A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES

By

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree

Philosophiae Doctor in Education

(Ph.D. in Education)

in

PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION

in the

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION STUDIES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

BLOEMFONTEIN

2017

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DECLARATION

I, Chidarikire Munyaradzi, declare that the thesis: “A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATE DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES”, handed in for the qualification of Doctor of Education 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.

I, hereby, cede copyright to the University of the Free State.

CHIDARIKIRE MUNYARADZI

Signed…… Date…….

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I give Glory to God for divine guidance, wisdom, provision and protection during the course of my study. If it was not for God's enablement, I could have failed to accomplish my academic and professional journey.

Secondly, I am highly thankful to the University of the Free State staff who gave me a scholarship to further my studies. This scholarship removed financial burden. I pay special tribute to my highly committed, patient and purpose-driven promoters, Prof. D.J. Hlalele and Dr. M.F. Tlali, for their unwavering support in this Ph.D. journey. My promotors are my source of inspiration. My appreciation is also extended to the SULE/SURLEC team for their advice during my studies.

Thirdly, I am a testimony of "besides a very successful man there is a wife". My gorgeous wife, Queen Jane, was my pillar of strength and support. She prayed for me, and provided the financial and moral support during my intellectual journey. To our three children, Prince "Princo Fire", Praise "maPure" and Providence "Popopo", I say, "Thank you very much for your love and understanding. You missed my love and affection when I was in South Africa, pursuing my academic studies." My wife and our children had lonely moments in Zimbabwe while I was doing my Ph.D. studies in South Africa.

Fourthly, let me extend my gratitude to my family: my mother Mrs Chidarikire, my mother-in-law Mrs. Nyokanhete, brother Danford, his wife Jessica Zimuto and their children Tanaka and Blessing in the United Kingdom, for financial support. I also thank the following people for their moral, financial and spiritual support: the Nyokanhete family, the Chidarikire family, Precious Mutete, LindiI Yende, Vimbai Mavhuruse, Pastors William and Rose Chauke (South Africa), Pastor Godfrey Fakude (South Africa), Pastor Stanley Dlamini (South Africa), Pastor Mfundo Masuku (South Africa), Pastor Jeremiah Mabuza (South Africa), Pastor Elton NgInya (South Africa), Pastor Nokhutula Mhlongo (South Africa), Dr. Pastor Mathebula (Alliance Barberton), Pastor Elias Khosi, Pastor Ropafadzo HungI (Sabiya), lecturer at Phumelela Bible College in South Africa, Apostle Ernest Chinyuke, Mr Jackson Pedzisai, Mr Sam and Mrs Y. Charity Shumba and Mrs Matsvange.

I thank Bishop Charles, Apostle Charity Josiya and The Alliance Church in Zimbabwe church members, for spiritually supporting me.

Fifthly, I want to thank Rector Sithe and Pastor M'pumelelo Khosi, the Principal of Phumelela Bible College in South Africa, who gave me permission to work as a lecturer at this institution whilst I was studying. Thank you very much, academic staff, professional staff and students of the Phumelela Bible College. You are friends in need and friends indeed!

Let me finally thank Mrs. Nokhuthula Maseko, who provided accommodation during my studies, and the many people who played significant roles in my life during my studies.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research study, posthumously, to my father, Johnson Chidarikire, who died due to drug abuse-related sicknesses and Bishop Jeremiah Thela, who was my mentor and fellow at Alliance Church in Fernie, South Africa, who died due to road accident-related injuries.

I also dedicate this study to all parents and children struggling with drug abuse. Lastly, I dedicate it to my beautiful wife, Jane, and our beloved children, Prince, Praise and Providence.

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study was to formulate a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The study was necessitated by the absence of a peer counselling strategy formulated by and for the learners in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Reviewed literature substantiated that peers had the capacity to influence one another to avoid drugs and the use of drugs, using a peer counselling strategy. I realised that there was a gap in terms of a specific peer counselling strategy in relation to drug abuse in the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The research study involved participants within Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies in a formulating peer counselling strategy that was culturally grounded. That gave voice to the marginalised and brought transformation on how previous peer counselling strategies are formulated. The study adopted Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) as a lens. CER allowed participants from rural learning communities, who are marginalised, to participate in formulating a peer counselling strategy in Zimbabwe. I adopted the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which buttresses the theoretical framework CER as they advocate CER. Both PAR for empowerment and emancipation of the marginalised members of the rural learning community. I used the Free Attitude Interview to generate data. The researcher analysed the data, made findings, determined implications, and did strategy formulation. The research results revealed that there was a need for peer counselling strategy formulated through the inclusion of views of Zimbabwean rural learning communities. Moreover, the research found that, most peer counselling strategies in Zimbabwe are western in nature and lack suitability to assist Zimbabwean rural learners. Furthermore, I noted that there are threats to peer counselling strategies, such as lack of peer counselling trainings. The significance of a peer counselling strategy was portrayed in Zimbabwe urban learning communities. This shows conflict of power, domination and social injustice perpetuated by urban dwellers on the rural communities in terms of formulation of a peer counselling strategy.

KEY WORDS: Critical Emancipatory Research, peer counselling, drug abuse, rural learning ecologies, adolescence

CONFERENCE PAPERS DURING Ph.D. STUDIES

Chidarikire, M. (2016) Peer Counselling Strategy for Alleviating Drug Abuse in Zimbabwean rural Learning Ecologies. Paper presented at an International Conference for Sustainable, Rural, Learning Ecologies Colloquium, (SuRLEc). University of the Free State, Qwa-Qwa Campus. October 5th – 7th October, 2016.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CDU – Curriculum Development Unit

CER – Critical Emancipatory Research

CET – Critical Emancipatory Theory

CT – Critical Theory

FAI – Free Attitude Interview

MP – Member of Parliament

MoE – Ministry of Education

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

PAR – Participatory Action Research

PC – Peer Counselling

UFS – University of the Free State

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

USA – United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY ON A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aims to formulate a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. In this study, peer counselling strategy is a technique used by Zimbabwean rural learners to counsel and give guidance to other learners dealing with problems such as drug abuse. I realised through literature and working as a peer counsellor coordinator in Zimbabwe that there is no specific peer counselling strategy formulated by Zimbabwean rural learners to solve drug abuse in their communities. Chapter one of this research consists of an overview of the issues to be addressed in this research. The background of the study will be dealt with at first, focusing on the need for a peer counselling strategy formulated by Zimbabwean rural communities to alleviate drug abuse in their rural learning ecologies. I will also introduce the research theoretical framework, which is Critical Emancipatory Research (CER), the five objectives of this research study and the research methodology, which is Participatory Action Research (PAR). Lastly, I will give the ethical considerations used in this study and the layout of this research study.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

The drug abuse problem is affecting Zimbabwean rural learners. This is supported by the evidence in the research study by Cooper (2009:135), who confirmed that a “study on adolescent drug use assessed by teachers should that alcohol use was the most serious drug problem in Zimbabwe”. In addition, the Department of Basic Education in South Africa (2013: iii) reported that “[s]ubstance abuse, binge drinking and tobacco use have a negative impact on learners’ academic performance, being linked to learning difficulties, absenteeism and school dropout”. The abuse of drugs by Zimbabwean rural learners creates the need to formulate a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. This peer counselling strategy will be used only in

Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, it cannot be used in towns and other countries because of factors such as different cultures of learners. I am of the view that a peer counselling strategy is effective to alleviate drug abuse, as proved by Oliha (2014:2), who asserted that "the alarming evidence in the prevalence of drug abuse, the effects and consequences of substance abuse among students have called for concern and challenge to all helping professions to mount strategies of equipping youth with skills of living devoid of substance abuse". After meticulously analysing voluminous literature on peer counselling, I realised that there was a gap in terms of a specific peer counselling strategy in relation to drug abuse in Zimbabwe. The peer counselling in Zimbabwe still needs to be explored. This was revealed by the research study by Chireshe (2013:253), who indicated that the "status of peer counselling in Zimbabwe secondary schools has not been fully investigated".

1.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY

The significance of a peer counselling strategy is shown by the following success stories recorded in the research studies. A research done in Nigeria by Oliha (2014:6) affirmed that "drug abusers exhibit some errant behaviour due to their reliance on drugs, they can be helped by counsellors to overcome their problem and counsellors are also required to provide drug abuse education to the adolescents in our secondary schools and tertiary institutions". This is one of the testimonies of the effectiveness of a peer counselling strategy in mitigating drug abuse among adolescent learners. In addition, the research study done in Kenya by Bett (2013:482) revealed that "the rationale of peer counselling is based on the assumption that people who share similar characteristics and age tend to influence another's behaviours significantly and it is recommended by the Kenyan Government that peer counselling service be established in all educational Institutions to motivate the youth to express their desire to protect themselves against HIV and AIDS and other social and psychological problems". However, there are no research studies that prove that peer counselling strategy can be effectively used mitigate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Therefore, this study sought to address this gap by

developing a new peer counselling strategy to be used in alleviating drug abuse among rural learners in Zimbabwe.

The other study done in Zimbabwe proved that peer counselling strategy and other counselling techniques have the capacity to deal with drug abuse. Maseko, Ngwenya and Maunganidze (2014:201) stated that “adolescents felt that being educated on the adverse effects of substance could help reduce substance abuse. Others felt that counselling was needed in school to help counteract negative affectivity and stress”. Another research study in Zimbabwe which supports the power of peer counselling, was carried out by Chireshe (2013:354), who argued that “peer counsellors are greatly involved in the reduction of HIV/AIDS infections”. However, there are no research studies done extensively to ascertain if peer counselling is an effective strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. I am of the view that peer counsellors have the ability to assist Zimbabwean rural learners solve drug abuse problems. This then creates the gap of knowledge which this study seeks to address.

1.4 ANTICIPATED THREATS TO A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY: LOCATING THE NEED FOR A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY

There are threats to a peer counselling strategy. The first problem that caused the need for a peer counselling strategy is the abuse of drugs by the Zimbabwean rural learners. This resonates with literature which states that there is a high level of drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, for example, the study done in Zimbabwean rural areas by Cooper (2009:136), who confirmed that “rural secondary pupils should an 18.5% prevalence rate of tobacco usage and 42.9% admittance rate of smoking and alcohol consumption among the patients.” In addition, this year, at Mucheke High School in Zimbabwe, the headmaster wrote in the school newsletter informing parents about school children who are expelled from school after abusing drugs. The Mucheke High School Newsletter (2016:2) reported that “this year (2016) four form 3 students are excluded for taking alcohol and drugs.”

Unfortunately, the drug abuse problem is currently there, and there is no specific peer counselling strategy being used to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Moreover, the threat to peer counselling strategy is that, teacher counsellors and peer counsellors in Zimbabwe are using Western counselling methods to try and mitigate drug abuse in rural areas. The Western counselling methods are defined by Stewart (2007:55), as "counselling methods that are dominant cultural attitudes and beliefs that are based on Western European philosophies and practices that inform counselling approaches and counselling training." Moreover, Beauline (2011:10), argued Western counselling methods are "centred on Western cultures, values and norms." Therefore, the Western counselling practices are divorced from Zimbabwean indigenous cultural beliefs and are shunned by most local people. My view resonates with the argument of Gross and Olusegun (2014:2) who posit that "the practice counselling in Africa may not be very comparable with way they are practised in the western world."

I have observed that most teacher counsellors are not trained to use these Western-formed peer counselling techniques. There is research evidence that clearly shows that Zimbabwe rural learners abuse drugs , for example, the evidence in the research study by Cooper (2009:135), who confirmed that a "study on adolescent drug use assessed by teachers should that alcohol use was the most serious drug problem in Zimbabwe." But there is no actual peer counselling strategy designed to alleviate drug abuse. Therefore, the problem encountered in addressing drug abuse problem in Zimbabwe rural learning ecologies is the absence of peer counselling strategy to solve it. Hence, this research study seeks to formulate a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwe rural learning ecologies.

These western peer counselling strategies have failed to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, as Dube (2016:98) found "that the approach has foreign origins, meaning it does not fit appropriately in the context of Africa." Additionally, this view is supported by Charema and Shizha (2008:45), who affirmed the following:

> …the influence of Eurocentric counselling theory, research and practice among the Shona people has demonised and oppressed individuals and groups whose culture lies outside the Eurocentric counselling culture. It might be worthwhile for all community leaders, traditional healers, pastors and counsellors to employ the multicultural approach.

Zimbabwe was colonised by Britain, most of the policymakers are trained in westernised education systems, and peer counselling educational materials are western. Consequently, the research findings by Chireshe (2012:36) stated that "Zimbabwe's education officers are sent to Britain for counselling training, but have since left The Ministry of Education in Zimbabwe." The current western content in peer counselling strategy is difficult to use in Zimbabwe because it is devoid of the voice of the indigenous people; I regard it as a 'square peg in round hole'. This means that Zimbabwean rural learning communities are not involved in the formulation of peer counselling strategies. Therefore, the current peer counselling strategies used in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies are made in foreign lands and contain components that are not in line with Zimbabwean rural contexts. In addition, the other threat is that most teacher counsellors, especially in Zimbabwean rural areas, who train peer counsellors, are not qualified counsellors. In their research, Chimonyo, Mapuranga and Runganye (2015:67) observed that "most teachers in charge of guidance and counselling have no appropriate qualifications." This proves that, in Zimbabwe, there are very few qualified and registered educational counsellors.

Furthermore, the other threat to the Zimbabwean rural peer counselling strategy, is the heavy workload on the teacher counsellors as they are involved in teaching subjects, such as history, and, on the other hand, counselling learners and mentoring peer counsellors. Moreover, the teacher counsellor-learner ratio is very high in most rural secondary schools, as Mapfumo (2001:11) attested that "teacher counsellors have heavy teaching loads and there are no full-time teacher counsellors in schools." The heavy workload on teacher counsellors causes them to be tired and stressed. As a result, they will fail to perform their counselling duties effectively. In other words, they will fail to attend to learners' problems due to work commitments. Moreover, many peer counsellors lack training and this was stated in the research by Chireshe (2013:352), who noted that "in some Zimbabwe schools, there are no trained peer counsellors." The other threat is the

lack of resources; this negatively affects peer counselling strategy implementation. The research study done by Lonborg and Bowen (2004:319) argued that “the effective America School Guidance Services are hindered by lack of referral resources.” In support of this finding, one research study done in Finland, recorded in Lairio and Nissila (2002:169), found “that Finnish school counsellors are negatively affected by the lack of counselling resources.”

1.5 PROPOSED SOLUTIONS TO MITIGATE IMPACT OF THREATS ON PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY

To mitigate the problem of less qualified teacher counsellors, I propose that the government should employ full-time qualified counsellors, especially in Zimbabwean rural areas. Teacher counsellors in Zimbabwean rural areas should be given better financial and material incentives to top up their monthly salaries. On the other hand, the shortage of peer counsellors may be solved by recruiting and training more peer counsellors, as suggested in Chireshe (2012:50), who argued that “one way to overcome shortage of school counsellors has been the introduction of peer counsellors.” Furthermore, another solution is to train Zimbabwean rural peer counsellors through workshops and intensive short courses, as suggested by Kamore and Tiego (2015:261), who concluded that “[t]he solution lies in training many peer counsellors in high schools.” For example, in Kenya “the Ministry of Gender Sports and Youth Affairs in Kenya, trained young people in life skills, management and peer counsellors” (Marangu, Bururia & Njonge, 2012:90).

The appropriate selection and training of Zimbabwean rural peer counselling makes them effective in the implementation of peer counselling strategies and their counselling duties. This is explained by Kamore and Tiego (2015:255), who wrote, “[w]hen right students are selected their efficiency can further be improved through progressive training in peer counselling.” In addition, to mitigate the peer counselling resource challenges, I suggest that the government should allocate specific money to be used in addressing resource constraints, such as counselling offices, pamphlets and meeting other needs. The government should actively collaborate with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders in mobilising resources, such as peer counselling equipment.

1.6 THE CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

There are many conditions necessary for the formulation and implementation of peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. One of the conditions for the success of the formulation and implementation of peer counselling strategy is the active participation of rural community members, as Lykes (2016:43) alluded that:

> …for over a century, community psychologists collaborated with women, men and children in schools, workplaces, churches, non-governmental organizations, and local communities, seeking to enhance well-being and redress social inequities and/or to transform oppressive underlying socio-political structures that gave rise to those injustices.

In this research study, I used the Participatory Action Research approach, which promotes active participation of Zimbabwean rural communities. I applied the idea of Abbott, Duane and Chase (2008:10), who came to the following conclusion:

> [T]he problems that drugs and alcohol bring to communities are multidimensional and treatment interventions should be designed with input from the community. Tribal groups, families, traditional healers, religious entities, legal authorities, and local health care providers should all be involved in the healing and recovery process.

The other condition of the success of a peer counselling strategy was the inclusion of Guidance and Counselling subjects, which deal with peer counselling within the Zimbabwe school curriculum. One study in Zimbabwe by Mapfumo and Nkoma (2013:101) has found that “the Master Timetable in the head teachers’ offices indicated that Guidance and Counselling lessons are carried out once per week.” The teaching of Guidance and Counselling that consists of the component of a peer counselling strategy, allows Zimbabwean rural learners to be knowledgeable and empowers them with skills of executing their duties as peer counsellors. This shows that the teaching of this subject is legal and being enforced by authorities of Zimbabwean rural schools, as suggested by Mapfumo and Nkoma (2013:108), who stated that “the high school guidance counsellor is expected to acquaint herself/himself with the Ministry of Education Chief Education

Officer Circular Minute 51/1992 which provides the parameters for establishing and running guidance services in schools."

Moreover, the other condition noted for the success of a peer counselling strategy is capacitating Zimbabwean rural peer counsellors and teachers in counselling, as submitted by Bett (2013:482), who alluded that "peer counselling training enables peer educators to increase their own personal growth and become more functional at higher levels, as they become role models and new skills gained can be used in community service." On another perspective of teacher counsellors' training, Mapfumo and Nkoma (2013:108) held that "in United States, for example, most schools have counsellors with Master's Degrees in Counselling, while in Canada counsellors must be licensed teachers with additional school counselling training." In Zimbabwean rural communities, there are few qualified teacher counsellors. However, recently, there was an increase of universities in Zimbabwe offering degrees in Counselling to doctorate level. Teachers should be encouraged to further their studies in Counselling.

1.7 RESEARCH PROBLEM

In Zimbabwe rural learning ecologies some learners are abusing drugs but there is no specific peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse. Hence, this research study seeks to formulate an effective peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwe rural learning ecologies.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This study adopted the Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) as a lens. A theoretical framework is very critical in research studies, as Vinz (2016:1) stated that "[a] good theoretical framework gives you a strong scientific research base and provides support for the rest of your thesis." The rationale for adopting the Critical Emancipatory Research theoretical framework rests on its emphasis on equality, justice and the sharing of power among all concerned people. This is supported by Noel (2016:1), who argued that "[e]mancipatory research is a research perspective of producing knowledge that can be

of benefit to disadvantaged people who may be marginalised for reasons of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, economic background."

The Zimbabwean rural communities are disadvantaged and their views are not considered in previous research studies. Contrary, in this research study, the views of community members are adhered to. In addition, Etonge (2014:31) held that the "choice of CER is inevitable for such a study, since it proposes the solving of a problem by using values such as democracy, social justice, sustainable livelihood, empowerment and emancipation." CER propagates the engagement of stakeholders and leads to the ownership of the strategy that has been formulated collaboratively. Similarly, Nkoane (2012:98) explained that "researcher and research participants work together as participants to develop understanding and knowledge about the nature and root cause of an undesirable situation, in order to design strategies and marshal support to effect change." However, in Zimbabwe, Zvirevo (2013:46) stated that "[l]earners are not consulted when programmes are formulated in Zimbabwe." Rural peer counsellors and other stakeholders are marginalised in formulating peer counselling strategies in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the involvement of rural community members in this research study creates a platform for them to provide solutions to drug abuse problems. This is elaborated on by Fournier *et al*. (2007:4), who held that "CER stresses the importance of people speaking from their own experience, identifying a common theme among their individual situations, creating an analytical perspective from which to relate their situation to root cause, developing solutions and strategies for change."

As a result, CER allows learners and other participants to air their views in formulating a culturally relevant and all-inclusive peer counselling strategy. I hold that CER is empowering, changes the lives of rural community members, is educative, and advances an agenda of equity. CER allows for transformation and empowerment of participants, which is the agenda of this study.

1.9 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

This research study is underpinned by the following main research question: “How can we formulate a specific peer counselling strategy that alleviates drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies?”

re are no sub-research questions. The reason for this is that the research study rotates around five research objectives.

1.10 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.10.1 Aim

This study aims to formulate a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

1.10.2 Objectives

This study is anchored on the following five objectives:

- To explore the need for a peer counselling strategy formulated through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

- To identify the strengths of a peer counselling strategy that is formulated through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

- To anticipate impediments against the successful implementation of a peer counselling strategy made through active participation and emancipation of participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

- To examine the circumstances under which the success of a peer counselling strategy is achieved through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

- To formulate a peer counselling strategy that involves the active participation and emancipation of the marginalised participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. Jacobs (2016:48) defined PAR as "the action research which combines theory and practice, action and reflection with the participation of stakeholders who seek practical solutions to concerns and issues, allowing the flourishing of those stakeholders and their communities because of the research process." PAR actively involved the Zimbabwean rural community members in the research process to formulate and implement a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse. The active participation of Zimbabwe disadvantaged community members empowers them, as proposed by Ryder (2015:1), who argued that "critical researchers believe that research should be situated in the concerns of the marginalised, and this can best be achieved through egalitarian research practices like participatory action research." The emancipatory view of PAR, according to Miller and Maguire (2008:85), "offers the possibility to create more equitable educational policies which allows for practices for educational reform from the bottom up." Moreover, Loewenson *et al.* (2014:18) alluded that "generated knowledge reflects and consolidates power relations and conflict and consequently influences social and power relations."

Therefore, there is a link between the methodology (PAR) and the theoretical framework (CER), in that PAR buttresses CER because it advocates for empowerment and emancipation of marginalised members of society. PAR methodology is transformative in nature, as Dube (2016:8) observed that "the strength of PAR lies in the fact that it recognises the capacity of participants in contributing to the research process towards improvements and social transformation" and that PAR is used "for its transformative endeavours and emancipatory consciousness."

PAR is appropriate in this study because it allowed collaborative inputs in formulating an effective and culturally acceptable peer counselling strategy that has total buy-in from all stakeholders. The practical and collaborative dimensions of PAR engage rural

communities, according to Kemmis and McTaggart (2007:282), to investigate "social practices that link them with others in social interaction. This 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." In addition, PAR was 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). PAR allowed all stakeholders in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies involved in counselling to identify and acknowledge the problem, study the problem, and the analyse and formulate a peer counselling strategy in response to the drug abuse problem.

In addition, Zuber-Skerrit (2015:105-106) stated as follows:

> Participatory Action Research is like CAR but it is always aiming at inclusion, social justice, and equality of participants in the research. PAR originated in developing countries but then spread across the world. PAR is also an international network of scholars and practitioners from diverse fields and sections of society.

PAR advocates equality between the researcher and the participants. In this research study, there was active involvement of participants at all levels of research and I gave participants equal status to mine. That is why I refer to the Zimbabwe community members as "participants" and use the pronouns "I" and "our".

1.12 DATA GENERATION TECHNIQUE

The Free Attitude Interview (FAI) was the data generation technique implemented to gather views of the Zimbabwean rural community on peer counselling strategies. Meulenberg-Bunskens (2011:1) defined the term FAI as "a translation of the Dutch term 'Vrije Attitude Gesprek' as used by Vrolijk, Dijkema and Timmerman". The origins of FAI are, furthermore, explained by Meulenberg-Burnskens (2011:1), who stated that FAI was developed during industrial psychological research, the so-called Hawthorne Research in 1929 in the United States. However, this technique was developed from the Western perspective, as Meulenberg-Burnskens (2011:2) argued that it was "important to realise

that Western interviewing techniques are developed in Western contexts and cultural differences will have methodological repercussions". Therefore, this technique should be modified in order to contextualise it in Zimbabwean rural learning communities.

Through FAI I formulated a peer counselling strategy that is culturally sensitive, acceptable and produce desired results in Zimbabwe by using PAR. My view is that PAR is not a mere method; I concur with the perspective on PAR of Miller and Maguire 2008:88), who viewed it as "a pledge to collaboration and partnership throughout the problem-posing, knowledge creation, and action-taking cycles of a project." In this study, I adopted FAI and used it "creatively and as an instrument of data collection because it has elements of respect for people and a question used only as a means to initiate a conversation" (Tshelane, 2013:419). Furthermore, Meulenberg-Burnskens (2011:4-6) said that the "researcher used the exploring question to initiate the conversation".

To get the participants' perspectives, I posed the main research question of this study, to "How can we formulate a specific peer counselling strategy that alleviates drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies?" The research team then deliberated on it. After these deliberations, I collectively gave a reflective summary, which stimulated the participants to provide more information. This method allowed us to use photo voice and drama. The secretary wrote and recorded all the relevant information deliberated in this study. I had the first combined meeting where team members collectively agreed on their responsibilities and roles. I will meet monthly with participants in focus groups at agreed venues, at agreed times. These sessions are fundamental because they create team spirit and networking. The generated data will be analysed through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and the participants and the researcher will make research findings and determined implications of the research study, and made recommendations. The above perspectives of PAR, according to Crane and O'Regan (2010:15), permit rural community members to make "latent contributions, participate in communication, explain, reframe, seek common ground and language, which facilitates and encourages collaborative dialogue in research". This is in line with the study's research methodology – PAR – and CER as theoretical framework that advocates for inclusion of all stakeholders.

1.13 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The following participants are involved in this research study: six learners, one participant from a local NGO, a psychologist, a parent, a pastor, a local chief, a Member of Parliament (MP) and two teacher counsellors. I have indicated the numbers of participants because it is feasible to generate data from a limited number of participants. Zvirevo (2013:34) stated that the "research participants should be members of the community who are knowledgeable about the problem, have technical skills and something in common like culture." The participants in this study are knowledgeable and affected by peer counselling. These participants are selected after considering that they came from the same marginalised location, which is Chivi rural area, had the same socio-economic, cultural backgrounds, had influence in policymaking, possessed technical skills and had expert knowledge in peer counselling.

In selecting participants, gender was factored in and there was an equal number of female and male participants, which is in line with the principles of PAR and CER, such as active participation and emancipation of women and girls in issues dealing with drug abuse. This agrees with the value of PAR in this study, as elaborated in Glassman and Erdem (2014:212), who noted that "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." Jacobs (2016:50) argued that "Participatory Action Research has drawn upon a number of theories such as pragmatism, the practice of democracy, constructionist theory, and feminist inquiry". I noted that many research studies had conclusive findings that girls and women are also abusing drugs. The involvement of female participants in this study helped us to understand drug abuse and peer counselling strategy from a female perspective. Therefore, it is essential to involve females in drug abuse issues that is dominated by males in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. This perspective is supported by Lazar (2007:142), who averred:

> The need to claim and establish a feminist perspective in language and discourse studies is of course part of what feminists in academia have for many years criticised and sought to change across male-stream disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences.

PAR advocates for inclusion of women and girls in research studies, especially if I consider Feminist Participatory Action Research, which promotes the active involvement of Zimbabwean rural female participants in studies that deal with drug abuse in their learning ecologies. Women and girls have been left out of drug abuse issues in Zimbabwean rural ecologies because drug abuse is regarded as a male problem, due to inequalities. PAR methodology mitigates power imbalance in research. I support the notion by Dube (2016:119), who stated that PAR helps to contest power imbalances in research by offering "a means to dispute power disparities and change systems and institutions to create substantial justice". The active involvement of females in this study helped us to understand drug abuse and peer counselling strategies from a female perspective and empowering them. I used the invitation letters to request the participants' permission to voluntarily participate in this research study.

1.14 DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION

I used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyse the generated data. CDA is explained by Janks (2012:1), who posited that "where analysis seeks to understand how discourse is implicated in relations of power, it is called Critical Discourse Analysis". I concur that CDA deals with inequalities and social injustices that take place in research processes. In support of the CDA's principle of solving power imbalances, Fairclough (1992:32) stated as follows:

> [CDA] 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 the hope of spurring people on to corrective actions.

This is in agreement with this study's theoretical framework CER and PAR, in that they all seek to empower marginalised people and address the issues of power. The purpose of this study is to ensure social change through empowering Zimbabwean rural communities to formulate and implement a peer counselling strategy. My assertion resonates with the explanation of Dube (2016:10), who stated that "the desire to ensure sustainable social change is coherent with the use of CER and PAR". The research team

analysed the data through three levels of CDA, which are textual, discursive and social practice.

1.15 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

Staple-Clark (2012:1) alluded that “the purpose of the study is to inform action”. This means research must be beneficial. This study is valuable to learners, peer counsellors, teacher counsellors, researchers, the Ministry of Education, and other stakeholders. After the formulation and implementation of a peer counselling strategy, learners may stop or avoid using drugs. Another value of the research was empowering and emancipation of rural community members actively participating in this and future research studies. Mthiyane (2015:14) expounded that, drawing on the South African context, the National Youth Policy (2008-2013) recommended “the equal participation and inclusion, service providers must design policies, strategies and programmes for and with young people by sharing information, creating opportunities and involving them in decision-making as active participant”. The peer counsellors, teacher counsellors and other health professionals will be more knowledgeable and develop their skills after reading this research study.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education will develop peer counselling teaching and learning manuals, and financially and materially support the implementation of a peer counselling strategy in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The information contained in this research study will add to the existing knowledge in areas of peer counselling in relation to drug abuse. Lastly, current and future researchers in peer counselling may refer to this study and conduct further researches in areas this research might have overlooked.

1.16 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research study was ethically cleared by University of Free State who gave me the ethical number UFS-HSD 2016 / 0495 (see Appendix A). This research study was conducted in the Chivi rural area, in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Masvingo Province gave me permission to do research and

clearly spelt our research ethics I should adhere to, such as confidentiality (see Appendices B and C). The essence of ethics is elaborated upon by Dube (2016:32), who stipulated that “ethical considerations are very important in any research study to protect the participants from any potential harm during the process of generating data”. Moreover, Moleko (2014:12) explained how participants should be “made aware that at any particular stage they wished to pull out they [would be] free to do so… [be] treated with respect at all times and their discussions [should remain] confidential”.

I accorded respect to the participants and explained to them that they had the right to stop participating in this study at any time. The ethical considerations are very crucial in this research study, as they protect the participants from harm during and after the process of data generation. In this research, I explained to participants, in detail, the importance of adhering to ethical considerations. The research team, in this study, adhered to the ethical issues, such as voluntary participation and confidentiality, and they voluntarily signed informed consent forms.

1.17 LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

Chapter one presents an overview of the study on a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

Chapter two frames the study theoretically and discusses related literature informing a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

Chapter three elucidates data generation procedures for formulating a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

Chapter four handles data presentation, analysis and interpretation of a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

Chapter five presents a discussion of findings, a summary and recommendations for a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

In Chapter six, the proposed peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies is highlighted.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED LITERATURE THAT INFORM THE FORMULATION OF A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Formulating a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies is the aim of this study, which seeks to bring transformation on how past strategies are formulated in addressing the same area under study. This chapter presents the Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) theoretical framework that will operationalise the research study. After providing the actual theoretical framework to be used in this study, which is Critical Emancipatory Research, I discussed the other two probable theoretical frameworks I could have used, but the weaknesses thereof propelled me to utilise CER. Defined terms are frequently used in this discourse.

I will elaborate on the related literature of peer counselling strategies, under the following research objectives:

- To explore the need for a peer counselling strategy formulated through active, equal participation and emancipation of marginalised people, for alleviating drug abuse in rural learning ecologies.

- To identify the strengths of a peer counselling strategy formulated through active, equal participation and emancipation of marginalised children, for alleviating drug abuse in rural learning ecologies.

- To anticipate impediments for the successful implementation of a peer counselling strategy made through active, equal participation and emancipation of marginalised people, for alleviating drug abuse in rural learning ecologies.

- To examine the circumstances under which a peer counselling strategy can be achieved through active, equal participation and emancipation of marginalised persons, for alleviating drug abuse in rural learning ecologies.

- Finally, to formulate a peer counselling strategy that involves the active, equal participation and emancipation of the marginalised, for alleviating drug abuse in rural learning ecologies.

2.2 THE CER THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I will give detailed analysis of using Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) as a theoretical framework in this study. I will start by stating the definition of "theoretical framework", the origins of CER, the objectives, nature of reality, role of the researcher, researcher versus participant relationship and, lastly, the justification for using CER as the most convenient theoretical framework in this study.

2.2.1 Definition of "theoretical framework"

A theoretical framework is defined by many scholars from different vantage points. The University of Free State Doctoral and Masters Research Proposal Development and Skills Training Manual (2016:2) defined a theoretical framework "as a set of ideas that informs and guides your research". Zvirevo (2013:45), citing Swanson (1999), defined theoretical framework as "the structure that can hold and support a theory of a research study". Furthermore, Vinz (2016:1) stated that a good theoretical framework "gives you a strong, scientific, research base and provides support for the rest of your thesis". This means the CER theoretical framework provides a scientific frame for this study.

Grant and Osanloo (2014:12) wrote that a theoretical framework "serves as the structure and support for the rationale for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions". The theoretical framework provides a grounding base, or an anchor, for the literature review and, most importantly, the methods and data analysis. The absence of an appropriate theoretical framework means that the vision of the research study is unclear. Just like the builder of a house needs a blueprint,

the researcher must have a theoretical framework. The theoretical framework in this study allows us to have an organised movement from one chapter to the next. This means that the CER in this research study should prove the understanding of concepts and theories relevant to the formulation of a peer counselling strategy for the alleviation of drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

2.2.2 Origins of CER

The development of CER has its roots in Critical Theory (CT). To adequately show the development of CER it essential to explain the background of CT. Later I will indicate how CT evolved into CER.

2.2.2.1 The background of Critical Theory (CT)

There are many theories concerning the origins of Critical Theory (CT). Some scholars hold the view that CT has Marxist's roots; Nkoane (2013:99), for instance, postulated that CT has "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". The above position of Marxist origins is supported by Curpas (2013:12), who posited 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".

However, there are some scholars who attribute the origins of CT to Emmanuel Kant. One of the proponents of Kant as the originator of CT, is McKernan (2013:412), who argued that "CT was first mooted by Emmanuel Kant, a German philosopher in 1871". The other view of the background of CT is accredited to Hermann Weil, as stated by McLaughlin (1999:109), recording that it was 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". The perspective of Weil as founder of CT is evident in the research study of Schmidt (2006:51), who submitted

> [S]ocial 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.

My view is that CT originated from the Marxist School of Thought. My perspective is based on what the above-mentioned proponents of the Marxist view proposed. I agree that the idea of CT developed at the University of Frankfurt. The development of CT at the University of Frankfurt is supported by many research studies. McKernan (2013:424) found the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt am Main in 1923 and the early years of its establishment to be "grounded in Marxist–Leninist thinking". At the University of Frankfurt, the scholars established CT and, later on, developed it to be collaborative in nature to challenge all exploitative conditions, according to Wellmer (2014:705), "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".

CT had the principle of emancipation of the oppressed, as alluded to by Demirovic (2013:1-2), who stated as follows:

> [CT promoted] 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.

I conclude that critical theorists had an agenda to encourage community members to collectively challenge all oppressive structures that disempower and exploit them. My view is that the Frankfurt School responded to eradicate all human oppressive societal structures through collective action to solve their predicaments. For me to fully articulate the evolving of CT to CER, I will pay attention to different periods of the Frankfurt School in the following sections:

2.2.2.1.1 First era of the Frankfurt School (1923-1929)

This era is called the “Grünberg era”, named after “Carl Grünberg, who gave the School an orthodox Marxist orientation” (Dube, 2016:12) by propagating the doctrine of Marxism. People, mostly the Jews, in the Grünberg era are more focused on politics, as Held (1980:30) found that “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”. Moreover, How (2003:13) was of the view that “the Frankfurt School was under threat of an elimination of the left-wing ideas that the School embraced contrary to the expectations of the Weimar Republic”. The Frankfurt School was under tremendous assault and was closed after Hitler took over political leadership in Germany (Wiggershaus, 1994:17). Wiggershaus also stated that “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” (1994:17). The School went into exile in New York during this period of persecution.

The Nazis persecuted the Jews during Hitler’s era. Therborn (1990:30) made the following observation:

> [T]he 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 counterrevolution.

The above historical account of the Grünberg era led me to conclude that the Frankfurt School was politically inclined and was regarded as left-wing, which caused them to be politically persecuted. This period is critical to this research study for it gives enlightenment to the research leaders about the development of CER from CT and shows sources of power imbalances and injustices against the minority.

Therefore, this phase of the Frankfurt School history also helps the research study audience to understand the essence of collectively resisting all oppressive societal structures. The Jews who are at the Frankfurt School are in the minority and are marginalised. This is applicable to the study in the sense that Zimbabwean rural learners

and other rural community members are marginalised in the formulation and implementation of a peer counselling strategy. The next section addresses the second era of the Frankfurt School under the leadership of Max Horkheimer.

2.2.2.1.2 The Frankfurt School in America – exile

During this exilic period, the Frankfurt School was under the leadership of Max Horkheimer, when this young left-wing philosopher became the director of the Institute in 1930 and continued to direct it after the exile (McKernath, 2013:425). The emergence of the Frankfurt School in New York is accredited to Horkheimer, as Wellmer (2014:705) recorded that "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". It was in New York that Horkheimer, in his first speech in 1932, announced that they would continue and break with programmes (theorising on social structures) and focus on politics (How, 2003:15). Furthermore, Horkheimer's CT included other disciplines, such as psychology. Wellmer (2014:33) stated this as follows:

> [CT is 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.

In addition, How (2003:17) stated that "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". I conclude that the period of Horkheimer in exile created a new curriculum of CT that included issues that are not considered by the founders of CT. This period is important in my study, as Horkheimer included us (psychologists) in his CT and determined that CT principles should be used in our everyday activities, which include formulation of a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

The following stage looks at the post-exilic period of the Frankfurt School in Germany.

2.2.2.1.3 Post-exilic period of the Frankfurt School in Germany

Around 1950, Horkheimer and Adorno came back to Germany from exile in the United States of America. Their return was initiated by Mayor Walter Kolb. The return of the Frankfurt School to Germany is explained by Parkinson (2014:44), who wrote that "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". The two men, namely Horkheimer and Adorno, are fully subscribed members of "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" (Her, 1995:41). Moreover, they are defenders of CT, as 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).

To conceptualise CT in this era, Kellner (2005:48) stated that the "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". Lybeck (2011:91) also declared as follows:

> [The] 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.

In addition, Britain (2012:205) explained that it was the interdisciplinary study of society that incorporated the disciplines of philosophy, sociology, psychology, economics, political theory and subsequently music and culture more generally. In conclusion, I noted that, during this peaceful period, many proponents of CT emerged and expanded the scope of CT to include issues such as emancipation, psychology (my area of study) and indigenous knowledge development.

The next phase deals with Habermas, whose views are important to the concepts of emancipation and communicative action of my research study.

2.2.2.1.4 Habermas's concepts of emancipation and communicative action

Habermas was recognised as one prominent scholar who, according to Bolton (2005:4-5), followed "in the thought of philosophers and social scientists who preceded him" and was noted for "extensive use of sociology and Anglo-American philosophy in his work". In addition, Habermas was described as one of the many scholars who retrieved the promises of the enlightenment after its catastrophic implosion during the middle decades of the twentieth century (Gordon, 2013:176). During the beginning of the 1970s, Habermas and others started to move the agenda of CER from CT. This shift was premised on the loopholes in the views of Horkeimer, Marcuse and Ardouino's CT. Habermas saw weaknesses in CT as a too individualised notion of the subject and their Marxist view of history (How, 2003:115). Dube (2016) argued as follows:

> Habermas added a new dimension to the Frankfurt School, focusing on the reduction of the suffering of people through the concept of emancipation and 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.

The above views of Habermas resonate with my study that seeks to formulate a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. I hold that a peer counselling strategy should emancipate Zimbabwean rural learners and rural communities involved in addressing drug abuse issues. Scholars acknowledge Habermas as one of the scholars who brought CER to the Frankfurt School.

I concur with Dube's (2016:24) view of CER: "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". This means that any transformation that does not emancipate Zimbabwean rural people, is irrelevant; however, in this research study I envisioned CER, transforming and emancipating Zimbabwean rural learners and community members. The rural community members have the capacity to bring about changes in their society, as Habermas's CER aimed "to further the self-understanding of social groups capable of transforming society" (How, 2003:25).

To put more emphasis on the above citation, Ngwenyama (1990:5) alluded that Habermas understood “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”. Furthermore, Roderick (1986:100) averred that “communicative action is linked internally to the reason embodied in speech reconstructed by universal pragmatics directed towards achieving an agreement based on the intersubjective recognition of validity claims such as truth, rightness, sincerity, and comprehensibility”. Habermas brought a new concept of communicative competence in CER. Gordon (2013:176) found 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”. Community members should make a practical communicative strategy that is acceptable within their community.

This study aims at developing a peer counselling strategy that seeks to bring all Zimbabwean rural learners and other stakeholders to communicative action, with the purpose of emancipating and improving their human conditions. For peer counsellors and other stakeholders to positively bring about change, they should engage community members in addressing issues of drug abuse. Habermas (1992:86) stated that communicative action involved “reasoned argument, consensus, and cooperation rather than strategic action strictly in pursuit of their own goals”. Therefore, Habermas’s CER seeks active participation and collectiveness; individualisation does not have space in improving human life. This study brought together different people, such as educationists, social workers, learners, parents, and community leaders, who had experience in peer counselling and drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. This research was driven by networking and partnership with different stakeholders.

The next section views an analysis of the contributions of Honneth’s views to CER.

2.2.2.1.5 The principle of recognition: Honneth's contribution to CER

The emergence of Honneth's view was in addressing the weaknesses of Habermas's perspectives on the communicative theory. Honneth (2000:96-101) argued that to "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". To mitigate the limitations, advocates for theory of recognition. CER focuses on the basic features of identity formation through socialisation processes to achieve a normative framework (Toniolatti, 2009:372). In addition, Dube (2016:13) argued as follows:

> Honneth expands CER by proposing the principle of recognition, which I consider an important element towards attaining social justice, engage in participation, should also become part and parcel of the curriculum, which will emancipate people improve human conditions and promote social justice.

One of the scholarly contributions by Honneth is typology of social recognition, which Honneth (1995:129) described as "love-based, rights-based and solidarity or merit based recognition". I conclude that the researcher using CER should have the respect of community members through recognising the ability of community members to solve their problems. Therefore, I sought peer counselling recognition from Zimbabwean rural community members to solve the drug abuse problem. I greatly appreciate the principle of recognition developed by Honneth; it is crucial in working together with different players in formulating a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse.

The work of Foucault in relation to CER is analysed in the following phase.

2.2.2.1.6 MICHEL FOUCAULT'S THEORY CHALLENGES DOMINANCE

The position of Michel Foucault's theory is explained by Demirovic (2013:10), who wrote that he was convinced of the following:

> [E]mancipation 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.

Foucault's theory unpacks power relations and discipline in education. Dube (2016:15) commented that "Foucault highlights issues of power dynamics that end to dominate others in society and to emancipate means to engage in forms that liberate people from oppressive structures". The important aspect that there are oppressive structures in Zimbabwe that do not recognise rural communities in solving drug abuse using a peer counselling strategy, should be challenged in order to bring total transformation.

Foucault's (1976:36) view on power relations is: "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". Moreover, Foucault (1976:67) posed a question: "How have I come to accept the types of knowledge that I presume to be legitimate, valid and true?" In application to this study, I asked the question, "Is a peer counselling strategy able to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies?" Foucault's question was answered by Stromquist (1998:4), who argued that there are "multiple forms of power that takes form in macro-levels 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". This shows that there is power contestation and domination in education circles, therefore I need to use CER to challenge power imbalances in peer counselling strategy formulation, to bring about social justice and emancipation. To summarise, CER gives the disadvantaged rural communities' space to air their views on peer counselling strategies.

2.3 PRINCIPLES OF CER

This segment shows some principles of CER that I regard as relevant to this discussion.

2.3.1 Emancipatory in nature

One of the principles of CER is emancipation, as alluded by Etonge (2014:28), who stated that "the emancipatory objective that underpins this theoretical framework is about the

democratic principles espoused in the legislation, through the critical emancipatory research lens, critical consciousness is raised on the study problems." In application of CER's principle of emancipation, domination in a peer counselling strategy by teacher counsellors and other Zimbabwe influential community members, according to Abel and Sementelli (2002:260), 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".

Seeing the principle of transformation of CER through Habermas's perspective, Sinnerbrink (2012:370) stipulated that "CER responds to historical and social conditions of crisis and transformation of the existing social structure and replace them with an emancipatory one". To add to the emancipatory aspect of CER discourse, Biesta (2012:10) submitted that "critical pedagogies focuses on the analysis of oppressive structures; practices and theories". From the above submissions, emancipatory research empowers Zimbabwean rural community members to provide solutions to drug abuse problems. According to Moleko (2014:17-18), it precipitates emancipation: "since CER allows people to work together and talk freely it makes it possible for empowerment to take place". CER affords people an opportunity to learn about their struggles, understand their problems, reflect on what they can do about them, act in an attempt to solve them, and realise a difference that they can make in terms of solving their own problems. On the other hand, Shangase (2013:13-14) concurred that "within this context the participants have freedom to voice ideas and participate, and power sharing amongst the participants prevails, making the whole process educative and empowering". Furthermore, Deeper (2012:9) posited that CER "engages all people, including the ones that are oppressed, marginalised and have been deprived of their freedom to participate in activities which involve them so that they could also be freed from oppressions". CER has a political agenda; its agenda is to liberate the oppressed that are unable to actively participate in their community welfare.

The oppression may be in many forms, which include mental oppression. In this study, participants are liberated by being given an opportunity to exercise power in the formulation of a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. In addition, Etonge (2014:31) held that the "choice of CER is inevitable

for such a study, since it proposes the solving of a problem by using values such as democracy, social justice, sustainable livelihood, empowerment and emancipation".

In this study, one of my values as researcher was to respect and treat the participants with dignity. In this research study, I adhered to the principles of CER, which includes respecting participants' perspectives and, without any prejudices, basing it on issues such as economic, cultural and educational status. Therefore, CER gave all stakeholders in this study the opportunity to be part of transformation. The most fundamental aspect in using CER is that community members who encounter the challenge, also generate solutions to address their circumstances by bettering them.

The next CER principle to be explained is transformative agenda.

2.3.2 Transformative agenda

This study seeks to transform the current state of how peer counselling strategies are formulated in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies in order to alleviate drug abuse. Moleko (2014:18) is of the view that CER is transformative in nature:

> CER [has an] agenda of transformation, seeking clarity on transformation of the current state of the supplemental instruction's functionality into a better one. It is through the lens of CER, which places more emphasis on social and power structures, emancipating and empowering human subjects, that transformation can be experienced.

Failure to implement the transformative principle of CER in the formulation of peer counselling will cause it to fail. This view is supported by Stimson (2006:9), who stated that "the reason drug abuse prevention programs fail is that they are not contextualised". In light of the above, social justice eradicates power inequalities in the formulation of a peer counselling strategy, as revealed in Abel and Sementelli (2002:253), who held that CER's transformation principle "explains how power works to dominate, alienate and marginalise certain individuals and groups through modern social, political and economic practices to achieve sustainable social transformation".

The active engagement of Zimbabwean rural communities in the formulation of a peer counselling strategy, contextualises and has the support of the community which will use it. Naturally, human beings have a tendency of resisting anything that does not involve their views and contributions. In the same vein, any peer counselling strategy that is void of community views, will be resisted and will fail to achieve its intended purpose. This finds support in the views of Setlalentoa, Ryke and Strydom (2015:5), who stated that there is a need for an "alcohol-reduction strategy that is relevant and appropriate for the communities". I am persuaded that implementing a CER theoretical framework in this study enabled us to achieve the aim and objectives of the study.

2.3.3 Social justice

The objective of social justice is found in CER. Social justice is explained by Connell (2012:681): "[It] 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". The research study by Dal *et al*. (2016:1) stated that "[c]ritical studies generally rest upon a quest for social justice, conflictual views and efforts to reveal a hidden political agenda". Therefore, in this research study, social justice in CER enabled us to articulate and diffuse tensions and conflicts of power between the people in the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies and policymakers in the formulation of a peer counselling strategy in the alleviation of drug abuse in their community. In considering social justice, Brady (2010:8) alluded that "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".

The social objective of CER is fostered through active participation of disadvantaged members of society. This corresponds with the view of Corbett, Francis and Chapman (2007:86) for the "researcher and the participants [to] join together to explore power inequalities and imbalances". In this study, the rural participants are emancipated through being involved in the whole research process, including the data generation process and the formulation of a peer counselling strategy. Social justice is against exclusion of learners from the education system and propagates peace. Nkoane (2010:113-114) said that it was "opposed to any classroom practices that undermine the rights of students. In

other words, in light of social justice maintain particular focus on the critical pedagogy principles of dialogue and dialectic voice".

The involvement of Zimbabwean rural learners and adults together in this research study played a role in dealing with social injustice. However, Sengani (2015:37) described that "in most African cultures, elders have, over the years, used power bestowed upon them to make critical statements to their children, for this reason, there have been silent wars in the families and communities". The above view is supported in the research study of Schmidt (2006:24), who posited that "some African Chiefs, headmen and male elders are power assigned and manipulated by colonial state". However, through the lens of the CER theoretical framework, which I use to interrogate issues, this is a challenge because it promotes exclusion of women and children in decision-making. In Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, there are strong cultural beliefs; elders' words are highly respected and children are not allowed to disagree or challenge elders. The use of CER in this study emancipated learners and adult participants through gaining knowledge of unequal power relations, respect of one another's views, regardless of age or gender, and to find ways to demystify social injustice.

In addition, Penuel (2016:1) stated that participation "transforms the ways that people imagine themselves and expands their possibilities for action and Critical Emancipatory Research emancipates the participants engaged in the strategic action from the dictates of compulsion, tradition, precedent, habit, coercion and deception". Therefore, through CER, rural disadvantaged members, such as children and women, are empowered to exercise their right to speak their issues concerning drug abuse and lack of a peer counselling strategy, and to offer solutions. CER is anchored in anti-oppressive philosophy, as Hlalele (2013:103) posited that "CER advances the agenda of human emancipation, regardless of status and strives for the attainment of peace, freedom, hope, justice and equity in all its forms".

It is my view that CER breaks all racial, gender, economic, cultural, educational, and professional statuses – makes everyone equal and allows participants to reach levels of desired peace, freedom and justice. In addition, the agenda of CER is explained by Hlalele (2013:104), who argued that "it is to identify and change the causes of oppression

and pays more attention to the causes of oppression and not the signs of oppression". In Zimbabwe, I noted that the causes of oppression are on the societal structures that hinder community members, such as learners and female participants, to actively participate in issues that concern them. The emancipatory and empowerment agenda is that the CER method will enable participants to be in total control of their circumstances and they are accorded respect in the research study.

The next principle of CER that I considered, is to improve people's lives.

2.3.4 An agenda to improve people's lives

The last principle of CER is its ability to better the community members. This principle is derived from Habermas's view on CER, as explained by Alvesson (1992:435) as to challenge the "enlightenment tradition, a tradition originally dedicated to changing institutions such as the divine right of kings, the church, feudal bondage, prejudice and superstitious ideas". To explain further the ability of Habermas's CER to improve human life, Dube (2016:17) was of the view that "the return from exile gave the impetus for Frankfurt scholars to interrogate the life situation with the intention of improving conditions which are torn apart by the conflict of the Weimar Republic".

The principle of improving human lives is essential to my study, as I endeavour to formulate a peer counselling strategy that will alleviate drug abuse in the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The removal of drug abuse helps the rural learners and community members to have good health, as well as improve their academic and professional performance among other improvements.

2.4 JUSTIFICATION OF USING CRITICAL EMANCIPATORY RESEARCH AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK IN THIS STUDY

This section provides details of some of the reasons that motivated me to use CER in this study.

2.4.1 The CER theoretical framework resonates with PAR methodology

The acknowledgement of the relationship bet

ween PAR and CER should be understood by the readers of this research because all my research objectives have a combination of “active participation and emancipation” of Zimbabwean rural community members. The CER theoretical framework, used in this research, resonates with the PAR methodology, the research methodology. One of the reasons to justify the use of CER was stated by Hlalele (2014:103), who held that CER signifies a “paradigm shift from a conventional and positivistic one that places the ‘powerful’ researcher, to one that seeks to present collective research ownership”.

Moreover, PAR’s principle of inclusion is crucial in CER’s principle of emancipation of Zimbabwean rural participants, as Tshelane (2013:418) argued that “PAR is an inclusionary mode that complements critical emancipation research as its tenants are geared towards empowerment and are emancipatory in nature”. The principle of CER of “collective ownership”, as stated above, is in line with PAR methodology and propagates total participation of participants in the research study, which leads to rural learners and community members applying their own peer counselling strategy. Moreover, Ryder (2015) stated that “critical researchers believe that research should be situated in the concerns of the marginalised, and this can best be achieved through egalitarian research practices like participatory action research”.

I reason that CER and PAR help the main researcher and participants to generate data that are closer to more meaningful forms of knowledge. In this study, the agenda was to assist the marginalised Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies to be actively involved in the formulation of peer counselling strategies in order to mitigate drug abuse within their societies. As Moleko (2014:9) explained, CER as a theoretical framework that promotes teamwork was deemed fit for this study “as it encourages teamwork that will make it possible”. Therefore, CER and PAR give participants the power to collaboratively make and provide solutions to their problematic situations. This informs that CER and PAR allow the researcher and participants to collectively formulate the strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Dube (2016:9) believed that CER

should be chosen for a study “because it seeks the abolishment of social injustice, champion emancipation, focuses on freedom and release both in the process of research and in the transformation of society itself”. In Zimbabwe, I have noted that, in many instances, peer counselling strategies and programs are formulated without input from the learners from rural learning ecologies. The emancipation of participants and togetherness are the hallmark of CER and this is contrary to traditional research methods, such as positivism. Through CER, the researcher becomes less powerful, but more equal to his or her participants.

In this research study, the participants from Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies are afforded the opportunity to exercise the same powers as the researcher. These powers include the decision-making process of how the research study must be carried out in terms of time, content and structure. Furthermore, Noel (2016:1) wrote that CER “is a research perspective of producing knowledge that can be of benefit to disadvantaged people who may be marginalised for reasons of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, economic background”. Furthermore, Noel (201:2) stated that “the Westerner researcher operating in a developing country context, or the urban or metropolitan researcher working in a rural community will always be perceived to have some form of privilege due to education, race, economic background etc.” I reside in the urban area and my current status as Ph.D. student may be viewed by participants as a social privilege. I had to put in effort to mitigate this perception and create equality between my participants and me. My thrust is to de-elitise knowledge in this research study.

This research study involves rural communities who have been marginalised, experienced inequalities and societal injustices. Moleko (2014:20) wrote the following:

> [S]ince this study sought understanding of what people say about their own world and how they make sense of it, a platform was created that allowed the participants to tell about their experiences, fears and hopes. This platform enabled us to move away from discovering knowledge through primarily external observation and experimental manipulation of human subjects, to conversations in which human beings could be understood.

By using CER in this study, the researcher and participants are able to discover and dismantle societal barriers, such as inequalities, social injustice and domination. This

could only be done through active engaging of community members in the research process. The active participation of participants from the society destroys lack of diversity and interracial perspectives.

2.4.2 CER has the potential for capacitating rural learners

I decided to address the capacitation of rural learners mainly because they are direct beneficiaries of this peer counselling strategy. I am aware that previously I highlighted the emancipation of learners. however, in this section, I will explain in detail how the adults in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, who are in a position of power and authority, such as counsellors and teachers, usually determine what is appropriate for the learners in rural learning ecologies. This creates inequality and domination between adults and learners in rural learning ecologies. The above statements are supported by Mafumbate (2014:34), who concluded that “School Guidance and Counselling Services in Zimbabwe schools are established without student input.” Furthermore, Zvirevo (2013:36) stated that “learners are not consulted when strategies are being formulated in Zimbabwe”. This shows that rural learners are marginalised in formulating peer counselling strategies that alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. This notion is the one that this study seeks to diffuse by emancipating the rural learners, through their active participation in formulating peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

Mertens (2015:23) argued that “some authors regard emancipatory research as transformative research and was born out of the motto ‘nothing for us, without us’, a political action that aimed to move the control of the research into the hands of communities being researched”. The learners and community members in rural learning ecologies, who will utilise this peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse, will be involved. There shall be no peer counselling strategy formulation without the active involvement of learners in rural learning ecologies.

2.4.3 CER addresses rural and urban conflict in research studies

The aspect of rural communities challenging urban dominance is of importance in using CER. Hlalele (2014:101) asserted that “urban and metropolitan schools, colleges and universities may unintentionally structure their learning programs in such a manner that they neglect rural attributes and resultantly ostracise or marginalise learners/students from rural environments”. This statement clearly shows conflict of power, domination and social injustice perpetuated by urban communities on the rural communities in terms of formulation of strategies. This submission holds water, as most of the strategies that I have used in Zimbabwe in executing counselling work in rural ecologies have been formulated in urban areas by urban dwellers in head offices or hotels situated in urban environments.

According to Demirovic (2013:10) “Foucalt was convinced that emancipation means to liberate the individual from any bonds”. Hlalele (2014:101) alluded that “the realities faced by people in rural areas cannot always be addressed by policy made elsewhere and for everyone”. To elaborate more on CER issues of emancipation of marginalised rural communities, Given (2008:140) stated that “CER looks at, exposes and questions hegemony, traditional power assumptions held about relationships, groups, communities, societies, and organisations to promote social change”. I can infer the above submission that peer counselling strategies are ineffective if learners and other stakeholders from rural areas are not involved in the formulation of peer counselling strategies. Rural community members are encouraged to peacefully demand their right to be free from oppression by employing CER, according to Glassman and Erdem (2014:213), who argued that “oppressed communities need to seek freedom and announce their presence and need for curriculum space”. Rural communities usually create resistance to strategies that are formulated without their input – they regard this as an imposition on them – but they are very supportive to strategies that they have contributed to.

The researcher, using the CER principle of emancipation, should be able to work together with rural communities as stated by Williams and Nierengarten (2010:103), who held that “in addressing rural realities, mandates need to consolidate, collaborate and cooperate.

This means that rural imperatives need a community aligned and should draw from various sources". Marton (2014:34) claimed the following:

> [C]hildren and young people, regardless of their disabilities, like to be involved in decisions about questions and issues about their own lives and results from previous research show that children are able to contribute new ideas and creative thoughts to research projects.

Therefore, CER gives voice to the rural peer learner counsellors and other stakeholders to solve the lack of a peer counselling strategy by formulating one that addresses drug abuse in their learning ecology.

In other words, CER empowers and capacitates Zimbabwean rural participants and makes them creators of their own solutions. Blad (2014:2) wrote:

> [T]he Peer Group Connection was more successful than some other peer-mentoring efforts because it is integrated into the school day, incorporates several meetings with students' families to reinforce lessons and supports, and requires buy-in from principals and teachers before a school implements the program, the researcher wrote.

The success of the above peer strategy rested on the inclusion of all stakeholders and the collaborative nature of CER. In addition, Hlalele (2014:103) posited that injustices affecting rural inhabitants may be addressed by promoting "a positive view of education in rural areas and encouraging innovation and initiative in the provision of rural education services; and providing a framework for sharing of concerns, issues and experiences relating to education and training in rural areas". Failure to involve the rural communities in formulating peer counselling strategies for alleviating drug abuse in rural learning ecologies means pre-determining the failure of the strategies, which then means failure to mitigate the drug abuse problem.

2.4.4 CER is culturally sensitive

One of the proponents of CER, Honneth, was criticised for his cultural views on CER. Toniollatti (2009:379) concluded that Honneth was "criticised for reducing political dimension of social struggles sole to the cultural level of social integration, which is

interpreted as an attempt of social recognition". I disagree with Toniollati's view of criticising cultural views in CER. I hold that a culturally sensitive strategy is a peer counselling strategy that incorporates the community beliefs, values and practices. My perspective is supported in the Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe (2007:12), which stated that Zimbabwe needed 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, compassionate/Ubuntu".

To assist my argument of culture in CER, Bercaw and Stooksberry (2004:2) averred that "social transformation towards recognition begins with the assumption that existing societal norms silence voices outside the dominate culture which should be brought back into space". Moreover, Shizha (2005:15) found that the production of the culture of the dominant in schools had "a hegemonic effect that reinforces the indigenous people of the world remain powerless". The above comment on culture by Shizha shows that some cultures perpetuate oppression, and culture is defined contextually, at a broader spectrum, such as the Shona culture, or at micro level at school.

However, I am aware that some scholars advocate for multiculturalism and some have difficulties in using it, as Dube (2016:69) explained that "culture undoubtedly has become a challenge to some educational scholars in terms of how to effectively and efficiently engage meaningfully with a plurality of culture". I agree, but the bottom line is that whether culture is singular in form, or a plurality, it should be considered by community researchers.

Tucker *et al*. (2014:293) argued the need for "health care interventions that are culturally sensitive, and include an emphasis on empowering these individuals to take control of their health by engaging in health promoting behaviours, despite whatever conditions may exist in their lives". A culturally sensitive strategy is a peer counselling strategy that incorporates the community belief, values and practices. This culturally sensitive peer counselling strategy is tailored to positively alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The issue of cultural sensitivity is explained further by Hlalele (2014:104), who expounded that "with the huge variety of languages, cultures, and

educational systems found within the African continent, it is apparent there is need for the development of culturally sensitive and reflexive methodologies."

The lack of culturally sensitive strategies inhibits the successful implementation of peer counselling strategies in the communities they intend to assist. This notion has been supported by Abbott, Duane and Chase (2008:5), who observed that "one study found that a particular ethnic group did not seek alcohol or drug treatment from a local program because the program did not have staff that included members of the same ethnic group". In this study I involved the qualified rural community members who had a similar cultural background as the learners. I have observed that people are quick to embrace strategies that uphold their cultural values and norms. Community members reject and resist any strategy that does not encompass their cultural beliefs and values. This calls for the researcher to be culturally sensitive and culturally competent.

Moreover, Bainbridge *et al.* (2015:2) argued that cultural competency is "a key for reducing inequalities in healthcare and improving the quality and effectiveness of care for indigenous people". Furthermore, Andreula (2015:10) wrote that "research has demonstrated that, traditionally, most models of prevention and treatment of substance abuse are culturally blind and fail to take cultural variables into consideration when making attempts at explaining the behaviour, stressors, and preventing problems of clients". CER's agenda of emancipating the communities is accomplished if the researcher is conscious of the cultural beliefs and values of his or her participants. This is important because peer counsellors must be culturally competent to be able to assist learners and communities to deal with drug issues within their cultural context. The researchers should learn the culture of the research participants. This argument is supported by Hipolito-Delgado (2014:3):

> [F]or the participants in our study, building connections and rapport with communities was facilitated by having positive experiences with communities, learning from communities and identifying the values and common life experiences they shared with communities. When properly designed, cultural immersion activities are a great avenue for fostering positive experiences with communities and creating opportunities to learn from these communities.

There are many cultural reasons why people use drugs, as well as cultural reasons why they do not use drugs. Knowing these reasons helps the researcher in understanding the root cause of drug abuse, as Abbott, Duane and Chase (2008:1) argued that, in the abuse of alcohol and other drugs (primarily illicit drugs), what is considered illicit is often "culturally determined and can vary between social groups. Most culturally distinct groups have used and abused alcohol and other drugs throughout the ages, and they have established codes of behaviour in their approach to drugs and alcohol".

The above-mentioned cultural reasons should be known and understood by the researcher, if he or she wants to formulate an acceptable and effective peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse. The researcher should actively engage community members who reside in his or her intended geographical area of research study. The aspect of collaboration in research is emphasised by Cherrington (2015:43), who wrote that "fruitful collaborative research engagement requires three key components for a solid foundation: community partnership, the data generation process, and working towards meaningful change and mutual benefit". As a result, teamwork causes the society to build trust and confidence in the main researcher and the entire research process. Therefore, CER, in collaboration with PAR, combines the strength of academic researchers and the strengths of participants in this study.

Moreover, I concur with Sharma *et al*. (2016:7), who made the following argument:

> [H]istorically, policies and programs that target certain sectors of society have been planned centrally and initiated without the consultation or dialogue with intended beneficiaries. Lacking information on the needs of constituents and their local context is a main reason for failure of social welfare programs.

Prior to this study, I was employed as a peer counsellor co-ordinator with an international organisation in Zimbabwe, doing community work in both the rural and urban areas. At the time, I realised that the peer counselling strategies I used, are made without the involvement of rural community members. Based on my previous experience, I got an understanding of the importance of collaboration and it made me realise that the marginalised communities have knowledge and power to cause transformation if given the opportunity to actively participate in a research study.

2.4.5 CER is gender sensitive

CER highly considers the cultural, gender and other community values. It addresses societal issues, using political thrust. In this research study, gender is factored in. On the other hand, Mertens (2015:32) argued that CER "contends that there are many realities shaped by social, cultural, economic, ethnic, gender and disability values." Furthermore, rural women should actively participate in community issues, in line with Kasomo (2012:57), who made the following observation:

> Kenyan women are a major force behind people's participation in life of society today. Not only do they comprise the majority in terms of population, but they also play a crucial role in society as procreators of posterity as well as producers of goods and services.

In this regard, in Zimbabwe, there are efforts in the academic and professional circles to emancipate and empower women to actively participate in research and other areas. It has been noted that the participation of women and girls in decision-making, is lacking. This observation is supported by Kasomo (2012:57), concluding that "in Kenya, traditional perceptions of women as inferior to men prevail as many people uphold cultural practices which enhance the subordination of women. Consequently, men continue to dominate women in political, economic, social, and religious realms."

In mitigating this marginalisation of women, this research focuses on empowering women and girls to make decisions and effectively contribute to the formulation of a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. This agenda of empowering women is elaborated by Mapfumbate (2013:57), who held that "this situation has necessitated the clarion call that women should be empowered by giving them due status, rights, and responsibilities to enable them participate actively in decision making at the political level". Research studies in Zimbabwe and other nations reveal that girls and women also abuse drugs. Levi and Easly (1999:104) postulated:

> [D]espite rising alcohol and other drug use, accurate, comprehensive information on drug use among women is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. Difficult partly because of the sensitive and illegal nature of drug use, and partly because of the opinion that drug abusers are unlikely to report illegal drug use.

The Zimbabwean rural society does not recognise drug abuse among females, as Ncube (2014:34) argued that “social stigma attached to women substance abusers may also keep these women hidden from health care providers and may contribute to inadequate information on drug use prevalence rates and patterns”. Following are some of the research studies that prove that women abuse drugs: As recorded by Levi and Easly (1999:102), “women cocaine abusers use alcohol and marijuana to come down from cocaine or to counterbalance its effects… the 1996 NHSDA indicated different rates of alcohol use in Anglo and African American women”. In addition, another research study by Herb and Grube (1993:79) found:

> [W]hite women [were] more likely than black women to consume alcohol in public settings such as bars, restaurants, and at parties away from home. Black women are more likely to drink at home or to hang around with friends drinking in public places such as parks, streets or parking lots.

The above-mentioned research studies show that women, regardless of ethnicity and cultural backgrounds, use or abuse drugs; however, most Zimbabwe females (ab)use alcohol and other drugs in hidden places, such as their homes, and very few use drugs in public places due to societal connotations. The reasons are many, but the most prominent one is that they are afraid of stigmatisation. Therefore, the female voice is crucial in formulating strategies to mitigate drug abuse by female rural learners.

As a result, the views of women and girls about drug abuse and a peer counselling strategy should be adhered to and factored in. Drug abuse is not only a gender-based problem, but also cuts across gender, ethnic and economic status; therefore, both male and female participants should have equal representation in order to hear their views and formulate a peer counselling strategy to mitigate drug abuse. I should take note that the culture of communities contributes to use of drugs by females, as Levi and Easly (1999:106) argued that “contemporary trends and forces suggest that drug use and drug abuse among women may be rooted in a cultural context and a woman’s life experience and situation, and cultural roles and beliefs generally influence drug abuse”.

Zimbabwe, like other nations, is a signatory to international laws that give women the right to participate in all spheres. Kasomo (2012:57) alluded:

> [T]he principle of equality of men and women was recognised in the United Nations Charter (1945), and subsequently in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), in spite of the international declarations affirming the rights and equality between men and women of which Kenya is a signatory, available literature shows that women still constitute a disproportionately small percentage of those participating in political decision-making and leadership.

The intended aim will be achieved by creating a conducive platform for active equal participation and empowerment of female participants to reach a point of standing up and airing their struggles in formulating a peer counselling strategy to mitigate drug abuse. Importantly, I will be able to devise the home-grown solutions to solve the drug problem in our community. Shangase (2013:140) held that, "despite almost two decades of universal suffrage, black females in communities are still being held like sardines in closed cans because they cannot stand up and raise their voices, even in matters pertaining to their lives". This is applicable within the context of Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, where most females in the rural areas in Zimbabwe generally look down upon themselves, and those in urban areas have a superior attitude over those from rural environments. Rural communities, in researches that have been conducted, are liberated through the use of the CER theoretical framework. McCabe and Holmes (2013:82) argued that "critical research involves the co-creation of the research agenda by the researcher and researched participants". In this research study, the participants, who included female participants, and I as the researcher, agreed on how to conduct our research study.

Mthiyane (2014:26) was of the view that "power dynamics are at the centre of CER, with people sometimes accepting things the way they are, critical thinkers reject this behaviour and warn that in so doing one might reinforce the current unequal distribution of power". I have noted that power disparities between the researcher and female participants cause problems in formulating peer counselling strategies that alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The usages of PAR and CER in this research empower and give voice to the rural marginalised females, so that they might be heard.

The issue of the marginalisation of community members in peer counselling matters in Zimbabwe was stated in Mapfumo and Nkoma (2013:100), who conclude that "results also indicate that there is little consultation between counsellors and teachers in the schools." Furthermore, Zvirevo (2013:36) stated that "learners are not consulted when

strategies are being formulated in Zimbabwe". The above empirical data confirms that one of the major challenges in Zimbabwe is the exclusion of female learners and other stakeholders in formulating peer counselling strategies that alleviate drug abuse among learners. The exclusion of participants precipitate problems in formulating commonly agreed peer counselling strategies and this gives birth to uncoordinated plans in implementation and leads to poor monitoring procedures of peer counselling strategies. In line with this idea, Mthiyane (2014:20) wrote:

> Critical emancipatory research involves use of critical theories, participatory action research, Marxism, feminism and ethnic studies. Freirean theories, race-specific theory and post-colonial theories are utilised to promote individual freedom within a democratic society and to transform social structures and challenge oppression.

2.5 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER AND PARTICIPANTS IN CER

In adhering to the CER's principle of transformation, the Zimbabwean rural community members participating in this research study are participants at par with the researcher. Dube (2016:55) explained that using the principles of CER and PAR, "the power of the researcher is reduced while that of the participants is increased, unlike in the positivist and post positivist paradigms". Given (2008:139) agreed with this:

> [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.

The researcher using CER is a facilitator, as alluded by Mahlomaholo (2009: 226), who maintained that the role of the researcher within the CER context is that of "engaging the participants in the research project with the aim of empowering, transforming and liberating them from futile practices and thoughts, consequently, meeting the needs of a real-life situation". In support of the researcher as facilitator, Shangase (2013:45) explained that "this is because the researcher within this context is more than a facilitator and an enabler who shares expertise rather than impose it". In this research study, CER principles of empowering and emancipation of marginalised co-research are applied, as

I relate to Zimbabwean rural community members. Blyler (1998:36) held that "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." I observed that, through my relationship with participants, I was not dominating in this research study – "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 the participants. The relationship between the researcher and participants is consensual:

> [T]he 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, I value principles of democracy, social justice, sustained livelihood and empowerment of all (Nkoane, 2013:396).

Therefore, CER contributes to the development of knowledge and own research outcome, as explained by Kemmis (2013:76), who posited that "CER will lead them to own the outcomes of the research project of their own efforts". I valued the Zimbabwean rural community members' skills and expertise, for I agree with Matsika (2012:209-210), who commented that "traditional and local knowledge exists and is advanced through the experiences of local community in the process of managing the conditions or context that challenges the people's life everyday".

In view of the above, knowledge of a peer counselling strategy capacitates Zimbabwean rural participants, according to Boven and Morohashi (2002:8), who stipulated that "they develop their own knowledge base and, to develop methodologies that promote activities for improving livelihoods". The relationship of researcher and participants is beneficial in that it creates peace and oneness, as it is a close kind of relationship that "emboldens transparency and openness particularly because of the platform generated by Critical Emancipatory Research which at all times advances the agenda of peace, freedom, hope, social justice and equity in all its forms" (McGregor & Murname, 2010:25). The researcher using CER sometimes gives research findings in personal terms, using words like "I" and plural terms, such as "we" and our".

The other role of the researcher in CER is to take care of the welfare of research team members. In this study, I provided food and transport money, and provided psychosocial support to the emotionally-stressed participants. This was done through the view of CER that involves “equity, social justice, freedom, peace and hope with genuine commitment to the plight of the less fortunate” (Mahlomaholo, 2009:241). I hold the same view as Campanella (2012:4), “that researchers must be compassionate, patient, and mindful of the issues that communities are faced with, and should allow the participants to air these issues in a manner that is convenient to them”. This helps researchers to be humane, to be effective listeners, and to be respectful to participants who are engaged in the research study.

In this research study, there are professional counsellors and social workers who are qualified to offer emotional support and counselling to those who experienced personal problems, such as stress and family problems. I also provided food and transport money to participants during the research process. These are some of the ways of showing compassion and appreciation to our research team members. The proponents of CER must work with the people, rather than work on the people. The role of the researcher and participants in CER is to collectively interpret the generated data and agree on the meanings. Shangase (2013:45) postulated that the role of the researcher is critical in this context because it “enables strategies to be directed towards yielding positive results, because all stakeholders are engaged, operate within the context wherein there are equal power relations and, therefore, own the program that is put in place”.

The following section outlines two probable theoretical frameworks that I could have used, and the rationale for not using them, is stated.

2.6 TWO PROBABLE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

In this section, I will give a brief discussion on the other two theoretical frameworks that I could have selected and used in this research study. The two theoretical frameworks are positivism and phenomenology. I will describe these two theoretical frameworks and submit my premises why I did not consider using them in this research study.

2.6.1 PHENOMENOLOGY AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The origins and objectives of phenomenology, nature of reality, the researcher's roles and the relationship between the phenomenologist and the research participants are discussed below.

2.6.1.1 Origins of phenomenology

The origins of phenomenology are explained by Kafle (2011:181) as an umbrella term "encompassing both the philosophical movement and a range of research approaches. The phenomenological movement was initiated by Husserl (1859-1938) as a radically new way of doing philosophy. Later theorists such as Heidegger (1889-1976), had to recast the phenomenology project." From another angle, Converse (2012:1) alluded that "the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl, is credited with starting the phenomenology movement in 1913 with the publication of his book, Ideas; General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology". However, the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (2015:1) recorded that "the historical movement of phenomenology is the philosophical tradition launched in the first half of the 20th Century by Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponenty and Jean-Paul Sartre".

In shedding, more light on the history of phenomenology, in addition, the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (2015:1) stated that "phenomenology comes from a Greek word *phainomenon* meaning that which appears and *logos* meaning study". This then leads to the definition of phenomenology, according to the Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (2015:1):

> [Phenomenology is] the study of structures of experiences, or consciousness. The literal meaning of phenomenology is the study of phenomena, the appearance of things as they appear in our experiences, or the ways I experience things, thus, the meanings things have in our experiences.

Therefore, it is the systematic study of phenomena that appears in the acts of consciousness. There are three kinds of phenomenology, as expounded by Kafle (2011:185), who held that "I can distinctively classify phenomenological tradition under

three major headings. They are: transcendental phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology and existential phenomenology". Converse (2012:1) defined phenomenology as a "philosophical perspective that helps researchers to explore and understand everyday experience without pre-supposing knowledge of those experiences". This means that the researcher regards knowledge as whatever is reflected during a phenomenon. The conscious experience of using phenomenological perspectives is regarded as subjective to the researcher. My critical analysis of phenomenology, as eluded to by Edmund Husserl and other phenomenologists, is that phenomenology provides strong bases for all human knowledge and scientific knowledge. I deduced that phenomenology rejects acknowledging and insights obtained from large quantities of data, while acknowledging knowledge from experiences gathered through phenomenological perspectives.

I concur with Zvirevo (2013:56), who stated that phenomenology refers to "a person's perception of the meaning of an event, as opposed to the event as it exists externally, outside of that person". Therefore, phenomenology tries to comprehend the participants' perspectives, perceptions and understandings of a phenomenon. It endeavours to respond to the question, "What is it like to experience such and such?" My argument is that phenomenology is divorced from the agenda from this research study. It only gives validation of data that has its historicity in phenomenological perspectives. I also noted that phenomenologists are concerned with accurately describing the phenomenon, and this is totally foreign to the purpose of this study. This disqualifies the usage of phenomenology in this study and validates my choice of using CER that acknowledges and values all kinds of knowledge and experiences participants have.

2.6.1.2 Objectives of phenomenology

One of the objectives of phenomenology is explained by Mathobela (2015:44) as follows: "the goal of the researcher within phenomenological context is that of accurately describing the phenomenon, renouncing from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts". This shows that the premise of reality in phenomenology is on the experience by the researcher. The aim of phenomenological research is centred on aspiring to pure self-expression by the participants, and excludes the main researcher's

influence or bias. The researcher does not offer leading questions to participants. The participant, through the process of bracketing, will be conscious of his or her own views and prejudices concerning the phenomenon under study. The principles of phenomenology are summarised as follows:

> 1. Causalities and fundamental laws are searched. 2) Phenomenon is reduced to the simplest elements. 3) Hypotheses formulation and testing them, to be focused on meanings. 4) Aiming to understand the meaning of events. 5) Exploring the totality of each individual case (Dudovskiy, 2016:14)

After careful consideration of the above-mentioned principles, I concluded that these principles do not resonate with this study that is using CER. For example, in this research study, I do not use hypotheses as phenomenology does, but rather a main research question and objectives to provide information. The aim of phenomenology was highlighted by Wilson (2014:291) as "to study how human phenomena are experienced in consciousness, cognitive and perceptual acts, as Ill as how they may be valued or appreciated aesthetically." From another perspective, the goal of the researcher using phenomenology was explained by Groenewald (2004:5) as "accurately describing the phenomenon, renouncing from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts". From the above analysis, I hold that the goal of phenomenology describes the people's "lived experience" of phenomena. Inter-subjectivity is an important concept of phenomenology. This is because human beings experience the world "through and with others".

An example of a phenomenology objective can be stated as follows: "the objective of this research study is to understand the experiences of child headed families in rural learning ecologies". Moreover, Langdridge (2007:4) stated that phenomenology is "a discipline that aims to focus on people's perceptions of the world in which they live in and what it means to them; a focus on people lived experience". The above citations mean that the reality to phenomenologists is premised on their own experience and not the reality as perceived by participants. These objectives do not resonate with the objectives and purpose of this study.

I submit that this research study allows the reality and perspectives of the participants to take precedence over those of the researcher. It is clear that phenomenology is essentially used when the researcher and participants do not know that phenomena exist and also whether the phenomena are poorly conceptualised. In this study, the research problem is not poorly conceptualised; I know that Zimbabwean rural learners abuse drugs and that there is a lack of peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse. This has contributed to my refusal of using phenomenology as a research theoretical framework.

2.6.1.3 Nature of reality of phenomenology

The nature of reality in phenomenology is stated as follows:

> [[P]henomenology takes into account experiences of people and trying to accurately describe the phenomenon, relinquishing from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts; the fact of the matter is that the researcher is the one interpreting these experiences of the subjects based on reality that is confined to his/her immediate experience" (Starks & Trinidad, 2007:1347).

This is clear evidence that phenomenology does not put into perspective the views of the marginalised research participants. The following research study concurs with my analysis: Mathobela (2015:45) argued that "the participants' voices and personal experiences are not heard as the phenomenology based researcher is the only sole interpreter of these experiences of subjects based on reality confined to his/her immediate experiences and disregarding those of the subject". This is totally divorced from the agenda of this research that advocates for participants to actively participate through sharing of their views.

Caligo (2014:2) stated that "hermeneutic phenomenology comes from the observer's experiences, presuppositions, and projections of his or her personal values and expectations". Therefore, in a nutshell, phenomenologists subscribe to the notion of studying experiences and how human beings experience phenomena. Furthermore, Goble (2016:1) argued that the basic tenet of phenomenology is that "our most fundamental and basic experience of the world is already full of meaning. The purpose of

phenomenological research is to bring to light and reflect upon the lived meaning of this basic experience".

My analysis is, according to phenomenology, that human experience includes sensory perceptions, thoughts, emotion and action. These experiences bring together what human beings live through. The phenomenologist researcher holds that, to arrive at certainty, anything outside the immediate experience must be ignored. Moreover, phenomenological study pays attention to particular experiences of the individual in a specific situation – not exploring reality, but what is preconceived to be. Hence, it is the study of appearances as opposed to reality. It is my view that the participants' voices and personal experiences are not heard in phenomenological studies, as the researcher is the interpreter of the experiences of participants, based on reality confined to the researcher's immediate experiences only. In phenomenology, the meaning created by human beings is founded in human actions. This concurs with Wilson (2012:23) who stated that "in phenomenology, people are engaged in an ongoing process of making sense of the world, in interaction with their fellows and we, scientists, are seeking to make sense of their sense making". It shows that researchers in phenomenological studies are regarded as the interpreters who give participants meaning.

This is contrary to the approach of the current study. In this research study, the participants give interpretations of their views and I play the role of the facilitator. The thrust of this study is on active participation of participants that allows them to give their perceptions and views on formulation of a peer counselling strategy. I hold that phenomenology, as a theoretical framework, is inappropriate in assisting this study to bring about transformation and empowerment to the lives of the Zimbabwe, rural-based participants, as their voices are ignored in the previous formulated peer counselling strategies.

2.6.1.4 Role of the researcher in phenomenology

Some of the roles of researchers using phenomenology are explained by Goble (2014:2), who wrote that "researchers attempt to describe phenomena as they appear in everyday life before they are theorised, interpreted, explained and, otherwise abstracted, while

knowing that any attempted to do so this is always tentative, contingent, and never complete". This shows that the researcher, in phenomenology, is very much active, while participants are inactive in the research process. Furthermore, the researcher using phenomenology is the sole creator of research knowledge:

> [P]henomenology like positivism allow for one person (the researcher) to create knowledge which in the case of positivism would be derived from numerical data and in the case of phenomenology from the textual data, while the subjects' contribution to knowledge creation is non-existent and very distant (Mathobela, 2015:45).

This disagrees with CER and PAR used in this study. As Moleko (2014:15) posited:

> [T]he choice was determined by an ability to help direct this study towards emancipatory, transformational and empowering praxis that helps address the research aim and objectives. It was made on the basis of embracing the engagement and participation of all people, including those usually excluded and marginalised from conversations and decision-making that involves them.

The usage of phenomenology allows the researcher to be judgmental and not flexible because he or she is guided by well-structured data-gathering instruments, such as structured questionnaires. Moleko (2014:16) was of the following opinion:

> [P]henomenology does not appreciate information and insight as coming only from large amounts of data, but should arise from intense study of experiences performed through phenomenological methods. Although phenomenology takes into account experiences of the people the researcher is the one who explains and interprets these experiences, based on a reality that is confined to his or her immediate experiences.

I concur that the researcher using phenomenology collates data from participants, and the researcher describes participants' experiences. I observed that some of the data-gathering instruments or tools used by phenomenology are observations, drawings, interviews, and diaries. When the phenomenological researcher has completed interviewing the participants, he or she looks into the interviews and searches for patterns. The researcher using phenomenology must use open-ended questions to generate information, whereas the researcher in CER must be an attentive listener, non-judgmental

and flexible. In this study, the role of the researcher is facilitation, I made use of flexible data-generation instruments, such as Free Attitude Interviews.

One should note that there are four steps of the methodology of phenomenological study: bracketing, intuiting, analysing and describing. The researchers using phenomenology use sampling methods in selecting research participants, and the sample must be small. The nature of this research study, employing CER, is that it does not use sampling and samples. The researcher using CER selects participants, based on their skills, knowledge of matter under study and geographical location, among other issues.

I share the same view as Mahlomaholo (2009:225-226), who alluded that both positivism and phenomenology, respectively, "cannot make it possible for critical reflection, deeper meaning, and a plethora of perspectives to be advanced due to their numerical and textual nature, and, on that basis, they are unable to guide this study to achieve its objectives". I concur with the above citation, in that phenomenology does not allow critical reflection and narrows the focus on one perspective. This study allows for critical reflection and accommodates different views and opinions from participants. I was very flexible in terms of conducting the research study. However, although phenomenology accepts many views, Mathobela (2015:45) concluded as follows:

> [T]hough phenomenology like CER allows participants to share their own perceptions and experiences of the phenomenon, phenomenology falls short as it ends at textual level analysis while CER goes beyond and provides critical reflection, deeper meaning, and a plethora of perspectives to be advanced from textual, social, political and discourse levels.

My use of CER in this study permits participants to share their own perceptions and experiences of the issue of formulation of peer counselling strategies for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

2.6.1.5 Relationship between the researcher and participants in phenomenology

The researcher in phenomenology, dominates or wields power over research participants. The main reason of the inequality is elaborated on by Creswell (2013:60), who explained that the researcher "poses questions to several individuals of their lived experiences of a

concept or phenomenon and the participants' role is to respond and give the researcher answers to questions posed". In this research study, there is equality between the researcher and the co-researcher. The equality between the researcher and the co-researcher is one of the principles of CER. This research study has the agenda to empower Zimbabwean rural communities through actively engaging the participants in setting the research agenda. This, then, empowers the participants. Furthermore, Creswell (2013:58) posited as follows:

> [T]he researcher describes what all the participants have in common as they experience the phenomenon. In the process, the individual experiences of participants with the phenomenon are reduced by the researcher and not by them to a description of the universal essence".

I observed from the above research study that the phenomenologist has the prerogative of describing the phenomena after identifying them, gathering information and making conclusions.

The research participant in phenomenology plays a very limited role in research. Moreover, Mathobela (2015:45) delivered the following statement about the role of the researcher:

> [T]he researcher identifies a phenomenon and then collects data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon, and develop a composite description of the essence of the experience for all the individuals. This description consists of "what" they experienced and "how" they experienced it from the perspective and understanding of the researcher and not participants.

The aforementioned reasons are my basis for rejecting phenomenology as the theoretical framework of this study. Through the CET, the participants and I worked as a collective team in describing the drug abuse problem of their community and ways to mitigate it through peer counselling.

2.7 POSITIVISM AS THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This segment focused on the origins of positivism, its objectives, the nature of reality, the roles of the positivist, and relationship between the positivist and the participants.

2.7.1 Origins of positivism

August Comte is the founder of positivism in the 19th century, according to Aliyu *et al.* (2014:82), as cited by Kaboub (2008): “the idea of positivism came into being as a truth-seeking paradigm in the later 19th century, through August Comte’s denunciation of metaphysics and his contention that barely only technical and scientific facts can disclose the reality concerning truth”. In addition, Younkins (2003:1) gave an account of the positivism history:

> Aristotle who is known as the inventor and father of positivism, states that human knowledge originates from experience and not the other way around. There are also two British philosophers who are the proponents of positivism namely: - John Locke (1632-1704) and David Hume (1711-1776), and later the Vienna Circle (1907-1938) led by Friedrich Albert and Moritz Schlick (1882-1936).

Another perspective of the origins of positivism is given by Dudovskiy (2016:34), who elaborated that positivism “belongs to an epistemology which can be specified as a philosophy of knowing, whereas methodology is an approach to knowing, philosophy, positivism adheres to the view that only factual knowledge gained through observation, including measurement, is trustworthy”.

I believe that positivism is a philosophical theory which derives positive knowledge from the natural phenomena. According to positivists, truth is found in derived knowledge. They believe that the community operates according to general laws and that there is no room for intuitive and introspective knowledge. This is supported by Dudovskiy (2016:48), who submitted that positivism “adheres to the view that only factual knowledge gained through observation, including measurement, is trustworthy”.

After considering the above perspectives, I decided that positivism, as a theoretical framework, does not suit this research study. My rejection of positivism is centred on the fact that, in this research study, I am not interested in logic, but rather critically engage in our own realities, generate our remedies to mitigate our own problems and, in the process, empower and emancipate ourselves. These reasons effectuate an advantage to the CER theoretical framework ahead of positivism.

2.7.2 Objectives of positivism

The main objective of positivism is to describe and explain experiences and observations by the researcher, as Moleko (2014:14) stipulated that "Aristotle, known as the originator of positivism, averred that human knowledge begins with experience and that the first task of a philosopher should be to describe experiences and observations, then to classify them". Therefore, logic and experience are the main components of positivism. Positivism rejects meta-physics. Dudovskiy (2013:67) summarised the principles of positivism as follows:

> 1. There are no differences in the logic of inquiry across sciences. 2. The researcher should aim to explain and predict. 3. The research should be empirically observable via human senses. Inductive reasoning should be used to develop statements (hypotheses) to be tested during the process. 4. Science is not the same as common sense. The common sense should not be allowed to bias the research findings. 5. Science must be value-free and it should be judged only by logic.

Positivists formulate concepts that need to be operationalised in order to be measured. This is contrary to this research study because the participants' concepts have been valued and taken into consideration. Positivists believe that factual statements are meaningful statements because they can be verified; that is why they use quantitative methods, as alluded to by Mertens (2015:10), who stated that "positivism uses quantitative methods and surveys in the collection of data". I will challenge positivism at this point using PAR, because "PAR and CER share a common vision where the thrust is to change [the] exploitative structure of society" (Dube, 2016:117). According to Eruera (2010:79), "PAR is a departure from the traditional, positivist, science to work towards recognising and addressing complex and social issues".

This research used focus group discussions as a platform for participants to air their views and I generated data using the FAI technique. This is in line with PAR, where the researcher and participants equally and actively explain and predict the research process. To authenticate the above, Lykes, Hershberg and Brabeck (2011:24) stated that PAR is "one of several critical approaches to research and seeks to develop collaborative processes that prioritise the voices and actions of those marginalized". Therefore,

positivism falls short of this study as it devalues participants' individual and lived experiences by being judgemental to their own individual experiences if they do not comply with the logic and experience of positivism, and cannot be tested. The above points are contrary to the spirit of this study, which is emancipatory in nature.

Another argument for rejecting positivism as theoretical framework in the research study, is that I have not used hypotheses but, rather, a main research question and objectives to provide information for our study. Therefore, CER is the most relevant theoretical framework as it places importance on and respects participants' experiences and the solutions they give. This concurs with the research study by Chilisa (2012:253), who argued that CER "uses dialogical methods of generating data". Through using PAR in this study, I generated data through active participation of participants, as they shared their views and opinions on the formulation of a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

2.7.3 Nature of the reality of positivism

Positivists hold that truth is objective and independent. Aliyu *et al.* (2014:81) articulated that "positivism could be regarded as a research strategy and approach that is rooted on the ontological principle and doctrine that truth and reality are free and independent of the viewer and observer". Terms such as "realism" and "objectivism" are used by positivists. Positivism research is identified by the following three aspects:

> [F]irst, through the extensive use of quantification and technical characters of the publication, second, usually only statistical methods are utilised and there is no attempt at triangulation, third, one dataset or every limited source of data is taken into account. The interpretation of findings is relatively categorical and very little attention is paid to the controversial findings (Adam, 2014:7).

What I have noted from the above citation is that positivism accepts knowledge from one source, unless if scientifically proved. However, in this study, the knowledge from different experiences of participants was generated and used in the research study. CER, in conjunction with PAR, accepts knowledge from multi-sources and experiences. Dube

(2016:64) concurred that “PAR allows multiple voices and players to engage in dialogue through emphasis of the principle of CER such as emancipation, social justice and recognition”.

During our research process, we respected and tolerated each other’s different views, interpretations, knowledge and experiences through usage of CER and PAR. Dudovskiy (2016:69) explained the shortcomings of positivism, as an epistemology:

> Firstly, positivism relies on experience as a valid source of knowledge, secondly, positivism assumes that all types of processes can be perceived as a certain variation of actions of individuals or relationships between individuals, thirdly, research findings in positivism studies are only descriptive, thus, they lack insight into in-depth issues.

I concur with these disadvantages and this informs my anti-positivism stance and conscious decision to use CER as a theoretical framework. To add to these shortcomings, Aliyu *et al*. (2014:82) laid the following criticism on positivism:

> [P]ositivism, particularly, the complex set of ideas and notions coined by Vienna Circle termed “rational positivism”, have been dishonoured in the view point of science and positivism appears to be lacking foundation for research and investigation in any case in the concluding realm.

The above-mentioned criticism on positivism convinced me to use CER.

2.7.4 The role of the researcher in positivism

In positivism, the researcher must be independent. Dudovskiy (2013) stated that in “positivism studies, the role of the researcher is limited to data collection and interpretation through the objective approach and the research findings are usually observable and quantifiable”. The positivist researcher must emphasise objectivity, impartiality and repeatability, as alluded to by Aliyu *et al*. (2014:82), who wrote that “positivists have equally a realist and an independent and objective analysis and view of the universe”. The positivist researcher uses quantitative analysis, confirmatory analysis and laboratory experiments. However, in this research study, the researcher was a facilitator and actively participated with participants. I generated and interpreted data

collectively as a research team. Adam (2014:6) opined that “positivism, somehow, presupposes that data are good quality and adequate if they can be quantified and bypasses the problem of context by dealing with the multitude of variables and correlations between them”. The researcher makes data summations in the research study that has positivism as a theoretical framework. One should note that in a positivism-based research study, the research hypotheses are formed to be solved by the researcher.

The positivists even make predictions on the outcomes of the research study. Revise Sociology (2015:1) stated that “positivists prefer quantitative methods such as social surveys, structured questionnaires and official statistics because these have good reliability and representativeness”. Therefore, the research tools mostly used by positivists are questionnaires which have been designed by the researcher. However, in research studies like this one, using CER, and other interpretive research studies, I use methods such as the FIA technique, as Creswell (2013:62) argued that “an Interpretivist approach to social research would be much more qualitative, using methods such as unstructured interviews or participant observation”. The use of quantitative methods by positivists may lead the researcher to induce biases on the research participants, and this is contrary to the expectations of this study. The researcher using the positivism approach uses generalisation and statistical probability, but this research study is devoid of generalisations. Chikuya (2016:37) delivered the following statement:

> [Q]uantitative data is usually subjected to statistical procedures such as calculating the mean or average number of times an event or behaviour occurs (per day, month and year). These operations, because numbers are “hard” data and not interpretation, can give definitive, or nearly definitive, answers to different questions.

More so, positivists use sampling methods and samples where research participants are randomly selected in large numbers. Contrary to the present research, which is qualitative, Community Toolbox (2016:37) argued that “quantitative analysis is considered to be objective – without any human bias attached to it – because it depends on the comparison of numbers according to mathematical computations”. In this research study, no statistical calculations, samples and samplings are used, but participants are

selected for specific reasons, such as their expertise and skills. I hold that the researcher's subjectivity must not perpetuate biases in the study as it is unethical for the researcher to bring his or her biases into the research study.

I perceive that the positivism research study is sometimes negatively affected and influenced by external forces; therefore, the researcher must mitigate these. Moreover, positivists have limited access to research participants and one of the reasons is that they use questionnaires and telephone interviews that are impersonal in nature. The interaction between the researcher and participants is minimal, whereas, in CER, the researcher and participants have equal access to one another in the research process because they develop a working relationship and work as a team. Aliyu *et al*. (2014:82) posited that "the positivist understands, comprehends and interprets from his or her own outline of orientation and references. He or she holds the view that uncommitted and indifferent impartiality is impracticable and realism or practicality of framework and background are imperative". This means that the researcher in positivism avers that there is no universal truth. The positivist is independent of the research study. The positivist uses the deductive approach in conducting a research study and should concentrate on facts and not on human interests.

Based on the afore-mentioned submissions, I conclude that I can never divorce feelings and emotions when creating knowledge; therefore, positivism is not an appropriate theoretical framework to help me in this research study in formulating peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Therefore, CER is concluded to be the most suitable theoretical framework.

2.7.5 Relationship between the researcher and participants in positivism

In positivism, participants are less relevant and are considered as subjects. Patton (2002:91) stated as such:

> [A] positivist approach also suggests that the subjects of the social world are conscious, stable, unified, and autonomous individuals whose experiences are the most authentic kinds of truths, and who are able to reflect rationally on their own experiences and speak for themselves.

People who take part in research done, anchored on the CER theoretical framework, are called “co-researchers” and are active main drivers of the research study. McGinn (2014:98) alluded to the fact that “a significant portion of qualitative research involves collecting data from research participants. The kinds of information that participants disclose in a research setting depend, in part, on the nature and quality of their relationship with the researcher”. One may conclude that the relationship between the positivist researcher and research participants is distant, due to many factors, such as the research instruments used. The following citation supports my argument: “in positivist research, researchers present themselves as detached objective reporters and attempt to gather data that are standardized and narrowly constrained” (Dudovskiy, 2016:91).

Furthermore, Patton (2002:43) asserted that “the neutral investigator enters the research arena with no axe to grind, no theory to prove, and no predetermined results to support”. The relegation of participants as subjects who are voiceless when the research is conducted by positivists, is totally contrary to the gist of this study which seeks, through CER, the active participation of participants at all levels of the research process. Positivists use instruments such as postal questionnaires. In agreement, Dudovskiy (2013:92) declared as follows:

> Researcher-participant relationships are not static, they differ, depending on many factors, for example, at different levels of research and the relationship between a researcher and participants may evolve and change over the course of a research project, especially if that research project progresses over an extended period of time, as is common in many forms of qualitative research.

The positivist is a purposeful objective observer in the research study, and regarded as knowledgeable of what she or he will be undertaking. This view finds its support in Patton (2002:41), who stated that “the researcher enters into the other person’s perspective in order to make sense of her experiences and understand the ways in which she contributed meaning to their actions”. Through objectivity, the researchers distance

themselves from participants in the study. By using CER, the researcher and participants work together in the research process.

The following section deals with the definitions of operational concepts used in this study.

2.8 DEFINITIONS OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

The definitions of operational concepts which are used for this study, are explained comprehensively in order to ensure that they are understood, as they are the main pillars on which this study evolves. I will state the definitions of operational concepts which are used in the context of this study. The operational concepts are peer counselling, drug abuse and adolescence.

2.8.1 Peer counselling

Marangu, Bururia and Njonge (2012:79) defined peer counselling as “a process of sharing, that enables two people, the counsellor and the counselee, to enter into a relationship that makes possible the clarification of a problem, an issue or a situation at hand through good listening”. In addition, peer counselling was defined by Kamore and Tiego (2015:254) as “a process in which trained and supervised students offer listening, support, alternatives and other verbal and non-verbal interactions, but little or no advice to students who refer themselves”. My definition is that peer counselling is the situation in which the counsellor and the client of the same age group range assist each other in the realisation of the problem and offer solutions to mitigate them. This is made possible by the professional counsellor-counselee relationship.

Peer counsellors are trained learner counsellors or paraprofessional counsellors from Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, who assist other learners from their communities to deal with any problem they may encounter. These peer learner counsellors are skilled to offer assistance to learners in rural learning ecologies to deal with drug abuse problems, using peer counselling strategy. According to Bett (2013:478), the “rationale of peer counselling is based on the assumption that people who share similar characteristics and age tend to influence one another’s behaviour significantly”. The peer counsellor

learners must have certain characteristics, such as being good listeners, having empathy, good communication skills, and confidentiality. They must adhere to counselling ethics, such as confidentiality. These characteristics are essential in assisting peer counsellors to be effective in their work.

It is evident from other research studies that peer counsellors are able to successfully assist students to behave well at institutions of learning and outside. Marangu, Bururia and Njonge (2012:79) found that "in schools where peer education programmes have been established and peer educators equipped with relevant knowledge and skills, there has been significant degree of success in positive behaviour". Based on the recorded success stories of peer counselling in dealing with students' problems in many countries, I therefore advocate for the formulation of a peer counselling strategy that alleviates drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

My rationale behind the formulation of this specific peer counselling strategy is two-fold, namely a) that currently, there is no specific peer counselling strategy that addresses drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, and b) the high prevalence of drug abuse in rural learning institutes. Therefore, to counteract drug abuse predicament, I have to employ peer counselling strategy, as observed by the Department of Basic Education of South Africa (2013:20), which reported that it "has recognised the fact of importance of peer led strategies and has created conducive environment for the implementation of peer education programmes within school setting". The above literature reflects that the peer counselling strategy is effective and its demand has been high in learning institutions across the world.

2.8.2 Adolescence

Adolescence is defined by Oliha (2014:1) as "a period of transition from childhood to adulthood and this critical developmental period is marked by physical, psychological and social changes". The Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2015:34) defines adolescence as follows:

> 1: the state or process of growing up 2: the period of life from puberty to maturity terminating legally at the age of majority 3: a stage of development (as of a language or culture) prior to maturity

I regard the adolescence stage as the teenager stage where the child is developing physically, emotionally, mentally, socially, and spiritually. This is a stage one may call “in-between” or “the transitional stage”, where one is neither a child, nor an adult. It is a human stage where one is leaving childhood and approaching adulthood. The adolescent stage is characterised by rapid growth in weight and height, voice changes in boys, development of breasts in girls, and changes in other body parts. In a girl’s body, signs of womanhood and, in a boy’s body, signs of manhood start to emerge. Adolescents become curious about their physical and intellectual development. This may lead them to experience identity crises. At this stage, social and emotional changes are being experienced by learners.

I have noted that, during the adolescent stage, most people at this stage are still discovering themselves and highly consider peer approval. In this discourse, the adolescents are people aged from 10 to 19. The Zimbabwean rural adolescent learners in this study are active participants and are allowed to give their views in the formulation of peer counselling strategies that would address drug abuse in their communities. The lack of right to active participation of rural learners is elaborated upon by Hlalele (2014:101), when he wrote that “emerging voices further found out that children in rural areas do not have their constitutional right to education realised, and their rights within education or through education are also limited”. The use of CER and PAR in this study empowers rural learners to formulate the peer counselling strategy and to assist one another in dealing with the drug abuse epidemic.

2.8.3 Drug abuse

Haladu (2013:107) defined drug abuse as “an excessive use and persistent self-administration of a drug without regard to the medical and culturally accepted patterns”. In addition, drug abuse is defined by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (2016:4) as “when people use illegal drugs or use legal drugs inappropriately. This includes repeated

use of drugs to produce pleasure and alleviate stress". On the other hand, Dictionary.com (2017:1) defines drug abuse as "substance abuse involving drugs".

My definition of drug abuse is when a young person under the legal age uses either legal or illegal drugs. The commonly used drugs in Zimbabwe by learners are alcohol and tobacco, among others. There are many reasons why learners in rural learning ecologies may engage in drugs: a) for fun, and b) as a way to be part of a group – they may engage in drugs in order to win and keep friends. This then brings to my attention that if peers can influence each other to abuse drugs, then it is possible for peers to influence each other not to abuse drugs. This leads to the aim of this study of formulating a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. In this research study, drug abuse is used interchangeably with substance abuse.

The following section deals with the literature review.

2.9 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ON A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES

In this section I, will outline the review of literature with the main focus aligned to the five objectives which are derived from the aim of this study. To remind the research readers, this study is anchored on the following five objectives:

- To explore the need for a peer counselling strategy formulated through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies;

- to identify the strengths of a peer counselling strategy that is formulated through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies;

- to anticipate impediments against the successful implementation of a peer counselling strategy made through active participation and emancipation of participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies;

- to examine the circumstances under which the success of a peer counselling strategy is achieved through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies; and

- to formulate a peer counselling strategy that involves the active participation and emancipation of the marginalised participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

These objectives consist of two critical components – "active participation" and "emancipatory" – that I want the readers of this study to consider, as they motivated me to use CER and PAR.

The following section deals with the first objective of the study.

2.9.1 The need for a peer counselling strategy formulated through active equal participation and emancipation of marginalised persons for alleviating drug abuse in rural learning ecologies

This research study aims to formulate a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. There must be a need identified in order to formulate a solution. Mapfumo and Nkoma (2013:103) eluded that "needs assessment will help the school counsellor to identify areas of deficit or need on which to base School Guidance and Counselling Services". After I have analysed literature on peer counselling, I realised that there was a need in terms of peer counselling strategy that has been formulated through active participation and emancipation of the marginalised participants in relation to drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

2.9.1.1 There is no specific peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural areas

In 1999 in Zimbabwe, the Presidential Nziramasanga Commission was appointed by the President to look into Education and Training.

> [F]ollowing in the adoption of the recommendations of the 1999 Presidential Commission of enquiry into Education and Training, the Ministry of Education, Sport, Art and Culture in the year 2005 came up with Director Circular Minute Number 23 which sought to strengthen and institutionalise guidance and counselling in Zimbabwe schools (Chimonyo, Mapuranga & Runganye, and 2015:143).

The Nziramasanga Commission in Zimbabwe indicated that, after research studies, peer counselling was introduced in schools. However, after a close evaluation of peer counselling policies, one will note that there is no specific, well-defined peer counselling strategy formulated by Zimbabwean rural stakeholders that addresses drug abuse among learners in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

This is social injustice – rural learners have the right to protection against drug abuse. Nkoane (2010:113-114) wrote that "CER's social justice is opposed to any classroom practice that undermine the rights of students, in other words, justice maintain a particular focus on the critical pedagogy principles of dialogue and dialectic voice". Moreover, the absence of a specific peer counselling strategy in the Zimbabwean curriculum, calls for the emancipation of Zimbabwean rural disadvantaged community members to bring about transformation in the school curriculum to include peer counselling strategies. I concur with Nkoane (2010:113), who argued that "the transformative curriculum looks at existing social conditions within and beyond classrooms to critique dominant arrangements to enable the participation of marginalised students". In Australia, to the contrary, there is a well-defined strategy to deal with drug abuse. Armstrong *et al.* (1990:56) confirmed that "in Australia the peer led strategy called "[S]moke Prevention" was successful in that, it increased the knowledge of the effects of smoking and provided the resistances kills to encounter peer pressure to smoke among seventh grades". This confirmed the impact of a preventive peer counselling strategy, as reflected by the evidence of research studies in Australia.

Even in South Africa, a peer counselling strategy is employed to mitigate drug abuse in schools. The Department of Basic Education of South Africa (2013:21) explained that "[C]APS further allow for the integration of drug and substance abuse into co-curricular activities and through peer-to-peer programmes where learners are allowed to define and discuss drugs and substance use and encouraged to find solutions to the problem". In addition, Morojele, Parry and Brook (2009:23) stated that "research has shown that peer-led strategies are effective in preventing substance abuse amongst young people, as adolescents are often more willing to listen and take advice from others with similar experience". Moreover, the University of Botswana identified the need of peer counselling:

> [In] Botswana, after realizing that as secondary students transit to join the university they experience stress due to changes in environmental and developmental gaps, the University of Botswana realised the "need gap" of lack of peer counselling strategy in mitigating problems bedevilling students. (Odirile, 2012:1-2)

I realised, through literature review on the status of peer counselling in Zimbabwe, that there is a demand of a peer counselling strategy to mitigate drug abuse.

The importance of research evidence of the need for formulating a peer counselling strategy, is supported by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNOCD) (2004a), (cited in the National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug Use Amongst Learners in Schools of the Department of Basic Education of South Africa (2013:20), that "prevention activities should be scientifically accurate, objective and free of value judgements". Similarly, (UNOCD) (2004a), (cited in the Department of Basic Education of South Africa, 2013:20), held that "activities that are based on intuition often transmit the wrong messages, and are perceived by the young as biased and lacking credibility". This is supported by Chepesiuk (1999), (cited in the Department of Basic Education of South Africa, 2013:20), who wrote that "over the decades, a substantive evidence base has been developed on the effectiveness of various prevention and treatment methods". The United States National Institute on Drug Abuse was established in 1974, with focus on training, research, treatment and prevention.

From the many literature sources submitted in this study, I concluded that there is lack of substantive evidence reflecting the presence of specific peer counselling strategies in relation to alleviation and prevention of drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. In some countries, governments embarked on research studies in order to ascertain the relevance of peer counselling in the educational sector. Bett (2013:478) stated the following:

> [T]he Ministry of Education, through the Report of the Presidential Working Party in Education and Manpower Training for the next Decade and Beyond (The Kamunge Report, 1988) and the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya (The Koech Report, 1999) recommend that peer counselling service be established in all Educational Institutions to motivate youth to express their desire to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS and other social and psychological problems.

2.9.1.2 The high prevalence of drug abuse among learners

The United Nations on Drug Control (2010:23), (cited in Department of Basic Education of South Africa- National Drug Abuse 2013:ii), stated that "[i]illicit drug users in Africa make up roughly 17% to 21% of global illicit drug users and the majority of treatment demand in Africa is for cannabis abuse (63%)." This statistical data paints a gloomy picture and call for strategies that are inclusive of all stakeholders' views in order to fight this epidemic. Moreover, Soobrayan (2013: i) mentioned the following

> [D]rug abuse has been linked to academic difficulties, absenteeism, thus negatively impacting on the attainment of quality basic education. It is also associated with a host of high risk behaviours, including unprotected sex, crime and violence, traffic accidents, mental and physical health problems.

The negative effects of drug abuse are numerous – it has devastating effects on the academic performance of learners, and leads to unacceptable behaviours and health negative effects. The devastating repercussions of drug abuse on the well-being of learners and other stakeholders are of such high proportions, one cannot afford to ignore them.

Many research studies have been done in Zimbabwe that reflect that there is a culture of high drug abuse in Zimbabwe. For example, the research study by Mutsvanga (2011:65) indicated that “the substance use culture in Zimbabwe is fast spiralling out of control, sucking into its vortex, adolescents”. Another research study that substantiated drug abuse in Zimbabwe, was done by Maseko, Ngwenya and Maunganidze (2014:185), who found that “reports in Zimbabwe are consistent in telling remarkable expansion in students’ interest in drugs and use of substances”. From another angle, Oliha (2014:2) claimed that “many drug abuse behaviours are heavily tied to peer culture, as children learn from and imitate the peers they like and admire”. To mitigate this drug abuse problem affecting learning ecologies, I used the PAR methodology and the CER theoretical framework. PAR and CER recognise that different stakeholders should give their inputs in creating a peer counselling strategy, as Dube (2016:64) postulated that “PAR allows multiple voices and players to engage in dialogue through emphasis of the principles of CER such as emancipation, social justice and recognition”. In addition, on the emancipatory perspective of PAR, Kemmis and McTaggart (2008:88) argued that PAR “helps people recover and release themselves from the restrictions of irrational, infertile, unjust, and unsatisfying social structures that limit self-development and self-determination”.

2.9.1.3 Lack of involvement of rural communities in the formulation of peer counselling strategies

I observed that the marginalised rural communities are excluded from the formulation of peer counselling strategies in Zimbabwe. The rural community members in most research studies are “merely researched”, but I support the idea of community members becoming participants, in accordance with Mahlomaholo (2009:225), who argued that “CER sees the researched as other human beings, as equal subjects like the researcher”, as well as Smith (1999:193), who expounded that, in PAR “[i]ndigenous peoples become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is transformed”. In light of this, the emancipatory angle of PAR is explained clearly in Miller and Maguire (2008:17), who alluded that PAR “offers the possibility to create more equitable educational policies which allow practice for educational reform from bottom up”. The failure to adhere to participants’ views nullifies the agenda of this research study of

empowering and emancipating of rural communities. However, I did engage marginalised Zimbabwean rural participants through the CER lens. To give credit to the above, Mahlomaholo (2010:11) argued that it was 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”.

Learners and other active rural community members should participate in the formulation and implementation of peer counselling strategies. This is acknowledged by Dube (2016:4), who declared that “the team used a collective ad consensus approach to generating data that contributes towards the formulation of the strategy” in that research study. The Zimbabwean rural learners and other participants in this study aired their views, which are captured and used in the formulation of a peer counselling strategy. CER allows us to combat exclusion of community members in the formulation of a peer counselling strategy and this breeds a transformative agenda. In line with these objectives of the CER theoretical framework, Hlalele (2014:104) postulated that it afforded “the participants an opportunity to own the problem and process, and to provide solutions to the challenges and also to provide the conditions that will make the solutions work”. Moreover, CER, according to Hlalele (2014:104), permits “the participants to identify their needs and problems, define and prioritize them, while solutions within the community are explored and discovered”. Therefore, CER gives power to the participants to have the liberty of identifying community needs and problems within their society. This is usually different from other research methods, such as positivism, which give more power to the main researcher to identify the needs and the problems of the society.

On the other hand, Mahlomaholo (2009:34) remarked that the engaging nature of CER “allows for a deeper meaning and for multiple perspectives to be considered.” In addition to this, Nkoane (2012:99) alluded that CER “will help the participants to better understand the challenges they face”.

The following section deals with the second objective of the study.

2.9.2 The strengths of peer counselling strategies formulated through active equal participation and emancipation of the marginalised for alleviating drug abuse in rural learning ecologies

Some of the strengths of peer counselling strategies for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies are discussed below.

2.9.2.1 Success stories of peer counselling strategies

The strengths of peer counselling strategies are portrayed in different countries where it was formulated and successfully implemented. I maintain that a peer counselling strategy formulated through participation and empowerment of the marginalised rural participants is useful in mitigating drug abuse. In applying CER, Makina (2012:101) commented that the empowerment of youth in the South African context is "supported through interaction and engagement whereby students with creative thinking skills [act] as active participants and co-creators of knowledge". From the social process point of view, according to Miller and Maguire (2008:81), the PAR perspective "openly challenges existing structures of power and creates opportunities for development of innovates and effective solutions to the problems facing our schools and communities".

A peer counselling strategy, found to be effective in the United States of America, namely Peer Provider Reproductive Health Services, was evaluated by Brindis *et al*. (2005). According to them, "the results show the decline of incidences of pregnancies, increased use of health care and increased use of contraception" (Brindis *et al*., 2005:66).

Studies by Okonofua *et al*. (2003:34) confirmed that the findings on a peer counselling strategy with regards to STI Counselling and Treatment in Nigeria, provided "strong, substantive evidence that [the] informal peer educational program that offers education and counselling on STIs to in-school adolescents can substantively improve the care-seeking behaviour with regards to STIs among youth". In addition, a success story of peer counselling is recorded in Armstrong *et al*. (1990:98), who asserted that, "in Australia, the peer led program called Smoke Prevention was successful in that it increased the knowledge of the effects of smoking and provided the resistance to encounter peer

pressure to smoke among seventh grades". According to research done in Zimbabwe by Chireshe (2013:352), "few respondents whose schools had peer counsellors mentioned that the peer counsellors assisted other students with HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, sexual abuse issues and they also helped in socialising isolated students." The effectiveness of a peer counselling strategy found in Kenya in the above research study, is supported by research studies done by Kaaria *et al.* (2014:213), who remarked that "the social issues handled by peer counsellors included disturbances from the opposite sex, stealing, drug abuse and bullying." Furthermore, Blad (2014:2) recorded a research study at Rutgers University, that found that "[p]eer Group Connection had notable success in raising graduation rates for Latino males. There was 19% increase in Latino men pass rate from 63% to 81%".

The above literature proves the effectiveness of peer counselling in solving problems and this has motivated me to collectively engage Zimbabwean rural participants in this study to formulate a peer counselling strategy that will address the drug abuse problem in rural learning ecologies in Zimbabwe. This argument is validated by the following submission of Mertens and Wilson (2012:172):

> [D]ecisions 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.

Furthermore, researchers are encouraged to consider the perspectives of participants, as Franco (2005:3) explained that the "critical action researcher considers the voice of the participants, their perspective and meaning, not for record purposes and later interpretation but as part of the fabric of the research methodology". In addition, the PAR research methodology used to engage rural participants in this study, according to Glassman and Erdem (2014:212), "facilitates 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".

2.9.2.2 The strength of peer counselling strategies is based on trained personnel

The strength of peer counselling strategies lies in the availability of trained and knowledgeable counsellors, including both teacher and peer counsellors who can be instrumental in the formulation and implementation of a peer counselling strategy. This peer counselling strategy considers the capacitation of rural teachers with the highest level of seriousness, as Schwartz (2006:449) alluded that “teachers are the filters through which the mandated curriculum passes”. In light of the above, teachers train peer counsellors, as explained in Young and Sternoa (2011:1), who wrote that “a teacher has an obligation to acquire knowledge to foster a meaningful and relevant education for all his or her learners”. Zimbabwean rural teacher counsellors may be involved in in-service training, as Pepin (2009:48) emphasised that training was “indispensable to enable teachers, at an ethical and pedagogical level, to deliver neutral and objective teaching”.

There are trained students as peer counsellors, as shown in the research study done in Kenya by Marangu, Bururia and Njonge (2012:78), who wrote that to “empower the youth for healthy life style, the Ministry of Gender Sports and Youth Affairs in Kenya, trained young people in life skills, management, and peer counselling”. Moreover, the study in Chireshe (2013:79) found that “in Northern Uganda, 2441 peer counsellors are trained to assist other students”. Peer counsellors can be trained in different areas, such as confidentiality. The evidence in the study in South Africa by Visser (2005), cited by Chireshe (2013:79), pointed out “that in South Africa, the training of peer counsellors focused on communication skills, problem solving skills, information about HIV/AIDS and substance abuse, as Ill as psychosocial issues in schools”.

Another research study by Kaaria *et al.* (2014:211) recommended that “peer counsellors should be trained in order to equip the peer counsellors with appropriate knowledge, skills and methods for counselling the students”. The trained counsellors help them deal with issues affecting other students. More students can be trained in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, thereby increasing the number of peer counsellors. The training of peer counsellors is validated in research done in Botswana by Odirile (2012:2), who posited that “the University of Botswana Careers and Counselling Centre, Peer Counselling program, trains and equips students with skills to enable them to help their

peers". Training assists community members to acquire skills in the formulation and use of peer counselling strategies for alleviating drug abuse within their learning ecologies. The participation of knowledgeable people, such as trained counsellors, equips peer counsellors and democratises the peer counselling strategy. The above statement finds its support in Hanrahan (2005:22), who postulated that "PAR 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". Furthermore, Dube (2016:121) asserted that "the incorporation of people's knowledge in the mainstream subject can emancipate teachers". In this discussion, it applies that training programs are essential to emancipate disadvantaged Zimbabwean rural participants, as I view this through the lens of the theoretical framework of the research – CER.

2.9.2.3 The Guidance and Counselling subject currently taught in Zimbabwe schools

The other strength of peer counselling strategies is that Guidance and Counselling is a recognised subject in Zimbabwe and is currently being studied in Zimbabwe learning institutions. The teaching of this subject results in the learners and teachers acquiring more skills and information related to peer counselling and drug abuse. I concur with the research done in Zimbabwe by Dube (2016:98), who argued that "the curriculum benefits all learners, which is important through the lens of CER, which recognises that all learners should benefit from mainstream curriculum". Moreover, Oliha (2014:7) recommended that "there should be a preventive drug abuse curriculum, there is a need for a standard form of drug abuse curriculum to be added to the school curriculum". On the other hand, most teachers and rural participants in Zimbabwean rural areas are not trained in peer counselling matters; this affects peer counselling strategies, as Schwartz (2006:450) concluded that the "curriculum, with all good intentions, have compiled volumes of Ill-conceived educational action plans, choosing specific materials and activities for their pre-conceived target, curriculum receivers, students, only find that curriculum users, teachers, are not prepared for innovations".

Moreover, the research in Zimbabwe by Chimonyo, Mapuranga and Runganye (2015:143) affirmed that “it has, however, been observed in most schools that no meaningful measures in terms of an appropriate syllabus and training of teachers are taking place”. Furthermore, Chimonyo, Mapuranga and Runganye (2015:143) alluded that “those teachers that seem to be co-ordinating the programme in schools do so on the basis of seniority rather than the appropriate qualifications and training”. This raises eyebrows on the effectiveness of peer counselling in Zimbabwe because most of the teachers are not Ill-trained in matters to do with peer counselling in relation to drug abuse. Therefore, it is my view that training emancipates rural counsellor teachers and learners, which is the rationale of underpinning a peer counselling strategy in the CER theoretical framework, combining peer counselling theory and practice.

The following section addresses some of the impediments that affect the success of peer counselling strategies.

2.9.3 The impediments for the successful implementation of a peer counselling strategy made through active, equal participation and emancipation of marginalised people for alleviating drug abuse in rural learning ecologies

There are threats to the successful implementation of peer counselling strategies.

2.9.3.1 Lack of peer counselling training

There are problems militating against the success of peer counselling strategies in Zimbabwe, as Chireshe (2013:353) affirmed that it emerged from his study “that peer counsellors in Zimbabwe are experiencing a number of challenges. The main challenge was that of lack of training in peer counselling.” In addition, Trevisan and Hubert (2001:225) stated that, “in America, lack of training on the part of school counsellors negatively affects School Guidance and Counselling”. One cannot do a proper job or an assignment if he or she has not been trained. The empowerment and emancipation of marginalised learners and members of rural learning ecologies may be made possible by training them. Training allows one to be knowledgeable in formulating and using a peer counselling strategy to mitigate drug abuse in one’s learning ecology.

Furthermore, another research by Kamore and Tiego (2015:56) indicated that “literature review on peer counselling shows a big gap in the quality and scope of training offered to peer counsellors”. The solution is to train Zimbabwean rural learner counsellors through workshops, intensive short courses and provision of peer counselling handbooks and manuals with information relevant to the learners in rural learning ecologies. If the government does not have money to train and assist Zimbabwean rural community members to acquire skills in formulation and use of peer counselling strategies for alleviating drug abuse, I recommend that the government should partner with NGOs and other stakeholders. The research study by Ncube (2014:52) validates my suggestion, as he confirmed that “training was made possible by collaborative efforts of government and other organisations such as Embu Youth AIDS Advocates who visit schools and train peer counsellors”. Chireshe (2013:78) observed:

> Zimbabwe’s education officers are sent to Britain for staff development, however it is, sad to note that all these education officers who have been trained in Guidance and counselling in the United Kingdom have since left The Ministry of Education in Zimbabwe.

Therefore, there is a great need to train teacher counsellors as a matter of urgency. The solution to this threat is that the government should pay competitive salaries to counsellors. This might mitigate the high turnover of teachers, trained in counselling, leaving the Zimbabwe educational sector. The Zimbabwe government should pay the rural incentive money to teachers and counsellors working in rural areas. This was also recommended by Zia, one of the Zimbabwe participants cited in Dube (2016:196), who said that “the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe, should endorse the idea of a token of appreciation”.

This is done in order to encourage more qualified teachers and counsellors to accept work in rural learning ecologies. Zimbabwe, South Africa and other countries have universities that offer specialised degrees in counselling and psychology. School psychologists and counsellors should be incentivised to acquire these degrees by way of offering them scholarships and bursaries. I recommend that in every rural school there should be at least two full-time counsellors, as also recommended by The Child and Law Foundation: Zimbabwe (2003:28), which recorded that “each school should have a team

of female and male teachers equipped with basic counselling skills and referral information to assist students in distress". Chireshe (2013:79) also recommended that "Zimbabwe school administration should support counselling teams by providing space for confidentiality, uninterrupted counselling and removing co-curricular activity loads that may compete with this service".

2.9.3.2 Resources constraints

In the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, there are many resource constraints hindering the effectiveness of peer counselling programmes, and these have been exacerbated by the economic turmoil that Zimbabwe, as a country, has been going through. This year, 2017, Zimbabwe is celebrating 37 years of independence; however, the sad story is that there are no textbooks for Guidance and Counselling. The lack of textbooks and other materials disempowers rural counsellors and defeats the agenda of CER, as Pettit (2012:7) alluded that empowerment focuses on "enabling individuals to gain access to assist, information and opportunities so that they are able to improve their situation". Garikai (2014:24) stated that "Zimbabwean rural schools lack counselling pamphlets and rooms for individual counselling". The solutions to this problem are suggested by Mapfumo and Nkoma (2013:48), who proposed that "school headmasters must provide adequate guidance and counselling budgets and physical facilities". Training resources must be channelled in training peer counsellors and peer counsellor trainers in areas of drug abuse. The training materials should have content that includes contributions and views of the inhabitants of rural learning ecologies.

The following research studies in different countries provide evidence that peer counselling success stories are delayed by a lack of resources: Lonborg and BoIn (2004:319) argued that "effective American School Guidance Services are hindered by the lack of referral resources". In Finland, Lairio and Nissila (2002:169) stated that "Finnish school counsellors are negatively affected by the lack of counselling resources". In Kenya, according to Kaaria *et al.* (2015:215), there are "certain challenges faced by peer counsellors in promoting behaviour change among students, such as personal unresolved issues, lack of resources, poor relationship with other students and inappropriate training". I also suggest that the government should engage NGOs and

other stakeholders in mobilising resources, such as finance, equipment and stationary, to support peer counselling programmes. My suggestion concurs with the recommendation of Kaaria *et al.* (2015:215), who recommended that "parents should be encouraged to seek bursaries and scholarships for the children's education". In addition, Chireshe (2013:352) confirmed that "many secondary schools in Zimbabwe do not have peer counsellors".

The involvement of learners and teachers in this research study will influence teachers to recruit and train more learners to be peer counsellors and, thereby, assist in alleviating drug abuse in rural learning ecologies. The involvement of learners in this study may inspire them to voluntarily engage in peer counselling and help in the mitigation of drug abuse. Dube *et al*. (2015:86) proposed that in Zimbabwe I could use "cultural technicians who are resource persons in teaching and learning" and in peer counselling teaching I can use psychologists and others to impart skills. This is in line with the spirit of PAR and CER, according to Kindon, Pain and Kesby (2007:1), who posited that they attempted to "remove hierarchical role specifications and 'empower ordinary people' in and through research. The attention is to transform an alienating 'Fordist' mode of academic production into a more flexible and socially owned process". To add weight to this discussion, Lykes, Hershberg and Brabeck (2011:24) suggested "they prioritise voices and actions of those marginalised from power and resources in education, advocacy, and organising activities that contribute to knowledge construction and material change and / transformation".

2.9.3.3 Peer counsellors are underrated by other students

The study in Zimbabwe by Chireshe (2013:352) noted that "respondents revealed that peer counsellors experienced some challenges which include: being underrated by peers, being resisted by other students, other students discouraging them from being peer counsellors, not being trusted by fellow students and little time for peer counselling". Learners or peers have the tendency to underestimate one another. Some learners do not embrace assistance from other learners and some learners do not trust sharing drug-related problems with their peers. The reason is that they think other learners may report them to school authorities or to their parents. However, rural parents support peer

counsellors. The research in one of the rural areas in Zimbabwe by Harris (2013:1) found that “villagers in Matobo South are appealing to the government to introduce peer educators in rural areas, who can guide young people in developing positive norms and especially in making healthy decisions about sex”. In Zimbabwe, drug abuse is an offence that warrants the dismissal of a learner from the school. Some of the ways to curb these challenges are discussed below.

The school authorities should embark on peer counselling awareness programmes that will assist learners in rural learning ecologies to understand the importance of peer counselling and peer counsellors. This finds its support in the PAR methodology I used in this study, as Kemmis and McTaggart (2007:277) stated that PAR is “utilised by groups of people who come and interact together to change the existing social structure for betterment of society”. Moreover, CER, according to Gruenewald (2003:12), enables empowerment and “the emphasis is on creation of an encouraging space that embraces multiplicity of voices in solving social problems of the day”. It was our intention to use PAR to encourage people to participate in peer counselling, thereby bringing everyone to an understanding of peer counselling. Crane and O’Regan (2010:15) explained that PAR’s latent contributions are to “participate in communication, explain, reframe, seek common ground and language, which facilitates and encourages collaborative dialogue in research”. The use of CER’s transformative aspect and PAR’s participatory thrust will make this peer counselling strategy effective, as supported by Carlson, Engebretson and Chamberlain (2006:837), who concluded that “lack of articulated theories of change and participatory methodologies hinder empowerment of individuals to the margins of the society and make programs ineffective”.

Some of the challenges encountered by peer counsellors may be due to lack of knowledge on the student body about the fundamental role played by peer counsellors in the mitigation of drug abuse and other related problems. Peer counsellors and rural community members should be trained in trust and acceptance issues to deal with counselling ethics, such as confidentiality. The Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe (2007:12) recommended that “Zimbabweans need to rekindle customs, values and those of our norms that are capable of laying a social foundation for resuscitation of the spirit of respect, integrity, tolerance, compassionate ‘unhu / Ubuntu”.

2.9.3.4 Lack of support from school authorities

In Zimbabwe, there are some school authorities who do not support peer counselling supervision and other peer counselling roles. According to Mapfumo and Nkoma (2013:101-102), “one study in Zimbabwe has found that heads of schools are not overly supportive of guidance and counselling in their schools”. This is one injustice against the Guidance and Counselling subject, because other subjects, such as English, are recognised and supported by school authorities. One research study done in a Zimbabwean rural area by Dube (2016:145) found that “[g]enerally, many subjects in the Zimbabwe curriculum have qualified teachers”. This shows that Guidance and Counselling is not supported. The finding of this subject not being supported adequately is of great concern to me as the researcher. Therefore, the importance of this research study, anchored in CER, is for the rural community to understand that they are being marginalised.

I concur with Mthiyane (2014:13) that “indications in some studies are that in some communities there are still inequalities and poverty”. To solve this, I used PAR as a methodology, through its transformative context. According to Mertens (2007:212), “the researcher using PAR is one who recognised inequalities in society and strives to challenge the status quo, who is a bit provocateur with overtones of humility, and who possesses a shared sense of responsibility”. In advocating for the support of peer counselling by school authorities through CER, I suggest solutions as recommended by Williams and Brydon-Miller (2004:245), who wrote that “CER addresses the cause of inequalities while at the same time focusing on finding solutions to specific community concerns”.

To mitigate this, Chireshe (2013:156) argued that the “Zimbabwe school administration should support counselling teams by providing space for confidentiality, uninterrupted counselling and removing co-curricular activity loads that may compete with this service”. Greenberg (2013:33) stated that peer counselling needed broad support from the school community, and that this support “should include administrators, faculty, parents and students”. This research study, using PAR, allowed school leaders, such as School Development Committee members, teacher counsellors and Members of Parliament to

play different roles to support the peer counselling strategy. The active participation of these school leaders is viewed through PAR, according to Kindon, Pain and Kesby (2007:2), as power relations that emphasise “dialogic engagement with participants, and the development and execution of context suitable stratagems oriented towards empowerment and transformation”. The heads of schools must provide leadership to peer counsellors so that they can execute their mandate. The lack of support from the school heads, who are the responsible authorities, may jeopardise the implementation of peer counselling strategies in rural learning ecologies.

2.9.4 Circumstances under which a peer counselling strategy is achieved through active, equal participation and emancipation of the marginalised learners for alleviating drug abuse in rural learning ecologies

There are some circumstances that permit the successful formulation of peer counselling strategies, which are as follows:

2.9.4.1 Choosing peer counsellors

The selection of appropriate peer counsellors who have the right characteristics is crucial in formulating and implementing peer counselling strategies. Kamore and Tiego (2015:254) wrote that “the question on who to select as student peer counsellor is important in developing an effective peer counselling program in high schools”. There are Ill-defined peer counsellor selection templets that spell out the qualities of peer counsellors and the process of identifying these counsellors. These templets differ from one school to the other. Peer counsellors are chosen to assist other learners to deal with drug abuse, as alluded by Ncube (2014:32), who argued that peer educators “are specially selected and trained students who serve their fellow students and teacher counsellors in a positive way”.

In some schools, peer counsellors are selected by learners and / or teachers and administrators. The research evidence submitted by Garikai (2014:45), explained that peer counsellors are “students appointed by their colleagues or the school administration in an effort to open a great link between individual students and are seen to be useful

where professional services may be inadequate or not readily available". I observed, in Zimbabwe learning institutions, that peer counsellors in some schools are selected by teachers and in others by students. In other institutions, learners voluntarily appoint themselves as peer counsellors. Some schools use both methods. I prefer the selection criteria of school peer counsellors to be open to the student body. This resonates with the agenda of PAR and CER to empower and emancipate the disadvantaged in decision-making.

Given (2007:2) stated that "PAR observes participants as participants, the joint contributors and investigators". Moreover, selection of peer counsellors should be democratic, as PAR methodology, according to Whiteman *et al*. (2015:625), is a "democratic model… [that is] able to produce, own and use knowledge [and] is driven by participants rather than an outsider sponsor, funder and academic". School learners and staff in rural learning ecologies should be involved in the entire process of selecting or electing peer counsellors. Inclusion of all stakeholders in the selection of peer counsellors is emancipatory and allows the active participation of the marginalised in the decision-making process. Mugo (2005:13) averred that "the goal is to ensure that students will be valued and respected by their peers when need arises". Students have a tendency to respect and value the peer counsellors they have chosen. They will, however, resist peer counsellors they feel have been imposed on them by the school authorities. Muranga *et al*. (2012:95), through their research findings, proved that "inclusion of learners in selecting peer counsellors is fundamental to the success of the peer counselling process". Failure to select the right peer counsellors negatively affects the peer counselling process and inhibits the aim of formulating a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

2.9.4.2 The availability of counsellor supervisors

Another circumstance conducive to effective formulation of peer counselling is the presence of counsellor supervisors. Most teachers in Zimbabwean rural areas have not been trained in peer counselling matters. The research study by Ncube (2014:65) defined counselling supervision as referring to "overseeing the peer counsellors". It is my view that peer counsellors need to be supervised when they are executing their mandate.

Supervision brings about accountability and enhances the performance of peer counsellors. This means that teacher counsellors provide peer counsellors with leadership, guidance and protection. Greenberg (2013:23) found that “the supervisor provides consistency, leadership and guidance necessary to the success of peer program”. The purpose of supervision in counselling is further elaborated by Garikai (2014:46), who alluded that “peer counselling supervision must be developmental, assisting them to evaluate their relationship with other learners and the counselling process”.

A relationship based on trust between the counsellor and the supervisor is essential. The supervisor should not be dominating, but rather be able to provide guidance and leadership without undue influence. In addition, Ncube (2014:67) stated that “school counsellors supervise the school counselling programs and bear the responsibilities of the performance, proficiency and effectiveness”. Peer counsellors should execute their counselling responsibilities under the approval of their superiors. Most learners seek approval before doing anything, for they fear to do anything that has not been sanctioned. Garringer and MacRae (2008:6) posited that “buy-in from the top is critical to any aspect of school programming. Getting support from and the active participation of principals, teachers, counsellors and other school staff is much easier if school leaders promote the program”. If the school authorities buy in, they will surely provide resources such as money, venues, personnel and equipment to be used by peer counsellors in dealing with drug-related problems among learners.

2.9.5 To formulate a peer counselling strategy that involves the active, equal participation and emancipation of the marginalised for alleviating drug abuse in rural learning ecologies

2.9.5.1 A peer counselling strategy should have a clear purpose

This peer counselling strategy has specific objectives and goals that are used to measure its success. Greenberg (2013:21) wrote that “at the earliest phase, program goals should be established that reflect the long-term benefits that can be derived from peer counselling”. The goals and objectives of our peer counselling are made in light of the

goal of CER, which was explained by Murphy and Fleming (2009:39) as “a goal to human emancipation”. On the other hand, the use of the PAR methodology calls for collaboration, as explained by Miller and Maguire (2008:88), who commented that “PAR is not a mere methodology, but rather a pledge to collaboration and partnership throughout the problem posing, knowledge creation, and action-taking cycles of the project”.

The marginalised perspectives are heard in research through CER. Alvesson and Karreman (2008:26) found that “marginal voices are to be integrated into social power distribution… and through raising critical consciousness, real discrimination and oppression that people experience in everyday life is exposed”. In addition, PAR promotes the agreement between the researcher and participants, as supported by Cornwall and Jewkes (1995:1669), who wrote that the researcher and participants should agree on the agendas and take “responsibilities for analysis and presentation of outcomes”. Moreover, goals and objectives of this peer counselling are negotiated as PAR methodology permits. Baden and Major (2010:53) advised that the “dynamic relationship between the researcher and participants [should be] consistently negotiated to deconstruct power, achieve and maintain trust, promote equality and ensure reciprocity”.

Haughey (2016:1) stated, “Once you have planned your project, turn your attention to developing several objectives that will enable you to be successful. Goals should be SMART – specific, measurable, agreed upon, realistic and time-based.” This peer counselling strategy had an aim to prevent drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The goals derived from this aim and objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and accomplished within a reasonable time frame. Some of the goals are to have a peer counselling strategy content that was collectively made by all stakeholders in the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. This peer counselling strategy was formulated through the involvement and the active, equal participation of the marginalised for alleviating drug abuse in rural, learning ecologies. This was made possible by using PAR to generate data from participants.

This peer counselling had a goal of preventing drug abuse by using peer counselling. Our peer counselling strategy is preventive in nature. This is supported by Van Zyl (2013:22),

who stated that, “essentially, prevention addresses the following main components: creating awareness, educating people about drugs and their effects, providing supportive environments”. The peer counselling strategy being formulated in this study will create awareness and educate people on the lack of peer counselling strategies that addresses the drug abuse problems that have negative effects on the learners and other people within the rural learning ecologies in Zimbabwe. The stakeholders in the rural learning ecologies in Zimbabwe are included in this research study in order to create awareness of drug abuse, lack of a peer counselling strategy and the importance of creating a strategy that is all inclusive in terms of people’s views. This is in line with PAR and CER that I used in this study, which advocate for non-exclusion of learners and other stakeholders in the peer counselling strategy for the alleviation of drug abuse in rural learning ecologies.

2.9.5.2 Implementation of a peer counselling strategy

There is a tendency of not implementing formulated peer counselling strategies. In Zimbabwe, Chimonyo, Mapuranga and Runganye (2015:149), in their research, arrived at the following conclusion:

> [R]evelations in this study are that in all schools the guidance and counselling programme was generally time tabled. This maybe so because it is a requirement by the Ministry of Education to have a subject taught in all schools yet, on the ground the actual implementation, is not taking place.

This proves that, in Zimbabwe, Guidance and Counselling as a subject is on the school timetable, but it is not being implemented because it is not examinable. This defeats the noble purpose of the peer counselling strategy because it will not be implemented. I have noted that many strategies that have been formulated, have not been implemented. Many research studies have been done with well-meaning intentions, but they are gathering dust because no one has implemented the formulated strategies. This research study is not only for academic and professional purposes, but its findings will also be implemented. This is possible through using PAR, as Sharma *et al.* (2016:4) confirmed that “virtually all participants acknowledged the importance of community participation and endorsed community development through an active and engaged citizenry” with this

methodology. The collaborative nature of this study in formulating a peer counselling strategy may contribute to the implementation of the strategy for the alleviation of drug abuse in the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

2.9.5.3 Evaluation of the peer counselling strategy

This peer counselling strategy will be evaluated periodically to ascertain its effectiveness. The importance of evaluation of the strategy is explained by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999:31), who stated that "evaluation is essential in determining whether the intended results of a program are realized". This peer counselling strategy will be evaluated through the active participation of the marginalised participants in order to ascertain its success in alleviating drug abuse within their Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. In this study, I engaged the marginalised rural participants in evaluating the peer counselling strategy because in CER, participants should create knowledge, Nkoane (2012:68) stated that the goal of CER is "to help participants construct their own 'knowing' in order to create action of their plan for better future". To empower the marginalised and involve them in peer counselling strategy evaluation, I used PAR's participatory evaluation, which is explained by Jackson and Kossam (2010:21) as the "means to document our individual and collective perceptions of the site, and reaching consensus on the priorities emerging from the evaluation".

Evaluation is done in order to monitor if the peer counselling strategy is successfully addressing its intended purpose and objectives. The evaluation allows us to make adjustments and corrections wherever the demand arises. Greenberg (2013:23) recorded that "there should be a regular process are peer counsellors, community members, staff and co-ordinators can share both positive and constructive feedback. Written evaluations should be developed in conjunction with program goals for purpose of gathering data about the success in accomplishing those goals". I regard evaluation as an ongoing process that is essential in making sure the formulated strategy accomplishes its purpose. I concur with the observations of McGannon, Cary and Dimmit (2005:78) who stated that the "issue of evaluation is receiving increased attention, as peer counsellors are asked to demonstrate that their efforts contribute meaningfully to student development and success". I will evaluate the goals and objectives of the peer counselling strategy, training

of peer counsellors and teacher counsellors, resources assigned, people's perceptions about peer counselling and its impact in relation to drug abuse.

2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the aim to formulate a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The aim of the study seeks to bring transformation on how previous peer counselling strategies for the alleviation of drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies are formulated. I adopted the CER theoretical framework that operationalises this research. After giving a theoretical framework, I defined terms which were frequently used in this discourse. The terms defined are peer counselling, adolescence, drug abuse and rural learning ecology. Through the CER framework and PAR research methodology, which is the lens of this study, I elaborated on the related literature of peer counselling strategies.

Chapter three will focus on the relevant research methodology and data generation procedure.

CHAPTER THREE

DATA GENERATION FOR FORMULATING A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research aim is to formulate a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The study was conducted in the Chivi rural area in Zimbabwe at Nyaningwe Secondary School. This chapter pays attention to research methodology in order to generate data that would enable us to fulfil the agenda of this study. In order to achieve this, I will expound on Participatory Action Research, a qualitative research methodology, addressing its origins, objectives, characteristics, its process, ontology, epistemology, data instrumentation and generation, narrative analysis, ethical considerations, profile of the research site, participants, as Ill as the conclusions that have been drawn. The tone will be set for Chapter four, in which data will be analysed and interpreted, and findings will be discussed. I will explain my use of the FAI technique and CDA method in this research study to generate and analyse data from 15 participants.

3.2 PAR AS RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

PAR is the research methodology in this study. Research methodology was defined by Khan (2014:32) as “the process and the method by which the researcher acquires knowledge about the world that may be helpful in answering the research questions and objectives of the present study”. Furthermore, Banda (2016:23) stated that “research methodology enables the researcher to get data through multiple sources, e.g., questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, focus group interviews etc.” From the above citations, I noted the following:

- The research methodology determines whether the research study is positivism, interpretivism or constructivism. Our PAR study falls under constructivism.

- Research methodology helps the research team to determine the type of research instruments to generate data to respond to the demands of the research question and achieve the expectations of research objectives.

In this discourse, I used Free Attitude Interview (FAI) techniques to generate data to answer the main research question, "How can we formulate a specific peer counselling strategy that alleviates drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies?"

PAR is defined by Jacobs (2016:48) as "action research which combines theory and practice, action and reflection with the participation of stakeholders who seek practical solutions to concerns and issues, allowing the flourishing of those stakeholders and their communities because of the research process". PAR was used in this research to actively involve the community members in the research process. It is evident that, for a long time, health professions such as counsellors, used PAR to bring together community members to create solutions to their community problems. Lykes (2016:43) supported this statement as follows:

> [F]or over a century, community psychologists collaborated with women, men and children in schools, workplaces, churches, non-governmental organizations, and local communities, seeking to enhance well-being and redress social inequities and/or to transform oppressive underlying socio-political structures that gave rise to those injustices.

Therefore, the PAR approach promotes active participation and emancipation of participants in this research study. The data generation in this research study was done through PAR, which democratised the research process and allowed participants and me to collectively generate data. This perspective agrees with how Moleko (2014:67) concluded that "the smiles on all faces after this assurance should that the team members acknowledged the value of PAR. This was evidence that PAR empowers, liberates, educates, and transforms the lives of people for the better". This shows that PAR resonates with CER, which is the theoretical framework of the study, both are advocating for empowerment and equality between the main researcher and participants.

After I had collectively generated and analysed data, I collectively formulated a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in our Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. This concurs with the submissions of Jacobs (2016:1), who argued that "traditionally, project beneficiaries have rarely been included in researching issues, finding solutions, designing indication or measuring change. PAR provides a way of changing this, offering an inclusive community-driven approach to development". Moreover, PAR and CER are driven by discourse, and organisational and poor relations.

There is a close link between the PAR methodology and the CER theoretical framework because they advocate for empowerment, enlightenment, emancipation and active participation of rural learning, marginalised people. This view is supported by Mthiyane (2015:20), who concluded as follows: "I found PAR best-suited for this study as it is concerned with problem-solving by linking knowledge to action, providing the enhancement of opportunities for intellectuals, social growth and sense of urgency in action towards social change". The thrust of this research study is to make people in rural learning ecologies active in solving drug abuse by formulating a peer counselling strategy. The PAR methodology allowed the participants to freely air their views and I did not interfere or manipulate their views in this study. Some literature supports PAR as an agent of transformation. Douglas (2016:1), for example, revealed that PAR is "a way of engaging people living in poverty as agents of change. It is of particular importance to development practitioners and researchers today, as it can ensure their interventions are relevant, appropriate and inclusive". My perspective is that the PAR methodology enabled and empowered the participants in this study to be active agents of change in solving drug abuse problems in their rural learning ecologies.

3.2.1 THE BACKGROUND OF PAR

The history of PAR was centred on the active involvement of grassroots members in decision-making. According to Lykes (2016:44), some scholars argued that "Participatory Action Research approaches to knowledge generation and social change can be traced back to early Greek philosophers or to indigenous communities." However, Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:4) explained the development of PAR as follows:

> [T]he development of PAR in North America and Europe evolved in reaction to the predominant modes of inquiry: empiricism and positivism, the goals of PAR focus on the production of alternative forms of knowledge, and its ontology and epistemology foundations are divergent from those of elitist or convention research.

Action Research had an agenda to solve predicaments such as discrimination and segregation, and helped in solving societal problems. It is evident that PAR is liberating in nature, as alluded by Lykes (2016:45), who argued that "most Latin Americans and their colleagues in Africa and Asia who engage in participatory and action research trace the origin of their work to anti-colonial and liberators' initiatives of Freire (1970), Flashboard (1985), and Rahman (2004)". One of the proponents of PAR was Paulo Freire, an adult educator and author who contributed to the development of PAR. His writings challenged poor relations and dominance in education, as expounded by Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:3):

> [The] philosophies of Paolo Freire and his propositions with respect to education as a liberating force, the acquisition of knowledge as a challenge to the oppression the poor by elite, the ideologies of Freire are that the marginalised within the society are able to construct knowledge in valuable ways, and that such knowledge is meaningful and significant for those social groups and their communities.

Furthermore, Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:3) stated that "the origins of Participatory Research can also be traced back to the perspectives espoused by Letwin (1946) who focused on action research and minority". PAR and CER have similarities in that they both empower the oppressed. There are different terms used interchangeably with Participatory Action Research. These terms include Participatory Research (PR) and Community-based Participatory Research. In this study, the PAR methodology was used to develop knowledge in formulating a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

The above is supported by Padilha, Sousa and Pereira (2015:1), who wrote that PAR "facilitates the change process in clinical practice and promotes knowledge development". The PAR methodology allowed us – the main researcher and community participants – to be action researchers in formulating a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse problems in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. This entails that PAR has an agenda

of social change. To accomplish our agenda of social change, I engaged in discourse and critical analysis of data to negotiate meanings and contextualise them, as pronounced by Zuber-Skerrit (2015:9):

> [PAR is] a holistic approach to learning, research and development, recognising and dealing with our emotions, feelings and intuitions, as Ill as our logical, rational, analytic, and critical thinking, and with social influences, contexts, and conditions of social realm. Within our social relationships, I negotiate meanings through dialogue, dialects, paradoxes, and discussions among critical friends who trust and respect one another as equals, while each has unique talents and viewpoints.

The PAR methodology consists of three major aspects, which are shared ownership of the research study, the involvement of communities in analysing the research problem and advocating for community action in solving the problem.

3.2.2 THE RESEARCH ONTOLOGY

The ontology of the research deals with reality. Khan (2014:31) stated that “ontology is concerned with the nature of reality. Reality is perceived as subjective and depends upon how researchers and participants perceive it. Ontology is all about understanding the real world and its existence and action”. Ontology deals with the question, “What is reality?” This means that different research methods have different perspectives on what they regard as reality. PAR has many realities, as elaborated by Crotty (1998:256), who submitted that realities “are socially constructed and that they are under constant internal influences”. Khan (2014:2) posited that “multiple realities and multiple truths/reality are socially constructed and constantly changing. Investigator and investigated are independent entities”. Therefore, ontology deals with how I perceive reality and gives the way of the ontological stance of the research study. From the above statement, I deduce that the participants are understood to view their worlds due to different personal perspectives on matters under discussion, emanating from different areas. Two basic scenario are that reality must be regarded as an objective, external reality; this calls the researcher to remain detached and to discard the notion that reality is subjective.

The PAR perspective of reality is different from that of other research methods, such as positivism, as explained by Jacobs (2016:49), who maintained that “a research project which utilises a PAR methodology rejects traditional positivist research paradigms and challenges traditional hierarchies between the researcher and those being researched”. Crotty (1998:256) asserted that there is “a single reality in positivism”. There is a total contradiction between positivism perspectives, which describe reality as objective, and the PAR perspective, that describes reality as subjective. The views from different participants in PAR lead it to have different realities and, therefore, link appropriately with CER, our research study theoretical framework. They have the common agenda to empower and emancipate the researcher and participants, from the peripherals of their own community involvement. The multiple realities of PAR are expounded in Jacobs (2016:49):

> [C]ontrary to this, PAR postulates that the researcher/observer not only impacts the phenomenon being researched, as they bring their values to the research process, but also that there are multiple realities present in the data due to the collaborative and social aspect of knowledge creation associated with PAR.

Focus group sessions are used, where the participants actively expressed their views without phobia.

3.2.3 THE RESEARCH EPISTEMOLOGY

Khan (2014:31) asserted that “epistemology is concerned with the way knowledge is acquired. It depends upon the relationship between researchers and researched, and how the researchers perceive that reality”. I noted that knowledge development in epistemology is centred upon the relationship between us, the research team members and the reality, and how I can explore reality. There are many epistemologies, but the research team must select the appropriate epistemology that resonates with the research ontology. Epistemology asks the question, “What and how do you know something?” Khan (2014: 2) stated that the “Epistemology Researcher and object are interactively linked / findings are mutually created within the context of the situation which shapes the inquiry”. Therefore, this leads to the question relevant for the research design: “What research perspective must I use to design my research study?” Epistemology, in PAR,

shows knowledge and how it is obtained. Knowledge, in PAR and CER, is derived from the views of many people. Jacobs (2016:50) argued as follows:

> "[PAR] has drawn upon a number of theories such as pragmatism, the practice of democracy, constructionist theory, and feminist inquiry. With respect to pragmatism, DeIy (1938) stated that any set of practices is dogmatic when not based upon critical reflection of its own underlying principles.

I should note that PAR holds the importance of reflection.

PAR liberates communities to provide practical solutions, as stated in Setlalentoa, Ryke and Strydom (2015:6):

> [C]ommunity members have capacity in prevention as well as early identification and intervention in alcohol abuse-related problems and the community members who are willing to participate and should be assisted to build capacity. Therefore, empowering the community to mobilise around alcohol related issues can be a powerful strategy.

I maintain that the control of community members' actions is influenced by involving them in the research study, sharing research responsibilities and roles, and the way in which they are interacting with one another. This is achievable by using a reflection technique.

As a researcher, I reminded myself that my role was to be empathetic and to see from other people's perspectives. This was alluded by Mubuuku (2013:151), who found that PAR "has the potential to empower, involve and actively engage all stakeholders in significant innovations in health professions training". The engagement of community participants using PAR allowed me to view the world through this new lens. The PAR methodology offers the main researcher a true reflection of our actions in the research process. The PAR methodology also postulates that the main researcher has more to learn in the research process, and that the voices and knowledge of participants must be acknowledged**.**

3.3 THE PAR OBJECTIVES

3.3.1 The objective to democratise the research process

Jacobs (2016:1) stated that the participatory nature of PAR "embodies a democratic approach to research in which participants work collaboratively in the co-generation of new knowledge to address a specific issue or problem". PAR operates on a multidisciplinary and collectively conceptual framework which participants are involved in. It assisted us to be broadly inclusive. Mthiyane (2014:6) made the following claim:

> [E]mpowerment is a mechanism, a multidimensional social process which can assist individuals, groups and communities gain control over their lives. It fosters power to act for those who are less powerful on issues they define as important to them, and counter oppression by dominant culture, values and language.

This means that participants are active participants and are empowered in the research study. The principal researcher and participants discussed issues and collectively agreed on solutions to address the problems bedevilling their societies. The support from NGOs and other stakeholders within the community was in different aspects, such as money, buildings and manpower. For example, in this study, I had officially requested the government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, to engage their learners, teachers and their buildings to conduct this study. Therefore, in this study, learners and all participants participated on an equal footing, in collaboration with the main researcher, and are empowered throughout the research study process. The PAR methodology allowed participants, and gave me the opportunity, to discuss our problems and offer solutions to mitigate the problems. These discussions are held in a non-threatening environment that was free of fear.

Khan (2014:30) argued that "positivism uses larger than qualitative sample/representative. The interpretivist has a small sample size, small/purposeful/ respondents with important information/not meant to be representative". The success of PAR is premised on total cooperation and a high level of commitment from participants, who are a source of information that I will use to generate data. The marginalised and oppressed participants are empowered in this research study through giving their views,

and listening to and being actively involved in formulating a peer counselling strategy to solve drug abuse problems in their learning environments. My above respective perspectives are supported by Tshelane (2013:414), who stated that the core value in PAR refers to “research done with mutual respect for individual needs and differences and with recognition of one another as equal members and values the contributions of the participants”. The participants in this study had an opportunity to air their ideas about issues of formulating a peer counselling strategy and took ownership of the research study results.

I was confident that PAR was appropriate in this study because it allowed collaborative inputs in formulating an effective and culturally acceptable peer counselling programme that would have a buy-in from all stakeholders. It permitted all stakeholders in peer counselling to identify and acknowledge the problem, study the problem, analyse it, and formulate peer counselling strategies to solve the problem. Zvirevo (2013:34) reckoned that the “research participants should be members of the community who are knowledgeable about the problem, have technical skills and something in common like culture and geographical location”. These participants are selected for the following reasons: they came from the same geographical location, and the same socio-economic and cultural backgrounds; they had technical knowledge that was useful in this study; and they also had influence on policymaking decisions.

PAR is a paradigm shift from the traditional research approaches which give more power to the main researcher over the participants. This research study focuses on empowering the community. Nkoane (2013:394) made the following remark:

> [S]ocial 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.

The marginalised in this research study are learners, teachers, counsellors, social workers, educational psychologists, members of parliament, and chiefs. Their involvement in formulating a peer counselling strategy empowered them and assisted them in eradicating inequitable learning conditions. They are autonomous and owned the

research process, and I did not exert an influence on them on how they formulated the peer counselling strategy for the alleviation of drug abuse in their community. The participation of learners particularly increased the democratic space in this research study. This is supported by the Department of Basic Education (2013: iv):

> [W]hile the policy mandate is substantive, focus now needs to be shifted towards implementation. International policies, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the African Youth Charter, mandate signatories to protect children from the use of substance, and their involvement in production and trafficking of substances.

Furthermore, the Zimbabwe Constitution (2013:25) stipulated that “children have a right to education, health and protection from drug abuse”.

I submitted that the policy of restorative justice should be enacted to assist learners who abuse drugs in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, in order to give learners another opportunity to live drug-free lives and pursue their studies. I am opposed to a punitive approach, such as expelling students who abused drugs, in dealing with learners who abused drugs. I advocate that punitive action must be taken against business people and individuals who sell drugs to learners.

The peer counselling strategy formulated in this research is to retain learners in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies and create a conducive learning space that promotes quality education. Our aim is to ensure that rural learning ecologies must be drug-free zones and conducive to the learning environment. The participants should advocate for the inclusion of a peer counselling strategy for the prevention of drug abuse in the school curriculum and the strengthening of collaboration to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

3.3.2 The objective of gender equality

The issue of gender was factored in as PAR advocates for inclusion of women and girls in research studies. Jacobs (2016:50) argued that PAR “has drawn upon a number of theories such as pragmatism, the practice of democracy, constructionist theory, and feminist inquiry”. The feminist inquiry advocates for female inclusion in research studies.

The female voice in issues of drug abuse are missing; therefore, I considered Feminist Participatory Action Research, which promotes the inclusion of women and girls in research studies. In addition, Lykes (2016:46) stated that PAR projects "are built on and nourished by the development of mutually dependent and co-operative relationships among collaborators". The involvement of female participants in this study helped us to understand drug abuse and peer counselling strategies from a female perspective.

3.3.3 The objective of combining "Action" and "Research"

I view action and research as compatible in PAR. Lykes (2016:46) made the following statement:

> [PAR] projects are built on and nourished by the development of mutually dependent and co-operative relationships among collaborators. These are facilitated through the development of shaped spaces wherein the various knowledge systems and skills are levels that can be valued, exchanged, and critiqued within and despite divergences, contradictions, and / or conflicts. These spaces facilitate the interactive processes for generating, appraising and reflecting on data and developing actions.

To unpack the above quote, I realised that PAR combines research and action to solve problems simultaneously. Thus, action and research are compatible in PAR. In this research study, action and research took place immediately after the initial consultation and planning sessions, when the research team took ownership of the research project and generated data that addressed the research aim and objectives, while simultaneously addressing challenges and generating solutions to community challenges.

The above statements find their support in Moleko (2014:55-56):

> [S]ince this study seeks not only to produce knowledge but also to change the status quo of the oppressed and to instil a sense of ownership to all involved, PAR was deemed pertinent. Unlike other research methodologies, it was specifically chosen because it recognises that "no individuation is possible without socialisation and that no socialisation is possible without individuation".

This is critical, as this research study values, appreciates and upholds that collectively we can achieve formulation of drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. It is my

conviction that, through active social interactions and deliberations, the research team can formulate an effective and efficient peer counselling strategy. All research team members actively participated in decision-making and our main purpose was to emancipate ourselves. PAR provides a platform for research teams to share their views, as stated in Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:4), who alluded that contemporary PAR methodologies "have evolved processes of co-construction involving community members, clients, specific cultural groups and researchers". This PAR methodology is consistent with my line of work. As an educational psychologist, I am committed to social justice, which is achieved through actively involving Zimbabwean rural communities in solving all societal injustices, such as inequality in the education system and drug abuse. The participants in this research study, through sharing their views and active involvement, was enabled to obtain social justice, freedom and empowerment.

In this study, "action research" connects data generation to the formulation of a peer counselling strategy that alleviates drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Another view is that of PAR, in which "action" and "research" work together. This is described by Roll *et al.* (2015:1):

> [A]ction research seeks transformative change through the simultaneous process of taking into action and doing research and action research practitioners reflect upon consequences of their own questions, beliefs, assumptions, and practices with the goal of understanding and developing, and improving social practice.

Therefore, PAR directs research teams towards self-transformation. For us to accomplish transformation in this study, the participants and I worked collectively and took ownership of the research study. As a result, the above submissions authenticate that PAR fulfils the aim and the five objectives of the research study.

3.3.4 The political agenda objective

PAR is political in nature. Kapoor and Jordan (2016:2) stated:

> [T]he attempted political dismemberment and disengagement of PAR, especially in relation to anti/critical colonial variations in professional and

> academic spaces, is both predictable, given the politics of co-optation and its role in helping to produce a global capitalist hegemony and Euro-American knowledge hegemony and, ironically, given the extent of marginalisation, dispossession, and colonisation in the contemporary era and, more significantly, the growing and vocal resistance to attempt subjection.

I concur that, in Zimbabwe, most of the peer counselling strategies being used, are Eurocentric, meaning that they are formed by people without taking into consideration the Zimbabwe context. I witnessed this when I was working as a peer counsellor co-ordinator and found that the peer counselling manual and other literature are written in a western context and Zimbabweans had not contributed their views; however, this research sought to include the views of Zimbabwean rural learning communities.

In most cases, researchers get views from urban dwellers and neglect rural communities. PAR, however, allows the decolonisation of knowledge from people in the urban set-up to rural communities to discover their own problems and provide relevant solutions. Conversely, Kapoor and Jordan (2016:3) stated:

> [T]he nature of the political intent and definition of PAR (in academia and in governing institutions) processes committed to the interests of a popular pedagogical and knowledge project of, from, by, and for marginalised and dispossessed social groups, calls attention to the pressing political and epistemic necessity to redraw the lines distinguishing various PAR engagements.

The political nature of PAR in this research study is centred on the issue of creating a peer counselling strategy for Zimbabweans by Zimbabwean rural leaning ecologies in the formulation of a peer counselling strategy that alleviates drug abuse in their society. The political nature of PAR also rests on its ability to raise the community members from being viewed as consumers of knowledge to active co-generators of knowledge. Furthermore, Zuber-Skerritt (2015:7-8) argued:

> [T]raditionally, it has been assumed that scientific knowledge is created by specialist scholars, scientists, or theorists and then applied by practitioners. In contrast the basic epistemological assumption in participatory action research is that, practitioners, too, can create knowledge based on concrete experience by critically reflecting on the experience, formulating abstract generalisations from it, and testing these newly created concepts in new situations, thus,

> gaining new concrete experience, and continuing the next cycle of experiential learning and knowledge creation.

In line with the above citation, in this study, I worked 'with' participants and not 'on' participants. The PAR methodology supports the CER theoretical framework because, according to Basit (2010:15), "it makes recommendations for improvements, social justice, empowerment and emancipation". I have noted that there is an unequal power relation between the main researcher and participants. The collaborative emancipatory nature of PAR has motivated me to embark on the academic journey to solve social justice by using a political kind of discourse that encourages the disadvantaged, marginalised and oppressed members of the society to rise and take ownership in solving their problems.

3.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF PAR

This section covers the characteristics of PAR, which are as follows:

3.4.1 PAR is centred on co-knowledge development

PAR is committed to new knowledge development together with participants, and this is the drive of every researcher in research – to develop new knowledge. Zuber-Skerrit (2015:17) stated:

> [T]he researcher and participants must co-create knowledge that is relevant, contextualised, and useful for both, meeting community needs and producing research outputs as required. Academics can produce research outcomes that are rigorous and valid, as well as community relevant, practical, and collaborative, therefore, more transformative and sustainable.

Therefore, the PAR methodology assists researchers and participants to comprehend that knowledge is an instrument of knowledge generation. Zuber-Skerrit (2015:8) stated as follows:

> [T]he basic epistemological assumption in Participatory Action Research is that, practitioners, too, can create knowledge based on concrete experience by critically reflecting on the experience, formulating abstract generalisations from it, and testing these newly created concepts in new situations – thus,

gaining new concrete experience, and continuing the next cycle of experiential learning and knowledge creation.

It is my view that PAR seeks a holistic approach of achieving change, in comparison to traditional research methodologies, such as positivism, that give exclusive knowledge generation to the main researcher. The acknowledgement in the notion that globalised world knowledge is that power plays a fundamental role in PAR. More so, Morales (2016:1) elaborated that PAR plots "research cell design or teacher network design to enhance research for action, action for research and creation of knowledge and theories whilst solving the problems in the classroom settings". Knowledge decolonisation through PAR is explained by Janes (2015:1), who mentioned that "the literature suggests that community-based participatory research holds the potential to democratise and decolonise knowledge production by engaging communities and citizens in the research enterprise".

In this study, PAR assisted the participants and me to co-create peer counselling strategy knowledge, as evident in Roll *et al.* (2015:1), who submitted that the "strength of action research is that the researcher studies what he or she does in concert with others, therefore, the knowledge created through action research is, inevitably, dialogical in nature, and is thus, always negotiated and co-created knowledge".

3.4.2 PAR deals with practicality of solutions

PAR is an applied research methodology. The ability to provide practical solutions is clearly validated by Morales (2016:159), who noted that PAR is grounded on a "participatory world-view bringing together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others to pursue practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people and, more generally, the flourishing of individual persons and communities." I actively participated in this research study with the clear intention to achieve the objective of formulating a peer counselling strategy as a way to solve drug abuse in our rural communities.

The PAR methodology uses conventional principles of social research, as explained by Kapoor and Jordan (2009:5):

> PAR is a composite methodology that is concerned, foremost, with the question of praxis, that is, the integration of theory and practice as an ongoing problem to be addressed in any form of social inquiry, whether in ethnographies and other fieldwork, or in understanding the generation of theory as a practical activity.

In agreement with the above submissions, PAR values the ideas of participants. In this study, Zimbabwean rural school learners and other participants mentioned, actively participated in collaboration with the principal researcher. PAR acknowledges the views of participants and, collectively, the principal researcher and participants determine the acceptability of the research process.

3.4.3 PAR deals with a multidisciplinary-related approach

The multidisciplinary-related concepts, values and perspective of PAR are indicated by Zuber-Skerritt (2015:6), who wrote that PAR is “a holistic, integrative concept that incorporates related concepts and values such as participation, collaboration, communication, community practice, networking and synergy”. The above observation proves that PAR aims to be inclusive, which means that all those who are interested in and concerned about dealing with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, are actively involved. I created an environment where not only practitioners, such as teachers and educational psychologists, but also the extended network of learners, parents, chiefs, and politicians, who are directly and indirectly affected by lack of peer counselling to alleviate drug abuse, are involved.

To emphasise the essence of multidisciplinary concepts and networking in the success of peer counselling, the Department of Basic Education of South Africa (2013:23) declared that “programmes are likely to be most effective when supported by various role players. These include politicians, national, provincial, district officials, school governing body, and community leaders, including traditional leadership”. Our collaboration assisted us in delegating community leaders to help us use their expertise, for example, “the chief” is a traditional leader of the Chivi rural constituency. He has powers to make traditional laws and, as a Member of Parliament, enacts laws in parliament. The traditional participants can use their political, traditional support and commitment to advance the cause of a peer counselling strategy. Chiefs in rural areas may mobilise community

members to form local drug action groups that will implement peer counselling, financially support it and lobby local business people and individuals not to sell drugs to learners.

In support of this, Zuber-Skerrit stated as follows:

> PAR fosters problem solving from the inside out, that is, the research and development project is planned and conducted with, for and by, not 'on' the people themselves, who are affected by the problem, its solution, and the decisions made as consequences. So, it is participatory and a true alternative to neo-liberalism and managerialism – the control mechanism of bureaucratic systems and powerful people who are interested in economic efficiency over human and social concerns, justice, and environmental sustainability.

They can use their indigenous knowledge in formulating a peer counselling strategy that is locally and culturally acceptable. In other words, partnership is vital for the success of a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

On the other hand, parents and caregivers play a fundamental role in the formulation of a peer counselling strategy and alleviating drug abuse. In this study, I need a collective effort to reduce or totally eradicate drug abuse in our communities. In elaborating further, Jacobs (2016:49) alluded:

> [R]eflection and the opportunity to work with students on a research project, using a PAR methodology also follows DeIy's 1997 belief that the teacher has more to learn than to teach, as a PAR project respects the voices and knowledge of all research participants and allows knowledge to be constructed through group collaboration and participation.

There must be coordination between the learners, school authorities and other external partners, such as NGOs. This research study reached out to all community members. The active participation of community members in different spheres in the research study was most critical to ensure the sustainability of implementation and evaluation. This shows that the research study was not exclusive.

3.4.4 PAR advocates equality

The PAR approach clearly holds that the principal researcher and participants are equal partners in the research process. Jacobs (2016:48) affirmed that PAR "postulates that the researcher/observer not only impacts the phenomenon being researched, but also there are multiple realities present in the data due to the collaborative and social aspect of knowledge creation associated with PAR". In addition, Jacobs (2016:48) explained that "central to this challenge of traditional positivists' methodology, is also the fact that the PAR project holds that research is conducted with participants, rather than on participants". In this research study, the research was conducted with members of Zimbabwean rural ecologies, rather than on them. It is the rationale of the PAR approach that participants must be the source of solutions to problems bedevilling them, and have shared ownership of the research study and its findings. In this regard, participants identified drug abuse problems and the lack of a peer counselling strategy and created a peer counselling strategy to mitigate drug abuse in rural, learning ecologies.

The principle of inclusion is elaborated on by Zuber-Skerrit (2015:105-106):

> Participatory Action Research is like CAR but it is always aiming at inclusion, social justice, and equality of participants in the research. PAR originated in developing countries but then spread across the world. PAR is also an international network of scholars and practitioners from diverse fields and sections of society.

The research team comprised community members of diverse backgrounds, such as teacher counsellors. The active participation of community members helped me to be accepted in this community. Furthermore, Burns (2015:89) alluded that "the cornerstones of Action Research include: participation, learning, relations, network building, appropriate actions and interventions". Most of the time, I witnessed that the rural community shunned principal researchers who are not from their community. They usually viewed them with suspicion. This was the case in my situation; I was from another residential place, carrying a 'foreign tag', and I then found myself in the same situation. To mitigate this, I engaged community members in the entire research process, sought permission from gatekeepers, and explained the purpose of the research. After using these techniques, I managed to gain their trust. I further explained my role to them as that

of a facilitator and provided leadership in the research process, giving the research a scientific tone, and identifying and providing an enabling atmosphere for participants to freely express their views.

Meyer (2016:1) delivered the following statement:

> I value three aspects of Action Research: 1) It allows me to be critical and reflexive of my own practices as a leader/decision-maker in the creative fields, 2) it provides collective visions for hands – activities in teaching and learning practices with students and communities, 3) it helps to develop capabilities to understand intersectional differences and working in diverse environments which impact the broader society.

I concur with the above submissions that PAR permits me, as main researcher, to do critical analysis as team leader. PAR allows us, as the research team, to collectively formulate the research vision, aim, objectives and other processes, and gives us the platform to interact and work within and beyond communities. I noted that the involvement of community members in this research study increased their confidence, self-esteem, self-determination, and self-worth. In responding to the principle of equality, the participants and I generated data, analysed it, provided objectives, deduced research findings, and made informed adjustments on the data, in relation to peer counselling.

3.4.5 PAR is emancipatory in nature

Zuber-Skerrit (2015:14) maintained as follows:

> [PAR] is inclusive and democratic. I have plenty of evidence that even illiterate or semi-literate people in the marginalised or disadvantaged communities, not only in developing, but also in developed countries can benefit from PAR. They can learn how to help themselves through self- directed, lifelong action learning.

To elaborate further, PAR empowers and emancipates the communities where the research study is conducted. It collaborates well with the CER study lens, according to Hlalele (2014:103), who argued that CER “signifies a paradigm shift from a conventional and positivistic one that places the ‘powerful’ researcher at the centre of the research, to one that seeks to present collective ownership”. The shift of power from researcher to

participants is made possible through the use of PAR, which accommodates participants' perspectives.

I hold the view that the emancipation of participants is the hallmark of both PAR and CER, which I used to formulate a peer counselling strategy through active participation of people from within the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. PAR and CER assisted this research study to destruct or eliminate extreme inequalities, domination and sliding of members in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies in providing solutions to problems affecting them.

The PAR methodology is emancipatory-based, as explained by Moleko (2014:56):

> PAR has a type of collaboration that is a powerful tool in effecting treatment outcomes for marginalised populations. Because of the inclusion of all the people and the value placed on the marginalised, one could say that, in PAR, participants are elevated and thus become participants, not the researched. The researchers are lowered in their status and become the participants, hence all those engaged operate from the same power level, wherein nobody is superior in knowledge.

The agenda of PAR is premised on assisting participants to deliver themselves from the clutches of irrational and unsatisfying social structures. These issues hinder the co-researcher's self-development and self-determination. I noted that there are three main sources of power struggles in PAR, namely:

- community researchers against outside researchers;
- community researchers against the community at large; and
- community researchers using the PAR approach against community researchers using traditional research methods.

In this research study, I experienced power struggles which emanated from the composition of the research team. In the research team, I had adults and children as participants. Adult participants had perceived power over children participants. To mitigate this inequality, I divided the research team into three focus groups. The focus group discussions facilitated active involvement of all participants in seeking solutions to

formulate a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Mubuuku (2013:150) stated that PAR "results in both knowledge generation and immediate action, gives stakeholders authority to direct the research process, addresses real contextual needs, promotes team work and collaborations". In this discourse, I employed the technique of consultations in decision-making, as a way to emancipate and promote active participation of all participants; for example, I gave participants the power to determine dates and times convenient for research sessions.

3.5 THE PAR PROCESS

This research study cover the following areas:

3.5.1 The research setting

The Nyaningwe Secondary School was the venue for this research study. It is located in the Chivi rural area, under the Chief Madyangove in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. I describe the venue where this research took place because it is essential in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), according to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:23) to explain "the community's historical and current context, culture, and relationship". I concur that the Zimbabwean rural community environment models the way participants in this study perceive issues and, therefore, affects their way of life. The Chivi rural area is a highly-disadvantaged area – no industries, a high level of unemployment and poverty, few secondary schools, and the area experience droughts yearly and receives little support from the Government. The area is marginalised and many secondary school learners end up using drugs; therefore, there is a need for a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse.

In line with CER, this study gives the Chivi rural community a platform to be empowered and take action to solve their community problems. The Nyanigwe School is owned by the Roman Catholic Church and was established in 1986. In Zimbabwe, schools are in different categories, namely private and public schools. Nyaningwe Secondary School falls under private church schools. It started by offering Form 1 to Form 4 level classes and in 1998 it was elevated to offer 'A' level classes, Form 5 and Form 6. It is one of the

few rural secondary schools to be recognised and elevated to upper high school status by the Government of Zimbabwe since independence in 1980. The research team members chose Nyaningwe Secondary School situated at Chivi Growth Point as a venue because of its centrality.

3.5.2 The researcher's entrance into the rural community

I entered the Chivi rural community as a researcher with the intention to actively engage community members to formulate a peer counselling strategy to mitigate drug abuse in learning ecologies. I entered the Chivi community armed with the PAR methodology, as, according to Glassman and Erdem (2014:214), PAR allows a "spiral of inquiries into critical thinking, reflecting and actions of members of the oppressed community while it also includes those who enter the community in search of intervention." Therefore, the issue of entry into the community through engaging community members must be respected by the researcher, as both the researcher and participants identify the problem collectively. Moreover, Khan and Chovanec (2010:35) described PAR as "democratic, unbiased, redemptive and life-enhancing". The active participation of community members in alleviating drug abuse through peer counselling is in line with the principle of PAR, as elaborated by Jacobs (2016:48):

> Participatory Action Research is an action research which combines theory and practice, action and reflection with the participation of stakeholders who seek practical solutions to concerns and issues, allowing the flourishing of those stakeholders and their communities because of the research process.

From the above definition, it is clear that PAR is applied through engaging the communities. Furthermore, from the citation, I deduced that the principal researcher discovers community problems from many sources, but I aimed to zoom in on the problem from the following sources, namely through reading literature on or seeing the problem. The community discovers its problem and requests the researcher to partner them in solving the problem. The community, through organisations, may request the researcher to give an objective analysis of the problem or to help in discovering and formulating the problem.

I embarked on this research after having witnessed rural learners abusing drugs and after reading literature. In turn, I shared the problem with learners and other participants in Zimbabwean rural areas to render them an opportunity to conceptualise the problem from their personal experiences, thereby soliciting their buy-in. This view of collaboration in problem identification is stated by Mubuuku (2013:148), who wrote that PAR "emphasises teamwork and active collaboration, where researchers and participants work together to analyse a problem situation and generate actions to solve the problem". The participants accepted my point of view on the problem and collectively accepted to act to solve the lack of a peer counselling strategy that alleviates drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. One should note that, regardless of how the main researcher identifies the problem, the community involvement is essential in the PAR process.

It is clear that, through usage of PAR, the marginalised stakeholders are respected. In this study, I treated the participants with great respect. The entry of the researcher in any community can be misunderstood and cause resistance. This is evident in Mubuuku (2013:147), who observed that:

> …unfortunately, many of these innovative changes in training have met with resistance from lecturers and students because they are just imposed on them. One way of ensuring acceptability and success of innovation and evidence – based on training methods in health sciences could be the use of the Participatory Action Research approach.

This applies to the Zimbabwe context, especially in rural areas, where the politicians, and people in general, are sceptical to researchers who are not from their local areas and they think that the researcher is on the "agenda of opposition politics". This research study took place during a period of political conflict and towards presidential and local elections in 2013. However, during this research study, I did not face any resistance from community members. I am of the view that I was gladly accepted in this community because I respectfully requested them to actively participate in the research study and the involvement of respectable community leaders, such as the chief and the MP was remarkable.

3.5.3 Ethical considerations in PAR

Another essential component in PAR is that the researcher should be guided by research ethics. I concur with the purpose of ethics, as Dube (2016:137) argued that “ethical considerations pertain to an authentic approach of carrying out a research study in dealing with participants, affecting how evidence is collected, documented, interpreted and used to avoid harm to participants”. Furthermore, as Moleko (2014:11) stated, “the participants are free to take part and their entry was negotiated. Permission was granted by the Higher Education Institution and consent forms given to them, all of which are signed”. I adhered to the following ethical considerations: permission to generate data, voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality.

Ethical considerations protect and value participants. I applied for ethical clearance from the Ethical Committee in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State. My research ethical clearance number is UFS-HSD 2016 / 0495 (see Appendix A). I sought permission to conduct the research in Zimbabwe from the National Zimbabwe Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the Masvingo Provincial Education Director and the Chivi District Education Officer to enter their schools and engage teachers as participants in this study (see Appendices B, C and D). In my previous research studies in Zimbabwe, I have learnt that before I conduct a study, I had to personally visit the chief and kraal head, regardless of the fact that I had a letter of permission to conduct research from the school authorities. These traditional leaders are not informed or invited to participate in research by letters or telephone; the researcher must visit them and verbally invite them. It is not culturally appropriate to invite them telephonically or by invitation letters.

I also sought permission from the employers of police officers, social workers, educational psychologists and NGO members. I was given the permission (see Appendix F). I personally requested the chief and the MP to participate in this research study and they agreed. They signed informed consent forms. The signing of consent forms was voluntary. In this study, too, “ethical considerations are discussed with the participants prior, during and after the research process”, as Mthiyane (2015:21) asserted. Considering the sensitive nature of the study, measures to guard against possible ethical dilemmas, and the less obvious, yet harmful effects of research, I informed the

participants about the aim of the research study and the implications of their participation. I also assured the participants that the data generated would be safely stored in my office in a secure cabinet and that data are gathered only for research purposes.

3.5.4 Participants in this research study

> [I]nclusiveness in research and fair distribution of benefits and burdens should be important considerations for researchers, issues of fair and equitable treatment arise in deciding whether and how to include people in research, the basis for the exclusion, provides guidance relevant to inclusion in research of specific groups such as women and children (Zvirevo, 2014:1).

In Zimbabwean rural areas, traditionally, vulnerable women and children have not been involved in research studies. Therefore, this research study included the rural and disadvantaged community members. The following participants are involved in this research study: six learners, a local NGO, a psychologist, a parent, a police man, a pastor, a local chief, an MP, and two teacher counsellors. These are members from the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies who are influential in their respectable areas of work. They are selected because they came from the same location, the same socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, had technical skills, are knowledgeable and had influence on policymaking.

The issue of gender was factored in in the selection of participants to participate in this study, as subscribed by the Centre of Genomics and Policy (2012:2):

> [W]omen have historically been inappropriately excluded from participating in some research. This exclusion of women, where unwarranted, has delayed the advancement of knowledge, denied potential benefits to women, and exposed women to harm when research findings from male-only research projects are generalised inappropriately to women, as has often been the case in clinical drug trials.

However, the principles of CER that I employed, allow female participation, as Blad (2014:2) stated that the inclusion of women in research “advances the commitment to justice, improves the generalizability of research findings to women where that is a goal of the research, and is essential to ensure that women and men benefit equally from research”. These community members are knowledgeable about the problems of a lack

of peer counselling strategies in addressing drug abuse problems in rural, learning ecologies. They possessed rural cultural capital, expertise and technical skills.

The educational psychologist is qualified to provide emotional and psychological support to learners and community members. In this research study, I requested her to provide psychosocial support to the team members. On the other hand, the social worker possesses the skills for monitoring peer counselling strategies and is an expert in provision of counselling services to team members and community members. The teacher counsellors have the mandate to teach and train learners in peer counselling strategies, and are peer counsellor mentors and supervisors, due to their professional qualifications. The parents, representing the School Development Committee, are the parents or guardians of learners. They create an environment that is conducive for the peer counselling strategy to be effective, and support peer counsellors and teacher counsellors through provision of material and financial support. School learners are the direct beneficiaries of peer counselling strategy, as the Centre for Genomics and Policy (2012:6) claimed that “children have varying degrees of maturity that may present important challenges for research design and the consent process, in addition, children may also lack the decision-making capacity to decide whether or not to participate in research”. The children in this research study signed informed consent forms (see Appendix D). They would use peer counselling to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The pastor was a religious leader who provided spiritual guidance and counselling. The police officer provided the legal aspect in relation to drug abuse that will be alleviated by the peer counselling strategy. Furthermore, the police officer reassured us that their job did not entail only arresting the drug abuse offenders, but they also promoted the use of a peer counselling strategy in mitigating the impact of drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

The Department of Basic Education of South Africa (2013:22) asserted that studies should increase “knowledge, life skills and confidence amongst learners, so that they are less likely to engage in problematic alcohol and drug use”. Most of the drug abuse awareness programmes in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies are currently being conducted by NGOs; therefore, the involvement of workers from NGOs helped us to have a deeper understanding of the current drug abuse problem. In addition, the support and

involvement of community members is supported by Garcia and Gonzalez (2011:9), who recommended that the following measures may be useful in the formulation and implementation of presentation and intervention strategies in Participatory Research projects: “identify and include local government agencies and non-government community based-organisations in the development of presentation and intervention programs”.

The Government and NGO workers also assisted us to identify the peer counselling knowledge gap. The chief and the MP had the traditional and political power and influence in their areas of jurisdiction. Ahmead (2014: i) came to the following conclusion:

> [T]raditional mediation helps the community keep control over the outcome of the dispute and in many societies, elders have traditional jurisdiction in facilitation, arbitration, and monitoring outcomes; resolutions are generally accepted and respected by all concerned parties, often bring important social influence.

They gave us permission to embark on this research study in their capacity as official gatekeepers, who have authority to give or deny us access to research venues and participants. The local chief informed us about the local traditional structures and programmes the communities had, in order to fight drug abuse problems. On the other hand, the MP explained to us in detail the duties of the government in promoting peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse through the enacting of laws. The MP narrated the support the government gave to schools in their quest to fight drug abuse, such as pamphlets and books. He further explained the government’s position on collaboration with different stakeholders in trying to deal with drug abuse among Zimbabwe learners in rural learning ecologies. The following research study supports collaborative efforts: Garcia and Gonzalez (2011:9) concluded that “community stakeholders should participate in all phases of research, from defining the research problem to collaborating with stakeholders to develop and propose policy and program recommendation”. In my view, this research study helped the participants to acquire new knowledge and counselling skills in order to deal with drug abuse and effectively implement peer counselling strategies in alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

Invitation letters were sent to organisations and to individuals involved in the study. The impact of the research study is based on the consultation of Zimbabwean rural community members, just as Garcia and Gonzalez (2011:10) stated: “we made our recommendations in consultations with community stakeholders interested in our work and with colleagues in the substance abuse field”. The participation of these stakeholders in this research study raised critical aspects on previous peer counselling strategies and intended assisting in alleviating drug abuse in rural ecologies. Giovazolias and Themeli (2014:81) made the following remark:

> [A] great deal of attention has been given to the application of programs that focus on the role of social impact, considering substance use to be a result of model imitation and substance offering by peers resulting from peer psychology empowerment, namely the gradual exposure of the individual to social influences so that they are rendered capable to resist powerful messages regarding substances.

The participants thrived to become responsible citizens, actively involved in the structures of the society. In the spirit of CER and PAR of empowering the research team members, I created an environment in which all members are freely expressing their views.

3.5.5 The negotiation process

The generated data provided the research team with points for discussion. I used the collaborative principle of PAR to engage participants at every stage in the negotiation process, “involving discussion, pooling skills and working together… [this] is intended to result in some action, change or improvement on the issue being researched” (Whitman, Pain & Milledge, 2015:625). Castro (2014:7) alluded that “in these conversations, the conflicting views that had surfaced during the interviews would be closely examined and contrasted with the teacher’s perspective, in order to meet the terms of triangulation”. I used my negotiation skills and made decisions, based on group consensus. I managed to negotiate the diverse perspectives that arose in our discussions, through the proposal of formulations that gained general consent among all participants. All our activities in this research study followed the procedure that data generated from participants, are

scrutinised in large focus group discussions in order to reach general acceptable agreements. Tshelane (2013:417) stated that “the main aim of PAR, as I see it, is to give participants an opportunity to engage in identification or acknowledging the existence of the problems; studying the problem; analysing it and designing ways of addressing the problem”. The citation clearly shows that the researcher and participants should negotiate the meanings of generated data and come up with an agreed position.

3.5.6 The planning stage

The question of the research study at this stage underwent refinement, for the participants involved in the study to understand their roles and responsibilities and their views on the agreed-upon issues concerning data generation and analysis. I actively involved the Zimbabwean rural participants to set research processes, in line with CER, according to Given (2008:139), who “worked with the participants to set the agenda [and] as a result, there was discovery and exploitation of power differentials in the research relationship as Ill as in the community under study”. Lopez (2015:230) made the following remark:

> [Through PAR,] 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 taking action to alleviate problems.

In this study, participants are engaged in the planning phase and I had two sessions for 45 minutes each.

3.5.7 The evaluation and monitoring stage

Castro (2014:536) made the following remarks regarding the evaluation and monitoring stage of his research study:

> [V]arious monitoring techniques are adopted to guarantee that evidence concerning the implementation of the action steps was looked at from different angles. The three perspectives represented are my own: I became the external observer during the group presentations – the perspective of the students giving the presentations, who acted as teachers whose practice was evaluated by the audience, and, finally, the standpoint afforded by the rest of the students acting as audience.

In this study, the participants and I agreed to do evaluation and monitoring collectively. Therefore, we both closely observing the research process and actively contributing my views during discussion sessions. It took an hour in this session to discuss our progress, the changes which are successfully implemented, the achievement of desired results, and further action to be executed. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999:56) stated that “evaluation is essential in determining whether the intended results of programs are realized”. This peer counselling strategy was formulated through the active participation of the marginalised participants in order to alleviate drug abuse within their Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The programme will be evaluated after its implementation. This will be done in order to monitor if the peer counselling strategy is successfully addressing its intended purpose.

The evaluation will allow us to make adjustments and corrections wherever the demands arise. I regarded evaluation as an ongoing process that was essential in making sure the formulated strategy accomplished its purpose. McGannon *et al*. (2005:98) stated that the “issue of evaluation is receiving increased attention as peer counsellors are asked to demonstrate that their efforts contribute meaningfully to student development and success”. The researcher and participants evaluated the goals and objectives of peer counselling, training of peer counsellors and teacher counsellors, resources assigned, people’s perceptions about peer counselling, and its impact in relation to drug abuse. There is a tendency of not implementing formulated peer counselling strategies that is substantiated in the findings of the research study by Garcia and Gonzalez (2011:10), who stated that “however, our recommendations are not adopted and not implemented”. I have noted that many strategies have been formulated, but they are not implemented. There are many research studies done with well-meaning strategies, but they are gathering dust because no one has implemented the strategies. This research study is not only academic and professional in purpose, but it will also be implemented.

3.5.8 The report writing stage

Khan (2014:33) described qualitative research as follows:

> [Q]ualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding, based on distinct methodological traditions on inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports details of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.

Our research was qualitative in nature. Our team secretaries recorded events accurately as they unfold in the research process.

3.5.9 The action plan

The recommendations of the researcher and the participants are used to determine the research action plan. It was collective.

3.6 THE INSTRUMENTATION

3.6.1 Use of the Free Attitude Interview technique

The Free Attitude Interview (FAI) technique to generate data was employed in the focus group. The Soul City Institute of Health and Development (2015:13) wrote that a Free Attitude interviewing technique allows “the social construction of experiences to emerge in the words of the participants themselves, and according to their priorities”. According to Meulenberg-Burnskens (2011:4-6), “the researcher uses the exploring question to initiate the conversation”. In this study, I posed the research question, “How can I utilise a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies?” The posing of a research question to get more views is supported by Tshelane (2013:419), who remarked that the FAI technique is used “creatively and as an instrument of data generation because it has elements of respect for people and a question used only as a means to initiate a conversation”. This was deliberated in three different discussion focus groups discussions in order to generate data. To achieve this, I agreed on following certain ground rules to govern our research discussions, namely:

- to speak freely, air our views and discuss our primary source of data;
- to treat each other with respect and dignity;
- to be patient in building trust among ourselves during discussion meetings;
- to communicate in a language one is comfortable with;
- to use focus groups; and
- to record our meetings proceedings.

Greeff (2012:361) defined a focus group discussion as “a research tool that collects data through group interaction”. I used focus group discussions as a method to empower the participants who are afraid to air views in the presence of the “feared ones”; for example, children fear their parents. These focus groups are divided as follows: focus group discussions for learners only; discussions for adult participants; and the combined focus group where all participants came together and shared ideas.

The focus groups are platforms where participants aired their views without fear. This made focus groups participatory in nature, as reflected by Mthiyane (2014:143), stating as follows: “for the focus group discussion (FGD) I was thoroughly prepared and had a strategy to keep team members informed, involved and encouraged to speak their minds with ease, which was largely informed by nature of communication”. This division of focus group discussions was empowering in nature because it allowed the marginalised and underrated learners and other participants to freely air their opinions in formulating an all-inclusive peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse. This is the agenda of CER: to empower the marginalised, in this case the rural marginalised learners, women and other stakeholders. Zimbabwean rural learners freely participated and shared their views without being afraid of adult participants.

The following advantages of focus group discussions explained, inspired me to use them:

> [T]he advantages of focus groups are: a) In a face to face interview, the moderator can keep the discussion under control and focus on the areas of interest as described in the moderators’ guide. b) Free and open discussion among the respondents results in generation of new ideas which can be useful for decision making. c) A focus group is not static. The moderator can bring any changes in order to better facilitate the discussion during the group

> discussion. This dynamism allows better results in terms of information derived from the focus group. d) Expressions, other than those in verbal form, such as gestures and stimulated activities, can provide the researcher with useful insights (Adam, 2014:12).

In addition, the importance of focus group discussions is explained as follows by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (2017:1):

> [F]ocus groups have proved to be a highly insightful research technique for engaging a group of people with a question, product or idea. Bringing together a group to discuss a particular topic provides a more natural setting than one-to-one interviews, as it allows participants to share their stories and through discussion can enable new strands of thought to emerge.

My research study is self-funded, and therefore I tried to avoid large expenses. Focus group discussions are useful in this regard, as explained by Basit (2015:1), who stated that "this qualitative research method can generate rich data in a less resource intensive manner than interviewing." In these discussions, I was able to keep contributions within the confines of formulating a peer counselling strategy for the alleviation of drug abuse within the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The participants were allowed to freely air their views. Mechanisms, such as confidentiality and anonymity, were implemented and these assisted participants to share sensitive information concerning drug abuse and peer counselling strategies. I agreed on group discussion rules that governed the discussion process and promoted active, equal participation of all stakeholders.

3.6.2 Use of photo voice

The FAI technique allowed us to use photo voice (see Appendix L). I explained the ethical considerations associated with taking pictures of participants in the research process. They gave consent to the use of cameras. According to Gariglio (2015:12), "images are increasingly present in our daily lives and, for a growing number of researchers, have become an integral part of research.'' I observed that photographs allowed the participants to think critically and discuss, in detail, their societal problems and the political forces affecting them. From my perspective, photo voice is an empowerment tool. As participants express their views, this affirms community-collective struggles and insights in dealing with drug abuse in their rural learning ecologies. Mertens (2015: 418) also

claimed that the "empowerment of participants, problem-solving, active participation and recognition of inputs happened, as the research process unfolded, as advocated in Critical Emancipatory Research". Moreover, Hergenrather *et al*. (2009: 687) averred:

> …photo voice as a research methodology provides participants an opportunity to take photographs that address a community concern and present them in group discussion that empowers them to reflect on personal and community strengths, create critical dialogue, share knowledge about personal and community issues, and develop and host a forum for the presentation of their lived experiences and priorities through self-identified images, language, and context.

In this research discourse, participants are able to use photo voice to share views about drug abuse in their communities (see Appendix L). This was appropriate because in Zimbabwe, people in rural areas share and listen to one another's past and present stories, and this evolves culture and traditions. The issues of storytelling in photo voice is stated in Seitz and Strack (2015:33), who wrote that photo voice is a "photographic method that is used for several purposes (e.g. storytelling, building awareness, enhancing personal discovery), including conducting community-based participatory research". Our research team engaged in storytelling, initiated through a documentary photograph called "photo voice", as described by Hergenrather and Rhodes (2008:245) as a "qualitative research methodology founded on the principles of feminist theory, constructivism, and documentary photography. Constructivism defines learning through the individual's interactive process of developing and constructing meaning through experiences".

The participants were given cameras and took pictures during the course of the study; through taking pictures, they are now researchers of their society and lives. This empowered the participants. Photo voice gives voice to participants' experiences through recording their life circumstances as they perceive them. This becomes the centre of critical dialogue. The above is in agreement with Hergenrather *et al.* (2009:687), who posited that "participants are provided cameras to take photos; the photographs enable participants to record and reflect their strengths and concerns through photographic images". In addition, Blad (2009:687) wrote the following about photo voice:

> [P]hoto discussions allow participants to share and discuss the photographs they took for each photo assignment and promote critical dialogue about community strengths and concerns. Participants present their photos during a facilitated discussion by contextualizing and often using root-cause questioning known by the use of photo voice.

Evans-Agnew and Rosemberg (2016:1) argued that "photo voice is an important participatory research tool for advancing health equity. Our purpose is to critically review how participant voice is promoted through the photo voice process of taking and discussing photo and adding text captions." Bananuka and John (2014:1) defined photo voice "as a 'non-text' method of doing participatory research that can be used for, among other benefits, its empowering potential of those involved in research". The learners took pictures while I are discussing and presenting data. It was the first time that these learners used a camera to take pictures. Using cameras for the first time was educative and empowering to the learners. This makes it appropriate to be used in this PAR study. Therefore, photo voice is very essential in this educative and community development-based study of formulating a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

The participants took pictures, aired their views and collectively analysed and interpreted the generated data. According to Murende (2016:45):

> …these photographs are collaboratively interpreted, and narratives can be developed that explain how the photos highlight a particular research theme and photo voice is often used by marginalized groups to provide insight into how they conceptualize their circumstances and hopes for the future.

I noted that photo voice is a form of PAR which has democratic ideals that allows the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies to advocate for social transformation. The active participation of participants in this study was witnessed when they used cameras to take photographs. The above is substantiated by Raina *et al*. (2015:1), who remarked that "the photo voice visuals methodology often employed in qualitative researching is the frame of community psychology because it enables participants to express their ideas using pictures". They captured photograph images, attached picture symbols to their personal meaning and attributed them to the research study topic. Bananuka and John (2014:1) stated as follows: "from their finding, the authors argue that photo voice can be a

framework that allows for dialogue in multiple ways to occur, for example, between the researcher and participants, the research and self and a community level dialogue". Through CDA, the participants and I analysed data generated through photo voice together. In this research, I critically analysed photographs and attached meanings to them. This was empowering, as expounded by Mthiyane (2014:20):

> CDA as a qualitative research approach was utilised to enable participants to undergo the processes of deconstruction, that is, analysis of written texts and spoken words was employed to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained and transformed within specific social, economic, political, and historical contexts.

The above concurs with our theoretical framework that advocates for inclusion of all stakeholders in formulating a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in rural learning ecologies.

3.7 THE DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

I used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in this research study to analyse generated data. CDA is defined as follows:

> [CDA is the] 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).

On the other hand, Mthiyane (2015:2) contended as follows:

> Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as a qualitative research approach, was utilised to enable participants to undergo the processes of deconstruction, that is, analysis of written texts and spoken words was employed to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained and transformed within specific social, economic, political, and historical contexts.

In addition, Mthiyane (2014: vii) expounded that the CDA approach "was utilised to analyse written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power,

dominance, inequality, and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained and transformed within specific contexts".

From the above citations from different authorities, I deduced that CDA helps the main researcher and co-researcher to unveil dominance and inequalities in both written texts and spoken words. According to the agenda of this study, using PAR and CER, the data analysis allowed our research team to expose societal inequalities and any other oppression against the marginalised Zimbabwean rural community members, which are contained in text and verbal words. In my data analysis, I, therefore, sought to reveal issues that had to do with power relations, inequality and any form of exploitation which might be embedded in the spoken word or text. I was persuaded to use CDA after reading Rogers (2011:1), who submitted that CDA "addresses disparities in educational sites, practices and systems, with appreciation for the fact that the world is characterised by inequality". I concurred that my research was designed to mitigate the inequalities and oppressions that hounded and militated against the formulation and implementation of a peer counselling strategy in the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. On the other hand, Zimbabwean rural learners are abusing drugs, and it is the thrust of this research study to equip them with appropriate peer counselling knowledge to alleviate drug abuse.

3.7.1 Background of CDA

There are many views on the origins of CDA. I have consciously submitted them in this section and shall, later on, submit my conviction on the emergence of CDA. The other view I noted on the origins of CDA, is advocated by Huckin, Andrus and Clary-Lemon (2012:108), who confirmed that "CDA rose in connection with Critical Linguistics (CL), with scholars such as Gunther Kress, Roger Fowler, Bob Hodge, and other students of M.A.K. Halliday in the 1970s". The proponents of Marxism claimed to have started CDA. Lomax (2004:140) argued as follows: "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, and anti-neo-liberal. It seeks not just to comprehend the social world, but to transmute it." 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". This view is also supported by Haig (2004:129), who believed 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". In contrast, some believe that it started in the 1970s in Europe, when other disciplines came to being and different people are accredited with the emergence of CDA. Van Dijk (1997:25), for instance, maintained that "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".

A clear analysis of the above citations shows that there are three views on the origins of CDA, namely: the Marxism influence, Critical Linguistics analysis, and from proponents such as Marx. I hold that CDA has its origins in Critical Linguistics, as it deals with power inequalities in text and words.

3.7.2 Definition of CDA

There are many definitions of CDA. Some scholars, like Rogers *et al.,* (2005:371) defines CDA as:

> … the associations among certain texts, interactions and social practices. It is an interpretation of the configuration of discourse practices and then, using the descriptions and interpretations to offer an explanation of why and how social practices are constituted, changed and transformed the way that they are.

Van Dijk's (2001:97) definition reads as follows:

> [CDA is the] 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.

On the other end, Bayram (2010:31) is of the opinion that CDA is "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".

The evaluation of the above definitions made me acknowledge that there are power inequalities that are perpetuated in our societies through words used in our discourses. I managed to take note of inequalities and undemocratic practices being done in the area of formulating peer counselling strategies in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The essence of CDA in the demolition of social inequalities is demonstrated by Fairclough (1992:32), when he argued 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 the hope of spurring people to corrective actions." Therefore, CDA is emancipatory in nature as it permits the active participation of the oppressed Zimbabwean rural community members in matters of interrogating generated data of peer counselling. This is substantiated by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:69), who alluded that CDA "does not, therefore, understand itself as politically neutral, but a movement committed to ensuring sustainable social change". I concur that CDA focuses on achieving total emancipation of disadvantaged community members and opposes types of human injustice. This resonates with CER and PAR, as supported by Dube (2016:131), who accounted for his selection of CER as a framework underpinning his study "because CDA and CER seek to improve human conditions by solving problems that confront people in society". In addition, Rogers (2011:67) wrote that "CDA justifies PAR as an approach for generating data since both seek to fight for the disadvantaged members of society." I used CDA to accomplish my desire to be an agent of change in the lives of the marginalised people in the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, whose views are not considered in the formulation of a peer counselling strategy that alleviates drug abuse in their learning ecologies.

3.7.3 Three levels of CDA in data generation

In this discourse, the participants and the researcher analysed the generated data of the research at three levels, which are text, discursive and social level analysis.

3.7.3.1 Text level analysis

This level of analysis deals with both oral and written words. In CDA, text consists of both the written and the spoken word. This is expounded by Dube (2016:132), who argued

that CDA “in text analysis, look[s] at text in general, whether spoken or written. There has been an assumption that text refers only to written words; however, a broader understanding implies that text includes spoken words”. Text analysis is very important in developing new knowledge, as explained by Mogashoa (2014:108), who reasoned that “texts are indeed multi-discursive, that is, they draw from a range of discourses, fields of knowledge and voices”. On the other hand, text analysis helped our research team to collectively deal with matters of inequalities and other social injustices embodied in oral and written words, during data generation. This is supported by Nasir and Xiaoyong (2013:9), who pointed out that “space allows for analysis of written and spoken texts to explore the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias”. To be able to analyse words uttered by participants, our team secretaries recorded the discussion on paper and we (the participants and researcher) then analysed data at the text level.

Our research team’s goal at text level was to remove all forms of oppression that militate against peer counselling strategy formulation through inclusion of all stakeholders in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. In our quest to achieve our above-mentioned goal, I took note of what Govender and Muthukrishna (2012:29) alluded that text analysis “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, legitimation denial, mitigation or concealment of dominance, among others”. The text analysis in this research study assisted us in identifying power struggles and this allowed us to use principles of CER, such as empowerment of the disadvantaged, and principles of PAR, such as inclusion. This shows that the text level of CDA resonates with our research theoretical framework and research methodology.

3.7.3.2 Discursive level analysis

The second level of CDA is the discursive level, which deals with the construction, maintenance and reproduction of unequal power in our community, which is in line with the arguments of Dube (2016:133), who stated as follows:

> [U]sing this text 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.

Furthermore, discursive level is affirmed by Fairclough and Wodak (1997:258) as having "major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between, for example, social classes, women and men, and ethnic or cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people". To diffuse these power inequalities in this research study, I created a conducive environment for active participation and equal participation of all research team members in analysing the views expressed. The active participation of disadvantaged rural women and girls in matters of peer counselling in order to alleviate drug abuse was emancipatory to them. Male and culturally-based dominance in issues of drug abuse was identified and dealt with, using discursive level analysis.

3.7.3.3 Social practice level analysis

The use of language is central at this level, as alluded to by Rogers (2011:28), who remarked that "language in use is part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific and social practices to ensure solidarity, the distribution of social goods and power" and "[s]ocial practice often involves technologies of exclusion and inclusion in society". I observed that the way community members use language can perpetuate or dismantle social inequalities. This is supported by Wodak and Meyer (2008:7), who observed that the "use of language is a 'social practice' which is both determined by the social structure and contributes to stabilising and changing the structure simultaneously".

Van Dijk (1997:30) also posited that "spoken and written discourses 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". The language used by participants in this study reveals the sentiments and positions of stakeholders in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The analysis of data, through the social practice lens, granted us access to understand the perceived thinking of rural community members on peer counselling strategies and drug abuse. This was our basis to create ways to mitigate any grey areas in peer counselling and drug abuse. From the above citations, I also noted that communities are using technologies of inclusion and

exclusion – consciously and unconsciously – to maintain or address the issues of social inequalities.

My rationale of using CDA is explained in Mthiyane (2014:154), who wrote, “I had planned and facilitated workshops to empower the participant student research team, ranging from critical consciousness and self-awareness development, CER and PAR as an approach, reflective practice and critical thinking skills, and CDA as an analysis tool”. In conclusion, I used CDA because it deals with power inequalities and this is in relation to CER, which allows active participation of community members in analysing data, as advocated by PAR.

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

I explained in detail the PAR method that was utilised to generate data to formulate peer counselling to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. I used PAR because it advocates for active participation of disempowered community members, identifying community problems and collectively providing action to solve them. Chapter three gave the profile of the participants, elaborated on FAI, the instrument used to generate data, and explained how CDA was then used to analyse data. Data collection procedures are employed, as well as discussions of data. The research process and research ethics considerations are discussed.

Chapter four will present data, analysis and interpretation of a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the research study was the formulation of a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. This chapter addresses the following matters: generated data presentation and analysis, and interpretation, presentation and discussion of research findings. The process of generating data operationalises PAR, which is the theoretical framework of this research study. The CER methodology is also discussed. I collectively and actively used the three levels in data generation analysis of CDA. The generated data was interpreted in the context of the three stages of CDA, namely text analysis, discursive analysis and social practice analysis. This was done in line with the aim and the five research objectives of the research study.

The generated data submitted in this chapter provides answers to the above five research objectives. The data was generated through the PAR methodology to respond to the above-mentioned research objectives. The ultimate aim is to formulate a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see 1.1). Our research team managed to operationalise the research vision, which it anchored on the aim of the research and the five research objectives.

It is clearly shown in Chapter one that our research team was composed of Zimbabwean rural community members from different backgrounds, namely counsellor teachers, a social worker, police personnel, learners, parents, a chief and an MP, based on Higginbottom and Liamputtong's (2015:11) perspective that "collectivism is a key feature in Participatory Action Research, it is also intrinsically a collective endeavour driven by

the collaborative processes taking place between the researcher, the communities and participants".

4.2. The following table contains the outline of themes

4.2.1	**Justification of the need for a peer counselling strategy, formulated through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwe rural learning ecologies**
4.2.1.1	The absence and negative effects of drug abuse in Zimbabwe rural learning ecologies.
4.2.1.2	The absence of a peer counselling strategy formulated by Zimbabwe rural communities.
4.2.1.3	The current peer counselling is foreign to Zimbabwe rural learning contexts.
4.2.2	**The strengths of a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwe rural learning ecologies are anchored on eight aspects as shown by the empirical data generated in this research study**
4.2.2.1	The ability of peer counselling to alleviate drug abuse.
4.2.2.2	The inclusion of Guidance and Career counselling in the Zimbabwe National School Curriculum.

4.2.2.3	The Zimbabwe government legally permits Zimbabwe rural school learners and School Development Committees to actively participate in the education sector.
4.2.2.4	The active participation of Zimbabwe rural community members in peer counselling strategy formulation through financial and material support.
4.2.2.5	The emancipation of voiceless Zimbabwe rural community stakeholders in the formulation of a peer counselling strategy.
4.2.2.6	The trained teacher counsellors and other knowledgeable members impart knowledge to other community members.
4.2.2.7	The collective implementation of a peer counselling strategy by the community members in Zimbabwe rural learning ecologies.
4.2.2.8	The collective and emancipatory use of technology by Zimbabwe rural peer counsellors and other community members.
4.2.3	**Impediments that militate against the successful formulation and implementation of a peer counselling strategy in Zimbabwe rural learning ecologies**
4.2.3.1	Inadequate knowledge and the lack of understanding of what a peer counselling strategy entails.

4.2.3.2	The Guidance and Counselling subject is not examinable.
4.2.3.3	The lack of collective engagement of community members in the formulation of a peer counselling strategy.
4.2.3.4	The teacher counsellors' lack of peer counselling strategy monitoring expertise and lack of incentives.
4.2.3.5	Teacher counsellors' heavy workload as classroom practitioners.
4.2.3.6	The stakeholders' misconceptions about peer counselling strategy.
4.2.4	**Circumstances under which the success of a peer counselling strategy is made, through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwe rural learning ecologies**
4.2.4.1	The involvement of community members in peer counselling informative programmes and workshops.
4.2.4.2	Monitoring and supporting the implementation of a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwe rural learning ecologies.
4.2.4.3	The peer counselling strategy should be gender sensitive.

4.2.4.4	The active involvement of former peer counsellors in assisting Zimbabwe rural learners to deal with drug abuse.

The following section unpacks the above mentioned themes:-

4.3 The need for a peer counselling strategy formulated through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies

This section shows the need of a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

4.3.1 The presence and negative effects of drug abuse by Zimbabwean rural learners

The first aspect that caused the need for peer counselling was identified during the empirical data generation, as the presence and negative impact of drug abuse on Zimbabwean rural learners was perceived (see 1.2; 3.2). This resonates with literature, which states that there is a high level of drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies; for example, the study done in Zimbabwean rural areas by Cooper (2009:136), who confirmed that “rural secondary pupils should an 18.5% prevalence rate of tobacco usage at 42.9% admittance rate of smoking and alcohol consumption among the patients”.

In addition, this year, at Mucheke High School in Zimbabwe, the headmaster wrote in the school newsletter informing parents about school children who are expelled from school after abusing drugs. The Mucheke High School Newsletter (2016:2) reported that “this year (2016) four form 3 students are excluded for taking alcohol and drugs” Furthermore, Kisii University (2016:1) affirmed:

> Research has shown that alcohol and binge are prevalent drugs of abuse among University students. Certain factors like peer pressure, easy availability

> of drugs and substances, parental and societal influences, emptiness in life, print and news media, pressure among many, play a leading role in drug abuse.

The high prevalence of drug abuse by Zimbabwean rural learners, as shown by the above evidence, concurs with views in this research study (see 3.7.2; 2.9.3), which motivated the study to seek ways to mitigate drug abuse. This leads to the formulation of a peer counselling strategy as a solution. Cooper (2009:135) stated that "a study on adolescent drug use assessed by teachers should that alcohol use was the most serious drug problem in Zimbabwe".

Furthermore, literature, such as the South Africa Department of Basic Education of South Africa (2013: iii), reported that "substance abuse, binge drinking and tobacco use have a negative impact on learners' academic performance, being linked to learning difficulties, absenteeism and school dropout". The above submissions concur with the many research studies that prove the high incidence of drug use and the dangers of abusing drugs. This justifies the need of a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The active community engagements should pay attention to the identified peer counselling strategy gaps to immediately address them (see 3.7.1; 2.9.1).

One of the participants, the chief, said, "*the fight against drug abuse cannot be left to teachers only but it is the collective responsibility of all concerned – parents, guardians, business people and private sector. Drugs have robbed our children's future by causing them to fail academically, experience health and social problems."* Analysis at this text level proves that there is a high presence of drug abuse, a negative impact and a collective community response strategy to mitigate drug abuse problems in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The formulation of a peer counselling strategy for the alleviation of drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies is a matter of urgency. The parents and community should play the role of proposing and enforcing laws that forbid the sale of drugs to children under the age of 20 see 3.6.1, 2.9.3).

Currently, people aged 18 are allowed to use drugs. This is legally permitted in Zimbabwe, but I hold that some learners in Zimbabwean rural learning institutions are above the age of 18 years. Mushunje and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:132) asserted as follows:

> [T]he Children's Protection and Adoption Act defines a child as any person under the age of 16, while the Legal Age of Majority Act defines children as persons under the age of 18, as does the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights of welfare of the Child.

Only adults above 18 are allowed legally to use legally permitted drugs, such as alcohol. I noted that, in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, there are learners who are above the age of 18 years (see 3.6.1, 2.9.3). There are many reasons why these rural learners still go to secondary schools at such an advanced age. Some of the reasons are that they might have had to drop out of school due to a lack of money to pay fees, lack of nearby schools in their area, as Ill as early and unwanted pregnancies (see 2.9.4). That is the reason why I proposed 20 years as the legal age of starting to use legally acceptable drugs.

4.3.2 The absence of a peer counselling strategy formulated by Zimbabwean rural communities

The other need is premised on the absence of a peer counselling strategy formulated by Zimbabwean rural communities to be used in their learning ecologies. Bett (2013:480, 482) noted that "in the light of the many problems that students experience, scholars have recommended that schools should be more involved in conducting students' needs assessments and developing comprehensive Guidance and Counselling programmes." I agree with the above statement that the Guidance and Counselling syllabus should contain outcome-based perspectives that meet the students' needs. Its intention is to address the relevance of peer counselling in alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

After studying relevant literature on peer counselling, I concluded that there is a gap in terms of specific peer counselling strategies in relation to drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see 2.10.1). The parents posed the question, "*where is the current peer counselling strategy being used to deal with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies?"* At text analysis level, the parents and other participants in this study stated that they had never seen the current or previous peer counselling strategy being used to specifically deal with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see

2.10.1; 1). Therefore, they are not aware of its contents. On the other hand, peer counselling in Zimbabwe is still at infant level and needs to be explored deeper. This was verified by the research study conducted by Chireshe (2013:253) that confirmed that “the status of peer counselling in Zimbabwe secondary schools has not been fully investigated”. This literature confirms what I have stated in Chapter one and Chapter two (see 1.2 and 2.10.1). Furthermore, Morojele, Parry and Brook (2009:23) stated that “research has shown that peer-led strategies are effective in preventing substance abuse amongst young people, as adolescents are often more willing to listen and take advice from others with similar experience”. Conversely, the above literature clearly shows many countries have successfully used peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in schools. Where there is a peer counselling gap, there is bound to be difficulty in the alleviation of drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

This peer counselling strategy should be formulated through collectively and actively engaging disadvantaged Zimbabwean rural community members who are important stakeholders in the education of their children (see 3.7.3.). I agree with the principle of the ability and increased involvement of disadvantaged societies in solving their problems, as noted by the Hidden Curriculum (2014:1), that observed that increasingly, “schools are being more intentional and proactive about involving a greater diversity of stakeholders, particularly stakeholders from disadvantaged communities and backgrounds or from groups that have historically been underserved by schools”. Moreover, Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:3) explained that PAR “has origins in Latin American political activism and bottom-up approaches to challenging the oppression produced by poverty and illiteracy”. The involvement of the disadvantaged Zimbabwean rural communities in this study concurs with literature reviewed in Chapter three (see 3.7.5). I agree, to a lesser extent, with the view that learners and other rural participants have a limited understanding of peer counselling strategies in their learning environments.

The view of rural communities’ lack of understanding of peer counselling strategies is based on the evidence that some people in rural areas are not formally educated, due to poverty and marginalisation. Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:3) argued that Participatory Research “challenges the oppression produced by poverty and illiteracy”. In this research study, there are participants who are not aware of what peer counselling

entailed (see 3.3). To mitigate the lack of knowledge of peer counselling strategies in oppressed rural communities, I allowed the active participation of community members, such as learners and others, to get adequate knowledgeability of peer counselling strategy planning, preparation and adhering to peer counselling strategy needs. On the other hand, in this research study, I involved knowledgeable rural community members in the peer counselling strategy, such as parents, a chief, police officers, an MP, teachers, a psychologist, social workers, and NGO workers. This argument strengthens the following view by Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:3):

> [S]ince PR methodologies devolve the power, usually vested in experts, and share it with participants, such methodologies challenge the hegemony of academia and professional research practice, indeed, non-academic research partners are often regarded as being more knowledgeable and expert in some domain (see 3.6.3).

In other words, participants should have appropriate comprehension, understanding the formulation and implementation of the results, assessment standards, aims and objectives of peer counselling. To address this lack of knowledge of peer counselling, I noted that I should engage in staff development workshops, training and education meetings (see 2.10.3). Some of the participants said that the previous development meetings they had attended, are of low quality in terms of content and presentation and, therefore, they are discouraged to attend more meaningless meetings. It is important to evaluate the formulated peer counselling strategy to find it meets the expected objectives (see 2.10.5; 3.8.7). I concur with Mahoso and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:264), who argued that “the effect of the curriculum on pupils should be revealed by evaluation. The extent to which the curriculum meets the interests and needs of the children should be assessed”.

The participants and I will collectively evaluate peer counselling strategies. This empowers and brings equality into the research process and this is in line with the PAR principle of democratisation of all research stages. This is expounded in Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:12), who asserted as follows:

> [I]n PR, democratic evaluation is valuable in health studies and in addressing issues of equity and inclusion. It is fundamentally a case study approach – the

> case being the program under evaluation. The fundamental goal is to democratise knowledge, ensuring that all the key stakeholders are mutually accountable, while challenging the inherent power dimensions and facilitating redistribution of the power.

4.3.3 The current peer counselling strategy is foreign to Zimbabwean rural learning contexts

One of the philosophies of the PAR methodology and CER theoretical framework is to 'decolonise', as Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:12) asserted: "in response to the ongoing legacy of colonization, key theorists have challenged the dominant hegemonies and conceptualised decolonizing methodology that reject Western world views, lenses and ethno-cultural orientations, and instead, often draw upon collective rather than highly individualistic approaches." Furthermore, Dube (2016:100) explained that an approach that has foreign origins, "does not fit appropriately in the context of Africa". Therefore, my argument, underpinned in the CET, is that I should formulate a peer counselling strategy through collaboration and emancipation of Zimbabwean rural communities. Additionally, this view is supported by Charema and Shizha (2008:45):

> [T]he influence of Eurocentric counselling theory, research and practice among the Shona people has demonised and oppressed individuals and groups whose culture lies outside the Eurocentric counselling culture. It might be worthwhile for all community leaders, traditional healers, pastors and counsellors to employ the multicultural.

The unfortunate part is that there are some Zimbabweans who think that Western knowledge is associated with high prestige. In relation to this, Shizha (2005:5) commented that "colonial education managed to corrupt the thinking and sensibility of the Africans; it filled their minds with abnormal complexes which de-Africanised and alienated them from their socio-cultural milieu". The research findings of Shizha concurred with the findings in a research study done in Zimbabwe by Muchenje and Goronga (2013:887), who wrote that "there is a desire to learn Western knowledge as opposed to local knowledge, Western forms of knowledge are associated with wealth, prestige and offers employment in urban areas".

My view is that European-based knowledge in peer counselling should not be used to demonise the Zimbabwean rural community's knowledge of peer counselling used to formulate a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in rural learning ecologies. I concur with the view that PAR researchers are intellectual activists, as suggested by Loewenson *et al.* (2014:14), who argued that "PAR escalates social agency and encourages activism in an intellectual approach". In this research study, the participants and I took the position of intellectual activists in addressing intellectual inequalities. From the curriculum content point of view, Kuyayama-Tumbare and Tsikira (2014:19) argued that "Curriculum content should be derived from the Learner' cultural experience." The aspect of the emancipation and active participation of Zimbabwean rural communities agrees with literature submitted (see 3.6.5; 3.7.5).

Zimbabwe, as a country, was colonised by Britain. Therefore, most of the policymakers are trained in westernised education systems and peer counselling educational materials are Western. This means that current peer counselling strategies used in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies are made in foreign lands and contain components that are not in line with Zimbabwean rural contexts (see 3.6.1). This creates an environment that needs an indigenous peer counselling strategy to address the issue of drug abuse within the context of Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The social worker in this research study said, "*in the past meetings I gave our suggestions on areas I thought the past peer counselling strategy formulated in Western countries should be improved in order to resonate with the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies*". Through discursive analysis, the in past research studies, views of the community members are not factored in, however, in this research study the views of the participants are factored in.

However, in this research study I employed the PAR methodology as unveiled by Mthiyane (2015: 21), who held that "employing PAR endorses individual and group strengths, fosters active participation and stimulates attainment of knowledge, empowerment and continued participation". The current Western content in peer counselling strategies is difficult to use in Zimbabwe because it is devoid of the voice of indigenous people. This means that Zimbabwean rural learning communities are not involved in the formulation of peer counselling strategies and not trained in using a Western peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse.

The above state of affairs was criticised and contributed to the rise of PAR in Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:6), who wrote that, in criticising general practices in education, "Freire contented that most educational activities do not challenge inequalities in the learners. Most such activities keep learners' passive and uncritical, and fail to help people question the situations in which they are forced to live". The above research evidence portrays a Zimbabwe education system where most learners and parents in Zimbabwean rural leaning ecologies are not active participants in matters to do with western-based peer counselling strategies (see 3.5; 3.7.4). It negatively impacts on both the formulation and implementation of a peer counselling strategy in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

Learner 3 said, "*I attended few meetings where I gave many suggestions on the formulation and implementation but, it seems our contributions are in vanity"*. This means that Zimbabwean rural learners and other community members are demotivated to engage in research studies because they feel their views are not being captured when formulating and implementing peer counselling strategies (see 2.10.3; 3.8.7). This testifies that the ways of formulating and implementing peer counselling strategies in the past are not advancing the agenda of this research study's PAR and CER to empower rural communities and take into consideration the views of community members in the formulation and implementation of a peer counselling strategy in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see 3.6.5; 2.2.1).

The active participation of disadvantaged rural, community members in research studies empowers them by allowing them to air their views and make conclusions on generated data. This resonates with Dube (2016: vii), who alluded that "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 CDA, chosen because of its focus on power relations, which are often problematic. CDA complements CER and PAR in the fight for the marginalised members of the community. The above analysis of CDA, which concludes that it has power to dismantle injustice and power domination, resonates with the literature studied (see 3.10). Moreover, Tenerio (2011:183) stated 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". The power relations between the main researcher and the participants is diffused through the use of CER and PAR in the research study. I noted that there was colonisation of peer counselling strategies by western-inclined formulators.

There is an unequal power relationship between the peer counsellor formulators and the Zimbabwean rural community members who are implementers (see 3.10.1). Taylor and Francis (2014:34) made the following remark:

> Counselling and guidance techniques developed from the Western world may not be appropriate for many African countries, where cultural influences, government policies and the availability of resources can have significant implications for service delivery. In order to develop more robust techniques, researchers and practitioners need rigorous analysis of professional practice across the nations of Africa.

This implies that the peer counselling strategy used was not taking into consideration the views of the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies and that they are disempowered in participating in creating solutions to their problems (see 3.6.4). The social worker and teacher counsellor explained, *"the peer counselling strategies they are using are made long ago, therefore, outdated and some are Western in nature and difficult to apply to Zimbabwe context, especially to rural, learning ecologies"*. The current foreign-based peer counselling strategies are no longer appropriate; they need to be revisited and adjusted to suit Zimbabwean rural situations, demands and cultural values (see 3.6.1).

The peer counselling strategy formulated by Zimbabwean rural communities should infuse their cultural values, attitudes and beliefs, as alluded by Mahoso and Kuyayama-Tambura (2014:252), who argued that it "should promote the attitudes, values and beliefs cherished by parents so that there is harmony and cooperation between the school and parents…[and] cater for the interests and needs of children". The Zimbabwean rural communities should be actively engaged to formulate their own peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in their learning ecologies (see 2.10.5; 3.6.3). The NGO worker stated:

> *I are uncomfortable of using peer counselling strategies that are imposed on us and I feel powerless to transform these peer counselling strategies to meet the Zimbabwe context because I, the workers, are not empowered by our authorities to make any changes. This complicates our work, thereby, I fail to alleviate drug abuse in our Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.*

The PAR methodology used in this study, permits the Zimbabwean rural NGO worker and other stakeholders to fully participate in the formulation and implementation of the peer counselling strategy. Dube (2016:1) alluded that "the PAR approach stresses justice and empowerment of all individuals and a collaborative approach to problem solving" (see 3.2). In addition, Setlalentoa, Ryke and Strydom (2015:1) alluded as follows:

> [C]ommunity support networks or service providers such as social workers and police officers and/or the police service have the responsibility to intervene to reduce alcohol abuse and the problems associated with it, in partnership with community members. The community members provide services in communities, with an intention to bring different skills, knowledge and experience to combat the problem of alcohol abuse and are referred to as community support networks.

The above observations are supported by literature cited in Chapter three, which reveals that PAR has the principle of teamwork in finding solutions to community problems (see 3.7.3). The issues raised by participants in this research study, show that rural community members are not involved, and do not actively participate in the formulation of peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see 3.2). Zimbabwe communities, both rural and urban, are the main contributors to the education system through the building of schools and other roles. This is attested by Tsikira (2014:178), who affirmed that "education was provided by the community in a collective manner". Zimbabwean rural communities cannot be bystanders in issues of their children's education. Semali and Stamback (2007:67) postulated that "it took a village to raise a child. The community's interests are considered more important than those of the individual. African communities cooperated in major tasks like ploughing, weeding, harvesting and Kupura Zviyo / ukubhulaamabele, (the final processing of grain for storage) through Nhimbe / Ilimba (communal work)".

It is explicitly clear that Zimbabwe community members have a strong tradition of coming together and creating solutions to their problems (see 3.6.4; 3.4). This is why this research

has an empowering agenda. Sinnerbrink (2012:12) stated that CER 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”. The literature reviewed in this study pointed out that CER, used in this study, empowers the participants in this study (see 3.6.5). Conversely, the active participation of the community in research is one of the values of Participatory Research (see 3.7.4), as explained by Cargo and Mercer (2008:328), who defined PAR as “a systematic inquiry, with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied, for the purpose of education and of taking action or affecting change”. In contrast, some researchers in Zimbabwe are not actively engaging rural community members. This has been noted as one of the demotivating factors that makes it impossible to eradicate or significantly reduce drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see 2.2.5; 3.4).

One could note the participants’ frustration with policymakers and peer counselling strategy formulators who design policies without their involvement. This causes the peer counselling strategy to fail to meet its target, according to Jansen and Sayed (2010:11), who stated that “policy failures arise from non-consultation with stakeholders and the consequent lack of ownership of such educational policies”. In spite of this, there is clear evidence that PAR is consultative, brings equality and perpetuates ownership (see 3.6.3).

Some researchers still use research methods that give them more power than participants. Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:4) posited that “some researchers have claimed that conventional or elitist research promotes iatrogenic effects, meaning that engagement in conventional or elitist research can have negative consequences for those participants who are not regarded as equal partners in the research process”. Undeniably, there is proof that there are unequal power relations that still exist between the peer counselling strategy formulators, peer counsellors and other implementers of the peer counselling strategy programmes dealing with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see 3.6.5). On the contrary, I consulted Chivi rural community members and they owned peer counselling strategy programmes (see 3.8.4). Furthermore, Dube (2016:22) stated that “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 and emancipate learners towards acceptance of the other and towards a sustainable, peaceful co-existence.

The participants unanimously agreed that their voices have been neglected in the formulation of peer counselling strategies in drug abuse issues (see 3.7.2). By comparison, the PAR methodology used in this study gives a "voice". According to Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:2), PAR "emphasises the notion of 'voice' in the study." This explains that Zimbabwean rural learning communities, like the Chivi rural area in which this research study was done, are offered opportunities to propagate matters that concern their lives, especially the formulation and implementation of peer counselling strategies (see 2.10.5; 3.8.7). Mthiyane (2015:57) observed the importance of "understanding the meanings that individuals experience in their own social lives, and how these influence, or are influenced by the way they act. The context, history and culture also have great influence on development and critical decision making". Therefore, I noted that previous peer counselling researchers are not aware of community needs, perceptions, and cultural values, and this caused them to create peer counselling strategies that are unacceptable to rural communities.

Naturally, Zimbabwean rural community members are sceptical of new innovations that do not include their cultural views, values and expectations (see 3.7.3). From the below citation, it is clear that the government of Zimbabwe is working in partnership with different stakeholders in its programmes. In the same regard, researchers or educationists should actively partner with Zimbabwean rural community members, understanding peer counselling strategy formulation and implementation by actively involving them (see 3.6.3). The Zimbabwe Economic Policy Analysis and Research Unit (2016:1) wrote:

> [S]ince 2011, USAID's Strategic Economic Research and Analysis (SERA) program has supported the Government of Zimbabwe in moving toward more inclusive growth built upon evidence-based policy analysis and research. Working in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Economic Policy Analysis and Research Unit (ZEPARU), the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT), and a host of government agencies and civil society organizations, the project has completed more than 40 policy studies.

In support of active participation of the community, Kuyayama-Tumbare and Takaendesa (2015:236) alluded that “guidelines on how to engage the community demonstrate to the community that it is important, and that the program cannot be implemented effectively without its involvement.” In addition, Kuyayama-Tumbare and Takaendesa (2015:312) stated that “community agencies such as child protectors, churches, community leadership, children’s rights activists and advocates” should be engaged (see 3.7.3). These views are in line with the literature reviewed in this study.

In conclusion, the need for a peer counselling strategy is derived on the three main issues, as reflected by the empirical data generated. These three factors are the presence and negative effects of drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, the absence of peer counselling strategies formulated by Zimbabwean rural communities, and the current peer counselling strategy which is foreign to Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The need for peer counselling strategies motivated the participants and the researcher to venture into this study with the aim of collectively formulating peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in our rural learning ecologies.

4.4 Strengths of a peer counselling strategy formulated through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants for alleviating drug abuse in rural learning ecologies

4.4.1 The capacity of peer counselling to alleviate drug abuse

The ability of a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies was one of the strengths uncovered in this research study through the empirical data generated. The research studies stated, confirmed that peer counselling has the power to alleviate drug abuse among adolescent learners (see 2.10.2; 2.9.1). To further strengthen the effectiveness of peer counselling, the research study by Kisii University (2016:1) concluded that “peer Counsellors are trained to counsel on a wide range of issues such as relationship concerns, sexual harassment, rapes, child defilement, unplanned pregnancies, stress, financial and time management, room-mate

problems, academic problems, religious issues, alcohol and drugs abuse." This corresponds with data generated, which holds that a peer counselling strategy, collectively formulated, is centred on the learners' ability to assist each other in dealing with life's problems, such as drug abuse issues in their environment (see 3.7.2). PAR focuses on practicality and implementation (see 3.7.2; 2.10.5).

Its problem-solving agenda is alluded to by Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:4):

> [I]n fact, the production of knowledge alone is not a goal; a key dimension of Participatory Action Research is the utilization and implementation of research products such that they have a meaningful and transitional impact on the lives of the engaged social group, community or individuals.

The peer counselling strategy was mooted by health professionals, such as counsellors, doctors and psychologists, as one of the effective methods I can use to assist learners and community members to deal with life's issues, such as drug abuse, career choice and academic performance (see 2.10.2). The other view that supports the strength of peer counselling, is from the California Department of Education (2016:12), which recorded that "school counselling programs have a significant influence on problems of discipline". Baker (2014:45) reported that "students who participated in a school counselling program had significantly less inappropriate behaviours and more positive attitudes toward school than those students who did not participate in the program."

The MP posed the question, "*Why are I waiting? Let us formulate and then implement our own peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in our schools.*" Analysis at this discursive level led the research team to agree that they had the capacity to formulate their own peer counselling strategy (see 2.10.5; 3.7.2), and that I have human resources (see 3.8.4), the will, and that I should mobilise other resources to formulate and implement a peer counselling strategy in our rural learning ecologies. There are many individuals and companies that are willing to support educational initiatives. For example, the Sunday Mail Newspaper reported that "the Zimbabwe Deputy Minister of Mines and Mining Development and Zvishavane – Runde MP, Fed Moyo donated 106 computers and 3 000 text books to rural schools in the district. The program will enhance the education of our children". The qualified counsellor teachers can also mentor and provide in-house training

to other teachers who are not qualified in counselling (see 2.10.3). The issue of training is also supported by literature reviewed in this study (see 2.10.4).

Training broadens the peer counselling knowledge base, where learners can tap into information and be mentored. They should be trained. However, there is a need to improve quality of training material to produce quality counsellors as Kamore and Tiego (2015:255) propounded that "literature review on peer counselling programmes vividly shows a big gap in the quality and scope of training student counsellors. The issue of training is controversial, due to lack of a harmonised training manual" (see 2.10.3). In spite of the lack of appropriate peer counselling literature, our research team agreed further with Moleko (2014:133) that "the trainings and workshops on the effective application of instructional strategies and student engagement helped students understand the course." Teacher 2 acknowledged the successes of the effective use of the strategies: "*The workshops on student engagement have been helpful. The performance of the students has improved looking at the assignments and the projects that I give them".* At the text level analysis*,* in the same vein, the qualified counsellor teachers may be utilised to train teachers who do not have qualifications in counselling. There must be well-planned activities to train peer counsellors and teachers in the appropriate ways of implementing and evaluating peer counselling strategies (see 3.8.7). The formulation and implementation of peer counselling strategies will be made easier if I collaboratively work hard and make information readily accessible to participants (see 3.7.3).

4.4.2 Inclusion of Guidance and Career counselling in Zimbabwe National School Curriculum

Guidance and Career Counselling is one of the subjects being taught in Zimbabwe schools (see 2.10.3). Peer counselling is one area of study, or part of the content in Guidance and Career Counselling. The following information summarises the inclusion of Guidance and Career Counselling, as explained by Chimonyo, Mapuranga and Runganye (2015:143):

> [F]ollowing in the adoption of the recommendations of the 1999 Presidential Commission of Enquiry into Education and Training, the Ministry of Education, Sport, Art and Culture, in the year 2005, came up with Director Circular Minute Number 23, which sought to strengthen and institutionalize Guidance and Counselling in Zimbabwe schools.

This implies that the Zimbabwe curriculum developers infused peer counselling into the Guidance and Counselling Programme, subject to imparting knowledge that will bring about quality peer counsellors to deal with drug abuse and other problems bedevilling our learners (see 3.7.3; 2.10.2).

The above views are supported by the literature analysed in this study. The inclusion of Guidance and Counselling in the Zimbabwe school curriculum is one of the pillars of strength of peer counselling, in that it is taught to all learners and teachers at teachers' colleges and universities. This subject adequately imparts peer counselling and other counselling techniques, knowledge and skills (see 2.10.3; 3.6.1). The Guidance and Counselling Programme is now on every Zimbabwe school timetable, in both rural and urban secondary and primary schools. Therefore, the inclusion of Guidance and Counselling as a subject at school by the Zimbabwe government, gives the legal authority to the teachers and other stakeholders to demand the full implementation of peer counselling as a strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

The ability of this research to involve the views of girls and women was emancipatory in nature (see 3.6.2). The strength of peer counselling strategies is rooted in being gender sensitive. The Zimbabwe education system is gradually fulfilling gender equality demands, as Mushunje and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:136) stated that "the 1999 Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training recommended that the system should try by all means to reduce gender disparities." Furthermore, Mushunje and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:137) claimed that "the Zimbabwe Education Act (Chapter 25:04), and its subsequent revised versions [Education Act 1987 and amended 1996 and Circular Minute Number 14 of 2004], are relatively gender blind". There should be equality of gender representation in the team of peer counsellors and peer counsellor teachers. I noted that some Zimbabwean rural secondary schools have more female peer counsellors and counsellor teachers, or vice versa. The language and instruction

instruments used in peer counselling processes should also be gender sensitive (see 3.7.3, 2.10.3).

4.4.3 The Zimbabwe government legally permits Zimbabwean rural School Development Committees to actively participate in the education sector

The strength of peer counselling strategies is that there are legal instruments to support active participation of Zimbabwean rural School Development Committees in the education sector (see 3.6.3). The School Development Committees are legally established through the laws enacted in parliament. Harris (2010:2) delivered the following statement:

> Dr Ndlovu said the SDA was a necessary branch of the education system because of the role that it plays. He said the bodies' mandate was to build, develop and maintain school buildings and grounds and support teaching and learning. SDAs know the needs of the school, as they work closely with the school authorities. The SDA knows what type of work needs to be done at the school, be it on the school grounds, how many books are needed to fill the library, and so on.

The Zimbabwe Education Act of 2006 gave parents the mandate to run schools through School Development Committees.

In agreement, parents support school programmes that are beneficial to their children, according to Mahoso and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:252):

> [P]arents are most likely to support schools that offer a curriculum that is acceptable to them. The value they attach to the curriculum is enhanced if the curriculum is in line with their expectations and if the curriculum does not meet their expectations, support for it by the parents is compromised.

I have also observed that, in South Africa, the South African Schools Act (SASA) states that parents should actively participate in the teaching and learning of their children. The Mucheke High School Newsletter (2016:2) stated that "a new SDA Committee was elected, the previous SDA Committee completed the main structure of the reading room." Parents annually vote for parents to run school affairs with the assistance of the headmaster and teachers. The MP attested to this when he said, "*The Government of*

Zimbabwe, since independence in 1980, I allowed the parents and community stakeholders to actively take part in the affairs of the Zimbabwe education system".

At this discursive level, I concluded that, in Zimbabwe, many rural and urban schools are built by parents, churches, NGOs, and governments (see 3.6.1). Many research studies proved that parents and community participation are on the rise and that there are some challenges affecting community participation. For example, O'Brien (2012:1) argued that:

> …according to the recent Metlife Survey of the American Teachers, teachers, parents and students all agree that parent engagement in schools has increased over the past 25 years and found it inspiring, how committed the group, as a whole, was, to not just improving family engagement in schools, but expanding engagement beyond the family, to the community in general.

However, there are learning institutions that underrate the role of the community in school development. Contrary to this, communities play a pivotal role, and rural communities should include the views of the community (see 3.3). In support of this, the research study evidence in the Hidden Curriculum (2014:5) took the following view:

> [S]takeholders' *voice* refers to the degree to which schools include and act upon the values, opinions, beliefs, perspectives, and cultural backgrounds of the people in their community and stakeholders may participate on a leadership team, take on leadership responsibilities in a school, or give voice to their ideas, perspectives, and opinions during community forums.

The parents in Zimbabwe are the ones responsible for paying supporting staff through the finances of the School Development Committee. Zimbabwe parents contribute money every term to meet many school expenses, such as paying water and electricity bills (see 3.6.1).

I have first-hand information and experience concerning the above; I was the chairperson of the School Development Committee for three consecutive years at the school where my son was studying. The legal standing of Guidance and Career Counselling was expounded by Chimonyo, Mapuranga and Runganye (2015:143), who wrote that "in the adoption of the recommendations of the 1999 Presidential Commission of Enquiry into Education and Training, the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture […] sought to

strengthen and institutionalise Guidance and Counselling in Zimbabwe schools". All subjects taught in schools are approved by relevant authorities and the Zimbabwe government has enacted laws and signed regional and international laws that promote the rights of their children in that perspective.

Mushunje and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:129) alluded that "the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights. This includes civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights." The Zimbabwe government ratified this instrument and, therefore, is accountable and expected to enforce them. Zimbabwean rural learners have constitutional rights and are expected to actively participate in the formulation of peer counselling strategies (see 3.6.1). The children have their rights enshrined in the Zimbabwe Constitution, including the right to education and protection from any harm. Zimbabwean rural learners should be protected from drug abuse and enjoy a drug-free learning environment.

Furthermore, Mushunje and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:131) made the following declaration:

> [C]hildren's rights are recognised in Zimbabwe Law as defined by the Children's Act, the Guardianship of Minors Act, the Education Act, the Domestic Violence Act and Children's rights in Zimbabwe can be summarised as follows: to be allowed to express themselves freely in their own language, to be heard and understood.

This resonates with the agenda of this study of emancipating the Zimbabwean rural learners by giving them the opportunity to air their views and be heard in the formulation of peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in the learning environment (see 2.10.5). The Zimbabwean rural learners and other participants in this study are allowed to air their views, using a language that they are comfortable with, as shown in this study (see 3.7.3).

4.4.4 Active participation of Zimbabwean rural community members in peer counselling strategy formulation through financial and material support

The once inactive rural community members take active roles in the formulation of peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. This was the strength noted before in this study (see 2.10.2). The active participation of disadvantaged community members is advocated by Mahoso and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:252), who stated that the education sector "should consider the expectations of parents since they need financial support from them. The co-operation of parents in the provision of infrastructure, equipment, as Ill as other necessary resources, is vital for success." Most parents in rural communities are involved in brick-moulding, building schools' counselling offices, using their labour, and financing school activities, such as sports, peer counselling training workshops, and other extra-curricular activities (see 3.7.3; 3.6.1).

The Sunday Mail News 18-24 December 2016 reported as follows:

> [The MP said,] *the parents and other community members ensure that the physical infrastructure and environment of all Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies are safe and Ill taken care of. This inspires learners and counsellor teachers to engage in learning, teaching and peer counselling strategies to deal with drug abuse*.

The involvement of community members removes all problems encountered by peer counsellors, as Ruttoh (2015:35) made the following recommendation:

> [T]he government should provide the necessary resources and policy structure on the implementation of the Guidance and Counselling programme in schools and most schools in Kenya are facing a problem of poorly implemented Guidance and Counselling services for those that have established the department. They are not Ill organised in terms of time allocation and infrastructure.

This research evidence is true, in light of the challenges being encountered in Zimbabwe (see 2.10.3). Therefore, Zimbabwean rural learning environments will not be drug-free zones. In this research, I realised that Zimbabwean rural learning community members are prepared to diligently work together to formulate and implement peer counselling

strategies to alleviate drug abuse (see 3.7.2). In addition, all participants in this study are stakeholders, as the Hidden Curriculum (2014:26) stated:

> [I]n education, the term stakeholder typically refers to anyone who has invested in the welfare and success of a school and its students, including teachers, students, parents, local business leaders, and elected officials, such as, city councillors… Stakeholders may also be collective entities, such as local businesses, advocacy groups, media outlets, and cultural institutions.

There is a great track record and many success stories of how community members contributed to the education of their children in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see 3.7.2). The rural business community should not sell drugs to school-going children in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Companies and organisations should contribute financially, materially, and morally, to the formulation, implementation and sustainability of peer counselling strategies that alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. As the chief said, "*The parents have invested a lot of money and other resources in their children's education*".

On analysing the above at the social practice level, parents and community members have been providing great assistance to schools in Zimbabwe. For example, the Dewure High School Headmaster's Newsletter (2016:1), recorded the donation to the school, done by one community member, as follows: "Mr Solomon Matsa, who donated 40 HP computers worth R300 000, other parents constructed an A' level double classroom block, the state-of-the-art rest rooms."

I observed from the above article that community members contribute to a conducive and non-threatening learning environment, as alluded to in Malhauser (2016:45), who stated that "achieving potential requires favourable conditions, and that, under adverse conditions, individuals may not grow Ill and develop in the ways that they otherwise could." The above is substantiated by Parent 2, who said, *"I kindly request our teachers and community leaders here present, to inform us about other ways, which you think can bring quality education in our rural, learning ecologies."* One notable contribution with regards to the above request by Parent 2, was from Learner 4, who said, *"I kindly request our parents to build houses for our teachers, buy furniture that is user friendly to children with disabilities*". Resources are needed in counselling, as Haider and Saha (2016:89)

observed that “the intervention package in the latter project had huge resources, and included a combination of group and inter-personal counselling by staff and outreach workers/paid volunteers, mass media communications, community mobilisation, and advocacy to create an enabling environment.” The social worker concurred with Learner 4, by stating, “*Most rural schools in Zimbabwe do not have learning facilities that are user friendly to learners, parents and community members who have disabilities, and who uses gadgets such as wheelchairs and scratches”*.

At text level analysis, school authorities should be in partnership with community members (see 3.6.1; 3.7.3). Community members should build teachers’ houses at schools and other incentives, as a way to mitigate brain drain. Most Zimbabwean rural schools are not user friendly to people with disabilities, and this is disempowering to them, and defeats the purpose of inclusive education. Mosesi (2016:1) wrote that “when social inclusion is woven into the fabric of the school, it provides many opportunities for constructive education and sustainable learning and different stakeholders’ engagements are considered vital to the success and improvement in the education of the child”. The house agreed with the above analysis, and I concluded that Zimbabwean rural parents are willing to assist, but they need to be continually empowered with the knowledge of their roles, and should be timely requested to assist in any way (see 3.6.4).

The chief said, “*tinodakubetsera”,* meaning “I are willing to assist you.” The words, uttered by the chief, “*tinodakubetsera*”, are pregnant with meaning, and I will unpack it using social discourse analysis. The word “*tinoda*” means “I”; this means the chief is speaking on his behalf, as Ill as on the behalf of the community, and speaking from a point of authority. I should understand the power relations in Zimbabwean rural areas. Whatever the chief declares, carries the day. In this context, the chief used the word “I” and not the word “l”. This means that the chief is sharing his “power” with the community members and, thereby, empowers them in decision-making (see 3.2; 3.6.4). This resonates with the theoretical framework, CER, and the research methodology, PAR, used in this research study. They both empower and permit active participation of all stakeholders in the research process (see 3.6.5).

I observed that rural learners participated actively in programmes or strategies that have the support of their parents and community (see 3.8.3). Learner 3 said, "*I seek the approval of my parents before participating in anything.*" Using discursive analysis, the learners are under the authority of the elders who represent the issues of power (see 3.10). I understood the authority of parents and authority figures in the lives of their children, and therefore, I sought permission from them. Guidance, Counselling and Parental Involvement (2016:1) states that "parental permission is obtained prior to any extended individual or group counselling". The parents gave consent to the children to participate in this research study. At every level of research, the research ethics must be adhered to, as Basit (2010:56) explained: "[research ethics] 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." In this research study, I requested permission from parents and school authorities to engage their children in all levels of the research study. It is paramount to have permission of parents and teachers because these learners, who are peer counsellors will, in future, be requested to attend training workshops and to implement peer counselling strategies outside school premises. They will need parents' permission. This shows that Zimbabwean rural parents and community leaders cannot be excluded (see 3.7.4). I need them to effectively implement peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

The learners and parents signed informed consent forms to show that they are voluntary participating in this research study (see Appendices D and E). This study was ethically cleared by the University of Free State (UFS) and my ethical clearance number is UFS-HSD 2016 / 0495 (see Appendix A). This is in line with ethical considerations of research studies (see 3.8.3), and following Mthiyane's (2015) example:

> [E]thical considerations are discussed with the participants' consent, prior, during and after the research process. Considering the sensitive nature of this study, measures to guard against possible ethical dilemmas, and the less obvious yet harmful effects of research, are sought and put into place. The ethical issues considered in this study included seeking approval, consent, maintenance of confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, and debriefing (Mthiyane, 2015:25).

It means that the role of ethics in research is to protect all research participants, as further pointed out in Mertens (2005:36) that "greater concern about rights and welfare of participants, generally leads to greater involvement of the participants, and this forms one of the basic tenets of transformative research."

Moreover, Bergold and Thomas (2012:14) made the following argument:

> [P]articipatory researchers are particularly called upon to address ethical questions. The closeness to the research partners during participatory projects repeatedly requires ethically sound decisions about the norms and rules that should apply in social dealings among the participants; about how data should be collected, documented, and interpreted in such a way that they do not harm the participants and that their privacy is assured; and about the reliability, duration, and timeframe of the professional researchers' availability.

In this research study, I deliberately held our meetings and discussions at agreed times (see 3.8.4) and during the weekends. The rationale behind it was that, usually during weekends, schools and organisations are closed, so that learners and community members would be resting and learners would be doing jobs, such as cattle-herding, gardening, and washing. To come to the research study meeting, they should be allowed by their parents.

All stakeholders had to be involved. The teacher counsellor said, "*The fight against drug abuse is a collective effort, and success of peer counselling strategies is not determined by peer counsellors alone, but all community members must be included in the research study."* Equally important, the chief said, *"Drug abuse affects us all. Therefore, I all need to roll up our sleeves to implement peer counselling strategies, in order to alleviate drug abuse in our schools".*

From the above submissions by the chief and the counsellor teacher, using social practice level analysis, I concluded that the Zimbabwean rural communities are cognisant of the importance of teamwork in the formulation and implementation of peer counselling strategies in order to alleviate drug abuse in our schools (see 2.10.5; 3.7.2). The success of a peer counselling strategy in alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies is premised on its collaborative nature. In this research, for example, every

team member used his or her strength and skills in making this research a success. Moleko (2014:71) elucidated:

> PAR as a methodology should draw on the knowledge of the user population to identify problems, tailor treatments and disseminate the results and I identified the people (experts) whom I thought would significantly contribute towards the attainment of the purpose of the study.

In addition, Carolyn and Dahir (2016:419, 451) asserted that "collaborating with related student professionals, such as physical therapists, in delivery of services, the school counsellor can integrate anti bullying lessons into the Guidance curriculum and work with administration, teachers, students and parents."

Therefore, in our research team, in line with PAR, each member had a well-defined role. For example, the pastor had secretarial skills, and she became the research team secretary. The educational psychologist and social worker provided counselling services to assist learners to deal with emotional and psychological problems, and learners used their peer counselling skills and knowledge to enhance this study (see 3.8.4). Our research team had a common vision and shared commitment in the formulating and implementing of a peer counselling strategy. To have a commonly agreed vision and commitment in this research study, I had research rules that I collectively agreed upon; for example, everyone was allowed to speak freely.

4.4.5 Emancipation of voiceless Zimbabwean rural community stakeholders in the formulation of a peer counselling strategy

The above is substantiated by Dube (2016: vi), who held that "because it seeks to work with disadvantaged members of the community. The approach values its participants as equal partners, and believes that the people with the problems are the ones with sustainable solutions." The fifth strength noted through the use of PAR, is the emancipation of the voiceless Zimbabwean rural communities in the formulation of peer counselling strategies (see 2.2.1; 3.6.5). The active involvement of oppressed rural learners and other stakeholders justifies the choice of using the CER theoretical

framework of a formulating peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

One of the proponents of PAR is Paolo Freire who, according to Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:3), alluded that "with respect to education, Participatory Action Research is a liberating force, the acquisition of knowledge as a challenge to the oppression of the poor by the elite and other groups within the society". Therefore, the researchers and other professionals should not deprive the underprivileged rural community members in creating knowledge that will be used to create solutions to their problems, such as the construction of peer counselling strategies (see 3.7.2).

Furthermore, according to Mushunje and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:128), "children have the right to participate in communities in which they reside and have programmes and services for themselves. Participation includes access to libraries, involvement in community programs, youth voice activities and decision making processes". This proves that the views of Zimbabwean rural community members, such as parents, teachers and learners, have the right to be heard. However, this right to be heard is violated by some researchers. Teacher counsellor 2 noted, *"It is evident that Zimbabwe teachers and other participants had not been consulted when the peer counselling policy was being formulated, and so did not give themselves time to change the pedagogical ways of counselling in line with the expectations of a Zimbabwe, rural, peer counselling strategy"*. In order to mitigate this, I employed PAR, of which Sithole (2016:1) wrote that "[it] is one method that allows researchers to put authorisation theory into practice by making sure that everyone who has a stake in the outcome of the partnership (i.e., stakeholders) has an expression in the process of decision." This was supported by the educational psychologist who told us, "*The peer counselling strategy formulated through combined community efforts is a powerful tool that can be used to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies and many success stories have been recorded in other countries that use peer counselling strategies"* (see 2.10.5; 3.7.3).

In explaining this further, Castro (2014:12) made the following assertion:

> I have learned the importance of collaborating with the students when solving a problem. Asking students to produce solutions can bring great results since, by doing so, the teacher can take into account the different points of view on a problem, and different solutions can be proposed. This way of solving problems is a way of taking into account the needs of all the students and their different ways of learning.

In this discourse, the participants are empowered as they are involved in data analysis, using CDA, as Mthiyane (2015:115) argued that "in PAR it is the responsibility of the participants to analyse and make sense of the data generated to answer the research questions." I used CDA to analyse the generated data in this research study (see 3.10).

4.4.6 Trained teacher counsellors and other knowledgeable members impart knowledge to other community members

Zimbabwean rural, qualified teacher counsellors, educational psychologists and other professionals can assist community members through sharing peer counselling knowledge. Teacher counsellor 2 said, "*There are very few qualified teacher counsellors. I encourage more teachers to enrol at universities and colleges that offer counselling courses."* From the above statement, that I analysed at text level, I noted that the availability of a few trained professionals in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies is the sixth strength discovered through the empirical data of the research (see 2.10.3; 3.8.7). Moreover, knowledgeable teacher counsellors are instruments of emancipation, as acknowledged by Banegas (2012:1), who wrote that "pedagogical knowledge empowers prospective teachers with self-awareness of the educational system as a whole, together with an understanding of learners supported by studies in psychology and pedagogy". In addition, the above statement, in the context of this study, means that the Zimbabwean rural knowledgeable people, such as teacher counsellors and social workers, are critical in teaching peer counsellors and community members about peer counselling strategies (see 3.8.4).

Furthermore, the pedagogical knowledge empowers the teacher counsellors and other participants with pedagogical skills in their understanding of the peer counselling

curriculum, and the formulation, implementation and evaluation of a peer counselling strategy in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see 3.8.7). I concur with Kuyayama-Tumbare and Chishaka (2014:213), who noted the following:

> The University of Zimbabwe, Great Zimbabwe University, Midlands State University and the Zimbabwe Open University offer degree programs for experts and enable educators to understand how children learn to develop and interact in the environment, so that the educator makes informed decisions.

These trainings are essential to rural learning ecologies because they are sources of professional development of counselling to learners, teachers and other participants (see 2.10.2).

Moreover, Bett (2013:480) came to the following conclusion:

> [P]eer counselling training is, therefore, empowering students, both individually and collectively in a system. The activities of PC can flourish in settings where there is an already established system for working together in cooperation with one another and where people support the values of caring about others. It works where there is concern for a belief in relationships that is based on hierarchies. It can take root or be sustained over time if the pioneering individuals in the organization are committed to its development.

Teachers and other stakeholders should contribute to curriculum content, as Mahoso and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:253) posited that "the content and quality of what a curriculum should offer is determined by the quality of training the teachers receive and their teaching experience. These teachers have to contribute because they are the ones who will implement the curriculum."

The community of parents should be emancipated by involving them in curriculum formulation, as Mahoso and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:252) claimed that "[i]f the curriculum does not meet their expectations, support for it by the parents is compromised. Therefore, curriculum workers should consider the expectations of parents, since they need financial support for them". Garikai (2014:65) affirmed the above by saying that "significant change in curriculum or any other domain is unlikely to be successful if professional development does not receive attention." The educational psychologist in the study said, "*It is evident that the department of Guidance and Counselling in many*

Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies is, and was, failing to formulate and implement peer counselling strategies effectively, because counselling curriculum does not have views of the community members."

At the text analysis level, I noted that this was the main reason why the Zimbabwe counsellor teachers, peer counsellors and other community members had not been actively involved in peer counselling. The lack of knowledge of the subject content was another reason (see 2.10.3; 2.10.4).

I am persuaded that teacher counsellors should be equipped with counselling skills that have the cultural values of the rural areas they are working in, and transfer these skills to peer counsellors, as Mahoso and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:256) stated that "most societies are multicultural. There is need to equip children with skills, values and attitudes that will enable them to value and accept others who are from different cultural groups." Furthermore, the Zimbabwean rural Guidance and Counselling Policy should place emphasis on the culture of teachers and communities (see 3.6.1).

4.4.7 Community members collectively implement peer counselling strategies in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies

The seventh strength of peer counselling strategies, according to generated data analysed, is that Zimbabwe community members should collectively implement peer counselling strategies to be able to impart knowledge to rural learners (see 3.2; 3.6.3). For many years, I have been involved in peer counselling education and training. I realised that the success of any strategy lies in the collective implementation thereof. My conclusion resonates with Mosesi (2016:1), who held that "education policymakers implement social inclusion as a strategy to have an impact in the education system, especially in rural areas". Many research studies concluded that peer counselling strategy formulation and implementation is not an individual activity, but is now a collective activity, and this applies to Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. In supporting the above, Msibi (2016:i) made the following argument:

> [T]he participation of all people is life-enhancing. 'This enables the expression of people's full potential.' For us to bring total transformation in our Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, in relation to peer counselling strategies and drug abuse, I need total engagement of community members, to work and learn together (see 3.2).

4.4.8 The use of technology by Zimbabwean rural peer counsellors and other community members

The use of technology in the formulation of and other matters that concern peer counselling strategies, is the other strength observed after critical analysis of the generated data (see 3.9.2). Learner 4 asked, "*Why can I not use e-Education for information dissemination about peer counselling strategies, and to bring awareness to community members? Most of the learners own computers and phones?*"

The issue of the use of technology is empowering, and is promoted by Mthiyane (2015:7), who argued that "some approaches to empowerment focus on enabling individuals to gain access to assets, information, choices and opportunities so that they are able to improve their own situations". I noted that many Zimbabwean rural learning ecology learners have many information gadgets, such as internet-connected cell phones and laptops, and this implies that peer counsellors can learn about and use peer counselling strategies to deal with drug abuse through these electronic gadgets.

The dissemination of information of peer counselling strategies for the alleviation of drug abuse is now easily accessible through electronic gadgets. The participants in this study used cameras. This was empowering to them (see 3.9.2), and I collectively analysed those pictures. The following remark was made by the Chief: *"Technology use is essential in education. Let us use technology to disseminate information*. *Thank you, Mr. M. Chidarikire for honouring us as a community by inviting us to give our perspectives. I are rarely consulted in issues related to drug abuse."*

At social analysis level, it means, in this study, that adults and learners, collectively, contributed to research, as Begold and Thomas (2012:1) recorded:

> [PAR] methods are geared towards planning and conducting the research process with those people whose life-world and meaningful actions are under study. Consequently, this means that the aim of the inquiry and the research questions develop out of the convergence of two perspectives — that of science and of practice. In the best case, both sides benefit from the research process.

The MP said, *"Daitose tabatana pakushandira mushaIdu kuti ubudirire, kurwisana nedambudziko rekumwa doro kwevana vedu, kwaibudirira."* (If possible, I should come together and fight the drug abuse affecting our children.) This was the call and plea from the Zimbabwean rural community leader to all community members to come together and be agents of change in their community. As I attentively listened to the comments and views expressed by Zimbabwean rural community members, I concluded that the community was able and already collectively working together in other community matters.

The issue of a power imbalance between the participants and me was addressed (see 3.7.4). Our research team engaged PAR to address all inequalities, as Dube (2016:109) argued that "PAR is understood as collaborative, which implies dissolving the traditional boundaries which have been set between the researcher and the researched and these boundaries are eliminated through emphasis on equal participation". The failure to acknowledge the capacity of Zimbabwean rural community members to solve drug abuse is creating a fertile ground for the failure of the peer counselling strategy. The collaborative research creates new peer counselling knowledge, as explained by Mhtiyane (2015:50), who noted that "people only achieve knowledge construction through sharing, learning from others, and passing on knowledge acquired from other generations." Therefore, Zimbabwean rural community members, such as teachers, should be involved in creating locally-based solutions to solve the lack of peer counselling strategies and to solve the problem drug abuse (see 3.7.2).

In summary, the strengths of a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies are anchored on eight aspects, as shown by the empirical data generated in this research study, namely: the capacity or ability of peer counselling to alleviate drug abuse (see 4.3.1); the inclusion of Guidance and Career counselling in the Zimbabwe National School Curriculum (see 4.3.2); the fact that the

Zimbabwe government legally permits Zimbabwean rural school learners and School Development Committees to actively participate in the education sector (see 4.3.3); the active participation of Zimbabwean rural community members in the formulation of peer counselling strategies through financial and material support (see 4.3.4); the emancipation of voiceless Zimbabwean rural community stakeholders in the formulation of peer counselling strategies (see 4.3.5); the imparting of knowledge by trained teacher counsellors and other knowledgeable members to other community members (see 4.3.6); the collective implementation of peer counselling strategies in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies by the community members (see 4.3.7); and the collective and emancipatory use of technology by Zimbabwean rural peer counsellors and other community members (See 4.3.8).

4.5 Impediments to the successful implementation of a peer counselling strategy made through active participation and emancipation of participants for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies

In this section, I will explain some of the impediments that came to the fore during data generations.

4.5.1 Inadequate knowledge of what a peer counselling strategy entails

One of the impediments raised during empirical generating of data, was the lack of knowledge of peer counselling, experienced by most participants (see 2.10.3). This was evident when Parent 1 asked, *"What is Peer Counselling Strategy? Today it is my first time to hear it. Please help me*". This comment by Parent 1 made us realise that there were some rural community members who did not have any knowledge about peer counselling strategies. One should be knowledgeable in issues of peer counselling, such as confidentiality (see 3.8.3). eDynamic Learning (2016:1) stated that "a counsellor's knowledge base must include the five universal human needs of physical Ill-being: security, belonging, appreciation, and personal development." Some community members are not aware of peer counselling strategies, and this might have contributed to the failure of participants to formulate and implement peer counselling strategies.

One of the solutions offered by the research team was to have training workshops following the example of the Harare Institute of Technology:

> HIT student leaders recently attended a training program on Basic Communication and Systemic Peer Counselling held at the Monomotapa Crowne Plaza Hotel from 29 March to 2 April 2016. The workshop covered topics such as Gender Based Violence, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, self-awareness and counselling skills. The Zimbabwe Institute of Systemic Therapy (CONNECT) facilitated the training programme, urged the participants to go out, assist and guide their peers using the learning experience and critical knowledge that they had acquired… Understand and read around the major issues that are causing havoc among the youth and you will be able to assist your peers successfully (Harare Institute of Technology Newsletter, 2016:1).

However, it should be noted that the above training programme was done in Zimbabwe's capital city, which is an urban environment, and no such programmes have been done in rural areas. Parent 2 posed the question, "*Where is the current peer counselling strategy being used to deal with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies?"* All participants in this study stated that they had never seen the current or previous peer counselling strategy being used to specifically deal with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Therefore, they were not aware of its contents. The participants in this study, implored us to make sure that the peer counselling strategy I are formulating, should be easily accessible in both hard and soft copies.

4.5.2 The Guidance and Counselling subject is not examinable

The other challenge noted from the research empirical evidence is that this subject was not being examined in Zimbabwe. Therefore, it was neglected by teachers and learners (see 2.10.3). Teacher Counsellor 2 said, *"The Guidance and Counselling is not an examinable subject, and this shows that this subject is not important. Teachers and learners have negative perceptions on Guidance and Counselling."*

From my observations, using text analysis, I concluded that the current Zimbabwe education thrust was on subjects that are examined at the end of the term, such as Geography. Teachers and learners in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies do not take seriously subjects that are not examinable at the end of the year. I highly recommend that

the Guidance and Counselling subject be examined in the same manner that mathematics and other subjects are examined. The fact that this subject has not been examined, has contributed to the ineffectiveness of peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in learning ecologies. Some teachers are using the time allocated to the teaching of Guidance and Counselling, to teach subjects such as mathematics and English, which are examinable. This has deprived learners to get adequate knowledge and skills in matters of peer counselling strategies. Consequently, they fail to deal with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

4.5.3 Lack of collective engagement of community members in the formulation of a peer counselling strategy

Parent 2 remarked, "*Isu vekumamisha, pfungwa dzedu hapana anodzinzwa.*" (Our views as community members are not heard and I are not consulted). From the social discursive level, the previous peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse are formulated without the collective engagement of Zimbabwean rural communities. This created an attitude of resistance (see 3.4). The reason is that most peer counselling strategies are formulated from far geographical locations (see 3.6.4). This is alluded to by Charema and Shizha (2008:45): "however, the influence of the Eurocentric counselling theory, research and practice among the Shona people, has demonised and oppressed individuals and groups, whose culture lies outside the Eurocentric counselling culture".

The researchers should note that Zimbabwean rural communities want to be actively involved in research studies, as Tsikira (2014:157, 178) posited that "the philosophy of traditional African Societies encompassed the principle of communalism, the education is provided by the community in a collective manner, it takes a village to raise a child". There should be a collective decision by teachers, headmasters, educational officials in the Department of Education, such as educational psychologists, as Ill as learners and other stakeholders to implement recommendations by the 1999 Nziramasanga Commission about teaching of Guidance and Counselling.

The research vision of formulating peer counselling strategies should come from the Zimbabwean rural learning community members, as observed by Kuyayama-Tumbura

and Takaendesa (2015:314), who wrote that the "principle of research vision and community development cannot succeed without a clear vision. Without a clear idea of what is needed to be achieved, how and why, some people may not understand the value of change and development." Furthermore, Kuyayama-Tumbare and Takaendesa (2015:328) noted that "disrespect for community knowledge, failure to recognise, value and integrate with those from the community with your own ideas for community development, may result in resistance from the community." The non-involvement of research participants is against research ethics considerations, such as respect of participants or participants (see 3.8.3).

The community members should actively participate to reduce drug abuse, as shown by research findings by the Rural Health Information Hub (2016:2), which affirmed that "a community-based prevention initiative was formed to reduce youth violence, delinquency, alcohol and tobacco use. The results of community based prevention have seen significant reductions in substance abuse among local youth in the 30 rural towns they serve."

Learner 2 stated, *"I have never attended a meeting or gathering where I contributed to the formulation of peer counselling strategies."* Learner 3 further explained, *"Learners are the end users of peer counselling strategies; therefore, they should be consulted first."* At the discursive level analysis, I concluded that previous peer counselling strategies used by peer counsellors did not reflect their perspectives. This made peer counsellors fail to understand the contents of peer counselling strategies and, therefore, led to the unwanted outcomes in relation to alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

By comparison, I actively engaged rural community members through PAR. Lephoto (2016:1) maintained that PAR "was considered an appropriate research methodology for its compatibility to CER principles, especially in their endeavour to empower people affected by the issue of concern, so that they can liberate themselves." This implies that when the main researchers ignore the views of the community members in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, they are disempowering them, and they act in an autocratic manner, in terms of how I conducted our research (see 3.2; 3.6.1).

On the contrary, I used CER, which was empowering to participants. Lephoto (2016:1) concluded that CER "was favoured as a theoretical framework for this study, because of its articulation for emancipator praxis for social justice and democratisation to transformation." This research study was empowered through active participation in all stages of research, and allowed Zimbabwean rural community members to articulate their opinions in formulating peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse among their learners and community members (see 3.5). Learners should be knowledgeable in peer counselling strategies, in order to solve the problem of drug abuse. Tsikira (2014:179) also stated that "African Education is essential to prepare young people for the work that they are called upon to do in the society".

4.5.4 Lack of expertise in the monitoring of peer counselling strategies

The successful formulation and implementation of peer counselling strategies is incapacitated by the lack of a peer counselling monitoring system and monitoring expertise (see 2.10.2). Counsellor teacher 2 stated, *"Most of the strategies fail because they are not properly monitored, and no adequate support is given to make the strategies work effectively."* To elaborate on this, the educational psychologist commented, *"Surprisingly, I – the educational psychologists working in rural areas – have never been invited to deal with peer counselling strategy challenges. I realised that our colleagues – educational psychologists working in urban areas – have been invited many times. This is discouraging, to say the least."* Moreover, the social worker stated, *"In our department, I have been invited to a few meetings to deal with peer counselling problems in monitoring."*

Using discursive analysis, I conclude that there should be effective monitoring systems to monitor all processes of peer counselling strategy content, peer counselling checking compliance with drug abuse, peer counselling strategy outcomes and assessment standards (see 3.8.7). Mahoso and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:265-265) posited that "the curriculum evaluation should focus on its clients – pupils, teachers, designers, the government and parents, these are central to curriculum implementation and all the gaps should be identified, and one way of bridging them should be identified".

Similarly, in line with PAR, I included all participants in the monitoring and evaluation, and further recommend that, in future, everyone should be engaged and allowed to deliberate on the peer counselling strategy content, and address inconsistencies and identified gaps that may arise (see 3.8.7). The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe clearly stated that there must be collaboration of all stakeholders in solving problems affecting the Education Ministry. Kuyayama-Tumbare and Takaendesa (2015:23) wrote:

> [T]he Principal Director's circular No. 46 of 2010 states that there is collaboration with victim friendly stakeholders, who include Police Victim Friendly Unit, Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Health and Child welfare and Ministry of Labour and Social Service.

Counsellor teacher 1 stated, *"Monitoring a peer counselling strategy is a process, and is a huge challenge to us teachers, who are already teaching in the classroom."* Equally, Counsellor teacher 2 added, *"I am teaching three subjects at Advanced level, and I are not paid extra money for being counsellors and this demotivates."* The chief stated, *"One counsellor teacher recently resigned from his work due to the high workload. He is suffering from stress related diseases due to the workload."*

From text analysis, as a result, teacher counsellors and other community members have other work commitments. For example, counsellor teachers in rural areas are full-time classroom practitioners, as Ill as full-time counsellors (see 2.10.3; 3.7.3). This overburdens the counsellor teachers, and makes it difficult for them to monitor the peer counselling strategy. Monitoring a peer counselling strategy is a process that is taxing, and needs total commitment from peer counsellors, teacher counsellors and all other stakeholders. I noted that some teacher counsellors are teaching two or more subjects to almost 200 students. The views forwarded by counsellor teachers should that the monitoring of peer counselling strategies was limited and, in some instances, peer counselling monitoring was non-existent.

Most rural schools in Zimbabwe have few counsellor teachers, one educational psychologist and two social workers in the entire district. This creates monitoring challenges (see 3.8.4), which Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies will experience. This may demotivate and lead qualified and experienced counsellor teachers and others to

seek transfers from rural learning ecologies to urban schools, where there are better working conditions. The MP stated as follows:

> *Many qualified teachers and health professionals, such as educational psychologists and social workers, are shunning rural learning ecologies because of poor working conditions which they encounter. I proposed that the Government should partner with other NGOs and businesses to incentivise the professionals working in rural learning ecologies.*

The Zimbabwean rural learning communities should collaborate with other internal and external stakeholders to support peer counselling strategies. Kisii University (2015:4) delivered the following statement:

> [A]s an educational institution, Kisii University Counselling Section, in collaboration with Alcohol and Drug Abuse (ADA) Committee, is committed to providing an environment that enhances and supports intellectual, spiritual, social and cultural processes. Thus, the administration, faculty staff, and students, have the collective responsibility of ensuring that the environment is conducive for healthy intellectual and spiritual growth.

Teacher 2 explained, "*The number of learners in Zimbabwean rural schools is one of the determining factors of the number of teachers allocated to the school, and the numbers of subjects taught by the teachers are less considered."*

My experience as a teacher from the Zimbabwean rural areas agrees with the above submission. At the rural school where I was teaching, one teacher who was the only Physics teacher, was teaching Form 1 to Form 4 classes, with a total of 120 students. He was also the Head of Department and a qualified school counsellor. As per school timetable, this teacher had a total of 27 lessons per week. On the other hand, the same teacher was mandated to monitor peer counsellors and render support to teachers in his department. In response to the issue of the School Development Committee, the Chief *"appreciate the work of monitoring and counselling which they are doing in assisting our children in solving their emotional, psychological and physical problems. I are going to give financial incentives to our teacher counsellors."* This support was appreciated, and this greatly contributed to the monitoring of peer counselling strategies by teacher counsellors and other stakeholders (see 3.8.7).

The government of Zimbabwe is not paying peer counsellors and qualified teacher counsellors; yet, other countries are paying for this service, as observed by Haider and Saha (2016:7): “in Bangladesh, Peer counsellors worked part time for 3–4 hours a day, and are paid an honorarium of Bangladeshi Taka 3,500–4,700 (approx. equivalent to USD 45–60) per month, depending upon their experience in the programme.” Therefore, the MP promised to take the issue of the paying of peer counsellors and counsellor teachers to parliament, and to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, to consider paying teacher counsellors for the extra work they are doing (see 3.6.1). The government should partner the community in financially supporting peer counselling strategy, as explained by Garcia and Gonzalez (2011:10), who stated that “identifying community partners, such as church or religious-based organisations that are not constrained by Government funding” is important. These are the people who are expected to monitor peer counselling strategies, and have other energy-draining commitments. This greatly compromises peer counselling strategy efficiency.

The social worker also stated, *“I are not trained in monitoring peer counselling strategy in relation to drug abuse. Therefore, I request thorough training in peer counselling strategy.”* The skilled, trained community members will be assigned to monitor peer counselling. This is noted by Mahoso and Mayayama-Tumbare (2014:345), who asserted that “division of work and specialisation help employees to increasingly become skilled and efficient, and they, in turn, increase output. The right people with the required expertise should, therefore, be assigned to the appropriate tasks.” It is difficult for untrained personnel to monitor the implementation of a peer counselling strategy (see 2.10.3). One must be knowledgeable and skilled in monitoring a peer counselling strategy that deals with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. This is authenticated by submissions of Haider and Saha (2016:4), who argued that “in the context of a well-structured program setting, and under the described circumstances, it seems likely that the Ill-trained and supervised community-based peer counsellors could assist in encouraging and helping.”

As our discussions proceeded, it was evident that rural counsellor teachers and other stakeholders are not unwilling to monitor peer counselling strategies; however, those in urban areas are motivated to monitor peer counselling strategies because they had been

trained and are adequately incentivised. This created a power imbalance (see 3.6.5), as Dufour and Marzano (2011:14) postulated that “the challenge confronting public education is the creation of powerful systems, the systems remaining autocratic and centralized in the education system, to fail to monitor the curriculum or give the support to teachers.” Furthermore, Kumashiro (2012:13-14) concluded that “teacher education had struggled, where it positions itself in terms of the rights of citizens to political and social freedom and equality.” Taking into consideration the above, I used the CER theoretical framework and the PAR methodology in this study to dismantle inequality, colonisation and the monopoly of peer counselling monitoring, thereby empowering rural learning ecologies (see 3.6.5; 3.6.1). The principles used in this discourse permitted the Zimbabwean rural community members to be heard and, as a result, they were empowered.

4.5.5 Misconceptions of community members about a peer counselling strategy

The last impediment derived from the empirical evidence is the misconceptions of the Zimbabwean rural stakeholders about a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse (see 2.9.1). Ruttoh (2015:36) came to the following conclusion:

> [S]ome head teachers and parents believe counselling is the invasion of their privacy, and that of their children, and therefore, they might attempt to sabotage its development. They, therefore, influence their children’s view towards the role of guidance and counselling in schools.

On Level 3 of this research study, where I dealt with strategic planning, I met many times to assess and evaluate the peer counselling strategy in Zimbabwean rural ecologies. These meetings are strategic, as they assisted us in making sure that everyone was on board, and all misconceptions are removed. Counsellor teacher 2 said, *“I noted that I came to meetings because I view them as crucial and helpful in making us understand peer counselling in great depth.”* The discursive analysis on what Counsellor teacher 2 submitted, should that participants came to these meetings because they realised that peer counselling was essential. That is the reason why they are dedicated to, and honoured meetings, and are punctual. They relegated other commitments to attend these

valuable meetings to formulate peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

I conclude that there are impediments that militate against the successful formulation and implementation of peer counselling strategies in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. There are six impediments that are generated from the research empirical data. These are the inadequate knowledge and lack of understanding of what a peer counselling strategy entails (see 4.4.1); the fact that the Guidance and Counselling subject is not examinable (see 4.4.2); the lack of collective engagement of community members in the formulation of peer counselling strategies (see 4.4.3); the teacher counsellors' lack of expertise in the monitoring of peer counselling strategies and lack of incentives (see 4.4.4); the teacher counsellors' heavy workload as classroom practitioners (see 4.4.5); and the misconceptions of stakeholders about peer counselling strategies (see 4.4.6).

4.6. Circumstances under which the success of a peer counselling strategy is made through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies

I explained in detail some of the circumstances that are essential for the success of a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse.

4.6.1 Involvement of community members in peer counselling informative programmes and workshops

One of the circumstances under which the peer counselling strategy succeeds, is the involvement of community members in peer counselling informative programmes and workshops (see 3.7.1). I collectively agreed to put in place training and awareness programmes that would enlighten the Zimbabwean rural communities to be knowledgeable about the importance of peer counselling strategies in eradicating drug abuse. It is recommended in Sharma *et al.* (2016:5,14) that "on-going training sessions that use the language and concepts of participation are needed to build and sustain the capacity and many members had poor knowledge as they did not attend training." I used text level analysis on the words uttered by Parent 2, who asked, "*I kindly request to know*

what is peer counselling strategy and what does it entail?" I observed the facial expressions of some participants and deduced that some wanted to know what a peer counselling strategy was.

Counsellor teacher 1 explained, "*A peer counselling strategy is a counselling technique that is used by people of the same age, to help each other deal with or solve issues, such as drugs and education difficulties.*" The definition by Counsellor teacher 1 is similar to the definition offered by Ambayo and Ngumi (2016:125):

> [Peer counselling is] the encouraging concerted effort to harness the capacity which group members, sharing common interests, may console, appease, befriend, mediate and reconcile those who are alienated from one another informally, without resorting to discipline, or depending on professionals, or those in authority within the organization or institution (see 2.9.1).

The educational psychologist also stated, "*The peer counsellors should be trained in order to assist other learners to deal with issues raised by teacher counsellor 1.*" This shows that, among Zimbabwean rural learning community members, some understand what peer counselling strategy is, whereas other community members need a lot of education and teaching about what peer counselling is all about. To achieve this, I used PAR in this study, as Whiteman (2015:625) alluded that PAR "is a democratic model of who is able to produce, own and use knowledge. It is driven by participants rather than an outside sponsor, funder or academic." The knowledgeable community members should be able to share information with others in order to equip the community and assist in the emancipation of rural community members in matters of peer counselling. In addition, Dube (2016:106) stated that the fact that local leaders had been included in his research study, was "a testimony to the view that local people are people through their knowledge, have a role and contribution towards social transformation."

Sharing of information concerning peer counselling strategies will allow community members to actively participate in discussions around drug abuse and peer counselling. This resonates with the CET theoretical framework and PAR methodology of this research study, that advocate for total empowerment of community members (see 3.6.5), as Ill as the emancipatory function and empowerment of PAR. Mabuuku (2013:150) stated that, additionally, PAR is likely to "promote a culture of collaborative inquiry, teamwork,

continued learning and ownership of actions within a community, actively engaging all stakeholders in educational innovations is one way of fostering teamwork and collaboration in health professions institutions."

Through using Social Discourse Analysis, I observed that the community members felt comfortable to engage in discourses that they are knowledgeable about. This was stated by the Chief when he said, *"I feel embarrassed to participate in issues that I don't know. Thank you, the educational psychologist and the counsellor teacher, for enlightening us about peer counsellors. I can now discuss because I now know what peer counselling is."* Parent 2 said, "*The understanding of peer counselling strategy gives us direction on how to formulate it in order to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwe, rural, learning ecologies."* I can deduct from using text analysis of the statements of the chief and Parent 2 that community members are willing to learn new things and to be able to impart knowledge to others (see 3.7.3). This is supported by Falsario, Muyong and Nuevaespana (2014:2), who concluded that "teachers are continually looking to create a positive classroom climate in which learning is maximised. It is having an environment where students feel safe, nurtured, and intellectually stimulated."

This desire to learn, shown by the Zimbabwe community members in this research study, was essential, because it allowed them to be receptive to knowledge of peer counselling (see 3.7.1). The knowledge of peer counselling strategies would help them to implement it in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The unpacking of the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse unlocked the desire to formulate and implement it in rural learning ecologies in order to solve the problem of drug abuse. I was an active facilitator in this research study (see 3.7.4), allowing the Zimbabwean rural marginalised participants to actively share knowledge about peer counselling. Meyer (2016:1) stated as follows: "the research enabled me to become accurately aware of my role as facilitator. I want to cascade my knowledge and actively share my own learning from the process." Therefore, my role in this research study was that of a facilitator, as alluded to by McKenzie, Tan and Hoverman (2012:20), who argued that "facilitation of the research and learning process, particularly of the nature of knowledge about eliciting and documenting values and knowledge held by participants, should be present". The concerns about peer counselling strategies, raised by the Zimbabwean rural learning community members, are

addressed through the knowledge shared by those who are knowledgeable of peer counselling strategies.

Learner 2 said, *"I had some questions on peer counselling, but today, I have gained a lot of insight concerning what peer counselling is all about."* The MP said, "*After I heard submissions from all of you, I am convinced that I must formulate and implement this peer counselling strategy at any cost without delay."* This shows that when matters concerning the subject under study are clarified, community members will have a buy-in (see 3.6.3). Dube (2016:108) stated that PAR "from the perspective of 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 community members can only effectively participate in community programmes of which they have ownership and a common vision. The above argument is supported by Meyer (2016:1), who stated that PAR "provides collective visions for hands-on activities in teaching and learning practice with students and communities."

I noted that in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, participants and other stakeholders gave full support to activities that they are knowledgeable about. To elaborate on this, German *et al.* (12:32) observed that, "involving the beneficiaries can provide an opportunity for sharing knowledge and experience among themselves and discussing common problems and solutions." Counsellor teacher 1 proposed, *"May I be allowed to give you a 15-minute drama, showing how peer counselling is done."* The research team gave approval to this request. Furthermore, Teacher counsellor 2 said, *"May I be allowed to act the drama, showing peer counselling, on Saturday next week? This gives us and the learners enough time to prepare so that I give a polished performance."* Mavroudis and Bournelli (2016:11) made the following argument:

> [R]esearch has also ascertained the effectiveness of educational drama in improving pupils' interpersonal relations, in cultivation of cooperation and as Ill as in the development of self-confidence and general awareness of participants. Therefore, it can be argued that dramatic education provides a secure way of confirming identity and of enabling pupils to confront social problems.

I therefore agreed to meet on the Saturday of the following week. I met for an hour, as per agreement. This initiative by the teacher counsellors and peer counsellors was essential in giving a practical feel to the peer counselling strategy (see 3.7.2).

I then agreed that, after their performance, I would give comments. This role play was instrumental in bringing awareness to participants. The active participation and collectiveness of the principles of PAR are shown in drama, as Ball (2012:34) found that "in educational drama, each child is an inseparable member of the team to which he/ she belongs. His/her social skills are naturally developed through the need to work and play with others."

After the drama, the parent asked, "*Why is there no table between the peer counsellor and the learner with the drug abuse problem?"* The peer counsellor said in response, "*Many research studies show that tables create psychological barriers between the counsellor and the counselee."* The chief clapped hands and said, *"I was not aware about the meaning or symbol of the table in the counselling room. I am going to remove the table in my office. I have learnt."* The MP said, "*I learnt from the peer counsellor in this drama, that one should explain why he or she is recording the counselling on the paper or on the video camera. The peer counsellor asked for permission to record, and the counselee signed a form to confirm his agreement to the use of audio and notes writing"*.

Parry *et al*. (2016:1272) wrote the following:

> A number of specific ethical concerns are raised by the decisions and processes entailed in making and using video recordings of healthcare communication, which include the risk that recording might detrimentally affect what people say and do. The ease with which data can be copied and shared and, therefore, potentially fall into the hands of people who are unauthorized to access it.

Furthermore, Mthiyane (2014: vi-vii) confirmed that "ethical considerations are observed to guard against possible ethical dilemmas, and the less obvious, yet harmful effects of research". In this research study, I emphasised and taught the importance of adhering to ethical considerations (see 3.8.4). The MP said, "*I learnt from the peer counsellors.*" This shows that adults may learn from young learners. This was empowering to the learners

in that they now understood that adults learnt from them (see 3.7.5). In this research study, using PAR and CER, I agreed with Baden and Major (2010:53) that "dynamic power relationships between researcher and participants are constantly negotiated to deconstruct power, achieve and maintain trust, promote equality and ensure reciprocity." In our Zimbabwean rural communities, it is acceptable that learners learn from adults, not vice versa (see 2.9.2).

The drama unlocked many issues that are pertinent to the effective formulation and implementation of peer counselling strategies in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. I saw confidence in the actors involved in this role play and realised that if people are exposed to adequate training in matters of peer counselling, they could execute their duties. The essence of involvement of participants is shown by Morales (2016:156-157), who alluded that a "participatory and a cooperative process across all levels with the involvement of staff, students and other stakeholders and it embraces broad areas of quality in terms of pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment domains". After this study, I collectively made resolutions, namely that I should hold development and training programmes in peer counselling strategy for participants, as Ill as confidence-building exercises (see 3.6.3).

The NGO worker made the following remark:

> *My young brother was involved in drug abuse, I tried to counsel him. He refused my help. I forced him to go to the doctor. Nothing changed. He was helped by Isaac, his friend. Peer counselling worked in helping my brother.*

The pastor said, *"Our peer counsellors' failure is our failure. This shows that I, as the Chivi community, take the blame for failing to implement peer counselling strategy to deal with drug abuse."* At text analysis level, I noted the following: this testimony by the NGO worker should the essence of peer counselling strategy in alleviating drug abuse in our learners' lives (see 2.9.1). Children's welfare is a community responsibility. According to Zimbabwean rural communities, I have a Shona expression that says, "mwana ndewedu tose", meaning that the child is not owned by individuals, but collectively, by the society. Therefore, the society must be engaged in solving health problems affecting rural learners and that is why I used the PAR methodology.

Sharma *et al.* (2016:4) made the following observation:

> [C]ommunity involvement in education is important for many reasons. It aids in the ability to identify local education issues and to develop strategies to resolve barriers that impede access and retention and compromise quality and community participation can also serve as an effective means of advocating for and mobilizing the resources needed to move towards a high-quality public system of education throughout the country.

The drug abuse problem can be caused or eradicated through community efforts (see 2.9.3; 3.7.2).

The failure of this peer counselling strategy is not the failure by the learners only, but is collective. I also state that if the peer counselling strategy is successfully implemented, and drug abuse is alleviated, the peer counsellors and community members will collectively take praise. Dube (2016:8) viewed that "the strength of PAR lies in the fact that it recognizes the capacity of participants in contributing to the research process towards improvements and social transformation". This resonates with the theoretical framework, PAR, of this research study. Tshelane (2013:416) averred that PAR "engages the participants so that their voices can be heard and respected. The goal is to ensure that everyday knowledge is used to shape the lives of ordinary people."

4.6.2 Monitoring and supporting the implementation of the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies

The second circumstance noted through analysis of data is the effective monitoring and supporting system of the implementation of the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecology. The Department of Basic Education of South Africa: Integrated Strategy on HIV, STIs and TB 2012–2016 (2012:56) delivered the following statement:

> [T]his strategy will be evaluated to monitor progress against its strategic objectives. Evaluation is imperative to ensure effective implementation of the DBE Integrated Strategy 2012–2016, because it holds stakeholders accountable for their contributions towards the achievement of specific indicators.

Our research team was convinced that it was our collective responsibility to design activities that are focused on the monitoring of the peer counselling strategy being used to alleviate drug abuse. Supervision of peer counsellors and peer counselling is important, as alluded by Kamore and Tiego (2015: 255), who wrote that "supervision in counselling literally means overseeing. In school, peer counselling supervision refers to teacher counsellors and teacher monitors overseeing the peer counsellors". The MP proposed that "*counsellor teachers should be responsible for monitoring the peer counselling strategy; the reason is that they are qualified in counselling and they are the ones spending more time with peer counsellors".* Through text level, monitoring of peer counselling needs trained personnel and therefore, the research team agreed on the notion moved by the MP, but the chief proposed that the NGO, educational psychologist and social worker be included in the peer counselling strategy monitoring team. No-one objected to this.

Kamore and Tiego (2015:255) stated that "regular supervision of peer counsellors is important in ensuring their efficiency. Effective supervision is determined by the level of training of the teacher counsellors and peer mentors". I therefore suggested that all Zimbabwean rural schools should have the monitoring tool, that will be used by trained educators and other members mentioned by the chief.

Having the peer counselling strategy monitoring tool, the Zimbabwean rural learning community members will know what is expected of them. The advantage of having our Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies make a peer counselling monitoring tool, gave us ownership and active participation as prescribed by the CER theoretical framework and the PAR methodology in our research study (see 3.6.3). I concur with Tshelane (2013:417), who argued that "ownership and participation address concerns about buy-in and recognition by target participants, which include engagement in the process of determining the input and output of services". Teacher counsellor 1 said, *"The monitoring tool created by us has all our expectations, and I can adjust it if there are challenges."* Using discursive level, the argument of the teacher counsellor was premised on her past experience with the European-made monitoring tool that she had once used in monitoring a peer counselling strategy in an urban school at which she had once taught. The foreign monitoring tools cannot be used to measure the success of the locally formulated peer

counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The Zimbabwean rural learning community members, including learners, must be taught how to use this monitoring tool. This empowers them through the impartation of monitoring knowledge (3.6.4).

4.6.3 The peer counselling strategy should be gender sensitive

The other circumstance is that the peer counselling strategy should be gender sensitive (see 3.6.2). Teacher counsellor 2 said, "*There is a wrong belief that only boys are using drugs. Please note that girls are also abusing drugs."* Through using social level, the above implies that girls are perceived not to abuse drug; however, in reality some girls are abusing drug in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. There is evidence that girls and women also use drugs (see 2.9.3). This was an eye opener because, in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, girls do not abuse drugs publicly, but they do it in hidden places. Zambrana (2013:110, 111) explained:

> [I]t fails to see that the institutions of the life world have been, and continue to be sites of female subordination, exploitation, and domination. A woman's freedom from dependence on the male head of the nuclear family, *at the same time,* makes her dependent on a patriarchal state bureaucracy. The emancipatory *telos* of feminism allows assessment of the forms of domination anchored in both system and lifeworld.

In relation to the above, the Zimbabwe culture does allow mature boys and men to legally take drugs, but does not permit women and girls to drink alcohol and use drugs. The use of drugs by girls and women is a taboo in Zimbabwean rural ecologies.

Zimbabwe females must be emancipated through the CET (see 2.2). Moleko (2014:22) wrote that "CER is deemed apt as it not only emancipates, but also empowers, restores equity and endorses individual freedom within a democratic society". This gave us a false belief that girls are immune to drugs, but recent studies, and our personal experiences as a research team, show that girls and women are indeed abusing drugs. This means that our peer counselling strategy should be able to assist both boys and girls to avoid using drugs (see 2.9.1).

One of the female learners said, "*My friend is using drugs. She started using drugs when she went to Harare city during school holidays, and they started drinking alcohol at the Christmas party. Since then, she has been taking drugs."* Through using social analysis, I noted that there was social discrimination and injustice against girls and women in relation to peer counselling strategy and drug abuse. More so, Moleko (2014:22) stated that "the participants, together with the researcher, then work collaboratively as equal partners, across the entire research process, in order to change their position through challenging their marginalization". I agree, therefore, that our peer counselling teams should include girls' counsellors and role models, who will assist female learners to deal with drug abuse problems (see 3.8.4).

The Feminist Critical Research, CER, and PAR, advocate for total emancipation and active participation of the rural girl child in solving her own problems. Therefore, this study was critical in advancing the Ill-being of the girl child, and her recognition in matters that are critical. The male domination in the formulation of peer counselling strategies is dismantled through the use of CER and PAR in this research study. In accordance with this, Mthiyane (2014:122) wrote that "challenging differences and boundaries in power relations should not be seen as barriers to participation, but as an existence of power shift and development of social change".

The missing voice of girls and women in matters of drug abuse is included in this discourse. In this research study, girls and women are incorporated in the formulation of peer counselling strategies in alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see 2.10.5; 3.7.4). Tshelane (2013:418) argued that "participants should form alliances and networks, thus bringing together shared goals and working in close proximity to one another". This was done through using PAR in this study. The Zimbabwean rural communities should engage girls and boys in issues of community development, creating employment opportunities and recreational facilities, as Ill as fulfilling other youth needs. These would help learners to be busy, and not fall into the trap of drug abuse.

I had to tap into the participants' linguistic capital. Tshelane (2013:416) affirmed that "linguistic capital is to have skills and tools developed through communication

experiences in more than one language". The participants are using non-verbal cues, such as nodding, clapping hands and others, as ways of communicating in the research study. These non-verbal cues are essential in transmitting the message. I was very observant, and noted the meanings of non-verbal cues. Sama (2016:4) argued that "when I interact with others, I continuously give and receive wordless signals. All of our non-verbal behaviours – the gestures I make, the way I sit, how fast or how loud I talk, how close I stand – send strong messages." In addition, Hull (2016:22) stated that "nonverbal communication can be powerful and even more influential and experts in interpersonal communication have estimated that non-verbal communication constitutes 70 percent of what is involved in communication".

4.8.4 Active involvement of former peer counsellors in assisting Zimbabwean rural learners to deal with drug abuse

The fourth circumstance is the active involvement of former peer counsellors in assisting Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies in their dealing with drug abuse. The educational psychologist asked, "*Are you engaging former students, those that completed their secondary school education, who are former peer counsellors to assist in the community, or even assisting at schools to remove drug abuse."* The teachers and community leaders said, "*No"*. The NGO member said, "*In our organisation, I have engaged three former peer counsellors in our programs to address drug abuse.*" In addition, the MP responded, "*I think the question raised by the educational psychologist is essential. I put more resources in training peer counsellors, and some serve one year because they will be in their final year at secondary school. Why not create employment for them as community peer counsellors?*"

From the social analysis perspective of the above-mentioned utterances, I realised that I are losing experienced and knowledgeable peer counsellors, who can share knowledge and assist us in dealing with drug abuse problems in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see 2.10.3). The employment of former peer counsellors also acts as motivation to current and future peer counsellors, for they may then know that they will be gainfully employed as peer counsellors when they complete their secondary education. From the

above submissions, I agreed that I had lost many skilled peer counsellors who could have assisted us in dealing with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

Morales (2016:157) made the following observation:

> [T]rained and skilled teachers are agents of positive societal change and have a multiplying effect by touching the lives and moulding the hearts of the learners. Accordingly, teachers' qualifications, competence, commitment and motivation to deliver quality education are central in achieving the goals related to education.

The above observation also applies to peer counsellors. They must be trained and skilled, as the former peer counsellors have been trained, and they may train other peer counsellors. Iyabo's (2016:416) argument reveals that "counselling, therefore, is a more specialised service requiring training in personality development and handling exceptional groups of individuals". Therefore, these former trained peer counsellors, if employed, may lessen the heavy load of the heavily burdened teacher counsellors and peer counsellors, who have other engagements, such as teaching and studying (see 2.9.3). This is supported by Iyabo's (2016:419) research findings that "many school authorities refuse to give definite time to school counsellors to perform the guidance and counselling program. Instead, they are engaged in teaching other subjects or doing other administrative jobs". Peer counsellors may help teachers by removing guidance and counselling work from them.

Former peer counsellors may be used in the monitoring and mentoring of peer counsellors and the peer counselling strategy being implemented by the learners in alleviating drug abuse. However, teacher counsellors are not relegating their peer counselling monitoring duties to former peer counsellors, but they will be involved in training and seeing if the former and current peer counsellors are professional doing their duties and maintaining the peer counselling standards. This is recommended by Garcia and Gonzalez (2011:9), who stated that "efforts should be made to develop the research capacity of the community-based organisations so that staff members feel comfortable making research suggestions and developing research-based recommendations". In adhering to the PAR methodology, our research theoretical framework included community members. Moleko (2014:14) stated the following argument:

> Participatory Action Research was made on the basis of embracing the engagement and participation of all people, including those usually excluded and marginalized from conversations and decision-making that involves them. It also sought to change the status of the marginalised by making them equal partners.

Teacher counsellors, educational psychologists, and those involved in the monitoring of peer counselling should ensure that peer counselling monitoring activities are followed religiously and executed accordingly. Nothing should be left to chance if I want peer counselling strategies to be effective and successful in alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

4.6.5 Aggressive mobilisation of resources to support peer strategy

The fifth component of the circumstances that contribute to the success of a peer counselling strategy is the mobilisation of resources to support peer counsellors (see 3.6).

The social worker said, "*Let us engage the business community and other stakeholders to help us raise money and other resources to create employment for these peer counsellors.*" The limiting factor is the unavailability of resources to employ and reward all peer counsellors and teacher counsellors, and supporting the peer counselling strategy, but, as suggested by the social worker above, mobilisation of resource is essential. The following conclusion was made in the research study by Iyabo (2016:421):

> [F]unds for the innovative efforts of counsellor have not been forthcoming, since school heads find it difficult to give out the already scarce funds to the counsellor. This may not exactly be their fault, as provisions may not have been made for this from the government. Any successful service requires money.

In Zimbabwe, I noted with concern that since 2013, the government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, has not been employing teachers and teacher counsellors. The reason is that the government has been experiencing financial difficulties. The involvement of former peer counsellors will, however, mitigate the scarcity of peer counsellors in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see 2.10.1; 3.6.2). The NGO worker said, "*As the head of the organisation in this province, I will propose that I employ*

21 former peer counsellors. I are going to send our proposal to our national and international leaders and partners, who are donors, to put our proposal into consideration."

From the social analysis level, I highlighted that this gesture and initiative by NGOs, of employing former peer counsellors, was applauded by all participants in this study (see 3.7.3). The critical component of this research study is partnership (see 3.7.3; 3.6.3), and from the NGO worker's submission, I realised that collectiveness can make the impossible possible. The Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies should consciously engage one another in community activities in order to be effective in solving their own problems (see 3.7.2). The peer counsellors may be involved in peer counselling clubs, where they may meet in Zimbabwean rural community halls, schools, churches, and other areas, sharing information about drug abuse and offer peer counselling. This will allow them to reach many people with the message of stopping the abuse of drugs in rural learning ecologies.

I concur with collective power, as shown in The Department of Basic Education of South Africa: Integrated Strategy on HIV, STIs and TB 2012–2016 (2012:56) which asserted that this was necessary "to achieve a sustained response and this demands interventions for all role players within the education system – learners, educators and officials". It may seem impossible to totally eradicate drug abuse in our learning environment, but I pledge to collectively pull all our resources from our community and externally to fight this epidemic. Parent 2 said, "*The battle lines have been drawn. I are in this fight against drug abuse together. Together I shall prevail*." One could sense from this statement by Parent 2 that everyone was ready to play a role in alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning environments.

4.6.6 Sustainability of a peer counselling strategy in rural learning ecologies

The sustainability of a peer counselling strategy is one of the cornerstones of the success of peer counselling strategies (see 3.7.3). I extensively debated on the issue of peer counselling strategy sustainability in order to produce quality peer counselling results of alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. I developed supporting

community strategies, designed to give support to peer counsellors and teacher counsellors, for them to successfully implement the peer counselling strategy to remove drug abuse in our schools (see 2.10.5). Sustainability is possible if peer counselling is valued, as the police officer said, "*It is sad and painful to see our Zimbabwean rural learning communities not taking peer counselling strategy and drug abuse with the greatest concern that they deserve."* The involvement of traditional leaders and others in authority brings sustainability to the peer counselling strategy.

The chief said, *"I will call for a community meeting to appraise the community members on the issues of peer counselling in relation to drug abuse."* This gesture by the chief is essential in that the community members would be made aware of the benefits of the peer counselling strategy in alleviating drug abuse in our learning environment (see 2.9.1). In Zimbabwean rural communities, community members have the tendency and tradition of accepting any programme that the chief and other traditional leaders and authorities support. The chief said, "*I rebuked one teacher who was moving with learners while drunk last week."* Based on the chief's testimony, I noted that the other issue that helped with the sustainability of peer counselling was professionalism. I agreed on professionally executing our duties as peer counsellors in terms of adhering to ethical considerations, such as respecting one another when counselling those with drug abuse problems (see 3.8.4). This is because community members, including teacher counsellors, must be good role models, who shun drug abuse. This will contribute to the elimination or reduction of drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

I agreed to create safe and drug-free Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. I agreed with Dufour and Marzano (2011:198), who stated in their research findings that "rather than citing problems in the external environment that others need to solve, effective leaders focus their attention on factors within their own sphere of influence, and hold themselves accountable for shaping the outcome through their actions". The team agreed to source more literature in order to sustain peer counselling knowledge and improve expertise (see 2.10.3). The social worker said, "*The peer counselling strategy should be advertised, people must be made aware of the places where they can immediately get assistance, in case of drug abuse challenges."*

Learner 2 said, "*I agreed to the issues of awareness programmes concerning drug abuse, because most people are not aware of peer counselling strategies that assist in mitigating drug abuse in our schools."* On the other hand, the team resolved to embark on massive peer counselling awareness programmes, wherein Zimbabwean rural communities would be informed about peer counselling strategies, and where peer counsellors were to be found. They would be informed about the dangers of drug abuse.

Finally, capacity building of community members in the formulation of peer counselling strategies is one of the environments of its success. The following research study by the Department for the International Development (2010:3) defined capacity building as "the peer counselling capacity building exercise which is not an event, but a process". This means that capacity building takes time. The educational psychologist said, "*I need to be adequately trained in peer counselling because it's a unique technique that needs us to be knowledgeable before I do it."* In support of this, I asked the following questions: "*Is there anyone who wants his or her tooth to be removed by his or her uncle, who is not a dentist? Is there anyone who wants to be driven by a driver who is not qualified to drive, who does not have a driver's licence?*" The participants laughed, and collectively said, "*No!*" Parent 2 raised his hand and said, "*I will never risk my life by being driven by an unlicensed driver, and I cannot allow an untrained person to remove my tooth. In all these cases, there is high probability of my dying. I cannot risk it."*

From the above responses, using text analysis to capacitate the Zimbabwean rural communities in formulating, implementing and monitoring peer counselling strategies for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, is a long-term and demand-driven process. Teachers who are unqualified, cause the curriculum to fail (see 2.10.3). I concur with Dube (2016:191), who held that "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". If the peer counselling capacity building exercise is successful, it will contribute to the sustainability of peer counselling development, which, in turn, enhances the ability of participants and the community to effectively implement peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in rural learning ecologies.

I noted that I had three distinct types of peer counselling capacity building exercises, which are professional, individual and social capacity. All three types of capacity building should be included in developing the peer counsellors and community members who will be involved in the peer counselling strategy.

Zimbabwe peer counsellors and community members should be developed individually in terms of skills and knowledge in the peer counselling strategy. The impartation of skills and knowledge in the peer counselling strategy, through individual capacity programs, is one method of empowering Zimbabwe communities. This is in line with the CER theoretical framework (see 3.7.1). They need to develop social capacity because they will implement this peer counselling strategy in the social context. The involvement of peer counsellors and community members in social capacity building is because I used the PAR methodology. This means that this research is done in the social context, and one must have the social capacity to work with community members, using the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see 3.2).

The professional capacity is essential to Zimbabwean rural peer counsellors and community members in that peer counselling is a profession and a specialised field that needs one to be equipped with techniques and information on how to counsel learners with drug abuse issues, as Ill as the necessary skills and knowledge to do so (see 2.9.1). The parent said, "*The capacity building programme enables us to be tolerant, appreciate and value other people's views regardless of our different perspectives."* Through capacity building, Zimbabwean rural community members and peer counsellors will be able to accept the team's collective resolutions if their decisions are not considered, and will not feel offended (see 3.6.3).

This aspect was important in this research study. There were moments when one's views are not considered. The capacity building programme allows community members to develop the ability to socialise, to share ideas respectfully, and to agree to differ. The acceptance of the views of other people creates a conducive environment where participants are able to freely express their views without being afraid of rejection. This is essential for increasing knowledge and, thereby, increasing the base of data generation.

The sharing of ideas freely by participants is also empowering, and creates the learning curve of the Zimbabwean rural community members (see 3.5). Through engagement and sharing of peer counselling ideas, the participants will develop intellectually and develop the ability to analyse information.

From the empirical data generated in this research study, I concluded that the following circumstances are those under which the success of the peer counselling strategy is achieved through the active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies: the involvement of community members in the peer counselling informative programmes and workshops (see 4.4.1); monitoring and supporting the implementation of peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see 4.4.2); the peer counselling strategy should be gender sensitive (see 4.4.3); the active involvement of former peer counsellors in assisting Zimbabwean rural learners to deal with drug abuse (see 4.5.4); and the sustainability of a peer counselling strategy in rural learning ecologies (see 4.5.5).

4.7. Formulation of a peer counselling strategy that involves the active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies

I considered the following stated aspects when formulating the peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in rural learning ecologies.

4.7.1 The research team forum

The research team comprised Zimbabwean rural community members, such as learners, an educational psychologist, a social worker, teacher counsellors, a chief, an MP, a pastor, and a police officer (see 3.8.4). Our research team had a common vision and was highly dedicated to formulate a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. According to Dube (2016:101), “PAR emerged against the background that the working class was motivated in their work when they are incorporated in decision making on issues that pertained to them. It necessitated a

common vision between the workers and the employers". To execute our mandate, I shared responsibilities with each co-researcher. This enhanced the active participation in our quest to formulate a peer counselling strategy (see 3.8.4). I combined our skills, and used them collectively in this research study. According to Whitman, Pain and Milledge (2015:625) PAR is collective "at every stage, involving discussion, pooling skills and working together, which is intended to result in some action, change or improvement on the issue being researched towards more socially and environmentally just outcomes".

The pastor was our research team secretary. She voluntarily requested to be the secretary. She had worked as a secretary at a company for many years before she became a pastor. I was excited to have her in the team because I wanted someone who could capture all the views of the participants in a clear and professional way. This was going to give us the information on which to base our formulation of the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Failure to capture the information would have caused undesired results on the data analysis and, thereby, render this research exercise futile. Our team secretary wrote our minutes, noted resolutions, and gave back a report.

The educational psychologist and social worker provided emotional and psychosocial support to our research team members. I are concerned about the Ill-being of our team members. The school counsellor teachers and peer counsellors had been chosen due to their experience in counselling. The School Development Committee, the chief and the MP, who are research study members, are community leaders whose voices are respected in the community. All the above-mentioned members are in full support of formulating the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies (see 2.10.5).

Dube (2016:110) argued as follows:

> I contend that PAR as a participatory approach enables full engagement of the co researchers in the research process. In this regard, participants are not objects for fulfilling a research agenda, but occupy an equal role in the research, and engage each other in the transformative journey to devise a hybrid strategy to respond to the problems.

The community leaders are essential in disseminating information of new initiatives, such as a peer counselling strategy, formulated to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Powers and Allaman (2012:1) held that PAR "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". This was empowering to Zimbabwean rural community members, because I decentralised the research study to them (see 3.7.5).

For us to fulfil the aspirations of CER theoretical framework, and the PAR methodology used in this research study, I had to embrace a common vision and common purpose in formulating peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Taiwo, Agwu and Lawal (2015:127, 132) delivered the following statement:

> [T]he impact of vision and mission statements on strategy cannot be over-emphasised; in the aspects of the performance of the organisation, the empirical evidence supports that vision and mission statements are important for day-to-day activities. To develop vision and mission statements, and bring strategies to implement them, should not be the sole responsibility of senior management because, for the organisation to succeed, it depends on every stakeholder's awareness about where they are going and for strategic plans to succeed, it depends typically on the correct formulation of mission and vision statements and wide participation in their formulation.

Our research team was determined to carry out this research study in a way that was not haphazard. The Zimbabwean rural participants in this study resolved to methodically conduct this research. All the research processes are Ill-defined, not rigid, but flexible enough to allow our research team to perform their duties, and amend actions, where possible. This ensured that I had collective consensus on all research issues. Together I evaluated and reflected on the progress of our research study (see 3.8.7), as supported by Dube (2016:8-9) in the following citation:

> Also, PAR is used in this work for its transformative endeavours, and emancipatory consciousness. It promotes partnership between the participants and I, in the struggle to make the world a better place, in this case,

> the participants and I undertook the intellectual journey as equal partners to formulate a strategy that responded to the problems.

This Zimbabwe co-research team had been formulated in line with the CER theoretical framework and PAR methodology, used in this research study, with principles of giving rural communities the power and opportunities to identify and create their own solutions (see 3.6.5). This is supported by Glassman and Erdem (2014:212), who stated that PAR "and development of knowledge has the potential to address research, and wider issues of social justice, inclusion and empowerment of the minority, and often marginalised communities".

In this research study, I was facilitating and co-coordinating. I made sure all research logistics are put in place, and I participated at the same level as all participants. Meyer (2016:1) made the following observation: "the research enabled me to become acutely aware of my own role as facilitator." My role as the main researcher was one of facilitation, and I provided my skills and knowledge, rather than imposing them on the community members. I collectively agreed to adhere to the principle of transparency in the research process. For the research process to be credible, transparency is essential.

My role as co-coordinator in the research study, allowed me to make sure that I met our deadlines and research objectives (see 3.7.4). The school headmaster and other participants, who are working at the school, which was the venue of research, are constantly in touch with me in order to inform me if there were any changes in meeting times, due to work- or school-related commitments. For example, the school headmaster told me that it might happen that school learners might be needed to play soccer or netball during weekends. Fortunately, this did not take place during the research study. This research study had no intention to disrupt participants' work and study times (see 3.8.3). That is why I conducted our research study during the weekends, and I all agreed on the time to start and the time to finish.

The parents in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies are involved in different farming activities, such as cattle rearing and crop farming. Usually, they work during the weekends, with the assistance of their children. I considered this very much. That is why I held most of our meetings in the mornings, in less than two hours. The National,

Provincial and District of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education gave me permission to conduct this study in the schools under their jurisdiction, and informed me that I was not to disrupt learning (see Appendix B).

4.7.2 The research action plan

Participatory Action Researchers embark in community research action to generate data that will bring practical solutions to the noted community problems. Loewenson *et al*. (2014:14) stated that PAR "aims for a change in societal power, as the control of knowledge creation shifts towards those affected by problems". This research is emancipating the Zimbabwean rural community in the formulation of peer counselling strategies (3.8.7). In PAR, the implemented activities should be systematically monitored. Glassman and Erdem (2014:214) postulated that PAR "gives a spiral of inequalities 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 interventions". I collectively agreed that addressing the five objectives of this research study, helped us in planning accordingly, and I successfully implemented our solutions, and identified and delegated our team members, according to areas or activities which they have knowledge and interest in (see 3.8.4). The research planning level assisted us in implementing our research activities, and I produced collective solutions to the lack of a peer counselling strategy to address drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Our research study activities are completed within the stipulated time.

4.7.3 Articulation of the vision of the peer counselling strategy

This research study is PAR in nature, as explained before. In action research, it is essential to have a clearly articulated research study vision.

4.7.3.1 Our research vision

I started by brainstorming the name of our peer counselling strategy; then I developed our vision, mission statement and research policy. Our research team vision was to provide high quality and professional peer counselling to Zimbabwean rural learning

ecologies in dealing with drug abuse, as Ill as emotional, psychosocial, educational, and other personal problems which learners may encounter. Peer counselling services are provided to rural learners from different socio-economic backgrounds, with the aim of creating an environment for them to actively engage themselves and community members, in bringing about transformation in their schools. To accomplish our vision, I employed collaborative activities which reinforced our empowering strategies (see 3.6.3). The vision of this research study takes into cognisance, and is sensitive to, the rural communities' inequalities, injustices, cultural diversity, and discrimination. I promote equality, emancipation, democracy, and justice to all rural community members. I agreed on naming this strategy the "Chidas peer counselling strategy". The name Chidas is coined by two words, namely the "Chivi rural area and my name, "Chidarikire". "Chi" stands for Chivi and "das" stands for "Chidarikire".

4.7.3.2 Our research team's mission statement

Collectively, as the research team in peer counselling, I believe in utilising rural community knowledge, skills, values, expertise, and attitudes through the PAR methodology to help us in dealing with drug abuse, and in solving challenges that disempowered us and our rural communities. I subscribe, through community guidance and collective creative thinking, that I can alleviate drug abuse and other challenges by engaging in discursive practice and social change. This can only be done through the development of the critical consciousness of community members.

4.7.4 Our research team policy

Our research team noted that members of Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies are side-lined in formulating peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse. I, therefore, decided to actively involve them in all research study processes. The active involvement of rural community members allows them to have first-hand experience of the research study procedures and regulations that are governing our research study that assisted us in obtaining our research results. The research team was actively involved in the brainstorming and formulation of the research study policy. In order to perform our research study professionally, our research team members agreed:

- to abide with research ethics considerations, such as confidentiality;
- to be punctual and give an apology when occupied;
- to actively work collaboratively with other participants in a professional manner;
- to treat other participants in a dignified manner and to be an active listener;
- to make sure our meetings are unthreatening to participants' active participation; and
- to be committed and diligently execute given tasks.

The above are guidelines that are to be religiously followed by our research team. I observed that the research study, with a well-defined vision, allows the participants to have buy-in. The participants of the research study developed trust in achieving the desired objectives because I had a well-articulated vision of alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies through peer counselling strategy. The participants in this study are allowed to give suggestions and other contributions on the vision. The educational psychologist said, "*I want to thank Mr. Chidarikire for giving us the opportunity to give our views on the vision, and I agreed to accept it, because I gave our opinions.*" It is important to allow participants to give their views. Castro (2014:5) confirmed that the social purposes of AR included "the ability to encourage the individuals to think for themselves, and, to hold themselves accountable for their educational influence, something that, according to them, can act as the grounds for the creation of good societies".

The participation of participants in the formulation of the vision of this research study helped me to create the democratic environment that permits the sharing of knowledge. This motivated the participants to work hard to fulfil our research vision. Moreover, Moleko (2014:10) made the following statement:

> Critical Emancipatory Research (CER), as a theoretical framework that promotes teamwork, was, therefore, deemed fit for this study, as it encourages teamwork that will make it possible for ideas, moreover, PAR has proven to be a powerful approach for working with oppressed groups in bettering their own circumstances within society, which is what this study intends to achieve and both encouraging teamwork and transformation of the lives of the people for the better.

The inclusion of Zimbabwean rural participants in the formulation of the vision, allows us to address the CER principles of democratisation and justice (see 3.6). I observed that people take action in the implementation of peer counselling strategies for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural areas because they do not want their vision to fail. The MP said, "*Vision gives us direction, and makes us direct our energy in formulating peer counselling strategies to solve drug abuse".* From the MP's position, vision helps us to focus on the job at hand that is the formulating of a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The research vision allowed our research team to diligently and collectively accomplish our objectives and aims. It is possible to embark on the research study without a research vision, or with a vague vision, as this would make it difficult for the researcher or research team to accomplish his or its objectives or purpose.

In this research study, our team collectively refused to work without a clear vision. All the research study stages are Ill-defined, and nothing was hidden from the participants. The success of this research study was anchored on transparency and active involvement of community members (see 2.10.5). The teacher counsellor said, "*In past research studies, I noted that transparency was problematic, but in this research, I appreciate that transparency was exhibited."*

The formulation and implementation of a peer counselling strategy in dealing with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, was caused by the lack of an articulated research study vision. It is my belief that a well-articulated research vision helps the research team to execute their duties with great commitment in order to sustain a peer counselling strategy and a drug-free learning environment.

Our research team carried out a research SWOT analysis because it gave us the framework in which to formulate the peer counselling strategy that would solve the community's drug abuse problem. This is supported by Balamuralikrishna and Dugger (2012:1) as follows:

> [A] broader, long-term goal of a SWOT analysis is to curb poverty, and help improve the economic status of the nation. In our case, I looked at future

> possibilities of the institution through systematic introspection, taking into consideration both positive and negative concerns.

4.7.5 SWOT analysis done by the research team

The purpose of a SWOT analysis in research is explained by Dube (2016:125), who submitted that "a SWOT analysis was used to interrogate the rationale, impact and the relevance". Through the SWOT analysis approach, I had an audit focusing on the participants, and helped them identify the much-needed resources to execute our activities successfully. Some of our strengths are as follows: I had highly qualified personnel who are specialised, such as an educational psychologist, a social worker, counsellor teachers, a police officer, and an NGO worker. These participants used their expertise, experience and knowledge in peer counselling and drug abuse issues (see 3.8.4).

Lykes, Hershberg and Brabeck (2011:24) made the following statement:

> Participatory Action Research is one of several critical approaches to research, and seeks to develop collaborative processes that prioritize the voices and actions of those marginalised from power and resources in educational, advocacy, and organising activities that contribute to knowledge construction and material, social change and/or transformation.

Jacob (2016:50) said that PAR "begins with the premise that knowledge has become the single most important basis for power and control, and that ordinary people are rarely considered knowledgeable". Furthermore, Maguire stated that PAR "epistemologically holds the premise that each participant knows some things, but no one knows everything".

Learner 4 said, *"Nothing for us, without us."* This means that the learners are also knowledgeable in peer counselling, and are aware of the effects of drugs (see 2.9.1; 3.4). This made us tap into the vast knowledge possessed by participants, and formulate a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Glassman and Erdem (2014:213) wrote that "praxis opens doors for the marginalised people to criticise, problematise, and reclaim their condition, which will eventually enable them to overcome". The parents, MP and chief are essential because they are

policymakers, supported the peer counselling strategy financially, and provided material support, such as books, venue and other essential resources (see 3.7.3).

This research team was highly dedicated and committed to the research study. They had self-motivation and are punctual in research team meetings. I capitalised on the strength of our research team, and that worked to our advantage. Our research strength was our bedrock in formulating a peer counselling strategy that aimed to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The research study faced some weaknesses and risks, and I created ways to mitigate them in order to reduce the impact of the risks on the research. Some of the research team members had transport challenges to overcome, to and from the venue of the research study. Some of the members had to walk to the venue. The MP and I gave the research team members money for transport. Most of the participants were busy people, engaged in different fields, such as workers and learners, and this made them tired. That is why I met at stipulated times, convenient to all participants in order to give them ample time to study, work and rest.

I noted the financial problems and the research team members indicated that the members of Zimbabwean rural communities, such as the business community and NGOs, are ready to assist us in implementing the peer counselling strategy that alleviates drug abuse, through financial and material support, such as making pamphlets and t-shirts (see 3.7.3). The peer counselling strategy and drug abuse awareness programmes may be expensive to execute. The financial challenges in peer counselling strategies may be reduced, as suggested by Garcia and Gonzalez (2011:9), who recommended that “there is need to identify funding sources and create low cost drug preventive programs in community”. In this regard, I needed external assistance. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, from the national to district officials, supported us morally, and gave us permission to conduct this research. These officials gave us guidance that was essential in crafting a peer counselling strategy that was in line with the standards of the Zimbabwe curriculum. The other risks I noted, are that learners in the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies still underrated peer counsellors (see 2.10.3).

However, in this Participatory Research, I valued our peer counsellors, as Skarpenesa (2014:716) remarked that “with this newly earned freedom, individual creativity flourished,

resulting in rapid growth in man-made objective forms. Initially, the objective forms of modern society epitomized a process of emancipation from traditional oppressive bonds". This means that more awareness programmes need to be rolled out in schools to disseminate and educate learners and staff about the role of peer counsellors in reducing and eradicating drug abuse in learning environments.

I also noted the peer counsellors and counsellor teachers had heavy workloads and, therefore, needed, among many other things, incentives in the form of money, recognition and awards. The counsellor teachers must be given few subjects to team up with, because they are also offering counselling services. I noted that peer counsellors and counsellor teachers did not have their own offices to counsel learners in (see 2.10.3). They should have offices to execute their mandate because counselling must be confidential. The cheap cost of drugs, such as beer and cigarettes, and the availability thereof, are some of the threats I noted. The cost and availability of drugs may deter or promote the use of drugs in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. I proposed that the government should enact a law that makes drugs expensive, and that law enforcement agents should arrest all those who sell drugs to children, as Ill as children found in possession of drugs (see 2.9.2). Courts should give deterrent punishment to those who break laws that deal with drug abuse.

4.7.6 Research team resolutions

The resolutions of the research team are as follows:

Firstly, to be time-conscious in our work as counsellors, as explained by Mutua (2012:2), indicating that the "time factor is another challenge that a teacher counsellor faces". If possible, students should avoid attending counselling sessions during class lesson time to prevent exposure through permission slip, or possible truancy of students, especially in schools.

Secondly, it is recommended that a school counsellor should not spend more than 20 hours per week in one-on-one counselling sessions. The time spent with each student

depends on the nature of the issue and timetable of the school. Time management is essential.

Thirdly, to draft the peer counselling strategy monitoring tool, which had specifics to meet performance standards that are to be assessed. This peer counselling monitoring tool is to be given to all teachers, learners, and those who are involved in peer counselling monitoring and evaluation (see 3.8.7).

Fourthly, the Zimbabwean rural teachers and those involved in monitoring and evaluation will undergo intensive training on how to monitor and evaluate the peer counselling strategy. The provincial and district educational psychologists and those responsible for Guidance and Counselling will be responsible for the monitoring and training of teachers and peer counsellors, as Ill as the implementation of peer counselling.

Lastly, at school level, the Head of Department of Guidance and Counselling will be responsible to monitor the implementation of peer counselling by the trained teachers. The teachers will be monitoring peer counsellors when executing their duties. School teacher 2 said, "*I propose that teachers and Heads of Department of Guidance and Counselling should be trained in peer counselling monitoring.*" All those who will be involved in the monitoring of the peer counselling strategy, should sign the designed control register, specifying the topics they had been taught, the challenges encountered, the solutions offered, and the number of students monitored, while executing their peer counselling mandate. This will help us in auditing all the activities of the peer counselling strategy being implemented in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. With regard to this, the educational psychologist said as follows:

> *The control registers should be collected from wherever they (teacher counsellors and peer counsellors) are and be submitted to the Head of Department of Guidance and Counselling on Fridays to enable the Head of Department to assess if the peer counselling strategy is being implemented.*

I agreed that all peer counsellors and teacher counsellors should periodically attend refresher courses in peer counselling, implementation, and monitoring. These refresher courses and training courses should be done during the holidays and weekends in order

not to affect the teaching and learning programmes of the school. A peer counselling training manual should be taught to its completion. I noted that, in Zimbabwe, any training that is not examinable, is usually not taken seriously by the participants. I then suggested that "*all peer counselling trainings should end with an examination".* Some of the participants disagreed with this submission. I resolved that the examination should not be difficult, should be in multiple choice, and examination question items should be in the vernacular and in the English language (see 3.7.3).

The chief said, "*Examination results should not be announced, let the examination act as a tool for revision."* The research team agreed with the chief's proposal. Teacher 1 said, "*Peer counsellors should be selected or chosen from Form 1 to 6 from secondary schools. This allows continuity of peer counselling strategy.*" This was proposed as a method to mitigate the lack of peer counsellors when other peer counsellors complete their secondary education (see 2.10.1). The research team reiterated that all former students in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, who had been involved in peer counselling strategies, should be incorporated in the monitoring and implementation of the peer counselling strategy (see 2.10.5). These former peer counsellors act as source of inspiration to the current peer counsellors. The former peer counsellors who are not employed, will be involved in the implementation and monitoring of the peer counselling strategy. The other reason for engaging these former peer counsellors is to increase the number of peer counsellors in rural learning ecologies. This will make the administration of the peer counselling strategy in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies easy.

The NGO official, the social worker and the parent are tasked to recruit former peer counsellors. The interventions proposed in this study require the collective effort of teacher counsellors and all task holders for the peer counselling strategy to prosper (see 3.6.1). The research team resolved that the knowledge of peer counselling needed to be addressed, so that all participants could implement it in rural learning ecologies. Adam (2015:6) made the following statement:

> [B]y collaborating with teachers, parents, stakeholders and community leaders, equal opportunity and academic success will be realised by all students, regardless of ethnicity, social class, language, or disability. Together, I can close the achievement gap by removing systemic barriers that inhibit

> educational equity by questioning authority, challenging the injustices I see in the schools, and working collaboratively with each other.

It was our strong belief that if the stakeholders are supported, they will be able to meet the required peer counselling strategies.

4.7.7 The peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies

The Chidas peer counselling strategy was formulated by Zimbabwean rural learning community members, together with the researcher, as advised in Dufour and Marzano (2011:21), who stated that "the best strategy for improving schools is developing the collective capacity of educators to function as members". A peer counselling strategy is a preventive intervention that uses the Zimbabwe culturally-grounded values and practices that protect learners in rural learning ecologies (see 3.6.1). This peer counselling strategy can be used by learners, teachers, and rural community members to deal with drug abuse problems. The family members of the learners are involved in this peer counselling strategy, as they are able to create drug-free homes and communities. The above is supported by the findings of Bywater (2014:98), who stated that a PAR project "encourages participants to acquire knowledge, skills and opportunities to solve problems. Furthermore, the project gave students an opportunity to develop investigative and evaluative knowledge".

Zimbabwean rural parents and guardians have significant roles to play in mitigating drug abuse in their children's learning ecologies (see 3.8.4). Nyaningwe is a rural secondary school with a drug abuse-based prevention strategy for learners from the age of 11 to 19 (see 2.9.2). This peer counselling strategy holds that effective communication, learning and life skills can mitigate peer pressure and other negative influences that cause learners in Zimbabwean rural learners to abuse drugs. The peer counselling strategy empowers rural learners with resistance to drug abuse. These drug resistance skills help the learners in rural communities to recognise and stand against misconceptions about drug usage, and to deal with media pressure to embark in the use of drugs.

PAR helps the rural learners to develop positive self-esteem, the ability to identify drug abuse problems, and ways to deal with these drug abuse problems. The peer counselling strategy enhances the anti-drug abuse norms and attitudes in rural learners. The rural learners also participate in communities in order to bring awareness of the use of the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse. PAR also informs the Zimbabwean rural learners about the risk factors of abusing drugs. This peer counselling strategy assists the Zimbabwean rural learners to develop peer counselling strategies that help them to assist other learners in dealing with drug abuse. This peer counselling strategy uses presentations, discussions, as Ill as group and individual practices to build positive social behaviours.

4.8. Chapter summary

This chapter focused on how data was analysed through the CDA focus, specifically at the three levels, namely the textual, discursive and social practice levels. I analysed data in line with the five research objectives of this research study. I interpreted and presented the research findings on the formulation of a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The generated data should that all participants agreed that there was a great need to formulate a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Through the generated data, I managed to identify the challenges bedevilling the implementation of a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

I offered solutions to mitigate the identified challenges to the peer counselling strategy. These identified solutions are essential in the effective implementation of a peer counselling strategy in order to reduce drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The research team also looked at the conducive conditions for the effective implementation of a peer counselling strategy in alleviation of drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The generated data in this research study should us the risks that I anticipated – the throwing of spanners in the implementation of a peer counselling strategy to mitigate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural secondary schools. I proposed

factors to circumvent the identified risks that are detrimental to the successful formulation and implementation of the peer counselling strategy.

Chapter five will deal with summary, findings and recommendations of the research study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to formulate a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. I will give a summary, report the research findings, draw conclusions, and make recommendations. This chapter further highlights the limitations of this research study. This research study focuses on a peer counselling strategy that will alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. This research study asks the following main research question*:* "How can I utilise a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies?" My critical and main argument is that there is no specific peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse, made by disadvantaged Zimbabwean rural learning community members, as they are marginalised.

The next section focuses on findings aligned to the five objectives driving this study.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings of the research study are aligned to the five objectives of the study. This section presents the research findings from both the literature review and the empirical data from PAR, our research theoretical framework. The following are the five objectives of this study:

- To explore the need for a peer counselling strategy formulated through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

- To identify the strengths of a peer counselling strategy that is formulated through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

- To anticipate impediments against the successful implementation of a peer counselling strategy made through active participation and emancipation of participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

- To examine the circumstances under which the success of a peer counselling strategy is achieved through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

- To formulate a peer counselling strategy that involves the active participation and emancipation of the marginalised participants, for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

5.2.1 Justification of the need for a peer counselling strategy formulated through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies

The discussion below provides grounds for the justification of the need.

5.2.1.1 Availability of drugs and dangers associated with drug abuse by Zimbabwean rural learners

The drugs are readily available and accessible to rural learners in Zimbabwe, the learners confirmed that they abuse drugs, as is revealed in the study by Munodawafa, Marty and Gwende (1992:471), who gathered that “in a study of 285 students, 8% had used tobacco in the previous week, 16% said they would use tobacco during the following year”. Moreover, a study by Acuda and Sebit (1997:226) should that “a study of 194 psychiatric patients aged 16-55 year in Harare Central Hospital revealed a 28.4% incidence of drug abuse”.

The abuse of drugs in Zimbabwean rural areas has been contributed to many issues, as stated by participants, including unemployment-related stress and poverty. This is also supported by Cubbins *et al.* (2012:339), who concluded that “Zimbabwe’s economy contracted by 40% while inflation jumped to over 66,000 percent. Individually

Zimbabwean faced shortages of fuel, medicine, food, and unemployment rates climbed to 85%, such economic conditions increase social stress that may lead to high drug abuse". The above submissions concur with the many research studies proving that drug use is high. The following finding was made by Giovazolias and Themeli (2014:69):

> [R]esearch on an international level suggest that the use of illegal substances is considerable common among young people and on a large-scale research among 16,661 participants aged 18, found that 9% had made use of illegal substance within the last month of the view.

Furthermore, the dangers of abusing drugs are many, such as ill health. These dangers justify the need for a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

5.2.1.2 Non-availability of a peer counselling strategy formulated by Zimbabwean rural communities

The other aspect is the non-availability of a peer counselling strategy formulated by Zimbabwean rural communities to be used in their learning ecologies. Peer influence has been identified as the motivator behind the abuse of drugs or the eradication of drug abuse, as confirmed in this research study and other research studies. In a study by Cubbins *et al*. (2012:333), it was stated that "past research studies show that social peers influence substance abuse, suggesting that the social environment may be effective target for reducing alcohol use and abuse". Moreover, the power of peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse is stated in Geldard (2005:39), who said that "peer counselling is an activity which occurs under the umbrella term of peer helping which covers a variety of services, occur through organised programs such as education and prevention dealing with varying concerns such as alcoholism".

However, most peer counselling strategies are devoid of inputs by and considerations of rural community members, as alluded to by Tarlow *et al.* (2014:1), who stated that "sixty million US residents live in rural areas, but health policies and interventions developed from an urban mind-set often fail to address the significant barriers to health experienced by these local communities". One research study done in Zimbabwean rural areas dealing

with drug misuse, using a Community Popular Opinion Leader (CPOL), failed to achieve its aim. This study was conducted by Cubbins *et al.* (2012:333), who concluded that "CPOL intervention was not effective in reducing the alcohol use in rural areas".

I have been a peer counsellor co-ordinator for another international organisation in Zimbabwe, working in both rural and urban areas. I testify to the fact that I have never seen or used a peer counselling strategy formulated by Zimbabwean rural community members. The one peer counselling strategy had been formulated in Sweden and was devoid of content that is Zimbabwe in nature. These research studies and the data generated from these studies gave impetus to the aim of this study to create a rural-based peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

5.2.1.3 Some peer counselling strategies being used are foreign to Zimbabwean rural learning contexts

The learners in Zimbabwe secondary schools acknowledge the importance of peer counselling as a method to reduce the impact of drug abuse in their learning environment, as Maseko, Ngwenya and Maunganidze (2014:196) gathered in their study that "adolescents felt that being educated on the adverse effects of substance abuse and counselling was needed in schools to help counteract negative affectivity, in light of these views it is apparent that interventions that target adolescents such as counselling". However, in the same study, Maseko, Ngwenya and Maunganidze (2014:196) warned that "the significance of the role of familial suggests that interventions that ignore the home environment will fall short of the mark". This warning confirms the evidence in this research study that some peer counselling strategies being used in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies are Eurocentric in nature, as alluded to in this research study. This view is supported by Goss and Olusegun (2014:1), who observed that, "[t]he practice of counselling and guidance in Africa may not be very comparable with these are practice in western world. Reason for this range from cultural difference and experience of clients**."** It might be worthwhile for all community leaders, traditional healers, pastors, and counsellors to employ the multicultural approach, in order to cater for the cultural diversity that has come with "modernisation".

Furthermore, Taylor and Francis (2014:89) delivered the following statement:

> [C]ounselling and guidance techniques developed in the Western world may not be appropriate for many African countries, where cultural influences, government policies and the availability of resources can have significant implications for service delivery. In order to develop more robust techniques, researchers and practitioners need rigorous analysis of professional practice across the nations of Africa.

Moreover, Mathobela (2015:235) made the following argument:

> [T]he bone of contention is that students and facilitators are concerned and worried because of the confusion caused by the content which is American and irrelevant to their daily lived African experiences, textbooks are detached from their own individual and collective experiences as Africans, and South Africans in particular.

I are concerned with peer counselling strategies that do not hold Zimbabwe values and views. However, I engaged the community members, as Setlalentoa, Ryke and Strydom (2015:1) suggested:

> [C]ommunity support networks or service providers, such as social workers and police officers, have the responsibility to intervene to reduce alcohol abuse and the problems associated with it, in partnership with community members. The members provide services in communities with an intention to bring different skills, knowledge and experience, to combat the problem of alcohol abuse, and are referred to as community support networks.

5.2.2 Strengths of the peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, formulated through active participation of marginalised participants

This section outlines some of the strengths of the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

5.2.2.1 The ability of the peer counselling strategy to mitigate drug abuse

This research study found that the peer counselling strategy had the ability to mitigate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. This strength had been uncovered

in this research study, through the empirical data generated. Many research studies confirmed that a peer counselling strategy has the power to alleviate drug abuse among adolescent learners. For example, in the research study by Cubbins *et al.* (2012:334), they argued that "some community-level interventions that draw on peer influences have been found to be effective in changing a community's social norms and cultural environment regarding risk-taking behaviours". In addition, Jules-Macquet (2015:16), wrote that "substance and addiction programs can produce positive outcomes of reducing substance usage". However, a peer counselling strategy should be supported by the government of Zimbabwe and other stakeholders. Collectively I can use peer counselling to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

The W.H.O. ASSIT Working Group (2002:1183) mentions that in conjunction with the bad economic situations in Zimbabwe, "it is hard to initiate recovery programs. It has been suggested that national and local governments, international bodies, non-government organisations, and global marketing companies should create a greater public awareness of drugs".

Moreover, teacher counsellors and learners in Zimbabwe maintain that counselling benefits them. Chireshe (2006: i) concluded that his "study revealed that the majority of both school counsellors and students viewed the school guidance and counselling as beneficial and school counsellors are playing their role". In this research study, I worked in partnership with many people from Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies to formulate the peer counselling strategy. It is our hope to continue working together and engage many more in the implementation and evaluation of the peer counselling strategy.

5.2.2.2 Teaching of Guidance and Career Counselling in rural secondary schools

Our research team found that Guidance and Career Counselling was one of the subjects being taught in Zimbabwe schools. This agrees with the following conclusion by Oliha (2014:6):

> [C]ounsellors are also required to provide drug abuse education to the adolescent in our secondary and tertiary institutions. Drug abuse counselling

> is therefore recommended as an integral part of school curriculum; a management which focuses on specific problems arising from drug abuse.

Furthermore, Oliha (2014:7) recommended that “there should be a preventive drug abuse curriculum, there is a need for a standard form of drug abuse curriculum to be added to the school curriculum”. Therefore, the inclusion of Guidance and Counselling in the school curriculum is one of the strengths of peer counselling, in that it is taught to all learners and teachers. Bett (2013:480) argued that “peer counselling training consists of the content area, like job-specific information, which relates to particular program objectives, e.g. problem solving, self-awareness, basic counselling skills including the skills of attentiveness, listening and empathy”. Zimbabwean rural learners are taught the Guidance and Counselling subject to adequately impart peer counselling and other counselling techniques, knowledge and skills. The Guidance and Counselling subject is now on every Zimbabwe school timetable, in both rural and urban secondary and primary schools.

In this research study, data generated from rural communities authenticated that peer counselling was being taught in schools as part of the school curriculum. This is validated by the research study by Bett (2013:478), who found that “in America, Peer counselling is achieved through coaching and training students and they are trained in basic listening and helping skills of problem-solving and decision-making”. I also noted that peer counselling education in Zimbabwe included teaching learners counselling skills, counselling ethics and other relevant matters that pertain to peer counselling. The above is supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (2008:104), who recorded that peer education provides knowledge that “involves teaching peer counsellors’ decision-making skills to help combat of negative peer pressure”.

Furthermore, Kaaria *et al.* (2014:215) made the following recommendation:

> [T]here is a need to equip counsellors with appropriate counselling knowledge and skills to ensure that they are capable of handling the diverse issues of counselling presented by students. This can be accomplished through training and refresher courses to the already trained peer counsellors.

A research study done in Kenya shows that the government of Kenya implemented the teaching of peer counselling in their schools, as recommended in the Koech Report, written in 1999. This was shown in Bett (2013:478), who found that “the Ministry of Education through the Report of the Working Party in Education and Manpower Training for the next Decade and Beyond, recommends that Peer Counselling services be established in all educational institutions”. Moreover, the Kenya Institute of Education (2004:89) stated that “in response to the development plan of (1997-2000) that recommended that counselling be enhanced in learning institute, peer counselling training has been established in schools and training colleges”. However, I noted that although Guidance and Counselling is on the timetable of Zimbabwe schools, many teachers are not teaching this subject, but rather use this time to teach examinable subjects, such as mathematics. This inhibits the effective implementation and comprehension of peer counselling concepts.

5.2.2.3 Active participation of School Development Committees in the rural education sector

The strength of peer counselling strategies that was found by our research team, was that there are legal instruments to support active participation of Zimbabwean rural learners and School Development Committees in the education sector. Parents’ participation in drug abuse matters is crucial, as Oliha (2014:6) made the following recommendation:

> [T]he researcher believes that there is an urgent need for tertiary institutions to introduce Parent-Teacher-Association (PTA) as a forum whereby parents and lectures would interact to identify the problems of the students with a view to find lasting solutions to such.

The School Development Committees are legally established through the laws enacted in parliament. Harris (2010:2) stated that “SDAs know the needs of the school, as they work closely with the school authorities”. The Zimbabwe Education Act of 2006 gave parents the mandate to run schools through School Development Committees. In agreement, parents support school programmes that are beneficial to their children, as Mahoso and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:252) postulated the following:

> [P]arents are most likely to support schools that offer a curriculum that is acceptable to them. The value they attach to the curriculum is enhanced if the curriculum is in line with their expectations, if the curriculum does not meet their expectations, support for it by the parents is compromised.

Many research studies have proven that parents and community participation is on the rise and that there are some challenges affecting community participation.

5.2.2.4 Financial and material support of the rural community in the formulation and implementation of the peer counselling strategy

The other strength found through this research study, was the active participation of the disadvantaged rural community members in the formulation of peer counselling. In Uganda, some parents are not supporting peer counselling strategies because these lack their cultural practices and beliefs. This was cited by Rutondoki (2009:19), who averred that “in Uganda, different cultural practices and beliefs do not cater for guidance and counselling services, hence some parents tend to resist these services because they are not part of their culture”. On the other hand, Chireshe (2013:54) observed that “Indian policy-makers have gradually given less importance to the introduction of SGS services even though there is great concern for improving the entire education system”. Moreover, Gerler (1992:500) found that “it is unfortunate that many policy makers in American public schools are less impressed by psychological development among students as a result of school counselling”.

I noted that this lack of support of peer counselling by parents greatly affects the formulation and implementation of peer counselling for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. However, in Zimbabwe I noted that parents support the peer counselling strategy. Mosesi (2016:1) wrote that “when social inclusion is woven into the fabric of the school, it provides many opportunities for constructive education and sustainable learning, different stakeholders’ engagements are considered vital to the success and improvement in the education of the child”.

In addition, all participants in this study are stakeholders, as the Hidden Curriculum (2014:67) stated:

> [I]n education, the term “stakeholder” typically refers to anyone who is invested in the welfare and success of a school and its students, including teachers, students, parents, local business leaders, and elected officials such as, city councillors and stakeholders may also be collective entities, such as local businesses, advocacy groups, media outlets, and cultural institutions.

There is a great track record and many success stories of how community members have contributed to the education of their children in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The active participation of disadvantaged community members is advocated by Mahoso and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:252), who stated that “school authorities should consider the expectations of parents, since they need financial support from them. The co-operation of parents in the provision of infrastructure, material and equipment, as Ill as other necessary resources, is vital for success”.

5.2.2.5 Emancipation of Zimbabwean rural community members allows them to express their views

The emancipation of the voiceless Zimbabwean rural community stakeholders was one of the strengths discovered by our research team. This is supported by Dube (2016: vi), who made the following declaration:

> [PAR] was chosen for its emancipatory tendencies, and because it seeks to work with disadvantaged members of the community. The approach values its co researchers as equal partners and believes that the people with the problems are the ones with sustainable solutions.

The active participation of oppressed rural learners and other stakeholders justified the choice of using PAR as a research methodology, and the CER theoretical framework, in this research, in formulating a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. One of the proponents of PAR is Paolo Freire who, according to Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:3), alluded that “with respect to education, Participatory Action Research is a liberating force and the acquisition of knowledge as a challenge to the oppression of the poor by the elite, and other groups within the society”. Therefore, the researchers and other professionals should not deprive the underprivileged rural community members in creating knowledge that will be used to create solutions to their problems, such as the construction of a peer counselling strategy.

Furthermore, Mushunje and Kuyayama-Tumbare (2014:128) remarked that "children have the right to participate in communities in which they reside, and have programmes and services for themselves. Participation includes access libraries and involvement in community programs, youth voice activities, and decision making process". This proves that the views of the Zimbabwean rural community members, such as parents, teachers and learners, have the right to be heard. However, this right to be heard is violated by some researchers.

5.2.2.6 Help of knowledgeable rural community members in knowledge construction

This research study found that there were some Zimbabwean rural qualified teacher counsellors, educational psychologists, and other professionals that could assist community members through sharing peer counselling knowledge. Moreover, the knowledgeable stakeholders, such as teacher counsellors, are responsible for training learners to be effective counsellors, according to Kaaria *et al.* (2014:215), who found that "special training is necessary to enable peer counsellors to form counselling relationships that foster clients' self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-concept in order to apprehend potential psychological problems". The reason for knowledgeable stakeholders training peer counsellors is that learners are not qualified professional counsellors. Bett (2013:480) stated the following:

> [P]eer educators fall under the general fabric of para-professionals, that is, those without extended professional training who are selected from the group to be served, trained and given on-going supervision to perform certain key functions generally performed by a professional counsellor.

These knowledgeable people in the rural learning ecologies also provide a supervisory role to peer counsellors, as referred to by Wango and Mungai (2007:123). They alluded that "teacher counsellors supervise the whole school program and bears ultimate responsibility for performance, proficiency and effectiveness of all school programs, including peer counselling programme inclusive". Failure to supervise peer counsellors may negatively affect the aim of the peer counselling strategy, namely eradicating drug abuse in our rural communities. This means that the Zimbabwean rural knowledgeable

people, such as teacher counsellors and social workers, are critical in teaching peer counsellors and community members about peer counselling strategies.

However, I noted that some rural teachers have not been adequately trained in peer counselling and I advocate for thorough training of teacher counsellors. I discovered that there were many training institutions that are offering counselling programmes wherein teacher counsellors could enrol, and this increased the number of qualified teacher counsellors. This was supported by Kuyayama-Tumbare and Chishaka (2014:213):

> [The] University of Zimbabwe, Great Zimbabwe University, Midlands State University and the Zimbabwe Open University offer degree programs for experts' counsellors to enable educators to understand how children learn, develop and interact in the environment, so that the educator makes informed decisions.

These trainings are essential to rural, learning ecologies, because they are sources of professional counselling development to the learners, teachers and other participants.

5.2.2.7 Willingness of rural community members to collectively implement the peer counselling strategy

The seventh strength of the peer counselling strategy, according to generated data analysed, is that Zimbabwe community members should collectively implement peer counselling strategy to be able to impart knowledge to rural learners. For the many years, I have been involved in peer counselling, education and training, I realised that the success of any strategy lies in the collective implementation thereof. My conclusion resonates with Mosesi (2016:1), who held that "education policymakers implement social inclusion as a strategy to have an impact in the education system, especially in rural areas".

Many research studies concluded that peer counselling strategy formulation and implementation are not an individual activity, but they are now a collective activity. This also applies to Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. In supporting the above, Msibi (2016) argued that "the participation of all people is life-enhancing. This enables the expression of people's full potential". For us to bring about total transformation in our

Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, in relation to peer counselling strategies and drug abuse, I need total engagement of community members to work and learn together.

5.2.2.8 Use of technological gadgets in Zimbabwean rural areas

The use of technology in Zimbabwean rural communities in the formulation and other matters that concern peer counselling strategies, is the other strength observed after critical analysis of the generated data. The issue that the use of technology is empowering, is promoted by Mthiyane (2015:7), in arguing that "some approaches to empowerment focus on enabling individuals to gain access to assets, information, choices and opportunities, so that they are able to improve their own situations". I noted that many learners in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies have many information gadgets, such as internet-connected cell phones and laptops. This implies that peer counsellors can learn about and use peer counselling strategies to deal with drug abuse through these gadgets.

Nadine (2002: i) stated that counsellors "need to become electronically and technologically competent to understand and solve the difficulties in the twenty-first century. Internet resources are provided for use by counselling professionals and clients". The dissemination and acquiring of information of a peer counselling strategy for the alleviation of drug abuse, is now easily accessible through these electronic gadgets.

There are counselling organisations specialising in drug abuse that are using Facebook, Twitter, Skype, and the telephone as methods to provide counselling services to clients. One of these organisations is called "Now Addiction Treatment", started by Tan, who wrote that "with NOW Addiction Treatment, finding the right drug or alcohol treatment centre is easy and discrete. With a simple call, I'll provide you with program details for the treatment centres near you" (Tan, 2017:3). This counselling organisation works for 24 hours, from Monday to Sunday.

In addition, there are different counselling manuals for counsellors who use hotlines to counsel people with drug abuse. For example, Magirigi (2011:4) stated as follows:

> [T]his training manual is designed to provide a guide and improve on the quality of services offered by hotline counsellors. Counsellors will acquire advanced knowledge in alcohol counselling and be able to support people with alcohol problems who phone in seeking help.

Therefore, in Zimbabwean rural communities, I can also use these technological methods to provide peer counselling to those who are abusing drugs. The participants in this study used cameras. This was empowering, and I collectively analysed those pictures together. However, in some Zimbabwean rural areas, there are no internet services, whereas in all urban areas, internet services are plenteous. The government of Zimbabwe should speedily provide internet services to the disadvantaged rural communities in order to fully participate in alleviating drug abuse. The failure to acknowledge the capacity of Zimbabwean rural community members to solve drug abuse through technology, is creating a fertile ground for the failure of the peer counselling strategy.

5.2.3 Impediments to the successful implementation of a peer counselling strategy made through active participation and emancipation of participants for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies

5.2.3.1 Some rural community members lack peer counselling knowledge

Our research team found that one of the impediments raised during the empirical generating of data was the lack of peer counselling knowledge by most of the participants. The lack of peer counselling knowledge by counsellors is not acceptable in the counselling profession, as the Counsellor Guide (2017:2) stated that “in addition to counselling qualifications, a counsellor should be armed with sufficient personal knowledge and understanding of what counselling is all about”.

Moreover, the peer counsellor should be knowledgeable in cultural issues of their Zimbabwean rural counsellors, as alluded to by RoII (2010:1), who stated as follows:

> [A]n effective counsellor must be sensitive, resourceful, perceptive and imaginative, respect people’s choices, what may be acceptable to one person may be culturally inappropriate for another, develop a culturally sensitive approach to all your clients, even if they do not come from diverse backgrounds

> and the most effective technique will be one that acknowledges the values and beliefs of your client's culture.

Teacher counsellors should be knowledgeable in peer counselling, so that they may transfer their counselling skills to Zimbabwean rural peer counsellors who have training needs. This is revealed in the research study by Lai-Yeung (2014:36):

> [T]eachers need to be competent in their multiple responsibilities towards their students inside and outside the classroom. One important teacher role inside and outside the classroom is to provide guidance and counselling to students, the present study found that students have various training needs, and perceived strengths and impeding issues in relation to carrying out the guidance and counselling role at school.

Therefore, as pointed out earlier in this research study, teacher counsellors should undergo intensive and extensive counselling training in order to be knowledgeable.

5.2.3.2 Currently the Zimbabwe Education system does not examine the Guidance and Counselling subject

The other challenge noted from the research empirical evidence is that this subject is not being examined in Zimbabwe and, therefore, it is neglected by teachers and learners. The teaching of Guidance and Counselling in Zimbabwe is not being enforced by school authorities. This was found in the research study by Chireshe (2006: i), who stated that "school guidance and counselling policy in Zimbabwe was not mandatory as compared to the international policies". The current thrust of Zimbabwe teachers is on subjects that are examined at the end of the term, such as geography. Teachers and learners in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies do not take seriously the subjects that are not examinable at the end of the year.

The advantages of examining Guidance and Counselling as a subject at secondary schools are many. Some of these advantages are stated by Hurst (2017:1), as follows:

> [S]tandardized testing allows educators to compare scores to students within the same school and across schools. This information provides data on not only the individual student's abilities but also on the school as a whole. Areas of school-wide weaknesses and strengths are more easily identifiable.

> Standardized testing provides a longitudinal report of student progress. Over time, educators are able to see a trend of growth or decline and rapidly respond to the student's educational needs.

The research team highly recommends that the Guidance and Counselling subject be examined in the same manner as mathematics and other subjects are examined. The lack of examination of Guidance and Counselling has contributed to the ineffectiveness of the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in learning ecologies. Some teachers are using the time for teaching Guidance and Counselling to teach subjects such as mathematics and English, which are examinable. Teachers and learners put more effort in examinable subjects. One reason for this is mentioned by Meador (2016:1), who stated that “standardized testing holds teachers and schools accountable”. This has deprived learners to get adequate knowledge and skills in matters of peer counselling strategy, and fails to deal with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

5.2.3.3 Some researchers do not actively engage rural community members in peer counselling strategies

The third impediment is that peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in the past are formulated without the collective engagement of Zimbabwean rural communities. This created an attitude of resistance. The above is supported in many research studies in Zimbabwe that reveal that other researchers have not been actively engaging rural communities. This is validated in Kuyayama-Tumbare (2015:328), who observed that “disrespect for community knowledge, failure to recognise, value and integrate with those from the community, with your own ideas for community development, may result in resistance from the community”. The non-involvement of rural communities in counselling issues is observed in the research study done in Zimbabwe by Chireshe (2006: i), who postulated that “students and parents are not frequently involved in needs assessment”. In this research study, I engaged Zimbabwean rural communities through using PAR in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of peer counselling. This was propounded by Baker (2012:3), who stated the following:

> [A]ction research seems to cover all data collection activities that lead to findings that are useful for evaluating local programs. Goals for action research include acquiring useful local knowledge for program improvement, involving

local stakeholders in the process, being open to the viability of a variety of data sources and anticipating that constructive actions/ decisions will follow the data.

The active participation of participants in formulating their solutions, is supported by Lephoto (2016:1), who held that PAR "was considered an appropriate research methodology for its compatibility to CER principles, especially in their endeavour to empower people affected by the issue of concern, so that they can liberate themselves". However, the reason for this was that most peer counselling strategies had been formulated from other foreign nations excluding Zimbabwean rural areas. This made peer counsellors fail to understand the contents of peer counselling strategies and, therefore, led to unwanted outcomes in relation to alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. By comparison, I actively engaged rural community members through PAR and CER.

5.2.3.4 Most teacher counsellors do not have skills to monitor and evaluate the peer counselling strategy

One of the research studies done in Zimbabwe, shows that Guidance and Counselling was not being evaluated as expected. Chireshe (2006: i) concluded that "the counselling services are not frequently evaluated in comparison with those in the international arena". The other impediment found in this research study was the lack of a peer counselling monitoring system, and lack of monitoring expertise. Oliha (2014:7) recommended that "counsellors attached to various universities should monitor and identify drug abusers and provide counselling therapies for them to adjust to normal life". I concluded that there must be effective monitoring systems to monitor all processes of the peer counselling strategy content, peer counselling checking compliance with drug abuse, peer counselling strategy outcomes, and assessment standards. Zimbabwean rural community members have a right to information and knowledge. With regard to this, Magirigi (2011:4) wrote that "people have a right to access knowledge on the nature of alcoholism/substance abuse and solutions to the problem". The importance of evaluation is explained as follows by Garcia and Gonzalez (2011:10): "I suggest utilizing a follow-up plan to verify whether program recommendation was implemented and this is important final measure will help researchers improve their recommendations in the future".

Participatory Action evaluation of a peer counselling strategy is essential. This allows us to improve our peer counselling strategy, as suggested by Baker (2012:11), who recorded that goals for action research "include acquiring useful local knowledge for program improvement, involving local stakeholders in the process, being open to the viability of a variety of data sources and anticipating that constructive actions / decisions will follow the data". However, there are challenges affecting counsellor teachers and others in their monitoring and evaluating peer counselling strategies. Baker (2012:12) stated the following argument:

> [H]istorically, counsellors have been perceived as resistant to evaluation and accountability and needing to be coaxed or assisted in the process by counsellor educators and local supervisors. This resistance was usually attributed to a number of supposed impediments, including a perceived lack of the requisite sophistication, insufficient time to do it.

The challenges portrayed in the above-mentioned research by Baker (2012), are also found in this research study. Zimbabwean rural teacher counsellors and other community members had other work commitments. This overburdens the counsellor teachers, and makes it difficult for them to monitor peer counselling strategy. In a research study by Kelvin (2007:114), it was found that "some counsellors due to addition of teaching loads to their counselling activities decided to forsake counselling". Moreover, Arowoko (2013:115) found that results should that the problems perceived by counsellors are in the following order of intensity: "wrong idea of counselling by principals and other members of staff, assigning counsellors to duties other than counselling, lack of counselling office, lack of funds to purchase materials for counselling and non-exposure to in service training". In our research study, I agreed that monitoring a peer counselling strategy is a process that is taxing, and needs total commitment from peer counsellors, teacher counsellors, and all other stakeholders.

I noted that some teacher counsellors are teaching two or more subjects, to almost 200 students. I agree Arowoko (2013:115), who recommended that "counselling should be a full-time job for counsellors and they should be exposed to workshops and seminars". Most rural schools in Zimbabwe have a few counsellor teachers, one educational psychologist and two social workers in the entire district, and this creates monitoring

challenges. I found out that most peer counselling strategies are monitored in urban areas at provincial education offices, without the involvement of rural teachers. The views forwarded by counsellor teachers should that the monitoring and evaluation of peer counselling strategies was limited and, in some instances, peer counselling monitoring was non-existent. However, Baker (2012:14) proposed that "teaching the necessary evaluation and monitoring skills and influencing appropriate attitudes about action research and accountability are important responsibilities held by counsellor educators". I may also engage other external personnel, such as programme evaluators, as suggested by Baker (2012:11), who stated that "action research seems to cover all data collection activities that lead to findings that are useful for evaluating local programs".

5.2.3.5 Stakeholders' misconceptions about peer counselling strategy

The last impediment found through the empirical evidence is the misconceptions of Zimbabwean rural stakeholders about peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse. The supporting evidence to the above-mentioned assertion is found in research by Arowoko (2013:115), who found the challenges of Guidance and Counselling which included the "wrong idea of counselling by Principals and other members of staff". Ruttoh (2015:36) came to the following conclusion:

> [S]ome head teachers and parents believe that counselling is the invasion of their privacy, and that of their children, and therefore, they might attempt to sabotage its development. They, therefore, influence their children's view towards the role of Guidance and Counselling in schools.

These misconceptions hinder the effective implementation of peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. I resolved to actively engage rural communities in peer counselling in order to remove all misconceptions.

5.2.4 Circumstances under which the success of the peer counselling strategy may be achieved through active participation and emancipation of marginalised participants for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies

I agreed that the following are some of the circumstances that contribute to the success of peer counselling strategies to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies:

5.2.4.1 Involvement of rural community members in the peer counselling strategy

Our research team found that one of the circumstances under which peer counselling strategy succeeds, is the involvement of community members in the peer counselling informative programmes and workshops. The success of counselling strategies lies on active participation of community members, as Magirigi (2011:4-5) posited that "the training model is participatory in that both the facilitator and participants have ample opportunity to exchange ideas, discuss, and reflect on various issues". The community members are engaged through the PAR methodology used in this study. I can use group discussions as methods to allow community members to share their views on drug abuse, according to Zvirevo (2013:5) who suggested the following:

> [T]he participants should be divided into groups of seven to nine participants depending on their number and each group is presented with task/questions to be discussed. After analysing the questions each group displays its findings to the plenary using the flip, the facilitators with the assistance of all the participants will critic each presentation and contribute to their responses.

The participation of community members prove that they have knowledge on how drug abuse can be alleviated through the peer counselling strategy. Magirigi (2011:5) offered the following argument:

> [I]t is believed that participants have some level of knowledge on the prevailing topic session, they will, therefore, be involved in some provocative open discussions in the plenary and the facilitator will engage the participants in sessional activity by asking the participants to respond to questions and providing answers that they deem relevant.

In this research, I gathered that Zimbabwean rural communities are very much knowledgeable about drug abuse and peer counselling as a technique to alleviate drug abuse in their learning ecologies.

5.2.4.2 Effective monitoring and supporting of the peer counselling strategy

The second circumstance found in this research study, was that there should be an effective monitoring and supporting system of the implementation of the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Psychology Wiki (2017:1) stated that "the effectiveness of the program should be monitored to ensure that the objectives are being met. One way to monitor the effectiveness of a program is to administer evaluations to the mentors and mentees".

Failure to monitor the peer counselling cause us to fail to comprehend if this research has achieved its intended goal of alleviating drug abuse. With regard to this issue, Geldard and Geldard (2001:102) made the following statement:

> [A]ll counsellors need supervision to help them resolve their own issues and to avoid burnout in what is an emotionally draining occupation. As Ill as providing a sounding board for the counsellor's concerns, a supervisor is in a good position to spot the onset of any symptoms of burnout and to assist the counsellor in dealing with them.

The teacher counsellors monitor and mentor peer counsellors as there are many benefits to doing this. According to Psychology Wiki (2017:1):

> …mentors are usually slightly more advanced students, so they can share useful knowledge and experience that is otherwise difficult to obtain, mentors serve as positive role models for the students, guiding them towards academic and social success and mentors provide support, advice, encouragement, and even friendship to students.

On the other hand, teacher counsellors provide supervision to peer counsellors. Regarding this issue, Corey, Corey and Callanan (2007:360) made the following finding:

> [S]upervision is perhaps the most important component in the development of a competent practitioner. It is within the context of supervision that trainees

> begin to develop a sense of their professional identity and to examine their own beliefs and attitude regarding clients and therapy.

In this research study, I agreed that teachers and other health professionals should be mentors and monitors to peer counsellors for the effectiveness of the implementation of peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse.

5.2.4.3 The peer counselling strategy should be gender sensitive

The research team found that the third circumstance is that the peer counselling strategy should be gender sensitive. One of the research studies which confirms that both females and males abuse drugs, is the study by Oliha (2014:6), who asserted that “the report identifies adolescents and youths, both male and female of between 15-25 years, as constituting the high-risk groups with male getting more involved than the female”. There is clear evidence that girls and women use drugs, but are not actively involved in issues to alleviate drug abuse problems in rural learning ecologies. Gender considerations are critical issues in research, as Passalacqua and Cervates (2013:1) made the following argument:

> [T]here exists a paucity of research on how gender, culture and spirituality intersect and impact intervention and treatment used by counselling professional and in today’s global society, consequences of not attending to these salient contextual dimensions may limit the level of understanding for counselling professionals to assist their clients and may even thwart their growth and development.

This means that gender issues have a great impact on research. Research studies should, therefore, include the views of females and males equally.

Gender aspects affect peer counsellors, training content and other related issues, as alluded to by Fukuyama and Sevig (1999:106), who stated that “understanding gender and cultural differences within the context of spiritual/religious issues has implications for counselling theory, training for counsellors and over-all effectiveness of practicing mental health professionals”. Furthermore, peer counselling recruitment and assignment of peer counselling duties are affected by gender roles in different cultural communities, as explained by Davenport and Yurich (1991:45), who wrote that “gender role socialization

and cultural experiences shape identities of women and men, define their behaviour, and set up expectations for how they interact in the world".

In this research study, females and males are given duties to do in order to make this research a success. Females in rural areas are not adequately engaged in drug abuse-related matters. However, this emancipatory and participatory research allowed women to actively participate in this research study as participants.

5.2.4.4 Engagement of former rural peer counsellors

The fourth circumstance found in this research study, is the active involvement of former peer counsellors in assisting Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The research team realised that I are losing experienced and knowledgeable peer counsellors, who could share knowledge, and assist us in dealing with drug abuse problems in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Most universities, colleges, and secondary and primary learning institutions have alumni, the body of former students actively participating in their former learning institutions. The importance of alumni is explained by the University of Denver (2013:1):

> [T]his is not surprising, considering an active alumni base generally indicates that past graduates feel like they had a quality educational experience. Attending a school with very active alumni also often encourages current students to remain involved and active after graduation, once more perpetuating a good cycle.

The financial stable alumni members may financially support peer counselling activities in their former schools, as alluded to by the University of Denver (2013:2):

> [A]lumni also help sustain the university through donations and volunteerism. It costs a lot of money to keep a university on its feet, and a big chunk of that comes from alumni donations. Sometimes, large donations allow universities to provide students with newer technology, better facilities, and a nicer campus — which in turn keeps universities competitive and appealing.

Furthermore, the University of San Diego (2017:1) stipulated the following:

> [A]lumni participation is critical to the success, prominence and sustainability of the University of San Diego. The University of San Diego Alumni Association encourages all types of alumni participation from volunteer programs to event attendance to student mentoring. For more information on how to get involved and give of your time and expertise, please see our pages on volunteering here.

In addition, most alumni students are volunteers who assist their former institutions through different activities, as stated by Elmhurst College (2017:1):

> [T]he Alumni Association at Elmhurst College encourages alumni to get involved in all kinds of ways — from volunteering to attending an event to hiring fellow Elmhurst graduates, participation so important because our alumni have so much to offer. When you get involved at the College, your experience and your enthusiasm enrich the campus for our students and our faculty and staff.

Therefore, in this research study, I encouraged the active participation of former peer counsellors in assisting the current study with peer counselling knowledge, by mentoring and monitoring them. Former peer counsellors may voluntarily participate in peer counselling programmes, and the government and other organisations may employ former peer counsellors. This acts as motivation to current and future peer counsellors, for they know that they will be gainfully employed as peer counsellors when they complete their secondary education. I have lost many skilled peer counsellors, who could have assisted us in dealing with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

5.2.4.5 Resource mobilisation to support peer counsellors

The fifth component of the circumstances that this research study found, is that the success of peer counselling strategy rests on the mobilisation of resources to support peer counsellors and counsellor teachers. There are peer counselling resource constrains in Zimbabwe, as Chireshe (2006: i) observed that his study “revealed that the effectiveness of Zimbabwe secondary school guidance and counselling services was negatively affected by lack of resources”. In Zimbabwe, the limiting factor that affects peer counselling strategies is the unavailability of resources to employ and reward all peer counsellors and teacher counsellors, and supporting the peer counselling strategy. However, as suggested by our team, resource mobilisation is essential. Peer counselling strategies are associated with different costs at levels such as formulation,

implementation, and evaluation; therefore, there is a great need of money and material support.

The following research studies on peer counselling strategies show different costs: Chola *et al.* (2010:14) recorded the following:

> [T]he research coordinator, peer supporter supervisors and driver are permanent staff on the project, and are therefore offered competitive salary packages. Peer supporters and recruiters are not permanent members of staff. They are offered a token US$20 every month for their participation, a figure that was arrived at in a meeting with peer supporters, where they agreed on this as adequate compensation for their time. The figure was also intended to amount to about 10% of an average school teacher's salary, taking into consideration the effort that peer supporters are expected to put into work.

However, other research studies state that drug abuse preventive strategies, such as peer counselling, are cost effective. This is confirmed in a research study by the National Institute on Drug Abuse of America (2014:6), that made the following finding: "research-based prevention programs can be cost-effective. Similar to earlier research, recent research shows that for each dollar invested in prevention, a savings of up to $10 in treatment for alcohol or other substance abuse". Therefore, resources should be mobilised to meet the cost of the peer counselling strategy. I need the financial resources to buy stationary, rent counselling offices, and pay bills, such as telephones.

Having explained the findings of this research study from the generated data and the literature review, the following section contains the contributions that this study offers.

5.3 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

It is intended that this study will contribute to the peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies and its application. The essence of this research study transcends the Zimbabwean boundaries into the international environments as drug abuse by leaners have unfortunately become ubiquitous in most areas. Furthermore, this study provides methodological contributions in relation to peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse is concerned in Zimbabwean rural learning context.

5.3.1 Contributions to alleviation of drug abuse

Foremost, it is crucial that I show that many research studies have been done on drug abuse within Zimbabwe context and international context for the purpose of positioning this present research study. Following are some of the research studies done, Copper (2009); Bett (2013), Chireshe (2013); Mapfumo and Nkoma (2013) and Maseko, Ngwenya and Maunganidze (2014) and Oliha (2014). These research studies were meticulously reviewed in this current research study and I found that not one of these have revealed the specific Zimbabwean peer counselling strategy formulated by Zimbabwean rural learners and other rural communities to address drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Therefore, I posit that, the current study has contributed to the formulation of specific peer counselling strategy designed to alleviate the drug abuse epidemic in Zimbabwe rural learning ecologies. This peer counselling strategy was not mainly formulated basing on how I interpreted the research data and findings but there was close connection with what Zimbabwean rural community members who participated in this research articulated. I postulate that, the proposed peer counselling strategy can persuade rural school authorities, learners, teachers, government and other stakeholders to channel resources and time to effectively eradicate drug abuse. This peer counselling strategy is unique in that it does not reproduce what has been submitted by other scholars. On the other hand, the study contributed to the field of education studies and to some extent sociology as the phenomena of the study cut across a myriad of fields. More so, the issue of peer counselling is paramount to catching the drug ills of the Zimbabwean rural communities at a greater scale due to the potential of training more peer counsellors. In addition, this study explores not only the availability or quantity of peer counsellors but strategies employed to render them effective primary counsellors especially in rural settings where professionals like educational psychologists, specialised teacher counsellors and so forth might be far in between.

5.3.2 Methodological contributions

This research study is anchored on Participatory Action Research methods. The participative nature of this research study allowed the Zimbabwe rural learners and community members to air their views on drug abuse matters and offer comprehensive solutions to mitigate drug abuse scourge. Therefore, this research study promotes the active participation of the marginalised rural learners and other stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of peer counselling in the alleviation of drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The intention of this research study is to empower, dismantle superiority and inferiority complexities among the Zimbabwean rural and urban research participants, this was in line with PAR principles and objectives. I argued that, the success of peer counselling strategy is premised on the active participation and collaboration of all team members to provide solutions to mitigate any impact in instances where peer counsellors are encountering challenges in executing the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in their ecology. However, during the course of conducting this research study in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies I observed that PAR does not grantee 100% success as I have experienced several hiccups in implementing participatory action research in Zimbabwe rural learning ecologies. As I expounded the research methodology in Chapter 3 of this study, I presented some challenges and how I navigated them to reduce their negative impact on this research. The critical analysis of these problems inform the researcher on the use of PAR in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

In addition, this research study is premised on Critical Emancipatory Research theoretical framework and therefore makes this study emancipatory. Therefore, the contribution of this research study is that the once neglected and disadvantaged Zimbabwe rural participants are fully engaged at all levels this discourse and are regarded as active drivers of this study. I submit that Critical Emancipatory Research allows the research participants to be familiar with many research approaches, how to create conducive atmosphere for them to freely air their views and communicative practices that lead to make appropriate research findings. However, given that, Zimbabwe search participants' emancipation is their personal choice and solely depend on their willingness to actively emancipate themselves, this makes emancipation goal a mammoth task.

Furthermore, this research study contributed significantly in making the Zimbabwe rural learners the focus of the research participative and critical reflections. This was facilitated by Critical Discourse Analysis that I used as data analysis technique. Some data analysis methods offer meaning of data at interpretive level and thereby centralises power to the researcher to make decisions on what, how and when to report. This gives more power to researchers and this contradicts the agenda of this research study. However, this research study through PAR and CER empower the participants and make them to become the centre of the research process in Zimbabwe context. Critical Discourse Analysis assists in transferring the interpretation of meaning of data from interpretive level to comprehend the deeper meaning hidden in views of the participants. It also helps the researcher and the participants to comprehend hidden power dynamics in language and how to challenge oppression perpetuated through words. The usage of Critical Discourse Analysis allows the researchers to give Zimbabwe rural learners freedom to articulate their views in their indigenous language (Shona, IsiNdebele).

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY

I noted that this research had some limitations, namely:

- The research study was conducted by one facilitator (me) and participants from the rural Chivi area. In future, researchers should conduct longitudinal studies on peer counselling strategies, observing students who are abusing drugs being counselled until they stop abusing drugs. This research study had no intention to generalise its findings. I uphold that the current researchers and scholars in peer counselling studies will find resemblances or differences in their peer counselling research studies.

- This research study was qualitative in nature, and had 14 participants from the wide population of Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Therefore, future research studies should be done at a larger scale, mixing qualitative and quantitative research methods.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

I recommend that future studies should focus on the provision of treatment to drug abusers in Zimbabwean rural communities. In Zimbabwe, there are no rehabilitation centres in rural areas to treat children with drug abuse problems; therefore, this study may inspire the government and other stakeholders to build rehabilitation centres in rural areas. Currently, the Masvingo Province has only one specific institution that deals with drug abuse problems.

In addition, I recommend that present and future researchers should focus on a peer counselling strategy to mitigate drug abuse by minority rural groups, such as learners with disabilities. This is essential, as it brings inclusion of minority members of rural learning societies in matters of drug abuse, and offers appropriate solutions. Minority groups have their own challenges that are unique to them.

I also recommend that future researchers focus on the legal framework and how it deals with learners involved in drug abuse. Concerning the provision of free legal advice and the types of sentences given to rural learners abusing drugs – is it punitive or reformatory? I urge peer counsellors and counsellor teachers to read carefully, and fully comprehend the peer counselling strategy, and implement it in teaching, learning, and in the counselling profession. I am optimistic that Zimbabwean rural learners, counsellor teachers, and other stakeholders would greatly benefit from a peer counselling strategy.

Lastly, I recommend that future researchers should focus on the quality of training given to rural peer counsellors and teacher counsellors who deal with drug abuse-related cases in rural learning ecologies. The quality of training of peer counsellors and teacher counsellors determines the quality of peer counselling and its success.

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The aim of the research study is to formulate a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Through the research processes explained above, I successful in generating data for the formulation of a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse, grounded on the literature and the research empirical data. The research contributions to the study were explained. The research study revealed that Zimbabwean rural communities are able to actively participate in the formulation of a peer counselling strategy. Researchers should strive to empower the disadvantaged rural community members by creating platforms for them to air their views in relation to peer counselling.

Chapter six will propose the peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

CHAPTER SIX

PROPOSED PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the research study is to formulate a peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Through using this research study, and studying the findings derived from the relevant literature and the data generated, a peer counselling strategy is proposed for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies proposed in this research study may be applied to different situations that need peer counselling, such as mitigating bullying at rural learning ecologies. The teacher counsellors, peer counsellors, and all other stakeholders involved in assisting learners in rural areas, may test and implement this peer counselling strategy, in order to mitigate any problems affecting learners.

6.2 A PROPOSED PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY TO ALLEVIATE DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES

The proposed peer counselling strategy is cited below in Table 6.1 and elaborated upon in detail.

Table 6.1: Peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED STRATEGY	Action(s)	Objective(s)	When?
Peer counsellors	Consistently attending peer	To acquire peer counselling	From the start to the end of peer

	counselling sessions. Contributing in the formation of vision, explaining vision and taking ownership of the team's vision.	strategy knowledge and skills that will assist them in executing their peer counselling duties. Selecting peer counsellors.	counselling sessions.
	Asking probing questions to get more clarity. Writing notes	Quarterly.	Twice weekly, when attending peer counselling strategy sessions.
	Counselling learners with drug abuse at their schools.	When the opportunity arises.	Daily, when there is a learner who needs counselling.
Teacher counsellors	Constantly attending peer counselling strategy sessions. Contributing in the formation of vision, explaining vision and taking ownership of the team's vision.	To help learners with course content of the peer counselling strategy.	From the commencement of the lectures until the lectures cease.
	Preparing adequate lesson content and adhering to peer counselling syllabus.	To integrate peer counselling skills with the peer counselling.	Every time they attend peer counselling sessions.

	Selecting peer counsellors.		
	Reading and understanding assigned peer counselling materials.	Course content.	Before the commencement of peer counselling sessions.
School Psychological Services Personnel	Coordinating the peer counselling sessions. Actively contributing to the formulation of and owning the vision.	To ensure that peer counselling sessions are Ill run; resources are made available and enough time is allocated for peer counselling sessions.	From the beginning to the end of peer counselling sessions.
School Administration	Selecting teacher counsellors.		At the beginning of the year before the lectures commence.
	Training peer counsellors and teacher counsellors.		Twice a year.

6.3 FOUR PILLARS OF THE PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY

There are four pillars of the peer counselling strategy, as shown in the above Table 6.1, namely peer counsellors; teacher counsellors; school psychological services personnel; and the school administration. These four pillars of the peer counselling strategy should harmoniously and effectively execute their different duties in a collaborative manner, in order to implement the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Table 6.1 shows that for peer counsellors to effectively use the

peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in their learning ecologies, teamwork needs to prevail among the four pillars. To have strong teamwork, the peer counsellors, teacher counsellors, school psychological services personnel and school administrators should be respectful, have open and clear communication, be highly committed, understand and own the vision and purpose, have enough resources, have clear and Ill-stated duties and expectations, and have regular update meetings that allow team members to air their views.

I maintain that there must be an accurately stated job description for each team member. This helps them to complement each other, and to avoid duplication of duties and conflicts, as Moleko (2014:155) stated that “the roles need to be clearly defined so that they can be understood by team members”. This research study indicates the success of a peer counselling strategy, premised on the active participation and collaboration of all team members to provide solutions to mitigate any impact in instances where peer counsellors are encountering challenges in executing the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in their learning ecologies.

In addition, Shangase (2013:83) alluded that “professional development for educators has been defined as the provision of activities designed to advance the knowledge, skills and understanding of educators in ways that lead to changes in their thinking and classroom behaviour”. From the above citation, our team should frequently attend peer counselling training sessions in order to remain up to date with current trends of the peer counselling strategy. The team should also constantly engage in meetings with regard to peer counselling, so that they can collectively deliberate on issues.

Moleko (2014:154) posited that “students’ performance to improve teamwork needs to prevail between the team members and team work will make it possible for effective plans to be developed”. Therefore, in the course of these highly interactive peer counselling strategic meetings, the team members will offer suggestions that are valuable to peer counsellors and other stakeholders, and in the improvement of the peer counselling strategy to be used to alleviate drug abuse in rural learning ecologies. The above submissions resonate with the argument of Shangase (2013:50) who wrote that “it

empowers stakeholders by encourage them to engage with research and then collectively develop or implement activities to turn around the situation around".

Moreover, this teamwork helps all stakeholders to develop relevant and up-to-date training manuals and lesson plans, that will adequately equip peer counsellors and teacher counsellors to acquire appropriate peer counselling strategy knowledge and skills. This is supported by Mthobela (2015:24), who argued that "discipline specialists and facilitators should be involved in manual and training developments and also involve all stakeholders in the processes including students, departmental heads and institutional management". In our research study, one essential component mentioned in this peer counselling strategy is the active involvement of rural learners. This is empowering, and gives voice to the learners who are the implementers of the peer counselling strategy. Therefore, the peer counselling strategy proves that the voices of the rural learners in Zimbabwe are valued in the discourse aimed at formulating and implementing the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

6.4 ROLE CLARIFICATION IN THE PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY

The above Table 6.1 explains the duties of each team member in ensuring that the peer counselling strategy is effectively implemented to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. Moleko (2014:155) averred that "the roles need to be clearly defined so that can be understood by team members". Therefore, this research study, shows that the duties of peer counselling team members should be clearly stated and explained, so that each individual understands his or her role. Job descriptions are essential in that everyone operates within a given scope. Moleko (2014:155) alluded that "clarification of roles will also help in maintaining good relations as they will know how their roles working together can contribute to the overall success of the strategy". I concur that the clarification of team roles is paramount in assisting in the maintenance of good working relationships among team members, as they understand how their roles in peer counselling strategy implementation are interconnected. This makes them realise how their collective teamwork can contribute to the success of the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

6.5 COLLECTIVE AND OWNED VISION OF THE TEAM

Table 6.1 highlights that, in order to effectively use peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies, it is crucial that the team agrees on the vision. In support of this, Moleko (2014:154) stated that for "learning to be enhanced it is vital that team members share a common vision and it must be formulated by the whole team in order to have its ownership". I argue that this vision must be formed by all team members in order for them to have ownership of the vision.

In the study by Shangase (2013:121), it was remarked that "vision creates the democratic sharing of knowledge thus fostering stimulation and enabling social action". The vision gives direction and permits the team members to collectively work together to accomplish it. In other words, the team's vision is a reminder of what they intend to achieve, and it assists in binding the efforts of the team members in achieving its purpose of alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. The research team members should orally explain the vision and, moreover, write it down clearly, so that they can visualise and understand it. The above Table 6.1 also shows that the vision of the peer counselling strategy should be clearly articulated in order to make team members and other stakeholders involved, have them take ownership, be committed, and accomplish the vision**.**

6.6 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF TEAM MEMBERS IN PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY CONTENT

Table 6.1 points out that it is important that team members should be adequately trained, and be knowledgeable in peer counselling content. Shangase (2013:87) observed that "it is also important [that] the team members be fully engaged in the practical training by the expert who will provide necessary capacity development". As experts in the field of peer counselling, they need to facilitate these peer counselling developmental sessions. In these sessions, both the teacher counsellors and peer counsellors should be involved in the practical peer counselling exercises that include problem-solving, and permit them to ask relevant peer counselling questions. The team members should go through extensive training in peer counselling to get peer counselling content and be highly knowledgeable.

I support the idea of content capacity development for the leaders, in order for their knowledge to be enriched**.**

As their peer counselling knowledge improves and increases, they, in turn, benefit from peer counselling sessions and, consequently, improve their peer counselling skills and techniques. Moleko (2014:156) recommended that “apart from being trained on small group facilitation as literature and guidelines stipulate, it is equally important that they also receive capacity development on the content so that their knowledge of the course can be enhanced”. Therefore, the success of the content capacity developmental sessions is premised on the teacher counsellors’ knowledge of the peer counselling content. As peer counsellors engage in practical methods of solving drug abuse problems, posing questions, and seeking clarity on the peer counselling strategy from the teacher counsellors and other experts during training sessions, they are exposed to different methods of solving drug abuse problems using the peer counselling strategy. This results in their having a deeper understanding of the course content.

Again, Table 6.1 proves that it is essential for teacher counsellors to be capacitated with peer counselling skills and knowledge, in order to teach and train peer counsellors. The teacher counsellors are trained to use peer counselling materials, prepare peer counselling lesson plans, and identify areas in the training curriculum that need improvement. The teacher counsellors also assist in identifying peer counsellors. Zimbabwean rural learners should also be involved in selecting peer counsellors. This brings up the issue of collectiveness in implementing the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in rural learning ecologies, that makes learners respect peer counselling and peer counsellors. If teachers alone choose peer counsellors, learners may view this as an imposition and, thereby, resist peer counsellors. The motive behind the practical peer counselling training of peer counsellors and teacher counsellors is essential, as they will have first-hand experience of how the peer counselling strategy works, and discover challenges encountered when implementing it. This gives them ideas on how to mitigate these noted challenges.

The school psychological services; personnel and school administration are responsible for the provision of resources, such as the venue, finances, training workshops and

materials, delegating qualified teacher counsellors, and playing supervisory and monitoring roles.

6.7 SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY

Table 6.1 shows that the team vision drives them to conduct a SWOT analysis on the peer counselling strategy. The reasons for conducting the SWOT analysis are clearly explained in the research study by Moleko (2014:157), who summarised that the team should conduct a SWOT analysis as this "helps the team to identify the valuable resources that the team has in an attempt to achieve the goal and the weaknesses that might impede successful implementation of the envisaged framework". The SWOT analysis helps them to identify the important resources that are essential to achieve the intended purpose. Moreover, it assists in identifying the limitations of the peer counselling strategy that may inhibit its successful implementation.

Furthermore, a SWOT analysis of the peer counselling strategy provides the team members with opportunities to successfully implement it to eradicate drug abuse in the rural learning environment, and it helps in the identification of threats to the peer counselling strategy. The identification of weaknesses and threats, in advance, allows the team to put in place mechanisms, in advance, to mitigate and evade these impediments that may affect the success of the peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse. This is supported with the view of Shangase (2013:81), who stated that "SWOT led us to the identification of areas of concern, and I listed them according to prioritise".

6.8 DETERMINATION OF PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY PRIORITIES

During the course of implementing the peer counselling strategy, some challenges may arise. I submit that these problems may not be solved during the stipulated times. However, every effort should be made to prioritise all challenges, and immediately address them. Shangase (2013:158) concluded that "prioritization of needs is crucial and the crucial needs should be attended to, before the other ones which are not crucial". Furthermore, Moleko (2014:157) argued that "it is significant to priorities so that those

that are" crucial" could be addressed first". The team should have a strategic detailed plan to indicate how these problems will be tackled.

6.9 THE PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGIC PLAN

The peer counselling strategic plan should be collectively formulated, resonating with identified objectives of the study, and implemented. Shangase (2013:81) reflected that the "strategic action plan detailing our five priorities on the bases of research objectives and how the strategy could be implemented was formulated". In adhering to the above perspective, I need the peer counselling strategy to be operational. This strategic plan needs to show clearly how the priorities are going to be met. In addition, Moleko (2014:159) alluded that "the strategic plan should further indicate the persons responsible for executing certain activities, time frames as to when the activities should be finished, the resources needed to execute the activities and how the evaluation is going to be made". Therefore, our peer counselling strategic plan should show the individuals who are assigned to do different jobs in peer counselling work, specified periods of the activities, the resources needed, and how the team will evaluate the peer counselling strategy.

As a result, the peer counselling strategic plan ensures that the team remains focused on its vision and, furthermore, it ensures that other issues connected to the team vision are put into consideration. The role of strategic planning is further explained by Tsotetsi (2013:233) as follows:

> [The] strategic plan is important because it helps the participants to avoid a situation whereby meeting the agreement is reached in terms of which activities need to be performed, but in the next meeting the task/activities has not been carried out.

6.10 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY

Hunter (2009:6) explained that "monitoring and evaluation enable the implementers to identify the problems, their possible causes and allow the implementers to recommend solutions". Since the peer counselling strategic plan shows how challenges are going to

be solved, and the specific activities to be implemented to achieve the desired purpose of the peer counselling, it is imperative that there should be monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. I claim that monitoring and evaluation enables the peer counselling strategy implementers to identify the challenges and the causes of these challenges, and to permit the team to provide mitigating factors to these problems. In addition, Moleko (2014:159) argued that “through conducting monitoring and evaluation, I are able to know whether I are meeting our objectives”. Therefore, through peer counselling monitoring and evaluation, the team is able to project if it is going to meet the five research objectives which are stated in the strategic plan. My view is that, as the team is implementing the strategic plan, it is crucial that peer counselling monitoring is done frequently to detect the challenges and discrepancies encountered during peer counselling strategy implementation early, and take drastic measures to solve these challenges.

Another advantage of peer counselling monitoring and evaluation is that, at the end of doing all the peer counselling activities, as stated in the team’s strategic plan, the team conducts evaluation to see if the peer counselling strategy has achieved its purpose or not – has worked or not. This resonates with the perspectives in the research study by Shangase (2013:159), who stated as follows: “[I evaluated] whether the plan was working towards yielding our purpose and I devised a monitoring tool to check the success of and loopholes in our plan”. Lastly, through peer counselling strategy monitoring and evaluation, the team derives valuable lessons, and from the data generated from monitoring and evaluation, the team members are empowered to improve the peer counselling strategy, thereby, effectively assisting learners to deal with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

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APPENDIX A

ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS UV

Faculty of Education

25-Aug-2016

Dear **Mr Munyaradzi**

Ethics Clearance: **A peer counselling program for alleviating drug abuse among adolescent learners in rural ecologies in Zimbabwe**

Principal Investigator: **Mr Munyaradzi Chidarikire**

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-HSD2016/0495**

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.

I request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure I 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 I wish you every success with your research.

Yours faithfully

Dr Juliet Ramohai

Chairperson: Ethics Committee

Education Ethics Committee
Office of the Dean: Education
T: +27 (0)51 401 9683| F: +27 (0)86 546 1113 | E: RamohaiJ@ufs.ac.za
Winkie Direko Building | P.O. Box/Posbus 339 | Bloemfontein 9300 | South Africa
www.ufs.ac.za

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH
NATIONAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

2 All communications should be addressed to "The Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education"
Telephone: 799914 and 705153
Telegraphic address : "EDUCATION"
Fax: 791923

MIN. OF PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
CHIVI
ZIMBABWE
23 SEP 2016
PRIVATE BAG 545
CHIVI
TEL : 0337 497 / 278 / 526

Reference: C/426/3 Masvingo
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
Harare

22 September 2016

Chidarikire Munyaradzi
No 4729 Rovambira Street
Rujeko B
Masvingo

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH AT CHIVI HIGH, CHINEMBIRI SECONDARY AND NYANINGWE HIGH SCHOOLS : MASVINGO PROVINCE

Reference is made to your application to carry out a research at the above mentioned school in Masvingo Province on the research title:

"FORMULATION OF A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWE RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES "

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director,Masvingo Province, who is responsible for the schools which you want to involve in your research. You should ensure that your research work does not disrupt the normal operations of the schools. You are also required to seek consent of the parents/guardians of all learners who will be involved in the research.

You are required to provide a copy of your presentation and a report of what transpired to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education by December 2017.

MINISTRY OF PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION
POLICY PLANNING RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT
22 SEP 2016
P.O. BOX CY 121 CAUSEWAY
ZIMBABWE

F. Fundira
Acting Director: Policy Planning, Research and Development
For: **SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**
cc: PED –Masvingo Province

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION LETTER FROM MASVINGO PROVINCIAL EDUCATION OFFICE

ALL communications should be addressed to
"The Provincial Education Director for Primary and Secondary Education"
Telephone: 263585/264331
Fax: 039-263261

ZIMBABWE

Ref: C/426/3

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P. O Box 89
Masvingo

23 September 2016

Chidarikire Munyaradzi
No 4729 Rovambira Street
Rujeko B
Masvingo

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH AT CHIVI AND NYANINGWE HIGH, CHINEMBIRI SECONDARY SCHOOLS: CHIVI DISTRICT: MASVINGO PROVINCE

Reference is made to your application to carry out a research at the above mentioned schools in Chivi District on the research title:

"FORMULATION OF A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEG FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWE RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES"

Please be advised that the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education has granted permission to carry out your research.

You are also advised to liaise with the District Education Officer who is responsible for the schools which are part of the sample for your research.

23 SEP 2016

Z. M. Chitiga
Provincial Education Director
MASVINGO PROVINCE

MINISTRY OF PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION
PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR
MASVINGO
27 SEP 2016
P.O. BOX 89, MASVINGO
ZIMBABWE
TEL : 039 - 264331
FAX : 039 - 263261

APPENDIX D

SIGNED INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR LEARNERS

Researcher
Chidarikire Munyaradzi
Stand Number 4729
Rovambira Street
MASVINGO
Zimbabwe

Email: mchidas78@gmail.com

Research Main Supervisor
Prof. Dipane Hlalele
8 Sedibeng Education Building
School of Education Studies
UFS, Qwaqwa campus
Contacts: 0587185003

Email: hlaleleDJ@ufs.ac.za

Dear Research Participant

REQUEST TO SIGN INFORMED CONSENT FORM IN THE STUDY ENTITLED: A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES

This is to confirm that I …… (**Name and Surname in full**), have voluntary agreed to participate in the research entitled **"A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL ECOLOGIES"**. Your participation in the study is voluntary and your basic human rights will be respected and protected at all times. I will maintain confidentiality and non-disclosure of personal information and identity, and inform you at all times of the processes involved in the research study.
The implications and risks of participating in this study are as follows: The co-researcher may be at risk to experience emotional stress and psychosocial challenges, such as grief and interpersonal problems. In order to mitigate this, I have trained a professional social worker and counsellor in our research team. They will assist with professional counselling. The research study meetings will take one hour per session and I will have two meetings per month. These meetings will be held for the duration of four months. This means that participants may have the risk of losing time to study and work. In order to mitigate this, the main researcher and participants will agree to be time-conscious and punctual. All sessions will be strictly one hour long. Participants will be informed about times and dates of meetings in advance; this will allow participants to schedule their work and study time. There will be no remuneration for participating in this study but the main researcher will provide light refreshments. You also have the right to leave or discontinue participation at any stage, should you feel uncomfortable.

1. I fully understand the nature and purpose of the research study.
2. I therefore give full consent to participate, and do so freely, without any cohesion.
3. I fully understand the implications and risks of participating in this research study.
4. I hereby give permission for the use of information obtained during the study and the use of the findings thereof.
5. I fully agree to the use of cameras in this research.

_____ _____/_____/_____
Signature **Date**

My contact phone number……..

Residential address……
……

CHIDARIKIRE MUNYARADZI

Masters in Educational Psychology (Zim), Bachelor of Science Honours in Counselling (Zim), Diploma in Education (Zim), Bachelor OF Theology and Certificate in HIV/AIDS (Unisa)
Phone: 00263773557276 **Alternative: 00263774333153**
Email: mchidas78@gmail.com

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR GUARDIANS OR PARENTS

Researcher
Chidarikire Munyaradzi
Stand Number 4729
Rovambira Street
MASVINGO
Zimbabwe

Email: mchidas78@gmail.com

Research Main Supervisor
Prof. Dipane Hlalele
8 Sedibeng Education Building
School of Education Studies
UFS, Qwaqwa campus
Contacts: 0027587185003

Email: hlaleleDJ@ufs.ac.za

DATE…….

Dear Parent/Guardian

I, …… I.D……the parent/guardian of …… give permission to my child to participate in the research entitled **"A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES"**. Your participation in the study is voluntary and your basic human rights will be respected and protected at all times. I will maintain confidentiality and non-disclosure of personal information and identity, and inform you at all times of the processes involved in the research study.
The implications and risks of participating in this study are as follows: The co-researcher may be at risk to experience emotional stress and psychosocial challenges, such as grief and interpersonal problems. In order to mitigate this, I have trained a professional social worker and counsellor in our research team. They will assist with professional counselling. The research study meetings will take one hour per session and I will have two meetings per month. These meetings will be held for the duration of four months. This means that participants may have the risk of losing time to study and work. In order to mitigate this, the main researcher and participants will agree to be time-conscious and punctual. All sessions will be strictly one hour long. Participants will be informed about times and dates of meetings in advance; this will allow participants to schedule their work and study time. There will be no remuneration for participating in this study, but the main researcher will provide light refreshments. You also have the right to leave or discontinue participation at any stage, should you feel uncomfortable.

1. I fully understand the nature and purpose of the research study.
2. I therefore give full consent to participate, and do so freely, without any cohesion.
3. I fully understand the implications and risks of participating in this research study.
4. I hereby give permission for the use of information obtained during the study and the use of the findings thereof.
5. I fully agree to the use of cameras in this research.

_____ _____/_____/_____
Signature **Date**

My contact phone number……..

Residential address……
……

CHIDARIKIRE MUNYARADZI

Masters in Educational Psychology (Zim), Bachelor of Science Honours in Counselling (Zim), Diploma in Education (Zim), Bachelor OF Theology and Certificate in HIV/AIDS (Unisa)
Contact Details Phone: 00263773557276 **Alternative: 00263774333153**
Email: mchidas78@gmail.com

APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR THE SCHOOL HEADMASTER/-MISTRESS

Researcher
Chidarikire Munyaradzi
Stand Number 4729
Rovambira Street
MASVINGO
Zimbabwe

Email: mchidas78@gmail.com

Research Main Supervisor
Prof. Dipane Hlalele
8 Sedibeng Education Building
School of Education Studies
UFS, Qwaqwa campus
Contacts: 0587185003

Email: hlaleleDJ@ufs.ac.za

Dear Headmaster/-mistress

I, …… have voluntary agreed to participate in this research study. I am the school head of…….…… Secondary School. I have voluntary agreed to participate in the research entitled **"A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL ECOLOGIES"**. Your participation in the study is voluntary and your basic human rights will be respected and protected at all times. I will maintain confidentiality and non-disclosure of personal information and identity, and inform you at all times of the processes involved in the research study.

The implications and risks of participating in this study are as follows: The co-researcher may be at risk to experience emotional stress and psychosocial challenges, such as grief and interpersonal problems. In order to mitigate this, I have trained a professional social worker and counsellor in our research team. They will assist with professional counselling. The research study meetings will take one hour per session and I will have two meetings per month. These meetings will be held for the duration of four months. This means that participants may have the risk of losing time to study and work. In order to mitigate this, the main researcher and participants will agree to be time-conscious and punctual. All sessions will be strictly one hour long. participants will be informed about times and dates of meetings in advance; this will allow participants to schedule their work and study time. There will be no remuneration for participating in this study, but the main researcher will provide light refreshments. You also have the right to leave or discontinue participation at any stage, should you feel uncomfortable.

1. I fully understand the nature and purpose of the research study.
2. I therefore give full consent to participate, and do so freely, without any cohesion.
3. I fully understand the implications and risks of participating in this research study.
4. I hereby give permission for the use of information obtained during the study and the use of the findings thereof.
5. I fully agree to the use of cameras in this research.

_____ _____/_____/_____
Signature **Date**

My contact phone number…….

Residential address……
……

CHIDARIKIRE MUNYARADZI

Masters in Educational Psychology (Zim), Bachelor of Science Honours in Counselling (Zim), Diploma in Education (Zim), Bachelor of Theology and Certificate in HIV/AIDS (Unisa)

Phone: 00263773557276 **Alternative: 00263774333153**
Email: mchidas78@gmail.com

APPENDIX G

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR ADULT PARTICIPANTS

Researcher
Chidarikire Munyaradzi
Stand Number 4729
Rovambira Street
MASVINGO
Zimbabwe

Email: mchidas78@gmail.com

Research Main Supervisor
Prof. Dipane Hlalele
8 Sedibeng Education Building
School of Education Studies
UFS, Qwaqwa campus
Contacts: 0587185003

Email: hlaleleDJ@ufs.ac.za

Dear Parent/Guardian

I, …… I.D…… works as…… at …… I have voluntary agreed to participate in research entitled **"A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES"**. Your participation in the study is voluntary and your basic human rights will be respected and protected at all times. I will maintain confidentiality and non-disclosure of personal information and identity, and inform you at all times of the processes involved in the research study.
The implications and risks of participating in this study are as follows: The co-researcher may be at risk to experience emotional stress and psychosocial challenges, such as grief and interpersonal problems. In order to mitigate this, I have trained a professional social worker and counsellor in our research team. They will assist with professional counselling. The research study meetings will take one hour per session and I will have two meetings per month. These meetings will be held for the duration of four months. This means that participants may have the risk of losing time to study and work. In order to mitigate this, the main researcher and participants will agree to be time-conscious and punctual. All sessions will be strictly one hour long. Participants will be informed about times and dates of meetings in advance; this will allow participants to schedule their work and study time. There will be no remuneration for participating in this study, but the main researcher will provide light refreshments. You also have the right to leave or discontinue participation at any stage, should you feel uncomfortable.

1. I fully understand the nature and purpose of the research study.
2. I therefore give full consent to participate, and do so freely, without any cohesion.
3. I fully understand the implications and risks of participating in this research study.
4. I hereby give permission for the use of information obtained during the study and the use of the findings thereof.
5. I fully agree to the use of cameras in this research.

_____ _____/_____/_____
Signature **Date**

My contact phone number…….

Residential address……
……

CHIDARIKIRE MUNYARADZI

Masters in Educational Psychology (Zim), Bachelor of Science Honours in Counselling (Zim), Diploma in Education (Zim), Bachelor OF Theology and Certificate in HIV/AIDS (Unisa)

CONTACT DETAILS
Phone: 00263773557276 **Alternative: 00263774333153**
Email: mchidas78@gmail.com

APPENDIX H

PERMISSION FROM SCHOOL HEAD, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

House Number 4729
Rovambira Street
Rijeka B
Masvingo
Zimbabwe

Email: mchidas78@gmail.com
Phone: 00263773557276
Alternative: 00263774333153

DATE…….

The Director
Zimbabwe Ministry of Primary and Secondary Schools
P.O. BOX
HARARE
ZIMBABWE

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON THE TOPIC: A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES

This letter serves to seek permission to conduct research at NyaningI Secondary School, Chivi growth point in the Masvingo Province. I kindly request your teacher counsellors and learners to participate in this research study.

I am a student studying towards a Doctorate in Education (Ph.D.) – Psychology of Education, at the University of the Free State. As part of the requirements for this degree, I will have to submit a thesis. My student number is 2015321397

The main aim of the study is to formulate a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. I will adhere to ethical considerations, such as anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent. The participants in this study are teachers, Ministry of Education officials, NGO officials, learners, School Development Committee members, business persons, educational psychologists or counsellors, social workers, pastors, chief and political leaders.

Consent letters will be issued to the participants. I also request permission to use any other material that could assist me to obtain and analyse data.

The information that will be provided, will be useful for research purposes only.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

……..

CHIDARIKIRE MUNYARADZI

Masters in Educational Psychology (Zim), Bachelor of Science Honours in Counselling (Zim), Diploma in Education (Zim), Bachelor of Theology and Certificate in HIV/AIDS (Unisa)

APPENDIX I

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

House Number 4729
Rovambira Street
Rujeko B
Masvingo
Zimbabwe

Email: mchidas78@gmail.com
Phone: 00263773557276
Alternative: 00263774333153

DATE…….

Dear Research Participant

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY ENTITLED: A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES

The research study will take place in secondary schools in Chivi growth point I –Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe. I am a student studying towards a Doctorate in Education (Ph.D.) – Psychology of Education, at the University of the Free State. As part of the requirements for this degree, I will have to submit a thesis. My student number is 2015321397. The main aim of the study is to ***"formulate a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies".*** Please take note that, as participant:

- your identity will remain anonymous when conducting and reporting on the results;
- you are allowed to withdraw from the study at any time you wish to do so;
- there is no financial benefit for participating in this study – your participation is voluntary; and
- you are kindly requested to sign the informed consent form.

The information that will be provided, will be useful for research purposes only.

Yours faithfully

CHIDARIKIRE MUNYARADZI

Masters in Educational Psychology (Zim), Bachelor of Science Honours in Counselling (Zim), Diploma in Education (Zim), Bachelor of Theology and Certificate in HIV/AIDS (Unisa)

APPENDIX J

PERMISSION FROM SCHOOL HEAD

House Number 4729
Rovambira Street
Rujeko B
Masvingo
Zimbabwe

Email: mchidas78@gmail.com
Phone: 00263773557276
Alternative: 00263774333153

DATE…….

The Headmaster/-mistress
P.O. BOX
MASVINGO
ZIMBABWE

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON THE TOPIC: A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES

This letter serves to seek permission to conduct research at your secondary school. I kindly request your teacher counsellors and learners to participate in this research study.

I am a student studying towards a Doctorate in Education (Ph.D.) – Psychology of Education, at the University of the Free State. As part of the requirements for this degree, I will have to submit a thesis. My student number is 2015321397

The main aim of the study is to formulate a peer counselling strategy for alleviating drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies. I will adhere to ethical considerations, such as anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent. The participants in this study are teachers, Ministry of Education officials, NGO officials, learners, School Development Committee members, business persons, educational psychologists or counsellors, social workers, pastors, chief and political leaders.

Consent letters will be issued to the participants. I also request permission to use any other material that could assist me to obtain and analyse data.

The information that will be provided, will be useful for research purposes only.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

……..

CHIDARIKIRE MUNYARADZI

Masters in Educational Psychology (Zim), Bachelor of Science Honours in Counselling (Zim), Diploma in Education (Zim), Bachelor of Theology and Certificate in HIV/AIDS (Unisa)

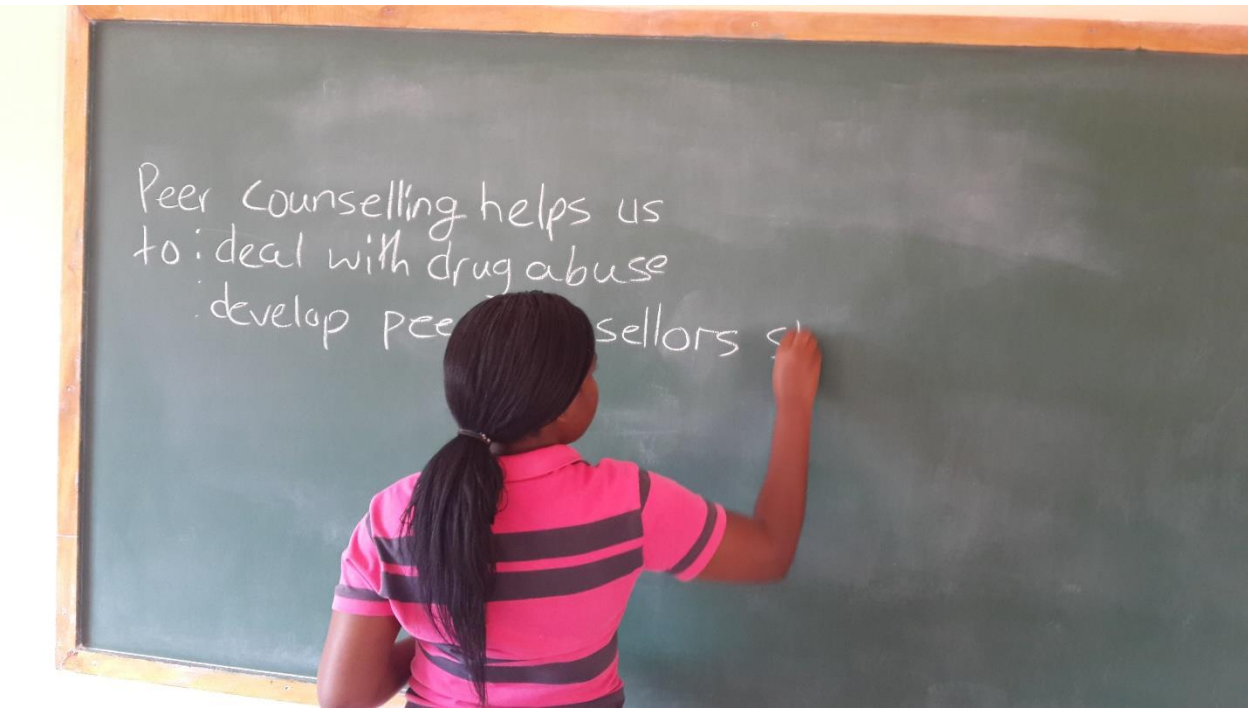
APPENDIX K

PICTURES DOWNLOADED BY TWO STUDENTS WHO ARE PARTICIPANTS Getty Images (2017:2)

Picture 1: Types of drugs

APPENDIX L

PICTURE TAKEN BY CO-RESEARCHER



Picture 3: One of the research participants

APPENDIX M

INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS

RESEARCH TITLE: A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES

This is an academic research study.

Qualifications to participate in this study:

1. Preferably those who reside in Chivi rural areas.
2. Rural secondary school students – male and females, aged 10-19.
3. Rural teacher counsellors, educational psychologists, social workers, NGO workers, law enforcement agents, and political, traditional and religious leaders**.**

TO APPLY:

1. Date of registration to participate is 15 September 2016.

2. Place of registration and venue where actual research will take place, is NyaningI Secondary School in Chivi, Masvingo.

3. Alternatively, you may register through email: mchidas78@gmail.com
   Or send a text or WhatsApp message to 00263774333153 / 0026377557276.

Your views will be treated with confidentiality.

APPENDIX N

MINUTES OF FREE ATTITUDE INTERVIEW FOR EMPIRICAL DATA GENERATION

FACILITATOR: IS THERE A NEED TO FORMULATE A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY SO THAT I CAN ALLEVIATE DRUG ABUSE AMONG LEARNERS IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES?

Chief: The fight of drug abuse cannot be left to teachers only but it is the collective responsibility of all concerned parents, guardians, business people and private sector. Drugs have robbed our children's future by causing them to fail academically, experience health problems and experience social problems.

Police officer: It is sad and painful to see our Zimbabwean rural learning communities not taking peer counselling strategy and drug abuse with the greatest concern it deserves.

NGO worker: My young brother was involved in drug abuse, I tried to counsel him. He refused my help. I forced him to go to the doctor. Nothing changed. He was helped by Isaac, his friend. Peer counselling worked in helping my brother.

Pastor: Our peer counsellors' failure is our failure. This shows that I as the Chivi community take the blame for failing to implement a peer counselling strategy to deal with drug abuse.

Counsellor teacher 2: I noted that I came to meetings because I view them as crucial and helpful in making us understand peer counselling in great depth.

Parent 2: I kindly request to know what is peer counselling strategy and what does it entail?

Counsellor teacher 1: A peer counselling strategy is a counselling technique that is used by people of the same age to help each other deal with or solve issues such as drugs and education difficulties.

Educational psychologist: The peer counsellors should be trained in order to assist other learners to deal with issues raised by Teacher counsellor 1".

Chief: I feel embarrassed to participate in issues that I don't know. Thank you, the educational psychologist and the counsellor teacher, for enlightening us about peer counsellors. I can now discuss because I now know what peer counselling is.

Parent 2: Where is the current peer counselling strategy being used to deal with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies?

Social worker: In the past meetings, I gave our suggestions on areas I thought the past peer counselling strategy formulated in Western countries should be improved in order to resonate with the Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

Learner 3: I attended a few meetings where I gave many suggestions on the formulation and implementation but it seems our contributions are in vain.

Social worker and teacher counsellor 1: The peer counselling strategies they are using are made long ago therefore out dated and some are Western in nature and difficult to apply to Zimbabwe context especially to rural learning ecologies.

NGO worker: I are uncomfortable of using peer counselling strategies that are imposed on us and I feel powerless to transform these peer counselling strategies to meet the Zimbabwe context because I the workers and not empowered by our authorities to make any changes. This complicates our work thereby I fail to alleviate drug abuse in our Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies.

MP: Why are I waiting? Let us formulate and then implement our own peer counselling strategy to alleviate drug abuse in our schools.

FACILITATOR: ARE THERE ANY SUCCESS STORIES OF PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGIES?

Teacher 2 (acknowledged the successes of the effective use of the strategies)**:** The workshops on student engagement have been helpful. The performance of the students has improved looking at the assignments and the projects that I give them.

Educational psychologist: The peer counselling strategy formulated through combined community efforts is a powerful tool that can be used to alleviate drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies and many success stories have been recorded in other countries that use peer counselling strategy.

Teacher counsellor: The fight against drug abuse is a collective effort and success of peer counselling strategy is not determined by peer counsellors alone but all community members must be included in research study.

MP: The Government of Zimbabwe since independence in 1980 allowed the parents and community stakeholders to actively take part in the affairs of Zimbabwe education system. The parents and other stakeholders have been instrumental in assisting peer counsellors to fight drug abuse.

MP: The parents and other community members ensure that the physical infrastructure and environment of all Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies are safe and Ill taken care of; this inspires learners and counsellor teachers to engage in learning, teaching and engage peer counselling strategy to deal with drug abuse.

Chief: The parents have invested a lot of money and other resources in their children's education.

Parent 2: I kindly request our teachers and community leaders here present to inform us about other ways which you may think can bring quality education in our rural learning ecologies.

Learner 4: I kindly request our parents to build houses for our teachers, buy furniture that are user friendly to children with disabilities.

Social worker concurred with Learner 4: Most rural schools in Zimbabwe do not have learning facilities that are user friendly to learners, parents and community members who have disabilities and who use gadgets such as wheelchairs and crutches.

Chief: *Tinodakubetsera.* (I are willing to assist you.) (The words "*tinodakubetsera*", uttered by the Chief is pregnant with meaning and I will unpack it using social discourse analysis: "*tinoda*" means "I"; this means the chief is speaking on his behalf and on behalf of the community (collectively) and speaking from a point of authority.)

Learner 3: I seek approval of my parents before participating in anything.

Teacher counsellor: The fight against drug abuse is a collective effort and success of peer counselling strategy is not determined by peer counsellors alone but all community members must be included in research study.

FACILITATOR: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY?

Teacher counsellor 2: There are very few qualified teacher counsellors. I encourage more teachers to enrol at universities and colleges that offer counselling courses.

Teacher counsellor 2: It is evident that Zimbabwe teachers and other participants had not been consulted when the peer counselling policy was being formulated, and so did not give themselves time to change the pedagogical ways of counselling in line with the expectations of Zimbabwean rural peer counselling strategy.

Educational psychologist: It is evident that the Department of Guidance and Counselling in many Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies is and was failing to formulate and implement peer counselling strategy effectively because the counselling curriculum does not have views of the community members.

MP: *Dai tose tabatana pakushandira musha Idu kuti ubudirire kurwisana nedambudziko rekumwa doro kIvana vedu*. (If it was possible, I should come together and fight the drug abuse affecting our children.)

Parent 1: What is peer counselling strategy? Today it is my first time to hear it. Please help me.

Parent 2: Where is the current peer counselling strategy being used to deal with drug abuse in Zimbabwean rural learning ecologies?

Teacher counsellor 2: The Guidance and Counselling is not examinable subject and this shows that this subject is not important. Teachers and learners have negative perceptions on guidance and counselling.

Parent 2: *Isu vekumamisha pfungwa dzedu hapana anodzinzwa*. (Our views as community members are not heard and I are not consulted.)

Learner 2: I have never attended a meeting or gathering where I contributed to the formulation of peer counselling strategies.

Learner 3: Learners are the end users of peer counselling strategies therefore they should be consulted first.

FACILITATOR: WHAT ARE THREATS TO A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY?

Counsellor teacher 2: Most of the strategies fail because they are not properly monitored and no adequate support is given to make strategies work effectively.

Counsellor teacher 1: Monitoring peer counselling strategy is a process and is a huge challenge to us teachers who are already teaching in classroom.

Counsellor teacher 2: I am teaching three subjects at advanced level and I are not paid extra for work of being counsellors and this demotivates.

Chief: One counsellor teacher recently resigned from his work due to high workload. He is suffering from stress related diseases due to workload.

MP: Many qualified teachers and health professionals such as educational psychologists, social workers, are shunning rural learning ecologies because of poor working conditions they encounter. I proposed that the Government should partner with other NGOs and businesses to incentivise the professionals working in rural learning ecologies.

Teacher 2: The number of learners in Zimbabwean rural schools is one of the determining factors of the number of teachers allocated to the school and numbers of subjects taught by the teachers are less considered.

Parent 2: I as parents and in my capacity as chairwoman of the School Development Committee appreciate the work of monitoring and counselling they are doing in assisting our children in solving their emotional, psychological and physical problems.

Social worker: I are not trained in monitoring peer counselling strategy in relation to drug abuse. Therefore, I request thorough training in peer counselling strategy.

FACILITATOR: WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES OF A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY?

Learner 4: Why can I not use e-Education for information dissemination of peer counselling strategy and to bring awareness to community members. Most of the learners' own computers and phones.

Chief: Technology use is essential in education. Let us use technology to disseminate information. Thank you, Mr. M. Chidarikire for honouring us as a community by inviting us to give our perspectives. I are rarely consulted in issues related to drug abuse.

Learner 2: I had some questions on peer counselling but today I have gained lot of insight concerning what peer counselling is all about.

The MP: After I heard submissions from all of you, I am convinced that I must formulate and implement this peer counselling strategy at any cost without delay.

Counsellor teacher 1: May I be allowed to gives you a 15-minute drama showing how peer counselling is done?

Teacher counsellor 2: May I be allowed to act the drama showing peer counselling on Saturday next Iek? This gives us and learners enough time to prepare so that I give a polished performance.

Parent: Why is there no table between the peer counsellor and the learner with a drug abuse problem?

Peer counsellor (in response to question): Many research studies show that tables create psychological barriers between the counsellor and the counselee".

Chief (clapped hands): I was not aware about the meaning or symbol of the table in counselling room. I am going to remove the table in my office. I have learnt.

MP: I learnt from the peer counsellor in this drama that one should explain why he or she is recording the counselling on the paper or on the video camera. The peer counsellor asked for permission to record and the counselee signed a form to confirm his agreement to the use of audio and notes writing.

MP: I learnt from the peer counsellors.

MP: Counsellor teachers should be responsible for monitoring the peer counselling strategy; the reason is that they are qualified in counselling and they are the ones spending more time with peer counsellors.

Teacher counsellor 1: The monitoring tool created by us has all our expectations and I can adjust it if there are challenges.

Teacher counsellor 2: There is a wrong belief that only boys are using drugs. Please note that girls are also abusing drugs. Issue of gender must be considered in our peer counselling strategy.

Girl-learner: My friend is using drugs. She started using drugs when she Int to Harare city during school holidays and they started drinking alcohol at the Christmas party, since then she is taking drugs.

Educational psychologist: Are you engaging former students (those that completed their secondary school education) who are former peer counsellors to assist in the community or even assisting at schools to remove drug abuse?

MP: I think the question raised by the educational psychologist is essential, I put more resources in training peer counsellors and some serve one year because they will be in their final year at secondary school. Why not create employment for them as community peer counsellors?

Social worker: Let us engage the business community and other stakeholders to help us raise money and other resources to create employment for these peer counsellors.

NGO worker: As the head of the organisation in this province, I will propose in our (work meeting) that I employ 21 former peer counsellors. I are going to send our proposal to our national and international leaders and partners (donors) to put our proposal into consideration.

Parent 2: The battle lines have been drawn. I are in this fight against drug abuse together. Together I shall prevail.

FACILITATOR: WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES TO PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY?

Chief: I will call for a community meeting to appraise the community members on the issues of peer counselling in relation to drug abuse.

Chief: I rebuked one teacher who was moving with learners while drunk last Iek.

Social worker: The peer counselling strategy should be advertised, people must be made aware of the places where they can immediately get assistance in case of a drug abuse challenges.

Learner 2: I agreed to the issues of awareness programs concerning drug abuse because most people are not aware of peer counselling strategy that assist in mitigating drug abuse in our schools.

Educational psychologist: I need to be adequately trained in peer counselling because it’s a unique technique that needs us to be knowledgeable before I do it.

Facilitator: Is there anyone who wants his or her painful tooth to be removed by his uncle who is not trained as a dentist. Is there anyone who wants to be driven by the driver who is not qualified to drive, who does not have a driver's license?

Parent 2 (raised his hand): I will never risk my life by being driven by an unlicensed driver and I cannot allow an untrained person to remove my tooth. In all these cases, there is high probability of me dying. I cannot risk it.

Parent 1: The capacity building programme enables us to be tolerant, to appreciate and value other people's views regardless of our different perspectives.

Education psychologist: I want to thank Mr. Chidarikire for giving us opportunity to give our views on the vision and I agreed to accept it because I gave our opinions.

MP: Vision gives us direction and makes us direct our energy in formulating peer counselling strategy to solve drug abuse.

Teacher counsellor: In past research studies, I noted that transparency was problematic but in this research, I appreciate that transparency exhibited in this research study.

School teacher 2: I propose that teachers and Heads of Department of Guidance and Counselling should be trained in peer counselling monitoring.

Educational psychologist: The control registers should be collected from wherever they (teacher counsellors and peer counsellors) are and be submitted to the Head of Department of Guidance and Counselling on Fridays to enable the Head of Department to assess if the peer counselling strategy is being implemented.

Facilitator: All peer counselling trainings should end with an examination.

Chief: Examination results should not be announced, let the examination act as a tool of revision.

Teacher 1: Peer counsellors should be selected or chosen from 1 to 6 from secondary schools. This allows continuity of the peer counselling strategy.

APPENDIX O
TURNITIN REPORT

TurnItIn

ORIGINALITY REPORT

%3	%2	%1	%1
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to University of the Free State Student Paper	%1
2	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	<%1
3	etd.uovs.ac.za Internet Source	<%1
4	www.ccsenet.org Internet Source	<%1

APPENDIX P
LANGUAGE EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

Dr. L.

Hoffman

Kroonstad

BA, BA(Hons), MA, DLitt et Phil

Cell no: 079 193 5256 Email: larizahoffman@gmail.com

To whom it may concern

DECLARATION

I hereby certify that the English language of the following thesis meets the requirements of academic publishing. This thesis was linguistically and technically edited and proofread by me, Dr. L. Hoffman.

Title of thesis

A PEER COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR ALLEVIATING DRUG ABUSE IN ZIMBABWEAN RURAL LEARNING ECOLOGIES

Candidate

MUNYARADZI CHIDARIKIRE

Lariza Hoffman

Kroonstad

11 April 2017

TurnItIn

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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