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THE EFFECTS OF RAPID CURRENCY DEVALUATION ON THE LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN WARD 7 KATANGA NORTON, ZIMBABWE

BY

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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read the dissertation and have approved its submission for marking confirming that it conforms to the departmental requirements on a research entitled: “The Effects of Rapid Currency Devaluation on the Livelihood Strategies of Young People in Ward 7 Katanga Norton, Zimbabwe.”

Submitted by Shelton Munyaradzi B210636B in partial fulfillment of Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Development Studies.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been the result of my own original efforts and investigations and such work has not been presented elsewhere for the purpose of degree assessment. All additional sources of information have been acknowledged by means of references.

Signature: 

Date: 12 June 2025

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My utmost gratitude is directed to God Almighty, for the strength and good health to carry out this research project to completion. I would want as well to express my appreciation to my research supervisor . This research would have been aborted without your patience and consistence in encouraging as well as guiding me. My siblings together with my lovely parents, you cannot be thanked enough. You always believe in me. May God Bless you.

ABSTRACT

Rapid currency devaluation has emerged as a critical challenge affecting the socio-economic stability of many developing nations. In Zimbabwe, this phenomenon has severely impacted the livelihood strategies of young people, particularly in high-density urban communities. This study employed a mixed-methods design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. A sample of 40 youth (aged 15–35) from Ward 7 Katanga, Norton was selected using purposive and convenience sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation, and analysed thematically alongside basic descriptive statistics.

Findings revealed that respondents experienced a sharp decline in purchasing power, difficulty accessing basic needs (food, education, healthcare), and rising financial stress, largely driven by inflation and shrinking formal job opportunities. Coping mechanisms included informal trading (78.9%), casual labour (44.7%), family support (84.2%), and in some cases, illegal activities (13.2%) or migration aspirations. However, these strategies were often only partially effective, contributing to further vulnerability, insecurity, and psychosocial distress. Participants strongly advocated for currency stabilisation (97.4%), inflation control (97.4%), job creation (94.7%), and youth-focused entrepreneurship support (92.1%). The study underscores how uncontrolled currency devaluation erodes key livelihood assets, limits resilience, and demands integrated interventions that combine macroeconomic reforms with targeted youth support and inclusive social protection.

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List of Abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RCD	Rapid Currency Devaluation
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

One of the important current issues of interest in many sates' economies in the twenty-first century has been rapid currency devaluation. It is one of the main elements influencing the accomplishment of the 17 sustainable development goals SDGs set forth by the United Nations. All facets of life, including the social, political and economic surroundings of many residents in various nations across the world, have been impacted by the rapid devaluation through inflation, young people being the group most affected. This study investigated how young people's livelihood strategies were affected by the swift devaluation of the currency in Katanga Ward 7, Norton. The backdrop of this chapter is the main topic of this chapter, problem statement, research aim, objectives, scope and significance of the study, definition of main terms and the chapter summary.

1.2 Background of the Study

Globally rapid currency devaluation has affected the socio-economic development of young people (UN, 2022). It is leading to inflation, higher prices and reduced purchasing power. This erosion of purchasing power is making it difficult for young people to afford basic needs like food, housing, health care and education, leading to high unemployment rates, World Economic Forum (2023). According to International Monetary Fund (2022), the increased cost of living disproportionately affects low income countries and young people straining their livelihood strategies. As a result, many young people are resorting to negative coping mechanisms like prostitution, substance abuse and crimes to deal with the economic hardships and in some cases, it is resulting in gender-based violence. Countries in Asia, Africa and South America, quick currency devaluation is leading to high rates of migration among the youths causing brain drain and separation of families as noted by the (United Nations, 2022). According to World Health Organization (2020), economic hardships have caused an increase in mental health problems among the youth worldwide.

Word bank, (2022) recorded that most of the countries worldwide have experienced rapid currency devaluations which is affecting the achievements of the 17 United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and hindering the future prospects of young people. Uncontrolled exchange rates and currency-undermining economic policies are the main causes of fast currency devaluation due to rapid growth of the economies and globalization according to International Monetary Fund (2022). Young people in European countries like Hungary, Greece, Portugal and Ireland were affected by rapid currency devaluation as they recorded high rates of inflation, unemployment rates, migration and reduced purchasing power among the youths leading to increase in poverty and hunger in those countries, According to the European Central Bank (2023). In 2018 Turkey saw a sharp devaluation of the Turkish currency, leading to economic instability, social discontent, and higher prices for necessities (Ahmed, 2020). According to the study by (Yilmazkuday, 2021), young people's diminished purchasing power made it difficult for them to pay for health care and education, which affected their long-term employment prospects and caused them to make slower progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals number four (quality education) and number three (good health and well-being). In Myanmar the harsh economic conditions have forced many educated women including teachers, nurses, and doctors to participate in sex work as a living strategy (United Nations, 2021). According to a study by (Ocampo 2019), many young people in South America were forced to turn into informal work and look for possibilities overseas due to high unemployment rates and lack of permanent employment options caused by quick devaluation of currencies in most countries there including Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil and Uruguay, Goal number 8 (decent work and economic growth) and other SDGs were adversely impacted.

Regionally Africa is not exception to effects of rapid currency devaluation, as they impact all facets of life especially the socio-economic development of young people who are often at the forefront of adapting to economic shifts, (Kuzma, 2022). For instance, according to (Africa Research Bulletin, 2018), countries like Chad, Nigeria, Somalia Burundi, Malawi, Sierra Leon and Mozambique experienced quick currency devaluation which resulted in them being the poorest countries in Africa, all commodities and services saw an unheard-of price spike as a result, which inevitably caused harsh living conditions, particularly for the youth and vulnerable low-income groups. This had a detrimental impact on the livelihood strategies and SDGs' attainment according to (African Development Bank, 2019). Most young people in Africa are resorting to migration, informal sector and engaging in criminal activities such as, illegal mining, drug and substance abuse, prostitution and robberies putting their lives at risk in order to cope with economic hardships brought on by rapid currency devaluation.

Zimbabwe's currency has depreciated sharply and quickly on a national scale as a result of both external and economic mismanagement. The scenario endangered the population's well-being and future possibilities, especially for the youth, as access to health care and education became too expensive for them (Mushamba, 2023). Inflation consequences have caused pain for millions of young people in Zimbabwe leading to social unrest country wide. According to the (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2023) report, approximately one million youth migrated to other countries in 2023 because of economic hardships and poverty caused by currency devaluation, resulting in brain drain and separation from families.

Locally Norton town is vulnerable to the effects of quick currency devaluation. According to the Department of Social Development Norton, young people in densely populated suburbs were mostly affected as there were high numbers of school dropouts, criminal activities, mental health problems, and antisocial behaviors as a result of fast currency devaluation during the period of 2019 to 2024. Therefore, this study is aimed at finding the effects of rapid currency devaluation on livelihood strategies of the youth specifically in ward 7 Katanga

1.3 Problem Statement

Youth in Zimbabwe are suffering from the effects of rapid currency devaluation, especially those who lives in densely populated suburbs according to (Murerwa, 2023), standards of living are very low and basic social services are unaffordable which is resulting in widespread poverty, less access to education and health services. Kazembe, (2022) noted that rapid currency devaluation has detrimental societal repercussions, such as increasing robberies, gender-based violence, drug and substance abuse, prostitution, and child dropouts from school owing to financial difficulties, among other anti-social activities. According to (ZIMSTAT, 2023) the inflation has resulted in economic hardships leading to high unemployment and migration rates among the youth. Consequently, it is essential to ascertain how the rapid currency devaluation has affected livelihoods strategies of young people in Katanga Ward 7 in Norton, Zimbabwe.

1.4 Research Aim

The overall aim of the study was to explore the effects of rapid currency devaluation on livelihood strategies of young people.

1.4.1 Objectives

i. To examine the impact of rapid currency devaluation on livelihood strategies of young people in Katanga Ward 7 Norton, Zimbabwe
ii. To investigate coping mechanisms employed by young people in Katanga Ward 7, Norton to mitigate the effects of rapid currency devaluation on their livelihood strategies.
iii. To find potential solutions to reduce the effects of rapid currency devaluation on livelihood strategies of young people

1.5 Research Questions

i. How has rapid currency devaluation affected the livelihood strategies of young people in Katanga ward 7 Norton, Zimbabwe?

ii. What coping mechanisms have young people employed to mitigate the effects of rapid currency devaluation on their livelihood strategies?

iii. How to reduce effects of rapid currency devaluation on livelihood strategies of young people.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The research investigation is important to Norton urban community because it will investigate the effects of rapid currency devaluation on livelihood strategies of young people. The research investigation will aim to find the ways to reduce the effects of rapid currency devaluation and ways to improve the livelihood strategies of young people and educating them to venture into other strategies like farming, seeking employment and education as a way to better their livelihoods. This research will also benefit:

i. To the academic

A study on effects of rapid currency devaluation on livelihood strategies of young people can benefit to the body of academic knowledge already available on the subject. This could assist other academics and researchers on their own studies.

ii. To the government

Effects of rapid currency devaluation on young people's livelihood strategies are a major concern to the government. This will help the government to have measures that will reduce rapid currency devaluation and also to improve the livelihood strategies of young people through employment creation and providing social services.

iii. To policy makers

The study will help policy makers to formulate policies that promote economic growth and economic development and this will reduce the devaluation of currency, thereby improving livelihood strategies of young people.

iv. To the non-governmental organizations and government ministries in Zimbabwe

The results of this research can be an eye opener to the stakeholders such as the reserve bank of Zimbabwe, Ministry of youth and empowerment, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Service Labor and Social Welfare and Non-Governmental Organizations who are interested in young people' living conditions.

1.7 Scope of the study

The investigation was conducted in Norton Katanga ward 7 community, due to its proximity and accessibility to own place of residence. The study will be focused on young people aged 15 to 35 in ward 7 one of the 13 wards in Norton urban, Zimbabwe. This study is only focused on young people and it excludes other age groups. The study will use mixed methodologies approach including both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Questionnaires, interviews, participant observation and focus group discussions were used in this study. The study's scope will be constrained to years 2020 and up. The study only involved a small number of youths in ward 7, which may not be representative of the broader youth population in high density suburbs, therefore it was difficult to generalize the results of the study beyond this specific context. Some participants were reluctant to share their personal experiences from the effects of quick currency devaluation and the researcher used informed consent to let them know that the research was strictly academic and any discussion will be kept private. These limitations will give the study a clear focus and ensure that it is still possible and realizable to achieve the results within the established parameters

1.8 Definition of terms

1.8.1 Rapid Currency Devaluation

Rapid currency devaluation is defined by (Decker, 2020) as an event where a nation's currency sharply depreciates in value compared to other currencies within a short time frame, leading to potential economic recession and social unrest. World Bank (2021) alluded that currency devaluation is experienced when a nation's currency decreases in value compared to other foreign currencies, resulting in notable impacts on trade, inflation. (Roubini, 2020) indicates that rapid currency devaluation is often triggered by a loss of investor confidence, leading to a self-reinforcing cycle of currency selling and further devaluation, resulting in economic crisis. Therefore, this study adopts the definition by (Decker, 2020) as it is the most appropriate to use in this study.

1.8.2 Livelihood Strategies

Livelihood strategies refers to the various approaches and methods that individuals or households employ to secure the basic necessities of life, such as food, income, and shelter.

These strategies are influenced by social, economic and political environments. Ellis (2019) describes livelihood strategies as “the ways that individuals and households combine diverse activities and resources to meet their basic needs and improve their well-being”. Chambers and Conroy (2019) define them as “the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living” and emphasize the importance of sustainability and resilience. Bebington (2018) notes, “livelihood strategies entail a combination of different activities and assets that people use to secure their livelihoods within their socio-economic context”. Therefore, this study adopts the definition of livelihood strategies by Ellis (2019) as the one suitable to use in this study.

1.8.3 Young People

The definition of young people varies among scholars, often reflecting cultural, social and developmental perspectives. Generally, “young people” refers to individuals in the transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, commonly encompassing ages from adolescences to early adulthood. According to the constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment act (No, 20) Act 2013 section 20, the youths are defined as people between the ages of 15-35 years, guided by Africa Youth Charter for which Zimbabwe is a signatory. UNESCO (2018) defines young people as “individuals aged 15-24 years, a group that represent a key demographic for sustainable development and social change”. Arnet (2020) describes young people in the context of emerging adulthood, noting they are typically aged 18-25 years and are characterized by exploration of identity, relationships and career pathways. Therefore, this study adopts the definition of young people from the constitution of Zimbabwe as the one suitable to use in this study.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided highlights into the research problem to reveal its apparent cause and manifestation to give it meaning. Finding out the effects of rapid currency devaluation on livelihood strategies of young people in Norton and what strategies that can be implemented in order to stop currency devaluation and improve the livelihood strategies is the main goal of this study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Rapid currency devaluation impacts various facets of an economy, particularly affecting the livelihood strategies of young people, who are often at the forefront of adapting to economic shifts. This literature review explores how currency devaluation influences the financial activities, job opportunities, and overall planning of youths, drawing on insights from multiple studies. This chapter aims to provide the conceptual framework guiding the study, an overview of the existing literature on the effects of rapid currency devaluation on the livelihood strategies of young people, identify the key themes that emerge from the literature, and analyse the existing literature on the effects of rapid currency devaluation on livelihood strategies of young people in ward 7 Norton, Zimbabwe.

2.2. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is a structure or an explanation which shows the relationship between the variables in which the concept of the research is drawn from. Rapid currency devaluation leads to economic instability, which is characterized by inflation, reduced purchasing power, and uncertainty. Economic instability leads to unemployment of young people as businesses can reduce production, lay off workers, or close down. Unemployment results in poverty as individuals and households experience reduced income, reduced access to basic needs, and increased vulnerability. Poverty results in limited access to training, as young people may not have the resources to invest in education and training. Rapid currency devaluation affects the livelihood strategies of young people as they need to adapt to changing economic conditions, reduced employment opportunities, and limited access to education and training. The diagram below show the relationship explained above.

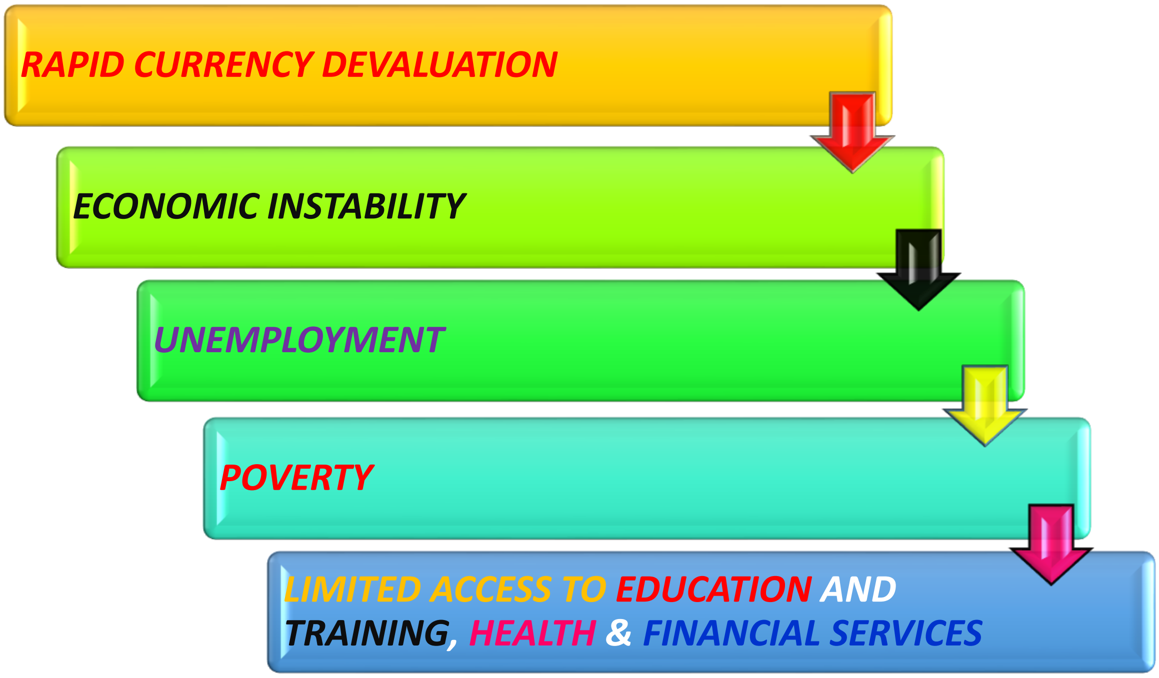


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

2.3 A Global overview on Impact of RCD on Livelihood Strategies of Young People

According to (World Bank (2021), quick currency devaluation has profound effects on the livelihoods of young people, particularly in developing economies. It influences economic stability, purchasing power, and job opportunities, leading young people to adapt their livelihood strategies (International Monetary Fund, 2022). It is estimated that millions of young people have been affected by rapid currency devaluation, which resulted in many of them looking for alternative livelihood strategies to cope with the effects of quick currency devaluation. Economic instability due to rapid currency devaluation often leads to inflation, driving up the cost of essential goods and services. Young people especially those already facing employment challenges, find it increasingly difficult to afford basic needs (Bachetta and Caminal, 2016). This can lead to a sense of uncertainty regarding future financial security, pushing young people to seek multiple income streams or engage in informal employment.

The quick devaluation of currency reduces purchasing power, forcing young people to alter their consumption habits. They can prioritize necessities over luxuries, switch to cheaper alternatives, or reduce expenditure altogether (Brixiova, 2017). This shift in behavior can affect local markets, where demand for certain products diminishes, and thereby influencing income levels for merchants and businesses that cater to young people. In economically volatile situations, traditional job opportunities dwindle. As companies reduce their workforce in response to rising costs, young people often turn to entrepreneurship as a coping mechanism.

Young people may start small businesses or engage in gig economic work to stabilize their income (Schmidt, 2021). However, access to capital can be limited, necessitating innovative ways to fund business ventures, such as pooling resources among peers or utilizing social media for marketing.

The impact of rapid currency devaluation can motivate young people to consider migration, either within their country or abroad, in search of better opportunities (Bohme, 2020). Young people may feel compelled to leave their hometowns for urban areas with more job prospects or even move to countries with stronger currencies. This can lead to brain drain in their home regions, impacting local economies and reducing long-term growth potential. Young people often rely on social networks for support during times of economic stress. Community engagement can enhance resilience, as peers provide emotional support and share resources (Cohen and Wills, 2015)

2.3.1 Impact of RCD on Livelihood Strategies of Young People in Africa

Rapid currency devaluation (RCD) had devastating effects on the livelihood strategies of young people across Africa. In East Africa, countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda have experienced increased unemployment, reduced purchasing power, and increased poverty among youths. Similarly, in West Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal have seen significant impacts on the livelihood strategies of young people, particularly in the informal sector. In North Africa, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia have seen significant impacts on the livelihood strategies of young people, particularly in the informal sector. In southern Africa, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique have experienced increased migration of young people in search of better economic opportunities, resulting in brain drain and loss of human capital

2.3.2 Impact of RCD on Livelihood Strategies of Young People in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, the impact of RCD on the livelihood strategies of young people has been severe (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2020). Many young people have turned to informal trading, vending, and cross-border trading to survive, often with limited access to social protection and economic security (International Labor Organization, 2020). RCD has eroded the purchasing power of young people, making it difficult for them to afford necessities, education, and healthcare (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, 2022). Some young people have migrated to neighbouring countries, such as South Africa and Botswana, looking for better economic opportunities, resulting in brain drain and loss of human capital (International Organization of Migration, 2021). RCD has reduced the affordability of education and training, limiting young people's access to skills development and employability (Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Zimbabwe, 2021)

2.4 A Global overview on Coping Mechanisms Employed by Young People to Mitigate the Effects of RCD

Young people worldwide have demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability in the face of rapid currency devaluation, employing a range of coping mechanisms to mitigate its effects on their livelihood strategies (International Labor Organization, 2020). One such mechanism is engagement in the informal sector, where many young people turn to entrepreneurship, starting small businesses or informal ventures to generate income (World Bank, 2019). Others engage in informal employment, such as street vending, to supplement their income (World Bank, 2019). Migration and remittances also play a crucial role, with some young people migrating to urban areas or other regions within their country in search of better economic opportunities (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2021). Other young people migrate to other countries, sending remittances back to their families to support their livelihoods (International Organization for Migration, 2022)

The digital economy has also provided opportunities for young people to participate in online freelancing platforms, offering services such as writing, designing, content creation, and programming (Upwork, 2021). E-commerce has also become a viable option, with many young people selling products online to generate income (International Monetary Fund, 2022). Social support networks, including family support and community support, have also been crucial in helping young people cope with the effects of rapid currency devaluation World Bank, 2018).

Education and skills development have played a crucial role, with many young people pursuing vocational training or skills development programs to enhance their employability (UNESCO, 2021). Online learning platforms have also become popular, providing young people with opportunities to acquire new skills or knowledge (Coursera, 2021). These coping mechanisms demonstrate the resourcefulness and determination of young people in the face of rapid currency devaluation.

2.4.1 Coping Mechanisms Employed by Young People to Mitigate the Effects of RCD on their Livelihood Strategies in Africa

According to the African Development Bank (AfDB, 2021), young people have demonstrated resilience in the face of rapid currency devaluation and economic instability, employing various coping mechanisms to mitigate its effects on their livelihood strategies. Many young people in Africa are venturing into the informal sector, where they are turning to entrepreneurship to generate income (World Bank, 2022). For example in Nigeria, young people have taken entrepreneurship, starting small businesses in areas such as technology and agriculture (International Labor Organization, 2019). In South Africa, many young people engage in informal employment, such as selling goods on the street or working as informal taxi drivers and touts (Stats SA, 2022). Migration is another coping mechanism that is being widely implemented by young people to cope with the effects of rapid currency devaluation. For example, in Ghana, young people migrate to urban areas, such as Accra, in search of better economic opportunities (GSS, 2022).

2.4.2 Coping Mechanisms Employed by Young People to Mitigate the Effects of RCD on Their Livelihood Strategies in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, many young people have ventured into the informal sector as a coping mechanism to mitigate the effects of rapid currency devaluation on their livelihood strategies (Chitambara, 2019). Young people have started small businesses in areas such as vending and agriculture to generate income (Mambondiani, 2020). Migration is another coping mechanism that young people are widely using. For example, the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT, 2022) estimated that about 1 million youths have migrated to South Africa in search of better economic conditions and employment. Social support networks have also played a crucial role in helping young people mitigate the effects of rapid currency devaluation (Mukandawire, 2022). Many young people rely on family support and community networks to cope with economic shocks (Chitambara, 2019). Education and skills development programs are one of the coping mechanisms being employed by young people to mitigate the effects of rapid currency devaluation on their livelihood strategies. This is being done to enhance their employability and acquire knowledge (Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education of Zimbabwe, 2020). In the context of Zimbabwe, these coping mechanisms are extremely important due to the country’s history of economic challenges, including hyperinflation and currency devaluation (RBZ, 2021)

2.5 A Global overview on Potential Solutions to Reduce the Effects of Rapid Currency Devaluation

To mitigate the effects of rapid currency devaluation on the livelihood strategies of young people, several potential solutions can be employed. Economic diversification can be achieved by promoting export-oriented industries (International Monetary Fund, 2022). Countries can foster entrepreneurship and invest in human capital through skills and training programs (United Nations Development Programme, 2021). Financial inclusion in countries worldwide is essential for young people and can be achieved by expanding access to financial services, promoting mobile banking, and encouraging financial literacy among the youth (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2018). Social protection programs such as safety nets, community-based initiatives, and youth empowerment programs can help protect young people from economic shocks (United Nations Development Program, 2019). Furthermore, education and skills development, such as vocational training, digital literacy and entrepreneurship education can help to equip young people with skills in demand in the labor market, (World Economic Forum, 2019). International cooperation is necessary to foster global partnerships, promote knowledge sharing, and mobilize resources to support youth development initiatives (United Nations, 2018). By implementing these solutions, young people can be empowered to mitigate the effects of rapid currency devaluation and promote economic empowerment, social protection, and education.

2.5.1 Potential Solutions to Reduce the Effects of Rapid Currency Devaluation on Livelihood Strategies of Young People in Africa

Promoting agriculture in Africa is one of the major solutions to reduce the effects of rapid currency devaluation on the livelihood strategies of young people (FAO, 2021). With the majority of young people engaged in agriculture, providing training on sustainable farming practices and access to markets can enhance food security and income stability. Vocational training programs can be solutions to the effects of rapid currency devaluation; tailoring vocational training to local market needs can equip youth with relevant skills, easing their entry into the workforce (International Labor Organization, 2018)

2.5.2 Potential Solutions to Reduce the Effects of Rapid Currency Devaluation on Livelihood Strategies of Young People in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, entrepreneurship in the digital economy, the informal sector, and agriculture can help diversify sources of income, which is essential for reducing the effects of rapid currency devaluation (Magidi, 2024). Young people can find alternate sources of income by being encouraged to investigate entrepreneurial options in the unorganized sector, such as the artisanal production of small-scale trading. To help young people deal with the consequences of rapid currency devaluation, financial inclusion and credit availability are also crucial. Young peoples' access to financial services, especially in rural regions, can be improved by boosting digital payments systems, bolstering microfinance institutions, and expanding mobile money services (Chitambara, 2019). Furthermore, giving young people access to online education, business training, and vocational training can give them marketable skills that will help them adjust to shifting economic situations (Mlambo, 2018).

Social protection and safety nets also play a crucial role in supporting vulnerable young people. Implementing food assistance programs, cash transfer programs, and youth employment programs can provide relief and support to young people affected by rapid currency devaluation and in need (Chikwati, 2019). Furthermore policy interventions and macroeconomic stability are crucial in promoting economic growth and development. Implementing monetary policy reforms, fiscal policy reforms, and trade policy reforms can help stabilize the currency, reduce inflation, and promote economic growth (Kanyenze, 2020).

2.6 The Theoretical Framework

The effects of rapid currency devaluation can be understood through the lens of the sustainable livelihood theory. This theory provides a framework for understanding the complex interactions between the economy and the livelihood strategies of young people. By applying this theory, researchers and academia can develop more effective interventions and policies to promote economic growth and development to avoid rapid currency devaluation, thereby reducing its impact on livelihood strategies of young people. Furthermore, applying this theory can help to understand the experiences of young people affected by the rapid devaluation of currency on their livelihood strategies and the coping mechanisms they applied to reduce the effects.

The sustainable livelihood theory is a framework used to understand and analyse the livelihoods of individuals, households, and communities. The theory was developed by the British Department for International Development. (DFID) in the 1990s and has since been widely adopted in development research practices.

2.6.1 Sustainable Livelihood Framework Assumptions

The basic assumptions of the theory are that individuals, households, and communities make rational decisions about their livelihoods based on their available resources and opportunities (DFID, 1999). The SL theory assumes that livelihoods are constantly changing and adapting to new circumstances, such as economic shocks, environmental degradation, or social conflicts. The theory also assumes that the specific context in which people build their livelihoods is crucial in determining their livelihood outcomes. It also assumes that individuals, households, and communities can make decisions and take actions that shape their livelihoods. The theory assumes that livelihoods encompass multiple dimensions, including economic, social, and environmental aspects (DFID, 1999). It also assumes that sustainability is the key, sustainable livelihoods are essential for ensuring long-term well-being and poverty reduction. Participation and empowerment, the theory assumes that participation of and empowerment of individuals, household, and communities are essential for achieving sustainable livelihoods. A holistic approach, considering multiple sectors and stakeholders, is necessary for understanding and addressing livelihood challenges.

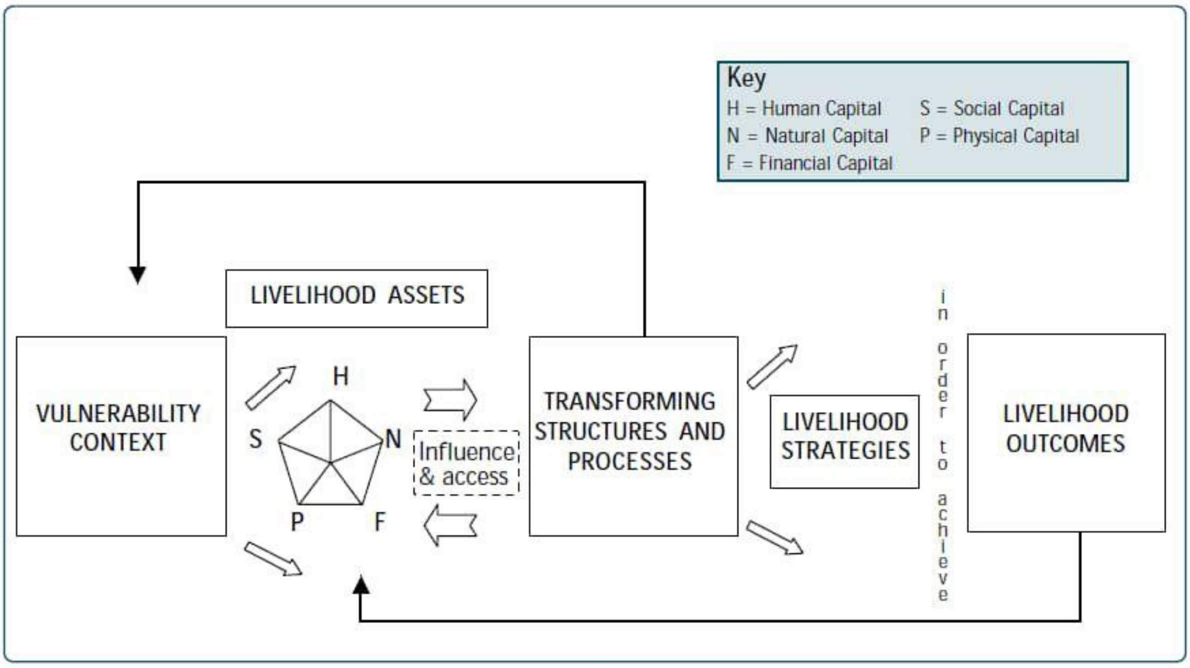
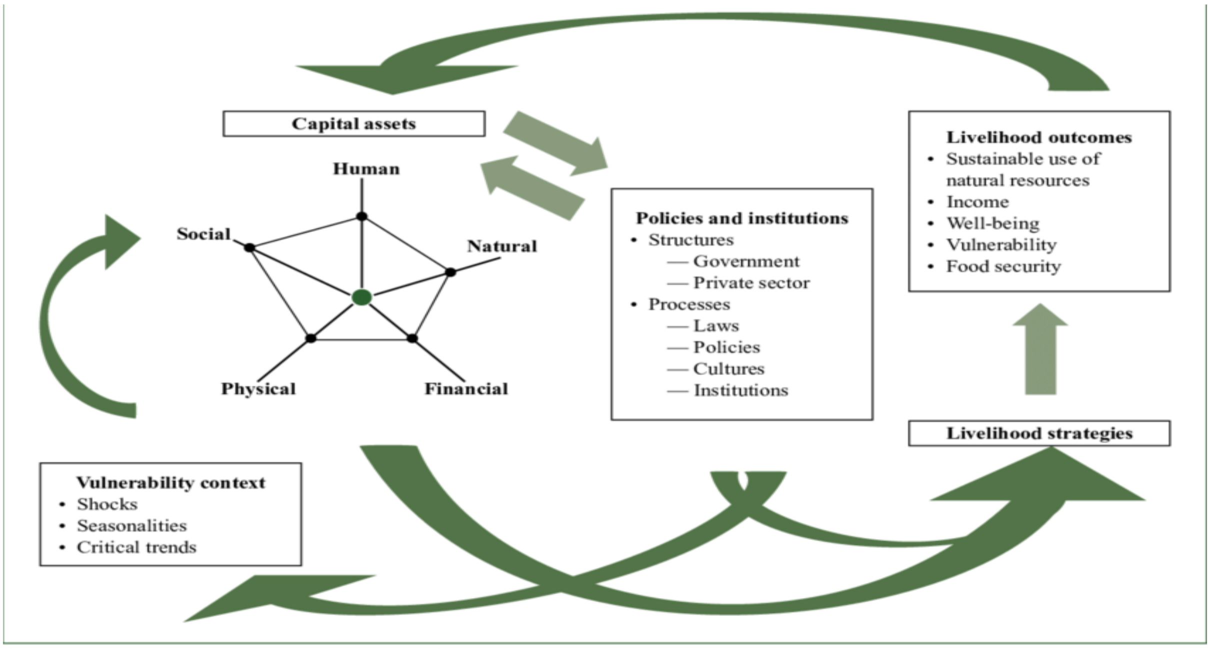


Figure 2.2 : Sustainable livelihood framework diagram

The sustainable livelihood approach framework emphasizes the importance of various assets (human, social, physical, financial, and natural) that individuals use to achieve their livelihood strategies. Rapid currency devaluation can diminish these assets, particularly financial capital, affecting young people's ability to invest in education or start businesses. This framework helps to analyse how youth leverage their available resources to adapt and survive in challenging economic conditions (Chambers and Conway, 1992).

2.6.2 Vulnerability Context of SL framework

Vulnerability context, according to the livelihood framework, economic shocks like currency devaluation affect young people's livelihood strategies and also the framework highlights the importance of resilience and adaptability, suggesting that youth may diversify their income sources or engage in informal work to cope with the economic instabilities caused by rapid currency devaluation (Ruggeri, Lardechi and Scully, 2022). Applying this theory to this study is very important as the theory helps to gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between rapid currency devaluation, livelihood strategies, and outcomes of young people.



Source: Department for International Development of the United Kingdom.

Figure 2.3: Sustainable framework vulnerability context diagram

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive review of the literature on the experiences of young people affected by the effects of rapid currency devaluation on their livelihood strategies. This chapter used the sustainable livelihood theory to explain the experiences of young people affected by the effects of rapid currency devaluation on their livelihood strategies and it also highlighted the assumptions of the theory and why it is important to this research. This chapter also discuss the impact of rapid currency devaluation on livelihood strategies, the coping mechanisms employed by young people and the possible solutions to mitigate the effects of rapid currency devaluation on livelihood strategies of young people. Furthermore the chapter highlighted the conceptual framework explaining the relationship between the variables of rapid currency devaluation.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this section is to introduce the methodology of this qualitative research. The main components of this chapter include, description of the study area, research design, research approach, targeted population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 Description of the Study Area

The study was carried out in Zimbabwe's Norton town, ward 7 Katanga. Norton is a commuter town located in the province of Mashonaland West, Zimbabwe. It is approximately 40 kilometers west of the capital city Harare. It is situated along the main road and railway line connecting Harare and Bulawayo.

The map of the study area Norton Ward 7 Katanga

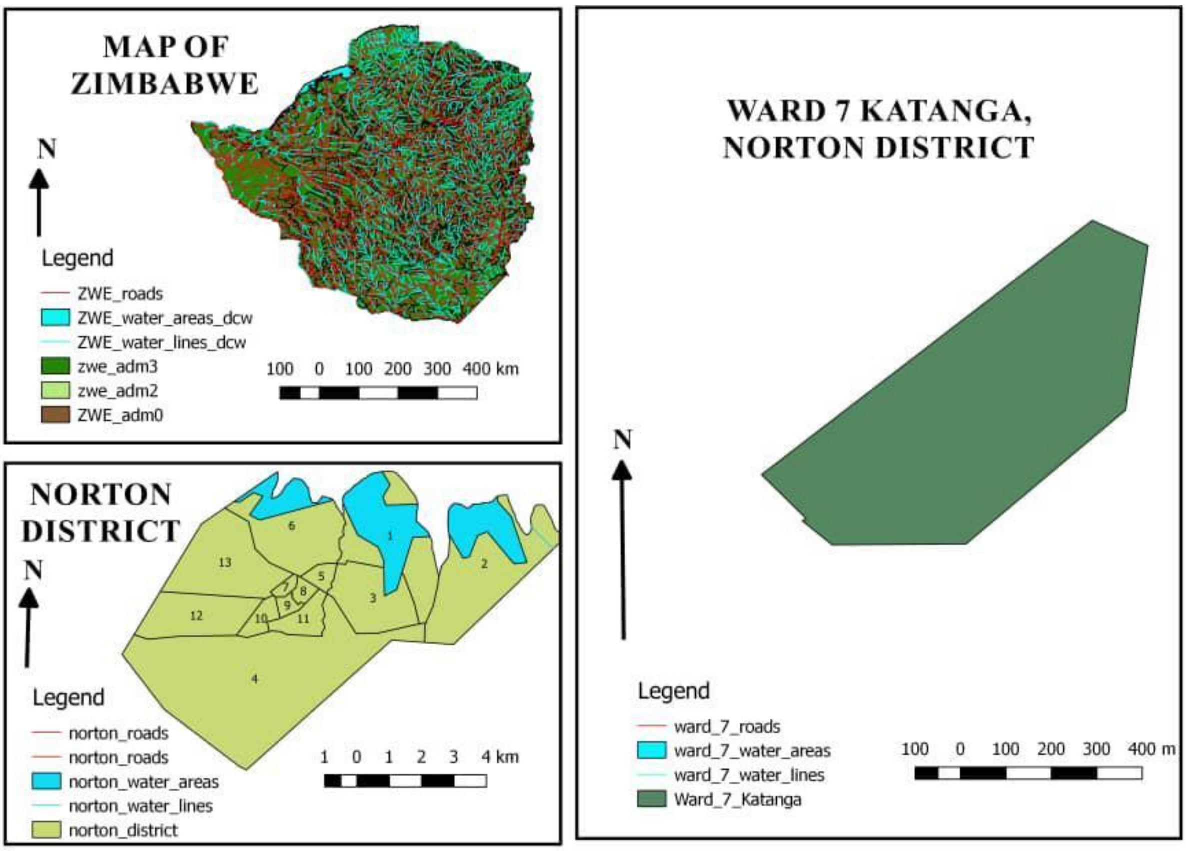


Figure 3.1 Ward 7 Katanga Norton Map

According to ZIMSTAT (2022) Norton has a population of approximately 86000 and ward 7 Katanga has a population of 3,965 and 995 households. Over time Norton has grown into a key industrial center, boasting a large tile and plate industry called Sunny Yifeng and Grain

Marketing Board depot (GMB). It is surrounded by fertile farm lands that produce range of crops, including tobacco, maize and wheat. Norton has become an important economic and commercial center in Zimbabwe, offering a unique blend of industrial, agricultural and residential areas. Ward 7 is one the wards in Norton and the residential areas are surrounding the Katanga shopping center which is the main shopping center, were there are bus termini, and big supermarkets and other shops including flea markets. It is commonly known for being one of the most populated areas as it is a high-density suburb. Young people are mostly into informal sector, agriculture, education and others are formally employed in different companies. Nevertheless, some young people in ward 7 Katanga are into illegal activities such as selling drugs and prostitutions as their livelihood strategies.

3.3 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to comprehensively explore the effects of rapid currency devaluation on the livelihood strategies of young people in Ward 7 Katanga, Norton.According to Creswell and Clark (2017), combining qualitative and quantitative data enhances the credibility of the research conclusion. The researcher collected data in a practical situation through both quantitative and qualitative research. This design facilitated a nuanced understanding by capturing statistical trends alongside in-depth personal experiences. The research was underpinned by a pragmatic philosophy, which prioritises practical solutions to real-world problems. This approach allowed for the combination of numerical data and narrative insights, aligning with the study's objective to understand both the measurable impacts and personal experiences related to currency devaluation.

To generate research findings, researchers must connect with study respondents through either inductive or deductive processes (Polite and Beck, 2003). According to Tisdell (2015), mixed method research provides insights into participants' life experiences, attitude, activities, values, worries, motives, culture and way of life. Qualitative and quantitative research allowed for the collection of rich data that can help in understanding young people's livelihood strategies and how they are being affected by the rapid currency devaluation, therefor the mixed methodology was chosen for the study. The study looked at how the young people are being affected by the effects of rapid currency devaluation on their livelihood strategies and what are the changes being caused by those effects of quick currency devaluation.

3.4 Research Approach

This research follows a mixed methods approach of both qualitative and quantitative approach. This approach allows for the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to provide more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. According to (Kothari, 2017) mixed methods approach allows researchers to leverage the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

3.5 Targeted Population

The targeted population are the residents of ward 7 Norton, particularly the youth aged 15 to 35 years old, who have been affected by the effects of rapid currency devaluation on their livelihood strategies and those who are experiencing the effects. According to Schutt (2009), the targeted population refers to the larger community to whom the researcher seeks to apply results of his research.

3.6 Calculating Sample Size

Determining an appropriate sample size is crucial to ensure the reliability and validity of research findings. For this study, which aims to assess the effects of rapid currency devaluation on the livelihood strategies of young people in Ward 7 Katanga, Norton, Slovin's formula was employed to estimate the sample size.

Slovin's formula is expressed as:

$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (estimated at 400 young people aged 15–35 in Ward 7)

e = margin of error

Given the constraints of time, resources, and accessibility, a margin of error of 15% ($e = 0.15$) was adopted. This level is appropriate for exploratory, small-scale social research where generalization to a broader population is not the primary aim, but rather to generate preliminary insights and identify trends.

$n = 400 / (1 + 400(0.15)^2) = 400 / (1 + 400(0.0225)) = 400 / (1 + 9) = 400 / 10 = 40$

Therefore, the sample size was set at 40 respondents, which matches the number of questionnaire responses actually collected in the field (as shown in Chapter 4). While a higher sample size might have increased statistical precision, the 15% margin of error was deemed acceptable given the study's exploratory nature and resource limitations.

3.7 Sampling Techniques

To be more specific, the researcher will employ convenience sampling, where participants are chosen based on their availability, desire to participate, and proximity to the study area (Nikoloupoulou, 2022). A comparatively quick and simple method of obtaining the required sample size is convenience sampling. Furthermore, the researcher will utilize a targeted sample, often referred to as purposeful sampling, which encompasses a range of sampling methodologies in which key informant respondents are chosen on the basis of distinct personal attributes and experience (Schawarchter, 2023).

This study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method wherein participants are deliberately selected based on specific characteristics pertinent to the research objectives. This approach is particularly suitable for exploratory studies aiming to gain in-depth insights from a targeted subgroup within a population. The research focuses on understanding the effects of rapid currency devaluation on the livelihood strategies of young people in Ward 7 Katanga, Norton. Given the study's objective to explore nuanced experiences and coping mechanisms, it was essential to select participants who are directly affected by the phenomenon under investigation. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to identify and engage with individuals aged 15–35 who have firsthand experience with the economic challenges posed by currency devaluation.

This method was chosen over probability sampling techniques due to the following reasons. Firstly, purposive sampling ensures that the selected participants possess specific attributes relevant to the study, thereby providing rich, detailed data aligned with the research questions. By focusing on a particular subgroup, the researcher could efficiently allocate resources and time, facilitating a more manageable and focused data collection process. Lastly, engaging with participants who have direct experience with currency devaluation allowed for a deeper exploration of the coping strategies employed, which might not be as effectively captured through random sampling methods.

While purposive sampling limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader population, it is justified in this context due to the study's exploratory nature and the need for detailed understanding of specific experiences. This approach aligns with qualitative research methodologies that prioritize depth over breadth, aiming to uncover rich, contextualized insights into complex social phenomena.

3.8 Data Collection Instruments

This study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments to comprehensively explore the effects of rapid currency devaluation on the livelihood strategies of young people in Ward 7 Katanga, Norton. The instruments were meticulously designed and structured to align with the research objectives and to ensure the collection of reliable and valid data.

3.8.1 Structured Questionnaire

The structured questionnaire was developed to gather quantitative data on demographic information, employment status, income levels, and access to essential services. It comprised both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions, facilitating standardized responses for statistical analysis. The questionnaire was divided into four sections:

1. Demographic Information: Age, gender, education level, and household size.

2. Economic Activities: Employment status, income sources, and changes in income over time.

3. Access to Services: Availability and affordability of basic services such as healthcare, education, and transportation.

4. Coping Mechanisms: Strategies employed to mitigate the effects of currency devaluation.

The questionnaire was administered in person to 38 participants, ensuring clarity of questions and immediate assistance if needed. Prior to the main data collection, a pilot test was conducted with a small group to assess the clarity and relevance of the questions. Feedback from the pilot test informed necessary revisions to enhance the instrument's reliability and validity. Structured questionnaires are effective for collecting quantifiable data from a relatively large sample, allowing for the identification of patterns and trends across the population. The standardized format ensures consistency in responses, facilitating comparative analysis and generalization of findings.

3.8.2 In-Depth Interviews

An interview is done to gather information is called a conversational interview. In a research, the interview provides responses to the questions posed by the interviewer (Patton 2016). The interviewer asks questions and guides the conversation. In this instance, the interviewer is a student, and the interviewees are research participants. Interviews might take place in person or over the phone. Additionally, using the internet for interviews is growing in popularity. According to (Mears, 2017), in depth interviews are scheduled meetings when a researcher aims to learn about a subject, as well as to learn about and document what the subject has experienced, felt and thinks about it, as well as potential worth or relevance.

In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide, allowing for flexibility in probing participants' experiences and perceptions. The guide included open-ended questions focusing on personal experiences with currency devaluation, its impact on livelihood strategies, and individual coping mechanisms. Seven interviews were conducted with selected participants who provided consent. Interviews were held in private settings to ensure confidentiality and encourage openness. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' permission for accurate transcription and analysis. In-depth interviews are suitable for exploring complex phenomena and gaining a deeper understanding of individual experiences. This method allows participants to express their thoughts in their own words, providing rich qualitative data that complements the quantitative findings.

3.8.3 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews targeted individuals with specialized knowledge or experience relevant to the study, such as community leaders or local government officials. The interview guide was tailored to elicit insights into the broader socio-economic impacts of currency devaluation on the community. Two key informant interviews were conducted, each lasting approximately one hour. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the informants and conducted in their offices to facilitate a comfortable environment for discussion. Key informant interviews provide expert perspectives and contextual information that enrich the understanding of the research problem. These insights are invaluable for interpreting the data within the broader socio-economic framework.

3.8.4 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussion is another qualitative technique that was used to collect data in the research. The researcher provoked discussion among the participants by asking them questions. This made it possible for the researcher to go deeper and produce more concurrently (Wheeldon, 2019). Each participant's narrative data was collected during the FGDs by the researcher using a focus group discussion guide. According to Tracy (2019), a focus group discussion guide provides questions that the researcher may use as a guide when speaking with people who have similar experiences or backgrounds. To obtain informed and competent information, the researcher used focus group discussion guide.

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were organized to capture collective views and experiences related to currency devaluation. A discussion guide with open-ended questions facilitated conversations around community-level impacts, shared coping strategies, and perceptions of economic changes. FGDs were conducted with groups of 6 to 8 participants, ensuring diversity in age, gender, and occupation. Discussions were held in neutral community spaces to encourage participation. Each session was moderated by the researcher, lasted about 90 minutes, and was audio-recorded with consent. FGDs are effective for exploring social norms, collective experiences, and community dynamics. The interactive nature of group discussions can reveal insights that may not emerge in individual interviews, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

3.8.5 Participant Observation

Through observation, participant observation is another qualitative technique that was employed in the research to examine the effects of rapid currency devaluation on livelihood strategies of young people in Katanga ward 7 Norton. Klopper and Patel (2016) state that this method permits involvement in community events on daily basis while simultaneously observing participant interaction and behaviors. This makes it possible to comprehend society's knowledge better, including how rapid currency devaluation affects livelihood strategies and how it leads to poverty.

Participant observation involved the researcher immersing in the community to observe daily activities, economic transactions, and social interactions. Observational notes focused on behaviors and practices related to coping with currency devaluation. Observations were conducted over a two-week period, with the researcher attending community events, markets, and informal gatherings. Detailed field notes were maintained to document observations systematically. Participant observation allows for the collection of contextual data and the validation of information obtained through other methods. It provides a holistic view of the community's response to economic challenges, enhancing the depth of the research findings.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of arranging information from multiple sources to uncover underlying facts (Pandey and Pandey, 2015). The primary goal of data analysis is to discover news from the data gathered. According to (Alston, 2013), data analysis is essential to research since it establishes whether or not the information gathered is pertinent to the topic at hand. The data was analyzed thematically. To allow participants the opportunity to express themselves, all focus group discussions and interviews were conducted in Shona, which is the local language, although a few people would use some English jargon. Based on the results, inductive reasoning was used because the data was not subjected to quantitative analysis. By using inductive reasoning, the researcher can extract patterns from the data and draw broad conclusions about the subject being studied (Schutt, 2013).

3.10 Ethical Consideration

To safe guard the research participant’s rights, ethical issues should be considered at every stage of the study. Among these is informed consent, which is obtaining participant’s voluntary and knowledgeable assent to participate following a thorough explanation of the study’s specifics, including any possible risk and advantages. Confidentiality must also be maintained to safeguard participants’ personal information. In addition to safeguarding participants, ethical issues boost the study’s legitimacy by guaranteeing that the data gathered is accurate and representative because researchers should report their findings truthfully and transparently and avoid any conflicts of interest or prejudices that could skew the results. Maintaining academic or scientific integrity is equally crucial. Researchers can carry out a well-informed study while also respecting the rights of their respondents by adhering to ethical norms (Morina, 2022). Additionally, the researcher suspends the participant from work and provides him time to collect himself if he becomes upset during an interview. The researcher made sure the interviewees were shielded from physical discomfort, humiliation, pain, suffering, emotions of insecurity, and psychological or other harm.

3.11 Chapter Summary

The chapter mentioned above addressed the following topics: the introduction, a description of Norton as a whole and the research location ward 7 Katanga, picture of study area map, the investigation’s research design, calculating sample size, data collection instruments, sampling techniques, the study’s targeted population and ethical considerations for carrying out the study.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes, and discusses the findings gathered from the research participants in Ward 7 Katanga, Norton. The data collected through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation are presented here in relation to the research objectives and questions. The chapter begins with the response rates and a demographic profile of the study participants. Subsequently, it presents the analysis of data concerning the effects of rapid currency devaluation on young people's livelihood strategies, their coping mechanisms, and potential solutions, incorporating both quantitative findings and qualitative insights. The chapter concludes with a discussion linking the findings to the existing literature and the theoretical framework guiding the study.

4.2 Response Rates

Data collection was conducted using questionnaires for the larger youth sample and interviews for a subset of youth and key informants.

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Response Rate

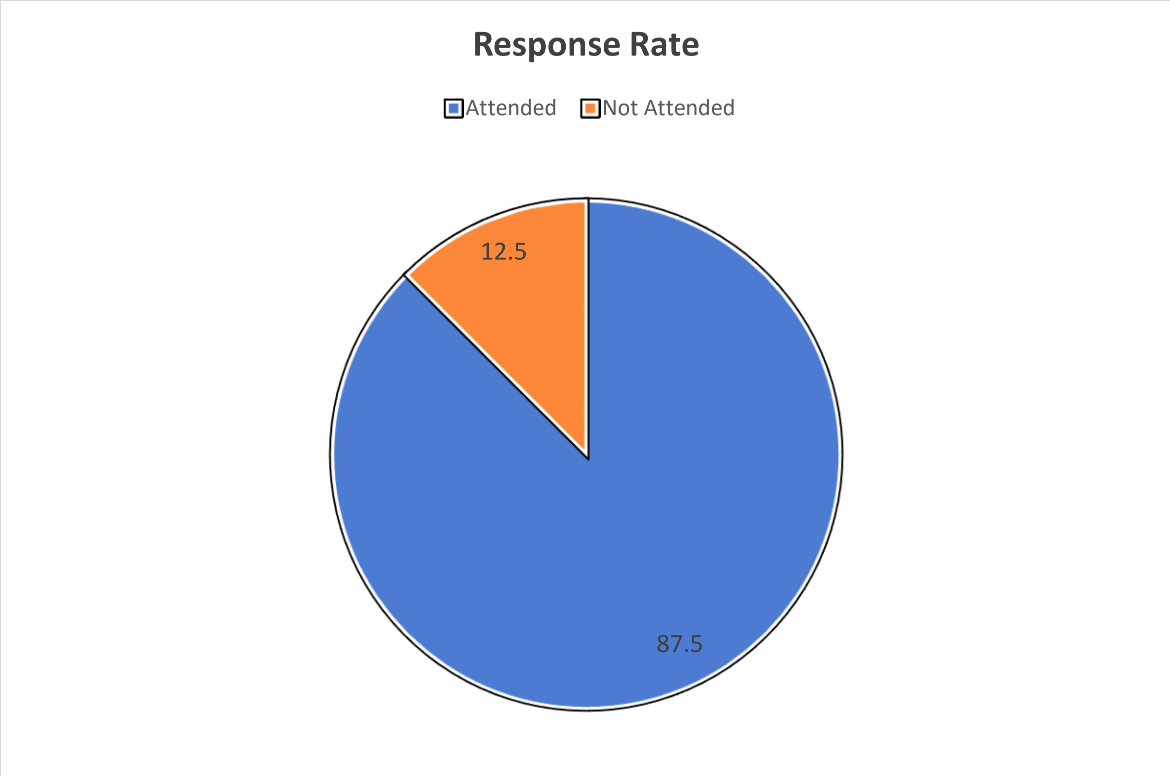
Number of questionnaires distributed	Successfully Responded	Response Rate (%)
40	38	95%

Source: Primary Data

As shown in Table 4.1, out of 40 questionnaires distributed to young people in Ward 7 Katanga, 38 were successfully completed and returned, yielding a high response rate of 95%. This high rate ensures that the quantitative data collected from the youth sample is largely representative.

Interviews were conducted with a selected number of young people and key informants. 8 youth interviews were planned and 7 were conducted (87,5%) and 5 interviews were planned and 5 conducted for youths(100%) and also 2 KI were also interviewed. The graphic above shows 'Not attended interviews' at 12.5% and 'Interview response rate' at 87.5%.

Figure 4.1: Combined Interview Response Rate



Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.1 indicates that out of the total planned interviews, 87.5% were successfully completed. This rate is considered sufficient to obtain detailed qualitative insights, especially when combined with data from other methods.

4.3 Respondents Demographic Information

The demographic profile of the 38 young people who completed questionnaires is summarized below to provide context for the findings. The demographic data indicate a slightly higher representation of female participants (63.2%). Over half of the respondents (52.6%) have reached secondary education, while vocational/technical and tertiary education are represented by 26.3% and 13.2% respectively. A significant majority of participants (52.6%) reported being engaged in informal business or vending, reflecting the prevalence of this sector among young people in the area. Only a small minority hold formal employment (13.2%), and a notable proportion are unemployed (13.2%). Most respondents have lived in Ward 7 for more than 10 years (52.6%), suggesting a population deeply rooted in the community. This demographic profile aligns with the background context of the study area, highlighting the high prevalence of informal economic activities among local youth.

Table 4.2 Participants Demographic Data

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	14	36.8%
Female	24	63.2%
Total	38	100%
Highest Education		
Primary	3	7.9%
Secondary	20	52.6%
Vocational/Technical	10	26.3%
Tertiary	5	13.2%
Total	38	100%
Employment Status		
Formal employment	5	13.2%
Self-employed (Formal)	3	7.9%
Informal business/vending	20	52.6%
Casual labour	5	13.2%
Unemployed (Seeking)	5	13.2%
Unemployed (Not Seeking)	0	0%
Total	38	100%
Years in Ward 7		
Less than 1 year	2	5.3%
1-5 years	6	15.8%
6-10 years	10	26.3%
More than 10 years	20	52.6%
Total	38	100%

Source: Primary Data

4.4 The Causes of Informal Forex Trading / Context of RCD

Understanding the causes of rapid currency devaluation (RCD) is essential for contextualizing its effects on youth livelihoods in Ward 7 Katanga. While this study primarily focuses on effects and coping strategies, both the questionnaire and interviews explored perceptions surrounding the underlying causes of RCD and the growth of informal forex trading.

Quantitative Findings

Table 4.3 below summarizes the perceptions of RCD causes based on questionnaire responses (multiple responses allowed):

Table 4.3: Perceived Causes of Rapid Currency Devaluation (n = 38)

Perceived Cause	Percentage of Respondents
Rapid decline in the value of ZWL/ZWG	95%
Prices of goods/services increasing quickly	97%
Limited legal access to foreign currency (USD)	80%
Preference for USD over ZWG	76%
Corruption and poor economic governance	68%
Overreliance on imports and lack of production	55%
Speculation in the parallel market	53%
Declining investor confidence in Zimbabwean currency	47%

Source: Primary Data

These responses point to a convergence of macroeconomic instability, currency shortages, and distrust in the financial system, reinforcing findings in previous literature (Marufu, 2022; O'Neill, 2021).

Qualitative Insights

The interviews and FGDs provided nuanced understandings of these causes. A recurring theme was the preference for USD in everyday transactions due to inflation and currency volatility. As one youth interviewee lamented,

"No one wants to be paid in ZWG anymore, even vendors are charging in USD. When you go to the shops, they give you a different price depending on the payment method."

This illustrates the erosion of trust in the local currency and the increasing duality of Zimbabwe's economy. The quote highlights how pricing structures themselves are a daily reminder of devaluation.

Others mentioned a lack of accessible foreign currency through official channels, pushing many into informal foreign currency trading markets. During an FGD with recent graduates, another participant echoed,

“Banks don’t have USD, and the queues are too long. It’s faster to get foreign currency from someone in the street. That’s just the reality.”

This statement underscores the supply-demand imbalance and explains why informal foreign currency trading has become normalized, especially among youth seeking fast access to currency.

An FGD participant offered a broader critique,

“The government keeps printing ZWG but there’s nothing to back it up. People see that and lose faith.”

This quote reflects a perception of fiscal mismanagement and links currency devaluation directly to policy failures. Such sentiments align with ZIMSTAT and IMF observations about inflationary pressures driven by excessive money supply.

Another youth interviewee explained the connection to everyday survival,

“If you want to eat, you need USD. That’s why we do street deals—even if it’s risky.”

This shows that informal foreign currency trading is not a luxury or greed-driven activity, but a response to structural deprivation and currency inaccessibility.

The data reveal that informal foreign currency trading in Ward 7 arises not merely from opportunism but from deep systemic issues—rampant inflation, low confidence in ZWG, limited formal access to USD, and economic policies perceived as unsustainable. The convergence of these pressures has effectively created a dual economy, with USD functioning as the de facto store of value and medium of exchange for young people. Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs corroborated these perceptions. Participants frequently described the volatile exchange rate, the preference for USD, and the resulting inability of the local currency to maintain purchasing power. When asked about the causes (primarily in interviews and open questions), common themes emerged, strongly echoing issues cited in the literature review. A recurrent refrain was the inability of educated young people to secure formal-sector jobs. As one youth interviewee lamented,

"I graduated with my diploma two years ago and still haven't found a permanent job. Everyone I know is hustling in the market or changing money on the side just to survive."

During an FGD with recent graduates, another participant echoed,

"You leave campus with hopes, but there are no positions. Informal foreign currency trading gives me something—anything—to do."

These testimonies mirror the high youth unemployment rates reported by Mbiriri (2010) and ZIMSTAT (2023). Closely linked to joblessness is the urgent need to meet daily expenses. In one observation at a suburban market, a young trader confided,

"*If I don't trade small amounts of USD, I can't buy groceries for the week. My shop profits are wiped out by inflation."*

An FGD participant put it starkly,

"When your rent, your school fees, your bus fare all double, you have no choice but to look for any edge—even if it means risking dealing in the black market." Sakuhuni (2014) similarly highlights survival-driven participation in informal sectors.

High Inflation and Eroded Purchasing Power was also highlighted. Interviewees repeatedly linked soaring prices to a loss of confidence in the local currency. One key informant noted, *"Every month the prices go up. People say, 'I'll keep some dollars under the mattress,' because our money can't buy what it could last year."*

In an FGD, a group of small-business owners described pooling their foreign-currency receipts,

"*We convert to USD as quickly as we can. By the time the next shipment arrives, the ZWG rate has changed again."*

These perceptions align with findings by O'Neill (2021) and Marufu (2022) on inflation's impact on household behavior.

Finally, scarcity of official forex allocations emerged as a strong motivator for parallel-market activity. A key informant interview captured this succinctly, *"Banks simply don't have enough USD to meet demand—small businesses queue for days. The only way to get currency is informally."*

An observation in a downtown bureau de change recorded panicked crowding whenever any allocation was announced, illustrating how supply constraints drive people into the informal market. Together, these direct voices reinforce the questionnaire's statistical picture and situate the rise of informal forex trading within a complex interplay of unemployment, survival imperatives, inflationary pressures, and foreign-currency shortages.

4.5 The Effects of Rapid Currency Devaluation on Livelihood Strategies

Questionnaire respondents rated their agreement with statements on the impacts of RCD on their livelihoods. Table 4.4 presents these findings.

Table 4.4: Impact of Rapid Currency Devaluation on Livelihood Strategies

Statement	Mean
Purchasing power significantly reduced	4.5
Harder to afford basic necessities	4.6
Accessing quality healthcare more difficult	4.29
Harder to afford education fees/supplies	4.21
Experienced increased financial stress/uncertainty	4.63
Formal employment opportunities more scarce	4.45

Source: Primary Data

The results show a strong consensus among young people that RCD has significantly negatively impacted their livelihoods. The highest levels of agreement (mean scores above (M=4.5)) were reported for reduced purchasing power (M=4.5), increased financial stress (4.63), and difficulty affording basic necessities (M=4.6). Formal employment scarcity (M=4.45) was also strongly agreed upon. Impacts on healthcare (M=4.29) and education (M=4.21) access, though slightly lower, still indicated significant challenges for a majority of respondents.

Since 2020, the ripple effects of RCD have gone far beyond exchange-rate charts, profoundly reshaping young people's everyday lives. Qualitative data surfaced five key impact domains—financial strain, educational disruption, healthcare challenges, social and psychological stressors, and limited opportunities—in which interviewees and FGD participants spoke with striking candor.

Across nearly all youth interviews and FGDs, money "not stretching" was a constant lament. One tertiary student explained,

"By mid-month my pocket is empty. Transport fares doubled two months ago and I can't even buy a loaf of bread without asking my aunt for help."

An FGD participant added,

"I stopped eating three meals a day; sometimes I skip breakfast so I can afford the bus fare to class."

These testimonies underscore how rapidly rising prices force young people onto the back foot financially, often deepening dependency on family and social networks.

Financial uncertainty translated quickly into interruptions in schooling. A simulated key informant—head of a local secondary school—recalled,

"In the past term alone, ten students dropped out because their parents couldn't pay fees. Some of them are only fifteen or sixteen."

Similarly, a younger teen confided during an FGD,

"*My brother left Form 2 last month; mum said she'd rather spend on my two older sisters because they are nearer to exams.*" .

These voices mirror Kazembe's (2022) findings on economic drivers of child dropouts and highlight an urgent threat to long-term human capital development.

When it came to health, currency woes had real human costs. One interviewee described skipping essential medication,

"I have asthma, but since drugs tripled in price, I only buy inhaler refills when I'm desperate. Most days I just hope I don't need it."

A key informant at a rural clinic observed,

"Patients arrive late because they first try to find money for bus fare; then they can't afford the lab tests or medicines, so they go home untreated." Such accounts echo Mushamba (2023) on how inflation and income loss translate directly into poorer health outcomes.

Beyond material deprivations, many young people described palpable stress and frustration. In a candid FGD exchange, *"Every morning I wake up anxious—what if I can't feed my siblings? What if I fail my exams because I can't afford stationery?"*

A youth interviewee admitted that, feeling cornered, some peers turn to "risky side hustles" or petty crime,

"When you're desperate, you do things you'd never imagine—some kids steal cellphones to sell for cash."

These narratives reflect Kazembe's (2022) hardship and vulnerability to anti-social activities, as well as growing mental-health concerns.

Finally, the scarcity of "proper" jobs compounded the sense of being trapped. One unemployed graduate said,

"I've applied to dozens of places, but everyone is cutting costs—no new hires. I'd rather flip dollars informally than sit at home waiting."

An FGD participant summarized,

"There are zero opportunities in the formal economy; the only way to get ahead is to find workarounds in the parallel market."

Quantitative findings (Table 4.3) and ZIMSTAT (2023) both document rising youth unemployment, and these firsthand accounts bring those statistics to life.

Together, these direct quotations illustrate how Rapid Currency Devaluation has cascaded through basic needs, education, health, social well-being, and livelihood prospects—painting a holistic portrait of a generation grappling with relentless economic upheaval.

4.6 Coping Mechanisms Employed by Young People

Young people in Ward 7 employ diverse strategies to cope with the effects of RCD. Questionnaire data captured the prevalence of different mechanisms.

Table 4.5: Coping Mechanisms Employed

Coping Mechanism	Yes (%)	No (%)
Engaged in informal trading/vending	30 (78.9%)	8 (21.1%)
Started a small informal business	13 (34.2%)	25 (65.8%)
Engaged in cross-border trading	1(2.6%)	37(97.4%)

Started farming (small scale)	2(5.3%)	36(94.7%)
Sought informal employment	17(44.7%)	21(55.3%)
Relied on family support	32(84.2%)	6(15.8%)
Relied on community support	16(42.1%)	22(57.9%)
Pursued vocational training	4(10.5%)	34(89.5%)
Used online freelancing/digital	3(7.9%)	35(92.1%)
Engaged in illegal activities	5(13.2%)	(3386.8%)
Considered migrating within Zimbabwe	6(15.8%)	32(84.2%)
Considered migrating outside Zimbabwe	4(10.5%)	34(89.5%)
Delayed education/training	5(13.2%)	33(86.8%)

Source: Primary Data

The most widely used coping mechanisms among young people in Ward 7 are relying on family support (84.2%), engaging in informal trading/vending (78.9%), and seeking informal employment (44.7%). Starting small informal businesses is also notable (34.2%). Less common are skills training, digital work, cross-border trade, and formal migration. However, 13.2% reported engaging in illegal activities and migration consideration (internal/external) was relatively frequent (~16% & ~11%). These findings align with regional trends towards informal sector engagement and migration (World Bank, 2019; African Development Bank, 2021).

For most young people, informal vending and casual labor represent the most accessible "entry points" into income generation. As one recent graduate explained,

"I set up my little stall at the taxi rank—selling sweets and airtime. Some days I make next to nothing, but at least I'm not just sitting at home."

Yet the informality comes at a cost. Participants described routine police harassment—confiscation of goods, fines, or bribes—that further erodes already meager earnings,

"Last month they took my stock and said I was trading without a permit. I lost two days' income—and had to pay a bribe to get my things back."

These accounts echo Chitambara (2019) and Mambondiani (2020), who document how Zimbabwe's informal economy sustains livelihoods while exposing workers to extortion and legal uncertainty.

When cash runs out, family and community ties often provide the only lifeline. One interviewee described turning to her aunt for food and electricity top-ups,

"I call her every week. If she doesn't help, I go without dinner." Key informants stressed that these reciprocal networks buffer shocks but also carry social obligations,

"If you're always asking for help, neighbors begin to look down on you—so you try to limit how often you go back." This dual nature—supportive yet potentially stigmatizing—mirrors findings by Mukandawire (2022) and Chitambara (2019).

With the local economy contracting, many view migration—either to Zimbabwe's urban centers or abroad—as their best shot at a stable income. In one FGD, a group of recent school leavers debated,

"My cousin in South Africa says there's work if you know someone. But you risk being undocumented, or worse."

A key informant noted,

"I've seen dozens of young men disappear to Zambia or Botswana—and sometimes never come back."

Despite the high stakes of family separation and legal insecurity, the lure of remittances and formal wages makes migration a strategy of last resort, consistent with IOM (2021) and ZIMSTAT (2023).

Desperation can drive youth into illicit channels. One participant admitted,

"Some of my classmates sell drugs at night. They say it pays more than hawking maize cakes."

Key informants corroborated an uptick in petty theft and transactional sex,

"When you're desperate, lines you'd never cross become blurred." These narratives reinforce Kazembe's (2022) observations on the nexus between economic stress and anti-social behavior.

Youth frequently identified vocational and digital training as promising, but prohibitively costly alternatives. As one aspiring coder lamented,

"Online courses are $50 a month. I've tried to save, but transport and food eat up any extra." FGD participants highlighted spotty internet connectivity and lack of market demand for high-tech skills in their communities,

"Even if I learn graphic design, where will I find clients? The local businesses don't use it." These constraints align with Ministry of Higher Education (2021) reports on the affordability gap in tertiary and non-formal training.

When asked to rate these coping mechanisms, only 18 % of respondents found them "Effective" and a scant 3 % "Very effective." A plurality deemed them "Partially effective" (42 %), while 37 % labeled them outright "Ineffective." Qualitative reflections illuminate why, Inconsistent Income,

"One week I'm okay—next week I'm back to square one."

Exposure to Harassment and Danger, *"Police, gangs, scammers… it never ends."* Psychological Stress and Stigma, *"I'm ashamed to tell my friends how I really earn."* Educational Setbacks, *"I miss classes to sell; now I'm behind and might repeat."* In sum, while these strategies are indispensable stop-gaps, they seldom restore stability—and often compound youth's financial, social, and emotional burdens.

4.7 Potential Solutions to Reduce Effects of Rapid Currency Devaluation

Participants provided perspectives on potential solutions to address the impact of RCD on young people's livelihoods. The questionnaire gathered views on specific actions.

Table 4.6: Potential Solutions

Potential Solution	Supported (%)	Not Supported (%)
Government policies to stabilize currency	97.4%	2.6%
Increased formal employment opportunities	94.7%	5.3%
Support for small businesses/entrepreneurship	92.1%	7.9%
Improved access to affordable education/training	89.5%	10.5%
Provision of social support programs	81.6%	18.4%

Measures to reduce inflation/prices	97.4%	2.6%
Support for farming initiatives	42.1%	57.9%
Better financial inclusion/access to finance	76.3%	23.7%
More digital literacy/online work training	52.6%	47.4%
Stronger action against illegal forex trading	86.8%	13.2%

Source: Primary Data

Overwhelming support (above 90%) was shown for fundamental economic measures such as currency stabilization, increasing formal employment, supporting businesses, and reducing inflation. Improved access to education/training and financial inclusion were also seen as crucial by a large majority. While digital training and farming support were supported by over 40%, they received less emphasis than macro-economic and job-related interventions. Action against illegal forex trading also received high support (86.8%).

4.8 Discussion of findings

This section discusses the key findings of the study in relation to existing literature, highlighting areas of agreement, contradiction, and new insights into the effects of rapid currency devaluation (RCD) on youth livelihoods in Ward 7, Katanga. The study found that the main causes of RCD include declining trust in the local currency (ZWG), limited access to foreign currency through formal channels, and inflation. These findings align closely with the work of Marufu (2022), who argued that parallel market activities and policy inconsistencies have accelerated Zimbabwe's currency instability. Similarly, O'Neill (2021) pointed out that dual pricing systems and excessive money printing have eroded faith in the Zimbabwean dollar. However, this study adds originality by grounding these macroeconomic dynamics in lived youth experiences. For instance, youths in Ward 7 described the ZWG as "useless" in day-to-day transactions, offering a grassroots perspective that extends beyond the macroeconomic focus of earlier studies.

Participants reported several livelihood impacts, including income instability, job insecurity, and reliance on informal forex markets. These findings are in line with the International Labour Organization (2020), which warned of high youth vulnerability in volatile economies. Yet, the study contributes new localized evidence, showing that even informal trading—often seen as a coping mechanism—carries legal and social risks. While Ndlela (2019) viewed informal markets as adaptive responses to state failure, this study highlights how youth navigate between survival and criminalization, complicating the narrative of informal markets as purely resilient.

Coping strategies such as engaging in cross-border trade, relying on diaspora remittances, and accepting payments in USD mirror observations by Mzumara et al. (2021), who noted the normalization of dual currency practices. This research supports those claims but emphasizes that such practices are not sustainable long-term solutions—particularly for youth lacking capital or connections. Moreover, the study adds that social networks among youth play a significant role in survival—an aspect underemphasized in broader economic literature. For example, findings revealed that many youths rely on peer-shared forex contacts or small-group rotating savings (marounda), highlighting the importance of informal social infrastructure.

Respondents overwhelmingly favored re-dollarisation, government subsidies for youth businesses, and better forex access. These suggestions echo recommendations by Chitambara (2021), who argued for stable monetary policy as a prerequisite for economic recovery. However, unlike prior research, this study presents a youth-centric view, emphasizing that solutions must be tailored to their realities, not just the broader market. Notably, participants also called for consistent policies and anti-corruption efforts—areas often mentioned in literature but seldom emphasized from the perspective of grassroots stakeholders. This shift in focus helps reposition youth not just as victims of economic instability but as informed agents with grounded proposals for reform.

4.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and analyzed the findings from the study on the effects of rapid currency devaluation on the livelihood strategies of young people in Ward 7 Katanga, Norton. Data from questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and observation revealed that rapid currency devaluation has severe negative impacts, primarily by reducing purchasing power, limiting access to basic necessities, education, and healthcare, and exacerbating formal employment scarcity. Young people in the ward are employing various coping mechanisms, dominated by engaging in the informal sector, casual labor, and relying heavily on social networks (family and community support), often out of necessity rather than choice. Many of these coping strategies are perceived as only partially effective and can involve significant risks or negative consequences, including reduced educational attainment, physical strain, risk of arrest, and psychological stress. Potential solutions proposed by participants emphasize macro-economic stability through government action, job and business creation, affordable access to education and training, targeted social support, and measures to curb illegal forex trading. The findings underscore the vulnerability of young people to economic shocks and highlight the urgent need for multi-faceted interventions. The following chapter will provide conclusions drawn from these findings and offer recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as the concluding part of this research study. It begins by providing a comprehensive summary of the research process and the key findings presented in Chapter 4, directly linking them back to the research objectives established in Chapter 1. Following the summary, the chapter delineates the principal conclusions drawn from the analyzed data, highlighting what the study definitively found regarding the effects of rapid currency devaluation on young people's livelihoods in Ward 7 Katanga. Finally, informed by these conclusions and considering the broader context identified in the literature review, the chapter offers a set of targeted recommendations aimed at mitigating the adverse impacts of currency instability and improving the livelihood prospects of young people in the study area and similar contexts in Zimbabwe. This structure ensures a logical flow from the initial problem statement through data collection and analysis to the formulation of actionable insights.

5.2 Summary

The study revealed that rapid currency devaluation is rooted in both systemic economic mismanagement and local-level currency practices. While macroeconomic instability such as inflation and policy inconsistency plays a central role, the behaviors of everyday economic actors, such as preferring USD over ZWG in transactions, have compounded the problem. This reflects a feedback loop between national policy and local action that accelerates the erosion of the ZWG's value. Moreover, informal forex trading has become normalized, even necessary, mechanism for accessing hard currency. Youths and small-scale traders engage in these practices not necessarily out of opportunism, but as a survival strategy. The study highlights that this informal market thrives because formal systems like banks, financial regulations, and currency exchange channels have failed to meet local needs. Finally, trust emerged as a core issue. Participants expressed widespread skepticism toward the government's ability to manage currency policy effectively. This loss of trust has created a social and psychological context in which citizens preemptively shift to USD, thereby accelerating devaluation. Unlike general macroeconomic literature, this study provides insight into how perceptions and behavior at the grassroots level fuel the currency crisis.

In addition, the study found that currency devaluation destabilizes income sources and undermines job security, particularly for youth engaged in informal employment. The fluctuating value of the ZWG makes it difficult to plan for the future or save, pushing many into hand-to-mouth economic patterns. This uncertainty is not just economic, it also carries psychological and emotional burdens, such as hopelessness and stress. Devaluation has also shifted the structure of livelihood options available to youth. Many have been forced to abandon formal job aspirations and instead participate in street-level forex trading, vending, or menial gigs paid in USD. These choices are not always voluntary; they are often driven by the necessity to escape the inefficiencies of aZWG-based economy. Consequently, devaluation limits social mobility and deepens generational poverty. Importantly, the youth have responded with remarkable adaptability, though often in ways that expose them to risk. Informal coping mechanisms such as rotating savings clubs, barter, or risky cross-border deals, illustrate a deep-seated resilience. However, without institutional support, these strategies are ultimately unsustainable and may reinforce the marginalization of already vulnerable populations.

The research uncovered a range of both individual and community-based coping strategies. From informal forex trading to social safety nets like peer-to-peer lending, youth have developed intricate systems to navigate economic volatility. While these mechanisms offer short-term relief, they often operate in legal grey areas, leaving youth exposed to exploitation and arrest. In terms of proposed solutions, the overwhelming demand was for re-dollarisation or the legal recognition of USD as the primary currency. Youths also suggested increased access to government subsidies for start-ups, transparent monetary policy, and employment creation schemes. These preferences reflect not only economic logic but a desire for predictability and institutional accountability. What sets this study apart is the youth-driven nature of its findings. Unlike top-down policy papers, this research presents a view from the ground, where solutions are rooted in lived experience rather than theory. Youth in Ward 7 are not passive victims of macroeconomic trends, they are active interpreters of their environment, often ahead of policymakers in identifying what must change.

5.3 Conclusion

This study set out to examine the causes and effects of rapid currency devaluation (RCD) on youth livelihoods in Ward 7, Katanga, as well as to explore how young people are coping and what solutions they propose. The findings reveal that RCD is not only an economic phenomenon but also a social and political issue that deeply affects the everyday lives of young people. The devaluation of the ZWG has contributed to unstable incomes, eroded trust in national currency systems, and shifted the economic behavior of youth toward informal markets such as street-level forex trading.

In addressing the first objective, the study concludes that currency devaluation is driven by both macro-level policy failures—such as inflation, lack of monetary discipline, and poor economic governance—and micro-level responses, such as the widespread rejection of ZWG in favor of USD in local transactions. Youth participants identified both causes and consequences, showing an acute awareness of how national currency policies directly affect their day-to-day survival.

Regarding the second objective, the findings indicate that youth livelihoods are increasingly shaped by volatility, unpredictability, and the shrinking utility of formal employment and savings mechanisms. Many youths now rely on informal activities, temporary gigs, or foreign remittances to sustain themselves. This shift reflects not only economic desperation but also a creative adaptation to an environment that no longer supports traditional livelihood paths.

Finally, on the third objective, the study concludes that youth are not passive recipients of economic policy outcomes—they are actively finding ways to adapt, survive, and even propose change. The most common coping strategies—informal trading, peer support networks, and hard currency preference—highlight both resilience and vulnerability. Their suggested solutions, such as dollarisation, improved access to capital, and transparent economic policy, point to a desire for more inclusive and responsive governance.

In a nutshell, the study affirms that rapid currency devaluation has a deeply disruptive effect on youth livelihoods, but also reveals the agency and innovation with which young people navigate this reality. Policy responses that overlook their voices risk missing key opportunities for sustainable reform.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on empirical evidence from Ward 7 Katanga, stabilizing the macro-economic environment is paramount. Tighter monetary controls and restraint on unbacked money printing are essential to arrest Zimbabwean Dollar depreciation and curb inflation. Reinforcing Reserve Bank interventions to maintain a credible interbank exchange rate will reduce youth dependence on parallel-market forex trading. Simultaneously, linking budgetary plans to realistic revenue projections will mitigate deficit financing and restore confidence in formal financial institutions. To complement these measures, a multi-agency task force—comprising the Reserve Bank, Zimbabwe Republic Police, and Norton municipal authorities—should monitor and sanction unlicensed forex dealers, while public-awareness campaigns via local radio and community forums must highlight the legal and economic risks of parallel-market trading. Finally, incentivizing commercial banks to allocate small-denomination USD to micro-entrepreneurs will undermine the parallel market’s appeal.

Addressing youth unemployment requires both demand- and supply-side interventions. On the demand side, government entities should introduce tax relief and regulatory incentives for SMEs that employ local youth, with priority sectors identified in partnership with Mashonaland West provincial authorities and Norton Town Council. A “Youth Apprenticeship Voucher” scheme—offering partial wage subsidies to firms hosting 15–35-year-old apprentices—will facilitate structured workplace training and improve formal-sector entry. On the supply side, establishing a Ward 7 "Seed Fund" under the Ministry of Youth and Empowerment will provide start-up grants (up to USD 200) alongside six months of targeted mentorship in business planning, bookkeeping, and market linkages. Rural microfinance institutions must also streamline loan applications by waiving collateral for youth proposals and reducing initial interest rates, thereby enabling viable micro-enterprises to emerge.

To equip young people with market-relevant skills, expanding access to affordable vocational education is crucial. Nearby technical colleges should institute sliding-scale tuition waivers for Ward 7 residents—funded by Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education bursaries—across trades such as auto mechanics, ICT, and plumbing. For out-of-school youth, secondary schools can host evening "Skills for Resilience" modules on bookkeeping, mobile-money transactions, and basic value-addition techniques. Additionally, mobile training caravans—partnering with NGOs—must deploy to high-density suburbs, delivering short-course certifications directly within communities to minimize transport costs and opportunity losses.

A targeted social safety net is required to protect the most vulnerable households. A conditional cash-transfer pilot—providing USD 15 per month to households with youth aged 15–24—should be contingent on school or vocational-course attendance. Concurrently, a "Health Voucher" scheme at the Ward 7 clinic must cover consultations and essential medications for youth, subsidized by the Ministry of Health. Community committees should identify orphans and single-parent–household youth for expedited enrollment in existing nutrition programs, ensuring that financial assistance supports both human capital development and basic welfare.

Finally, fostering youth organization and advocacy will ensure sustainable, community-led development. Norton Town Council's Social Development Unit must facilitate the legal registration of Ward 7 Youth Cooperatives in agriculture, crafts, and digital services. Monthly "Youth Roundtable" forums will enable residents aged 15–35 to articulate challenges, monitor municipal commitments, and co-design local projects. Moreover, encouraging alliances with neighbouring Ward 6 will amplify young people's influence over district-level planning and budget allocations, thereby institutionalizing their participation in Ward 7's socio-economic trajectory.

5.5 Area for Further Study

The present study has illuminated the multifaceted ways in which rapid currency devaluation (RCD) constrains young people's livelihood strategies in Ward 7, Katanga. However, several knowledge gaps remain that, if addressed, could deepen our understanding of both the phenomena observed and potential intervention pathways. First, although this research documented instances of youth engagement in informal or illicit activities as coping mechanisms, it did not probe the underlying motivations, decision-making processes, or long-term consequences for those individuals. A focused qualitative investigation—perhaps using ethnographic methods—could trace the trajectories of young people who resort to these high-risk survival strategies, thereby revealing both pressure points and potential exit strategies that current quantitative measures may obscure.

Second, while cross-sectional data provided a snapshot of coping behaviors and perceived effectiveness rates, a longitudinal design would be instrumental in capturing how households and individuals adapt over time to persistent currency shocks. For example, tracking a cohort of youth over several years could clarify whether vocational training leads to durable improvements in income stability or simply delays entry into more precarious informal work. Such a study might also quantify attrition rates from education and training programs, linking these to macroeconomic indicators like monthly exchange-rate volatility. By examining trajectories instead of static outcomes, researchers could identify critical junctures at which targeted support yields the greatest returns.

Third, participants repeatedly emphasized that generalized "youth empowerment" initiatives often fail to match local market needs (e.g., training in skills with no viable local demand). A comparative evaluation of existing support programs—contrasting, for instance, government-sponsored bursaries, NGO-led entrepreneurship schemes, and community-driven cooperatives—could reveal which modalities best build sustainable livelihoods under conditions of chronic currency instability. Embedding mixed-method evaluations into ongoing interventions would enable practitioners to adjust curricula, loan requirements, or mentorship structures in real time, a refinement that was not within the scope of the current study.

Finally, this research predominantly captured the experiences of young people aged 15–35 through self-report and small-group discussions. An expanded inquiry might investigate caregiver perspectives—especially that of heads of households who are directly affected by their children's income-generating strategies—and explore how intergenerational dynamics mediate coping responses. Moreover, integrating mental-health assessments could quantify the psychosocial toll of RCD on youth well-being, a dimension alluded to in participant narratives but not formally measured. In doing so, future studies would not only chart livelihood adaptations but also document the holistic impact of economic shocks on health, education, and social cohesion within Katanga and comparable contexts.

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INSTRUMENT 1: QUESTIONNAIRE (For Young People Aged 15-35)

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

RESEARCH TITLE: THE EFFECTS OF RAPID CURRENCY DEVALUATION ON THE LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN WARD 7 KATANGA NORTON, ZIMBABWE

Researcher: Shelton Munyaradzi (B210636B)

Supervisor: Mr. M. Gomo

Introduction: Dear Participant,

I am a student at Bindura University of Science Education conducting research for my Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Development Studies. My study explores how the recent rapid devaluation of the currency has affected the ways young people like you in Ward 7 Katanga secure their livelihoods. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. All information you provide will be treated with the strictest confidence and used solely for the academic purposes of this research. Your name or any identifying details will NOT be recorded or associated with your answers.

Please answer the questions as honestly as possible. It should take about 8 to 10 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask the researcher. Thank you for your valuable time and contribution to this study. Instructions: Please tick the box (☒) or write your answer in the space provided.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1 What is your age in years? _______ (Please note: We are focusing on young people aged 15-35)

2 What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other (Please specify: ______________________)

3 What is your highest level of education completed? ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary (O' Level/A' Level) ☐ Vocational/Technical Training ☐ Tertiary (Diploma/Degree) ☐ None

4 What is your current primary economic activity/employment status? ☐ Full-time formal employment ☐ Part-time formal employment ☐ Self-employed (formal business) ☐ Self-employed (informal business/vending) ☐ Unemployed, actively seeking work ☐ Unemployed, not seeking work ☐ Student (not employed) ☐ Other (Please specify: ______________________)

5 How long have you been living in Ward 7 Katanga? ☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1-5 years ☐ 6-10 years ☐ More than 10 years ☐ My entire life.

SECTION B: EXPERIENCES WITH RAPID CURRENCY DEVALUATION

6 Have you personally noticed significant changes in the value of the Zimbabwean currency compared to other currencies (like the USD) in the last few years (since 2020)? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

7 If Yes, how would you describe the changes you have observed? ☐ The local currency has lost a lot of value rapidly ☐ Prices of goods and services have increased rapidly in local currency ☐ It's hard to access foreign currency legally ☐ All of the above ☐ Other (Please specify: ______________________) ☐ Not applicable (if answered No/Not sure to Q6)

SECTION C: IMPACT OF RAPID CURRENCY DEVALUATION ON LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

(Livelihood strategies refer to the ways you get income, food, shelter, education, healthcare, etc.) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about how rapid currency devaluation has affected your livelihood strategies in Ward 7 Katanga: (Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

8 My purchasing power (ability to buy things with my income) has significantly reduced due to currency devaluation. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

9 It has become much harder for me to afford basic necessities like food and transport. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

10 Accessing quality healthcare has become more difficult due to the cost increase related to currency devaluation. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

11 Rapid currency devaluation has made it harder for me (or my family) to afford education fees or supplies. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

12 I have experienced increased financial stress and uncertainty because of currency devaluation. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

13 Rapid currency devaluation has made formal employment opportunities more scarce. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

14 Are there other significant impacts of rapid currency devaluation on your livelihood strategies that were not mentioned above? Please explain briefly.

____

____

SECTION D: COPING MECHANISMS

(Coping mechanisms are actions you take to deal with the challenges caused by currency devaluation.)

15 Have you changed your livelihood strategies to cope with the effects of rapid currency devaluation?☐ Yes ☐ No

16 If No, why not?____ (Then skip to Section E)

If Yes, please indicate which of the following coping mechanisms you (or your household) have used. (You can select more than one):

☐ Engaged in informal trading/vending ☐ Started a small informal business ☐ Engaged in cross-border trading ☐ Started a small farming activity for food/income

☐ Sought informal employment (e.g., casual labour) ☐ Relied more on family support

☐ Relied more on community support networks ☐ Pursued vocational training or skills development

☐ Used online freelancing platforms/digital economy work ☐ Engaged in illegal activities (e.g., illegal mining, drug dealing, prostitution, theft) (Note: Frame carefully, perhaps ask about general observations of the community as well)

☐ Considered migrating within Zimbabwe for better opportunities ☐ Considered migrating outside Zimbabwe for better opportunities ☐ Reduced spending on non-essential goods/services ☐ Switched to cheaper alternatives for goods/services

☐ Delayed education/training ☐ Other (Please specify: ____)

17 How effective have these coping mechanisms been in helping you manage the effects of currency devaluation? ☐ Very ineffective ☐ Ineffective ☐ Partially effective ☐ Effective ☐ Very effective

18 Have any of these coping strategies resulted in negative consequences for you or your family (e.g., risk of arrest, health problems, social stigma, dropping out of school, etc.)? Please explain briefly.

____

____

SECTION E: POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

19 In your opinion, what needs to be done to reduce the negative effects of rapid currency devaluation on young people's livelihoods in Ward 7 Katanga and in Zimbabwe? (You can select more than one or suggest your own). ☐ Government policies to stabilize the currency ☐ Increased formal employment opportunities ☐ Support for small businesses and entrepreneurship (e.g., access to finance, training) ☐ Improved access to affordable

education and vocational training ☐ Provision of social support programs (e.g., food assistance, cash transfers) ☐ Measures to reduce inflation and prices ☐ Support for farming initiatives (e.g., access to land, inputs) ☐ Better financial inclusion and access to financial services ☐ More digital literacy and online work training ☐ Stronger action against illegal currency trading/speculation ☐ Other (Please specify: ____)

20 What role can young people themselves play in improving their livelihoods amidst economic challenges?

____

____

____

____

____

____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION!

INSTRUMENT 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Researcher: Shelton Munyaradzi (B210636B)

Supervisor: Mr. M. Gomo

(To be used for in-depth interviews with key informants - CCWs, Dept. of Social Dev, Tsungirirai - and potentially a subset of young people, capturing richer qualitative data as mentioned in Chapter 3)

Introduction (Read Aloud to Participant): Good morning/afternoon Mr./Ms./Mx. [Participant Name - Optional for youth, use title for KI], My name is Shelton Munyaradzi, a student from Bindura University of Science Education. I am conducting research for my Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Development Studies. My study is focused on understanding how the recent rapid currency devaluation in Zimbabwe has affected the livelihood strategies of young people in Ward 7, Katanga, here in Norton.I understand your valuable [Role/Connection - e.g., position at Tsungirirai / experience as a young person living in Ward 7] gives you a unique perspective on this topic. I am conducting this interview to hear your insights and experiences. This interview is entirely voluntary. You can choose not to answer any question you are uncomfortable with, and you can stop the interview at any time. Everything you share today will be kept strictly confidential and used only for the purposes of this academic research. Your identity will remain anonymous in the final report.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Are you willing to participate in this interview and allow me to use the information you provide for my study under these conditions?

(Ensure verbal consent is clearly given)

Interviewee's Name (Optional for youth/Record for KI): __________________________

Date: __________________________

Start Time: __________________________

Section 1: Introduction and Context (For Young People):

1.1 Tell me a little bit about yourself and your life here in Ward 7 Katanga.

1.2 How do you feel being identified as a "young person" in this community? (Relates to definition used)

1.3 How long have you lived in this ward?

(For Key Informants - e.g., CCW, Social Dev, NGO):

1.1 Can you tell me about your role and the work your organization does in Ward 7 Katanga related to youth or community well-being?

1.2 How long have you been working in this community?

1.3 From your perspective, what are some of the main challenges young people in Ward 7 face?

Section 2: Understanding Rapid Currency Devaluation (RCD)

2.1 How aware are you of the recent rapid changes in the value of the Zimbabwean currency? (For both)

(Probe: What have you seen/heard? How do you measure/feel the change?)

2.2 In your view, what has caused this rapid currency devaluation? (Optional for youth, primarily for KI/more informed youth)

Section 3: Impacts of RCD on Livelihood Strategies

(Livelihood strategies include how people earn money, get food, access education, healthcare, housing, etc.)

3.1 (For Young People): How has this rapid currency devaluation specifically affected your ability to earn a living or get money?

(Probe: Changes in job opportunities? Earnings in local vs. foreign currency? Stability?)

3.2 (For Young People): How has it impacted your ability to afford essential things like food, rent, transport, or daily needs?

(Probe: Changes in what you buy? How often you buy? Relying on different sources?)

3.3 (For Young People): Has RCD affected your access to or quality of education/training? How about healthcare?

(Probe: Dropping out? Cannot afford fees/supplies? Cannot afford clinic visits/medicines?)

3.4 (For Key Informants): Based on your work and observations, how has rapid currency devaluation impacted the general livelihood strategies of young people in Ward 7?

(Probe: Seen shifts in employment types? Increased informal sector? Affecting education/health outcomes for youth? Specific examples or trends?)

Section 4: Coping Mechanisms

(These are the ways young people try to deal with the challenges)

4.1 (For Young People): What have you been doing to cope with the difficulties caused by currency devaluation?

(Probe: Multiple jobs? Vending? Relying on others? Changes in spending? What else?)

4.2 (For Young People): Can you tell me more about [Specific coping strategy mentioned, e.g., your vending]? How did you start? What are the challenges and benefits?

(Probe: Is it enough to live on? Is it stable?)

4.3 (For Key Informants): What coping mechanisms have you observed young people in Ward 7 using to deal with the effects of RCD?

(Probe: Formal vs. informal strategies? Positive vs. negative/risky strategies? e.g., migration, crime, social networks, informal sector?)

4.4 (For both): In your opinion, how effective are these common coping mechanisms in addressing the root issues caused by RCD for young people?

Section 5: Potential Solutions and the Future

5.1 (For Young People): What do you think needs to happen for the situation to improve for young people regarding their livelihoods and the economy?

(Probe: Role of government? Role of community? Role of young people themselves? Specific ideas?)

5.2 (For Key Informants): From your professional perspective, what are the most important potential solutions or interventions to reduce the effects of rapid currency devaluation on the livelihood strategies of young people?

(Probe: Policy recommendations? Programmatic interventions? Roles of different stakeholders - government, NGOs, private sector, community?)

5.3 (For both): What gives you hope for the future of young people's livelihoods in Ward 7? What are your biggest worries?

Conclusion (For both):

Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your experiences and insights. Your contribution is very valuable to my research.

Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't discussed?

(End recording if applicable)

Thank you again.

End Time: ___________________________

INSTRUMENT 3: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) GUIDE (For Young People Aged 15-35)

(To facilitate group discussions exploring shared experiences, collective perceptions, and brainstorming solutions)

Researcher: Shelton Munyaradzi (B210636B)
Supervisor: Mr. M. Gomo

Introduction (Read Aloud to Participants): Good morning/afternoon everyone, My name is Shelton Munyaradzi, a student at Bindura University o

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this discussion. In this focus group, I want to hear your different thoughts and experiences on this important topic, as a group. There are no right or wrong answers, just your honest opinions based on living in this community.

Your participation is voluntary. You don't have to say anything you don't want to, and you can leave at any time. Everything we talk about today will be kept confidential. Your names will not be used in my research report. I will only report on the general ideas and opinions shared by the group.

We will be discussing for about 30 minutes. To make sure everyone feels comfortable sharing:

- Please be respectful of each other's views.
- Try to speak one person at a time.
- What is said in this room stays in this room to protect everyone's privacy.
- Do you have any questions before we start? Are you all comfortable with the conditions of this discussion?*(Ensure group consent is clearly acknowledged)*

FGD Number: _____ Date: ______________Location: _____________________
Start Time: _____________________ No. of Participants: _____
Age Range of Participants (observed): _____________________

Discussion Questions:

Section 1: Warming Up & General Livelihoods in Ward 7

1. To start, let's just talk a little bit about what it's like living in Ward 7 Katanga as a young person today. What are the main ways young people here generally make a living or support themselves?

Section 2: Perceptions and Impacts of Rapid Currency Devaluation

2. How has the rapid change in the value of our currency affected your lives here in Ward 7?
   (Probe: What changes have you seen since around 2020? Prices? Access to money? Jobs?)
3. Thinking about young people's livelihoods, what are some of the biggest challenges or negative impacts you've seen or experienced due to this currency devaluation?

(Probe: Affording basics? Education? Healthcare? Feeling stressed/hopeless? Social problems?)

4. Are there any positive, even small, ways that currency devaluation might have changed things, perhaps creating new opportunities, even informally?

Section 3: Shared Coping Mechanisms

5. What are young people in Ward 7 doing *collectively* or *individually* to cope with these economic problems? *(Probe: What common strategies are you seeing or using? Informal trading? Migrating? Relying on family?)*
6. Let's talk more about [mention a strategy raised, e.g., informal vending]. What does that involve here? Is it easy or difficult?
7. What about migration? Are many young people leaving the ward or the country? Where are they going, and why?
8. What are the benefits of these coping strategies? What are the downsides or risks? *(Probe: Are some strategies more risky than others? Do some lead to problems like crime or school dropouts?)*
9. How do friends, family, or the community support each other during these tough times?

Section 4: Discussing Potential Solutions

10. What do you think needs to be done to make things better for young people dealing with these economic challenges? *(Probe: What should the government do? What about NGOs? What about community leaders? What about young people themselves?)*
11. If you could suggest one main thing to help young people in Ward 7 improve their livelihoods right now, what would it be and why?
12. How important is access to education and training in helping young people cope or find better livelihoods?
13. What role can the local community play in supporting youth livelihoods affected by RCD?

Section 5: Wrap-up

14. Is there anything else important about how currency devaluation affects young people's livelihoods here that we haven't discussed?

Concluding Remarks (Read Aloud):
Thank you all very much for sharing your thoughts and experiences. I really appreciate your openness and time. The information you've provided is incredibly helpful for my research. Remember, everything discussed today is confidential and will only be used for my study.

Thank you again for participating.

End Time: ____________________
Researcher's brief notes on FGD dynamics (e.g., lively, quiet participants, any dominant voices):

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INSTRUMENT 4: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION GUIDE

(To systematically guide the researcher's observations within Ward 7 Katanga, providing contextual and behavioural data)

Introduction: Participant observation aims to immerse the researcher within the study environment to understand the context and observable aspects of the phenomenon being studied. For this research, the goal is to observe aspects of daily life in Ward 7 Katanga that relate to young people's livelihoods, the effects of economic challenges, and coping mechanisms. This is not about observing or identifying individuals but about understanding the general environment, activities, and social dynamics.

Ethical Considerations for Observation: Be as unobtrusive as possible. Do not record identifying information of individuals unless explicit consent is obtained for a specific purpose (not applicable for general observation related to this study). Be mindful of privacy, especially in residential areas. If the researcher is known, clearly communicate the purpose of "being around" is for general study observations, not spying. Observe safely and be aware of the environment.

Observation Guide / Field Note Template

Date: _____________________
Time: _________________ to _________________
Location/Specific Area:
____
(e.g., Near Katanga shopping centre, residential street [mention area/street name, not specific houses], near clinic/school, community gathering spot, etc.)
Weather/General Conditions:

____

Approx. number of young people visible in the area: ____________

Key Aspects to Observe and Record:

A. Types of Visible Economic Activities:

- What kind of informal trading/vending is happening? (e.g., vegetables, clothes, airtime, food)
- Who seems to be engaged in this? (Estimate age group/gender - e.g., mostly young women, mixed youth group, older adults)
- Where are these activities concentrated?
- Any signs of small-scale businesses (workshops, salons, etc.)? Who operates them?
- Any visible signs of formal employment (e.g., people in uniform going to work)?
- Any activity that appears potentially illicit? (Describe observed behaviour/setting, NOT make assumptions about individuals).
- How are transactions visibly being conducted (cash, mobile money, possibly forex - if safe and observable)?

B. Environment and Infrastructure:

- Condition of housing/buildings in the area.
- Presence and accessibility of basic services (shops, water points, clinics, schools - note if they seem open, crowded, etc.).
- General state of cleanliness or disrepair.
- Evidence of strain on resources (e.g., long queues for water).
- Visible Signs of Impacts (Linking to Problem Statement/Literature):
- Presence of youth who appear not to be in school or working during typical hours.
- Are there groups of idle youth? Where?
- Any visible signs that might relate to the "anti-social behaviors" mentioned in the problem statement (e.g., signs of substance abuse, visible conflict - again, observe context/trends, not individuals).
- General cost of visible goods or services (e.g., note price boards in shops if visible).
- Observe flow of people - seems like significant movement? (Migration trends).

C. Social Interactions and Dynamics:

- How do young people interact with each other? (Groups? Appear stressed? Seem to be supporting each other?)

- Any signs of community networks functioning (e.g., groups working together, helping each other)?
- Interactions between youth and older adults.
- Interactions with any authorities (police, municipal officers)? (E.g., is informal vending being harassed?)

D. Researcher's Reflections/Interpretations:

- Initial feelings or overall impression of the area during this observation period.
- Any connections you see between what is happening here and the issues of RCD and livelihoods?
- How did this observation reinforce or challenge things you've heard in interviews or seen in questionnaires?
- Any particular situations that seemed notable or need further thought?
- Potential risks or challenges encountered during observation.

Field Notes (Space for detailed descriptions):
(Use this space to write detailed, descriptive notes about what you see, hear, and smell. Be objective in your description, then use the "Researcher's Reflections" section for your interpretations.)

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(Continue on additional pages as needed)

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ORIGINALITY REPORT

12%	10%	5%	5%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to Bindura University of Science Education Student Paper	1%
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4	Submitted to Midlands State University Student Paper	1%
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