THE PSYCHOSOCIAL CHALLENGES FACED BY INSTITUTIONALISED CHILDREN. A CASE OF PONESAI VANHU CHILDREN’S HOME, SHAMVA DISTRICT. (AUGUST 2013 TO JULY 2014)

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at finding the psycho-social challenges faced by institutionalized children in Zimbabwe focusing on Ponesai Vanhu Children’s Home in Shamva district. The study’s main objectives were to identify the psychological and social challenges faced by institutionalized children, to establish major causes for institutionalization and to expose the strategies used by caregivers to mitigate the psychosocial challenges. The study used case study research design, which is a qualitative approach. Data were collected using interview guides. The information was gathered from a sample of 30 institutionalised children and Stratified random sampling was employed to select the study participant and purposively sampled five key informants. Four were caregivers and one the Head of the institution. Data entry and analysis was done using tables and it was presented in thematic method, which was divided into subtopics that related to the response of the research instruments. From the analysis of the findings, the research noted that children in institutions face psychological challenges such as stress, depression, anxiety and fear and have low self-esteem. The children also face social challenges such as isolation, stigma and discrimination, attachment disorder and abuse and neglect. The study recommends that the Government and NGOs should work towards the alleviation of psychological and social problems faced by institutionalized children through enactment of policies and public campaigns which address the challenges. Children in residential care should be educated on the psychosocial challenges. Caregivers should be trained on how to cater for the psychosocial needs of children.