

The Most Popular Shona Female Anthroponyms¹

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ABSTRACT This multidisciplinary qualitative ethnographic article discusses the most popular Shona female anthroponyms the Shona people of Zimbabwe's seven out of ten provinces prefer. Popular Shona names are those that are widely used in the Shona society. Through the use of insights from realist theory and sociological concepts of structure, culture and agency, this study established that the most popular Shona female names are an embodiment of diverse factors that the namer (primary agent) or namers (corporate agents) had to come to terms with within the prevailing structures (Shona societal hierarchies) and ethos (culture). It emerges that the most popular female names the namers coined were meaningful and charming names similar to the meticulous branding of products to enhance marketability. Also, the study asserts that the bulk of Shona names are shortened versions of the 'principal' name that could appear in variant forms that captures the prevailing context that gave rise to such nomenclature.