specifically teach about religious abuse so that learners and members of the society can escape abusive people who use religion as a tool for conformity, exploitation and dominance (Worsely, 2008:75). Examples of abuse evident in religious circles includes forced sex under the pretext of a better life or obedience to God, financial scams, prohibiting medical treatment, and withdrawal of children for religious purposes. Hence, some now view religion as a bad social institution despite its positive contributions to the wellbeing of citizens. In the light of this, RS cannot afford to remain silent on religious abuse, given that learners are also becoming victims of the abusive system. RS should therefore be a religiously and culturally responsive curriculum to deal with religious abuse. If it

fails, learners are at risk of being abused through the religion that they have studied at school.

The other problem facing RS in Zimbabwe that SRHS seeks to redress, is the demise of the indigenous knowledge system (IKS). The current RS curriculum has managed to make learners and teachers lose confidence in the own local epistemologies. This can partly be attributed to the fact that “Africa has undergone tremendous transformation since its contact with Europeans and other foreign cultural elements. As a result, Africa has emerged from this contact with a bruised cultural identity and the philosophy of the oppressed” (Boaten, 2010:104). The postcolonial changes in education have not done enough to ease the challenges of IKS in the curriculum and society. RS content continues to marginalise IKS (Zimsec, 5.1.1-3). Moreover, the examination allocates few marks to IKS questions, instilling the perception in learners that IKS has no value (Dube, Mufanechiya & Mufanechiya, 2015:82) despite its contribution to the social coherence and survival of local people.

The other challenge that drives the need for SRHS is the lack of qualified teachers for RS classes. Most schools, especially in Matabeleland North, are staffed by teachers who are not qualified to teach RS. Most of the RS teachers are trained to teach other subjects, implying that these teachers are not qualified to handle a multifaceted group of religious learners. This is a challenge for SRHS in the sense that noble ideas may be devised by curriculum specialists, but the innovations will fail in the hands of incompetent teachers.

1.4 Proposed solutions to the challenges of RS

There have been several attempts to respond to the challenges of RS in Zimbabwean schools. After independence the government introduced the life theme approach, which aimed to link RS to the realities that learners face in society. However, the approach remained Bibliocentric. A life experience approach “was adopted so that learners are able to relate their spirituality to life problematic issues. It was developed at Westhill College, Birmingham by Ronald Goldman and Douglas Hubery, and sought to relate the ordinary experience of children to the Bible. The approach also became known as the life theme approach” (Teece, 2010:32). The challenge of this approach is that only the Christian religion was used to relate to the learners’ experiences. When

the life theme approach failed, the phenomenological approach was adopted. The approach emphasises “tolerance, openness, autonomy, and social justice, which are regarded as above question and constitutive of the liberal tradition” (Barnes, 2001a:447-448). Despite the phenomenological approach’s promises of social justice, RS remained largely Christocentric, prompting educationists to change to the multifaith approach. This approach sought to “redress the pedagogical concerns of RS in a pluralistic environment, in that, it rejects the claim that there is a religion which is uniquely true and superior to others” (Museka, 2012:64). Despite the promises of the multifaith method to resolve RS problems, the approach has continued to promote the Christian religion in the curriculum, thereby acting as a technology of religious exclusion. The weaknesses of these approaches led to the development of SRHS to respond to the problems of RS in Zimbabwe.

1.5 Conditions necessary for implementation of SRHS

There are various conditions essential for the successful implementation of SRHS. One of the conditions for success is a dialogue among religious groups in the community. Dialogue among religions is a collective bargaining, sustainable way to reach hybridisation, a “mutual respect which leads to one’s empathy, care, and love” (Bloom, 2012:185). In addition, dialogue provides a respectful climate for a multiplicity of religious beliefs, ethical and otherwise, where citizens have the opportunity to progress (Kunzman, 2003:260). Another condition for the success of the strategy lies on giving IKS its rightful place in an increased curriculum space, since it provides the impetus of solving the concerns and challenges of the local people (Chirimuuta, Gudhlanga & Bhakuvhani, 2012:3). Moreover, the other condition for the success of this strategy is to capacitate teachers to teach various religions and IKS, to meet the needs of learners of diverse religious orientations.

1.6 Anticipated threats to implementation of SRHS

Various threats are anticipated in the implementation of the strategy. This is because religion is both personal and pedagogical and hence evokes emotions of anger, betrayal, dominance, powerlessness, power and space control. Because of this, religious beliefs are misinterpreted and misrepresented based on ignorance, which

fuels conflict and justifies violence (Kasomo, 2010:24) to other religions' adherents perceived as enemies. The other threat lies in the fact religion serves as a coercive and ideological state apparatus Louis Althusser 1919-90 (Althusser, 1971:127) to promote political agendas. Hence; religion has often been tied to national aspirations, which unfortunately in some cases have escalated violence and religious extremism that disregard the welfare of society and human rights. It is a threat to engage in a dialogue with religions that do not value the lives of other members of society. Another threat is that some religious followers are not willing to moderate their religious views to promote the peaceful co-existence of members of the community. Such religious followers perceive their religion or faith as ultimate and superior and deserving of space in the curriculum.

1.7 Anticipated success for implementation of the strategy

There are benefits associated with the implementation of SRHS in responding to the problems of RS in Zimbabwean schools. The strategy will ensure that RS upholds values such as "equity, social justice, freedom, peace and hope with a genuine commitment to the plight of the less fortunate" (Mahlomaholo, 2009:241). Moreover, SRHS ensures democratic engagement, elimination of manipulation and control in pursuit of social justice (Lynch, 1999:441). Hence, the RS curriculum is geared to be religious and culturally responsive to the needs of diverse learners. It furthermore allows collaboration of various religious stakeholders to be part of RS. Another benefit associated with the strategy is that RS becomes a focal religious site (Mukova & Mangena, 2012:170) to promote human rights. Through the strategy, learners can use various religious orientations to confront religious abuse. In addition, learners may acquire "moral and political elements and consequences, which obligate them to take social action to promote freedom, equality, and justice for everyone" (Gay, 2002:110). Besides the promotion of human rights, SRHS has the advantage of calling for the renaissance of IKS through RS. The strategy is a "struggle for the indigenous people, reclaiming, revitalising as well as the renewal of their knowledge systems" (Hammersmith, 2007:iii). Moreover, the strategy ensures teacher capacitation, given that the majority of the RS teachers are not trained to teach RS. Through teacher capacitation, RS classrooms are geared to be staffed by teachers who are "able to

manage identity and diversity to help learners define 'otherness' and to learn to live with different people harmoniously" (Diez de Velasco, 2007:78).

1.8 Research questions

It could be argued that RS, as indicated in the background discussion, has remained irrelevant with a misplaced space in the curriculum and society. Hence, this research study sought to develop a strategy that would promote religious dialogue among various faiths and cultures to achieve efficiency, effectiveness and relevance in the teaching and learning of RS. The research is underpinned by the following research questions:

- How does the socio-religious hybridity model make the RS curriculum relevant in Zimbabwean schools?
- What are the challenges in the teaching and learning of RS in the Zimbabwean curriculum?
- What solutions have been proposed to respond to the challenges of RS?
- Which conditions are necessary for the successful implementation of SRHS?
- What are the threats anticipated in the implementation of SRHS?
- What are the successes associated with the implementation of SRHS?

1.9 The aim and the objectives of the study

The study aims at designing a socio-religious hybridity strategy (SRHS) to respond to the problems of RS in Zimbabwe.

The study is foregrounded in the following objectives;

- Examining the challenges in the teaching and learning of RS.
- Evaluating solutions that have been used to respond to the challenges of RS.
- Discussing conditions for the successful implementation of RS using SRHS at O Level.
- Exposing threats associated with teaching and learning of RS in secondary schools.
- Highlighting possible successes associated with the implementation of SRHS in a quest for curriculum relevance in Zimbabwean schools.

1.10 Theoretical framework: critical emancipatory research

This study is premised on the critical emancipatory research (CER) framework to design an SRHS that responds to the problems of RS. CER has been chosen to critique a current RS trend which, to the researcher, fails to promote social justice as championed by the proponents of CER this paradigm. In their discussion of the theoretical framework, Elicondo, Albert, Zavala, Alvarado, Suaze and Veronica (2013:424) argue that the critical theory was “born with the philosophers Horkheimer and Adorno founders of Frankfurt school”. Likewise, Ngwenyama (1992:2) argues that “founders of Frankfurt school, Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse, attempted to break with the traditional hypothetical deductive methods which were oriented towards preservation and gradual reformation of the status quo”. CER is pertinent to this study, as Willmott (1992:432) states that it emancipates people to be “freed from repressive social ideological conditions, in particular, those that place socially unnecessary restrictions upon development and articulation of human consciousness”. Furthermore, CER has been chosen for this study because it seeks the abolishment of social injustice, champions emancipation, focuses on freedom and release both in the process of research and in the transformation of society itself (Elizondo, Alberto, Olga, Olivia, Sauzo & Veronica, 2013:424). The framework helps to critique the current RS to ensure a curriculum responsive to social justice, which accommodates all religions found in Zimbabwe. This will reduce the conflict associated with religion, negative perceptions of IKS and emancipate teachers, learners and society to deal with religious abuse.

1.11 Generating data: Participatory action research

In generating data in this research, I used the participatory action research (PAR) approach because it complements and is coherent with CER. McTaggart and Nixon (2013:84) state that the strength of PAR lies in the fact that it recognises the capacity of coresearchers in contributing to the research process towards improvements and social transformation. Also, PAR is used in this work for its transformative endeavours and emancipatory consciousness. It promotes partnership between the researcher

and the coresearchers in the struggle to make the world a better place (Kincheleo, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011:64). In this case, the coresearchers and I undertook the intellectual journey as equal partners to formulate a strategy that responds to the problems of RS in Zimbabwean schools.

Moreover, PAR has been chosen because, according to Khan and Chovanec (2010:35) the approach is "democratic, unbiased, redemptive and life-enhancing". PAR has become an approach of the marginal that promotes the interests of those considered poor and disenfranchised (Jordan, 2003:186). To achieve this, PAR pools "aspects of popular education, community-oriented research, and action for social change to promote marginalised communities, where the quest is to unearth the causes of social inequality and consequently the solution to alleviate the identified problems". To generate data through PAR, various religious leaders, RS teachers, RS learners, educationists and local leaders were invited to be part of the hybridity team. A common vision was formulated, namely to find a strategy that responds to the problems of RS. The issues of power were ironed out. Vertical forms of power that perpetuate dominance were eliminated through the emphasis that all the hybridity team members had egalitarian space despite their religious status as perceived by society.

1.12 Data analysis: Critical discourse analysis

The data generated was analysed using critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA has been chosen for this study because "it strives to explore how these non-transparent connections are a factor in fortifying power and hegemony, and it draws devotion to power imbalances, social inequities, nondemocratic practices, and other injustices in hopes of spurring people to corrective actions" (Fairclough, 1992:32). Through CDA, the interest of the poor is often taken into consideration ahead of that of the advantaged members of the community. The "experiences and opinions of members of such groups are taken seriously, and supports their struggle against inequality" (van Dijk, 2001:96). CDA "does not, therefore, understand itself as politically neutral, but a movement committed to ensuring sustainable social change" (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002:69). The desire to ensure sustainable social change is coherent with the use of

CER and PAR. The data generated by the hybridity team was analysed through the three lenses of CDA, namely at the textual, discursive and social practice level.

1.13 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are very important in any research study to protect the coresearchers from any potential harm during the process of generating data. In light of this, the study was ethically cleared by the University of the Free State. Because the study was located within the CER paradigm, it followed principles such as unifying ethical consent, confidentiality and autonomy of coresearchers, beneficence and justices (Nolen & van der Putten, 2007:401-402). In complying with the ethical requirements, I obtained permission from the Zimbabwean Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Matabeleland North. In line with ethical requirements, the coresearchers were invited through an advertisement and signed a consent form. The coresearchers were assured that their contributions would not by any means harm them and they were not forced or coerced in any way to be part of this study.

1.14 The value of the study

This study plays a pivotal role. It presents a strategy that attempts to respond to the problems of the teaching of religion in school, to make it relevant to the needs of learners from different religious and cultural orientations. SRHS is based on a dialogue between the representatives of different religious and cultural groupings, in an attempt to give them equal representation in the curriculum to promote human rights, “freedom and dignity, equality and respect for life and by introducing the learner to non-violent strategies, dialogue, meditation and the non-prejudiced perception of others” (Duerr, Spajic & Martins, 2000:39). The strategy presents an opportunity for various religious and cultural players to become integrated into RS, as opposed to the current situation where other religious players are excluded from the curriculum whether by default or design.

1.15 Layout of the chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study, research aim and objectives, research approach, critical discourse analysis and value of the study.

Chapter 2: critical emancipatory research, its origins and development from critical theory to critical emancipatory research and principles of CER. The transformative paradigm from ontology, axiology, epistemology and methodology. Reflection of CER and definition of operational terms.

Chapter 3: Review of the related literature. Solutions of Religious Studies in other countries. Challenges, solutions, conditions, threats and excellences of SRHS.

Chapter 4: Participatory action research. Its origins, development and principles. Selection of coresearchers, power relations in research, and credentials of the coresearchers. Operationalisation of the hybridity team and critical discourse analysis.

Chapter 5: Data presentation, analysis, discussion, and interpretation.

Chapter 6: The socio-religious hybridity strategy and discussion of findings.

Chapter 7: Conclusion of the thesis. Summary of each chapter, recommendations for future studies in RS, and a final word from the author.

CHAPTER TWO

CRITICAL EMANCIPATORY RESEARCH: FRAMEWORK TO CRITIQUE THE TEACHING OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN ZIMBABWE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses the conceptual framework underpinning this study, critical emancipatory research (CER). CER is premised within the broader spectrum of critical theory (CT). In unpacking CER, this chapter will trace its origins from the Frankfurt School of social science, its developments and concepts and how it relates to and informs this study. Furthermore, the chapter shows how this study transformative from an axiological, ontological, epistemological and methodological perspective to address the lived realities of learners and members of society. Operational terms informing the study will be defined also.

2.2 Origins of critical emancipatory research

The rise of CER is sketched from the CT angle. The first part of this section discusses the origins of CT and shows its development as a theory to CER. To begin with, the introduction of the CT ideology as a theory into academia and the public milieu is rather ambiguous. Some believe, such as McKernan (2013:424) that CT was first mooted by Emmanuel Kant, a German philosopher in 1871. On the other hand, the development of CT is attributed to a “Marxist think tank founded by a wealthy son of a German millionaire, Mr Weil, who helped the Frankfurt School to create an innovative brand of philosophical oriented radical social science” (McLaughlin, 1999:109). The Frankfurt School for “Social Research was the name of the corporate entity that the philanthropist Hermann Weil had established in 1923 at the University of Frankfurt Whether the idea of CT is traced from Kant or Weil, it is acknowledged that the School was largely influenced by Marxist perspective on economic and social questions” (Schmidt, 2007:51). To buttress the origin of CT in association with Marxism, Nkoane (2013:99) states that the CT has its “philosophical roots in several traditions such as Marx’s analysis of socio-economic conditions and class structure, Haberman’s notion of emancipatory knowledge and Freire’s transformative and emancipatory pedagogy”. Some, like Kingston (2007:32), situate the rise of CT in a period of “crisis in Europe

and more specifically in Germany where capitalism was demonstrating self-destructing tendencies while liberal democracy seemed impotent, the Marxist analysis had proved inadequate for understanding why German post-industrial society faced with a non-militant working class". Curpus (2013:12) also believes that "CT emanated within the context of the struggle of the working class as an instrument of the envisioned Marxian revolutionary knowledge and action associated with the ascent of fascism". In short, CT "emerged not only out of suspicions in the academy but also out of wider social movements and struggles against oppression which have found a voice in the academy" (Carrette & Keller, 1999:22-23). Juxtaposing the above, it seems clear that the origin of CT is associated with many people, such as Kant and Weil, and also traced to Marxist philosophy. While I appreciate McKernan's (2013:424) view that CT is associated with Kant, I concur with the consensus that CT is traced from Marxist tradition, which is supported by scholars like Nkoane (2013), Curpus (2013) and Kingston (2007).

CT as an academic discipline and approach is aligned with "the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt am Main in 1923 and the early years of its establishment was grounded in Marxist–Leninist thinking" (McKernan, 2013:424) where it sought to bring the "basic contradictions of capitalist society to consciousness by placing itself outside the mechanism of its reproduction and the limits of the prevailing division of labour" (Therborn 1970:67-68). The Frankfurt School sought to discover "how to make sense of the world, and of our consciousness of the world and our being-in-the-world, and of our capacity for subjectivity and agency, set against a background of enormous political forces and structures" (Farrands & Worth, 2005:49). The idea of CT during the establishment of the School was propelled by the prevailing social problems brought by the capitalist system. I note that CT in the early days of the Frankfurt School rose as a reaction to the exploitative nature of capitalism. Hence; the School sought to bring awareness to the masses of the negative effects of capitalism. My argument is supported by Demirovic (2013:1), who stated that CT in its earliest establishment was to respond to "defeat of emancipatory movements. This defeat required that all the assumptions and concepts of this intellectual and political tradition had to undergo a critical examination to challenge exploitative condition".

The members of the "Frankfurt School were members of the intelligentsia with affluent bourgeois background" (Therborn, 1970:30). They were shaped in their thinking by the

concept of the political economy, which intended to transmute political economy “through collaboration between philosophers, economists, and psychoanalysts into a CT of society that would be adequate for the social and historical constellation that existed after the Great War” (Wellmer, 2014:705). In addition, as stipulated by Demirovic (2013:1-2), the thrust of the CT tradition was premised in “emancipation through a rational organization of all aspects of social relations – rational in the sense that all human beings will participate in producing and shaping their world as a whole through their own rationality, that is, their capacity to appropriate the world through labour”. The CT approach intended to break with “traditional hypothetical deductive methods which are oriented towards the preservation and gradual reformation of the status quo” (Ngwenyama, 1990:3). The actual politics of CT was based primarily on the steadfast and steady insistence on the power of negativity (Howard, 2000:275). The associates of the Frankfurt School were largely from a prosperous background, influenced by Marxism and also belonging to the left wing (Wigston, 2007:33). Interrogating the original assumptions of Frankfurt scholars, I notice that they intended to call people into a collaboration to challenge the status quo which had dehumanised them. Therefore, the School was a direct response to the need to remove oppressive structures, but the success of this depended on the participation of people, which is why they strategically positioned themselves to sensitise people into collaborative action.

To further highlight the Frankfurt School, Herf (1995:39) is of the view that the members were an example of “Social Democratic governmental benevolence, a group of intellectual communists with a small ‘c’ whose commitment to Marxism was clear”. Even by the standards of Weimar's cultural modernism, the Frankfurt scholars combined revolutionary theory with the respectability of the academy. In doing so, these scholars contributed extensively in many fields. From its inauguration, the members of the Institute contributed at different levels with varying degrees of consistency. There was an evident division of labour. The members created a fruitful “cross-fertilization of barely inaugurated research methods and approaches” (Mandieta, 2005:3). In summary, the Frankfurt School was a revolutionary group who premised their struggle, in theory, on collaboration with the masses and integration of various fields to intensify their struggle against the capitalist system.

To fully conceptualise the developments of CT towards CER, I focus on various phases of the Frankfurt School, each phase named after the directors who led the School through different historical settings and geographical locations (Schussler, 1986:65-66; Given, 2008:175). The following section focuses on the Grunberg era of the Frankfurt School, which stretched from 1923 to 1929.

2.2.1 The Grunberg era of the Frankfurt School, 1923–29

The first period of the Frankfurt School, according to Jays (1973:202), is referred as the Grunberg era, named after Carl Grunberg, who gave the School an orthodox Marxist orientation. He is considered by many to be one of the founders of the Austro-Marxist tradition (Held, 1980:29). The first group of the Frankfurt School, at least according to Wiggershaus (1994:13), “were all Jews by ethnic background and the institute of social research itself was funded by a Jewish millionaire, Felix Weil”. Coupled with the efforts of Weil, the University of Frankfurt acquired political and economic sustenance from the Prussian ministry of culture (Frankfurt was in the political jurisdiction of Prussia in the 1920s) and administrators of the university (Herf, 1995:39). According to Held (1980:30), the first generation of the Frankfurt School was deeply committed to politics. As a left-wing movement, they attempted to resist the influence of the Weimar republic and as a result faced persecution.

The institute was therefore under threat of an elimination of the left-wing ideas (How, 2003:13) that the School embraced contrary to the expectations of the Weimar Republic. Hence, it is concluded that the School during this period lived amid the turmoil of the Weimar republic (Schussler, 1986:66). The School was closed within six weeks of Hitler’s rise and consolidation to power, mainly because the School proved hostile to the structures and ideology of the state (Wiggershaus, 1994:17). The situation was further worsened by the antagonism and attitude of the Nazis towards the Jewish ethnic group, this led to the fall of the School. The demise of the School at this stage was marked by the defeat of the working class by the Nazi counter-revolution (Therborn, 1970:30). From this, I deduce that the School in its early days focused on politics and they aligned themselves with left-wing political ideology, which attracted attention to the School and consequently led to its persecution. In my opinion, the situation was exacerbated by the large numbers of Jewish scholars who were part

of the School. Given the Nazis' attitude towards and hatred of the Jews, persecution was inevitable.

I focused on this stage for three reasons. Firstly to ground the readers on the framework that underpins this work. I want the readers to understand the evolvement of CT as theory, especially towards CER. Secondly, this research focuses on religion. Hence, it is important to note that religion as a social institute has always been in the minds of the Frankfurt scholars, given that the early members of the group were Jewish. Thirdly, I have highlighted this stage to my readers because it opens our minds to the need to resist oppressive structures wherever they may appear. The early Frankfurt scholars associated themselves with the left wing, which was a marginalised group; it hence contributes to my study in the sense that there is a need to find ways in which those oppressed or marginalised because of religion can find space in the religious studies (RS) curriculum by challenging dominance, just as the Frankfurt scholars opposed the exploitative Weimar Republic. The following section focuses on the second phase of the Frankfurt School during the exile, led by Max Horkheimer.

2.2.2 Max Horkheimer era of the Frankfurt School

The School emerged during the days of the exile of the Frankfurt School. Therborn (1970:66) states that during the emergency and consolidation of Hitler's political power, the Frankfurt School dispersed to New York and become associated with Columbia University. It is during this period that "a young left-wing philosopher, Max Horkheimer, became the director of this Institute in 1930 and continued to direct it after the exile" (McKernath, 2013:425). The School left Germany due the intensification of Hitler's hegemony. In 1933, the institute was barred by the Nazis, but "Horkheimer succeeded in hiding its funds from the Nazis and re-established the institute in New York. It is during this period that the journal of the institute established their first journal and was published in exile" (Wellmer, 2014:705). I am of the view that the hostility of the Nazis, especially towards the Jewish ethnic group, forced the School to find a new home where their ideas were accommodated. Germany proved to be a life-threatening milieu for left-wing philosophies.

In exile, the Frankfurt School managed to draw a diverse group of scholars with extraordinary arrays of talent (Held, 1980:31). Ingram and Simon-Ingram (1991:xix) describe them as follows:

“The fluctuating composition and direction of the European labour programme and the evolution of Soviet communism and Western capitalism attracted their attention initially. Later expanded their focus to include the decline of patriarchy in the nuclear family; the psychosocial dynamics underlying controlling, anti-Semitic and fascist tendencies; and the rising latent for totalitarian mind control in the mass production and consumption of culture”.

The Frankfurters, particularly during their exile years, were concerned with the political world around them (Howard, 2000:274). In his inaugural address in 1931, Horkheimer expressed both continuities and breaks with Grunberg’s programmes (theorising on social structures) and focused on politics (Held, 1980:32; How, 2003:15). I believe this move was because of the bitterness of the persecution of the members of the School and their desire to make their displeasure at the manner and conduct of Nazi political ideologies abundantly clear.

During Horkheimer’s tenure as the head of the School, apart from politics, he attempted to make an “interdisciplinary study in which philosophies, sociologists, economics, historians, and psychologists can unite for lasting working partnership...to formulate the philosophical questions which lead to methods of handling specific issues and this ultimately leads or open for a possibility of real research” (Held, 1980:33. Moreover, according to How (2003:17), CT was expanding to include areas of everyday life, sports, fashion and other things which had not been part of the concerns of the early Frankfurt scholars. The exile was therefore a conducive environment, allowing the School to explore other areas of life and bring collaboration and informed research into social science, which was not possible during the first phase due to the persecution of its members.

The period is critical to my study in this sense that Horkheimer managed to expand the scope of the Frankfurt School to other areas which were not originally mooted among the CT scholars. This period brought the understanding that CT can be applied to day-to-day life activities such as religion, which is the thrust of this research study. In short, this period has been included in this work to show the expansion programme

of CT. This next phase I focus on, is the Horkheimer and Adorno phase which began with the return of the Frankfurt School to Germany.

2.2.3 Horkheimer and Adorno phase of Frankfurt School

The third phase of the Frankfurt School began around 1950 with the return of Horkheimer and Adorno from their exile in the United States. The return from the United States was through an invitation by the city's mayor, Walter Kolb. "Upon arrival from exile, Horkheimer, Adorno, and their colleague Friedrich Pollock worked to re-establish the Institute for Social Research and [it] was officially reopened in November 1951 at the Goethe University Frankfurt" (Parkinson, 2014:44). Horkheimer and Adorno were full-fledged members of the "West German intellectual and scholarly establishment and formed a link between the modernist, left-liberal spirit of Weimar and the reviving left-liberalism of West Germany" (Herf, 1995:41). Horkheimer and Adorno "believed that they were a kind of vanguard of contemporary critical thought representing the most progressive stage of enlightenment and social criticism" (Demirovic, 2013:2). During their tenure, the School began to address "new concerns, personnel and subsequently a new programme for critical theory" (Jay, 1973:203). During this period, new adherents emerged, most remarkably the theorists Alfred Schmidt and Jürgen Habermas. Some of the associates died during the war, others drifted away (e.g. Fromm), whereas the newer followers only became vigorous for a few years (Therborn, 1970:66).

In conceptualising CT during the third phase, Horkheimer and Adorno firmly maintained clarification of human beings through meeting their immediate interests and needs which led them to be socialised individuals (Negt, 1978:66). The other "focus of Horkheimer and Adorno's CT was developing a critique of science, technology, instrumental reason, and a theory of the administered society, shifting focus from the critique of capitalism which was previously a major focus" (Kellner, 1993:48). According to Zambrana (2013:95), Horkheimer and Adorno's original idea stressed the need to rethink not only critical-intellectual practices but also the "very idea of critique in light of the reciprocal determination of theory and the world of capital".

The flourishing of CT in the third phase is understood in light of the overwhelming conservative mood of the post-war West Germany (Jay, 1973:203). The other “focus of this School during the third period was to answer questions which lay within the embedded structures of society; the programme was wide and varied ranging from an examination of fascism, anti-semitism capitalism, mass psychology and mass culturalism” (Lybeck, 2004:91). However; Brincat (2011:234) notes that

“Horkheimer and Adorno’s approach to CT – no matter how critical it was for the adoption of the physical sciences to the analysis of social life [rather they focused only on the struggles of the working class]...instead of an appreciation of movements of emancipation outside the West, limiting the horizon of possibility under a non-reflexive Euro-centric gaze”.

Besides the limitation noted during this period, the School wanted to advance an “interdisciplinary study of society that incorporated the disciplines of philosophy, sociology, psychology, economics, political theory and subsequently music and culture more generally” (Brittain, 2012:205). In summary, this period was a time for the expansion of CT given the post-war conducive environment where Frankfurt scholars could theorise on social issues. The post-exile period is pertinent in my study in the sense that it allowed the development of CT. Because of the peaceful environment, new scholars began to emerge to enhance the thrust of CT. Scholars began to explore comprehensively various social structures including religion.

In the following section, I focus on Habermas, whose thinking is instrumental in introducing the concept of emancipation and communicative action to this study. Because CT was a growing field, it began to focus on various issues such as race, feminism, indigenous knowledge and emancipation. For the purposes of my study, I take the route of CER, which moves towards the aim and objectives of this study.

2.2.4 From critical theory to critical emancipatory research: Habermas’ concept of communicative action

Habermas first came to prominence in the 1950s and 1960s as a fierce critic of post-war Germany’s conservative ideological consensus. He is an intellectual committed, both in theory and practice, to retrieving the promises of the Enlightenment after its catastrophic implosion during the middle decades of the twentieth century (Gordon,

2013:176). He is also known as an academic who is systematically immersed “in the thought of philosophers and social scientists who preceded him and for extensive use of sociology and Anglo-American philosophy in his work” (Bolton, 2005:4-5). He is intellectually committed “to retrieving the promises of the enlightenment after its catastrophic implosion during the middle decades of the twentieth century” (Gordon, 2013:176).

By the early 1970s, the greatest philosophers of the first cohort of CT were deceased or were not bringing important new ideas (Kellner, 1993:2). Thinkers like Habermas stepped up to advance the cause of CT to CER. He sought to overcome what he saw as the weakness of Horkheimer, Arduino and Marcuse’s work, especially the “too individualised notion of the subject and their Marxist view of history” (How, 2003:115). Habermas added a new dimension to the Frankfurt School, focusing on the reduction of the suffering of people through the concept of emancipation. More, importantly, he began to interrogate power structures embedded in society towards the emancipation of people affected by coercion and by general problems of society. This is very important to my study, as I seek to enhance RS to address the lived realities of the learners and society. I am of the view that RS should emancipate learners and the society to move towards a unity of religions, and use religion to combat religious abuse, which has become a prominent social pathology.

Under Habermas, the new generation of the Frankfurt School sought to move beyond CT’s “preoccupation with how to overcome the limits of instrumental reason and ideology, which, in Habermas’ view, locked the tradition within a philosophy of the individual subjective consciousness. Instead, he proposes that a basis for confidence in human reason and communication can be found in intersubjective interaction” (Brittain, 2012:209). During the period of Habermas, CER took up the “task of responding to historical and social conditions of crisis and transformation of the existing social structures and replace them with emancipatory ones” (Sinnerbrink, 2012:370) and this, according to Habermas, was achieved “through communication research in analysis of social problems, suggesting changes within the existing social structures” (Hardt, 1993:59). In my opinion, Sinnerbrink (2012) describes the concept of CER very clearly. It is a theory that seeks to transform society especially those oppressive and dehumanising structures of society and curriculum, and replace them with the ones that emancipate people. In other words, any transformation that does

not emancipate people is irrelevant. With this in mind, I see this theory informing my study where the desire is to transform RS and emancipate learners towards acceptance of the other and towards a sustainable, peaceful coexistence of religious differences.

The CER of Habermas “aims to further the self-understanding of social groups capable of transforming society” (Held, 1980:250). Postone (1993:248) concurs that “Habermas tries to provide the basis for the theoretical change to a paradigm of intersubjectivity by developing the concepts of communicative reason, and action” (Habermas, 1979:25). In buttressing this notion, Ngwenyama (1990:5) avers that Habermas understands discipline and its mission of improving the human conditions as a concerted determination where people toil collectively to realise its ends; to achieve this, communication is vital to the presentation of a resolute discipline. Bearing this in mind, the growth of communicative competency includes an environment of common knowledge, morals and belief. It advances the interrogation of legitimacy in the situation of the dialogue act (Hardt, 1993:58). In addition, Roderick (1986:100) alludes to the notion that “communicative action is linked internally to the reason embodied in speech reconstructed by universal pragmatics directed towards achieving an agreement based on the intersubjectivity recognition of validity claims such as truth, rightness, sincerity, and comprehensibility”.

Given the above, I am of the view that Habermas adds an important dimension to CER, where the ultimate goal is an improvement of human conditions. Once emancipation has occurred, it generally follows that the human condition is improved. I engage CER in my study specifically to achieve improvement of the human condition. I am of the view that relevant RS pedagogy should aim at the improvement of human lives. Religion generally is a problematic issue in many ways. It can be used to foster pain, abuse, segregation and exclusion (this does not mean religion is not contributing positively). Hence, I am of the view that relevant RS pedagogy should aim at improving the human condition, where the values of love, peace, inclusion and acceptable of difference are highly prioritised.

Habermas brings another element to CER, where he argues that “communicative competency is a quasi-transcendental presupposition of unforced understanding: every act of communication aims toward a mutual intelligibility that necessarily

exposes all claims to criticism. Discourse thus contains an intersubjective rationality that is oriented pragmatically toward consensus” (Gordon, 2013:176). In the same vein, Toniolatti (2009:373) concludes that Habermas’ theoretical approach is in fact based on the challenge to individuate the basic structures of human interaction that provide the ultimate scheme of societal evolution. The identification of such features embodies the first step towards the expansion of a normative framework based on communicative prudence. The issue here is that while people may be different, which is natural, it is important that they develop a communicative strategy that is practical and leads to consensus. This research study seeks to develop a communicative strategy, the Socio-Religious Hybridity Strategy (SRHS) that seeks to bring various religions to communicative action, with the purpose of emancipating and improving the human condition for both the learners and society. If religions are to contribute positive to society, there is a need for engagement, CER gives religion space for dialogue to eliminate various social pathologies that have made it an undesirable phenomenon in society.

Elaborating further on communicative action, Habermas (1984:86) concludes that it involves “reasoned argument, consensus, and cooperation rather than strategic action strictly in pursuit of their own goals”. Moreover, another Habermas element connected with communicative action “provides a theoretical basis for a view of planning that emphasizes widespread public participation, sharing of information with the public, reaching consensus through public dialogue rather than exercise of power, avoiding privileging of experts and bureaucrats, and replacing the model of the technical expert with one of the reflective planner” (Argyris & Schön 1974:44). The communicative action is pertinent to this study in that “individual actions are designed to promote common understanding in a group and to promote cooperation, as opposed to strategic action designed simply to achieve one’s personal goals” (Habermas 1984:85). With this in mind, Habermas “rejected ordinary hermeneutics for its tendency to reify tradition and language, and to assume that subjects are aware of the meaning of their actions”. Instead, Habermas proposes a CT which has the eradication of unnecessary oppression and the maximisation of human emancipation as its value (Medison, 2005:208). When interrogating CER, Habermas sought to ensure that there is active participation of people towards achieving collective action based on consensus. With this in mind, I note that CER is against individualism that does not

contribute towards the wellbeing of the members of the community. Cooperation is key in CER as a theory that foregrounds my study. The study intends to bring various religions into mutual dialogue, where people are exposed to various religions. This will lead to cooperation and peaceful coexistence where prejudice is reduced. Religious knowledge, in this case, should go beyond private space to pedagogic and to societal knowledge, where all members know and understand the operations of various religions, as opposed to secretive beliefs that breed suspicion and consequently fuel unnecessary religious battles that can be solved through the communicative aspect of CER.

To ground the readers further on CER, in the following section, I focus on Honneth's understanding and contribution to CER.

2.2.5 Honneth's understanding of CER: Principle of recognition

The year 2001 marked the beginning of a new era for CER. Honneth took over the presidency of the "Institute for Social Research and has been the driving force behind a large number of new initiatives, including a major grant from the Volkswagen Stiftung on structural transformation of recognition (for 2007–2010) in the 21st century" (Anderson, 2011:47-48). Honneth's theory developed from the view that Habermas' concept of communicative theory did not adequately interrogate the experience of deep emotional misery, as well as the cracking of one's individuality instigated by society. His argument was that the sufferers did not inescapably "experience any failure of implementation of norms of language understanding or of rational discourse as the immediate threat to their selfhood; what they do feel threatened by [is] the lack of empathy, disrespect, and disregard" (Honneth, 2000:96–101). To rectify the drawbacks of Habermas thoughts, Honneth brought into space the theory of recognition, which focuses on the "basic features of identity formation through socialisation processes to achieve a normative framework" (Toniolatti, 2009:372). Shedding more light, Connolly (2015:395-396) argues that he "attempts to diagnose social pathology, including that caused by the contemporary structure of individualization...establish an intrapsychic foundation for the struggle for recognition which pushes beyond conventional norms". In light of this, Honneth expands CER by proposing the principle of recognition, which I consider an important element towards

attaining social justice. I argue that , when religions can engage in participation, religious adherents begin to recognise other religions as valid to their adherents and that they should also become part and parcel of the curriculum, which will emancipate people improve human conditions and promote social justice. In essence, by combining Honneth and Habermas, I note a pattern in CER that comprises emancipation, communicative action, improvement of the human condition and recognition.

Conceptualising further the concept of recognition, Zurn (2003:519) is of the view that it attempts to identify “obstacles to attaining a healthy sense of self in extant social relations of recognition and call for their overcoming in the name of each person’s legitimate claim to an equal opportunity for realising an undistorted identity”. It therefore follows, according to Honneth, that emancipation would require not the realisation but the overcoming of the consequences of this mode of the social constitution (Postone, 1993:236-237), where the struggle for recognition is historically effective, perhaps even emancipatory (Connolly, 2015:404). The concept of recognition, which brings along emancipation, is important in that it allows a better comprehension of concrete contexts of injustice, exclusion and discrimination that remain unseen within a strongly normative standpoint (Toniolatti, 2009:372). In the milieu of “social justice recognition is a fundamental and overarching moral category and the distribution of material goods is a derivative category” (Huttunen, 2007:423). Honneth provides reasons to believe that we are reliant on social recognition and that this needs to be taken into contemplation by any CER of social movements (Connolly, 2015:409). Among many of Honneth’s contributions, arguably, is the development of a typology of social recognition: “love-based, rights-based and solidarity or merit-based recognition” (Honneth, 1995:129), where respect plays a critical role in social solidarity. The concept of recognition serves as a central criterion for the identification and overcoming of social pathologies in contemporary societies (Stojanov, 2010:171).

In light of the foregoing argument, I note that recognition goes hand in hand with emancipation and respect for others. Therefore, by seeking religious recognition for different religions in the curriculum, I am ensuring that religions are respected as organisations in their own rights. This reduces religious conflict that may endanger people’s lives, for example the widespread unrest in the Middle East, which is motivated by religion. It is evident from these battles that once religious wars start,

ending them is a gigantic project which may not yield positive results. In this argument, I concur with Fraser (1989:52) that emancipation and the principle of recognition and parity creates an overarching egalitarian society.

Honneth, however, has been criticised for reducing the “political dimension of social struggles solely to the cultural level of social integration, which is interpreted as the attempt to achieve social recognition for one’s own idea of the good life” (Toniolatti, 2009:379). His theory, however, remains silent on the existential moments of self-recognition, when we abstract from the experiences of love-based, rights-based and merit-based recognition to consider autonomy, authenticity and agency (Connolly, 2015:409). Honneth ignores “relevant alternative explanations of processes of deviation and disassociation from norms of social freedom, which he characterises as social underdevelopment” (Schaub, 2007:107). Despite the weakness of Honneth’s theory, I affirm the value of his contribution to CER. The principle of recognition plays a pivotal role towards engaging various religious players in dialogue that improves the human condition. To advance the conceptualisation of CER, I will now focus on the work of Foucault in the following section.

2.2.6 Foucault and the challenge of dominance

Michel Foucault’s understanding of CER centres on the diagnosis of human bondage and the ethical-political strategies for release and emancipation (Nuyen, 1998:27). Foucault, like Adorno and Horkheimer, analyses power extensively, in case some uncharted habits of living and communal dealings develop the initial idea for new procedures of power under control (Demirovic, 2013:9). Foucault “was convinced that emancipation means to liberate the individual from any bonds to its identity, conceiving the individual subject itself as the effect of disciplinary and inquisitorial power to constitute an individual by registering, observing, educating and normalizing it, giving to it a personal history, guaranteeing its identity” (Demirovic, 2013:10). Among his many contributions to CER, is the unveiling of power relations and disciplinary practices that are generally viewed as standard, notably in our educational practices (Woermann, 2012:114). The issue here is that Foucault highlights issues of power dynamics that end to dominate others in society. To emancipate means to engage in forms that liberate people from oppressive structures. In essence, the issue at hand is

that oppressive structures that do not recognise others as human or other religions as legitimate must be challenged in a quest for improved social conditions and social transformation.

In Foucault's argument for the notion of power dynamics, "power is not only the ability to dominate others but also a relationship of influence between different agents. Power is directly related to knowledge: power defines what counts as authentic knowledge and capitalises on it" (Foucault, 1976:36). Foucault poses a question: "How have we come to accept the types of knowledge that we presume to be legitimate, valid and true?" Applying this question to RS, I ask on what basis has the RS curriculum become monothelic, by ignoring other local religions? This question is problematic in a religious context largely because religion is both personal and pedagogical. It often evokes passion, emotions and a sense of identity. Thus, legitimising one religion over others, especially in religious contexts, presents a serious threat to humanity since adherents of a religion are capable of responding with violence once they see and think that their religious epistemologies are being undermined.

To respond to the above questioned posed by Foucault, Stromquist (1998:4) contends that it is critical that there should be a consideration of "multiple forms of power that takes from in macro-level of institutions to the capillary of person-to-person transactions...where people are aware of many ways to see an event and the large variety of voices among social actors, including voices that become suppressed". In essence, the Foucauldian analysis of education is valuable in revealing formerly neglected matters of knowledge, control and contestation, and thereby in problematising acknowledge able tradition (Woermann, 2012:119) that seeks to use power to dominate. Foucault urges people to resist modern inclinations to come up with better understandings, solutions, and plans for action (Biesta, 2007:9) for improving human lives, in this case through all hybridised religious pedagogies. Applying the analysis of Foucault's theory to my study, I contend that RS or religion in general carries the power of the dominant religious people or group who often influence the practices of mainstream curriculum practices. Hence, from a CER perspective, this power needs to be challenged in the quest for social justice and emancipation for society and schools where all citizens despite their religious and cultural background can participate in democratic processes. In light of this, the SRHS seeks to find better ways in which religion can be used to address the lived realities of

learners through the comprehensive inclusion of all religions and cultures for social sustainability. Juxtaposing on this, I sum up that CER is a framework that fights to create space for people who have been traditionally marginalised and disadvantaged. In the case of this research, it includes religions that have been pedagogically marginalised in the RS curriculum such as Hinduism, African religion, Judaism and Islam among many others. It also speaks to the need to challenge the power of religious leaders who seek to dominate and dehumanise people in the context of religious commitment, in the process engaging in abusive behaviours.

Because my research focuses on religion, I take my readers through what CER has to say about religion. In addition, I will revisit the Frankfurt School, to determine their exact views on the issue of religion.

2.3 The Frankfurt School and religion

The leading cohort of the Frankfurt School were all Jews by cultural upbringing (Wiggershaus 1994:13), which gave them an interest in religion and its perceived role in society. Religion was viewed by the early Frankfurt scholars “as a fundamental part of the lifeworld, not just because it coalesces into churches, sects, and proselytizing movements, but also because it provided societies with common languages through which to address people’s hopes and discontents” (Mandieta, 2005:80). Religion was on the other hand also seen by some scholars as an “impediment to economic advancement, irrelevant for modern societies and something that would fade away in time” (Lunn, 2009:939). It is evident that religion was viewed from two basic assumptions: it brought hope for people in times of crisis, but it was also viewed as a prohibiting phenomenon in the economic and political scenario, perhaps due to its emphasis on docility and living a generally peaceful life devoid of resistance, which in fact was needed against the capitalistic society.

The associates of the Frankfurt School commonly use the term “religion” in locus to Western Europe religions such as Judaism and Christianity. They also mainly emphasise religious notions and concepts, rather than on ceremonies and communal practices or the sorts that concern anthropologists and other religionists concerned with lived religion (Brittain, 2012:210). The role of religion among the early Frankfurt scholars was “for their ideological support of the nation-state, encouraging people to

passively bear injustice in the hope of attaining reward in the afterlife, and also maintains a vision for a better life through non exploitative means” (Brittain, 2012:206). The scholars of Frankfurt were conscious that religion could be bad where it perpetrates domination and promote injustice. It could also be can be good in the sense that it emancipates people for better living conditions (Siebert, 2015:6). While I agree with the Frankfurt scholars that religion can be viewed from these two different perspectives, I am of the view that religion being bad or good is a subjective issue and that religions cannot be entirely good or bad. There are some good elements in every religion. I submit that the focus should on those issues that are good, those that emancipate and bring social solidarity. On the other hand, negative aspects of religion should be castigated and reshaped by the desire to respectfully champion the human rights of all religious adherents.

The second Frankfurt School generation, like some of the first generation of scholars, were less interested in religion, with some outstanding exceptions (Brittain, 2012:208). However, the changes in world events in the context of religion posed a new era for religion within the spectrum of CER, particularly in the work of Habermas. His “early reduction of religion as primitive forms of thought has shifted after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, to a more hospitable desire to encourage dialogue between religious adherents and secularists” (Brittain, 2012:2014). The 9/11 attack on America inspired Habermas to comment frequently on religion and accept not only its permanence but also its vital benefit to modern democracy (Gordon, 2013:175). The 9/11 events launched a phase in which people began to think seriously about the role of religion in society especially as a motivating factor for human behaviour. I am of the view that 9/11 became a reckoning point for both social scientists and religious scholars to consider forms of dialogue among religious adherents to avoid a repeat at all costs. In the strategy designed in this research, I contend that this dialogue should begin at a pedagogical level and then cascade to all areas of the society. This level has been chosen to give learners an opportunity to appreciate various religions and celebrate the diversity of religions.

As regards religion, perhaps based on the 9/11 events, Habermas’ prime concern was the amalgamation of religious communities into collective visions of citizenship and consensus (Brittain, 2012:210). Habermas’ “proposed reconstruction of the history of the species should be seen as an attempt to move beyond the fundamental pessimism

of CER and to resuscitate the possibility of an emancipatory critique of contemporary society and dialogue” (Postone, 1993:230). In attempts to make religion address the lived realities of the people, Habermas “essentially places a heavier burden on religious citizens, asking them to translate their beliefs into terms and concepts that secular people can better understand. He does emphasise that both believers and non-believers are involved in a complementary learning process in which each side can learn from the other” (Brittain, 2012:210). For Habermas, emancipation is the result of the correction of all distortions (Nuyen, 1998:27) and the way “power works is crucial if people are to prevent the colonization and mechanization of the lifeworld by power and money and develop a society based on free and undistorted communication” (Habermas, 1987:183). Habermas was geared “more toward the possibilities of democratic politics and toward the simultaneously theoretical and emancipatory task of revealing the distortions of contemporary politics” (Anderson, 2011:35). In this, Habermas was of the view that religion should not only be for religious adherents but also for non-believers, to inform them about religious expectations that could motivate behaviour to destroy people’s lives. Through emancipation, religion can become a public domain for all; in many ways it reduces the prejudice, misinterpretation and misrepresentation of religious ideologies that may fuel conflict in society.

Habermas grants that religion may serve as a reservoir of normative possibilities for democracy. He goes so far as to imply that democratic procedures may very well need the pre-political instruction best found in religion (Gordon, 2013:192). In essence, religion in later CER discourses become one of the influential elements in championing democracy in society. Thus, Habermas’ work forms a critical base for this study in the sense that religion is acknowledged as an essential element in championing issues of social justice, respect and collective bargaining for the common good of all the citizens. In relation to the above, I agree with Habermas that religion plays a powerful role in the formulation of democracy through championing social justice. No doubt, RS can contribute a lot towards democracy as long there is recognition of all religions and cultures. I am of the view that relevant RS has to respond to the problems confronting society, such as social injustice, violence and segregation.

Summing up this concept of religion, I contend that it clarifies CER in two ways: it inspires an ethical craving for an impartial society in the milieu of an unjust social

dispensation and avoids the foreclosure of balanced thought into an inflexible position, which nurtures distinctiveness and eventually raises uncontrollable religious conflict (Brittain, 2012:208). Religion and more specifically RS are positioned to emancipate society towards religious knowledge, to reduce the prejudice and misconceptions that may lead to serious social pathologies.

Section 2.3, covered the historical evolution of CT into CER. I focused on various phases of the Frankfurt School. Each phase contributed significantly to CER as a theory. In interrogating the various historical antecedents of CER, I conclude that CER has five claims which are going to underpin this work. With this in mind, the following section addresses the principles of CER deduced from the historical narratives

2.4 Principles of critical emancipatory research

This section serves to ground readers on the principles of the CER gleaned from the long history of the Frankfurt School and shows how these principles inform this research to justify its inclusion as a theoretical framework. Although CER has always been fluid, even by design (Rush, 2004:7), there are general tenets that inform “researchers to be analytical, to be able to go for the deeper meaning and look at all the sides of the story” (Mahlomaholo, 2009:225-226). The first principle discussed is the improvement of human conditions.

2.4.1 CER aims at improving human lives

CER as a school of thought aims at improving human lives or conditions. Its “focus is on general theoretical problems as well as specific investigation of concrete problems of contemporary social organisation” (Ngwenyama, 1990:3). This emanates from the work of Habermas on CER, where the thrust is to challenge “enlightenment tradition, a tradition originally dedicated to changing institutions such as the divine right of kings, the church, feudal bondage, prejudice and superstitious ideas” (Alvesson, 1992:435) for the betterment of people’s lives. Improvement of the human condition is a radical yet peaceful and respectful commitment that was hostile to life circumstances (Bunner & Kellner, 1989:1). The return from exile gave the impetus for Frankfurt scholars to interrogate the life situation with the intention of improving conditions which were torn apart by the conflict of the Weimar Republic. Concurring with this, Held (1980:76)

states that the underprivileged, those struggling for survival, constitute the masses and that their struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism is the most important threat to capitalism, with the ultimate goal of improving human conditions.

This principle is very important in my study, as I seek curriculum relevance through RS. Religion has undoubtedly contributed to violence, abuse and untold human atrocities. This has led religion to become a contentious issue in society. I concede that while religion has often been associated with negative issues, it can contribute significantly to improvements in human lives. It is then the thrust of the SRHS to show how RS can improve human lives. In short, the teaching and learning of RS should aim at human conditions. In the following section, I discuss the principle of the elimination of false consciousness.

2.4.2 CER and elimination of false consciousness

Another principle of CER guiding this work is the elimination of the false consciousness that religion cannot be critiqued, especially when it does not improve the human condition. This principle stems from the work of Foucault and the Freirean critical pedagogy and states that ideology must critique to eliminate false consciousness, allowing individuals and groups to critique and resist oppressive regimes of power (McKernath, 2014:425). I hold the view that CER attempts to eliminate the false consciousness that that which oppresses people and dehumanises them cannot be critiqued and challenged, especially when it relates to religion. Religion carries a certain type of hegemony, which according to many cannot be interrogated because it is divine. As a result, this religious hegemony has led to numerous abusive religious activities in some circles, such as non-consented sex, eating of snakes, beatings and financial manipulation. In essence, this principle attempts to discard historically created distortions that influence everyday life (Given, 2008:734). CER seeks answers to questions that “lay deep within the embedded structures of society by employing a method of immanent critique and dialectical reasoning” (Lybeck, 2010:93). CER conceives of itself as part of a struggle (Wellmer, 2014:706) to liberate human beings, in which everybody would have an equal chance of self-development (Horkheimer 1972:236). CER “looks at, exposes, and questions hegemony, traditional power

assumptions held about relationships, groups, communities, societies, and organisations to promote social change” (Given, 2008:140).

The principle also critiques social institutions formerly held as sacred, such as religion, which has led to curriculum structures that consolidate the power of the few, propagate diverse forms of religious abuse, segregation and cultural exclusion of the other. CER thus views knowledge as a result of power relations and questions constantly the legitimacy of all forms of knowledge (Chen, 2005:16) with the intention of eliminating false consciousness. In this context, CER plays a pertinent role in interrogating forms of power and knowledge in religious pedagogies, challenging the religious assumptions that are often taken for granted. It eliminates the false consciousness imposed by the religious oppressors that their authority cannot be questioned even though it might negate improvement of human conditions. I concur with Freire (1990:33) that eliminating false consciousness enables people to amend issues of power imbalance, which may contribute to the end of religious oppression.

When educators fail to critique false consciousness, they are in danger of helping social reproduction of power relations and cultural identities that exist in society (Chen, 2005:13). Alvesson (1992:436) adds that CER is strategically placed to “challenge any forms of knowledge and practices that serve to sustain the illusion of autonomy and to replace the illusion with a structure of social relations in which autonomy in guise of individualism is transformed from a pillar of bourgeois ideology into a practical reality”. The CER also has potential to infiltrate the world of neutral entrances to uncover the basic social relationships that are often hidden. CER scholars believe that current credence systems are treated as truths by the dominant class and act as barriers to conscious action of freedom (Lindsey, Shields & Stajduhar, 1999:1241). As such, Howard (2000:272) points out that the goal of CER is to demystify reified politics separated from the life world on which it nonetheless depends to eliminate false consciousness. I conclude that the religious status quo, which is oppressive, must be challenged so that a democratic society is created for the improvement of human conditions. The strategy outlined in Chapter 6 speaks to the need for critical interrogation of religious ideas, so that oppressive and undemocratic tendencies are eliminated in the process.

In relation to this, I also contend that there is a need to eliminate the false consciousness that various religions cannot engage in meaningful dialogue to improve human conditions. It is possible that religion can engage, and according to SRHS this engagement should begin in the pedagogy space so that values of acceptable differences and the peaceful resolution of difference are inculcated in the lives of the learners. Hence, RS serves as a strategic space for religious engagement. The next section discusses another principle of CER pertinent to this study, namely ensuring sustainable social transformation.

2.4.3 CER and sustainable social transformation

Right from the inception of CER, under the turmoil of the Weimar Republic, the Frankfurt scholars sought to transform society through theory and practice. To concretise this view, Kreber (2005:397) contends that CER “aims at praxis whereby the insights gained through critical reflection are used to effect change or improve the action”. Brooke (2002:49) adds that the underlying focus of the CER is the wish not only to picture insufficiencies in society but also to encourage reflection upon and liberation from any shortfalls as regards social transformation.

This principle of CER is a radical way of thinking about modern societies and their inherent unresolved problems. It differentiates itself from traditional (bourgeois) forms of theorising on the grounds that its society should be liberated from all forms of domination (Kurbag, 2011:3). With this in mind, the marginalised “have the right to name reality, to articulate how social reality functions and decide how issues are organised and defined” (McLaren, 1995:272). In essence, CT “aims at solving practical problems by critical thinking and the use of knowledge which is free from superstition and prejudice” (Steinvorth, 2008:400) to transform society. I note that this principle seeks to change all oppressive structures, technologies of exclusion and abuse associated with religion. In the same vein, I contend that RS, as taught from the Western perspective, seeks to displace and marginalise local epistemologies. Local knowledge, in this case the indigenous knowledge system (IKS) as taught in RS, is marginalised in the curriculum. There is a need for sustainable transformation so that IKS is accorded value, given its importance to local people.

The sustainable social transformation sought by CER believes in transformation for the better, a lessening of the “human condition or emancipation and it does so by providing a better self-understanding of the social agents who aims at transformation” (Peters, 2005:38). In light of this, Abel and Sementelli (2002:253) aver that the theory seeks to “explain how power works to dominate, alienate and marginalise certain individuals and groups through modern social, political and economic practices” to achieve sustainable social transformation. It “aims at an accurate representation of their viewpoints but also to empower the less advantaged in terms of being able to take an active agent role in social change” (Mertens, 2007:222). The thrust here is that CER through the principles of sustainable social transformation seeks to ensure that oppression, segregation and marginalisation are eliminated. Religion is not an exception if it aims to address the lived realities. RS as a subject in Zimbabwean secondary schools should be transformed into an all-inclusive pedagogy that addresses the diverse needs of the learners. In the following section, I discuss the fourth principle of CER, namely the promotion of social justice.

2.4.4 CER and promotion of social justice

Another principle of CER pertinent to this study is the promotion of social justice. Social justice “concerns quality in the distribution of an education service, and it also concerns the nature of the service itself and the consequences for society through time” (Connell, 2012:681). Social justice in the context of CER means including the privileges of those quietened (marginalised religions in the RS curriculum) to declare for themselves, mending knowledge that has been overlooked and shattered (Traitler, 2015:88). With this in mind, “social justice is a learned response fostered by progressive human and faith development. Building upon the inherent human dignity of every person, social justice involves working together to establish a just society” (Brady, 2010:8). Social justice is a commitment to peace, it is “opposed to any classroom practices that undermine the rights of students. In other words, in light of social justice maintain a particular focus on the critical pedagogy principles of dialogue and dialectic voice” (Nkoane, 2010:113-114). CER seeks to abolish social injustice. Justice is shown as necessary and indispensable; the emancipatory paradigm looks for social change, focused on freedom and release, both in the process of the research and in the transformation of society itself (Elizondo, Alberto, Olga, Olivia, Sauzo &

Veronica, 2013:424). The exclusion of other religions from current RS is a disregard of social justice, because an equal representation of religion is eliminated. In conclusion, social justice is one of the tenets of a democratic society and curriculum. It is therefore desirable that society and curriculum to be cognisant of social justice so that it is in line with democratic tendencies. The following section discusses the principle of emancipation.

2.4.5 CER and the principle of emancipation

Another notable aspect from the Frankfurt scholars, especially in the later work of people like Habermas and Foucault, is the challenge of domination, which has affected the homogeneity of the community. Emancipation comes within a context where there is domination. Domination is a phenomenon that inhibits growth, novelty and sustainable solutions to human problems in society. Hence it must be challenged on all levels where it may appear no matter how subtle it may be. Abel and Sementelli (2002:253) note that domination is an “exercise of power in the interest of certain individuals and groups at a recognisable cost to others, and is made possible through colonisation of individuals’ life worlds by instruments, scientific ideologies, and technological discourse”. In this regards, dominant groups possess the power to make their culture and religion the mainstream (Chen, 2005:12) that should be unquestionably adopted by all members of society. Horkheimer and Adorno (1989:260) castigate “domination by arguing that it distorts consciousness, controls practice and directs discourses, leaving people without the possibility of either discovering anything that is already posited in the dominant ideology or understanding of anything except through prescribed epistemologies, practices, and discourses”. Throughout the historical narratives of CER it is clear that domination is an undesirable phenomenon that has no place in people’s lives. It distorts people’s identities and potential. Hence, I am of the view that emancipation enables the release of the dominated into a space where they can exercise their potential without prohibiting circumstances which seek to favour one group over others.

Domination is a “dehumanisation process that has to be challenged and it (through the power of public agencies) inhibits the capacity of individuals to act as creative, reflective agents free of misconceptions about their own interests” (Abel & Sementelli,

2002:260). In light of this, Scotland (2012:13) is of the view that CER seeks to emancipate the disempowered. The critical questions are: how do people challenge forms of domination in society given that they are already incapacitated by oppressive structures; and how is transformation possible in the context of religious marginalisation, religious terrorism, abuse, and violence? To address these questions, the CT introduces a concept of empowerment of the marginalised and oppressed. This is the concept of emancipation. Shedding light on the origins of emancipation, Biesta (2010a:41) argues that “emancipation stems from Roman law, where it referred to freeing of a son or wife from legal authority of the pater familias –the father of the family. The emancipatory impetus is particularly prominent in the critical tradition and approaches where the aim of education is conceived as emancipating students from oppressive practices and structures in the name of social and human freedom” (Zeev, 2005:50). Analysing the above, I note that domination can be eliminated by emancipation. There is a need for a transforming force to eradicate dominance, namely emancipation.

The goal of emancipation is not to create an impartial society or an additional form of state but to look for different ways to organise social collaboration on a worldwide scale (Demirovic, 2013:9). The emancipatory interest of “critical pedagogies focuses on the analysis of oppressive structures; practices and theories” (Biesta, 2012:10). It moves towards empowering oppressed individuals to achieve humanity (Freire, 1999:34). Emancipation also emphasises the formation of norms for fairness and improvement of human liberties (Ngwenyama, 1990:4). It acknowledges the multidimensionality of power relations but upholds the role of agency and social movements in effecting social change, efforts clearly directed against domination (Morrow & Torres, 1995:50). As such “emancipation knowledge is concerned with freedom from constraints in social structures and by the critical examination of existing rules, habits, traditions and ideologies, that is, knowledge exposes power relationships that shape society” (Lindsey, Shields & Stajduhar, 1999:1242), to challenge them if they expose domination. Buttressing the above, Alvesson (1992:432) argues that emancipation describes the procedure “through which individuals and groups become freed from suppressive social and ideological situations, particularly those that place socially unnecessary precincts upon development and enunciation of human consciousness”. The above makes it clear that emancipation plays a very important role in people’s

lives, namely to empower people to be released from undesirable circumstances. Emancipation is critical to this study, so that religious and local epistemologies that have been segregated, can be empowered to make their presence known in the dominant arena through respectful means. It gives people a voice that enables recognition, as shown by Honneth's contribution to CER.

Moreover, "emancipation involves releasing people to exercise power over their thought processes, life-worlds" (Abel & Sementelli, 2002:266). Emancipation ushers in a new era of conscious action among the oppressed and the end result is noted by Chen (2005:17), who states that when subordinate groups become "conscious of how the dominant groups devalue them through societal institutions, critical pedagogues believe that they may be more likely to question what they learn in school and subsequently avoid internalizing negative messages about their culture". For this reason, emancipatory learning must reach its full potential (Honneth, 1993:22). Emancipation enables people to question what we learn and teach to eliminate any forms of domination that may be part of curriculum packages. Foregrounding this work in CER is to bring an "awakening of consciousness and awareness of social injustices, motivating self-empowerment and social transformation" (Stinson, 2009:506).

This tenet of CER is critical as it allows the "researcher and the participants [to] join together to explore power inequalities and imbalances" (Corbett, Francis & Chapman, 2007:86) with the intention of collectively solving social pathologies. The construct of emancipation "assumes that a society consists of separate groups possessing different levels of power and control over resources and that social problems stem not from individual deficits, but rather from the failure of the society to meet the needs of all its members" (Gutierrez, 1990:44). Hence, emancipation is crucial for members whose needs and voices have not been reflected in the RS curriculum.

Emancipation is also possible through empowerment of the marginalised groups. The emancipatory aim thus encourages critical researchers to pursue those matters that are professed to be unfair and where change is a prerequisite (Stahl, 2006:97); this change comes through empowerment. Empowerment is essential for emancipation; it is laden with the expectation of social transformation (Chen, 2005:18). When empowerment has taken place, emancipation then eliminates "situations that limit freedom, once these barriers have been dissolved, people can control the direction of

their own lives” (Ryan, 1998:260). I conclude that CER is the “science which wants to free man from all unnecessary domination” (Madison, 2005:210) through emancipation, hence; to emancipate is to empower, where individuals or religious groups can express themselves in a democratic society and in the curriculum.

This section covered the principles of CER, namely the improvement of human conditions, elimination of false consciousness, promotion of social justice and emancipation. These principles will henceforth guide my discussion. The principles of CER guided me in relating with the research team, which I call the hybridity team, together with the data analysis, interpretation and formulation of the SRHS. CER is used to interrogate issues in this study, particularly the principles. The principles discussed speak to my study in many ways. In the following section I discuss the objectives of the study and how CER informs and grounds them.

2.5 Aim, objectives of the study and critical emancipatory research

The aim of the study is to develop a SRHS to respond to the problems of teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwe.

To develop a SRHS to respond to the problem of RS, the following objectives direct this study:

- Examine the challenges in the teaching and learning of RS where SRHS can provide intervention measures in dealing with social ills such as abuse.
- Evaluate solutions that have been used to respond to the challenges of RS.
- Discuss conditions which are necessary for the successful implementation of RS using SRHS at Ordinary Level
- Expose threats associated with teaching and learning of RS in secondary schools.
- Highlight possible successes associated with an implementation of SRHS in a quest for curriculum relevance in Zimbabwean schools.

To develop a strategy that responds to the problems of RS in Zimbabwe, I used CER principles as a guiding framework. In the formulation of the strategy, the hybridity team was composed of participants from various religions, such as Islam, Christianity, African religion and Judaism. Various religions were included in the hybridity team in

response to CER, which calls for the recognition and inclusion of religions that have been marginalised in the mainstream curriculum. In formulating the strategy, the team understood the need to treat each member with respect and to learn from one another. Hence, the formulation of strategy took into account the issues of democracy such as social inclusion, respect for humanity and recognition. Recognition of various religions as legitimate in their own rights “serves as a central criterion for the identification and overcoming of social pathologies in the contemporary societies” (Stojanov, 2010:171).

Moreover, CER enabled me and the hybridity team to be equal partners in the intellectual journey of generating possible solutions to address the problems of a monothelic curriculum in a multi religious and cultural society. CER enabled me to understand that a solution that ensures sustainable social transformation is located in the collaboration of religions, which I refer to as hybridity in this research. The hybridity of religious and cultural players ensures that interested people with democratic orientation collaborate to negotiate the contested terrain of religion. This will help to ensure that religion responds to all hybridity members and consequently improves human conditions. I contend that curriculum space is an effective initial strategy, because learners can easily relate with other learners from various religious backgrounds without prejudices, misconceptions, and misrepresentations. RS pedagogy, as stipulated by Habermas (1984:86), must be a “reasoned argument, consensus, and cooperation rather than strategic action strictly in pursuit of their own goals”. I summarise this section by noting that the strategy firmly believes that responsive and relevant RS should be collaborative, multi religious and responsive to problematic social pathologies.

The first objective of the study was to examine the challenges of the teaching and learning of RS. In responding to this objective from literature and empirical data, I juxtapose challenges with reference to those that do not improve a condition, that instil false consciousness, and that hinder transformation, social justice and emancipation. SRHS seeks to respond to the challenges and empirical data generated in response to the first objective. The second objective examined some possible solutions to the problems of RS. I interrogate the strategies using CER and also borrow positive aspects of the solutions to formulate a comprehensive SRHS. Another strategy borrowed from CER is collaboration. It is an appreciation that other scholars and educationists can positively contribute to improved human conditions. It is supported

by Ngwenyama (1990:5), who says that the improvement of human conditions is a collaborative effort where people work together to achieve its ends, including through research on RS.

The third objective examined the conditions necessary for the implementation of SRHS. In my use of CER, the required conditions referred to are those which promote social justice, emancipation, social transformation and improvement of human conditions. In short, one of the conditions for the success of the strategy is a collaboration of various religious players in RS, so that the curriculum is hybridity-endorsed to respond to all the needs of the learners. In such a situation, religious players are content with the manner RS is handled in schools.

The fourth objective examines threats associated with the implementation of SRHS in multi religious and multicultural contexts. It has been shown that the ideas of CER during the early days of the Frankfurt School were revolutionary and radical. Hence, they attracted the attention of the Weimar Republic and the School suffered persecution. Teaching RS using SRHS holds the possibility of evoking a reaction from dominant groups and leaders who might have benefited from mainstream curriculum practices. The move to hybridity may be seen as a direct provocation to some religious stakeholders who do not want the status quo challenged. However, SRHS does not attempt to engage violently for recognition in the curriculum space; the strategy respectfully engages the dominant and disadvantaged groups of society.

The last objective of the study relates to the quality of the implementation of the strategy. The excellence of the strategy is judged against the principles of CER. Once some of the principles of CER are reflected in the teaching and learning, it will indicate that the research has responded to the problems of RS in Zimbabwean schools. As Medison (2005:208) states, the desire of the strategy, underpinned by CER principles is the “eradication of unnecessary oppression and the maximization of human emancipation”.

2.6 Position of the researcher and coresearchers

This study, in line with the principles of CER and as a part of the transformative paradigm (TP), values coresearchers as equal to the researcher. Using the principles

of CER and participation action research (PAR), the power of the researcher is reduced while that of the coresearchers is increased, unlike in the positivist and post-positivist paradigms. In this research the “traditional power hierarchy between professional researchers and research subjects [is turned] upside down and invokes a commitment to break down the dominance and privilege of researchers to produce relevant research that is able to be sensitive to the complexities of contextual and relational reality” (Given, 2008:139). In this relationship, the intention is to move authority away from top-down research that subjugates creativity and to converse authority associations through an unequivocal centring on indigenous familiarities, morals, knowledge, and proficiency (Park, 1992:30). Hence, in generating the empirical data, the researchers are not all-knowing individuals who come to do research so that they endorse their findings; rather, it is a collaborative journey to generate data. The researcher is not superior, but walks hand in hand with coresearchers to find a sustainable solution to respond to the problems of RS.

In this research, people who have been traditionally referred to as participants or respondents move from being participants to be co researchers in generating data. In the spirit of CER and to foster “empowerment and emancipation critical researchers redefine a number of aspects of the research process, including again the relationship between the research and the goal of research” (Byler, 1998:36). In this type of relationship, the researcher is “no longer a dominant player and in control, no longer the sole arbiter of what counts as knowledge” (Mumby, 1993:37). Instead, the “knowledge is generated via a consensual relationship between the researcher and participants” (Byler, 1998:37). Nkoane (2013:394) avers that “social justice becomes a norm in this kind of relationship because it is about respect and addresses issues of equity, freedom, peace and hope. CER values the contribution of the participants and as such, the research becomes transformational and problem-solving”. ACER-oriented study therefore respects the people involved in the study; it realises that coresearchers are viewed as equally knowledgeable partners of the researcher. When participants become coresearchers and are respected as such, academics are confronted with the reality of the societal pathology in which the people with the problems in question can come up with the best possible solutions that may not be known to researchers working on their own.

The critical researcher helps coresearchers understand the “literalness and how their experiences are imbricated in contradictory, complex and changing vectors of power” (McLean & Lankshear, 1993:407), so that they walk in this intellectual journey with a common vision. The process empowers both the researcher and the coresearchers, because it tolerates discovery and investigation of control discrepancies in the research association as well as in the society under investigation (Given, 2008:139). In this context, the “critical action researcher considers the voice of the coresearchers, their perspective and meaning, not for record purposes and later interpretation but as part of the fabric of the research methodology” (Franco, 2005:3). Freire (1970:49) therefore states that researchers do not impose change on coresearchers but work with them. This proves that CER concurs with my methodology approach (PAR), where the ultimate desire is recognition of the coresearchers, not as instruments to be used to fulfil the agenda of the research, but to collectively interact and find the best possible practices that respond to social pathologies. I concur with Franco (2005:3), who makes researchers value coresearchers not for self-indulgence but for strategic partnerships towards improving human conditions. The coresearchers in this work played a pivotal role in transforming my life because of the wealth of knowledge they brought into this work towards a strategy to transform RS towards religious inclusion where power inequalities are eliminated. This confirms the sentiment of Lindsey *et al.* (1999:1240) that in “emancipation eliminate power inequalities and, people can engage in the research process” to improve RS in the Zimbabwean secondary schools. In short, according to Ponterontto (2005:131), the researcher and coresearchers are objective and dualistic.

The relationship also “encourages reciprocity, turning participants into coresearchers, while providing the means for the researcher and participants’ self-empowerment” (Lather, 1991:52). Such a relationship sees the “researcher as being tasked with interpreting other people’s interpretations and trying to make sense thereof, research is seen as the most humanising experience” (Mahlomaholo, 2009:225). Moreover, regarding the consensual relation in research, Nkoane (2013:396) concurs that “the steel rod that holds us together is CER, which requires us to become totally immersed as equal partners in this intellectual journey. Through this approach of informed eclecticism, we value principles of democracy, social justice, sustained livelihood and empowerment of all”.

The participation of coresearchers makes research a valuable experience towards social transformation. Freire (1993:47) argues that “attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be easily manipulated”. Buttressing this notion, Ngwenyama (1999:7) avers that CER “allows the researcher to be thoughtful to the life worlds of participants which are central to understanding the way social action are constructed and executed”. In summary, CER as a framework of this study seeks to dilute power relations that have made society a victim of researchers who do not respond to its lived realities. CER makes the coresearcher and the researcher join hands to change society through a democratic, collaborative and constructive strategy. CER causes a paradigm shift, especially for the researchers, to rethink their practices in light of respect for the coresearchers as equal knowledgeable people who have a special gift to offer in research. In my study, the coresearchers demystified the notion that religions cannot conduct a dialogue. These coresearchers made me fully understand the value of respect, recognition and love for people with beliefs different from mine.

2.7 Transformative paradigm and CER

There are four major research paradigms, namely positivism, post-positivism, pragmatism and TP. In this section, I discuss TP because CER falls within this paradigm. The theories that fall “in the transformative paradigm include participatory action researchers, Marxists, feminists, racial and ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities” (Mertens, 2005:16). Transformative research “involves a dynamic interplay between reflection and action, between knowing and doing. Its focus is the intertwining of research and practice” (Given, 2008:887). In this paradigm, researchers generally adopt “transformational methodologies in pursuit of social justice, socio-economic or cultural equity, empowerment of marginalised individuals, or actions [were] taken in a process of exposing and resisting hegemonic power structures” (Given, 2008:886). The role of the researcher in this milieu is redesigned; the researcher becomes someone who differentiates variations and inequalities in society and tries to contest the status quo (Mertens, 2007:212). TP “consummate[s] a relationship with emancipatory consciousness. Whereas traditional researchers cling

to the guardrail of neutrality, critical researchers frequently announce their partisanship in the struggle for a better world” (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011:164).

2.7.1 Origins of the transformative paradigm

TP emanated “partially because of dissatisfaction with the dominant research paradigms and practices and because of limitations in the research [on] indigenous and postcolonial peoples, people with disabilities, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and queer communities, and others who have experienced discrimination and oppression, as well as other advocates for social justice” (Mertens, 2005:21-22). According to Creswell (2003:9), “transformative researchers felt that the interpretivist approach to research did not adequately address issues of social justice and marginalised people” (Creswell, 2003:9). TP sought to shift and disrupt established scientific paradigms (Huangetal, 2013:291). TP with “its associated philosophical assumptions provides a framework for addressing inequality and injustice in society using culturally competent, mixed methods strategies” (Mertens, 2007:212). Hence; in support of this, Mertens (2010:12) believes that TP “pushes the regulatory principles of respect, beneficence, and justice on several fronts” and is about shifting things for the better, not just destabilising them (Ravn, 2015:13). On analysis of this section, it is clear that TP was a response to the failure of scientific paradigms that had not yielded desired results towards social transformation. The scientific paradigm sought to maintain the status quo, but TP seeks to change social issues that do not benefit the majority of the members of the community; hence, TP “explicitly address[es] power issues, social justice, and cultural complexity throughout the research process” (Given, 2008:886).

TP emphasises the “deliberate inclusiveness of groups that have historically experienced oppression and discrimination on the basis of gender, culture, economic levels, ethnicities/races, and sexual orientation, and disabilities, and in a conscious effort to build a link between the results of the research and social action” (Mertens, 2004:2). Research that “is done for transformative purposes is praxis-based— that is, it encompasses an energetic interplay between reflection and action, between knowing and doing. Its focus is the linking of research and practice” (Given, 2008:887).

TP based on key “axiological, ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions differs from those underlying those of [the] post-positivist and interpretive or constructivist worldview” (Mertens, Farley, Madison & Singleton, 1994:124). In light of the above, I conclude that TP has to do with the change of the status quo, but this change should not be haphazard and result in more problems. This transformation should be underpinned by the principles of CER, which seeks to promote social justice, improve the human condition and bring about emancipation. While a change in the approach of RS is necessary, it should be anchored in the very principles of CER. Curriculum relevance can then be achieved which addresses the lived realities of the learners.

2.7.2 Transformative paradigm and axiology

Axiology, in this context, deals with issues of “ethics which are central to a transformative paradigm. TP places priority on the axiological assumptions as a guiding force for conceptualising subsequent beliefs and research decisions” (Mertens, 2009:29). The transformative axiological assumption replicates a cognisance of the ubiquity of perception that transpires in many groups and the principled liability of the assessor to understand perilous magnitudes of multiplicity to contest societal procedures that publicise a domineering status quo (Mertens & Wilson 2012:14). To concretise TP from an axiology concerns “itself with unequal distributions of power and the resultant oppression of subjugated groups, a pre-set goal of the research is to empower participants to transform the status quo and emancipate themselves from ongoing oppression” (Ponterotto, 2005:131). Juxtaposing axiology from TP is concerned with ethical issues which should be considered when challenging the status quo. While change is necessary, it must be done within acceptable ethical consideration so that the research becomes relevant in challenging the status quo. CER as TP tends to view circumstances through a lens of local supremacy by those in authority, with the possibility of localised resistance (Brooke, 2002:49). TP is desirable since there is a need to be “attentive to the tendency towards polarising sameness or difference, self or other into irreconcilable or distant opposite in the existing discourses” (Wang, 2013:489). The axiological aspect of TP emphasises “transparency and reciprocity...designed in such a way as to bring benefits to the host community and to foster skills and self-sufficiency” (Mertens,

2009:31). Using the axiological aspect of transformative research in this study, I sought to develop a strategy that should benefit society by solving the most pressing issues of the day. While as a researcher I benefited from the research, it was paramount that learners and the community benefit as well from the strategy towards the peaceful existence of various religions. The reciprocal relationship should be underpinned by observing the ethical issues (see 4.8).

2.7.3 Transformative paradigm and ontology

Ontology is “the study of being, that is, the nature of existence and what constitutes reality” (Gray, 2013:19). It is a multifaceted multidisciplinary arena that focuses on the knowledge of material organisation, usual language processing, information withdrawal, mock intelligence, knowledge depiction and attainment (Ding & Foo, 2000:2). Ontology addresses the following questions: “What is the form and nature of reality, and what can be known about that reality”? (Ponterotto, 2005:130). To shed light on ontology and TP, Mertens (2007:216)

“TP holds that reality is socially constructed, but it does so with a conscious awareness that certain individuals occupy a position of greater power and that individuals with other characteristics may be associated with a higher likelihood of exclusion from decisions about the definition of the research focus, questions, and other methodological aspects of the inquiry”

TP’s view of “ontology argues that reality has been shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; a reality that was once deemed plastic has become crystallised” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:110). I note here that the reality of the RS curriculum is a result of various influences that shaped the monothelic RS curriculum. Some of the influences are negative, such as segregation of other religions, and as such it is important that factors that shaped RS should be examined through CER so that RS can begin to be relevant not only for Christian learners but to other religions as well.

TP from an “ontology perspective acknowledges a reality shaped by ethnic, cultural, gender, social, and political values, they focus on realities that are mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted” (Penterotto, 2005:130). In essence, the ontology in this regard made me understand that reality is socially

constructed. This includes RS pedagogy that was shaped by missionary activities. Understanding that reality with RS is a result of influence, then, the hybridity team sought to ensure that the curriculum was shaped and reshaped by the principles of CER. The SRHS is a strategy that incorporates various religions and cultures informed by CER principles.

2.7.4 Transformative paradigm and epistemology

Epistemology “concerns the thought, the intelligence, the knowledge, the consciousness, the imagination, the perceptions, the sensations” (Browaeys, 2004:2). The epistemological assumption of TP “leads to a cyclical model of research that includes the establishment of partnerships between researchers and community members, including the recognition of power differences and building trust through the use of culturally competent practices” (Mertens, 2007:218). I therefore understand that knowledge is socially constructed and that the knowledge that benefits society should be constructed through consensus. Being cognisant of this view, the hybridity team comprised various community members of different religions. The research then became democratic and was endorsed and validated by the community, which according to Chan (2005:17) is the first step towards social transformation.

2.7.5 Transformative paradigms and methodology

Methodological “decisions are aimed at determining the approach that will best facilitate use of the process and findings to enhance social justice; identify the systemic forces that support the status quo and those that will allow change to happen; and acknowledge the need for a critical and reflexive relationship between the evaluator and the stakeholders” (Mertens & Wilson 2012:172). Butressing the above, Mahlomaholo (2010:11) argues that it is through “this kind of research approach that values such as democracy, social justice, sustainable livelihood and empowerment of relegated or marginalised people could be realised”. Critical pedagogy with TP “encourages practitioners of pedagogies to critically analyse the existing social conditions within and beyond classrooms and critique the dominant arrangements of power and the creation of platforms to enable the participation of marginalised students” (Nkoane, 2010:113). Critical theorists advocate student “empowerment as a

way of enhancing the possibilities of emancipation and social transformation” (Chen, 2005:19). In this I agree with Chen (2005), Nkoane (2013) and Mahlomaholo (2011) that an appropriate methodology should be sought to enhance social justice which creates a space for the marginalised. In response to a methodological aspect of TP, I chose PAR (see 4) as an approach to engage various religious leaders. The approach associates itself with the marginalised and empowers the coresearchers.

In light of the methodological aspect of TP, Mertens (2009:33) suggests it is the “analysis of power inequities in terms of social relationships involved in the planning, implementation and reporting of the research to ensure an equitable distribution of resources”. Mumby (1988:259) adds that power is “ultimately an attribute of total systems and individual power is conditioned by one’s role in the system’s overall structure. The structure locates social power differently in social roles and it is this differential distribution that renders some powerful and others powerless”. Power relations are important in any curriculum process; hence, the voice of the influential often take the centre stage. Individual empowerment coincides with social transformation. It should eventually move beyond the individual level and affect society (Chen, 2005:18). Through the implementation of SRHS, power relationships move from vertical hierarchies to a horizontal layout where everyone is equal in the intellectual journey.

Summing up the concept of TP, Mertens (1999:4) argues that TP is characterised as placing “central importance on the improvement of lives and experiences of marginalised groups, such as women, ethnic or racial minorities, people with disabilities, and those who are poor”. This is achieved through underpinning research in CER, where social transformation, social justice, equity and consensus dialogue are guaranteed.

2.8 Reflection on the use of CER

In this section, I reflect on the use of CER in research studies. I highlight the positives associated with this research and go on to point out various weaknesses of the CER framework.

2.8.1 Strengths of CER

CER is pertinent to this research in the sense that “it provides the most potent and effective means of creating conditions under which the distorted consciousness can be subverted and the cultivation of a positive academic identity” (Mahlomaholo, 2009:224). Nkoane (2010:112-113) states that CER is important because it “provides a much needed paradigmatic change in the world of unjust society”. CER is an ideal framework in the sense that it attempts to promote social justice throughout the research process. It is also an important framework in that, as postulated by Abel and Sementelli (2002:259), it “conceptualises the idea that power may be exercised by some and by total systems to control not only the actions, desires, goals, perceptions, behavioural dispositions and individual power of others but to control their paradigms and epistemologies as well”. In essence, this framework is critical in that it provides praxis and ideas on how socially oppressive structures must be challenged to enhance the democratic participation or engagement of all religious players in society. In the case of my study, a relevant curriculum is a collaborative effort where no one is advantaged over another in a quest for the peaceful coexistence of religions.

The other strength of this framework rests on emancipation. It seeks to bring about the desired empowerment for people who have been abused in religious pedagogies. It is my view that a relevant RS curriculum responds to social pathologies such as social abuse, so that society can attest to the need for RS in the curriculum. I contend that learners who have studied religion should not be abused by that very religion. Through emancipation, learners can confront abusive leaders who have distorted the benefits of religion through practices that dehumanises people. I conclude this section with a remark by Traitler (2015:88) that emancipation makes people move “superiority to equality; from concern about solving doctrinal problems and preserving religious purity to efforts to peace building and shared life”.

2.8.1 Challenges of engaging CER in research

Every theory has weaknesses associated with it, thus this section grounds readers on the drawbacks of using CER. Firstly, by nature, CER poses a threat to society because

of its emphasis on radical change of oppressive societal structures. The theory “is a dangerous activity for the ruling class in that it could lead to members of the subaltern classes as well as critical theoreticians to understand that a free and rationally self-organized mode of socialisation had become possible” (Demirovic, 2013:2). Another notable challenge of CER is that it creates dependency syndrome on the exploited or disadvantaged religious groups. This is because, more often, emancipation relies on the involvement of the emancipator, an intrusion based on admitting that which is fundamentally unreachable to the one to be emancipated (Biesta, 2010:45). Another limitation of CER is that it “often labels participants as belonging to a particular marginalised group; therefore, homogeneous notions of identity are superimposed” (Scotland, 2012:14). In other words, it is a conceptual framework that focuses on the people who are disadvantaged and marginalised. The critical question is: what is the space of the advantaged in the context of CER? Scotland (2012:14) further argues that the critical paradigm does not recognise that different contributors enter the research with fluctuating levels of conscientisation. People blindly do the command of powerful rules, further subjugating themselves in the process.

CER also “risks abdicating its critical vocation by restricting its role to providing an ideal counter-factual normative account of the conditions that enable what we already think, say, and do” (Sinnerbrink, 2012:370). In short, I notice that the major weakness of the theory is that its point of departure is always people deemed disadvantaged in society. It then becomes hard to see how the theory relates to the members of the community who are already advantaged by the current setup of RS. It is easy to discern what disadvantaged religions can get from the use of CER. However, the use of CER for major religions like Christianity is not clear. Future research can take up the issue and help us to see how those in dominance benefit from CER. Despite the weaknesses cited, CER is a framework relevant for my study as I respond to the problems of a monothelic religious curriculum.

2.9 Definition of operational terms

In this section, I take my readers to the operational terms that inform this study, defined from dictionaries, encyclopaedias and the literature as well as my own definitions. These terms include social, religion, hybridity and religious studies.

2.9.1 Hybridity

The notion of hybridity is borrowed from Homi Bhabha; it occupies a central role in post-colonial discourses. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1992:183) notes that hybridity is a term associated with the sciences; it “usually refers to animals or plants resulting from a cross between two or more races, breeds, strains or varieties of the same species”. Morrell & Swart (1995:94) argue that it is a term developed to try to capture the fluidity of post-colonial life and postmodern insights into the multiple identities and subject positions available. Hybridity is a versatile and apparently endlessly fertile metaphor and cultural description, most often used to refer to a process of transculturation which occurs in colonial zones but which is also extended to refer to a variety of cultural exchanges (Bohata, 2004:129). My usage of hybridity is not from a scientific perspective, but from a cultural perspective.

Spielmann (2006:1) defines hybridity as follows:

“Hybridity has become a term commonly used in cultural studies to describe conditions in contact zones where different cultures connect, merge, intersect and eventually transform. More specifically, hybridization denotes the two-way process of borrowing and blending between cultures, where new, incoherent and heterogeneous forms of cultural practice emerge in translocating places – so-called third spaces.

Hybridity is “predominantly used to describe cultural phenomena and identities. The term refers to the different lifestyles, behaviours, practices and orientations that result in multiple identities” (Cieslik & Verkuyten, 2006:78). It is a result of a negotiated terrain among the stakeholders as they move into the third space to confront issues of dominance, social injustice, disrespect and evangelisation through RS curriculum. The “concept of hybridity is useful in the development of new anti-essentialist approaches to tease meaning out of the colonial encounter. It generates flexibility, mobility, and spaces for academic appreciation of the crossover of ideas and identities between the coloniser and the colonised” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007:175). As a result of hybridity, educational policies will emerge from a range of different actors (Moyo & Modiba, 2013:381) thus; promoting social justice and inclusion for all religions in society

In this research study, hybridity refers to the combination of various religious groups seeking consensus to find ways to address pressing issues of society such as

injustice, religious exclusion and religious abuse. Hence, the term implies multidimensional religious facets, combined to achieve one common good, which is solving a societal problem. In this research study, the team used a collective and consensus approach to generating religious data (PAR) that contributes towards the formulation of a strategy. It is not rigid but allows multiple voices and players to engage in religious dialogue through emphasising the principles of CER such as emancipation, social justice, and recognition. It is an understanding that collective religions can move towards sustainable solutions to societal ills. It is the call for social inclusion, for religious and cultural players to have a holistic approach to religion and culture to meet the diverse religious needs of learners in RS.

2.9.2 Society

Society is defined by MacMillan (2007:1418) as “people living together in organised community, with laws and traditions controlling the way they behave towards one another”. The OED (2010:1414) postulates that society is people in general living together as a whole. Society in this research study refers to a group of people from various backgrounds coming together with a common purpose of living together and solving their problems collectively and consensually. It is a community of people with different religions, yet they coexist embracing the fundamental values of living together, despite possible variances.

2.9.3 Religion

Religion, as defined by the OED (2010:1244), is the belief in the existence of a god or gods and the activities connected with worshipping them. Likewise, McMillan (2007:1254) defines religion as a system of beliefs in a god or gods that has its ceremonies and traditions. The interest of this research is the usage of religious which is an adjective derived from religion. Religious according to Cambridge (2013:1298) is defined as relating to religion or religious education. Shedding more light, MacMillan (2007:1254) avers that religious refers to the beliefs and practices of a particular religion. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1992:509) defines religion as a certain arrangement in which “doctrines, myths, rituals, sentiments, institutions and other similar elements are interconnected”. According to Imo (2001:116), religion means

“sets of beliefs and practices that are related to an acceptance that there is a beyond outside of this material world and that there is a special kind of power and inspiration that can be drawn from this beyond”. In this research study, religious is used to indicate various faiths and beliefs found in the community which can contribute to a sustainable solution to societal problems.

From the literature perspective, religion deals with the way people localise themselves through the procedure of revered rites and holy places as borderline indications and deals with identity (Albanese, 1992:5). Likewise, “religion is defined as a public and collective belief system that structures the relationship of the individual to the divine and the supernatural” (Busse, 2012:422). In this research study, religion is used in its generality where it aligns itself to one particular religion. It is a collective term that refers to various religions found in the community. It also entails the practice of living in response to a deity and acknowledgement that the deity is very active in human affairs. Hence, religion occupies a critical role in the survival and sustenance of social structures. In short I sum up the concept of religion through the words of Ajaegbu (2012:1):

“It is a system of social coherence commonly understood as a group of beliefs or attitudes concerning an object, person, unseen or imaginary being, or system of thought considered to be supernatural, sacred, divine or highest truth, and the moral codes, practices, values, institutions, and rituals associated with such belief or system of thought”.

The terms society and religion have been combined in my study, in formulating the strategy that seeks to bring about curriculum relevance in RS. Socio-religious in this refers to the interaction between the societal and religious factors at play in the daily life of the community. Religion and society have been in existence since time immemorial through varied forms and expressions and religion was central to the being of society. With this in mind, SRHS is an attempt to facilitate reconsideration on how religion is taught in Zimbabwean schools with the purpose of using various religions in solving societal problems. I propose that social and religious can come together in consensus in an attempt to solve social pathologies.

Religious studies as defined by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1992:510) is “concerned with religious behaviour in relation to the transcendent, to God or the gods

and whatever else regarded as sacred or holy and a study which is faithful to both outer and inner facts". RS in the context of Zimbabwe can be defined as a pedagogy which focuses on the life and work of Jesus Christ who lived in Palestine around 4 BC. It is a subject that attempts to incorporate the IKS of the general populace of Zimbabwe. With that in mind, RS is a curriculum that combines Biblical stories and IKS, where IKS refers to an attempt to educate pupils on African traditional religion.

2.10 Summary of the chapter

Chapter 2 addressed the conceptual framework informing this study, namely CER. Its origins, claims and transformative nature were highlighted. The different phases of the Frankfurt School were discussed and particular theorists were chosen to expand the concept of CER and its relevance to this study. The work of Grunberg, Adorno, Horkheimer, Habermas, Honneth and Foucault was analysed, showing how CT evolved into CER in social science research. This chapter also reflected on the use of CER in research studies, outlining its benefits and weaknesses. Chapter 3 reviews related literature where challenges of teaching and learning RS are discussed and the various interventions that have been implemented in different countries with the purpose of enhancing the teaching of religion in schools.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING RELIGIOUS STUDIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 reviews the literature on the challenges of teaching and learning RS in a multicultural and multireligious society like Zimbabwe. The chapter responds to the objectives of the study, developing four constructs underpinning the discussion: religious hybridity, indigenous knowledge system (IKS), religious abuse and teacher capacitation in RS. Best practices of other countries to circumvent the problems of RS are discussed. The chapter also demonstrates the anticipated success of implementing SRHS to respond the problems of RS in Zimbabwe.

To begin with, I remind my readers of the objectives of the study to which the review of related literature attempts to respond:

- Examining the challenges in the teaching and learning of RS.
- Evaluating solutions that have been used to respond to the challenges of RS.
- Discussing conditions for the successful implementation of RS using SRHS at O Level.
- Exposing threats associated with teaching and learning of RS in secondary schools.
- Highlighting possible successes associated with the implementation of SRHS in a quest for curriculum relevance in Zimbabwean schools.

3.2 CHALLENGES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING RELIGIOUS STUDIES

In this section I focus on various challenges which have made the teaching and learning of RS a challenge. I focus on religious and cultural exclusivism

3.2.1 Religious and cultural exclusivism

The challenge of religion in most countries is that it has remained exclusive in nature despite promises that RS in school must address the multi religious and multicultural needs of the learners. Because of the exclusive nature of RS in the 21st century, it

operates against values such as “plurality, openness, and multiplicity of meaning” (Pollefeyt, 2008:16). Undoubtedly, this has become a challenge to some educational and RS scholars in terms of how to effectively and efficiently engage meaningfully with a plurality of cultures and religions. This challenge has also opened avenues for unrelenting religious conflict among ethnic and religious groups. The exclusiveness of RS is premised in regarding the non-Christian religions as irrelevant, even though learners come from different religions (Ndlovu, 2004:3). The situation is further worsened by religious leaders who teach that compromise between religions is forbidden, thus making issues of religious and pluralism sensitive focal points in contemporary debates (Fabbe, 2014:437). So far, the problem I notice is that religion carries within itself a feeling of superiority that must not be compromised, especially when it relates to religions that are deemed enemies. I also notice that leaders play a pivotal role in promoting religious exclusion in society. In the light of this, the major challenge at hand is to deal with people’s attitudes towards the religious other.

Because of the feeling of superiority over other religions it has become a norm for such other religious groups to “caricature and trivialise the religious beliefs and practices of our fellow citizens, especially if they happen to be from a religious, racial, or ethnic community that is different from their own” (Garelle, 2002:52). This creates a monolithic religious culture that does not accept the reality that religious difference is a prominent life phenomenon, which people should celebrate and find sustainable strategies of reaching common ground.

This challenge of religious exclusion is arguably traced to fundamentalists that “claim to possess knowledge of the absolute truth concerning matters of morality and perceive dissenting perspectives as threats to eternal salvation, and (in some cases) regard heresy as a punishable offense” (Powell & Clarke, 2012:15). More often, the downgrading of religion in modern society inspires fundamentalists to act to reinstate faith in a dominant place, and this implies that there is a requisite for sanitisation of their religion in the arsenals of fundamentalists (Brahm, 2005:2). In other words, viewing religious extremes as a challenge is not applicable to religious fundamentalists, who believe that interaction with other groups pollutes their religious ideology. It is clear that the problem is in most cases due to the religious commitment that holds that a certain group of religious people is the only group that possesses the truth of God and the rest are lost. This creates avenues where religious groups try to

maintain this truth. However, in some cases, this often involves violence to foster and maintain what is deemed as the truth. In essence, there are contradicting views on religious exclusivism as a challenge. Through the lens of CER, informed with the need for collaboration, religious exclusivism is unjustifiable and it often makes religion an oversensitive topic that cannot be brought into the public space for critique.

RS in Zimbabwe is religiously exclusive; the Christian religion dominates the curriculum despite the presence of other religions in the country. Zimsec (2013, Section 5.1-5.1.3) provides evidence that the curriculum is exclusively Christian, despite the aims of the syllabus that indicate that learners must be exposed to various religions in society (Zimsec, 2013, Section, 2.2 and 4.1). An exclusive curriculum presents a threat to any society, especially in religions where people can engage in violence to make their presence felt in the religious space. SRHS seeks to respond to such challenges so that RS may be religiously and culturally responsive to all the needs of learners.

3.2.2 Religious Studies and colonisation as a challenge

The second challenge of religion in society and Zimbabwe in particular is that it is associated with colonisation. Religion in a general sense preceded colonisation in many African countries. This is clarified in the following words of Desmond Tutu, cited by Cooper and Dancyger (2005:10) that: “[w]hen the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said: 'Let us pray.' We closed our eyes. When we opened them we had the Bible and they had the land.”

The introduction of formal schooling in Zimbabwe saw the inception of religion into the curriculum against the background that the missionaries had used all possible means to displace African traditions and epistemologies that were deemed superstitious and irrelevant. Because RS is associated with colonisation, many people have difficulty in accepting RS as a relevant subject for African learners. This even explains the resistance to other religions, such as Islam, in the Zimbabwean society. Just as the Christian missionaries used religion to colonise Africa, Islam can also use religion to colonise Zimbabweans; hence, there is resistance.

It is generally argued by some scholars such as Ciaffa (2008:212) that “colonialism violently disrupted African cultural traditions and imposed [a new form of civilisation which was foreign to African way of life], with varying degrees of success. In these cases, colonisers often permitted missionaries to start or continue schooling in the colonies”. The extent of missionaries’ responsibility to education fluctuated across imposing supremacies but was generally substantial (Gallego & Woodberry, 2010:298) to strategically displace African hegemony. The key goal of RS was mainly to ensure that Africans would misplace their religious uniqueness and embrace the European Christian view (Gwaravanda, Masitera & Muzambi, 2013:226). This led to the assumption that the acquiescence of the Victorian Christian missionaries, British colonial government and the church were in a way to promote British commercial interests in order to control Africans (Mungezi, 1991:3). Western education was arguably the prevailing device for diminishing the permanency of traditional education and for navigation in a process of Western change (Datta, 1984:36).

The missionaries sought to encourage a Christian way of life through education and to this end they advocated a Christian philosophy of education, namely Christian RS, which emphasised Christian values (Chizelu, 2006:79) to force indigenous people into submission and an unquestionable acceptance of Victorian hegemony. Some overenthusiastic missionaries even demolished traditional ritual places in an attempt to encourage the evangelised to accept that their ancient ways were insignificant (Lado, 2006:9). To buttress the same notion, Zvobgo (1996:56) argues that “RS was introduced into the formal secondary school curriculum during the colonial era of an evangelising instrument, hence its cultural bias” and partiality. Analysing these scholars, I notice that they describe the negative impact of the missionaries on society, namely the cultural and religious displacement of the Africans. While this may be true, it is also critical to note that the presence of missionaries in African society also brought a new dimension to the people who were considered outcast and disadvantaged by the set-up of the African hegemony. For example, the missionaries preached equality of all men in society in the eyes of God, while the African and in particular the Ndebele believed in a class system of people depending on their contribution to and influence in society. The message of the missionaries was easily accepted by the dominated members of the society. According to Gatsheni-Ndlovu (2003:189), the missionaries’ teaching implied equality and this was a direct challenge to African hegemony

(Gatsheni-Ndlovu, 2003:189). In short, my argument is that scholars often view the effects of colonisation from the perspective of the dominant group, who wanted to maintain the status quo, instead of examining the effects of colonisation with a particular focus on those who had been disadvantaged by African arrangements of dominance.

Taking the argument of religion and colonisation, Mungazi (1991:1) is of the view that “the whites, both missionaries and lay persons, intended to pursue a set of objectives designed to promote their own interests”, as opposed to the interest of the indigenous people. Schmidt (1990:624) states that to achieve the colonisation process, “some African chiefs, headmen and other male elders were power assigned and manipulated by the colonial state, to be the backbone of the administrative system of indirect rule”. While “individuals were fully aware of the strategies to divide and rule and their abuses, they portrayed themselves neither as victims nor as rebels (Summer, 2002:xiv) out of fear of the missionaries who had the backing of the colonial government. Deducing from this, I notice that colonisation through religion was not only the task of the missionaries but also of the Africans who had been converted. The converted played a pivotal role and in some cases, they became preachers and teachers who championed the new religion.

I am also cognisant that some people, especially with Christian orientation, may not agree with the view that missionary activities were associated with colonisation, because to them, the missionaries were harbingers of an era of enlightenment. Hence, they had a divine mandate to invade unchristianised Africa. Taking the above into consideration, the implication is that colonisation through religion becomes an effective tool to sustain colonial hegemony and displace African epistemologies on the basis that some African people had joined the train of colonisation. This implies that colonisation divided the African society; hence, religion and its study present a problem in that they colonised and divided society and must therefore be resisted in the school curriculum, especially because it carries the religion associated with colonisation.

3.2.3 Divisions and lack of dialogue among religious adherents

Another challenge facing religion in society is the fact that religious leaders and adherents rarely reach to consensus in relation to behaviour, lifestyle, and approach to a situation. The Christian faith, for example, comprises Orthodox, Protestants, Pentecostals, charismatics, apostolics and so on. Islam is divided into Ahmadiyya, Sunni, Shia, and Khawarij, among others. Hindu denominations include Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Shaktism. The list is endless. Of course, one may argue that there is nothing wrong with diversity. However, these divisions also mean that firstly, each religion can hardly speak with one voice in quest for a sustainable solution. Secondly, since religion is practised in both the public and private sphere, there are many confusing ideas across society about religion. Because of all these divergent views, many people do not have adequate knowledge of the complexity of religions, leading some to extremist behaviour in the name of religion. According to Montalvo and Querol (2000:4), religious and “ethnic conflict strains the bonds that sustain social fabric and sustain civility and it is often the root of violence that results in looting, deaths, and other social pathologies”. These disagreements cascade to other areas of society, such as in business. Ushie (2015:121) states that companies and factories often fold because of insecurity arising from the fear of conflict among various religious groups.

My argument here so far is that these divisions among religions hamper the use of religion to solve social pathologies. The challenge of divisions in religions is that the adherents of each religion are inclined to view their religious beliefs as the most closely aligned with God, leading to the development of many doctrines. In order to ensure that certain views are maintained over others, violence or coercion is used. Therefore, “religious adherents respond to threats to the religion by seeking a political entity in which their faith is privileged at the expense of others” (Brahm, 2005:2). In the light of this, I argue that the space of religion in society is compromised due to diversity on issues that matter in a society, like politics and education. The general tendency is that they want a certain religious ideology to dominate the curriculum and this certainly presents challenges.

3.2.4 Legacy of colonial educational policies on religion

The arrival of missionaries in Zimbabwe brought the concept of formal education, which was grounded in policies that guided teaching and learning. In this section, I focus on the policies that had a direct bearing on the teaching of religion. The colonial policies assumed that Africa had a religious vacuum; hence, the role of the missionaries was to fill the vacuum through education. The current challenge is to re-educating young people in African religiosity. In this work, I focus on three selected policies, which I believe still influence the teaching and learning of RS despite the much-celebrated decolonisation of Africa.

3.2.4.1 Keigwin Scheme of 1920

The Keigwin Scheme was set up to look into the education of the natives; it was named after the then director of native development, H.S. Keigwin. His plan was to open industries in villages. As a pilot project, he opened two industrial African schools at Domboshawa in Mashonaland in 1920 and Tjolotjo in Matabeleland in 1921 (Zvobgo, 1981:13). Keigwin argued that the government should “develop village industries such as basket making, chair making, pottery, tile work and other crafts which would not compete with European trade and products” (Rose, 1970:242). He sought to develop the concept of a unified curriculum pointing to all means by which Africans could raise their levels of production and provide themselves with more comfortable living conditions (Atkinson, 1972:98). The Keigwin policy was to “deny indigenous people’s advancement into the modern industrial economy, consequently, Africans were denied advanced skills for self-sufficiency and self-determination in the social-economic order” (Shizha, 2011:19). In his understanding of native education, Africans were only good when equipped with practical skills as opposed to literacy. The strategy here was to channel Africans towards subjects that did not demand or enhance critical thinking, enabling a dogmatic and confessional approach to religion. I do not negate the vocationalisation approach to education. However, my argument is that while it was important, Africans were given practical subjects so that they did not develop a critical mind to question the activities and the policies of the colonial government. According to CER, this was domination and also created a false consciousness (see 2.4.2 & 2.4.5).

Keigwin's attitude to literacy education produced problems of a different kind by threatening to precipitate the first major fight between the missionaries and government over the main lines of educational policy in the territory. The missionaries tended to look with suspicion on any form of literary instruction not grounded in Christian teachings (Atkinson, 1992:101). The Keigwin Scheme for Africans became "a subject of debate among the colonial officials and church leaders... not because it was in the hands of missionaries or not but because of what it was designed to do" (Mungazi, 1991:4). Interrogating the views of Atkinson and Mungezi, I notice that for the missionaries, education that was valid was premised in grounding learners with Christian views. Therefore, any education that compromised this need was deemed unnecessary. The fact that RS today is still Christocentric in nature, confirms that education in Zimbabwe suffers from the hangover of colonial policies on education, despite decolonisation. In essence, the status quo has not changed, and this through the lens of CER and in particular the principle of social justice impedes attempts to democratise RS to meet the lived realities of a multicultural society.

In relation to the Keigwin Scheme, the missionaries were not opposed to a policy of industrial education. They were anxious to promote formal academic education and RS in particular. This was because firstly, it enabled them to prepare young Africans for church, particularly during the early days when missionaries were unacquainted with local conditions and the languages and customs of the people (Zvobgo, 1996:17). The conflict between the missionaries and colonialists became apparent when the missionaries emphasised R.I (The name used for the study of religion before it was changed to RS) and the latter emphasised manual labour as a more appropriate form of education for Africans (Mungazi, 1991:3). To this end, the Keigwin Scheme did not seek to enhance the knowledge that the Africans already had before the arrival of the missionaries. With the help of the missionaries, the scheme sought to convert and position Africans into understanding that African religiosity was impracticable, primitive and did not have a space in the progressive processes of development. In short, the policy centred on the promotion of vocationalisation for African learners, but because of the influence of the missionaries, the policy also focused on learning Christian religion. Hence, there was a deliberate exclusion of African religion and epistemologies, which has continued in contemporary RS in Zimbabwe (see Zimsec, 2013, Section 5). Through the lens of CER, which I use to interrogate issues, this is a

challenge because it promotes exclusion and a superiority complex and ultimately it does not contribute to the improvement of human conditions (see 2.4.1).

3.2.4.2 Phelps-Stokes Report of 1925

The Phelps-Stokes Commission was sponsored by the Phelps-Stokes Fund of New York to inquire into the state of native education in Africa (Atkinson, 1972:103). Colonial government in pre-Zimbabwe, through Phelps-Stokes intended “to promote a rationalised, coordinated and effective system of education, mainly under the supervision of missionaries” (Mwanakatwe 1968:17). The Commission made a number of recommendations: to increase government spending on education to include grants-in-aid to mission schools; to provide financial aid to central mission schools; to give aid to missionaries in supervising the educational work of their missions; to provide an allocation of funds for Zimbabwean visiting teachers in order to encourage and improve village schools; to provide religious and moral education in all schools (Phelps-Stokes Reports 1962:55-56). The intention of the fund was to promote the missionaries and the schools that embraced Christian values. The funding is not a problem at all; in fact, funding is important for schools. It only becomes a problem when it is used to destroy people’s culture or other religions in society. This causes conflict which becomes difficult to extinguish it once it has started. My argument, informed by CER, is that you cannot solve the problem of religious exclusion by introducing a new form of religious exclusion. I argue for policies that ensure religious inclusion, social justice and collaboration (see 2.4.3).

Furthermore, the commission sought to create a space for the missionaries to control education. It managed to make RS a central subject in all schools, with the missionaries having full control of education. The “most significant recommendation made by this Commission was the provision for and emphasis on religious and moral education in schools, which in the view of the missionaries was the most relevant education” (Masterton 1987:13). This implied that funding was only to be directed to schools that had RS as a central subject. Therefore, all the schools that wanted grants were forced to resort to the teaching and learning of RS. In short, the policy sought to propagate missionary education through funding. Another element that arises from the analysis of the Phelps-Stokes policy is that missionaries were in charge of RS, and

that RS was therefore taught by Christians. It is traditionally understood, as a misconception of course, that RS is a continuation of church activities. As such, believers can teach RS despite the lack of professional training on the subject. This mentality has continued over the years, with few attempts to train secondary school teachers for RS. Most schools are staffed by RS teachers who have not been trained. In most cases, they are committed members of the church who lack a pedagogy orientation.

3.2.4.3 George Stark policy of 1934

The third educational policy in question was devised by George Stark, appointed by the Huggins administration in 1935 as a chief administrative officer to coordinate all levels of native education (Mungazi, 1991:43). He formulated a policy of training teachers capable of teaching courses in what Keigwin called village industries; however, it had no relevance to the traditional life of Africans (Mungazi, 1991:50). His philosophy of education for the Africans was premised on three major categories, namely curriculum structures, supervision of schools and training of African personnel to ensure effective management of the native schools. Stark ordered that missionary superintendents should supervise the teachers (Mungazi, 1991:45). The missionaries' control over education opened the way to the broader pressures of Western expansion, to direct colonial rule and to cultural imperialism (Vilhanova, 2002:49). From this, it is clear that the missionaries began to take control of the teachers, ultimately enforcing teaching in an evangelical manner to please the supervisors.

Under this scheme, African education was purposefully designed as a colonial instrument to make African children fit certain moulds in order to perform roles and tasks for the colonial administrators and the settlers (Ndlovu, 2004:4), with missionaries being "portents and curators of education on behalf of the imperial government". In the light of this approach, the Africans and teachers began to develop a negative attitude towards the missionary inspectors (Mungazi, 1991:47). Given that missionaries became inspectors, it followed that RS became a very important subject in the school curriculum. Religious education or RE (the name used for RS during part of the colonial period) was made compulsory in 1940, partly to support the moral values underlying "democracy" (White, 2010:151). To concretise this view, Mungazi

(1991:2) avers that “[b]ecause the education of Africans remained largely the responsibility of Christian organisations...it stressed the learning of moral and religious values as the most important of an objective of education”. The implication of this policy is that missionaries occupied a central role in the education of the Africans, with latent and explicit emphasises of the Christian religion as the alpha and omega of the native populace, in the process dismantling the traditional way of life.

From the analysis of the three educational policies in Zimbabwe, it can be concluded that the missionaries created a legacy that only one religion was superior and should be cultivated through mainstream curriculum practices. Rather than creating space and respect for difference, this kind of RS is profoundly illiberal, effectively giving one group the ability to make life exceptionally difficult for the other (Given, 2014:4). To elucidate this further, Ndlovu (2004:55) says that the missionaries “influenced and shaped the content and character of the subject. They were convinced that any future development in African education was to be built on a Christian foundation.”

Interpreting this challenge through the lens of CER, I conclude that the role of the missionaries was to create a monothelic curriculum that closed doors to other religions, preventing them from penetrating in mainstream curriculum practices. The closing of doors alludes to the fact that the missionaries were convinced that Christianity was the only relevant religion, negating the learners who had a different view. In the next section, I focus on religion as a channel for negative citizenship.

3.2.5 Religious studies and negative citizenship

Religion is a powerful force in human interactions. It can shape and reshape people’s behaviour towards accepting a certain ideology as the laws of the Medes and Persians. The challenge in simple terms is that religion is enforced in learners or members of society to instil a sense of obedience for the benefit of certain other members of the society. Adding to this, Baidhaw (2007:18) argues that government uses religion as an ideological apparatus to indoctrinate students towards obedience through state-sanctified concepts of religions. In such cases, the concept of citizenship is narrow, “oppressive and exclusionary, exacerbating tensions between diverse groups within a multicultural society” (Antal, 2008:88). It is under these conditions that citizenship becomes negative. Moreover, in the context of negative citizenship, religion

“is reduced to indoctrination or functions only as a process of socialisation while the promise and possibilities of transformative human activity are ignored” (Siejk, 2001:548). Post-independence political elites often tend to monopolise nationalist history and religions for their own ends in political rhetoric (Munochiveyi, 2011:71). The challenge here is that religion is more often used in political rhetoric to foster issues that dehumanise people to follow a certain ideology devoid of critical thinking. It raises a society that is dominated and can be manipulated to engage in violent acts, causing yet more problems. Through the lens of CER, I find citizenship education dehumanising because it reduces people to object used to fulfil agendas from which they do not benefit.

The other challenge in the teaching and learning of RS is the lack of professionally educated teachers to teach RS.

3.2.6 Lack of professional educated RS teachers

In many schools in Zimbabwe, RS is taught by teachers that did not major in religion during their teacher education. Only one college in Zimbabwe focuses on RS, namely the Mutare teacher's college. This makes it impossible to ensure adequate staffing in RS despite university graduate who have joined teaching in the Zimbabwean secondary schools. The implication is that teachers are not fully and adequately prepared to handle multi religious challenges in the classroom. Commenting on this situation in the case of Malawi, Matemba (2011:85) avers that RS becomes a subject which by “law must be taught but the very same law does not give any provision for the training of teacher specialists in the subject”. In such case, it becomes very difficult or impossible for teachers to avoid influencing their religion, (mis)presenting other religions and creating stereotypes (Cush, 2007:220). The lack of qualified teachers stems from the colonial legacy, where the subject was entrusted to committed members of the church. I believe the missionaries and even the present educationists do not commit themselves to the training of RS because they know committed church members can fill the gap. This undoubtedly leads to confessional RS and consequently more problems, especially when other religions need space in the curriculum.

3.2.7 Religion abuses as a challenge

One of the inescapable challenges is religious abuse, where some religious leaders have used their authority to take advantage of members of their religion. In some cases, the religious leaders establish laws and systems that violate human rights. The abusive religious systems are sometimes described as “legalistic, mind controlling, religiously addictive, and authoritarian” (Henze, 1996:1). Issues of abuse remain one of the challenges in religion today. Some religious leaders have appeared in both print and electronic media for the wrong reasons, such as using religion to exploit unsuspecting followers into sex (more often the victim realises that they have been duped into sex through religion) and in some cases taking people’s money through charismatic and motivational speeches. In some cases, religion has been used to justify wars and aggression (Velasco, 2007:78). Innocent people suffer because of religious acts. The daily news abounds in reports of genocide, ethnic cleansing and the expulsion of people in the name of religion (Alexander & Alexander, 2001:133). This is partly because “whenever religion is involved, the emotional level of group identification rises quickly and options for conflict resolution narrow substantially. In this regard, there is a risk of the increase of inter-religious and cultural violence, and discrimination” (Basedau, Vullers & Korner, 2013:860).

The world still “remembers the savage massacres in Rwanda in 1994 in a fall out of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict memories also abound, of the warlords of politics in Somalia that led to the near collapse of the country. Today Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote D’Ivoire, and Sudan remain one of the continent hotbeds of religious and ethnic conflict” (Cyril, 2007:38). The picture that emerges is one where religion is used for violent means, a form of abuse. It usually affects people that may have nothing to do with the agenda at hand.

3.2.8 Religion as both personal and pedagogical

Religion in society remains a problem in that it is both personal and pedagogical. It is personal in that it touches people’s emotions and hearts. It is pedagogical in that it is taught in schools. Because religion is culturally universal, it is intertwined with all other dimensions of human life (Ayotollahy, 2008:35) implying that religion is a personal;

matter and influences individual's behaviour towards other aspects of life (Carrette & King, 2005:14). Because religion is personal, parents with strong religious convictions are sensitive to issues of faith and can withdraw their children from school on religious grounds (Webb, 2014:141). Religion is embedded so deeply that those who think they are unaffected by religion, unknowingly participate subtly in religion in various forms (Marsh, 2007:824). I contend that everyone is religious, and people appeal to religion more often in times of conflict and pain and when they suffer problems. There is nothing wrong in being religious at a personal level; it only a challenge when one's personal convictions have to influence, shape and reshape pedagogy. People treat religions very differently at a personal level; hence, when religion moves from a personal level to a pedagogic space, it has to be interrogated through the lens of CER so that religion in pedagogy can address the lived realities of diverse learners.

Moreover, the challenges of religion as personal and pedagogical is that religion is unlike race, language or tribe. It is rather something lived and influences the behaviour of people (Marsh, 2007:821). I therefore disagree with the Human Rights Commission (2009:4) that religious education does not engage the beliefs of the learners at a personal level. In fact, learners acquire religious knowledge, catechetical experience and theological formations that become a personal experience (Gravett, Hulsetter & Medine, 2011:162). Based on this, it is no longer possible to view religion as something of private relevance, largely unconnected to broader life institutions such as education (Birdsall, Lindsay & Tomalid, 2015:5).

In the light of this, religious education cannot longer be left to individual families or communities, because there is no guarantee that the sort of education provided in these milieus will contribute positively to public life for the benefits of the society (Rosenblith & Bailey, 2007:94). Because religion is personal, its use in private and in academic discourses presents problems of separation between the personal sphere and academic field, often affecting the effective teaching of religion to public scholarship. Furthermore, some teachers fail to detach from religion as pedagogy from their personal lives, consequently formulating a confessional curriculum that does not address the needs of a multi religious and multicultural society. In short, the challenge here is that the personal aspect of religion influences public life. Its influence varies from person to person and religion to religion, allowing multi-identities of religions to emerge and compete for the curriculum space.

3.2.9 Religion destroys IKS by religion

IKS is taught in RS in Zimbabwe. This has led to a lack of appreciation of IKS by learners, due to imperialism that successfully entrenched the “perception that IKS is worthless or shameful, did not fit into the colonial education system, its scientific notions and or the missionary worldview” (Rasoka, 2005:6). In addition, as Dube *et al* (2015:85) state, the “rise and influence of radical pentecostalism has rendered all prospects of reviving IKS a futile exercise in that direct attacks are directed at IKS and all that it stands for, hence the greatest pitfall that African children face is the dichotomy of knowledge acquired from religious institutes and that of school”. These scholars allude to the fact that teaching IKS in RS faces problems because RS is predominantly Christian, a religion which on its arrival in Africa sought to eradicate African knowledge and epistemologies. I contend that mixing the two in RS presents problems for learners, causing them to become less appreciative of local epistemologies in favour of Western knowledge, and consequently losing benefits associated with embracing and nourishing local epistemologies.

In the light of the challenges of religion raises above, the following section addresses the solution that has been implemented to mitigate the problems of religion both in society and in the curriculum space.

3.3 SOLUTIONS TO RESPOND TO THE PROBLEMS OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Selected models or frameworks are now discussed that have been instigated in different countries in circumvent some of the RS challenges highlighted in the previous section.

3.3.1 Life education: A multi religious model– Taiwan

The first model I discuss is a multi religious one, used in Taiwan to respond to the challenges of religion. Taiwan is a multicultural and religious society, meaning that there are various religions and cultures. Because of the presence of various religions in Taiwan, it was inevitable to ignore the teaching of religion to cater for multi religious and multicultural society. Taiwan has the following religions as noted by Vermander

(1999:130):“Taoism, Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Baha'i faith, Tenrikyo, Li-ism, Tiandejiao, Yiguandao, Xuanyuanjiao and Tiandijiao and these twelve 'religions' are officially recognized as such by the government”.

In response to presence of various religions in Taiwan, it was critical to look more closely at students' religious literacy in preparing them to be participate in a multi religious society (Rosenblith & Bailey, 2007:93) through life education. Before this model, RE in Taiwan was confessional in approach. To mitigate the challenges of confessional religious education, Taiwan introduced Life Education (Shun-Sum, 2002:39). Life Education (LE) consists of “a school's planned provision to promote its pupils' personal, social, and spiritual development. This programme includes learning religious education in a multireligious approach. LE consists of topics such as death and life, character education, career education, and physiological health education” (Shun-Sum, 2009:39). LE in Taiwan is part of an “educational reform programme that intends to create new forms of society based on a revitalised moral culture” (Shun-Sum, 2002:42). Through LE, “pupils understand the diversity of religions and to understand how faiths, values, and traditions have influenced individuals, societies, and cultures. By the same token, pupils can learn the various meanings of death and life from the viewpoint of a multireligious perspective” (Shun-Sum, 2002:41), that is, “how the study of religious culture contributes to socialisation and prevents isolationism of both the secular and the sectarian types” (Kozyrev & TerAvest, 2007:256). From this, I deduce that LE is a comprehensive subject that not only focuses on religion, but also pressing life issues that confront learners. The strength of this approach is that religion is approached from a multi perspective angle, which is religion-inclusive to address the diverse religious needs of the learners.

LE as a multireligious model is one of the most satisfying in an attempt to theorise an education for amity. It “is based on the appreciation on the part of the state of equality of all religions with no official religion being endorsed but without leading to a disappearance or concealment of the collective values of religion which becomes diverse and non-exclusive” (Velasco, 2007:82). The LE subject does not take religion as a locked system that bargains knowledge about all religions and does not seek to assume a particular religious tradition. There is no affection to a precise tradition (Bagir, 2008:5). Instead of just “learning about what given religions believe and why, and placing a positive valuation on them (out of fear of offending), students are given

opportunities to study religions from multiple perspectives as critic, advocate, and skeptic, that is, from within and without” (Rosenblith & Bailey, 2007:98). So far, this approach of LE responds to some of the problems noted above. A multi religious approach to religion is a direct retort to the closed-door challenge of religion in school and society. Religious exclusivity is the lack of acknowledgement of the existence of different religions (see 3.2.1).

Moreover, LE “is a significant factor in the learning of values of equality in believing in the context of difference” (Velasco, 2007:82). It argues that religious traditions are “ideally to be understood cognitively from an objective, neutral standpoint, not something in which one may be personally involved” (Bagir, 2008:5). Also, LE as a multireligious model “is based on reflection on the social ills currently facing society” (Shun-Sum, 2002:42) through engaging various religions as possible solutions to the problems. I notice here that the strength of the model is that cognition that leads to critical thinking is not ignored. As been noted in the challenges, some religious leaders negate cognition into religious matters making religious a problematic phenomenon in society (see 3.2.8). In many cases, people become too committed to religion, to the extent that critical reasoning is relegated to the periphery, leading to religious abuse (see 3.2.7)

The model acknowledges that although a “certain degree of religiocentrism is inevitable, given that absolute neutrality is not possible, it is important to educate both for sensitivity and for critical thinking” (Velasco, 2007:83). The LE model assumes that “it is possible that good interfaith education can operate on the pluralist premise that diversity is beneficial, that there are different worldviews that pupils can learn and critically assess” (Byrne, 2011:55). Considering the day to day experience of interreligious contacts and state-society offer new lessons about the forces that exacerbate religious tensions” (Meagher, 2013:210-211). In this regard, “learning about and from religion is a window to cultural understanding, to human motivation, to ethical discourse, and to the deepest musings of humankind” (Coldwell (2002:12). Hence, schools need not be, according to Richardson (2002:22); “a battleground of conflicting ideologies, as some have feared, rather, they should be a place of challenge, dialogue, and, in a non-sectarian sense of spiritual development”. The strategy calls for “openness to religious diversity [that] promotes honest enquiry and encounter and can lead to new relationships” (Richardson 2002:13). Learners acquire

the understanding that the “beliefs and values of our neighbours are important if we are to have any hope of living in harmony with them; and the school provides a neutral space for this understanding” (Cush, 2007:220-221). Therefore, a dialogue (Patalong, 2014:43) with diverse world views is instigated which is correctly recognised as a requisite element of social coexistence. This approach addresses the problem of an education that is monothelic through deliberately engaging learners in various ideas. Hence, the school becomes a battlefield for thinking, while at the same time fostering the values of peaceful coexistence of different religious adherents. This responds to the challenge noted (see 3.2.4) where schools and educational policies are positioned to promote one religion over the other. I also note that this model through the lens of CER promotes social justice (see 2.4.3).

I conclude that LE as a multireligious model in Taiwan has sought to address the diverse needs of learners. No single religion has dominated the curriculum, as in the case of Zimbabwe. In short, the model is democratic in the sense that it views all religions as equally important and that they should be cultivated in the mainstream curriculum. In the following section, I address the hermeneutic-communicative model of Nigeria.

3.3.2 Hermeneutic-communicative model (Nigeria)

I focused on Nigeria on the basis that it is one of the African hotbeds for religious and ethnic conflict, especially involving extremist Christians and Islam. In Nigeria religion “has continued to surface in the political sphere of the country, and the dramatic and dynamic changes religion has taken in the contemporary global political space has further given much impetus to the phenomenon of religion and politics in Nigeria” (Onapayo, 2012:43). In the light of this, Nigeria has refocused RS education through the hermeneutic-communicative model (HCM) to respond to political problems that are intertwined in religion. Because of the intersect of religion and politics, Nigeria is currently experiencing war and conflict based on ethnicity and religious differences. I note here that HCM is a model that attempts to solve the problems associated with religions and politics that have caused people to lose their lives. Instead of contributing to improving human conditions (see 2.4.1), religion has caused untold suffering. In this

study, I view this as religious abuse in the sense that religious adherents use religion for personal interests (see 3.1.7).

Traditionally “Nigerian education has been influenced by outstanding pedagogical cultures, the African Traditional Religion, the Arabic-Islamic education and Euro-Christian or European pedagogy via the colonial projects” (Ugbor, 2015:91). HCM functioned against the background of correlation dialectics, from the 1990s in particular. It functions against the backdrop of pluralistic theology (Pollefeyt, 2008:13). Because RE in Nigeria was informed by different competing theological orientations, it was critical to bring these theological orientations into a dialogue. The HCM model emphasises communication to solve religious challenges. This model therefore responds to the challenge noted (see 3.2.3) where religion as a social institution is divided to the extent that religious adherents cannot speak with one voice to solve pressing issues of the day.

HCM contributes to the “religious formation of pupils, engaging the multidimensional and transdisciplinary issues that people bring in RE classes”. The approach demands from both educator and pupils a multidimensional logic of accountability (Ugbor, 2011:90). In this model of faith communication, “the hermeneutical intersections are traced, laid bare and unravelled in a communicative process in the class” (Pollefeyt, 2008:14). HCM of religious “formation aims at encouraging pupils to reflect critically on the tension and conflicting interpretations present in a classroom and shape their search for spiritual and moral identity in order to discover the similarities, difference and conflict between their everyday experiences and faith tradition” (Ugbor, 2014:93). The purpose of HCM in religious education is to allow students to apprehend their own and other religions or philosophical assumptions and reinforce their awareness (Pollefeyt, 2008:14). In addition, as Fraser (1995:5) notes using the lens of HCM, “teaching of religion in the schools provides an extraordinary, helpful means of approaching religion...thus power and control are understood and dealt with properly”. Juxtaposing the above, I note that this educational model does not negate the view that learners come to class with various religious orientations. As such, these orientations are used to develop learners’ morals and relate the experiences to their daily lives. Further, the model gives learners an opportunity to relate with the religious other, which addresses issues of power dimension in religion and control. The analysis

of power and control then allows learners to develop a moral orientation that helps them in their daily experiences.

HCM has two dimensions. The hermeneutical dimension which allows pupils to learn from one another through religious stories. The communicative dimension stresses taking learners on a lifelong voyage in search and reception of meaning (Ugbor, 2014:93). In this voyage, differences in religious pedagogies are taken very seriously; opinions, attitudes and traditions are not dismissed, but are to the contrary made explicit (Pollefeyt, 2008:14). Students study religions from multiple perspectives as critics, advocates and sceptics, that is, from within and without. Students thus learn to treat religion with respect (Rosenblith & Bailey, 2007:98-99). These curricula help students “explore and understand various moral rationales and motivations from a variety of cultural sources, religious and otherwise, provide the opportunity for students to engage with difference and develop the capacity for mutual respect and (when necessary) reasonable disagreement” (Kunzman, 2003:260). In this model, life choices and religious inclinations are seen as affianced, attitudes that are best conversed in an engaged style (Pollefeyt, 2008:15). This strategy has strengths that cannot be ignored. It allows people to engage critically with religion without any ridicule of religious traditions that the learners may not understand or subscribe to. It does allow disagreement, which is natural, but these disagreements are treated with respect. It also acknowledges that religion is a personal phenomenon and as such should be cultivated in the curriculum but not at the expense of other religion. In this regard, I contend that learners acquire a new dimension of handling social pathologies in respect, love and a considerate spirit towards traditions that are different from theirs.

The following section addresses the Malawian model, which also attempted to solve religious challenges in society.

3.3.3 The Malawian approach

Malawi gained independence from Britain in 1964 (Bone, 2000:91). Just like any other postcolonial state, Malawi had a major challenge with the teaching and learning of RS. Describing RS in Malawi, Rimmington (1966:127) alludes to the fact that it served mission resolutions, namely to create people that were more capable in the Bible and catechism. The missionaries in Malawi demanded conversion before enrolment (Bone

2000:90). They operated on a “policy that can be described as Christianity before literacy” (Heyneman 1972:143). The Bible is the sole textual reference in the learning of RS. The advent of political pluralism in Malawi has created many challenges to the nation, particularly the youth (Malawi Ministry of Education, 1998), who want to find space for their religion in the mainstream curriculum practices. The RS situation in Malawi is similar to that of Zimbabwe, largely because both countries were colonised by the British. The agenda of the missionaries, in my view, was that while literacy was important, it was subject to being a successful Christian. Because of the prestige associated with literacy, for example white-collar jobs, it became inevitable that locals would resist the new form of civilisation. In turn, the missionaries successfully Christianised schools, at the same time obliterating IKS (see 3.2.9). This situation pertains to the challenge that there is religious exclusivism in the curriculum (see 3.2.1).

In response to this challenge, Malawi’s educational authorities introduced two separate syllabi for religion in schools, namely Religious and Moral Education (RME) and Bible Knowledge (BK). These are offered simultaneously in the secondary school curriculum (Phiri, 1998:127). RME syllabus “focuses on a multifaith [the concept is similar to the multifaith approach used in the Zimbabwean secondary school] with its content cutting across the three major religions, namely Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion. BK is a mono-faith drawing its content from the Bible as the scripture for Christianity” (MoE, 1998:iv). The intention of the dual syllabi is to include marginalised religions into the school curriculum. While this appear to be a noble idea in response to the problems of religious exclusivism in Malawi, I note that both syllabi still gives Christianity an advantage over other religions. The study of religion in Malawi has therefore remained Christocentric.

RME deals mainly with “religious concepts and themes in areas such as the meaning of religion, exploring religious founders, describing sacred communication and explaining worship festivals, symbols, and rituals of life and death” (Phiri, 1998:126). Despite the attempts premised in RME, the reality in schools was that Christianity remained the sole religion. Biblical “stories and mnemonics of selected Biblical texts dominate teaching and learning. It seems there is rare inquiry, discussion and reflective methods used. In most cases, children were not even encouraged to challenge and probe further on what they were being taught” (Matemba 2011:86). The

Malawi model to religion exposes loopholes, largely as stipulated by Matemba (2011) – it does not encourage critical thinking into interrogating religious issues as with the case with Nigerian approach to religion (see 3.4.1). In the light of this, I argue that the study of religion that does not promote critical thinking exposes learners to various forms of abuse that are religion-related. In the absence of critical thinking about religious matters, it is easy for adherents of other religions to use religion to exploit others. It is important, then, that religious pedagogy contributes to critical thinking in order to allow learners to juxtapose religious issues before making a passive conclusion that neither enhances their lives nor develops well-balanced learners.

RME “is motivated by the desire to create a purely educational form of religious education, one which will not be open to the charge of indoctrinating or giving an unfair advantage to a particular religion” (Hull, 2007:3). However; churches “reiterate that those who desire to reform and displace BK in the curriculum on the pretext of balancing the conundrum might have another hidden agenda” (Bone 2000:87). This situation raises issues of power relations, where the church had a voice to control and influence a decision about the teaching and learning of religion. Because of this control, I conclude that it can become challenging for other religions to gain space in the curriculum.

The weakness of the dual RME curriculum it largely indoctrinates learners, and gives unfair advantages to Christianity over Islam and African Traditional Religion (ATR). This is because while Christianity is exclusively covered in the mono-faith space (BK)” (Sookrajh & Salanjira, 2009:80). In essence, the current situation in Malawi is that RME is taught as a compulsory subject that includes Islam, Christianity and Malawi ATR. BK is taught as an elective and it is based only on the Christian faith, implying that Christianity has a large portion in RE. The only success that Malawi managed, as I cross-examine issues here using the lens of CER (see 2.4), is that having two syllabuses accommodates Islam and Malawi ATR, which of course not enough to respond to religious exclusion.

The next section focuses on the Malaysian model’s response to the challenges of religion.

3.3.4 Inter-religious dialogue – Malaysian model

Just like any other multireligious country, Malaysia grounds the teaching and learning of religion to Inter-religious dialogue (IRD). IRD is “being understood as intellectual discourse, forum or public lecture” (Shahrom, 2004:23). IRD “occurs whenever members of participating religions come together to discuss matters concerning their religions in order to improve understanding among each other” (Nasr 1995:25). IRD involves a conference or a series of meeting between scholars from two or more religious communities. The meetings involve the discussion on key “components of the religions that need to be elucidated to the community members (Barker, 1998:11). Various group members, “be it Muslim or non-Muslim play[s] an active role in promoting inter-religious dialogue in Malaysia. Among those organizations are Akademi Kajian Ketamadunan (Academy of Civilization Studies) (AKK), Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia (Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia) (IKIM), Malaysia Consultative Council for Buddhism, Christian, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST) and the Archdiocesan Ministry of Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs (AMEIA) representing inter-faith and non-Muslim organizations” (Yasof & Majid, 2012:9). In responding to the problem of religion in society, it is clear that there is collaboration among various religious leaders and groups. This is what I call hybridity in this research study, where various people come together despite their religious and cultural dissimilarities to respond to the challenges of society. I also note that this strategy takes religion further than pedagogy level. Religion becomes a public discourse, where various people can engage in religion. This reduces prejudice and the misconceptions associated with religion when it is relegated to private places only. While private space to discuss and practice religion is important, it does not generally help learners and society in religious engagement.

In the Malaysian model, religious leaders from various religions engage in dialogue that focuses on “nurturing participants’ abilities to engage in collective thinking and inquiry for the development of meaningful relationship” (Yasof & Majid, 2012:9). Usually under this model various religious leaders engage in public debate on the role and importance of the religion (Yasof & Majid, 2012:9). This allows religions to dialogue among together there by creating unity, and serves as a direct response to

the challenge of division and a lack of unity among religions (see 3.2.3). While the model is very important for engaging religion into the public space, the challenge with this model is that it does not show how it is cascaded down the schooling system. I therefore argue that while this helps to mitigate challenges of religion at social level, it is more important to have a strategy that engages the learners. It is desirable that the culture of religious tolerance and acceptance of difference should emanate from a pedagogical level and then cascade down to different social structures to respond to the challenges of religion.

3.3.5 The British approach to Religious Studies

Britain is one of the nation's experiencing an influx of different people with different religious orientations, making it a cosmopolitan society. As a result, the study of religion was posed to change in the light of the multireligious and multicultural needs of society. To regulate the teaching and learning of religion, a body was formed at a local level. It was "composed of professional bodies, for example, representing teachers or advisers; faith communities varying from the Anglicans to the Zoroastrians; new religious movements such as the Pagan Federation and non-religious organisations such as the British Humanist Association; and several interfaith networks and centres" (Chateretal, 2014:257). As a starting point to respond to the challenges of religion, Britain managed to have various religions to come together under one roof to find best suitable practices that address the lived realities of the learners.

The British religious body comprises the major religions and various faiths practised in Britain.

The "breadth of the RE Council's membership (over 60 national bodies of various religions and faiths), representing professional religious educators and national organisations of religion and belief, gives RS wide currency. The extensive consultation about draft versions of this framework means the document provides a widely supported platform for RE which can encourage a coherent range of RE syllabus" (National Council for Religious Education, 2013:9). This forms a hybridity of religious ideas through consensus with an intention of improving learning and teaching of religion in schools.

Unlike, RS in Zimbabwe, where content and methodology is not explicit, RE in Britain has “largely followed the ways in which English, Mathematics, and Science are described in the national curriculum, including examples and notes” (NCFRE, 2013:10). Using this strategy, “pupils gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ” (NCFRE, 2013:11). Another aspect of religious education in Britain is that every city has a locally agreed syllabus where various religious leaders give their input on what is taught in their area. As a result, the syllabus differs from one city to another depending on what has been locally agreed. Jackson (2013:5) states that “syllabuses for RE in community schools in England are drafted at a local level by an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) which includes four committees: representatives of teachers; the Church of England; other denominations and religions; and local authority representatives. In such cases, RE dilutes the power of one religion through the involvement of various religious groups throughout the curriculum process.

The major strength of the framework is that it is endorsed by various religious groups, limiting religious threats and chances of rejection. The content, methodology and textbooks are compiled by consensus. The syllabus is agreed by various local available religions. Hence, domination and a power struggle are eliminated.

3.3.6 Approaches to teaching the RS curriculum in Zimbabwe

In this section, I focus on various strategies and approaches that have been implemented in Zimbabwe to respond to the challenges of religion. I discuss three approaches: the life experience approach, the phenomenological approach and the model currently used in Zimbabwe, which is the multifaith approach.

3.3.6.1 Life experience

The postcolonial educational reforms realised that “RS curriculum totally ignored the life situation of the Zimbabwean learners; where African traditional religion and culture played an important part, especially in shaping the beliefs and values of the learners” (Curriculum Development Unit 1981:3). To respond to this challenge, a life experience

approach was adopted so that “learners are able to relate their spirituality to life problematic issues. The life approach was developed at Westhill College, Birmingham, by Ronald Goldman and Douglas Hubery, and sought to relate the ordinary experience of children to the Bible. The approach also became known as the life theme approach” (Teece, 2010:32). It was practised in many countries in East and Central African schools (Onsongo, 2002:10).

The introduction of the life experience approach in the Zimbabwean situation was “thus a negotiation of the views of the radical policy makers, curriculum developers, educational administrators and educators and the views of the conservative policymakers, curriculum developers, educational administrators and educators” (Ndlovu, 2004:118-119). This model has solid origins in Christian RE. It observes the life “issues of children and encourages them to reflect on them against the explanations given in religious texts” (Matema, 2011:26). The approach intended to help “learners as they relate religion to their life experience” (Ndlovu, 2004:116). This approach to RE refers to a “tactic which focuses attention on the whole of the child’s experiences or more precisely, it focuses on the child’s attention on the whole of his experiences, and uses them as the basis for forming religious concepts” (Grimmit, 1973:52). So far, the strength of the approach is that it attempts to relate religion to the practices of the learners. I further more note the challenge of this approach is that it is founded on one religion. Through my lens of CER, this does not work towards championing social justice and a hybridity approach to life problems (see 2.4.3).

3.3.6.2 Phenomenological or non-confessional approach

The weakness of the life theme approach with its basis on one religion necessitated the phenomenological approach to RE. As a concept and an approach to teaching and learning of religion “phenomenology has a long history, although our present understanding of it is generally associated with the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)” (Ricoeur, 2007:21). The recent growth of the model as a retreat from confessional religious education began in the mid-1960s (Strhan, 2010:25). The term phenomenology is “derived from the Greek word *phainomai* which means ‘that which manifests itself’. Phenomenology may, therefore, be regarded as a study of

‘appearances’” (Chatindo, 1998:102). The phenomenological approach does not stress the acceptance of a particular faith or belief system, which is the privilege of religious bodies; nor does it press for conversion (Singh, 1986:233) but seeks to ‘inform’ rather than ‘convert’ pupils” (Swann, 1985:498). Phenomenology was a direct response to the confessional teaching and learning of religion. It was a departure from the confessional approach, seeking to inform learners on religion.

The approach attempted to ensure that learners gained an appreciation of “the diverse and sometimes conflicting life stances which exist and thus enabling them to determine and to justify their own religious position” (Singh, 1986:233). The phenomenological approach emphasises “tolerance, openness, autonomy, and social justice, which are regarded as above question and constitutive of the liberal tradition” (Barnes, 2001a:447-448). Buttressing the notion, Strhan (2010:25) argues that phenomenology at “dialogical understanding of the meaning of religious practices and placed importance on collaboration with religious communities in constructing curricula for study and in the preparation of texts for analysis”. The phenomenological approach to RS attempts to help learners “understand the nature of belief and a range of belief systems” (Singh, 1986:242).

The disadvantage of the phenomenological approach in the teaching and learning of RS is that it fails to take into account the questions that pupils pose about religion, just as it refuses to allow pupils’ existential concerns to shape the religious education curriculum. It also does not take consideration and reconnoitre the issue of religious truth: how is religious truth to be determined and what criteria are appropriate? (Barnes, 2001:580-581). Furthermore, according to Lovat (2001:570), “phenomenological religious education is too heavily descriptive, values-neutral, and lacks a certain definitiveness in making an assessment between good and bad religious claims”. Given the weaknesses of this approach, I am of the view that this approach is inadequate in the sense that it does not engage learners to be active participants in religion and it is descriptive in the sense that it does not allow interrogation on other issues beside those stipulated by the syllabus. Interrogating this through CER, I conclude that while it attempted to respond to the challenges of life theme approach, it has fallen short of encouraging learners to engage in religion because it is descriptive. A descriptive approach entails that religious paths are not negotiated; therefore, it impedes attempts to achieve the coexistence of religions.

In the next section, I discuss the current approach used in the teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwe, which is the multifaith approach.

3.3.6.3 Multifaith approach

Because the phenomenology approach failed to address the challenges of religions in the curriculum, the government from 1997 till present “advocated for a multifaith approach to Religious Studies teaching as it realised and acknowledged the presence of members of other religions besides Christianity in Zimbabwe society, and, consequently schools” (CDU 1999:1). The multifaith approach emerged as a reaction against the discriminatory and reductionist tendencies of exclusivism and inclusivism (see 3.2.1). The approach seeks to redress the pedagogical concerns of RS in a pluralistic environment, in the sense that it rejects the claim that there is a religion that is uniquely true and superior to others (Museka, 2012:64). It is significant that the approach rose to address the presence of religions in society. In favour of “a non-confessional multifaith approach is the argument that human culture past and present cannot be understood without understanding religions in the plural, there is need to understand the beliefs and values of our neighbours if we are to have any hope of living in harmony with them” (Cush, 2007:220).

The origins of the multifaith approach are traced from the West and Britain in particular. This approach was first mooted in the UK in the 1960s and the ensuing decade (Maposa, 2014:76). Two fundamental conditions were at play in the construction of the multifaith approach for the British school system. Firstly, British society gradually became multiracial following the influx of immigrants after the Second World War (1939-45); secondly, the immigrants brought about a religious pluralistic society (Ndlovu, 2004:149). Haar, Moyo and Nondo (in Ndlovu, 2004:149) identified five principles that underpin the multifaith approach:

- Religious studies must transcend the information. It should do so not in the direction of evangelising, but in the direction of initiation into understanding the meaning of, and into questions about the truth and worth of religion.
- Religious studies should not exclude a committed approach, provided it is open and does not artificially restrict understanding and choice.

- Religious studies should provide a service in helping people to understand history and culture other than our own.
- Religious studies should emphasise the descriptive, historical side of religion and thereby enter into dialogue.
- The best interests of both Christians and non-Christians are served by these aims.

I want to engage with these principles briefly. The first principle alludes to the fact that evangelism should not occur in the teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwean schools. This is a noble idea, given that the curriculum does not address the needs of one specific religion. However, a closer analysis of the second principle seems to contradict the first. The first subscribes to the view that evangelism should not be propagated through the curriculum, while the second one does not exclude a committed approach. A committed approach often leads to evangelisation. The problem is aggravated by the fact that there is no explanation of what is meant by a “committed approach”. The third principle states that religion should be descriptive. This may ensure non-confession in learners, but in doing so, it does not respond to the spiritual needs of the learners. That is, learners cannot engage meaningfully with their religion while at the same time celebrating the difference in religious orientations. Finally, the approach seeks to have the curriculum benefit all learners, which is important through the lens of CER, which recognises that all learners are equal and should benefit from mainstream curriculum practices despite religious and cultural differences. My major concern so far is that the principle does not address the kind of teacher needed and the education the teachers need to meet these principles.

Interrogating the multifaith approach, the CDU (1999:10) states that the “problem of selection of the most suitable religions and appropriate learning content is a serious concern among curriculum developers”. The critical question is how and where the struggle comes from, given that curriculum scholars are equipped to handle curriculum problems. I believe the problem is not so much in selection but in the powers that influence a certain religious ideology, making it difficult for curriculum planners to use the multifaith approach effectively and efficiently. In short, I appreciate the multifaith model, but argue that it has remained a theory rather than developed into praxis. I also note that the multifaith approach has foreign origins, meaning that it does not fit appropriately in the context of Africa, especially where IKS is taught with religion. It

also does not address the problematic issue of religious abuse and finally, it does not address the aspect of teacher capacitation, given that most of the teachers are not trained in religion. In the light of these gaps left by the multifaith approach, I suggest that the hybridity strategy underpinned in CER attempts to marry theory and practice in the teaching of RS. It seeks religious and cultural collaboration, promotes IKS, emancipates learners from religious abuse and capacitates teachers to respond to the challenges of religion both in society and in RS. In the following section, I draw my readers' attention to the conditions that are necessary to ensure the success of SRHS in responding to the challenges of RS in Zimbabwe.

3.4 CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL TEACHING AND LEARNING RS USING SRHS

There are various conditions pertinent to ensuring that SRHS responds to the needs of the learners and society. This section responds to the second objective of the study. Schooling currently is becoming so complex because of many emerging value systems that learners take with them to the classroom (Webb, 2014:145), thus; it critical to discuss various conditions necessary for the teaching of RS using SRHS. If these conditions are not met, they thwart learning (UNICEF, 2006:3). Dialogue between religious authorities is one of the conditions necessary for successful implementation of a strategy that attempts to solve religious issues.

3.4.1 Dialogue between religious authorities

Dialogue between the local available religious players goes a long way towards attempts to solve pressing issues in society. Dialogue between religions is a collective bargaining, sustainable way to reach hybridisation, "a mutual respect which leads to one's empathy, care, and love" (Bloom, 2012:185). Dialogue enables religious "adherents [to] gain an understanding of the religious world and identify the place and role of human beings" (Danchan, 2002:4) in the religious space. I concur with Polinska (2011:163) that dialogue must be guided with "open-mindedness, curiosity, and cognitive complexity which are valuable experiences that promote non-judgmental attitudes towards practitioners of other religions which make transformative learning possible". When dialogue is properly conducted, RS cannot be a monolithic subject,

which has a shared value even at a worldwide level, together with delicate to small consensus and small identities, which on many occasions are ancestrally are abandoned in the mainstream curriculum (Diez de Velasco, 2007:85). It though the “points of consensus, where various actors can agree to disagree where communities are supported in making their voices hear” (Nicolai, 2009:87). This condition confirms the relevance of CER as a strategy to interrogate issues in the study. CER stresses the need for collaboration where people can learn from each other and consequently reduces the prejudice associated with religion. In essence, religious dialogue is not relics of the past, but should be pointedly highlighted, received and recognised to free people of threats and prejudice associated with religious difference (Preis & Russell, 2006:16).

In addition, dialogue provides a respectful climate for a multiplicity of religious beliefs, ethical and otherwise, where citizens who have the occasion to progress opportunity to devise (Kunzman, 2003:260) strategies for peaceful coexistence. The religious dialogue then serves as a means to mitigate ethnic and religious hostility that is fast spiralling out of control (Cyril, 2007:37). Through a dialogue between religions, SRHS can be discussed and supported by various religious leaders. Dialogue gives an opportunity for religions to negotiate the religious and curriculum terrain to ensure that the curriculum addresses the lived realities of the learners. Such dialogue, according to Hsing Wang (2013:153), empowers students to challenge existing social structures and allows them to recognise the impact of these structures on the development of their identities

3.4.2 Support of IKS in RS curriculum

IKS is indubitably very important in the livelihood of the local people. Despite the “extraversion and disarticulation of African IKS, there is still great potentiality in the continent for the promotion of African IKS for sustainable community development” (Kaya, 2013:32). Arguably, “African cultures are repositories of a substantiated body of knowledge on how to promote peace and maintain harmonious communities” (Murithi, 2009:223). The postcolonial state has a role in supporting structures that promote the IKS, religious, ethnicity and gender intersect to provide cultural inclusivism (Nolutshungu, 1990:90). For this to be possible, there is a need to protect

and further develop the knowledge generated and perpetuated by local communities through deliberate policy and institutional reform programmes (Domffeh, 2007:41). Such an “approach to IKS and learning styles is of crucial value to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators who seek to understand the failures, dilemmas, and contradictions inherent in past and current educational policy and practice” (Battiste, 2005:4) of the local people. Schools have the necessary context and cultural spaces that provide strategies for repossessing African cultural and religious identities to offset cultural identity loss (Shizha, 2013:7).

For the successful promotion of IKS, teachers must be committed to teaching learners about IKS, because they are the people who implement the curriculum in the classroom (Hamid, 2013:26). Teachers should be sympathetic towards indigenous values and knowledge (Diez de Velasco, 2007:85) with the aim of helping learners to reunite with their identity through embracing IKS. Furthermore, support for IKS should emanate from various “measures at the levels of policy, management, curricula content and teacher training, ranging from legislative measures” (Tawil, 2001:6).

3.4.3 Emancipation of RS teachers

Most teachers in Zimbabwe are not professionally equipped to teach RS, because there is only one teachers’ college offering religion. The lack of training for teachers (see 3.2.6) derails the successful implementation of SRHS, hence it is critical to emancipate teachers to reduce problems of teaching RS. The “religious studies classroom, which is increasingly diverse, should be attentive to and supportive of the full range of beliefs represented by the students through respecting their religious freedom and dignity” (Webb, 2014:139). This prepares them to be participants in democracy (Rosenblith & Bailey, 2007:94).

Religious educators have a mandate to present the value and prominence of their subject matter – how it is perceived, its history and how it can transform individual lives. They can achieve this by allowing discussion about matters that bring about change in the lives of the learners (Webb, 2014:139). To achieve this, educators must be prepared pedagogically, thus I argue for the emancipation of teachers as a condition for successful teaching of RS through SRHS because “teaching religion in

public schools is a sensitive topic, therefore, teachers need to have more practice and preparation for RS lessons” (Webb, 2014:139).

Teachers have a central role in the implementation of curriculum packages, hence; Abel and Sementelli (2002:270) argue that “emancipation requires the presence of certain abilities and supporting conditions, a certain regime of truth that makes agency possible”. Biesta (2010a:44) supports them, stating that to ensure emancipation an intervention from the outside is needed. Such an intervention, moreover, must be by someone who is not subject to the power that needs to be overcome (see 2.4.5).

3.4.4 Challenge domination and lack of recognition

Another condition for successfully solving religious challenges for the religions excluded in the curriculum is to engage in a peaceful struggle for recognition. This will lead, according to Fay (1987:60), to “a liberation from ideologies, power relationships, limiting paradigms and constraining epistemologies and an empowerment through the transformative fusion of theory and practice and struggle”. Commenting on this, Bercaw and Stooksberry (2004:2) say that “social transformation towards recognition begins with the assumption that existing societal norms silence voices outside of the dominant culture which should be brought back into space” (see 2.4.3). Moreover, Glassman and Erdem (2014:213) aver that oppressed communities need to seek freedom. Those marginalised in religion must announce their presence and needs for curriculum space. They should be willing to engage educationists and other religious adherents to negotiate their entry into the curriculum. Through the lens of CER, fighting for space does not entail violence that disrupts the improvement of the human condition; space is negotiated, with respect and love for those who have a different religious view. Terrorism to announce the presence of a religion must therefore be refuted by every possible means because it does not address the problem but worsens it. In short, CER is against strategies that seek to destroy even though the idea of engaging in the struggle is noble.

In support of the peaceful struggle for space, McLaren (1995:217) states that the “marginalized must identify and name their reality, to articulate how social reality functions and ultimately decide how issues are organised and redefined”. This is possible through empowerment as “human endeavour which should find a space in

society, in academics and in religious praxis as a means of liberation (see 2.4.5). Emancipation can come if people gain an adequate insight into the power relations that constitute their situation – that is why the notion of ‘demystification’ plays a central role in critical pedagogies” (Biesta, 2012:10-11).

Summing up this section, I concur with Freire (2000:52) that “the oppressed must confront reality critically, simultaneously objectifying and acting upon that reality”. This struggle involves engaging the relevant authorities through peaceful means, and consequently sustainable social transformation is achieved (see 2.4.2) that champions social justice (see 2.4.4). In short, peaceful engagement is critical, and likewise the dominant players should avail space for incoming players in the industry because as noted by Powell and Clarke (2012:5), the costs of subduing the minority religions do not offset the advantages. I conclude that recognition is critically necessary. Worldwide, there are plenty of conflicts, wars and abuse as a result of the clashes between religions due to the neglect or absence of recognition of other religions (Kreamalmeyer 2014:9).

3.4.5 Championing human rights through religious pedagogy

For RS to be culturally and religiously responsive, it needs to champion human rights by being sensitive to freedom of worship for peaceful coexistence (Njoku & Hamid, 2014:204). This condition comes against the background that there has been an increase in wars, genocide, abuse and persecution in the name of religion, making the issue of religion very important both in a public sphere and in academia. This does not mean the research does not acknowledge the positive contributions of religion in society, but here the emphasis is on those negative issues that have cast a negative influence on religion in society. In fact, “under normal circumstances, people hope that their experiences and those of the loved ones will be positive and nurtured through religion” (Kent, 2012:50). This is because religion can invest in human reality by introducing goals and value systems that relate to all aspects of a person’s life (Emmons, 2005:739). Religions generally call their adherents to live according to their values through a prescribed set of practices and relationships that may affect many aspects of personal and social life (Danchin, 2002:4); conversely, other religious

leaders have used religion to promote hidden agendas. This makes religion one of the greatest forces of evil (Prothero, 2007:6).

Promotion of human rights through the curriculum improves human conditions (see 2.4.1) when all forms of religious injustice and abuse are challenged and eliminated” (O’Donohue, 1997:233) (see 2.4.2). This can be possible if various religious groups collaborate with the community (Bobinac, 2007:426) to create safe religious sites and practices that promote social transformation (see 2.4.3). Championing of human rights can be successful. Every religion has “charitable and sacrificial giving; respect for fellow humans and other living beings; compassion and assistance for the poor and needy in society; the pursuit of equity and justice; and care for the natural environment” (Lunn, 2009:945). Thus, in order to achieve human rights, Pretorius (2011:233) recommends that “religious freedom needs to be endowed with an additional facet, it should not only ensure that the worship is conducted in the service of religion and not of religious leaders with ulterior motives and hidden agendas that lead to the violation of other human rights”. Pretorius (2012:234) further argues that “religion can be harmful to the extent that there is a need for restraint in the interests of the public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals or for the protection of the rights and freedom of others”. It is clear that religious organisations have the potential for championing social justice (see 2.4.4.); this should cascade down to the curriculum space so that RS addresses and responds to the problems that beset society. I argue that the curriculum should expose abusive religious institutions and leaders immediately and that they should be censured and forbidden by society (Bottoms, Nielsen Murray & Filipas, 2003:4). This, however, should be done in such a way that even the perpetrators of social injustice are built up.

This condition is critical because it will help learners to gain an in-depth knowledge of religious pedagogy. The argument is that people are abused in the name of religion largely because of the lack of in-depth knowledge of their religion and the religious other. I concur with Prothero (2007:6) that “religious illiteracy is more dangerous because religion is the most volatile constituent of culture” (Prothero, 2007:6). In-depth knowledge enables various religions to emancipate people worldwide to collaborate in constructing principles of peace, justice, and healing. Ultimately, a transformed, rehabilitated world is secured (Nimer, 2004:107). On the other hand, recognition of the other can be impeded by the belief that religions have nothing to learn from or offer to

each other (Forde, 2013:21). This is not true, particularly of those that think critically about religions and those who believe in a diversity of thinking towards an improvement of human conditions. The thrust and desire of the strategy is the commitment to “education of a new society, which in the spirit of inclusiveness, instils a feeling of forgiveness instead of hatred, promoting tolerance, understanding and coexistence rather than conflict and violence, reinforcing civic education and observing human rights” (Preis & Russell, 2006:16). The above subscribes to the view that when human rights are promoted through the curriculum, then RS is religiously and culturally responsive to social pathologies. SRHS can be a success if all religious stakeholders are interested in championing human rights through their preaching and teaching and particularly through the RS curriculum.

3.4.6 Learning from the other

The other condition for successful implementation of RS is the willingness of religions to learn from each other. It acknowledges that a religion that is different from mine has something to offer. This may be viewed as socially and religiously impracticable, but I argue that it is doable and desirable if we wish to have religion contribute to social transformation and the peaceful coexistence of religious differences. This principle comes from a hermeneutic-communicative model where “ignorance about the beliefs of others and about the inviolability of human rights, often becomes an instrument for the manipulation of populations, winning their support and participation in the violation of the range of human rights related to the exercise of freedom of religion” (Reardon, 2006:23). A critical aspect of the dialogue is that religious parties should minimise and alleviate differences through egalitarian means (Wani, Abdullah & Chang, 2015:648). This is possible when RS “help[s] students think critically about the messages students receive in the marketplace and expose[s] them to the moral and spiritual goals that are important to millions of people” (Lester & Roberts, 2006:18). This will allow learners to become tolerant of religion. If this aspect is ignored in RS, learners become intolerant due to the lack of understanding and failure to see the good in the other. The lack of religious understanding and areas as well as limitations to tolerate which has resulted in being sceptical intolerance (Rahman & Khambali, 2013:86) leading to unnecessary conflict. Consequently, there is an inclination among religious devotees to become imprisoned inside their own stories of susceptible

identity, vindicated fear, and inexcusable distress (Funk & Said, 2004:2). As a result, religions think they cannot learn from one another, and this should be demystified through a strategy like SRHS that emphasises collaboration of diverse religions. I conclude that religious leaders and adherents should make strong attempts to learn about other religions, because when we learn, the prejudices and misrepresentations of the religious other are demystified. In fact, religious variances should never be seen as insuperable. Conversely, there should be an understanding that a basic fibre of unity links the countless religious civilisations (Preis & Russell, 2006:32).

3.5 THREATS TO THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

In this section, I discuss the threats of religion in the curriculum and in society. Religion, because it is personal and pedagogical (see 3.1.8), presents serious threats in a multicultural context. I outline various threats that I anticipate in the implementation of SHRS.

3.5.1 Fear of losing identity in religious hybridity

People have a general, uninformed fear of religious collaboration or hybridity. I argue that these are more often than not based on prejudice and misrepresentation of religious ideologies. In essence, there is fear of one's religious identity through hybridity (Kirill, 2009:89). This fear may also be evident in schools where learners develop an attitude of indifference or dissociation (Polinska, 2011:164), particularly when they see that their beliefs are not upheld or recognised. The situation is aggravated by some religious leaders that "denigrate people of the other religions as being faithless, unreliable, and even malicious while at the same time overemphasizing their own religion as the one and only true belief system, deeply religious, absolutely sincere, and entirely trustworthy" (Basedau *et al.*, 2013:869).

The challenge is that each religion has its central confessional theme and its history, which is often defensive and closed to other traditions (Koyana, 2002:1). Some committed religious adherents are not prepared to compromise their traditions even though they may disturb the lives of others. Such members of extreme nationalist or ethnic groups to the far right use violence to generate change (Pressman, 2009:6). This causes fear of change, sparks dialogue, creates points of resistance and strategies

for survival and control (Glassman & Erdem, 2014:213) about how religion is conducted. Given these circumstances, hostility and superiority may well emerge to validate one's own religious stance (Polinska, 2011:164). The threat here is that some religions tend to protect their religious identities, prohibiting their members to interact with other religions or faiths for fear of religious adherents losing their identity. Undoubtedly, such an approach to religion comprises attempts to ensure that the unity of religions contributes to social transformation and improvement of human conditions (see 2.4.3 and 2.4.1).

3.5.2 Negative attitudes to IKS

SHRS also focuses on IKS. I argue that an appropriate RS curriculum should accord IKS adequate space to allow appreciation of its value by the learners. The strategy is important because IKS in schools is under threat of extinction, largely under the influence of Western epistemologies. According to Shizha (2005:15), this due to the "reproduction of the culture of the dominant in schools [which] has a hegemonic effect that reinforces". Given the pervasiveness of hegemonic forces, the indigenous peoples of the world remain powerless, and their identities become eradicated (Abimbola, 2010:307). The current RS aims and contents in Zimbabwe are prime examples (Wardekker & Miedema, 2007:76) of a subject that attempts to eliminate IKS covertly. The situation is further propelled by the lack of documentation of IKS. The generation of elders is dying out, leaving unknown and untapped the richness of their knowledge and skills for the survival, academic and social development of posterity (Chirimuuta, Gudhlanga & Bhukuvhani, 2012:3).

Apart from the threats noted above on IKS, the negative attitude of the owners of the language is another serious threat to IKS and therefore to SHRS. There is a generally held idea that colonisation destroyed IKS. However, as Africans, we have done very little to revive IKS. Hence, IKS suffers from our own attitudes as much it suffered in colonisation. I argue that as long as IKS is relegated to the peripheral in child development, our identity as Africans is fast facing demise. As long IKS continues to be associated with irrelevance and primitive tendencies, our future is robbed. This negative attitude is evident among teachers, learners, religious leaders and curriculum planners.

3.5.3 Lack of teachers to teach all religions

Another potential threat to the implementation of a strategy that responds to the needs of learners through RS is the lack of professionally qualified teachers to teach RS from a hybridity perspective. I agree with Schwartz(2006:450) that “curriculum writers, with all good intentions, have compiled volumes of well-conceived educational action plans, choosing specific materials and activities for their pre-conceived target, curriculum receivers, students, only to find that the curriculum users, teachers, are not prepared for the innovations”. This is one of the reasons why many curriculum packages fail, namely because teachers were poorly prepared, especially concerning RS, where teachers may have a personal interest in a specific religion. Despite hinting strongly at the role of teacher knowledge in enactment, most studies on teachers’ use of curriculum materials have not obtained objective measures of teacher knowledge, have not examined how teachers with different levels of knowledge use their available curriculum resources, and have not studied how both, in turn, inform instructional quality (Charalambos& Hill, 2012:449). SHRS requires teachers to have in-depth knowledge of various religions, their basic beliefs and religious developments so that learners benefit from the wide body of knowledge the teacher possesses. In short, I argue that if building teacher capacities is not taken seriously, good changes and innovations face an inevitable demise.

3.6 POSSIBLE SUCCESS AND EXCELLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH IMPLEMENTING A SOCIO-RELIGIOUS HYBRIDITY STRATEGY

In this section, I discuss the possible success of implementing SRHS in the teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwean schools and also in other countries.

3.6.1 Sustainable curriculum transformation

The thrust of the study is to develop a strategy that attempts to respond to the problems of RS that affect learners and the community. SRHS intends to respond to the problems of RS. The strategy attempts to ensure a sustainable curriculum transformation that opens avenues for other religions not only in theory, but also in praxis. This is when all religious, local leaders and educational authorities reread,

retell, reteach and relearn (Traittler, 2015:87) the current RS towards social justice (see 2.4.4). In designing this strategy, I agree with Mahlomaholo (2009:241) that the successful implementation of the strategy anticipates respect, “equity, social justice, freedom, peace and hope with a genuine commitment to the plight of the less fortunate”. This helps, as confirmed by Lynch (1999:41), to ensure democratic engagement, elimination of manipulation and control in pursuit of social justice (see 2.4.4).

From the writings of Mahlomaholo (2009:241), Traittler (2015:87) and Lynch (1999:41), I aver that the excellence of a strategy is measured by the values of love, peace, and peaceful coexistence. SHRS encourages religions to strive for the aforementioned values, especially the promotion of social justice (see 2.4.1), through democratic engagement. The transformed curriculum allows students to benefit from a holistic and religious-inclusive curriculum. In short, I concur with Nkoane that a transformative curriculum critically analyses the “existing social conditions within and beyond classrooms to critique dominant arrangements of power and the creation of platforms to enable the participation of marginalised students” (Nkoane, 2010:113). Transformation in the curriculum occurs when various religions can engage actively. Further, it allows learners of religion to embrace the politics of difference, which emphasises the diversity of religions (Ramey, 2006:212) and prepares learners for peaceful coexistence. SHRS gives “opportunity initiatives that accept[s] differences among ethnic groups, individuals, and cultures as normative to the human condition and valuable to societal and personal development” (Gay, 2013:50).

The advantage of this strategy is that it encourages learning about diverse religions to promote friendship among pupils and increases social initiations (Mandaga & Chakandinakira, 2014:4). In the process, prospects are open for critical discussion to which religions and religious people can contribute and where they can shoulder their duties so that an egalitarian society (Spinder *et al.*, 2003:6) is created. This is possible, since religion is one of the historically powerful forces in shaping the mores of humanity (Danchin, 2002:5). Hence, RS should exploit the influence of religion to ensure that learners are socialised towards the need to embrace differences of religious opinion. I conclude that differences “can create a healthy tension and sometimes even conflict that enhances creativity and learning as long they are well managed. And, yes, life without difference life would be dull. Celebrating difference and diversity add piquancy

and enjoyment to life” (The Alberta Teacher Association, 2010:5). I conclude this section by arguing that SHRS allows for democratic engagement, opens avenues for religious hybridity, a common vision among religions for the betterment of the world, and good moral codes that provide a solid base for a more supportable and suitable improvement strategy (Lunn, 2009:945). In short, the great advantage of the strategy is that it reduces the mismatch between school culture and the culture of the students. (Ware, 2006:429).

3.6.2 Promoting human rights and improvement of human conditions

Another excellent aspect of SHRS is that it champions human rights, which have been violated through religion among others. Through the implementation of this strategy, pupils attain an understanding that discrimination against any religion goes against the international provisions of freedom of religion (Pretorius, 2012:1). This is possible because religions, generally have the latent ability to address and support human rights and human cohesion and freedom (Bone, 2000:87). It is against this background that SHRS insists that schools should be focal religious sites (Mukova & Mangena, 2012:170) to promote human rights and freedom.

Moreover, the strategy gives the learners the opportunity to interact with different cultures and religions; which according to Kasomo (2010:24), it “eliminates any suspicions and misunderstanding” that may lead to human rights violations. By promoting peaceful coexistence through championing human rights, learners are able to celebrate actual differences and disagreements and debates that transform relationships (Eck, 2001:72). Peaceful coexistence does not mean losing religious identity and commitment, but that religious adherents can maintain their religion cognisant of the rights of other” (Danchin, 2002:7) religious groups. This is because there is an intersection between religion and human rights (Mukova & Mangena, 2013:171). There is a need to promote human rights through the RS curriculum, because it will enable learners to question religious principles and traditions that “cause conflict, violence, poverty, the destruction of livelihoods and the displacement of vulnerable people” (Lunn, 2009:945). After interrogating, learners can use various religious orientations to confront religious abuse. The learners acquire a “moral and

political elements and consequences, which obligate them to take social action to promote freedom, equality, and justice for everyone” (Gay, 2002:110).

3.6.3 Promoting sustainable teaching and learning of IKS

Another excellent aspect of SRHS is that it values local knowledge as an important source for survival of the community. Matsika (2012:209-10) is of the view that “traditional and local knowledge [that] exists and is advanced through the experiences of the local community in the process of managing the conditions or context that challenge the people’s everyday life”. I partly agree with Matsika (2012), but not with his usage of the word “traditional” to refer IKS. Traditional has many connotations; many of them imply something that is backward and contemporarily irrelevant. Referring to IKS as traditional leads learners to think that IKS is not relevant to them, which is not true. IKS has been windswept by imposing Western culture and more lately by globalisation (Hunter, 2002:43). Despite subtle attempts to displace it, IKS remains “crucial and provides techniques necessary for sustainable development” (Gupta, 2011:60). SRHS then is a struggle for the indigenous people, reclaiming, revitalising and renewing their knowledge systems (Hammersmith, 2007:iii). The great advantage of SHRS for IKS lies in that the renaissance of IKS will promote Ubuntu among learners, a “powerful human centred philosophy that calls for an empathic communication in seeking solutions to problems” (Chasi & Omarjee, 2014:232). Ubuntu further promotes “human interconnectedness and dignity” (Waghid & Smeyers, 2012:11). In essence, because SRHS values IKS, it follows that ubuntu, African identity and recognition are maintained in the lives of the learners, who in turn, model the identity of Africanness and ubuntu. I argue the excellence of the strategy lies in its call for an IKS renaissance.

It am strongly convinced that the strategy capacitates local people to “develop their own knowledge base, and to develop methodologies that promote activities for improving livelihoods in a sustainable way” (Boven & Morohashi, 2002:8). This will allow “IKS to be part and parcel for a quest for identity and recognition and will form an integral part in community sustainability in the use of local remedies which have been tested and passed through generations as a valid science for survival of the people” (Dube *et al.*, 2015:86). SHRS seeks to enhance IKS through RS, which in some

quarters has been illegitimated, illegalised, curbed and uninhibited and also associated with primitive communal life, a distinction most people find belittling (Ocholla, 2007:3).

3.6.4 Enhancing teacher capacitation in Religious Studies

SHRS addresses the issue of teacher capacitation, enabling them to address problematic religious issues and social pathologies such as religious abuse. This component of the strategy is critical, since “our school communities continue to reflect the increasing diversity of society in terms of culture, ethnicity, language, race, colour, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion and other characteristics” (The Alberta Teacher Association, 2010:ii). Hence; the teacher has an obligation to acquire knowledge about cultural differences to foster a meaningful and relevant education for all of her or his learners” (Young & Sternoa, 2011:1).

Because of the lack of professional teachers who have majored in religion SHRS attempts to emancipate (see 2.4.5) educators to execute their duties despite their lack of training in the area of religion. In a multireligious country like Zimbabwe, the real challenge for educators is “to be able to manage identity and diversity in order to help learners define ‘otherness’ and to learn to live with different people harmoniously” (Diez de Velasco, 2007:78). In light of the foregoing argument, the strategy takes teacher capacitation seriously since “teachers are the filters through which the mandated curriculum passes. Their understanding of it, and their enthusiasm, or boredom, with various aspects of it, colours its nature” (Schwartz, 2006:449). The strategy is of the view that religious leaders can be used to assist in teaching religion (Wani, Abdullah & Chang, 2015:646) especially aspects that teachers may have difficulties given the lack of professional qualification in teaching religion. Recognising that apparently different values can actually support each other opens new potentials both for intercultural relationships and for a full progress of the human character (Funk & Said, 2014:24). It involves implementing specifically student-oriented instructional processes as well as choosing and delivering ethnically and culturally relevant curricula (Brown, 2004:268) that do not champion one religion over the other. Through the strategy, teachers are enabled to ensure matching communication procedures with

students and create meaningful bonds with their students, grounded on candid social connections (Brown, 2004:280).

3.7 Summary of the chapter

Chapter 3 focused on the review of related literature of the challenges of RS in the light of the objectives of the study. I focused on the challenges of religion and solutions that have been used to circumvent such challenges. I highlighted various conditions that are necessary for the successful implementation of SRHS. The anticipated threats and advantages of SRHS were outlined. Chapter 4 focuses on participatory action research, an approach used to generate empirical data in collaboration with coresearchers.

CHAPTER FOUR

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AND TEAM OPERATIONALISATION TO GENERATE DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 is divided into a theoretical and empirical section to elucidate the research design and approach used to achieve the aim of the study. This chapter integrates the theoretical constructs developed in Chapter 3 to respond to the research questions. The first section covers the theoretical arguments to provide a deeper understanding of PAR. The second, practical section describes the process of generating the data to be analysed in Chapter 5 to operationalise CER. In addition, the chapter shows how the generated data was analysed collectively with the coresearchers using critical discourse analysis (CDA). The credentials of the coresearchers and their activities are detailed in this chapter. To explore an effective methodological approach to this research, the aim and objectives of the study are highlighted.

4.2.1 Aim and objectives of the study

The study aims to develop a strategy to respond to the problems of RS in Zimbabwean secondary schools. To achieve this, the study is grounded on the following objectives:

- Examining the challenges in the teaching and learning of RS.
- Evaluating solutions that have been used to respond to the challenges of RS.
- Discussing conditions for the successful implementation of RS using SRHS at O Level.
- Exposing threats associated with teaching and learning of RS in secondary schools.
- Highlighting possible successes associated with the implementation of SRHS in a quest for curriculum relevance in Zimbabwean schools.

4.2.2 Research questions

The critical question underpinning this study is how SRHS responds to the problems of RS to enhance curriculum relevance in Zimbabwean schools. What are the challenges, solutions, opportunities, threats and successes associated with the use of SRHS in the teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwean schools? To respond to the

aim, objectives, and the research question, I used participatory action research (PAR) as an approach to generate data with the coresearchers. The following section discusses PAR as an approach to research.

4.3. PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AS AN APPROACH TO GENERATING DATA

In this study, PAR was used as an approach for generating data. To adequately conceptualise PAR, I discuss PAR from various angles, such as its origins, definition and importance, PAR as social action, its reflective, emancipatory, participatory, practical, collaborative and critical nature and its weakness as a research approach. PAR has been chosen for its emancipatory effect and empowerment of people who have been pushed to the periphery of society (Eruera, 2010:1). Emancipation and empowerment form the thrust of this research, which seeks to create space for other religions and cultures that have been prejudiced by the RS curriculum. PAR is applied to challenge domination, where religion can be used to abuse and dehumanise people. This confirms the coherence between the theoretical framework and the approach (see 2.4.5).

Grounding this study on PAR as an approach is premised within the transformative paradigm and more specifically CER, a theoretical framework that seeks to capacitate the community through research (Ngwenyama, 1990:3). Moreover, PAR was chosen as an approach since it involves create to new approaches that promotes changes (Glassman & Erdem, 2014:207). In this particular work, SRHS is a proposed new approach to responding to the problems of RS from both a pedagogical perspective and societal space. To fully conceptualise and theorise PAR, I focus on the origins of PAR as an approach to generating empirical data in the following section.

4.3.1 Origins of participatory action research

The origins and development of PAR cannot be easily traced. The challenge is that PAR is often mistakenly regarded as action research and in some cases it embraces forms of “participatory research, and popular education initiatives” (Jordan, 2003:187). Glassman & Erdem (2014:206) add that PAR is multifaceted and cannot be attributed to an individual or a group of scholars. It is, however, generally agreed that PAR’s

origins can be traced back to the social psychologist Kurt Lewin between the 1940s and 1950s (Given, 2008:601; Khan & Chovanec, 2010:35; Walter, 2009:1; Schein, 1995:7; Conrad & Campbell, 2008:248; van der Meulen, 2011:1293; Reason & McArdle, 2004:1; Glassman & Erdem, 2014:207). He was a “Jew who grew up in the United States of America and his interest was more on conflict resolution where he argued that peace and democracy should be the core of social existence” (Burnes, 2004:978; Maksimovic, 2010:120). There are similarities with the rise of the Frankfurt School, where the majority of the first scholars were Jews embarked on a journey to liberate people from oppressive structures through marrying theory and practice (see 2.2).

Lewin’s theoretical and philosophical base was premised on the understanding that people can be enthused and inspired to do their work if they contribute to decision-making processes in the operationalisation of their workplace (McNiff, 1998:22; McNiff & Whitehead, 2006:36). Conversely, Lazarowitz, Zelniker and Azaiza (2010:271) argue that PAR first appeared around the 1960s and 1970s together with research studies that focused on underprivileged societies. However, the scholars or researchers connected with the origins of PAR in the 1960s to 1970s. During this period, PAR was the subject of public debate and was also gaining momentum in the academic arena (Bennett, 2004:21). PAR emerged against the background that the working class was motivated in their work when they were incorporated in decision-making on issues that pertained to them. It necessitated a common vision between the workers and the employers. I also note that this approach to research was positioned within the context of the underprivileged people in the community, with the intention of finding best practices that emancipated them.

Several authors, (Given, 2008:601; Bennett, 2004:21; Charles & Ward, 2007:6; Eruera, 2010:1) have argued that PAR rose in the milieu of political turbulence, with scholars such as Freire and Orlando Fals-Borda, who focused on experiences and struggles of the people considered poor. In addition to this notion, Kindon, Pain and Kesby (2007:1) note that the advocates for PAR have “attempted to remove hierarchical role specifications and empower ‘ordinary people’ in and through research. Their intention is to transform an alienating ‘Fordist’ mode of academic production into a more flexible and socially owned process.” PAR and CER share a common vision where the thrust is to change exploitative structures of society (see 2.4.3). The philosophy of PAR as it

is associated with scholars like Paulo Freire indicates a struggle for recognition for the members of the community who are deemed poor and are often dominated by various structures and technologies of exclusion.

It is also contended that PAR emerged against the background of approaches to international aid and development in the 1960s and 1970s, including Western research methodologies that were being disparaged as unproductive for overturning poverty and inequality, as well as the failure to cater for the poor, which led to social disparities (Dickson, 1997:17-18). Some scholars, like Loewenson, Laurell, Hogstedt, D'Ambruso and Shroff (2014:15), state that PAR can be traced to "socio-political processes such as the popular education movement in Latin America, Asia, and Africa". In addition, Eruera (2010:1) avers that PAR constituted a departure from "traditional, positivist, science to work towards recognising and addressing complex human and social issues". The fact PAR was a departure from the traditional forms of positivism towards addressing the needs of people through their involvement, indicates that it is transformative in nature (see 2.7), where the goal is to achieve change to improve human conditions (see 2.4.1).

On a different tack, McTaggart (1991:169) argues that PAR as an approach to research evolved with the intention of "improving and informing social, economic, and cultural practice which in principle is a group of activities whereby individuals with differing power, status, and influence, collaborate in relation to a thematic concern". Thus, the underlying aim of PAR is to locate research processes with those who are affected by the problem (Jordan, 2003:190) and have a viable solution. It can be argued that PAR is explicitly political, attempts to emancipate beleaguered peoples, and able to formulate knowledge and practice (Reason & McArdle, 2004:3). PAR with emancipatory tendencies is related to CER, as both are geared towards emancipating people and achieving sustainable social transformation (see 2.4).

In summary, I conclude that PAR emerged from a dissatisfaction with existing social, political and economic structures that did not address the lived realities of people, especially those regarded as disadvantaged by the designs and technologies of the elite members of society. This also confirms the theoretical framework of this study, which is grounded in emancipation, social justice, and improvement of human conditions and elimination of false consciousness. Ultimately, all these lead to

sustainable social transformation (see 2.4). I contend that PAR finds space in this research where RS is not comprehensively addressing social ills; it is accommodative, especially for the religions which have been socially marginalised in the curriculum. It is therefore desirable to utilise PAR to rethink our current practices with the aim of incorporating religions that are pedagogically excluded from mainstream curriculum practices.

4.3.2 PAR as an approach: Definition and importance

PAR refers to a process whereby researchers and coresearchers collaborate in the all the processes of research (Turnbull, Friesen & Ramirez, 1998:178). It involves the “investigation of actual practices and not abstract practices and learning about the real, material, concrete, and particular practices of particular people in particular places” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:277). Moreover, Winter (1989:2) states that PAR is an “approach which challenges a scientific method of inquiry based on the authority of the outsider observer and the independent experimenter”. In the same vein, Lopez (2015:229) indicates that this approach directly challenges the traditional ways of doing research, and that its focus is on benefitting the community in which the research is taking place. I contend that PAR, defined as an approach to generating data, it is geared towards changing social structures that do not have emancipatory tendencies. It therefore strives to engage theory and practice in research, so that the results directly respond to the problems confronting society. Through my engagement with and theorising about PAR, I have come to conclude that PAR has five principles that a researcher needs to be cognisant of when using it as an approach to generating data in collaboration with coresearchers. The next sections therefore unpack the principles of PAR.

4.3.2.1 PAR for working with marginalised communities

PAR has been projected as a research approach focused on empowering the marginalised community (Johnson & Guzman, 2013:406; Amaya & Yeates, 2014:3; Reason & McArdle, 2004:3). In support, Khan and Chovanec (2010:35) maintain that the PAR process is “democratic, unbiased, redemptive and life-enhancing”. Hence, it has become an approach marginalised groups that promotes the interests of those

considered as poor and disenfranchised (Jordan, 2003:186). To achieve this, PAR pools “aspects of popular education, community-oriented research, and action for social change to promote marginalized communities, where the quest is to unearth the causes of social inequality and consequently the solution to alleviate the identified problems” (Williams & Brydon-Miller 2004:245; Mulligan, Wilkinson, Lusty, Dolorne & Bong, 2015:97; Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008:424). While it logical to work with the marginalised people, I propose that a focus that is entirely oriented towards the marginalised, also creates a dichotomy between the marginalised and the advantaged members of the community. I believe it is critical that while the focus is on the marginalised, PAR should also consider finding ways to engage the dominant members of the society.

PAR is one of “several critical approaches to research and seeks to develop collaborative processes that prioritize the voices and actions of those marginalized from power and resources in educational, advocacy, and organizing activities that contribute to knowledge construction and material social change and/or transformation” (Lykes, Hershberg & Brabeck, 2011:24). Buttressing this notion, especially within the context of education, Brydon-Miller and Maguire (2008:79) argue that PAR ensures a shared vision to enhance educational practice and contribute to affirmative transformation for learners, their families, teachers and communities, with strategies that respond directly to their needs.

Thus, it can be argued that PAR has long been promoted as the method of choice for conducting research with marginalised communities (Khan & Chovance, 2010:34; Eruera, 2010:3). Likewise, PAR is regarded as a way to move towards a world “based on justice, and a living philosophy which has a potential to make the world a better place to live” (Fournier, Mull, Kipp & Walusimbi, 2007:12). In this case, it becomes possible through developing trusting relationships with key stakeholders in the religious fraternity to rethink the current RS practices, aligning them with the goals of social justice and above all improving people's lives. Buttressing this further, PAR is a way for researchers and the perceived marginalised members of the community to collaborate to eradicate social problems through research (Bennett, 2004:23). In this particular case, PAR responds directly to the problem being studied, where RS exhibits a lack of social justice, equity and inclusion, among many other things. The approach ensures that relevant results are obtained that relate positively to the

problem (Danley & Ellison, 1999:2). PAR offers a “spiral of inquiries into the critical thinking, reflecting, and actions of members of an oppressed community while it also includes those who entered the community in search of an intervention” (Glassman & Erdem, 2014:214). In response to this, my hybridity team was comprised of members of groups marginalised in the curriculum, such as Islam, African religions and Judaism. Because I used CER, an approach that believes in collaboration, I also invited Christian leaders to be part of the hybridity team. Hence, I ensured that all relevant and willing stakeholders became part of designing a strategy that responded to the problems of RS.

4.3.2.2 PAR helps to contest power imbalances in research

One of the strengths of the PAR approach is that it offers a means to dispute power disparities and change systems and institutions to create substantial justice. This justice implies fair depiction of and admittance to resources, fair process, gratitude or respect (which is not the case with the current RS). It premised that injustice is socially constructed and can be challenged (Leowenson *et al.*, 2014:14). To elucidate further, PAR is about valuing and appreciating the people with and for whom researchers work. It calls for a mutual or consensual approach to research, where the goal is to give coresearchers authority in the research process (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995:1674; Walter, 2009:2). Hence, the power of the researcher is reduced while that of the coresearchers is increased, as can be expected from all transformative research studies like this one. The coresearchers therefore exercise ownership and control over the knowledge generated about them and their world (Lynch, 1999:55). The contributions of the team were very important, since they were the experts in the study. This approach ensured collaboration among and within the religions involved in this study. Participation was structured to eliminate fear or prejudice.

4.3.2.3 PAR aims at transforming theory and practice

As seen in the section on the origins of PAR, the approach has focused on changing the status quo with the aim of transforming society to be a better place where people live harmoniously. To buttress this notion, Kemmis and McTaggart (2007:283) argue that PAR is important because it aims “to transform both practitioners’ theories and

practices of others whose perspectives and practices may help to shape the conditions of life and work in particular local settings". Additionally, PAR aims to articulate knowledge production and transformative action (Johnson & Guzman, 2013:405). The "overriding motivations of activist 'research' are to develop practice aimed at social transformation rather than to use a set of tools aimed at the 'production of knowledge' and the 'solving' of 'local' problems" (Chatterton, Fuller & Routledge, 2007:22). The selection of PAR as an approach is therefore justified, since one of the intentions of this research is to ensure that RS contributes successfully towards social transformation (see 2.4.3) through praxis and theory formulated by common consent.

I argue that religion, like other social institutions, must contribute more positively to sustainable social transformation that improves human conditions (see 2.4.5) through practices that are socially and religiously inclusive. With this in mind, "praxis opens doors for the marginalised people to criticise, problematize, and reclaim their condition, which will eventually enable them to overcome" (Glassman & Erdem 2014:213) undesirable theories and practices (such as the multifaith approach, 3.2.6.3) that foreground the exclusive teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwe. The research relationship must be democratised so that the research process enables coresearchers to understand and change their situation (Lynch, 1999:57).

4.3.2.4 PAR values knowledge of indigenous people

One of the importance aspects of PAR is that local epistemologies for the benefits of the marginalised (Francis 2012:149; Hoare, Levy & Robinson, 1993:43).It promotes returning the power of constructing knowledge and its use to ordinary people and beleaguered people; it thus contributes to the democratisation of the research process and the advancement of social change (Hanrahan, 2005:22). Likewise, Smith (1999:193) avers that when "Indigenous peoples become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is transformed". Local leaders were included in the research study, a testimony to the view that local people through their knowledge have a role and a contribution towards social transformation and that their contribution can furthermore improve the teaching and learning of IKS in secondary schools. In addition, the incorporation of people's knowledge in the mainstream RS can emancipate teachers in critical areas of IKS where they may have challenges.

4.3.2.5 PAR ensures participation of coresearchers

PAR as an approach is important because it reflects the principles of participation. According to Glassman & Erdem (2014:212), PAR ensures “action and development of knowledge. It has the potential to address research and wider issues of social justice, inclusion and empowerment of minority and often marginalised communities” (Eruera, 2010:1). Moreover, PAR recognises the wealth of assets that the community brings to the process of knowing, creating knowledge and acting on that knowledge to bring about change (Leowenson, Laurell, Hogestedt, D’Ambruoso & Shroff, 2014:12). In addition, PAR opens a communicative space between the coresearchers and researcher. The process of PAR is one of a “mutual inquiry aimed at reaching intersubjective agreement, mutual understanding of a situation, unforced consensus about what to do, and a sense that what people achieve together will be legitimate not only for themselves but also for every reasonable person” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:298). In PAR, the entire research process from inception to implementation should be collaborative, involving all stakeholders (Danley & Ellison, 1999:2; Conrod & Campbell, 2008:248). Hence, David (2002:13) states that “PAR seeks to avoid the ethical and epistemological pitfalls of covert forms of research by involving the researched in the formulation and conduct of research”. Accordingly, the coresearchers were treated as experts (Rempfer & Knopf, 2001:153) who came to the research study with academic wealth, ensuring the success of the research. The coresearchers had experience of different religions, IKS and pedagogical approaches. To ensure participation, the hybridity team members were given opportunities to contribute to the study.

In the following section. I conceptualise PAR further by interrogating it from a social process angle; participatory; practical and collaborative; emancipatory; critical; and reflexive. I show how I used PAR to generate data to transform RS in both theory and practice (Benson, Samarawickrema & O’Connell, 2009:712).

4.4.1 PAR as social process

PAR as understood from a social process angle “consciously travels the relationship between the realms of the individual and the social” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:280).

It underscores that no “individuation (the process of being a human being) is possible without socialisation, and no socialisation is possible without individuation” (Habermas, 1992b:26). In addition, Powers and Allaman (2012:1) state that PAR as a process “seeks to investigate meaningful social topics, participate in research to understand the root causes of problems that directly impact them, and then take action to influence policies through the dissemination of their findings to policymakers and stakeholders”. PAR as a social process results in positive changes within individuals, organisations, communities, and societies (Juujaarvi & Lund, 2015:3). It seeks to understand how people’s lives are shaped and reshaped through interactions in society, just as the relationship between the teachers and learners is continually reframed (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:280-281).

PAR from the perspective of the social process entails vigorous research engrossment and tenure by people in societies who have a vision of working together towards solving a certain problem. The coresearchers are involved in all stages of research. Community members are seen as the experts, unlike the traditional forms of research where the researcher occupied a significant role in the research process (Eruera, 2010:1). To concretise PAR from the social process, Miller and Maguire (2008:81) note that the “perspective openly challenges existing structures of power and creates opportunities for the development of innovative and effective solutions to the problems facing our schools and communities”. I can confirm that PAR is utilised by groups of people who come and interact together to change the existing social structure for the betterment of society (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:277).

In response to PAR as a social process, the team comprised various religious leaders to with the common vision to see RS responding to its challenges. As a team, we understood that society shapes people’s behaviours, attitudes and expectations and that religion plays an important role in socialising learners. A collaborative approach to RS ensures a hybridity socialisation of learners to reflect the multireligious identities of society.

4.4.2 PAR as participatory evaluation

Understanding PAR as participatory evaluation means to “document our individual and collective perceptions of the site, and reaching consensus on priorities emerging from

the evaluation” (Jackson & Kossam, 1998:712). Individuals in a group attempt to comprehend “ways in which knowledge shapes their sense of identity, agency and recognition” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:281-282) towards transformation of their lives. Expanding on PAR as participatory evaluation, Reason & Bradbury (2001:1) believe that it is a practical knowledge which is worthwhile and is achieved through democratic approaches. Using PAR from this angle, Crane and O’Regan (2010:15) advice that people be invited to make “latent contributions, participate in communication, explain, reframe, seek common ground and language, which facilitates and encourages collaborative dialogue in research”. I contend that PAR as participatory approach enables full engagement of the coresearchers in the research process. In this regard, coresearchers are not objects for fulfilling a research agenda, but they occupy an equal role in the research and engage each other in the transformative journey to devise a hybridity strategy to respond to the problems of RS.

4.4.3 PAR as practical and collaborative

PAR is understood as collaborative, which implies dissolving the traditional boundaries which have been set between the researcher and the researched (Schroeder, 2013:106; Fletcher, MacPhee & Dickson, 2015:2). These boundaries are eliminated through emphasises on equal participation (Given, 2008:601). The practical and collaborative aspect of PAR engages people to investigate “social practices that link them with others in social interaction. It is a continual process in which people explore their practices of communication, production, and social organisation in a quest to improve their interaction in the community” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:282). It is collective “at every stage, involving discussion, pooling skills and working together, and it is intended to result in some action, change or improvement on the issue being researched towards more socially and environmentally just outcomes” (Whitman, Pain & Milledge, 2015:625). It regularly involves collaboration between different colleagues who have specific sets of skills and knowledge (Pain, Finn, Bouveng & Ngobe, 2013:29). In support, Tshelane (2013:417) maintains that PAR is a collaborative strength to address the precise systems. It is a recurring and meditative research design that emphasises on the problem solving, enhancing work practices and comprehending the research process and its effects.

Apart from being practical and collaborative, Leykim, Pugh, Lanham, Harmon and McDaniel (2009:8) state that PAR attempts to address issues in a specific systems, focuses on problem solving, enlightening work practices, and values the research process as alternative to life solutions. The impact of change is probed and its relevance to the community examined. Emphasising teamwork within marginalised or oppressed communities, PAR works to address the “underlying causes of inequality while at the same time focusing on finding solutions to specific community concerns” (Williams & Brydon-Miller 2004:245). In this case, school and the community become the main concern of the research process where collaborative and practical solutions are sought (Miller & Maguire, 2008:88). From this perspective PAR is not a just a method “but rather a pledge to collaboration and partnership throughout the problem-posing, knowledge creation, and action-taking cycles of a project” (Miller & Maguire, 2008:88).

In response to PAR as practical and collaborative, the coopted coresearchers who are actively engaged in the day to day teaching of RS and who focus on religion and cultural issues that have a bearing on the societal processes and livelihood of the community. I teamed up with these coresearchers and as a team we explored various options that can be implemented to respond to the challenges of religion in society.

4.4.4 PAR as emancipatory

PAR from the emancipatory angle aims to provide space to “help people recover and release themselves from the restrictions of irrational, infertile, unjust, and unsatisfying social structures that limit their self-development and self-determination [see 2.4.5]. It is a process in which people travel the ways in which their practices are shaped and constrained by wider social structures” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:282). Loewenson *et al.* (2014:14) aver that it “escalate[s] social agency and encourage[s] activism in an intellectual approach” towards shaping or changing social structures.

Through PAR, teachers are encouraged to work with their students and community partners in all life spheres on how best their interaction can contribute positively to the community (Apple 1995:87). Likewise, PAR from this perspective seeks to find practical and viable solutions to life problems (Dold & Chapman, 2012:512). In its emancipatory research approach, relations have equal representation as opposed to

hierarchies (Somerville & Brown-Sica, 2011:671), which distorts the essence of transformative research that intends to improve the life of the community (see 2.4.1). In other ways, PAR complements CER because it makes “recommendations for improvements, social justice, empowerment, and emancipation” (Basit 2010:15).

The emancipatory perspective of PAR “offers the possibility to create more equitable educational policies which allows for practices for educational reform from the bottom up” (Miller & Maguire, 2008:85). Loewenson *et al.* (2014:18) state that generated knowledge reflects and consolidates power relations and conflict and consequently influences social and power relations. In short, Reason (2004:16) states that PAR as emancipatory process is important to emancipate and recover voices that have been relegated to the periphery even in research. The interest of the emancipatory aspect of PAR is to recognise the psychological, cognitive, moral, political and social reality of all the participants of the research, including the researcher, with the aim of focusing on the understanding of the group to provoke a systematic change (Elizondo *et al.*, 2013:425) to improve human lives.

Influenced by PAR as emancipation, our thrust as a team was to find ways in which religion in learners could be emancipated to respond to life problems using the various religious orientations of the learners. The team sought to examine practices that engage religion towards solving life problems, as opposed to religious practices destroying the life of the learners through religious abuse.

4.4.5 PAR’s critical nature

The critical nature of PAR, according to Kemmis & McTaggart (2007:282);

“aims to help people recover, and release themselves from the restrictions rooted in the social media through which they interact – their language (discourses), their modes of work, and the social relationships of power... deliberately set out to contest and reconstitute irrational, unproductive, unjust, and unproductive ways of interpreting and describing their world”

In addition, Crane and O’Regan (2010:16) aver that PAR’s critical nature is “underpinned by values of relationship, inclusion, and justice. Critical replication includes examining our own expectations and norms, appreciating the nature of your

own agency's interests and recognising the broader systemic factors that preserve defencelessness and undermine the well-being of particular individuals and groups."

The critical aspect of PAR enabled coresearchers to speak up, especially those in the marginalised groups, on religious issues affecting their society. During the group discussions, the team leader asked specific questions to break the silence and challenge misconceptions of religious issues in the curriculum or print media.

4.4.6 PAR as reflective

The reflective aspect of PAR is a "deliberate social process designed to help collaborating groups of people to transform their world so as to learn more about the nature of the recursive relationships" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:282-283). Participative reflection was applied throughout the process to keep the research focused and contributive to academia and society.

In the following section, I discuss the weaknesses of PAR as an approach to generating data.

4.5 Weakness of PAR as an approach to generating data

While PAR has been indicated as an emancipatory approach that aligns itself with the marginalised members of society, it has specific weaknesses, especially when the coresearchers are not well acquainted with this approach to research. Its unfamiliarity was evident from the frequent requests by the coresearchers for questionnaires. I had to explain the research paradigm, particularly the transformative paradigm (PAR) that does not use questionnaires. The explanation enabled the team to acquire a shared vision on the use of PAR in generating data.

The weakness of PAR is that it is "threatened internally by the sometimes unexamined biases of its practitioners and externally by the increased de-politicization of action research as a tool for educational problem solving disconnected from theory and critiques of unjust social conditions and relationships" (Miller & Maguire, 2008:82). The participation of the researcher in the research procedure can lead to bias, which will lead to a lack of coherence between the theory and the implementation of PAR. Walter (2009:6) points out that "participation, democracy can greatly reduce the validity of the

research". While Walter sees this as a weakness, I disagree with him on the basis that when participation and democracy are engaged in the research process, there is a high likelihood that the research will respond to the problems under investigation. Collaboration validates data better than individual research, which may not reflect the needs of the entire community.

Another weakness of PAR in generating empirical data is that, as Walter (2009:6) states, it has "no clear end times of the research and also it's difficult to articulate exactly when the problem can be effectively solved in research". Initially, some of the coresearchers did not understand why our team should operate for six months, because people were used to the positivist research approach using questionnaires, which is often a one-off method to gather data from participants. Bennett (2004:25) points out another weakness of PAR, arguing that it is difficult for researchers to conduct participatory research because not everyone in the community will want to engage in participatory research. Participatory methods all require participation not just by the people, but also by the researchers. It is time-consuming and taxing (Kegan, 2012:15). Hence, people can become tired and disengage from the team throughout the process of research.

Moreover, Lykes, *et al.* (2011:31) note the difficulty of handling an intricate PAR research process with limited resources and dedication, especially from coresearchers who are used to one-off questionnaire-types of research. Supporting this notion, Phillips and Vavra (2008:47) state that PAR projects can produce dissonance for some adult learners because the process is not straightforward, linear and clean. This makes it very difficult to coordinate PAR projects. Danley and Ellison (1999:5) note that "researchers may imagine that PAR team meetings will be racked with conflict, brought off course with irrelevant discussion, or entangled by symptomatic or inappropriate behaviour". Another weakness is that PAR is selective in the sense that it only focuses on marginalised people. It ignores the dominant members of society who often seek to sustain oppressive structures in society. I think the dominant also needs space in this approach so that they may meaningfully engage with the marginalised in power negotiations and ultimately change the oppressive social structures.

I conclude that PAR is a very important approach to working towards the social inclusion of community stakeholders in a particular research study. It understands the

value of the peripheral and attempts to accommodate those who have been considered insignificant in the research process. Hence, the team created participatory spaces to build understanding among religions where inclusion is key and desirable for the improvement of human conditions (Catterton *et al.*, 2002:24). I chose PAR for this study because it accommodates the assumed disadvantaged members of the community. Various religious groups are disadvantaged by the current RS curriculum. PAR emphasises the participation of coresearchers as equal partners with the researcher in generating data, which allows coresearchers to bring their expertise. The approach helped me and the coresearchers to understand that a successful research study was one in which power relations were negotiated towards giving the coresearchers more power in generating data and the formulation of SRHS. In short, PAR is a method that engages marginalised people in improving their condition.

The above section focused on the theorisation of PAR. In the following section, I focus on how PAR was used to generate data with the coresearchers. I take the readers on a long journey of the activities of the hybridity teams.

4.6 PROCESS AND STEPS OF GENERATING DATA

The study site was a community school where learners came from different religious and cultural orientations. The school had a generally low pass rate in RS and the study was welcomed because it aimed to respond to the problems of RS. The following section highlights Tsholotsho, where the research took place.

4.6.1 Description of research site: Tsholotsho

The description of the research site is important to researchers in critical discourse analysis (CDA) to highlight the “community’s historical and current context, culture, and relationship” (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:23) which may shape the community way of thinking and hence affect their way of life. Tsholotsho is a primarily rural area in Matabeleland North province, and one of the seven districts that form the province. The people living there are generally impoverished owing to the lack of employment prospects. The population was affected by the Gugurahundi genocide of the early 1980s. Tsholotsho remains a relatively disadvantaged community, which receives little support from the government. Hence, the people often feel marginalised.

Numerous religious activities take place in Tsholotsho, possibly inspired by the need of divine intervention in the situation of the inhabitants. The existence of various religions made the place ideal for this research study as it was hoped that hybridisation would help to improve people's lives and significantly reduce the religious conflict that tended to affect other spheres of life. RS is taught in the two schools where I conducted the research. One is a mission school and the other a local council school. In line with CER, the study presented an opportunity for the people of Tsholotsho to be heard. They were marginalised people, yet had the right to be coresearchers (Shallwani & Mohammed, 2007:13) not only in the political and religious arena but also in academic pursuit. I consequently describe the two schools where the intervention strategy took place.

- **Caca Mission**

Caca is a liberal mission school that has been active national in issues such as inclusion, dialogue among religions and social justice. In this school, all learners study RS. Hence, the school readily gave permission to me and other researchers because the research did not contradict the aims and objectives of the church.

- **Mzaza High School**

Mzaza is a community school in Tsholotsho. It houses various religious groups as a place of worship. The school is not attached to any specific religion, but RS is taught there. There are only a few classes because of the lack of teachers able to teach RS.

This section dealt with the empirical section of generation of data with special focus on the historical background of the schools. Next, it is described how coresearchers were identified and invited to contribute to the development of SRHS to respond to the problems of RS.

4.6.2 Selection of coresearchers

Coresearchers were chosen after an invitation sent to the selected schools and locally available religious groups. The invitation set out the title, aim and objectives of the study (see Appendix D). I did this so that aspiring coresearchers could form a clear

picture of what the research entailed and how their participation could contribute to solving the problems of RS. The information was designed to attract relevant teachers, students and religious leaders. Interested teachers and religious leaders contacted me, but some religious groups delayed their response. I therefore had to make a follow-up call. The coresearchers who indicated their willingness to engage in the study signed consent forms to indicate that no one had been coerced to be part of this research, in line with the ethical considerations underpinning the study. The coresearchers of the team were drawn from Judaism, Islam, Christianity and African religions, and included an RS provincial inspector, provincial psychologist and teachers. Since the research focuses on religion and teaching, it was important that the coresearchers be people with an interest in religious issues and learning. In support of my approach and use of PAR, German, Tiani, Daoudi, Maravanyika, Chuma, Jum, Nemarundwe, Ontita and Yitambeu (2012:32) argue that “involving the beneficiaries can provide an opportunity for sharing knowledge and experience among themselves and discussing common problems and solutions”.

Three teachers from the two schools and religious personnel participated in the study. A total of five (5) learners was chosen as coresearchers. The students were doing the O-Level, with RS as one of their subjects. The coresearchers who responded to the invitation were invited to a meeting at one of the schools to be introduced to one another. From the first meeting, we agreed to form a team with a vision of improving the teaching and learning of RS, by interrogating the issues pertaining to RS. Ultimately the focus of the group was to come up with a strategy to minimise the problems of RS, attain curriculum relevance and solve social ills perpetrated in the context of religion.

4.6.3 Research operationalisation: Design research

In generating data with the coresearchers, I used design research for operationalisation purposes. The “first and most compelling argument for initiating design research emanates from the desire to ensure that this research is relevant in educational research settings” (van den Akker, Gravemeijer, McKenney & Nieveen, 2006:2). Furthermore, design research was preferred because “it aims at developing empirically grounded theories through a collective study of both the process of learning

and the means that support that process” (diSessa& Cobb, 2004:85). I also used design research in the context of Faste & Faste’s (2012:3) stipulation that it is used to “seek inspiration, evaluate existing solutions and approaches to similar problems, identify user needs, test the usability of concepts, find and experiment with different materials, predicting the marketability of an idea”. McKenney and Reeves (2012:14) argue that researchers learn through collaboration with partners affected by the problem. Hence, design research allowed me to invite suitable coresearchers who were directly affected by the teaching and learning of RS.

In the first stage of the design research, the research team–formulated a common vision, that is, to develop a strategy to respond to the problems of the teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwe. The team worked in line with the objectives of the study, setting objectives and activities for the envisaged period of six months. In each activity, a team leader was chosen by the group to oversee the operationalisation of the vision, ensure its sustainability and achieve the objectives of the study. The team leader monitored the progress of the research and the hybridity team collectively reflected on each stage of the programmes. Additionally, the team engaged in data analysis using the CDA technique, which included reflection on our journey as researchers with regard to improving the teaching of RS in schools. They then progressed to data validation to ensure that it reflected what was discussed and resolved during the research process.

4.6.4 Credentials of the coresearchers

In this section, I highlight the credentials of the hybridity team members who were instrumental in generating data. They were interested in the religious issues of the day and how religion could be strategically placed to meet the needs of the learners and to respond to the social pathologies hindering development. Pseudonyms have been assigned to protect the identities of the coresearchers. This is line with the ethical principles informing this study (see 4.9.3).

4.6.4.1 Mdala

Mdala was one the subject inspectors at the provincial education department and one of the members of the subject panel overseeing the teaching and learning of RS. The

subject inspectors are in charge of the seven districts of the Matabeleland North education department. All the religious inspectors were invited to be part of the team, but Mdala responded, signing the consent letter to be part of this research study. The invitation to the religious inspectors was done in cognisance of the advice of McGarvey (2007:8) that people with “influence in decision-making should be included from the onset of the research”. Mdala brought his expertise in the pedagogy of RS as well as education policy issues to the study.

4.6.4.2 Mzala

Mzala was a psychologist, who responded to the invitation while she was still at a secondary school, before being promoted to this post. This indicates the critical shortage of RS teachers, leading to people with a psychology and non-teaching background being incorporated into the teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwean schools. She continued to be part of the team even after she left the district of Tsholotsho.

4.6.4.3 Zie

Zie was one of the community leaders who responded to the invitation, showing his interest in being part of this study that focused on the teaching and learning of religion and IKS. The invitation was sent to the community in the context of PAR, which encourages the collaboration of various stakeholders in the process of sustainable social transformation. His participation helped to construct a full picture of the needs of the people in the community and to find the most suitable strategies and structures to mitigate the challenge the community was facing, in line with the PAR approach and CER.

4.6.4.4 Nkalakatha

Nkalakatha responded to the invitation as he was representing the African religions and was included in the team so that the concept of hybridity could be fully utilised. As a specialist on African religion, he brought a wealth of knowledge on the African religions that influenced the majority of the indigenous people of Zimbabwe.

4.6.4.5 Muranda

Muranda was a teacher and a Christian. He was trained to teach physical education, but ended up teaching RS because of his commitment to the Christian religion.

4.6.4.6 Nceku

Nceku was another teacher who consented to be part of the study. She was a qualified teacher, who majored in Music and Ndebele. However, she was requested by the school's principal to become the RS teacher because she studied RS when she was still in high school, more than 10 years previously.

4.6.4.7 Lups

Lups was also an RS teacher, although he was trained in languages. He responded to the invitation, joining the research journey to find sustainable ways in which RS could contribute to solving social pathologies.

4.6.4.8 Mbambo

Mbambo was one of the church leaders who became part of the hybridity team. She was one of the representatives of the Christian community.

4.6.4.9 Jojo, Kurara, Jerry

Jojo, Kurara and Jerry were learners who accepted the invitation to participate in the study. They provided the perceptions of the learners in relation to the learning of RS in Zimbabwean schools.

4.6.4.9 Tshuks

Rabbi Tshuks represented the Jewish community, which has a very limited population in Matabeleland North. He brought various contributions to the research, reflecting the feeling of a minority in respect of how religion is taught in Zimbabwe.

4.6.4.10 Adulm

Adulm represented the Muslim community in Zimbabwe. He occupied a critical place in the Islamic community as one of the public relations officers. His many duties included teaching the public about the Islamic religion. His participation as a coresearcher contributed to this study especially towards hybridisation of RS pedagogy.

4.6.4.11 Father Konzalos

Father Konzalos was an ordained priest of the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. He had been involved in leading the church for more than 25 years and was a member of the group of church leaders who attempted to facilitate interreligious dialogue as part of the church programme. He was invited to participate and signed the consent form to indicate his full support for the hybridity of religions.

In the following section, I focus on the power relations during the research process. PAR and the transformative paradigm seek egalitarian power-sharing between the researcher and coresearchers.

4.6.5 Power dynamics in participatory action research

PAR falls within the broader perspective of the transformative paradigm, where CER is (see 2.7). The issue of power relations in the transformative paradigm “must be addressed at each stage of the research process” (Mertens, 2007:213). Moreover, PAR researchers challenge unjust power relations and undemocratic social and political systems and practices in the research process (Khan & Chovance, 2010:34). In the context of the transformative paradigm, the researcher has a challenge to “reframed as one who recognises inequalities and injustices in society and strives to challenge the status quo, who is a bit of a provocateur with overtones of humility, and who possesses a shared sense of responsibility” (Mertens, 2007:212). Within the PAR approach, the “distinction between ‘researcher’ and ‘researched’ is deliberately blurred, as both are seen as possessing the important knowledge to contribute to the process. Both parties benefit from working together to address gaps in knowledge and take action to alleviate problems” (Lopez, 2015:230). Hence, in relation to these cordial relationships, Danley and Ellison (1999:3-4) say “one is no less important than the other is, and one cannot replace the other. Instead, the two groups each bring their unique perspectives and together create a situation of co learning”. I note that through the use of PAR, the researcher and coresearchers engage in a research study as equal partners who travel together: not one is more powerful than the others. In fact, the vertical power relation as demonstrated in the positivist approach is challenged in a quest for horizontal power relations where everyone in the study participates equally.

PAR in power relations “aims for a change in societal power as the control of knowledge creation shifts towards those affected by problems” (Leowenson *et al.*, 2014:14). In this regard, PAR in power relations focuses on emancipation, which provides a political and moral framework for the research where the thrust of research should strive for the welfare of the oppressed and disadvantaged in society (Dickson, 1997:21). Kindon *et al.* (2007:2) argue that PAR in “power relations emphasises dialogic engagement with coresearchers, and the development and execution of context suitable stratagems oriented towards empowerment and transformation at a range of scales”. The researcher and other participants should be in a relationship as coresearchers, thereby allowing input not only into results but also into the description of the problem or issue to be researched (Khan & Chovanec, 2010:35). In interrogating this further, I notice the transformation in the research process, where participants in research are transformed into coresearchers. Referring to team members as coresearchers is an act of emancipation and empowerment.

PAR in the power relations context, as contended by Reason & Bradbury (2008:11), sees researchers not as experts but as working with coresearchers as equal partners. Given (2008:599) notes that participants as “coresearchers refer to a participatory method of research that positions coresearchers as joint contributors and investigators to the findings of a research project. This qualitative research approach validates and privileges the experiences of coresearchers, making them experts and collaborators in the process of gathering”. In other words, as stated by Whitman *et al.* (2015:625), PAR is a “democratic model of who is able to produce, own and use knowledge; is driven by coresearchers rather than an outside sponsor, funder or academic”.

Consequently, my role in this study, as concretised by Mckenzie, Tan and Hoverman (2012:20), was to “facilitate research and learning process particularly of the nature of knowledge about eliciting and documenting values and knowledge held by coresearchers”. In line with PAR, the hybridity team in this research ensured flexibility and was willing to give up the idea of control and adapt the approach as needed and to suit the coresearchers. In doing this, I valued the advice of Fournier, Mull, Kipp and Walusimbi (2007:6) that for PAR to progress as it should, power and control should remain with coresearchers. To ensure this, I concur with the advice from Crane and O'Regan (2010) who say that it is critical that spaces and processes are safe,

respectful, and culturally responsive and open to the contributions of all involved to strike a balance of power among coresearchers.

In responding to power dynamics in research, we as researcher and coresearchers set the “agendas and took responsibility for analysis and representation of outcomes” (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995:1669) of the generated data. As participatory action researchers “we explored how changing objective circumstances (e.g. performances, events, effects, patterns of interaction, rules, and roles (shaped and reshaped by the subjective conditions of participants’ perspectives” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:290). As such, the data generated reflects partnership in every process of the research and interpretation of knowledge (Loewenson *et al.*, 2014:16). The hybridity team worked iteratively to develop the focus of interest, methods and findings, sometimes dividing tasks according to experience, and always reflecting at each stage (Whitman, Pin & Milledge, 2015:626).

When power relations are diffused, coresearchers play an active role in all stages of research (Jacobson, Attenberg, Barnes, Rowley & McKinnon, 2005:87). In this “research, I worked with the coresearchers to set the research agenda, as a result, there was discovery and exploration of power differentials in the research relationship as well as in the community under study”(Given, 2008:139). Moreover, the coresearchers promoted participant involvement in the research process. Coresearchers had the prospect of telling their own stories and giving an insider view to the process of being the object or subject of research (Given, 2008:599). The process “becomes meaningful knowledge in the context of such relationships, and relationship-building takes time. It took shared work across time to get to know each other below the surface level and to begin developing trust” (Miller & Maguire, 2008:87-88). We consented as a team that power must be distributed evenly among everyone in the group. No one was supposed to loathe anyone else, take the contributions personally or show a lack of respect to anyone, including his or her religion and culture. Mutual respect and tolerance were key in this research to find desirable, sustainable solutions to the teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwean schools. This was spelled out in the consent form with the aim of diluting the power from the centre to the periphery. We conceded to Baden and Major (2010:53) that “dynamic relationships between researcher and coresearchers are constantly negotiated to deconstruct power, achieve and maintain trust, promote equality and

ensure reciprocity". In diluting power in relationships, we contended with David (2002:13) that without the involvement of the coresearcher as equal partners in the "formulation and conduct of research, this work remains an opaque".

I conclude that PAR, as transformative research and influenced by CER, puts the value on the coresearchers as the knowledgeable people who have the potential to contribute to the formulation of a strategy that seeks to respond to the problems of RS. The qualification or the credentials of the researchers were not considered for their inclusion into the research. In fact, all people regardless of qualification, race or any other factor qualify to engage in a collaborative journey with researchers towards the transformation of RS pedagogy to be inclusive of all religions in society.

4.6.6 Challenges of engaging coresearchers

One of the challenges associated with the use of coresearchers is that, because of the influence of the traditional forms of research like positivism, coresearchers does not take ownership of the program. Coresearchers often have a limited understanding of this approach to research; hence, they treat their perspective as that of outsiders, because they are accustomed to engaging in research as participants (Given, 2008:600). PAR seeks to empower the coresearchers through the process, although some might see it as a tiring exercise that takes a lot of their time. I note that this challenge emanates from the dominant or traditional perspectives that have influenced research processes.

4.6.6.1 A strategy for active participation

To encourage active participation in the hybridity teams, every team member was given an opportunity to say something on the topic under discussion. It is a non-threatening strategy that allows maximum participation among the coresearchers in a relaxed milieu (Ihuseman, Lafit & Hatfield, 2009:1). The hybridity views of the team were written down on the flipchart and each team discussed them (Dunham, 2006:1). The strategy of giving every member an opportunity to speak stimulated discussion on the issues at hand (Potter, Gordon & Hamer, 2004:126). In this case, the discussion centred on how religion could be relevant to meet the needs of the learners.

4.6.7 Stages and process of data generation

This section describes how the hybridity team worked together to generate data that responded to the aim and the objectives of the study. The hybridity team gathered data through discussions, workshops and observations. The subsequent section shows the stages of data generating. However, the discussions and stages intersected. The stages described below highlight the topics that the hybridity team dealt with towards the formulation of a hybridity strategy to respond to the problems of RS in Zimbabwean schools.

4.6.7.1 Stage 1: Problem clarification and scheduling

The first stage was critical for a clear understanding of the problem at hand, namely the failure of the current RS to respond to the needs of the learners. The first hybridity team meeting laid the foundation for the research and spelt out how best people should relate to one another for the success of the research. As part of the first stage, the coresearchers were given the opportunity to outline their religious and cultural affiliations. The coresearchers drew up ground rules, which enabled them to relate to each other. The ground rules included respect for people's opinion, listening attentively to someone and responding when necessary as directed by the team leader. An important laid was to avoid negative perceptions and remarks that might be directed to a particular religion or culture. The time and dates for discussions and workshops were determined, and it was agreed that the team would meet every two weeks for a period that would not exceed two hours. The team promised to abide by the rules set collectively.

4.6.7.2 Stage 2: Challenges in teaching and learning of religion

In response to the first objective of the study, the team discussed the various challenges of religion in society and in the pedagogy space. It was generally noted that while religion still played a dominant role in people's lives, it was affected by challenges that caused some to negate the importance of religion in society. The challenges were divided into categories such as political, economic, educational and societal issues. The notable challenge of RS was that it was not accommodative of

other religions. In the team's opinion, RS did not reflect a democratic society that valued human rights such as the freedom of worship. Hence, the team proposed that we discuss the basics of the religions represented in the group to reduce prejudice and misrepresentation of the religious other. The lack of knowledge of the religious other was cited as one of the factors that contributed to religious violence and terrorism, as people acted out of ignorance of the other.

4.6.7.3 Stage 3: Fundamentals of religions, faiths and cultures

After the meeting on the challenges of religious knowledge of the other, every coresearcher was given time to take the hybridity team throughout the basic beliefs of each religion presented. This was helpful for some coresearchers who had no knowledge of other religions. Through this discussion, the team constructed a shared vision on the basics of the various faiths. This helped to eliminate some of the misconceptions often held by people on religions of which they have little or no understanding on.

The coresearchers were further asked to outline various fundamentals which they wished the curriculum to include or exclude. The team leader stressed the need for the discussion to adhere to the initial ground rules. Furthermore, each concept that the various religious leaders wanted reflected in the curriculum had to be justified in light of how the children would benefit holistically, namely in terms of their physical, emotional, spiritual and cognitive growth. The thrust of the discussion remained the learners, who were the direct beneficiaries of the RS curriculum.

4.6.7.4 Stage 4: Discussions with learners on challenges in RS

The team was thereupon given the opportunity to hear the views of the learners on the challenges they faced in the learning of RS. These learners were doing RS at O Level. To ensure an effective and coordinated discussion, one of the coresearchers was assigned to probe the learners on their perceptions of RS and how the subject related to their daily life experience. This was also done to determine the extent to which RS influenced the learners outside the classroom walls. A SWOT analysis was used to interrogate the rationale, impact and relevance of RS to the O-level learners. The students started by listing the issues and concepts in RS which they studied and

believed had a direct impact on their social lives. The discussion was maintained along the relevance of the subject to the learners.

4.6.7.5 Stage 5: Solutions to challenges of RS

The team then held in a workshop on the teaching and learning of RS, hosted by one of the participating schools. The focus was more on what should be done to address the various challenges of the teaching and learning of religion in Zimbabwean schools and on how religion as a social institution could contribute to sustainable social transformation that would enhance the livelihood of the members of society. The team reflected on various solutions that could be implemented to ensure that RS responded directly to the lived realities of the learners. By this time, the hybridity team were conversant with the challenges of RS and had suggestions that could go a long way in transforming the teaching and learning of RS in society. The solutions proposed by the hybridity team led to a successful formulation of the strategy to respond to the problems of RS in the pedagogical space.

4.6.7.6 Stage 6: Conditions for successful implementation of SRHS

After the team had deliberated on different solutions to respond to the challenges of RS, another workshop was held that focused on the conditions necessary for successful implementation. This was necessary because team members believed that no matter how important a solution, the exercise would become a mere compilation if the conditions for success were not met. The team identified conditions critical to ensuring the success of SRHS in responding to RS problems. The conditions ranged from pedagogical level to policy level to ensure that RS was relevant to addressing lived realities. The team emphasised the collaboration of various religious and educational stakeholders as a key condition for the success of SRHS.

4.6.7.7 Stage 7: Threats to implementation of SRHS

A workshop was held on the threats that the team anticipated in implementing the suggested solutions in a quest for RS curriculum relevance. They shared the understanding that no matter how noble an idea, it was likely to face various threats

that could jeopardise any attempts to improve human conditions through RS, if not managed properly. They noted various threats and suggested different avenues for dealing with them in the teaching and learning of RS.

4.6.7.8 Stage 8: Anticipated successes of SRHS

The benefits anticipated through the implementation of various suggestions by the team to address the challenges of RS were also work shopped. It was manifest that when different religions came together, dialogue ensued and the best ways to solve problems from collaborative perspectives could be found.

4.6.7.9 Stage 9: Formulation of socio-religious hybridity strategy

After the discussions, workshops and observations, the hybridity team mapped out a strategy that incorporated the points raised. This information gleaned in the mapping workshop was used to formulate the strategy outlined in Chapter 6. In the construction of the strategy, the team focused on four constructs, namely religious hybridity, religious abuse, IKS and teacher capacitation. The team believed that if these issues were addressed in RS, the subject would be geared towards the promotion of human conditions, elimination of false consciousness, social transformation, social justice and emancipation of the learners and society (see 2.4).

4.6.7.10 Stage 10: Winding up the research

In the last meeting of the hybridity team, we reflected on a journey that took about six months to complete due to challenges and commitments that were beyond our control. I took this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the team for their unwavering support towards the success of this research. I admitted that the knowledge and experience demonstrated by the team outpaced my expectations. It was a transformative journey that indicated that hybridity of religions was possible when people engage in dialogue informed by the principles of CER. The research process reduced prejudices as the hybridity team learnt about religious issues from each other.

4.6.8 Minute-taking and recordings

To capture every detail of the research and obtain a true reflection of what took place in this research study, a coresearcher was assigned at every meeting to note the key issues raised in the discussion. Each stage was recorded to ensure that data was adequately captured.

I will now focus on CDA, the approach I used in Chapter 5 to analyse the empirical data generated through PAR. To fully conceptualise CDA, I have traced the history of CDA, discussing the three levels at which CDA is used to analyse data, namely the textual, discursive and social practice levels.

4.7 Critical discourse analysis technique for data analysis

After the data was generated with the coresearchers, it was subjected to data analysis. In this research study, I used CDA as propounded by numerous scholars. CDA is a “theoretical approach to studying the role of language in a society that originated within linguistics but has found widespread application across the social sciences. The term is also sometimes used to refer only to the methodological framework of CDA that centres on the qualitative linguistic analysis of spoken or written texts” (Given, 2008:145). To shed light on CDA, van Dijk (2001:352) argues that “CDA is a type of discourse analytical research that focuses on issues of social abuse, dominance, and inequality [that] are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political milieu”. On the other hand, Rogers (2011:1) contends that CDA addresses disparities in educational sites, practices and systems, with appreciation for the fact that the world is characterised by inequality. Coming from a different angle, Tenorio (2011:183) notes that “from its inception, CDA was a discipline designed to question the status quo, by detecting, analysing, and also resisting and counteracting enactments of power abuse as transmitted in private and public discourses”. I note that CDA is an approach or lens for looking at the generated data to expose various aspects portrayed in the text such as social inequality, oppression, power relations and the structures in place to perpetuate the social status quo. In my data analysis I therefore sought to reveal issues that have to do with power relations, inequality and any form of exploitation which might be embedded in the spoken word or text.

I chose CDA under the influence of van Dijk (1998:5), because it is the discourse that focuses on “the abuse of such power, and especially on dominance, that is, on the ways control over discourse is abused to control people's beliefs and actions in the interest of dominant groups, and against the best interests or the will of the others”. This is part of the thrust of my study, namely the uneven distribution of power in the teaching of RS in Zimbabwean schools. In addition, religious abuse by some religious leaders is prevalent and it is therefore critical that learners be equipped with relevant skills to escape the wrath of such abusive religious leaders in society.

I will now trace the development of CDA into the academic space for data analysis.

4.7.1 Origins of critical discourse analysis

The 1970s saw “the emergence of a form of discourse and text analysis that recognised the role of language in structuring power relations in society” (Wodak, 2001:13). However, van Dijk (1997:25) is of the view that the modern study of CDA appeared in the 1970s, simultaneously with other disciplines in the social sciences. CDA was disseminated through the works of European linguists during the late 1980s, chiefly Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak and Teun van Dijk (Given, 2008:139). On the other hand, Wodak (2001:4) states that CDA as “rose through a small symposium in University of Amsterdam, in January 1991, where scholars such as Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen and Ruth Wodak discussed CDA theory and its approach”.

In contrast, scholars such as Huckins, Andrus and Lemon (2012:108) state that the CDA rose in connection with Critical Linguistics (CL), with scholars such Gunther Kress, Roger Fowler, Bob Hodge, and other students of M.A.K. Halliday in the 1970s. From another angle, others such as Haig (2004:129) believe that “CDA theorists frequently refer to the Marxist origins of some of their concepts, such as the ‘emancipatory knowledge interest’ and the Gramscian notion of hegemony”. As regards CDA’s origins associated with Marxism, Lomax (2004:140) states that it is a “political enterprise in the additional and crucial sense that it is motivated by a particular political agenda – non-conformist, anti-elitist, neo-Marxist, anti-neo-liberal; it seeks not just to comprehend the social world, but to transmute it”. Tenorio (2011:188) concurs, saying that certain elements of CDA have roots in Marxism and Althusser’s

theories. Hart (2007:106) notes that CDA is a “multidisciplinary theory to analysis, consisting of a number of different theoretical approaches to the micro level analysis of text and talk that has to do with the social and or political”. I hence note three schools of thought associated with the rise of CDA: its link to the conference in Amsterdam; its evolution from CL; and its association with scholars such as Gramsci and Marx. I conclude that CDA developed under the influence of Marxism, because it seeks to expose the oppressive structures in society portrayed in texts, just as Marxism does.

4.7.2 Definition and Importance of critical discourse analysis

The goal of CDA is to describe “the associations among certain texts, interactions and social practices and interpret the configuration of discourse practices and then use the descriptions and interpretations to offer an explanation of why and how social practices are constituted, changed and transformed the way that they are” (Rogers, Berkers, Mosley, Hui & Josephs, 2005:371). In addition, CDA is a “form and practice of that account for detailed structures, strategies and functions of text and talk, including grammatical, pragmatic, interactional, stylistic, rhetorical, semiotic, narrative or similar forms of verbal and preverbal organization of communicative events” (van Dijk, 2001:97). From a different angle, Locke (2004:2) sees CDA as associations “between discursive practices, events and texts and wider social and cultural structures”. CDA is an “analysis used for unfolding, interpreting, analysing, and assessing social life reflected in text and aims to analytically explore relationships between discursive practices, texts, and events and wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes” (Bayram, 2010:31). The critical discourse scholars further “make their own positions and interests explicit while retaining their respective scientific methodologies and while remaining self-reflective of their own research process” (Wodak & Meyer, 2008:3). CDA is a movement that attempts to ensure equal representation of issues, making democracy possible (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002:88) through analysis of issues, feelings and perceptions hidden in both written and text.

Looking at the above definitions and thinking through them, I note that texts as written or spoken words have power structures behind them. The words spoken portray a certain kind of social structure, which exposes exploitation and inequality and finds ways to facilitate social change through text.

The importance of CDA is that “it strives to explore how these non-transparent connections are a factor in fortifying power and hegemony, and it draws attention to power imbalances, social inequities, nondemocratic practices, and other injustices in hopes of spurring people to corrective actions” (Fairclough, 1992:32). The target of the analysis is the power of the elites that ratifies, endures, authenticises, tolerates or disregards social discrimination and prejudice (van Dijk, 1993:252). CDA was pertinent to this study, because I interrogated the power relations evident in religions, which often seek to dominate other religions or dehumanise other religious adherents. CDA enabled me to discern the power structures that are used by religious adherents to sustain the status quo. I wished to expose these structures to challenge any domination, social inequality and exploitation that exist in religious people. I interrogated the data through the lens of CDA, which argues that all domination should be challenged, to emancipate people.

Furthermore, CDA reveals social problems, especially where power imbalances are evident, through an exhaustive account, clarification and analysis of the textual strategies in text and discourse (Rahimi & Riasati, 2011:108). The interest of the poor is often taken into consideration ahead of that of the advantaged members of the community. The “experiences and opinions of disadvantaged members are taken seriously, and supports the struggle against inequality” (van Dijk, 2001:96) for the betterment of all the members of the group. CDA “does not, therefore, understand itself as politically neutral, but a movement committed to ensuring sustainable social change” (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002:69). It therefore follows that CDA is a theory that seeks social change where the interests of the poor or disadvantaged are taken into consideration in the teaching of religion. It rejects any forms of inequality that are exhibited either in language, text, discursive or social practice. The move towards hybridity of religions and cultures propelled this research study to use CDA, since it opened avenues where the interest of the disadvantaged could be considered through their inclusion and participation in the study. Hence, I conclude that CDA confirms my selection of CER as a framework underpinning this study, because CDA and CER seek to improve human conditions by solving problems that confront people in society (see 2.4.1). In addition, CDA justifies PAR as an approach for generating data since both seek to fight for the disadvantaged members of society (see 4.3.2.1).

In this section, I focused on the definition of CDA and pointed out why I regarded it as important. In summary, the importance of CDA lies in its role as a lens through which text and the spoken word are interrogated to expose inequality, exploitation and dominance, with the intention of challenging dominance to solve life problems. The generated data was analysed at three levels, namely textual, discursive and social practice.

4.7.3.1 Analysis at text level

In text-level analysis, I look at text in general, whether spoken or written. There has always been an assumption that text refers only to written words; however, a broader understanding implies that text includes spoken words (Fairclough, 1995:4). Huckin (2002:9) says that text-level analysis includes “genre, heteroglossia, framing, extended metaphor, foregrounding, omission and auxiliary embellishments”. Analysis at text level is crucial, as shown by Janks (1997:1), who asserts that “texts are instantiations of socially structured discourses and that the processes of reproduction and reception are socially constrained. Hence; in texts, discursive differences are negotiated; they are governed by differences in power that are in part encoded in and determined by discourse and by genre”. Consequently, texts are locations of contestation as they expose different and conflicting ideologies that exist in the social realm (Wodak & Meyer, 2008:10). Mogashoa (2014:108) argues that “texts are indeed multi-discursive, that is they draw from a range of discourse, fields of knowledge and voices”. To elucidate further, van Dijk (1997:29) avers that “text and talk in many ways signal their contextual relevance, and therefore context structures need to be observed and analysed in details; also as possible consequences of discourse, settings, and their communicative and social roles”. In short, CDA in relation to text-level analysis as propounded by Nasir & Xiaoyong (2013:9) is the “space which allows for analysis of written and spoken texts to explore the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias”.

In this study, text as in spoken words and written formats was analysed by the researcher and coresearchers, taking into consideration issues of social injustice, inequality and domination that emerged during our discussions on the issue of the teaching of religion and culture in schools. Spoken text was audio-recorded to enable

it to be analysed at text level. The goal of analysis at this level was to find ways in which social change was championed through religious pedagogy, and the elimination of any social inequalities that inhibited inclusion and specifically the hybridisation of socially available religions and cultures. To succeed in the use of text for analysing data, Govender and Muthukrishna (2012:29) state that it “requires that structures, strategies or other properties of text, talk, verbal interaction or communicative events play a role in the modes of reproduction of power relations, enactment, representation, legitimisation denial, mitigation or concealment of dominance among others”. At this level, I examined the text and tried to determine how it related to social inequality and dominance. I then drew my conclusions from the text, as seen through the CER lens.

The other level of analysis used in this work is the discursive level and I discuss it below.

4.7.3.2 Analysis at discursive level

The discursive level of analysis examines issues that “construct and maintain unequal power relations” (Jansen, 2009:109). Likewise, van Dijk (1998:23) argues that analysis at the discursive level seeks to maintain and reproduce the status quo within specific social, political and historical contexts. The “discursive constitutes situations, objects of knowledge and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It pays attention to issues that sustain and reproduce the social status quo and how these issues can be transformed (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:258). Using this level of analysis, I explored structures in society or in the text that seemed to construct, maintain and reproduce exploitation. The dominant in society have invented structures and technologies that seek to construct and maintain undesirable social structures that marginalise other people in the community.

In the discursive analysis, the thrust was to analyse the response of the coresearchers in line with what others would have raised or said. A conducive relationship to create social justice is critical at this level of analysis (Romm, 2010:24) to enable analysts to unearth issues produce and sustain the status quo. The goal is to naturalise particular power relations and ideologies in the ways in which they are articulated in the struggle (Fairclough, 1992:12). Discursive practices may have “major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for

instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic or cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:258).

The analysis at this level examined the responses of the coresearchers in relation to issues raised during the discussions. The responses to given issues portrayed the underlying assumptions about the ‘other’; hence; the analysis at this level sought to unearth the often tacit conceptions of people as they emanated in discussions, especially when they sought to reproduce social inequality. We were alert to the fact that discursive practices might reproduce social inequality (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:258). In short, I used discursive analysis to discern how the spoken words of the coresearchers sought to construct, maintain and reproduce social inequality in society. It is natural that people may unknowingly want to maintain the status quo and even enlarge the scope of dominance.

4.7.3.3 Analysis at social practice level

To analyse at the social practice level of CDA, I approached it as propounded by Rogers (2011:28), namely as “language in use which is part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific social practices and social practices to ensure solidarity, the distribution of social goods and power”. Social practice often involves technologies of exclusion and inclusion in society (Fairclough, 2003:23). On the same note, Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000:449) aver that discourse as “social practice is the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse is a feature”. The language underpinning social practice implies a “dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:258). At the social practice level of analysis, I examined what the coresearchers were saying during the research process and interrogated their words to see if there were any signs of technologies of inclusion or exclusion.

CDA is a paramount instrument of “observation that use of language is a ‘social practice’ which is both determined by the social structure and contributes to stabilising and changing the structure simultaneously” (Wodak & Meyer, 2008:7). The “spoken and written discourse are forms of social practice in sociocultural contexts, and language. Language users may enact, confirm or challenge more comprehensive

social and political structures and institutions” (van Dijk, 1997:30). While analysing our data at the social practice level, we understood as a team that the discussions, opinions, sentiments and assumptions presented by the team reflected the general thinking of the community. Analysing data from this angle helped us to note the perceived thinking of society about other religions and cultures. This helped us to find ways to address misconceptions upheld by society in relation to the teaching of religion and also find ways to address them without causing yet more problems.

In summary, I conclude that I chose to analyse data through the lens of CDA because, as shown by Mogashoa (2014:105),

“It aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices, events and texts, and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power”.

This aligns with CER, where power is interrogated to challenge power imbalances in society.

3.7.4 Weakness of CDA as a technique for data analysis

Morgan (2010:4) notes that “one limitation of discourse analysis is that the array of options available through the various traditions can render issues of methodology problematic as each tradition has its own epistemological position, concepts, and procedures”. In addition, “because of various traditions which people come within research, CDA researchers may fail to integrate context and audience satisfactorily into their analytical framework, leading to naively deterministic assumptions about the workings of discourse and social reproduction” (Breeze, 2011:494).

Another challenge associated with CDA is that it can be “very challenging since the door is never closed on any analysis and each new interpretation gives rise to a further intense critique” (Morgan, 2004:4). The extent of analysis using this approach is therefore not established which may lead to weird interpretations and possibly problems for scholars who use other traditions for analysis. Besides, I also note that CDA, just like CER, has a weakness in that it is always on the side of the oppressed.

It ignores the people (the rich and dominant) whom it accuses of constructing, dominating and reproducing social inequality in society. It does not take all members of the community into consideration. It assumes that social inequality exists in every situation which may not always be true.

4.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations pertain to an authentic approach of carrying out a research study in dealing with coresearchers, affecting how evidence is collected, documented, interpreted and used to avoid harm to coresearchers (Leowenson *et al.*, 2014:74). Every PAR project will involve ethical dimensions that are prioritised through the research process (Crane & O'Regan, 2010:40). In light of this, I agree with Mertens (2005:36) that "greater concern about rights and welfare of coresearchers generally leads to greater involvement of the coresearchers and this forms one of the basic tenets of transformative research". Furthermore, I concede to the notion of Basit (2010:56) that ethical considerations "should be kept in mind at the design stage, in gaining access, collecting and analysing data, in writing reports and in disseminating the research findings". The following are the ethical principles that informed this study.

4.8.1 Permissions granted

I sought and was granted ethical clearance by the University of the Free State (UFS). The reference number is UFS-HSD2015/0445 (see Appendix E). I approached the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Schools through the provincial educational officer in charge of Matabeleland North for permission to conduct the research. I handed them a permission letter from UFS, which requested the ministry on my behalf to allow me to carry out an empirical study (see Appendix A). My research was approved by the Provincial Education Director (PED) (see Appendix B). I proceeded, as instructed, to the provincial office of the Tsholotsho District Education officer (DEO), where I was granted permission to proceed to the schools. I took letters from the district and provincial officers to two selected schools who responded positively by granting written permission to allow me to conduct research. I also approached various religious groups who endorsed their participation by signing the consent letter and also responded by signing a consent form (see Appendix C) been granted (see Appendix).

By doing this, I concurred with Winter's (1987:11) notion that researchers "must ensure that all relevant persons, committees, and authorities have been consulted, and the research is approved prior to commencing the research".

4.8.2 Informed voluntary participation

Participation in this research was voluntary. The coresearchers had to be informed of the purpose of the research with its desired outcomes, and had to be able to decide whether to participate or not without any threats or harm (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:521; Basit, 2010:60; Shallwami & Mohammed, 2007:13). In the same vein, Winter (1987:12) argues that "no one should be obligated to participate in the research process and those who wish to terminate should do so without any reparations. Furthermore, the development of the work must remain visible and open to suggestions from others throughout the research process". In line with this notion, I informed the coresearchers that this was a voluntary study and they were not being coerced by any subtle means to participate in the study.

4.8.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is one of the crucial elements in ethical considerations in research. In this regard, I agree with DESA (2011:7), which stipulates that "researchers must recognise the participants' entitlement to privacy and must accord them their rights to confidentiality and anonymity, unless they or their guardians or responsible others, specifically and willingly waive this right". In response to this principle in ethics, I assured all the coresearchers that their responses would be treated with confidentiality unless they chose to associate themselves openly with a certain opinion and idea. I disclosed this aspect in the consent letter.

4.8.4 No harmful effects

To obviate possible harmful effects, I assured the coresearchers along the lines of Mertens (2005:33) that the research "aims at maximising good outcomes, avoiding unnecessary risk, harm or wrong". In response to this, I highlighted that this research does not in any way seek to hurt anyone during the process and requested that the

coresearchers expose any of the threats or harm which they sense during the research process. I was aware that the issue of religion and particularly religious integration was very sensitive and thus assured the coresearchers that the presence of participants from other religious persuasions was not intended to harm them in any way. I stressed that the guiding principle in our relationship with each other was respect for one another's religion, tolerance and celebration of unity in difference.

4.8.5 Voluntary withdrawal

Shallwani and Mohammed (2007:13) argue that "researchers must recognise the right of any participant to withdraw from the research for any or no reason, and at any time, and they must inform them of this right". I concurred with this principle and throughout the research coresearchers had the liberty of withdrawing from the study, as was their democratic right.

4.9 Summary of the chapter

Chapter 4 focused on the approach which was used to generate data from the coresearchers. PAR was used largely because it was the method associated with the marginalised members of the community, in this case those who had experienced religious and cultural exclusion from the curriculum. The chapter focused on the profiling the coresearchers who participated in the study. It explored the issue of data analysis and showed how CDA was used to analyse data from the text, discursive and social context levels. The ethical considerations underpinning the research were discussed. The chapter outlined how the data was generated during the course of the research. Chapter 5 presents and analyses the data that was generated.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 focuses on data presentation, analysis, and discussion of the data findings. The data I present in this chapter emanated from the use of participatory action research (PAR), a methodology for generating data. The generated data attempted to respond to the aim and the objectives of the study. I used critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a technique for analysing the generated data. The empirical data was interrogated in the light of the three levels of CDA, which are text, discursive and social practice. The generated data builds on the constructs discussed in Chapter 3. Also, in this chapter, the team laid a foundation for the formulation of a socio-religious hybridity strategy (SRHS), as detailed in Chapter 6.

Firstly I remind the readers of the aim of the study which is to develop a strategy that responds to the problems of RS in the Zimbabwean schools. The data presented in the chapter responds to the objectives of this research:

- Examining the challenges in the teaching and learning of RS.
- Evaluating solutions that have been used to respond to the challenges of RS.
- Discussing conditions for the successful implementation of RS using SRHS at O Level.
- Exposing threats associated with teaching and learning of RS in secondary schools.
- Highlighting possible successes associated with the implementation of SRHS in a quest for curriculum relevance in Zimbabwean schools.

The empirical data generated through PAR attempts to respond to the above objectives. Its ultimate purpose is to develop a strategy that enhances the teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwean secondary schools. The team in the operationalisation of the vision was anchored in the aim and objectives of the study. As been shown in Chapter 4, the team was comprised of people from various religions, namely Islam, African religions, Christianity and Judaism. Representatives of the religions consented to be part of this research study, although some did not have a space in the RS curriculum. Various religions were invited to participate as coresearchers, based on Freire's (1970:15) assertion that "attempting to liberate the

oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated.”

5.2 CHALLENGES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The following section highlight one of the challenges of teaching and learning of RS as generated by the hybridity team.

5.2.1 Lack of dialogue between religions

The challenge raised during the empirical generating of the data was the lack of communication among various religions. This confirms literature stating that the lack of religious dialogue presents problems with the teaching and learning of religion (see 3.2.3). Literature revealed that religious dialogue is critical to solve religious challenges such as abuse and terrorism in society (see 3.4.1). The RS syllabus also refers to the interaction and communication of religious adherents (Zimsec, 2013: 2.3). A policy document as stipulated by Cultural policy of Zimbabwe (2007:11) states that open debate on religious issues should be allowed. Despite the need for religious dialogue, the discussions of the team pointed to a lack of religious dialogue. Nceku and Zie state their views on the lack of religious dialogue:

Nceku: “The issue of religious exclusivity can cause unnecessary loss of human lives but to allow communication among religions is one of the fearful things to do, besides the community might think you are confused on your faith if you appear having interests in different religions.”

Zie: “The issue of religious communication is problematic. This is the first time when I can sit with people of different religion, discussing issues of religion, its tense, just thinking if we can really agree.”

Analysis at this level shows that generally there is no dialogue between the religions at pedagogical level, as indicated by some members of the hybridity team. According to Nceku, one of the reasons for the lack of religious dialogue is fear emanating from the atrocities associated with religion such as loss of human life (see 3.2.7). The words of Nceku indicate that some religions are treated with suspicion, perhaps emanating

from misinformation, prejudice, and lack of knowledge on the religious other. Zie's statement that "it is the first time that I sit with people of different religion" indicates that there are structures that have been put in place by the society to ensure that religions do not engage in dialogue. More often, these structures are not visible but can be seen when the situation calls for it, as in this research study where I deliberately invited different religions to come together and discuss how problems of RS can be solved from a hybridity perspective. Zie notes that one of the things that hinder religious dialogue is fear of the unknown. It also clear from Zie's comments that religious dialogue is usually negated on the assumption that people can never agree on religion. Conversely, the literature review indicates that some countries have successfully managed inclusive religious teaching and learning through engaging in dialogue (see 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.4, 3.3.5). Furthermore, literature has proven that peaceful co-existence of religion is possible through dialogue (see the case of RS in Britain, 3.3.5). Dialogue between religions is possible and contributes to the improvement of human conditions (see 2.4.1). Moreover, unreasonable prejudices are dropped (Gwaravanda *et al.*, 2014:243).

In this, I focus on the issue of power relations as portrayed in society. Nceku states that "society may think you are confused". The question is: who is the society who determines that someone is confused based on engaging in religious dialogue? It can be argued that it refers to the dominant group in society, who determines the right and wrong of social interactions. In other ways, society is now a technology of inclusion and exclusion for religious communication. This "misleading thinking is more dangerous in the world of ordinary life because it may result in fundamentalism and religious conflicts" (Gwaravanda *et al.*, 2013: 243). Because of the power of the dominant controls and out of fear of the dominant, the dominated act to please the dominant. According to CER, this must be challenged (see 2.4.5) to eliminate false consciousness (see 2.4.2) that religions cannot engage in mutual and democratic dialogue. When Zie notes that "*it's tense, just thinking if we can really agree*", it indicates that he has prepared mechanisms that will block religious dialogue. Zie has knowledge of religious that he believes is true and cannot be negotiated with other people to come into a certain consensus. In other words Zie seeks to maintain and reproduce structures that negate religious dialogue (see 3.5.3).

The discussion continued with Kurara, Jojo and Mzala giving their views on religious dialogue:

Kurara: "For four years I have been doing RS, I have never encountered people who belong to other religions, I think those who belong to other religion are hiding it. They can't communicate their faiths, maybe because of fear of being the only one in that religion."

Jojo: "Our teaching at churches or mosques are to be blamed for discouraging dialogue between religions. I think we need to reconsider this because we all have one God."

Mzala: "Communication of religion is very difficult especially when there are religions which they think are better than others. Teaching of other religions make it difficult for us to communicate since [I] am already coming from a condemned position."

At the text level analysis, the sentiments of Jojo, Kurara, and Mzala also refer to the failure of the schooling system to provide for dialogue between religions. Kurara states that he has been doing RS for four years and in those years; he has never encountered people who are from other religions besides the Christian faith. Jojo states that religious leaders through their teachings discourage dialogue between religions. This indicates structures deliberately put in place by religious leaders to ensure that dialogue of religions does not take place. Religions acquire a certain superiority complex where they see no reason to enter into a dialogue, especially with religions that are deemed their enemies. In this case, dialogue between religions is sacrificed on the altar of a superiority complex (see 3.5.3), and in doing so religions maintain that their faith is best compared to others (Basedau *et al.*, 2013:869). They consequently see no need for religious dialogue (see 3.5.1). However, in some cases this superiority complex is cascaded to the learners, where learners from the dominant religion may see themselves as superior. The situation is exacerbated by the teaching and learning of religion where only Christianity and occasionally adherents of African religions are referred in the curriculum creating a superiority complex for Christian learners. Mzala states that dialogue between religions is very difficult because some religions are already condemned, implying they have nothing to offer in the dialogue process. This dehumanises the condemned people and jeopardises attempts for peaceful co-

existence. Hence, there is a need to critique this false consciousness (see 2.4.2) that some religions are better placed than others (McKernath, 2014:425). It is evident that a religious superiority complex blocks dialogue; this may be used by some religions as an excuse for engaging in religious violence (see 3.2.7) owing to a lack of critical thinking towards religious practices (Antal, 2008:88).

Issues of power and dominance are at play here, where dialogue between religious groups is deemed difficult, given that some religious adherents are already condemned or their religion deemed irrelevant. It is clear that Mzala argues from a position of being a marginalised religious member, where their religion is seen as inappropriate. Given that religion is both personal and pedagogical (see 3.2.8), viewing other religions as condemned, irrelevant and inappropriate is a good breeding ground for resistance and violence, as the marginalised seek the politics of identity and recognition. In conclusion, I consider it critical that both schools and society find ways in which dialogue can be achieved among religions, before religious tension escalates to levels which human conditions are disturbed. It is public knowledge that religion-motivated wars are difficult to mediate once they start, as witnessed in the Middle East uprisings (see 3.2.7).

5.2.2 Closed doors for other religions in curriculum

The other challenge that emanated from the empirical evidence is the issue of closed doors for other religions to be fully part of the mainstream curriculum practices. This confirms the literature review (See 3.2.1), where I pointed out that religion is problematic because of religious exclusion. There are closed doors for other religions in RS, as shown by the RS syllabus content, which is Bibliocentric (Zimsec, 2013:5.1-5.2.3). This section of the syllabus contradicts section 4.4 of the syllabus that stipulates that the Koran and Vidas may be used in the teaching and learning of RS (Zimsec, 2013:4.4). Gwaravanda *et al.*, (2013:218) confirm my observation that the syllabus, which is supposedly designed for a multifaith approach, excludes African traditional religions (ATR), Islam, Buddhism, Baha'i and atheists among others. The closed-door policy on the religious other is not only in the curriculum, but also cascades down to society, where adherents of some religions fail to embrace the diversity of believers and practitioners of different faiths (Kefa & Moses, 2012:2). This is confirmed by

Garelle (2002:52), who states that “there is a tendency to caricature and trivialise the religious beliefs and practices of our fellow citizens, especially if they happen to be from a religious, racial, or ethnic community that is different from our own”. Under these circumstances, there is need to for a strategy to enhance RS to champion social justice and inclusion of the religious other (see 2.4.4).

Nkalakatha, Jerry and Muranda commented as follows on closed doors for other religions:

Nkalakatha: “where can we get knowledge of other religions since we grew up knowing that we as Christians we do not mix with unbelievers? More so the RS says we should teach other religions but we as teachers do not even know other religions apart from the one we are used.”

Muranda: “I teach RS but cannot even get a copy which talks about other religions beside Christian faith. As a result, I teach what is there and what I am knowledgeable about.”

Jerry: “I only know one religion in detail, I also know little about African tradition religion though I do really believe it because, and I am Christian. For other religions, I just know there is Islam, Hindus and Buddhism.”

At the text level analysis, Jerry and Nkalakatha state that there is exclusion of religions that are not Christian in the curriculum. The technologies of exclusion invented which closes doors for other religions in RS comprise a lack of knowledge on the teacher’s part and a lack of textbooks for teach other religions. The critical question is: Why teachers are entrusted to teach RS not knowledgeable of all the religions which they are supposed to teach? This confirms and is similar to the situation in Malawi (see 3.3.3), where the government made the teaching of religion legal but the same government was not committed to train teachers of religion (Matemba, 2011:86). One might argue that there is a deliberate plan to displace other religions through subtle ways such as the lack of qualified teachers. The lack of professional training of teachers acts as means of exclusion for some religions. Also, imposition of religious beliefs and moral boundaries (Mathews, Khidzer & Keys, 2014:8) cannot be ruled out. Nkalakatha notes the lack of textbooks about other religions as the reason why he is

not teaching about the various religions found in the curriculum. It is therefore clear that the lack of resources such as textbooks can be a means to exclude religions.

It is clear that Nkalakatha and Jerry believe that the powerful control education and select what must be taught and what not. These members of the hybridity team confirm that they have detailed knowledge of only one religion; in the context there is no doubt that there is a power that deliberately excludes other religions in the school system. van Dijk (1993:84) concurs, saying that “power of a specific group or institution may be ‘distributed’, and may be restricted to a specific social domain or scope”. Bernstein (1970:47) adds that “how a society selects, clarifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principle of social control”. Hence, Young (2014:13) argues that it is those with more power in society who have access and force certain kinds of knowledge on others. Hence, van Dijk, Bernstein and Young indicate that knowledge as taught in school is the knowledge of the powerful, who control the means and distribution of resources. The knowledge of the powerless is irrelevant despite the fact that it has potential to contribute to the development of the learners. In the light of this, it is critical that other religions negotiate knowledge space in the curriculum through engaging in a peaceful struggle for recognition (see 2.4.5). If they fail to do so, the dominant discourse will remain in place, while the knowledge of other religions and IKS diminishes in society.

Therefore, when dominance continues, though morally illegitimate, it leads to social inequality (van Dijk, 1993:84) and to violent resistance, because religion is both personal and pedagogical (see 3.2.8). Social inequality can lead to the need to justify violence (Moore, 2010:5); it is hence critical that a new strategy be devised to respond to the challenges of RS by advocating a dialogue that will lead to a negotiated curriculum space. It can be argued that the current RS syllabus, according to Abel and Sementelli (1989:260) “dominates, distorts consciousness, controls practice and directs discourses leaving people without the possibility of either discovering anything except through prescribed epistemologies, practices and discourses” (see 2.4.5). The power exerted by the dominant distorts people’s minds (see 3.2.2). The closed doors for other religions in the curriculum are best described by Lado (2006:9), who says they seek the destruction of religions that are not Christian. Therefore, I disagree with Mandoga and Chakandinakira (2012:3) that education in Zimbabwe has “made

commendable strides in terms of redressing discriminatory educational practices of the colonial government by democratizing the learning space". I conclude from the views of Jerry and Nkalakatha that as long as other religions do not have space in the RS curriculum, democratisation of the curriculum is questionable.

The discussion on the closed doors continued with the following contributions by Mdala, Jojo and Jack:

Jack: "This surprises me a lot, there is lot of literature from the internet where teachers can get information on other religions."

Jojo. "Yes the information can be there but as long the syllabus is silent on what I should teach, then how will I know what to read and prepare for the learners?"

Mdala: "Yes this is the challenge we have faced that our syllabus does not give us what teachers should teach. But this cannot be an excuse for teachers to be monothelic in their approach to religion."

The above conversation indicates different points of departure between the team members. Mdala and Jack seem to indicate that teachers are not doing enough to ensure that other religions are taught although there is a vast body of information that relates to other religions beside Christianity, which can be obtained from online sources. On the other hand, Jojo is of the view that it is not possible to teach other religions since the syllabus does not permit it. In other words, closing doors to other religions has nothing to do with the teachers; it takes place through the syllabus, over which teachers have little or no control. The conversation above reminds us that teachers control the pedagogical space, and ultimately brings to mind the issue of "power behind the closed doors" as proposed by Antonio Gramsci (1971). Hence, teachers do what is best and think it is in line with their professional orientation. In this case, they teach Christianity, about which they are knowledgeable and which is reflected in the content of the syllabus. On the other hand, it might be lack of knowledge that Jojo lacks, forcing him to teach what he or she thinks is best (see 3.2.6).

From the discussion of this challenge, I conclude that the RS curriculum, whether by default or by design, is predominantly Christian. This does not imply that I am against the Christian faith, but it is my understanding that people can only be good religious

adherents if they have full appreciation and knowledge of various religions. Moreover, any religion can occupy a position of dominance – the notion will be still applicable even if Islam or Hinduism were to dominate the curriculum space and display tendencies of religious hegemony. Religious hegemony should be challenged to achieve peaceful co-existence without uninformed prejudice; that is why I chose CER (see 2.4), which “challenges religious hegemony and evokes consciousness and awareness of social injustices, motivating self-empowerment and social transformation” (Stinson, 2009:506).

5.2.3 Lack of comprehensive religious knowledge

The lack of comprehensive religious knowledge was cited as one of the causes of religious problems in society. It is not peculiar to teachers and learners, but also applies to religious leaders and the general populace. Davis (in Pepin, 2009:9) states that “cultural diversity is something to be enjoyed. It is not a problem. However, the problem is ignorance. It is ignorance that provides the fuel for fear, prejudice and hate”. Religious ignorance does not only refer to other religions, but also to one’s own. Many people do not have enough knowledge of their own religious traditions, which often leads to denigration of other religions as faithless, unreliable and even malicious (Basedau *et al.*, 2013:869). This in turn can easily arouse hostility and superiority to validate one’s own religious stance (Polinska, 2011:164) despite being poorly informed (see 3.5.1). The RS syllabus appreciates this problem and attempts to respond to the lack of comprehensive religious knowledge (Zimsec, 2013: 2:2-2:6).

During the workshop to generate the empirical data, Adulm and Father Konzalos commented on the lack of religious knowledge:

Adulm: “Our religion is school is suffering a lot because teachers and learners do not have adequate and correct knowledge on various religion. This is was also revealed by the wrong answers which were provided on the General paper last (Grade 7: 2013). This is disheartening especially when curriculum planners’ educationists cannot see the mistakes but when it comes to other faiths there are no mistakes.”

Father Konzalos: “The problem of religious knowledge cuts across every religion, and the effects of the lack of it is catastrophic. It leads some to act on inadequate information which unfortunate turns to hurt or disrupts and may lead people to have misconceptions [about] one’s religion.”

Adulm indicates a lack of knowledge that even reflects in the examination. Adulm compares the situation with the Christian faith, which he believes is given a huge share in the RS curriculum. This situation needs attention, because if it is not closely attended, may escalate to resistance (see 3.2.8). In line with this, Pepin (2009:10) states ignorance “cut young people off from their own roots and create problems for them in acquiring religious knowledge. More importantly, it lays the foundation for intolerance and prejudice”. If people act in ignorance, there is a high likelihood of spreading misconceptions, which unfortunately leads to fear, prejudice and the need to find a defence mechanism to defend or refute a certain religious ideology.

Lack of religious knowledge can cause a false sense of spirituality. According to Court and Seymour (2015:531), some religious groups hence consider only themselves human and all others outsiders. This is a fertile breeding ground for people who are considered outsiders to engage in a battle for supremacy to regain their identities as human beings. Examining the RS curriculum closely, especially with the reference to content, Zimsec (2013:5.1-5.2.3) has developed technologies of exclusion which at the discursive analysis level seek to construct, maintain and reproduce a single religion, consequently leading to a persistent lack of religious knowledge among learners, teachers and members of the community. In response to the challenge, SRHS is of the view that people can be good Christian or African religious people if they have a wide knowledge both of their own religion and that of others in the community.

5.2.4 Lack of training of RS teachers

The team also noted another challenge confronting the teaching of religion in Zimbabwe, namely the lack of professional teachers who majored in religion. This confirms the finding of the literature review (see 3.2.6) that teacher education in RS is one of the problems that contributes to religious problems. Teachers assigned to teach RS in the schools that participated in the research were trained to teach other subjects

such as physical education, Ndebele, English and English subjects. The lack of qualified religion teachers is due to the fact that there is only one secondary teacher's college that offers RS, the Mutare Teachers College. However, some universities such as Great Zimbabwe University are now offering teaching degrees in religion, which is hoped to alleviate the shortage of RS teachers. This indicates that the Mutare College cannot meet the huge demand for teachers to fill RS vacancies. Despite the efforts of the Mutare Teachers College and some universities, RS classes are still being taught by people who are not qualified for the subject. In the light of this, "curriculum planners may have good intentions for students, only to find that the curriculum users, teachers, are not prepared" (Schwart, 2006:450). This is true of RS in Zimbabwe.

Mzala, Nceku and Nkalakatha highlighted the difficulty of the lack of training during a workshop:

Mzala: "I teach RS because the head requested me to do so. To him it was an easy subject to teach. I only did RS up to ordinary level. So my knowledge is very limited but I cannot tell my learners that I struggle. Beside it has been more than 10 years since I last did ordinary level."

Nceku: "Here in this school, we are made to teach RS despite that we never trained for the subject. This is hard because we fail to teach RS in an effective way, besides RS keeps on changing."

Nkalakatha: "I was told to teach RS by my head since he knows that I am a Christian. Yes, I teach but there are other things which become very difficult for me to teach. In most cases I ignore what appears difficult for me, if I raise it, am told no one can teach it."

The analysis at text level indicates that RS teachers do not teach out of their own will or as a professional mandate but are somehow coerced to teach RS. Mzala teaches RS because he was asked to by the principal, while Nceku was forced by the principal to teach RS. Nkalakatha teaches RS because he is a Christian, which ultimately may lead him to champion his beliefs through the RS curriculum. This presents problems for RS and for the learners. During the empirical data generating, it was noted that many teachers were not professionally equipped to teach RS. The critical question is: Why RS in particular? Generally, many subjects in the Zimbabwean curriculum have

qualified teachers. Hence, the exception of RS is a concern for me as a researcher. Nkalakatha and Mzala admitted that they had difficulties in teaching RS due to lack of professional training in religion. If the teachers are facing difficulties, what more the learners who look up to the teachers for knowledge? Nkalakatha notes that when she attempts to raise problems encountered in teaching, the complaint is met with resistance. This implies that the principal is not prepared to solve problem of the lack of RS teachers.

At discursive analysis level, I note that the lack of trained teachers in RS serves as a technology of exclusion in the sense that teachers tend to focus on one religion. In this regard, RS constructs, maintains and reproduces the existing epistemologies which were put in place by the missionaries during the colonial era. Under colonialism, “cultural diversity was submerged by the exclusion of most African traditions from education and as a results curriculum packages have not matched expectations and educational systems have, in some cases, caused new problems for nation-building” (Woolman, 2011:27-28). This makes the decolonisation of curriculum packages questionable, given that the RS curriculum has remained the same and hence perpetuates the colonial structures. In the light of this SRHS seeks to ensure that there is teacher capacitation so that teachers can meet the needs of multireligious and culturally diverse learners.

5.2.5 IKS seen as primitive and irrelevant

Another challenge in the teaching and learning of religion in Zimbabwean schools noted by the team is the perception that learners and teachers have of IKS. Despite the fact that IKS carries people’s culture, its survival in the RS curriculum is threatened (see 3.2.9). Based on the negative perception on IKS, the Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe (2007:12) notes that “Zimbabweans need to rekindle customs, values and those of our norms that are capable of laying a solid foundation for the resuscitation of the spirit of respect, integrity, tolerance, compassion ‘unhu’/Ubuntu”. While the policy’s sentiments are noble, the teaching of IKS continues to be held in low esteem. During our discussions, Benny and Jerry noted the following in relation to the challenge of IKS:

Benny: “IKS as a concept is not properly explained to us thus it is hard to see the value of it. Our perception of IKS is just the way in which our forefathers

lived and does not apply today. In fact interest in IKS makes one seem so backwards in community. So I rather go for Western life which has prestige.”

Jerry: “IKS to me is something that is no longer necessary. We do not have even grandmothers who can teach us the old ways. The few old people who practice IKS are generally poor with nothing much to show as an advantage of embracing and valuing IKS.”

In the text level analysis, Jerry and Benny list various reasons for their negative perceptions of IKS. It is seen as primitive and backward and those who practice IKS have nothing good to show. Arguably, Jerry and Benny assume a false consciousness (see 2.4.4) that Western knowledge is associated with prestige and civilisation. In relation to this, Shizha (2005:5) is of the view that “colonial education managed to corrupt the thinking and sensibilities of the Africans: it filled their minds with abnormal complexes which de-Africanized and alienated them from their socio-cultural milieu”. Boaten (2010:104) concurs, stating that “Africa has undergone tremendous transformation since its contact with Europeans and other foreign cultural elements. Africa emerged from this contact with a bruised cultural identity and the philosophy of the oppressed” (see 3.2.9). As a result, some learners through contact with Western epistemologies (which may not be relevant to their local context) have lost confidence in IKS (Kaya, 2013:139). With this in mind, Muchenje and Goronga (2013:887) advise that IKS should not be regarded as something that was practised in the past and as such lacks relevance in contemporary society based on its contribution to the livelihood of the society. The advice does not imply that people should negate Western epistemologies; the argument is that while Western knowledge is important for the survival of people, it must not be applied within the context of destabilising IKS, because IKS has been adapted by the local community to serve pressing social issues and challenges (Emeagwali & Dei, 2014:ix). In the light of this, the demise of IKS is inevitable if sustainable solutions are not sought. I conclude that teachers and the elders in society have not modelled the value of IKS. The manner in which IKS is taught may also have an effect, given that some teachers are Christians, whose religion was designed to eliminate indigenous ways of knowing (Shizha, 2005:5).

There is a desire to learn Western knowledge as opposed to local knowledge. IKS is generally downgraded in learners’ lives due to the belief that Western forms of

knowledge are associated with wealth, prestige and offers of employment in urban areas (Muchenje & Goronga, 2013:887). Given this, it can be argued that the emergence of Western knowledge in the African context saw new forms of power that strategically, forcefully and tacitly displaced local knowledge. To concretise this, it may be argued together with Amoah and Bennett (2008:8) that “since colonial times, a major problem with foreign perceptions of African religions has been a tendency to over-generalize and, in the process, to reduce all the indigenous systems to little more than animism and ancestor worship”. Concretising this notion, Akinwale (2012:1) states that the IKS of “Africans remains a gold mine, although it has been suppressed since the advent of cultural imperialism exemplified by harrowing scenes of devastation in the contexts of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism”. The above scholars have one thing in common, namely the belief that Western epistemologies sought to displace IKS. While this may be true, it does not follow that Western knowledge is of no value to an African person. It has value and where possible should complement local knowledge rather than eradicate it. I summarise this challenge by citing Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009:17) that “missionaries in Africa were not only harbingers of the new religion but were also carriers of Victorian values”. Victorian hegemony displaced IKS and continues to do so. Ignoring this challenge would be tantamount to the destruction of the value and identity of African people; at the same time, ways should be explored on how Western knowledge devoid of colonisation can complement IKS.

5.2.6 Lack of textbooks of IKS

Related to the perception that IKS is primitive and irrelevant (see 5.2.5) is the lack of textbooks to use in the teaching and learning of IKS. In the thirty-six years after Zimbabwe’s independence, IKS has always been taught with RS, but there are no textbooks for O-level IKS. CPoZ (2007:13) seems to have brilliant ideas to preserve IKS, as it argues that “research must be carried out to give all those with knowledge of our oral history a chance to have the knowledge recorded”. However, like many other policy issues, these ideas have remained on paper with almost no attempts to document IKS to assist future learners. The lack of textbooks was raised by Muti and Kurara as a challenge in learning IKS:

Muti: “RS is an interesting subject especially dealing with Bible story. The only difficult comes when one is dealing with IKS and African religion because of the lack of textbooks.”

Kurara: “RS is a fine subject but there are so many stories to memorise, and also the lack of textbooks on IKS makes RS a challenging subject.”

Muti remarks that although studying RS is interesting, there are no textbooks dealing with IKS. Similarly, Kurara also contends that the lack of IKS textbooks makes the learning of RS challenging. Analysing Kurara and Muti’s views at social level, indicates that the lack of RS textbooks in the teaching and learning of RS serves as one of the technologies that have been put in place to negate the teaching of IKS. However, this could be disputed on the basis that African scholars have not given much attention to publishing works that cover any of the areas of IKS, especially as taught in RS. Because of the lack of textbooks, teachers remain the point of reference for the learners studying IKS, which is again derailed by the lack or limited knowledge of IKS by some teachers (see 3.2.9). RS faces three challenges in the mainstream curriculum: the lack of qualified teachers to teach RS, the impact of Western epistemologies on IKS, and thirdly the lack of textbooks. The critical question is what then should be done to avert the pending demise of IKS in secondary schools. In response to this question, SRHS seeks to ensure that teachers, leaders, and the community engage in an intellectual journey towards the documentation of IKS so that IKS remains viable knowledge that responds to social pathologies.

5.2.7 Examination negates IKS

Participant Zie points out that the examination awards very low marks to IKS stories compared to Biblical stories. To learners and teachers it may imply that the concept is not important. The evidence below shows the mark allocation for the relevant RS paper.

Zie, during the discussion, showed how examination negates IKS:

Zie: “Besides learners can pass RS without attempting any questions on IKS.”

The evidence of Zie is backed by the following table, which shows the mark allocation for the national examination for RS in Zimbabwean schools.

Table 5.1: Mark allocation in O level RS national examination, N2012, Q7

Exam concepts	Biblical stories	General Christian	IKS	Other religions
Mark allocation out of 16	13	3	3	0

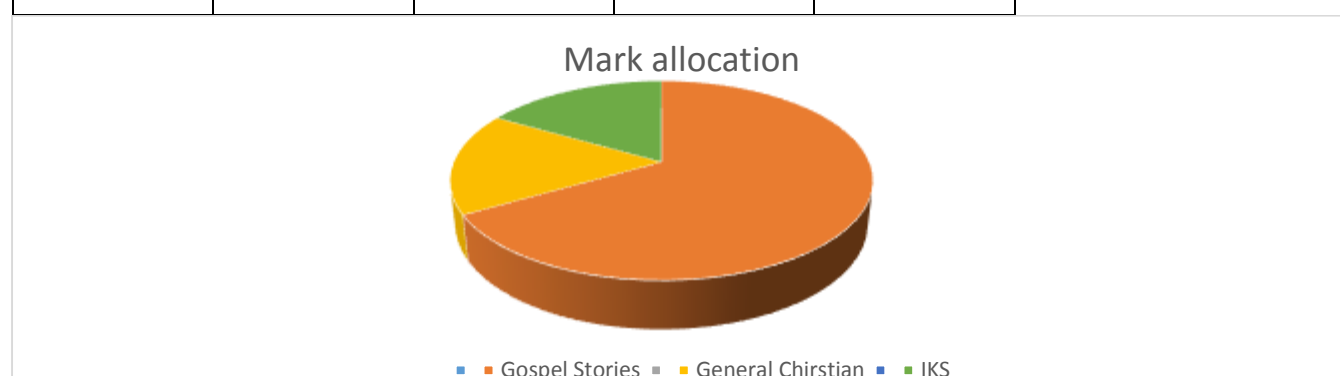


Figure i. Source: Dubeet *et al.* (2015:80).

Fig. 1 Religious Studies examination allocation marks per question

Zie reveals that learners can pass RS exceptionally well without having to attempt a question on IKS. The Zimsec November 2012 national examination confirms that, allocating 3 marks out of the possible 16 marks to IKS. There is an indication that the examination system in Zimbabwe has developed technologies of exclusion on IKS through allocating very few marks to IKS questions. In relation to this scenario, Shizha (2007:7) concurs that destroying IKS is evident in mainstream curriculum practices. Given this situation, Hoppers (2005:8) is of the view that IKS has been relegated to an invisible, informal regime and denied space, resources and the recognition it ought to have. Apart from the examination that has marginalised IKS through allocating a low mark, the syllabus content that does not refer to anything to do with IKS exacerbates the situation (Zimsec, 2013: 5.1-5.1.3 cf Nov, 2012 Q7). Given this discrepancy, one could argue that the cart has been put before the horse when it comes to the examination and RS syllabus in Zimbabwe. This problem needs serious attention.

Learners and teachers cannot be left to guess what should be taught or not given the vast content of IKS. To this end, Dube *et al.* (2015:86) conclude that “it is sad to note that IK in the secondary school curriculum does not have adequate space for its recognition among students, and faces a brutal end due to a lack of interest and knowledge among students and teachers”.

The challenge of the examination is further elucidated by Nkalakatha and Adulm:

Nkalakatha: “Your concern has always been raised and we are in the process to address that. But I think it’s only the IKS which is problematic rather than the whole syllabus. I guess the syllabus is silent to address the multicultural society.”

Adulm: “Now I understand why the examination will even give wrong answers. The examination is detached from what the teachers and learners do in schools, eeeeeesh the problem is bigger than we anticipated.”

Nkalakatha, representing policy and education officials, says the concern has been raised; however, he seems to defend the syllabus (silence of the syllabus). This does not justify the exclusion of IKS from the syllabus, because the syllabus is the blueprint for action which must be followed by the teachers and the learners in preparation for examination. Adulm understands the root problem of the examination, namely the detachment of the item writers, curriculum planners, teachers and learners. An aspect that concerns me is why the discrepancy of the syllabus and the examination has escaped the eyes of the curriculum scholars and item writers. If they have noticed it, then why is this discrepancy not attended to so that learners and teachers both know what must be taught in relation to IKS? Synchronisation is desirable so that RS remains relevant and in line with other subjects at O Level where the syllabus informs the examination not the other round like in RS.

5.2.8 Conflict of Biblical stories and African religion

The teaching of Biblical stories (the major component of RS) and IKS was also identified by the hybridity team as a problem which has led to the demise of African religion in the Zimbabwean schools. In the context, I am cognisant that there are

people who practice syncretism (worship of two religions simultaneously). Given some conflict issues between Christian religion and African tradition, Mokotso (2015:160) is of the view that “there is a form of de-culturalization through mis-education in the use of a pedagogy and curriculum that deliberately omits, distorts or trivializes the role and benefits of African religion”. In the case of Zimbabwe, the contact between the missionaries and African religion has led to a contest for space in the religious lives of people. To elucidate this, Gatsheni-Ndlovu (2003:182) avers that missionaries criticised the African culture; aspects such as the law of celibacy, antagonistic wars as harsh treatment of reprobates, witchcraft and African religion were described as ill-defined. Hence, some prohibiting legislation was enacted to protect innocent people. Moreover, practices such as casting the bones and the use of charms to consult the living dead were viewed as sorcery (Nyathi, 2001:146) and condemned by the Christian religion (Deuteronomy 18:9-13; Jeremiah 27:9-10).

Gatsheni-Ndlovu (2003:182) sums up the conflict between the Christian religion and African religion as characterised by “contestation and compliance, fascination and repulsion”. The literature shows that the conflict is not unique to these two religions as is the case in Malawi. Hence, Malawi religious education opted to separate African religion and Christian religion. Both subjects become optional in the secondary school curriculum (see 3.3.3). Juxtaposing the above, I agree that the Christian and African religions have some conflicting concepts, but despite the differences, it should be also noted that these two religions have some agreements such as the worship of one god, which should serve as a starting point of dialogues among religions. Therefore, it is paramount that religious adherents of the two religions focus on common areas while at the same time celebrating their differences. This attitude will lead to religious hybridity and peaceful co-existence.

During the discussion as a team, Nceku, Muranda and Mdala had the following to say on the teaching of Biblical stories and African religion:

Nceku: “African religion is important to us as African people but combining African religion presents problems where issues raised in the Bible seem to condemn African practice. So how is co-existence of religions possible when some religions condemn practices which are important to us?”

Muranda: "The thrust should help learners of various religions. The difference should not be explored in such a way that one religion is ridiculed while the other is magnified. Remember, at school we are not making converts but helping our children have a wide knowledge of various religions."

Mdala: "Our religion suffers when taught with Christianity. I don't know why the two conflict religions are combined together."

The team revealed various challenges which are associated with combining African religion with Christianity. Nceku argues that Christian religion condemns African practices, while Muranda is of the view that RS classes are not supposed to be used to ridicule other religions; rather, they should be a space used to cultivate wide religious knowledge. On the other hand, Mdala is of the view that African religion suffers when taught together with Christianity. It should be noted that African religion also castigates IKS as an imported phenomenon and hence states that it has no relevance for African people.

Interrogating the responses from the three team members I note their discomfort in combining the two. It should not be a problem, especially if the teachers and learners understand the role of the curriculum in relation to religions. Given the view that there are many people teaching RS but not qualified to teach RS, it presents problems to coordinate the two religions in the curriculum. The situation is intensified by the fact that some teachers managing RS classes adhere to the Christian faith. It follows that their interest will be towards championing their own religion, because religion is so personal and at the same time pedagogical (see 3.2.8). Undoubtedly, the teaching and learning becomes confessional or a process of evangelisation. This may be attributed to the view that RS suffers from the colonial hangover, where Africans had nothing to give but everything to receive from the West. In essence, the missionaries thought civilisation was displacing African religion for Western cultures (Lado, 2006:9). In addition, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) notes that missionaries were not only harbingers of Western civilisation but also forerunners of the Victorian hegemony, which crushed attempts to cultivate African religion among learners. The eradication of African religion, arguably, is because of the colonial legacy, where policies were enacted to destroy African religion (3.2.4.1-3). To sum up, there is nothing wrong in combining these two religions in the curriculum as long there are teachers who are professionally

educated to teach RS, teachers who understand that the curriculum space is not intended to champion one religion over the other, or displace other religions to settle out-of-classroom agendas. Once this has been resolved, the combination of the two works towards peaceful co-existence of religion to improve human conditions (see 2.4.1).

5.2.9 Abusive religions and systems

Religious abuse is a phenomenon that is attracting attention from religious scholars and educationists, as religion is increasingly linked to various forms of abuse. The review of literature also confirms that religious abuse is a problem (see 3.2.7). There is wide evidence to show that some religious leaders have been caught on the left hand of the law through instigating various forms of abuse on religious followers. For examples, some of the abuses are cited in *Newsday* (12 January 2013:2), *Woza* (23 September, 2013:5) and *Herald* (18 July 2015:2). The list is endless, but the bottom line is that some religious leaders and groups (in incidents of terrorism) have not contributed to conditions that improve human lives (See 2.4.1). Given the evidence, I conclude that some religious leaders and followers have portrayed religion as an abusive system in society. Conversely, I do acknowledge that some religions have played a significant role in changing people's lives and have remained committed to championing human rights and ensuring that religion contributes significantly to human emancipation (see 2.4.5).

In a workshop, Muranda, Mdala and Nkalakatha shared the following sentiments:

Muranda: "Some religions take advantage during prayer times to propose women and make promises to end their problems. The goal of such prophets is to sleep with church followers."

Mdala: "That one, sexual abuse is becoming so common, I don't why it's so easy to get sex when you use religions. This despite that religions teach against sexual immorality and it becomes worse when it is not consented."

Nkalakatha: "You see this is caused by religious leaders who claim to have unquestionable power and authority. But it is also surprising that you see more

women flocking into such churches where they are abused. When you tell them that they are abused, they can get angry with you. Religion so, hayi aah aah.”

Textual level analysis indicates that religious abuse has generally become problematic in society. Muranda notes that some religious leaders take advantage of their followers during the prayer meetings so that they commit abusive religious acts. He describes such leaders as people that have intention to engage in sexual activity with the unsuspecting members. Mdala confirms that such religious leaders also engage in illicit sexual relationships although their religions teach against sexual abuse. Nkalakatha points out that the issue of religious abuse is problematic, given that the people who may be perceived as abused in fact see it as a commitment to one religious faith. Hence, Nkalakatha notes that people who are abused always show commitment to the seemingly abusive system. The sentiments by the team members concur with various reports of religious sexual abuses (in print and electronic media). It can also be deduced from the sentiments by the hybridity team that abuse can be perpetrated in the pretext of religion, which in turn has a great impact of religious abuse on victims. To elucidate this, Garland (2006:16) is of the view “that impact on victims of sexual abuse by religious leaders is greater compared to other forms of power abuse because the spiritual resources of a person’s coping capacity are directly compromised or denied by religious authority”. Emphasising this point, Bottoms (2003:7) states that “if abuse is perpetrated in the name of God, its victim may be robbed of the meaning and comfort that spirituality can provide, which might intensify the trauma of the abuse, and compromise coping efforts”. In interrogating this, I conclude that abuse, religious or otherwise, dehumanises the victim. It is very unfortunate that religion, a social institution that is generally associated with improving the human condition, is becoming part of an abusive system.

Issue of power and ideology are at play when it comes to religion. Some religious leaders possess power that is unquestionable, which according to the CER informing the study is a false consciousness (see 2.4.2) and must be challenged. According to Nkalakatha, the gateway to an abusive religious system is when the authority of the leadership is unquestionable and unaccountable. This confirms Barker’s (n.d:1) notion that abusive leadership does not tolerate challenges to its authority. They strive on the “don’t question” rule and as stipulated by Damiani (2002:45), this “destroy[s] any individual personality and replace the void with a cultic personality that no longer

questions, thinks critically, or feel the impact of an abusive system”. To concretise the foregoing argument, McClure (2014:3) states that religious abuse and victims struggle with their sense of personhood and self-esteem, and have difficulty trusting anyone again. Abusive religious leaders enforce (sometimes through subtle means) “fear-based obedience to doctrines, such as fear-mongering tactics, immediate and intense unscientifically based opposition to the physical realities, and intentional concealment and distortion of the real message to enforce obedience to religion” (Baqai, 2011:242).

Even though some religious groups are known to be abusive, Nkalakatha notes that it becomes difficult for the victims to disengage from the religious system; this certainly negates attempts to reduce religious abuse. The problem stems from the notion that religion is personal (see 3.2.8). It makes the concept of religious abuse problematic to define, especially when some regard being part of the oppressive system a sign of religious commitment. What can then be concluded from this is that RS should help learners to develop a critical approach, so that they can interrogate their religious beliefs and observations in line with human rights, respect for dignity and a desire to ensure the welfare of society.

As the discussion progressed, Kurara and Jerry noted another form of religious abuse that is not sexual, but pertains to assault:

Kurara: “I have seen in some religions when the prophets claim to be in the spirit, they begin to beat their followers justifying their actions as act which God has commanded.”

Jerry: “You see the issue of beating people during religious function is justified because some of the followers are very arrogant thus the leader will be offended in the spirit; hence, the beatings are part of the punishment for disobedience. Beating happens when one is the spirit.”

Assault on the pretext of religion is seen as a divine mandate, which must be executed by religious leaders, at least according to Jerry. This is different from Kurara, who regards beating of people during prayer meetings as a form of religious abuse. Those who agree with beatings find their justification from biblical texts such as Matthew 21:13. Analysing this at text level, religions develop certain structures and procedures; when the religion’s members fail to comply, they are punished. In this context, I pose

a question: How does RS becomes a mitigating factor to enable people to rethink their practices in the light of human rights? It is critical for learners, religious leaders and society to have an understanding that the right to be religious is not the right to use religion to abuse others. I am of the view that religious commitment without being conscious of the feelings of others is undesirable, and it breeds various challenges that are difficult to control. Educating people in human rights and respect for the other is the essence of democratic society and serves as a base for promoting sustainable, peaceful social transformation (see 2.4.3).

As the discussion on the issue of religious abuse unfolded, Jojo, Mzala and Adulm remarked:

Jojo: "I have seen some religious groups forbidding their members to work. They spend most of their time working in the fields belonging to the religious leaders, sometimes even school going children are made to leave school to join the rest of the religious members in farms."

Mzala: "Another abuse is seen in religious groups which deny children medication. This is the worst form of abuse and various leaders should address this issue because it is robbing us of potential human capital. It must be investigated and perpetrators brought to book. Schools should open discussions to allow such reports to be made public."

Adulm: "Another related abuse evident in our society is when children are forced to early marriage. In those marriages, children do not have a comfortable life since she is married against her will. The child becomes a parent before the time fully comes. It is unfortunate that some of the girls do not see evil in it, this could be due to socialisation subjected to these children. This is bad and must change. Children should be allowed to children instead of being robbed of their lives because of obedience to religion."

In relation to religious abuse, Jojo notes that some religious leaders forbid their followers to be employed, and forbid learners to go to school. Nehenda Radio (5 May 2015) confirms that some religious groups forbid children to be part of the schooling system. On the other hand, Mzala notes that religious abuse is seen when people forbid members to take medicine because, according to Feltoe and Maguranyanga

(2015:1), they regard “modern medical treatment as disobeying God’s will; heathen practices and the devil’s work”. *Herald* (2 May 2014:2) reports on denial of medicine on religious grounds. Adulm notes that religious abuse in religion is seen when people are forced into marriage (Human Rights Watch, 25 November 2015). In most cases, children are the victims of abusive religious system, which, according to Sibanda (2011:15), “perpetuates an inter-generational cycle of poverty, lack of opportunity and reinforces the subordinated nature of communities that traditionally serve the powerful classes”. The hybridity team members concur that religious abuse is a dehumanising mechanism where religious adherents are manipulated psychologically and morally and consequently induces spiritual confusion and guilt (Garland, 2006:3). This indubitably goes against the general expectation that religious leaders have leadership responsibilities and work to champion human rights (Vendley & Veneman, 2010:35).

The issue here is that Mzala, Jojo and Adulm note that religious abuse is a phenomenon that must be challenged because it does not contribute to the improvements of the human condition. Their views indicate that they associate themselves with victims of religious abuse, hence fulfilling the agenda of CER and PAR that works on the side of those exploited and marginalised by oppressive systems such as abusive religious followers and their leaders (see 2.4.5, 4.3.2.1). The saddest part of an abusive system is that innocent children often become defenceless victims and are robbed of their potential through religion, to which they had perhaps looked up to as sustainable solution to their social pathologies. Bottomsetal. (1995:94) corroborate this: “religions leaders, more often are thought to be moral or holy, their sexual advances are likely to be particularly confusing, guilt inducing and betrayals for victims”. Under these circumstances, victims are often threatened that they will lose their salvation (Damiani, 2002:46) if they do not comply with religious oppressive structures. As the issue of religious abuse unfolds, I conclude that some have not portrayed religion as a good institution in society. The dominance exerted by some religious leaders is dehumanising and if not properly interrogated in the light of human rights, it will rob us of our children and create more stigma on religion as an institution. In my opinion, there is nothing wrong with the power that influences people in religion as long it seeks to contribute to improving human conditions. The exercise of power in society is inevitable, but it should done with the aim to emancipate people to achieve their full potential (see 2.4.5). The critical question as regards religious abuse is how

learners studying RS become victims of religion. And how then should RS be taught to ensure that learners are not abused by the religion they are studying? In Chapter 6, I set out the strategy that seeks to address the problems of religious abuse in the context of religion, among many other challenges in the teaching and learning of religion.

During the discussions on religious abuse in the form of violence and suicide bombings, members of the hybridity team such as Lups, Adulm and Mbambo remarked:

Lups: "Of all the religious abuse, extremism is one of the dangers that religion poses in society. The sad issue is that people who are not connected to the issue (which the suicider may be protesting) are affected by suicide bombing."

Adulm: "I think we need to understand that it's not all Muslims who believe in suicide, these are extreme people and are not representing the Islam community well. I think in all religions there are people who become so extreme in religion to an extent that logical reasoning does not hold a place in their lives."

Mbambo: "To be honest this is the reason why many people do not want Islam in the community. It's fearful when Islam spreads in society. When I see a Muslim, I think terrorism."

Terrorism is one of the forms of religious abuse that was identified by the team. The literature review also confirms that through terrorism, religion has become tainted as one of the dangerous phenomena in society (see 3.2.7). Lups notes that terrorism is one the worst forms of religious abuse because most of the time, the people who die in terrorist attacks have no ties to the religion that singles them out as victims of terrorism. Adulm believes that only people with extremist attitudes commit acts of terror and that sometimes these individuals do not represent the entire religion. Hence, there are Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and Jews who commit terrorist acts (Awni, Karzon & Hunting, 2010:2).

Mbambo states that terrorism is the main cause of fear of some religions and that this renders people suspicious about Islam as a religion. Whether terrorism comes from Islam or any other religion, the analysis at text level indicates that "terrorism ignores the moderate views of most religious people and those with no religion, and it has the

potential to do serious damage to the health and well-being of anybody in its path” (O’Brien, 2013:1). In the light of this, I argue that it is important that RS in Zimbabwean schools should respond directly so that sustainable solutions and structures can be put in place to avoid religious extremism, which endangers everyone in society.

Adulm, representing the Islam community, uses his epistemological power to argue that Islam in its entirety is not a violent religion. He notes that people have a misconception in branding Islam as a violent religion. In his defence of his religion, he reminds the team that issues of violence and terrorism are inherent in many religions. He stresses the fact that people often castigate religions without full knowledge. At the same time, he does not deny that Islam as a religion is associated with terrorism. Nevertheless, current acts of terrorism centre on the Islamic religion, for example, the Asian uprisings. Hence, it is critical that Islam embark on a journey to prove beyond reasonable doubt that it is a peaceful religion as its adherents claim, so that negotiating curriculum space with other religions does not become problematic. Mbambo points out that Islam as a religion has exercised its power to intimidate other religions. This is one of the reasons why religious dialogue is difficult as long as people are suspicious of the other. The power to induce religious fear acts as a technology of exclusion in society. Under these circumstances, living together becomes a burden and threat where violence is defended and “extremism of various kinds, economic, military, political, religious, or cultural, is seen as a refuge and basis for our oppositional identities” (Kalin, 2007:65).

It appears that it may take a while for people to exorcise their fear of the Islamic religion. It will demand a greater effort from Islam to relax the grip of fear it holds over society. If its religious power is diluted, various religions may begin to engage with Islam meaningfully without fear or prejudice. It is critical to address extremism, which is “a great challenge towards stabilising a society. In fact, the struggle is against extremism, particularly religious fanaticism” (Baqai, 2011:242). The RS curriculum is positioned to help learners of diverse religious backgrounds to resist religious abuse as much as possible for peaceful co-existence.

Religious “extremism is based on the concept of exclusivism (see 3.2.1), which makes extremists think that they are different from others on cultural, linguistic, ethnic or sub-religious grounds and use violence in expressing their identity and pursuing

ideological, social, economic and political objectives” (Iqbal & Lodhi, 2014:196). As result, there are wars, inquisitions, honour “killing, suicide bombing, and genital mutilation – each of which has a unique set of causes, only one of which is a religion” (Krause, 2015:48). Because of such extremist violence, religion worldwide has become a prominent and troublesome factor (Ganzevoort, 2006:1). The paramount question here is: How does RS as a subject contribute to solving religious extremism which leads to terrorism? Based on interrogating the views of the hybridity team, I believe there is a need to educate learners on the dangers of religious terrorism in society. My basis for this argument is underpinned by the sentiments of Zenn and Kuehnast (2014:8) that under-education and ignorance are key factors that enable leaders to manipulate and mobilise people to carry out acts of violence. Unless RS begins to address religious violence at the earliest stage in the curriculum space, our once peaceful society will begin to experience untold and uncontrollable terrorism. RS has to become culturally and religiously responsive to the challenge of terrorism so that the notion of resolving differences peacefully is inculcated in learners, who in turn will pass the baton to the rest of the community.

I concur with Damiani (2002:46) that through the failure to deal with extremist tendencies, the perpetrators and victims of religious abuse “acquire a sense of purposelessness and disconnection from life coupled with unbearable loneliness, isolation and alienation”. School provides a space that can be exploited to emancipate (see 2.4.5) learners towards tolerance. Feinberg (2014:403-404) supports this, saying that “religion can be taught in the public schools as a part of the human experience and as a way for students to understand their own traditions and those of others with intention of cultivating co-existence”. RS cannot justify its presence in the curriculum if delivered in “isolation with life threatening problems such as terrorism” (Pepin, 2009:53).

This section focused on the challenges of RS. Next, Section 5.2 addresses the solutions proposed by the hybridity team towards solving religious challenges in the curriculum and social space.

5.3 SOLUTIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL TEACHING AND LEARNING OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

This section covers the solutions proposed by the team towards solving the problems raised (see 5.2).

5.3.1 Religious and cultural hybridity schools

For religion to be viable in society and meet the needs of diverse learners, it is important that schools open their doors to teach all religions and cultures available in the community, not in principle only but also in praxis. That schools can become sites of religious and cultural hybridity, is confirmed by literature, citing the case of Taiwan, which used school as places to promote religious unity (see 3.3.1). Pepin (2009:53) state that participation in inter-religious dialogue, especially at school level, builds intercultural experience and knowledge. This forms citizens capable of reflecting and participating in democratic society (Milot, 2006:13). This is supported by Abdool, Potgieter, van der Walt and Wolhuter (2007:545), who state that schools “are not only pedagogically justifiable but also ensure deeper understanding spirituality that contributes to social and civic peace in the broader pluralistic community”. School provides sufficient room for learners to remember their past, identify their present and empower themselves (Cragg, 2015:429) towards peaceful co-existence. The “seeds of peaceful co-existence and religious tolerance should be planted early in the hearts of children at the basic level of education in order to raise a new generation of peace-loving citizens of this great country” (Yusuf, 2013:229).

As the team was discussing the possible solutions which they thought could mitigate the challenges of the teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwe; Father Konzalos, Muranda, Nceku and Mzala remarked:

Father Konzalos: “Schools are very important for our children and the society because it is easy to use the school as a place to ensure that tolerance is easily taught. School kids can easily relate to one another as opposed to older members of society who have various unresolved grudges, and in many cases but teachers should not take advantage of this privilege.”

Mzala: "School is one the safest places where learners can be helped to live, interact and learn from each other's religions. Given that children from different cultures and religions interact, it follows that there is good opportunity to teach all religions."

Muranda: "Schools are not like churches, synagogues, or mosque where one religion is supposed to be cultivated, teachers can speak freely on different religions without fear. This helps learners to have wide knowledge."

Nceku: "But you know it is not possible in all schools because some schools are missionary schools which have a specific agenda which must be cultivated. Maybe government schools."

From the comments of Father Konzalos, it can be deduced that schools are strategically placed to teach tolerance, given that learners can easily interact with each other, which might not be as easy at social level. Rahman and Hambali (2013:82) concur, stating that tolerance is instilled through knowledge, openness, communication and freedom of thought at school level. Mzala sees schools as the safest places where people can learn from the other without prejudices. Muranda contrasts schools with synagogues, churches and mosques, saying that schools provide opportunities for learners to interact, in contrast with churches and other places of worship. Nceku points out that this should not be regarded an easy task, given that schools, especially missions-oriented schools, have a mandate that includes preaching the gospel.

In juxtaposition, these comments have led me to conclude that schools largely provide a platform where learners can relate with each other despite religious differences. On the other hand, it is clear that while the agenda of promoting religious and cultural inclusivity is noble, resistance may also occur, given that some schools may not want to compromise the mission for their establishment. The ownership of schools by missionaries acts as a technology of exclusion for the teaching and learning of other religions. Hence, it becomes critical for teachers to negotiate the best ways to teach various religions through RS, by being cognisant of and respecting the establishments and missions of their school.

Analysing issues of power at play here, Father Konzalos as a church leader gives a warning to teachers. The warning is influenced by his position in the church, where one of his roles is to ensure that the mission of the church is adhered to without compromise. While teachers are permitted to teach other religions, they should do so with respect for the responsible authority. This is because “respect and tolerance of other religious views is a good weapon of promoting national unity, development and socio-cultural integration” (Awojobi, n.d:10) that “contributes to learning to live together and understanding democracy” (Pepin 2009:48). Nceku also raises the issue of power. He believes that mission schools have the power to block any teaching of religions that may seem to oppose the vision of the church. Analysing these sentiments closely, the power that mission schools have to control what is taught becomes evident. This power emanates from the money that missionaries have invested in schools in terms of infrastructure and so on. Hence, when there are deliberate attempts to displace the mission traditions, they are seen as a challenge. Ultimately, the owners of the schools have the power to control the pedagogical activity in their schools.

Missionary schools have the power to resist any practice which may seem contrary to their beliefs. This is evident from the issue of the national pledge, introduced by the government of Zimbabwe in conjunction with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. It is recited soon after the singing of the national anthem. To indicate the investment power of the missionaries, some churches felt the national pledge violates the rights of their beliefs and thus they resisted it. The following extract indicates the power missionaries have to control what happens in their schools:

“As BICC Zimbabwe conference, together with like-minded organisations, we are unequivocally against the pledge and its implementation. We therefore appeal to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the government to rescind the decision. Our position is that we will neither participate nor encourage our institutions, members and our children to participate on matters contrary to our beliefs and conscience.” Chronicle, 2 May 2016:1.

Relating the issue of the national pledge to the discussion of the schools as possible sites for religious hybridity, my argument is that while schools are strategically positioned to promote religious dialogue, it must be done in such a way that school establishments are respected to avoid resistance. Entry to these schools should be

negotiated to ensure that the teaching of various religions and cultures is feasible. Against this background, I argue that RS should not be confessional and evangelical, so that RS classes do not become a contested space and battleground for religious supremacy.

Despite the power challenges, I conclude along with Pepin (2009:9) that citizens are educated through schools to live and work in “ever more multicultural societies and since religion is seen as a cultural fact and a field of knowledge that cannot be ignored.”

5.3.2 Teaching religious abuse in RS

In response to the need to address the challenge of religious abuse in society, the team suggested that the topic should be integrated into the curriculum to sensitise learners, religious leaders and the society to religious abuse. As Bottoms, Nielsen, Murray and Filipas (2003:3) state, religion provides specific directives for positive moral action and the promotion of human welfare. Literature also confirms that a socially responsive RS is one that addresses various social ills in society such as abuse (see 3.3.1). The current RS syllabus, with its vague reference to the idea of dealing with the problematic issues in society, seems to indicate that learners should focus on such issues that affect them (Zimsec, 2042:4.1). In order for the curriculum to respond to the lived realities of learners, it is important that there should be an appreciation and vision that human rights should not be disconnected from the context of one’s cultural values or religious beliefs (Kalin, 2007:86). While the workshop was generating empirical data for this research study, Jerry, Kurara and Mdala commented:

Jerry: “Human rights are critical for all to observe despite our religious affiliations. This helps our learners to appreciate that respect for others is critical despite that we are different.”

Kurara: “This is a noble idea but I think this will be adding load to the teacher who is already struggling to teach RS. The job of the teacher is becoming, don’t you see, beside learners have to be prepared for the examination.”

Mdala: "You see Kurara, teaching other concepts does not need you to add more work on what you are already doing, the issue is to have what we call side plates in teaching, where you can make example by using something that to stimulate interest. For example when one teaches on the woman with haemorrhage, the Bible says she had suffered in the hands of physicians, indicating some sort of abuse. This can be your entry point. It is all about innovation in teaching, the teachers need to be creative in their work because teaching on human rights in RS is possible as long the teacher is clever."

There is a general indication that teaching of human rights is a noble idea when integrated with the teaching of RS. Jerry bases his argument for teaching human rights through RS on the view that it is easy for learners to appreciate one another and respect the rights of others. Kurara objects, saying that if religious abuse as topic is added in the RS curriculum, teachers will become overloaded. It therefore appears that Kurara believes that there is no space in the RS curriculum for teaching about human rights, given that learners need to be prepared for examinations. Mdala points out to Kurara that this is a misconception, because through innovativeness a teacher can integrate the issues of human rights in RS lessons. The possibility of overload cannot be an excuse to avoid teaching about human rights.

The success of human rights teaching hinges on the innovativeness of the teacher given that the syllabus does not have space to accommodate it (see the content of RS topics, Zimsec, 2013:5.1-5.1.3). Mdala, as an inspector for the subject, uses his power and experience as an RS teacher to show Kurara how best to teach. Kurara, as a teacher, believes that the goal of successful teaching is to attain results; hence, teachers should focus on the results. Here we see a power relation at play. To Kurara, an effective teacher is the one who focuses on examinations, while Mdala, being informed by his experience and position, castigates teachers who are incompetent in RS. This points to contestation between the young teachers and the experienced teachers on the essence of teaching.

For Kurara, preparation for examinations and overload are excuses to exclude the teaching of human rights through RS, despite its importance. He suffers from what Ball (2003) calls the "terrors of performativity" where the teachers are prepared to invest everything in the development of children as long they can perform well in an

examination, ignoring other aspects of the children's growth such as moral development. Kurara is geared towards learners' performance, which is noble; however, to ignore human rights is tantamount to opening doors for learners to become victims of abuse at the hands of religious leaders.

5.3.3 Formulation of a socio-religious hybridity body

In order to solve problems of religion in society, the hybridity team suggested that a religious body be formed that oversees the teaching and learning of RS. This will help towards inclusion of religions and promote social justice (see 2.4.3). A religious body approach to respond to the teaching and learning of religion is confirmed by the review of literature (see 3.3.5), as in the case of Britain. The proposed body should be made up of various religious leaders who have a passion for the unity of religions to solve social ills in society. The body would serve as an extensive consultation department of RS, which is supported as a possible framework to foster a coherent syllabus (NCFRE, 2013:9) and social inclusion.

Discussing the need for such a religious body as a solution to religious problems, Father Konzalos and Adulm comment:

Father Konzalos: "In our church we are prone to issues of religious inclusivity. For example our church is part and parcel of religious body in charge of the planning and implementation of religion in schools. I suggest that we consider a possibility for creation of a religious body that will govern religious teaching and address complaints which may rise due to religious exclusivism or the manner in which religion is taught in schools."

Adulm. "Yes this is a good idea, I have seen it work in countries like England where what is taught in religion is agreed by various members of the community, in this case clashes of religions are reduced."

Father Konzalos believes that a religious hybridity body is very important in the teaching and learning of RS, since his church is already involved in such bodies in other parts of the world. He argues that the body serves to address issues that may arise because of religious problems in the curriculum and extremism. Adulm, coming from the Muslim community, sees this body as an opportunity where various religions

can come together. To these two, a socio-religious hybridity body will go a long way towards addressing the problems of religious exclusivism (see 3.2.1). According to Kefa and Moses (2012:xiv), socio-religious hybridity will help religious leaders and their communities to use their moral authority to raise awareness about the general issues affecting their societies beyond dogmatic and doctrinal preaching. The formulation of a body that oversees the teaching and learning of religion is a technology of inclusion where various religious groups can unite under a shared vision to ensure a cultural and religious responsive curriculum.

5.3.4 Various RS syllabi

The other members of the hybridity team proposed having various RS curricula that cater for various religions, such as Christian Religious Studies, Islam Religious Studies and African Religion, among many others. This proposal corresponds to the solution adopted in Malawi to respond to the challenges of religion in the curriculum (see 3.3.3). While the idea seems to be noble, to respond to the problem of religion, the strategy may not be feasible owing to the current economic woes worldwide. This idea, to be successful, requires capital for training teachers, to purchase textbooks, drawing up a syllabus and orienting society to the need and rationale of a religious studies syllabus to a predominantly Christian society.

Muranda, Adulm and Jojo suggest this:

Muranda: "If other religious leaders are not happy with the way religion is taught, my humble suggestion is that they can negotiate to have different RS syllabus which will cater for different needs of different religions. Just like in Kenya where there is Christian Religious Studies, Islam Religious Studies Kenyan Traditional religion etc."

Adulm: "This is a very noble suggestion, Pastor, but this is a long-term plan which requires a lot of resources and retraining of teachers in line of this requirement. What about now? We need to have something now while we pursue this noble idea."

Jojo: "But don't you think this will give us lot of work. Just imagine when am to teach all religion to the fullest. That will be hard for us as teachers. Already our

classes are overloaded with work. I don't see space, let religions share the available space."

Muranda is of the view that religious problems can be solved by following the Malawi model, given that some religious groups are not happy with the way RS is currently taught. Adulm, although he supports the idea of various syllabi for RS, believes that it is a long-term plan. Hence, he suggests that a more urgent and feasible plan should be sought to respond to the problems of RS. Jojo sees the suggestion as adding extra work to teachers who are already overloaded. I noticed a trend with some of the members of the hybridity team that while they appreciate innovation, they feel the implementation of changes, imply additional work on the part of the teachers. This is unfortunately a general trend that teachers tend to resist additional work regardless of how noble the idea may be.

I appreciate the team's suggestion of a multireligious syllabus to cater for inclusivity. However, the reality is that it will be an enormous task needing a huge capital outlay to implement it successfully. Furthermore, the suggestion has implications for teacher education in Zimbabwe, to develop teachers majoring different religions. While the idea is appreciated, the project is too big, with many stakeholders that need to buy into the idea to ensure its success. Politicians, who are the custodians of national ideology, will have to be engaged. I conclude that it is paramount to focus on strategies that have little or no budget implications and minimum of political interference.

5.3.5 Use cultural technicians

The notion of using cultural technicians corresponds directly to the demise of IKS in the curriculum (see 3.2.9 & 5.2.5–5.2.7). The term is borrowed from Dube *et al.* (2015), referring to the people used as resource persons in teaching and learning. Against the background that some teachers are struggling to teach IKS, the use of cultural technicians is one of the economic methods for responding to problems in teaching and learning in other subjects apart from RS. In the process, the teachers are emancipated to achieve their professional obligations (see, 2.4.5). During the discussions of the solutions to the problem of IKS, Zie and Mdala suggested the following:

Zie: “Another way we can solve the problem of religion in schools is to allow knowledgeable people to come and help in the teaching and learning, to supplement the lack of training for religious teachers. They should be given a token of appreciation just the way other resource persons are given money.”

Mdala: “Yes this is possible, this is usually referred to as resources teachers. The ministry does allow the use of the resource person subject to consultation with the head and the responsible authority. However, the problem is that some of the resource persons end up thinking that they should always be part of the learning and teaching; hence they expect pay for their services.”

Zie proposes that knowledgeable people should be identified in every community to work hand in hand with teachers on problematic religious issues. He also states that just like in other subjects in the school, cultural technicians should be given something as a token of appreciation. Mdala, representing the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, endorses the idea but adds that the notion of a token appreciation is problematic, because it leads cultural technicians to think that they have been employed. It is important that cultural technicians understand their role in teaching and learning, which is to bridge the knowledge gap, and that their contribution will be required when necessary and justifiable. I sum this section up by noting that the use of cultural technicians is very important to bridge the knowledge gap, but not everyone can be invited. Persons are required who understand the need and can effectively cover the knowledge gap without demanding much in return. With this in mind, IKS can be positioned towards recovery in the mainstream curriculum space.

5.4 CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY TO RESPOND TO CHALLENGES

The following section addresses the conditions proposed by the hybridity team for the successful teaching and learning of RS using SRHS.

5.4.1 Documentation of IKS

One way which the revival of IKS in the curriculum can be assured, is that local people should take responsibility and begin to write textbooks that focus on IKS and RS for O-Level learners. Literature confirms that IKS can only survive when its documentation is taken seriously (see 3.4.2). The documentation of IKS can be successful if there is adequate support from educationists and the government. Hence; Msuya (2007:348) is of the view “that African governments need to take a leading role in intervening and participating fully in the creation, development and protection of IKS”. The CPoZ (2007:20) “acknowledges the need to ensure professional research and documentation into this important aspect of tangible and intangible heritage”. The documentation will go a long way towards addressing local problems and improving human conditions (see 2.4.1).

During the generating of data using PAR (see 4.3) in a workshop, Mdala and Jojo had this to say on the documentation of IKS:

Mdala: “These teachers have a special role to play in IKS. As a ministry we encourage the teachers to write and publish books which will assist in the teaching and learning of IKS. If the teachers won’t stand up, then we will be soon be robbed of our trusted treasure of IKS.”

Jojo: “Yes inspector. Who can listen and take what we have written as true? How is this going to possible since even our smallest grievances are not taken serious by the school?”

Mdala: “Teachers always have excuse for contributing to the teaching profession, always complaining of workload, low salaries etc. I believe if someone has a passion for academic, he or she can publish works which of course will be scrutinised before being accepted as textbooks. Teacher, have you ever come to my office with a grievance which I turned down”?

Mdala as religious inspector states that teachers have been encouraged to write, although he does not allude to structures or incentives put in place to encourage teachers to document. The failure to document it, implies that the demise of IKS in the

secondary school and in society is inevitable. Jojo, emerging from the point of being less powerful, is of the view that documentation will be a waste of time as long there are structures to ensure that there is recognition of the contributions. He indicates that documentation by teachers can successfully take place if proper structures are in place. Mdala criticises teachers' failure to write, stating that teachers are in the habit of complaining about their conditions, while failing to contribute significantly to their work. There is an indication that from Mdala that teachers are not doing enough to ensure that there is considerable success in the documentation of IKS. Given this conversation, I note that the need to document is there but the structures to support the documentation of IKS are not readily available to and accessible by teachers. I also note that people often give various reasons for their failure to engage in productive activities such as the documentation of IKS, which may in some cases be genuine. In the light of this, it is imperative and desirable that educational authorities should make available avenues (and of course with incentives) for documentation very clear for all the teachers who intend to be part and parcel of documentation of IKS.

5.4.2 Moderate approach to religion

Another condition for successful implementation of IKS lies on the willingness of religious adherents to be moderate in their approach to religion. This means that extremist behaviour jeopardises all attempts to move towards socio-religious hybridity. Solving religious problems can only be feasible if adherents are moderate in their approach to religion. According to Awojobi (n.d:10) the moderate approach fosters unity, brotherliness and love, "without injustice, discrimination, and physical annihilation of opposing parties".

As the discussions unfolded on the possible conditions which can enable successful implementation of a strategy that responds to religious challenges, Lups, Mbambo and Kurara note:

Lups: "Hybridity of Religions is possible when we as religious leaders acquire a moderate approach to religion. Moderation does not mean we are weak in our faith but shows that we are mature and willing to embrace a brother who has a different faith than mine".

Mbambo: “Too much commitment of anything in life usually becomes problematic. Religion should be taken very critical, otherwise too much adhering to it makes you go wild.”

Kurara: “Moderate in religion means we have to peaceful people who have love for other people despite our religious background. To me, moderate means am willing to acknowledge that there are people who see things different from me and I should always acknowledge that.”

Lups believes the problems of RS can be solved if people take a moderate approach towards religion. He adds that being moderate in our religious approaches does not mean being weak in our faith. In Mbambo’s view, overcommitment to anything has always presented problems for individuals and society. In the case of religion, too much religious commitment makes one “wild”, especially those who may not be conscious of human rights. The aspect of wildness may be interpreted as an inclination towards extremist behaviour, where people end up “believing that their religion is the only road to salvation and that full and equal acceptance of others would be a betrayal of their deepest religious convictions” (Ganzevoort, 2006:2). Kurara suggests that moderate means the ability to accept that people in the world can never see things the same way. Juxtaposing these issues, while moderation may be ideal for religions to engage in dialogue, I also believe that critical thinking about our practices is very important, meaning that one’s religion should be thought through very seriously so that one may understand that in this world, people can never fully agree on everything, including religion. Furthermore, if I do not agree with other people’s religious understanding, it does not mean that they are wrong. If this insight grounds our minds, it follows that our religious differences will be reduced significantly both in society and school. Moderate thinking combined with critical thinking can reduce negative attitudes and pessimism, which often provoke anger and animosity (Ayantayo, 2008:26). I also concur with Nimer *et al.* (2004:111) that change in how religions relate can only take place when “individuals and groups take the risk of reinterpreting their own traditions in the light of the need for peaceful co-existence”.

5.4.3 In-service training for teachers in RS

The other condition of successful implementation of a strategy that responds to the problems of RS is through in-service education for teachers to bridge the gap of lack of knowledge and professionalism in relation to RS. This should not be interpreted to mean that teachers currently have little to offer on RS. Rather, it has its origins in an understanding that teaching a subject in which a teacher did not major is a great sacrifice which should be greatly appreciated. The hybridity team members nevertheless felt that there is a need for continuous in-service training in RS in the form of workshops and seminars. This will enhance teacher capacitation in RS and ultimately teachers will become part of the solutions to the challenges of RS in society.

During the discussion, Nkalakatha, Mdala, Lups and Nceku remarked on teacher capacitation:

Nkalakatha: "I suggest that the ministry introduces in service courses for teachers who are currently teaching RS to upgrade themselves."

Mdala: "Yes as a ministry we have programs which we always conduct for religious teachers but due to financial constraints we cannot conduct them as much as we would love to."

Lups: "Aaaah training again, aaah no I am tired of learning myself. Maybe workshops can do rather than retraining for RS. Beside there is no money for that."

Nceku: "But teacher as long you have interest in teaching religion, there is need for you to go through training so that you are able to handle the issue of religion properly."

Nkalakatha believes the ministry should introduce various training programmes for teachers to bridge gaps in their knowledge. Mdala notes that although there are various in-service programmes to enhance teacher capacitation, they have been stopped due to financial constraints. Lups, as a teacher, states that he is tired of learning and he is not prepared for further in-service education. He adds that there is no available budget for studying. Nceku, unlike Lups, insists that further training in the line of education is inevitable as long as one has an interest in religion. In interrogating these views, I see that as long the teacher capacitation aspect is not addressed, all the strategies will fail in the hands of teachers who may not be competent for the task.

In arguing for teacher capacitation in RS, I concur with Pepin (2009:48) that training of RS “is indispensable to enable teachers, at an ethical and pedagogical level, to deliver neutral and objective teaching, with due regard to all beliefs”. This is because “teaching about religion in public schools brings with it particular challenges that teachers seldom face when addressing other subject areas” (Moore, 2010:5). As a result, teachers may try to dodge these questions because they dread giving anomalous or erroneous information. Teachers may also fear that they will cross the line of what is constitutionally acceptable (Moore, 2010:15) in relation to religion. RS is “too contentious or too difficult, we need to make special efforts to see that it is done well and that religious educators are properly equipped for the task” (Richardson, 2010b:5).

In essence, I support whatever training is available to address teacher capacitation, in the form of seminars and workshops and preferably further education in this area. Continuous training of teachers on RS is appreciated and the teachers become a “part the experience that transpires the classroom, and an inspiration to learners” (Schwartz, 2006:457) and consequently bring desirable and sustainable social transformation (see 2.4.3) through religious pedagogy.

5.4.4 Support from religious groups and government

Because RS is a contentious subject, it does not operate in a vacuum. Many stakeholders have an interest in the teaching and learning of RS. This means for an RS strategy to achieve its goal, support from the religious groups and the government is essential.

During the discussion about the support of the government, Benny, Jerry and Nceku said the following:

Benny: “Government can support the learning of RS by giving us textbooks which we can use to study especially of IKS.”

Jerry: “Government support is necessary because they have control of everything, if the support fails our religious freedom is jeopardised.”

Nceku: “The support of the religious leaders to all peace initiatives is desirable. Resistance by religious leaders has impact on efforts towards religious hybridity.”

According to Benny, the support of government is very important because they have the capital strength to provide the resources necessary for the success of any strategy. On the other hand, Jerry believes that the support of the government is critical because it controls the schools and religious freedom. This denotes that the government has power over issues that relate to religion and education. Nceku notes that the condition for success lies in the active participation of the religious leaders. These leaders need to buy into the idea that religious hybridity is a feasible and desirable phenomenon, at least if they entertain the view that they have a mandate to contribute to the welfare of their followers. Religious leaders have the power to derail all attempts that threaten or compromise their beliefs and existence. In the light of this, I concur with the view that the support of the government and religious authorities is important to ensure the success of a strategy.

5.5 THREATS IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The following section addresses the threats associated with the teaching of RS raised during the process of generating empirical data.

5.5.1 Religious extremism

One of the threats that destroys any attempts to solve religious problems in society are the extremists who are not willing to moderate their religious views to accommodate different religious views. Literature confirms that religious extremism is a threat to the peaceful co-existence of people in society (see 3.5.3). Extremism “imposes beliefs, ideology or moral values on others” (Baqai, 2011:242). When people resist them, extremists resort to violent means to ensure that their ideologies are accepted. This approach tends to cause resistance and in the process the benefits associated with socio-religious hybridity face demise.

Discussing the anticipated threats to the successful implementation of SRS, Mzala, Mbambo and Tshuks commented:

Mzala: “You see beliefs cannot force your religion on somebody. If your attitude show that you undermine my religion then no negotiation is possible.”

Mbambo; “People have different beliefs, so any one who makes him or herself superior, destroys any hopes for me to relate with him or her.”

Tshuks: “There are people who always want to be right. If you speak with them, they want to be always heard. Their religious views are never wrong. So I just avoid talking to such people.”

Mzala alludes to the fact that forcing one's view on others is not ideal. Religious issues should be negotiated so that dominance is eliminated (see 2.4.5) in every level in which it appears. On the other hand, Mbambo believes that when an individual has an attitude of superiority, then any negotiations or peaceful co-existence are threatened. Tshuks refers to people who think they are always right, that any other view is secondary, only their view matters. This jeopardises attempts to engage people to use religion to solve their problems. Hence, extremist religious behaviour globally has become prominent and troublesome because of its connection with violence (Ganzevoort, 2006:1). Extremism is “a great challenge towards stabilising a society. In fact, the struggle is against extremism, particularly religious fanaticism” (Baqai, 2011:242). From the argument of the three team members, it is clear that the power to resist any form of dominance is inherent in human beings. All three stated that they resisted the imposition of religious beliefs by others. This confirms the framework of the study, which seeks to resist dominance not through violent means but through peaceful engagement (see 2.4.5).

5.5.2 Interpretation of abuse as religious commitment

Defining the concept of religious abuse is contentious, ambiguous and problematic, because different individuals have differing perceptions of religion and abuse. In some circles, religious abuse may be interpreted as commitment to the religion and to the religious leaders concerned. This commitment may range from giving money to displaying a respectful attitude, and in some cases engaging in sexual acts as obedience to the divine will of the deity. Engaging people with such a mindset in formulating a new strategy that responds to the problems of RS is challenging and

generally negates all attempts to use religion to solve abuse in society. Different perceptions of religious abuse in society emanate from the fact that religion is both personal and pedagogical (see 3.2.8) and that there are various theological orientations. Abdool *et al.* (2007:557) state “that religion is a multi-layered phenomenon. It is something very personal since it touches the dearly held beliefs as well as the deepest spiritual level of people”. In this regard, abuse that is interpreted as religious commitment is a threat to the struggle against religious abuse.

As the strategy seeks a curriculum-relevant pedagogy in RS, the interpretation of religious issues remains a threat. Discussing this issue, Tshuks, Mzala and Jerry noted the following:

Tshuks. “Some religious leaders are cunning and very charismatic. They can speak until you give your last cent.”

Mzala; “Tshuks this is not true. Giving [is] a divine mandate from God. Whether the pastor or what uses the money anyhow, it is fine because you did not give him but you gave God.”

Jerry: “No ways Mzala these guys (religious leaders) are living lavish lifestyle because of our monies yet we are impoverished. No ways I can never agree with this. Just check around, church members suffer yet they enjoy. Guys let’s open our eyes.”

It is clear that religious issues are contested and that giving and finance in relation to worshipping God is a contentious matter. Tshuks describes some of the religious leaders as cunning, with the aim of leaving religious adherents penniless. Mzala stresses that it is the mandate of God that people should give. As people give, the focus should be God, not on the religious leader. Hence, he believes that giving even when one is penniless is not abuse, but a sign of commitment. Jerry is evidently irritated by the conduct of religious leaders who are living luxurious lives while those who donate to them are languishing in poverty. He insists that people should look around and see how religious leaders have benefited at the expense of poor religious adherents. As I interrogate this, I see that people have different opinions as to what constitutes religious abuse, particularly as regards finance. Although it is evident that religious abuse dehumanises the victim, it is up to individuals to determine what they

view as religious abuse. I submit that religious abuse occurs when religion is used to exploit people and dehumanise them in the pretext of fulfilling a divine mandate. When religious abuse is seen as commitment, it negates a pedagogy that castigates abusive religious leaders and people. Such people may even believe that this castigation is an attempt to derail their religious commitment.

Consequently, learners must be helped to interrogate their practices before they become victims of the religion they are studying. From the discursive level of analysis, it is clear that the power attached to religious leaders is unquestionable to the extent that some have taken advantage of the situation to extort money from faithful religious adherents. In most cases, abusive religious leaders often invoke feelings of fear in their adherents to maintain the status quo. It is significant that Mzala does not see religious leaders abusing their power. It is possible that Mzala benefits directly or indirectly from the use of religious power. Jerry, on the other hand, believes this oppressive power must be resisted because it does not seek to improve human conditions (see 2.4.1). From a power perspective, I conclude that power or dominance that dehumanises on the pretext of religious commitment should be strongly resisted. This can be achieved if religious adherents and learners engage in discussions of religious issues and teachings. Critical thinking is essential to interrogate practices in the light of sacred teachings and the promotion of human rights. This will reduce the chances of people becoming victims of religious abuse. The threat essentially lies in the interpretation of what constitutes abuse, which hampers efforts to eliminate religious abuse through RS mainstream curriculum practices.

5.5.3 Fear of other religions

The move towards the hybridity of religions is threatened by the general fear that people have of engaging with other religions. Slim (2005:1) states that the “reappearance of religious belief at the heart of the contemporary conflict is a challenging and perhaps tiresome development for essentially secular political and military analysts”. Under these circumstances, some religious adherents “often reduce their beliefs to a small, workable subset in order to fight and protect themselves from any influence that may compromise their religion” (Funk & Said, 2004:20). People often become fearful of religions that are known for violence and terrorism,

jeopardising efforts to move towards hybridity. By the same token, the fear of other religions compromises efforts to help learners acquire their own faiths comprehensively and also be exposed to the range of diverse theologies and practices of the other members of the society (Court & Seymour, 2015:530). Literature confirms that some religious groups tend to design technologies of exclusion as they deem other religions erroneous in their approach to God; unfortunately, this may also entail the use of violence.

During the workshop, Kurara, Adulm and Jerry commented on the fear of other religions as a threat to hybridity:

Kurara: "I think the exclusion of other religions in the curriculum is done deliberately because of the fear that people have on religion like Islam given the rise of violence in areas like Syria."

Mdala: "You are right Pastor. This is a general assumption that people have that Islam is very a dangerous religion. But just like in Christianity there are many denominations, Islam has many classes which are Sunni and Shi'a. Some believe in violence, some believe. Even in the Old Testament there was violence and also during the crusades in the 12th century. In short violence in religion is more individual or at group level than at the organisation level of religion."

Jerry: "Yoh some religions are problematic. By just hearing the name the temptation to associate them with evil is irresistible. Of course this may be due to prejudice, but I think the feared groups have a serious challenge to demystify their beliefs so that the society accepts them."

Kurara avers that Islam is excluded from the curriculum largely because it is associated with uprisings and violence. This is one of the reasons why other religions do not wish to engage in any dialogue with Islam. Adulm attempts to demystify the notion that Islam is a violent religion. He alludes to the fact that Old Testament is associated with violence. Simkins (2007:84) states that "if violence does occur in the name of religion, it is because religion has been hijacked by political or ideological zealots who find in the symbols of faith an easy currency". He further states that there is a need to separate the elements of deviance in religion, which according him are

the main causes of violence. Jerry expands on Kurara's sentiments, stating that some religions are inherently associated with violent tendencies, making people hesitant to embrace them in their quest for religious dialogue. Thinking through this, I realise that a lack of knowledge and acting on prejudice are often the major reasons why religions fail to engage meaningfully towards sustainable social change. I also note that in every religion there are elements of violence, perpetrated by its deviant members. In the process, the entire religion is given a negative image.

It is important that religions moderate their beliefs, especially when they become a danger to other members of the society. This can begin at school level, where learners should be taught the dangers of engaging in religious deviance especially when it leads to the loss of lives. In this regard, I concur with Awojobi (n.d:10): "there is need to teach learners that religion must foster unity, brotherliness and love in society or nation rather than being used as a tool for injustice, discrimination, and physical annihilation of opposing parties". Almirzanah (2014:239) concurs, noting that moving towards hybridity "of religions is to encourage knowledge and understanding between religions and cultures, based on the assumption that prejudice will be overcome if each knows more about the other". Attention has to be given to this threat, because "religious beliefs and misinterpretations have increasingly fuelled conflict and may be central to many disputes and is often used to justify and fuel violence" (Kasomo 2010:24). In short, I note that the fear of other religions is a threat to SRHS, and I also underscore that this fear can be eliminated if adherents of a religion moderate their beliefs for the sake of the religious other.

5.6 SUCCESS AND EXCELLENCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES UNDERPINNED BY SRHS

The following section covers the empirical data that responds to the 5th objective, which is the excellence associated with teaching RS through SRHS.

5.6.1 A religious hybridity-oriented curriculum in theory and practice

Through implementing this strategy, according to Funk and Said (2014:24), ensures "recognition [of] diverse religious values [that] can actually reinforce each other and opens new possibilities both for intercultural relations and for a full development of the

human personality” (Funk & Said, 2014:24). This “recognition of religions is of profound to ensure that people have an understanding that there exists an underlying thread of unity connecting the great religious traditions” (Preis & Russell, 2006:32). Literature substantiates that a successful inclusive pedagogy is seen when various religious groups participate to address problematic religious issues (see 3.6.2). Zie, Mdala, Lups and Mbambo comment:

Zie: “An inclusive approach to RS is a great success to all. The issue is not [to] expose the child to one route of life when there are many other avenues which can be explored”.

Mdala: “Yes a multi religious approach is a very good curriculum because we are assured that learners have a wide range of beliefs in their disposal, so that when they choose, they are informed and can be good believers of the religion of their choice. Knowledge is power.”

Mbambo: “I do not see a problem with learners learning various religions at school. Even me, during my training I learnt various religions and at the end of the day I remained true to my faith. So it is important to expose learners to all religions.”

Lups: “This sounds nice but the problem is space in the curriculum because we are already overloaded with work. Maybe if the principals can reconsider their load on us.”

Zie sees a religious hybridity curriculum as a successful endeavour that exposes the learners to various religions. With the same view, Mdala believes that knowledge is power, allowing learners to make life decisions and choose the appropriate religion to pursue. Mbambo, as a religious leader, does not see a problem with learning about various religions; during his training for the ministry, he also had an opportunity to learn about various religions. If the religious leaders support this, it holds out hope for the move towards hybridity. Lups argues differently. He is against religious hybridity because it would bring extra work. To him, the problems confronting RS should continue because there is no space in the curriculum. Lups believes that the current status quo should be maintained and perpetuated, which will mean that a single religion will dominate the curriculum. The lack of curriculum space as suggested by

Lups acts as a technology of exclusion against other religions' becoming part of the RS curriculum.

A hybridity curriculum does not require many changes on the workload; teachers can use different religions to address problematic issues in society. As long as teachers are knowledgeable about different religions, hybridity is feasible in the present curriculum space. In interrogating the group's sentiments, I can state that a hybridity curriculum is a success when it develops in learners "a charitable spirit toward others' religious identities, for a deep understanding of religion in the world today and also for achieving the goals of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence" (Ream, 2009:86). Religious teachers, leaders and the community need to strive towards eliminating the issues that can so easily create divisions that often escalate to undesirable social conditions.

5.5.2 Promotion of IKS in the curriculum

Another indicator of success for this research will be when IKS is given its rightful space in the RS curriculum. By the rightful space, I mean that it should be reflected in the syllabus content and an increased mark allocation on IKS in the final national examination. This excellence provides what Shizha (2013:6) describes as "strategies to reclaim African cultural identities to counteract threats of cultural identity loss". This excellence is also supported by the cultural policy, which stipulates that there is a need to "promote and preserve our cultural heritage. Concerted efforts have to be put in place to preserve this cultural heritage for posterity and to maintain it as a unique part of world cultural heritage" (CPoZ, 2007:5).

Discussing giving IKS an increased share in the curriculum as an indicator for success, Muranda, Tshucks and Jojo expressed the following sentiments:

Muranda: "The strategy is useful in helping to revive IKS in schools. The use of religious and cultural technicians will go a long [way] to assist teachers and learners."

Tshuks: "As I represent the community, I am delighted that this workshops brings hope that our culture, 'Ubuntu Bethu' will be taught religious. I am glad

that all religious leaders represented here are interested in the teaching and learning of IKS.”

Jojo: “I think learning of IKS will be interesting given that we are going have people who will assist us in issues which we are battling on as a class”.

Muranda states that IKS is important and applauds the use of cultural technicians to bridge the gap of a lack of knowledge of IKS. Muranda, by acknowledging that cultural technicians are important in teaching and learning, indicates that there is inclusion and recognition of other people as equally knowledgeable and able to contribute to the success of the teaching process. Furthermore, the acceptance and inclusion of cultural technicians can be one of the most profitable and cost-effective means to enhance teacher capacitation. Tshuks regards the strategy as successful when ubuntu is enhanced through the curriculum, since it is the essence of acquiring local epistemologies. Jojo, the teacher, is delighted by the idea that learning will be more fulfilling if there is assistance for the challenges encountered by teachers in RS. I conclude that excellence will be attained if there is a renaissance of IKS which leads to development of society. This can be successful if African scholars take a leading role to ensure the survival of their own epistemologies. The fact that our own has been displaced in the curriculum requires us to seriously re-think our quest for the politics of identity and recognition.

5.6.3 Reduced religious abuse in society

Reduced religion-related abuse serves as an indicator for success for this strategy. Every normal society “desires a community of moral persons, to have such a moral community requires a moral education, enforcement of moral recovery and reform” (Kudadjie, 1997:20).

As the team was discussing the indicators of success when it comes to religion, Mbambo, Zie and Jerry commented:

Mbambo: “We need to work together as a religion to address the religious abuse which has led to negative perception of religion as evil institute in society.”

Zie. “A successful IKS is the one that can help our children to use what they have learnt in schools to address religious abuse. Teachers, local leaders and religious leaders should be pointedly to address religious abuse, then we can conclude that our learners have learnt to interrogate issues of religion.”

Jerry: “I know that if teachers do well to address religious abuse, we will see a changed society and people will not hesitate to look into religion for problematic issues.”

The hybridity team members indicate a successful RS curriculum is the one that is able to address the problem of religious abuse in society. Mbambo notes that religious abuse has tarnished the image of religion in society, thus it is critical that RS pedagogy address this problem. Zie indicates that schools should confront religious abuse pointedly. This is possible when society collaborates or hybridises to solve problematic life issues (see 2.4.3). Jerry judges a successful RS curriculum as one that addresses religious abuse that has distorted the identity of religion in society. The three hybridity team members indicate that religious abuse must be challenged, so that exploitative practices in religious contexts are eliminated.

5.6.4 Programmes for teacher capacitation

Partnerships of various religious and cultural groups can enhance teacher capacitation, as it has been shown that most of the teachers are not trained in RS. Teacher capacitation is a critical indicator in the sense that many curriculum packages have failed in the hands of teachers that are incompetent to deliver as expected. The teachers that participated in this research study, indicated that they find it difficult to teach RS because they lack a professional education in RS. In short, the indicator for success is when teachers are comfortable in teaching various religions and local epistemologies so that the lived realities of the learners are met.

The hybridity team discussed the issue of teacher capacitation as an indicator for a successful strategy. Nceku, Muranda and Father Konzalos commented:

Nceku: “The collaboration of various religious stakeholders will help our teachers to meet the needs of multicultural society.”

Muranda: “All our plans and suggestion as a team can fail as long the teachers are not able to implement our suggestions. Our success lies on the teachers who will carry on the common vision to ensure that the success in teaching of RS from a hybridity perspective.”

Father Konzalos: “A sign of progressive teacher in this day [and] age is the one who had multireligious knowledge so that all learners benefit.”

Teachers have an important role to play to ensure the successful implementation of curriculum packages. Nceku believes that this is possible through a collaborative effort from various religious stakeholders. Muranda believes that if the issue of teachers in RS is not addressed, all efforts and plans to solve religious problems in society are in jeopardy. This alludes to the fact that RS teachers have the power to control the pedagogical space; when they are not capacitated, all curriculum innovation and changes fail. Father Konzalos describes a relevant contemporary religious teacher as the one who can teach religion from a multireligious perspective for the benefit of all learners. I note that teachers have the power to exclude or include religions since they have power over the pedagogical space, described by Gramsci as the “power behind the closed doors”.

5.7 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, I focused on analysing data using CDA, paying particular attention to analysis at the textual, discursive and social practice levels. The analysed data responded to the objectives of the study. In Chapter 6, I focus on the strategy envisaged in Chapter 1 to develop a SRHS to respond to the problems of RS in Zimbabwean schools.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS AND THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS HYBRIDITY STRATEGY: ITS PRINCIPLES AND INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

“[s]ince we are all heirs of the story of conflict. Then we have to leave aside tired generalisations and seek to know one another through this we can become the architects of a truly new order of cooperation” (Funk & Said, 2014:25-26).

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, I address the findings synthesised from the data generated through PAR. Section 2 of this chapter is the fulfilment of the promise to formulate a strategy that attempts to respond to the problems of RS in Zimbabwean schools. The strategy is a result of a combination of the best practices of teaching and learning religion in selected countries, discussed in Section 3:2, together with empirical evidence, literature and my personal inputs to the strategy. The strategy is located in the principles of CER (see 2.4). Various steps involved in the strategy are discussed. As the chapter ends, I focus on the indicators for the successful implementation of SRHS.

6.2 Research objectives reiterated

- Examining the challenges in the teaching and learning of RS.
- Evaluating solutions that have been used to respond to the challenges of RS.
- Discussing conditions for the successful implementation of RS using SRHS at O Level.
- Exposing threats associated with teaching and learning of RS in secondary schools.
- Highlighting possible successes associated with the implementation of SRHS in a quest for curriculum relevance in Zimbabwean schools.

6.3 SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

In this section, I focus on the findings that emanated from the discussions, workshops and observations during the hybridity team engagement and their operationalisation of a shared vision in Chapter 4. The findings correspond to the objectives of the study.

6.3.1 Socio-religious hybridity as desirable phenomenon

I found that the collaboration of religious stakeholders ensures the relevance of the RS curriculum and responds to the challenges of religion (see 3.2). Collaboration of religions ensures what Rezvan (2011:12) terms “to live together while remaining diverse”. This means that religion can be used “as a tool for creating a sustainable environment and peaceful coexistence” (Wani, Abdullah & Chang, 2015:646). In the intellectual journey with the hybridity team, I discovered that people from different faith traditions can work together in the name of peace for a transformed co-existence that heals the world (Nimer, 2004:107). This dispelled some notions that religions or “different faiths cannot find common learn from one each other on the grounds when it comes to religious issues” (Forde, 2013:21). I noted Orellana’s (2003:32) comment that “religious commitment can become a strong impetus for engaging in peace-building activities and bringing about social change” (see 2.4.3), despite the battles and acts of violence perpetrated by religious variations. In fact, the study indicated that religion offers unexpected avenues toward peace-making (Rasul, 2009:2). Interrogating this finding further, it is critical that religious groups in society open venues that can allow dialogue and new possibilities both for intercultural relations and for a full development of the human personality (Funk & Said, 2014:24), unity and unity of purpose. It is through this collaboration or hybridity of religions that society and learners can gain significantly from the teaching and learning of religion. I argue that hybridity is desirable so that different religious orientations can work together to solve social pathologies that have hindered development in society such as violence, bullying and terrorism.

From the empirical evidence, this hybridity based on mutual respect and love obligates religious and cultural players to take social action to promote freedom, equality and justice for everyone (see 2.4.4) (Gay, 2002:110). This calls for a new perspective to critique religions in society. It requires people to value other religions as equally important for the improvement of human conditions. Hence, I argue that the focus should be on those positive aspects of religion that unite people in society and encourage social development at various levels. This approach to religion ensures that learners will gain meaningful and comprehensive religious ideologies that are

bias-free; consequently, unnecessary prejudice is reduced for the common good for all the religions' members.

6.3.2 Comprehensive religious knowledge reduces prejudice

Through the journey with the hybridity team, I found that ignorance and misunderstanding of “the beliefs and practices of the religious other” (Hall, 2010:4) often stir up anger, exclusion and suspicion. Comprehensive knowledge of RS or religion in general dispels the notions and narratives that seek to use religion as an excuse to indulge in acts of hate. Some religious followers tend to be trapped inside “stories of threatened identity, justified fear, and unjustifiable suffering” (Funk & Said, 2004:2). I also found that it is important that learners and society acquire comprehensive religious knowledge, which opens ways to “relate to one another, on the basis of what we might create together and not merely on the basis of that which we fear and desire to avoid” (Funk & Said, 2014:25-26). For hybridity of religion and cultures, I found that there is a need for an education premised in the spirit of inclusiveness and “forgiveness instead of hatred. This promotes tolerance, understanding and coexistence rather than conflict and violence, reinforcing civic education and observing human rights” (Preis & Russell, 2006:16). RS taught from SRHS serves as an opportunity to teach learners on various religions, through an emphasis on the aspects of religion that promote unity in diversity.

The comprehensive knowledge is also possible if teachers are pedagogically prepared to teach all religions without promoting one religion over the other. This implies that an objective approach to religion is required, where teachers become facilitators of religious knowledge as opposed to evangelists through the mainstream curriculum. It is my argument that when people have comprehensive religious knowledge of their religion and the other, they can then be good religious followers who value human lives and respect for other people whose religion differs from theirs. The difference, in my opinion, is that there should not be enmity; rather it should be a celebration that God allows diversity, which makes life beautiful. Unfortunately, followers of different religions have been prompted by their lack of adequate religious knowledge to see it as an opportunity to eradicate people with a different religious opinion. This approach, I argue, has led people to miss the beauty associated with diversity towards an

improvement of human conditions. This journey with the hybridity team helped me to understand that having an in-depth knowledge of various religions is a gateway towards ensuring peace in the community.

6.3.3 Divergent religions' members are abusive

One of the gigantic challenges confronting in our society is religious abuse, which manifests in the form of causing harm to other people in the name of religion, or exploitation of people through the use of religion. Throughout the process of gathering empirical data, I discovered that some religions' followers, particularly extremist nationalists or ethnic groups to the extreme right, use violence to generate change (Pressman, 2009:6). The extremists' approach to religion often leads to the violation of human rights and loss of life, which could be prevented if adherents could become committed followers of their religion, yet at the same time remain moderate in their religious beliefs cognisant of the rights of other members of the community. I argue that it is important that religious leaders who support social justice, improvements of human conditions, human rights and a love for people despite their religious orientations, teach their religious members to be moderate and considerate of other religions and "obligate them to take social action to promote freedom, equality, and justice for everyone" (Gay, 2010:110).

I reiterate that religious leaders have an obligation to pointedly highlight and condemn religious abuse, "as the world is not yet free of threats of different confrontations of a religious, ethnic or other nature" (Preis & Russell, 2006:16). Abusive religious extremists are condemned in the RS curriculum because they are closely "associated with conservative politics characterised by various forms of intolerance, including racism, sexism, homophobia and elitism" (Deichs & Fleschenberg, 2010:15). Through this journey of generating data with the hybridity team, I noted that it is possible to hold fast to our own traditions while recognising the authenticity of one another's religious faiths (Hall, 2010:13). In interrogating this finding further, the challenge of religion is that people have limited knowledge of their religious traditions, and worse, that such people engage in extremist behaviours which ultimately present a negative picture of a religion. Acting on limited religious knowledge is dangerous to both the perpetrator and the victims. There is an obligation on curriculum scholars, teachers and religious

leaders to teach followers to be considerate of people with a different opinion. This should be influenced by the understanding that legitimate religious recognition, representation and identity cannot be significantly achieved by violent acts towards people with politics of religious difference. On the contrary, religions that value violence, abuse of religious followers and oppression are likely to be insignificant and unpopular with people. My argument, as will be shown in SHRS, is that violent, oppressive and abusive religious practices should be pointed out to learners, be criticised and be discouraged through mainstream curriculum practices. In this way religious leaders, followers and adherents will become conscious of their religious acts, especially those that do not promote social justice and human rights.

6.3.4 IKS is marginalised in RS curriculum

I also found that IKS has a limited space in RS, which has led teachers and learners to negate the teaching and learning of IKS (see 5.2.7-8). I concur with Ocholla (2007:3), who says that IKS among its owners is “illegitimated, illegalised, suppressed and abandoned by some communities, and the countries and peoples practising it [IKS] was associated with outdatedness, a characteristic most people find demeaning”. However, while the legacy of colonisation can be blamed for the demise of IKS, I also believe that local people are or should equally be blamed for not putting structures in place that ensure the survival of IKS. Furthermore, little is done to ensure its survival in the RS curriculum. It is clear from the current RS that IKS is facing demise if strategies such as SRHS are not utilised to contribute to its survival. The schooling system should be transformed to the extent that it becomes a hub to nurture and perpetuate the essence and value of IKS in learners. However, this is a mammoth task given that the teachers who were coresearchers in this study made it clear that they have challenges with the teaching of IKS. Given these circumstances in schools, the learners are robbed of Ubuntu, which forms one of the identity features of an African child, a philosophy that defines and sustains the African fabric of peaceful co-existence, collaboration and social development.

6.3.5 RS teacher capacitation is indispensable

The teaching of religion is complex and I found that it is important that teacher capacitation be taken seriously to enhance “meaningful bonds with students based on genuine social interactions” (Brown, 2004:280) and address their lived realities through religious pedagogy. I discovered that teacher capacitation can act on “knowledge about cultural differences, and implements, as a habit, pedagogical skills that foster a meaningful and relevant education for all of her/his learners” (Young & Sternoa, 2011:1).

6.3.6 Formulation of a socio-religious hybridity body desirable

I also noted that it is critical that a religious and cultural governing body be appointed to oversee an inclusive RS curriculum in Zimbabwean schools. This will ensure values that “promote peace and nonviolence, common humanity, and encourage co-existence” (Orellana, 2009:32). Such a religious and cultural body should work with various stakeholders to minimise and mitigate differences through democratic means (Wani, Abdullah & Chang, 2015:648). The religious body must ensure that there is a fair representation of all religions found in local communities. As in the case of Britain the body should work closely with educationists to improve the teaching and learning of RS in schools. This will allow the diffusion of power from one central religion to the peripheral, hence significantly reducing the resistance and violence associated with religion in the curriculum and society, to the common good of all citizens.

In the following section, I formulate and discuss the rationale of the strategy intended to respond to the challenges of RS in Zimbabwean schools. .

6.4 SOCIO-RELIGIOUS HYBRIDITY STRATEGY AND SUPPORTING RELIGIOUS TEXTS

SRHS is supported by various religious texts, making it a feasible and desirable phenomenon among religions. Preis and Russell (2006:15-16) support this notion, arguing that generally various religions “convey a message of peace, justice and human solidarity”. Consequently, it is expected “that all religious leaders, like other civil society and community leaders, exercise a certain degree of morality and positive influence on how people in society understand and interact with each other in peaceful ways”.

To begin with, I refer to the following texts of various religions, which indicate that religions generally have elements of religious hybridity that should be used as an entry point for sustainable peaceful co-existence of religions.

- The Holy Quran states: “O Mankind, we have created you male and female, and have made you races and tribes, that you may know each other” (Al Quran 49:13).
- In Judaism, it is stated: “Seek peace and pursue it ... Seek it where you are and pursue it in other places as well.” (Psalm 34:15).
- The New Testament states: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you” (Matt. 5:44).
- “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”. 1 Corinthians 1:10.
- In Hinduism, Swami Vivekananda states: “Help and not fight, assimilation and not destruction, harmony and peace and not dissension are the substance of my faith.”

The above extracts from different religious texts indicate that the general core philosophy of each religion is love, respect and non-violence as people relate to one another in society. In light of these religious texts, it is desirable to promote peace, as quickly as possible, to liberate ourselves from the metaphysical and theological conflicts (Islam & Cruze, 2011:2) that have caused endless religious conflict and catastrophes. These religious texts are corroborated by Preis and Russell (2006:15), who state that among “religions exist an underlying thread of unity connecting the great religious traditions. They each propound basic spiritual tenets and standards of behaviour that constitute the essence of social cohesion for peaceful co-existence”. This understanding gives SRHS support, space and justification as a strategy to respond to the problems of RS in Zimbabwean schools. Religions and their followers can explore these texts to foster hybridity so that the collaboration of religious stakeholders can be meaningful and they can respectfully relate to one another.

The strategy is necessary given the challenges of religion in society and particularly in the curriculum (see 3.2.1-9). I propose that these challenges can be solved by the implementation of SRHS. I base my arguments for SRHS on CER, to ensure that RS becomes an inclusive curriculum, not only in principle but also in practice in a quest

for social justice, peaceful co-existence and improvement of human conditions (see 2.4.1-5). In the process the RS curriculum, as suggested by Preis and Russell (2006:15) is transformed from being part of the problem in society, into part of the solution to religious challenges. The RS curriculum can be justifiable in the secondary school curriculum if it contributes towards solving social pathologies in society such as religious abuse, religious hate and exclusion. My argument is that RS should a life-solving subject and this should emanate from the multireligious orientation of society.

My work in developing the strategy was undergirded by studying the best practices in the teaching and learning RS in different countries (see 3:2). These countries have applied their best practices to the reduction of conflict associated with religion and particularly discrepancies in teaching and learning religion. I borrowed some elements to consolidate SRHS; I hope that these best-practice elements will assist learners to acquire an appreciation of religious difference with positive curiosity, understanding, respect and appreciation (Rice, 2008:9). Once this has been achieved, “the learners embrace the politics of religious difference which enforces a certain level of social cohesion for the maintenance of public order” (Bangura, 1994:1). Moreover, the strategy assumes that “religious understanding can be one of an essential means by which foundations of peace and harmony can be achieved. By overlooking religious differences and uniting under the belief of the existence of a divine being, the learners can strive towards humanitarian equality ... [as] not just rhetoric but a reality” (Khaled, 2007:9).

I argue that the current RS approach, the multifaith method (see 3.2.6.3), lacks “integral embracement of religious difference and is practical insensitivity to religious plurality which has resulted in indoctrination, domination, manipulation and poaching, ethnic-religious violence and conflicts, interreligious and intercultural controversy and rivalries” (Ugbor, 2015:21-22). In light of this, it was critical to construct a strategy that emphasises religious dialogue and contributes to the weaving and understanding of the (new) moral and ethical fabric of the political unit of the religious community (Abdool *et al.*, 2007:556) as opposed to the exclusion implicit in the multifaith approach. The “understanding of other religions (including diversity within religious traditions) enables learners to see through the spectacles of other cultures to develop an empathetic understanding of another culture, consequently, learners become ready to empathise with other cultures” (Almirzanah, 2014:239). In essence, the above

scholars state that the multifaith approach is short-changing learners, preventing them from acquiring comprehensive religious beliefs since it concentrates on one religious and also variations within one religion. The multifaith approach is not democratic in its orientation; thus, the SRHS seeks to ensure that RS is democratic, reflecting multireligious identities in society.

The strategy also arises against the background that “one antidote to hatred among religious communities is to teach communities about the beliefs and practices of the religious other” (Smock, 2005:2) to achieve a democratic society. The strategy is vigilant and sensitive to the dangers of inequity, social injustice, lack of freedom, lack of peace and of hope (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2010:10). It is my humble submission that SRHS is strategically placed in the schooling system to produce learners who are tolerant and respectful towards other religions and moreover to produce citizens who value differences of opinion in religious matters (Rahman & Khambali, 2013:82). This is possible and desirable, so that “no religion preaches terror, but if our schools are not accommodative of all religions, terror becomes inevitable, since terror rests on prejudices, intolerance, exclusion and, above all, on the rejection of any dialogue” (Preis & Russell, 2006:14).

The strategy values the contribution of religion to society. Religion has shaped communities to maintain peace in society; on the other hand, “religion has been thought of as playing a crucial role in generating conflicts, particularly internal ones. While it may be a source of conflict, its role in the overall peace process has all too often been overlooked” (Bercovitch & Orellana, 2008:175). Moreover, the strategy concurs with Funk and Said (2014:25-26) that we are all heirs of the story of conflict. If “we leave aside tired generalisations and seek to know one another, we can become the architects of a truly new order of cooperation”. The strategy invites different religious groups to a spiritual journey “that open[s] us to the deepest convictions and meanings at the heart of living” (Court & Seymour, 2015:530). Furthermore, SRHS provides a platform to critically interrogate the tired generalisations that have caused religion to be viewed as a dangerous institution in society. Hence, through SRHS, “a shared vision is achieved where religious adherents understand the perceptions of injustice that lead the people to invoke texts that privilege violence over nonviolence, hatred over co-existence” (Orellana, 2003:32) and in the process, sustainable solutions to religious problems are attained that preserve human lives (see 2.4.1).

The strategy values human lives and also contends that RS as a curriculum subject should contribute to helping learners to use religion to save lives instead of using religion as a scapegoat to cause loss of lives. By so doing and also in line with CER, the strategy affirms that “mutual respect, rooted in open dialogue and nourished by multiethnicity, multiculturalism and multireligiosity are indispensable for the preservation of peace, stability and the resolution of conflicts” (Preis & Russell, 2006:15). In short, SRHS seeks to respond to the problems of a monothelic curriculum by ensuring that RS is democratic in its approach and emphasises that a relevant RS should be oriented towards solving human pathologies, especially those associated with religion. In this way we can produce learners that are socially and religiously relevant and conscious of social justice and a peaceful existence of difference.

The following section addresses the aims of SHRS in a quest to ensure RS curriculum relevance.

6. 5 Principles of the SRHS

In the following section, I focus on the principles or the aims of the SRHS in relation to RS curriculum.

6.5.1 To promote hybridity of religions

The strategy seeks to foster religious hybridity in secondary schools in Zimbabwe. This responds to the challenges with religion in society (see 3.2-3 cf 5.2.1-3), namely exclusion, division, closed doors and lack of communication among religious leaders and their followers. By promotion of hybridity of religions, I mean that the curriculum should be multireligious and multicultural to address the lived realities of the learners in a multicultural society, which allows unity and recognition of other religious orientations. While this at first may not appear feasible, the hybridity team has proven that it is possible for religious players to work together, especially in areas such as education that seek to improve human conditions. The possibility of religious hybridity lies on the desire for religious leaders and followers to “moderate their religious beliefs and practices by giving space to other faiths as well” (Wani, Abdullah & Chang, 2015:646). A moderate approach to religion means tolerance of other religious ideas in a quest for peaceful co-existence of religions. This is possible as stipulated by

Rahman and Khambali (2013:89) that “mostly all religions of the world put religious tolerance as a good moral character and must be implemented in the life of religious people”. Furthermore, moderate in religious beliefs implies “a charitable spirit toward others’ religious identities and is necessary not only for a deep understanding of religion in the world today but also to achieve the goals of reconciliation and peaceful co-existence” (Ream, 2009:5). The critical question is how this is possible given the resistance that is often portrayed by religious followers in a quest to maintain and protect their religious identities. In responding to this question, I am that religious dialogue is important, where religious adherents listen, observe and make connections before questioning, correcting and disputing to achieve a transformative meaning (Hall, 2010:11).

6.5.2 To bring awareness and abolishment of various kinds of religious abuse

Another principle of the strategy is to make learners and society aware of religious abuse. In this strategy, I argue that culturally and religiously responsive pedagogy is the one that addresses the lived realities of the learners and also solves social pathologies. It is evident in our society that religious abuse is causing havoc by destroying the personal identities of the victims. The strategy focuses on religious abuse because I contend that it has not received adequate attention from scholars that focus on religion and education especially at secondary school level. Furthermore, there seems to be little data on human rights violation in a religious context (Karam, 2015:35), despite the media being awash with acts of human rights violation in the pretext of religion.

Given that little is being to address the rising levels of atrocities in the name of religion to learners and society, the strategy intends to respond directly to abuse associated with religion so that learners are armed with ways to escape abusive religious leaders or members. In doing so, I agree with Frohardt and Temin (2003:9) that RS should help learners to acquire the “ability to avoid abuse and manipulation” (Frohardt & Temin, 2003:9) through religion, which generally leads to dehumanisation, exploitation and negative perceptions of religion. This assumption is supported by Orellana (2003:31) that all religious traditions commonly “embody a wide variety of cultural and moral resources, which have configured the basis of personal and communal values

that support nonviolence and prevent abuse”. Through the sentiments articulated by Frohardt and Temin and Orellana, one can conclude that a hybridity of religions opens novel opportunities to eradicate religious abuse, because religions have largely expressed their commitment to nonviolence and avoidance of abuse. Given this understanding, SRHS has among many of its principles to identify and abolish religious abuse where ever it appears overtly or covertly. While this may be a gigantic task and many take year to deal with, RS gives a relevant starting point where abuse can be eradicated.

Moreover, the eradication of religious abuse is a principle in this strategy because religion in some occasions is intertwined with politics. Hence, religion being a common denominator in world politics, it necessitates the need for people to understand it correctly (Woever, 2007:209) to avoid political recruitments to religions that often perpetrate abuse. History has proved beyond reasonable doubt that religiously motivated wars seldom end and that the damage often exceeds that of non-religious wars. This is largely because religion can be personal to the extent that if not guided properly, thousands of lives can be lost. Given these circumstances, I believe that it is critical that RS at O Level should begin to address religiously motivated wars by pointing out how they succeed in destroying the social fabric of peaceful co-existence.

6.5.3 To promote the preservation of IKS

The promotion and the preservation of IKS in the RS curriculum are embedded in SRHS. This principle comes against the backdrop that IKS is a treasured phenomenon by local people. Hence, since the curriculum is part of people’s culture and is socially constructed, it follows that a relevant curriculum finds it indispensable to ignore comprehensive teaching and learning of IKS. In this regard, I concur with Mutekwe (2015:1297) that IKS “transmitted through schooling is the foundation of the social order and society should be perpetuated through educational institutions”. In some sections of society, IKS has become people’s religion and as such, IKS is directly positioned to meet the “challenges that humanity face, such as the diseases of communalism, religious hatred, intolerance, and extremism which can be avoided by using the common teachings of religion” (Wani, Abdullah & Chang, 2015:646). IKS should therefore be preserved as an alternative solution to problematic human

conditions (see 2.4.1). While IKS cannot adequately address all the problems that learners face in modern society, Western epistemologies can be used to fill in the gaps of IKS. However, Western epistemologies often rather seek to distort the essence and the value of IKS. There is also a great need of awareness that “Western knowledge systems (WKS) are different from African knowledge systems, therefore, WKS cannot be pre-packaged as solutions for African challenges” (Moyo, 2013:207). This does not mean that educators of religion and IKS should discard WKS as irrelevant and illegitimate for an African child. On the contrary, WKS must negotiate its curriculum terrain to complement rather than displace IKS. The negotiation of the knowledge terrain forms hybridity of knowledge, which can solve problems affecting society. I argue that it is critical that RS cultivate and give IKS an honourable status in the curriculum so that the future generation will look back with admiration at the works that the present generation has done to preserve IKS. It is my argument that SRHS gives the impetus for RS to contribute significantly to the preservation of IKS.

6.5.4 To enhance RS teachers’ capacitation

To achieve a socio-religious hybridity in RS and equip learners to avoid religious abuse and to value IKS, teacher capacitation occupies a critical role to ensure the success of the strategy. The teacher is “expected to have a broad knowledge base on RS subject content and adopt a reflective attitude to support the flexibility and expertise to achieve relevant pedagogy” (Ware, 2006:429). The challenge at hand “is how to teach and redefine RS to be dynamic and meaningful for young generation within the accelerating complexity of postmodern, secularised and individualistic contexts without undermining any religious identity” (Ugbor, 2015:21), given that majority of RS teachers in Zimbabwean schools are not trained to teach religion.

There is a need to “meet this challenge on the way how teachers are prepared with skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary to enhance their ability to undertake the gigantic responsibility of creating an appropriate for advancing prejudicial and stereotypical attitude which are brought by the learners” (Phuntsog, 1999:99). In this regard, it is the desire of the strategy to “create effective classroom management which utilises essential research-based pedagogical processes that respond appropriately to the emotional, social, ethnic, cultural and cognitive needs of students”

(Brown, 2004:268). I argue that it is not feasible to wait until the government trains RS teachers when the problems of religion continue to cause havoc in society. The strategy presents various measures that can be used to mitigate the challenge while the long-term training RS teachers is given consideration in teacher colleges. Given that the learners are already studying RS, the available teachers can therefore be assisted through the established avenues of SRHS. The available structures serve to emancipate teachers to meet religious challenges with an adequate knowledge that reflects multireligious orientations in society.

6.6 PILLARS AND STEPS IN SOCIO-RELIGIOUS HYBRIDITY STRATEGY

The strategy addresses various steps involved in the SRHS to address the challenges of religion as discussed (see 3.2). I discuss four pillars and each pillar has its steps to achieve socio-religious hybridity. Each stage of this strategy requires a collaboration of educationists, religious leaders, followers, local leaders and various stakeholders whose desire is unity among religions and who are committed to social justice and human rights. The strategy is divided into four pillars with each pillar having three steps towards the hybridity of religions. These four pillars are religious hybridity, religious abuse, IKS and teacher capacitation.

6.6.1 Pillar A: Religious hybridity in SRHS

This pillar responds to the challenges noted in chapter 3.2.1-3 and 5.2.1-3, where it is observed that generally religion is problematic because there is religious exclusion in the curriculum and the current RS has closed doors to other religions that are not Christian in the curriculum. In responding to this challenge, the SRHS proposes a number of specific steps.

6.6.1.1 Open dialogue of religions

For any strategy to be successful in attempts to move towards hybridity of religion, religious dialogue is inevitable. The SRHS begins at the point of dialogue among religions where a common vision to maintain a peaceful society, a society that promotes and upholds human rights and contributes positively to human emancipation

through RS (see 2.4.5). The strategy is cognisant that religious hybridity is a “commitment and an effort that honours the deepest truths and holds promise for better and conducive humanity” (Preis & Russell, 2006:32) through pedagogy space. This, I argue, begins with willingness by religious followers to engage in a meaningful dialogue.

The dialogue among religions is very important because it is “a commitment against religious terrorism, reinforcing the determination to cope with new vulnerabilities in an era of globalisation” (Preis & Russell, 2006:14). Developing “dialogue among faiths and religions, therefore, becomes desirable and it’s a challenges that scholars of curriculum and religion should battle with” (Yasof & Majid, 2013:49) in a quest to use religion to respond to social pathologies. In addition, Nimer *et al.* (2004:127) are of the view that “becoming aware of the significant role that our personal, societal and religious understandings play in approaching conflict is an essential step toward finding creative alternatives and constructively engaging with others”. To achieve this, Orellana (2013:33) suggests that there is a need to identify those “religious authorities that are peace oriented. Only then, they could open channels through which these institutions and actors could connect to a wider network of peace-building initiatives across the social, political, and economic spectrum”. By exploiting the open channels of “communication easily available through advanced technology, religion focuses on the humanitarian and pluralistic aspects of teachings as a means to bring religions to dialogue” (Khaled, 2007:9). In juxtaposing this, I argue that the first step to dialogue among religion is to seek to unify religious leaders who are prone to peace and begin there. Other religious leaders and followers will join the hybridity train as time goes on. Dialogue does not require all religions to come forward at once; rather, the few leaders that peace-conscious can begin to hybridise and the benefits of hybridity will be evident for all to admire and pursue.

To move towards religious hybridity, the strategy “discourages religious narratives which promote exclusive in-group loyalties, negative images of adversaries, and escalates conflict because these can easily exacerbate tensions, the thrust is to promote narratives that highlight a shared vision to reduce conflict” (Funk & Said, 2004:3). The peace-oriented religious leaders have the understanding that negative narratives and histories jeopardise genuine reforms in religion; hence, the focus in the strategy is on those areas that unite religions. Through the journey with the hybridity

team, I saw the feasibility of different religious leaders sharing a common vision because the team explored areas that build hybridity, such as love for one another, respect, recognition, appreciation of difference in diversity. The SRHS has an understanding that to “establish lasting conditions for peace and tolerance where there is mutual understanding, respect, and tolerance” (Yusuf, 2013:226) are key. My experience with the hybridity team taught me that no matter how deep the hate among religious adherents due to past experience, respect, love and recognition of the other religion as legitimate opens new ways that people can relate. Consequently, the healing process begins as people realise that despite religious orientations, we are all heirs of the same story, and when we begin to interrogate issues of religion through new lenses, we can then find fulfilment in God and also contribute significantly through religion.

Through my interaction with the different religious followers, I have come to conclude that every religion possesses feelings and avenues which can easily be used to mobilise people to foster religious dialogue (Orellana, 2003:26). If this is true with all religions, then religious leaders have an obligation to cascade the values of peaceful co-existence to other members of the religion with the intention to allow religious members to moderate their religious views in light of social justice and respect for humanity.

The strategy supports the sentiment by Bercovitch and Orellana (2008:178) that religious “leaders and faith-based actors are often like the insider mediators with the moral and spiritual legitimacy to influence the opinions of people. They are highly respected and their opinions are generally held in high regard within their communities”. I therefore conclude that the success of the hybridity of religions both in the curriculum and society depends largely on religious leaders. The more religious leaders are oriented towards peace, the more the world is assured to have peace. The opposite is also true. Religious leaders have a strategic contribution; negative narratives from them impact their followers, who may act on them to disable the peaceful social fabric of the community. I concur with Yusuf (2013:225) that “religious leaders need to be oriented toward peace and tolerance rather than towards violence”. It is this social dimension (the quest for peace) “that allows religions to bring people together, discuss matters that affect their lives and develop processes to address issues and concerns” (Rasul, 2009:3). There is a need for some religious leaders to

re-orientate their members towards the understanding that the peaceful co-existence of different religions is feasible despite past religious atrocities and their concomitant endless religious wars.

Dialogue, in the context of SRHS, serves as a useful tool “to transform groups and societies through mechanisms and institutions that can channel the energy of conflict into constructive rather than destructive channels” (Nimer *et al.*, 2007:131). With this in mind, I note with appreciation Forde’s (2013:18) view that “dialogue does not entail engaging in contentious debate or arguing about religion. It does, however, call for a willingness to be open, to listen, and to respect the other. A willingness to set aside our own sense of religious superiority”. In this regard, according to Hermas and Dimaggio (2007:38), “all religious parties are encouraged to play a role as an active and reciprocal contributor of the interchange, failure to do this, dialogue is reduced to monologue with certain voice(s) in control of the situation at the expense of the active contribution of the other”.

The SRHS underscores that fruitful religious dialogue is “born from an attitude of respect for the other person, from a conviction that the other person has something good to say. It assumes that there is room in the heart for the person’s point of view, opinion, and proposal. To dialogue entails a cordial reception, not a prior condemnation” (Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity, 2015:1). For religious dialogue to be effective, there is a need for all religious groups to develop high levels of trust. This trust is the understanding that dialogue is positioned not to cause harm but to bring together all religions committed to social justice. Once the “relationship of trust has been built, points on which people differ are discussed in an atmosphere of respect rather than in the negative, polemical and destructive manner” (Forde, 2013:22).

Having an understanding that RS seeks to improve the life of the learners, it is feasible to confront negative religious thoughts “and explore the implications of attitudes and practices with the goal of fulfilling children’s rights” (UNICEF, 2012:47). In addition, Kalin (2007:67) supports “dialogue, openness, critical thinking, curiosity, and respect for one’s partner in dialogue and, finally, rationality, which means acknowledging the common ground shared by all present and future participants in the dialogue, regardless of their faith or other cultural attributes”. The foregoing arguments concur

that the dialogue of religions is possible if all parties involved in the dialogue are clear that the goal is to enhance RS and ultimately improve the lives of the learners through religion.

Dialogue of religion also entails difficulties. I do not want to create the impression that this step is very easy and can easily be understood by different religious stakeholders. Indeed, there are challenges, which if not properly handled, will cause the collapse of the dialogue of religions. In a dialogue between partners representing religious bodies, there is often the suspicion that there is a hidden apologetic agenda and this is difficult to dispel. This is because “there is a tendency among disputants to become trapped inside their own stories of threatened identity, justified fear and unjustifiable suffering” (Funk & Said, 2004:2). Moreover, “it is easy to slip from the critical presentation of views, into a mode of persuasion and perhaps even preaching. Preconditions of parity or equality, too, are difficult to meet when one religious group may be more committed to their religion than to move into the third space” (Helleman, 2009:2). The problem is further “propelled by powerful voices in both cultural camps who utilise strained historical analogies to argue that the necessary lessons for dealing with contemporary problems are to be found in epic struggles against the communal adversaries of times past” (Funk & Said, 2004:7). These are the realities that exist among religions, but the strategy calls educators and religious leaders committed to peace to embrace SRHS. The SRHS also values the contributions of other scholars. Hence, to respond to these challenges in dialogue, I borrow the tenets of the contact theory (Majid, 2013:715) to ensure peaceful interactions and reduced prejudice in religious dialogue.

The contact theory was proposed by Gordon Allport in 1954, who argued that “dialogue potentially can reduce prejudice when it is structured to incorporate one of ‘prejudice reduction’”. To achieve this, there are “four intertwining conditions that must exist during any interaction (e.g. dialogue) in order for the contact theory to produce positive effects (i.e. equal status, common goals, cooperative interactions and support from authorities)” (Majid, 2013:714). Commenting on Allport’s ideas, Everett (2013:1) states that he “proposed one of the most important social psychological events of the 20th century, suggesting that contact between members of different groups (under certain conditions) can work to reduce prejudice and intergroup conflict” (Everett, 2013:1). The value of contact theory is that it transforms “the manner in which the

group members label out-group members” (Chiappa *et al.*, 2005:95) and this case, followers of a different religion.

The point of departure for SHRS is “that all the religions involved in the dialogue must be moderate enough in their religious beliefs and practices and to always try to give space to other faiths as well” (Wani, Abdullah & Chang, 2015:646). Moderation, in this case, “does not mean that one should forsake their religion; rather it means one should be committed to his religious orientation but at the same time not let their religious practices be a problem for others who are not of the same faith” (Apel, 1990:16). This means that religious activities that do not seek the common good for other religious people should be condemned and discouraged in the public and curriculum space; however, this must be done in respectful and emancipative ways given that “research has shown that confrontational and shaming approaches are often futile or even counterproductive in addressing many harmful practices, particularly those that are based on cultural belief systems” (UNICEF, 2012:47). This is because SRHS is underpinned in CER and as such the purpose is not to dehumanise those that dehumanise others, but to find ways to transform oppressive practices so that those who are being oppressive may realise that dominance has never benefitted anyone in the long run, especially in a religious context.

To unpack the contact theory to enhance SRHS, I now focus on the four principles that inform dialogue. Pettigrew (1998:65) says “Allport specified four conditions for optimal intergroup contact: equal group status within the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation and authority support”. According to Schiappa, Gregg and Hewes (2005:94), if any of “these conditions are not met, prejudicial beliefs may increase (if the groups are in competition, for example) and any dissonance can be resolved without changing prejudicial attitudes”. The four principles are not put in order of sequence and some cases they can occur simultaneously.

Equal status

In this study and SRHS, all religions are viewed as equal. As such, terms such as major and minor are avoided since they create a hierarchy of religions which jeopardises any attempts to attain religious hybridity for peaceful co-existence. This also means that for various religious groups to support the RS curriculum, there is a need that RS depicts values of equality and fair representation both in principle and

also practice. Equal status also denotes that all religions who want a share in the curriculum should come forward and negotiate education terrain through peaceful means. Undoubtedly this will reduce the violence associated with the politics of religious identity and recognition. In short, equity is critical in allowing dialogue; moreover, religious leaders should be actively involved in religious hybridity so that their religion have a share in the curriculum.

Common goals

The common goal or the shared vision keeps dialogue in shape. In this case, the common vision of a dialogue with various religions to achieve religious hybridity is to enhance the teaching and learning of RS at secondary schools. The contact theory is of the view that “to win, inter-racial teams need each other to achieve their goal” (Pettigrew, 1998:67). The shared vision enables religious leaders to win together, which is desirable to achieve hybridity of religions. In response to this, the hybridity team operated with a common goal. This made the team the focus in generating relevant data that responds to the objectives of the study and kept our relationship in good shape throughout the process of generating the empirical data.

Group cooperation

To achieve the aims and the objectives of the study, the SRHS emphasised the need for cooperation of the religions that agreed to participate in this study to enhance curriculum relevance of RS in Zimbabwean schools. A group that cooperates despite differences is assured of winning together. In line with the principle of contact theory, the hybridity team sought cooperation or collaboration in all stages of research in line with PAR and CER, where values of respect, social justice, love and improvement of the human condition (Khaled, 2007:8) underpinned the intellectual journey of this research towards the formulation of a strategy. However, this does not mean there were no challenges in the process. In this cooperation, I support Muck’s (2011:191) view that “it is not only are learning about the other person’s deep filters but, in the process, are raising our own to consciousness” (Muck, 2011:191). In short, through cooperation, people understand each other better and this enhances chances of promoting peaceful religious existence.

Authority support

Dialogue among religion can be successful if religious leaders support the hybridity of religions. Without the support of the religious leaders, religion will continue to be a problematic phenomenon in society. In pursuit of this principle, I sought permission from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to conduct a research study. This helped me to be accepted by various religious groups that participated. The letter from the University of Free State endorsing my research helped to validate my research as a legitimate study which sought to contribute to the body of academic literature and also find ways in which the problems of RS in Zimbabwe could be solved. I approached various religious leaders and explained the thrust of the research. In support, the religious leaders delegated some people to be part and parcel of this research. Seeking authority was done in concurring with Pettigrew 1998:67) that authority support establishes norms of acceptance. Through my experience in this research, I come to conclude that when the authorities are approached through respect, love, recognition and clarity of purpose, the blessing to engage in a dialogue is granted. I noted that the authorities can always support research that is legitimate and attempts to solve life pathologies.

Apart from the dialogue of religion to achieve religious hybridity, the SRHS proposes the second step to this pillar that is an exploration of basics of religion.

6.6.1.2 Exploring of religious basic beliefs

The other step of SRHS is the desire that various religions explore fundamentals of religions which are different from theirs to fully understand the way of life expected in other religions, which will open avenues where people can easily relate to society. This step responds to the challenges (see 5.1.3) where the team noted that religion is a challenge due the fact that religious leaders lack knowledge of their own traditions and of the other. I note that religious illiteracy, especially on the religion of difference, opens possibilities of endless conflict in society; hence, the SRHS is of the view that “religious literacy opens new opportunities and skills for all” (Yusuf, 2013:226). It is the argument of SRHS that if the RS curriculum that does not make reference to religious basic beliefs deprives learners who become illiterate despite passing RS with flying colours and under these circumstances, conflicts and abuse associated with religious illiteracy

will continue to haunt society. Exploration of the fundamentals of religions is critical to any society which attempts to promote human rights. Hence; Bercovitch and Orellana (2008:177) are of the view that “religious values, rituals, traditions, texts and narratives may also be used to promote peace and co-existence, advocating human rights and democracy”.

SRHS’s approach to RS is housed in ensuring that learners gain adequate and critical academic background to facilitate objectively and scholarly to the religion (Haynes, 2008:6). The teaching of basic religious teachings ensures that learners have adequate and diverse religious knowledge. I argue that people often engage in religious conflict because they do have basic knowledge of beliefs, which enable them to identify points of similarities which can serve as an entry point for dialogue and peaceful existence. Furthermore, prejudice often happens because people have a lack of the basics of religions. This implies that a monothelic RS curriculum is irrelevant because it cultivates one religion over the other, producing learners that do not have a wide appreciation of local religions, including the African religion.

The teaching of religious basics “involves a multipronged approach: engaging with theologians on the understanding of religious practices as they apply to local norms, transforming leaders’ teaching and engaging parents and children at the grassroots on the basis of the practice so they can make knowledgeable choices for change” (UNICEF, 2012:48). Interrogating this step, I argue that, as stipulated by Court and Seymour (2015:523), the basics of religions “removes barriers created by fear of difference and sense of strangeness and this, in turn, may deepen our desire and our ability to interact on a human level, creating greater connection and enabling respect”. For this stage to be successful, there is a need for teachers to be abreast with trending religious thought so that learners from diverse backgrounds can glean from the knowledge of the teacher. In short, religious hybridity is possible when teachers and learners have a wide knowledge of the basics of religions.

The other step that promotes religious hybridity is the negotiation of religious terrain. I discuss the step in the following section.

6.6.1.3 Negotiating the religious terrain

Due the fact that religion has very sensitive issues and is personal, a degree of negotiation is important. The SRHS comes against the background of a monothelic RS; hence, achieving a hybridity of religions cannot happen overnight. It is important that religious groups that are deemed disadvantaged should through dialogue, mutual respect and love for other religions negotiate their entrance into the mainstream curriculum. The issue here is not displace one religion and replace it with another, but the thrust is that religions must co-exist in the curriculum through negotiation. Negotiation of religious terrain implies being conscious of “peace-promoting teachings, values, and practices which allow the hybridity dynamic to achieve the core of different traditions” (Nimer *et al.*, 2004:107). Through this step, there is a need for religious leaders to adopt moderate approaches when delivering their speeches” (Wani, Abdullah & Chang, 2015:650). While every religion is “normally perceived from their own religion to tend toward exclusiveness by claiming that their religion is the only true religion, offering the true revelation and the true way of salvation” (Rahman & Khambali, 2013:81), it is equally important that religious groups understand that people see things differently and as such RS is more effective and relevant when it can relate to various local religious orientations in society. The SRHS is of the view that a progressive and democratic approach to RS should be free from evangelism and confessionalism so that conflicts associated with religion superiority are reduced in society.

To effectively negotiate a peaceful religious terrain, there is a need for recognising that religion is “a highly political issue in many contexts, it is important that efforts to engage with religious communities are impartial and non-partisan. This is critical in situations where religious differences may be used to fuel conflict or competition for political power” (UNICEF, 2015:55). Negotiation of terrain is premised on the need for impartiality in religious dialogue, curriculum and recognition. This presents “unique opportunities to intervene in ongoing conflicts or to reduce the risk that violence will erupt” (Levine, 2009:5). In short, religions need to negotiate their existence in the curriculum. It is possible if there is a regulating body that allows religions to dialogue and reflect on religious issues in society. The religious hybridity in this strategy is achieved through religious dialogue, learning about religions’ basics and also

negotiating religious terrain through respectful ways that promote humanisation of all people despite their religious orientation.

6.6.2 Pillar B: Religious abuse and SRHS

The research has shown that there is abuse in the context of religion. This pillar responds to the challenge cited in 3.2.8 and 5.2.9. There are various reasons which have led to religious adherents to be abused, chiefly the lack of religious knowledge on how to respond to the threat of religious abuse. Also, religious abuse occurs because of the fallacy that religious authority cannot be questioned despite the atrocities which are perpetrated by religious leaders. The strategy is a response to a call by Bottoms *et al.* (1995:109) that “in the long run, society should find ways to protect children from religion-related abuse and help religion evolve in the direction of better treatment of children”. The strategy is of the view that relevant and socially responsive RS should help learners to create safer and more caring communities (Fawcett, Claassen, Thurman, Whitney & Cheng, 1996:1). This safety as propounded by the Mennonite Central Committee entails “both an emotional and physical issue” (Mennonite Central Committee, 2008:17). The SRHS believes that RS should be a starting point to ensure substantial religious knowledge that will help learners to challenge any form of abuse which may occur, especially abuse in the context of religion. In building on this pillar, I focus on the steps on how religious abuse can be eliminated.

6.6.2.1 Critical thought on religion

To deal with religious abuse, the RS must teach learners to be critical and think through religious issues before implementation. The current approach to RS requires learners to merely memorise Biblical stories. However, memorising religious narratives is not enough. RS should take a step further and help learners to think through issues of religion. This step builds on the principle of CER that requires people to eliminate false consciousness that religion cannot be critiqued (see 2.4.2). A critical thought to religion will help learners to interrogate, juxtapose and evaluate religious ceremonies, beliefs and practices in light of democracy, human rights and respect for humanity. The desire of the strategy is to strengthen individual (particularly the

learners) critical “knowledge and skills involves transferring information and skills to increase an individual’s capacity for preventing sexual abuse and exploitation” (Lyles *et al.*, 2009:14) by some religious leaders. This critical approach to religious practices will enable learners to resist any form of religious practice that seeks to harm them or other members of society. The thrust through the strategy is that RS should not produce learners that follow blindly, who are tossed about by abusive leaders. Learners should use what they learn in RS to confront abusive identities. The step is desirable against the background of Damiani’s (2002:43) view that “the impact of an abusive or cultic church ... often is devastating. It will destroy any individual personality and replace the void with a cultic persona that no longer questions, thinks critically, or feels”. RS cannot remain a rote-learning subject, which is divorced from the lived realities of the learners such as religious abuse. SRHS demands that RS should help learners to be critical and interrogative in all religious engagement.

6.6.2.2 Religious abuse oriented curriculum

Apart from critical thinking, the second step to this pillar is that RS should begin to include topics that deal with religious abuse. That is, religious abuse should be part and parcel of RS. This entails that RS should include topics such human rights, freedom of worship, abuse and religious tolerance among many other related topics. It is essential that learners, through the critical thinking of religion, acquire skills and strategies to survive religious abuse. This will help learners to be conscious of human rights through religion and as a result, will mitigate the problem. There is increasing damage in society because of religious abuse and more often the sufferers may come to believe that the abuse is parentally and transcendentally authorised or required or is a castigation for their wrongdoings (Bottom *et al.*, 1995:107), which according to the principles of CER, is a false consciousness (see 2.4.2). Effective RS “not only alerts individuals to new information, but also helps build a critical mass of support for safer behaviour, norms, and policies” (Lyles, Cohen & Brown, 2009:13). Through this step of the SRHS, I argue that RS can go a long way towards helping learners and society to escape religious epistemologies which are abusive.

A religious abuse oriented curriculum is a culturally responsive curriculum that insists that religious abuse must be “challenged and addressed immediately through early-

response, pre-crisis engagement, and preventive diplomacy” (Hayward, 2010:6). This calls for a curriculum that continually exposes the effects of religious abuse so that learners can be cautious on how they relate to abuse in their daily lives. Undoubtedly, the community will benefit and emancipate learners (see 2.4.5) through RS and ultimately help to improve human conditions (see 2.4.1).

6.6.2.3 Collaboration of religious leaders, community and government

The problem of religious abuse cannot remain the sole responsibility of the teachers and learners. The collaboration of the teachers, learners, religious leaders and the government goes a long way towards solving this social pathology. This is essential to create a safe society for all religious and non-religious followers in society. The collaboration is anchored on the “values that serve as a reminder to the commitment to the partnership” (O’Neill, Gabel, Huckins & Harder, 2010:401) in a deal with religious abuse. Collaboration is valuable foregrounded by the view that, as averred by McClure (2013:3), “many abuse victims remain in abusive situations, however, due to a lack of support, and consequently acquiring feelings of helplessness”. It is always unfortunate that “victims of spiritual abuse may continue to support the abusive leader because of their naïveté or loyalty to the leader” (McClure, 2014:3). The collaboration of various stakeholders forms a support base which will help the victims of religious abuse to regain their lost humanity. Furthermore, learners are assured that the struggle against religious abuse is not the role of the teachers only but for all other members of society. Through this, society will enjoy the benefits of religion underpinned in the values of human rights and social justice.

The following section focuses on the third pillar of the SRHS, which is the promotion of IKS in the RS curriculum.

6.6.3 Pillar C: Preservation of IKS and SRHS

To achieve a religiously and culturally relevant curriculum in Zimbabwean secondary schools, it is desirable that IKS be part and parcel of the teaching and learning process, not as a way to pacify the emerging voices of cultural renaissance but as a total commitment to protect local epistemologies that are contextually relevant to address local pathologies. The preservation of IKS, as shown by the World Bank (1998:7), “can

enrich the global community and contribute to promoting the cultural dimension of development”. It is common knowledge that Africa is very rich in IKS; however, there are debates on the promotion and development of existing IKS (Msuya, 2007:345). Lwoga, Ngulube and Stilwell (2010:34) argue that IKS is at “risk of becoming extinct if appropriate measures are not taken to manage it to assume its accessibility to future generations”.

I propose this step based on the view that not much documented research has been conducted on IKS. It is, therefore, difficult to determine how best IKS can be part of the educational curriculum to ensure a formal transmission from one generation to the next (Msuya, 2007:347). In this regard, the SRHS seeks to ensure that IKS “needs to be acknowledged, validated, reinforced, disseminated, innovated upon and preserved through practice” (Ranganathan, 2007:3). The research acknowledges that there is no single solution to IK management because the specific knowledge and needs will vary in different communities (Stevens, 2008:28). The SRHS is justified in line with the observation made by Akinwale (2012:2) that “Africans are presently behind the rest of the world in terms of ability to develop indigenous potentials for effective management of natural resources”. There is “therefore, an urgent need to bridge the knowledge gap to intensify the preservation and propagation of indigenous knowledge for natural resources management in Africa” (Akinwale, 2012:2). The “failure to provide such a framework would erode the grounding in one’s own knowledge system and deepen the dependence on an alien one” (Ranganathan, 2007:3). To preserve IKS in this strategy, I propose three steps which are discussed in the following section.

6.6.3.1 Documentation of IKS

The documentation of IKS is indispensable so that local people can entertain chances of benefiting in trusted and treasured knowledge which has sustained the local community. This documentation has to progress from hard copies only to electronic media. Modern learners have developed an interest in the use of technology. Hence, documentation of IKS must be advanced technologically so that learners can access IKS through the internet. Documentation through ICT comes against the backdrop that “traditional knowledge is/was preserved through oral tradition and more often than not, it emerges gradually rather than in distinct increments” (Gorjestani, 2000:6). The need

for documentation of IKS comes against the view that IKS owners easily, as shown by Ocholla (2002:4), “lose moral and material ownership of their intellectual property or capital, which is relegated to third parties – explicit knowledge thrives because of its visibility, access and use”. In the same vein, Owing and Mehta (2014:234) note that the “challenge[s] facing oral cultures are the disappearance of traditional knowledge and skills due to memory loss or death of elders and deliberate or inadvertent destruction of IKS”. I am also cognisant that this is a gigantic project that needs various stakeholders to buy into the idea, but if local people are serious about the renaissance of IKS, this is one of the avenues that can be followed.

The strategy believes that collaboration of teachers and libraries and information professionals will assist indigenous communities and learners “with the management and preservation of traditional knowledge through providing resources and expertise in the collection, organisation, storage and retrieval” (Stevens, 2008:25). This “partnership could provide financial support to local IKS centres for research and documentation, for the establishment of Internet connectivity between the local centres as well as for more traditional dissemination tools to facilitate the exchange of IKS practices across communities” (World Bank, 1998:iii). This will eliminate the challenge of the lack of textbooks. The other important aspect is that learners will have the opportunity to interact with IKS through the use of technology. This is possible; if other subjects like history, mathematics and English can have their material accessed online, then it follows that the same can be done with IKS,

Moreover, the digitisation of IKS will provide an impetus for “innovation in the preservation and propagation of indigenous knowledge, which can be used to promote effective management of natural resources” (Akinwale, 2012:3). Digitisation of African indigenous knowledge has become increasingly necessary to prevent the erosion of authentic African heritage. Such digitisation can be used to promote effective management of natural resources in Africa and elsewhere. In this way, the crisis of climate change can be confronted, particularly through the use of orthodox or alternative remedies (Akinwale, 2012:4). The argument that I make here is that the challenge of RS textbooks that focus on IKS can be managed through reconsidering new forms of electronic documentation.

In doing this, I acknowledge that “it is difficult to record, transfer, and disseminate IKS based on the view that some indigenous people are reluctant to share their knowledge. No adequate intellectual property rights are in place. And indigenous knowledge is often regarded as pseudoscience or anti-science” (Olaide & Omelere, 2012:92). But the few that are willing to record and transfer IKS will serve as a starting point for the further growth of IKS in RS and consequently in ICT. The challenge at hand that must be addressed as a matter of urgency is the “lack of skilled librarians, especially those with the knowledge and willingness to incorporate oral culture in collections and services to rural communities, creates knowledge gaps and further limits the reach of library services in rural Africa” (Owiny *et al.*, 2014:237). To respond to this challenge, I am of the view that the government has an obligation to incentivise people who are keen to facilitate the recording of IKS. There are many people that have the potential, which must be exploited to improve IKS, thus, incentives will go a long way to encourage people to come forward and address the challenge of the lack of skilled people.

Hence, I argue that SRHS in relation to IKS requires “libraries to be proactive and implement community engagement programmes that promote synergies between the young and the old through intergenerational dialogue” (Chisita, 2011:5). I sum up this section along the lines of Abioye, Zaid and Egberongbe (2011:9) that there is an urgency of its documentation in Africa where its appreciation lies with oral nature of the older generation, which when undocumented IKS perishes with the demise of the older generation.

6.6.3.2 Recognition of IKS by the examination system

This step comes against the challenges cited by the hybridity team on IKS (see 5.1.7). It “should not be forgotten that indigenous knowledge is a very sensitive issue, related with cultural identity and ethnicity of this stakeholders. It reflects dignity and identity of the local community” (Gupta, 2011:61). Therefore, its presence in RS curriculum should be treated with respect, particular to examiners who often allocate low scores on IKS in the national examination. The survival of IKS is “hinged on how educationist values it in the examination system. So unless and until the examination begins to award IKS an equal share in the examination, IKS will remain an optional component

which a student can or cannot answer depending on one's interest" (Dube *et al.*, 2015:80). As been noted in the empirical data generation, the examination system in Zimbabwe does not value IKS (see 5.2.7). The critical question is how can IKS survive if our own examiners do not value it. Here there is no colonisation to blame, but rather local people, in this case, the examiners and item writers who do not value IKS. In light of this, the strategy proposes increased IKS mark allocation. As such learners and teachers will begin to value local knowledge.

6.6.3.3 Policy network support

The policy's network support requires collaboration between religious leaders, cultural leaders, government officials, community and educational authorities to promote IKS through the RS curriculum. The support of "local and regional networks of traditional practitioners and community exchanges can help to disseminate useful and relevant IK and to enable communities to participate more actively in the development process" (Gorjestani, 2000:7). IKS "should be incorporated into national policy and development documents where issues bordering on the use, preservation, and distribution need to be clearly stated" (Olaide & Omelere, 2012:94). While the desire to preserve IKS through digitalisation is valid, the "pressing problems against digitisation of African indigenous knowledge include inadequate funding, lack of technical know-how, and inadequate infrastructure. Therefore, there is a need to promote the integration of science and society" (Akinwale, 2012:16). A policy network of various religious and educational stakeholders will ensure that there is funding, technical expertise and resource mobilisation to promote IKS. In the same spirit of policy networking, Jaya (2006:6) says "universities and other institutions of higher learning should raise awareness of the value and importance of community-based practices in enriching the IK development process through participation in a share a common vision". In short, support is essential to promote IKS successfully.

6.6.4 Pillar D: Teacher capacitation and SRHS

To achieve the essence of SRHS, teacher education in Zimbabwe in relation to the study of religion needs to be enhanced. The strategy seeks to bridge the gap of the lack of qualification in the teaching of RS. The intention is not to replace teachers who

have worked tirelessly to ensure the continued study of religion in schools, but to emancipate them in the process of teaching and learning of RS. To enhance teacher capacitation, the strategy suggests that teacher education in RS can be improved through three steps, that is, cultural technicians (CT), RS workshops and continued study in the area of religion. Once this has been achieved, teachers are likely to handle religion from a hybridity perspective, reducing religious abuse and teaching IKS effectively. This implies that the teachers will have been emancipated (see 2.4.5).

6.6.4.1 Use of cultural and religious technicians

This principle of using cultural and religious technicians implies that teachers should collaborate with various experts in culture and religion who could join the mainstream curriculum practices as experts who help teachers to achieve their teaching and learning objectives. The CTs have the “ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality” (Byram *et al.*, 2002:10). In this regard, they become partners with teachers and engage in a journey where the teacher acknowledges the expertise of other people to teach concepts which are problematic to teachers and learners. Teachers do not need to be the sole or major source of information especially for issues with which they are not conversant (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002:10). The CT in this particular research study is defined as a “person who can help learners see relationships between their own and other cultures, can help teachers and learners to acquire interest in and curiosity about 'otherness', and an awareness of themselves and their own cultures seen from other people's perspectives” (Byram *et al.*, 2002:10). The teacher is confronted by knowledge related to globalisation, cultures, language, global issues, religion and cultural self-awareness (Jing, 2013:112). It is therefore critical to teach the learners holistically, but is not possible without collaboration with the experts who can bridge the gap in problematic issues of RS. The SRHS argues that teachers should not be ashamed to engage knowledgeable people to help them teach religion. In fact, when teachers and the CTs collaborate, the learners are assured of comprehensive and multiple perspectives of religious knowledge.

6.6.4.2 RS workshops

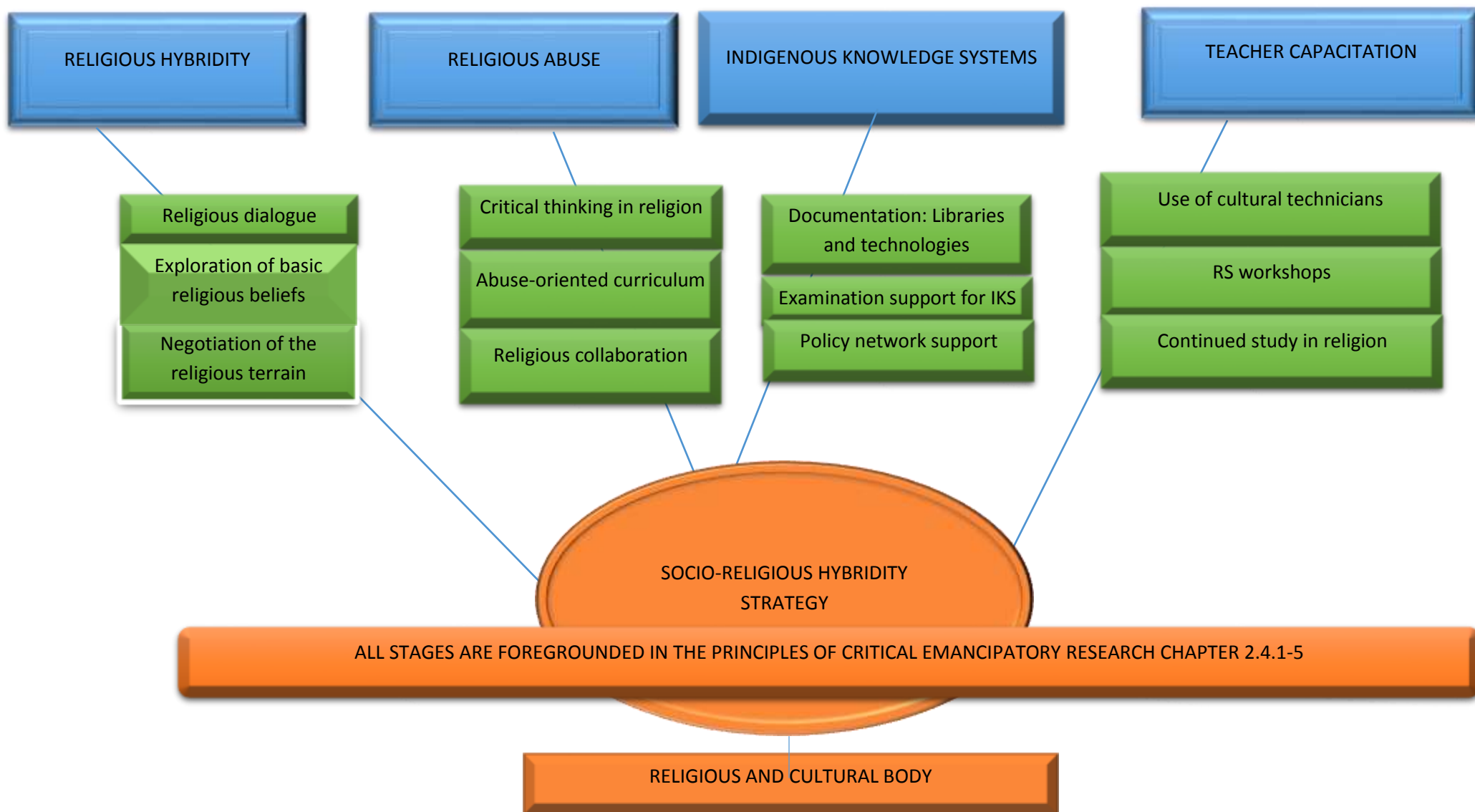
To address the shortage of RS teachers, the strategy also proposes occasional workshops to improve the teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwe towards a curriculum that responds to the learners' lived realities. The workshops would sensitise teachers about issues of religious hybridity, religious abuse and IKS. Such workshops could also include learning about the fundamentals of various local religions. This will emancipate teachers to deal with a wide range of questions that may arise in the classroom. Through these workshops, teaching practices are likely to result in high-quality professional development (Harwell, 2011:2). High-quality professional development can mitigate the challenges that teachers have in RS. Workshops give teachers an opportunity to learn new classroom practices and are far more effective than more traditional methods of professional development (Harwell, 2001:7). Because teachers are very important to the success of SRHS, it is paramount that teachers update their knowledge and skills to deal with change in religious context, where the move is toward religious hybridity (Anderson, 2001:1).

6.6.4.3 Continued study in RS

The workshops can play a certain part in the development of the RS teachers, but cannot fully address the diversity which is in RS. The strategy proposes that teachers should engage in further studies in the area of RS. There are different universities in Zimbabwe that have focused on the study of religion, thus teachers should enrol and study. This will improve the way in which teachers handle religious problems in a multicultural society. Furthermore, continued learning in RS exposes teachers to various strategies for dealing with the problem of religion in society. Hence, teachers become part of the solution rather than the perpetrators of the problem. A deeper study of religion is important because of the global atrocities currently taking place in the name of religion; "there is never been a time when the understanding of religions has been more important and never has there been a greater need for such knowledge and critical inquiry to advise public debate which so often lacks informed perspectives" (Flood, 2012:1). It is therefore desirable that those who love to teach religion and wish to see religion champion social justice, improve the human condition and emancipate learners and society should engage in further studies in the area of education.

6.6.5 Creation of a religious hybridity and cultural body

The desire and need for a religious hybridity body stems from the British approach to the teaching and learning of RS, where various religious and cultural groups have come together and oversee the teaching and learning of RS. Such a group should include curriculum and religious experts who are oriented towards human rights, inclusion and social justice and committed to sustainable social transformation through religious pedagogies. Through this religious and cultural hybridity body, religious groups work across their differences to seek to build a place of flourishing towards the encounter of the power of God (Court & Seymour, 2015:531). I therefore argue that religious groups, local leaders and educationists should formulate a body that oversees the affairs of RS in the curriculum.



6.7 Indicators of success of the strategy

In this section, the focus is on the indicators of success when SRHS is used or implemented in the teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwean schools. Most “implementation strategies have been limited to paper-based manuals that focus on describing interventions without providing complementary information on necessary implementation resources and activities” (Mertz, Blasé & Bowie, 2007:1). Once the above steps have been taken in SRS, there are indicators that serve to show that the strategy has successfully implemented towards responding to the problems of RS in Zimbabwe. Successful indicators for this strategy are categorised in three levels: at the practice, organisational and systems level (Mertz, 2007:2). In the following section, I focus on indicators of success at a practical level.

6.7.1 Practical level

The success at this level is self-evident in communities where individuals participate in various religious hybridity activities that are locally available as a way to prove religious social transformation. This would be evident through a change of personal behaviour, which exhibits love for other religious followers, values human rights and seeks to improve human conditions (see 2.4.1).

6.7.1.1 Active participation in hybridity

Active participation in the hybridity of religion will be an indicator of success for the strategy. As Diehl (2005:2) states, “intercultural interaction, cooperation and encounter each other in a variety of roles, positions and functions”. Followers of one religion will acknowledge the validity of other religions. Furthermore, the RS will be oriented towards multiple religions, where teachers are able to handle all religious issues to meet the needs of the learners. This will certainly lead to religious understanding and participation, expanding the opportunities for reducing prejudice amongst the religious followers (Majid, 2013:710). Active participation also entails the willingness of people to learn about the

religion of the other, respect other people's beliefs and also moderate one's beliefs in light of social justice (see 2.4.4) and the common welfare of citizens. This will enrich religious discourses and consequently reduce religion-related conflict (Horell, 2014:434).

6.7.1.2 Oppressed willing to confront their identities

The other indicator of success for the strategy is the willingness or the courage of religious followers to confront oppressive identities. When religiously oppressed people can speak out and refute abuse, domination and relegation to the periphery, then the strategy will be a success in the teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwean secondary schools. While confrontation may be desirable, it should be done in a peaceful and respectful way and in good faith. The strategy can be deemed successful when the oppressed can seek space through peaceful means. The strategy is opposed to violence as a means in the struggle for the politics of identity and recognition, as seen through the lens of CER, which states that any approach to recognition and identity should be premised on improving human conditions (see 2.4.1). At the schools, in particular, RS has a crucial role to ensure that learners acquire a critical mind to interrogate life issues and confront the oppressive structures of society. Furthermore, the role of the school is not simply to make students accumulate knowledge, but rather mould them into well-cultured citizens (Jebungei, 2013:277) who have an appreciation of human rights through confronting oppressive identities for the common good of everyone in society. The oppressed need to comprehend that oppression is a serious societal pathology for all members of society to overcome, where those affected must play an active role in their liberation to attain a society where there is equal representation (McDonald, keys & Balcazar, 2007:160).

I argue this indicator of success along the lines of Freire (1970:46) that the "fear of freedom which afflicts the oppressed, a fear which may equally well lead them to desire the role of oppressor or bind them to the role of oppressed, should be examined" (Freire, 1970:46). It should not be a means to attack the oppressor, but an attempt to find new and stable ways of restoring human dignity that has been destroyed by oppression. The culture of domination is always culturally confronted through action in depth. In short,

when religious adherents who are oppressed engage in meaningful resistance towards religious hegemony through peaceful means, then the strategy is deemed successful.

6.7.1.3 Willingness by religious groups to combat abuse

When people become cognisant of religious abuse, its effects and the need to fight it, then the strategy is a success. Its success will be determined by religious followers' commitment to the "promotion of the human good, provide basic human needs, guarantee protection of human rights and promote the integral development of the globe" (Ogbonnaya, 2012:2). The success of the strategy is evident when the RS curriculum begins to address abuse pointedly and religious stakeholders unite to end the challenge of oppressive religious followers who seek to destroy life, in contrast to the values of religion, which seeks to preserve life. In addition, the strategy is successful when learners and the general members of the community are able to critically examine religious practices in line with human rights, interrogate religious teaching and challenge those that seek to dehumanise and oppress people.

6.7.2 Organisational level

This level as an indicator of success is where various religious groups endorse various activities where there is unity in the diversity of religion in society. This becomes evident when religious groups portray a changed mindset on how they treat religious groups that differ from theirs. This treatment includes respect, love and tolerance. Religious followers "have a challenge of envisioning a new way of relating to the religious other where we seek to understand each other more deeply" (Holbrook, 2015:484). At the organisational level, there is no need for religious officials who are hypocritical, judgmental and out of sync with shifting attitudes (Scott, 2014:478) towards religions which are different from what is practised in the mainstream religious space. The success of the strategy lies in the support from "religious leaders, political leaders, think-tanks, and academic institutions to play an important role to transform and reconcile religious conflicts if they work with integrity and genuinely believe that human blood is very costly" (Wani, Abdullah & Chang, 2015:650). In short, this level entails a change at the leadership level.

6.7.2.1 Improved IKS teaching in RS

Another indicator of success for this strategy at an organisational level is the renaissance and rebirth of the IKS in the Zimbabwean schools. This will be seen by an increased mark location and also training of teachers in regard to the teaching and learning of RS. Furthermore, the syllabus will be articulate on what exactly and the extent of IKS to be taught in RS. Through this, IKS through SRHS will be on the road to recovery. This indicator does not mean neglect of epistemologies that are not local, but there should be understanding that other forms of knowledge exist in the curriculum, not to displace IKS but to complement for the improvements of human conditions (see 2.4.1). The CPoZ (2007:6) confirms this by noting that “culture and IKS must be seen as integral to development and since development, and since development cannot take place without the full support and participation of the people, it is essential that all Zimbabweans participate actively in the creation and promotion of a culture that is responsive to their needs and aspirations”. This calls for practical intervention by various religious and educationists. In support of this, Mazonde (2007:23) argues that educational “changes in the late colonial and postcolonial period cannot be properly understood except in the context of winds that have been blowing over Africa”. The wind of change must not only be in policy but also in praxis cutting across the secondary school curriculum with the purpose of equipping pupils into re-unity with their lost cultural practices.

6.7.2.2 Willingness embrace politics of difference

Religious leaders, as an indicator of success, accept other religion as equally viable to be included in the curriculum different and allow co-existence (Diehli, 2005:12). Furthermore, the success is when all religions are malleable (Woever, 2007:215) to conditions that promote co-existence of religions. To “build a nonviolent organisation and to shape a society of just peace, leaders and communities need to embody and teach empathic listening in every aspect of their community life” (Moore, 2015:443). Once religious leaders begin to accept that other religion are valid to be part and parcel of the curriculum despite irreconcilable differences. This does not entail conversion to another religion, but

it means the appreciation that people have different ideas from other and they should be respected. As such no violence should be used to ensure that others are converted to religious ideologies.

6.7.3 System level

This stage involves support from the government and in particular the educational authorities to allow space for different religions and culture in the mainstream curriculum practices in Zimbabwe. This is evident when the educationists endorse policies which are inclusive and accept diversity.

6.7.3.1 Support from the government

The hybridity of religions in society cannot be successfully implemented as long there is not government support though recognising the existence of various religions and also bringing them to curriculum space. The government that understands principles of democracy, social inclusion and recognition of minority will not find it difficult to accord space of various religion into the curriculum space. In essence, the government of the day has a lot to play towards ensuring that its populace has a fair representation in all quarters of society which includes religious issues. More so, “governments should abstain from any preference for a particular worldview or religion, but should guarantee the political constellation in which religious/worldview citizenship education can flourish at the benefit of all children and young people” (Miedema, 2014:365). In light of this, Yasof and Majid (2013:49) is the view that the “government’s support is also needed since the government is capable of providing facilities for inter-religious dialogue and promoting the benefits of dialogue through various channels open doors for community experts”.

Furthermore, the government can create (through financial resources and political muscle) religious identities which can interact with the socio-cultural and political setting and consequently contribute towards the emphasis on the same identity levels (Harpviken & Roislien, 2005:9) to handle religious problematic aspects in society such as in curriculum. Furthermore, government “need to find ways of forging national unity amid

ethnic and religious diversity, while individuals must be prepared to shed rigid identities if they are to become part of diverse societies” (Preis & Russell, 2008:15)in short the indicator of success here is when the government and educationists support hybridity of religions in the curriculum.

6.7.3.2 RS teachers capacitation

Another indicator of success is when the government begin to commit its self to the training of RS teachers. This ensures that teachers manning RS classes are adequately prepared to meet the challenge for all students that “possess skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary to enhance the ability to undertake the gigantic responsibility of creating classroom environment appropriate for achieving excellence and equality of learning for all children” (Phuntsog, 1999:99). As indicated in the empirical data generating, teachers have challenges in the teaching and learning of RS, thus, SRHS proposed various ways to resolve the issue. As a result, the success of the strategy will be measured when teachers are able to address the multiidentities of the learners including the effective teaching of IKS.

6.8 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, I focused on the discussions of the findings from the empirical data. I also formulated a strategy that responds the problems of RS in Zimbabwean schools. I also showed the indicators which can be used as a yardstick for success. In the Chapter 7, I conclude this journey by summing all the chapters, giving the recommendations for further studies in the area of RS and also the final word in this thesis.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION OF CHAPTERS, RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDIES AND FINAL WORD

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I summarise what has been done in this study. I begin with an overview of what has been discussed in each chapter. The chapter outlines possible areas for future researchers such as, theologians and educationists to either enhance SRHS, or come up with better solutions to religious problems which might not have been adequately addressed by SRHS in this research. As I close this chapter, I give my final word on this research study.

7.2 Summary of chapters

7.2.1 Chapter 1: Introduction to the thesis

In Chapter 1, I introduced the study to my readers, outlining the aim of the study, namely to design a strategy that would respond to the problems of RS in Zimbabwean schools. I stated the objectives of the study and the research questions. The background of the teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwean schools was described. I pointed out that the problems of RS were primarily embedded in the colonial legacy and the failure by postcolonial governments to decolonise curriculum packages to suit a multireligious and multicultural society. The contribution of the study in academia and the social space was proposed. In this chapter I also introduced readers to critical emancipatory research (CER), participatory action research (PAR) and critical discourse analysis. The delimitation of the study was discussed.

7.2.2 Chapter 2: Theoretical framework: critical emancipatory research

In Chapter 2, I focused on the rise of CER from the critical theory of the Frankfurt School of 1923. The Frankfurt School sought to discover “how to make sense of the world, and of our consciousness of the world and our being-in-the-world, and of our capacity for

subjectivity and agency, set against a background of enormous political forces and structures” (Farrands & Worth, 2005:49). I traced the development of CER from as early as Gruenberg to the later works of scholars such as Habermas, Honneth and Foucault. The chapter described how religion was viewed in different historical periods of the Frankfurt School. Through analysing the developments of CER, I came up with five working principles that guided my study: the improvement of human conditions, elimination of false consciousness, sustainable social transformation, social justice and emancipation (see 2.4.1-5). CER was chosen to foreground this work because it “looks at, exposes, and questions hegemony, traditional power assumptions held about relationships, groups, communities, societies, and organisations to promote social change” (Given, 2008:140). Social change is desirable in relation to RS, to align it with democratic values such as social justice, equity and recognition.

I discussed the transformative paradigm (TP), largely because CER is part of this paradigm. In discussing TP, the focus was on its axiology, ontology, epistemology and methodology. The value of TP is that it emphasises the “deliberate inclusiveness of groups that have historically experienced oppression and discrimination on the basis of gender, culture, economic levels, ethnicities/races, and sexual orientation, and disabilities, and in a conscious effort to build a link between the results of the research and social action” (Mertens, 2004:2). Applied to this study, the focus was on religious groups that had been curriculum-marginalised, so that they might be brought into the learning space in line with democratic tendencies and a respect for humanity. I reflected on the use of CER as a framework and highlighted how coresearchers were treated in the light of CER. The value of PAR in the relationship between the researcher and coresearchers, as stipulated by Baden and Major (2010:53), is that “relationship is negotiated to deconstruct power, achieve and maintain trust, promote equality and ensure reciprocity”. The weakness of CER in research is that it “often labels participants as belonging to a particular marginalised group; therefore, homogeneous notions of identity are superimposed” (Scotland, 2012:14). Hence, the framework did not seem to provide space for people who were socially advantaged. CER’s focus is always on the marginalised members of the community. Finally, I discussed the operational terms underpinning this study. These operational terms included hybridity, socio-religious and

religious studies. The terms were defined from a dictionary perspective, the literature and encyclopaedias, in addition to my personal understanding and how I wished the readers to conceptualise the terms.

7.2.3 Chapter 3: Review of related literature

In Chapter 3, the focus was on reviewing related literature on the teaching and learning of RS. The chapter attempted to respond to the objectives of the study. In the first section I therefore focused on the challenges of RS. One of the challenges noted was religious exclusivism in the RS curriculum. The challenge of religious exclusion is based on the “claim that other religions have of possessing knowledge of the absolute truth concerning matters of morality and perceive dissenting perspectives as threats to eternal salvation” (Powell & Clarke, 2012:15), perceived as not available in other religions. Hence the justification for religious exclusion. The review of related literature examined different proposed solutions, including the best practices in other countries to respond to the problems of RS and religion in general. I focused in countries such as Nigeria, Taiwan and Malawi among many others. I also focused on the life theme approach and phenomenological approach, formerly used in Zimbabwe and since abandoned in favour of the multifaith approach. Because the multifaith approach has its own share of problems, I was challenged to develop an alternative strategy to respond to the problems of RS in Zimbabwean schools.

The third objective of the study focused on the conditions necessary for the successful implementation of SRHS. One of the conditions noted was the need for emancipation of RS teachers, based on the view that “teaching religion in public schools is a sensitive topic, therefore, teachers need to have more practice and preparation for RS lessons” (Webb, 2014:139). The related literature also addressed the anticipated threats in response to the fourth objective of the study. Fear was one of the threats to religious hybridity. The fear emanated from the fact that some religious followers “denigrate people of the other religions as being faithless, unreliable, and even malicious while at the same time overemphasizing their own religion as the one and only true belief system, deeply religious, absolutely sincere, and entirely trustworthy” (Basedau *et al.*, 2013:869). Without

doubt, this becomes a threat that jeopardises the noble and desirable idea of religious unity. The literature further focused on anticipated successes associated with implementation of SRHS in the teaching and learning RS. One of the noted successes of the strategy was the renaissance of IKS in the curriculum. Related to IKS, the strategy promotes ubuntu, which is a “powerful human centred philosophy that calls for an empathic communication in seeking solutions to problems” (Chasi & Omarjee, 2014:232).

7.2.4 Chapter 4: Participatory action research

Chapter 4 focused on the approach used to generate data, namely PAR. The discussion was divided into two major categories, namely the theorisation of PAR, its origins and importance as a research approach, how it is viewed as a social process, and emancipation as practical, collaborative, reflexive and evaluation. PAR was chosen for this work largely because of its “emancipatory [effects] and empowerment of the members who have been pushed to the periphery of the society” (Eruera, 2010:1). Given this, PAR complements CER in its emancipatory endeavours. The second section focused on how the data was generated through the collaboration of the hybridity team and the researcher. Furthermore, in Chapter 4, I focused on critical discourse analysis (CDA). This chapter indicated how the generated data was analysed through the three legs of CDA, which are textual level analysis, discursive level analysis and social practice level analysis. This technique of analysis was chosen because, according to Dijk (2001:352), it is “a type [of] discourse analytical research that focuses on issues of social abuse, dominance, and inequality [that] are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political milieu”. Interrogating this, CDA complements the efforts of CER and PAR to improve the lives of disadvantaged members of the community.

7.2.5 Chapter 5: Data presentation, analysis and interpretation of results

The chapter focused on presentation, analysis and interpretation of data by research. The data presented in the chapter responded to the objectives of the study and ultimately towards the fulfilment of the promise, which is to design a strategy that responds to the problems of RS. Data presented was analysed through the use of CDA and in particular

through the three legs of CDA. Given the discussions with the hybridity team I came to different conclusions on the teaching and learning of RS. The data presented and analysed contributed significant to the formulation of SRHS.

7.2.6 Chapter 6: Findings and socio-religious hybridity strategy

In Chapter 6 I summarised the various findings of the hybridity team. A key finding was that it is important that the local religions should formulate a religious body that will oversee the teaching and learning of RS. The hybridity team further found that it was critical to implement measures to curb religious abuse, which has become a social pathology that in some cases has overshadowed the beauty of religion and God in society. I subsequently formulated the SRHS, taking into consideration the findings of the team, the review of related literature, best practices of teaching and learning RS and my own input. The strategy rests on four pillars that are central to the problem of teaching and learning RS in Zimbabwean schools. The pillars are religious hybridity, religious abuse, IKS and teacher capacitation. Various steps for successful implementation of the strategy have been highlighted.

7.3 Limitations of this study

Just like any other research, this study has certain limitations. I trust other researchers will exploit these weaknesses to improve the study of religion in secondary schools and in society. One of the limitations of this study is the fact that religion is a personal phenomenon. Hence, persuading people to be moderate with their religious views to accommodate other people is a gigantic task. The weakness here is that the strategy does not address people who are so extreme in their beliefs that accommodating other religions is forbidden. This is because some religious leaders and followers caricature and trivialise the religious beliefs and practices of our fellow citizens, especially if they happen to be from a religious, racial, or ethnic community that is different from their own (Garelle, 2002:52). The study assumed that people generally could moderate their views on religious issues. It failed to take into account those who are extremists in their religious approach.

The other limitation of the study is that the perception might arise that the hybridity team is against the Christian religion that has been anchoring the RS curriculum in Zimbabwe over the years. This perception may be particularly evident at the schools that were designed to promote the Christian religion. The research may be seen as a direct challenge of Christian faith, which was not the intention. The weakness lies in the fact that people fail to understand that the strategy is equally applicable in countries where Islam, Hinduism or any other religion is dominant. The research study emphasised that RS as a subject should limit its role and space to pedagogy; that is, RS should not be used for proselytising but should be used to help learners to acquire a comprehensive understanding of RS and furthermore use various religious orientations to solve the social pathologies that confront societies.

7.4 Recommendations for future work

In this section, I highlight various areas of research which other scholars should explore in order to improve the teaching and learning of RS.

I recommend future studies to focus on the issue of religious extremism, especially how to help learners who hold extremist religious views, regarding learning about other religions as a violation of their religion. I believe a study on this area could come up with different strategies that can be used to help extremists to moderate their views. I believe that the problems associated with extremism in religions, such as terrorism, will then be reduced in society.

I recommend that future studies focus on the influence of teachings on RS in churches, synagogues or mosques, especially those that focus on hate, exclusion, and even elimination of other religions from society. This is important, because learners bring hatred and other mindsets into the learning environment. I believe an assessment of religious institutions will help teachers to help learners to moderate their beliefs in the light of social justice, equity and respect for humanity.

Another area that future researchers can focus on is the question of religious abuse and what can be done to help victims of religious abuse. The focus in this study was only on

ways in which learners could avoid religious abuse. It did not address remedies for those that have been abused or whose rights have been violated in the name of religion. I think it is critical to focus on this, because human rights are viewed by Pretorius (2012:2) as the instrument through which a truly peaceful co-existence can be ensured among human beings. I suggest that future studies could find different ways of helping victims from a religious or medical point of view, and also from a counselling perspective. Victims of religious abuse often feel degraded, lose self-esteem and acquire a false consciousness that God has caused their suffering. Hence, future studies should focus on how this false consciousness can be eliminated (see 2.4.2).

7.5 Summary of the chapter

Chapter 7 concludes this thesis. I summed up the contents of each chapter by highlighting selected issues. I also pointed out the weaknesses of the study, which other scholars could exploit to find research space and moreover improve the teaching and learning of RS in Zimbabwean schools and elsewhere. I also recommended various areas that future studies can focus on. In the following section, I say my final word as a reflection of this journey and how this research transformed me to relate with respect and love for religions that are different from mine.

7.6 The final word

The study has been one of the humbling and educative experiences in my life, in particular because I was dealing with religious issues that are sensitive and personal, as well as pedagogical. The journey opened new possibilities in my life in relation to the hybridity of religion. The love, understanding and interaction that I had with various religious leaders was fulfilling and rewarding in the area of teaching and learning. Through the journey it became very clear that unity or collaboration of religions is feasible as long the relationships or interactions are underpinned with the values of respect for humanity, love and humility. I discovered that if people felt respected and loved, they could relate with you, despite the tired generalisation that religions cannot have a dialogue in society. Mutual understanding of religious, cultural and ethnic bonds can hold communities

together, while differences along the same lines often lead to calls for national independence, complicate nation-building and confront inter-communal peacekeeping (Marsh, 2007:811). With this in mind, I argue that religious people could make this world a better place if they related with each other in love, respect for humanity and humility. Similarly, it is important that the culture of respect for humanity be cultivated through the RS curriculum. Consequently, social pathologies such as violation of human rights and religious abuse can be mitigated for the improvement of human conditions. This is foregrounded on the premise that every normal society desires a community of moral persons. Such a moral community requires a moral education, enforcement of moral recovery and reform (Kudadjie, 1997:20).

Through the journey with the hybridity team, I discovered that it was important that people have in-depth knowledge of their own religions as well as the religion of others. This will reduce prejudice associated with religious ignorance. Having in-depth knowledge is important because “religious beliefs and misinterpretations have increasingly fuelled conflict and may be central to many disputes and is often used to justify and fuel violence” (Kasomo 2010:24). In the same vein, there is need for a “vivid awareness of the dangers that emerge when we fail to recognise religion as a potent source of motivation and behaviour” (Wester, Buckley, Jensen & Thomas, 1999:35). Religion is one of the motivators of behaviour; it is therefore critical that RS address issues of religious behaviour, especially if it disturbs the fabric of peace and co-existence in the community.

The SRHS sought to respond to the problems of RS in Zimbabwean schools. The desire of the strategy was underpinned by the desire to ensure that RS was relevant and also addressed the lived realities of the learners despite their religious background. Furthermore, the strategy sought to ensure that RS contributes positively to social justice, equity, recognition and representation. Once this has been achieved, the world is assured of peaceful co-existence despite differences. It is up to educationists to read and understand the strategy and implement it in the teaching and learning of RS. I am convinced that learners, teachers and the entire religious community will benefit from the strategy, despite its weaknesses. The strategy in its nature is emancipatory and inclusive of all members of society despite their position. Unlike the multifaith strategy that is limited

in its scope to intrareligious relationships, particularly in the Christian faith, the SRHS addresses both intrareligious and interreligious relationship. Both types of relationships can be accommodated in the RS curriculum. I believe that the strategy can be applied in other countries where there are various religious problems. Other scholars are also welcome to restructure, develop and popularise SRHS as a response to the problems of religion in society. I cannot conclude that I and the team have developed a watertight strategy that does not need the input of other scholars; I believe that other scholars can contribute positively to the strategy and to RS. I am also convinced that “pedagogies are emerging which, in various ways, acknowledge the plurality of both traditional and modern dimensions as the context for religious education” (Jackson, 2014:1), which can be infused to this strategy bearing in mind that the ultimate goal is have the best SRHS that responds to all problems of RS that may arise despite the location, time and circumstances, for the benefit of the learners.

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APPENDIC A: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

Postgraduate Director Room 13

Faculty of Education

Winkie Direko Building Faculty of Education

University of the Free State

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www.ufs.ac.za NkoaneMM@ufs.ac.za

05 November 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to conduct the empirical study/research

May I kindly indicate that Mr Bekithemba Dube (Student number 2015180760) is a bonafide PhD student in the School of Education Studies, Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State, South Africa. He is currently registered towards the Philosophy of Doctoral degree in the discipline of Curriculum Studies. As part of the programme the candidate is required to conduct an empirical research project. To fulfill this requirement, we kindly request you to assist with anything which may contribute towards the completion of his research project. This may involve interviews, meetings, workshops, group discussions, observations and/or administering of questionnaires. Any assistance rendered to him while conducting his empirical study will be highly appreciated. We promise to keep the actual names, identities of co-researcher, participants, names of schools and all related data as confidential. We further promise to respect all ethical dictates in research. Furthermore, co-researchers, participants in this study will not be compelled and schools programme will not be disrupted in anyway

Kind regards, Milton Nkoane (PhD)

Supervisor



Postgraduate Studies and Research

Faculty of Education

University of the Free State

Email: nkoanemm@ufs.ac.za

Tel: +27 (0)51 401 7550

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN ZIMBABWEAN SCHOOLS

*All communications should be addressed to
"The Provincial Education Director"
Tele-Fax: 67574
E-mail: matnorth12@gmail.com*



Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
Matabeleland North Province
P O Box 555
Bulawayo
Zimbabwe

13 November 2015

University of the Free State
Faculty of Education
Bloemfontein 9300
South Africa

Attention: Bckithemba Dube: E.C. No. 5700597A

**AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH ON SOCIO-RELIGIOUS HYBRIDITY
MODEL TO RESPOND TO THE PROBLEMS OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN
ZIMBABWE: TSHOLOTSO DISTRICT: MATABELELAND NORTH PROVINCE**

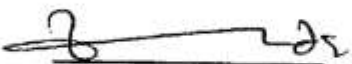
Reference is made to your letter dated 5 November 2015 requesting for permission to conduct a research at Nemane High School, Sipepa High School, Tshabanda High School and Magama High School in Tsholotsho district.

You are hereby granted permission to conduct your research at the above mentioned schools. However, your research should not in any way disturb the smooth running of the schools.

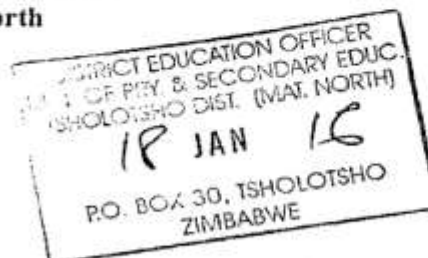
You will be required to furnish the Province with a copy of your findings after the research.

NB: Before proceeding to the schools please ensure that you pass through the office of the District Education Officer – Tsholotsho District.




Sibanda Z. (Mrs.)

A/Provincial Education Director-Matabeleland North



APPENDIX C: CONSENT LETTER IN ISINDEBELE

Study Leader: Dr. Nkoane, MM
Prof Mahlomaholo SG
Winkie Direko Building
Faculty of Education University of
the Free State
P.O. Box 339 Bloemfontein 9300
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ISIVUMELWANO SOPHATHEKO

Kuwe mfundi

Researcher:

Ngithanda ukuletha unxuso kuwe ukuthi uphatheke kulesi sidingisiso esilesihloko esilandelayo **A socio-religious hybridity strategy to respond to the problems of Religious Studies in Zimbabwe**

Isivivinyo lesi siphathelene kokudingisisa amaqhinga anasiza umfundi lombabli abaphatheka kuzifundo zenkolo, imikhuba lama siko esiNtu. Lokhu kwenzelwa ukuthi isizundo zenkolo zinsizane labafundi ngendlela ebalulekileyo ezingeni lemfundo yangaphezulu. Ngalokhu siyacela ukuthi uphatheke ukulesi sidingisiso. Silesiqiniseko ukuthi ulwazi lwakho uluzasiza abantwana lababalisi ngendlela ephakemeyo ekuthuthukiseni izifundo zenkolo ezinkolo zakithi

Ekunzeleleni ukuphathisa kwakho ekuqhubeni lumsebenzi, awubanjwa ngamandla ukuthi uphatheke kulesi sidingisiso. Nxa ekuphathekeni kwakho ungafuma izinto ezikwenza ungahlaliseki kahle, ulakho ukutshiya lumsebenzi endleleni. Ulakho ukusebenzisa amabizo amanye ukuze ungaziwa yilaba abazabala lu msebenzi

Nxa ungatholana lobunzima ekuphathekeni kulo umsebenzi, ngicela uthintane lami kukheli le nombolo eziphezulu, sixoxisane, kumbe ulakho ukuthintana lo umphathi wesifundo laye ikheli yakhe iphezulu. Siyathembisa ukusizana lawe ngendlela ezibalulekileyo ukuthi silungisise uhlupho olungabe luvelile ngokuphatheka kulesi isidingisiso.

owakho, U

(Bekithemba Dube)

Ngicela ugcwalise imizila engaphansi.

Isifundo: A socio-religious hybridity strategy to respond to the problems of Religious Studies in Zimbabwe

Researcher: Bekithemba Dube

Ibizo lesibongo: _____

Iminyaka yokuzalwa: _____

Ikheli lenombolo zami zocingo: _____

- Ngiyavuma ukuthi ngiphatheke kulesi sidingisiso.
- Ngiyazwisisa ukuthi isifundo lesi siphatheleni ngani njalo lenkinga ezingangivelela ngokuphatheka kulesi isifindo.
- Ngiyavumela ukuthi uchwayisisi asebenzise okuzatholakala kulesichwayisiso

Usicindezwelo sokuvuma: _____

ilanga: _____

APPENDIX D: ADVERT TO RECRUIT CORESEARCHERS

CO RESEARCHERS **CO RESEARCHERS** **ADVERT**

A socio-religious hybridity strategy to respond to the problems of Religious Studies in Zimbabwe

Vacancies have risen in the area of research, to be eligible answer the following questions

Are you interested in academic research?

Do you have passion on Religious Studies in secondary school?

Do you want to contribute towards social transformation through Religious Studies?

Do you have passion for your Religion to be taught in school?

Do you wish Religious Studies to address issues of democracy, social justice, and violation of human rights in your society?

Do you have a suggestion on how best Religious Studies should be taught in schools?

Do you have passion on Indigenous Knowledge System?

If your answers to the above question is YES

Then

You are the right person to participate in the research; I kindly invited you to be part and parcel of this research. Your contribution will be treated with respect and confidentiality

For more information contact

Bekithemba Dube

00263772899249/00263713922920



Email: bekithembadube13@gmail.com

APPENDIX E: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Faculty of Education

11-Dec-2015

Dear Mr Bekithemba Dube

Ethics Clearance: **A socio-religious hybridity strategy to respond to the problems of Religious Studies in Zimbabwean schools**

Principal Investigator: **Mr Bekithemba Dube**

Department: School of Education Studies (Bloemfontein Campus)

APPLICATION APPROVED

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Education, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2015/0445**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance.

Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours faithfully

Dr. Juliet Ramohai

Chairperson: Ethics Committee

Education Ethics Committee

Office of the Dean: Education

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APPENDIX F: CONSENT LETTER

Researcher:

Bekithemba Dube

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bekithembadube13@gmail.com

Study Leader:

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NkoaneMM@ufs.ac.za

Dear teacher

I would like to invite you to take part in this research project: **A socio-religious hybridity strategy to respond to the problems of Religious Studies in Zimbabwe**

This study is about designing a strategy which will respond to the problems of Religious Studies in order to achieve curriculum relevance to the lived realities of the learners and the community at larger. We would like you to participate with us in this research because we value your experience and knowledge which you have accumulated over the years dealing with Religious Studies. The reason we are doing this study is to ensure Religious Studies is relevant in meeting the needs of the learners. I am sure you will benefit from this study as it will bring wealth knowledge in the teaching and learning of Religious Studies and enhance the performance of the learners.

While I greatly appreciate your participation in this important study and the valuable contribution you can make, your participation is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part in this study. If you do choose to take part, and an issue arises which makes you uncomfortable, you may at any time stop your participation with no further repercussions. Please feel free to use pseudo names for the purposes of privacy and anonymity.

If you experience any discomfort or unhappiness with the way the research is being conducted, please feel free to contact me directly to discuss it, and also note that you are free to contact my study supervisor (indicated above). Should any difficult personal issues

arise during the course of this research, I will endeavour to see that a qualified expert is contacted and able to assist you.

Yours sincerely,

(Bekithemba Dube)

Please fill in and return this page. Keep the letter above for future reference

Study: A socio-religious hybridity strategy to respond to the problems of Religious Studies in Zimbabwe

Researcher: Bekithemba Dube

Name and Surname: _____

Age: _____

Contact number: _____

- I hereby give free and informed consent to participate in the abovementioned research study.
- I understand what the study is about, why I am participating and what the risks and benefits are.
- I give the researcher permission to make use of the data gathered from my participation, subject to the stipulations he/she has indicated in the above letter.

Signature: _____

Date:

APPENDIC G: MINUTES FOR EMPERICAL DATA GENERATION

Phase 1

Co-ordinator	Comments of the hybridity team
Umbalisi	<p>Linjani bakithi. Ngithemba liphilile lonke. Siyabonga ngokuzimisela njalo lokufisa ukuphatheka kuleli hlelo lokuthuthukisa ukufundiswa ko RS. Ngithemba sizaba lesikhathi sokufunda lokufundisana ngehloso yokuthi abafundi bengasizakala kanjani ezifundweni zenkolo lezamasiko</p> <p>Okukuqala sizapha ilunga ngelunga ithuba lokuthi lizethule kuphakathi ukuthi ngubani njalo umelele liphi iqhembu lenzenkolo kumbe amasiko. Ngemva kwalokhu sizapha uchwayisisi ukuthi asiphe isingeniso salo umsebenzi ophambi kwethu. Lokhu senzela ukuthi sibe lokubona kunye nge RS njalo senelise ukuthola imibono engasiphathisa ukuze abafundi besizakale.</p>
Umchwayisisi	<p>Ngiyabonga kakhulu ngethuba engiltholaya ukuthi ngizethule kumphakathi njalo ngethule umbono engilawawo ngokufundiswa kwe RS. Mina ibizo lami ngingu Bekithemba Dube. Ukuchayisisa engiphakathi kwalo lusekelwa yi Yunivesithi Yase Fresta, elizweni lasa South Africa. Inhloso yesichwayisiso yikuthola igqinga esingalisebenzisa ekufundiseni I RS ukuze inking ezihlangana le RS zingqontshwe. Inhlonso yami namhla yikuthi ngethule ukumiswa komsebenzi njalo.</p> <p>Umsebenzi lo uzathatha inyanga eziyisithupha. Lizangibekezelela ngonga sekuthapheni uluwazi sisebenzisa I Participatory Action Research. Sizahlela izikhathi zokuthi sihlangeane. Singapha imibono yethu ukuthi singahlangana ngemva kwesikhathi esinganani?</p>
Umdlala	<p>I think once in every two weeks its fine but I should also note that due to my commitments I might not be always available but I will make every possible effort to come and contribute to this study. Ngingazi abanye ukuthi bathini?</p> <p>Mina ngiyavumelana lomdala ukuthi sihlangeane after two weeks. Lokhu kuzasivumela isikhathi sokuthi siqoqe izinto esizazi contributor towards ukufundiswa kwe RS.</p>
Mzala	<p>Ok isikhathi esingahlangana ngaso yisiphi? Mina ngibona ukuthi u 2pm urayithi. Lokhu senzela ukuthi ama lessons abantwana engaphambaniseki kakhulu.</p>
Mina	<p>Nxa sivumelana kuhle sesizahlangana after two weeks. Okubalulekileyo okwamanje yikuthi siyedinga amasyllabus and ama text books awe RS. Lokhu kunzenza ukuxoxa kwethu kube lula.</p>

CHALLENGES OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Phase 2

Nceku	Ekuxhoxisaneni enhlupho ze RS uNceku eveze okuthi “The issue of religious exclusivity can cause unnecessary loss of human lives but to allow communication among religions is one of the fearful things to do, besides the community might think you are confused on your faith if you appear having interests in different religions”.
Zie	<p>“The issue of religious communication is problematic. This is the first time when I can sit with people of different religion, discussing issues of religion, its tense, just thinking if we can really agree”.</p> <p>Inking evelayo yikuthi abazenkolo abalaso isikhathi sokuxoxisana enkolweni lokudala yikwesaba ezinye inkolo.in</p>
Kurara	“For four years I have been doing RS, I have never encountered people who belong to other religions, I think those who belong to other religion are hiding it. They can’t communicate their faiths, maybe because of fear of being the only one in that religion”. Kuvelile ukutho ababalis abanengi bafundisa izifundo zenkolo kodwa bengaqeqetshanga kufikeni ezingeni lokuthi benelise ukufundisa ibanga le o Level. Kodwa kulemisazamo ekhona ku mimistry ephathisa ababalis ukuthi babamelana leenhluho ezingavela ekufundiseni ezenkolo
Jojo	“Our teaching at churches or mosques are to be blamed for discouraging dialogue among religions. I think we need to reconsider this because we all have one God”.
Mzala	<p>Kuvelile ukuthi imfundiso ezitholakala emasontweni lezinye indawo zokukhonzela zilesandla ekubangeleni inhluho ezibhekane lezenkolo</p> <p>“Communication of religion is very difficult especially when there are religions which they think are better than others. Teaching of other religions make it difficult for us to communicate since am already coming from a condemned position”.</p> <p>Kuvelile ukuthi ukuxoxisana kwabantu abafundisa njalo abaphatheka kwezenkolo kungenza kubelokuzwanana kwamalunga atshiyeneyo abantu bezenkolo. Lokku kungaphumelela uma abantu bengaphathisana ekulungiseni inking ezingavela kwenzenkolo</p> <p>Kuyavela ukuthi ababalisi bahlangana lohlupho ekufundiseni izifundo zenkolo ngenxa yokuthi abafundelanga umsebenzi wakhona. Kodwa iteam le ithembisile ukuthi izapha amaqinga atshiyeneyo angathuthukisa ukufundisa kwe RS ezikolo zesekhondari .</p>

Nkalakatha	<p>“where can we get knowledge of other religions since we grew up knowing that we as Christians we do not mix with unbelievers? More so the RS says we should teach other religions but we as teachers do not even know other religions apart from the one we are used”.</p> <p>Kuvelile ukuthi abantu bakhangelela phansi ezinye inkolo okwenzq ukuxoxisana kwenkolo kungaphumeleli kakuhle. Ngokunjalo iqembu lakubona kusobala ukuthi ukuxoxisana kwenzenkolo kumele kuqale ezifundweni ze O level. I O level ipha abafundi ithuba lokuthi babob isane ngenze nkolo kungela kulwa phakathi. Lokhu kwenza abantu behlaziye kahle ezenkolo kungela ohkangela omunye ngelihlo elingayisilo kumbe uzabangela udlame.</p> <p>“I teach RS but cannot even get a copy which talks about other religions beside Christian faith. As a result, I teach what is there and what I am knowledgeable about”.</p> <p>“I only know one religion in detail, I also know little about African tradition religion though I do really believe it because, and I am Christian. For other religions, I just know there is Islam, Hindus and Buddhism”.</p> <p>Kuvelele njalo ukuthi abanye ababalisi abala lwazi ngenzenkolo ngaphahle kwesikistu. Lokhu kwenza abafundi babelolwazi lokholo lwesiKistru kuphela. Lokhu akwamukelwanga kakahle ngabanye abalandeli benzenkolo ngoba labo baveze ukuthi balesifiso sokuthi inkolo zabo zifundiswe ebangeni le O level</p>
Muranda	
Jerry	
Jack Jojo	<p>“This surprises me a lot, there is lot of literature from the internet where teachers can get information on other religions”.</p> <p>“Yes the information can be there but as long the syllabus is silent on what I should teach, then how will I know what to read and prepare for the learners”?</p> <p>“Yes this is the challenge we have faced that our syllabus does not give us what teachers should teach. But this cannot be an excuse for teachers to be monothelic in their approach to religion”</p>
Mdala	
Adulm	<p>“Our religion is school is suffering a lot because teachers and learners do not have adequate and correct knowledge on various religion. This is was also revealed by the wrong answers which were provided on the General paper last (Grade, 7: 2013). This is dishearting especially when curriculum planners’ educationists cannot see the mistakes but when it comes to other faiths there are no mistakes”.</p> <p>Ukuswelakala ngolwazi kwababalisi ngokunye kwezinto okwenza ukufundisa kwe RS kube luhlupho ezikolweni. Ngokunjalo baqoqonsele ukuthi ababalisis kumele bahloniswe ngolwazi lokuthi banelise ukufundisa abafundi abavela endaweni ezehlukeneyo</p> <p>The problem of religious knowledge cuts across every religion, and the effects of the lack of it is catastrophic. It leads some to act on inadequate information which unfortunate turns to hurt or disrupts and may lead people to have misconceptions one’s religion.</p>
Father Konzalos	

Mzala	I teach RS because, the head requested me to do so. To him it was an easy subject to teach. I only did RS up to ordinary level. So my knowledge is very limited but I cannot tell my learners that I struggle. Beside it has been more than 10 years since I last did ordinary level”.
Nceku	Here in this school, we are made to teach RS despite that we never trained for the subject. This is hard because we fail to teach RS in an effective way, besides RS keeps on changing.
Nkalakatha	I was told to teach RS by my head since he knows that I am a Christian. Yes I teach but there are other things which become very difficult for me to teach. In most cases I ignore what appears difficult for me, if I raise it, am told no one can teach it.
Benny	IKS is a concept is not properly explained to us thus it is hard to see the value of it. Our perception of IKS is just the way in which our forefathers lived and does not apply today. In fact interest in IKS makes one seem so backwards in community. So I rather go for Western life which has prestige.
Jerry	IKS to me is something that is no longer necessary. We do not have even grandmothers who can teach us the old ways. The few old people who practice IKS are generally poor with nothing much to show as an advantage of embracing and valuing IKS.
Muranda	Some religions take advantage during prayer times to propose women and make promises to end their problems. The goal of such prophets is to sleep with church followers.
Mdala	That one, sexual abuse is becoming so common, I don't why it's so easy to get sex when you use religions. This despite that religions teach against sexual immorality and it becomes worse when it is not consented.
Nkalakatha	You see this is caused by religious leaders who claims to have unquestionable power and authority. But it is also surprising that you see more women flocking into such churches where they are abused. When you tell them that they are abused, they can get angry with you. Religion so, hayi aah aah.
Muti	RS is an interesting subject especially dealing with Bible story. The only difficult comes when one is dealing with IKS and African religion because of the lack of textbooks”.
Kurara	RS is a fine subject but there are so many stories to memorise, and also the lack of textbooks on IKS makes RS a challenging subject”.
Nkalakatha	Your concern has always been raised and we are in the process to address that. But I think it's only the IKS which is problematic rather than the whole syllabus. I guess the syllabus is silent in order to address the multi-cultural society”.
Adulm	Now I understand why the examination will even give wrong answers. The examination is detached from what the teachers and learners do in schools, eeeeeesh the problem is bigger than we anticipated.

Jojo	I have seen some religious groups forbidding their members to work. They spend most of their time working in the fields belonging to the religious leaders, sometimes even school going children are made to leave school to join the rest of the religious members in farms.
Mzala	Another abuse is seen in religious groups which deny children medication. This is the worst form of abuse and various leaders should address this issue because it is robbing us of potential human capital. It must be investigated and perpetrators brought to book. Schools should open discussions to allow such reports to be made public. Adlum: Another related abuse evident in our society is when children are forced to early marriage. In those marriages, children do not have a comfortable life since she is married against her will. The child becomes a parent before the time fully comes. It is unfortunate that some of the girls do not see evil in it, this could be due to socialisation subjected to these children. This is bad and must change. Children should be allowed to children instead of being robbed of their lives because of obedience to religion.
Kurara	Kurara: I have seen in some religions when the prophets claim to be in the spirit, they begin to beat their followers justifying their actions as act which God has commanded.
Jerry	Jerry: You see the issue of beating people during religious function is justified because some of the followers are very arrogant thus the leader will be offended in the spirit hence; the beatings are part of the punishment for disobedience. Beating happens when one is the spirit
Lups	Of all the religious abuse, extremism is one of the dangers that religion poses in society. The sad issue is that people who are not connected to the issue (which the suicider may be protesting) are affected by suicide bombing.
Adulm	I think we need to understand that it's not all Muslims who believe in suicide, these are extreme people and are not representing the Islam community well. I think in all religions there are people who become so extreme in religion to an extent that logical reasoning does not hold a place in their lives.
Adulm	To be honest this is the reason why many people do not want Islam in the community. It's fearful when Islam spreads in society. When I see a Muslim, I think terrorism

SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Father Konzalos	"Schools are very important for our children and the society because it is easy to use the school as a place to ensure that tolerance is easily taught. School kids can easily relate to one another as opposed to older members of society who have various unresolved grudges, and in many cases but teachers should not take advantage of this privilege".
Mzala	"School is one the safest places where learners can be helped to live, interact and learn from each other's religions. Given that children from different cultures and religions interact, it follows that there is good opportunity to teach all religions".
Murandu	

Nceku	<p>“Schools are not like churches, synagogues, or mosque where one religion is supposed to be cultivated, teachers can speak freely on different religions without fear. This helps learners to have wide knowledge”.</p> <p>“But you know it is not possible in all schools because some schools are missionary schools which have a specific agenda which must be cultivated. May be government schools”.</p>
Jerry	Human rights are critical for all to observe despite our religious affiliations. This helps our learners to appreciate that respect for others is critical despite that we are different.
Kurara	This is a noble idea but I think this will be adding load to the teacher who is already struggling to teach RS. The job of the teacher is becoming, don't you see, beside learners have to be prepared for the examination.
Mdala	You see Kurara, teaching other concepts does not need you to add more work on what you are already doing, the issue is to have what we call side plates in teaching, where you can make example by using something that to stimulate interest. For example when one teaches on the woman with haemorrhage, the Bible says she had suffered in the hands of my physicians, indicating some sort of abuse. This can be your entry point. It is all about innovation in teaching, the teachers need to be creative in their work because teaching on human rights in RS is possible as long the teacher is clever.
Father Konzalos	<p>Linjani bakithi. Ngithemba liphilile lonke. Siyabonga ngokuzimisela njalo lokufisa ukuphatheka kuleli hlelo lokuthuthukisa ukufundiswa ko RS. Ngithemba sizaba lesikhathi sokufunda lokufundisana ngehloso yokuthi abafundi bengasizakala kanjani ezifundweni zenkolo lezamasiko</p> <p>Okukuqala sizapha ilunga ngelunga ithuba lokuthi lizethule kuphakathi ukuthi ngubani njalo umelele liphi iqhembu lenzenkolo kumbe amasiko. Ngemva kwalokhu sizapha uchwayisisi ukuthi asiphe isingeniso salo umsebenzi ophambi kwethu. Lokhu senzela ukuthi sibe lokubona kunye nge RS njalo senelise ukuthola imibono engasiphathisa ukuze abafundi besizakale.</p>
Adulm	
Muranda	<p>Ngiyabonga kakhulu ngethuba engiltholaya ukuthi ngizethule kumphakathi njalo ngethule umbono engilawawo ngokufundiswa kwe RS. Mina ibizo lami ngingu Bekithemba Dube. Ukuchayisisa engiphakathi kwalo lusekelwa yi Yunivesithi Yase Fresta, elizweni lasa South Africa. Inhloso yesichwayisiso yikuthola igqinga esingalisebenzisa ekufundiseni I RS ukuze inking ezihlangana le RS zingqontshwe. Inhlonso yami namhla yikuthi ngethule ukumiswa komsebenzi njalo.</p> <p>Umsebenzi lo uzathatha inyanga eziyisithupha. Lizangibekezelela ngonga sekuthapheni uluwazi sisebenzisa I Participatory Action Research. Sizahlela izikhathi zokuthi sihlangeane. Singapha imibono yethu ukuthi singahlangana ngemva kwesikhathi esinganani?</p>
Adulm	
Jojo	

Zie	I think once in every two weeks its fine but I should also note that due to my commitments I might not be always available but I will make every possible effort to come and contribute to this study. Ngingazi abanye ukuthi bathini? Mina ngiyavumelana lomdala ukuthi sihlangeane after two weeks. Lokhu kuzasivumela isikhathi sokuthi siqoqe izinto esizazi contributor towards ukufundiswa kwe RS.
Mzala	
	Ok isikhathi esingahlangana ngaso yisiphi? Mina ngibona ukuthi u 2pm urayithi. Lokhu senzela ukuthi ama lessons abantwana engaphambaniseki kakhulu.

CONDITION FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF SRHS

Mdala	<p>These teachers have a special role to play in IKS. As a ministry we encourage the teachers to write and publish books which will assist in the teaching and learning of IKS. If the teachers won't stand up, then we will be soon be robbed of our trusted treasure of IKS.</p> <p>Yes inspector. Who can listen and take what we have written as true? How is this going to possible since even our smallest grievances are not taken serious by the school?"</p> <p>Teachers always have excuse for contributing to the teaching profession, always complaining of workload, low salaries etc. I believe if someone has a passion for academic, he or she can publish works which of course will be scrutinised before being accepted as textbooks. Teacher, have you ever come to my office with a grievance which I turned down"?</p>
Jojo	
Mdala	
Lups	<p>Linjani bakithi. Ngithemba liphilile lonke. Siyabonga ngokuzimisela njalo lokufisa ukuphatheka kuleli hlelo lokuthuthukisa ukufundiswa ko RS. Ngithemba sizaba lesikhathi sokufunda lokufundisana ngehloso yokuthi abafundi bengasizakala kanjani ezifundweni zenkolo lezamasiko</p> <p>Okukuqala sizapha ilunga ngelunga ithuba lokuthi lizethule kuphakathi ukuthi ngubani njalo umelele liphi iqhembu lenzenkolo kumbe amasiko. Ngemva kwalokhu sizapha uchwayisisi ukuthi asiphe isingeniso salo umsebenzi ophambi kwethu. Lokhu senzela ukuthi sibe lokubona kunye nge RS njalo senelise ukuthola imibono engasiphathisa ukuze abafundi besizakale.</p>
Mbambo	
Kurara	

Nkalakatha Mdala Lups Nceku	Ngiyabonga kakhulu ngethuba engiltholaya ukuthi ngizethule kumphakathi njalo ngethule umbono engilawawo ngokufundiswa kwe RS. Mina ibizo lami ngingu Bekithemba Dube. Ukuchayisisa engiphakathi kwalo lusekelwa yi Yunivesithi Yase Fresta, elizweni lasa South Africa. Inhloso yesichwayisiso yikuthola igqinga esingalisebenzisa ekufundiseni I RS ukuze inking ezihlangana le RS zingqontshwe. Inhlonso yami namhla yikuthi ngethule ukumiswa komsebenzi njalo. Umsebenzi lo uzathatha inyanga eziyisithupha. Lizangibekezelela ngonga sekuthapheni uluwazi sisebenzisa I Participatory Action Research. Sizahlela izikhathi zokuthi sihlangeane. Singapha imibono yethu ukuthi singahlangana ngemva kwesikhathi esinganani?
Benny Jerry	I think once in every two weeks its fine but I should also note that due to my commitments I might not be always available but I will make every possible effort to come and contribute to this study. Ngingazi abanye ukuthi bathini? Mina ngiyavumelana lomdala ukuthi sihlangeane after two weeks. Lokhu kuzasivumela isikhathi sokuthi siqoqe izinto esizazi contributor towards ukufundiswa kwe RS. Umsebenzi lo uzathatha inyanga eziyisithupha. Lizangibekezelela ngonga sekuthapheni uluwazi sisebenzisa I Participatory Action Research. Sizahlela izikhathi zokuthi sihlangeane. Singapha imibono yethu ukuthi singahlangana ngemva kwesikhathi esinganani?
	Ok isikhathi esingahlangana ngaso yisiphi? Mina ngibona ukuthi u 2pm urayithi. Lokhu senzela ukuthi ama lessons abantwana engaphambaniseki kakhulu.

ANTICIPATED THREATS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SRHS

Mzala Mbambo Tshuks	Linjani bakithi. Ngithemba liphilile lonke. Siyabonga ngokuzimisela njalo lokufisa ukuphatheka kuleli hlelo lokuthuthukisa ukufundiswa ko RS. Ngithemba sizaba lesikhathi sokufunda lokufundisana ngehloso yokuthi abafundi bengasizakala kanjani ezifundweni zenkolo lezamasiko Okukuqala sizapha ilunga ngelunga ithuba lokuthi lizethule kuphakathi ukuthi ngubani njalo umelele liphi iqhembu lenzenkolo kumbe amasiko. Ngemva kwalokhu sizapha uchwayisisi ukuthi asiphe isingeniso salo umsebenzi ophambi kwethu. Lokhu senzela ukuthi sibe lokubona kunye nge RS njalo senelise ukuthola imibono engasiphathisa ukuze abafundi besizakale.
Tshuks Mzala Jerry	Ngiyabonga kakhulu ngethuba engiltholaya ukuthi ngizethule kumphakathi njalo ngethule umbono engilawawo ngokufundiswa kwe RS. Mina ibizo lami ngingu Bekithemba Dube. Ukuchayisisa engiphakathi kwalo lusekelwa yi Yunivesithi Yase Fresta, elizweni lasa South Africa. Inhloso yesichwayisiso yikuthola igqinga esingalisebenzisa ekufundiseni I RS ukuze inking ezihlangana le RS zingqontshwe. Inhlonso yami namhla yikuthi ngethule ukumiswa komsebenzi njalo.

	Umsebenzi lo uzathatha inyanga eziyisithupha. Lizangibekezelela ngonga sekuthapheni uluwazi sisebenzisa I Participatory Action Research. Sizahlela izikhathi zokuthi sihlangeane. Singapha imibono yethu ukuthi singahlangana ngemva kwesikhathi esinganani?
Kurara	I think once in every two weeks its fine but I should also note that due to my commitments I might not be always available but I will make every possible effort to come and contribute to this study. Ngingazi abanye ukuthi bathini?
Mdala	Mina ngiyavumelana lomdala ukuthi sihlangeane after two weeks. Lokhu kuzasivumela isikhathi sokuthi siqoqe izinto esizazi contributor towards ukufundiswa kwe RS.
Jerry	Okukuqala sizapha ilunga ngelunga ithuba lokuthi lizethule kuphakathi ukuthi ngubani njalo umelele liphi iqhembu lenzenkolo kumbe amasiko. Ngemva kwalokhu sizapha uchwayisisi ukuthi asiphe isingeniso salo umsebenzi ophambi kwethu. Lokhu senzela ukuthi sibe lokubona kunye nge RS njalo senelise ukuthola imibono engasiphathisa ukuze abafundi besizakale
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SUCSESSES ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SRHS

Zie	An inclusive approach to RS is a great success to all. The issue is not expose the child to one route of life when there are many other avenues which can be explored.
Mdala	Yes a multi religious approach is a very good curriculum because we are assured that leaders have a wide range of beliefs in their disposal, so that when they chose, they are informed and can be good believers of the religion of their choice. Knowledge is power.
Mbambo	I do not see a problem with learners learning various religions at school. Even me, during my training I learnt various religions and at the end of the day I remained true to my faith. So it is important to expose learners to all religions.
Lups	This sounds nice but the problem is space in the curriculum because we are already overloaded with work. Maybe if the school heads can reconsider their load on us. Okukuqala sizapha ilunga ngelunga ithuba lokuthi lizethule kuphakathi ukuthi ngubani njalo umelele liphi iqhembu lenzenkolo kumbe amasiko. Ngemva kwalokhu sizapha uchwayisisi ukuthi asiphe isingeniso salo umsebenzi ophambi kwethu. Lokhu senzela ukuthi sibe lokubona kunye nge RS njalo senelise ukuthola imibono engasiphathisa ukuze abafundi besizakale

Muranda	The strategy is useful in helping to revive IKS in schools. The use of religious and cultural technicians will go a long to assist teachers and learners.
Tshuks	As I represent the community, I am delighted that this workshops brings hope that our culture, “Ubuntu Bethu” will be taught religious. I am glad that all religious leaders represented here are interested in the teaching and learning of IKS.
Jojo	I think learning of IKS will be interesting given that we are going have people who will assist us in issues which we are battling on as a class. Okukuqala sizapha ilunga ngelunga ithuba lokuthi lizethule kuphakathi ukuthi ngubani njalo umelele liphi iqhembu lenzenkolo kumbe amasiko. Ngemva kwalokhu sizapha uchwayisisi ukuthi asiphe isingeniso salo umsebenzi ophambi kwethu. Lokhu senzela ukuthi sibe lokubona kunye nge RS njalo senelise ukuthola imibono engasiphathisa ukuze abafundi besizakale
Mbambo	Linjani bakithi. Ngithemba liphilile lonke. Siyabonga ngokuzimisela njalo lokufisa ukuphatheka kuleli hlelo lokuthuthukisa ukufundiswa ko RS. Ngithemba sizaba lesikhathi sokufunda lokufundisana ngehloso yokuthi abafundi bengasizakala kanjani ezifundweni zenkolo lezamasiko. Okukuqala sizapha ilunga ngelunga ithuba lokuthi lizethule kuphakathi ukuthi ngubani njalo umelele liphi iqhembu lenzenkolo kumbe amasiko. Ngemva kwalokhu sizapha uchwayisisi ukuthi asiphe isingeniso salo umsebenzi ophambi kwethu. Lokhu senzela ukuthi sibe lokubona kunye nge RS njalo senelise ukuthola imibono engasiphathisa ukuze abafundi besizakale.
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