

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY



FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

**THE LINK BETWEEN THE LAYPERSON'S DREAM INTERPRETATIONS AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING. A CASE STUDY OF THE AFRICAN
APOSTOLIC CHURCH, SENGA BRANCH.**

BY

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R124548F

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BSc HONOURS
DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY**

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MAY, 2016

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APPROVAL FORM

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommended to Midlands State University for acceptance of a dissertation entitled:

***Research topic:* THE LINK BETWEEN THE LAYPERSON'S DREAM INTERPRETATIONS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING. A CASE STUDY OF THE AFRICAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH, SENGGA SECTION**

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RELEASE FORM

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TITLE OF DISSERTATION: THE LINK BETWEEN THE LAYPERSON'S DREAM INTERPRETATIONS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING. A CASE STUDY OF MSU, SENGA AND NEHOSHO.

DEGREE IN WHICH DISSERTATION WAS PRESENTED: BSC HONOURS IN PSYCHOLOGY

YEAR GRANTED: 2016

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my parents, Mr and Mrs Simunyu, my brothers and sisters, My uncle and aunt, Mr and Mrs Chivinge, my grandmother, Mrs Shumba, Fadziso Tendayi and last but not least, Vongai Muchineuta.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank the living God of Paul Mwazha for taking me through this research project. He gave me strength and wisdom to successfully carry out this research.

I would like to, also, thank my supervisor, Mr Maunganidze, for the assistance and constructive criticism he gave me during the research. He worked tirelessly to the completion of this project.

I would like to extend my hearty gratitude to my family, for the financial and moral support.

I also extend my gratitude to the members of the African Apostolic church who were so supportive throughout my data collection, allowing me to take some of their precious time to obtain the data that drives this research.

May God bless you.

ABSTRACT

The beliefs about dreams lay people hold, in most cases, are irrational and not true. The study aimed at bringing out that there is a strong relationship between common dream interpretations and diminished Psychological well-being. Aaron Beck and Albert Ellis in their Cognitive Behavioural therapy, argued that, emotional problems such as Anxiety, depression, and stress are a result, not of the actual event, but of one's beliefs and thoughts about the event. In the same way, the beliefs and thoughts people have of their dreams may affect them emotionally. The research was prompted by the shocking fact of how nightmares are positively correlated with emotional problems such as anxiety and depression, and also the fact that, the brain cannot distinguish the difference between real events and dreams/visions. The research is a phenomenological, and qualitative in nature since detailed explanations where required. A non-probabilistic sampling technic known as extreme sampling, was used to select The African Apostolic Church, Senga branch, as the targeted population. A snow-ball technic was then applied from which fifteen respondents where used a sample. In-depth interviews were conducted thoroughly on the sample. The data was analysed thematically as per the research questions. About 15 dreams where common amongst the respondents, and their interpretations where based on generally 5 dream interpretation principles which where culturally and religiously derived. Of the 15 reported dreams, 12 dreams had very much negative emotional effects on the dreamers and where associated with 5 emotional problems namely anxiety, depression, stress, paranoia, neurosis and paranoid thinking. Thus, it became justified for the researcher to assume that irrational dream interpretations can affect the psychological well-being of the layperson.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the background to this research so as to give an insight of the dawn of the research problem. The research serves to explore how irrational interpretation of dreams by adults may affect psychological wellbeing. The chapter takes up the researcher's concern through the purpose of the study, significance of the study and the research questions. Delimitations, limitations, assumptions and definition of terms will also be covered in this chapter.

This chapter focuses on the preliminary aspects of the research. It presents the research giving background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, and definition of terms.

1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Dreams are a common phenomenon in the lives of human beings in every part of the world. They have an undisputable importance to the psychological wellbeing of the people, particularly adults as they are able to assign meaning to their dreams. Dreams have existed in the vocabulary of humans for as long as the earth has existed, with various studies being done on them and literature being written on the subject. The interpretation of this cognitive process (dreaming), has remained the most interesting in the study of dreams.

Dreams are basically defined as successions of images, ideas, emotions, and sensations that occur involuntarily in the mind during certain stages of sleep, American Heritage Dictionary (2000). Dreams mainly occur in the rapid-eye movement (REM) stage of sleep when brain activity is high and resembles that of being awake. REM sleep is revealed by continuous movements of the eyes during sleep. At times, dreams may occur during other stages of sleep. However, these dreams tend to be much less vivid or memorable.

Every culture or religion has its own way of interpreting dreams. According to Hall (1953), Opinions about the meaning of dreams have varied and shifted through time and culture. Dream interpretations date back as far as 5000-4000 BC. The earliest recorded dreams were acquired from materials dating back approximately 5,000 years, in Mesopotamia, where they were documented on clay tablets. In the Greek and Roman periods, the people believed that dreams

were direct messages from the gods, or from the dead and that they predicted the future. Some cultures practiced dream incubation with the intention of cultivating dreams that are prophetic. A study by Hall and Van de Castle (1966) has proven that, there is uniformity in the content of dreams amongst cultures throughout the world.

In some cultures and religions, these interpretations have remained unchanged with time, and most of them are still used by people in the interpretation of their everyday dreams. These cultural and religious beliefs are what this research will, from now on, refer to as the layperson's interpretations of dreams. Harthan (2011) summarises the problem that has prompted this research when she stated that, it is probable to try a superficial analysis of some dreams with very limited understanding of dream language. Modern dream dictionaries are common because they give people a quick interpretation, but nevertheless, their content is reliant on the facts and traditions of the culture in which they initiated. For instance, contemporary Western society differs from Ancient Egyptian civilisation, nor has it the beliefs of the Victorians. Some interpretations have their backgrounds in Gypsy folklore and have a tendency to believe that dreams are divinatory; which is to say that they, at all times, tell the future. Nonetheless, none of them can ever explicate particular symbolism.

According to Morewedge and Norton (2009), most people value their dreams to the extent that they can cancel a flight after having a bad dream in which they had a plane crash. They suggested that, unconscious thoughts, like dreams, rub in a stronger influence on decision than akin conscious information because they seem to be internally produced and are consequently less likely to prompt correction processes. Roberts et al., (2009), has it that there is a strong correlation between emotional problems such as anxiety, depression, phobias and bad dreams and nightmares. This is clear proof that the interpretations laypeople place on their dreams have a vital contribution to the emotional problems they may experience.

These unscientifically proven irrational interpretations of dreams by the laypeople, bear strong resemblance to what Ellis (1991) refers to as irrational beliefs. In his theory known as Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy, he argues that, it is not the events one experiences that cause emotional stress or psychological problems, but rather the way the person interprets the event is where the stress stems from. In the same light, this study wishes to bring out that the lay interpretations made by lay people of their dreams may be the source of the various emotional problems and phobias laypeople experience.

Beck (1979), on the other hand, are of the same notion but with just a different terminology and very few concepts. Beck argues, like Ellis, that people use the information already stored in the schemas to interpret the events they face in life. What it means is that, if the thoughts or beliefs one has are distorted, the end result then becomes an automatic emotional problem. Beck decided to call these, distorted thinking. Beck made it clear that, it was not the events that caused emotional problems, but rather the way people interpret these events was the source of all the problems. Therefore, in the same way that the layperson may misinterpret the events they experience and get emotional self-harm thereof, it is not out of line to argue that, people can also misinterpret the dreams they experience and get affected emotionally. Identifying the irrational thoughts about dreams and correcting them can be a very important development in the cognitive behavioural therapy department.

Beck's model brings into play a vital subject: people use information already stored in the schemas to make automatic interpretations of the events they experience. The question that then immediately begs for an answer is to where the information (particularly the interpretations) comes from. The culprits in this case are likely to be culture and religion. Religion and culture are so influential on the lives of the people to the extent that, despite the education, almost everything is done according to the dictates of either culture or religion. In this case, the unscientifically proven cultural beliefs about dreams can be the culprits of the many emotional problems laypeople experience in response to their dreams. Religion and culture can be equally blamed for the irrational ways of interpreting of dreams that has left many people stigmatised and emotionally damaged, (O'Neil, 1976).

Written and oral dictionary dictionaries of dreams, unique to each culture or religion, are passed from one generation to another through what explained to be social learning, (lahey, 2003). Though these dictionaries have worked hard to try and assign a certain meaning to every common or recurrent dream, most of the interpretations are not necessarily true, thus may end up causing unnecessary pressure on the dreamer instead of being a useful tool for self-development. Thus, Cognitive Psychology, as a discipline, is being challenged to take into consideration, challenging the irrational beliefs about dreams during Cognitive therapy.

Vivid evidence, as per the extent to which religion influences the layperson's automatic beliefs about dreams, can be drawn from the apostolic sects in Zimbabwe. These sects have a confession system through which congregants are given the opportunity to confess in front of the congregation. Besides sin confession, the members also grab the opportunity to share their

dreams and how they affect them. The church leaders, particularly the prophets, are then responsible for offering the possible meaning of the dreams. These apostolic sects, particularly the African apostolic church led by Paul Mwazha, are resourceful sources of information on how religion contributes to the emotional problems people may experience through irrationally interpreting the recurrent dreams people have.

Apart from religion, culture cannot be left out when discussing the origins of dream interpretations by the layperson. Geertz (1973) has it that, culture influences almost everything that people do in their everyday lives. Every common and recurrent dream, in every culture, has an already established cultural meaning passed from one generation to another through oral tradition and literature, these interpretations remain pivotal in how the layperson interprets dreams. Most of the culturally derived interpretations have no guarantee of being accurate, thus the link between these unscientific interpretations of dreams and emotional problems is what this study is entirely interested on and seeks to bring out.

To mention but a few, dreams about sexual intercourse, in the African context, are viewed as that the dreamer is being used by the so called “goblins” as a sexual partner, (Chidester, 2008) With this interpretation at hand, most dreamers are likely to assign that meaning to their dream. The dream and its negative connotations will not take long to affect the dreamer psychologically. The dreamer’s inability to do anything about the situation will even worsen the situation as feelings of frustration and anger are likely to result. It becomes a source of stress, low self-esteem and stigmatization.

Callaway (1868-1870), has it that there are various principles that Africans hold of their dreams. These interpretations may not necessarily be true despite that the fact that most Africans allude to them. A typical example of such misleading principle of dream interpretation is the principle of contrast. This principle holds that, dreaming about someone being healthy, may mean that person’s death and vice-versa. It is such principles that this research wish to trace and bring their negative effects on the psychological wellbeing of those that hold fast to them.

Two major types of dreams whose misinterpretation is likely to cause emotional problems are nightmares and bad dreams. According to Haynes & Mooney (1975), nightmares are related to symptoms of anxiety and Levin & Fireman (2002) also affirmed that, bad dreams are associated with depression. Bad dreams are also concomitant with borderline personality disorder, Hartmann, (1981). The most devastating finding about recurrent bad dreams and nightmares is

its correlation with suicidal behaviour (Sjöström, Hetta & Wærn, 2007). Thus, it is clear that disturbing dreams are common in many different types of psychopathology. Nonetheless, the effects of bad dreams lengthens beyond those disorders. For instance, 60% of persons who had PTSD testified having nightmares earlier before the trauma, (Ohayon & Shapiro 2000), signifying that the presence of nightmares may escalate the risk of developing PTSD. In a similar manner, the existence of bad dreams amongst suicide attempters fuelled the risk of future suicide attempts by four fold over a period of two years after treating for DSM axis I disorders (Sjöström, et al., 2009). Bad dream are also associated with lesser levels of psychological well-being (Zadra & Donderi, 2000) and greater cognitive inconsistencies (Simor, Pajkossy, Horváth, & Bódizs, 2012). Thus, the influence of dreams, whether directly or indirectly, cannot be ignored.

Though much research has been done on the link between bad dreams, nightmares and psychological disorders, little has been done on how the meaning people assign to their dreams may affect them psychologically, hence the motive to conduct this study. Research by Gauchat et al., (2009) indicates that recurrent dreams in grown-ups are linked to impoverished psychological well-being. Most persons with psychological disorders such as schizophrenia, anxiety and depression, to mention but a few, have reported experiencing bad dreams and emotions.

The focus in the discipline of Psychology has always been based on Freud's theory of dream interpretation and how it can be used to tap into the unconscious mind. This research wishes to identify the stereotypes made in interpreting dreams and how they psychologically affect the dreamers, in order to be able to tackle these problems by educating the populace on the alternative dream interpretations, which are more likely to help them, rather than affect them

1.3 STATEMENT THE PROBLEM

The irrational beliefs and thoughts that the lay-person have of their dreams, may result in negative psychological effects such as anxiety, depression and stress

1.4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to identify the link that may exist between the layperson's interpretation of dreams, and the emotional problems they may face.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What are the common dreams and their interpretations experienced by the layperson?
- What is the relationship between the common interpretations of dreams and emotional problems?
- What is the relationship between common (irrational) dream interpretations and culture/religion?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The study aims at raising awareness that, assigning illogical meanings to dreams can actually be detrimental to the psychological wellbeing of one 'self. The study will be a contribution to cognitive behavioural therapy by proving that, changing how people interpret their dreams can be a useful therapeutic technic in dealing with psychological problems. The study can also be the basis upon which adults can be educated on more logical interpretation of their dreams and do away with those stereotypes which can easily cause stress to them. At the same time, the following benefits may accrue to the following groups of people:

1.6.1 To the researcher

The research will be carried out in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Psychology. The research will also broaden the researcher's academic knowledge on the study area.

1.6.2 The community

This study will inform urban communities of the dangers of randomly assigning irrational interpretations to common dreams. It seeks to expose the stereotypes in dream interpretation that are not necessarily true, so as to curb the effects of irrational thoughts that go through one's mind after experiencing a recurrent dream.

1.6.3 Cognitive-Behavioural Therapists

This research will prompt the behavioural therapist to look in the direction of dream interpretation in trying to correct the irrational thoughts that are detrimental to the psychological wellbeing of the people.

1.6.4 Psycho-dynamic therapy

The study will also provide Psycho-dynamic therapist with a basis on which they can apply their supposedly more rational dream interpretations proposed by Sigmund Freud in his book, 'The Interpretation of dreams'.

1.6.5 Religion

The study will also provide the religious sectors, under study, a feed-back of some of the effects of the dream interpretation they offer to their members

1.7 ASSUMPTIONS

- Common interpretations of dreams by adults, affect them psychologically, either positively or negatively.
- Culture and religion have a strong influence on how people assign meaning to their dreams.
- Most of the interpretations made by people of their dreams, are inaccurate and are most likely to mislead them or cause Psychological problems.
- Psychological problems which come as a result of wrong interpretations of one's dreams can be dealt with by challenging them and offering a more logical interpretation of the dream.

1.8. DELIMITATIONS

- The study will focus on The African Apostolic Church, Senga Branch.
- It will also focus on members with more than 6 years in the church.

1.9. LIMITATIONS

The findings were limited by the following aspects which were beyond the researcher's control;

- Some dreams and their interpretations, are very sensitive and personal, it is difficult for the researcher to gain trust from the participant for them to share such information.
- People tend to present themselves in the best picture, those dreams that seem embarrassing are not shared, and even their interpretations are not discussed.

- Dream remembering is not consistent, participants can fail to remember their dreams

1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- **Dream**- Dreams are basically defined as successions of images, ideas, emotions, and sensations that occur involuntarily in the mind during certain stages of sleep
- **Dream interpretation**- the process of assigning meaning to experienced dreams
- **Dream stereotype**- common interpretations of dreams made by people on the common dreams they have.
- **REM**- Rapid Eye Movement
- **Recurrent dreams**-dreams that occur more than once
- **Nightmares**-dreams that are so scary it wakes the dreamer startled
- **CBT**- cognitive behavioural therapy
- **Layperson**-an ordinary person

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter gave a general overview of how the interpretations made on the dreams one experiences may be a cause of emotional stress. Basing on the theory put forward by Aaron Beck as well as Ellis, it is quite evident that, dream interpretation is a process that is deeply subjective to culture and religion such that , there is need to identify the irrational thoughts and correct them when trying to deal with dream related psychological problems. This was all covered in the background of the study. The statement of the problem was stated generated from the background of the study. The research questions where formulated to express the critical areas to be explored. Also, assumptions where designed to drive the research process. Lastly, key terms where defined contextually

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Miles and Humberman (1999) literature review refers to an evaluating report of information from in the literature interrelated to a selected area of study. This chapter concentrates on how other researchers view the research problem. The review summarizes, clarifies, evaluates and describes the literature. It as well gives a theoretical platform for the research and assists the researcher regulate the nature of the research. Thus this chapter summaries the several literature that is associated to dream interpretations and their impact on the psychological well-being of the laypeople. Literature on the influence of both religion and culture on how the layperson interprets dreams. The chapter will also bring to scrutiny, the theories that help explain the hypothesis. Lastly, the chapter will, briefly, outline the literature on the psychological problems associated with dreams and dream interpretation.

This chapter provides a reviewed summary of the literature concerning the psychological effects of irrationally interpreting dreams. Various studies that cover concept of dream interpretation, correlation between bad dreams and emotional problems, the common theories of dream interpretation, consequences of these unscientific automatic dream interpretations and the possible ways of averting the negative effects of misinterpreting dreams. The researcher will also make use of past related studies on dreams and its relation to psychological problems. By doing the review of related literature, the state of the knowledge gap would be established for further searching.

2.2 CONCEPT OF DREAM INTERPRETATION

Various studies have proven that most dreams are common in every culture. Dreams such as being chased, falling, and sexual dreams and dreams where one fails to shout or make any sort of movement, have been reported in most cultures where researches about dreams have been done. The most interesting part about dreams, which is also the most complicated, is the interpretation process. Dream interpretation is simply defined as the process of assigning some form of meaning to dreams, (The American Heritage dictionary, 2000). Despite the similarities in dream content in every culture, the dreams have totally different meanings and significance to the cultures and religions.

2.2.1 Brief history

The earliest dream interpretations date back to roughly 3000 B.C., The first cultural group to reside in Mesopotamia, the Sumerians, left dream archives dating back to 3100 B.C. According to these early writings, deities and royals, such as the 7th century B.C. scholar-king Assurbanipal, gave careful attention to dreams (e.g., King Gilgamesh), (Oppenheim, 1956).

The Egyptians understood dreams to be messages from the gods. Egyptian dream records from around 2000 B.C. listed categories of dreams and proposed what each kind meant to the future of the dreamer. The Egyptian god of dreams was known as Serapis and dream temples known as serapims were where people went to have dreams made (induced).

Greek's earliest interpretation was that a god undertook a visit during dreams. They also believed that sleeping in ritual temples and participating in intricate rituals enabled persons to obtain access to dreams that foresaw and prophesied the future or recommended cures for illnesses. Hippocrates held the belief that throughout the day, the soul received images but in the night, it produces images, thus, we dream. Plato believed that our thinking ability was put on hold during sleep. Aristotle viewed dreams as indicators of conditions inside the body. He did not accept the idea that they were divine or had divine inspiration. In 100 A.D., Artemidorus, a philosopher wrote a book called *Oneirocritica* (The Interpretation of Dreams) which is believed to be the great-grandfather of all the dream books existent. He presented a catalogue of dreams and insisted on flexibility in dream interpretation for the individual, (Pick & Roper, 2004)

The Romans, Generally, were influenced by the Greeks and had various dream sanctuaries for dream cultivation. Emperor Augustus decreed that anybody who dreamt anything about the state must proclaim the dream in the market place. All Roman Legion had their own personal fortunetellers to try and interpret the 'nocturnal visions'. Cicero was similar to Aristotle in that he believed that dreams were not from the gods, (Oppenheim, 1956).

Dream dictionaries were also discovered in India and China. The Sacred Vedas of India, written between 1500 and 1000 B.C. gave precise interpretations of dreams. The Chinese believed that the soul left the body, temporarily, to connect with the deceased in dreams. Pictures in dreams were believed to bear particular meanings. Dreaming of the Sun or moon rising meant one's family would flourish. Dreaming of an Orchard full of fruits meant that one would have many

children and lastly, dreaming of teeth falling out was believed to mean that, one's close relatives were in jeopardy, (Pick & Roper, 2004).

In Africa, the gods, dead family members, the living and even the unborn were believed to communicate through dreams. Native American tribes understood that dreams were the most significant experiences in life. They also held the belief that dreams had divine inspiration. Various tribes alleged that wishes articulated in dreams were supposed to be practiced in waking life. The Mapuche Indians of Chile shared their dreams with each other on a daily basis within their families, (Oppenheim, 1956).

Sigmund Freud, a well-established psychologist, in 1900 got interested in the study of dreams in connection to the mental wellbeing of the dreamers. He went on to write a book on dreams titled *The Interpretation of Dreams*. The book became influential in altering the understanding that the dreams, people experience, are influenced by external forces, to the understanding that dreams are created by the effects of intra-psychic conflict. He accessed the dreams through free association (a technic whereby the client narrated freely the dreams he/she experienced). He came up with a list of common symbols that could be employed to interpret dreams, most of which were sexual in nature, (Pick & Roper, 2004).

2.2.2 Dream Beliefs as Theories of Dreaming

The various cultural and religious interpretations of dreams can be grouped into generally five umbrella beliefs or theories which this study wishes to term the dream theories. These include (1) the belief that dreams are a communication channel with the spiritual world, (2) dreams are visions of the activities of our souls when they temporarily left the body. (3) Dreams are generally dismissed as unreal figments irrelevant to the important concerns of day-to-day life (4) dreams are just random pictures of things done moments, days or years before. (5) Dreams are the messages from the body of the things in the unconscious which requires attention, (Morewedge & Norton, 2009)

The first two beliefs are products of both religion and culture. Though many aspects, such as sources of dreams and dream content, may differ from culture to culture, the general consensus that dreams are channels of communication with deities and spirits of the dead or demons etc. Cultures such as the Ongis believe that, an important component of the person is a person's smell, which tends to disperse and must be well-preserved to avoid weakening and resultant sickness. When one sleeps, the soul connected to the individual's odour separates from the

body and visits each spot the sleeping dreamer has gone to during the waking time, accumulating the odour the individual left there and taking it back to the person's body. To avoid endangering the sleeping person, the dreamer must not be awoken at all cost, (Kracke, 1979). Such a belief gives a good illustration of how laypeople have irrationally interpreted their dreams for centuries.

There is a propensity to discredit dreams as being irrelevant and unworthy of consideration. Harthan (2011) terms them 'superficial interpretations', and argues that, resisting the examination the dream in more detail, can be a sign that there is a hidden issue that the dreamer is not willing to face or may not be aware of. In this case, one can be sure that the hidden issue would be instigating difficulties in the dreamer's life. The effects can be seen in both the overall well-being of the individual and also in their behaviour, attitudes and beliefs about themselves and life in general, (Harthan, 2011).

The last pair of dream beliefs is more scientific and originates from dream researchers such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung respectively. Freud not only uses the term 'residue' to refer to the random pictures produced in the brain, but also strongly believed that, dreams were the high way to unconscious mind. Anything that the defense mechanisms were forcing out of consciousness, could be brought to consciousness through dreams where the mind is unable to effectively apply the defense mechanisms, (Lahey, 2003)

Carl Jung, on the other hand, falls under the last general belief about dreams which states that, dreams carried messages from the unconscious mind of the thing the dreamer needs to address before harm is done on the person. He argued that, there was need to understand the symbols which the body uses in communicating its messages to the conscious mind. Thus interpretations based on the last two theories are of little harm to the psychological wellbeing if only people could adopt them, (Jung, 1948).

2.3. DREAMS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Dreams are, in many ways, associated with impoverished psychological well-being. It is this striking fact that has prompted this study to focus on the concept of dream interpretation in relation to psychological well-being.

Studies have proven that there is a strong positive relationship between dreams and psychological problems. Nightmares or scary dreams, are associated with various undesirable

effects, e.g. they can potentially predispose persons to develop PTSD, and influencing suicide attempts, (Sjöström, Hetta & Wærn, 2009). According to Zadra and Dondrei (2000) they are also associated with lower levels of well-being. Nightmares are also believed to cause cognitive difficulties, (Simor, Pajkossy, Horváth, & Bódizs, 2012). Agargun, et al., (2003) has it nightmares are associated with symptoms of various kinds of psychopathology. According to a study by Nadorff et al., (2014), bad dream recurrence was also related to stronger symptoms of depression, anxiety, and worry, as well as inferior quality of life, when equated to other adults who did not experience bad dreams. Thus, it is beyond doubt that dreams have a strong impact on the psychological well-being of people, thus more study should be conducted on them.

Having the same dream over and over again (recurrent) has also proven to be related to poor psychological well-being. Robbins and Houshi (1983) established that, undergraduate students who reported having recurrent dreams, scored higher on the Beck Depression Inventory and conveyed a considerably greater amount of emotional difficulties in their daily lives (e.g., problems at school, clashes with their parents) than did undergraduates students who did not report experiencing recurrent dreams.

Yet another dream study by Brown and Dondrei (1986) compared adult recurrent dreamers with people who had never had a recurrent dream and with individuals whose previous recurrent dream ceased to recur for a minimum of one year (past recurrent dreamers). By comparison, the past-recurrent dreamers recorded continuously higher scores than those without repetitive dreams on indices of well-being, suggesting that the maintained stop of persistent dreaming reflects an improvement in well-being.

In a somewhat similar study to Brown and Dondrei (1986), Zadra, O'brien, and Dondrei (1997) found that people with repetitive dreams reported considerably higher intensities of neurotism, depression, anxiety, somatic symptomatology, as well as life-events stress. They also found that, recurrent dreamers had lower levels of individual regulation. Though the studies do not clearly state that the interpretations by the recurrent dreamers are the direct cause of the psychological problems thereof, the studies did not deny it either, hence the need to conduct this study and find out whether the interpretations lay people make of the dreams have anything to do with the impoverished psychological well-being.

2.4. INFLUENCE OF RELIGION AND CULTURE ON DREAM INTERPRETATION

Dreams are a common attribute of almost every religion in the world. They are so important to the extent that some religions and religious books are based on dreams. Bearing this in mind, it is not surprising to find out that each and every religion has its own way interpreting dreams. Studies have proven that most dreams are common to all cultures but their interpretations are very subjective to various religions within those cultures.

Dreams are clearly important in the Islamic religion as seen when Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islamic religion, is said to have received his first vision in dream. Sources say he was visited by the angel Gabriel whilst at Mecca mountains meditation. In Christianity, historical figures such as Solomon, Joseph, Jacob, Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel all have had experiences of dreaming and dream interpretation, so significant that the dreams became popular in their religions. In the Biblical book of Genesis, Jacob's dream of heavenly golden stairs, was interpreted as a representation of the destiny awaiting the Jews. Joseph, son of Jacob, is taken from a dungeon to interpret assign meaning to an Egyptian pharaoh, as the common belief was that, kings' dreams foretold the future of the whole nations. The book of Jewish law known as the Talmud that was assembled between 500 BCE and 200 CE, there are more than 200 references to dreams, (Pick & Roper, 2004).

Dreams also played a pivotal role in the establishment of Buddhism. In 544 BCE, Queen Maha Maya dreamt she was taken to Himalayas by angels, where the future Buddha entered the womb in the form of a glorious white elephant. Significance of dreams is also visible in Hinduism, with the Sacred Books (early Hindu writings) of Wisdom known as Vedas, from India where discovered around 1500 -1000 BCE. These addressed the relations between unconscious dreams and actions in the conscious life. Later editions of Indian literature explained that dreams were revelations of inner/deeper desires and wishes, (Edgar, 2011)

The above discussion was aimed at bringing out the importance of dreams in the various religions of the world though not all religions were included in the discussion. Though these religions of the world, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, African traditional religion, to mention but a few, are very different in many aspects not worthy mentioning, they share one central view of dreams that is: dreams are a channel through which the spiritual world communicates or gets in touch with the mortal people. Based on this central view of dreams, bad dreams are associated with evil spirits whereas pleasant dreams are attributed to God.

Culture, on the other hand, has its share of influence on the dreams people have and how they interpret them. Many different principles of dream interpretation have cultural backgrounds. In some cultures, they strongly believe that, there is direct communication between the dreamer and the person being dreamt of. Which means that, a dream about having sexual relations with a person may actually mean the person may be having similar thoughts at that moment. A typical example the popular legend of a missionary who was astounded at the rate at which his converts confessed adultery, only to find out that the sins being confessed were sexual experiences dreamt of and not actually done. (Kracke, 1979).

In most modern European cultures, dreams are dismissed as unreal figments which hold very little significance to the waking life. According to O'Neil (1976), most cultures that don't place much importance on dreams, have also proven to remember their dreams lesser than those that consider their dreams to be very important. Most of these cultures use the Freudian beliefs in their interpretations (sometimes dreams where just random images of the events experienced in the previous day known as day's residue), (Morewedge & Norton 2008)

In other cultures, dreams are believed to foretelling. Kracke (1979) has it that, cultures that valued their dreams engaged in dream cultivation or incubation in-order to maximise the amount of information obtained from the dreams. These rituals were conducted in specially sanctified temples, and all the dreams yielded thereof were recorded as prophetic oracles. A typical example is the Egyptian culture that had such temples known as Serapims, where the god of dreams known as Serapis was worshiped, O'Neil (1976).

To dream of someone erotically may mean that person is thinking about the dreamer with desire (among the Parintintin of South America), or may even be considered an intimate contact (Arapesh of New Guinea). The effects of love magic may show up in the dreams of the man or woman targeted with the magic (Trobriand Islands). Sufi disciples in Pakistan may be called. In African cultures, the general consensus is that, dreams are a direct channel into the spiritual world. The Azande culture of Central Africa believe the possibility of being bewitched through bad dreams, and the Parintintin dreamers acknowledge the presence of demons experiencing nightmares. It is also believed that, dreamers can willingly make things happen in waking life through dreams, (Kracke, 1991).

Dream beliefs such as these, are what this study believe to be the irrational beliefs that the lay-people have of the dreams which may have negative effects on their psychological wellbeing.

Holding a belief such as that dreams foretell the future is likely to cause anxiety in individual dreamers who coincidentally have a car crash dream the night before a journey.

2.5 IRRATIONAL THOUGHTS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS.

Irrational thoughts or distorted thoughts are what Ellis (1991) and Beck (1975), respectively, blame for the majority of emotional problems people experience in their lives. A study by Khaledian, Saghafi, Pour and Moradian, (2013) in which they investigated the relationship between irrational beliefs and anxiety on Iranian college students, they found out that the more a student held irrational beliefs, the higher the score they had on the anxiety scale. From this, a conclusion was made that irrational beliefs about anything in life causes or increase anxiety.

In a somewhat similar study, Bridges and Harnish (2010) investigated the role of irrational beliefs in anxiety and depression. As assumed, their findings confirmed that irrational beliefs are responsible for various emotional problems particularly anxiety and depression. Through testing irrational beliefs in the patients suffering from anxiety and depression, they found that almost all the patients held irrational beliefs about the issues that depressed them.

Beck (1975) also made it clear that, it was those illogical thoughts that caused the psychological problems and challenging them and correcting them was the most effective way of curing such emotional problems. He stated that, ranging from paranoid thinking, marital problems, domestic violence, stigma, loss of self-esteem, the list is endless, can all be traced back to some form of irrationality in the way one views the world.

2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.6.1 Irrational thoughts Albert Ellis

For long, Albert Ellis referred to his approach to therapy, Rational Emotive Therapy (RET), but he later changed to Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT). As indicated by the first two words of the title of the therapy, Ellis's emphasizes a relation between rationality and emotions. Ellis (1962) argues that, to live happier lives, there is need to make our thoughts more rational and less irrational.

The dominant theme in REBT was that, man's psychological or emotional disturbances are a result of the illogical or irrational thinking they hold. Correcting these irrational beliefs or thoughts is the number one cure for the emotion problems. Maximizing one's rational capacity and minimising irrationality are some technics clients can acquire and apply on their own.

Ellis's came up with a model to illustrate his assumptions and termed it the ABCDE. The model was designed for the comprehension and recording the effects of cognitions on emotions. This model was also referred to as the ABC model. (Ellis & Grieger, 1977). The creation of this model, enabled Ellis to frame the crucial characteristics of cognitive therapy into a simplified acronym that became usable by many of therapists and clients. Basically, the ABCDE model, was a shortened version of saying: Activating event (A), Belief (B), and emotional Consequence (C).

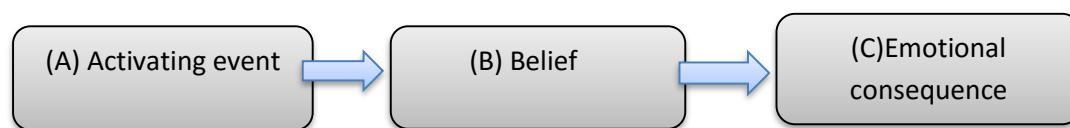


Fig.1. A basic illustration of the ABC Model

Ellis believes that, irrational beliefs are deadly because they work as inflexible, fixed demands that people apply to themselves. Examples of such are, "I must always get distinctions in all my modules," "I need to be in a relationship someone," or "I failed an interview so I'm a loser." Though these may seem like strong preferences, they become irrational when one makes them 'musts or 'shoulds' without any room for compromise. Furthermore, people have a propensity to pair these demands with exaggerations of the consequences if one is to fail—"If I fail to get a distinction, I will fail the whole level and end up failing to graduate", "If I'm not in a relationship with someone right now, then I'm entirely worthless,". Ellis believed such self-statements lacked logical reasoning but were rather driven by emotions. Correction of such beliefs was needed, (Ellis, 1991).

Two more steps were then added to ensure the effective correction of the irrational thought. These became known as (D) and (E), representing Dispute and Effective new belief. Basically, Ellis was proposing that, the therapist's duty was to challenge or dispute the irrational thoughts

in the client and then finally help the client establish a new belief that is more rational and logical, , (Ellis, 1991).

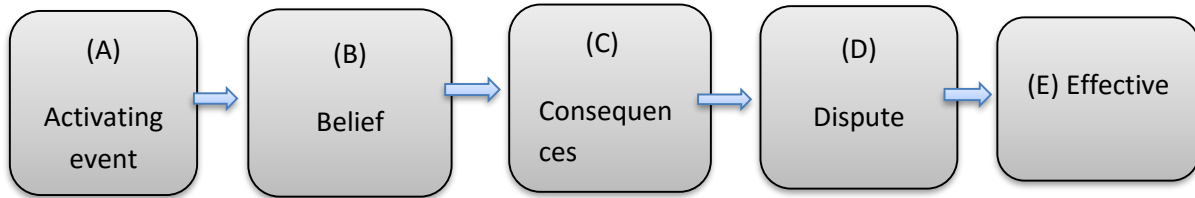


Fig. 2 an illustration of the ABCDE model

This model can be duly applied to this study in that, in the same way the sequence of events follow the ABC pattern, this can happen in the dreams experienced. As in this case the activating event would be the dream experienced such that the model would look like this:

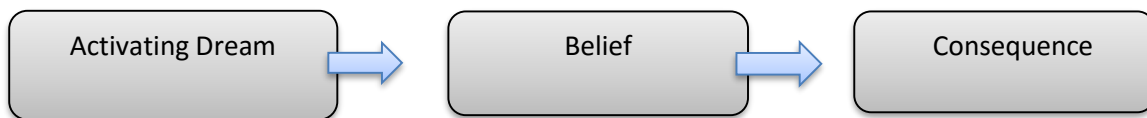


Fig. 3 An illustration of the effects of dream interpretation

The applicability of this theory on the research is strengthened by the fact stated by Harthan (2011), that the brain is incapable of differentiating between real and imagined events. Thus, to the brain, a dream, a vision or a real event have more or less the same effects. With this in mind, the study considers its ‘A’, on the ABC Model, to be the dream. The activating event is not a real-life event, but in this case a dream. If one has irrational beliefs about dreams or an irrational way of interpreting his/her dreams, negative emotional problems are likely to rise thereof. The study entirely based on the assumption that, in –as much as people can misinterpret their real-life events, they can also misinterpret their dreams and in-as much as irrationally interpreting real-life events can cause emotional problems such as anxiety, depression or stress, irrational interpretation of dreams is likely to have more or less, a similar impact on the emotional wellbeing of the dreamers.

2.6.2 Distorted thinking Aaron Beck

As Ellis was developing his REBT, Aaron Beck, one of the co-founders of Cognitive Behavioural therapy, was busy developing a theory on which the whole discipline of CBT was built upon. Like Ellis, the basic concept of Beck (1979) theory was that, it was not the actual event that caused emotional problems to the person involved, but rather the beliefs the person holds about the event. For example, it is not the break-up from a relationship that causes depression in either of the ex-lovers, but the belief that, if I'm not dating someone, I'm worthless", that causes the emotional problem in the ex-partners. (Beck, 1972).

Beck (1967) believed that there were three cognitions that shaped the mental health of any individual. These were: (1) the thoughts about the self (2) thought about the external world (3) and the thoughts about the future. Beck hypothesised if all the three beliefs are negative, depression is the end result. The main aim of Beck's approach to cognitive therapy, like Ellis's, is to promote and increase logical thinking in the clients.

Common Thought Distortions

An important stage in cognitive therapy is to disrepute unsound automatic thoughts by classifying them. To facilitate this classification, Beck and his subordinates have come up defined a list of common thought distortions. Cognitive therapists clarify these terms to clients, making use of handouts and take-home readings as well as training them on how to make use of the terms when scrutinizing their own thoughts, (Beck, 1975). The identified common thought distortions included:

- **All-or-nothing thinking-** Irrationally evaluating everything in extremes. Either very good or very bad
- **Catastrophizing-** always expecting the worst in the future, when truthfully, it is not likely to happen.
- **Magnification/minimization-** exaggerating the negatives and downsizing the positives
- **Personalization-** taking personal responsibility for events not necessarily your fault.
- **Overgeneralization-** assuming negative outcomes because of a small disturbance.
- **Mental filtering-** actively ignoring the positives and ignoring the positives despite the negatives outweighing the negatives
- **Mind reading-** declaring accurate knowledge of what others are thinking.

Beck (1972), emotional problems such as depression, anxiety, stress, loss of self-esteem, to mention but a few, are a result of some of the above mentioned thinking distortions. He argued that, the beliefs people hold about themselves, the world or others, are the hypotheses they have. There is simply need to prove the hypothesis wrong to deal with the emotional problem at hand. In the same way that people may have un-reasonable hypotheses about the world, themselves or others, can also be the very same way they may wrongly hypothesize the meanings of their dreams and be emotionally affected by the interpretations depending on the amount of value they place on their dreams

The seven thought distortions that Beck proposes can also be applied to show how some interpretations people may have of their dreams may be distorted and untrue. For example:

- **All or nothing thinking**-one may believe that, their dream is either very bad and has a deeper meaning that needs to be unveiled, or good and pleasant dreams. According to Hartmann (1987), aggression, anger and anxiety are the most common emotions in dreams, which means that, chances of having a pleasant dream are very slim. Thus, the dreamer does not believe in neutral dreams, but rather consider every dream content to the extremes.
- **Catastrophizing**-this then becomes the belief that, since dreams are believed to be foretelling the future, what-ever dream one has becomes an already established fact that the future is going to be the worst.
- **Personalization**- this is where one takes responsibility of the dream content. Kracke (1979) has it that, a story is often told of a pastor who was shocked when most of his congregants confessed adultery only to find out they were taking responsibility of sexual activities in their dreams.
- **Overgeneralization**- this whereby, people generalise their dreams and associate all dreams that seem to have the same content as also having the same meaning. E.g. the belief that, all bad dreams result from being bewitched during sleep or in the dream.
- **Mental filtering**- this is where the dreamer filters the pleasant dreams and chooses to focus only on nightmares and disturbing dreams and yield to the negative common interpretation.

This is the basic way through which the study wishes to explain how distorted beliefs about dreams may cause emotional problems using Beck's (1975) theory of cognitive behavioural therapy.

2.6.3 Social learning Albert Bandura

This is a theory put forward by Albert Bandura in which he states that, persons learn from other individuals in the social circles. The social learning theory argues that individuals adopt behaviours through modelling and imitation processes. Atkinson et al., (1990) has it that, social learning theories emphasizes the prominence of the functions of behaviours, cognitive and the environment as significant parts of development. It is through social learning that individuals learn and store in schemas, the illogical beliefs about dreams. More so, the social learning theory emphasize that persons can learn willingly by observing others. People learn from other ways of behaving and reacting when faced with various situations. Bandura also believes that people behave in a certain way only if they are sure that the situation calls for that action or reaction, Lahey (2003). For example, a dreamer is likely to panic if they have car crash dream, a day before their scheduled travel, if they have learnt and strongly believe that their dreams are prophetic or tell the future directly or metaphorically.

In this study the researcher uses social learning theory in trying to explain how the irrational beliefs and interpretations about dreams have managed to stand the test of time continue to be used by one generation after the other despite being unnecessarily true. This study uses this theory to answer the question as to where the irrational beliefs about dreams originate from. More so, this theory strengthened the idea put forward by Ellis that people interpret events according to the information already contained in the schemas. People gather various beliefs about life from mostly religion and culture. Desperate to avoid the negativity of certain dreams, people automatically yield to the interpretations they already know and have learnt from various sources such culture, religion or even tools such dictionaries of dreams. Thus, the interpretations are likely to have been acquired from culture and religion through a process of social learning.

2.7 KNOWLEDGE GAP

Much research has been done on dreams for centuries. Studies have ranged from the link between dreams and psychological problems, dreams in various cultures, the influence of dreams on the waking behaviour as well as dream interpretation as a psychotherapeutic tool, to mention but a few. Though the studies have proven, without doubt, that bad dreams are strongly associated with a diminished

psychological wellbeing, none of the studies have focussed on the interpretations of dreams in relation to psychological wellbeing. An example is a study by Nadorff et al., (2015), which proved that most people diagnosed with Generalised Anxiety Disorder reported higher levels of nightmares and bad dreams. This finding, however, did not clearly state as to whether it was the anxiety that caused the bad dreams or rather the nightmares and bad dreams that caused or increased the anxiety problem.

Other findings in a study by Sjöström et al., (2009), has postulated that, nightmarish dreams are likely to increase suicide attempt by four fold. This devastating fact again has not been explained fully to show clearly how dreams and their interpretations, in this case, affect the dreamer causing or worsening the situation (suicide attempt/thoughts).

Therefore, it is the focus of this study to try and answer that particular question which has remained unanswered. The study wishes to find out if there is a link between the way one interprets his/her dreams and the emotional problem they may experience in their lives. The study is also interested in the influence of dreams on the everyday way of life of the lay person so as to find out if unpleasant dreams may affect them psychologically especially if their interpretation is biased.

2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter covered the literature review of the study that is the literature that is linked to what the study is all about. The concept of dream interpretation was discussed at length tracing its history and basics of interpretation drawn from different backgrounds such as religion, culture and education. The influence of culture and religion on dream interpretation were also discussed in which the researcher sought to establish a link between the dream interpretation and culture/religion. The significance of dreams to humanity was also looked at with evidence being put together to support that most cultures in the world consider their dreams to be very important. Psychological problems associated with dreams were also covered to show indeed why it is necessary for the study to be carried out. Lastly, dream interpretation here in Zimbabwe was also briefly asses

Chapter 3:

Research Methodology

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter lays down the research design, research instruments, target population, sample, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, and data analysis and presentation that were used by the researcher. This chapter will also look at strengths and weaknesses of the research design and its appropriateness to this research.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The study is qualitative. Stuart (1962) explains qualitative approach to be an approach interested in explanations and opinions of the subjects under study. This is a logical path to understand human beliefs and perceptions. The measures in this paradigm involve the reviewing of a small sample of subjects through widespread and longitudinal patterns to establish strong relationships and meanings. It permits unstructured involvement which is a general approach which permits respondents to narrate their dreams as well as assign meaning to their experiences in dreams. This kind of data is best dealt with using qualitative study so as to gain in depth knowledge of whether irrational beliefs about dreams may cause or worsen emotional problems.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

In simpler terms, research design is the general operational pattern of the project that specifies what information is to be gathered and from which source and by what means. According to Marshall and Rossman (1998), research design refers to an extensive framework which stipulates the type of information to be gathered, the source of the data and the procedures of collecting the data. This is the central plan that guides data gathering and investigation phases of the research project.

Important advantages of qualitative research design are that it is conducted in the natural setting and it enables the gathering of a variety in responses as well as the ability to adapt to new changes or issues during the research process itself. Conversely, there are also shortcomings

associated with include being difficult to graph or presentation in mathematical terms. Also, the small group of individuals interviewed are not representative of the whole population. This research design was the most appropriate as the information gathered had not much need for diagrammatical mathematical presentation.

3.4 TARGET POPULATION

Target population can be defined as the population from which the subjects of research are to be drawn. A target population is the whole group of people to be study or describe, (Bailey, 2008) Studies have showed that, this population is vital in any research as it governs how sampling would be done and directs the whole research methodology.

In this study, the target population are the members of African Apostolic church members at Senga branch, aged between 18 and above. The study will also focus on church members who have been church members for more than 6 years. A sample will be drawn from this group purposively, such that the highest amount of information may be obtained from the group.

3.5 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Dooley (2003) states that the phrase population sample is used to refer to a smaller group of the target population. Population sample is a lesser part of the target population.

The sampling technique applied by the researcher was a non-probabilistic sampling technique. The researcher chose to use Purposive sampling, with Extreme or deviant case sampling being the technique of choice to select The African Apostolic Church as the target population. According to Patton (1990), this technic is based on making use of very rich groups of people or cases in order to obtain quality information.

In this case, the researcher considered the fact that every human being dreams, but people value their dreams differently. Therefore, in-order to assess the impact of dream interpretation on psychological wellbeing, it was necessary to focus on the groups that place extra-ordinary importance on their dream life.

The African Apostolic Church led by Paul Mwazha, was considered by the researcher to be an extreme case because they place extreme importance on their dream lives. This is evident from the fact that, it is one of the few churches that hold confession systems whereby ordinary members of the church are given the opportunity to (1) confess their sins (2) give testimonies

(3) share their problems with the church, including troubling dreams and experiences, asking both the people and God for spiritual help. Thus, the researchers saw this church as a resourceful group that may shade much light on how the layperson's interpretation of dreams may cause or worsen emotional harm on the dreamer.

Snow-ball sampling technic was then used in selecting the 15 respondents taking part in the research. According to Kumar (2011), snow ball sampling involves respondents referring the researcher to people they know to be resourceful. This was relevant as the study as the respondents referred the Researcher to those members known to report dreams often and those involved in dream interpretation in the church. Using this sampling technic, a sample size of a total of **15 members** of the church, both men and women was gathered.

3.6. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

These are basically tools used in data collection. They are tools used for gathering information and data needed, (Myers and Avison, 2002). The researcher used in-depth interviews.

3.6.1. In-depth interviews

Teddle and Tashakkori (2009) defines in-depth interviews as qualitative research techniques that involve carrying out thorough personal interviews with a very few respondents to explore their opinions on a certain situation. Advantages of in-depth interviews include that, they enable the researcher to obtain non-verbal feedback. These interviews are viewed as very effective in terms of providing more broad information and that offer a more comfortable setting in which to gather information. Therefore, in-depth interviews will enable the researcher to get more detailed information about the common dreams people have, how they interpret them and the emotional effects of the interpretations.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

This sector gives an insight on the measures that was followed to collect data during the research exercise.

Firstly, an interview guide was drafted by the researcher and an expert analysis of the interview guide was done. A brief explanation/translation of the questions was sometimes necessary for those participants who were either illiterate or semi-illiterate. A private place was then chosen for the detailed interview that included sensitive dreams, their interpretations and their effects

on the person's emotions were disclosed. Probing was sometimes necessary in-order to prompt more information being shade especially on the impact of the dreams on the dreamers.

The validity of the instrument will be approved in the Faculty of Social Science, Department of Psychology after necessary adjustments. The reliability of the interview guides and questionnaires will be measured and the results was analysed qualitatively and partly quantitatively with the help of faculty.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic methods of analysis where applied on the stud to analyse the data from interview manuscripts. This enables the researcher to identify common themes in the responses given by the respondents.

Six steps were followed in applying the thematic analysis. The initial step was to familiarize with the data collected and interpret it to make sense out of the information and relate it to the research topic. Secondly, thematic points were generated from the information obtained from interviews in relation to research questions. Thus coding and systematising the gathered data. Thirdly, an analysis of the crated themes, such that sub themes related to the main idea are established.

The fourth step is characterised by deep analysis of themes and sub themes in-order to answer the research questions. Step number 5 was to establish what important psychological issue has each theme captured. Then sixth and last step is the analysis and coding of the information as a set of completely analysed themes which can be presented on paper

3.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Miles and Humberman (1999), ethics are morals for accepted and responsible behavior.

Ethical considerations are concerns which must be taken into consideration to avoid violating rights of the persons who participated in the study.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality was observed on participants by safeguarding the privacy and identity of the participants. The researcher treated the records of research respondents as confidential.

Ethical approval

Ethical approval to undertake the study was obtained from the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture who granted permission for data collection.

Informed consent

Respondents had the right to be informed of whatever the researcher may think to change.

They are also entitled to be truthfully told of the nature of the research and everything about the study before they agree to participate.

Right to withdrawal

The participants have the right to withdraw from the research (interviews) for whatever their reason maybe.

3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the research methodology and it also enabled the reader to understand how the researcher came up with the research findings to be presented in the next chapter which is chapter four. The chapter also reflected the data collection procedures, sampling techniques used, research instruments used and the ethical issues that were put into consideration by the researcher. In a nutshell, the chapter sought to enlighten the reader on how the findings came about, so as to justify that the research is both valid and reliable.

Chapter 4

Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focusses on the presentation of the obtained data. The data is presented according to the themes that were identified from the data. The characteristics of the respondents were presented with their demographic information being presented in a table. Common dreams experienced and their respective interpretations were established. The psychological problems associated dream interpretations were also established and finally, religion and culture were also identified as the sources of the dream interpretations people hold in life.

4.2. CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

The respondents were adults and senior members of the church who are deep rooted in their religion as members of the independent African church. They also included 2 prophets whose contribution was vital as they were two of the few that actually perform the duty of assigning meaning to the dreams the ordinary members of the church. It was necessary to present some questions in Shona as some respondents were semi-illiterate.

Participant A	30 years old	Male	Married	Teacher	8 years
Participant B	27 years old	Female	Married	House wife	7 years
Participant C	30 years old	Male	Married	Teacher	6 years
Participant D	30 years old	Female	Married	Teacher	6 years
Participant E	56 years old	Male	Married	Information technician	14 years

Participants F	48 years old	Female	Married	House wife	20 years
Participant G	36 years old	Male	Married	Lecturer	7 years
Participant H	32 years old	Female	Married	Nurse	6 years
Participant I	65 years old	Female	Married	House wife	30 years
Participant J	26 years	Female	Single	Student	Since birth
Participant K	24 years	Male	Single	Student	6 years as a member
Participant L	35 years	Female	Married	House wife	15 years
Participant M	40 years	Male	Married	Council	6 years
Participant N	28 years	Female	Single	Student	8 years
Participant O	27 yeas	Male	Single	Student	7 years

4.3 COMMON DREAMS AND THEIR INTERPRETATIONS THE LAYPERSON EXPERIENCE

A wide range of dreams have been reported by the respondents and some form of meaning has been assigned to each reported dream. Though various common dreams or rather, recurrent dreams, have been reported, there are basically 15 types of dreams that seem to be common among the respondents. It is also striking to note that, these commonly dreamt themes, are also basically interpreted in the same way, has more or less similar emotional effects on the dreamer. 15 of the commonly dreamt dream content or themes include.

1. Sexual dreams

These dreams are basically characterised by the dreamer having sexual encounters with either a known partner or a stranger. The dreams may include actual sexual intercourse or mere

fondling or attempts to have sexual relations. A typical response came from Respondent E, a male student when he stated,

“...I have this woman who is a regular in my dreams. When I first saw this woman in my dreams, I was wedding her. From then on, she came to me and we slept together as husband and wife. What troubled me the most was that I understood that my real wife was also there but I was enjoying sexual relations with this woman. At first, I enjoyed it and liked it up until the time when I was told that the woman was a spiritual wife. It troubled me. What worsened my worries was the fact that it happened to me involuntarily despite me being in defiance...”

It is this theme that the respondents have shown clearly that they hate the most. The general interpretations given where as follows:

- (1) The dreamer is being used as a sexual partner by an evil spirit or a goblin. These some even termed spiritual partners.
- (2) The dreamer is being tormented by strong demons of fornication. So there was need for the dreamer to be somehow cleansed through a process that resembles exorcism in nature.
- (3) Witches are using the dream sex as a tool to weaken the dreamer by making the dreamer sin involuntarily in the spirit. So there was need again for the dreamer to become more prayerful or risk becoming a witch him/herself.

2. Dreams about eating

It is also clear that 90% of the respondents remember dreams of them eating despite the fact that they all find dreams about eating as unwelcome to them. The reason for their discontentment with eating dreams is that, they believe that, eating in dreams is the work of the witches and evil spirits. A typical response was given by Respondent C when she said that,

“...I started having a negative attitude towards dreams about eating after I dreamt, at one time, being at a funeral. A cow was slaughtered and the meat was cooked properly. I was among those who helped in cooking and serving the meal. A relative came and gave me plenty of meat in a plate, and I feasted on it, enjoying every bit. When I woke up the next morning, I had a serious stomach ache. The ache was worsened when, after

narrating my dream at church, was told that I had been bewitched, and cooking at a funeral was a sign of joining witchcraft....”

They strongly believe that one can be be-witched or even killed in sleep through eating in during dreams. 100% of the women believed that dreams such as these were used by witches as initiation ceremonies into the satanic world. Eating meat in dreams, whether of a commonly edible dish, was considered the most unacceptable of eating dreams.

3. Being chased

Most male respondents reported dreams of being chased by either a vicious dog, a mad man or a strange creature. In each case, the attacker always seemed to be faster than the dreamer, but they were only rescued after shouting the chant,

“...in the name of Jesus Christ who sent Paul Mwazha of Africa...” Respondent J

Again the interpretation was basically that the attacker was a personification of an evil spirit. All the respondent reported experiencing such a dream.

4. Dreams of being awake but failing to move or shout

In such dreams, all the respondents reported having experienced such a dream where they could see that they were awake, but failed to control their bodies. It felt as if a certain force was actually above them, physically trying to keep the dreamer from waking. Respondent clearly stated in her report,

“..Usually around 4 am in the morning, I experience a dream a dream that appears to be so real. At one time, I dreamt of a woman who came and tried to give me roasted chicken to eat. When I refused, she tried to force me. My husband was with me, but seemed to be either unaware of the on-goings. I tried to shout for help but my voice couldn't come out. I tried to move but was I was paralyzed.....”

These were considered, by all the respondents to be the physical manifestation of witchcraft. They believed strongly that, waking up and failing to move or speak, was a clear sign that God would have helped the dreamer awaken at the very moment when witches are in action.

5. Misfortune dreams

These are dreams in which the dreamer experiences a misfortune of any sought, whether being robbed, car accidents, injuries, being apprehended by the police, to mention but a few. These kind of dreams are very subjective to the dreamer's personal life, but the emphasis is on the fact that, the dreamer is unfortunate in some sense. Respondent H mentioned that,

“...I often dream myself being naked, trying by all means to cover myself with pieces of clothes available. I hate such dreams because every time I have such dreams, a misfortunate event happens also in my waking life...”

These kind of dreams are commonly interpreted in two ways. The first way: (1) as prophetic (foretelling the future) (2) direct messages of the current situation of the dreamers life. Either way of interpretation has been reported to causing stress to the dreamer.

6. Dreams about animals

All the respondents acknowledged that animals were also common objects in their dreams. Respondent, a male student reported that:

“...the animal I dream about the most is a very big dog with very large canine teeth. To my surprise, the dog's intention is not to hurt me but to befriend me. When I wake up, I feel happy to have had an experience with a dog because personally, I have a soft spot for dogs. But the pleasant thoughts about the dogs quickly vanishes the moment the meaning of the dream comes to mind. These dogs symbolise demons of fornication in most cases....” Respondent M

The respondents also made it clear that, there were certain animals that had positive significance to the dreamer and also animals with negative connotations. Dogs were very much common amongst the male respondents who then held a strong belief that dogs symbolise demons of fornication. Some reported of dreams involving cattle which they interpreted as evil spirits. All flesh eating animals have been attributed to the work of evil spirits and the devil, whilst doves, and pigeons and sheep are associated with pleasant outcomes.

7. Dreams in dirt

These are dreams in which the dreamer finds him/herself in extremely dirty and disgusting places. These places may include toilets with faeces covering the whole floor, sewage and filthy rubbish. Such dreams were interpreted by the dreamers using two opposite theories. (1) Dreams have a reverse or opposite meaning (2) dreams meanings are direct. Using the 1st theory, the respondents believed that their dreams in dirt foretold success, prosperity or even obtaining

some money. On the other hand, the 2nd theory meant that dreaming in dirt is a sign of being in the worst spiritual state. One Respondent stated that,

“...whenever I have such a dream, I become delighted because I heard that it means I’m going to get some money...”

Another interpretation was rather negative. A typical example is the response by Respondent who stated that,

“I sometimes dream myself in a broken toilet, with the floor covered in human dung. I don’t the experience both in the dream and when I wake up....”

8. Church gatherings

Despite having reported a series of dreams that troubled them, the respondents also reported common dreams of themselves being at church gatherings wearing their church regalia (all white garments). The purpose of the gatherings may differ in each dream, but generally, such dreams were positively attributed to, especially when the founder of the church, Paul Mwazha, also appears. Respondent E can be quoted saying,

“...I usually dream being at our national church gathering with Paul Mwazha present teaching us various things. I believe these dreams a divine....”

All the respondents, reported such a dream, and none of them had any negative interpretation of such dreams.

9. Dreams about flying

All the respondents having experienced dreams in which they flew away from danger. These kind of dreams were clearly their favourite kind of dreams because of their belief about such dreams. The interpretation was generally similar as they all believed that flying in ones dreams signified one’s righteousness and truthfulness. Failing to fly was a sign of unrighteousness. However, one respondent interpreted differently, arguing that this was another sign that one was about to enter into witchcraft. Respondent C was quoted saying,

“...whenever I’m faced with danger, I fly away from my enemies. I feel joy knowing that my enemies cannot fly after me...”

This clearly was interpreted as a sign of victory by the dreamer. This is typical of the interpretations made by 8 of the respondents of the 15, of their flying dreams.

10. Mysterious dreams

These are dreams which are very strange which the dreamer fails even to understand the sequence of events in the dream or even the objects, creatures of people in the dream. These kind of dreams are the only dreams that the respondents openly confessed that they did not know their meanings. Respondent J gave the most interesting mysterious dream in which she stated,

“...I found myself in a strange forest. I had gone there to look for mushroom. I found a pit that was filled with mushroom. I was about to enter when I had a female voice command me not to. I looked around but could not see anyone, but instead, all I saw where dead bodies hanging from trees. The bodies where deformed, limbs cut-off and greyish in colour. The voice commanded me again, talk to the dead bodies and teach them. I was so confused because I did not know where to start, or how to do it, then I woke up.....”

Up to the time of the interview, she clearly stated that she still had no clue what the dream was trying to her.

11. Dreams about driving

Another common dream among the dreams reported by the respondents was the dream about driving. In this kind of dream, one would dream him/herself driving a vehicle. This dream again did not have a common interpretation among the respondents. Depending on what really happens during the dream, 75% of the respondents believed that the car symbolised one's life. Failing to control the car in a dream, was a sign that one was not in control of their life. 25% of the respondents believed that dreaming about driving and experiencing was simply a warning from God to be careful of accidents. Only one respondent had a unique experience with dreams about driving as she reported that whenever she had a dream about driving, she was beat up by her guardians, whether she has dis something wrong for an offense committed long back. Respondent H had a very interesting interpretation and experience of her dreams about driving. She reported,

“...whenever I dreamt myself driving successfully, it was a sign to me that I my life was going in the right direction, and I'm in control...”

12. Dreams about crossing a river

Crossing a river has been another recurrent theme in the dream lives of the respondents. Whether succeeding or failing to cross the river, dreams about crossing a river was basically interpreted as symbolic of the challenges in life. If one dreams of a failing to cross a river, it was interpreted as failing to succeed the most important task at that given time whereas success in crossing the river would be attributed to success in whatever task at hand in the waking life. Any example is Respondent C who stated,

“...I found myself standing before a large river. I understood that I had to cross the river in-order for me to continue with my journey. Some people came and easily crossed but, to me it was a big challenged. I hesitated so many times, and woke up before crossing....”

This was again commonly reported by 8 of the 15 respondents, who expressed deep concerning of why it was always like that in their dreams.

13. Fighting

Another commonly reported dream was a dream in which the dreamer would dream him/herself fighting with either a human being or a creature. These dreams where generally interpreted as battles with evil spirits. If one loses the struggle, they strongly believed that it was a sign of defeat by the evil spirits and vice-versa. Respondent D gave a typical response when she said,

“...I always dream fighting this ugly maniac dressed in black ragged clothes. In most cases, he would be holding a machete in his hand and determined to cut me into pieces. I find myself fighting, wrestling and exchanging words with this killer. I use anything within my reach, as weapon, be it rocks, sticks or anything hard enough to cause pain. But this man is usually more powerful than me. I seldom defeat him, but he grabs me, and strangles me. Just as he is about to cut me into halves, is when I wake up gasping for breath.....”

Such dreams are very common nightmares the respondents reported experiencing. 10 respondents of the 15 reported dreams in which they fought against people they knew, stranger or animals.

14. Dreams about death (of self or another)

14 of the 15 (93 %) respondents reported experiencing dreams about death in which they were either the ones dead, a relative or a person they know. This dream, in most reports, was given a literal meaning that it meant the death of that person dreamt of. Respondent A revealed that,

“...I have had dreams about death so many times. At one time I dreamt myself being involved in an accident and dying on the spot. I saw my spirit get out of my body, and started walking towards heaven following a very small path in the sky. I looked back and saw my wife and relatives crying over my body. Suddenly, I felt a powerful force that propelled my spirit to go back into my body, then I woke. Surprisingly, I was without the memories of the nightmare haunting me. Honestly, I became scared of travelling....”

In this case, it was clear the respondent interpreted his dream as being a direct message and foretelling.

15. Dreams about falling

These are dreams where the respondents reported falling and never seemed to reach the ground. The dreams had no clear interpretation, but 13 of the 15 respondents reported experiencing such a dream. A typical response came from respondent O who said,

“...just at the beginning of my sleep, I dream of myself falling, but I never seem to reach the ground. I grow more anxious and anxious as it is unclear to me as to the nature or the ground I’m going to hit...”

Despite being so common, many respondents dismissed them as being just mere dreams influenced by may be the way the dreamer is physically positioned during sleep.

4.4. THEORIES OF DREAM INTERPRETATION

From the interpretations the respondents gave, 5 theories of dream interpretation can be deduced. These are:

(1) **Dreams foretell the future**- this is the belief by the respondents that their dreams are prophetic. Dreams such as those of accidents and death were among the most to be believed by to be prophetic of future events. Thus the respondents were most likely to fast and pray for themselves in trying to evade the impending disasters. One respondent even reported that,

“...as a child of about 11 years of age, whenever I dreamt myself driving, the next day I would get beaten up by my guardians no matter how much I tried to avoid doing anything that would get me into trouble. It occurred so many times

in my life that I became automatically stressed the next morning after dreaming myself driving....” Respondent M

- (2) **Dreams are messages from God**-this is the belief by the respondents that all dreams are messages from a supreme being who, in this case, is God. 100% of the respondents held strongly to the belief that dreams are a God’s platform for communication with the believers. A typical response came from Respondent who said

“...I once dreamt Paul Mwazha before I even joined The African Apostolic church. He gave me a direct order to convert and become a member. He was shining like the sun, and his books under his left arm, and his shepherd staff in his right. I couldn’t look him in the eyes. I trembled with fear, and but his presence was divine and magnificent. From that day on, I joined the church and am still a member...” Respondent F

This report makes it clear that dreamers view their dreams as divine messages which can greatly influence their decisions in life. Dreams of being at church gatherings which have proven to be very common amongst the respondents, have been attributed to be the best dreams one may have experience and are a sure sign that God is being satisfied with the dreamers conduct.

- (3) **Dreams have reverse meanings**- this is the belief that dreams mean the opposite of what the dreamer dreams about. An example is the general belief by 12 of the respondents that dreaming one ‘self in dirt or faeces generally means that one would be prosperous or will get a lot of money. Another example of this belief about dreams can be drawn from this report by Respondent I

“...Whenever I dream about being at a wedding, I get worried because, I believe weddings symbolise death. Whether I am directly involved or it’s a relative, I know something death related is bound to happen...”

In the waking life, weddings are pleasant and joyful, but in the dream life of the respondents, it seems weddings denote antagonistic message.

- (4) **Dreams are symbolic**- this is the belief that dreams contain symbols and cannot be taken literally. It is through this theory that 90% of the respondents interpreted much of their dreams. To mention but a few,

16. Dogs- demons of fornication

17. Snakes- spirits of witches
18. Cattle- evil tribal spirits
19. Vehicle- one's life
20. Dove-holy spirit
21. Rain-more life
22. Wedding- death
23. Oceans/Sea- Satanism
24. Whites(Europeans)- Satanism
25. Angels- Divine presence
26. Green crops- life
27. Soldiers/police- Satanists/misfortune
28. Nakedness- embarrassment

The list is endless but the researcher chose to highlight a few of the many symbols the respondents reported in the interviews. An example of such symbolism in dreams can be seen from Respondent report in which she says,

“...I once had a series of dreams in which I found myself visiting the ocean. At one time, I saw a white (European) woman, she was very beautiful and marvellous to look at. She called me and asked me to follow her. She started to teach me how to speak in English and I complied. When I narrated this dream at church, prophets and seers made it clear that, only a few steps were left for me to be initiated into deep Satanism unknowingly. This troubled me greatly. I became scared, and dreaded the nights. I tried by all means to avoid sleeping...”

Respondent F also stated that, dreams about dogs were a sign that demons of fornication were tormenting him. Female respondents found it embarrassing to discuss such dreams, but respondent I and J reported that, dogs in their dreams symbolised the spirit of prostitution. If not fought fiercely may lead them into the unpopular business of prostitution.

(5) **Dreams have a direct meaning-** this is the belief that dreams mean what they reveal. This theory was used to by most respondents to interpret dreams such as death, failing or passing exams, getting or losing a job. Etc. such belief was effectively applied in a report by Respondent H,

“...at one time, I dreamt my female neighbour coming to me naked. I understood that she was a witch in patrol, and on that day, I was her target. She had a clay bowl with water in it. She tried to sprinkle some onto my face but I tactfully avoided it. I started rebuking her in the name of Jesus who sent Paul Mwazha of Africa. We then engaged in a heated fist fight, and I boxed her all night till she surrendered. When I saw her the next morning, she avoided me and didn't answer me when I greeted her. For some reason, her left cheek was swollen. I couldn't help but think that dreams are direct messages of what took place in the spiritual world...”

Respondent F also stated that, dreams about dogs were a sign that demons of fornication were tormenting him. Female respondents found it embarrassing to discuss such dreams, but respondent I and J reported that, dogs in their dreams symbolised the spirit of prostitution. If not fought fiercely, may lead them into the unpopular business of prostitution.

4.5. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COMMON INTERPRETATIONS OF DREAMS AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

The common interpretations of dreams discussed above have been accompanied by various emotional problems that came directly from the irrational beliefs the dreamer has of their dreams. The study will outline the above discussed common dreams and interpretations together with the emotions that the respondents experienced afterwards.

.B. The Researcher refers to the interpretations as irrational because they were not scientifically proven in anyway, and the respondents acknowledged that the majority of their interpretations never came to be true.

4.5.1. Below is a list of Psychological problems that fit the descriptions of what the respondents felt after having dreams which they interpreted negatively:

- I. **Anxiety** – these disorders are characterized by a persistent sense of physical or psychological danger. Dreams in which the dreamer was chased are an example of dreams that caused the respondents to have a persistent sense of physical or psychological danger. Another example can be drawn from mysterious dreams which left the dreamer the dreamer with no clue of what the dream meant. Nightmares like these scared the dreamers to the extent that they would have a consistent fear of the unknown. A typical response was given by respondent E who said,

“...twice I dreamt myself being chased by a stranger holding an abnormally machete. My legs grew tired and unable to carry me anymore. The man and his gang caught up with me. They robbed me, took everything and they disappeared. When I woke up the next morning, the memory of the dream hanged on mind for the rest of the week. I couldn't go even to the shops alone after the sun went down...”

Neurosis- is characterized by anxiety, internal tensions and conflicts, uncontrollable avoidance of threatening situations, and ineffective coping. Examples include panic, phobia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and posttraumatic stress.

“...nightmares trouble me a lot. At one time I dreamt myself dying in an accident. It took me almost two weeks to willingly commute, without having constant fears about having an accident similar to the one I dreamt myself in...”

Dreams about death reported by the respondents are good examples of how dreams may affect the dreamer psychologically. After a having a dream in which one dies, they all reported to have abnormally avoided threatening situations. This resembles clearly resembles neurosis.

Paranoia- Generally, this refers to high levels of suspicion and mistrust, controlling, and quick to develop grudges and jealousy. Some men who batter their wives or girlfriends have this disorder. Respondent K gave response that resembled the definition of Paranoia given above when she said,

“...after having a dream in which one of my relatives gave me food and I woke having stomach aches, I hated her so much. The next time I met her, I confronted her about her attempts to kill me...”

Eating dreams and paralysis (failing to move or shout) are the two dreams which the respondents declared that, the person seen in the dream giving food or causing the paralysis is the witch.

- II. **Depression-** it is a severe emotional problem in which the individual cannot stop feeling sad and constantly feels helpless and hopeless. Dreams about failing to drive a car, failing to cross a river and misfortune dreams are the typical dreams which the respondents agreed that they caused them to feel helpless, down and empty. The

situation is worsened when the dream then becomes a recurrent dream. Suicidal ideation was reported by Respondent I when she said,

“...my dreams always come true. They are prophetic in nature. At one time I dreamt a fire breaking out at my house and all my 5 children and my husband dying at once. This was too much for me to bear. Knowing my dreams to be true, I contemplated killing myself so that I don’t witness the impending devastation...”

III. **Stress-** Psychological symptoms of stress include anxiety and tension, uncontrollable worrying, irritability, distractibility. A description of similar symptoms were reported by respondent M who said,

“...waiting for my results after completing my A level studies, I had a dream in which I failed dismally and got 2 points. This was a bad time for me to have such a dream because it was almost the very time results always came out. I couldn’t stop worrying, I would spend hours in bed even during day time. I lost appetite, and imagined the worst that could happen to considering how my parents valued my education. It was a stressful part of my life indeed...”

Death dreams were also among the dreams reported by the respondents to cause such emotional disturbances in the dreamers. Respondent N also mentioned how she experienced intense stress after dreaming of herself having intercourse with her own father. The dream was very much confusing and unbearable to even just think about the picture.

IV. **Paranoid thinking-** involves a bias assuming that others are prejudiced, abusive or critical. Such symptoms are typical of what respondent O reported,

“...I always knew my father’s first wife was a witch and she was trying to kill me and my brothers. Every now and again, I dreamt of her be-witching me. I know this because I usually woke up and intercepted her operations. She then tried to use her magic on me to try and keep me asleep, but I fight. I try to scream and fail. Movement becomes impossible, but I see her smiling cruelly, halfnaked and determined to carry on with her business at all cost. When I finally break free from the spell, I usually sprinkle the whole room with coarse salt, pray and I then sleep peacefully for the rest of the night. I know she hates us because we are devoted Christians, and she is not a believer...”

Respondent B also described incidents almost similar to the above respondent. She narrated that, she once broke up with her boyfriend because she had dreamt about him cheating on her. She confronted her boyfriend and he denied it but she insisted that he was guilty and left him for good.

below is a table that summarizes the commonly reported dreams and the associated emotional problems.

Dream type	Interpretation(s)	Associated Psy problem(s)
1. Sexual dreams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One is being used as spiritual partner by evil spirits or goblins. • One is possessed with demons of fornication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety • Depression • Stigma • Low-self esteem • Schizophrenia
2. Dreams in dirt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosperity (obtain money) • Deep rooted in a messy situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivated • Depression • Anxiety
3. Falling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instability of one's life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • Anxiety
4. Eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being bewitched by witches. (poisoned) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paranoid thinking • Anxiety • Low-self esteem • Stress
5. Death (of self or others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct warning about death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • Anxiety • Low-self esteem • Suicidal thoughts • Paranoia • Stress • Neurosis
6. Flying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritually strong • Righteous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivated

7. Crossing a river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A life challenge at that particular moment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivated (if succeeds in crossing) • Demoralised (if failed) • Loss of self-esteem (if failed)
8. Awake but failing to speak or move	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believed to be bewitchment • Strong belief that, the witches are responsible for the failure to move, and that the witch would be physically on top of the dreamer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety • Phobias (of objects, situations, animals, or people dreamt of) • Insomnia
9. Animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The animals are symbolic e.g. dogs symbolise spirits of fornication and cattle- evil spirits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigma (if a negative symbol) • Phobias (if a negative symbol) • Depression (if a negative symbol) • Motivated (if a positive symbol)
10. Church gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritually stable • Righteous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivated • Boosts self-esteem
11. Mysterious dreams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety • Depression • Neurosis
12. Driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vehicle is symbolic of one's life. Failure to control the vehicle is simply interpreted as failure to control one's life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivated (if succeeds)
13. Being chased (person or animal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work of witches and evil spirits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety • Paranoia • Neurosis
14. Misfortune	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believed to have a direct meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low self esteem • Stigma
15. Fighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • symbolised a spiritual fight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anxiety & depression (if defeated) • boost self-esteem (if triumphed) • Paranoia

4.6. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMON (IRRATIONAL) DREAM INTERPRETATIONS AND CULTURE/RELIGION

80% of the respondents reported that their interpretations stemmed from their religion. 15% acknowledged that their interpretations had cultural origins. 4% surprisingly stated that their interpretations or theories of dream interpretations were their own perception of the dreams. 1% reported making use of dictionaries of dreams.

Prophets and seers in this African Independent church, are usually responsible for interpreting the dreams. The majority of the dreams reported were interpreted based on the interpretations given in the church. Respondent C and L even mentioned in their narrations that each dream they had could be interpreted in two ways, (1) the church way and (2) cultural way. An example is when respondent L stated that,

“...there are two contradicting interpretations of the dream in dirt. The one from our culture is that, it’s a sign of luck, one would eventually get remunerated well. The one from church shunned the dream, and labelled it a sign of spiritual deprivation and uncleanness...”

The table below will present the findings:

N.B. The irrationality column is derived from Aaron Beck’s list of **thinking distortions**

Dream theory	source(s)	Example(s)	Irrationality
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<p>1. <i>Dreams have a reverse meaning</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly cultural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dreams in dirt- interpreted as a sign of monetary gain. • Dreams about weddings-ironically interpreted as symbolising death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Magnification (catastrophizing) or minimization</i>-having unrealistic expectations for the monetary gains • <i>The fortune teller error</i>- assuming that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already-established fact.
<p>2. <i>Dreams are foretelling (prophetic)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion (Christianity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dreams about accidents or misfortunes. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mental filter</i>- You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened simply because you believe your dreams are prophetic. • <i>The Fortune Teller Error</i>
<p>3. <i>Dreams are symbolic or contain symbols.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both culture and religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dreams about driving- the vehicle symbolises one's life. • Dreams about animals- e.g. dogs symbolise demons of fornication, cattle symbolise evil spirits, to mention but a few. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The symbols maybe wrong. E.g. as a child, one could have extremely feared dogs. Dreaming about dogs as an adult does not have anything to do with his/her sexual behaviour. • <i>labelling and mislabelling</i>- Instead of describing one's error, he/she attaches a negative label to ones 'elf: "I'm a loser.", I'm a fornicator, prostitute etc.

<p>4. <i>Dreams are messages from God.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both culture and religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual dreams- interpreted as spiritual intercourse with an evil spirit • Dreams at church gatherings- interpreted a closeness to God • Dreams about flying- sign of righteousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's not a concrete fact that all dreams are messages from God. There is evidence that the physical environment (such as alarm tone) can influence dream content. • <i>Overgeneralization</i> is the irrationality associated by thinking that all dreams are heavenly messages.
<p>5. <i>Dreams are direct messages</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion • One's own interpretation • Dreams dictionaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misfortune dreams- e.g. failing an exam when one is towards exams in real life. • Accidents- considering that people board auto-mobiles almost on a daily basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's irrational to take every dream literally because dreams sometimes present rationally impossible events such as flying, non-existent creatures, as well as never before seen locations.

4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter presented the data obtained from the respondents thematically. Research questions were answered using the data found. The common dreams and their interpretations were presented, with a list of 15 commonly experienced dreams being outlined together with each interpretation. The basic theories of dream interpretations used by the layperson were also outlined, with examples being drawn from the list of common dreams presented earlier. The link between dreams interpretations and psychological problems was also established through

identifying each common dream and the associated negative emotion stemming from its interpretation. A table was drawn to present the analyzed data diagrammatically. Lastly, the influence of religion and culture on the layperson's beliefs about dreams was also brought out. Each theory of dream interpretation discussed earlier in the chapter traced its origin, and another table was drawn to present this analyzed data in a more comprehensive manner.

Chapter 5:

Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter discusses the themes raised in chapter 4. Refers to bringing the both sides of the topic in question. In this instance, both the positive and the negative effects of the layperson's dream interpretation are brought out. The link between the theories outlined in the literature review will now be brought checked whether they were relevant in the study. The conclusions are then drawn, in which a justification of the study is made bringing out why the research was a necessity. Lastly, the topic points out the recommendations that the researcher wishes to put across to the significant (s) of the research.

5.2. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study was undertaken to explore the link between the beliefs held about dream meanings and psychological wellbeing among adults in the African Apostolic Church at Senga branch. The aspects of the dream experiences that were taken into consideration include to find out the common dreams experienced and the interpretations assigned to them, the emotional problems experienced as a result of the interpretations placed on negative dreams experienced, how religion and culture influence the beliefs people have of their dreams. Findings are discussed according to these aspects.

5.2.1. What the Common dreams and their interpretations?

In this study, one of the research questions required the researcher to find out the common dreams and their interpretations. This research question was answered in that the researcher established that there are basically 15 common dreams amongst the respondents. For example, most respondents reported having sexual dreams, dreams about eating, falling, flying and paralysis (being awake but failing to make any movement or sound). Their interpretations where that, being used by demons for a spiritual sex partner, being be-witched though eating and being under the spell of a witch, respectively. These common dreams confirm Tedlock's (1981, 1987) findings in which he found that, certain typical dreams (such as dreams of falling, flying, examinations, or being rooted to the spot when trying to run) seem to occur in all cultures, though some studies suggest they vary in frequency other Dreams may be frequent in a culture because of that culture's beliefs about the meaning of dreams: In a culture where a "falling down house" is believed to predict death, it may become a typical dream in that culture.

Dream theories

In the quest to find out common dreams and their interpretations, the research managed to bring out general guidelines upon which the laypeople interpreted their dreams. These are what the study terms dream theories. These include, (1) dreams have reverse meanings (2) dreams have direct meanings (3) dreams contain symbols (4) dreams foretell the future (5) dreams are divine (messages from God) (6) they are random pictures of events experienced before. These findings confirmed some of the dream researches done in other cultures else-where.

The belief that over thinking about something may result in one dreaming about the thing, resembles the notion brought forward by Sigmund Freud in which he termed these pictures 'day residue'. Respondent A even jokingly referred to such dreams as '...hope dzemuchando' which means they are insignificant dreams.

Also, the belief that dreams are direct messages to the dreamer also resembles Freud's belief that, people may dream about the things that maybe actually happening in real life. This is evidenced by the fact that a person can dream about the sound of his/her alarm or a conversation being held in real life. A typical dream which the respondents reported commonly believed was a direct message was the paralysis dream. In this dream, respondents would fail to move or shout. So the respondents believed such dreams were direct messages telling the dreamer that they were under the attack of witches. Thus confirming the belief by Freud that dreams are influenced by the waking life.

Respondents also believed that their dreams are symbolic. This confirms the theory put forward by Carl Jung (1974), in which he argued that dreams contained symbols which the dreamer ought to know their meanings in-order to comprehend the messages the unconscious mind is sending to him/her. An example of the symbols given by Jung include a sword-which he argued may mean a male reproductive organ. Though symbols may not have universal meanings, the idea that dreams contain symbols has been very much recurrent in most studies about dreams including those by Carl Jung.

The belief that dreams foretell the future has also been found in other cultures. Respondents reported dreams such as car accident dreams, or misfortune dreams such as failing an interview or an exam. These they believed to be foretelling dreams. Such beliefs about dreams, confirm what Kracke (1991) also found in his studies. He argued that, in many cultures, dreams are held to provide knowledge of the future, either literally or, more often, metaphorically, through symbolic references to future events (like the dreams interpreted by Joseph in the Bible).

Another recurrent belief among the reports given by the respondents was the notion that, dreams have a reverse meaning. One respondent reported that she believed dreaming about a wedding foretold death. This belief is clear that people sometimes believe dreams have reverse meanings. Such beliefs echo the beliefs in Corsica and in Portugal about dreams, where they held that, to dream of someone's death gives that person longer life (Kracke, 1991)

5.2.2 The relationship between the common interpretations of dreams and emotional problems

The findings in this research confirmed that, indeed the irrational common beliefs people may have of their dreams may affect them emotionally. According Harthan (2011), there's also abundant evidence from neuroscience that the brain is unable to distinguish between real and imagined events. This makes it valid to apply cognitive behavioural theories by Aaron Beck and Albert Ellis to the effects of the dream beliefs on the dreamers.

Respondents reported having great fears or even phobias of the thing that seem to threaten their safety. This was common when they interpreted the dreams to be foretelling or direct messages. Such dreams included car crashes, being robbed or being raped. Such fears of the unknown, and un-restlessness are similar to the symptoms of anxiety. This confirms Beck (1975) asserts that irrational beliefs may cause emotional problems such as anxiety.

Sexual dreams (believed to mean spiritual sexual relations) have been generally associated with stigmatization and depression. Respondent E even stated that,

“...I am finding it hard to have a meaningful relationship because I have a spiritual husband. He comes to me during my sleep and has intercourse with me. I don't wan't this to happen but I don't know how to stop it. I believe if I don't get help soon enough, I may never get married in my life...”

The lack of hope and helplessness is typical of depression symptoms. This again confirms Beck's belief that irrational beliefs are associated with depression. This is also congruent with the study by Robert et al., (2009) who argues that dreams are associated with depression.

Extreme avoidance of threatening situations was another reported emotional problem among the respondents. Dreams about embarrassment were also responsible for the feelings which resemble neurosis symptoms. The respondents would avoid people and social gatherings, to avoid the embarrassment the dreamer would have experienced earlier during dream. This again confirms the beliefs by Ellis (1991) that, irrational beliefs, may cause emotional problems such

as neurosis and phobias. Correcting this irrational belief about the dream experienced is the best solution to the problem.

Extreme cases of paranoia were evident in the respondent's beliefs about eating dreams. These were generally interpreted as being a sign that they were being bewitched or poisoned in their sleep by enemies. This belief continued even in waking life, with the people present in the dream viewed as the enemies and hated in real life. This irrational belief about the meanings of eating dreams can be argued to be the source of the emotional problem. This confirms the belief by Beck that people may have an all or nothing bias, which means that they have no neutral dreams. They should have pleasant dreams only, if they experience eating dreams, the dreams do not bear any other meaning besides bewitchment. This indeed confirms Beck's arguments about irrational beliefs.

Failure to achieve goals in dreams has proven, from the respondents, that it can cause stress even in the waking lives of the dreamer. Dreams such as failing to cross a river, failing an exam or failure to defeat an opponent, stresses the dreamer. The feelings of worry and hopelessness resemble stress symptoms, again confirming the assertion by Ellis that people may hold irrational beliefs such as the fortune-teller error. In this, the respondent would be certain that that his dream is accurate, thus cause stress to him.

Paranoid thinking has been another psychological problem which the researcher noted from the respondents. One respondent even mentioned that he cut relations with all his relatives because they were witches and trying to kill him. Asked how he came to that conclusion, he attributed his decision to the recurrent dreams he had had about them fighting him and trying to kill him in his dreams. The decision to totally shun his relatives because of mere dreams is, without doubt, paranoid. This again confirms what Ellis what Beck termed the labelling and mislabelling error. In this, one quickly labels himself to be something that he is not simply because of one mistake or event. In the same way, one can label other people to be what they are not simply because of his irrational beliefs. Ellis also discussed irrationality stemming from the belief that, one's feelings towards someone, situation or a thing, a truly how things are. This is known as emotional reasoning.

5.2.3 The relationship between common (irrational) dream interpretations and culture/religion

Basically, respondents reported obtaining their interpretations from their religion. Being all members of The African Apostolic Church led by Paul Mwazha. 2 of the respondents were Seers. Their duties in the church also include assigning meaning to the dreams people have. Not only do they interpret narrated dreams, but they are also capable of telling dreamers of the dreams they dreamt of, and then assign the relevant meaning to the dream. This confirms the fact that, religion plays an important role in influencing what people dream about, how they interpret them, and the actions they take as a result of their dreams. 100% of the respondents attributed their dream interpretations to their religion.

Despite being deep rooted in their religion as they are, respondents still held some cultural beliefs about some of their dreams. The belief that dreams had reverse meanings, is a cultural belief that the respondents still hold despite being involved in a totally different religion. This belief was used to interpret dreams about weddings as referring to death and death dreams believed to mean the more health and livelihood. This confirms the findings by Callaway (1868-70), when he researched on dreams in the Zulu culture. He found that, the Zulu observed the principle of contrast in their interpretation of dreams. Two examples of the application of this contrast principle is the dream about weddings which they interpreted as meaning death, but, dreaming of someone dying, may mean increased. This then shows, generally, that Africans hold more or less similar beliefs about their dreams.

5.3. CONCLUSIONS

It has been confirmed, without doubt, from the study that people experience more or less similar dreams and hold similar interpretations of these dreams. Though the content of the dreams may not be exactly the same as the next person, themes such as, sex in dreams, eating, death, falling, crossing rivers, and driving, to mention but a few, are surely common among all peoples, even beyond the African continent. The interpretations assigned to these common dreams are based on generally 6 principles which are also common among other cultures beyond Africa. Principles such as, dreams having contrast/reverse meanings, dreams being channels of

communication with the supernatural, dreams being direct messages from body, dreams being symbolic, as well as dreams being random images influenced by the day to experiences. Thus indeed, as proven above, these dream interpretation principles are common among cultures.

The effects of these interpretations on the dreamer's emotional wellbeing was also assessed. The findings proved that, the principles used to interpret dreams where, to some extent, irrational and if not applied with care, may cause emotional problems to the dreamer. Also some common dreams such as sexual dreams, have proven to be very much stressful to people who strongly held the belief that, sex in dreams meant, without doubt, the presence of an evil sexual partner. This is just an illustration of the many beliefs about dreams that have caused emotional problems on the dreamers. The most commonly reported problems closely matched the symptoms of, anxiety, depression, stress, paranoia, neurosis, and paranoid thinking. Thus the study concludes that, irrationally interpreting dream may cause emotional psychological problems in the same way, irrationally interpreting the everyday events may cause emotional problems such as the above mentioned.

It was quite obvious that people use the knowledge they get from either religion or culture through social learning, to perceive their environment and interpret it. The study also strengthened this assertion as most respondents reported interpreting their dreams according to the interpretations they are given at church. It was quite evident, also, that though Christians, they still held cultural beliefs about their dreams. But generally, it can be concluded that culture and religion play an important role in influencing how people view and interpret almost everything in their lives and Dreams are of no exception.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above-mentioned inadequacies it is recommended that further quantitative research studies be conducted in order to better understand the breadth of the problem. As this research was qualitative in nature, it had a small sample size and the research was limited to a few members of The African Apostolic Church in Gweru. There is need for a more extensive research.

The study also recommends that, cognitive behavioral therapy consider challenging the irrational beliefs people may have of their dreams. This could be a vital step, as some cultures place much value on the dreams one has. The fact that nightmares may increase the possibility of suicide by four fold is not a thing to overlook. There is need to look deeply into the effects

of dreams and their interpretations in dealing with clients suffering from emotional problems such as depression, anxiety, and stress.

The study also urges Psychologist to launch campaigns that can educate people on more logical interpretations of dreams such as those put forward by Freud and Jung rather applying their religious and cultural dogmas that only worsen their psychological wellbeing, especially in Africa.

5.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter discussed the link between the findings and the literature review. Correlations were established and all the research questions were answered. 15 common all 6 dream interpretation principles were proven to be also existent in other cultures and beliefs. The psychological problems associated with irrationally interpreting dreams were also discussed. These included depression, anxiety, paranoid thinking, stigma, neurosis and paranoia. The origin of these interpretations were traced and found out to be religion and culture. Conclusions were made on each research question. It was concluded that, people a more or less similar dreams and interpretations. These interpretations may be sources of emotional problems if not applied rationally, and religion/culture play significant roles in shaping the beliefs people have on their dreams. Recommendations were also made. The study recommended further research on the impact of dreams on psychological wellbeing, as well as cognitive behavioral department to consider challenging irrational beliefs on dreams in their clients because these irrational beliefs maybe responsible for many emotional problems being experienced. Lastly, the chapter recommended cognitive behaviorist to launch educational campaigns to educate people of more logical interpretations of dreams.

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APPENDIX A- RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

MY NAME IS CLEMENT SIMUNYU. I AM A STUDENT AT MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

This research is entitled “**The link between layperson’s dream interpretations and psychological well-being**”. It explores the dreams and interpretations people experience and the effects they may have on their emotional well-being. The Information gathered is for educational purposes and therefore is kept confidential.

SECTION A-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Sex Male Female

2. Marital status married single widowed

3. Age 18-24 25-30 30-35 36-above

4. Period as member _____

5. Occupation _____

SECTION B-COMMON DREAMS EXPERIENCED AND INTERPRETATIONS

1. Briefly narrate any 5 dreams which are recurrent to you.
2. How do you interpret each of the above mentioned dream?

SECTION C-LINK BETWEEN INTERPRETATIONS AND EMOTIONS

1. What feeling do you experience after each of the dreamed mentioned in section B?

SECTION D-SOURCE OF THE INTERPRETATION

1. From where did you obtain the interpretation you assigned to the dreams above?

APPENDIX C-AUDIT SHEET

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR- STUDENT AUDIT SHEET

DATE	TOPIC DISCUSSED	COMMENT	STUDENT'S SIGNATURE	SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE

