**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

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DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

EVALUATING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ROLE OF WOMAN IN TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP. A CASE STUDY OF BINDURA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role and significance of women in traditional leadership in Bindura district, Zimbabwe. The study seeks to understand the roles and contributions of women leaders in the district's traditional structures and how these have evolved over time. The research employs a qualitative research methodology, including interviews with women traditional leaders, community members, and key informants and document analysis. The research examines the challenges and opportunities that these women face in their leadership roles. The findings of this study suggest that women play essential roles in traditional leadership structures, including as custodians of culture and traditions, mediators and arbitrators, and community development agents. However, cultural and gender stereotypes, limited access to resources, and legal and institutional frameworks that do not adequately recognize women's leadership roles constrain their effectiveness. The study recommends that efforts to promote women's inclusion in traditional leadership structures should focus on addressing these constraints while working with communities to recognize and value women's contributions to development and peacebuilding.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God and to my lovely family for their unwavering support and encouragement to pursue my highest academic and career goals.

Lastly to the Almighty God for His blessing and for giving me power and strength to write this paper and a sound mind to overcome any other obstacles that I encountered in this academic journey

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On a personal level, I extend my heartfelt thanks to my father, mother, and aunt, as well as all my family members, friends, and ultimately to the divine providence of the Lord, who made this achievement possible. Foremost, I dedicate this endeavor to the Almighty God, expressing my profound appreciation for the wisdom bestowed upon me, the strength, the tranquility of mind, and good health, which enabled me to successfully complete this research.

I would like to sincerely acknowledge and express my gratitude to my family for their constant encouragement, which greatly contributed to the completion of this paper. My father, mother, and sister have always been by my side whenever I needed their support. I am deeply grateful to BINDURA UNIVERSITY for their invaluable guidance, continuous supervision, and provision of essential information related to this research. Additionally, their support has been instrumental in completing this endeavor.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and background to the study

The research examines the significance of women's role in traditional leadership within the Bindura district of Mashonaland Central, Zimbabwe. The social history of Zimbabwe portrays women as victims of various forms of mistreatment, including verbal, emotional, physical, and psychological abuse. Women encounter abuse from their partners, employers, and fellow tribesmen. These acts of mistreatment are rooted in racial, cultural, and economic factors. The prevailing male-dominated culture and traditional leadership systems contribute to gender-based oppression. The aim is not to overhaul the institution of traditional leadership, but rather to incorporate women into its structures and develop customary law in alignment with constitutional principles.

1.2 Study Area

Bindura is a district located in Mashonaland Central province of Zimbabwe. It is the capital of Mashonaland Central province and is situated about 88 kilometers northeast of Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe. Bindura district is home to the Bindura University of Science Education and is also known for its agricultural activities, particularly tobacco farming. The district is also rich in minerals such as gold, nickel, and copper. The total population of Bindura district was estimated to be around 200,000 people in 2012, with the majority of the population engaged in farming and mining activities.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Many cultures around the world portray women as weak and incapable of making their own decisions. However, this has not been the narrative on women in African history. African women have a long-standing history of women that are influential leaders spiritually and politically

1.4 Research aim

The aim of this research is to evaluate the significance of the role of Women in traditional leadership in the Bindura District.

1.5 Research objectives

1. To identify the roles played by women in traditional leadership roles
2. To identify the challenges faced by women in traditional leadership.
3. To conduct a comparative analysis on the past and present narratives that are associated with African women in traditional leadership roles.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What are the roles played by women in traditional leadership roles?
2. What are the challenges faced by women in traditional leadership?
3. How do the narratives associated with African women in traditional leadership roles differ between the past and the present?

1.7 Assumptions

Several presumptions are used to evaluate the importance of women in traditional leadership roles. One of the main presumptions is that traditionally, women have been excluded from traditional leadership roles. The idea that women have distinctive viewpoints and traits that can improve traditional leadership is another. The evaluation also makes the assumption that the inclusion of women in traditional leadership positions can benefit communities' social and economic development. It is also believed that advancing women in conventional leadership positions can advance gender equality and undermine patriarchal systems.

Another presumption is that women are marginalized and excluded from decision-making processes because their contributions to leadership are not always valued or acknowledged. Another presumption is that patriarchal power dynamics common in conventional leadership systems may inhibit women from taking on leadership positions. Resistance to change may also result from cultural prejudices and unfavorable attitudes toward women in leadership positions. Finally, a barrier to women's participation in conventional leadership roles may be the lack of resources and education available to them.

1.8 Justification of the study

As part of the initiatives outlined in Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), nations pledge to encourage and ensure the complete and meaningful involvement of women, as well as equal opportunities for leadership, across all levels of decision-making. The United Nations Women's Organization, the United Nations Environment Assembly, and political participation in Africa are among the stakeholders who find this research to be of great significance. The African Queens will emerge stronger as a result and become cultural leaders..

1.9 Definition of terms

Traditional leadership refers to the practice of receiving authority from a predecessor, such as kings, dictators, and certain family-owned businesses.

Fundamental denotes serving as a foundation that supports existence or determines the essential structure or function.

Discriminate entails making an unfair or biased differentiation in the treatment of various groups of individuals, particularly based on factors such as ethnicity, gender, and age.

Significance is defined as the importance or relevance of something, in this case, referring to the importance of the role of women in traditional leadership in the Bindura District.

Role is defined as the function or position played by someone or something, in this context, referring to the specific responsibilities and contributions of women in traditional leadership.

1.10 Thesis Overview

This overview provided a background on the study and provided context for the management issue. It emphasized the problem statement and also developed logical research objectives. The objectives will then open the door to locating literature that backs up the claim in an effort to address the research questions. Additionally, the research is important for all academic, governmental, and other organizations to use when making management recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this particular chapter, the focus was placed on exploring the position and obstacles encountered by women in the realm of traditional leadership. The chapter includes a literature review, which involves a thorough analysis of a specific portion of existing knowledge by summarizing, categorizing, and comparing previous research, examining the existing literature, and considering the theoretical framework.

2.1 Traditional Leadership

The traditional leadership of Zimbabwe has been a part of the country's culture and history for centuries. It has been a key part of how the country is governed and how decisions are made. In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on the role of women in traditional leadership in Zimbabwe. This literature review will explore the role of women in traditional leadership in Zimbabwe, focusing on their access to power, their involvement in decision-making and their impact on society.

2.1.1 Access to Power

Studies have found that the traditional leadership structure in Zimbabwe is largely male-dominated. Women are rarely appointed to positions of power, and when they are, their power is limited. For example, although there are some examples of women being appointed as chiefs, they are often relegated to a subordinate role to their male counterparts. In addition, women are often excluded from participating in the decision-making process, and their views are not taken into account when decisions are made. According to Foucault (1975) power is not just exercised by individuals or groups but is also present in social institutions and structures. He argued that power is not something that can be possessed but rather is a dynamic force that operates in relationships between people, institutions, and social structures.

2.1.2 Decision-Making

Despite the lack of access to power, there are some examples of women being involved in the decision-making process in Zimbabwe. In particular, women are often consulted when it comes to matters relating to family and community, such as marriage, inheritance and land issues. They are also often consulted when it comes to matters of health and education, as well as economic and political issues. However, their input is not always taken into account when decisions are made, and they are often not given the same level of authority as men according to Darkwar (2012) women in traditional leadership have over the years been marginalized in decision making process

2.1.3 Impact on Society

Despite the limited access to power and decision-making, studies have found that women in traditional leadership roles in Zimbabwe have had a positive impact on society. Women are effective advocates for their communities, working to ensure that their needs are met and that their rights are respected. They have also been found to be effective mediators, helping to resolve conflicts and build bridges between different groups. In addition, they are important sources of support for other women in the community, providing both practical and emotional assistance.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

In many traditional societies, women have played and continue to play important leadership roles. However, the limitations of traditional gender roles have led to women being excluded from formal leadership positions in many of these societies. This theoretical framework seeks to explore the factors that contribute to women's participation in traditional leadership roles, and the challenges they face in doing so.

One of the key factors that contribute to women's participation in traditional leadership roles is the cultural norms and practices of the society. In many African cultures, for instance, women are usually regarded as natural leaders in the community, who are responsible for the well-being of their families and communities. As such, they are often consulted and respected for their wisdom and guidance in matters of community development and conflict resolution.

However, despite this recognition, women are often relegated to subordinate positions within traditional leadership structures, with men occupying formal leadership positions. This reflects deeply entrenched gender stereotypes that view men as the primary decision-makers and

leaders, and women as passive followers. As a result, even when women are recognized as leaders in their communities, they may not have equal access to resources or decision-making power.

Another important factor that influences women's participation in traditional leadership is their access to education and economic resources. In societies where women have limited access to education and economic resources, they are less likely to be able to fully participate in leadership roles. However, where women have access to education and economic resources, they are more likely to be able to challenge gender stereotypes and assert their leadership abilities within their communities.

In addition to cultural and structural factors, women in traditional leadership roles often face specific challenges that can limit their effectiveness as leaders. For example, they may face resistance and opposition from male leaders who are unwilling to accept their leadership, or they may be subject to gender-based violence or discrimination. Additionally, they may have limited access to formal governance structures or decision-making processes, which can make it difficult for them to advance their leadership agenda.

In conclusion, women's participation in traditional leadership roles is influenced by a wide range of factors, including cultural norms and practices, access to education and economic resources, and the challenges they face in asserting their leadership. To fully harness the leadership potential of women in traditional societies, it is important to challenge gender stereotypes and promote gender equality, as well as to provide adequate support and resources for women seeking to take on leadership roles.

2.3 Africana Womanism Theory

Africana Womanism is a term coined by the author Clenora Hudson-Weems in (1987) to describe a social theory that incorporates feminist ideals with the cultural traditions and practices of women of African descent. This theory recognizes and celebrates the unique experiences and struggles of black women, which differ from those of white feminists. Africana Womanism seeks to empower black women by emphasizing the importance of self-naming and self-definition. It encourages women to define themselves on their own terms, rather than accepting the definitions and expectations placed upon them by others.

One of the key strengths of Africana Womanism is its focus on the intersectionality of race, gender, and culture. This perspective recognizes that black women experience oppression in

unique ways, not only because of their gender, but also because of their race and culture. Additionally, Africana Womanism places a high value on the role of the family and community in the lives of black women, which is an important aspect of African culture. This theory also emphasizes the importance of spirituality and interconnectedness, which are central values in many African cultures. Africana Womanism is a response to what Hudson-Weems saw as the limitations of Feminism and Womanism for African women. It has three main components It is grounded in the experiences of Africana women, it is committed to the survival and wholeness of the entire community, and it recognizes and affirms the importance of women's roles as culture bearers and the significance of the spiritual and emotional aspects of their lives. Africana Womanism is a holistic approach to understanding the experiences of Africana women, and it emphasizes the interconnectedness of all aspects of their lives.

Despite its strengths, Africana Womanism has also been criticized for being too essentialist and not inclusive enough of other marginalized groups. Some have argued that it places too much emphasis on the experiences and struggles of heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied, and middle-class black women, and does not fully address the experiences of other marginalized groups within the black community. Additionally, some have criticized Africana Womanism for being too focused on tradition and not adaptable enough to changing social and political contexts. Despite these criticisms, Africana Womanism remains an important and influential theory within African-American feminist thought.

2.4 Roles of Women in traditional leadership

Traditional leadership has been an integral part of human society since ancient times. Among African people, traditional leadership has been the sole form of governance they have known. Traditional leaders hold a significant role as the foundations of their communities.

2.4.1 Mediators and peacemakers

Women in traditional leadership have played a significant role in conflict resolution and mediation. Women have been known to act as peacemakers in their communities by negotiating for peace and reconciliation among warring factions. They use their natural abilities of empathy, compassion, and nurturing to bring people together and find common ground.

In many traditional African societies, women have been recognized as natural mediators due to their roles as mothers, wives, and daughters. They have been involved in resolving conflicts

within families, communities, and even between tribes. Women often use their interpersonal and communication skills to build bridges between opposing sides and facilitate dialogue.

An illustration of this is the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement, led by Gbowee (2011), which played a pivotal role in bringing an end to the civil war in Liberia. Women from different ethnic and religious groups came together to demand peace and an end to the fighting. They organized sit-ins and protests, and even staged a sex strike to pressure the warring factions to sign a peace agreement. They have used their unique skills and perspectives to mediate conflicts and negotiate for peace, often with great success.

2.4.2 Advisors and counsellors

Women in traditional African societies often played important roles as advisors and counselors to traditional leaders. They were considered wise and experienced, and their counsel was valued and sought after. Women were often seen as the glue that held communities together, and their role as advisors and counselors was crucial in maintaining social harmony and resolving conflicts.

In many African societies, women were responsible for mediating disputes and resolving conflicts within the community. They were often called upon to act as peacemakers, using their wisdom and experience to bring opposing parties together and find common ground. Women were also involved in resolving family disputes and providing counseling and support to those in need. Pipher (2003) noted that counselors and advisors may have unconscious biases based on their own experiences and backgrounds, and it is important for them to be aware of these biases and work to overcome them.

As advisors and counselors, women played an important role in shaping the decisions made by traditional leaders. They often had a different perspective on issues than men, and their input was valued for its unique insights and perspectives. Women were also responsible for passing on traditional knowledge and wisdom to younger generations, ensuring that cultural traditions were preserved and passed down through the generations.

The role of women as advisors and counselors in traditional African societies was essential in maintaining social harmony and resolving conflicts. Their wisdom, experience, and unique perspective were valued and respected, and their contributions to the community were crucial in shaping the decisions made by traditional leaders.

2.4.3 Healers and spiritual leaders

Throughout African history, women have played a significant role in traditional leadership as healers and spiritual leaders. In many African cultures, women were believed to possess spiritual power that was passed down from their ancestors. As such, they were often called upon to serve as healers and spiritual leaders in their communities.

One relevant example of this is the role of the sangoma in South African traditional culture. Sangomas are traditional healers who are primarily women. They are believed to be able to communicate with the ancestors and use their spiritual powers to heal those who are sick or suffering. Sangomas play an important role in many South African communities, and their services are often sought out for a variety of ailments and problems. Dr. Watson, a nursing scholar and theorist, emphasizes the importance of caring and compassion in healthcare, which are qualities that women have traditionally embodied

In addition to their role as healers, women have also served as spiritual leaders in many African cultures. They were often the keepers of traditional wisdom and were responsible for passing it down to the next generation. They were also responsible for leading ceremonies and rituals that were important to their communities.

The role of women as healers and spiritual leaders in traditional African culture was a crucial one. They played an important role in maintaining the spiritual and physical health of their communities and were highly respected for their knowledge and abilities

2.4.4 Community organizers and mobilizers

In many African societies, women have played an important role in community organizing and mobilizing. This role has been particularly important in times of crisis, such as during natural disasters, conflicts, and epidemics. Women have been instrumental in mobilizing their communities to respond to these challenges and in providing support to those in need. According to Muthien, (1997), community organizers and mobilizers are responsible for "the mobilization of resources and the coordination of activities towards a common goal or objective

For example, during the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in (2014), women played a crucial role in mobilizing their communities to respond to the crisis. They worked with health workers and local officials to spread awareness about the disease and to encourage people to adopt preventive measures. They also provided care and support to those affected by the disease, including orphans and widows. According to Dr. Patricia McFadden 2002 has written

extensively about the role of women in community mobilization and organization in Africa. McFadden notes that women have been instrumental in organizing around issues such as healthcare, education, and economic empowerment

In many African societies, women have also been involved in organizing and leading community development initiatives. They have been instrumental in promoting education, health, and economic development in their communities. They have also been involved in advocating for the rights of women and marginalized groups.

However, despite the important role that women have played in community organizing and mobilizing, they have often been excluded from formal leadership positions and decision-making processes. This has limited their ability to influence policy and to effect meaningful change in their communities. It is therefore important to recognize and support the important work that women do in these roles and to promote their participation in formal leadership positions.

2.4.5 Decision-makers on issues that affect women and children

Women in traditional African societies have played a critical role as decision-makers on issues that affect women and children. This role is particularly significant because women have traditionally been excluded from formal decision-making structures in most traditional African societies. Women in traditional leadership positions are able to use their knowledge of the community and their relationships with members of the community to make informed decisions on issues that affect women and children.

For example, in many African communities, women leaders have been instrumental in creating initiatives to address issues such as maternal and child health, education, and economic empowerment. These initiatives are often community-led and involve a range of stakeholders, including women, men, youth, and elders. Gaidzanwa (1992) contended that women have historically held an indispensable position in society

One example is the Women's Development Committee in Ghana by Aidoo, which was established in the 1980s to address the needs of women and children in rural communities. The committee was made up of women leaders and was responsible for identifying the needs of the community and developing strategies to address those needs. The committee was able to secure funding from the government and other sources to implement a range of development projects, including health clinics, schools, and economic empowerment programs.

Women in traditional leadership positions have played a crucial role in ensuring that the needs of women and children are addressed in African communities. They have been able to do this by using their knowledge of the community, their relationships with members of the community, and their ability to mobilize resources and stakeholders to create positive change.

2.5 Challenges faced by Women in traditional leadership

Traditional leadership systems have historically been male-dominated, with little or no recognition of the leadership potential of women. As a result, women seeking leadership positions in traditional leadership structures face a range of challenges that need to be reckoned with.

2.5.1 Marginalization and discrimination based on gender

Women in traditional leadership face various challenges, such as marginalization and discrimination based on gender. They are often not given equal opportunities to lead or participate in decision-making processes. This marginalization and discrimination are perpetuated by traditional beliefs that women are inferior to men and should not hold positions of power. According to Kabeer (1999), women's marginalization in leadership positions is often rooted in cultural norms and values that prioritize men's leadership roles

Women in traditional leadership are often excluded from important meetings, and their opinions are not valued. This exclusion limits their ability to influence decisions that affect their communities and perpetuates gender inequality. Okome (2006) notes that women in traditional leadership positions are often excluded from decision-making processes, which limits their ability to influence policy and programs that affect their communities. Women in traditional leadership are also subjected to gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and assault.

In order to tackle these obstacles, it is crucial to provide education to communities regarding the significance of gender equality and the involvement of women in leadership positions. It is important to encourage traditional leaders, particularly men, to actively support women in leadership roles and foster gender equality within their communities. Governments can contribute by implementing policies that advocate for gender equality and safeguard the rights of women.

2.5.2 Patriarchal power structures that exclude women from decision-making processes

Women in traditional leadership often face challenges caused by patriarchal power structures that exclude them from the decision-making process. These power structures, which are deeply ingrained in many African societies, often view women as inferior and incapable of holding leadership positions. As a result, women are often excluded from political and economic decision-making processes.

One example of this is the practice of male-only councils, which are common in many African societies. These councils are responsible for making important decisions about the community, such as land allocation and dispute resolution. Women are often excluded from these councils, which perpetuates the idea that women are not capable of making important decisions.

This exclusion from decision-making processes has a significant impact on women's lives. For example, women may not have a say in how resources are allocated, which can leave them without access to important resources such as land and water. Additionally, decisions made by male-only councils may not take into account the unique needs and perspectives of women, which can result in policies and practices that are harmful to women.

Addressing these patriarchal power structures is crucial for empowering women in traditional leadership. This can involve challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes, promoting women's education and leadership development, and advocating for gender-inclusive decision-making processes.

2.5.3 Limited access to resources and education

Limited resources and education are major challenges faced by women in traditional leadership. In many African communities, women do not have equal access to resources such as land, capital, and credit. According to a report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 2021, women's access to education and economic resources is a critical factor in their ability to participate in leadership roles effectively. This lack of access to resources limits their ability to effectively lead and make decisions on behalf of their communities. Additionally, many women in traditional leadership positions may lack formal education, which can make it difficult for them to navigate complex governance structures and decision-making processes. This can also create barriers to their ability to effectively advocate for the needs of their communities. In many patriarchal societies, women are often denied access to education, which limits their ability to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to lead. For

instance, a study by Alsharif in (2018) on women's leadership in Saudi Arabia states that women's education is a crucial factor in their ability to participate in leadership roles

2.5.4 Stereotyping and negative cultural attitudes towards women in leadership roles

Stereotyping and negative cultural attitudes towards women in leadership roles are significant challenges faced by women in traditional leadership. In many cultures, there is a belief that women are not suited for leadership roles or that their place is in the home. These attitudes can create barriers to women's participation in traditional leadership and limit their ability to influence decisions that affect their communities. Kadar. In her book (2011)"Gender Issues in Ethnography," He argues that women in leadership positions face pervasive gender stereotypes that affect their ability to be effective leaders.

These stereotypes include the belief that women are less capable than men in decision-making and leadership roles, and that they are overly emotional and nurturing, which is not seen as appropriate for leadership roles. Stereotyping and negative cultural attitudes can also lead to discrimination against women in leadership positions, making it harder for them to be taken seriously or to have their voices heard. Overcoming these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that involves education, awareness-raising, and the promotion of positive role models. It is essential to challenge gender stereotypes and to promote gender equality and the inclusion of women in leadership roles. Enloe (2012) argues that stereotyping and negative attitudes towards women in leadership positions are often reinforced by cultural and social norms. She notes that women who hold positions of power are often subjected to gender-based discrimination, which can lead to their marginalization and exclusion from leadership roles

2.5.5 Resistance to change from those who benefit from the status quo

A major obstacle encountered by women in traditional leadership is the opposition to change from individuals who benefit from the existing state of affairs. According to Kabeer (1999), those who hold traditional power positions are often resistant to change, particularly when it threatens their status and authority There are often individuals who are resistant to change, particularly when it comes to shifting power dynamics. This can be particularly true in traditional societies where patriarchal power structures are deeply ingrained and where women are not traditionally seen as leaders. Molyneux (1985) have noted that resistance to change can also come from women themselves, particularly those who have internalized patriarchal values. Such women may resist efforts to promote gender equality and may even work to undermine the efforts of other women leaders. Those who benefit from maintaining the status quo may

resist changes that could empower women and threaten their own positions of power. This resistance can manifest in various forms, such as blocking women from participating in decision-making processes or discrediting their leadership abilities. It is important to acknowledge and address these challenges in order to promote gender equality and empower women in traditional leadership.

2.6 A comparative analysis on the past and present narratives on African women in traditional leadership

African women have played significant roles in traditional leadership across the continent for centuries. However, the narratives associated with these women have changed over time. In the past, African women in traditional leadership roles were often portrayed as passive figures, subservient to men and confined to domestic chores. They were viewed as inferior to men and rarely given opportunities to participate in decision-making processes.

However, in recent times, there has been a shift in the narratives associated with African women in traditional leadership roles. Women are increasingly being recognized as key players in the development of their communities and nations. The roles of women have expanded beyond domestic chores to include positions of leadership in different sectors, including politics, education, and business.

Despite these advancements, women in traditional leadership roles still face several challenges. Patriarchal power structures, limited resources and education, stereotyping and negative cultural attitudes, marginalization, and discrimination based on gender, and resistance to change are among the obstacles that women must overcome.

In conclusion, there has been progress in the narrative associated with African women in traditional leadership roles. Although there are still challenges to overcome, women are increasingly being recognized as key players in the development of their communities and nations.

2.7 Opportunities of Women in traditional leadership

Women leadership is a valuable resource that cannot be ignored, especially in traditional societies where women have played important roles in various aspects of life. This essay explores the opportunities available for women in traditional leadership.

Traditional leadership is a term that refers to the governing structures, practices and system of governance that have been in place for centuries. In such societies, women have actively participated in different roles, from engaging in decision-making processes to leadership positions. Additionally, women have played various influential roles in the community, such as medicine women, spiritual healers, and cultural custodians.

One of the main opportunities for women in traditional leadership is the ability to contribute to decision-making processes. For instance, in many African societies, women have been the custodians of culture, playing a vital role in socialization and instilling values within the community. They have also been involved in resolving conflicts, which has played a significant role in maintaining peace.

Furthermore, women have been involved in agriculture, which as a vital sector for many traditional communities. Women have played a significant role in food production, and their contribution has helped to mitigate hunger and poverty. In many societies, women are also involved in the creation of handicrafts, which have been sold in local markets, boosting the local economy.

Another significant opportunity for women in traditional leadership is their role as spiritual leaders. Women in traditional societies are often the stewards of religion and play important roles in religious ceremonies and worship. As spiritual leaders, they have a significant influence on the community and can help shape their community's values, beliefs and norms.

Traditional leadership also provides women with the opportunity to access education and training, which can help to advance their careers in different fields. For instance, women can gain training in agricultural practices, entrepreneurship or traditional medicine, which can help them to grow their businesses and promote economic growth.

Furthermore, women in traditional leadership positions can serve as role models, inspiring young girls to take up leadership roles in their communities. They can mentor and guide young girls, helping them to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their careers.

In conclusion, women in traditional leadership positions can play a vital role in the development of their communities. They have numerous opportunities, including contributing to decision-making processes, playing a significant role in agriculture and handicrafts, serving as spiritual leaders, accessing education and training, and inspiring young girls to take up leadership roles. By empowering and supporting women in traditional leadership, societies can

benefit from their experience, knowledge and skills, and help promote gender equality and sustainable development.

2.8 Legal Frameworks

2.8.1 Constitutional provision on traditional leadership

The issue of women's participation in traditional leadership has been a contentious one in many societies around the world, including in many African countries where traditional structures continue to play a significant role in governance and decision-making. In order to address this issue, many countries have enshrined constitutional provisions or legislation aimed at promoting the rights and participation of women in traditional leadership structures.

One of the key constitutional provisions that promotes women's participation in traditional leadership is the principle of gender equality. This principle is enshrined in the constitutions of many countries, including South Africa, Ghana, Uganda, and Kenya, among others. The principle of gender equality requires that men and women be given equal opportunities to participate in all spheres of life, including in traditional leadership structures.

In addition to the principle of gender equality, many countries have specific provisions that address the issue of women in traditional leadership. For example, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, provides for the recognition of traditional leadership and specifies that women must be represented in traditional leadership structures at all levels. The Constitution also prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender and requires that women be given equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of traditional leadership.

Similarly, the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda provides for the recognition of traditional leaders and specifies that they shall be representative of the diversity of the people of Uganda, including women. The Constitution further provides for affirmative action measures aimed at redressing imbalances in the representation of women and marginalized communities in traditional leadership.

The Constitution of the Republic of Kenya also provides for the recognition of traditional leadership and requires that women be represented in traditional and cultural institutions. The Constitution further provides for the establishment of structures and mechanisms aimed at promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in all aspects of society, including in traditional leadership structures.

The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana similarly recognizes the role of traditional leaders in governance and requires that they promote the development of their communities. The Constitution also provides for affirmative action measures aimed at promoting the participation of women and marginalized groups in traditional leadership structures.

In addition to constitutional provisions, many countries have also enacted legislation to promote women's participation in traditional leadership. For example, the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, (2017), of South Africa provides for the representation of women in traditional councils and requires that traditional councils adopt gender-sensitive practices and policies. The Traditional and Cultural Leaders Act, (2019), of Kenya similarly provides for the representation of women in traditional and cultural institutions and requires that they adopt gender-sensitive practices and policies.

Despite these constitutional and legislative provisions, however, the participation of women in traditional leadership structures remains limited in many societies. Traditional structures are often deeply patriarchal and resistant to change, and women continue to face significant barriers to their participation in traditional leadership. Addressing these challenges will require a sustained effort by governments, civil society organizations, and traditional leaders themselves to promote gender equality and empower women in all aspects of society.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, an analysis of relevant literature was conducted, aligning with the objectives of the study. The researcher specifically concentrated on the Africana womanism theory, which directly addressed the research aim. The information derived from this literature will be utilized to discuss the research findings presented in chapter four of the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methods which the researcher employed in collecting data. The chapter provides the research design; study population, sampling procedure and the sample size. The chapter will also consider the research instruments and the activities carried out. A desktop survey which included the consultation of primary and secondary sources of data were also used

3.1 Research Approach

Refers to the systematic method used to conduct a research project. It includes the methods techniques and procedures employed in collecting, analyzing and interpreting data. The choice of research approach depends on the research question, the type of data that will be collected and the research design

3.2 Study Population

According to Leedy (2012), the scholar described a population as any group type of individuals' that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. The population for this study consists of the significance of women in traditional leadership the researcher also chose this population because it's within his proximity which can be easy for him to collect data

3.3 Sampling

According to Touvila (2020), sampling is defined as a statistical analysis method that involves selecting a predetermined number of observations from a larger population. In this study, non-probability sampling was employed. According to Babbie (2015), non-probability sampling occurs when the probability of including each population element in the sample is unknown. The researcher utilized purposeful sampling technique, selecting volunteers who were familiar with the research topic. Purposive sampling is commonly used with small sample sizes and enhances the study's reliability, as noted by Breakwell et al. (2012). Additionally, an eligibility

criterion refers to the specific attributes of the target population used to select individuals for inclusion in the study, as defined by Babbie (2012)

3.4 Data Collection

According to Couper (2017), data collection process is the act of gathering primary or secondary data utilizing various techniques or technologies. The researcher applied semi structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires as two ways for gathering his primary data

3.4.1 Semi structured interviews

Interviews are a popular research technique that combines the flexibility of an unstructured interview with the structure of a structured interview. Semi-structured interviews are used in a wide range of fields, including sociology, psychology, anthropology, and business, to explore complex topics and gain detailed insights into people's experiences, beliefs, and attitudes.

Unlike structured interviews, which use standardized questions that are asked in the same order to all participants, semi-structured interviews use a flexible format that allows the interviewer to ask follow-up questions or probe for more information based on the participant's responses. Semi-structured interviews commonly commence by presenting a series of open-ended questions intended to encourage participants to provide comprehensive and expansive responses. These questions may cover a wide range of topics and are often based on the research questions or hypotheses.

During the semi-structured interview, the interviewer will ask follow-up questions or probes to elicit more detailed responses from the participant. These questions may be founded on the participant's answers, and the interviewer may seek clarification or ask for more information. The interviewer may also use prompts or probes to encourage the participant to expand on their responses or to explore related topics. The interviewer's role in a semi-structured interview is to facilitate a conversation that allows the participant to share their experiences, beliefs, and attitudes in their own words.

One of the benefits of using a semi-structured interview is that it allows for flexibility and adaptation during the interview process. This flexibility can be particularly useful when exploring complex or sensitive topics, as participants may need more time to elaborate on their

experiences or may have difficulty answering certain questions. The flexibility of a semi-structured interview also enables the interviewer to adjust the interview questions based on the participant's responses, which can

3.4.2 Open ended questionnaires

Questionnaires which are open ended in structure are a form of data collection that allows respondents to provide detailed and nuanced answers to questions. Unlike closed-ended questionnaires, which offer a limited set of pre-determined response options, open-ended questionnaires allow participants to express their thoughts, opinions, and experiences in their own words. This can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the topic being studied, as well as provide rich and detailed data that can be used for analysis.

One of the primary benefits of open-ended questionnaires is that they can capture a wider range of responses than closed-ended questionnaires. With closed-ended questions, respondents are limited to selecting from a set of pre-determined response options, which may not accurately reflect their true feelings or experiences. Open-ended questions, on the other hand, allow participants to provide more detailed responses that can capture the nuances and complexities of their experiences.

Another benefit of open-ended questionnaires is that they can provide more detailed and nuanced data that can be used for analysis. Since respondents are free to provide detailed answers, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of the participants. This can be particularly useful when studying complex topics, such as social issues or healthcare, where there may be many different factors at play.

Open-ended questionnaires can also provide valued intuitions into the viewpoints and experiences of minority groups or individuals who may not fit neatly into traditional categories or response options. By allowing participants to provide their own answers, researchers can gain a improved understanding of the unique challenges and experiences of these individuals, which can inform policy and program development.

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

The analysis of data entails the procedure of scrutinizing, refining, converting, and modeling data with the objective of uncovering valuable information that can assist in making informed

decisions. On the other hand, data presentation entails the visual representation of the processed data through graphs, charts, tables, or any other meaningful way.

Data analysis can be broken down into several stages, including data cleaning, data transformation, data modeling, and data interpretation. The process of data cleaning encompasses the identification and rectification of errors, inconsistencies, and outliers present in the data. This essential step guarantees that the analysis is conducted using precise and dependable data. In data transformation, the data is prepared for analysis by converting it into a format that is suitable for statistical analysis. This step may involve creating new variables, aggregating data, or recoding variables.

Once the data is transformed, data modeling involves applying statistical techniques to the data to extract meaningful information. This step may include descriptive statistics that summarize the data, inferential statistics that test hypotheses, or predictive modeling that attempts to forecast future outcomes. Data interpretation involves making sense of the results of the analysis by identifying patterns, trends, and relationships in the data.

Data presentation involves communicating the results of the analysis to the intended audience in a clear and concise manner. The ultimate goal of data presentation is to enable the audience to understand the findings and make informed decisions based on them.

There are several ways to present data, including graphs, charts, tables, and diagrams. Graphs and charts are particularly effective for presenting numerical data, while tables are useful for presenting categorical data. Diagrams can be used to show the relationship between variables.

Effective data presentation involves selecting the appropriate type of visual aid to represent the relationship between variable research findings were   analyzed using thematic analysis approach because it is a qualitative research method. The research findings were also assessed using through ugh using thematic analysis approach, research findings were explored to identify, analyze and report the patterns within the data which is used to identify, analyze and reporting patterns or themes within data (Chambers,2018). Thematic analysis assisted the researcher to establish semantic themes and fundamental themes that recognized difficulties that women in traditional leadership encounter. Thematic analysis was appropriate for the nature of the study and it was compatible with the types of data collection methods which were used as the researcher was able to explain and convey data that he had gathered. The findings were examined in chapter four (4) together with their detailed analysis.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Data collected is supposed to be valid and reliable thus the researcher employed validity and reliability in ensuring information gathered is worth it. The study's findings reflected the researcher's objectives clearly indicating that information gathered was valid. The tools for research used by the researcher can be used by other researchers to obtain same or more in-depth information which the researcher obtained thus making it reliable. the research also took into account crucial ethical considerations which the researcher saw fit to use in his study.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher was able to put his research into practice and adhere to the laws that govern the people of the community that he researched at.

3.7.1 Permission and Informed Consent

In this research, participation was voluntary and any participant who wanted to withdraw during the course of the research withdrew freely. Informed consent is a provision which allows the researcher to seek permission from the participant before agreeing to participate in the study without being coerced by the researcher to participate. Purpose of the study, the anticipated risks and benefits, any conveniences or discomfort and that the participants are allowed refuse or withdraw from the research at any time (Chambers,2018).

3.7.2 Confidentiality

The term "confidentiality" has been defined by ACA (2014) to refer to information shared between two parties in a relationship of trust with the understanding that it won't be revealed to others without their consent or in ways that are inconsistent with the original disclosure. The researcher told the participants that the data they provided would be kept private and that he would use all reasonable efforts to avoid disclosing it without their permission.

3.7.3 Harm to respondents

The researcher made sure to protect participants from any harm. Babbie (2015) elaborated on the importance of protecting participants from any harm during the research. Participants' wellbeing matters the most during research and the researcher is responsible for observing certain ethical codes. The research tried to avoid any harm of the participants.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This section has concentrated on the research methodology of the study. The descriptive research design has been adopted for use in the research. The researcher utilized primary and secondary sources in the study. The researcher employed a qualitative approach in carrying out the research and thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data. In the next chapter, data collected will be presented.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS PRESENTATIONS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

The main purpose of the research was to evaluate the significance of the role of women in traditional leadership in Bindura District. Therefore, this chapter is going to provide the research findings which the researcher obtained during the study.

4.1 Presentations on Research findings

A narrative form of presentations is going to be used in this chapter according to the research findings from the respondents. Data obtained will be analysed in line with the study's objectives. The objectives are to identify the roles played by women in traditional leadership, the challenges encountered by women in traditional leadership and to conduct a comprehensive analysis on the past and present narratives that are associated with African women in traditional leadership. The researcher adhered to using narrative form so at to make complex findings create an emotional connection and make the information more understandable.

4.2 Demography

It is the study of human population including its size, distribution density migration, birth and death rates age and gender structure.

4.2.1 Sex

Out of the total respondents, 60% were female, and 40% were male. This indicates that females were more interested in the participation of women in traditional leadership than males this is also shown by the table 4.1 and also by the figure 4.1

Table 4. 1: Sex of respondents

SEX	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
MALES	6	40%
FEMALES	9	60%
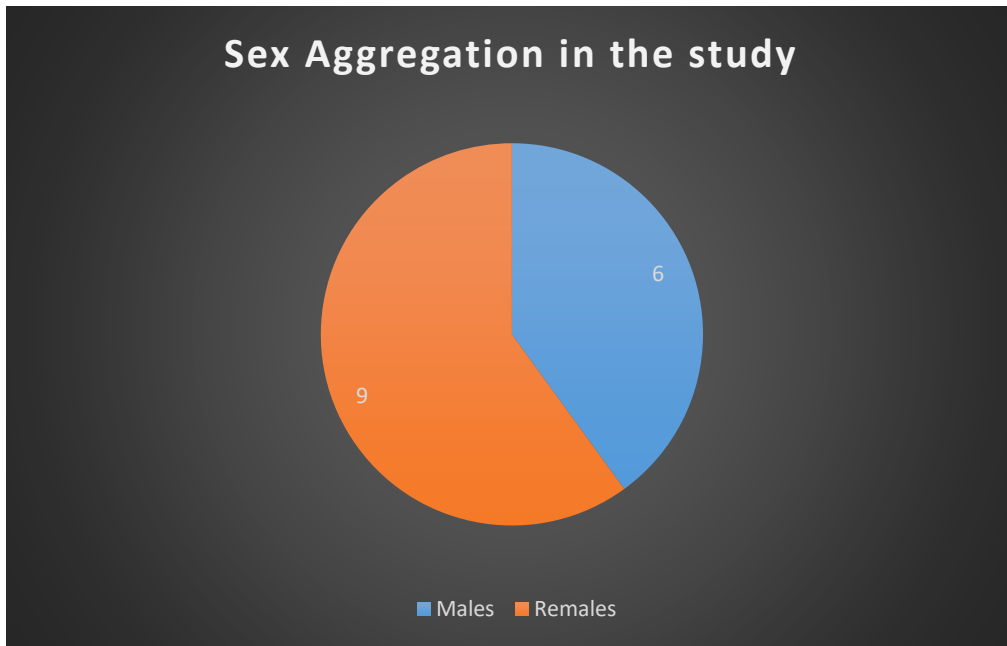
Figure 4. 1: Sex aggregation of respondents in the study

4.2.2 Age

The age group of the respondents ranged from 18 to 65 years, with the majority falling between 18-29 years (45%). This indicates that the participation of women in traditional leadership is commonly known by the middle-aged group as shown in the table 4.2 and also figure 4.2

Table 4. 2: Age of respondents

Age Group	No of Respondents	Percentages
18-29	6	40%
30-39	4	27%
40-49	3	20%
49>	2	13%
Total	15	100%
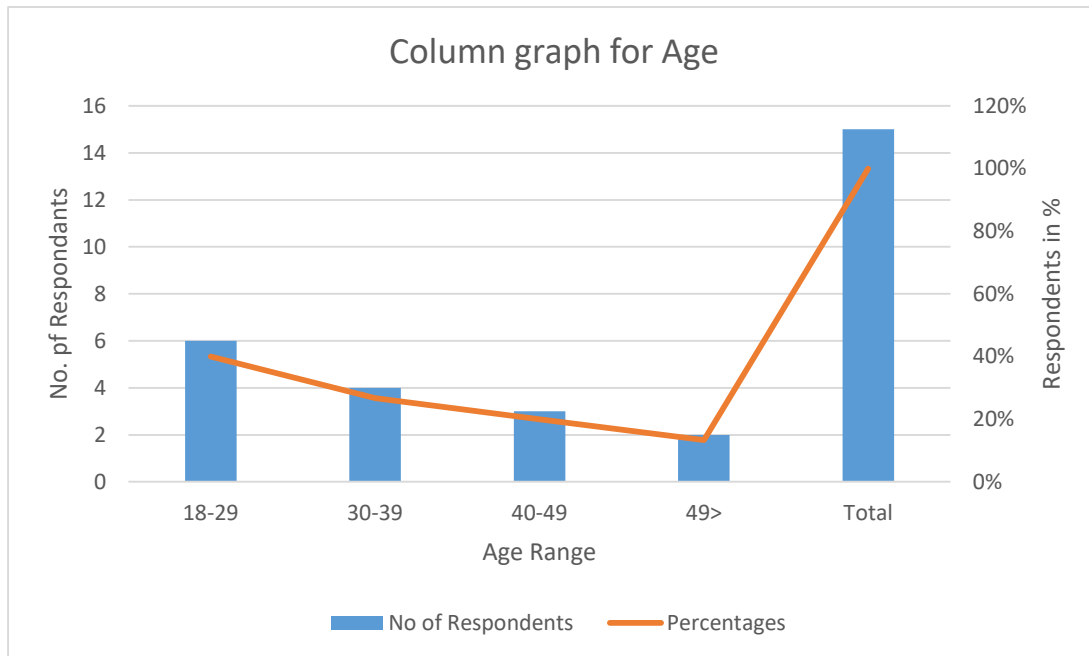
Figure 4. 2: Age of respondents

Table 4. 3: Educational Qualifications of respondents

Tertiary	3
Secondary	4
Primary	8

4.2.3 Occupation

The respondents' occupations were also diverse, with 14% being employed in the private sector, 28% in the public sector, 23% self-employed, and 35% unemployed. This indicates that most of the responded are unemployed which is represented by table 4.4 and figure 4.3

Table 4. 4: Occupation of respondents

OCCUPATION	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGES

PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT	2	13%
PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT	4	27%
SELF EMPLOYMENT	4	27%
NO EMPLOYMENT	5	33%
TOTAL	15	100%
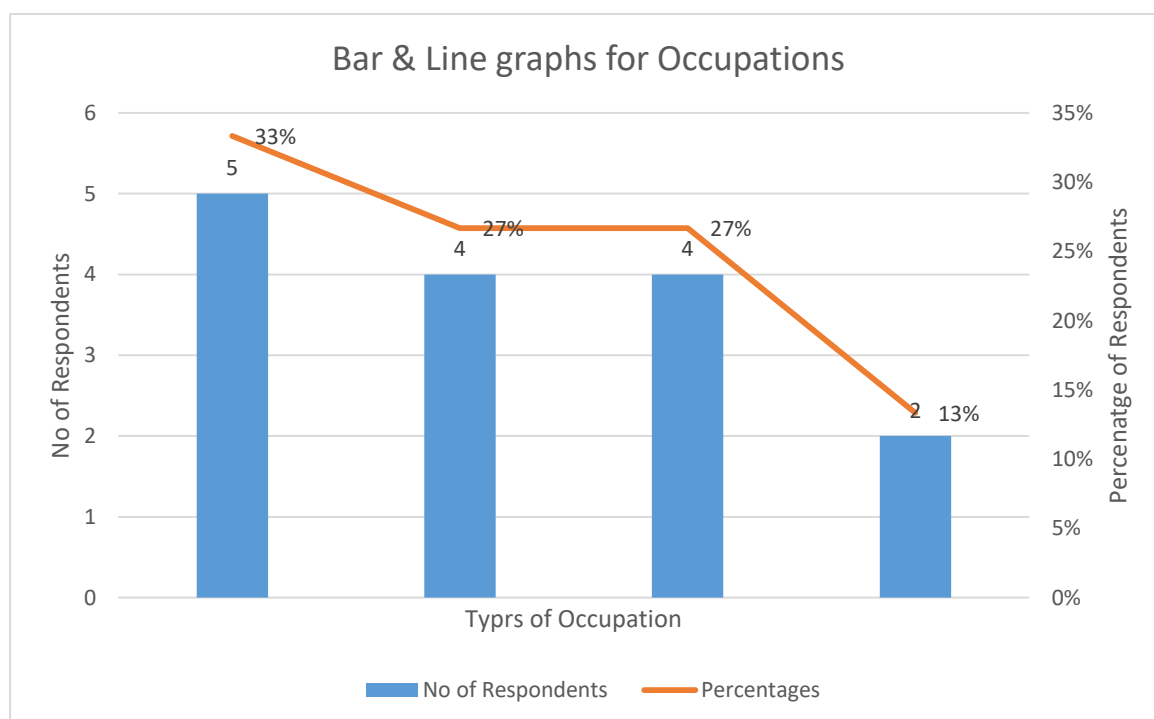
Figure 4. 3: Occupation of Respondents

4.3 Roles played by women in traditional leadership

Women have played a significant role in traditional leadership for centuries. Despite various cultural, structural, and societal barriers, they have continued to challenge the status quo and have made an indelible impact on their communities. According to Dr Kim Terri 2015 he argues that women have been at the forefront of promoting peace and security in their communities. Women who hold traditional leadership positions have been at the forefront of promoting peace, resolving conflicts, and mediating disputes. This role has been widely

recognized and celebrated by scholars and researchers who have written extensively on the topic for example Cynthia Enloe 2000, The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 adopted in 2000. In this context, this topic seeks to explore the meaning of the word "roles" within the context of women in traditional leadership while citing relevant scholars

4.3.1 Mediators and peace makers

Mediators are individuals who help to resolve disputes between two or more parties by facilitating communication and negotiation between them. On the other hand, peace makers are people who work towards preventing conflicts and promoting peace. When asked of issues to do with being a mediator and peacemaker,

Participant said: *Well, I think one of the most important qualities is empathy. Women tend to be good listeners and have a strong sense of empathy, which allows them to understand the perspectives and concerns of all parties involved in a conflict. They're also often skilled at building relationships and finding common ground*.

Another participant said: *Yes, unfortunately there are still many barriers for women in this field. In some cultures, and communities, women are not seen as authoritative or competent enough to be mediators or peace makers. They also often face discrimination and harassment on the job.*

Key informant said: *I think one of the most important qualities is empathy. Women tend to be good listeners and have a strong sense of empathy, which allows them to understand the perspectives and concerns of all parties involved in a conflict. They're also often skilled at building relationships and finding common ground* and she also said that: *I think there are several things that can be done. First, we need to raise awareness about the important role that women can play in conflict resolution and peace building. We also need to provide training and support for women who are interested in this field, and create more opportunities for them to get involved. Finally, we need to address the systemic barriers and discrimination that women face, both in terms of access to education and employment opportunities*

Dr. Medie 2015 discusses the importance of including women in peacebuilding efforts. She argues that women, as primary caregivers and members of civil society, have unique perspectives that can contribute to sustainable peace and also Dr. Golan 2011 argues that

women are well-suited for peacebuilding roles due to their ability to empathize and communicate effectively

Figures 4.3.2 showing women as spiritual mediators

4.3.2 Healers and Spiritual leaders

In traditional societies, women have played crucial roles as healers and spiritual leaders. Healers refer to women who use their knowledge of herbs and other natural remedies to heal the sick, injured, or ailing members of their communities. Spiritual leaders, on the other hand, are women who lead religious ceremonies, offer blessings and prayers, and provide guidance on moral and ethical issues.

These roles have been recognized and respected in many cultures and communities around the world, and women who hold these positions are often highly regarded for their wisdom, compassion, and healing abilities. In traditional leadership, women often held the roles of healers and spiritual leaders. As healers, women were responsible for the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of their communities. They used various methods such as herbal medicine, massage, and prayer to heal their patients. As spiritual leaders, women were responsible for leading religious ceremonies, offering guidance and counsel, and interpreting dreams and visions. They served as intermediaries between the spiritual world and their

communities. These roles were highly respected in traditional societies and played an important role in maintaining social harmony and well-being

Participant said: I *think that women are often more attuned to the spiritual realm, and are able to connect with it more easily. Women are also often more nurturing and compassionate, which are important qualities for a spiritual leader to have* and she also stated that *Women can bring a unique perspective and set of skills to the table. They are often more in tune with their intuition, and can help guide people on a deeper level. Women can also provide a nurturing and supportive environment for people on their spiritual journeys.*

Another participant said: *I think that women have always been healers, even if they haven't always been recognized as such. Traditionally, women were the ones who cared for the sick and injured in their communities, and that role has carried over into modern times* she also said that *Women are often more in tune with their intuition and emotions, which can be very helpful in the healing process. We also tend to be more nurturing and compassionate, which are important qualities for anyone in the healing profession*

Key informant said: *unfortunately there are still some people who don't take women healers seriously or who believe that men are better suited to the role. But I've found that by staying true to my own abilities and continuing to educate myself and improve my skills, I can overcome those obstacles and gain the respect of my clients and also to trust your instincts and don't let anyone tell you that you can't do something. If you're passionate about helping others and you have a natural talent for healing, then go for it! There are so many different paths you can take in the healing profession, so don't be afraid to explore your options and find what works best for you*

In traditional societies, women have often played key roles as healers and spiritual leaders. These roles are frequently linked, with healers drawing on spiritual practices and beliefs to help their patients. Some scholars have studied the role of women in traditional healing practices.

For instance, Dr.Sibanda (2011), a scholar from the University of South Africa, has written about the role of women as traditional healers in southern Africa. She notes that in many African cultures, traditional healers are believed to have been called by a divine power to act as intermediaries between the living and the dead. Women, in particular, are believed to have a special connection to the spiritual realm and are often called upon to perform healing rituals.

Likewise, Dr. Luckman, (2000) a scholar from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, has written about the role of women as spiritual leaders in African societies. She notes that women have been spiritual leaders in many African cultures for centuries and have served as intermediaries between the living and the dead. They have also been responsible for passing on traditional beliefs and practices from one generation to the next.

Figure 4.3.2 women as traditional leaders

4.3.3 Advisors and Counsellors

Advisors are individuals who provide expert advice or guidance to decision-makers. They are usually highly knowledgeable and experienced in a particular field, and their role is to provide objective and informed recommendations to help inform the decision-making process. Advisors can be found in various settings, including government, corporations, and non-profit organizations. Advisors and counsellors play an essential role in traditional leadership. Advisors offer guidance and counsel to the leader, assisting them in making informed decisions. They may also provide support to the leader in various other ways. Counsellors, on the other hand, provide guidance on personal and emotional matters. They may offer advice on how to manage stress, deal with conflict, and improve interpersonal relationships. In traditional leadership, women have played significant roles as advisors and counsellors. They have offered guidance to leaders, assisted in decision-making, and provided support to community members. Women's roles as counsellors have been particularly important, as they have often been responsible for helping individuals navigate complex emotional and personal issues

Participant said*: I can testify that involving women has brought great changes in the community*

Another participant said*: Vakadzi varinani kuti vatore zvinzvimbo zvehutungamiri nekuti Havana havi yeuori zvekare vane rudo nevanhu vese zvinoita kuti vanhu vanouya kuzobatisrwa nematambudziko varerukirwe.*

(We want women to be leaders because women leaders are less corrupt than their male counterparts and their decisions are made with people at heart because they are mothers

Key informant said*: Kubva munguva yeBhaibheri, madzimai aisawana mukana wekutora zvinzvimbo zvehutungamiri zvepamusoro. Hazvingaite kuti utore mubatsiri pamba kuti auye kuzokutongera mararamiro ako semuridzi wemba, ndiwe unotomuudza zvokuita zvimwechezvo semucherechedzo mudzimai haangauye kuti atungamire, Mwari pavakasika Eve vakati kuna Adam, ndakusikira mubatsiri vachireva kune mudzimai.*

(Throughout history, women have traditionally not held positions of authority, as depicted in biblical references. Consider the scenario of hiring a maid; it is the homeowner who provides instructions to the hired help, rather than the other way around. Similarly, when God created Eve, He referred to women as helpers for Adam)

According to scholars like Adetunji, (2013), women counsellors in traditional African societies, including Zimbabwe, have played a crucial role in promoting social harmony and resolving conflicts. They have earned respect and trust from the community, making them an essential part of traditional leadership structures. The insights provided by the participants indicate that the marginalization of women in traditional leadership roles can be attributed to conservative elements and practices ingrained in the culture of the Bindura District. Ngan (2011) and Biri and Mutambwa (2013) explain this phenomenon. The long-standing social structures have perpetuated discriminatory practices concerning the appointment of women to leadership positions. Dodo (2013) supports this claim by suggesting that men have dominated traditional leadership, which has contributed to the persisting unfavorable conditions for women. This situation reflects the argument put forth by the role congruity theory of prejudice, where culture has played a role in socializing the notion that men are leaders while women are expected to follow.

Figure 4.3.3 showing headwoman Jingu Counselling Hall

4.3.4 Community Organizers and Mobilizers

Community organizers and mobilizers are individuals who work towards empowering and mobilizing communities to achieve a common goal. In the context of women in traditional leadership, community organizers and mobilizers play a critical role in advocating for gender equality and women's rights. They work to ensure that women have access to resources and opportunities that enable them to participate in leadership and decision-making processes. They also work to raise awareness and mobilize communities to address issues that affect women, such as gender-based violence, limited access to education and healthcare, and discriminatory cultural practices.

Participant said:*Mudunhu ratinogara rinokoshesa nekutsigira vanhukadzi kuti vatungamire nokuti paitova nevatungamiri vechidzimai sanambuya Nehand vaitotungamira zvinomwisa mvura munguva yehondo*

 (The residents of this District demonstrate their support for women leaders, citing historical examples of prominent female figures like Nehanda, who played a significant role during the liberation struggle of the 1890s.)

Another participant said: *Women can be very effective at mobilizing communities because they have a unique perspective on the needs of their families and communities. They are often the*

ones who are responsible for caring for children, the sick, and the elderly, so they have a deep understanding of what resources are needed to support these groups.

Key informant said*: women in this community are actively involved in decision-making related to issues concerning children and women. They participate in community meetings and are represented in local leadership structures. They also have their own groups and associations (China chevadzimai ne mukando) where they discuss and address issues affecting them and their families*

According to the African Journal of Political Science and International Relations 2015, women in traditional leadership can benefit from community organizers and mobilizers in several ways. These include building solidarity among women, promoting gender equality, and ensuring that women's voices are heard in decision-making processes.

In addition, scholars such as Akinyemi and Adesina (2015) have argued that community mobilization can help to challenge patriarchal power structures and promote gender equality in traditional leadership. By organizing and mobilizing women, community organizers and mobilizers can create a platform for women to demand their rights and challenge the status quo.

Figure 4.3.4 showing the researcher with a traditional leader

4.3.5 Decision makers on issues concerning women and children

Decision makers on issues concerning women and children are individuals or groups who have the power to influence policies, allocate resources, and make decisions that affect the well-being of women and children. These decision makers can include politicians, government officials, community leaders, and heads of non-governmental organizations. It is important for decision makers to consider the needs and perspectives of women and children in their decision-making processes. This is because women and children are often the most vulnerable members of society and can be disproportionately affected by policies and decisions. To ensure that the voices of women and children are heard, it is necessary to promote their participation in decision-making processes. This can be achieved by creating opportunities for women and children to express their views and concerns, providing them with access to information, building their capacity to engage in decision-making processes, and ensuring that their participation is meaningful and leads to concrete outcomes**.**

Participant said: *Vakadzi vanogona kutungamira zvakanaka nekuda kwekuwandirwa nemabasa akawanda epamusha.*

(Women's proficiency in multitasking due to their various responsibilities within the household makes them capable of excelling in leadership roles)

Within traditional African society, the well-being of the family and the prospects of marriage relied heavily on the contributions of African women. Gaidzanwa (1992) contended that women have historically held an indispensable position in society. It has also been observed that women play a crucial role in maintaining most marriages and nurturing children. An elderly man further corroborated this viewpoint.

Another participant said: *Well, women in this community are actively involved in decision-making related to issues concerning children and women. They participate in community meetings and are represented in local leadership structures. They also have their own groups and associations where they discuss and address issues affecting them and their families*

The findings align with the research conducted by Tein (2010), which emphasizes the influence of cultural context on women's perspectives regarding their responsibilities and the balance of family life. It is evident that many women are tasked with managing households, including the well-being of children, highlighting certain social responsibilities that they cannot disregard.

4.4 Challenges faced by women in Traditional leadership

4.4.1 Marginalization and Discrimination

Marginalization can be defined as the societal and economic process of pushing a particular group of individuals to a lower social status or the periphery of society. It happens when an individual or a group is treated as insignificant, unimportant, or pushed to the side lines of society, and their needs and opinions are disregarded by the mainstream. This can occur due to factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or socioeconomic status.

Discrimination against women in traditional leadership is a widespread phenomenon in many societies. In most traditional societies, leadership positions are predominantly held by men, with women often excluded from participation or relegated to a secondary role. Discrimination against women in traditional leadership takes various forms, including exclusion from decision-making processes, limited access to resources and political power, and lack of representation in leadership positions.

Participant said: *despite the roles we partake in traditional leadership, our efforts will always be inferior to those of men. The society is based on male domination*

Another participant said: *Certain men exhibited a lack of trust in women's leadership abilities, often expressing doubts about their confidence and perceiving them as inherently weak. As a result, women themselves believed they were incapable of leading men, leading to a tendency to nominate men for leadership positions.*

According to both Rutherford (2001) and Ngan (2011), women encounter obstacles when striving for top positions. Even when they attain such positions, they may still encounter unequal employment opportunities, conflicts in their roles, and the persistence of patriarchal attitudes towards women.

Historically, women in traditional leadership positions were not recognized or valued to the same extent as men. However, this has changed over time, with women gaining more recognition and respect in leadership positions. Scholars have researched and written about these changes.

For example, Nnaemeka (2005) argues that African women's roles in traditional leadership have been overlooked by both African men and Western scholars, and that African women have been marginalized in their own societies. In contrast, Kandjii-Murangi (2014) highlights how Namibian women have been able to gain leadership positions in traditional communities through their participation in community development activities and their ability to negotiate with male leaders

4.4.2 Patriarchal power structures

Patriarchal power structures are social systems in which men hold primary authority and power over women in domains such as political leadership, economic activity, and cultural norms. These structures are characterized by gender inequalities and reinforce the belief that men are superior to women. Patriarchal power structures can manifest in various forms, including discrimination, harassment, violence, and lack of representation in decision-making processes

Participant said: *Patriarchal power structures make it harder for women to become leaders and to be taken seriously as leaders. They often face discrimination and prejudice simply because they are women. This makes it difficult for them to gain the respect and support of their communities*

Key informant said: *Hutongi hwemumaruva hunonetsa kuti huende kune vanasikana nekuti ndewevakadzidza naizvozvo anofungirwa kuti anoenda nahwo akaroorwa kune rimwe dzinza zvinova zvisiri imutsika medu.*

 (The leadership positions of chiefs and headmen are typically not bestowed upon girls due to concerns that they may marry and relocate to another tribe, which goes against our cultural norms.)

According to Kabeer (2003), patriarchal power structures limit women's abilities to participate in decision-making processes and leadership positions, thus perpetuating gender inequalities. In many cases, women's leadership is limited to specific domains such as health, education, and social welfare, while men dominate political and economic spheres. This division of labour reinforces gender stereotypes and restricts women's participation in leadership positions.

Furthermore, patriarchal power structures often reinforce the idea that women are inferior to men, leading to discrimination and bias in the workplace. According to Acker (1990), such power structures are deeply ingrained in society and are often invisible, making it difficult to challenge them. It was noted that Bindura District retains its patriarchal culture, although the government has implemented certain policies to support and encourage the advancement of women in leadership roles. Additionally, five participants highlighted the observation that women still face certain challenges in this regard.

4.4.3 Limited access to resources

Limited access to resources refers to situations where women are deprived of the necessary tools, facilities, and materials required to achieve their goals and objectives. This could be due to cultural, economic, or political factors which restrict their access to resources such as education, land, finance, and other forms of capital. In traditional leadership, women often face challenges related to limited access to resources. For instance, they may not have access to the same level of education as men, which could limit their ability to make informed decisions and contribute to their communities. Additionally, they may not have access to land or other productive assets, which could make it difficult for them to generate income or engage in economic activities

Participant said*: Traditionally, women have not had ownership rights to property, which puts them at a disadvantage when seeking leadership positions. This is because the eligibility*

requirements for contesting such positions often include the ownership of immovable properties.

Another participant said: *Yes, I have noticed that access to financial resources is a major issue. Women in traditional leadership often struggle to secure funding for their projects and initiatives. Additionally, access to education and training opportunities can be limited, which makes it difficult for women to develop the skills necessary to be effective leaders*

According to Huyer and Sikoska (2003), limited access to resources is a significant challenge faced by women in traditional leadership. They note that women are often excluded from decision-making processes, which limits their ability to access resources and allocate them effectively. This exclusion is often due to cultural and social norms that privilege men in leadership positions. Similarly, Kabeer (2001) argues that gender-based discrimination and gender stereotypes limit women's access to resources in many societies. Women are often viewed as less competent or less deserving of resources, which leads to their exclusion from decision-making processes and resource allocation

4.4.4 Stereotyping

Stereotyping is a significant challenge that women face in traditional leadership. Stereotypes are preconceived notions about individuals or groups based on their gender, ethnicity, or other characteristics. These stereotypes can be harmful and limit women's ability to be taken seriously as leaders. For example, women may be seen as emotional, irrational, or weak, which makes it harder for them to be respected as leaders. This can lead to women being excluded from decision-making processes or not being considered for leadership roles. It is important to recognize and address these stereotypes to ensure that women are given an equal opportunity to lead.

Participant said: *Vanhurume vazhinji havafarire hutungamiri hwevanhurume zvinkonzeresa kuti vadzikisire vanhukadzi vachitende hutungamiri hwevanhurume.*

(There is a tendency among males to resist being led by females, leading to an underestimation of the value that women bring to leadership roles)

Another participant said*: One of the biggest barriers was the assumption that women are emotional and irrational, and therefore not good leaders. I had to work hard to dispel this stereotype and show that I was just as capable as any man. It was also challenging to balance the need for change with the need to maintain stability and continuity in the organization*

Key informant said: *Last year, I wanted to organize a training program for women in my community to help them learn new skills and start their own businesses. I applied for funding from the local government, but my application was rejected without any explanation. I later found out that the funding was given to a male-led organization that was doing a similar program*

The majority of male participants hold the belief that women are not capable of leading them, asserting that men should be the ones in leadership positions. Some of them actively attempt to undermine women by assigning them challenging topics in public settings. Often, women are only given opportunities to speak at less significant events, aiming to downplay their visibility. Six participants argued that men and women are socialized differently, with culture generally portraying male figures as having authoritative positions in society. This is exemplified by certain beliefs within the Karanga society that leadership roles are exclusively reserved for men. Women who aspire to join are often labelled as lacking cultural awareness, as noted by Rutherford (2001) and Chigwata (2014). Stereotyping is a common challenge that women face in traditional leadership roles. Several studies have explored this issue, including research by Eagly and Carli (2007) and Schein (2001). Eagly and Carli (2007) found that gender stereotypes can impact how people perceive women's leadership abilities. For example, women may be seen as less competent than men in leadership positions, which can make it more difficult for them to gain support and respect from colleagues and subordinates. Schein (2001) explored the impact of gender stereotypes on organizational culture. She found that gender stereotypes can shape the way that organizations operate, and that women may need to conform to male-dominated norms in order to succeed in leadership positions. This can create a double bind for women, who may be seen as too assertive if they exhibit leadership behaviours that are seen as masculine or too passive if they exhibit behaviours that are seen as feminine.

4.4.5 Resistance to change

Resistance to change is one of the significant challenges faced by women in traditional leadership. Traditional leadership tends to be male-dominated, and the resistance to change is often due to the patriarchal power structures that exist. Many people, including men and women, who hold traditional beliefs and values, may not be open to the idea of women assuming leadership roles. There is the belief that women are inferior and not capable of leading. This stereotype hinders women's progress in traditional leadership, and it takes a lot

of effort to change the mindset of the people to accept women as leaders. Women often have to prove themselves to be capable and competent leaders, which can be a challenging task.

Participant said: *Patsika dzepasichigare, vana vose vakomana nevasikana vanezvavanodzidziswa dzinopindirana nemishando nemabasa avanofanira kuita mumhuri nemunharaunda. Mabasa akaita sekurera vana, kubika nemabasa epamba ndiwo anodzidziswa vasikana, vakomana vachidzidziswa ekutungamira mhuri.*

 (In our culture, there is a distinct difference in the socialization of girls and boys. Girls are typically taught skills related to child care and various household chores, whereas boys are instructed in taking care of the family in other ways)

Key informant said*: I knew that I had to prove myself and earn their respect. So, I started by listening to their concerns and addressing them one by one. I showed them that I was knowledgeable and capable of leading the team. I also made sure to involve everyone in the decision-making process and to give credit where it was due. Gradually, they began to see me as an effective leader, and the resistance faded away.*

4.5 Comparative narrative analysis on past and present traditional leadership roles within African women

4.5.1 Empowerment

 Empowerment in the field of women in traditional leadership refers to the process of providing women with the necessary tools, resources, and opportunities to take charge of their lives and make decisions that affect them. This is particularly important for women in traditional leadership who face several challenges, including limited access to resources, stereotyping, and patriarchal power structures. According to scholars such as Annalisa Enrile and Rita A. Mora, empowering women in traditional leadership involves providing them with education, training, and mentorship programs to help them build the skills and knowledge necessary for leadership roles. It also involves creating policies and programs that promote the inclusion of women in decision-making processes, as well as providing financial and material support for women-led initiatives

Prior to Zimbabwe achieving independence in (1980), women faced restricted opportunities for education, property ownership, and political influence. However, following independence, the newly formed government acknowledged the significance of women's involvement in the

country's progress. To address this, the government implemented policies and initiatives aimed at empowering women across different sectors, including education, healthcare, and economic advancement.

One of the significant achievements in empowering women in Zimbabwe was the enactment of the Zimbabwean Constitution in 2013, which guarantees gender equality and prohibits discrimination based on gender. Furthermore, the government introduced a range of initiatives to encourage women's engagement in politics, including the establishment of programs like the quota system. This system ensured that a specific proportion of parliamentary seats were reserved exclusively for women.

However contemporary Zimbabwe, women are being empowered in various ways. The government, civil society organizations and private sector are actively promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Women are being encouraged to participate in politics, leadership positions and in the economy. Women are also being supported through various programs such as training, funding, and mentorship. Moreover, there exist regulations and strategies aimed at advancing gender equality and safeguarding women's rights. However, despite these endeavours, further actions are required to ensure the complete empowerment of women and equal accessibility to opportunities.

In contemporary Zimbabwe, women are empowered through various initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and women's rights. The government of Zimbabwe has been implementing policies and programs to enhance women's participation in decision-making processes, education, and economic empowerment. There are also several women's organizations and NGOs that work to promote women's rights and empowerment. For example, the Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN) provides training, education, and advocacy programs to promote gender equality and women's rights. The Women's Trust Zimbabwe is another organization that works to empower women through education, training, and advocacy programs. Additionally, Zimbabwe has a quota system that ensures women's representation in politics, with at least 30% of parliamentary seats reserved for women. These efforts have contributed to the increased recognition and support of women in Zimbabwe

4.5.2 Recognition

Recognition refers to acknowledging someone's achievements, status, or rights. It is the act of acknowledging or showing appreciation for somebody's contributions, accomplishments, or

existence. Recognition can take many forms, including verbal praise, awards or rewards, promotions, or public acknowledgment.

In the past Zimbabwe, women were often not recognized and were not allowed to participate in traditional leadership structures. However, there were some exceptions. For example, According to Professor Mlambo 2011 he argues that Queen of the Munhumutapa Empire was a powerful figure who had significant influence in political and economic matters. Additionally, there were some female chiefs and headwomen who were recognized as community leaders and had authority over their communities. However, these exceptions were rare and did not reflect the experiences of most women in traditional leadership structures

In Zimbabwe, for instance, women held key decision-making positions in the pre-colonial era, such as the Mambo, a queen or female chief, who had the power to make decisions on behalf of the community. Women in traditional leadership also played a vital role in the mobilization of resources for community development projects such as building schools, clinics, and water infrastructure

4.5.3 Support

Support can be defined as the act of providing assistance, encouragement, or backing to someone or something. It involves being available to help others, offering resources and guidance, and providing a sense of comfort and understanding. In the context of women in traditional leadership, support can include providing mentorship, advocacy, and resources to help women overcome the challenges they face in their roles as decision-makers and leaders

4.6 Chapter summary

Chapter four gave summary of the results which were given by different respondents in the Bindura District Zimbabwe. The presentation of the results was based on options and questionnaire answered by respondents. The findings demonstrate the importance of women's involvement in traditional leadership within Bindura District. The researcher employed narrative analysis to gain a comprehensive and in-depth comprehension of the roles and obstacles encountered by women in traditional leadership. This approach has played a significant role in addressing the research objectives and questions. The subsequent chapter will encompass a summary, recommendations, and conclusion of the research study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECCOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The research has evaluated the significance of the role of women in traditional leadership, in Bindura district. The research has managed to look at the following: role of women in traditional leadership, challenges encountered by women in traditional leadership and a comparative analysis on the past and present narrative associated with African women in traditional leadership roles.

5.1 Summary of findings

Women in traditional leadership have been subjected to patriarchal power structures that limit their decision-making abilities and their participation in leadership roles. Precolonial support for women in traditional leadership was relatively high, with women holding significant roles in the decision-making process and leading their communities. However, post-colonial support for women in traditional leadership has been minimal, with male-dominated power structures being reinforced by the colonial administration and post-colonial governments.

Despite these challenges, women leaders in traditional settings have continued to play a vital role in their communities. They have often been the backbone of community development, promoting education, health, and welfare programs. Women leaders have also been instrumental in preserving cultural practices and values, especially regarding gender roles and responsibilities.

In conclusion, while women in traditional leadership have faced significant challenges, they have made significant contributions to their communities. Efforts to promote gender equality and empower women in traditional leadership positions can have positive impacts on community development, gender equality, and social justice

5.2. Implications to cultural heritage studies

The results of the study have shown that women in traditional leadership have significant implications for cultural and heritage studies. When women occupy leadership positions in communities, they preserve and promote traditional cultural practices. Women in traditional leadership positions contribute to the development of gender-sensitive cultural policies and practices which protects cultural rights of men and girls. Thus, culturists need to play very crucial roles of educating communities on the importance and benefits of having women in leadership positions. Initiatives to support and identify female leaders such as trainings and mentorships programs should be put in place. Cultural custodians should make efforts to challenge and change traditional gender roles and stereotype which prevent women from attaining leadership roles.

5.2.2 Policy implications

The research findings highlight several crucial issues for policy and practical implementation. It is imperative to prioritize education, awareness-raising, and mass media initiatives to address the challenges faced by women in traditional leadership. These initiatives can involve residential workshops, media campaigns, public events, poetry slams, and community outreach programs that emphasize the importance of women in traditional leadership roles. The study provides evidence indicating a high prevalence of marginalization and discrimination. Furthermore, the research reveals the persistence of harmful beliefs that hinder the meaningful participation of women in traditional leadership, such as the notion that women are socialized to speak but not to lead. Consequently, there is a need to review and revise existing policies and laws to ensure equitable opportunities for women to access traditional leadership positions.

5.2.3 Recommendations

The findings of this research request some recommendations

Promotion of gender equality: When electing traditional leaders, there is need to promote women in higher positions so as to deal away with subjugating women to men and hindering their equal and influential participation into traditional leadership. There is need for men to be supported so they can be equipped to be powerful advocates for women's participation in traditional leadership. In that way, men will be able to speak out the importance of women's roles in traditional leadership thus eliminating gender based discrimination and biases.

Embracing diversity: The already women in traditional leadership should promote inclusivity in their patterns of leading. They should recognize and value differences such as age race etc.

when diversity is embraced; there is promotion of equality, reduced discrimination and enhancement of cultural competence. In this way, everyone feels empowered and respected thus leading to a more effective decision making, better representation and improved cultural heritage studies.

Strengthening women's networks: This aims on supporting the development of women leaders. This means creating opportunities for women in traditional leadership to connect and support each other, either in formal or informal networks. This involves the building of a community of female leaders who can share skills, experiences and knowledge. By promoting and investing in the above-mentioned initiatives, a pipeline is created of capable female leaders who can bring unique perspectives and experiences to bear on cultural heritage studies.

5.3 Chapter summary

The above chapter was the final chapter for the study. The chapter looked at the summary, conclusions and recommendations. The research has confirmed the significance of the role of women in traditional leadership. The participants interviewed have made important contributions, collectively; they have helped to assess the challenges encountered by women in traditional leadership roles. The research has helped to elucidate a comparison between the past and present narrative analysis associated with African women and traditional leadership roles. The above chapter highlighted the summary of the findings in relation to the research objectives and the implications to social work.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix I: Consent Form

Dear Research Participant

I am Tanaka Chapisa, currently pursuing a Bachelor of Culture and Heritage Studies at Bindura University. As part of the program's curriculum, I am obligated to conduct a research study. Therefore, I have chosen to undertake a research project titled**: "Evaluating the significance of the roles of women in traditional leadership"** I am kindly requesting for your assistance in completing this guide. The purpose of the research is to identify the roles played by women in traditional leadership roles, to identify the challenges faced by women in traditional leadership and to conduct a comparative analysis on the past and present narratives that are associated with African women in traditional leadership roles.

Please be informed that there is no right or wrong answer to the questions in this guide and if you do not understand any question, please do not hesitate to seek clarification. Information shared in the interview shall be kept confidential and names of the participants shall not be disclosed to any party. In the event that confidentiality has to be shared to the third party, participants will be informed. Also, be assured that data collected is for academic use only. The research is voluntary and one is free to withdraw any time they feel so. The interview will at least last for 45 minutes.

Please indicate N/A where it does not apply to you

Would you like to participate in the research?

If yes;

Please Sign…………………………………………………

Appendix II: Guide for participants (Questionnaires)

SECTION A: Demographic Characteristics of participants

1.   How old are you?

2.   What is your marital status?

3.   What is your highest level of education?

4.   Occupation?

SECTION B

1.   What role is played by women in traditional leadership?

2.   What are the challenges encountered when executing their duties?

3.   What strategies have been put forth to alleviate the challenges faced?

4.   What ways has the government, ministry or community helped women in traditional leadership to achieve their goals?

5.   Are there organizations which have been helping women in traditional leadership to achieve their goals?

Appendix III: Guide for semi-structured interview for participants

1. Can you tell us about your background and how you became involved in traditional leadership?

2. How do you see your role as a woman within the traditional leadership system?

3. What are some challenges you have faced as a woman leader in a traditionally male-dominated field?

4. In your experience, what are some effective ways to address gender-based discrimination in traditional leadership settings?

5. How do you balance the demands of your traditional leadership role with other responsibilities such as family or work?

6. What advice would you give to other women who aspire to become traditional leaders?

7. How do you envision the future of traditional leadership and the role of women in it?

8. Is there anything else you would like to add or share about your experiences in traditional leadership?

Appendix IV: Guide for key informants (Open – Ended Questionnaires)

SECTION A: Demographic Characteristics of key informants

1.   What is your highest level of education?

2.   How many years have you been a traditional leader?

3.   Are you employed, if so in the formal or informal sector?

SECTION B: Questions

1.   How can a woman become a traditional leader?

2.   What qualities make one to be a traditional leader?

3.   What makes women to be discriminated as traditional leaders?

4.   Who is in charge of appointing women as traditional leaders?

5.   What selection criteria is put forth to elect women in traditional leadership

Appendix V: Guide for Semi-structured interview for Key Informants

1. Can you tell us about your background and expertise on issues related to women in traditional leadership?

2. In your opinion, what are some of the benefits of having women in positions of leadership within traditional systems?

3. Conversely, what are some of the challenges or barriers that women may face when trying to assume leadership roles in traditional settings?

4. How would you describe the current status of women's participation in traditional leadership systems, both in your own region and more broadly?

5. Are there any success stories or examples of effective strategies that have been used to increase women's representation and leadership in traditional systems?

6. What role do you see external actors (such as NGOs, governments, or international organizations) playing in promoting women's participation and leadership in traditional settings?

7. How do you think traditional leaders themselves can be encouraged to support and promote gender equality within their communities?

8. Finally, is there anything else you would like to add or emphasize regarding the importance of women's leadership?