BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE STUDIES

NHODO INTEGRATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF MARONDERA DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE

BY

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A Dissertation Submitted to Bindura University of Science Education in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Bachelor of Science Honours in Culture and Heritage Studies Degree

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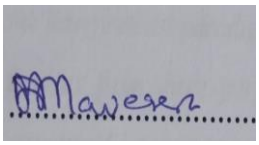
Approval Form

The undersigned certifies that they have supervised and endorsed the acceptance of the dissertation entitled: Nhodo Integration in Primary Schools of Marondera, Zimbabwe, submitted in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Culture and Heritage Studies.



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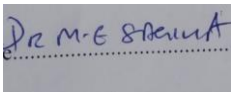
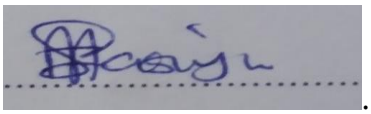
Chairperson name...  Signature.....

....Date..**10/06/2026**

Abstract

This study investigated the integration of nhodo, a Zimbabwean traditional indigenous game, into primary school education in Marondera District. The study sought to examine the extent to which the Heritage-Based Curriculum supports the integration of nhodo, establish the current status of nhodo integration in schools, explore stakeholder perceptions, and propose a framework for nhodo integration into the teaching and learning. It adopted a qualitative case study design within the interpretivist paradigm. Data was collected from three school heads, six teachers, and fifteen parents from three purposively selected primary schools through document analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The study was also guided by Sociocultural Theory and Afrocentric Theory. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Research findings revealed that nhodo contributes to the development of skills such as numeracy, critical thinking, concentration, social interaction, and cultural identity among learners. Despite policy framework as stipulated by the Heritage-Based Curriculum 2024-2030, integration of traditional games such as nhodo in schools remained limited due to curriculum overload, lack of implementation guidelines, and changing learner interests influenced by technology. Participants generally supported the integration of nhodo into formal education and emphasized the need for teacher capacity building and community involvement. The study concluded that nhodo is both a valuable cultural heritage resource and an effective pedagogical tool. The research recommended the development of practical implementation strategies to facilitate nhodo integration into primary school learning.

Declaration Form

I Kudzayi Maringamoyo declare that this study is my original work and has never been presented to any other university. The sources I used have been acknowledged

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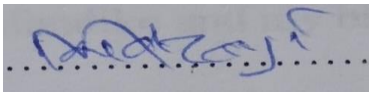
Signature: 

Date: **10/06/2026**

Dedication

To my parents Mr and Mrs. Maringamoyo, whose sacrifices became the soil in which where my dreams could grow. Their love was my first lesson in resilience, their faith in me was the quiet force behind every page of this work

To my relatives Mr and Mrs. Kufandiko and my brothers Innocent and Junior who filled long days of studying with constant reminders of what really matters. I also dedicate this study to my boyfriend Clinton for his unwavering support.

Acknowledgements

I would like to sincerely thank the Almighty who gave me the wisdom and courage to complete this dissertation. I would also like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Dr Mavesera for her continued support, advice and constructive criticisms which have been of great

value in formulating and shaping my work into its present stature. Many thanks go to all my research participants who took part in the study.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

BUSE: Bindura University of Science Education

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

HBC: Heritage-Based Curriculum

IKS: Indigenous Knowledge Systems

MoPSE: Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

NAPH: National Assessment of Primary Schools

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Traditional games play an important role in preserving cultural heritage and promoting children's development. In Zimbabwe, *nhodo* is a traditional game that enhances skills such as counting, concentration, problem-solving, and hand-eye coordination. However, its use has declined due to modernization and changing recreational activities. As Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum 2024-2030 promotes the inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems in education, this study examines the integration of *nhodo* in primary schools in Marondera district and its contribution to teaching, learning, and cultural preservation.

1.2 Background of the Study

Zimbabwe's rich cultural heritage faces significant challenges in the contemporary era due to globalization and modernization, which increasingly marginalize indigenous knowledge systems and traditional practices. Among these traditions is *nhodo*, a strategic game that has been played for generations across various Zimbabwean communities. It is a popular children's game played using stones and often a small hole or circle in the ground. *Nhodo* is more than a form of

entertainment; it embodies a complex system of indigenous knowledge, encompassing strategic thinking, mathematical concepts, and social values that have been transmitted intergenerationally (Chikodzi, 2019). However, the rapid pace of sociocultural changes and the predominance of Western-centric educational models have led to the gradual sidelining of such traditional practices within formal learning environments.

The integration of indigenous games like *nhodo* into formal education would present a critical opportunity to mitigate cultural erosion while simultaneously enhancing educational outcomes. Existing research indicates that traditional games hold significant educational value, particularly in fostering critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and mathematical reasoning among young learners (Mutekwe & Modiba, 2012). The basic game involves throwing one stone into the air while simultaneously manipulating other stones into or out of the circular hole in the ground and catching the airborne stone before it falls.

Primary Schools in Marondera District, Mashonaland East Province, Zimbabwe, serve communities in which traditional practices remain culturally significant. Yet, the intentional incorporation of these practices into the official curriculum seems to remain limited. Many educators rely heavily on Westernized teaching frameworks that overlook valuable local indigenous knowledge systems. This disconnect often creates a cultural gap for students, who find fewer connections between their classroom lessons and daily community life.

Since independence in 1980, Zimbabwe's educational landscape has seen efforts to indigenize the curriculum and enhance its relevance to local contexts. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) has explicitly advocated for the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into the educational framework to improve learning outcomes and promote cultural preservation (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015). Despite

these supportive policy directives, the practical implementation of traditional games like *nhodo* in primary school curricula, there remains a significant gap between policy formulation and practical implementation within the primary schools.

Primary school children in Marondera represent a crucial demographic population for cultural preservation initiatives, as they are at a formative stage where cultural values and cognitive skills can be effectively nurtured. The adoption of *nhodo* in primary education could serve a dual purpose such as preserving intangible cultural heritage and functioning as an academic tool to develop strategic and mathematical competencies. Children naturally learn mathematical concepts such as counting, addition and subtraction while playing the game. Nevertheless, the current extent of *nhodo's* utilization in schools, its perceived educational benefits, and the factors enabling its integration are scarcely documented in academic literature. Despite supportive policy directives, several practical and systematic challenges hinder the consistent integration of IKS like *nhodo* into the curriculum.

The research demonstrates that integration of indigenous games can simultaneously address cultural preservation and contemporary education sustainability. This initiative serves to bridge the gap between schools and local communities. Encouraging greater parental and elder involvement as knowledge holders and valuable educational resources. Thereby transforming the school into a more connected and culturally reflective institution. This focus on identity, belonging and community linkage provides a holistic view of the potential impact of the study.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the integration of nhodo traditional game in primary schools of Marondera district, Zimbabwe.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Despite Zimbabwe's policy commitment to incorporating indigenous knowledge systems into formal education, traditional games like *nhodo* remain underutilized in primary school curricula, potentially contributing to cultural erosion and missed opportunities for enhanced learning outcomes. The inadequacy of comprehensive research on *nhodo's* cultural significance, educational benefits, and adoption patterns in primary schools of Marondera represents a sigificant gap in understanding how traditional games can be effectively integrated into contemporary educational systems. This problem is compounded by the absence of empirical data on teachers' perceptions of *nhodo's* integration and implementation in formal educational settings. Without such understanding, efforts to preserve cultural heritage through educational institutions may remain ineffective. Therefore, this research set out to explore the integration of *nhodo* into primary schools in Marondera, Zimbabwe.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

i. evaluate the understanding of *nhodo* in Zimbabwean communities

ii. determine the status of *nhodo* integration in primary schools of Marondera District.

iii. assess the attitudes and perceptions of key stakeholders.

iv. develop a practical educational framework for integrating *nhodo* into primary school lessons in Marondera.

1.6 Research Questions

i. What is the general understanding of traditional games such as *nhodo*?

ii. Is *nhodo* being integrated in primary schools of Marondera District?

iii. How do key stakeholders perceive the integration of *nhodo* in primary schools?

iv. Which practical educational framework can be used to integrate *nhodo* into primary school lessons in Marondera District?

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

This study operates under two fundamental assumptions.

i)It assumes that participants, including teachers, students and parents will provide honest and accurate responses during interviews, reflecting their genuine perceptions regarding *nhodo* and its role in education and cultural preservation.

ii)The study assumes that the selected sample of primary schools in Marondera District is representative of broader educational contexts within the district, allowing for findings that can reasonably inform educational policy and practice beyond the immediate research sites.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study holds significant theoretical, practical, and policy implications for education and cultural preservation in Zimbabwe. Theoretically, it contributes to the expanding body of scholarship on indigenous knowledge systems in education, particularly within African contexts where colonial legacies continue to influence curriculum design. Analyzing *nhodo* as a cognitive tool reveals how to integrate authentic culture into modern education. The findings expand the limited research of African games education, building for future cross-cultural studies.

This study has the potential to directly benefit multiple stakeholders within the Marondera educational community and beyond. Teachers will gain evidence-based insights into innovative

educational approaches that honor cultural heritage while addressing curriculum requirements, particularly in mathematics and critical thinking domains. Parents and community members will see their cultural knowledge valued and incorporated into their children's education, potentially strengthening school and community partnerships. Most importantly, students stand to benefit from culturally responsive education that not only preserves their heritage but also develops crucial cognitive skills through engaging, culturally familiar methods. This research provides empirical evidence to inform decisions on integrating indigenous knowledge, offering a replicable model that could be adapted for Zimbabwe's cultural landscape.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

This study is deliberately bounded in several ways to maintain focus and manageability. Geographically, the research is delimited to Marondera district in Mashonaland East Province, and does not claim to represent all Zimbabwean contexts or other regions where *nhodo* may be played. Educationally, the focus is specifically on primary education (particularly grades 5-6) rather than secondary or tertiary levels, as primary school represents the developmental stage most appropriate for foundational cultural learning and basic cognitive skill development. While *nhodo* may have applications across various subject areas, this study emphasizes its potential relevance to mathematics education and strategic thinking. The research examines *nhodo* specifically rather than the broader universe of traditional Zimbabwean games, allowing for depth of investigation rather than breadth. Methodologically, the study employs qualitative approaches and does not include experimental to measure learning outcomes quantitatively, instead, it focuses on understanding perceptions, experiences, and contextual factors related to *nhodo's* cultural and educational significance. These delimitations enable thorough investigation

within a defined scope while acknowledging that broader studies could expand upon this foundation.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

Despite careful research design, this study faces several limitations that warrant acknowledgement. The study focuses on Marondera district; while providing depth, it limits generalizability to other Zimbabwean regions where cultural contexts, urbanization levels, or educational resources differ significantly. Language barriers were encountered as interviews conducted in Shona were translated to English for analysis and reporting. The researcher's positionality as an educated individual investigating traditional practices introduces potential bias in interpretation; efforts toward reflexivity mitigate but cannot eliminate this limitation. Time and resource constraints restrict the number of schools that were studied and the duration of engagement with each site. To ensure depth despite this, multiple data collection methods including interviews, observations, and document analysis were used. Additionally, the qualitative methodology, while rich in understanding context and meaning, does not establish causal relationships between *nhodo* engagement and specific learning outcomes, a question that would require different methodological approaches. The reliability of findings was ensured through thick description and member checking with participants.

1.11 Definition of Key Terms

Culturally Responsive Education: Educational approaches that recognize, value, and build upon students' cultural backgrounds, using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and learning preferences to make learning more relevant and effective (Gay, 2010).

Cultural Preservation: Deliberate efforts to maintain, protect, and transmit cultural practices, knowledge, values, and artefacts from one generation to the next in the face of external pressures or changes that threaten their continuity (UNESCO, 2003).

Heritage-Based Curriculum: An educational framework implemented in Zimbabwe that priorities the integration of local culture, history, identity and indigenous knowledges systems into formal schooling to foster national pride, relevance and sustainable socioeconomic development (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, MoPSE, 2024)

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS): Are a body of knowledge, or bodies of knowledge of the indigenous people of particular geographical areas that they have survived on for a very long time (Mapara, 2009).

***Nhodo*:** A traditional game indigenous to Zimbabwe, particularly among Shona communities, played by girls in the age range of about five to thirteen years. The girls sit cross-legged around a hole in the ground. The game is played using small stones or fruit seeds and a bigger stone or seed which is used as *mudodo* (Mapara, 2008).

1.12 Dissertation Outline

This dissertation is organized into five chapters, each serving a distinct purpose in presenting the research comprehensively.

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter establishes the foundation for the research, including the background of the study, the purpose of the study, the statement of the problem, research, the objectives, research questions, assumptions, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, ethical

considerations and definitions of key terms. The chapter concludes with this dissertation outline and an overview of the research methodology.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter provides an expanded, comprehensive review of scholarly literature. It critically analyses existing studies, identifies gaps, and creates theoretical perspectives. Drawing from relevant theories such as Sociocultural theory of learning and Afrocentric educational. The chapter concludes by positioning this research within the broader academic discourse.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter provides the research design, paradigm, and methods employed in the study. It describes the qualitative case study approach, research setting, and sampling. Data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis are explained in detail with sample questions. The chapter outlines the data analysis process using discusses measures taken to ensure trustworthiness and rigor, and addresses ethical considerations specific to the research procedures.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter presents the findings of the study organized thematically in response to each research question. Description is provided using direct quotations from participants, detailed notes. Themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data are clearly articulated and illustrated. Cross-case analysis compares findings across schools. The chapter maintains analytical rigor while presenting findings in an accessible, engaging style.

Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The final chapter discusses the findings in relation to the literature review and provides a conclusion for the entire study. The chapter also suggests directions for future research that could build upon this study's findings. It concludes with final reflections on the study's contribution to cultural preservation and educational enhancement in Zimbabwe

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, and other aspects that provided the foundation for this research. This chapter reviewed related literature on the integration of indigenous games into formal education, with particular focus on *nhodo* as a traditional Zimbabwean game. Literature review was an important component of research because it enabled the researcher to examine existing knowledge, identify areas of agreement and disagreement among scholars, and establish the gap that justifies the current study.

The review was organized into international, African, and Zimbabwean literature to provide a broad understanding of indigenous games, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, cultural heritage preservation, and their educational significance. The chapter further outlines the research gap guiding the study . Through reviewing relevant literature, the chapter sought to position the study

within existing scholarship and provide a foundation for investigating the integration of *nhodo* in primary schools of Marondera District.

2.2 Review of International Literature on Indigenous Games and Education

One of the most influential international scholars in understanding the relationship between culture and learning is Vygotsky (1978), whose sociocultural theory argues that cognitive development occurs through interaction within culturally meaningful environments. Vygotsky contends that knowledge is socially constructed through participation in activities mediated by cultural tools and symbols. According to this perspective, learning cannot be separated from the cultural context in which it occurs because culture provides the framework through which individuals understand and interpret their experiences. Traditional games function as cultural tools that facilitate learning through social interaction, observation, imitation, and participation. Children develop cognitive abilities while engaging in activities that are familiar and meaningful within their communities. This perspective is particularly relevant to *nhodo* because the game is deeply embedded within Zimbabwean cultural practices and serves as a medium through which children acquire strategic thinking, counting skills, and social competencies. While Vygotsky's work provides a useful theoretical explanation for the educational value of indigenous games, it does not specifically address how such games can be systematically integrated into contemporary school curricula. The present study therefore seeks to bridge this gap by examining how *nhodo* can be incorporated into primary school learning environments in Marondera.

Pellegrini and Smith (2005) conducted extensive research on children's play and learning and concluded that traditional play activities contribute significantly to cognitive development. Their findings demonstrate that games encourage strategic reasoning, memory retention, concentration,

and problem-solving abilities. The scholars argue that children learn effectively when they are actively involved in meaningful activities rather than being passive recipients of information. Traditional games create opportunities for experiential learning where participants test ideas, evaluate outcomes, and develop innovative approaches to challenges. Furthermore, play-based learning enhances learner motivation because children naturally enjoy participating in games. The findings by Pellegrini and Smith support the argument that indigenous games can serve as effective pedagogical tools within formal educational settings. However, the study focused largely on general forms of play and did not examine indigenous games within specific cultural contexts. Consequently, questions remain regarding how culturally specific games such as *nhodo* contribute to educational development and cultural preservation.

Bishop (2014) explored the relationship between culture and mathematics education and found that many indigenous games contain sophisticated mathematical concepts. According to Bishop, traditional games often involve counting, estimation, sequencing, classification, and logical reasoning. These concepts are embedded within the structure of the games and are acquired naturally through participation. The scholar argues that mathematics should not be viewed as a culturally neutral discipline because mathematical thinking exists within all societies, albeit expressed through different practices and activities. In the case of *nhodo*, learners engage in counting, predicting outcomes, calculating moves, and making strategic decisions. Such activities have the potential to strengthen numeracy skills while simultaneously preserving cultural heritage. Bishop's work is particularly relevant to the current study because it highlights the educational possibilities of integrating traditional games into mathematics instruction.

Rogoff (2003) contributes significantly to the discourse on indigenous learning systems by arguing that learning is most effective when it occurs through participation in meaningful

community activities. Her concept of learning by observing and pitching in challenges conventional classroom approaches that position learners as passive recipients of knowledge. According to Rogoff, children in indigenous communities learn through active engagement in cultural practices, where knowledge acquisition occurs naturally as part of everyday life. The scholar maintains that learning should not be confined to formal educational settings but should draw from community experiences and indigenous ways of knowing. This perspective is particularly relevant to the current study because *nhodo* is traditionally learned through observation, imitation, and participation rather than through formal instruction. Rogoff's work therefore provides strong support for the integration of traditional games into school learning. However, her research primarily focuses on indigenous communities in Latin America and North America, creating the need for studies that examine similar learning processes within African contexts such as Zimbabwe.

Similarly, Sutton-Smith (2001) challenges traditional perceptions that view games solely as recreational activities. He argues that games are important cultural texts that communicate societal values, beliefs, and knowledge systems. According to Sutton-Smith, play serves multiple functions in society, including socialization, identity formation, creativity development, and cultural transmission The significance of Sutton-Smith's argument lies in its recognition of games as educational spaces where learning occurs naturally and continuously. This observation is particularly applicable to *nhodo*, which teaches concentration, strategic planning, and resilience while simultaneously fostering social interaction among players. Nevertheless, Sutton-Smith's work largely focuses on broad theories of play and does not specifically investigate how traditional games can be systematically integrated into educational curricula. The current study

seeks to contribute to this area by examining practical pathways for incorporating *nhodo* into Zimbabwean primary school education.

UNESCO (2003) provides another important perspective through its Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The organization recognizes traditional games and sports as integral components of humanity's intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO argues that cultural heritage extends beyond monuments and artefacts to include practices, expressions, skills, and knowledge transmitted from generation to generation. Traditional games are identified as important cultural resources because they preserve collective memory, strengthen cultural identity, and facilitate intergenerational knowledge transfer. UNESCO further emphasizes that educational institutions have a crucial role to play in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage by incorporating cultural practices into learning programs. The organization warns that rapid globalization, urbanization, and technological advancement threaten the survival of many indigenous traditions, particularly among younger generations. UNESCO's position directly supports the rationale for the current study because *nhodo* constitutes an important element of Zimbabwe's intangible cultural heritage. Integrating the game into primary school education does not only promote learning but would also contribute towards preserving a valuable cultural practice.

Gray (2013) examined the relationship between play and child development and concluded that children who regularly participate in traditional forms of play demonstrate higher levels of creativity, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving ability. According to Gray, traditional games encourage independent thinking, adaptability, and innovation because they require participants to negotiate rules, develop strategies, and respond to changing circumstances. Gray's findings are particularly relevant to the current study because *nhodo* requires players to

anticipate outcomes, make quick decisions, and adapt strategies during gameplay. Such cognitive demands suggest that the game has significant potential as an educational resource. However, Gray's study was conducted within Western educational contexts and does not specifically address the cultural dimensions of indigenous games. The present research therefore extends this discussion by focusing on a traditional Zimbabwean game and its potential contribution education.

From another perspective, Kovačević and Opić (2014) investigated the educational benefits of traditional games among European children and found that indigenous games foster communication skills, social cohesion, and cultural awareness. The researchers observed that educational systems should recognize traditional games as valuable pedagogical resources capable of enhancing learner engagement and participation. Furthermore, the study found that learners displayed greater enthusiasm when educational activities incorporated elements of their cultural experiences. This finding is important for the present study because it suggests that culturally familiar games such as *nhodo* may increase learner motivation and participation within Zimbabwean classrooms. While the study contributes valuable insights into the educational value of traditional games, its European focus limits its applicability to African educational contexts. Therefore, there remains a need for context-specific research exploring how indigenous games function within African schools and communities.

2.3 Review of African Literature on Indigenous Games and Education.

One of the most influential African scholars in this area is Dei (2011), who argues that indigenous knowledge systems constitute legitimate forms of knowledge that deserve equal recognition alongside Western scientific traditions. According to Dei, colonial education systems

systematically devalued African knowledge by presenting Western perspectives as superior and universal. This process resulted in the marginalization of indigenous practices, languages, and cultural traditions within formal schooling. The scholar further argues that learners are more likely to engage with educational content when it reflects their lived experiences and cultural realities. Dei's work provides strong justification for the present study because it highlights the importance of reconnecting education with local knowledge systems. However, while the scholar advocates broadly for indigenous knowledge integration, limited attention is given to specific traditional games such as *nhodo* and the practical challenges associated with their implementation in schools.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) provides a critical African perspective on education through his argument that colonialism did not only dispossess Africans of their land and resources but also alienated them from their cultural heritage. According to Ngũgĩ, colonial education functioned as a tool of cultural domination by privileging foreign languages, histories, and worldviews while simultaneously undermining indigenous knowledge systems. Ngũgĩ further contends that education becomes more effective when learners are able to connect classroom knowledge with the realities of their everyday lives. This perspective is highly relevant to the current study because *nhodo* represents a cultural practice familiar to many Zimbabwean communities. Its integration into formal education has the potential to bridge the gap between school knowledge and community knowledge. While Ngũgĩ's work strongly advocates for the decolonization of education, it does not provide detailed frameworks for incorporating specific indigenous practices into classroom instruction. The present study seeks to contribute to this area by examining practical strategies for integrating *nhodo* into primary school learning.

Mawere (2015) examined the significance of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in African societies and observed that indigenous knowledge remains one of the most underutilized resources within contemporary education. The scholar argues that traditional games form part of this knowledge reservoir because they embody social values, practical skills, and cultural philosophies. He further notes that the increasing influence of globalization has contributed to the gradual erosion of indigenous cultural practices, particularly among younger generations who are increasingly exposed to foreign forms of entertainment and education. As a result, many traditional games are disappearing despite their educational value. Mawere advocates for deliberate efforts to preserve indigenous knowledge through educational institutions because schools provide structured environments where cultural practices can be documented, transmitted, and sustained. His observations are directly applicable to the current study because *nhodo,* like many traditional African games, faces the risk of declining participation among children. Integrating the game into school programs may therefore serve the dual purpose of preserving cultural heritage and enhancing educational outcomes.

Acheampong (2017), studying indigenous games in Ghanaian communities, found that traditional games contribute significantly to children's intellectual and social development. The study revealed that learners who participate in indigenous games demonstrated stronger problem-solving abilities, improved concentration, and enhanced communication skills. Acheampong argues that traditional games provide children with opportunities to develop leadership qualities, teamwork, and resilience in ways that formal classroom instruction may not. The scholar further observed that indigenous games often involve strategic decision-making processes that require players to think critically and anticipate future outcomes. Acheampong's findings are particularly important to the current study because *nhodo* similarly requires strategic thinking, concentration,

and careful planning. However, while the study establishes the educational benefits of indigenous games, it focuses on Ghanaian cultural practices and therefore leaves unanswered questions regarding the role of traditional games within Zimbabwean educational contexts.

Amory (2018) investigated the role of indigenous games in South African schools and found that traditional games have the potential to transform classroom learning experiences. The study demonstrated that learners became more actively engaged when teachers incorporated culturally familiar games into lesson delivery. According to Amory, indigenous games create interactive learning environments that encourage participation, collaboration, and creativity. Learners are able to explore concepts through practical engagement rather than relying solely on theoretical explanations. The study further established that traditional games promote inclusivity because they draw upon experiences shared by learners from similar cultural backgrounds. This finding is significant because learner engagement remains a major concern in many educational settings. The incorporation of games such as *nhodo* may therefore provide opportunities to increase learner participation while simultaneously reinforcing cultural identity. Nevertheless, the South African educational context differs in important ways from Zimbabwe's context, making it necessary to investigate whether similar outcomes can be achieved through the integration of *nhodo* in Zimbabwean primary schools.

Kaya and Seleti (2013) argue that indigenous knowledge systems should occupy a central position within African education because they provide culturally relevant solutions to contemporary challenges. The scholars contend that African educational systems have historically prioritized imported knowledge at the expense of local wisdom and experiences. This imbalance has contributed to the marginalization of indigenous practices, including traditional games, which were once central to children's learning and development. Kaya and Seleti further

notes that through participation in traditional games, children acquire practical knowledge while strengthening their sense of identity and belonging. The scholars therefore advocate for curriculum reforms that recognize indigenous cultural practices as legitimate educational resources. Their arguments support the rationale of the current study, which sought to explore how *nhodo* can contribute to educational development while promoting cultural preservation.

Chireshe and Chireshe (2010) examined the developmental value of indigenous games among African children and concluded that traditional games play a significant role in shaping behavior, attitudes, and social relationships. Their findings indicate that participation in traditional games enhances self-confidence, cooperation, patience, and interpersonal communication. The scholars argue that many indigenous games are intentionally designed to prepare children for adult responsibilities by teaching values such as discipline, respect, perseverance, and teamwork. These findings challenge assumptions that traditional games are merely recreational activities with little educational significance. Instead, they suggest that indigenous games function as informal educational institutions through which societies socialize younger generations. The relevance of this study to the current research lies in its recognition of traditional games as tools for holistic development. However, Chireshe and Chireshe focused broadly on indigenous games rather than examining how specific games can be integrated into formal educational settings.

2.4 Review of Zimbabwean Literature on *Nhodo,* Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Education

The discourse on Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Zimbabwe has grown considerably over the past two decades as scholars increasingly recognize the importance of preserving local

knowledge and integrating it into formal education. Mapara (2008) provides one of the most comprehensive discussions of traditional games in Zimbabwe and identifies *nhodo* as one of the most popular indigenous games among Shona communities. According to Mapara, while the game is often perceived as a recreational activity, the scholar argues that it embodies sophisticated cognitive processes that contribute to children's intellectual development. Players are required to demonstrate concentration, hand-eye coordination, memory, strategic thinking, and decision-making skills throughout the game. He further notes, the game promotes social interaction and cooperation among participants. Mapara (2008) provides one of the most detailed discussions of *nhodo* within Zimbabwean communities. While these findings establish the educational significance of the game, the study primarily focuses on describing its cultural functions rather than examining its application within formal educational settings. Consequently, there remains limited understanding of how teachers can effectively integrate *nhodo* into classroom teaching and learning processes. The current study addresses this gap by investigating practical mechanisms for incorporating *nhodo* into primary school education.

Mutekwe and Modiba (2012) investigated the role of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Zimbabwean education and found that local cultural practices possess considerable educational value. The scholars argue that many indigenous practices contain embedded knowledge capable of enhancing learner understanding and academic achievement. They further contend that educational systems that ignore indigenous knowledge risk alienating learners from their cultural identities and lived experiences. According to their findings, traditional games offer opportunities for experiential learning because they require learners to apply knowledge actively rather than passively receiving information. Mutekwe and Modiba also observe that indigenous games promote learner participation because they are culturally familiar and enjoyable. This

observation is particularly significant in light of ongoing concerns regarding learner engagement in Zimbabwean schools. The current study builds upon these findings by specifically examining *nhodo* and its potential contribution to primary school education. Unlike Mutekwe and Modiba's broader focus on Indigenous Knowledge Systems, the present research concentrates on one traditional game and its educational implications.

Shizha (2013) argues that the continued dominance of Western educational models in Africa has contributed to the marginalization of indigenous forms of knowledge. According to Shizha, many African learners experience a disconnect between what they learn in school and the realities of their communities because educational content often reflects foreign perspectives rather than local experiences. The scholar advocates for culturally responsive education that acknowledges the value of indigenous knowledge systems and incorporates them into curriculum design. His work is relevant to the current study because it provides a theoretical justification for integrating *nhodo* into formal education. However, the scholar's discussion remains largely conceptual and does not provide empirical evidence regarding the practical implementation of indigenous games in schools. This limitation creates space for studies such as the present research.

Chikodzi (2019) specifically examines the educational significance of traditional games in Zimbabwe and argues that indigenous games possess immense potential for supporting cognitive development. According to Chikodzi, games such as *nhodo* involve counting, estimation, classification, sequencing, and strategic reasoning, all of which are important components of mathematical thinking. The scholar notes that learners often acquire these skills naturally through participation in games without necessarily realizing that they are engaging with mathematical concepts. This observation challenges conventional assumptions that academic

learning occurs exclusively within formal classroom environments. His findings are particularly relevant to the current study because they directly support the argument that *nhodo* can contribute to educational development. However, while Chikodzi establishes the cognitive benefits of traditional games, his study does not investigate the extent to which they are currently integrated into Zimbabwean primary schools.

Mawere and Mubaya (2016) examine the challenges facing Indigenous Knowledge Systems in contemporary African societies and conclude that globalization poses a significant threat to the survival of traditional cultural practices. According to the scholars, younger generations are increasingly exposed to foreign cultures through technology, media, and formal education, often at the expense of local traditions. As a result, many indigenous practices, including traditional games, are gradually disappearing from communities. They further contend that cultural preservation should not be viewed as separate from educational development because indigenous knowledge contributes meaningfully to learners' intellectual and social growth. Their work strengthens the rationale for the current study by highlighting the urgency of preserving traditional games such as *nhodo* before they become marginalized within contemporary society.

A significant contemporary contribution to this discourse is provided by Mavesera (2026). Mavesera argues that traditional games represent living archives of indigenous knowledge, embodying cultural philosophies, social values, problem-solving techniques, and community histories. She challenges the perception that traditional games belong solely to the past and instead presents them as dynamic cultural resources capable of addressing contemporary educational challenges. The scholar observes that many indigenous games require strategic reasoning, numerical competence, creativity, cooperation, and resilience, qualities that are equally valued within modern educational systems.

Mavesera (2026) further contends that traditional games play a critical role in strengthening cultural identity among young people. She notes that participation in indigenous games enables children to develop a sense of belonging and appreciation for their cultural heritage. In an era characterized by increasing global cultural influences, traditional games provide opportunities for communities to maintain continuity with their historical traditions while adapting to contemporary realities. This perspective was particularly relevant to the current study because the successful integration of *nhodo* into primary schools may require active involvement from community members who possess knowledge about the game.

However, despite recognizing the educational value of traditional games, Mavesera acknowledges that limited empirical research has been conducted on their actual implementation within Zimbabwean schools. This observation directly aligns with the focus of the current study, which sought to investigate the integration of *nhodo* in primary schools of Marondera.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by two complementary theories namely Sociocultural Theory and Afrocentric Theory. These theories provide a foundation for understanding how *nhodo* can contribute to learning and cultural preservation within primary schools.

2.5.1 Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural Theory was developed by Lev Vygotsky (1978). The theory emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction and cultural experiences. According to Vygotsky, children construct knowledge through engagement with more knowledgeable others such as teachers, parents, peers, and community members.

The theory argues that culture shapes cognitive development because learning is influenced by language, traditions, tools, and social practices within a community. Educational activities become meaningful when they connect with learners' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences.

Nhodo aligns closely with Sociocultural Theory because it is a culturally embedded activity learned through social participation. Children acquire skills and knowledge by observing, imitating, and interacting with peers and elders during gameplay. Through these interactions, learners develop problem-solving abilities, strategic thinking, and mathematical reasoning.

The theory was relevant to this study because it explains how indigenous games can serve as educational tools within culturally responsive learning environments. It supports the argument that integrating *nhodo* into classrooms can enhance learner engagement by connecting formal education with familiar cultural experiences.

Sociocultural Theory also emphasizes collaborative learning. *nhodo* encourages interaction, cooperation, and peer learning among children. Such social engagement contributes to both cognitive and social development.

However, critics argue that Sociocultural Theory may place excessive emphasis on social factors while paying less attention to individual differences in learning. Despite this limitation, the theory remains useful for understanding the educational significance of culturally grounded learning practices.

2.5.2 Afrocentric Theory

Afrocentric Theory was developed primarily by Molefi Kete Asante (1987). The theory advocates for the centering of African values, experiences, and cultural perspectives in knowledge production and education.

Afrocentric scholars argue that African education systems should reflect African realities rather than relying exclusively on Eurocentric models. According to Asante (1987), education should empower African learners by validating their identities, histories, and cultural heritage.

The theory is relevant to this study because *nhodo* represents an indigenous African cultural practice that has historically been marginalized within formal education systems. Integrating *nhodo* into schools aligns with Afrocentric principles of reclaiming and preserving African knowledge systems.

Afrocentric Theory further supports the inclusion of community knowledge holders such as parents and elders in educational processes. This aligns with the study's focus on stakeholder perceptions and cultural preservation.

The theory also challenges the dominance of Western educational standards that often exclude indigenous cultural practices. By recognizing *nhodo* as a legitimate educational resource, schools can promote cultural pride and identity among learners.

However, critics argue that Afrocentric approaches may romanticize traditional practices without adequately addressing modern educational demands. Nevertheless, the theory remains valuable because it emphasizes cultural relevance and educational decolonization.

Together, Sociocultural Theory and Afrocentric Theory provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing the integration of *nhodo* into primary schools. Sociocultural Theory explains the

learning processes involved while Afrocentric Theory highlights the importance of cultural identity and indigenous knowledge preservation.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on the relationship between indigenous knowledge integration, stakeholder perceptions, heritage-based curriculum support, and educational outcomes.

The framework assumed that successful integration of *nhodo* into primary schools depends on several interconnected factors. These include supportive educational policies, positive stakeholder attitudes, teacher preparedness, availability of cultural knowledge, and curriculum flexibility.

2.7 Research Gap

The reviewed literature indicates that international, African, and Zimbabwean scholars acknowledge the educational and cultural value of indigenous games. Studies by Vygotsky (1978), Dei (2011), Mapara (2008; 2009), Mutekwe and Modiba (2012), Chikodzi (2019), and Mavesera (2026) demonstrate that traditional games contribute to cognitive development, cultural preservation, and learner engagement. However, most of these studies focus on indigenous games in general rather than on *nhodo* specifically.

In Zimbabwe, although scholars have highlighted the importance of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and traditional games, limited research has been conducted on the actual integration of *nhodo* into primary school education. Furthermore, little is known about the perceptions of teachers, learners, parents, and school administrators regarding its use in formal learning

environments. There is also a lack of practical frameworks that guide the incorporation of *nhodo* into classroom teaching.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the integration of *nhodo* in primary schools of Marondera District, examining stakeholder perceptions, and proposing a practical framework for its incorporation into teaching and learning.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed literature related to indigenous games, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, cultural preservation, and education. The review was organized into international, African, and Zimbabwean perspectives. The literature revealed that traditional games play an important role in promoting cognitive development, social interaction, cultural identity, and the preservation of indigenous knowledge. The chapter further discussed the Sociocultural Theory of Learning, which guided the study, and presented the conceptual framework that illustrated the relationship between the integration of *nhodo* and educational and cultural outcomes. Identification of a research gap that justified the current study was presented. The next chapter presents the research methodology and procedures that were employed in conducting the study**.**

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed literature related to traditional games from international literature up to Zimbabwean literature. This chapter presented the research methodology and design adopted in the study on the integration of *nhodo* in primary schools in Marondera district,

Zimbabwe. The chapter explains the philosophical assumptions guiding the research, the methodological approach, and the research design employed to generate and analyze data. It also outlines the target population, sampling methods, data collection procedures, research instruments, validity and reliability measures, pilot testing, ethical considerations, and the methods used for data presentation and analysis.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the integration of *nhodo* in primary schools of Marondera district. The study was guided by four research questions, namely: how the heritage-based curriculum supports the integration of *nhodo* in primary schools; the current status of *nhodo* integration in Marondera primary schools; stakeholder perceptions regarding the use of *nhodo* in education; and the practical educational framework that can support the integration of *nhodo* into primary school lessons. Since the study sought to understand lived experiences, perceptions, cultural meanings, and educational practices within their natural context, a qualitative methodology was considered most appropriate.

The methodology adopted in this study was informed by the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two, particularly Sociocultural Theory and Afrocentric Theory. These theories emphasize the significance of culture, lived experience, and social interaction in knowledge construction and educational development (Vygotsky, 1978; Asante, 1987). Their relevance supports a methodology that values participants' voices and contextual understanding within indigenous Zimbabwean educational realities.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the beliefs and assumptions guiding how knowledge is generated and interpreted in a study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). This study is guided by the interpretivist research philosophy.

Interpretivism assumes that reality is socially constructed and that meaning is shaped by human experiences, interactions, and cultural context. The philosophy sought to understand how individuals interpret their world and attach meaning to their experiences rather than measuring reality objectively through numerical methods (Creswell, 2014). This philosophy was appropriate because the study focuses on indigenous cultural practices and educational experiences, areas that are deeply shaped by values, traditions, and social meaning.

The integration of *nhodo* in primary schools involves perceptions held by teachers, parents, and school headmasters. These perceptions are influenced by cultural beliefs, educational experiences, and community expectations. Interpretivism allowed the researcher to explore how participants understand *nhodo* as both a cultural practice and a learning tool within the school environment.

The philosophy also aligns with Afrocentric Theory, which emphasizes understanding African realities from African cultural perspectives rather than imposing external frameworks (Asante, 1987). It therefore enabled the researcher to center indigenous Zimbabwean experiences and meanings when analyzing *nhodo* within primary education in Marondera.

3.3 Research Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative research methodology.

Qualitative research sought to understand experiences, attitudes, meanings, and social realities from the perspectives of participants within their natural environments (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative inquiry allows detailed exploration of human experiences and provides deeper understanding of complex social and cultural phenomena.

The study focused on *nhodo* as an indigenous cultural practice and educational tool. Because the study aimed to explore how participants experience and interpret the integration of *nhodo* in schools, qualitative methodology provided the most appropriate approach. It enabled the researcher to collect rich descriptions from teachers, school administrators, and parents regarding their experiences, perceptions, and suggestions.

The methodology was further appropriate because one objective of the study is to develop a practical educational framework for integrating *nhodo* into classroom lessons. Such a framework requires understanding contextual realities and lived experiences before proposing recommendations.

3.4 Research Design

The study employed a qualitative case study design.

A case study design allows an in-depth investigation of a phenomenon within its real-life setting (Yin, 2018). It focuses on understanding the relationship between the phenomenon and its context. In this study, the phenomenon is the integration of *nhodo* in primary schools, while the context is Marondera district.

The case study design was selected because *nhodo* integration is influenced by school culture, teacher practices, curriculum interpretation, and community attitudes. These contextual factors are interconnected and best understood within the actual school environment.

The design enabled the researcher to collect information from multiple sources, including interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary review. This strengthened understanding through triangulation and made it possible to compare perspectives from different participants.

The case study was also suitable because Marondera district provides a culturally relevant setting where indigenous practices remain visible within community life. The study therefore generated context-specific findings while also contributing knowledge relevant to similar educational settings in Zimbabwe.

3.5 Population and Sample

The research population comprised three primary schools within Marondera district, Mashonaland East Province, Zimbabwe. Marondera district contains both urban and rural primary schools serving diverse communities where traditional practices maintain varying degrees of cultural importance.

The target population within schools included three primary stakeholder groups whose perspectives were crucial for addressing the research questions comprehensively. The school heads comprised the first group, their pedagogical decisions and perceptions directly influence curriculum implementation. Teachers, particularly those teaching mathematics and cultural studies in grades five through six, constituted the second stakeholder group. Parents with knowledge of traditional games and cultural practices constituted the third group, providing historical and cultural expertise regarding *nhodo's* traditional contexts and meanings.

The sample for this study consisted of three primary schools selected through purposive sampling. With specific participants from each stakeholder group recruited within each school. Purposive sampling involves deliberately selecting information-rich cases that provide insights relevant to research questions rather than randomly selecting participants to enable statistical generalization (Patton, 2015). This approach was appropriate for case study research where the goal is analytical generalization of theoretical propositions rather than statistical generalization to populations.

The three schools were selected to represent maximum variation sampling, a purposive strategy that captures diverse perspectives and contexts to understand how phenomena may vary across different settings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Selection criteria included geographic location (two urban schools and one rural school), school size (two larger schools with over five hundred pupils and one smaller school), and socioeconomic context (schools serving different socioeconomic communities). This variation enabled examination of how *nhodo* integration manifests or could manifest across diverse educational contexts within Marondera district. School A was a large urban school serving a middle-class community. School B was a smaller urban school in a lower income area. School C was a large rural school serving multiple surrounding villages. These schools provided sufficient contextual diversity while remaining manageable within the research timeframe and resources.

Within each school, participants were recruited through a combination of purposive and criterion sampling strategies. Teachers were selected based on specific criteria including teaching grades five through six, willingness to participate, and at least two years of teaching experience at the school. Two teachers were recruited from each school, generating a total teacher sample of

approximately six participants. Focus group discussions with parents involved four to five participants per group, with one focus group conducted at each school.

Parents were identified through consultation with school leadership, selecting individuals recognized for their cultural knowledge and willingness to share. This sampling strategy produced a total sample of approximately twenty-four participants across all stakeholder groups and research sites.

3.6 Sampling Methods to be Used

The study employed non-probability sampling techniques, specifically purposive sampling and its variants. Non-probability sampling was appropriate because the research aimed for analytical depth and theoretical insight rather than statistical representativeness. The sampling strategy operated at two levels: case selection at the school level and participant selection within cases.

At the case level, maximum variation sampling guided school selection. The strategy was implemented through consultation with Marondera district education officials who provided information about schools' characteristics, enabling informed selection of cases representing desired variation.

Within cases, criterion sampling was employed for teacher selection, establishing specific inclusion criteria that ensured participants possessed relevant experience and knowledge. The criteria included current teaching assignment in grades five through six, minimum two-year tenure at the school, and willingness to participate in interviews and allow classroom observations if applicable. Teachers meeting criteria were invited to participate through information sessions explaining the research purpose and procedures.

Snowball sampling supplemented purposive selection for parents, as these populations required initial contacts to facilitate access. Teachers and school administrators provided initial referrals to parents known to have interest in cultural matters.

Practical considerations including research timeframe and resources necessitated approximate targets guiding recruitment. The final sample of approximately twenty-four participants across 3 schools and three stakeholder groups provided sufficient data richness to address research questions. While allowing thorough analysis within available timeframes.

3.7 Data Collection Methods

Data collection employed multiple qualitative methods, enabling triangulation that strengthened the credibility and comprehensiveness of findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The primary data collection methods were semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis, each serving distinct purposes while collectively generating rich, multifaceted data.

3.7.1 Semi-structured interviews constituted the primary method for collecting in-depth individual perspectives from school heads and teachers, parents. Semi-structured interviews follow a flexible protocol with predetermined questions while allowing conversational flow and emergent searching based on participant responses (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). This format was appropriate because it ensured systematic coverage of key topics across participants while accommodating exploration of unique insights individual participants offered.

Teacher interview protocols explored several thematic areas. Questions addressed teachers' knowledge with *nhodo* and other traditional games. Sample questions included: "Is *nhodo* being integrated in your school?" "In your view, what educational skills or values might *nhodo* help

develop in students?" These questions encouraged narrative responses revealing both practical realities and underlying beliefs.

Interviews were conducted in participants' preferred language, either English or Shona, with the researcher conducting all interviews personally to maintain consistency. Interviews lasted between 10 and 20 minutes, depending on participant responsiveness and time availability. All interviews were written-recorded, detailed written notes were taken during interviews

3.7.2 Focus Group Discussions were employed specifically with parents, as this method proved particularly effective for engaging parents in discussing their experiences and perspectives (Morgan, 1997). Parents focus groups contained four to five participants from different grade levels. One focus group was conducted at each school, generating three total focus group sessions involving approximately fifteen parents.

3.7.3 Document Analysis provided contextual data complementing interview and focus group data. Relevant documents included curriculum documents from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education outlining curriculum standards and indigenous knowledge integration policies, school records such as schemes of work and lesson plans.

The combination of these three methods enabled methodological triangulation, with each method's strengths compensating for others' limitations (Patton, 2015). Interviews provided deep individual perspectives but could not capture group dynamics. Focus groups generated interactive data but were less suitable for sensitive topics individuals might not discuss publicly. Document analysis offered objective policy and practice documentation but could not reveal how people interpreted or experienced these policies.

3.8 Data Presentation and Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is an iterative process beginning during data collection and continuing through interpretation and reporting (Miles et al., 2014). This study employed thematic analysis, a widely used qualitative analytical approach involving systematic identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns or themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Data analysis proceeded through several interconnected phases. The first phase involved data preparation and familiarization. Written recordings with Shona language transcript translated into English during transcription. Translation was conducted carefully to preserve meaning.

The second phase involved generating initial codes through systematic examination of transcripts. Coding is the process of identifying and labeling meaningful segments of data, with codes representing conceptual labels capturing what is significant in data segments (Saldaña, 2016). The researcher used a combination of deductive and inductive coding.

The third phase involved searching for themes by examining relationships among codes and clustering related codes into broader thematic categories. This process moved analysis from descriptive coding to interpretive theme development. Themes represent patterns of meaning across the dataset that capture something significant about the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The fourth phase involved reviewing and refining themes to ensure they were coherent, distinct, and supported by sufficient data. Each theme was reviewed against original data to ensure interpretations remained grounded in participants' actual expressions rather than reflecting only researcher impositions.

The fifth phase involved defining and naming themes, developing detailed descriptions of each theme's meaning, and identifying sub-themes capturing nuances within broader patterns.

The sixth phase involved producing the research report, integrating themes into a coherent narrative addressing research questions. Cross-case analysis compared themes across the three schools, identifying patterns consistent across contexts and contextual variations shaping different expressions of similar phenomena.

Throughout analysis, the researcher maintained an audit trail documenting analytical decisions, theme development evolution, and interpretive reasoning. Regular consultation with the research supervisor provided external input on developing interpretations, serving as a form of peer debriefing that strengthened analytical rigor.

3.9 Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the conceptual and soundness of a research study or an investigation with the primary purpose of producing valid conclusion, Marzyk (2005). He further notes that, validity is rel9ted to the research methodology due to its primary purpose to increase the accuracy and usefulness of findings. While reliability refers to whether an assessment gives the same results each time it is used in the same setting with the same type of subjects, Sullivan (2011).

Credibility refers to the confidence that can be placed in the truth-value of findings. This study employed several strategies to enhance credibility. Prolonged engagement involved spending sufficient time at each research site to understand the context and build rapport with participants. Triangulation involved comparing data from multiple sources including different stakeholder groups, different data collection methods, and different schools to verify patterns across sources (Denzin, 2012). Member checking involved sharing preliminary findings with selected participants to verify the researcher had accurately captured their perspectives and experiences.

Transferability addresses the extent to which findings might apply to other contexts. Qualitative research does not seek statistical generalization but rather analytical generalization, where findings illuminate theoretical propositions applicable beyond immediate research sites (Yin, 2018). This study enhanced transferability through thick description, providing rich contextual detail about research sites, participants, and processes enabling readers to assess similarity between research contexts and contexts.

Dependability refers to the stability and trackability of findings. Dependability was addressed through maintaining a comprehensive audit trail documenting all research activities, decisions, and materials. This trail included interview protocols, transcripts and coding schemes. The audit trail enables external auditors to examine research processes and determine whether procedures were followed consistently and whether findings are supported by data. Additionally, dependability was enhanced by regular consultation with the research supervisor.

Confirmability, was pursued through reflexivity, involving critical self-examination of how the researcher's background, assumptions, and positionality influenced the research (Finlay, 2002). The researcher maintained a reflexive journal documenting personal reactions, assumptions, and potential biases throughout the research process. Confirmability was further enhanced through the audit trail enabling verification that interpretations were grounded in actual data rather than unsupported speculation

3.10 **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical research practice requires protecting participants' rights, welfare, and dignity throughout the research process (Christians, 2011). This study adhered to ethical principles established by Bindura University of Science Education and internationally recognized standards for research

involving human participants. Formal ethical approval was obtained from the university's research ethics committee before commencing fieldwork. Additionally, permission was secured from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education at both provincial and district levels, and from individual school heads before approaching potential participants.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, voluntary participation and withdrawal rights were explicitly communicated to all participants, emphasizing that participation was entirely voluntary and refusal or withdrawal would not result in any negative consequences. Participants were informed they could decline to answer specific questions or discontinue participation at any time without providing reasons.

Confidentiality and anonymity were protected through several measures. Participants were assured that their identities would be protected in all research outputs through use of pseudonyms and removal of identifying details. Physical documents were kept in locked storage. School identities were also protected through assignment of generic labels (School A through C) and non-disclosure of specific identifying characteristics in reporting.

Minimizing harm and maximizing benefit involved careful attention to potential risks while ensuring participants could derive value from involvement. The research posed minimal risk to participants, primarily involving time commitment and potential minor discomfort discussing cultural practices in educational contexts where they may feel marginalized.

Cultural sensitivity and respect were paramount given the research's focus on indigenous cultural practices. The researcher approached traditional knowledge with respect, acknowledging parents as experts and knowledge holders whose insights were valued. Protocols for engaging with parents followed local cultural norms, including appropriate greetings and expressions of

gratitude. The research design positioned traditional knowledge as legitimate and valuable rather than exotic or inferior to Western knowledge, reflecting commitment to decolonizing research practices (Smith, 2012).

Power dynamics and reciprocity were addressed through reflexive awareness of the researcher's position as university-educated investigator studying communities where educational and socioeconomic diversity existed. The researcher actively worked to minimize power imbalances by conducting interviews in participants' preferred settings and languages, emphasizing participants' expertise, and avoiding academic jargon. Reciprocity was pursued through sharing preliminary findings with participating schools.

3.11 Chapter **Summary**

This chapter has outlined the comprehensive methodological framework guiding this investigation of *Nhodo* integration in Marondera primary schools. Grounded in interpretive philosophy and employing qualitative methodology. The research utilized a multiple case study design examining three purposefully selected schools. Data collection employed semi-structured interviews with teachers and headmasters, parents, focus group discussions with parents and document analysis of curriculum and policy materials. Thematic analysis procedures guided systematic movement from raw data to meaningful themes addressing research questions. Trustworthiness and pilot testing refined data collection instruments before full implementation. Rigorous ethical procedures protected participants' rights and welfare.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

While the preceding chapter outlined the methodology, sampling techniques and ethical protocols governing this study, the current chapter presents, analyses and discusses findings gathered from semi-structured interviews conducted with school heads and teachers as well as focus group discussions conducted with parents from selected primary schools in Marondera

district. The findings are presented according to the objectives and research questions of the study. Data were analyzed using a thematic approach where recurring ideas, patterns and experiences from participants were grouped into themes and sub-themes. The chapter integrates verbatim responses from participants to reflect lived experiences and realities observed during fieldwork.

To preserve confidentiality, pseudonyms such as School Head A, Teacher B and Parent from school C are used throughout this chapter. The chapter is organized according to the major themes emerging from the study.

4.2 Demographic Information of Participants

The study involved school heads, teachers and parents from three selected primary schools in Marondera district. Participants were selected purposively because they possessed knowledge and experience relevant to the study. The schools represented both rural and urban settings to ensure diversity of perspectives.

The sample consisted of three school heads, six teachers and fifteen parents who participated in focus group discussions. Among the teachers, four were female while two were male. Most teachers had teaching experience ranging from two years and above. The parents represented different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds.

Fig 4.2.0: participant demographic by role and gender

Participant role	Female	Male	Total
School heads	**1**	**2**	**3**

Teachers	**4**	**2**	**6**
Parents	**10**	**5**	**15**
Total sample			**24**

This diagram illustrates the composition of the study sample size, totaling 24 participants.

4.3 Presentation and Analysis of Findings

4.4 School Heads Responses

Theme 1. Understanding of *nhodo*.

When asked what *nhodo* is, all school heads described it as a traditional indigenous game commonly played using stones and a larger stone known as *mudodo* and others calls it *mubhoga*. School head A from the urban school explained that *nhodo* was not merely a game but a form of indigenous education which sharpened children's minds. He explained that as children played, they unknowingly developed counting skills, hand-eye coordination, patience and social interaction. The participant recalled how children in the past would spend hours competing in *nhodo* during play time.

School head B from an urban school stated that *nhodo* helped children learn discipline because the game requires concentration and patience. He explained that the game also reduced antisocial behavior among children because it encouraged teamwork and healthy interaction. According to the participant, many children today spend too much time on mobile phones and television instead of engaging in productive indigenous games.

Another school head indicated that *nhodo* had educational significance particularly within mathematics lessons. She explained that children constantly count stones, estimate timing and plan strategies during gameplay. According to the participant, this demonstrates that indigenous games can complement formal education if properly integrated.

The findings revealed that all school heads had personally played *nhodo* during their childhood. Their experiences shaped positive perceptions toward the game. One participant remarked:

"Munguva yedu vana vaidzidza unyanzvi hwakawanda hwehupenyu kuburikidza nenhodo. Taisada matoyi anodhura kana makombiyuta. Vana vaiva nehunyanzvi hwekugadzira uye vaibatana zvakanaka nevamwe."

(During our time children learned many life skills through *nhodo*. We did not need expensive toys or computers. Children became creative and socially connected).

The above response demonstrates how older generations continue to value indigenous games as tools for learning and socialization. However, participants expressed concern that modernization and technology are gradually eroding such cultural practices.

Theme 2. Current status of *nhodo* integration in schools.

Regarding whether *nhodo* is currently played in schools, responses varied. The rural school reported that some learners still play *nhodo* during break time and sports activities. However, the practice was described as informal and inconsistent. In urban schools, participants stated that only a few children know how to play the game. Most learners reportedly prefer digital games and football.

School heads acknowledged that teachers themselves rarely participate in teaching or supervising nhodo activities. One participant admitted:

Vadzidzisi vanofarira asi hapana gwara rakajeka rinoratidza kuti nhodo inofanira kupinzwa sei muzvidzidzo. Saka zvinopedzisira zvangosiiwa kuvana kuti vazviitire vega."

(Teachers are interested but there is no clear structure showing how *nhodo* should be integrated. So, it ends up being left to children themselves).

This finding demonstrates that lack of structured implementation frameworks contributes significantly to the decline of indigenous games within schools.

Theme 3. Perceptions towards inclusion of *nhodo* in primary schools.

On the inclusion of *nhodo* in schools, all school heads supported the idea. Participants argued that the game aligns with the philosophy of the heritage-based curriculum which seeks to promote Ubuntu, cultural identity and indigenous knowledge systems. Nevertheless, participants strongly criticized the gap between policy and practice. Although the curriculum emphasizes integration of indigenous knowledge, the participants revealed that implementation remains superficial in many schools.

School head C explained:

"The heritage-based curriculum talks a lot about indigenous knowledge systems but when you look practically in schools, nhodo is rarely played. Teachers are under pressure to finish examinable subjects. Indigenous games are mentioned in documents but not fully implemented."

This finding reflects a significant contradiction between educational policy and practical realities. Although the curriculum promotes heritage education, schools continue prioritizing examination

performance and academic subjects. Indigenous games therefore remain marginalized despite policy support.

Another school head observed that curriculum implementers were not adequately trained on how to integrate indigenous games into lessons. The participant argued that teachers often lack confidence because teacher training institutions historically focused more on Western-oriented teaching methods.

Participants also explained that many parents associate academic success with textbook learning and examinations rather than indigenous activities. According to Headmaster B:

"Vamwe vabereki vanofunga kuti kana vana vachitamba nhodo kuchikoro vanenge vachingopedza nguva. Vanoda kuti vana vagare mukirasi nguva dzose vachigadzirira bvunzo."

(Some parents think if children are playing *nhodo* at school then they are wasting time. They want children to be in classrooms all the time preparing for exams).

The findings suggest that societal perceptions continue to influence educational implementation. While parents may verbally support cultural preservation, many still prioritize conventional academic approaches associated with modern education.

Theme 4. Strategies for integrating *nhodo* into primary school lessons.

Participants suggested incorporating *nhodo* into practical lessons within mathematics, physical education and heritage studies. School heads argued that teachers should intentionally design lessons around indigenous games instead of treating them as extracurricular activities only.

Another important strategy involved organizing inter-school competitions through NAPH. Participants believed that if *nhodo* competitions were introduced alongside athletics and football, learners would regain interest in indigenous games. One school head stated:

"Makwikwi eNAPH anogona kumutsiridza nhodo nekuti vana vanofarira kukwikwidzana. Kana zvikoro zvatanga kukwikwidza, vadzidzisi nevadzidzi vachaikoshesa."

(NAPH competitions can revive *nhodo* because children enjoy competition. Once schools begin competing in *nhodo*, teachers and learners will take it seriously).

The findings further revealed that participants consistently indicated that successful integration requires clarity on how *nhodo* aligns with curriculum objectives. A practical strategy is to develop a simple curriculum mapping guide showing where *nhodo* supports specific learning outcomes in mathematics, heritage education, and life skills.

This design ensures that the game is not treated as entertainment only. It becomes a structured learning activity while still preserving cultural authenticity.

School heads also proposed establishment of cultural days where learners demonstrate indigenous games, dances and storytelling activities. Such events were viewed as opportunities for strengthening cultural pride and community participation.

Despite their support for integration, participants acknowledged potential challenges including curriculum overload, lack of resources, technological distractions and negative attitudes among some teachers and parents.

Overall, the school heads' responses reveal strong support for integrating *nhodo* into schools but also expose major implementation gaps between curriculum intentions and classroom realities.

4.5 Teachers' Responses

Theme 1. Understanding of *nhodo*.

When asked to define *nhodo*, teachers consistently described it as a traditional stone game played mainly by girls during childhood. Most teachers had personal experience playing the game. Teacher A explained:

"Nhodo mutambo wechivanhu unotambwa nematombo madiki. Waiwedzera kugona kuisa pfungwa pachinhu nokuti kana ukarasikirwa nekutarisa unotadza kubata matombo."

(*Nhodo* is a traditional game played with small stones. It improved concentration because if you lose focus you fail to catch the stones).

Another participant explained that the game developed mathematical reasoning unconsciously because players constantly counted and grouped stones. According to Teacher C:

"Children actually learn mathematics through nhodo without realizing it. They count, estimate, add and subtract while playing."

The findings strongly suggest that teachers recognize the cognitive benefits associated with indigenous games. Participants frequently linked *nhodo* with concentration, memory development, coordination and strategic thinking.

Several teachers also highlighted social benefits. Participants explained that *nhodo* teaches patience, respect for rules, teamwork and healthy competition. Teacher E remarked:

"Children who play nhodo learn to cooperate and wait for their turns. It also reduces bullying because children interact positively during the game."

Teachers further observed that indigenous games create inclusive learning environments because they require minimal resources. One participant explained that unlike expensive digital technologies, nhodo only requires stones which are easily accessible within schools.

Theme 2. Current status of *nhodo* integration in schools.

When asked whether *nhodo* is currently played at schools, most teachers indicated that the game is no longer common especially in urban settings. Participants attributed this decline to technological changes, urbanization and changing lifestyles. Teacher F observed:

"Vana vazhinji mazuva ano vanoziva mitambo yemavhidhiyo kupfuura mitambo yechivanhu. Kunyange panguva yekuzorora vazhinji vanenge vachitaura zvemakatuni nemafoni."

(Most children today know video games more than traditional games. Even during break time many are discussing cartoons and mobile phones).

However, some rural teachers reported that a few learners still play *nhodo* during free time although participation is decreasing. Participants noted that girls are more likely to play *nhodo* compared to boys, reflecting historical gender associations attached to the game.

The study further revealed that teachers themselves rarely participate actively in *nhodo* activities. Some participants admitted feeling uncomfortable teaching games they had not played for many years. Others explained that workload and time constraints prevent them from organizing indigenous game sessions.

Theme 3. Perceptions towards inclusion of *nhodo* in primary schools.

On perceptions regarding inclusion of *nhodo* in schools, all teachers generally supported integration. Participants argued that culturally responsive teaching improves learner engagement because children relate easily to familiar cultural experiences.

Teacher B stated:

Kana vadzidzi vakaona tsika nemagariro avo dzichikosheswa kuchikoro, vanowedzera kuzvivimba uye vanofarira kudzidza."

(When learners see their culture being valued at school, they become more confident and interested in learning.)

The findings also revealed that teachers appreciate the goals of the heritage-based curriculum. Participants acknowledged that the curriculum attempts to decolonize education by incorporating indigenous knowledge systems. However, participants criticized weak implementation mechanisms.

Several teachers argued that although policy documents emphasize integration of indigenous games, schools continue focusing more on examinable subjects. According to Teacher D:

"The heritage-based curriculum sounds good on paper but in practice schools are still exam-oriented. Teachers are judged by pass rates, not by how much indigenous knowledge they teach."

Another teacher expressed frustration that no practical guidelines are provided on how *nhodo* should be integrated into classroom lessons. The participant explained:

"We are told to integrate indigenous knowledge but nobody really trains us how to do it effectively."

Participants also identified noise generated during *nhodo* play as a practical barrier to inclusion in schools. Some teachers expressed concern that the excitement, talking and cheering associated with the game can create disruptions, particularly in crowded school environments where lessons take place close to one another.

One participant stated, "*when learners are playing nhodo they become excited and the noise can disturb nearby classes,"* pointing to concerns over classroom management. Others noted that the interactive nature of the game, while valuable for participation, may be interpreted as disorder within schools that emphasize quiet and controlled learning spaces. Some participants felt this could discourage teachers from using the game during formal lessons, limiting it to break time instead.

This finding demonstrates that teachers require practical support, instructional materials and training if meaningful implementation is to occur.

Theme 4. Suggested solutions and practical educational framework.

Despite these challenges, teachers proposed several strategies for effective integration of *nhodo* into schools. A major recommendation involved integrating *nhodo* directly into teaching subjects such as mathematics and physical education. Participants explained that teachers can use *nhodo* stones when teaching counting, grouping, addition and subtraction.

Teacher A explained:

"Instead of teaching mathematics only from textbooks, teachers can allow learners to use nhodo practically. Children understand concepts faster when they are involved physically."

Another strategy involved teacher training workshops focusing on Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Participants argued that teachers need confidence and practical skills for integrating traditional games effectively.

The idea of introducing indigenous games into National Association of Primary Heads (NAPH) competitions also emerged strongly among teachers. Participants argued that competitive events would motivate learners and schools to value *nhodo* more seriously. According to one participant:

"Kana nhodo ikaiswa mumakwikwi eNAPH, zvikoro zvichaifarira nekuitsigira nekuti vana vanofarira kukwikwidza, uye makwikwi anovakurudzira kuti vatore mutambo uyu zvakanyanya."

(If *nhodo* becomes part of NAPH competitions, schools will definitely support it because competition creates recognition and motivation).

Participants further suggested that *nhodo* integration will remain fragile if it depends only on break time play. Schools can strengthen integration by allocating dedicated periods for cultural activities, heritage clubs, or structured co-curricular sessions. Such scheduling acknowledges curriculum pressure while legitimizing heritage learning as a formal school priority.

Leadership commitment becomes essential here. One of the teachers noted that,

"*When a school head supports scheduling and supervision, teachers are more likely to implement heritage activities without fearing that they are wasting time".* Meaning to say support from headmasters is needed for the integration of *nhodo.*

The findings also revealed concerns about possible challenges during implementation. Teachers feared that some parents may resist integration because they perceive indigenous games as outdated. Others worried about balancing curriculum demands with additional activities.

Nevertheless, most participants remained optimistic. They argued that if schools intentionally prioritize cultural preservation and learner-centered approaches, *nhodo* can become a meaningful educational resource.

Overall, teachers' responses demonstrate strong recognition of the educational and cultural significance of *nhodo*. However, they also reveal significant implementation gaps, insufficient training and contradictions between policy rhetoric and educational practice.

4.6 Focus Group Discussion Findings from Parents

Theme 1. Understanding of *nhodo* and its educational significance.

When participants were asked what *nhodo* is and how it is understood within the community, most described it as a traditional game played using stones. They explained that, *nhodo* is much more that a playground game. It isa traditional game of speed, focus and calculation played on the ground. One parent noted:

"We dig a small hole called gomba, put 10 or more pebbles called vana inside the hole and use a larger throwing stone called a mubhoga"



Picture 4.6: A lady demonstrating how to play *nhodo*

A picture of a lady demonstrating the traditional game of *nhodo*. The player is shown using a *mubhoga* (throwing stone) and *vana* (small pebbles) around a *gomba* (hole), illustrating the basic playing procedure of the game.

Another older parent also explained that the game was common during their childhood and formed an important part of everyday social life. The parent explained:

"Nhodo was part of our upbringing. Every girl in the village knew how to play it. Even boys sometimes joined although it was mostly associated with girls." (Parent, school B)

She continued, *"Takakura tichitamba nhodo, kunyanya munguva yekunaya"*

(We grew up playing *nhodo* every afternoon, mostly during the rain session.) (Parent, school C)

Another participant described *nhodo* as a game that teaches children patience, thinking and respect. Parents frequently emphasized that indigenous games transmitted moral values and social discipline. Participants also explained that *nhodo* strengthened relationships among children because it encouraged social interaction. According to one parent:

"We were taught moral values (ubuntu), such as, how to sit properly by sitting cross legged on the ground (kupfunya chisero)."

The findings suggest that parents associate indigenous games with community cohesion and collective socialization. Many participants contrasted past communal lifestyles with contemporary technological lifestyles perceived as isolating children from cultural experiences.

Theme 2. Do children in this community still play *nhodo*? Why or why not?

On whether children still play *nhodo* within the community, most participants stated that the game has declined significantly especially in urban areas. Participants attributed this decline to television, mobile phones, social media and modern entertainment. One parent explained:

"Vana havachafariri mitambo yechivanhu nekuti vanogara vachiona terevhizheni kana kushandisa mafoni."

(Children no longer have interest in traditional games because they are always watching television or using phones.) (Female Parent, school A)

Another participant added:

"Even parents are contributing to the problem because instead of teaching children traditional games they buy digital gadgets for them." (Male parent, school B)

The findings therefore indicate that cultural transmission within families has weakened. Several parents admitted that they themselves rarely teach children indigenous games due to busy work schedules and changing lifestyles.

Despite the decline, some rural participants reported that a few children still play *nhodo* during holidays and community gatherings. However, participants agreed that the frequency of participation has reduced compared to previous generations.

Theme 3. Do you think *nhodo* should be included in primary schools? Why or why not?

Regarding inclusion of *nhodo* in schools, parents generally expressed strong support. Participants believed that schools have an important responsibility in preserving culture because homes alone are no longer effectively transmitting indigenous knowledge. One participant remarked:

"If schools do not teach our culture, these games will disappear completely." (Parent, school A)

Parents argued that integrating *nhodo* into schools would strengthen children's cultural identity and improve discipline. Several participants also acknowledged educational benefits associated with the game. According to one parent:

"Nhodo sharpens the mind. Children learn counting and concentration while enjoying themselves." (Parent, school B)

One community elder from Cherima Rujeko, Marondera, explained that *nhodo* helps to develop singing skills through the use of traditional songs sung by players during the game. This helps children to practice singing; this helps in school chores. One common song sung by players is,

"*Idzva, idzva,*

Ukaramba kudzva,

Ndiwe muroyi."

(Fail, fail

If you do not want to fail

You are the witch.

The elder noted that this song is often sung by the opposing players or those watching the game to challenge, tease or demotivate a player, especially when a player is not making an mistakes.

While other parents have a negative perception towards its integration.

One of the community members noted, "*we worry that if our children are out at the pit, they aren't learning the serious subjects like English or Science that will help our children get a job later*. Parents perceptions towards the game hinder the integration of *nhodo* in primary school curricula."

Another parent also noted that, *"playing nhodo on the ground makes our children's uniforms dirty".*

The discussions further revealed mixed perceptions regarding the heritage-based curriculum. While parents appreciated the government's intention to promote culture and indigenous knowledge, many criticized weak implementation. One participant stated:

"We hear about heritage-based curriculum but honestly many schools are not taking it seriously. Children still spend most of their time preparing for examinations." (Parent, school C*)*

Another parent observed that teachers often mention indigenous knowledge theoretically without giving children practical opportunities to engage in activities such as *nhodo*.

This finding reinforces concerns raised by teachers and headmasters regarding the gap between policy and implementation. Parents perceived the curriculum as promising in theory but inadequately operationalized in practice.

Theme 4. Do you think there are challenges that might arise when introducing *nhodo* in schools? If yes, what solutions do you propose to overcome these challenges?

When discussing possible challenges affecting integration of *nhodo* into schools, participants identified several issues. The most common challenge involved negative attitudes among some parents and teachers who associate indigenous games with backwardness. One participant explained:

"Vamwe vabereki vakadzidza vanofunga kuti mitambo yechivanhu ndeyekare uye haibatsiri vana kubudirira muzvidzidzo."

(Some educated parents think traditional games are old-fashioned and cannot help children succeed academically.) (parent, school C)

Parents also highlighted technological distractions as a major challenge. Participants observed that modern children are more attracted to digital entertainment than outdoor indigenous games.

Another challenge involved lack of teacher knowledge and confidence. Some participants argued that younger teachers may not fully understand traditional games because they grew up in urban settings with limited cultural exposure.

Participants further noted that schools already face heavy academic demands. As a result, teachers may struggle to allocate time for indigenous activities.

Despite these challenges, parents proposed several solutions. A major recommendation involved introducing *nhodo* in cultural activities such as *Nhanga Gota*.

Recommendations also involved involving elders and grandparents directly within schools. Participants argued that elders possess important cultural knowledge and practical experience necessary for teaching traditional games authentically.

Awareness campaigns were also proposed. Parents suggested that schools and communities should educate families about the educational benefits of indigenous games so that negative attitudes can gradually change.

Participants also proposed the development of indigenous themed digital games or mobile applications as an innovative strategy for integrating *nhodo* into contemporary education. This strategy emerged from recognition that many children in urban areas are increasingly drawn to digital technologies.

One parent suggested, "*if children like phones and tablets, why not put nhodo there so they learn culture through technology*?" This view positioned technology not as a threat to indigenous games, but as a possible vehicle for cultural preservation and transmission. (Parent, school B)

Overall, the focus group discussions demonstrate that parents value *nhodo* as both a cultural and educational resource. However, they remain concerned about modernization, technological distractions and weak implementation of heritage-based education policies.

4.7 Thematic Discussion of Findings

4.7.1 *Nhodo* as a Tool for Cognitive Development

The findings revealed widespread recognition of *nhodo* as a cognitive development tool. Participants consistently associated the game with concentration, strategic thinking, counting

skills, memory development and problem-solving abilities. These findings support Chikodzi (2019) who argues that indigenous games contain embedded mathematical and strategic concepts useful for formal education.

The findings further align with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory which emphasizes that learning occurs through socially meaningful activities. Children participating in *nhodo* actively engage in counting, sequencing and coordination within social environments. The game therefore provides experiential learning opportunities consistent with learner-centered educational approaches.

Teachers and school heads particularly emphasized the game's role in improving concentration and patience among learners. Such findings demonstrate that indigenous games contribute not only to academic learning but also to behavioral and emotional development.

Figure 4.7.1: Perceived Educational Benefits of *Nhodo*

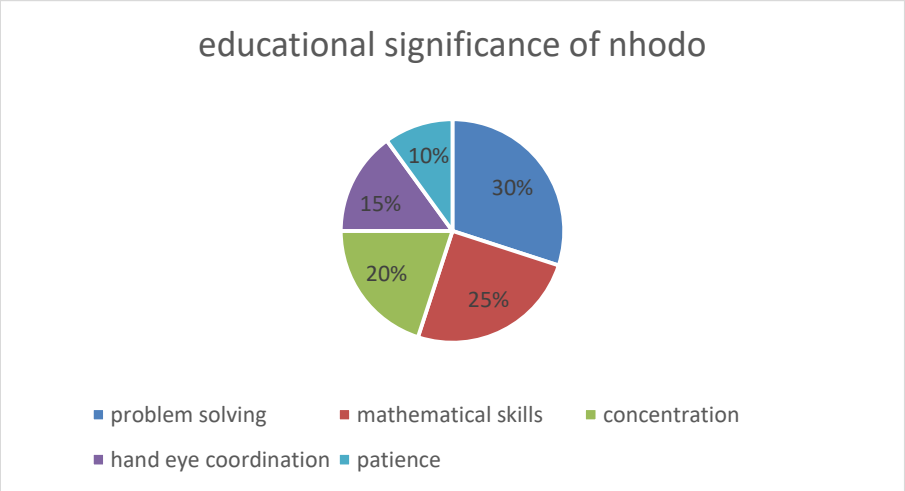

Figure 4.7.1 presents the perceptions of school heads and teachers regarding the skills developed through playing *nhodo*. Problem-solving was the most frequently identified skill (30%), indicating that learners develop critical thinking and decision-making abilities through the game.

Mathematical skills accounted for 25% of responses, while concentration represented 20%. Hand-eye coordination constituted 15% of responses, reflecting the physical skills involved in gameplay. Patience was the least cited skill at 10%, although participants acknowledged its importance in developing perseverance and self-discipline. These findings suggest that *nhodo* contributes to learners' cognitive and physical development.

4.7.2 Nhodo and Cultural Preservation

Another dominant theme emerging from the findings was cultural preservation. Participants repeatedly expressed concern over the disappearance of indigenous practices due to modernization and technology. The findings reveal that schools are increasingly viewed as important institutions for safeguarding cultural heritage.

The findings support Afrocentric Theory which advocates centering African cultural experiences within education systems. Participants believed that integrating *nhodo* into schools would strengthen cultural identity, Ubuntu and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

The study further revealed reminiscence among older participants who compared past communal lifestyles with present technological isolation. Such responses suggest that indigenous games previously functioned as important mechanisms for community cohesion and socialization.

4.7.3 Contradictions within the Heritage-Based Curriculum 2024-2030

One of the most significant findings concerns contradictions between the heritage-based curriculum and actual practice. Although participants acknowledged that the curriculum emphasizes Indigenous Knowledge Systems, they consistently criticized weak implementation.

The findings reveal that schools continue prioritizing examination-oriented learning while indigenous activities remain marginalized. Teachers explained that they are assessed mainly through pass rates rather than cultural integration. Consequently, indigenous games receive little practical attention despite policy rhetoric.

This finding confirms Chireshe and Moyo (2016) who argue that curriculum reforms in Zimbabwe often face implementation challenges due to inadequate teacher preparation and examination pressures.

Participants also highlighted absence of practical implementation frameworks. Teachers expressed uncertainty regarding how indigenous games should be integrated into specific lessons. This demonstrates that policy support alone is insufficient without training, resources and monitoring structures.

4.7.4 Declining Participation in *Nhodo*

The findings reveal significant decline in children's participation in *nhodo* particularly within urban areas. Technology emerged as the major contributing factor. Participants frequently mentioned mobile phones, television, internet and video games as distractions preventing children from engaging with traditional games.

Urbanization and changing lifestyles were also identified as important factors. Modern children reportedly spend less time in communal outdoor spaces where indigenous games were traditionally learned.

The findings further suggest weakening intergenerational transmission within families. Parents admitted that they rarely teach indigenous games due to busy schedules and changing priorities.

Consequently, schools are increasingly expected to compensate for cultural gaps previously addressed within communities.

4.7.5 Stakeholder Support for Integration

Despite implementation challenges, the findings reveal overwhelming support for integrating *nhodo* into schools. Headmasters, teachers and parents all recognized educational and cultural benefits associated with the game.

Participants particularly supported integration within mathematics, physical education and heritage studies. This demonstrates recognition that indigenous knowledge can complement formal academic learning rather than oppose it.

Stakeholders also valued the low-cost nature of *nhodo*. In resource-constrained educational settings, indigenous games provide accessible learning opportunities without requiring expensive infrastructure.

4.7.6 Strategies for Effective Integration

The findings identified several strategies for integrating *nhodo* effectively into primary schools. The most significant strategy involved practical classroom integration. Participants suggested using *nhodo* stones during mathematics lessons to teach counting, addition, subtraction and grouping.

Another important strategy involved teacher training. Participants argued that successful implementation requires educators who understand both the cultural and educational significance of indigenous games.

NAPH competitions emerged as a highly supported strategy. Participants believed that formal competitions would legitimize indigenous games and increase motivation among learners and schools. Such competitions could include categories for *nhodo* alongside athletics and football.

Participants also recommended cultural days, indigenous games clubs and community involvement. These activities would strengthen collaboration between schools, parents and elders.

4.7.7 Challenges Affecting Integration

Although support for integration was widespread, participants identified several challenges. Curriculum overload emerged prominently. Teachers explained that pressure to complete syllabi leaves limited time for indigenous activities.

Negative attitudes also remain problematic. Some parents and educators continue associating indigenous games with backwardness or lack of academic seriousness.

Teacher preparedness represents another major challenge. Younger teachers especially may lack practical knowledge regarding traditional games.

Technology was consistently identified as both a challenge and cultural threat. Participants feared that digital entertainment is replacing indigenous socialization and outdoor interaction among children.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and analyzed findings gathered from headmasters, teachers and parents regarding integration of *nhodo* into primary schools in Marondera district. Using thematic analysis, the study identified major themes including educational significance of *nhodo*, cultural

preservation, stakeholder perceptions, implementation gaps and strategies for effective integration.

The findings revealed strong stakeholder support for integrating *nhodo* into schools despite challenges associated with modernization, examination pressures and inadequate teacher preparation. Participants criticized weak implementation of the heritage-based curriculum and emphasized the need for practical strategies such as NAPH competitions, teacher training and community involvement.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

Building upon the data presented in the prior chapter, this chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the findings, recommendations, implications for policy and practice, and areas for further research. The chapter is based on findings gathered from school heads, teachers and parents regarding the integration of *nhodo* in primary schools in Marondera district. The chapter further explains how the study contributes to the understanding of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, the heritage-based curriculum and Education 5.0 in Zimbabwe.

5.2 Summary

This study investigated the integration of *nhodo* in primary schools of Marondera District, Zimbabwe. The study was guided by four objectives: to analyze the cultural and developmental role of *nhodo*, determine its current status in primary schools, assess stakeholder perceptions regarding its inclusion in education, and develop a practical framework for its integration into teaching and learning.

Chapter One presented the background of the study and established the research problem. The chapter highlighted the growing marginalization of indigenous knowledge systems due to globalization and modern educational practices. It outlined the purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions, delimitations, limitations, definitions of key terms, and the overall structure of the dissertation.

Chapter Two reviewed related literature on indigenous games, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, cultural preservation, and education from international, African, and Zimbabwean perspectives. The chapter was guided by Sociocultural Theory and Afrocentric Theory, which provided the theoretical foundation for understanding the educational and cultural significance of *nhodo*. The literature revealed that indigenous games contribute to cognitive development, social interaction, cultural identity formation, and heritage preservation. The chapter also identified a research gap regarding the practical integration of *nhodo* into primary school education in Zimbabwe.

Chapter Three described the research methodology employed in the study. The study adopted an interpretivist philosophy and a qualitative case study design. Data were collected through document analysis, semi-structured interviews with school heads and teachers and focus group

discussions with parents. The chapter also explained the sampling procedures, data collection methods, thematic analysis process, trustworthiness measures, and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four presented, analyzed, and discussed the findings. The findings revealed that stakeholders viewed *nhodo* as an important indigenous game that promotes skills such as numeracy, critical thinking, concentration, social interaction, teamwork, and cultural identity. Although the Heritage-Based Curriculum 2024-2030 supports Indigenous Knowledge Systems, the integration of *nhodo* in schools remains limited because of curriculum overload, lack of implementation guidelines, inadequate teacher training, and changing learner interests influenced by technology. Participants generally supported the inclusion of *nhodo* in primary school education and suggested strategies such as teacher capacitation, curriculum mapping, cultural days, heritage clubs, and NAPH competitions.

Chapter Five presents the summary, conclusions, recommendations, and a practical model for integrating *nhodo* into primary school learning. The chapter concludes that *nhodo* is both a valuable cultural heritage resource and an effective pedagogical tool that can contribute to learner development while preserving Zimbabwean indigenous knowledge systems.

5.3 Conclusions

This study investigated the integration of *nhodo* in primary schools of Marondera District. The findings revealed that *nhodo* is more than a traditional game; it is an important Indigenous Knowledge System that contributes to the development of skills such as numeracy, strategic thinking, concentration, social interaction, and cultural identity among learners. The study therefore concludes that *nhodo* possesses significant educational and cultural value and remains relevant within contemporary primary school education.

The study also concludes that despite policy support provided through Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum 2024-2030, the integration of *nhodo* in primary schools remains limited. While some schools acknowledge the importance of indigenous games, their incorporation into formal teaching and learning activities is not systematic. Challenges such as curriculum overload, inadequate implementation guidelines, limited teacher preparedness, and the growing influence of modern technology continue to hinder effective integration.

Furthermore, the study established that key stakeholders, including school heads, teachers and parents, generally hold positive attitudes towards the inclusion of *nhodo* in schools. Participants viewed the game as a useful educational tool capable of enhancing learner participation while simultaneously preserving cultural heritage. Stakeholders believed that integrating *nhodo* into classroom activities would strengthen the connection between school learning and community knowledge.

Finally, the study concludes that the successful integration of *nhodo* requires a practical and collaborative framework involving curriculum support, teacher training, community participation, and continuous monitoring. Through such an approach, *nhodo* can serve a dual purpose of preserving Zimbabwe's intangible cultural heritage while enriching teaching and learning in primary schools. Overall, the study concludes that *nhodo* is both a valuable cultural resource and an effective pedagogical tool that deserves greater recognition within Zimbabwe's education system.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

5.4.1 Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should provide clear implementation guidelines explaining how indigenous games such as *nhodo* can be integrated into different subjects within primary schools. Schools require practical frameworks rather than broad policy statements alone.

The Ministry should also strengthen teacher training programs focusing on Indigenous Knowledge Systems and culturally responsive teaching approaches. Teachers need practical skills, confidence and instructional support for effective implementation.

Regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be established to ensure that schools implement heritage-based curriculum 2024-2030 objectives meaningfully rather than superficially.

5.4.2 Schools and School Administrators

Schools should allocate specific time for cultural activities and indigenous games within school timetables. This will strengthen formal recognition of heritage education and reduce dependence on informal break-time participation.

School administrators should support the establishment of heritage clubs, indigenous games competitions and cultural days that encourage learner participation and community involvement.

Schools should also involve parents, elders and cultural experts in teaching indigenous games and cultural practices.

5.4.3 Teachers

Teachers should integrate nhodo into subjects such as Mathematics, Heritage Studies and Physical Education to promote practical and learner-centered learning experiences.

Teachers should further encourage collaborative learning approaches that connect classroom teaching with learners' cultural experiences and local realities.

5.4.4 Parents

Parents should actively participate in preserving indigenous knowledge by teaching traditional games and cultural practices at home.

Communities should work together with schools in promoting awareness regarding the educational benefits of indigenous games.

5.4.5 Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of literature on Indigenous Knowledge Systems and culturally responsive education in Zimbabwe and Africa. The study demonstrates that indigenous games possess educational value capable of contributing to learner development, cultural preservation and community participation.

The findings also reveal that successful implementation of the heritage-based curriculum requires practical support systems, teacher preparation and strong institutional commitment. Policy support alone is insufficient without effective implementation structures.

The study further highlights that Education 5.0 can benefit significantly from Indigenous Knowledge Systems because culturally grounded learning promotes innovation, creativity and locally relevant educational development.

5.5 Proposed Framework for Integrating *Nhodo* into Primary School Lessons

Table 5.6: Framework for *Nhodo* Integration within Primary Schools

Framework Component	**Activities**	**Expected Outcomes**
Curriculum Alignment	Link *nhodo* activities with Heritage Studies, Mathematics, Physical Education and Guidance lessons	Improved curriculum relevance and heritage preservation
Teacher Capacity Building	Workshops, training programs and instructional guides on indigenous pedagogy	Increased teacher confidence and competence
Classroom Implementation	Incorporate *nhodo* into lesson introductions, demonstrations, practical activities and assessments	Enhanced learner engagement and participation
Community Involvement	Invite parents, elders and cultural experts to demonstrate and teach *nhodo*	Preservation of indigenous knowledge and cultural authenticity
Resource Provision	Develop manuals, activity guides and learning materials based on *nhodo*	Consistent and sustainable implementation
Monitoring and Evaluation	Assess educational outcomes and learner participation regularly	Continuous improvement and evidence-based implementation

Explanation of the Practical Model

The proposed model illustrates a systematic process through which *nhodo* can be integrated into primary school education. The process begins with the Heritage-Based Curriculum, which provides policy support for the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in teaching and learning. Once curriculum recognition is established, teachers become the central agents of implementation through training, professional development, and access to instructional materials.

Teacher preparedness facilitates classroom implementation where *nhodo* is incorporated across different learning areas. In Mathematics, learners develop counting, sequencing, estimation, and problem-solving skills. In Heritage Studies, learners gain appreciation of indigenous knowledge and cultural identity. In Physical Education, the game promotes motor coordination and dexterity, while in Guidance and Counselling it fosters teamwork, patience, and cooperation.

The model further emphasizes community participation as a crucial element of successful implementation. Parents, elders, and cultural custodians possess indigenous knowledge that can enrich classroom experiences and ensure cultural authenticity. Their involvement strengthens connection between schools and communities.

Through meaningful learner engagement, *nhodo* becomes both a learning resource and a cultural practice. Learners actively participate in practical and collaborative activities that support experiential learning. The ultimate outcomes include improved numeracy skills, enhanced strategic thinking, stronger social relationships and preservation of indigenous knowledge.

The model demonstrates that *nhodo* performs a dual function within education. It serves as a cultural preservation mechanism while simultaneously functioning as a pedagogical tool that

develops cognitive, social, and academic competencies. This dual role makes *nhodo* particularly suitable for integration into Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum and positions it as a valuable resource for achieving both educational and cultural objectives.

5.7 Areas for Further Research

The present study focused on the integration of *nhodo* within primary schools in Marondera District. Future studies may extend this work in several ways.

1. A quantitative study could be conducted to measure the impact of *nhodo* on learners' mathematical achievement and problem-solving abilities.
2. Comparative studies could examine the integration of *nhodo* across different provinces in Zimbabwe.
3. Future research could investigate learner perspectives regarding indigenous games and educational participation.
4. Studies may explore the integration of other indigenous games such as *tsoro*, *pada*, and *mahumbwe* within formal education.
5. Researchers may investigate how digital technologies can be utilized to preserve and promote traditional games among younger generations.

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Appendix 1: Research Guide

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Participants: Primary school educators

My name is Kudzayi Maringamoyo. I am a BSc in Culture and Heritage Studies. I am studying how *nhodo* can be integrated into primary schools in Marondera. With your permission, I would like to conduct this interview. I want to assure you that your participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time. We will keep your conversation confidential and anonymous, and the information will be used only for academic purposes.

With your permission, I would like to proceed

1. What is your understanding of *nhodo*?

2. Is *nhodo* currently being played or taught at your school?

3. How do you perceive the inclusion of *nhodo* in primary schools?

4. What strategies do you think can be used to effectively integrate *nhodo* into primary school lessons?

Appendix 2: Focus Group Discussion Guide

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide

Participants: parents

My name is Kudzayi Maringamoyo, and I am a student at Bindura University of Science Education within the Department of Culture and Heritage Studies. I am currently conducting research for my dissertation titled, Integration of *Nhodo* in Primary Schools of Marondera. The purpose of our discussion today is to explore how we can integrate *nhodo* in primary schools of Marondera. I want to assure you that your participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time. To protect your privacy, your identity will remain anonymous, and any information you share will be treated with the strictest confidentiality, used solely for academic purposes. Thank you for your time and for helping preserve our national heritage.

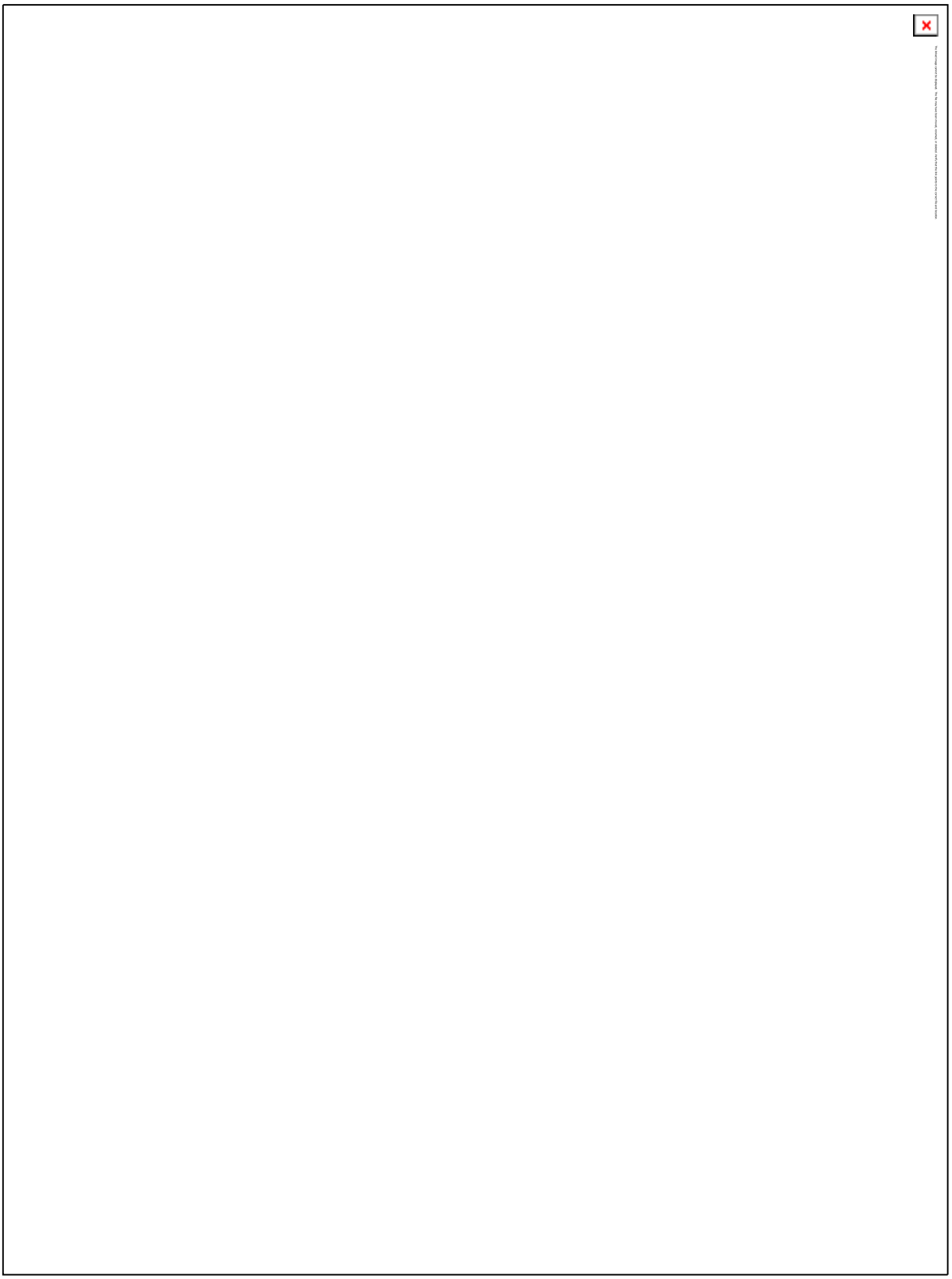
1. What is your understood of *nhodo*?

2. Do children in this community still play *nhodo*? Why or why not?

3. Do you think *nhodo* should be included in primary schools? Why or why not?

4. Do you think there a challenges that might arise when introducing *nhodo* in schools? If yes, what solutions do you propose to overcome this challenges?

Appendix 3: consent Form MoPSE



Appendix 4 Research Letter from The Department

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

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SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE STUDIES

13 November 2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH IN YOUR ORGANISATION

This serves to introduce the bearer, Maringamoyo Kudzai, Student Registration Number B222828B, who is a **BSc Honours Degree in Culture and Heritage Studies** student at Bindura University of Science Education and is carrying out a research project in your area/institution.

May you please assist the student to access data relevant to the study, and where possible, conduct interviews as part of the data collection process.

Yours faithfully

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE & HERITAGE STUDIES
20 NOV 2025
PRIVATE BAG 1020, BINDURA, ZIMBABWE

M.E Sagiya (Dr)
Acting Chairperson