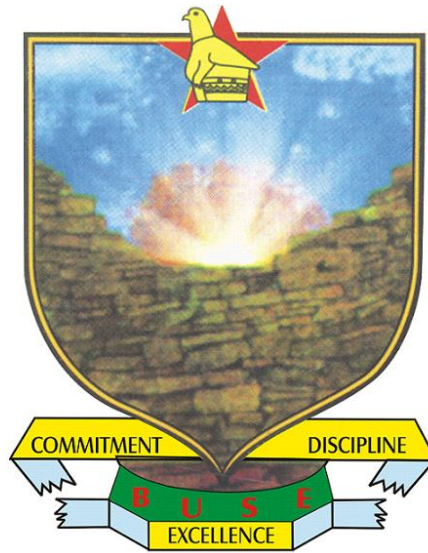**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

THE ROLE OF LIFE SKILLS TRAINING IN EMPOWERING TEEN

MOTHERS. A CASE OF HOPELY, ZIMBABWE

By

(B210123B)

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Social Work in partial fulfilment for the requirements of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work.

JUNE, 2025

DECLARATION AND RELEASE FORM

I, (B210123), hereby certify that this dissertation is the product of my own independent research and analysis, except where due acknowledgment is made in the references and acknowledgements. I further confirm that that this work has not been submitted, in whole or in part, for any other institutions.

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Student's Signature   **Date**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I give thanks to the Almighty for granting me the wisdom strength and resilience to finish this dissertation. I would like to thank his presence and power that was with me since I started this journey till now, without him I wouldn't have made it this far.

I also extend my appreciation to my supervisor for his guidance, support, and expertise through this project. His constructive feedback and encouragement have been invaluable to me. I also extend my heartfelt thanks to Bindura University of Science Education for providing with the platform to conduct this research.

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To my mom , dad and Collins l would like to thank you for always having me in your prayers. To my friends Martin, Zvikomborero and Vimbai I really appreciate you, from day one you have always been there for me I really appreciate. To everyone who contributed in any way to the completion of this work, I extend my heartfelt than you.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents George , Agnes and Professor Collins , whose unwavering love, sacrifices, and encouragement have been my greatest source of strength. Your endless support, both emotionally and financial support, has guided me through every challenge and triumph in this journey. Your faith in me, even in the moments when I doubted myself, has been a beacon of inspiration. May this work contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the department of Social Work and inspire future generations of scholars and researchers.

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ABSTRACT

examines the role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers in Hopely. Teenage motherhood is a significant social and economic challenge in Hopely, with many single mothers facing poverty, limited access to education and healthcare and social exclusion. Life skills training have been identified as a potential strategy for improving the livelihoods of single mothers by providing them with access to educational service, social support and economic empowerment. This study used qualitative data collection and analysis methods. The study found that life skills training have had a positive impact on the livelihoods of teen moms in Hopely and enhancing their social well-being and self-esteem. The study recommends that life skills trading be supported and scaled up in Hopely, as a strategy for improving the livelihoods of single mothers and promoting women's empowerment. The study also highlights the need for policymakers and development practitioners to recognize the importance of life skills training in promoting women's economic empowerment and improving their livelihoods.

APPROVAL FORM

I certify that I have supervised Zihero Vanessa Tamary **B210113B** in undertaking the research titled: **The role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers.A case of Hopely, Zimbabwe.**This is in partial fulfilment of the requirements of a Bachelor of Science, Honors Degree, in Social Work, and hereby recommend it for acceptance by Bindura University of Science Education.

Signature..   ..../.............../.........

J.C Magocha   Date

(Supervisor)

Chairperson of the Department Board of Examiners

The department board of examiners is satisfied that this dissertation report meets the examination requirements and therefore I recommend to BUSE to accept this research project by   Zihero Vanessa Tamary titled: **The role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers. A case of Hopely, Zimbabwe** in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science, (Honors) Degree in Social Work

Chairperson

Name...

Signature.......................................Date......../.........../.........

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

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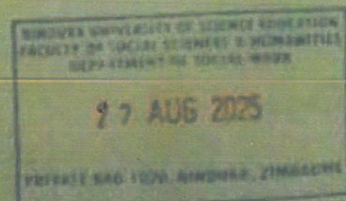
MARKING GUIDE

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION	Possible Mark	Actual Mark
Abstract	10	
Background to the study- what is it that has made you choose this particular topic? Include objectives or purpose of the study	20	
Statement of the problem	10	
Research questions	15	
Assumptions	5	
Significance of the study	15	
Limitations of the study	5	
Delimitations of the study	5	
Definition of terms	10	
Summary	5	
Total	100	
Weighted Mark	15	

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Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction- what do you want to write about in this chapter?	5	
Conceptual or theoretical framework	10	
Identification, interpretations and evaluation of relevant literature and citations	40	
Contextualisation of the literature to the problem	10	
Establishing gaps in knowledge and how the research will try to bridge these gaps	10	
Structuring and logical sequencing of ideas	10	
Discursive skills	10	
Summary	5	
Total	100	
Weighted Mark	20	

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Chapter 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction	5	
Research design	10	
What instruments are you using to collect data?	30	
Population, sample and sampling techniques to be used in the study	25	
Procedures for collecting data	15	
Data presentation and analysis procedures	10	
Summary	5	
Total	100	
Weighted Mark	25	

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Chapter 4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction	**5**	
Data presentation	**50**	
Is there any attempt to link literature review with new findings	**10**	
How is the new knowledge trying to fill the gaps identified earlier	**10**	
Discursive and analytical skills	**20**	
Summary	**5**	
Total	**100**	
Weighted Mark	**30**	

 Comments

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Chapter 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction- focus of the chapter	**5**	
Summary of the whole project including constraints	**25**	
Conclusions- have you come up with answers to the problem under study	**30**	
Recommendations(should be based on findings) Be precise	**30**	
References	**5**	
Appendices i.e. copies of instruments used and any other relevant material	**5**	
Total	**100**	
Weighted mark	**10**	

Comments

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SUMMARY:-

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Contents

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The rising number of teen mothers presents a pressing demographic challenge that calls for immediate attention. In recent years, the empowerment of adolescent mothers has emerged as a critical area of focus in global development particularly in regions grappling with high rates of teenage pregnancy. This phenomenon is notably prevalent in Hopely, Zimbabwe where socio-economic challenges, cultural norms and inadequate access to education create significant barriers for young mothers. The case of Hopely, a suburb in Harare explains the pressing need for targeted interventions that can facilitate the transition of teen mothers from dependency to self-sufficiency. For teen mothers, these life skills are not only essential for personal development but also critical for fostering resilience and promoting informed decision-making. By analysing these factors within the framework of life skills training, this dissertation will explain the importance of a holistic approach to empowerment that addresses not only the practical skills needed for survival but also the psychosocial dimensions of young motherhood, examining how such programs can help them build confidence and skills they need to cope with everyday challenges.

1.2. Background of the Study

Teenage motherhood remains a serious challenge affecting millions of young lives particularly in developing countries. In Zimbabwe, the difficulties experienced by teen mothers are compounded by socio-economic factors making life skills training essential for their empowerment. Globally, approximately 21 million girls aged 15-19 years give birth each year, with a significant percentage of these pregnancies unplanned (United Nations Population Fund, 2020). The consequences of teenage pregnancy include increased rates of school dropout, poverty, and social stigma which hinder the socio-economic advancement of young mothers. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), argue that in many developing countries teen pregnancy and child birth complications remain the leading cause of death for girls aged 15-19 and a heart breaking reality for many young lives just begin. In addition, a study by the Guttmacher Institute (2018) found that globally, fewer than 30% of adolescent mothers return to school after giving birth highlighting the importance of life skills training in helping teen mothers cope and thrive facilitate their reintegration and empowerment. Kabeer (2016) emphasize the recognizing of life skills training as a vital approach to help teen mothers build better futures by enhancing decision-making, self-

esteem and economic independence. However, a gap remains in understanding how culturally tailored programs can effectively meet the unique needs of teen mothers across different regions. According to Bellingham et.al (2018), each year, more than 16 million adolescent girls around the world become pregnant with about 95 % of these pregnancies occurring in the low and middle income countries. Although the global adolescent birth rate has dropped from 65 to 46 births per 1000 girls between 1990 and 2021 teen pregnancy remains alarming common in Sub Saharan Africa highlighting a persistent challenge that continues to shape the lives and futures of many young girls in the region(Ahinkorah et al., 2021).

Discussing still, a recent meta-analysis disclosed that the prevalence of adolescent pregnancy is 18.8% across the entire African continent (Kassa et al.,2018). In Sub-Saharan, the rate is slightly higher at 19.3% with variations ranging from 21.5% in East Africa to 9.2% in North Africa (Kassa et al., 2018). In certain countries, the incidence of teenage pregnancy reaches alarming levels such as 44.3% in Congo, 39.4% in Angola, 38% in Gabon and 38.9% in Liberia (Kassa et al.,2018). However, Zimbabwe boasts a youthful demographic with approximately one third falling within the 10-24 age bracket. As per the National Population Census (2022), adolescents' girls aged 10-19 make 24% of the country's total population and faces various developmental challenges encompassing issues like unemployment, restricted educational access, child marriage, pregnancy and HIV infection. Many young girls continue to face gender based violence , pressure from inter-generational relationships and a range of other productive health challenges. Today, around 22% of girls aged 15-19 have already started child bearing with a 17% having given birth reflecting an urgent need to support, educate and protect these young girls and additional 10% pregnant with their first child (ZimStat and ICF International,2021).

Furthermore, in Southern Africa, the rate of teenage pregnancy continues to be high with Zimbabwe reporting among the mosey alarming rates seen across the region. According to the Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS, 2015), for many girls aged 15-19 early motherhood has already become a reality with 18% having begun child bearing with significant disparities based on socio-economic status and education. A study by the South African Medical Journal (2020) indicated that life skills training programs in Southern Africa have resulted in a 25% reduction in repeat pregnancies among participants. This underscores the effectiveness of

such interventions in empowering young mothers and improving their life outcomes. Chigwedere et al. (2021), highlights that while regional programs exist, many fail to address the socio-cultural barriers that teen mothers face. However, there is a need for more targeted approaches that consider local customs and values to enhance program effectiveness.

. Local surveys by Zimbabwe Youth Council (2021), indicate that over 60% of teen mothers in Hopely do not return to school after childbirth, primarily due to financial constraints and lack of support. The Zimbabwe Youth Council also has reported that life skills training programs can reduce school dropout rates by up to 40% when combined with financial support and childcare services. Nyoni (2022) argue that life skills training must be integrated with community support systems to be effective. They emphasize the need for collaboration between local governments, NGO, and community leaders to create an enabling environment for teen mothers.

Early marriage is a significant immediate factor contributing to teenage pregnancy. Early marriage affects 5% of girls globally and 12% in Sub- Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, 2020). Northern Africa, Western Africa and Southern Asia (particularly lndia) have witnessed the largest declines in child marriage since 1994. In Southern Asia, a girl's risk to early child marriage is declined to more than 40% from 53.3% to 29.9%(Kassa et al.,2018). In Latin America and Caribbean there is no evidence of progress with a constant 25% of adolescent girls affected (UNAIDS,2020). The global burden of child marriage is shifting to Sub – Saharan where rates of progress need to be accelerated significantly (UNICEF,2021).

1.3. Problem Statement

The importance of life skills training in empowering teen moms is becoming more widely acknowledged. It equips them with the necessary abilities to deal with the challenges of parenting, school and future job. In Hopely, a recently developed community south of Harare, Zimbabwe, the difficulties experienced by young mothers are severe making the need for efficient life skills training programs even more critical. Communication skills, livelihoods initiatives like poultry, cuni-culture, emergency preparedness and ISALs, decision-making processes, financial literacy, health education and social networking are just a few of the aspects covered by these life skills

training programs. Even though the value of this kind of training is widely recognized, there is a big disparity in the community's adoption and efficacy of these programs. According to research, adolescent moms frequently face additional challenges such as social shame, a lack of educational opportunities, unstable finances and subpar healthcare. Maphosa and Nyoni (2022) stress that these difficulties are made worse by the lack of thorough life skills training which leaves many young mothers ill-prepared to change their socioeconomic situation. The 2013 Zimbabwe National Policy for Gender and Development emphasizes the necessity of focused interventions for vulnerable groups, although at the local level, these policies are usually not implemented effectively. Teen moms receive uneven support as a result of the absence of adequate coverage and quality of many programs started by community organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). For example, while many NGOs have created programs to address particular problems that this group faces, many of these programs fall short in taking into account the participants' particular sociocultural circumstances, which results in low involvement and subpar results.

1.4. Aims

This research aims to understand the role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers in Hopely, Zimbabwe.

1.5. Research Objectives

This research is guided by the following;

1. To analyse the role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers
2. To examine encounters that teen mothers go through during life skills training
3. To assess the effectiveness of existing life skills programs in supporting the needs of teen mothers in Hopely.

1.6. Research Questions

This research made use of the following research questions;

1. What are the experiences faced by teen mothers in life skills training?
2. How do teen mothers perceive this phenomenon?
3. How do the society perceive life skills training of teen mothers?

1.7. Assumptions

This was conducted with the following assumptions:

1. The targeted research subjects (teen mothers) have common shared experiences.
2. The selected study participants were willing to participate in the study and be truthful in their responses.
3. The experiences faced by teen mothers in life skills training are similar to those somewhere in Zimbabwe.

1.8. Significance of the study

The role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers is both timely and relevant given the increasing need to address the unique challenges faced by adolescent mothers in developing contexts. Teen motherhood is a multifaceted issue that not only impacts the individuals directly involved but also has broader implications on their families and communities hence life skills training can play in transforming the lives of young mothers, ultimately contributing to their empowerment and socio-economic stability. The data collected highlights the critical role that both government and non governmental organisations play in shaping policies aimed at supporting and empowering teen mothers. However, there is currently no effective framework that truly takes into account the lives experiences of these young mothers particularly in relation to life skills training. By developing such a framework, teen mothers would have the opportunity to engage more fully in society and see their voices heard and their needs addressed hence making the society functional as evidenced by the Functionalist perspective.Ultimately, the recommendations from this research could help pave way for improved wellbeing, more fulfilling and hazard free social life for these young women.

Additionally, it can help those in power to inform and shape local and national policies aimed at supporting teen mothers. While there are existing frameworks such as the Zimbabwe National Policy for Gender and Development (2013), that emphasize the need for targeted interventions for

vulnerable populations a gap often exists between policy formulation and real-world application. Chikozho (2022), points out that this gap can hinder effective support for adolescent mothers. This research aims to bridge that gap by providing evidence-based insights and recommendations for enhancing life skills training programs. By analysing the current landscape of these initiatives in Hopely, the study will serve as a valuable resource for policymakers and practitioners potentially leading to the development of more effective, inclusive and sustainable interventions. Improved policy implementation not only benefits teen mothers but also contributes to broader societal goals of gender equity and social justice as evidenced by Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16 hence navigating the complexities of motherhood and socio-economic challenges ultimately improving their overall quality of life.

1.9. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Life skills training

Brackettal et al., (2020), define life skills as essentials that enable individuals to effectively manage the demands of daily life including emotions regulation, decision making and interpersonal. Life skills training can be defined as a set of skills that contribute to social, emotional learning enabling individuals to build positive relationships, make responsible decisions and develop resilience (Durlak et al., 2021). Life skills training encompasses a variety of competencies that help individuals cope better with the ups and downs. For teen mothers, these life skills are not only essential for personal development but also critical for fostering resilience and promoting informed decision-making. In the context of Hopely, where many young mothers face stigmatization, limited educational opportunities and economic instability, life skills training act as a stepping stone towards a more stable and confident future by ultimately break the cycle of poverty. Therefore, life skills training can be defined as an educational approach aimed at developing a set of social competencies and cognitive that enable teen mothers to effectively cope with the pressures amd responsibilities they face each day by fostering agency, resilience and long term socio economic for adolescent mothers.

1.9.2. Empowerment

Aditi, (2023) defines empowerment in education as an inclusive pedagogy empowers students to value diverse perspectives and to foster a sense of belonging and agency in the learning process. It is a process through which individuals and communities gain knowledge, skills and confidence to make informed decisions and improve their wellbeing (Jessica, 2022). Therefore, one can define empowerment as a way of providing skills, knowledge and confidence which is needed to navigate individuals lives effectively by recognizing their inherent strengths and capabilities which can lead to improved decision- making.

1.9.3. Teen mothers

According to United Nations Population Fund (2020), teen mothers are defined as women aged 15to 19 who give birth with a focus on the challenges they face in accessing healthcare, education and social support. Teen mothers are defined as females aged 13 to 19 with a focus on the intersection of adolescent development and the implications of early motherhood on their health and social outcomes (Santelli et Al., 2020). The context of teen mothers in Zimbabwe reveals a complex web of challenges that require a multifaceted approach. By understanding the social, economic and cultural factors at play, stakeholders can develop targeted interventions that support teen mothers and promote their well-being. Addressing these issues holistically will contribute to healthier families and communities breaking the cycles of poverty and stigma associated with teenage mothers.

1.10. Chapter Summary

The chapter looked at the general introduction of the study which discussed the various aspects of the effectiveness of life skills training in empowering teen mothers. The statement of the problem was also articulated highlighting the gaps in existing literature on the lived experiences of teen mothers and how the study would address this gap. The chapter also focused on the aim of the study, research questions, objectives and statement problem which mainly focuses on the life skills training in empowering teen mothers. The chapter was concluded with a chapter summary.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

The researcher explored a variety of viewpoints and authors to discuss the role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers. An overview of the theoretical framework based on theory of change is presented at the start of this section. Teenage motherhood remains a pressing issue in Zimbabwe, with severe social and economic implications for both the young mothers and society at large. In peri-urban communities such as Hopely, Harare, teenage pregnancy is often the result of systemic issues like poverty, gender inequality, lack of access to education, and inadequate sexual and reproductive health services. Teenage mothers in these contexts are frequently subjected to stigma, isolation, and limited economic prospects. Life skills training has increasingly been recognized as a powerful tool for equipping adolescent mothers with the competencies needed to navigate these challenges, make informed decisions, and lead empowered lives. This chapter explores the role of life skills training in empowering teenage mothers, with an emphasis on the socio-cultural context of Zimbabwe, the nature and types of life skills training, difficulties these teen mothers confront and root reasons of this problem and evidence from existing programs, particularly within Hopely and similar communities.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Theory of change

This investigation is based on the theory of change. Theory of change serves as an understanding and evaluating complex social programs emphasizing the importance of articulating casual pathways, social interventions and assumptions (Cornell & Kubisch, 2020). The theory of change is a vital framework that outlines how specific interventions lead to desired outcomes, particularly in complex social issues such as adolescent motherhood ultimately leading to empowerment and improved life style. Theoretical explanations of the role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers are extensive and diverse at the societal level but underdeveloped at the individual level which highlights the teen mothers' experiences. Certain ideas, such as the theory of change may look all-encompassing by name yet contain sharp divides that have a significant impact in understanding the role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers

and validates the importance of such training in empowering teen mothers ultimately contributing to their personal growth and community development.

As a result, the theory of change has ended to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers by facilitating positive change in the lives of participants (teen mothers). About the role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers, the theory of change emphasize that life skills training can significantly enhance self-efficacy, decision making among teen mothers and highlighting the importance of tailored interventions leading to improved life outcomes (Murray et al., 2020). Through the application of this framework, the research proposal can develop or improve established intervention strategies that are already implemented to ensure the effectiveness of life skills training in empowering teen mothers.

In Zimbabwe, the prevalence of adolescent pregnancy and motherhood is a significant socio-economic concern. According to the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2013), approximately 30% of girls aged 15-19 are either pregnant or have already given birth. This alarming statistic underscores the urgency of addressing the needs of teen mothers who often face a myriad of challenges including social stigma, poverty and limited access to education and healthcare. The cultural context in Zimbabwe frequently exacerbates these challenges as societal norms marginalize young mothers creating barriers to their participation in educational and economic opportunities.

Life skills training encompasses a wide range of competencies that enable individuals to navigate the complexities of daily life. The theory of change posits that by implementing targeted life skills training programs, several key outcomes can be achieved. Firstly, enhanced self-efficacy is a primary outcome of life skills training. Programs designed to improve self-confidence can empower teen mothers to make informed decisions about their health, education and parenting. Studies indicate that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to set challenging goals and persist through difficulties. By fostering self-efficacy through life skills training, teen mothers can advocate for their needs and pursue opportunities for personal growth.

Secondly, economic empowerment is a critical outcome linked to life skills training. Vocational components integrated into training programs can lead to tangible economic benefits for teen mothers. Programs teaching practical skills, such as sewing or financial management, can help teen mothers generate income, reduce dependence on others and improve their living conditions. Economic

empowerment is essential for breaking the cycle of poverty, allowing young mothers to invest in their education and that of their children.

Furthermore, improved educational attainment is another key outcome. Life skills training can motivate teen mothers to return to school or pursue alternative educational pathways. Access to education is crucial for mitigating the negative impacts of adolescent motherhood. Studies have found that teen mothers who participate in life skills training are more likely to re-enroll in school and achieve academic success. Education fosters a sense of agency, enabling young mothers to envision a better future for themselves and their families.

Additionally, life skills training can strengthen social support networks. Programs that incorporate group activities foster peer support and community engagement. By participating in training sessions, teen mothers can build networks that provide emotional and practical support, which is vital for their well-being. Strong social support systems enhance the resilience of adolescent mothers, helping them cope with challenges and encouraging collective advocacy for their rights.

2.3. MAIN LITERATURE

2.3.1. To analyse the role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers

a. Self Esteem

Life skills training plays a pivotal role in fostering self-esteem among teen mothers which is essential for their overall empowerment. These life skills programs improve self-esteem and mental health. Young mothers who undergo training often report increased confidence and reduced feelings of shame. In peer-support models like Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Teen Mums' Club, participants form bonds with others who have faced similar challenges, thereby reducing feelings of isolation and depression. According to World Health Organization 2018, states that programs designed to enhance self-esteem can lead to significant improvements in participants' confidence and mental well-being. A global analysis revealed that adolescents who participated in life skills training reported a 30% increase in self-esteem (Smith et al., 2020). This improvement is crucial, as higher self-esteem is linked to better mental health outcomes and resilience in facing life challenges. In regional contexts, studies show that life skills programs tailored for young mothers effectively enhance self-worth, enabling them to navigate societal obstacles more effectively (Chinyoka & Naidoo, 2015). However, there is a notable gap in research

specifically examining how life skills training impacts self-esteem among teen mothers in Hopely, Zimbabwe. Understanding this relationship is vital because it can inform the development of targeted interventions that not only improve self-esteem but also foster a supportive environment for young mothers, ultimately leading to healthier community dynamics.

b. Confidence and Decision making

Confidence is a critical component of empowerment, particularly for teen mothers who face unique societal challenges. Life skills training programs that emphasize assertiveness, effective communication, and critical thinking have demonstrated substantial improvements in decision-making capabilities. Globally, evidence suggests that such programs can lead to a 25% increase in confidence levels among participants (UNICEF, 2020). This increase in confidence allows young mothers to make informed choices about their education, health, and family life. In regional studies, the focus on decision-making and confidence-building has been linked to improved educational and economic outcomes for young mothers (Moyo & Mavundla, 2019). However, the specific effects of these trainings on confidence among teen mothers in Hopely have not been thoroughly explored hence reflecting a critical research void. Addressing this gap is important because empowering young mothers to make confident decisions can lead to improved life trajectories, reducing the cycle of poverty and social stigma associated with teen motherhood.

c. Socioeconomic Empowerment

The intersection of life skills training and socioeconomic empowerment is vital for sustaining the benefits gained by teen mothers. Programs that equip young women with both vocational and life skills have demonstrated significant impacts on their economic independence and ability to support their families The benefits of life skills training for teenage mothers in Zimbabwe are multidimensional. First, such training promotes economic empowerment. For many participants, learning a trade or business skill is their first step toward financial independence. This reduces reliance on family members or abusive partners and increases their ability to provide for their children. Globally, studies indicate that life skills training can reduce poverty levels among teen mothers by enabling them to engage in income-generating activities (Jones et al., 2019). This economic empowerment is crucial for breaking the cycle of poverty that often accompanies early motherhood. In the regional context, initiatives in Southern Africa have shown that life skills training can lead to improved socioeconomic status for young mothers (Ndlovu, 2021). Nonetheless, localized research focusing on how life skills training enhances socioeconomic empowerment specifically in Hopely is limited. However, understanding this dynamic is imperative

because it can inform policy and program design and ensuring that interventions are not only effective but also sustainable in uplifting young mothers and their communities.

2.3.2. To examine encounters that teen mothers go through during life skills training

a.Poverty

Worldwide, poverty is a consistent barrier to teen mothers' participation in life skills education. According to UNESCO (2021), economically disadvantaged adolescent mothers face structural challenges such as transport costs, childcare responsibilities and pressure to earn income which limit their program attendance. Similarly, World Health Organization (2020), notes that the inability to afford sanitary products, proper clothing, or bus fare often keeps girls from participating in social empowerment activities.In Kenya, Mutua and Kimani (2019) highlight that teen mothers who come from extreme poverty face shame, exclusion, and are often considered "unfit" for investment in life-skills programs by NGOs and communities alike. However, teen mothers often skip life skills programs due to informal vending responsibilities or lack of basic needs (e.g., food security, school fees for younger siblings). These economic roles force girls to prioritize survival over empowerment.

b. Emotional and Psychosocial challenges during training

Teen mothers face various psychosocial challenges that affect their experiences in life skills training. Globally, feelings of isolation, low self-esteem, and anxiety can hinder participation and learning (Smith et al., 2020). In regional studies, mental health issues have been identified as barriers to effective engagement in training programs (Chinyoka & Naidoo, 2015). However, the specific psychosocial challenges encountered by teen mothers in Hopely during training are limited and understanding these challenges is vital for developing tailored support mechanisms that enhance learning experiences, ultimately contributing to the empowerment of young mothers.

c. Role of support systems

Support systems significantly influence the experiences of teen mothers during life skills training. Globally, strong social support networks have been linked to improved participation and retention in educational programs (UNICEF, 2020). Regionally, community involvement and family support are associated with better educational outcomes for young mothers (Ndlovu, 2021). However, the specific support systems available to teen mothers in Hopely during life skills training are lacking and recognizing

the role of these support systems is essential hence there is need to leveraging community resources that can enhance program effectiveness and lead to better empowerment outcomes for young mothers.

2.3.3. To assess the effectiveness of existing life skills programs in supporting the needs of teen mothers in Hopely.

Evaluation of life skills program curricula

Assessing the curricula of life skills programs is essential to understanding their effectiveness in meeting the needs of teen mothers. Globally, studies indicate that programs incorporating practical skills such as financial literacy, health education, and parenting skills are more effective in empowering participants (Smith et al., 2020). In regional contexts, curricula that align with local cultural values and socioeconomic realities have shown higher engagement and success rates among young mothers (Chinyoka & Naidoo, 2015). However, there is limited research specifically analysing the curricula of life skills programs available to teen mothers in Hopely. Therefore, evaluating and adapting these curricula to better fit local needs is crucial for enhancing program relevance and effectiveness, ultimately leading to better empowerment outcomes for young mothers.

Impact assessment of program outcomes

The measurable outcomes of life skills training programs provide insights into their effectiveness. Globally, evaluations have shown that participation in life skills programs can lead to significant improvements in self-esteem, decision-making, and economic independence (Jones et al., 2019). In regional studies, findings indicate that teen mothers who complete life skills training are more likely to pursue education and employment opportunities, resulting in better socioeconomic status (Moyo & Mavundla, 2019). Locally, there is a lack of comprehensive assessments of the outcomes of life skills programs specifically for teen mothers in Hopely. Hence understanding these impacts is essential, as it provides evidence for stakeholders to advocate for program continuation and funding, ensuring that the needs of young mothers are effectively met.

Barriers to program effectiveness

Identifying barriers to the effectiveness of life skills programs is crucial for their improvement. Globally, common challenges include inadequate resources, lack of access to training facilities, and cultural stigma surrounding teen mothers (Kumar et al., 2021). In regional contexts, logistical issues such as transportation and childcare significantly hinder participation rates (Moyo & Mavundla, 2019). Locally,

specific barriers faced by teen mothers in Hopely have not been thoroughly researched hence creating a critical gap. However, understanding these barriers is vital for developing strategies to enhance program accessibility and effectiveness, ultimately ensuring that life skills training can truly support the empowerment of young mothers in the community.

2.4. Understanding Teen Motherhood

2.4. Introduction

Teenage motherhood remains a significant public health and socio-economic concern in Zimbabwe. The phenomenon is influenced by a complex interplay of factors including poverty, limited access to education, cultural norms and inadequate sexual and reproductive health services. This chapter delves into the current prevalence of teenage pregnancies in Zimbabwe and examines the demographic factors contributing to this issue.

2.4.1. Prevalence and Demographics

In Zimbabwe, approximately 18% of girls aged 15-19 are mothers with the rate significantly higher in rural areas. According to the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2022), about 30% of urban girls give birth before the age of 18. This demographic shift contributes to long-term socio-economic challenges

2.4.2. Prevalence of Teenage Pregnancy

Recent data indicates a concerning rise in teenage pregnancies in Zimbabwe. The adolescent birth rate (ABR) in Zimbabwe stands at 108 live births per 1,000 girls aged 15–19, significantly higher than the global average of 44. In 2022 alone, over 69,000 girls aged 10 to 19 gave birth, accounting for 16% of all live births recorded that year. The prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Zimbabwe has become a significant public health concern, with recent statistics indicating a troubling rise. According to the National Assessment on Adolescent Pregnancies conducted in June 2023, approximately 22% of adolescents aged 10 to 19 are reported to be pregnant, a sharp increase from 9% in 2016. This surge is attributed, in part, to the socio-economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited access to education and reproductive health services. This however translates to about 358,458 pregnant adolescents out of 1,706,946 antenatal care bookings recorded between 2019 and 2022. Alarmingly, around 25% of maternal deaths in Zimbabwe occur

among adolescents and young women under 24 years old, highlighting the severe health risks associated with early pregnancies. Factors contributing to this rise include gender inequality, lack of access to contraceptive methods, and inadequate sexual education, which often leave young girls vulnerable to coercion and abuse. The Zimbabwean government, in collaboration with organizations like UNFPA, has initiated campaigns such as "Not-In-My-Village" to combat this issue by promoting awareness and community-driven solutions aimed at reducing teenage pregnancies and supporting affected young women.

2.4.3. Demographic factors influencing Teen motherhood

a. Age Distribution

In Zimbabwe, the age group of 15 to 19 years is notably affected, with approximately 22% of young women in this bracket experiencing pregnancy. This statistic reflects a concerning trend where younger adolescents, especially those aged 15-17, face higher risks, often due to limited access to education and reproductive health services. However, pregnancies among younger teens including girls as young as 10 have been reported hence highlighting the vulnerability of this age group. For instance, a study by World Health Organization (2023), highlighted that girls in rural areas are more likely to become mothers before the age of 18 compared to their urban counterparts, with rural rates reaching up to 30%. However, teenage mothers are at higher risk for complications during pregnancy and childbirth which can lead to increased maternal and infant mortality. These findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions, such as community health programs and better access to contraceptives, to address the root causes of teenage pregnancies and support affected young women.

b. Geographical disparities

Geographic disparities play a significant role in influencing teen motherhood, particularly in Zimbabwe, where urban and rural areas exhibit stark differences in rates and contributing factors. Recent statistics by World Health Organization (2023), indicate that rural regions have a higher prevalence of teenage pregnancies with rates reaching approximately 30%, compared to around 15% in urban settings. For example, a 2023 survey by World Health Organization it revealed that young women in rural communities face greater economic pressures and cultural expectations to marry early resulting in higher rates of adolescent motherhood. In contrast, urban areas, while not

immune, often have better access to education and reproductive health services, which can mitigate these risks.

Reflecting on these geographic disparities, it becomes evident that addressing the issue of teen motherhood requires targeted approaches. Rural girls often lack access to comprehensive sexual education and healthcare leading to increased vulnerability. Additionally, cultural norms in rural areas can perpetuate early marriages, limiting young women's opportunities for education and economic independence. Therefore, to effectively reduce teenage pregnancies, it is crucial to implement community-specific interventions that focus on enhancing education, providing access to reproductive health services, and challenging harmful cultural practices. By recognizing and addressing these geographic disparities, stakeholders can create more equitable solutions to support young women across diverse contexts.

c. Socioeconomic status

Socio-economic status (SES) is a critical factor influencing teen motherhood, particularly in Zimbabwe hence adolescents from low-income families are more likely to experience early pregnancies due to limited access to education and healthcare. For instance, a 2023 study by the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency found that girls from the lowest economic quintile had pregnancy rates exceeding 30%, compared to just 12% among their peers from higher economic backgrounds.

A notable example is the case of rural areas like Mudzi, where families rely on agriculture and face economic hardships. In these communities, early marriage is often seen as a solution to alleviate financial burdens, leading to higher rates of teenage motherhood. Additionally, girls in these settings typically lack access to contraceptive methods and sexual health education, further exacerbating the situation.

Discussing still, these socio-economic disparities it becomes clear that addressing teen motherhood requires comprehensive strategies that focus on improving the economic conditions of families and enhancing access to education for girls. Programs aimed at empowering young women economically and providing them with information about reproductive health can significantly

reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancies. Therefore, by tackling the root causes linked to socio-economic status, communities can foster environments where young women can thrive and make informed choices about their futures.

d. Education

Education is a significant demographic factor influencing teen motherhood, particularly in Zimbabwe hence indicating that girls with higher educational attainment are less likely to become pregnant as teenagers. For instance, the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2023), found that only 10% of girls who completed secondary education reported being pregnant, compared to 25% of those who did not complete their education. In rural areas like Gokwe, many girls drop out of school due to economic pressures or early marriage, leading to higher rates of teenage pregnancies. A specific case by World Health Organization (2022), highlighted that in Gokwe, 30% of girls aged 15-19 were already mothers largely due to limited educational opportunities and a lack of awareness about reproductive health. Therefore, by improving access to education is crucial in reducing teen pregnancies hence implementing Sustainable Development Goal 3. It is important to note that, initiatives that promote girls' education such as scholarships and awareness campaigns, can empower young women to prioritize their education and delay motherhood.

Moreover, incorporating comprehensive sexual education in school curricula can equip girls with the knowledge they need to make informed choices about their bodies and futures. By addressing educational barriers and promoting female empowerment we can significantly reduce the rates of teenage pregnancies and improve the overall well-being of young women in Zimbabwe. Investing in girls' education is not only a matter of social justice but also a vital step towards sustainable development.

e. Cultural and legal factors

Cultural norms and practices such as child marriage play a role in the prevalence of teenage pregnancies. Despite legal frameworks prohibiting marriage under the age of 18, enforcement remains a challenge and some communities continue to uphold traditional practices that encourage early marriage. Cultural and legal factors significantly influence teen motherhood particularly in Zimbabwe. Cultural norms often promote early marriage and childbearing especially in rural areas

and people who come from the Johanne Marange sect. For example, the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2023), revealed that nearly 31% of girls marry before the age of 18 with many communities viewing this as a rite of passage.

Legally, while Zimbabwe has laws against child marriage, enforcement remains weak. The 2016 Constitutional Court ruling to set the legal marriage age at 18 has not been fully realized in practice particularly in traditional settings. This discrepancy allows cultural practices to persist leading to higher teenage pregnancy rates as seen in areas like Mudzi, and Hopely where societal expectations pressure girls into early motherhood. Therefore, addressing these cultural and legal barriers is essential for reducing teen pregnancies. Efforts to change societal attitudes towards early marriage, combined with stronger enforcement of legal protections for young girls, can create a supportive environment for their education and personal development. Engaging community leaders in advocacy and education initiatives can help shift norms and empower girls to resist early marriage.

2.4.4. Social Stigma

Teen mothers frequently encounter social stigma that leads to isolation and mental health issues. This stigma is exacerbated by cultural beliefs that view early pregnancy as a failure. Young mothers in Hopely often drop out of school due to stigma or lack of childcare, making them economically dependent and vulnerable to repeated cycles of poverty and abuse. According to UNICEF (2023), a significant number of adolescent mothers in Zimbabwe also face mental health challenges, including depression and anxiety, due to societal rejection and the pressures of early parenthood. Over 70% of teen mothers' report feeling judged by their peers and community which can deter them from seeking education and support services (Zimbabwe Youth Council, 2021). Consequently, there is a need for comprehensive interventions that address not only the immediate needs of teenage mothers but also empower them to rebuild their lives sustainably.

2.4.5. Economic Challenges

Teen motherhood is significantly influenced by economic challenges which can create a cycle of poverty that affects both young mothers and their children. In Zimbabwe, economic hardships often force families to make difficult choices leading to increased rates of teenage pregnancies. Teen mothers often face significant economic hardships. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2023), indicates that only 30% of girls who become mothers before age 18 continue their

education and limiting their job prospects. Many live below the poverty line with reports indicating that over 60% of teen mothers rely on informal employment or family support to survive.

Economic challenges also manifest through limited access to healthcare and reproductive services. Many young women in impoverished areas lack the resources to obtain contraceptives or comprehensive sexual education, further exacerbating the issue. However, girls from the lowest economic quintile are three times more likely to experience early pregnancy compared to those from wealthier backgrounds. It is important to note that, it becomes clear that economic instability not only affects the immediate circumstances of young women but also has long-term implications for their futures. Teen mothers often face difficulties in continuing their education and securing stable employment which perpetuates the cycle of poverty. Their children are also at risk of facing similar economic hardships leading to generational cycles of disadvantage.

Therefore, addressing the economic challenges linked to teen motherhood requires a multifaceted approach. Initiatives that focus on economic empowerment for young women such as vocational training programs and microfinance opportunities, can provide pathways out of poverty. Additionally, community-based support systems that offer resources and education can help young mothers navigate their challenges while promoting healthier family dynamics. It is important to note that, each teen mother represents a unique journey marked by resilience and potential. By prioritizing economic support and educational opportunities we can help transform these young women's lives and break the cycle of poverty, allowing them to envision a future filled with possibilities for themselves and their children.

2.5. Defining Life skills and their relevance

Life skills refer to the abilities that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), key life skills include problem-solving, critical thinking, effective communication, decision-making, creative thinking, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness, empathy, and coping with emotions and stress. For teenage mothers, these skills are particularly essential for navigating motherhood, rebuilding self-esteem, and regaining a sense of control over their futures.

Life skills training provides teenage mothers with practical knowledge and psychosocial competencies that improve their parenting abilities, enhance their employability, and strengthen their resilience. In the Zimbabwean context, such training often includes reproductive health education, financial literacy, small business management, child care practices, and psychosocial support. These life skills not only help young mothers to cope with their current realities but also prepare them for long-term personal and professional growth.

2.5.1. Life skills training of teen mothers

2.5.1. Importance of Life skills

The World Health Organization (2020), emphasizes that life skills training can significantly improve mental health, self-esteem, and social functioning. For instance, participants in life skills programs experience a 40%increase in self-confidence and decision-making abilities. Empowerment refers to the process by which individuals gain control over their lives, claim their rights, and achieve social, economic, and political participation. For teenage mothers, empowerment through life skills training involves building confidence, independence, and agency. Several empirical studies have highlighted the positive outcomes of life skills programs targeting adolescent mothers.

One notable program is Médecins Sans Frontières' (MSF) "Teen Mums' Club" in Mbare and Epworth. This initiative combines peer support, vocational training, and sexual and reproductive health education to help teenage mothers reintegrate into society. Participants are trained in income-generating activities such as baking and tailoring and are supported through mentorship and group counselling. In 2023, MSF reported that over 60% of program graduates had either returned to school or started small businesses within six months of completing the training.

Similarly, UNICEF Zimbabwe's "Young Mentor Mothers" initiative empowers HIV-positive adolescent mothers by training them as peer counsellors. These mentors guide other young mothers through issues like infant health care, antiretroviral adherence, and managing social stigma. A 2022 evaluation of the program found that mentor mothers not only improved their own livelihoods but also played a critical role in reducing infant mortality and improving psychosocial outcomes among their peers.

In Mashonaland West, the Angel of Hope Foundation (2023), spearheaded by Zimbabwe's First Lady, provides life skills and entrepreneurship training to teenage mothers. Participants receive starter packs for businesses such as soap making, poultry farming, and vending. These initiatives illustrate that life skills training is a practical and transformative intervention that empowers teen mothers socially and economically.

2.5.2 Examples of Successful Programs

Girls' Empowerment Program (GEP)

Implemented across several African countries, including Zimbabwe, GEP combines life skills training with vocational education. Participants reported a 50%increase in employability within a year of completion.

Teen Mother Support Network(TMSN)

This Zimbabwe-based initiative provides life skills workshops and has shown a 35%increase in participants continuing their education after training.

Plan International Zimbabwe

Their "Because I Am a Girl" program focuses on empowering adolescent girls, including teen mothers, through life skills education. Evaluation results indicated improved self-efficacy among 70% of participants.

2.6. Challenges in implementation

2.6.1. Resource Constraints

Resource limitations also constrain program scalability. Many initiatives rely on donor funding, which can be unpredictable. Limited training materials, lack of skilled facilitators, and inadequate follow-up mechanisms can reduce the impact and sustainability of these programs. Limited funding is a significant barrier to the success of life skills training programs. Many organizations, such as ZimRights (2021), report being able to serve only 60% of interested participants due to budget constraints hence impacting the quality and reach of their services.

2.6.2. Societal Resistance

Despite the clear benefits, life skills training programs in Zimbabwe face numerous challenges. One of the most significant is cultural stigma. Teenage mothers are often labelled as immoral or irresponsible which affects their willingness and ability to participate in public training sessions. Community attitudes can either support or hinder their reintegration, making local sensitization campaigns crucial. Resistance from community members can undermine the effectiveness of empowerment initiatives. Programs must actively engage community leaders and parents to foster support and encourage participation.

2.6.3. Cultural stigma

Despite the clear benefits, life skills training programs in Zimbabwe face numerous challenges. One of the most significant is cultural stigma. Teenage mothers are often labelled as immoral or irresponsible, which affects their willingness and ability to participate in public training sessions. Community attitudes can either support or hinder their reintegration, making local sensitization campaigns crucial.

2.6.4. Policy

Additionally, policy gaps remain a barrier. Although Zimbabwe has policies aimed at supporting adolescent mothers such as allowing re-entry into school they are not consistently implemented. Bureaucratic hurdles, unsympathetic school administrators, and a lack of political will often undermine these policies. According to Mavunga (2023), argue that while the Zimbabwean government recognizes the importance of life skills education gaps in policy execution hinder effective implementation. For instance, the Education Act (2006) mandates the inclusion of life skills in curricula, yet many schools lack the resources and trained personnel to deliver these programs effectively.

Statistics show that despite policies supporting life skills education, only 45% of schools in rural areas offer comprehensive programs (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2022). This disparity underscores the socio-economic challenges that limit access to quality education and resources. Therefore, one can argue that it's clear that a concerted effort is needed to bridge the gap

between policy and practice hence engaging community stakeholders, providing teacher training and securing funding are crucial steps to enhance the effectiveness of life skills training.

2.7. Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness of life skills training in empowering teenage mothers, several strategies are recommended. Firstly, there is a need to mainstream life skills training into national education and health systems to ensure consistent funding and delivery. Government support is essential for scaling up successful pilot programs and integrating them into public service structures.

Secondly, community-based approaches should be prioritized. Engaging local leaders, schools, and religious institutions can help reduce stigma and encourage community buy-in. Also, programs should be designed with flexibility to accommodate different levels of education and social support, using mobile platforms or weekend sessions to reach more participants.

Finally, continuous monitoring and evaluation should be incorporated into all life skills programs. Gathering data on participant outcomes, drop-out rates, and community impact can help stakeholders refine interventions and ensure they remain relevant and effective.

2.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter covered the theoretical framework that is applicable to the research topic so as to gain a better insight about the role of life skills trading in empowering teen mothers. The chapter also covered the researches that have been done before by other scholars on global, regional and local levels. It is from this chapter that the research topic under study has been researched on by other researchers, although there is a gap of knowledge to be bridged. The next chapter will be looking at the methodology of the study thus the research approach used and other related methods which were used in carrying out the study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3. Introduction.

This chapter discussed the research design as well as the data collection instruments. It also explained the presentation and analysis strategy. The chapter described the study's research philosophy, approach, design, study population, study sample, sampling procedure and data collection instruments.

3.1. Research Philosophy

This study adopts a constructivist approach recognizing that the realities of teen mothers in Hopely, Zimbabwe, are socially constructed and shaped by their unique cultural, social, and economic contexts. It employs an interpretivist approach to focus on the subjective meanings these mothers assign to their experiences with life skills training, allowing for a nuanced exploration of their perceptions and empowerment journeys. This constructivist and interpretivist approach aligns with the study's goal of understanding the lived experiences of teen mothers, providing insights that are essential for developing culturally relevant interventions. Murray et al. (2020), highlight the need for context-specific solutions, reinforcing the importance of this framework in fostering genuine empowerment and improving life outcomes for this vulnerable demographic. According to Mauthner (2020), research philosophy serves as the cornerstone of the research process, assisting researchers in the collection and analysis of data in order to draw conclusions. When deciding the research approach to use when carrying out research, research philosophy plays a crucial role. In social science research, interpretivism is regarded as one of the research ideologies. It entails using each person's subjective perspective of social reality to comprehend and interpret it. In order to explain behaviour, attitudes, and experiences in the social and cultural sphere, interpretivism depends on qualitative research techniques. Interpretivism is based on qualitative research techniques used to investigate people's subjective experiences, attitudes, and feelings. These approaches are sensitivity to the social and cultural context makes them more suitable for capturing experience and meaning (Pham, 2018). Because qualitative research methodologies have several advantages when applied to interpretivism, this study adopted interpretivism as its research philosophy. First, because qualitative research methods are flexible enough to adjust to changing conditions and scenarios, they yield genuine and trustworthy data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Secondly, exploratory hypothesis generation and testing are made possible by qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). Third, qualitative research enables academics to get extensive and rich data that reflects the diversity of culture and social life (Maxwell, 2013). While there are certain drawbacks to qualitative research methods, it has been argued that these approaches can lead to researcher bias and that the findings' generalizability is dubious. Because the reliability and validity of the results could be questioned, the researcher must be careful to minimize researcher bias by employing impartial data gathering techniques (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

3.2. Research Approach

For the study on the role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers at Hopely, Zimbabwe, an inductive research approach will be employed. This choice is justified because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the personal experiences and perceptions of participants, which deductive methods may overlook. By conducting semi-structured interviews and focus groups, the research aims to uncover nuanced insights into how life skills training affects self-esteem, decision-making, financial literacy, and social networks among teen mothers. Murray et al. (2020), highlight the importance of context-specific interventions, emphasizing that empowerment initiatives must be tailored to the cultural and social realities of participants. Additionally, Miller (2021), asserts that qualitative methods are essential for understanding the lived experiences of marginalized groups, as they reveal the complexities of social dynamics and personal agency. By integrating these scholarly perspectives, the objective is to understand the specific challenges teen mothers encounter such as stigma, lack of support and limited resources and how training can be adapted to address these barriers effectively. This qualitative approach will not only provide a rich understanding of their empowerment journeys but also inform the design of targeted interventions that are culturally appropriate and responsive to the unique needs of teen mothers in the community. Ultimately, this research aims to foster sustainable empowerment and improve life outcomes.

3.3. Research Design

This study adopted a phenomenological research design. A research design serves as a blueprint that outlines the methods and processes used to collect and analyse data (Gupta, 2020). Phenomenology was chosen because it enables researchers to explore and interpret the lived experiences of individuals, offering deep insights into how people make sense of

their realities (Creswell, 2018). As Corbin and Strauss (2019) explain, phenomenological inquiry helps expand understanding, challenge existing perspectives, and clarify meaning by intentionally examining people's everyday experiences. This approach focuses on how individuals perceive and experience their life worlds and their daily realities shaped by personal and social interactions. It was therefore a fitting method for exploring the lived experiences of teen mothers engaged in life skills training. By using this approach, the researcher was able to gain a more authentic and meaningful understanding of their journeys. Phenomenology also ensures that the subject matter is understood from the participants' own perspectives, allowing the true essence of their experiences to emerge.(Vittana, 2020).

3.4. Study Setting

The research outlines the role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers. A case of Hopely, Zimbabwe. Hopely, Zimbabwe, is a vibrant rural community characterized by a diverse population and significant socioeconomic challenges, including high unemployment and limited access to education and healthcare. This environment creates a pressing need for life skills training, particularly for teen mothers who often face early pregnancies and societal stigmas. The presence of local NGOs and community organizations dedicated to women's empowerment further supports the implementation of such programs. These factors make Hopely an ideal research site to explore how life skills training can empower young mothers, offering insights that could benefit similar communities across Zimbabwe and beyond.

3.5.Target Population

According to Corbin and Strauss (2019), a study population refers to a group of individuals who share common characteristics and are of interest to the researcher. In this study, the target population consisted of teen mothers between the ages of 17 and 19 who are currently participating in life skills training programs. These young mothers were selected from the Hopely area. As outlined in the National Case Management System Overview (2022), the country's child protection system is primarily supported by two main pillars: government institutions and non-governmental actors. Key players in this space include the Ministry of Health, the Department of Social Development,

NGOs and civil society organisations, particularly in Harare. For this study, the researcher focused on teen mothers as the main participants drawing insights directly from their lived experiences.

3. 6. Sampling techniques and sample size

The sample size refers to the total number of participants involved in a study (Institute for Work and Health, 2020). For this research, the sample included six individuals: four teen mothers and two key informants. The researcher used the concept of data saturation to determine the number of teen mothers to interview. This means interviews were conducted until no new information was emerging, which occurred after speaking with four teen mothers. The number of key informants was also guided by their relevance to the study. This approach ensured that the voices and experiences shared were rich enough to inform meaningful findings.Since there are no general numerical direct methods for choosing a sample size for Lichtman (2020), the idea of data saturation was used. Stratified and purposive sampling approaches were used in this study's two sampling ethods. According to Lichtman (2020), a sampling technique is an established strategy chosen to be utilised in data collecting or to get a sample from a certain population. This is an explanation of the aforementioned sampling methods:

3.6.1. Purposive Sampling

Through this approach, the researcher deliberately selected participants based on their roles, knowledge of the topic, and ability to provide meaningful insights. The key informants were chosen specifically for their professional experience and expertise in child protection, as well as their hands-on involvement in supporting vulnerable children and teen mothers in their daily work. Their perspectives were considered valuable in helping to deepen the understanding of the issues explored in this study. This method allows you to specifically select participants who meet certain criteria such as being teen mothers who have participated in life skills training programs. Purposive sampling is particularly effective in qualitative research as it ensures that the sample is directly relevant to the research objectives, providing rich and insightful data that reflects the experiences and perspectives of

the target population. By employing purposive sampling, the study can effectively highlight the nuances of empowerment as experienced by teen mothers, leading to meaningful conclusions and recommendations for life skills training programs.

3.6.2. Stratified sampling

Another effective sampling technique l applied is stratified sampling. Stratified sampling ensures representation across different segments of the population, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of how various factors influence the experiences of teen mothers regarding life skills training. This technique can highlight differences in empowerment outcomes based on these characteristics. By employing stratified sampling, the research can effectively address the varying needs and challenges faced by different groups of teen mothers leading to more tailored and impactful recommendations for life skills training programs.

3.7. Data Collection Techniques and Tools

Data collection refers to the methods and procedures used to gather information during a research study (Bryman, 2020). In this study, interviews and observations were the primary tools for collecting data. The researcher personally conducted the interviews, using an interview guide that was translated into Shona—the local and most commonly spoken language—to ensure participants felt comfortable and fully understood the questions. On average, two interviews were carried out per day, allowing enough time to listen carefully and gather meaningful insights. In cases where participants did not feel comfortable being recorded, the researcher respectfully switched to taking detailed notes instead. This flexible approach helped ensure that the voices of the participants were captured accurately and respectfully.

3.8. Research Procedure

The researcher used interviews as the main method for collecting information. As Lichtman (2020) explains, an interview is a two-way conversation initiated by the interviewer with the goal of collecting relevant and focused data aligned with the study's objectives. This method allowed the researcher to clearly explain the purpose of the study and address any questions or concerns the participants had, helping to minimise misunderstandings. It also created a comfortable space for open dialogue, building trust and rapport between the researcher and participants making it easier to collect honest and meaningful responses.

In this study, face-to-face interviews were conducted. According to Lichtman (2020), such interviews are particularly valuable when questions or answers might be unclear, as they allow for real-time clarification. This approach not only improved the quality of the data gathered but also enabled the researcher to pick up on non-verbal cues like body language, facial expressions, tone of voice and insights that might not be captured through written questionnaires. These face-to-face conversations gave participants the chance to expand on their thoughts, clarify their opinions, and share their experiences in a more natural and expressive way. Interviews were held with both the teen mothers and key stakeholders who play a role in supporting them.

3.9. Validity and Reliability

Validity is the appropriateness, significance, accuracy, and utility of the inference that a researcher draws. This is the degree to which a measurement achieves its intended purpose (Bryman, 2020). Research tools must measure precisely what the research questions are intended to address. As a result, it was pretested because the data was credible, real, correct, and exact. The research tool used to draw results was impartial. To make sure that validity has been addressed based on the goals of the study and literature review, interview questions were pretested.

Reliability in research is crucial because it guarantees that the findings of a study are consistent and can be replicated or repeated. This means that the study's findings can be trusted and used to make informed decisions or to formulate policies. Without reliability, the results of a research study would be unstable and could not be used to make valid conclusions. While validity and reliability are two separate concepts, they are closely related in research. A research study that is not reliable cannot be valid because it cannot produce consistent results that accurately measure the concept being studied. Similarly, a research study that is reliable but not valid cannot produce accurate results because the research instrument is not measuring the right concept. It is, therefore, essential for researchers to ensure that their research instruments are both valid and reliable before collecting data. This can be done through various methods, such as pilot testing the research instrument and using statistical analyses to test for validity and reliability

3.10. Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher used tables to help present the data clearly and systematically. To make sense of the findings, explanations and descriptions were used to interpret the results in a meaningful way. This helped to capture the real-life experiences of teen mothers participating in life skills training and how such experiences have influenced their overall wellbeing. Through this process, the researcher was able to assess how effective life skills training has been in empowering teen mothers.

The data was analysed and shared using narrative descriptions carefully organised around the main research questions. As Creswell (2018) explains, data analysis involves taking the information collected and arranging it in a way that helps make sense of the issue under investigation. The responses from interviews were explored and interpreted based on existing knowledge. Analysis began while the information was still fresh in the researcher's mind—especially details that might not have been written down during the interviews.

3.11. Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity was a key part of the study, and the following considerations were carefully observed:

3.11.1. Voluntary Participation

All participants took part in the study willingly. They were not forced, tricked, or manipulated into participating. The researcher clearly explained the purpose of the study—that it was about understanding their real-life experiences as teen mothers in life skills training—and reminded them that they could withdraw from the interview at any point without any consequences (Creswell, 2018).

3.11.2. Informed Consent

Participants were fully informed about the study before giving their consent. This included explaining the study's goals, the process involved, any risks or benefits, and what would happen with the information they shared (Creswell, 2018). The researcher gave them the option to sign a consent form as a way of confirming their agreement to participate. Respecting informed consent was crucial as it protected the participants' rights and allowed them to make an informed decision.

3.11.3.Confidentiality and Anonymity

The identities of the participants were protected throughout the study. As Babbie (2019) states, confidentiality means the researcher knows who provided the information but promises not to reveal it. Only the researcher and her academic supervisors had access to the data. Names were never used or recorded, and extra care was taken to ensure the privacy of the teen mothers due to the sensitive nature of their experiences.

3.11.4.Avoiding Harm

The researcher ensured that no harm be it emotional, physical, or psychological was caused to the participants. According to Creswell (2018), researchers must protect participants from any potential harm, regardless of their voluntary involvement. The researcher was careful not to engage in any actions that might have negatively affected the participants in any way.

3.12.Delimitation of the Study

This research was carried out in Hopely, an area chosen because of its accessibility and relevance to the study. Being close to the researcher's home meant she could conduct the interviews without needing external funding for transport. Interviews were held with teen mothers in a safe and familiar environment, giving them the comfort and freedom to openly share their experiences.

3.13. Limitation of the Study

Due to the sensitivity of the topic, some participants might have exaggerated their responses, possibly hoping for assistance. Additionally, because the participants knew they were part of a study, their responses may have been influenced—a common phenomenon known as the Hawthorne effect.

3.14. Conclusion

This chapter explained the research methods used in the study, guided by a phenomenological approach to understanding real-life experiences. It described the study population, research design, sampling strategy, data collection tools, and how data was analysed. Ethical measures were highlighted to ensure the research was conducted with care and respect. The next chapter presents the actual findings, interpretation, analysis, and discussion based on the voices and experiences of the participants.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.

4.1: Introduction

This chapter presents, interprets and discusses the key findings from the study. The analysis is guided by the theoretical framework that supports this research helping to make sense of the results. Insights from the literature review are also used to deepen the understanding of participants perspectives on how life skills training empowers teen mothers. To provide context, this chapter begins by exploring the participants sex, age and highest level of education offering a clearer picture of their backgrounds, the challenges they face and how these factors have influenced their need for life skills training.

4.2: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES FOR PARTICIPANTS AND KEY INFORMANTS

To effectively analyse an issue and draw meaningful conclusions, it is important to first understand the demographic background of participants. These characteristics play a pivotal role in shaping people's knowledge, attitudes and behaviors within their communities and making them essential for interpreting research findings.

4.2.1. Demographical profile of participants

Table 4.1 presents the demographic details of the participants who participated in the study. The sample consisted of teen mothers from Hopely who had been involved in life skills training. These young women had different age and education backgrounds who shared their different personal experiences to help shed light on the impact of life skills training in their lives. They were selected based on their availability making them well suited to provide meaningful insights for this study.The information provided will be used in the discussion that follows to explore the challenges and outcomes linked to life skills training in empowering teen mothers in Hopely.

Table 4.1: Demographical details of the participants

PARTICIPANTS	SEX	AGE	LEVEL OF EDUCATION
1	FEMALE	19	FORM 3

2	FEMALE	18	FORM 2
3	FEMALE	18	FORM 2
4	FEMALE	17	FORM 1

4.2.2: Demographical profile of key informants

. Table 4.2 outlines the demographic profiles of key informants from the Hopely area, focusing on their age, the organisations they represent and their roles. The primary informants in this study were a social worker from the Department of Social Welfare and a health officer. They were selected because of their experience and their vital roles as frontline stakeholders in supporting teen mothers. The health officer, often a nurse, plays a key role in creating youth-friendly spaces and ensuring teen mothers have access to medical care and counselling. The social worker from the Department of Social Development works to ensure that the needs of teen mothers are met both within their homes and in the wider community.

Table 4.2: Demographical Profile of Key informants

KEY INFORMANT	AGE	SEX	ORGANISATION	POSITION
1	38	MALE	Department of Social Development	Case Management Officer
2	40	FEMALE	Ministry of Health and Childcare	Health Officer

4.3: THE ROLE OF LIFE SKILLS

4.3.1. Self Esteem

For teen mothers in Hopely, life skills programs became one of the few social spaces where they could be seen beyond their mistakes, where they could begin to rebuild a sense of identity fractured by judgment, stigma, and rejection. Self-esteem was not only about "feeling better" but it was about recovering voice, agency and dignity in environments that had silenced them.The responses below capture how these girls began to shift how they saw themselves and even when the world around them had already given up on them.

Participant 3 : Dropped out in Form 2 mentioned that,

"When I got pregnant, even my aunt said I was useless now. I believed her because l would sit idle at home doing nothing.But during sessions they made me participate and lead during discussions.At first l was scared but eventually l gained confidence and they would clap their hands for me.From that moment l started to think positively that l was not stupid at all as my aunt claimed."

Participant 4: Dropped out in Form 1mentioned that,

"I had never stand in front of a crowd and talk to them..At home I was usually antisocial and never engaged in conversations. But here, we had role plays and l acted as a teacher. Everyone laughed in a polite way and l reciprocated. I felt good ."

A health officer working with Tariro mentioned that,

"I normally interact with these girls during antenatal checkups and many of them avoid eye contact.But l noticed that, those that have gone through life skills training are different.They tend to ask questions, debate and some even complain when they feel like they are not treated in the right manner politely. That's self-esteem, right there."

As a result, life skills training is a powerful intervention that positively enhances self self-esteem of teen mothers.By employing Theory of Change framework it clearly indicates ways in which self-esteem can foster resilience and self-worth among teen mothers.Macleod (2020), argues that self-esteem plays a pivotal role in how teen mothers perceive themselves and is not built through lectures as these teen mothers are oftenly labelled, silenced or scolded. They begin to reclaim their voices through praise, participation and being taken seriously.From a Theory of Change

framework, it makes self-esteem not just a personal win but rather a social tool in a way that it breaks cycle of dependency, poverty and marginalization.Therefore, for teen mothers this is not just therapeutic, but it is revolutionary.

4.3.2. Confidence and decision making

In the lives of teen mothers in Hopely, confidence and decision-making often develop after pregnancy, not before and sometimes for the first time. While their journeys are marked by trauma, shame and abandonment, life skills programs offer them tools to make choices and not only about their future but about their present selves.

Participant 3: Dropped out in Form 2 mentioned that,

"Before I joined, I could not even decide what to wear. I always asked my mother. But after the sessions, I started choosing my own clothes, even telling my baby's father what I want. One day I told him, 'No, I will not come. I'm tired and l felt big and powerful after that."

Participant 4: Dropped out in Form 1 mentioned that,

"I did not even know what family planning was. I thought getting pregnant again was just something that happened. But in the life skills group, they explained it clearly.. I went to the clinic after that and for the very first time l made a decision for myself."

A Health Officer mentioned that,

"These teen mothers who have been through life skills program often ask questions and they don't just nod. I remember one even asked me, 'What are my options if I want to finish school and still breastfeed?' That kind of question shows confidence and they are thinking ahead."

For many teen mothers, life skills training can feel like its happening to them but rather than with them.Confidence and decision making are not just program outcomes but rather are deeply human needs. For example, from the moment they discover that they are pregnant decisions are often made on their behalf by their families or even healthcare. Yet by listening to the voices of teen mothers in this study, it becomes clear that something crucial happened when they participated in life skills training hence they began to reclaim their voices and trust their choices. Based on the

Theory of Change framework it helps to unpack the pathways ,highlight the importance of supportive environments and explore the transformation of confidence and decision making as pivotal blocks in the empowerment process of teen mothers as they start view themselves as capable, deserving of choices and everything changes.

4.4: ENCOUNTERS OF TEEN MOTHERS ENGAGED IN LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

4.4.1: How teen mothers engage in life skills training

Teen mothers who took part in life skills training opened up about the experiences that led them to such life-changing circumstances. Through interviews with both the teen mothers and key informants, the researcher explored the factors that influenced their involvement in these programs. Their stories revealed several powerful drivers, including poverty, cultural expectations, stigma and discrimination, as well as emotional and psychological stress which shaped their journeys and underscored the need for support through life skills training

4.4.1.Poverty

From the interviews conducted, poverty emerged as the most significant driving force behind the teen mothers' decision to take part in life skills training. Both the respondents and key informants highlighted how growing up in poverty-stricken environments deeply affected these young mothers. The hardships they faced left a lasting impact on their emotional and psychological wellbeing, leading them to seek out life skills training as a way to cope, rebuild, and find hope for a better future.

Participant 1: Dropped in form 3 mentioned that,

"Due to poverty that we had at home, l was forced to drop out of school at form 3. We were at a stage of money shortage to buy essential, so it was very difficult for my parents to take care of me and my siblings and also raise money for school. I was forced into child marriage to a polygamous man who had three wives. During that period l had lost hope in life and there was

now no need for me to further my studies. Months passed, l then ran away from this marriage to my parents' house pregnant because the man was very abusive and he never came back to my parents' house looking for me and the child."

Participant 2: Dropped out in form 2 mentioned that,

"Because of poverty that we had in my family, only boys were allowed to go to school and as a girl l was left with no choice but to look for work as a house maid. This allowed me to earn money so that l can buy sanitary wear and money for upkeep. Later, l was raped and returned home."

The case management officer mentioned that,,

"I have witnessed the challenges that teen mothers go through while participating in life skills training particularly from poverty stricken environments.. Many of these young women arrive with hopes of gaining skills to secure a better future for themselves and their children. However, many of these teen mothers' face food insecurity, lack of transport and limited access to childcare which tend to hinder their consistent attendance and engagement.

For many teen mothers in this study, poverty felt deeply personal. It showed up not just as empty wallets but unfinished schooling and the daily anxiety of not knowing how to provide for a child. According to Amartya Sen (2023), emphasizes that poverty is not only about lacking resources but about lacking freedom and the ability to purse a life one values. With this one can argue the fact that, from participants who were interviewed agreed that poverty becomes more than just lack of money as it is a force that silences confidence and shapes how these girls see themselves and how they are perceived by others.Based on the Theory of Change, a change does not happen by accident but rather is planned, layered and supported. The change is not just economic it is emotional, relational and deeply personal. By supporting these teen mothers through life skills training, the program begins to get rid of poverty not with handouts but with hope and strategy.

4.4.2. Stigma and discrimination

For some of the participants interviewed, stigma and discrimination stood out as the main reasons they turned to life skills training. They shared how being judged and excluded by

their families and communities pushed them to seek support and find a space where they could rebuild their confidence and sense of self-worth hence they decided to be engaged in life skills training. These teen moms were bought up in stigma and discrimination environments. Across all three cases explained below, stigma is both externally imposed and internally experienced often leading to isolation, shame and reduced engagement. These findings indicate that life skills programs must go beyond content delivery to actively build inclusive, non-judgmental spaces. Interventions should incorporate group cohesion strategies, peer mentorship and facilitators trained in trauma-informed and non-discriminatory practices. Ultimately, dismantling stigma is essential for the emotional safety and success of teen mothers in such programs. These These experiences took a heavy toll on their mental and emotional wellbeing which led them to seek out life skills training as a way to heal, grow and regain control of their lives

Participant 2: Dropped out in Form 2 mentioned that,

"*When I joined the life skills training, some girls looked at me as if l did not belong there. Even some facilitators acted differently.It made me want to quit but I stayed because I knew I needed something tangible to change my life.*"

Participant 3:Dropped out in Form 1 mentioned that,

"*People in the group judged me right away. They thought I was too young to be a mother. Sometimes I sat alone because I felt ashamed. I started skipping sessions because I did not feel welcomed even though I really wanted to learn and do better.*"

Participant 4: Dropped out in Form 1mentioned that,

"*I felt so out of place. The other girls could read and speak better English and some laughed when I tried to answer questions. I was afraid to speak up because I did not want to be laughed at. The trainers were kind but I still felt like I did not belong there because of how others treated me.*"

The case management officer mentioned that,

Stigma and discrimination are among the most persistent and damaging encounters faced by teen mothers during life skills training. The officer noted that many of the teen mothers enter the program already burdened by labels imposed by their families, schools and communities' labels that cast them as "failures" or "bad influences." This societal judgment often follows them into the training environment where some face subtle exclusion from peers or lowered expectations from facilitators. The CMO shared, "Some of the girls tell me they feel like they are being watched or judged the moment they walk into the room. It affects their willingness to speak, to participate, even to show up."Without intentional efforts to create inclusive, non-judgmental spaces, the training risks reinforcing the same social rejection that pushed many of these young mothers out of school and into silence."

Based on the insights from both the participants and key informants revealed a different perspective on the issue. According to MacLeod (2023), it underscores how stigma and discrimination profoundly shape the experiences of teen mothers in support programs, including life skills training. However, with this one can argue that many teen mothers internalize negative societal labels such as being seen as "irresponsible," "immature," or "a burden" which creates psychological barriers that hinder participation and personal growth.It is important to note that these girls not merely as program attendees but as individuals navigating the emotional weight of being young, female, poor and pregnant in environments that often lack compassion. By utilizing the Theory of Change, participants courage to even show up to training while facing community judgment and peer exclusion demonstrates resilience that is too often overlooked. If life skills programs are to be effective, they must not only teach but also restore dignity, actively countering discrimination and fostering environments where every teen mother feels seen, heard and valued.

4.4.3.Emotional and Psychological Stress

From the participants that were interviewed, emotional and psychological stress is another driving factor for respondents and key informants. The emotional weight teen mothers carry into life skills training struggles go far beyond the classroom as they are trying to heal, survive, and grow in environments that often do not fully understand or support their emotional reality. These

experiences left a deeply affected their emotional wellbeing leading them to turn to life skills training as a way to find support, healing and a sense of direction.

Participant 1: Dropped out in Form 3 mentioned that,

"I sit in the sessions and everyone talks about their goals but all I feel is pressure like l am running out of time to fix everything. I was doing okay in school before I got pregnant. My parents had hopes for me. Now, when I think about the future, I feel scared and ashamed and l want to believe in myself again but most days l am just trying not to cry in front of everyone."

Participant 2: Dropped out in Form 2 mentioned that,

"They asked us to talk about our strengths but I went blank. I used to have dreams I wanted to become someone big but it's too late. Everyone looks so confident and at times my heart races so fast that l feel like l can't breathe. But I stay quiet because I do not want them to see how broken I feel."

Participant 3: Dropped out in Form 2mentioned that,

"It is hard to focus during training. I keep thinking about my baby if she has eaten and safe. I sit there trying to listen but my mind is somewhere else. I am always anxious and tired. Sometimes I want to speak and join in but the fear of being judged or saying the wrong thing keeps me silent."

Participant 4: Dropped out in Form 1 mentioned that,

"I feel small in that room. Others understand things faster, speak up and asking questions. But me? I keep quiet. I do not want to look stupid. I did not finish much school and that makes me feel

like maybe I am not good enough to be there. I want to learn I really do but I also want someone to tell me that I am not a failure.”

The Health Officer as one of the key informants mentioned that,

According to the Health officer, many young mothers carry deep emotional trauma stemming from early pregnancies, strained family relationships, rejection by partners and social isolation. These underlying stresses often manifest during training sessions in the form of withdrawal, anxiety, or lack of participation. The officer explained, “Some of the teen mothers come to sessions smiling but underneath they are battling depression, self-blame, and fear of the future. One girl broke down during a session after being asked to talk about her goals she said she hadn't thought about herself in a long time.The officer added that even those with strong potential may appear disengaged not because they are lazy or uninterested but because they are emotionally exhausted. This insight echoes the participants' own accounts and underscores the need for mental health integration in life skills programs not as an optional support but as a foundational component of meaningful and lasting empowerment.”

From the responses gathered, the participants agreed that emotional and psychological stress is the one of the most significant yet often overlooked barrier holding back teen mothers from fully benefiting from life skills training programs (Audu and Yusuf ,2023). However, with this one can argue the fact that many teen mothers experience persistent anxiety, guilt, and low self-worth often compounded by the sudden transition into adult responsibilities without adequate social or emotional support.By utilizing the Theory of Change, it helps us to understand how a structured intervention like life skills training leads to emotional transformation hence it is not just important but it is the foundation. The Theory of Change in this study reflects the Trauma Informed Care approach which emphasizes the importance of safety, trust and empowerment in healing emit wounds. These findings mirror the lived experiences of the young mothers in this study, who spoke about feeling overwhelmed, mentally drained, and often invisible within the group. These emotional wounds are not always visible, but they are deeply real and they shape how these young women learn, engage, and dream as evidenced by the theory of change. Therefore, life skills training must therefore go beyond teaching functional knowledge, it must become a space of

healing where teen mothers feel emotionally safe, seen and supported. Only then can true empowerment begin.

4.5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LIFE SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMS IN SUPPORTING THE NEEDS OF TEEN MOTHERS IN HOPELY.

4.5.1. Evaluation of life skills training in Hopely

Below are four distinct responses from teen mothers in Hopely who dropped out at Form 3, Form 2 and Form 1 respectively. These voices are an underlying disconnect between what program designers define as "life skills" and what teen mothers experience as necessary for daily survival. These stories echoes a common pattern: young mothers come in hopeful but walk away with more shame than support,

Participant 1: Dropped out in Form 3 mentioned that,

"I really tried to attend the sessions. They said it was life skills, so I thought maybe I could learn how to start a small project to sell things or take care of my child. But it was not like that. They just talked about being respectful, how to behave and not making the same mistake again. I didn't feel like they were helping me with what I needed most honestly."

Participant 2: Dropped out in Form 2 mentioned that,

"I went for three weeks but I stopped. Every day I do walk with my baby on my back and hoping they do teach us about child health or something to make money from home. But most of the time it was just talking about self-esteem and confidence. That did not help me when my child was sick or when I had no food at home."

Participant 4: Dropped out in Form 1mentioned that,

"I did not understand some of the English sessions. I felt small. Like I did not belong there . I wanted to learn how to make something with my hands maybe beads or soap but they just kept saying we should 'make better choices next time.' I was already a mother. I did not need judgment."

A Case Management officer mentioned that,

"Sometimes when l look at these girls and I just want to cry. They walk in tired and not just physically but emotionally. Some carrying babies and others come without eating. We offer life skills sessions and yes, we talk about hygiene, goal setting, communication but deep down I know it's not enough. Not when a girl is worrying about how to get formula for her baby. We really do. But we are working with limited resources. Sometimes only a handful of girls show up. Also, there are days I leave work feeling like we are just putting band-aids on bullet wounds. We need programs that go beyond talk. They need food, transport, counseling, and income-generating skills and things that speak to their realities not ours. Until we walk beside them not above them, the cycle will continue. And they will keep slipping through the cracks."

Based on the TOC framework, it reveals how targeted interventions such as parenting , communication and self esteem can create a significant shift in behavior, mindset and future prospects. Barry et al. (2023), argue that when teen mothers are equipped with relevant life skills, they are more likely to engage in positive parenting, to avoid repeated pregnancies and purse education or income generating opportunities. For example in Zimbabwe many teen mothers who once felt overwhelmed and voiceless now demonstrate improved decision making and emotional resilience reflecting life skills sessions as their turning points.

4.5.2.Impact assessment of program

In exploring the effectiveness of life skills programs in Hopely, it became essential to understand the actual impact these interventions have on the daily lives of teen mothers and not just from the perspective of facilitators but through the raw lived experiences of the girls themselves. These young women, who exited formal schooling at various stages (Form 3, 2 and1) offer insight into what these programs truly mean when applied to the realities of motherhood, poverty and social isolation. What emerged from their narratives was a layered picture: while many participants valued the safe spaces, group interaction and emotional encouragement offered during the sessions, most felt a stark disconnect between the program's teachings and their real-life challenges. The absence of ongoing support, practical skills, and economic empowerment often left them emotionally uplifted but structurally unchanged. Their voices point not to resistance but to a quiet yearning for something deeper and more durable, more relevant, and more responsive to the weight they carry.

Participant 1: Dropped out in Form 3 mentioned that,

"The program gave me some confidence and l do not want to lie. I can now speak very well front of a crowd without shaking. But I thought they would help me go back to school or start a project. After the last session, there was no follow-up. Just silence. I felt like we were left hanging."

Participant 2: Dropped out in Form 2 mentioned that,

"The program gave me a routine. It was nice to have something to do. I even made friends with other teen mothers. But after it ended, it was like waking up from a dream. I went back to my same problems. No money, no one to help with my baby and no job. I do not think it changed anything."

Participant 3::Dropped out in Form 1mentioned that,

"I liked that people listened to me during the sessions. At home, all they do is shout.. But now that it is over, I feel alone again. They did not give us anything to help after."

A Case management officer mentioned that,

"The teen mothers in Hopely are not resistant to intervention but they are hungry for meaningful change. Their stories highlight the emotional power of being included but also the heartbreak that comes when inclusion is temporary or performative. These programs, as currently implemented, risk becoming spaces of false hope and uplifting in the moment but destabilizing in the long term when no structural change follows. They need more than words. They need a system that walks with them after the sessions end."

For girls who are often silenced or sidelined in their homes and communities being heard during sessions was a healing experience. However, these benefits were often temporary and emotionally fragile. Without material support such as income-generating opportunities, continued mentorship, or childcare assistance, however the programs did little to shift the girls' daily hardships.Based on TOC, it sometimes highlights the gap between what was hoped for and what was delivered. In light of these findings, it is evident that for life skills programs to have lasting impact, they must be holistic, sustained, and grounded in the real-life contexts of teen mothers.

4.5.3.Barriers to program effectiveness

While the life skills programs offered in Hopely aim to support teen mothers, several structural and personal barriers continue to undermine their effectiveness. Interviews revealed that while some girls want to participate, life circumstances often stand in the way. Barriers range from logistical (transport, food, and childcare) to emotional (stigma, shame, and lack of family support) making it nearly impossible for the most vulnerable girls to complete or benefit meaningfully from these programs.

Participant 1: Dropped out in Form 3 mentioned that,

"I wanted to go to all the sessions, but sometimes I had no bus fare. They said we must be on time, but how can I be on time when I have to beg for money every day? One time I walked and got there late, and they said I missed the main part. I stopped going."

Participant 2 : Dropped out in Form 2 mentioned that,

"I felt judged when I came. Some of the facilitators looked at us like we were dirty or stupid. One said, 'You should have thought twice before opening your legs.' I never went back. I already get enough judgment from home."

Participant 3: Dropped out in Form 2 mentioned that,

"I did not have anyone to leave my baby with. Even when I wanted to come, I had to carry her. Sometimes she would cry and they do tell me to leave and come back later. But where could I go?"

Participant 4: Dropped out in Form 1 mentioned that,

"I did not understand some of the English words they used. I was too shy to ask. The others were older, they knew more. I just sat quietly, then I stopped going. I felt out of place."

Despite the transformative potential of life skills training for teen mothers, several barriers hinder program effectiveness when viewed through the Theory of Change. This framework shows that while inputs like training sessions and mentorship aim to produce empowered, self-reliant young mothers, the pathway to sustained change is often disrupted by systemic and personal challenges. According to Mpanza and Nzima (2022), argue that poverty, stigma, lack of childcare, and unstable home environments significantly limit teen mothers' ability to fully participate and apply the skills gained. For instance, some girls in Hopely struggle to attend sessions because they must care for their children or lack transport fare, creating a gap between program activities and desired outcomes. Furthermore, without consistent psychosocial support and community acceptance, the internal growth sparked by training may wither under external pressures. The TOC framework reminds us that real empowerment requires more than skills and it demands that barriers at each stage of the journey be actively dismantled, allowing teen mothers not just to survive, but to truly transform their futures.

4.5.4.POSSIBLE MEASURES TO HELP TEEN MOTHERS

a.The government

Through the interviews participants shared what kind of support they hope to receive from the government. They all agreed that government intervention is crucial to help them improve their circumstances and create a better future for themselves and their children.

Participant 1 mentioned that,

"Sometimes I feel like people in power forget we exist. We did not choose this path but now we are here trying to survive and take care of our babies. If the government really wants to help us, they should create spaces where we feel safe and supported. We need places to go back to school without being judged. Some of us dropped out not because we wanted to but because we had no choice. There should be schools or training centers for girls like us with child care and people who understand what we're going through. Also, mental health support is important. We carry so much pain and most of us have no one to talk to. And maybe they can give us small grants or starter packs to begin a business, something that helps us stand on our own. We do not want handouts we just want a chance to try again."

Participant 2 mentioned that,

"I think the government should understand that being a teen mother does not mean our lives are over. What we need most is a chance just one chance to rebuild ourselves. They can start by giving us free or low-cost training programs that include life skills and something practical, like sewing or baking, so we can earn money. Also, they should provide proper health services especially for us young mothers. Sometimes we go to clinics and people treat us badly just because we are young. It hurts. If there were friendly places where we can get both health care and counselling that would really help. And maybe if they could help with things like baby formula or diapers for those who have nothing that small help can change a lot. We want to be strong for our babies, but we need support too. We want to be seen not as failures, but as young women who still have something to offer."

All the key informants emphasized the need for a prompt and effective response from the government to support young women through life skills training highlighting that it has beaming a growing concern among the residents of Hopely. They called on give leaders especially those in positions of authority to take meaningful action and prioritise this issue by supporting teen mothers must go beyond punitive or moralistic approaches and instead focus on inclusive policies that promote education re-entry, access to adolescent-friendly health services, and targeted economic empowerment programs. When governments invest in these areas such as subsidized vocational

training, psychosocial support and child care services they not only reduce long-term poverty cycles but also improve health and educational outcomes for both the mothers and their children.

b. Non-Governmental Organizations

The area under study has been a hub for a nearly 42 NGOs working across different sectors including food aid, child protection, urban youth resilience and social cash transfer programs.Participants strongly expressed the need for these organisations to continue their presence in the community highlighting the vital role they play in offering support, skills training and much needed assistance to teen mothers and others in need.

One 18 year old participant said

"Non governmental organisations have really helped some girls I know and I think they can do even more if they listen to what we need. Most of us just want to feel like we have not been forgotten. If NGOs could provide things like counselling, parenting classes and skills training that come with small start-up kits, that would help a lot. Even just having a safe place to meet and talk with other young mothers makes a big difference, it reminds us of we're not alone."

Another participant mentioned that,

"I think NGOs can help us by giving us real chances to stand on our feet. Sometimes, people give us advice but no actual support. If NGOs can help us with hands-on skills like hairdressing, farming, or tailoring—and give us tools to start with that would change everything. Not all of us can go back to school, but we still want to work and provide for our children. Also, I think NGOs should involve us more when planning programs. Ask us what we need, don't just assume.If NGOs can create safe spaces and listen to our stories without judging, they can help us heal and move forward. We just want a chance to feel human again."

A Health Officer from Tariro mentioned that,

"What we see every day are girls who have been hurt not just physically by childbirth at a young age but emotionally by rejection, shame and silence. Many of them come to us afraid, unsure if

they will be judged again. So, the first thing we offer is kindness." She explained that at Tariro, they focus on creating a safe and welcoming space where teen mothers can access health care without fear or stigma. Sometimes, even just having someone greet them by name, ask how they are doing and actually listen it makes all the difference. Through youth-friendly clinics, counselling sessions and small group support, Tariro tries to bring healing and hope. "We also connect them to skills training or help them go back to school, because we know they are more than their situation they are young women with dreams, even if life interrupted them.That's how healing begins."

4.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter presented the findings gathered through interviews with teen mothers involved in life skills training focusing on the experiences they shared. The researcher reached data saturation after speaking with four teen mothers and two key informants as no new information was emerging. The findings are organised according to the research objectives which guided the development of the main themes explored in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes the entire research study on the lived experiences of teen moms undergoing life skills training. In this chapter, we look at how life skills training can empower teen mothers. Adolescent pregnancy is often fraught with daunting problems, leaving many young moms feeling alienated and worried about their futures. However, our study has shown that life skills training can be a source of hope for these young women, giving them the tools they need to establish a better life for themselves and their children. We've seen incredible results by providing teen mothers with important skills like effective communication, decision-making, and financial literacy. Participants reported not only more confidence, but also better relationships with their family and friends. They are more resilient and determined to face the challenges of parenthood thanks to their newly discovered feeling of agency. The goals, objectives, and questions of the research served as the basis for this summarization. It seeks to highlight how crucial it is to fund initiatives that assist teen moms in transforming obstacles into possibilities. We can create an atmosphere that enables these young ladies to flourish rather than just endure if we recognize the value of life skills training. We believe that by sharing their experiences and stories, we will raise awareness of the value of focused interventions and community support in creating better futures for teen moms and their kids. As a result, this chapter examined the research study's summary, conclusion, and recommendations.

5.2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study was on the role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers.

To explore the encounters faced by teen mothers during life skills training

The study's conclusions raise serious concerns about the role that life skills training plays in empowering adolescent mothers. According to the study, teen moms encountered a number of obstacles that made it difficult for them to participate in life skills training, even though it provided a much-needed chance for development and empowerment. Many of them found it difficult to balance their training sessions with their caregiving duties; they frequently arrived late, were worn

out, or had to skip sessions entirely because there was insufficient childcare support. Others struggled to focus or participate completely because they were emotionally spent and carrying the burden of rejection from partners or family. In the training environment, several teen moms also experienced stigma from the community and even subtle judgment, which impacted their self-esteem and openness to communication. Another significant obstacle was financial difficulty; some girls were unable to pay for transportation or other essentials, which made them less inclined to continue. These experiences show that while the goal of the life skills training was empowerment, its impact was frequently limited by the larger realities of poverty, social shame, and isolation. Many participants, however, demonstrated resilience; some said that the sessions turned into a unique safe place where they felt heard and seen, and they started to slowly regain their sense of self.

To under the perception of teen mothers towards life skills training

According to the study's findings, Hopely's teen moms saw life skills training as a timely and profoundly transforming intervention, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak and the 2018 drought. Many of them were now more vulnerable as a result of these events, dealing with issues like starvation, dropping out of school, losing their jobs, and declining mental health. The combined stress of environmental and health issues further marginalized young moms who were already facing stigma and abandonment. In this situation, life skills training was viewed as a safe haven as well as a curriculum. Numerous participants reported that the sessions helped them regain their confidence, provided them with useful coping mechanisms for ambiguity, and enabled them to imagine a future beyond mere survival. They appreciated the emotional support as much as the information, especially when it came to decision-making, parenting, and self-care. The general sentiment was one of thankfulness, with many people saying the training helped them "breathe again" during a period when their world seemed to be falling apart, even though some felt it required more consistency and logistical support. These observations highlight the ways in which life skills initiatives can serve as stabilizing factors during national emergencies, providing people most in danger with hope and fortitude.

To identify suggestions from teen mothers on how programs could better support them

Based on the study's findings, Hopely's teen moms provided sincere and useful recommendations on how life skills programs may better serve their needs, particularly in light of the stress brought on by previous crises and the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of them suffered from emotional trauma, financial ruin, and a lack of steady support as a result of these incidents. The young mothers consequently demanded programs that provide comprehensive and ongoing assistance, going beyond workshops. Many recommended that childcare be provided during training sessions because their job as young caretakers frequently hindered them from participating fully. Others highlighted the necessity of addressing survival needs in addition to personal development by expressing the need for food aid, mental health counseling, and start-up resources to begin small companies. In order to lessen transportation issues, they also suggested that sessions be held more frequently and in the neighborhood. Crucially, teen moms requested more welcoming and nonjudgmental settings where their reality are accepted and their opinions are heard. Their recommendations demonstrate a great yearning for dignity, security, and belonging in addition to skills, particularly in light of previous national tragedies that highlighted how precarious their lives had become. These revelations demonstrate that programs that empower girls need to be adaptable, sensitive, and based on their real-life experience

5.3. CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

According to this study, teen moms benefit greatly from life skills training since it gives them the self-assurance, information, and useful skills they need to manage motherhood and personal development. It showed that teen moms start to see themselves as strong, resilient young women with a future rather than as victims of their circumstances when they are given the opportunity to master skills like communication, goal-setting, decision-making, and emotional management. I learned from the studies that connection, encouragement, and the conviction that these young moms deserve help are the foundations of empowerment, which transcends classroom education. Teen moms can regain their voice, make wise decisions, and improve their own and their children's lives by receiving life skills training, which helps to rebuild that belief.

In the end, empowering teen moms involves more than just providing them with resources; it also entails acknowledging and treating them as competent people with aspirations, potential, and the

right to prosper. When carefully planned and empathetically carried out, life skills training can be a potent step in that process.

5.4. Implications for Social Work Practice

On the basis of the research fin and conclusions discussed above and in light of social work theory and policy the study highlights the following implications of the study to social work practice:

- Social workers should advocate for legislation that increase teen moms' empowerment by providing them with emotional, physical, and financial support when they are unable to obtain health care services.Develop and execute better healthcare interventions for teen moms during and after childbirth by fostering a symbiotic partnership between the government, community-based organizations, and non-governmental organizations.
- Social workers must also include the appropriate parties to help teen moms participate in life skills programs and activities that will likely enhance their healthcare in the community.
- It's crucial to remember that this study also suggests that social workers who collaborate with NGOs, the government, and PVOs can help increase awareness of teen moms.
- When it comes to stigma and discrimination against teen moms seeking basic services, social workers should help to lessen societal unfairness.
- When working with teen mothers, social workers should make life skills training a top priority as a fundamental intervention. These young ladies require more than just compassion; they also require resources, direction, and confidence in their own abilities. Thus, life skills training is a gateway to reclaimed hope, agency, and resilience rather than merely a curriculum. Thus, this study urges social workers in Hopely and elsewhere to move from just solving issues to fostering potential.

Despite highlighting the study's implications for social work practice, this section only offers social work-related recommendations. Therefore, the study's suggestions are given to all other stakeholders who may find value in the study's findings in the part that follows.

5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the theoretical framework and literature review in Chapter 2, as well as the research findings and conclusions mentioned above, this study makes the following suggestions to certain stakeholders. Thus, the researcher's own research and information obtained from Hopely participant interviews—who constituted a representative sample for the study—are the main sources of these recommendations. The urgent necessity to incorporate life skills training as a planned and ongoing empowerment strategy for teen moms in Hopely was also revealed by this study. Several layers of cooperation and practicality are needed to address this problem. The following suggestions are based on the actual experiences of teen moms and are designed to bring about quantifiable change.

To raise awareness and upholding women's rights

In addition to enacting laws, the government can significantly improve the lives of teen moms by defending their potential and dignity. In addition to feeling invisible and scrutinized by the very structures designed to serve them, many of the Hopely girls have the burden of becoming mothers too young. They now have a voice and the means to rebuild thanks to life skills training, but their progress could be short-lived if their rights are not protected and there is no public awareness. Teen moms must understand that their dreams are important and that they are not alone. In order to combat the stigma associated with teen motherhood and advance messages of inclusion, respect, and opportunity, the government must aggressively increase awareness in communities, schools, clinics, and through media outlets. Enforcing laws and services is necessary to safeguard young mothers from abuse, guarantee their rights to health and education, and provide them second chances. Real transformation begins when a girl feels heard, safe, and encouraged. It also occurs when life skills training is supported by a system that genuinely believes in her value.

To strengthen teen mother's participation in community programs

In order for life skills training to genuinely empower these young women, the community must decide to support them rather than oppose them. Communities have the ability to either empower or silence teen mothers. For instance, many young moms in Hopely talked about how they frequently go about their neighborhoods with their heads down, feeling ignored or judged.

However, several of them felt capable, heard, and appreciated for the first time when they walked into life skills training spaces. The community must be involved in the process in order to maintain that transformation. Therefore, it is imperative that friends, families, churches, and local leaders open their hearts and actively assist adolescent moms—not just with words, but also by providing childcare, inviting them to community meetings, or publicly praising their efforts. Teen mothers start to feel like they belong when they are accepted into a room rather than being talked about in whispers. And she starts to rise when she belongs. Teen moms are able to grow with dignity and purpose because of the community's love, acceptance, and support, but life skills training lays the groundwork.

To improve the availability of services for teen mothers

In order for life skills training to genuinely empower teen moms, stakeholders need to do more than just provide temporary assistance; they also need to take concrete measures to increase the availability, accessibility, and significance of vital services. Many adolescent mothers in Hopely talked about how they felt optimistic after training sessions, prepared to make better decisions, care for their children, and dream again, but they quickly ran into a roadblock when they couldn't find anywhere to go for counseling, medical attention, or even assistance going back to school. When a young mother is told she has promise and then left to fend for herself in a system that seems distant or unapproachable, it is devastating. Stakeholders, including NGOs, clinics, schools, and community leaders, must collaborate to establish a safety net that will support young girls at difficult times. This entails lowering red tape, putting services closer to them, and treating them with empathy rather than condemnation. The life skills a teen mother has acquired start to take root when she is aware that there is a clinic that will not embarrass her, a counselor who will listen, or a school that is willing to accept her back. Empowerment transcends the concept and becomes her reality.

To implement policies that are inclusive

Policies need to start addressing the realities of teen moms, who are routinely abandoned, feared, and criticized despite their immense potential. Life skills training, according to many of the teen moms in Hopely, provided them a second chance—a place to develop, to be heard, and to regain

their sense of value. However, policies must make room for them as a priority rather than an afterthought if they are to turn that spark into long-lasting change. It is advised that the government and other decision-makers create and carry out initiatives that are genuinely inclusive, providing counseling, childcare assistance, youth-friendly health services, and flexible schooling. It shouldn't be necessary for these young mothers to decide between providing for their kids and securing their future. Life skills training becomes more than a glimmer of hope; it becomes a bridge to a better life when policies acknowledge their individual journey and offer genuine, useful assistance. Adolescent mothers should be told by inclusive policies that they are important. Your life is important. And we are accompanying you on this adventure.

5.6. AREAS OF FUTURE STUDY

Although this study clarified how life skills training empowers teen moms in Hopely, Zimbabwe, there are still a number of unanswered questions that demand more research. First off, this study was primarily concerned with the short-term impacts of life skills training; it did not assess long-term benefits like parental results, further schooling, or sustained economic independence. To determine how life skills training affects teen moms' life paths over a number of years, future study should be longitudinal.

Second, the viewpoints of male partners, family, and community leaders were not examined in this study, despite the fact that their support—or lack thereof—has a big impact on the empowerment process. Designing more inclusive and comprehensive solutions may be made easier with an understanding of their perspectives. As a result, while the study focused on the perspectives of adolescent moms, it did not thoroughly examine how Hopely's cultural and religious values affect the difficulties they encounter as well as how they respond to life skills training. Future studies should look at how these elements may help or hurt attempts at empowerment.

Lack of information on teen moms with disabilities, who might experience double discrimination and particular access challenges, is another gap. To guarantee that services are genuinely accessible and egalitarian, research should take into account this frequently disregarded group. The impact of particular life skills modules, like financial literacy or emotional control, on specific

outcomes, like self-esteem, job placement, or school re-enrollment, might be tested and evaluated in future research. This could aid in improving training materials for increased effectiveness.

Future studies can improve our knowledge and assist in creating more adaptable, inclusive, and transformative support networks for adolescent moms in Hopely and other comparable communities by tackling these issues.

5.7. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The findings from the research of the role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers a case of Hopely were the main emphasis of this last chapter. The chapter also covered the study's findings, which showed that life skills training provides a gateway to resilience, hope, and agency rather than merely a curriculum. The utilization of policy, stakeholders, the community, and social workers to assist these children was mentioned in the subsection on the study's suggestions. After that, the chapter discussed a topic for further study, which has generally involved social work techniques. The chapter ended with a summary of the chapter.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

My name is Vanessa Zihero, I am a fourth year student at Bindura University of Science Education studying Bachelor of Science (Honors) Degree in Social Work. As a requirement of completion of

the degree programme. I am required to carry out research. To this end, l am conducting a research entitled: The role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers. A case of Hopely, Zimbabwe. The researcher has seen it appropriate to interview you for information on the subject. The information l will collect will be for academic purposes only. The details of the study are as follows.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, you are required to respond to the questions from the researcher. The interview involves one on one interface with the researcher in order to secure privacy and confidentiality. The researcher assures privacy and confidentiality on the research information and the research will not include any personal information that identifies the participant. The access to the records will also be limited to the researcher.

N.B Participation is voluntary, there are no rewards or monetary value for participating in the research.

You are not obliged to answer everything that can have been asked.

Statement of consent

I have read and understood the above information. I have agreed and received answers to the questions that l have asked. I consent to participate

Signature………………

Date…………………….

CONFIDENTIAL

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is Vanessa Zihero and I am currently studying Social Work with Bindura University of Science Education. I am interviewing teen mothers engaged in life skills training in Hopely to find out their experiences. The main purpose of the study is to find out the lived experiences of teen mothers engaged in life skills training.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF TEEN MOTHERS

1. SEX…………………
2. AGE……….
3. LEVEL OF EDUCATION…………….

SECTION B: ENCOUNTERS OF TEEN MOTHERS ENGAGED IN LIFE SKILLS

1.   Can you tell me how you were engaged in life skills training?

2.   Can you tell me the encounters you face as a teen mother in life skills training?

3.   What are the life skills provided?

4.   What are the challenges you are facing since you were engaged in life skills training?

5.   What do you do when you face these challenges?

6.   Who is providing the life skills?

7.   How do teen moms benefit from life skills?

SECTION C: TEEN MOTHERS PERCEPTION OF LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

1.   How do you perceive the issue of life skills?

2.   Do you think your life would have been better/worse if you did not be involved in life skills training?

3.   What are your benefits of being involved in life skills training?

SECTION D: POSSIBLE MEASURES TO HELP TEEN MOTHERS

1.   What do you think can be done to help you in overcoming these challenges?

2.   What can the government do to help you?

3.   What can non-governmental organizations do to help you?

APPENDIX 3

CONFIDENTIAL

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is Vanessa Zihero and I am currently studying Social Work with Bindura University of Science Education. I am interviewing stakeholders that offer child protection in Hopely to find out the experiences faced by teen mothers engaged in life skills training. The main purpose of the study is to find out the lived experiences of teen mothers engaged in life skills training.

 BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THE KEY INFORMANT

1.   SEX………

2.   AGE

3.   ORGANISATION

4.   POSITION

5.   What is your role in child protection?

6.   What is the current situation of teen mothers engaged in life skills training?

7.   What are the major driving actors of teen mothers to engage in life skill training?

8.   How do you perceive these teen mothers?

9.   How do the society perceive these teen mothers?

10.   Can you tell me the challenges that these teen mothers face in life skills training?

11.   What do you think can be done to address challenges and minimize challenges faced by teen mothers engaged in life skills training?

12.   What are the coping strategies which you use at your organization in trying to mold resilient teen mothers?

13.   What other strategies do you believe the Department of Social Development can use to assist teen mothers engaged in life skills training?

14.   Are there any other strategies you think can strengthen the child protection systems in the community of Hopely?

15.   Do you have any additional comments on the issues we have discussed that can help to minimize the effects of Life skills training in empowering teen mothers?

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe   [Telephone+263 4 2933741]

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Homeownership
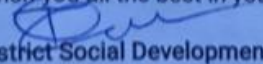Mutare

Date: 21 February 2025

Dear Miss Zihero V. T

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT FIELD RESEARCH "THE ROLE OF LIFE SKILLS TRAINING IN EMPOWERING TEEN MOTHERS". A CASE OF HOPELY, ZIMBABWE

Following your letter dated 24 January 2024 seeking for permission to carry out a field research study on the topic: **The role of life skills training in empowering teen mothers. A case of hopely, Zimbabwe.** I am pleased to inform you that the permission is hereby granted on the following conditions:

(a) That you shall strictly stick to the core purpose of the study, that is academic.
(b) You shall not in any way negatively interfere with the duties or personal lives of your study participants.
© The identity of the participants shall be protected at all times and
(d) No political issues shall be discussed during your study.

You are required to submit a printed copy of your research study upon completion of your studies.

I wish you all the best in your field research study.

District Social Development Officer
Highfield District
Harare

HIGHFIELD DISTRICT SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
2 / FEV. 2025
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BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

Date: 17 FEBRUARY 2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR ORGANISATION

This serves to introduce the bearer:...
Student Registration Number:.........................who is a **BSc SOCIAL WORK** student at Bindura University of Science Education and is carrying out a research project in your area/institution.

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

Yours faithfully

MS E.E. CHIGONDO
CHAIRPERSON

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
SOCIAL WORK CHAIRPERSON
17 FEB
16 JAN 2025

FACULTY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
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