

THE AFRICAN ORPHANS' LIFE: YESTERDAY AND TODAY

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Abstract

The orphanhood phenomenon is much pronounced among the developing countries of the world. Looking at the life of the orphan from the African perspective, one would really wonder how and the life has taken such a radical change. The African philosophy was that when a child lost both parents the extended family members would bear the burden of caring for that orphan. The orphan enjoyed everything in the family including the food, clothing and life skills development in preparation for the future life. Such efforts by the families helped to maintain the social harmony and to keep the family intact for the enhancement of social, economic, cultural and spiritual sustainable development. The life of the time was fully characterised by love and respect for each other with the moral values being the order of each day. The orphan enjoyed the comfort of the home and the entire environment. As the time passed by, the whole situation changed as a result of a myriad of factors including the increase in deaths of parents, poverty, family disharmony and disintegration as well as laxity of the moral values and social stratification. Such changes saw the orphan treated as an outcast and a second class citizen in the family. Life became unbearable for the orphan who then would choose to make life in the street. Such situation gave rise to some orphanages to replace the home (family) system. When in the orphanage the orphans still face some challenges especially within some individual-based institutions because they usually fail to fit into their families. This research therefore was conducted to unravel what exactly the challenges are. Mutare urban in Manicaland Province-Zimbabwe was used as a case study. The qualitative paradigm was employed and case study design was adopted for this research. From a population of 4000 a sample size of 50 (30 females and 20 males) was selected using the stratified, purposive, systematic and the random sampling techniques. The questionnaire, direct observation and interviews were used to generate the data. Ethical and legal implications were also considered. The researcher used some theories such as the systemic, grounded, functionalism and the constructivism. The data were descriptively presented. The research findings were that the orphans are ill-treated and abused by their extended family members to the extent that they choose to find safety in the streets from where some of them are picked and placed in some orphanages such as the individual-based ones. While they are in these orphanages they experience some challenges which include lack of resources and life skills. The research recommended that there is great need for the restoration of family harmony for the social, economic, spiritual, psychological and moral transformation. This is because the society is anchored on the family system. It is therefore the duty of the government to initiate some programmes which are focused towards sensitizing and educating the communities on the value of the family systems within the context of the African culture.

Keywords: Transformation, programmes, individual-based, orphanages, orphan, family systems, restoration and challenges

Background of the study

In many African communities, the population of orphans in the past was not as significant as it is today. In fact, an orphan was not different from other children within a family institution. According to the African culture, when a child lost both parents he/she remained under the custody of an elderly family member whose role was to nurture the orphan (Murdock, 1994). The custodian would make sure that the orphan received adequate share just like other children. In most cases the orphan received the largest share. This was an effort to make him/her feel comfortable and also to maintain the relationship intact. In this case families remained highly functional (Parson, 1989). Because material, psychosocial support and moral resources were adequately shared, the life of an orphan was made easy (The Times Magazine, 18 July 1985). From an African perspective, when families are compatible, homeostatic balance and collectivism are achieved (Kanyowa, 2003). The concept of “Ubuntu” which means, “I am because we are” becomes evident from a societal point of view. Such attitude reinforces self-confidence, positive self-concept as core attributes and ingredients for nurturing an African child (Kanyowa, 2003). From the symbolic interactionist theory, the language used in nuclear institutions would never isolate the less privileged because a culture of “weness” was deeply imbedded in the society (Katiro, 2011). Therefore, an orphan who was brought within such accommodative environment would feel very comfortable and warm. As one of the family members, participation in community activities and household chores as a grooming and training process was nurtured. Compatibility within the nuclear family in which the orphan lived would encourage the him/her to be focused and determined for self-actualisation. Even when old the orphan ever cherished a life of his/her family. With the values, norms and beliefs being the family’s important social capital, the orphan’s interests were focused towards identifying him/herself with his/her family. Despite insufficient financial resources, however, love, respect and unconditional regard of self and others were sufficient to constitute a strong familyhood as important social capital (Makamure, 1985). Such conditions made the life of an orphan easy and comfortable. What this translate into was that the African orphan was groomed to be patriotic and to be proud of his/her identity as an African...and to be a proud to be a valuable resource within the family institution and society (Boudillon, 1994). Thus, was the life of an orphan yesterday.

However, life has taken a new twist in many countries of Africa. With the advent of the H.I.V. and AIDS pandemic, the number of orphans has risen tremendously with every family registering not less than two orphans. In Zimbabwe, for example, the number of orphans rose by 860% between 2004 and 2010 from 163 000 to almost 2 million (National AIDS Council (N.AC) 2011). This is too large a number for a small country with a population only 14 million. The social life in Zimbabwe has completely changed. So many factors have negatively influenced the family life with each member struggling for survival. Economic decline, high rate of unemployment, drastic increase of orphans as a result of HIV and AIDS pandemic and gender inequalities have made the life of many orphans unbearable. Many children in Zimbabwe experience orphanhood long before their parents die, as the “time lag” between the infection and death of parents progressively reduces their capacity to be productive and provide care for their children. During this period, child-parents relationship may be altered seriously often characterised by children caring for their parents in their stages of terminal illness (UNAIDS, 2010). The reality is that such children start assuming adult roles prematurely and this may deprive them from receiving proper education. If they are lucky to attend school, their participation is poor, resulting in reduced academic performance.

According to the Annual Report of 2010 by Simukai Protection Programme in Mutare, Manicaland Province, some of the orphans become destitute because of lack of basic resources by the guardians. They become vulnerable and are prone to any form of abuse

(Childline Annual Report, 2009). This gave rise to some Residential Care Homes or Children's Homes. According to the International Save the Children Alliance report of 2001, the purpose of creating Children's Homes is a response to the increasing number of orphans and vulnerable children due to HIV and AIDS pandemic. The aim was to provide care and support to the orphans. As such, in Manicaland Province Zimbabwe, some Orphanages or Children's Homes were established. Rekayi Tangwena Orphanage Home in Mutasa District, Forward in Faith Children's Home in the City of Mutare and Bakorenhema in Mutare District are some of the orphanages which were established. Zimbabwe, as a signatory to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (ICRC), has the obligation to save the life of all children through observing the general principles that are basic to implementation of all rights contained in the ICRC document.

This implies that orphanages, should work in the best interests of the child. This aspect of life seems to be missing because the orphans usually fail to reunite with their family members. According to the Zimbabwean culture, a child is attached to and identified by his/her totem and ancestral genealogy. Some of the orphans only know their carers in the orphanages, and when they grow up what becomes of "their identity" is the big question. A very good example is of an orphan who was brought up at an orphanage in Zimbabwe. Upon reaching the weaning stage, the child was supposed to leave the institution for the country life. He totally refused arguing that he had nowhere to go because the "Home" was the only home that he knew and the carers of the "Home" were his parents (Manica Post 9-15 April 2010). Another incident is of an orphaned girl who was brought up in another orphanage in Zimbabwe. Upon reaching the weaning stage she did not go anywhere but opted to stay and get employed in the "Orphanage". When she was about to get married she chose the carers to be her relatives to deal with her marriage processes. One would wonder how culturally the marriage proceedings would be conducted. These examples and many others that are unfolded are a clear testimony that the issues of identity and attachment are critical in the life of an orphan (Katiro, 2010; The Sunday Mail September, 9-15, 2012 and Bowlby, 1972). From the Analytic Conflict Theory point of view, lack of the individual's full package of personal identity in the society/community is one of the sources of gender marginalisation (Giddens, 2011). This also becomes a fertile ground for the development of some abnormal behaviour in a person (Sarason and Sarason, 1994). If a child lacks attachment with the biological parents he/she is likely to develop some emotional and psychological disturbances.

A report by Keep the Child Alive Organisation in March 2013 stated that, with Zimbabwe facing a myriad of social, economic and political challenges, the proportion of child rights, particularly for the HIV orphans, is proving to be a challenge. Their stay in some orphanage homes is generally unpleasing; especially those institutions which are currently run by individuals, in some cases, those under the government. The orphans seem to be facing some challenges which include lack of life skills, health facilities, birth certificates as well as guidance and counselling to prepare them for future life. According to UNICEF report of 2011, Zimbabwe had a total of 1, 6 million orphans and of these orphans, 4 000 were in some orphanages. Because of the economy which continues declining and political instability continues to increase, the orphans also continue to be victims of abuse, especially in some orphanages. A report by The Destiny Orphanage in 2010 also concurred with the above views on the orphans in Zimbabwe. Orphans were living in an environment where there were no robust health policies and Social Welfare services were very minimal. The Destiny Orphanage 2010 report also believes that the legal framework in Zimbabwe seems not to fully address the challenges faced by the HIV and AIDS orphans and vulnerable children, especially those in the orphanages. Such challenges as access to birth certificates, life skills, reintegration programmes, guidance and counselling seemed to be inadequately addressed, and the children in orphanages continued to suffer.

Echoing the same sentiments on the orphans' challenges in Zimbabwe, The Morning Line of July 2012 on its heading "The Forgotten Orphans," stated that the situation in Hwange was not pleasing because the orphans were facing challenges of inadequate food and proper accommodation. Some of the orphans failed to attend school because the local authorities did not have money. It appears that the situation was exacerbated by a decade long melt-down of the economy with a record of inflation, unemployment and shortage of basic commodities having been the order of the day.

From a brief interview with one of the District Social Welfare Officers at one of the orphanages in the rural area on 14 December 2012, it was revealed that the institution lacked so many basic resources such as food, stationery, recreational facilities only to mention a few. How orphans would develop their full potentials when they have such unfavourable backgrounds was / is something to wonder. From the above examples, therefore, the researcher was initiated to find out what exactly the orphan's life is by looking at are the challenges that the orphans face in the Orphanages in Zimbabwe with much emphasis on the individual-based orphanages in Manicaland Province. If such challenges are brought to surface some strategies may be mobilised to improve the life of the orphans in the orphanages and make what it should be.

Statement of the Problem

When the orphans are weaned from the orphanage they usually struggle or even fail to fit into their family systems resulting in some choosing to stay in the streets, while some refuse to leave the orphanage.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to bring out the challenges faced by the orphans in the individually-based orphanages and make some recommendations that may help improve the conditions of life more favourable for the orphans.

Objectives of the study

The research was guided by the following objectives:-

- i. To find out how the orphans lived in past.
- ii. To establish how the family life has changed the orphan's life.
- iii. To assess how the orphans feel being in the orphanage.
- iv. To examine the attitudes of the society towards orphans in the orphanage.
- v. To establish the challenges faced by the orphans in the orphanage.
- vi. To suggest some strategies to improve the life of orphans in the orphanages

Research Questions

- i. How did the orphans live in the past?
- ii. In what ways has the family life changed?
- iii. How have changes in the family life affected the life of the orphan?
- iv. What are the society's attitudes towards the orphans' life in the orphanage?
- v. How do the orphans feel being in the orphanage?
- vi. What are the challenges faced by the orphans in the orphanage?
- vii. How are the orphans prepared to reunite with their families?
- viii. What can be done to improve the life of the orphans in the orphanage?

Significance of the study

The findings of this study will:

-encourage mobilisation of resources for the well-being of the orphans in the orphanage.

-make the Zimbabwean community aware of the challenges that the orphans face in the orphanages. This will inspire the community to take some responsibility to shoulder the burden of caring for their orphans because the future of any community rests on the present generation of that community.

-motivate the government and the donor community to carry effective programmes that are aimed at encouraging effective linkages between the orphanages and the orphans' family members for smooth reunification with the orphans.

Assumptions

It is assumed that:

- Although there are some challenges in the orphanage, the orphans find the life better than staying as slaves with their family members.
- The family members have limited resources to care for the orphans.
- Care-givers in the orphanages have little skills to care for the orphans.
- If the orphans are provided with sufficient and relevant resources, their life in the orphanages will improve.
- Orphans are not provided with some life-skills to prepare them for the future life.

Delimitation

The research was confined to the individual-based orphanages in Manicaland Province-Zimbabwe. The study was confined to the life of the orphans yesterday, today and how the life should be.

Limitations

The topic was sensitive such that some of the participants were reluctant to release important information. The researcher assured them of anonymity and confidentiality.

Some of the participants were engaged in some activities which they felt could not be disturbed. The researcher gave appointment through phoning or emailing and had to be strictly on time to avoid embarrassment.

It was not easy to drive each time from Mutare to the orphanages because of the distances and financial constraints. The researcher used some lifts or other public transport for travelling and at times he could put up at some neighbours' homes near the orphanages.

Theoretical frameworks

The following theories were used for the research:

The substructural theory:

This explains deviance in terms of the substructure of a social group. It argues that a certain group of individuals develops norms and values which are to some extent different to those held by the other members of the society. In this study the researcher wanted to find out if the orphans developed different values and norms which make them fail to fit into their family systems.

Interpretivism

According to Carson (2001), this theory assumes that reality is relative and multiple. This means that in qualitative research in-depth study looks into the changes in behaviours, attitudes and feelings of the respondents and interprets them to make meaning. The

knowledge that is generated from Interpretivism is perceived through socially constructed and subjective interpretations. In this research, the researcher was receptive to meanings in human interaction and was capable of making sense of what was perceived as multiple realities. As Hudson and Ozanne (1983) state, the researcher remained open to new ideas throughout the study and let it develop with the help of the informants.

Constructivism

From the view of Hudson and Ozanne (1983), constructivism is a theory that explains human learning as an active attempt to construct meaning in the world around us. It is a theory that is based on observation and scientific study about how people learn. In this study, the researcher observed how the orphans are equipped and empowered with some life –long skills and to learn to be active explorers of their environment. The researcher found out if the orphanages linked the orphans with their families during their life in the orphanages and upon weaning them from the orphanages. The theory was also used to find out if the systems that are involved in the caring of the orphans and the orphans themselves create some meanings out of the life of orphans in the orphanages.

Humanism

McLeod (1996) explains that the humanistic theories assume that human beings have the inherent ability for self –growth, self-realisation and self- actualisation. Such abilities need to be inculcated throughout one’s life span. Therefore, knowledge and skills for self-development are important for the orphans as they live in the orphanages in order to prepare them for future life and to be able to effectively and independently participate and interact with the environment. In this study the humanistic theories were used to find out whether the orphans are empowered with skills for self-growth, self-realisation and self-actualisation to prepare them for future life.

Systemic

Guttman (1991) believes that a system is a unified whole with interrelated parts. In this research, the researcher used the theory to find out how the orphanages live with orphans from different systems and prepare them to reintegrate with their systems without facing some problems. This became the main purpose of this research in which the researcher would want to unveil the challenges faced by the orphans in the orphanages. In the African culture, systems are important to promote collectivism and to maintain the value of “Ubuntu” within individuals. It is within the context of this value that the researcher wanted to find out the extent to which this concept is inculcated in the orphans so that they are not divorced from their families and cultures.

Grounded Theory:

It asserts that the researcher gets into a research without a concrete theory for the problem. As the researcher interacts with the participants and gets new knowledge, insights and concepts on the problem through continuous generation of new data, he/she establishes some theories from which to choose the most appropriate one(s) for the research. In this study the researcher used the grounded theory through immersion and debriefing with the participants as well as triangulation of instruments.

Ethical and legal implications

The researcher sought written permission from the local authorities such as the Social Services Personnel and the councillors. Dates were set for the interviews with the consent of the authorities. Some codes were used to maintain confidentiality and anonymity

Research methodology

Research paradigm

The qualitative paradigm was employed in this study because it enabled the researcher to collect in-depth information on what the community say or do in their natural settings,(Borgdan and Biklen,1990).The design involved in-depth study of the phenomena by focusing on the affective, cognitive and behavior domains of the respondents on the plight of the orphans in the orphanages. The question of perceptions and attitudes is an abstract concept and requires direct inquiry so as to unravel perceptions because they lie at the heart of the respondents (Barbie, 1998). Punch (2009) also argues that qualitative paradigm involves intense contact with life situations which are normal and reflective of the everyday life of the society. The researcher's role was to obtain a holistic overview of the context under study. Marshall and Roseman(2006) contend that in qualitative paradigm , the researchers explicate the way people in particular settings come to understand , account for, take action and manage their daily situations.

The method

For the purpose of this study, the researcher employed the case study in order to establish the problems that the orphans in the individually-based orphanages in Mutare urban faced. Stake (1994) in Punch (2009) defines case study as a bounded system that emphasizes the unity and wholeness of that system, but confining the attention to those aspects that are relevant to the research problem at that time. A further definition of a case study by Theodoson and Theodoson (1969) in Punch (2009) is that it is a method of studying phenomena using a thorough analysis of an individual case among many. Marshall and Roseman (2006) contend that a case study provides a unitary character to the data being studied through triangulating facts that are derived from a variety of instruments. Therefore the richness of a case study lies in its ability to provide in-depth understanding of important aspects of a new problematic area.

Population

During the time of study, the population of around the three orphanages under study was 4 000. This figure included the orphans.

Sample and sampling procedures

The researcher had 50 participants (30 females and 20 males) for the research. The females were more than males because they were always available when the study was carried. Because the researcher worked with different villages, excluding the orphanages, he chose to use stratified and systematic sampling techniques to have the sample. Using the systematic sampling technique, every 100th house was selected as a sample, excluding the gate-keepers of the communities. Purposive sampling was used to select some influential people of the communities because of their and direct influence to the orphans. The random sampling technique was used to select the orphans.

Instruments

In order to collect data the researcher used the questionnaire, direct observation and interviews

Questionnaire

The questionnaire had open- ended questions to solicit in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Borgdan and Biklen, 1992). Questionnaires were easy to complete because they were self- administered. Each participant received a questionnaire to complete at his or

her own time. The participants were given ample time of seven (7) days to complete the questionnaires; this would give them enough time to attend to all the items on the questionnaire. The researcher collected the completed questionnaires from the selected participants.

Direct Observation

According to Hill (2005), observation allows the researcher to collect data in respondents' natural environment. This was rich because it enabled the researcher to record what was happening in the real world of the participants (Johnson, 2007). The researcher also observed the orphans in their natural environments and how they lived. This facilitated for accurate and unbiased data.

Semi- Structured Interviews

The interview questions were prepared to guide the researcher on what to ask the participants. The questions were structured in such a manner that they were short and precise and enabled the researcher to interact with the participants and to get their in-depth feelings and attitudes towards the phenomena, (Marshall and Rossman, 2007). However because the issue seemed to be sensitive, some participants were not willing to release information for fear of victimization. In this case, anonymity and confidentiality were assured. Each interviewee had a code.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher sought permission from the kraal-heads, Ward Councillors and the orphanage carers in order to get into the area. The councillors provided the researcher with statistical data for the total number of the residents in the area. The data were collected using questionnaire, direct observation and unstructured interviews.

Data presentation, analysis and discussion

Data Analysis Procedures

Collected data were carefully coded and presented descriptively and discussion was done

The orphans' life in the past.

They had peace of mind.	90%
They received adequate resources.	88%
There was no difference between and the biological children in the family	85%
They were taught to respect the family's values	90%
They were taught some life skills	95%

From the above views it is quite clear that the orphans were moulded to become effective participants and explorers of their environment. This made them to be fully functional in the development of their society. From the functionalist point of view, (Davis and Moore, 1067) the family systems stressed the element of harmony and togetherness of the different sub-systems of the family. If the family system respects and gains the value of unity then the homeostatic balance exists. The roles and responsibilities of each member become evident thereby increasing production and development. Such characters were inculcated in the orphans when they became new members of the extended families. From the systemic stand the orphans were taught to contribute to the development of the society because they were also important units of the society (Talcott, 1979). From the constructivist angle (Silverman 2008) the family systems focused on those social attributes that influenced positive self-identity and self-concept as key elements for the society's integration. In this respect, therefore, the orphan felt warm, accommodated and free. With the life skills fully

imparted to him/her, the orphan encountered no problem in life when grown up to be an independent individual. Thus, was the orphan's life in the past.

How the family life has changed.

Family disintegration as a result of poverty	92%
Family disintegration as a result of hatred	96%
Increase of the orphans in the extended families	94%
Value of humanity has diminished	94%
Massive mismanagement of morals within the families	96%

From the Interpretivism view (Giddens, 2011) most of the family systems have developed laxity of rules and values such that the moral philosophies which used to bind the sub-systems together have vanished. Poverty as a result the ever increasing economic melt-down has forced some parents to seek better life in the diaspora where they can take their biological children leaving the orphans impoverished and struggling for life. Within the families themselves, hatred has fuelled family disintegration. This has caused some serious damages to life of the children because when their parents are dead they are left in isolation and no extended family member will bother caring for them. This has influenced the development of child-headed family units (UNICEF, 2012) especially in the developing countries.

The H.I.V and AIDS pandemic has also contributed to some changes in the life of children. The number of orphans has sharply increased in the last decade as a result of the pandemic. For example, in Zimbabwe, the number of orphans rose by 860% from 163 000 to 2million between 2004 and 2010(N.A.C. 2011). According to UNICEF(2010) most of the deceased were young parents of not more than forty years. This suggests that the children were left without breadwinners and assumed parental responsibilities at a very early age. This is just shocking especially when such victims were left with no income. Cultural liberalism has to some significant degree caused a lot of changes in the life of orphans. Each family unit has created its own culture that is divorced from that of the society, thereby creating a subculture with its values and norms. The value and ideology of humanity “ubuntu” and collectivism have all been destroyed and this has perpetuated confusion in the life of an orphan. With the family morality decayed, and laxity of rules and norms unmanaged, the orphan finds no place in the family system. Therefore the radical change within the family institutions has made some negative impact to the life of the orphan.

Why the orphans prefer life in the orphanage to home life

Lack of family support	90%
To escape from abuse by family members	95%
To seek refuge	80%
To mix with other orphans	60%

The above views indicate that some of the orphans face unhealthy living conditions once their parents are no more. In the Zimbabwean culture(Kanyi, 1996)when a child lost both parent she/he remained in the custody of the family members and received equal, if not the best, treatment so as to make him/her feel comfortable in the home. This was so because of value of humanity that was vested in the society of that time and also life was affordable as resources were in abundance. The reasons that were given by the participants indicate that all is not well with orphans even with their immediate family members. Perhaps such ill treatment by the family members could be as a result of economic decline and poverty (UNFPA 2012). Despite such unfortunate social factors, every child deserves maximum care and support irrespective of his/her status as the Shona adage states

(Chengaosemanhangahapanarisinamhodzi) meaning “We should care for all child because they are equally important.”

From a sociological perspective (Giddens, 2011), the family system is important for the maintenance and sustenance of the value of “Ubuntu” which is an important social capital within the African culture,(Kanyowa ,2010).Therefore, if the family is disintegrated it means that the value also shrinks and the system will fail to function as a unit.

It also emerged from the interview that some of the orphans ran away from their family members because there was no communion within some families. When, therefore, children lose their parents no-one is willing to care for them. This would imply that hatred among family members seriously affects the children.

Society’s attitudes on the orphans’ life in the orphanages.

Positive-----30%
 Negative-----70%

The responses above are a clear indication that the society feels uncomfortable to stay with some orphans. This would also suggest a circular process within families (Momnsem,2000) because the families only meet after a long time when something serious happens which would demand each other’s presence. What appeared to be amazing was the fact that some of the participants were point blank that the orphans were not supported because they would think that their relatives were rich and would come back to them upon weaning from the orphanage. Therefore they keep neglecting them and to make them learn life the hard way. It is unfortunate that we still have communities with such attitudes in a Christian world today. Such degree of neglect is hurtful and demonstrates untold gender marginalisation within the society (Durkheim, 1982). However, despite such attitude by some members of the society, the orphans were lucky that that they were given some attention by the larger portion of the community members around as evidenced by the responses above. This would also imply that the orphans have some hope built on nothing else other than the community. Therefore in times of sorrow and crisis, (Van Pelt, 2006) the orphan finds some solace

The orphans’ feelings being in in the orphanage.

We feel uncomfortable-----96%
 We feel rather happy-----88%
 We feel protected-----92%
 We feel loved-----94%

The responses above are a testimony of the orphan’s sense of security despite lack of other basic needs such as food and clothing. There are no such things as threats to the orphans’ life from the environment. From a Humanist stand, when the human being receives love and protection from the environment, freedom and peace of mind prevail,(Sprinthall and Sprinthall, 1996).If therefore the orphans feel protected against some environmental abuse, they experience easy and free life(UNICEF, 2009). From a gender perspective, every human being, regardless of his or her status deserves love and protection for effective socialisation and communion (Sweetman, 2007).It is this love for one another that consolidates the society’s social capital and achieves meaningful reconciliation for sustainable development. In this case, therefore, the communities around the orphanages are sensitive to the life of the marginalised populations such as the orphans (Giddens, 1998).

However, it emerged from the study that the orphanages lacked such basic resources as food and clothes as a result of some financial constraints. Indeed, such basic resources are equally important for the upkeep of the child. However, this is no-one’s blame because as

each day passes, the country's economy also goes down and the financial constraints continue rising leading to a perpetual cycle of poverty and suffering for the whole nation. Nevertheless, what is sympathetic is that the orphan is deprived of a healthy living condition.

Educational challenges

Lack of stationery had 75%; lack of literature at home had 100%; Lack of school fees, no future plans and lack of school wear had 80% each.

The impression of the responses is that the educational challenges for the orphans are unbearable, considering that such children have hopes for some of career in future. Such challenges seriously reduce the learning desire of the vulnerable orphans (Sweetman, 2007; Oxfam 2009). The self-esteem and future plans are shattered (UNICEF 2012). Some life-skills become difficult to impart because the brain lacks some motivation and encouragement from the home. To them education becomes just a thing to do and the spirit for competition shrinks. From a functionalist angle (Giddens, 1990), usually poverty inhibits effective participation and involvement in the developmental issues. The reason for most orphans failing to fit into their society upon graduating from the orphanages could be lack of preparation for the future and reinforcement during their stay in the orphanages.

Health related challenges

Lack of food, recreational facilities and toiletries each had 90%; inadequate clothes scored 80%.

The in-depth study of the orphans' problems revealed a serious deficiency of the basic health promotion commodities expected at any institution. The health and all round development of a child is built as early as from birth to about 6-7 years (Freud, 1959). Most importantly is the development of the mind through provision of a healthy environment. If the basic necessity as food lacks, therefore, the intellectual ability will deteriorate (Van Pelt, 2011).

The sociological interpretation of the health related problems could be that the orphans are within societies which are also poverty stricken but willing to care for the vulnerable children. This translates to a life cycle of perpetual poverty and misery for the orphans.

Psychological challenges

30% of the participants said that the orphans would feel neglected; 90% said the orphans would feel safe, proud and wanted.

What is very interesting from the responses here is that although the orphans have poor experiences in the orphanages, they were contented with the life because of the safety and love that they received from the carers than the hostile family life. Comparatively, therefore, the orphans would not mind failing to get food; what is important to them is to receive love and security and all other things are secondary. This implies that in life we sometimes forego other very important issues in order to survive (Haralambos and Holborn, 1994). Learning life the hard way sometimes motivates the mind to grow stronger and stronger each day.

One would also interpret this adjustment as a strong and positive intrinsic force that compels the ego to feel adequate and worthy despite fearful challenges around. If at this tender age the orphans are able to reach such adjustment levels, surely, the society needs to extend its helping hand.

Challenges related to preparation for reunification

Nolife-skills-----	90%
No guidance and counselling programmes-----	90%
No visiting by relatives-----	90%
No communication-----	90%

The study revealed that the orphans lack some reunification programmes such that they are weaned for the world almost unaware of what to do next. In Ukraine, the orphans without the benefit of guidance and counselling in many areas find a place to live, find something to eat and a job in order to survive. Similarly, the orphans lack benefit of reintegration processes while in their preparatory institutions, thereby making life very difficult for them. This may imply that some of the orphanages are simply places of safety for the orphans, and the carers are not sensitive of what the orphans should benefit to prepare them for the future life. Lack of life-skills such as morals, decision-making, self-empowerment, communication, social and many others adversely affect the orphan in his/her effort for self-enhancement. To further impede the orphan's life, is the blockade that may be permanently built between the orphan and the external environment in which he/she will finally settle for the rest of life. Therefore, when shadowed with blank future due to poorly planned future prospects, the orphan finally feels inadequate to be part of this world; “----and what next?” asks Taylor,(1983). It not surprising that some of these orphans end up in the streets, live a life of crime and prostitution or even taking up their lives, because to them life and everything else is unbearable and cruel.

Conclusion

The revelations of this study were that orphans experience hard times with their extended family members and usually, they are victims of all sorts of abuse ranging from physical to neglect. This indicates that some of the orphans' guardians are insensitive and inconsiderate of the life and the needs of the orphans. It also suggests a complete change of cultural and human values. Poverty and economic constraints should not be seen as reasons to put the human life to waste. In fact, it is during the hard times that love and respect for the human should be demonstrated at their heights. It seems our culture no longer recognises that family union as an important social capital for sustainable social, political, cultural, economic and spiritual development. It also emerged from the research that when weapons are sharpened within a family system, it becomes difficult to feel for one another in times of problems, especially when children are left without parents. To worsen the situation, the property, on which the orphaned children may have very little say, is shared among the deceased's family members leaving the children with almost nothing. Faced with such situation, the orphans become vulnerable and many choose to seek refuge in the orphanages or in the streets, making some of the family members feel some form of relief. Therefore, torturing the orphans becomes a nonverbal message that they are unwanted within the system. Such attitudes within some communities has forced some of the orphans to remain at their parents' homesteads as child-headed families- a situation which may expose the orphans to further abuse. This scenario suggests that the orphan is never at peace with life. Some peace and happiness are experienced when he/she only joins the orphanage in which safety and love remain open to shepherd him/her.

Although the orphans find some relief in the orphanages, they still face a lot of challenges which include educational, health, psychological and lack of adequate preparation for future life including reintegration with the family members. The poor background suggests that the orphanages are also poorly equipped, although they may have the much needed values and vision for the promotion of the life of those who are marginalised and trapped in the cycle of poverty. As a system, the society expects the orphans to be provided

with all the relevant knowledge and skills that enhance their future capabilities including those of facing life's challenges with courage, and to learn to emancipate themselves through being productive. Such preparations in the African context are very important.

Recommendations

The study recommended that:

- Family members should be encouraged to take responsibility of caring for the orphans so as to maintain the value of 'ubuntu' which sustains social, cultural and political development of a society.
- Government should encourage community programmes that facilitate restoration and promotion of family ties and relationships for the effective and sustainable social, economic, political, cultural and spiritual transformation and development.
- Government should intensify gender-based violence and abuse on the minority and marginalised populations through initiating behaviour change programmes that aim at educating the communities to be sensitive on the rights and values of humankind.
- Government should encourage, intensify and support multifaceted programmes towards assisting some orphanages with resources for the relief and enhancement of life of the orphans.
- The orphanages should make efforts to put in place programmes that empower and equip the orphans with some life-skills to prepare them for the future life.
- Orphanages should organise programmes aimed at promoting effective and purposeful linkage between the orphans and their families so as to create smooth reunification when the orphans graduate from the orphanages.
- Orphanages as the replacements of the family systems should regularly offer guidance and counselling to the orphans to enhance their positive self – concept, self-efficacy, self-worth and to change their mind-set.

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