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DECLARATION

I Takawina Nyamuparadza, Student Number B1644858, declare that this dissertation is my original research done under the guidance of my supervisor. No part of this dissertation has been submitted to any other educational institution for any qualification. All sources used have been acknowledged.

Signed___________________  Dated 30th October 2017
DEDICATION

MY BELOVED WIFE YEUKAI, MY SONS CASTERN, OBEDIENCE, KUDZAISHE, VICTOR AND DAUGHTERS, BLESSING AND NYASHA FOR THEIR LOVE AND ENABLING A CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE ENTIRE PERIOD OF MY STUDY
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Finally, my love and appreciation goes to my dear wife Yeukai and my sons Castern, Obedience, Kudzaishe, Victor and my daughters Nyasha and Blessing for their love and support as well as patience, tolerance and encouragement during the writing of the research project.
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<td>AHPC</td>
<td>Allied Health Practitioners Council</td>
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<td>ATR</td>
<td>African Tradition Religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Before Christ</td>
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<td>BC</td>
<td>Beijing Convention</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention in the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>District Administrator</td>
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<td>DHS</td>
<td>Demographic Health Survey</td>
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<td>DSI</td>
<td>District Schools Inspector</td>
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<td>FDG</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<td>NFLWA</td>
<td>Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for Advancement of Women</td>
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<td>NPA</td>
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<td>SPSS</td>
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<td>VDPA</td>
<td>Vienna Declaration and Program of Action</td>
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<td>VFU</td>
<td>Victim Friendly Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZIMSTAT</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Statistics Agency</td>
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<td>ZPCA</td>
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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine marital break-ups from a micro conflict perspective. The research identified key drivers and prevalence of divorce and further assessed the effectiveness of premarital counselling in building sustainable marriages. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were employed in this research. The researcher used case study as the research design. Research instruments used to gather data included the use of questionnaires, in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion. The study was guided by Parson’s Structural Functionalist Theory which focuses on the family and its relationship to society as well as the most significant functions that hold a marriage together. The other theory which guided the research was Johan Gultang’s Conflict Analysis Mode which focuses on the combination of attitudes, behaviour and contradictions in creating conflict. This study found out that divorce rate in Centenary Township is constant but tend to increase with seasonality especially during the sale of agricultural produce. The main sources of conflict in marriage identified are personality, communication and behaviour. These sources have direct relationship with the major causes of marital breakups since unfaithfulness/infidelity and the absence of love are influenced by human behaviour and personality. A lesser percentage of couples indicated that they seek premarital counselling and highlighted that it assisted them to prepare for marriage life. However, most of the couples noted that they only sought marital counselling when faced with conflicts in marriage. The study recommended that key traditional and community leaders (pastors included) must be trained in counselling to be equipped with modern skills necessary in dealing with marital conflicts. Counselling programmes must be cascaded to tertiary institutions such as colleges and universities preparing adolescents for future marriages. Policy makers should also develop policies that stabilizes and strengthens the institution of marriage. There is also need to further look into the effectiveness of marital counselling in building sustainable marriages.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The high incidents of marital break ups in Centenary Township prompted the carrying out of this research study in view of its impact on the social fabric as well as the economic repercussions it bears. Centenary Township is infested with patriarchal societies hitched on various traditions especially the African Tradition Religion (ATR). The high level of divorce amongst married couples in this Township proved to be a fertile ground for further research taking into cognisance of the fact that marital break-ups have a negative impact on society and the nation at large. Onyango (2013) contends that in the contemporary society, the rate of marital dissatisfaction due to marital conflicts is at an alarming rate, not even the church has been spared.

Centenary Township is one of the marginalized service centres of Muzarabani District in Mashonaland Central Province. It is situated 150 kilometres North of Harare, surrounded by former commercial farms which are densely populated due to its occupation by ‘new farmers’ (A1 and A2). People from other districts have migrated to Centenary for farming, employment and other social and economic activities. The Township has a population of 123 686 people (2012 Census Report) comprised of the Chewa, Nyanja and Wemba people from Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia (former commercial farm workers). The Korekore from Mbire, Mt. Darwin and lower Muzarabani and the Zezuru from Chiweshe have also been attracted to come and live in this small community. Employees from across the nation have been deployed to work in various government departments and private institutions. Economically Centenary Township thrives on agriculture, small and medium enterprising. By virtue of its location, cultural, social and economic background, the Township has its fair share of social ills. Muzarabani district in which Centenary is situated leads in early marriages, high illiteracy rate, high prevalence of HIV and AIDS and poverty (Poverty Atlas, 2016).
The Township is rich in multicultural diversity where various ethnic groups possess different beliefs, values and moral ethics on the marriage institution, with some viewing payment of lobola as not important, while others view ‘marrying sprees’ as a socially acceptable norm. To others, polygamy and wife inheritance is not a taboo. This has turned the Township into a haven of prostitution, commercial sex work, domestic violence, moral decay and alarming divorce rate. The Township has a busy night club which has frequently attracted prominent musicians with hired ‘dancing queens’ to spice up the ‘pleasure mood’ of local residents. This trend is prevalent during the harvesting season when farmers begin to sell their cash crops and is mostly marked with various forms of crime like domestic violence, murder, suicide, baby dumping, school dropouts and marital conflict.

Statistics obtained from the local district magistrate court indicate that a total of 42 maintenance and 15 protection order cases have been filed for the first quarter of 2017. A police officer in charge of the Victim Friendly Unit of Centenary Police Station also commented that they attend an average of one case of domestic violence on daily basis. Centenary’s Pastors Fraternal Chairperson, Reverend Bunza (fictitious name) also indicated that they attend an average of five cases per week, thus, showing that marriage strife case rates are alarming. The breakdown in a marriage does not only affect the couple in question, but would adversely affect the lives of children of divorcing parents, close friends and relatives. Hence there is need to consider divorce as a major threat to marriage which calls for an immediate course of action. It was against this background that the research was instigated by the need to find out patterns of marital breakups and the effects it bears on the involved partners, children, work and society at large and furthermore look into possible ways to mitigate this phenomenon.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There is a high prevalence and continuous accumulation of divorce cases in Centenary Township which destabilizes family set-up thereby resulting in a number of orphans, school drop-outs, child marriages and child abuse punctuated with promiscuous and antisocial behaviour such as prostitution and drug abuse by the divorced and victims of family break-ups. This trend has been perpetuated by various factors which include widespread economic hardships, cultural
degradation which leads to erosion of moral values, infidelity and also political factors. In particular, the economic meltdown has necessitated loss of jobs and quite a number of heads of households had migrated in search of employment. In addition, abuse of social media platforms such as face book and WhatsApp has stirred mistrust between married couples. Chances are higher such that each partner can re-engage his or her former lover which would end up bringing past memories leading to conflict which could end in marriage break-up if not properly handled. It can be noted that with the change in governance styles, women are gaining first priority in most spheres of influence which would resultantly promote micro-conflicts at family level.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the prevalence and key drivers of marital break-ups as well as assessing the effectiveness of pre-marital counselling in building sustainable marriages in Centenary Township.

1.4 Objectives

The major objectives of this research are:

1. To explore the prevalence of divorce within Centenary Township.
2. To examine the causes of marital conflict leading to divorce in Centenary Township.
3. To assess the effectiveness of premarital counselling in strengthening marriages in Centenary Township.

1.5 Research questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How prevalent is marital break-ups in Centenary Township?
2. What are the key drivers of marital conflict in Centenary Township?
3. How effective is premarital counselling in reducing the prevalence of divorce in Centenary Township?
1.6 Assumptions

Marital break-ups leave a negative impact on the family, community and national well-being. Therefore microcosm of family conflict can lead to family disintegration creating favourable atmosphere for child development, hindering sustainable care and support of the children. Therefore the researcher assumes that premarital counselling can be very effective in building sustainable marriages.

1.7 Significance of the study

This research is beneficial in the following ways:

To the researcher: This research is geared to enhance the scholastic resource base in the discipline of the social sciences and micro-conflict management with the need to attain a qualification at masters’ level. Besides, the need to satisfy curiosity the researcher now has an appreciation of the perspectives of different people with regards to marital break-ups and the various strategies which can be employed in enhancing marriage stability.

To the field or area of study: This study seeks to contribute to the development of knowledge about different strategies that can be applied in-order to create long lasting marriages. It will also make clear other existing gaps of study which other scholars can research further about.

To the policy makers: A clear understanding of issues underlying the high levels of marital break-ups would enable policy makers to effectively craft policies that would alleviate this malady. Policy makers will also be informed about the effectiveness of the existing institutions, acts and bills in dealing with marital break-ups.

To the community: the research findings would assist the community by availing good marriage practices that could go a long way to solve marital disputes and ultimately curb the alarming high divorce rates. Findings of this research will shed light on what has to be done in order to minimise marriage conflicts thereby strengthening the sacred union.
1.8 Limitations of the study

The scarcity of data on the prevalence of marital breakup suppressed this study to give detailed literature on divorce trends in Zimbabwe. Most of the information available was grey literature; which is information from media especially newspapers, court records, police records and information from pastors’ fraternity counselling sessions. In carrying out the study of this nature, this researcher acknowledged possibilities of non-cooperation by some informants especially the divorced who fear stigmatization. Sensitivity of some issues surrounding the topic could preclude some participants in this research to fully and honestly disclose information which would be of relevance to the study. Some individuals and key participants could not be readily available due to their busy work schedule. Even so some couples could cite busy schedules to justify their reluctance to be interviewed or to participate in the research. This research ran a risk of being subjected to biases or subjective viewpoints. This turned to be so since the majority of the participants of this research were either married or divorcees who are perhaps the interested parties of the issues under investigation. In light of the above mentioned limitations the researcher had to thoroughly ensure principles of ethical guidelines such as informed consent, confidentiality and privacy. In order to rectify the issue of participants’ busy schedule the researcher had to make appointments with participants. Maximum levels of objectivity were therefore demanded from the researcher in the data analysis process.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

The study was confined to Centenary Township in Muzarabani District which is in Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe. The area under study covered high and low density suburbs and the researcher excluded the surrounding farm compounds. It focused primarily on divorcees and a handful of married couples as key informants. The study confined itself to marriages as defined by union of two people of opposite sexes. Same sex unions or co-habital relations were not included in this study. The researcher sought to assess the effectiveness of pre-marital counselling over a host of other mitigatory strategies in building sustainable marriages.
1.10 Definition of Key Words

The definitions below are drawn from an array of terms and shall be used as the working definitions of the respective terms in this project.

**Marriage** is a socially or ritually recognized union between spouses that establishes rights and obligations between them, their children and their in-laws. It is an institution in which interpersonal relationships, usually intimate and sexual are acknowledged.

**Marital break-up** is the final termination of a marital union, cancelling the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving bonds of matrimony between the parties, usually freeing the partners to re-marry.

**Conflict** - Galtung (2000) views conflict as a situation in which two or more independent parties are in pursuit of incompatible goals.

**Micro-Conflict** looks at small-scale interactions between individuals, such as conversation or group dynamics. It involves a state of disharmony between incompatible or antithetical persons, ideas, or interests; a clash.

**Pre-marital counselling** refers to counselling that is primarily centred on preparing unmarried persons for marriage. It is a skills training procedure which aims at providing couples with information on ways to improve their relationship once they are married.

**Counselling** is an interpersonal relationship between someone actively seeking help and someone willing to help who is capable of or trained to help in a setting that permits help to be given and received.

**Chapter Outline**

This work will be divided into five chapters. Chapter one covered the introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem and it establishes research objectives, research questions and definition of key terms. It traces evolution of marriage, marital
disintegration as well as impact of marital break-ups on family. Chapter Two reveals the available literature with regards to pre-marital counselling and marital break-up from a micro-conflict perspective in general and Zimbabwe in particular. Also a theoretical framework will be outlined to highlight the relationship between marital break-up and its impact on the family at micro-conflict level. Chapter Three will highlight the methodology which will be used for this study showing the research design used and highlighting the target population, sample size and sampling methods used to identify the subjects to participate in the research. It will also identify research tools that were used. It suggests how data is analysed. Chapter Four will analyse the data collected during the research period and Chapter Five will proffer conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This research is not pioneering work in the field of analysing marital break-ups and the effectiveness of premarital counselling as other researchers have extensively studied this area before. Thus this chapter seeks to review literature in light of premarital counselling and divorce from a micro-conflict perspective. However, before delving into marital break-ups, there is need to define what micro-conflict is as well as highlighting the scholarly perspectives and controversies surrounding the field of marriage and divorce with a view to locate the different interpretations of the situation within the contextual framework of societal expectations in the traditional African family. A theory and model in micro-conflict applicable to marital break-ups are discussed highlighting on their contextual applications and prerequisites. Issues on the nature of marriage and the laws that govern this sacred institution together with relevant government legislation shall be explored. The researcher examines the literature that pertains to the subject of study, the extent to which other researchers stretched themselves and the gaps for further research.

2.1 Theoretical Frameworks

This research is based on this Structural Functionalist Theory coined by Parson and the Social Analysis Mode propounded by Johan Galtung, each with a different general overview and perspective in assessing situations in marriage.

2.1.1 The Structural-Functionalist Theory

This theory studies groups of people or organizations in society and looks for the events and factors that hold that group together. The question that fits this theory is, “what are the consequences of marriage for the operation of society?” (Mast, 2008). The structural-functionalist focuses on the family and its relationship to society as well as the most significant functions that hold a marriage together. Parson’s theory included the differentiation of gender
roles within the family, with each partner filling one of two somewhat opposing but complementary functions. Men were characterised as fulfilling an instrumental role, with women’s more expressive nature providing the complement. He argued that the expressive role was assigned to women as a result of the primarily expressive bond between mother and children.

The above theory was given further intellectual currency by scholars like Bryant et al (2004) who contended that the family fulfils two key functions within society, which are the socialisation of children into the appropriate values and norms of society and the stabilisation of the adult personality through marriage, which served as the antidote to the emotional stresses and strains of everyday life. According to the proponent, there are no elements of society that are in actual conflict with each other. Socialization promotes the family’s understanding on the importance of cooperatively working towards the same end. This culture provides the environment and basis for meeting social and personal goals, moulding each personality to relative conformity. On a global level, Structural-Functional theory explains how and why all of the elements in a society might cooperate with each other to form social progress.

Bryant et al (2010) further noted that society is held together by shared values, languages and symbols. He believed that society is a complex system of interrelated and interdependent parts that work together to maintain stability. In order to study society, Durkheim asserts that a sociologist must look beyond individuals to social facts such as laws, morals, values, religious beliefs, customs, fashion, and rituals, which all serve to govern social life.

2.1.2 The Conflict Analysis Model by Johan Galtung

The conflict analysis model proposed by Johan Galtung in 1969, includes both symmetric and asymmetric conflicts. In the author's opinion, a conflict can be viewed as a triangle whose sides are represented by A (attitude), B (behaviours) and C (contradictions), where C is the tip of the triangle (Stalenoi, 2014).
(C) Contradiction: the main conflict includes real or perceived "incompatibility of goals" between the conflicting parties. In symmetrical conflicts, the contradiction is defined by the parties, their interests and conflicts of interests. In asymmetric conflicts, the contradiction is defined by the parties, the relationship between them and the conflict within this relationship (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2011).

Structural asymmetry exists when A and B are asymmetric in terms of their status, in this case the root of the conflict lies in the structure of the relationship between the two parties. The origin of the conflict is a change in the relations between adversaries. One wishes to amend; the other wants to avoid the change by any means. Nowadays, an increasing number of conflicts have strong asymmetrical characteristics. There are three types of asymmetry: power, strategic and structural asymmetry.

In Galtung's view conflict is the summation of attitude, behaviour and contradiction, where contradiction (C) is the root of the conflict, and attitude (A) and behaviour (B) are meta-conflicts after (C). CAB is a possible example of a conflict sequence starting objectively with an attitude of inner life that is expressed externally through violent or not verbal and / or physical behaviour. This definition helps us to talk about the CAB as a guiding conflict theory, as a dynamic phase of the conflict, or as an approach to solutions (Galtung, 2007). (A) Attitude: includes the perception and non-perception of the parties about themselves and each other. It can be positive or negative, strongly negative especially in violent conflicts when the parties can develop humiliating stereotypes about each other. Attitude consists of emotive and affective components (I like or I
do not like X), cognitive components (favourable or unfavourable information about X) and cognitive/behavioural components (desire, will) were: (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2011). (B) Behaviour: involves cooperation or coercion/conciliation or hostility. Regarding the behaviour in case of violent conflict we talk about threats, coercion or destructive attacks.

Both theories, the Structural Functionalist and the Conflict Analysis Model are significant in this research because they take into cognisance the importance of values and norms of married couples which if faced with irreconcilable differences may spark a conflict, leading to divorce. However, the vision to mitigate the above predicament is grounded in the realisation that it is important to integrate traditional methods of marital counselling skills with the modern family therapy techniques to develop contextual and relevant endogenous marriage counselling approaches. This focus is motivated by the understanding that using relevant marriage counselling strategies can bear far reaching positive implications on building sustainable marriages. The Conflict Analysis Model mentions that when perceptions become incompatible and blended with hostilities, coercion or destructive attacks conflicts are likely to image whereas Parsons expounds on family and gender roles which are also considered important in marriage. When these gender roles, needs, values, goals, and resources become unbalanced, marital conflicts arise in marriage, especially when women bargain for equality.

2.2 Overview on Marital Break-ups
This study on divorce among married couples drew from several sources of reviewed literature which was directly and indirectly related to factors which influenced marital break-ups from a micro-conflict perspective. Most of the literature was drawn from Eurocentric perspectives but generalisation was made, to cut across cultures. This chapter reviewed contemporary literature on marriage and divorce among married couples. The reviewed literature was pertinent in that it helped the study to locate gaps that needed to be filled in by the current investigation. Some of the sub-topics formulated for review were, patriarchal view of marriage, divorce trends, causes of marital conflict and premarital counselling strategies.
As a social relationship that embodies physical, emotional and social dimensions in a manner that is both intimate and harmonious, marriage remains a relationship and like all other relationships between people, it has undergone constant change and evolution (Green, 2013). In this regard, since family and kin forms part of everyone’s existence, marriage life encompasses virtually the whole range of emotional experience which could be warm and fulfilling but, Giddens (2015) argued that marriage could equally be full of the most pronounced tensions, driving people to despair or filling them with a deep sense of anxiety and guilt. One could suggest that there are many aspects of the oppressive side of marriage, including the conflicts and the hostilities that lead to separation and divorce.

2.3 Patriarchal View of Marriage

Sultana (2010) viewed patriarchy as a system whereby male was the primary authority figure central to social organisation where men held authority over women, children and property. It entailed male domination and female subordination. In that same line of thought, Kambarami (2011) viewed patriarchy as a set of social relations which had a material base which enabled men to dominate women. The material base of patriarchy was demonstrated by men’s control over women’s labour power. According to patriarchy, women were regarded as assets owned by men and this view meant that women had to subordinate to their male counterparts and they did not have a voice but complied with men’s demands without objections. The purpose of this study was to find the impact of the above findings practiced by male figures in their marriages and the contributions of such behaviour towards an unceremonious dissolution of a marriage institution. Patriarchal dominance was also further maintained by exclusion of women from access to necessary economically productive resources and by restricting women’s sexuality. All this attributed to society which had socialised men within a culture that perceived men as superior over their female counterparts. Smart (2013) shared the above sentiments when he stated that patriarchy believed that all women were naturally unsuitable to lead men no matter what talent and expertise they possessed. It is vital to note that such sentiments gave rise to feminism movement which sought to prove to men that women were also as competent as men in most areas and they could also be heads of families. Thus, this study also sought to assess why women
decided to settle for divorce. Is it that they wanted to free themselves from male dominated environments or they wanted to prove to men that they were also competent?

According to Sultana (2010) men viewed marriage as an institution where they could demonstrate their masculinity by having dominion over their wives. Masculinity was also further demonstrated by men practicing polygamy. Moyo (2010) posited that polygamy was openly tolerated and men could have as many wives and children as they could and build themselves names for the purpose of fame. Women in such traditional marriages were expected to be submissive, play passive role and take care of children. However marriage should be viewed as a transition that joins two families and anticipates the development of the next generation in both of those families.

Traditionally, men as breadwinners participated in the public spheres being responsible for providing for their families. According to Walter (2011) men were associated with the public sphere while women were associated with the private sphere. This kind of distinction reflected the dominance of men in decision making both in the private and public spheres and consequently the social cultural belief was that women were inferior and men were superior. Smart (2010) claimed that men had an upper hand to control their wives’ sexuality and they determined the number of children for the family. In light of such a background, the main purpose of the research was to assess the contribution of these cultural factors to divorce. This study also assessed common experiences of divorced men and women.

Adams (2010) noted that the coming in of modernization had not changed men much because they still wanted to wield an upper hand in dictating the pace of marriage and how things had to be done. Thus, traditionally age was greatly considered and men could marry wives who were generally young to them so that they would be able to control them. In agreement DeKeseredy (2011) stated that majority of men were against the idea of marrying up. Marrying up was the act or practice of marrying a spouse of higher caste or status and marrying down meant marrying a spouse from an inferior status. Above that, there were some well-meaning men who strongly
believed that educated and professional women were challenging and unmanageable as a result they preferred to marry women who were of perceived inferior social status to theirs.

Mawere and Mawere (2010) highlighted that traditionally, patriarchy regarded the payment of lobola as a custom that brought together families and not as a platform of amassing more wealth. Thus, bride wealth could be paid in kind whereby the groom was expected to exert his labour in the fields of his in-laws and be given a wife after an agreed period. Having been married in such backgrounds divorce was very rare and the partners were compatible in most areas.

2.3.1 Divorce Trends

In this study a funnel shaped approach has been adopted to review literature on the prevalence of divorce starting from a global perspective, moving on to regional and lastly national level as well as the area under study. This approach has chosen to fully trace and account for the prevalence of marital breakup and measuring its intensity as a micro-conflict perspective.

2.3.2 Global view

Generally, divorce has become viral, inevitable and is growing like an epidemic in several countries across the globe. Even developed countries with strong economies are also experiencing high incidents of divorce. One study estimated that legal reforms accounted for about 20% of the increase in divorce rates in Europe between 1960 and 2002. In Australia, nearly every third marriage ends in divorce. After reaching a peak divorce rate of 2.7 per 1,000 residents in 2001, the Australian rate declined to 2.3 per 1,000 in 2007. In Japan, divorces were on a generally upward trend from the 1960's until 2002 when they hit a peak of 290,000 (www.boundless.com/sociology/textbooks/boundless-sociology-textbook/family-12/divorce-95/statistical-trends-in-divorce-542-2426/).

Russia tops the chart of higher divorce rates as five per 1000 of the Russian population whereas Belarus has 3.80; Ukraine has 3.60, Moldova 3.50, Cayman Islands and United States of America 3.40, Bermuda 3.30, Cuba 3.20 and Lithuania 3.10. Russian rate of divorce is recorded
all time higher because of a number of reasons that makes the couple separate. The divorce rate is nearing 51%, and according to the reports in the year 2012, nearly 650,000 people got divorced. The reasons for divorce are alcoholism, sub-standard living situations, and financial difficulties. Other factors to add include poverty, living in cramped houses, inability to compromise and infidelity. The instability in the growth of the family, domestic violence, adultery, murders of either spouses or spousal suicide is also some of the other factors. While on the other hand, Belarus has the second highest rate in the world with 68% and the reasons are secularization, abortion rates and an increase in poverty. Ukraine has a divorce rate of 42% as the people get married as early as possible but this makes them impossible to maintain their marriages. Additional factors of divorce are alcoholism, loss of trust, financial strains, an increase in the number of single-parent families and easy divorce procedure (www.worldstopmost.com/2017-2018-2019-2020/news/countries-with-highest-divorce-rate-top-10/).

Researchers have long sought to understand variation in divorce across countries and to predict changes in divorce over time. Shelley and Brauner (2015) argued that industrialization—by which he meant a host of socioeconomic changes including urbanization, the weakening of kinship ties, women’s increased educational and employment opportunities and the greater pursuit of individual self-interest led to higher levels of divorce. Consequently, not only would more industrialized countries have higher rates of divorce than less industrialized countries, but divorce rates would increase as countries industrialized. This hypothesis, widely accepted by demographers, is broadly consistent with the increase in divorce seen in North America and Europe, which rose from the beginning of the twentieth century through the mid-1980s (Shelley and Brauner, 2015:585).

A general observation in five countries with highest divorces rates being tracked over three consecutive years clearly indicated that divorce rates are soaring high. Statistics from table2.1 below indicate that in 2010 there was decline in crude divorce rate in four main countries except in Belarus were it was increasing constantly. This later increased in 2011, thus giving an impression that divorce has become cancer in marriages.
Figure 2.1: High Crude Divorce Rates in 2011

Source (United Nations World Demographic Report)

The prevailing wind of divorce has also been felt even in the Islamic states. From figure 2.2 below, the lowest rate is 0.63 per thousand, the majority of the states are between 1.1 and 1.6 whereas the highest is at 2.3 per thousand. These statistics alone indicate that divorce is a major phenomenon which is affecting every society globally.
2.3.3 African Perspective

Divorce trends in the region of Africa are difficult to trace given the scarcity of such data. Despite this lack of adequate data, there is widespread belief that divorce in the region is increasing rapidly. Researchers frequently assert that divorce is on the rise, but often justify these claims by making reference to dated ethnographic work in small populations (Shelley and Brauner, 2015). Others point to the rising number of women who are currently divorced without taking into account population growth or possible changes in the rates of remarriage (Ntoimo and Odimegwu 2014; Takyi 2001; Takyi and Broughton 2006 as cited in Shelley and Brauner, 2015).

General view by Shelley and Brauner (2015) from the assessment of trends in divorce conducted over time in twenty countries indicated that divorce is not increasing. Instead it is stable or declining in most countries. The highest rates of divorce occur in Liberia, Central African Republic, and Congo-Brazzaville, with over 40 percent of unions ending in divorce less than 20
years after they began. In Malawi and Ethiopia and a band of countries in eastern Africa which includes Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Madagascar divorce rates are generally thought to be high. In the remaining countries in central and southern Africa divorce rates are more moderate, while the trend appears least common in the Sahel countries of Mali, Burkina Faso and Senegal.

Data collected from the several rounds of Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) in twenty countries indicated no evidence of a clear and consistent upward trend in divorce in any country. In fact, in six countries (Benin, Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, and Niger), divorce appears to be decreasing over time. In Benin in 1996, 26 percent of unions ended in divorce within 20 years. By 2001, this proportion had fallen to 14 percent. In Ghana, comparable proportions fell from 43 percent in 1988 to 33 percent in 2008. In Niger, the proportion of divorced women dropped by more than 10 percentage points over the 20 years from 1992 to 2012. Namibia, Senegal, Togo, and Zambia exhibit modest declines. Another six countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe) show very little change of an upward trend, as does Nigeria with the exception of the DHS conducted in 2003. Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, and Rwanda reveal substantial variation, but not in a consistent direction.

2.3.4 The Zimbabwean Context

The scarce evidence of data on the divorce trends in Zimbabwe is also consistent with few scholarly data being available. Most of the information available is grey literature; which is information from media especially newspapers, court divorce records, police records and from pastors’ fraternity counselling sessions. This scarcity of divorce trends data suppresses this study to give detailed literature on divorce trends in Zimbabwe. Thus, even Goode as in his seminal work, “World Changes in Divorce Patterns”, does not discuss trends in sub-Saharan Africa precisely because of the absence of reliable data (Shelley and Brauner, 2015). This conspicuous knowledge gap can be partly attributed to the absence of high-quality data. Standard measures of divorce rates usually rely on data from civil registration systems, which are inadequate in nearly all countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Shelley and Brauner (2015) contended that consequently, country-level estimates of divorce rates are missing from African region in standard statistical
compilations, such as the UN’s Demographic Year Book for instance the United Nations 2010. In addition, nationally representative demographic surveys, which can help fill the data gaps for other missing statistics (such as age at first marriage, fertility, and mortality), collect very limited data on union dissolution. While many censuses and the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) collect data on current marital status, little is said about the risk of divorce since current status does not account for the rate of remarriage, which can be quite high in sub-Saharan Africa (De Walque and Kline, 2012).

However, according to the Zimbabwe Population Census Report (2012) the national divorce rate was 4.2 percent. Matabeleland South had the highest percent of 5.2, followed by Harare with 5.1 percent and most provinces have divorce rates between 4.1 and 4.8 percent. Mashonaland Central the province in which this research was being undertaken had a divorce rate of 4.3 percent.
Table 2.1 Percentage distribution of Population by Province and Marital status, Zimbabwe 2012 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Never Married</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Divorced /Separated</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Not stated</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulawayo</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>431439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manicaland</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>982377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mash. Central</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>659367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mash. East</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>783672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass. West</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>884987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mat. North</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>419436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mat. South</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>387148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>927427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masvingo</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>815978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harare</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1397127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7688958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source (ZIMSTAT, 2012:18)

ZIMSTAT (2012) also reviewed that divorce rate was higher in females (6.5%) than in males (2.5%). Maybe this could be due to changes in marital practices, growing women’s autonomy and also weak divorce laws enabling women to frequently quit marriages whenever they wanted (Shelley and Brauner, 2015) and availability of maintenance costs which will enable them to remain economically stable (Mapuranga, 2016). One plausible argument is that increases in women’s autonomy will elevate divorce rates as better-educated women grow increasingly dissatisfied with traditional unions and employed women acquire the means to leave unacceptable relationships (Shelley and Brauner, 2015).
According to Nyoni (2014) in 2014 alone the High Court of Zimbabwe received a total of 551 cases of divorce applications, a 20% increase as compared with 416 cases received in 2010. Laiton (2017) noted that, 1 102 couples have registered to terminate their marriages at the High Court in Harare and Bulawayo with 173 divorces already granted since January 2017. He further notes that the Bulawayo High Court also received 282 divorce requests and has so far annulled 44 marriages with the couples citing irreconcilable differences. The staggering number of divorces granted by the High Court the same week was a serious cause for concern. During this same period High Court judge Justice Erica Ndewere granted 22 couples the wish to terminate their marriages for varying reasons, with many citing irreconcilable differences for throwing in the towel. The Judge President, Chief Justice Chiweshe speaking at the High Court Circuit in Bulawayo in 2013 said, “The rate at which couples are divorcing has reached alarming levels”. He emphasized that the prevalence of factors such as urban migration, domestic violence, adultery and other social ills and the prevailing harsh economic conditions exacerbated the national increase of divorce rate.

2.4 Causes of Marital Conflict

2.4.1 Global View

The initial global increases in divorce took social scientists by surprise (Williams, 2012) and even now, there is no single explanation of why divorce rates have increased, or vary cross-nationally. Suggested explanations range from economic trends to cultural shifts and legal changes. Many explanations point to the change in gender roles—from gender asymmetry to increasing gender symmetry and equality and, in particular, to the dramatic increases in married women’s labour market activity. Indeed, the trends in female employment and in divorce rates have closely followed one another and a positive relationship between the two is also visible across countries (Adams, 2010).

Leach as cited in Haralambos (2010) suggested that the privacy in marriages is the source of fear and violence, far from being the basis of the good society. He further explains that marriage with its narrow privacy and tawdry secrets is the source of most social discontents. These discontents
unresolved normally caused a breakdown in marriage. Women remain marginalized in terms of access, control and ownership of economic resources thereby inhibiting them from expanding their economic capabilities and responsibilities. When women bargain for equal economic status, men feel challenged and this becomes a spark for marriage conflict which may lead to break ups.

Overall, there are considerable uncertainties in attempts to predict future rates of divorce and couple relationship instability. To the extent that the increases in divorce and instability reflected incompatibilities between prevailing family institutions and changing society, it is possible that divorce rates will stabilize and decline if social practices and institutions adapt to the changing circumstances (Williams et al, 2012). Such declines in divorce have occurred before. For instance, in Japan divorce was more common at the beginning of the twentieth century than some decades later, which was interpreted as reflecting adaptation of family life to broader societal changes (Mast, 2013). In the Western countries, an important candidate for change is gender roles. The changes in gender roles were to a larger extent driven by changes in women’s roles and activities, whereas men have been much slower in taking up previously female tasks. An increase in men’s willingness to do their share in the household may thus lead to increased family stability.

In addition, legislative changes also affect divorce rates. But one would ask if they really change or they merely reflect the rising acceptance of and demand for divorce. Recent research has generally concluded that liberalization of divorce laws because spikes in divorce rates most probably as spouses in ill-functioning marriages took advantage of the better opportunities for exiting their marriages (González and Viitanen, 2009). Loosening of official control over marriages and divorces changed the divorce process and the dynamics of marriages. The possibility of exiting a marriage without the consent of another spouse shifted the power balance to the one willing to do so, while the shortening of the legal recourse of marriage dissolution have made the process faster and possibly less conflict-ridden (Stevenson and Wolfers, 2009).

The spread of new ideas and attitudes is likely to have contributed to the increases in family instability. This has seen the erosion of traditional and indigenous customs and values. Divorce
laws have remarkably changed in the beginning of the 21st. Divorce was prohibited until recently in several western countries (for example, Italy legalized divorce in 1974, Spain in 1981, Ireland in 1997, and Malta in 2011) and it is difficult to obtain in others. Often, divorces could be granted on the basis of serious fault (such as adultery, violence, or mental illness) or possibly, by the mutual consent of the spouses (Helms et al, 2013). Even then, the process was usually expensive and lengthy. Major liberalization of divorce laws began in the sixties and seventies, and in 1970, California was the first state to implement no fault divorce, in which either spouse could exit the marriage without having to provide specific reasons (Helms et al, 2013). Thus, it can be noted that cultural shift has significant role in destabilising marriages.

Increases in international migration have spurred interest into the family lives of migrant groups. Migration as a major life event can itself have a divorce-inducing effect, especially since one of the spouses can benefit from the move more than the other (Lyngstad and Jalovaara, 2010). Furthermore, this results in intermarriage which is commonly regarded as a sign of integration. Such exogamous marriages face higher dissolution rates, since groups may keep features of their countries of origin which would spark conflicts in marriages.

Muwanigwa (2016) assets that the increase of marital break-ups has something to do with sociological issues. It really points to an issue of people not knowing the reasons why they enter into marriage because most of these break-ups are as a result of couples not being compatible with each other and having so many differences. It can be noted that as a result of incompatibility, couples end up engaging in violence and the end result is divorce.

2.3.1 African Perspective

The rampant occurrence of divorce in African homes is found to have socio-economic and political effect in the society. Olaniyi’s “analytical study of the causal factors of divorce in African homes” reflected that participants perceived barrenness or infertility as the major cause of divorce. It is also followed by other causes such as absence of love, ignorance, poverty, religion differences, unemployment, and others (Olaniyi, 2015). The results obtained in Olaniyi’s study further showed that, there is significant relationship between poverty level and divorce
rates. This also revealed that the differences in religion and culture have a significant influence on divorce rates, both positive and negative.

In an African context, culture plays a pivotal role in stabilizing marriages. The issue of marital break-up was a taboo during the Victorian era. If a married couple was to separate, it was expected that they would remain married but live separately for the rest of their lives (Rupande et al, 2013). Marital problems were not openly discussed. In contrast, the contemporary trend was an ever-increasing divorce rate among young couples especially those gainfully employed. In the modern set up, marital problems could publicly be discussed with colleagues at workplaces and peer counselling could be easily employed than explored.

Mbit and Oforchukwu (as cited in Arugu, 2014) pointed out that in African culture, any marriage that is not blessed with children is not yet considered to have achieved its aim. This was also the case in the biblical story from the book of Samuel, where Hannah was taunted for being childless. It is written that, her rival, Peninnah, would continuously mock her because Yahweh had made her barren so Hannah wept and would not eat (1 Sam. 1:6-7). The other reasons why women married in the Victorian era are that they were not educated or trained with any skills other than being a wife and mother (Dale, 2009). Young girls were taught to take care of the household and keep themselves beautiful to capture the attention of their husbands. In contrast Niedomy et al (2010) posited that modern women were educated and often involved in careers, therefore, the reasons for marriage depended on the personal choices of the women than the need for support. Modern women often held careers while married, creating a marital partnership rather than a subservient situation. Home and financial responsibilities were shared between men and women, making marriages appear like a state of partnership rather than an institution with assigned roles. This change of roles of women has increasingly put pressure on men to adopt a moderate view of the marriage that gave the woman an elevated position of equality. However, men who had failed to appreciate this development tried to relegate women to a traditional subservient role which had resulted in women seeking their emancipation from the marital yoke. Women emancipation movements promoting feminism had impacted on marital relations with the end result being high divorce rates. This research attempted to establish how women’s changing roles over time has exacerbated divorce among married couples.
2.3.2 The Impact of Globalization on an African Marriage

Globalisation made marriage to lose its essence due to exacerbated hefty bride wealth charges. Beck-Gernsheim (2011) asserted that before modernity when societies were still closed, relations of marriages were cemented by little tokens as hoes or even non-material things like working in the fields of in-laws so as to be given a wife. The contemporary generation can no longer afford the prevailing demands of the customary practice of marriage. The new custom is perceived as a facilitator of the oppression and abuse of women in marriages. It is a dehumanizing practice that equated women to tradable property. The above perception concurred with Niedomy (2010) that in societies where bride wealth has been commercialized, women are seen as property owned by their husbands. This is also consistent with Kambarami (2012) who argued that hefty lobola bred inequality and widened the social power gap between men and women thereby placing women in subordinate positions. This has led to a decline in the formalized marriage unions. Contemporary women are fighting for a voice and they are hacked down by the custom of lobola which relegated them to a secondary social position in relation to men. However, Gasva and Mutanana (2014) asserted that, though some women preferred to remain single, marriage remains an important indicator of female status and many women believe that an unsatisfactory marriage or a brief one is preferable than not being married at all. Marriages were based on true love and not on material benefits. This research established some reasons why marriage was no longer regarded as a priority among most women.

2.3.3 Zimbabwean Context

During the prehistoric era, marriage was viewed as a way to unite two different families and observing the traditional norms and values of a particular society. Unfortunately these traditional norms have disappeared under the guise of modernity. Culturally, the Shona considered lobola (bride price) as a noble custom that functioned to safeguard against marital dissolution because it was generally expected to be paid back upon divorce unlike in cohabitation where there is free entry and exit (Mawere and Mawere, 2010). Lobola was viewed as a gesture of commitment on the part of the bridegroom towards the marriage union. In traditional marriages, husbands had
authority and expected their wives to be obedient and submissive. In an attempt to evade such conflicts women now choose to escape male control and dominance by staying away from bride wealth marriages. Instead of contracting a formal marriage, most modern women prefer informal marriages such as cohabitation (*kuchaya Maputo*) to maintain their social liberty. The misconceptions of freedom by some members of the society in recent years have resulted in the loss of respect for culture and marriage and consequently leading to break-ups of many families with women seeking legal recourse for maintenance (Mapuranga, 2016). This has in turn negatively affected the psychology and behaviour of children who grow up with single parents. In the modern calculative environment, marriages are no longer based on love but rather on wealth and money (Mawere and Mawere, 2010). These informal marriages have exposed partners to conflicts than formal ones like “*kukumbira*” which strengthens family ties and promote consensual relationships based on free will and transparent choice (Mawere and Mawere, 2010). In light of the above, modernity has eroded African culture on marriage.

Marriage is now viewed as an economic partnership where the partners involved contributed to the survival of the union (Guttmann, 2014). Though there is a paradigm shift from the traditional perspectives, men still want to maintain an upper hand in their marriages. Philippe (2009) posited that the payment of hefty bride wealth made many men to exercise control even over their wives’ discretionary income. The majority of men hold the perspective that once they settle in marriage they become the upper guardian over their spouses especially in terms of decision making. Men would exercise control over the resources earned by their spouses. This is a potential area of serious conflict between married partners. The research established reactions of married women to male dominated environments and how this led to marital strife culminating in divorce.

2.3.4 The Impact of Poverty on Marriage

Poverty is also one of the major drivers which have perpetuated the vulnerability of many households within the country to the wide array of the social ills, UNFPA Annual report (2014). The upsurge of economic hardships has led to family break-up with some couples divorcing, living separately, children withdrawn from school some choosing to become domestic workers in
order to earn for a living. The following statistics on poverty in Muzarabani District indicate that poverty could be one of the key drivers to marital break ups in Centenary Township. According to ZimStat Poverty Atlas (2015), the overall poverty prevalence for Muzarabani District was 88.4%. Further analysis by ward indicated that Ward 24 had the lowest poverty prevalence of 66% compared to Ward 15 (Centenary Township) which had the highest prevalence of 95%. The information gathered from social welfare indicates that a total of 90,556 people are vulnerable and receiving a total of 962,8 tonnes of maize annually. This alone shows a high rate of poverty within Muzarabani District.

2.3.5 The Impact of Technology and Social Media on Marriage

Through technological advancement, social media is evolving at an alarming speed, with smart phones replacing simple cell phones offering a whole new world of fast, direct and discreet communication options. Countless applications exist to change provocative pictures and messages, so that it is easier than ever to maintain multiple virtual and real life relationships in secret. Jim Halfens in his blog post Huffpost of April 27, 2015 said that, “Gian Ettore Gassani president of the Italian Association of Matrimonial Lawyers, told the Times of London that forty percent of adulterous divorce cases in Italy cite WhatsApp messages as evidence of unfaithfulness”. Not only WhatsApp, but, even face book is also driving a wedge between couples. Infidelity and mistrust born through the unfaithful use of social media has become the new monster to marital break-ups (Lindner, 2012). Misunderstandings and disputes are inevitable within a marriage, but their outcome should not escalate to marital conflict and violence.

Mutanana’s research on how family members are interacting, the type of social networks they are using to interact and why they are using those networks revealed that the use of media in relationships undoubtedly has a negative impact on marriages. According to Mutanana (2016) social media networks make family members keep in touch every day, discuss social issues affecting the family, providing easy communication with family members across the borders, get everyday news in time, and assists in research studies. On the contrary the same author strongly
affirms that the negative impact of media on marriages is disastrous and no marriage is immune. From his research, over nine-tens of the participants had experienced a misunderstanding from communicating through electronic media that affected a close relationship and half (50%) said that the misunderstanding damaged the relationship. This is supported by Lumpkin (2012) who attributed 33% of divorce cases to the face book in 2011 and inappropriate messages to individuals of the opposite sex.

2.3.6 The Advent of Human Rights and its Impact on Marriage

The nature of human interactions within marital relationships has been changing with evolution of time. The rise of human rights, equal rights and feminist ideologies is contributing to further complexity of marriages. The Commission for Africa (2005) revealed that there are several conventional declarations that have been also enacted from global to national levels intended to address gender disparities and mainstreaming. Such declarations include; the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for Advancement of Women (NFLSAW) of 2001, Vienna Declaration and Program of Action (VDPA) of 2003, Convention in the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Convention (BC) and Namibian Plan of Action (NPA) on mainstreaming gender perspectives. Whilst the researcher acknowledges the role of gender perspectives in strengthening families, occurrence of marital break-ups is ever increasing which is a cause for concern and an indication that something is wrong in the society. This notion is also supported by Minister Chinamasa who was quoted in the Herald of December 23, 2012 saying, “The rate at which couples are divorcing is alarming and people have become too litigious. The actual reason, I cannot tell, but it shows something is wrong somewhere.” Hence, there is need for investigation on the cause of this phenomenon and proffer solutions to create stable marriages translating to peace and tranquillity within the society and Zimbabwe at large.

Zimbabwe has obligations under CEDAW to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family issues. It also has the duty to “modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women with a view to achieve the elimination of prejudices, customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of
either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women” (Dube, 2013:2). The fact that women are using gender equity and equality as a standard measure of freedom in most aspects of life has seen them gaining more power to determine when marriage starts, its duration, how it ends and what they take aboard after marital dissolution. Some women view marriage institution as a wealth accumulation facet through informal marriages such as cohabitation which can be easily terminated and offer opportunities for claiming maintenance (Mapuranga, 2016). In pursuit of striking gender balance between men and women, the tide of turbulent marriages has continued to grow with children experiencing the greatest impact.

Through enactment of government policies, acts and bills in a way to address inequality women are given the upper hand by the law that it is up to them to make men suffer through the law (Mapuranga, 2016). The Maintenance Act [Chapter 5:09] in 2005 provided ground for women to seek courts claiming maintenance fee to ensure that children access what they deserve. Subsequently, women are getting married in order to be divorced so as to claim maintenance and a share in the distribution of property (Mutanana, 2016). This indicated that the state favours the interests of women and undermining those of men. Thus most women are now entering into marriages especially with the elite, for prosperity and not for genuine love, unlike in the old days. The Herald (2015) has even reported that according to the Harare Civil Court statistics at least 72% of men siphoning huge amounts of money have been exonerated from paternity by DNA tests. This proves that some women have even claimed maintenance funds from men who are not the real fathers of their children.

Phillipe (2009) posited that the Victorian married women owned no property and assets brought into the marriage by the women automatically became the property of her husband. In the event of marital dissolution, all assets, including the children, would belong to the husband. In the Zimbabwean setup marriages were done in legalese - out of the community of property and this implied that both couples contributed to the estate belonging to the marriage and in the event of divorce property could be divided on pro-rata basis (Niedomy, 2010). The implication of this is that the woman is no longer the loss leader in a divorce settlement. This might encourage women
to consider divorce as an option in the face of marital strife. The researcher attempted to establish how much the right to earn and own property has increased the woman’s proclivity towards opting for divorce.

2.4 Premarital Counselling

Tusker (2017) postulates that, one of the most important reasons to seek premarital counselling is to prevent divorce. Stahmann (2010) defines premarital counselling as a process that enriches premarital relationships in order to promote more satisfactory and stable marriages and less divorce. Premarital counselling will assist in increasing couples likelihood for harmony as they will identify their fears, values, beliefs, needs, and desires and eventually learn how to communicate them. It will empower couples with the tools needed to build trust between each other and the techniques that can be adopted to support the relationship, (Tusker, 2017). The goals of premarital counselling include easing the transition from single to married life, increasing couple stability, satisfaction, friendship, commitment to the relationship, couple intimacy, enhancing problem solving and decision making skills. Kim (2012) states that, whenever couples are planning to get married, premarital counselling becomes an excellent strategy for them to get started on their union. Mobegi, Mokoro and Keari (2016) in support establishes that, premarital counselling as an immunization function boosts the partners capabilities to handle potential difficulties that may emerge later in the marriage life.

2.5 Global View of Marital Counselling

The science of marriage counselling is being studied in great detail. Dale (2009) posited that women seemed to get more from it than men and that it might not have had a lasting effect on the couple’s marriage. However, receiving professional marital counselling before problems escalate to critical stages is beneficial to a marriage. The work of marriage counselling was informally fulfilled by close friends, family members or local religious leaders. Dale (2009) asserted that in many less technologically advanced cultures around the world, the institution of family, the village or group elders fulfilled the work of marital counselling. With increasing modernisation or westernisation in many parts of the world and the continuous shift towards isolated nuclear
families the trend is biased towards trained and accredited relationship counsellors or family therapists (Green, 2009). Sometimes volunteers were trained by either the government or social service institutions to help those who were in need of family or marital counselling. Some large companies maintained full-time professional counselling staff to facilitate smoother relations between corporate employees, to minimize the effect that personal difficulties might have on work related performance and production. This study sought to establish whether marriage counselling was an effective tool on reducing divorce among couples.

2.5.1 African Perspective

In traditional African societies, marital counselling was provided in various forms, the most common of which was giving advice and sharing wisdom in men and women’s forums for instance Dare. Providing advice has been a common way of helping other people. The advice offered was frequently instrumental in assisting couples to consider their future. In many instances, the extended family was the main source of advice for family or clan members. Wisdom generally refers to experience and knowledge about life and using them judiciously. In African societies, it was considered the responsibility of elders to provide wisdom or counsel to young boys and girls. The wisdom provided by elderly men and women was part of the counselling function of the family or society for teenagers. Another aspect of wisdom is sharing proverbs or folk stories (Ndlovu and Hove, 2015). Smart (2013), argues that providing advice often promoted the dependence of young couples on the information offered which was largely subjective and did not promote their personal choice to marriage life and development.

However, marriage counselling was provided with various aims given that the nature and intensity of problems varied according to sex as well as age. The process also depended on the situation, environment and on training. The basic aims of marital counselling include; helping clients and couples to gain insight into the origins and development of emotional difficulties leading to an increased capacity to take rational control over feelings and actions. Secondly, to alter maladjusted behaviour. Thirdly, to assist couples to move in the direction of fulfilling their potential or achieve an integration of conflicting elements within themselves. Lastly, to provide them with interpersonal skills, awareness and knowledge which will enable them to confront
social inadequacy (Smart, 2013). Communication skills, compatibility, long term goals, conflict resolution, expectation, intimacy and sexuality and personalities are also covered by successful premarital counsellors (Mobegi, Mokoro and Keari, 2016).

2.5.2 Zimbabwean Context

Traditionally, societies have always had ways and means of addressing problems which individuals and families encountered. Communities and families had people of high moral standing, like grandparents, aunts, uncles, kraal heads, and headman to handle problems related to bride-proposals, marital affairs and family disputes (Gasva and Mutanana, 2014).

In modern society, some married couples in Zimbabwe are making use of pastors or ministers of religion. Of late Zimbabwe Republic Police introduced a counselling unit known as the Victim Friendly Unit (VFU) whose major focus is counselling victims of domestic violence and child abuse. However, in spite of all these attempts, it would appear that married people do not always seek counselling when in need. In collectivist communities like Zimbabwe, some married partners maybe exposed to the belief that the intervention by professional counsellors, pastors or VFU officers is tantamount to interference of their private lives because some married couples may lack trust and may view counsellors as strangers. Ndlovu and Hove (2015) argued that in non-individualistic societies like Zimbabwe, society does not interfere in the couples’ fights the argument being that, it is a domestic affair. This could explain the reason why most couples do not opt for marriage counselling. Baer (2013) propounds that premarital counselling has the potential of creating problems, in that it causes prospective couples to discuss issues they may never have considered. Norman as cited in Mobegi, Mokoro and Keari (2016) further elaborates that most young people who are anticipating marriage do not seek premarital counselling services due to the fact that they fear that their secrecy that they may disclose to the counsellor may harm their relationship. Furthermore, it is purported that partners may not disclose their past relationship history for fear of becoming a public ridicule. Ultimately, premarital counselling becomes a rare choice to most young couples (Gottman, 2014). Even though young couples experience the fears outlined above, participating in premarital counselling sends positive
messages to the couple. This makes premarital counselling an important aspect in their journey to the institution of marriage.

In Zimbabwe, there are basically four modes of counselling that would benefit couples. These are: traditional counselling, pastoral counselling, victim friendly unit of the Zimbabwe Republic Police, and professional counselling (Gasva and Mutanana, 2014). Choice of the mode of counselling solely depends on the preference of one in need of such a service.

### 2.5.3 Traditional Marital Counselling

In African tradition, family rules dictate that if married couples experience marital conflicts, they should consult their elders to resolve the problems. This view is further explained by Komblum (2010) who states that some methods employed by couples in resolving marital conflicts include a ‘round table’ settlement by both family members of married couples and intervention by close friends. However, it seems that this traditional way of resolving marital conflict has since been affected by several factors among them, socio-cultural and economic factors. According to Rupande et al (2013) traditional chiefs had multiple roles which included serving as a symbol of authority and as a regulator. Since these roles were accepted and respected by all, they acted as a clear direction in the day-to-day affairs of the society. The community elders and the chief were a valuable source for guidance and counselling for the members of society. In most cases, the chiefs were regarded as a vital link between ancestors and the present generation. This link was strengthened by the rituals, ceremonies and taboos attached to them. Due to such a set up, it was easy to guide and counsel the younger couples, since the rituals or ceremonies were also aimed at preparing them for adult roles in society. ([http://www.oerafrica.org](http://www.oerafrica.org)/FTP Folder/ Website 20 Materials /Health / KCN- Health OER/Unit1/001.html). Counsel was therefore readily sought and provided. While each one of these elements is important, only a few are used to illustrate the role of marriage counselling in present-day sub-Saharan African societies.

It can be noted that in the present day, sub-Saharan African countries have experienced many changes resulting in the weakening of the structure and values of a marriage institution. Smart (2013) outlined the most outstanding examples as: a gradual shift from the extended to the nuclear family unit, or single parent family unit, a heavy reliance on a cash economy in poor
countries, the infiltration of foreign culture through films, television, videos, live performances, and magazines which are counter-productive. These include wars, political instability and epidemics, leading to increased numbers of orphans and refugees; resulting in moral decay due to elements from within and outside the nations.

The changing socio-economic environment has also altered the ways in which people manage their affairs; hence the need for counselling has become paramount in order to promote married couples in improving their self-image to effectively achieve life tasks.

During the pre-colonial era, the ‘round table’ strategy of resolving marital conflict used to be quite effective. In such a mode of counselling, the aunt (tete) or uncle played a pivotal role. In support of the above notion, Chakuchichi and Zvaiwa (2010) posited that boys and girls received pre-marital counselling before marriage. However, the above authors further notes that this culture has been eroded by modern styles of living including the disintegration of the extended family, education and media.

In his address to the British parliament on 2nd February 1835, Lord Macaulay said;

> I have travelled across the length and breadth of Africa and I have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief such wealth I have seen in this country, such moral values, people of such calibre, that I do not think would ever conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone of this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage and therefore, I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for if the Africans think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own they will lose their self esteem, their native culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nation.

Ndlovu and Hove (2015) indicated that Ndebele and Shona cultures task people to provide marriage counselling services in different problem situations. These people included sahwira (a close family friend). A sahwira is told problems by a family or one of the spouses since he/she is considered to be better placed to solve their marital strife (Ndlovu and Hove, 2015). Then there was sekuru/umalume who counselled the young men as they reached puberty in preparation of
marriage life. The maternal uncle and aunt served as teenage counsellors who took boys and girls through their usually trouble filled teen years. As partially prescribed by tradition, *sekuru/umalume* marriage counselling continued even after the teens got married. The uncle tried by all means to acquire as much skill and training in counselling from peer friends and elders so as to be there for his nephews when they needed the service. Finally, grandparents were available to offer premarital counselling for sex education to their grandchildren and encourage them, to maintain their purity until marriage. All the above people worked hand in hand in building responsible future families as well as maintaining sound marriages.

### 2.5.4 Pastoral Marriage Counselling

Religion can serve as a great resource for marriage counselling. Various studies show that there is a positive link between religion and marital satisfaction. Premarital preparation in North America can be dated back to the 1930s, with the earliest interventions being administered through churches (Duncan, Childs and Larson, 2010).

A number of couples are encouraged by their pastors or church leaders to engage in premarital counselling. Premarital counselling within church settings is provided by the clergy or pastor or lay ministers of the church (Gottman, 2014). For example, traditional Muslim couples may assume a religiously based set of gender-role expectations in which a Muslim wife might maintain the upkeep of the household, including the protection of her husband's belongings, while in turn expecting him to be the breadwinner and provider of the family (Springer *et al*, 2009).

Mafumbate *et al* (2010) observed that religious community leaders have traditionally sought to provide spiritually-based solutions for those in marital conflict. Pastoral counselling is helpful as the clergy have been able to listen intently to personal problems of Christians and non-church members for centuries. However, there is now a paradigm shift to ecumenical marriage counselling which has basically placed pastors in the provision of family therapy. Pastors who are certified mental health professionals are mainly found in developed countries. For instance, Mafumbate *et al* (2010) notes that in America there is the American Association of Pastoral Counsellors which represents and sets standards for over 3,000 pastoral counsellors and 100
counselling centres in North America and around the world. Pastoral counselling offered in developing countries like Zimbabwe is still traditional, but all the same it is popular because it helps people with different social problems. In the same view, Atkinson et al (2013) identified a pastoral counsellor as a ‘listener of stories’ and in a certain sense, who becomes an ‘interpreter of stories’ embedded in the religious and cultural language of the person’s experiences. Basically, it follows that pastoral counselling is a process of re-interpretation of human experiences. Mafumbate et al (2010) made reference to pastoral counselling as Christian counselling though some non-believers would sometimes opt for it. More often, people in marriages or relationships face various spiritual or other problems which may compel them to seek spiritual guidance from pastors.

2.5.5 Professional Marriage Counselling

Professional counselling is in some instances named modern counselling. The researcher opted to refer to it as ‘professional’ because, unlike the above stated modes of counselling services, it is guided by an ethical code, for instance, the Zimbabwe Professional Counsellors Association (ZPTCA) even though it is yet to be registered with the official Allied Health Practitioners Council (AHPC). Marriage and family counsellors are trained in psychotherapy and generally focus on understanding their clients’ symptoms and their intervention contribute to alleviating problems in marriage relationships. They are also trained to use various counselling theories and techniques in relation to marital issues. In this regard, Clinebell (2011) identified some of the most widely used family therapy approaches as psychodynamic, social-learning theory and systems theory.

2.5.6 Benefits of Premarital Counselling

Saleh (2017) postulate that, there have been numerous studies conducted on the effects of premarital counselling and the results show that it is beneficial. One particular study was a meta-analysis. The meta-analysis evaluated the results of research about the effectiveness of premarital prevention programs. The study revealed that the average couples that participated in a premarital counselling program were better off than 79% of those who did not (Carroll, 2013). In other words the couples who participated in premarital counselling had higher rates of
satisfaction and stability within their marriage and lower rates of divorce than couples who did not participate in a premarital prevention programs.

Another is a study whereby researchers used a random household survey to find out information on premarital counselling, marital quality and marital stability. After analysing the information they gathered from the survey they found that participation in premarital education was associated with higher levels of satisfaction and commitment in marriage and with lower levels of conflict and divorce (Stanley, 2014).

There has also been research done on the introduction of premarital education for college students. Mark, Meadows and Taplin did a study on premarital counselling in the counselling centre at Virginia Commonwealth University. The results of the study demonstrated a need to provide counselling for engaged college couples (Meadows, 1970). Providing counselling early on for college students can help to increase awareness about how to create satisfaction within a marriage and decrease the divorce rates for the ‘soon to be newly-weds.’ Tasker (2017) postulates that, couples who attend premarital counselling have the opportunity to discuss issues that most couples argue about and most often lead to divorce or separation. Premarital Counselling can help couples learn how to be a good listener, so as to understand what the other partner wants and needs.

2.6 Summary

This chapter focused on the different schools of thought with regard to the prevalence and causes of divorce, paying special attention to the information’s theoretical frameworks. The chapter further interrogated the various sources and literature informing on premarital counselling strategies. The next chapter will focus on research design and methodology.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, a research methodology is explicated as the research design, the informants, research instruments, data collection procedures, data presentation, data analysis procedures, ethical considerations and the conclusion. Research methodology was a key aspect of this study because it influenced all aspects of the research process. Neuman (2011) revealed that research methodology focuses on the discussion of fundamental or regulative principles, which underline the conception of the subject matter, and how it might be investigated. A combination of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches has been employed by the researcher so as to provide a deeper insight into the problem understudy (Creswell, 2014). He also addressed concerns that are commonly associated with both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and made attempts to minimize their weaknesses. Creswell (2014) points out that at a general level, mixed method is chosen because of its strength of drawing both qualitative and quantitative data and minimizing their limitations. It is therefore, in light of the above that, the researcher has been prompted to consciously choose the most appropriate research design, research instruments and select the population that made this study a success.

3.1 Research Philosophy

3.1.1 The Phenomenological Philosophy

The research philosophy informing this study is the phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is a philosophical movement that stresses that analysis and interpretation of the structure of conscious experience and human relationships, without consideration of any scientific or metaphysical presuppositions about the nature and existence of the mind and external reality. This philosophy was developed by Husserl in the 17th century. Underlining this philosophy is the belief that researchers must understand the phenomena from the insider’s
perspective. Where Husserl departed from Descartes was that he did not accept that certitude could be achieved solely through the use of rationality and logic. According to Woburn Business School Module 1 (2013), Husserl argues that it was necessary to examine the bedrock of everyday experience, because it was there, in people’s emotions, actions and perceptions of things and relationships that an ultimately true understanding would be derived. Phenomenology, as such, strives to describe the essence of everyday experience. It could only be achieved by the individuals examining their own personal experience of the world.

According to the Woburn Business School Module I (2013), the phenomenological paradigm demands that the researcher should: seek to develop an attitude of openness and wonderment in relation to the phenomenon, strive to bracket off assumptions, adhere to the principle of horizontality-no one meaning is considered more important than another, engage in imaginative variation what would need to change to make phenomenon different, enter and immerse selves in situation as lived with the subject, spend time lingering in the described situation, magnify, amplify, and pay special attention to detail, allowing it to loom large and turn from objects to immanent meanings.

The aim of phenomenology is to produce an exhaustive description of the phenomena of everyday experience, thus arriving at a fundamental understanding of the thing itself. Phenomenology seeks to go beyond a natural attitude to a transcendental attitude which is a process of eidetic seeing by getting to the essence of things. Such imaginative variation involving seeing things from all angles, breaking down of those things which were constant (the essence) is critical. The conceptual encounter as an approach to phenomenological research should possess a primary goal to produce a map of personal experience. At the heart of the method is the encounter between the investigator and a person who has agreed to act as research partner. Given the above underlying factors, suffice is to say the phenomenological paradigm is very critical in this study because maximum attention is given to the research subjects rather than depending on the value judgements of the researcher as there is also need to investigate the perceptions, emotions and feelings of people on Marital Break-ups from a Micro-Conflict Perspective.
3.2 Philosophical Assumptions

This research is based on the epistemological and axiological assumptions which are explained hereunder.

3.2.1 Epistemological Assumption

Epistemology is a way of understanding and explaining how people know what they know (Crotty, 2011). Based on this assumption, conducting a qualitative study means that the researchers strive to get as close as possible to the participants under study. Therefore, subjective evidence is assembled based on individual views (Crotty, 2011). It becomes necessary then to conduct studies in the field where the participants live and work. The longer the researcher stays in the field or get to know the participants, the more he/she may know what he/she may know from first-hand information. For the purpose of this study, the researcher advantageously chose Centenary Township which is within his vicinity to fully understand behaviour patterns of married couples.

3.2.2 The Axiological Assumption

The axiological assumptions focus on values. Hussey and Hussey (2013), contends that the assumptions are concerned with values while positivists argues that the process of social science research is value free. Researchers are detached from what they are researching and should regard phenomena as the focus of their research. The axiological assumptions are concerned with interrelationships of the cause and effect of the subject they are studying. Thus, people in marriage institutions have needs, values and meanings attached to life and human behaviour, aspirations, needs and feelings that are subjective. Creswell (2014) posits that, in marriage, issues of counselling, financial management, cultural values and poverty are concepts that tend to provide more depth to information. These values and perceptions of informants are expressed freely when the study is qualitative. The perception is how one views the world and phenomena available.
A research design is the blueprint of the study process as it reflects the whole research process in the shortest fashion conducted (Leedy and Omrod, 2010). It is a strategy of enquiry comprising of a bundle of skills, assumptions and practices that a researcher employs as he or she moves from paradigm to the empirical world (Creswell, 2014). According to Saunders et al (2009) a good research design provides a description of the various components of the investigation, specifying the general approach to the research study which is the adopted strategy. The research design also provides details about the methods of data collection and analysis, rationale for the choice of research strategy in relation to research questions and how they link with specific research areas being investigated. It also shows how the data collection methods and analysis are consistent in terms of their general philosophy. The type of informants, study location, data collection and analysis methods must relate to the research questions throughout the research study.

A case study was used in this study because it incorporates both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The survey method was also preferred under quantitative approach by means of administration of questionnaires to participants. A quantitative research design enables the researcher to gather data in numerical quantitative terms. Under the mixed method, research design, the researcher used interviews for ten key informants, questionnaires for 60 participants (30 female divorcees and 10 male divorcees, ten married man and ten married women). A focus group discussion (FDG) was conducted with five couples with over 30 years in marriage to gather data.

The selected research design could not produce sufficient information about all the events and variables that were occurring at the time being studied hence qualitative research design was employed to make up for the weaknesses of the quantitative research design. Crotty (2011) further supports that it is very difficult to argue for a best research design, but it is more reasonable to adopt a research design that works best for the research topic, for the variables, and for the participants selected in the study. Therefore, triangulation research design was helpful in
this study where the major aim was to discover causes of marital break-ups and the effectiveness of premarital counselling in building sustainable marriages in Centenary Township.

3.4 Population

Coolican (2009) states that a population refers to all the existing members of a group technically referred to as cases. Therefore, population refers in simpler terms to those elements within which a sample study is drawn from. In this research the population was made up of (123 686 people:2012 Census Report) in Centenary Township. The population of this study includes those who are directly or indirectly affected by marital break-ups in Centenary Township. A total number of eighty participants drawn from three hundred households were considered for this study. The above informants (10) were deemed as direct sources of information on marital break-ups since they are involved in issues related to the research study. Among this population, the researcher has consciously selected a local pastor, a clerk of court from the magistrate court, a police officer from Victim Friendly Unit, a professional counsellor from the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Gender and Community Development, District Schools Inspector, a Primary School Head, local Nurse, District Administrator, local Chief and Senator as key informants. Patton (2012) defines key informants as people who are particularly knowledgeable about the inquiry setting and articulate about their knowledge, and whose insights can be helpful in assisting an observer in understanding events that have happened and reasons why those events happened.

3.4.1 Population Sampling: Purposive sampling

Sampling is a process of selecting a group of subjects for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected (Kitchenham, 2013). Babbie (2010) and asserts that the use of sample size in research is a technique widely used in social science research as a way of gathering information about a population without having to measure the whole population. In light of the above, the researcher employed the purposive sampling technique selecting divorcees who are directly affected by the phenomenon in question. The researcher liaised with pastors from ten churches in Centenary Township where the divorcees were withdrawn and randomly selected from the church registers. Key informants and
some divorcees were also obtained from government (Police and Social Welfare Department), private institutions (Red Cross, Christian Care and World Vision) and the community. Couples who participated in FDGs were religious leaders, traditional community leaders, professionals and ordinary senior citizens of Centenary Township.

To reduce bias the researcher used a hat which had pieces of papers with numbers written on them tallying with those appearing on the registers against each divorcee name. These were placed in a hat, mixed and picked randomly by the pastor’s wife since the researcher was a non-participant. Numbers which were picked were checked with the register to identify the person for interviews and those for participants who were not present were replaced by picking another one again from the same hat. To minimise replacements the researcher mobilised the participants during Widows and Single Mothers Fellowship and during Sunday Services.

3.5 Research Instruments

Research instruments are methods and procedures used in the acquisition of data with which to test the research hypothesis (Kothari, 2010). These are specific research techniques such as interviews and questionnaires. In this study, the researcher has opted to use the questionnaire, focus group discussion and interview to collect data. As indicated below, the researcher weighed the advantages and disadvantages of these methods and found the merits outweighing the demerits and thus considered them appropriate in the acquisition of relevant data for this study. The choice of interviews and FDGs as research instruments was informed by the research philosophy which demands that researchers must understand the phenomena from the insider’s perspective and also to examine the phenomena from the bedrock of everyday life such emotions, actions and perceptions of things and relationships that an ultimately true understanding would be derived. For the purpose of striking balance (triangulation) the researcher also employed questionnaires to gather quantitative data from participants.
3.5.1 Questionnaires

According to Cohen et al (2013), questionnaires are useful in reflecting on the basic attitudes or opinions of people. This research used semi-structured but open-ended questionnaires, a sample of which is in appendix B. The questionnaires were open-ended to give participants the flexibility to share their experiences. Questionnaires were distributed to a sampled population of 60 people in Centenary Township selected through non-probability sampling. Out of the 60 participants 40 were divorcees (10 male and 30 female) and 20 were married couples (10 male and 10 female). Participants were reached in their usual residences and workplaces on appointment. Upon request some of the questionnaires were translated into Shona language which was easily understood by the participants. Questions were asked following the sequence. Where there was need for clarity the researcher had to rephrase the question and clarifying any doubts that the participants might have regarding any question on spot. In an attempt to overcome low response rates, the researcher posed questions and took responses on the spot to ensure high rate of return, and to ensure true representation. The researcher also had to consider those who wanted to participate willingly.

3.5.2 Interviews

According to Kothari (2011), the interview method of collecting data involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses. It is in a sense of an oral question and answer session in which the subject or interviewee gives the needed information orally and face to face while the interviewer writes or records and possibly further probes questions for clarification from the interviewees. The researcher conducted in-depth and semi-structured interviews with a group of ten key informants. These included a local pastor, a clerk of court from the magistrate court, a police officer from Victim Friendly Unit, a professional counsellor from Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Gender and Community Development, the District Schools Inspector, a primary school head, a local nurse, the District Administrator, the local chief, and a senator. The researcher made an appointment with them seeking for an informed consent after having satisfactorily explained the purpose of the study. Since, the interview guide was written in English, the researcher verbally translated some of the questions into Shona language to clarify issues to some of the informants upon request. During data collection, the researcher wrote the
information on paper as informants responded. However, three of the key informants requested that they first study the questions and write down their responses before the interview. The questions were asked following the sequence outlined in the interview guide to avoid mix up of data. Responses that included other areas of interests which were not covered by the interview guide were written them down in a notebook and later used such additional information for complementary purposes in data analysis. The researcher also made use of electronic recording systems during interviews to capture data. On average each interview lasted for thirty minutes except to those conducted with the local chief and senator which lasted forty-five minutes respectively due to the detailed explanation from their rich experience of the question under study.

The implementation of interviews provided room for double checking by giving the interviewer an opportunity for supplementary questions. Through interviews the researcher was able to obtain opinions which were not obtained by questionnaires as they provide greater depth in research. Thus, a higher response rate was achieved through interviews. The researcher used an interview guide to make sure that he does not go off track and also used probes to follow-up on issues of interest. Few interviews were conducted because of travelling costs and time constraints.

3.5.3 Focus group discussion

A focus group is a small group of six to twelve people led through an open discussion by a skilled moderator, Research toolkits (2009). The group needs to be large enough to generate rich discussion but not too large such that some participants are left out. A focus group discussion (FGD) is a good way to gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. The strength of FDG relies on allowing the participants to agree or disagree with each other so that it provides an insight into how a group thinks about an issue, the range of opinion and ideas, and the inconsistencies and variation that exists in a particular community in terms of beliefs and their experiences and practices.
The researcher before introducing his topic to the invited participants who were married couples with thirty years and above of experience in marriage (consisting of religious leaders, traditional community leaders, professionals and ordinary senior citizens of Centenary Township) had to explain issues of privacy and confidentiality in line with the requirements of research ethics. Consent was granted and the researcher briefly outlined the objectives of the study. Questions were read out from the Focus Group Guide (see Appendix E) and each participant was given enough time to freely air out his or her views. The researcher only read out questions whilst one of the participants took on the task of moderating. As the FDG progressed, participants got motivated by the responses of peer members of the group; hence the discussion became live and interesting.

To a larger extent, responses from the FDG concurred with those which were gathered from the in-depth interviews with key informants. The rich experience in marriage from FDG participants helped a lot in unearthing the degree of impact of factors such as difference in culture, religion, values, beliefs, poverty and generational gap as root causes of marital conflict and divorce as informed by Olaniyi’s study and Tusker (2017) in Chapter Two in this research.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

According to Reinhaz (2012), validity is the consistency of a measure with some outside criterion or standard by which to judge the test. It is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research and the correctness or credibility of an account, explanation or interpretation that a researcher may come up with (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2014). Reliability implies that repeated observations of the same phenomena should yield similar results, and different observers following the same research methodology or procedures should arrive at the same conclusions (Palys, 2012). In short it is the repeatability of a measurement or the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same condition with the same participants. To enhance and achieve validity and reliability of this study, the following procedures and steps were taken: triangulation of data collection methods, pilot study and member checking whose steps are highlighted below.
The researcher made use of three different data collecting instruments; questionnaires, interviews and FDGs as a way to mitigate the weaknesses of each tool by the strengths of the other. For instance, participants at times could just indicate a response for the sake of filling the questionnaire without giving adequate data and this was counteracted by implementation of in-depth interviews which produced rich information about marital conflict.

In a bid to reduce biased information from a single specific group of targeted participants, in this case which are the divorcees, the researcher chose key informants and some divorcees from the government (Police and Social Welfare Department), private institutions (Red Cross, Christian Care and World Vision) and the community. Couples who participated in FDGs were religious leaders, traditional community leaders, professionals and ordinary senior citizens of Centenary Township who came from different origins.

In order to ensure reliability, the researcher maintained the order of asking questions as well as the structure of the data gathering tools.

3.7 **Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation**

The purpose of analyzing the data was to deduce meaning and to come up with findings and conclusions. Data presentation involves checking or logging the data in; checking the data for accuracy, entering the data into the computer, transforming the data; and developing and documenting a database structure that integrates the various measures. Data gathered was presented in tables, graphs and charts.

3.7.1 **Checking the Data for Accuracy**

As soon as data was received it was screened for accuracy. Doing this right away allowed the researcher to go back to investigate any problems or errors. There are several questions a researcher asked as part of this initial data screening: Are the responses readable? Are all important questions answered? Are the responses complete? Is all relevant contextual information included (for instance date, time, place, and researcher?) In most social science research, quality of measurement is a major issue. Assuring that the data collection process was not inaccurately contributed helped the overall quality of subsequent analysis.
3.7.2 Pilot Study

Tuckman (2013) defines pilot study as a process whereby researchers tests the techniques and methods to see how well they work in practice and if necessary modify accordingly. Thus, a pilot study is a small scale preliminary study conducted before the main research in order to check the feasibility, to improve the design of the research and to test logistics. Borg and Gall (2009) further argue that a pilot study can reveal deficiencies in the design of a proposed study and then can be addressed before time and the resources wasted. However, the purpose of the pilot study was to perfect the questionnaire and interview guide. On the questionnaire, grammatical errors were corrected, spelling errors were rectified and double barreled questions were removed and reframed. Vague and ambiguous questions were eliminated. The pilot study was carried out on non-target populations so as to reduce internal threats to consistent validity of data.

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

According to Charles, Eliot and Louise (2014), data analysis is defined as a way of summarizing the complete observations in such a manner that they yield answers to the research questions. The researcher followed up every data by reading through the responses several times afterwards. This had the advantage of getting the perspective of the participants empathically so as to absorb the information gathered. Some of the data collected was qualitative. For the qualitative data, the researcher predominantly used inductive data analysis strategies where each case was analyzed in its context. The participants spoke for themselves and the researcher’s interpretation was made in light of such. The analysis given is therefore, descriptive and was presented following the order in which the research questions appeared in the instruments. Similarities and differences in the collected data were taken care of and reflected in the analysis.

The rest of the data (quantitative) was presented statistically, in the form of tables, bar graphs and pie charts. The researcher sort assistance from a person well versed in using excel and SPSS V18 for data capturing and analysis. Data was first captured on an excel template which was designed
based on the structure of the questionnaire. After capturing, the data was cross checked for errors and to ensure quality data, a sample of 15 questionnaires were picked at random and were verified. The data was exported to the SPSS Version 18 application in which codes were developed to assign responses. For instance where there was a ‘no’ or a ‘yes’ for an answer, yes was coded 1 and no, a code of 2. After importing the data from excel, it was also verified again before running frequency tables to ensure a true reflection of the participants. The researcher ran frequencies and used charts to come up with pie charts and bar graphs. This approach was used for its ability to allow the use of numbers and percentages for tabulation of data.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Saunders et al (2012) explained that ethics refers to the system of moral principles which individuals can judge their actions as right or wrong, good or bad. Professional social science researchers are expected to conduct their research in an ethical manner. The acceptability of social research depends increasingly on the willingness of researchers to accord respect to their subjects and to treat their subjects with expected ethical considerations. When carrying out research, access into the organization where the investigation will be carried out is paramount. A good relationship between the researcher and the participants was developed. Discussed below are the ethical practices which were followed when conducting this research project;

3.9.1 Confidentiality

In a research study, participants should provide a voluntary consent to participate since information should be confidential. Therefore, participant protection is vital in order to get authentic and detailed information from the participants. According to Hussey and Hussey (2014), it is normal to offer confidentiality to participants in a research project for this encourages them to give more open and honest responses. Saunders et al (2012) alluded that information should be treated confidentially and not to be disclosed to anyone other than researchers involved in the study and in a way that is traceable to the individual who would have provided it. There was security of data and its source, in this case the married couples, divorcees and key informants. The researcher ethically informed potential participants on the purpose of
the research in order to obtain their consent to participate. He further explained that they were free to withdraw from the interview at any point without fear of negative consequences and also free not to answer any question they were not comfortable with. The participants were informed about the benefits that their community and the nation as a whole could accrue due to their participation in the study.

3.9.2 Dignity
Naturally the dignity of individuals should be respected for human beings are embarrassed when ridiculed. They need to be communicated to with due respect. Saunders in Hussy and Hussy (2012) emphasized that the relationship between the researcher and the participants, is complex and some participants can view the researcher as someone in authority and may behave differently thinking that the researcher has come to provide assistance especially in areas where poverty is prevalent. In observing the above ethical consideration, the researcher chose a spacious venue secluded from the public, a church hall which promoted privacy. Participants had to make consensus when to meet and the duration of the FDG session which they agreed as starting at 5 O’clock after working hours and session lasted for one and half hours couples sitting close to one another for promoting psychological and emotional support during the course.

3.9.3 Publications
There is the urge to publicize one’s work in the field of professional research hence project results must not be falsified in order to achieve publication success. The researcher assured the participants that this information was going to be used only for scholarly purpose and that publication will only be done after they had given their consent. The researcher did not omit the results but rather reported what he had obtained from the research data.
### 3.10 Summary

This study selected the qualitative approach mixed with some quantitative aspects. This chapter described the research design and techniques employed in this study. It adopted the mixed method design because the researcher wanted to have extensive data coverage as well as integrating and triangulating data sources. Questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions were the research instruments used to achieve triangulation of results. The strengths and weaknesses of each data collecting tool were calculated with a view of choosing the best out of each through what most researchers term transfiguration. The validity and reliability of each instrument was discussed, so were the ethical considerations associated with carrying out social science research. The following chapter focuses on data presentation, analysis and interpretation.
4.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the data which was collected through the administration of questionnaires, focus group discussions (FDGs) and the conduct of interviews. The data was presented using tables, bar graphs and pie charts. The description of the data was outlined and broader analysis done to derive deeper meanings from the data set. Questionnaires were used to solicit views, mainly on the sources of marital conflict which lead to divorce as well as contribution of marital counselling towards preservation of marriages. Interviews were used to triangulate data collected by questionnaires and FDGs and thematic analysis was used for data which was collected through interviews.

4.1 Presentation of findings

4.1.1 Gender Distribution

![Graph showing gender distribution]

Figure 1: Gender distribution
The above graph represents gender of the 60 participants who answered the questionnaire and it reflects that 40 of them were female whilst the remaining 20 were male participants. More female participants were reached in this research due to the fact that most men tend to remarry unlike women who normally do not quickly remarry after a divorce.

4.1.2 Age Range

Table 1: Age Range of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-30 years</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41+ years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extracted from research results using SPSS Version 18
Age Range of the Participants

Extracted from research results using SPSS Version 18

Figure 2: Age range of the participants

From Table 1 and Figure 2 showing research results from data collected through questionnaires, the highest number of participants reached per specific age group in this research was 19 and this had 41+ years, and the majority (26) were between the age of 26 to 35 and a few (7) were within the age range of 20-25 and 36 to 40 years.
4.1.3 Marital Status of Participants

![Pie chart showing marital status]

**Figure 3: Marital status of the participants**

Results from Figure 3 indicates that out of the 60 participants who were issued with questionnaires, 65% were divorcees, followed by married couples (33%) and the last few (2%) were single parents. Thus, main ideas gathered were based on divorcees and this has been influenced by purposeful sampling technique which was adopted by the researcher in-order to focus more on marital breakups from a micro-conflict perspective.
4.1.4 Duration of Participants in Marriage

Figure 4: Duration of the participants in marriage

Figure 4 above shows the duration of participants in marriage. The results obtained from the questionnaires indicated that more than 50% of the participants were in the early ages of their marriages; twenty had their marriages between five to ten years and seventeen had less than five years in marriage. A few had eleven + years in marriage.
4.1.5 Years in Divorce

Figure 5: Years in divorce

Results following the question; How long have you been in divorce?, indicated that 45%(27) of the participants were in divorce for less than five years, 15% (nine) stayed between five to ten years in divorce and 8% (five) had eleven +years in divorce whilst 19% had their marriages still intact. It can be noted that total number of divorced couples tends to decrease with time. Duration in divorce also helped to determine the time lag at which divorce cases are on the rise as well as when they fall which in turn necessitates the selection of effective interventions to mitigate high incidence of marital breakups.
4.1.6  Frequency in Marriage

Figure 6: Frequency in Marriage

Figure 6 highlights that 83% (50) of the participants have been involved once in marriage whilst 17% (ten) were involved twice in marriage as reflected by data collected through questionnaires. This reflects that couples are not remarrying quickly following a divorce especially women.

4.1.7  Premarital Counselling

Figure 7: Those Who Seek Counselling
Out of the 60 participants who answered the questionnaire, 58% indicated that they never went for premarital counselling whereas 42% received premarital counselling. Thus, a larger percentage of couples are marrying without first going for premarital counselling.

### 4.1.8 Sources of Conflict in Marriage

**Figure 8: Sources of Conflict in Marriage**

Data obtained from the questionnaires indicated that the most significant sources of conflict in marriage were incompatible personality, poor communication and irreconcilable behaviour as these were answered yes by 50+ participants. Not having enough time together, values, power control, sex and friends were amongst the other sources rated second whereas religious and cultural background and parents were identified as not contributing much towards conflict in marriage.
4.1.9 Causes of Divorce

Results from data gathered by use of questionnaires in Figure 9 above show that most participants strongly agreed that unfaithfulness/infidelity and absence of love are the most causes of divorce. This was followed by communication defects, lack of submission, lack of understanding, lack of trust, infertility, immaturity, lack of cooperation, lack of perseverance as well as family problems as other causes of divorce. A larger percentage disagreed that poverty, difference in culture and religion, language barrier and unemployment are not key drivers of marital break-ups. Other causes of divorce which were identified by the participants include lack of hygiene, payment of bride price or lobola and instances where couples stay far from each other due to factors such as work placement.
4.1.10 Marital Counselling

The researcher also had to use a questionnaire to gather data relating to marital counselling assessing if couples seek counselling when they face marital conflicts. The results are presented in the table and graph below.

Table 2: Marital Counselling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extracted from research results using SPSS Version 18

Figure 10: Marital Counselling
From Table 2 and Figure 10 above, most participants 57% (34) indicated that they seek marital counselling when they face challenges in their marriages, whereas 28% (17) sometimes go for counselling and 15% (9) do not seek marital counselling when they face challenges in their marriages.

4.1.11 Stability of Marriage

Figure 11: Stability of Marriage

Figure 11 above shows that only a few (ten) of the 60 participants had their marriages considered solid, seven had their marriages being strong but prone to disputes and three had their marriages being weak and on the rocks and the larger number, 40 of the participants were divorcees and were not eligible for this question hence they indicated non-applicable. The above statistics reveal that out of 20 married couples who responded to the questionnaires, 50% (seven plus three) of them are experiencing marital conflict.
4.2 Presentation of Findings from Key Informants and From FDGs

The findings shall be presented in themes which were derived from the research objectives of this study. The interviews were conducted with ten key informants including the chief, District Administrator (DA), headmistress, local nurse, local pastor, professional counsellor, senator, District Schools Inspector (DSI), Ward Councillor and a police officer from Victim Friendly Unit (VFU). The FDGs constituted of ten couples with over thirty years of experience in marriage.

4.3 Trend of marital break-up in Centenary Township

Divorce in Centenary has been accounted as constantly high but tends to soar during the tobacco seasons when most men usually go for tobacco sale and squander the money with small houses forgetting their families. The clerk of court from Centenary magistrate court said;

_In Centenary Township it seems there is high prevalence of divorce especially when couples fail to agree on spending their proceeds obtained from the sale of their cash crops and mostly the solution is divorce_

The general observation made by a large number of the key informants including the DSI, DA, local pastor, local nurse, chief, senator and the headmistress Mrs Gambe (fictitious name) was that divorce trends in Centenary Township were generally on the rise. This is also supported by research results presented in Figure 5 which indicated that 60% of the participants were in divorce within the first ten years. ZIMSTAT (2010) highlighted indicated that the divorce rate was higher in females (6.5%) than in males (2.5%). In the same literature review Nyoni (2014) noted that the year 2014 had seen a 20% increase in divorce rate as compared to national census results of 2010. Thus, it is suffice to conclude that divorce rates are increasing.

4.4 Key drivers of marital break-up in Centenary Township

The local chief and the D.A of Centenary district highlighted that the geographical position of the Township itself promotes the inhabitants into the inevitable discourse of divorce which has become rampant in this community. Its population constitutes various tribes with different
values, customs and beliefs which is a fertile ground for conflicts amongst couples. Geographically, the Township experiences high influx of people from the surrounding farming communities.

Results obtained from the questionnaires revealed that poverty is not a key driver of marital break-ups in Centenary Township. The reason could be that participants only felt the resultant effects of poverty and were not in a position of identifying its contribution to marital breakup. However during an in-depth interview, the police officer from the VFU, the headmistress of a local primary school, the District Schools Inspector Mr Magara (fictitious name) and the DA concurred that it as a key driver. Mr Magara commented that;

*When a family I poverty stricken, children do not hesitate to resort to early marriages as a panacea to the family scourge. Prostitution, alcohol and drug abuse become order of the day*

The above participant highlighted infidelity and financial mismanagement as key drivers of marital breakup in Centenary Township. This tally well with the statistics obtained from the questionnaires on the question on causes of divorce where most participants strongly agreed that unfaithfulness/infidelity and absence of love are the key drivers of divorce. The results obtained in Olaniyi’s study indicated in Chapter Two of this research agrees that absence of love, ignorance, poverty, religion differences, unemployment are causes of divorce among married couples. He went on to highlight that there is a significant relationship between poverty level and divorce rates.

It is interesting to note that responses obtained from focus discussion group of couples with over thirty years of experience in marriage revealed the following factors as key drivers of marital break-up; friend/bad advisors, lack of premarital counselling. The first participant, Mrs Charehwa (fictitious name) cited bad advisors/friends and gossip as causes of marital conflict. The second participant with 34 years in marriage had this to say;

*Kusazivana kwemhuri yekwauri kunoroora kana kuroorwa* (getting into marriage without proper knowledge of each other and the expected marital values).
He also added mistrust between couples, interference of the in-laws and power control in decision making as some of the major factors which also influence marital conflicts and break-ups. A third participant 31 years in marriage indicated lack of love, poor communication, “kusazivaMwari” (lacking Word of God), lack of self-control in face of marital strife as key drivers of marital break-ups. Tusker (2017) as indicated in Chapter 2 above noted that many couples cite the reasons for divorce as infidelity or financial issues when in reality the major cause of a marriage breakdown is lack of communication as was identified by the 32 year old participant. The above participant Zvarevashe (fictitious name) added that;

Taking time out” in face of conflicts and proper communication can be a solution.
Sometimes silence is a remedy for marital conflict. A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger (Proverbs 15:1).

Concluded the participant also, quoting from the Bible.

4.5 The impact of marital conflict or divorce on the immediate family and society at large

Marital break-ups like any other social phenomena have a negative impact on the family and the society as well. The majority of the key informants lamented over its negative effect upon children compromising their school performance. This was also supported by the headmistress who indicated poor performance in class, lack of moral values, high school drop-outs and children absconding from school. Her assertion was supported by the third participant from FDGs, Mrs Zvorwadza (fictitious) with 31 years in marriage who said;

Children will lack parental care and guidance. Moral decay will also infiltrate within the community as children will regard divorce as a normal way of liberating oneself and this habit becomes a chain promoting promiscuity.

Mapuranga (2016) cited that divorce has a negative impact on the psychosocial development and cognitive behaviour of the children who are survive under the torture of marital conflict. The police officer from VFU cited that the abandoned girl children normally opt for early child marriages as a solution for financial upkeep. The police officer added;
If they do not opt for early marriages they will not escape the fate of child abuse within their communities.

This was seconded by the third respondent with 33 years in marriage, Mrs Zvarehwa (fictitious name).

Divorces affect children most as the stepmother may ill-treat them because they are not of her own blood.

The D.A also commented that if the victims of marital conflict do not go for counselling they will end up failing to undertake their daily duties at work due to stress thus leading to decreased production. The District Administrator said;

Sometimes divorced professionals may actually execute their duties in the wrong way.

She went on to highlight that, self-actualisation and confidence is also diminished following marital conflicts or divorce. Mr Bhura (fictitious name) one of the FDG participants concurred;

If it happens that the breadwinner separates with the children this would also affect the society at large because in some circumstances the dependents become very vulnerable such that the society has to intervene to assist the children and in some cases even the divorced wife

4.6 The effectiveness of pre and post marital counselling in building a sustainable marriage

An opening statement uttered by the local chief who is also a senator in the National Council of Chiefs in Zimbabwe.

When a light goes off in the house, the family must not flee darkness, but rather fix the light and stay in their home. The same also applies to marriage. When couples
are faced with marital conflict, they must seek for solution in due course in order to save their marriage and not consider divorce as the alternative choice.

The Clerk of Court from Centenary Magistrate Court commented that;

*Getting into marriage without premarital counselling is like building a house without foundation in the shallow sands of the sea.*

He emphasised that premarital counselling provides a firm foundation for sustainable marriages. This concurs with Tusker, (2017) in Chapter 2 above who posited that premarital counselling empower couples with the tools needed to build trust between each other and the techniques that can be adopted to support the relationship.

The above notion was supported by the information gathered through FDGs from the third and the forth participants, a couple with 35 years of experience in marriage. They said that counselling should start at home with the parents.

*The mother should be the first auntie.* Said the 55 year old woman.

*We are not ashamed of providing counselling to our children because we regard them as friends.* Added her husband.

According to the DSI of Muzarabani the advantages for receiving pre-/marital counselling are that couples are bonded more, they can also be helped to reconcile if disagreements occur. The above interviewee concluded by saying;

*Above all, couples will be empowered to solve both minor and major marital conflicts on their own*

However, some couples do not seek premarital counselling as indicated in Figure 7. It can be noted that 58% participants do not premarital counselling whereas Figure 10 indicated that 57% seek marital counselling when they are faced with problems in marriage. Makoro and Keari (2016) noted that couples who are anticipating marriage do not seek counselling due to stigmatisation associated with such sensitive and private information. Nevertheless, in Chapter 2,
Chakuchichi and Zvaiwa (2010) posited that during the Victorian era boys and girls seek premarital counselling before marriage and the results show that it is beneficial in building sustainable marriages.

4.7 Summary
This chapter dealt with data presentation, interpretation and analysis. This was done in the form of tables, charts and graphs. Data presentation was guided by the research questions of this study as well as the themes that emerged from the data. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires, in-depth interviews and FDGs. The chapter further presented, interpreted and analysed the participants’ perceptions, views, feelings and experiences pertaining marital conflict and the effectiveness of premarital counselling in building sustainable marriages.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter establishes the correlation of the results and the research objectives and also indicating if the research questions were answered. Summary and conclusions are withdrawn from the findings and recommendations are given to strengthen and safeguard marriages to ensure long lasting and fruitful families in Centenary Township and Zimbabwe at large.

5.1 Summary of Research

Chapter one provided the background to the study of marital break-ups from a micro conflict perspective. From this chapter background to the problem, statement of the problem, purpose and significance of the study were provided. The research objectives and research questions also constituted chapter one.

Chapter Two highlighted the importance of the research by re-looking at related literature and previous researches on marital break-ups. The researcher examined the scholarly perspectives and controversies surrounding the field of marriage with a view to locate the various interpretations of the situation within the contextual framework of societal expectations in the traditional African family. One key area in this chapter was the patriarchal view of marriage which is dominant in most African states and Zimbabwe is not an exception. In such marriages, men use masculinity which prompts many conflicts when women claim fairness and if not properly dealt with spill out into divorce. In addition, theories underpinning this discipline were highlighted focusing on their applicability as well as contextual application.
Chapter Three explained the methodology that was used in investigating marital break-ups from a micro-conflict perspective with particular reference to Centenary Township in Muzarabani District. It comprised of the research design, the informants, research instruments, data collection procedures, data presentation and analysis procedures, ethical considerations and the conclusion. Research instruments were thoroughly examined and suitability was also assessed in order to collect accurate and relevant data in answering the research questions.

Chapter Four focused on the presentation of collected data, analysis and discussion of the findings obtained from studying marital break-ups in Centenary Township from a micro-conflict perspective. Data from the three major collecting techniques (questionnaire, interviews and FDGs) was also triangulated. Literature review from Chapter two was also correlated to the research findings.

Chapter Five presents the research summary, conclusions from the findings and recommendations towards ensuring sustainable, harmonious and peaceful marriages in Centenary Township and Zimbabwe at large relying on the research findings. This chapter also shades light on other areas of further research which have been identified from the findings.

5.2 Conclusion of Research Findings

The following are conclusions drawn up from the findings which came out from the analyzed data, based on the research objectives.

The first objective was to explore the prevalence of divorce within Centenary Township. In order to establish the divorce trends in Centenary Township, the researcher chose key informants who answered a question accounting for the divorce patterns in this Township. From the research findings, it was noted that generally the rate of divorce is constantly high but tend to increase during the sale of agricultural produce. This was indicated by eight out of ten of the key informants who were interviewed. Research findings also indicated that a larger number of the divorcees (47%) had less than five years in divorce showing that they were recent and the
number tends to decrease with time. Thus, divorce is not a new phenomenon and still continues to persist in the present day Centenary Township.

The second objective was to examine the causes of marital conflict leading to divorce in Centenary Township. Answers to this objective were sought from key informants through interviews and also from participants who were purposefully selected and responded to the questionnaires. From the wide range of causes of divorce, most participants strongly agreed that unfaithfulness/infidelity and absence of love are the major causes of divorce. This was also supported by outcomes from the FDGs. The second tier of causes of divorce which were identified constituted of communication defects, lack of submission, lack of understanding, lack of trust, infertility, immaturity, lack of cooperation, lack of perseverance as well as family problems as other causes of divorce.

The research revealed that the most significant sources of conflict in marriage were incompatible personality, poor communication and irreconcilable behaviour between couples. The researcher identified the nexus between sources of conflict and causes of divorce. For instance, incompatible personality can influence unfaithfulness or infidelity and poor communication can reflect the absence of love.

Nevertheless, a larger percentage of participants disagreed that poverty, difference in culture and religion, language barrier and unemployment are key drivers of marital break-ups yet key informants pin pointed these as major causes of divorce. The reason could be that the participants of questionnaires understood the above factors from a narrow perspective while the key informants used a bird’s eye view which was holistic. Other causes of divorce which were identified by the participants include lack of hygiene, non payment of bride price or lobola and instances where couples stay far from each other due to factors such as work placement.

The last objective was to assess the effectiveness of premarital counselling strategies in strengthening marriages in Centenary Township. In order to answer this objective participants answered questionnaires and participated in interviews and FDGs giving their opinions. Analysis
results indicated that a larger number of couples (57%) seek premarital counselling, with 28% sometimes going for counselling and 15% not going for counselling at all. Those who sort premarital counselling cited that it was very helpful in preparing them for marriage life as well as equipping them with techniques they can use to overcome conflicts and effectively dealing with them. Moreover, those who did not seek counselling indicated that marriage counselling can be disastrous due to the fact that couples are given information on anticipated challenges which can prompt them to misbehave. Premarital counselling has the potential of creating problems, in that it causes people to anticipate and discuss marital issues they may never have considered as problem in marriage (Baer, 2013).

5.3 Recommendations
In view of the information obtained from literature review, responses and findings of this research, this study proposed the following recommendations to secure marriages of couples in Centenary Township.

- There is need for massive awareness campaigns on domestic violence, gender mainstreaming and the negative effects of divorce.
- It should be made policy that all public and private institutions should engage professional counsellors to offer marriage counselling to employees.
- Premarital counselling programmes should also cascade to tertiary institutions, such as colleges and universities, thus teaching adolescents to prepare for marriages early.
- Key traditional and community leaders must be trained in marital counselling in order to be equipped with traditional and modern skills necessary in dealing with marital conflicts.
- To influence policy makers to develop effective policies that stabilizes and strengthens the institution of marriage.
5.4 Chapter Summary

The research findings proved that marital break-ups are a real phenomenon occurring within the society though at a smaller scale but their impact is disastrous. Basing on the results and the reviewed literature from Chapter Two, it is very clear that divorce rate is ever increasing from household level to the national level and even globally. Associated causes include social factors which were at the top of the list, followed economic factors and lastly cultural and religious factors. Results obtained from interviews and FDGs showed that premarital counselling is effective even though participants who responded to the questionnaires indicated that couples rarely seek premarital counselling although it is effective in preparation for future marriage life. A larger percentage (57%) of the couples indicated that they only seek marital counselling when faced with problems.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

There is need for undertaking a critical analysis on the effectiveness of marital counselling in building sustainable marriages in Zimbabwe.
REFERENCES


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Majome, J on Studio 7 in Zimbabwe, 07 February 2015(1845-2000 hours).


APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

Terms and Conditions of the Study

1. There shall be no financial or benefits to be gained from participating in this study
2. Anonymity and confidentiality shall be ensured with utmost good faith
3. Participants are free to withdraw from the study

I…………………………………………………………………………………………………………..Gender........
.........agree that I have read and understood the terms and conditions accompanying
this research. I therefore participate freely in this study

SIGNATURE………………………………………………………………………………………………

DATE……………………………………………………………………………………………………
APPENDIX B

A PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

The researcher is a student at Bindura University of Science Education perusing Masters in Peace and Governance. I am conducting a research project on *Marital Break-Ups in Centenary Township: a Micro-Conflict Perspective*, in partial fulfilment of the Masters’ program requirements.

Please kindly respond to the following questions as frankly as you can by putting a tick in the box/space provided. You are kindly requested base your responses on your own perceptions and experience on marriage. All your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for this research study. Please do not write your name.

**SECTION A**

1. What is your sex?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. May you indicate your age range?

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Age Range</th>
<th>20-25 years</th>
<th>26-30 years</th>
<th>31-35 years</th>
<th>36-40 years</th>
<th>41+ years</th>
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<td>20-25 years</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26-30 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-35 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>36-40 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>41+ years</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What is your marital status?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Single (parent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. How long have you been married?
5. How long have you been divorced?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Less than 5 years</th>
<th>5-10 years</th>
<th>11-15 years</th>
<th>16+ years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Causes of divorce

6. What did you consider to be the most important factor in choosing a marriage partner?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication defects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of perseverance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of cooperation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immaturity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of love</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfaithfulness/infidelity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsubmissiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In-laws and bad advisers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language barrier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self pride</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infertility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal sharing in decision making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Education and urbanization

Age at marriage

Negative impact of technology

Extended family

Other………………………………………………………………………………

Explain………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

SECTION B

7. How many times have you been involved in marriage?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Once</th>
<th>Twice</th>
<th>More than thrice</th>
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</table>

8. What are the main areas of conflict in relationships?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONFLICT AREAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personality (jealousy, esteem, moodiness, lying)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough time together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values (money, goals, lifestyle, gender roles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication (frequency, honesty, language)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION C

9. Did you go through pre-marital and/or marital counselling?

   YES
   NO

10. If “yes” in the above Question, was it helpful? Please may you explain your answer.

   ........................................................................................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................................................................................

11. Do you seek counselling when you face marital conflict?

   YES  NO  SOMETIMES

12. How would you rate the stability of your marriage?

   Solid  Strong but prone to disputes  Weak and on the rocks

   ........................................................................................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................................................................................

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APPENDIX C

PILOT STUDY FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS

PLEASE (i) answer all questions in this questionnaire

(ii) Do not write your name on the questionnaire

(iii) Put a tick in the appropriate box against your chosen answer

1. Were the instructions on the questionnaire clear?

YES

NO

2. Was the layout of the questionnaire clear and attractive?

YES

NO

3. Were any of the questions not clear and ambiguous?

YES

NO

If yes which questions ………………………and why…………………………………………………

4. In your opinion has any major questions been left out?

YES

NO

If yes which one? ……………………………………………………………………………………………

5. How long did it take you to answer all questions on the questionnaire?


(a) Less than 30

(b) More than 30 minutes

(c) Less than 1 hour

(d) More than 1 hour
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

1. According to your own understanding, what are the key drivers of marital break-ups in Centenary Township?

2. How can you account for divorce patterns in Centenary Township?
3. What impact does divorce have to the family and society at large?
4. Do couples seek for counselling before marriage and after marriage?
5. According to your perception, does counselling help in building a strong marriage?
6. What should couples do in order to have a happy and sustained marriage?
7. What can local institutions relevant in dealing with marital conflicts do in mitigating the prevalence of divorce in Centenary Township?

THANK YOU
APPENDIX E

FDG GUIDE WITH MARRIED COUPLES

1. From your own experience what are the various factors which lead to divorce?

2. Do couples seek counselling when conflicts emerge and also before divorcing?

3. What impact does divorce have on an individual who has divorced, on the family and also the community at large?

4. Who is to blame when marriages collapse and for what reason?

5. If you are to get another chance to get married, what would you do to correct past mistakes?
APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>COMMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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APPENDIX G

PRE-CONTACT LETTER

Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe
Centenary Assemblies
Box 188
Gatu

30 August 2017

Dear Sir

RE: VISIT TO YOUR ORGANISATIONS FOR PURPOSES OF CARRYING OUT A RESEARCH.

I am a final year student with Bindura University of Science Education doing my research in fulfilment to the requirements of Masters in Peace and Governance. I have written this letter to seek your cooperation and assistance. Details of the nature and plan of my visits are as follows


Proposed date of visit……………..

Purpose of visit…………………..

(i) To distribute questionnaires get them filled and to immediately collect them.

(ii) To conduct face to face interviews with

Targeted participants

Randomly selected people

Randomly selected counsellors, school heads, Senator, Magistrate, Police Officer

Proposed time

(i) 1 hour allocated as to face to face interviews and questionnaire
(ii) 30 minutes allocated to logistical preparations for both questionnaires and interviews

I would be very grateful if my request meets your favourable consideration

Yours faithfully

T. Nyamuparadza (Student)