BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCING SCHOOL DROPOUT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL GIRLS IN RURAL AREAS. A CASE OF CHIWESHE WARD 11.

BY

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK IN PARTIAL FULLFILMENT OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK

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Declaration Form

I, Shiphrah Ruvimbo Katekwe studying for a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work, l am aware of the fact that plagiarism is an academic offense and that falsifying information is a breach of the ethics of Social Work research, I truthfully declare that:

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family whose unwavering support has been my foundation. To my younger siblings Josiah, Nokutenda and Tabitha, may you be inspired by this work to pursue your dreams and embrace the power of education. I would also want to dedicate this dissertation to me for the strength and resilience I have shown throughout this journey.

Abstract

This study identified the sociocultural factors influencing dropout among secondary school girls. The major aim of the study was to investigate the already existing support mechanism that support girls education in the Chiweshe area. The study was qualitative in nature and employed focus group discussions, indepth interviews, questionnaires and document analysis for the purpose of data collection. It employed case study research design and interprevist research philosophy. A sample size of 30 participants was selected from the target population and the total response rate was 80%. The study employed the ecological systems theory. The study revealed that sociocultural factors such as poverty, religion, household responsibilities and engagement in risk behaviors are influencing girl's dropouts in Chiweshe ward 11. Moreover the study found out that parental levels of education, age, social perception, school environment and a disconnect between educational program intentions and implementation affect girls education contributing to high dropout rates. The study also put across some recommendations which include awareness raising on the importance of education and negative effects of early marriages. A model was also proposed with the aim on empowering girls and communities through encouraging utilization of local resources to minimize over dependence on aid and effective monitoring and evaluation of educational programs to assess if they are still serving its intended purpose.

List of abbreviations and acronyms

BUSE: Bindura University of Science Education

CBOs: Community Based Organizations

CTE: Career Technical Education programs

CCWs: Community Care Worker

EMIS: Education Management Information System

GBV: Gender Based Violence

GEEM: Girls Educational Empowerment Model

GOV. UK: Government of United Kingdom

MDAs: Ministries, Departments and Agencies

MDGs: Millennium Development Goals

MoPSE   Ministry of Primary Secondary Education

NGOs: Non-Govemental Organizations

SDC: School Disciplinary Committee

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

ZIMSTAT: Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency

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<center>**CHAPTER ONE**</center>

<center>**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**</center>

1.0 Introduction

Students dropping out of school is a worldwide concern. Despite coordinated efforts in terms of policy formulation and other interventions to allow smooth transition there is still a significant percentage of students withdrawing before graduating. This chapter provide a comprehensive background to the study highlighting the critical need for targeted intervention. The statement of the problem outlines the complexities surrounding dropout phenomena, emphasizing the need for effective strategies to reduce these influences. The aim of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, justification of the study, key definitions to the study are all included in this chapter.

1.1 Background of the study

Equal access to education is an important human right, acknowledged globally. This has prompted governments across the world and international development agencies to promote universal access to education through making huge financial investments and crafting enabling legislations and policies to that effect. Some of the significant commitments to equal access to education by world leaders has been the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the child, the 1990 World Conference on Education for all, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its predecessors, MDGs. Despite global efforts such as the SDGs, millions of girls in sub-Saharan Africa remain at risk of dropping out of school due to complex interplay of sociocultural, economic and institutional factors (UNICEF, 2021).

In Zimbabwe according to 2018 EMIS Report, secondary school dropout stands at 34.1% with lower secondary school completion at 63.12% whilst that of upper secondary school was at 14.9% with gender parity in favor of males. Newsday of June 8, 2021, reports that national average school dropout in Zimbabwe is at 15%. In Zimbabwean rural areas and especially in communities such as Chiweshe ward 11, many girls are unable to complete their secondary education due to a complex interplay of sociocultural factors. These include educational abuse or harassment, poverty, family dynamics and expectation, early marriage, early pregnancy and traditional practices. Thus,

<center>1</center>

girls' school dropout is influenced by an array of factors relating to individual, family, school and community settings in which the learner lives.

In Zimbabwe significant strides have been made towards achieving gender parity in primary education, however disparities persists at the secondary level. According to ZIMSTAT (2022), the net enrolment rate for girls in secondary schools stands at approximately 49%, compared to 55% for boys. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, further indicates that dropout rate among adolescent girls in rural areas are disproportionately high, with early marriage, household responsibilities and poverty cited as the leading causes (ZIMSTAT AND UNICEF, 2022).

Focusing on the Mashonaland Central Province, and specifically Chiweshe ward 11, the challenges faced by secondary school girls are particularly acute. According to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (2023), 30% of girls enrolled in form 1 do not compete form 4 primarily due to sociocultural factors such as early marriage, gender based violence and entrenched beliefs about the value of educating girls. Community- based organizations operating in Chiweshe highlighted that many families in this community prioritizes domestic chores or early marriages of continued schooling for girls exacerbating dropout rate (Plan International Zimbabwe, 2021). The consequences of high dropout rates among girls are far reaching, perpetuating cycles of poverty, limiting personal opportunity and community development, undermining progress towards national and global goals (UNICEF, 2021).

While interventions such as community awareness, scholarship and legal reforms have been implemented, dropouts rate in Chiweshe ward 11 remain high indicating persistent gap in strategies that are tailored to the local sociocultural context. Consequently, there are distinctive circumstances for the girls in Chiweshe ward 11 area that are yet to be addressed. It remains unclear which factors are leading to the increase in dropout rate in the area. Hence, rather than generalizing, the research sought conceptualized solutions for mitigating girls' school dropout in Chiweshe. It is therefore against this background that this research seeks to explore and propose context-specific strategies to mitigate the sociocultural barriers to girl's education in Chiweshe ward 11 drawing from the perspectives of girls, parents, school leaders and community leaders.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite global advancements in education, Nyachuru and Gweshe rural secondary schools in Chiweshe ward 11 continue to experience alarmingly high dropout rates, significantly hindering students' academic and future opportunities contributing to social and economic disparities. There is rising incidence of adolescent pregnancy among girls aged 13 to 16, coupled with their vulnerability to exploitation in informal labor in the area. Hence this situation threatens the economy of the country because of the nexus between human, financial and material resources. Without understanding of sociocultural influences specifically for Chiweshe ward 11, interventions designed to improve student retention may remain ineffective and misdirected. This study seeks to address the critical gap in understanding how sociocultural influences operate and interact, ultimately contributing to dropping among secondary girls in the area.

1.3 Aim of the study

To assess the socio-cultural factors contributing to school dropout among secondary girls in Chiweshe ward 11 rural area.

1.4 Objectives of the study

1. To identify socio-cultural factors influencing school dropout among secondary school girls in Chiweshe ward 11
2. To examine the extent to which socio-cultural factors influence school dropout amongst Gweshe and Nyachuru secondary schools in Chiweshe ward 11.
3. To investigate the support systems that are there to reduce school dropouts among secondary school girls in Chiweshe ward 11.

1.5 Justification of the Study

The findings from this study will assist the social workers and Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to have adjustments in overlooked socio-cultural factors influencing dropouts among secondary girls in rural areas specifically for Chiweshe ward 11 area. There is an African proverbs which says that "educating a boy is educating one person, educating a girl child is educating a nation" thus it stretches the importance of educating girls and sponsoring the education of a girl child. The study is not just going to emphasis on policy changes but for a holistic approach which involves increased community education, safety measures, family support and empowering girls and their families.

This research is a powerful tool against teen pregnancies and school dropping ultimately contributing to a more empowered, resilient and sustainable community. Additionally, it reduces gender pay gap and allow women to participate in socioeconomic development and in politics. As a result women will be soundly represented in decision making breaking social and cultural barriers to their inclusion in all sectors. By integrating the research findings into educational programs, universities can equip future educators with deeper understanding of the challenges faced by rural students, fostering more effective teaching strategies that are sensitive to diverse sociocultural backgrounds.

1.6 Key definitions

Socio-cultural- the interplay between individual behaviors and societal influences

School drop-out: refers to individual who does not complete or is no longer enrolled within an educational institution that can lead to school completion at a particular point in time.

Formal Education- a structured and systemic approach to learning that occurs within established educational institutions such as schools, colleges and universities. It typically follows a standardized schedule and culminates in recognized certificates or degrees

1.7 Dissertation outline

Chapter one: Introduction and background

This is introductory chapter provides an overview of the research problem and aspects such as introduction and background of the study statement of the problem, aim of the study, research objectives, and justification of the study.

Chapter Two: literature review and the theoretical framework

This chapter provides literature review and foregoing studies on school dropout among secondary girls. The chapter reviewed literature from Europe, African and Zimbabwe clear bringing out the research gap and the link between previous studies and the foregoing study.

Chapter three: Research design and methodology

The chapter describes the methods used to research the topic as well as the research design employed. The study employed case study as a research design since the research is qualitative

research. It clearly explains sampling method and techniques adopted, ethics adhered to as well as data collecting methods and tools used. Interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussion as data collection tools were harnessed by the study.

Chapter four: Data presentation, interpretation, analysis and discussion of findings

The finding were analyzed thematically and the researcher relates the finding to the literature and theoretical framework in chapter 2 showing were it concur and contrast.

Chapter five: summary, conclusions, recommendations and areas of further research.

This chapter gives a summary and draws conclusions of the findings in the previous chapters. It also propose recommendations and a model for this study. Lastly it stated key that were omitted in this research and need to be researched on in future researches.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the general background and introduction of the research topic. The research by Mawere as well as the government of Zimbabwe and others has notably addressed the school dropout question among secondary girls in rural areas. The research therefore aims to understand the continued dropout rates among secondary girls in rural areas a case of Chiweshe ward 11 as well as to proffer solutions. The following chapters will focus on theoretical framework concerning school dropping among secondary girls, research design and methodology adopted in this study, data presentation as well as conclusion

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides comprehensive review of existing literature on sociocultural determinants of school dropout, with particular emphasis on rural context similar to Chiweshe ward 11. It explores both global and local perspectives, highlighting the complexity and multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by rural school girls. The chapter also examines various intervention strategies documented in scholarly works, evaluating their relevance and applicability to the Chiweshe ward 11 context. Also theoretical framework which is going to be employed in this research is explained below. Through literature review and theoretical analysis, the chapter seeks to establish subsequent analysis and recommendations, ultimately contributing to the practical interventions tailored to the specific needs of secondary girls in Chiweshe ward 11 area.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Various theories can be employed to explain why individual's dropout from learning institutions. This study is going to employ the Ecological Systems Theory developed by Bronfenbrenner and further developed in social work by Gitterma and Germain (2013). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory will be discussed to provide a foundation for analyzing the interplay between individual, family, community and institutional factors influencing girls schooling. By anchoring the discussion with a strong theoretical context, this section aim to reveal how sociocultural factors contribute to dropout rate and to identify evidence based strategies that can be employed to reduce girl's dropout rates.

2.1.1 Ecological Systems theory

This theory assumes that there are complex layers of the environment that influence people's lives (Schwartz, 1995). These environmental structures include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem (Leonard, 2011). Thus, the family, friends and social networks are influential part of mesosystem which contribute to girls dropping out. According to Sherif (1989) a microsystem is the smallest unit of social organization which includes one's personal and interpersonal relationships including individual, family and the extended family from whom she get the first line of help in times of need. In the context of the current study, the

microsystems of the girls in rural secondary schools will be explored to get an understanding on how they impact on their decision making and socialization in relation to school dropout. For instance, girls whose parents believe that sending a girl child to school is a waste of resources are likely to drop out. Leonard (2011), observe that both community and cultural forces directly affect the family. Girls who are brought up in churches which believe in early marriage or in not educating girls, results in those girls not completing secondary school. Therefore at microsystem context, the study is going to conduct interviews and focus group discussions with girls who have dropped from Gweshe and Nyachuru secondary schools to understand specific circumstances that interplay in their lives. Also conducting interviews with parents with children who dropped out from school and school leaders from the two selected schools to gather personal information about their experiences with girl's education.

The second stage of the ecological systems theory which is mesosystem is going to be utilized by this study to analyze the effectiveness of communication between schools and families. Mesosystem refers to the connections between different microsystems like the relationship between the family and school. This will involve interviews with community leaders about existing connections and potential areas for improvements. Engaging the community members in identifying sociocultural factors that affect girl's education is going to provide insights into how and the extent to which sociocultural factors influence dropping and affect girls schooling. The researcher is also going to employ the exosystem layer in this study which refers to the external environment setting that indirectly influence development, such as parental work workforce and community resources. Thus the study is going to investigate how parents' employment conditions affect their ability to support their daughter's education. Adding on, from the macrosystem context the study is going to analyze the societal beliefs and values regarding girl's education in Chiweshe ward 11 area. Also, educational policies that promote gender equality and how they are implemented in rural setting are going to be reviewed so as to enable the researcher to generate viewpoints of this research and to propose policy recommendation based on the finding of this study. The macrosystem which are the institutions will help in developing measures that can be introduced to reduce sociocultural factors that influence girls to drop out of school in Chiweshe ward 11 area. In chronosystem which is the dimension of time, reflecting changes and transitions in individuals life and socio historical context, this research is a powerful tool in empowering girls

against teen pregnancies and school dropping ultimately contributing to a more empowered, resilient and sustainable future generation.

Sherif (1989) is of the view that the Social Ecological Theory emphasizes the significance of including people in actively reshaping their environment. This is relevant to the study in Chiweshe ward 11 and nationwide because personal, family as well as community factors contribute to school dropout among secondary school. Hence the theory can be used to reshape the socio and cultural factors to reduce school dropouts. It is of great importance that individuals, family, society and the government take collective action towards mitigating girls' school dropout rates. The framework guides the development of comprehensive strategies that address not just individual or family level barriers but also structural and community level barriers, leading to more sustainable and effective strategies for reducing girls dropout rates.

2.2 Literature Review

This section reviews key literature on the causes of dropout and evaluates the effectiveness of various approaches designed to keep girls in school. The section also reviewed literature using the objectives of this study.

2.2.1 Socio- demographic characteristics of girls who dropout from school

According to Dey (2016) parent's educational attainment contribute to a girl child educational attainment. Thus, children whose parents have lower educational attainment are most likely to drop out because their parents do not see the importance of learning. Brown and Park (2011) in their research in China they indicated that each additional year of a father's education, the probability of child's dropping out is 12-14% whilst Dey (2016) is of the view that mother's secondary education lowers dropout to 2.6%. Hence the researcher is going to design the questions that asks parents educational attainment in her research tools in order to effectively respond to this attributed feature associated with school dropout.

Mawere (2012) has identified cultural and religious beliefs motivating early marriage as another socio-demographic characteristic which has a bearing on secondary girls' dropouts. A study carried out by Zaharia (2015) established that early marriage custom is prevalent in rural areas. Young girls who belong to Johanne Marange sect drop out from school because their doctrine considers early marriage. In a research carried out by Gouda and Sekher in 2014, they observed

that in West Bengal a region in India Muslim girls when compared to girls from other religious groups they drop out school far early. This is because Muslim prefer to educate their daughters outside state formal education instead, they opt for Maktab teaching. Muslim countries such as Afghanistan normally have problems with gender equality for patriarchal norms makes girls drop out from school. In line with culture and beliefs as motivators of dropping school this research is going to assess if droppers from the two selected schools were also influenced by culture and beliefs to leave school.

Academic performance of an individual is another socio-demographic characteristic that can be attributed to girls dropping in secondary schools. According to Doll and Walters (2013), academic achievement or ability is associated so well with dropouts in schools. In this regard learners struggling to do well in all subjects taught at school may fail to develop self-esteem hence see no reason for continuing with school. In the same vain Covington (1998), observed that students who dropout from school see little motivation in the school when they perceive their abilities as inadequate. Therefore, this study is going to investigate this typical feature among droppers in Chiweshe ward 11 in order to propose meaningful learning and thinking among students.

Age is another socio-demographic characteristic found on secondary girls who dropout from school. The level at which a child is contributes to the likelihood of dropping school. According to Mutavati (2013) most girls experience dropout during the key years of form three and form four, with a percent of 78%. Accordingly a research carried out in Kenya in 2020 indicates that approximately 23% of girls drop out of school during their early teenage ages, with the majority leaving between ages 13 to 15. This is because most of them want to experiment with their sexuality. Therefore, this study is going to look for the demographic information of girls who have dropped school to have a clear conclusion whether age is a feature which contribute to girls dropping.

2.2. 2 Socio-cultural determinants of girls' dropouts in rural areas.
Early marriage is one the socio-cultural factors influencing girl's dropout rates in rural areas. Patel (2016) found out that married girls are less likely to continue with their education as compared to their peers. Early marriages disrupt education as the married girls are expected to take on domestic responsibility such as household chores and childrearing and their husbands have limited ability to continue support their education. A study carried out by Zaharia (2009) established that early

marriages are common in rural areas and that the cultural practices in Zimbabwe are affecting girls' education. Thus, a man can offer her daughter in marriage for material or financial gain. Girls from poor background can be married earlier because they will be viewing marriage as a way of earning a better life whilst on the other hand the family may view marriage as a way of alleviating economic burdens, thus prioritizing marriage over continued education for daughters. Therefore, this study will assess if early marriages are still existing in Chiweshe ward 11 area.

Teenage pregnancies also influence young girls dropping. Most girls in rural areas fall pregnancy due to limited access to formal sexual education and family planning methods as compared to girls in urban areas who had access to online resources and healthcare providers. Also, in rural area discussions around sex, reproductive health and ways of preventing pregnancies can be viewed as taboo leading to misinformation and increased unintended pregnancies. Most adolescent girls who have become pregnant leave school in most Sub-Saharan African countries, with statistics ranging from 95% in Zambia to 99% in Tanzania (Research Report, 2015). Amadi et al (2013) argue that 70% of the female school dropout cases are due unintended pregnancy. Although the education Act in Zimbabwe and other NGOs such as Vana Activities advocate for girls who have fallen pregnancy to be re-admitted in schools most of them do not return. In addition, technology exposes girls to dangerous content which encourage them to experiment with their sexuality without guidance. Also abuse from family members, teachers, strangers or elder partners result in girls falling pregnant which results in dropping and unable to continue with education since they will be taking care of the family. This cause of dropping out of school shows that the microsystem, mesosystem and the exosystem have influence on dropout rates in rural areas hence the study will have particular attention to that.

African culture motivating early marriages can also influence school dropping in some marginalized rural schools. The women are valued by the number of children they bear for their husbands. As such, girls leave school and get married so that they can have children and be valued in the community. In a research study by Cammish and Brock (1997) completed in seven developing countries revealed that most girl's dropout of school due to cultural bias towards males, a result of countries patriarchal structure. Traditional initiation rites known as "kuchezwa ngoma" practiced particularly among Shona speaking has encouraged girls to leave school (Rutakinikwa, 2016). This ceremony involves older women teaching youth girls how to have sexual intercourse

and satisfy men hence it can encourage girls to leave school to become wives or mothers. This practice can be also connected to school dropout if the events occurred during school terms leading to missed school days. Thus, if the family continue prioritizing these events girls may fall behind in their study and struggle to catch up eventually contributed to dropping out. However, this study seeks to assess if such traditional practices that hinder girls from continuing school are influential to Nyachuru and Gweshe secondary school droppers in Chiweshe area.

Religion factors have contributed to girls dropping out from school. According to Save the Children (2005), cultural norms and beliefs are affecting girls' education in developing countries. Mawere, (2012) conducted a study which indicated that White garments religious sect members consider the selling of the girl child to the husband the subject of holy spirit desires. This has led to young girls submitting to their parents' order and or Holy Spirit desires. Moyo and Mavezwa (2013), observe that, most girls of the apostolic faith religion sect are married as soon as they reach puberty. These girls will stop school and focus on taking care of the husbands if selected. Some religious teachings emphasize modesty which can influence the way girls participate in school for instance requirements for girls to wear long clothes and not to wear shorts or tracksuits. Hence religion may create barriers for girls to continue with education especially if the school environment does not support or allow religious attire. Thus, the researcher is also going to find out if the droppers from the two selected schools faced dilemmas between their religious practices and school rules which eventually lead to dropping.

Poverty is another identified sociocultural factor influencing school dropout. Chenge and Maunganidze (2017), observed that children from low-income earners whose parents struggle to provide food are strong candidates for dropping out from school. Families in poverty may prioritize immediate needs over long term investment like education. Older girls are seen as contributors to the household economy as a result may be sent to work instead of going to school. For instance, the girls will be expected to care for young siblings, assist with household chores or even expected to take up small business to help the family make ends meet. Shahidul and Karim, (2015), argue that direct and indirect schooling costs carried by the child are important factors to consider for the education of the children. For example, failure to pay examination and school fees by parents diminishes the child's purpose for going to school when there is no certificate at the end. Also, if the family faces financial crisis, they may sacrifice girls' education over that of a boy child. This

is because in patriarchal societies, girl's role is of bearing children and since they do not benefit their family due to marriage and a boy child will be sent to school because they will directly benefit from him.

Researches also identified household responsibilities as a sociocultural factor influencing dropout in rural areas. Household responsibility refers to the expectation that girls contribute significantly to domestic chores and caregiving within the family. In many rural Zimbabwean communities these expectations area deeply rooted in traditional gender roles. These include fetching water and firewood, caring for younger siblings, cooking and cleaning which are regarded as girl's assigned roles. The burden of household duties has several direct and indirect effects on girls schooling. According to World Bank (2020), girls often have less time for homework or rest due to household chores, leading to poor academic performance.

Gender based violence is another sociocultural factor influencing girls to dropout in rural areas according to UNICEF (2022). Gender based violence encompasses a range of harmful acts directed to individuals based on their gender. In education setting GBV include corporal punishment, physical, emotional; and psychological and emotional abuse, as well as harassment and bullying. A study by the Zimbabwe Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (2023), found that nearly 17% of secondary school girl in rural areas reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment or abuse while at school. Hence GBV trigger absenteeism, erode self-esteem and confidence and cause early pregnancies eventually leading to dropping out of school. According to Plan International Zimbabwe GBV girls who are subjected to violence may feel unsafe, anxious, or depressed leading to disengagement from school activities. Cultural norms in many communities such as Chiweshe discourage reporting incidents of abuse due stigma, fear of being judged or lack of trust authorities. This silence perpetuates the cycle of abuse and increases dropouts. Therefore, this study seeks to ascertain if dropping in Chiweshe ward 11 is being influenced by GBV and or by aforementioned factors or they are other peculiar factors affecting girls in that area creating a strong foundation for developing effective strategies to reduce girl's dropout rate in Chiweshe ward 11 and in other rural areas.

2.2.3 Identified support systems that can be employed to reduce school dropouts among secondary school girls in rural areas.

There are various studies that have put forward with strategies that can be taken to mitigate school secondary girls from abandoning their studies. One of the strategies that can be used is introducing and enforcing strict educational laws. For instance, in Finland and Sweden they implement early intervention programs that identify at-risk students and provide support before they reach the point of dropping. This promotes inclusive education as it ensures that children with disabilities, mental health challenges and children from low-income families receive appropriate support to remain in school. According to GOV.UK (2016), parents who absent their children from school are required to pay 2,500 pounds or are imprisoned for three months. This helped lowering school dropout as parents will be playing a pivotal role in making sure that their children attend lessons because of fear of being imprisoned. According to Kalong (2013 legal action should also be taken to the people who employ students in domestic work. Thus, strict laws should also be introduced in many developing countries such as Zimbabwe that are still facing high dropout rates. Hence this study seeks to assess whether these measures can be also adopted in Chiweshe ward 11 area.

Parents should also be actively involved in the education of their children as another strategy to reduce dropouts' rate. Thus, parents who support children education by ensuring that their children have proper school uniforms, school shoes and promptly pay school fees reduce the rate of dropping. Kalong (2013) stipulates that parents should teach their children the importance of going to school and discourage bad behavior at school. Consequently, parents who encourage their children to attend to school regularly, discourage absenteeism and communicate with teachers may track their children behavior, progress and challenges they may face and work with the school administrators before they lead to dropout. Also, parent involvement fosters positive attitude towards learning especially on a girl child because they face societal expectations to marry early or expected to assume domestic roles (Kaufman et al, 2000). Mavambo NGO which operates in Chiweshe ward 11conduct sessions that encourage parents to demonstrate the value of education by consistently talking about benefits of learning such as improved job opportunities and personal empowerment since it promotes resilience and strong commitment to education. Therefore, a supportive family system environment can make a big difference in combating girls dropping and there is need to continue encouraging parents in Chiweshe ward 11 area through awareness campaigns on the importance of their involvement in the education of their children.

Involving the community is another identified strategy that can be utilized to mitigate school dropout. Community awareness campaigns about the importance of educating a girl child programs targeting the entire community including religious groups and local leaders it helps challenging deep rooted cultural attitudes that prioritize domestic roles or early marriage over education. Thus, the community must report school girls who hang around with boys or males during school hours. Also, the community must report to police officer's cases of children between the ages of school going who stays at home. This reduces teen pregnancies and ensures that children remain at school. In Zimbabwe, in Masvingo district chief Chiredzi has been involved in campaigns that encourage parents to send their daughters to school rather than arrange marriages for them. This advocacy led to reduction in early marriages and an increased number of girls staying at school. Therefore this study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the measures that community leaders in Chiweshe ward 11 area had introduced in order to curb the problem of secondary girls dropouts.

Awareness campaigns is another strategy that can be utilized to reduce school dropout. Various advocacy organizations should conduct awareness campaigns on the consequences of dropping and the importance of pursuing with education. Babinski et al (2016) argue that in America many advocacy organizations have devoted their time resources to increase community awareness on girls' education and this helped to prevent school dropout. Plan International through its "Because I am a Girl" campaign has been one of the key players in Zimbabwe raising awareness about the importance of educating a girl child. The campaign has sought to address various sociocultural barriers such as poverty, lack of sanitary products and all forms of abuse which led to high dropouts among secondary girls in rural areas. This study advocates for continued educational campaigns because the world is changing hence barriers to education may increase such as lack of technical devices such as computers can make learning difficult for students especially in rural areas were many parents and schools do not afford to buy them leading to drop outs

Including life skills in the curriculum is another strategy that can be employed to reduce dropout rates. Countries like Switzerland have Career Technical Education programs (CTE) of providing vocational training and workshops in school. This provides children with practical skills and career pathways hence reduced dropout's rate as they find meaning in education and are motivated to remain in school. Also, including reproductive health rights lessons in school curriculum so that

girls will be aware of their body and their right, hence reducing teen pregnancies. In the USA, sexuality education has been introduced in schools and students are taught how to use contraceptives with the aim of protecting them from unplanned pregnancies (Advocacy of youth, 2008). Consequently, there has been a decline in teen pregnancy. Providing comprehensive sexual education as part of life skills will enable rural girls understand the risk of early pregnancies, indulge in protected sex which can help reduce dropping due to teen or unintended pregnancies.

White and Kelly (2010) note that in North America the rate of high school graduation has increased from 72% in 2002 to 74% in 2004 because of the social skills, support and coaching that counselors in schools provide to students. Guidance and Counselling in schools build confidence and resilience in rural girls. Since they face gender-based violence, economic hardships which can lead to dropping. Life skills such as guidance in decision making, knowledge on actions to take if they feel harassed or abused and problem-solving skills can help them navigate these challenges. Although the educational policy in Zimbabwe and other NGOs such as Vana Activities advocate for a "second chance" girls who have fallen pregnant to be readmitted in schools, the majority of them do not return. Hence this study will look deeper into why girls are not returning to school after giving birth so that the researcher will be in a position to propose an effective way of channeling second chance program.

2.3 Research Gap

While extensive literature examines the socio-demographic and socio-cultural factors contributing to school dropout rates among girls, there is a notable gap in understanding the specific contextual influences within rural areas, particularly in Chiweshe ward 11. Existing studies highlight factors such as early marriage, teenage pregnancies, and cultural beliefs, but they often lack a detailed examination of how these elements interact within the region's unique socio-economic landscape. Moreover, the significance of local support systems and community involvement in addressing these challenges remains underexplored. This study aims to address these deficiencies by investigating the interplay of these factors in Chiweshe, assessing both the contextual influences on dropout rates and the effectiveness of community-driven initiatives, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of girls' educational persistence in rural settings.

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has reviewed literature related to the socio-cultural factors that influence girls to drop out of school in rural areas and strategies to mitigate those factors. Guided by social ecological theory, the chapter has exposed how complex layers of the environment influence rural girls' education and the need for the researcher to tailor a multi-level intervention. Global, regional and local overviews from other studies were reviewed. Various strategies including involving parents and the community in girls' education, enforcing strict laws, involving life skills in the curriculum have shown promise in addressing barriers to girl's education, though their effectiveness often hinges on the specific cultural and environmental context. The following chapter exposes research design and methodology to delve deeper into the local realities of Chiweshe ward 11 leading to implementation plan to enhance girl's education retention.

CHAPTER THREE

RESERCH METHODOGY AND DESIGN

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed literature related to factors contributing to rural girl's dropouts and strategies to reduce sociocultural factors influencing. Guided by the complex layers within people's lives the chapter examined how there is still a number of girls dropping out from school besides the current educational policy and other interventions in the country. This chapter unpacks the research methodology that was employed by the researcher in this study. Topical issues to be covered include research philosophy, approach and design, study setting, target population, sampling techniques and samples size, data collection techniques and tools, research procedure, data validity and reliability as well as data analysis.

3.1 Research Philosophy

In this study an interpretivist epistemology philosophy was adopted to explore and develop strategies for reducing sociocultural factors influencing girls from Gweshe and Nyachuru secondary schools to drop out. This philosophy is particularly appropriate for this study because factors leading to dropout such as cultural norms, family expectation, early marriage, gender stereotypes and community attitudes are deeply rooted in unique social and cultural context of communities. Epistemology recognizes that these influences cannot be understood through statistics alone but through understanding personal experiences, perceptions and values of the girls in Chiweshe ward 11, as well as those of their parents, school leaders and community leaders. Eventually this philosophical approach supports a holistic and empathetic understanding of the problem, laying a strong foundation for effective and sustainable interventions.

3.2 Research Approach

This study employed qualitative approach as it enables an in-depth understanding into factors influencing girls dropping and ways to deal with the problem as it unfolds during research. Langmaid (1998) defines qualitative research as centrally concerned with understanding phenomenon rather than with measuring it. This means that the study took a center stage in examining the causes of dropping out from school as highlighted by participants rather than quantifying the causes. Qualitative research is based on people's opinions and accounts, hence it

is mainly expressed in words of the respondents. This contributes significantly to understanding and addressing the complex issue of school dropout in perspective of research participants. The table below shows the differences that exist between qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

Table 3.1: Shows the difference between qualitative and quantitative research methodologies

Qualitative methodology	Quantitative methodology
Words	Numbers
Process	Static
Unstructured	Structured
Rich deep data	Hard reliable data
Contextual setting	Artificial setting
Point of view of participants	Point of view of research
Theory emerged	Theory testing

The researcher collected qualitative data since the research is primarily concerned with how interactions amongst people, cultural beliefs and practices influence girls dropping in Chiweshe ward 11 area. Qualitative research were chosen over quantitative research because of the following characteristics of this study.

- Findings were presented in non-numerical form where little use numerical or statistical analysis was being employed.
- There was need to understand phenomena in their setting, this means that context were seen as important.
- A model emerged as the research was being carried out and the researcher was flexible throughout the whole process.

The qualitative approach is open ended and inductive exploration of reality. Exploratory in the sense that it aims to use participants' own understanding of reality in understanding social setting (Allan, 1991). Hence participants' emic and etic perceptions regarding girl's education in Chiweshe ward 11 area was ensured in this study.

3.3 Research Design

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a research design is a systematic plan that guides the collection, measurement, and analysis of data to address a research problem. Therefore, it serves as blueprint for conducting a research and ensuring validity and reliability of findings. The researcher used case study as a research design. Case study was specifically appropriate for this study because it facilitated the collection of rich, detailed data from various key informants in Chiweshe ward 11 such as students, teachers, parents and community leaders. It also enabled the researcher to be in a position to capture the complexity and clues of sociocultural influences that might be overlooked in broader, less focused studies. Hence such a grounded approach increases the potential for developing effective strategies to reduce school dropout rates among girls in rural areas.

3.4 Study Setting

The research was conducted in Chiweshe ward 11 area. The researcher chose Chiweshe ward 11 area because it was easy for the student to find the participants since she lived in the same area. More so, the researcher selected Nyachuru and Gweshe Secondary Schools because of increasing numbers of school droppers in both schools.

3.5 Target Population

Population can be defined as a group of people who have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the research. Barbie (2017) defines target population as the entire group of people about whom you want to generalize. The girls who have dropped out from school at Nyachuru and Gweshe secondary schools from 2019 up to 2023, key informants such as school leaders from the two selected schools and parents with children who dropped school between the stated range of years and also community leaders are target population with the hope of collecting unbiased data.

3.6 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

According to Creswell (2014) sampling is the process of selecting a portion of the population to make inference on the characteristics of the larger population. Case studies generally uses purposive sampling, partly because the size is often small (Marrelli, 2007). A purposive sample size of 30 people was drawn from the target population. These include 20 girls who have dropped school from 2019 up to 2023, 4 school leaders from both schools and 4 parents with children who have dropped school within the stated period in both schools and 2 community leaders. The researcher managed to collect data from 24 partcipants. Therefore a sample size of 80% were researched on.

3.7 Data Collection Techniques and Tools

Data collection tools are tools or devices used to collect data that answers research demands. According to Smith (2023), case studies utilizes a variety of qualitative techniques such as interviews, observations and document analysis to collect and analyze data. Hence this study made use interviews, questionnaires and document analysis to uncover the underlying meanings and motivations behind school dropout enabling the development of strategies that are relevant and culturally tailored for Chiweshe ward 11 dropouts. Varied data collection tools allows the researcher to cross-validate data and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the problem. Also the researcher identified patterns, themes, and insights that might not been apparent from a single source of data and new ideas emerged.

3.7.1 Key Informant Interviews

Interview is a social encounter where speakers collaborate in producing retrospective, and perspective accounts of their past or future experiences, feeling and thoughts (Seale, Giampiento, Gubrium and Silvermen, 2004). A key informant interview guide was prepared with semi-structured questions to enable the researcher to generate more insights into strategies to reduce socio-cultural factors that influence girl's dropout. The interview guide was prepared in advance with four sections to avoid time mismanagement and the responses were recorded with the participants' permission. The interviews were conducted in an uninterrupted environment which is an ethical consideration adhered to.

This method was very useful as it managed to acquire in-depth information on socio-factors influencing girls dropout in Chiweshe area leading to development of effective and tailored

interventions. Four of the dropouts interviewed were selected from the two focus groups discussions since some people are introverts hence may feel insecure and shy to share their viewpoints in group. Also, this data gathering tool was cost effective as the researcher had to move from one key informant to another so as to conduct face to face interviews.

3.7.2 Focus Discussion Groups

According to Lewis (2003), a focus group discussion is a type of interview that is planned in a manner that allow viewpoint to be yielded in a topic of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. An FGD guide was prepared was prepared in advance with semi-structured questions to enable the researcher to use time wisely and stay guided during sessions. FDGs were very important in this research as they have assisted with general background information pertaining to the increase of dropout rates among secondary girls in Chiweshe ward 11. According to Stewart and Shamdasani (1990), FDGs can also be used to stimulate new ideas and creative interviews concept. The researcher conducted two focus group discussions A and B comprised of 8 girls who have dropped out from school in each group which is a manageable sample which does not allow members to dominate others. The discussion was held in an informal way to allow participants to freely participate and share insights that stimulates others to share information they left out on questionnaires and face to face interviews.

3.7.3 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research tool consisting of series of a questions designed to gather specific information from respondents. The questionnaires were administered to 10 girls who have dropped school from 2019 to 2023. By allowing respondents to write down their responses feely, the researcher minimize the risk of steering them towards certain responses, ensuring the data reflects their true opinions related to the research. The additional context provided in open ended responses helped the researcher interpret data from other methods, creating a more comprehensive understanding of topic under study.

3.7.4 Document Analysis

Document analysis simply means the process of reviewing literature to have a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. Documents like proposals on causes of school dropout, strategies to reduce barriers to education, government records, local NGO statistics and alterations gazettes were analyzed because all these provides relevant information to the topic under study. According

to the data of UNICEF (2013), school-related reasons (grade or form repetition, failure, absenteeism), personal reasons (different school preferences, marriage, male-female relationship), financial situation (working in a different job outside of school), peer influence (bad habit) and attitude towards school (teachers, lessons, dislike of school) play an important role in dropout. This helped the researcher to understand the complex problem of dropout in spite of government efforts to ensure that girls remain in school. This tool help to analyze patterns and identify themes such as initiatives that have been made to make sure that girls remain in school, effectiveness of those initiatives and areas that still need some developments. Document analysis was however used alongside semi-structure and key informant interviews and focus group discussion to verify the information. Also some document such as previous proposal and researches specifically on Chiweshe ward 11 were not available yet were very important for the researcher to assess developments that had been made in girl's educational attainment.

3.8 Research Procedure

To initiate the research, the researcher applied for approval to collect data in Chiweshe ward 11 from the Ministry of Public Affairs and Social Welfare. The application process required the researcher to submit several documents including parts one and two of the research proposal, research tools and informed and assent forms. After thorough review, the ministry granted the researcher an approval letter, allowing her to conduct the research. This approval was essential to ensure ethical adherence and to facilitate engagement with the target population. With this approval on hand the researcher proceeded to collaborate with Community Care Workers (CCWs) to identify and reach out to girls who had dropped out of school between 2019 and 2023, ensuring compliance to ethical guidelines throughout the data collection process. Ultimately, this enabled gathering of valuable insights into sociocultural factors influencing girls to drop out of school and strategies to reduce dropout rates in Chiweshe ward 11.

3.9 Validity and Reliability/ Trustworthiness

This refers to the measures implemented to ensure that the information obtained is sound and dependable. The data collecting tools used were reliable in the sense that document analysis can be checked and checked, interviews were conducted with primary and key informants making their responses dependable. Also, adherence to semi-structured ethics enhanced the objectivity of the data collected.

3.10 Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to the process of resolving complex data into simple or basic ones. Creswell (2014) posits that data analysis is making sense out of text or image data. Thematic analysis method was adopted in this study. This is because this analysis helps in explaining the real socio-cultural experiences influencing girls' dropout and it ensures that effective and sustainable interventions can be drawn from the participants data.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

According to McLeod (2007), ethics refers to the appropriate rules of conduct necessary for conducting research. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw at any time without facing any consequences. The researcher obtained informed consent from all participants, providing them with a brief overview of the study, including its purpose and procedures, before they agreed to take part. To protect sensitive information, confidentiality was prioritized, as it is a fundamental principle of ethical research. To maintain confidentiality, the researcher employed pseudonyms such as participant A and B ensuring that personal information remained secure. This practice is vital for safeguarding participants' privacy and fostering trust and rapport with respondents.

3.12 Limitations

The research was affected by delays in obtaining approval to collect data from the relevant authorities, she was able to navigate this challenge by dedicating the semester break to daily follow-ups with the relevant authorities, ensuring timely approval.

3.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter details the research methodology employed to investigate the sociocultural factors influencing school dropout's rates among girls in Chiweshe ward 11. Guided by an interprevist philosophy, a qualitative approach was employed and case study design focused on girls who dropped out between 2019 and 2023 was adopted by this study. Participants were selected through purposive sampling with the help of CCWs. Data collection tools included in-depth interviews, questionnaires and document analysis to enhance context and depth. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ministry of Public and Social Welfare under the Department of Social Development, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality and voluntary participation. The following chapter will present and analyze the data collected.

PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDING

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research conducted on the strategies to reduce sociocultural factors influencing school dropout rates among girls in Chiweshe ward 11. Building on the methodology outlined in chapter 3, this chapter aims to interpret and deliver a thorough analysis of data obtained through interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions and document analysis. The findings are organized thematically, reflecting key issues identified by participants. By highlighting the experiences and perspectives of the respondents, this chapter enhances understanding of the challenges within girl's educational attainment and sets the stage for subsequent discussion of how study findings relates with the ecological systems theory as a theoretical framework employed by the study and literature reviewed in chapter 2.

Table 4.1 Response Rate

N= 24

Category	Number of intended respondents	Number of actual respondents interviewed	Rate
Girls	20	17	85%
Parents	4	2	50%
School leaders	4	3	75%
Community leaders	2	2	100%
Total	30	24	80%

The response rate of 80% in table 4.1 above indicate strong participation and engagement with the study. While the perspectives of the 6 non-respondents particularly the 3 girls who did not finish questionnaires and declined to participate neither in one on one interviews nor focus groups

discussions may represent important views that were not captured. Also the headmaster who indicated that he was too occupied and parents who were unwilling to participate in interviews despite the researcher's follow up efforts also represent important viewpoints that were left out in this study. However the data collected provides a diverse and reliable base for understanding and addressing the dropout problem among girls in rural areas specifically Chiweshe ward 11 area.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Demographic information allows researchers to identify patterns and correlations that can influence decision making and resource allocation (Creswell, 2018). Twenty girls who have dropped school between 2019 and 2023 participated in this study. Their ages ranges between 13 and 19.

Table 4.2 Demographic information of girls who dropped out of school

N= 17

variables		frequency
Level they dropped school	Form 1	2
	Form 2	7
	Form 3	5
	Form 4	3
Age range	13-15	11
	16-17	4
	18+	2
Marital status	married	13
	single	4
Economic status	economically advantaged	2
	economically disadvantaged	15
Religious affiliation	Apostolic sect	10

	Pentecostal churches	4
	Mainline churches	3

4.2.1 Distribution of primary respondents by age

The age ranges shown above highlight that most girls dropped school at 13, 14, and 15 years and most of them will be in form 2 and 3 suggesting that targeted interventions are necessary during these years to retain girls in school. This finding is in agreement with the study by Mutavati (2013) who indicates that 78% of girls drop out of school in form three. Similar, to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2020), that majority of girls drop school between 13 and 15 years. During interviews the researcher asked key informants on why most of girls dropped out of school in these ages and most of them states that when girls reached form 2 they engage in sexual relationships without adequate guidance on how to prevent pregnancy which results in unintended pregnancies.

This finding is supported by Erikson`s Psychosocial Development theory which states that in the fifth stage, between 13- 18 years there is a period of identity verses role confusion (Fleming, 2004). It is at this stage that the body and the sexual organs mature and the individual develops a sense of sexual identity. As such, some adolescent girls began to experiment with their sexuality without the proper guidance from adults which results in them getting pregnant and dropping out from school. According to this finding, reasons for dropout at this level is attributed to peer pressure and sexually active without adequate sexual health education which results in teenage pregnancy.

4.2.2 Distribution of primary respondents by marital status

Out of 17 primary participants only 4 indicated that they were single, 5 of them were married and have children, 6 were not married but they have babies and the remaining 2 were expecting. The types of marriages that were being mentioned was eloping, cohabiting and traditionally arranged marriages revealing unintended or teen pregnancies as a sociocultural factor influencing dropping amongst secondary girl in Chiweshe ward 11 area. Another view point from this finding is that these traditionally marriages perpetuates girls exploitation since they are the ones that elope their men, usually older to them and no bride price has been paid amongst all the respondents that claim to have husbands.

4.2.3 Distribution of primary respondents by religious affiliation

The study shows that majority (10) of the girls dropped school belong to Apostolic Sect specifically Marange. Thus the finding shows that if a girl belongs to Apostolic Sects she has a high probability of dropping school. This finding is similar to study carried out by Zaharia (2015) established that early marriage custom is prevalent in rural areas and that young girls who belong to Johanne Marange sect drop out from school because their doctrine considers early marriage. Contrary, main line and Pentecostal churches where marriage is viewed as ordained by God and should be entered soberly girls are encouraged to finish schooling first and it could be the reason they are few dropouts from these churches. This is might be the reason why few students from mainline and Pentecostal churches dropped school. The socio-ecological theory explains that religion holds a significant influence over many people's lives cementing this finding that girls from apostolic sect abide by the norms of their religion which shapes their lives.

4.2.4 Distribution by primary participants economic status

Two out of 17 primary participants indicated that they are from rich backgrounds whilst the remaining 15 are from poor background. There were 10 participants who indicated that they are doing piece jobs "maricho" for a living. Additionally primary participants indicated that they were not provided with all school requirements such as school uniforms, food and Wi-Fi for researches which eventually led to dropout. Similarly, Chenge and Maunganidze (2017), observed that children from low-income earners whose parents struggle to provide food are strong candidates for dropping out from school. This finding is essential to this study because it help explain how economic status influence dropping among secondary girls in Chiweshe area.

Table 2.3 Key informants demographic information

N= 15

Parents level of education reached	primary	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	tertiary
frequency of fathers	0	2	3	2	1
frequency of mothers	3	5	2	2	0

Position	Child Care worker	Village head	Senior teacher A	Senior teacher B	Female teacher
Years of experience	10	5	20	20	15

4.2.5 Distribution of parents' level of education

A majority of respondents reported that their parents did not finish high school portraying parental level of educational attainment as a characteristic among dropouts. Parents who lack secondary education tend to discourage their children from pursuing schooling, as they may not understand its benefits. For instance, primary participants stated that:

Chikoro hachina kana basa amai vangu vakagumira fomu yepiri asi vari kungorarama wani.

(Schooling is not important because my mother dropped out at form two yet she is living a normal life). **(Girl, 13 years)**

Ini vabereki vangu vakati chikoro hachina dhiri nekuti havana kuenda ku A Level asi vanatowana kudarika vamwe vakapedza nguva vachiende ku A Level. Mazuvano madeals ndiwo anobhadhara.

(My parents said that school is not important because they did not go to Advanced Level yet they earn more than some who spent time going to Advanced Level. Besides, these days being a dealer pays more. **(Girl, 14 years)**

This study also shows that majority of the droppers' mothers left school earlier than their fathers. Hence, this finding relates to that of Brown and Park (2011) in their research in China where they indicated that each additional year of a father's education, the probability of child's dropping out is 12-14% whilst Dey (2016) is of the view that mother's secondary education lowers dropout to 2.6%. This illustrates that parents who have completed their education are more likely to encourage their children to attend school and provide necessary support for their educational journey.

4.2.6 Distribution of key informants rank and importance

The key informants interviewed included 1 senior teacher from Gweshe secondary school and 2 teachers at Nyachuru secondary school. All the teachers were well trained and had been working at these two schools for between 15-20years. The CCW who was interviewed and assisted in reaching out primary participants has 15 years of experience and as a result she highlighted significant issues to this study. The village head has been serving for the position for 5 years and during the interviews he showed his awareness in factors such as teen pregnancies and poverty as other factors that influence girls dropping and highlighted that families must start self have project that enable them support their daughters education to avoid too much dependency on BEAM showing his undisputed contribution to this study.

4.3 Themes

Themes and subthemes are going to be interpreted and discussed below using the objectives of this study. A theme is recurrent element or pattern in qualitative data that provides insight into the subject matter and helps to answer research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Subthemes are specific instances that elaborate on its nuances and provide a more granular understanding of data (Nowell, Norris, White and Moules, 2017). The table below shows simplified themes and subthemes emerged from this research carried out in Chiweshe ward 11.

Table 4.4 Themes and Subthemes Emerged from Participants Data

N= 24

Themes		subthemes	frequency
Sociocultural factors influencing dropout among secondary girl	poverty	➤ Lack of qualifications to acquire better paying and stable jobs ➤ Lack of school requirements ➤ hunger ➤ teen pregnancies	20
	religion	➤ Early marriages ➤ Lack interest in education	22

	Household responsibilities	➢ Prioritization of domestic roles over education ➢ Girls sacrificing their education to support their families	10
	Engaging in risky behaviors	➢ Peer pressure ➢ Limited access to sexual guidance ➢ Socio-economic vulnerability ➢ Drug consumption	7
The extent to which sociocultural influence dropout	Social perception	➢ Stereotyping ➢ Gender roles ➢ Emotional abuse	10
	School environment	➢ Harassment and bullying ➢ Discrimination ➢ Physical abuse	12
An investigation of support systems for girls	Counselling, tutoring services	➢ Limited parental involvement guidance ➢ Need for increased awareness especially on parents and communities	10
	Financial support in schools	➢ Increased demands ➢ Favoritism ➢ Need for increased BEAM admission number	18
	Role of NGOs	➢ Mainly assists children with disabilities and those with HIV ➢ Unintended use of funds ➢ Shortages in service delivery	15

		➤ Empty promises	

4.3.1 Theme 1: Sociocultural factors influencing dropout among secondary girls

The socio-cultural factors influencing girls dropping were explored by this study. This research identified the following themes which are poverty, the influence of religion, household responsibility and engagement in risky behaviors as shown in table 5 above.

4.3.1.1 Poverty

Poverty was cited by 20 participants as a social factor triggering secondary girls to drop out of school. Participants highlighted that poverty results in lack of essential school needs such as school uniforms, school fess, food to eat during break and lunch time. The primary participants indicated that it was embracing to go to school with torn shoes or worn out uniforms and without something to eat during break time whilst peers have it. Key informants reported that most of the girls' dropout of school due to failure by parents to pay fees on time. Primary participant indicated that;

> *Vabereki vangu vaitambudzika nekuwana mari yechikoro ndichigara ndichidzoserwa kumba nekuda kwechikwereti uyezve kunyeyiwa nevamwe kuchikoro nekuda kwekushaya zvikwanisiro zvakazokonzera kuti ndisiye chikoro ndiri form 2.*

> *(I was often sent home for unpaid fees because my parents struggled to pay my education. Additionally I faced bullying from peers for lacking school supplies, which led to my decision to drop school in form 2). (***Girl, 18 years***)*

> *Ndaisarudzwa kuchikoro nekuda kweuniform yaive yakacheneruka uye ndaienda kuchikoro ndisina chekudya sevamwe uye zvikwanisiro zvakaita se wifi pama research emaCala vabereki vangu vaisazvikwanisa.*

> (I was neglected at school because my uniform was worn out, and I went to school without food like others, also my parents could not afford resources such as Wi-Fi for research). **(Girl 14, years)**

Parent A stated that;

31

Baba vacho vaisabhadhara mari yechikoro, aiva asina tracksuit zvayo, zvekuti ndaitoona kuti aibatikana nekushaiyawa zvimwe zvaidiwa kuchikoro.

(The father did not pay school fees, and he did not have the proper tracksuit, which made it clear that he was struggling and lacked other necessary supplies for school). (**parent B, 37 years**)

These responses supports that poverty is a factor that affect girls education. The study shows that the exosytem factors such as parental employment supported by most parents who lack qualifications for better-paying jobs, further limits ability to support their daughters' education which indirectly affect a child's development. Hence the immediate environment (microsystem) including family dynamics and peer interactions play crucial role in shaping educational experiences. This aligns with findings from Chenge and Maunganidze (2017) in Mount Darwin who argued that economic factors, including parental investment and schooling costs, significantly influence girls' dropout rates. The lack of access to resources such as Wi-Fi for research and embarrassment about worn out uniforms and lack of food directly affects participant's self-esteem and school attendance reflecting broader systemic issues related to poverty. Inadequate access to technology and educational materials can hinder academic performance and engagement, leading to higher dropout rates among girls (Shadihul and Karim, 2015).

However this study presents a contrasting perspective to the finding of Shahidul and Karim (2015) where they identified a gender bias in educational investment, particularly in low-income households where parents often prioritize on boys. In contrast participants from this study reported one instance of such bias indicating that their families faced financial constraints that affected all children equally. This suggest that the lack of resources, rather than a preference for one gender over another, played a significant role in educational access for both boys and girls in participants household aligning with Bronfenbrenners' emphasis on the importance of context in understanding developmental outcomes. Therefore the researcher notes that sometimes economic conditions can override cultural norm due to the absence of gender bias in educational investments among Chiweshe participants.

4.3.1.2 Influence of religion

Fourteen respondents indicated that they dropped out of school due to the beliefs held by their religious sects, particularly girls who belonged to the Johanne Marange Sect. This sect teaches that individuals should not pursue formal education, as their primary focus should be on marriage and nurturing the family. Primary participants shared;

> *Kuchurch kwedu kune mutemo wekuti munhurume akarota uri mukadzi wake anobva akuroora chero ari mukuru zvakazoita kuti mukuru wechechi paangandirota ndiri mukadzi wake vabereki vakatonditiwo enda kwavari ndiko kuroorwa kwandakatoita.*
>
> *(In our church, there is a rule that if a man dreams of a wife, he must marry her, even if he is older. This led to the church leader insisting to marry me when he dreamt me being his wife, my parents also told me to go along with it, which is how I ended up getting married).* **(Girl, aged 17)**
>
> *Kuchurch kwedu vasikana hatibvumidzwe kuenda kuchikoro kusvika kuma fomu tinofara kuroorwa togara tichichengeta mhuri saka tikaenda tinenge takanganisa mhiko yechurch.*
>
> *(In our church, we are not allowed to go to school until we reach the higher forms, we are suppose to stay home and raise family so if we do pursue education, we would be violating our church vows).* **(Girl age 16)**
>
> *Pandakange ndaramba ndichienda kuchikoro ndatove mufomu yechitatu abishop/mukuru wechurch vanga vakupopota vachiti chirorwa semunhu abva zera zvakazoita kuti ndava fomu 4 ndakatora sarudzo yekuroorwa zvangu.*
>
> *(When I was still resisting going to school, I was already in form 3. The bishop/church leader was rebuking me, saying I should get married since I was of age. So by the time I reached form 4, I made the decision to get married.)* **(girl aged 19)**

The teachings of the sect exert pressure on families not to prioritize education for their children, often leading to early marriages, which in turn contributes to school dropouts. These findings align with Mawere (2012) who noted that elders in the Johane Marange sect discourage schooling and promote child marriage, considering that as the orders of the Holy Spirit. This illustrates how deeply religious teachings and doctrines (macrosystems) can influence individual and communal

behaviors. Hence it is worthwhile to note that this situation is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which posits that religion significantly impacts individuals' lifestyles and thought processes (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). This is evidenced by young girls from White garment sect in Chiweshe ward 11 who are submitting to their parents' or Holy Spirit desires. The teachings of the Apostolic Sect, which advocate for early marriage, create an environment where girls find it challenging to question these norms or recognize its negative effects on their education.

While the Johanne Marange sect has been identified by 10 respondents as a significant influence on girls dropping out of school, the village head from Johane Masowe and the CCW claim that such practices have ceased. This inconsistency highlights complex sociocultural dynamics at play and can be analyzed through the lens of ecological systems theory. Therefore this portrays chronosytem level of the ecological systems theory which is a dimension of time, reflecting changes and transitions in individual life or historical context hence community leaders should continue discourage such harmful practices in their communities.

4.3.1.3 Household responsibility

Household responsibilities are frequently cited by teachers and girls as a significant factor influencing school dropout rates among secondary school girls. These responsibilities include domestic chores and caregiving. One primary participant said;

> *Ndaipota ndichienda kunoonga kumaZena pakati pevhiki ndichiitira kuti ndiwane mari yekubatsirawo amai vangu kutenga zvekudya pamba.*

> *(I intend to do artisanal mining during school days to earn money to help my mother buy food at home).* **(Girl, 19 years)**

> *One noticeable case involved a case of a bright student who had to leave school to care for her your siblings after her mother fell ill. Her family believed that it was more important to support them than continue with education.* **(Senior teacher A)**

> *Vasikana vasati vaenda kuchikoro vanongosiya vatsvaira nekuchera mvura yekushandisa pamba. Pavanodzoka ndipo pavonozoenda kunodiridza kumagarden zvekuti handifunge kuti ndizvo zvakaita kuti umwe wavo asiye chikoro ini nekuti mabasa anofanirwa kungoitwa nemwana musikana kuitira ramangwana rake.*

(Girls before going to school often sweep and fetch water for use at home. When they return, that's when they can go to water the gardens, so I don't think that's what caused one of them to leave school; rather, it's the responsibilities that a girl must undertake for her future). **(Parent B, 37years***)*

From these responses it is clear that balancing school and household responsibilities can lead to significant stress and burnout. According to Wang and Degol (2013) the emotional toll of managing multiple roles can reduce motivation to continue education, as girls may feel overwhelmed and unsupported. This finding aligns with World Bank (2020), who highlights that the burden of household duties has several direct and indirect effect of girls schooling, including less time for homework or rest leading to poor academic performance. However, the contrasting parental views reflect a cultural belief that domestic responsibilities are integral to a girl's education, suggesting that learning domestic skills is essential for future roles in society. Mlambo (2018), highlights that cultural expectations can undermine girls' educational aspirations, often lead to higher dropout rates. Hence this study shows the complex interplay between individual, familial, and societal factors since the parents who hold the view that there is no conflict between education and housework, believe that both are equally important for a girl's development. Therefore, household responsibility is one factor that influence dropout among secondary school girls in Chiweshe because of the shared experiences. Also the fact that parents are not fully recognizing the cumulative stress and time constraints these chores impose on girls makes it an undisputable factor that need to be addressed from family level up to societal level.

4.3.1.4 Engaging in risk behaviors

Twenty five participants indicated that engagement in risk behaviors results in many girls dropping out of school. Risk behaviors such as unprotected sexual activity, theft and substance abuse has been shared in this study. Primary participants indicated that peer pressure drives them to engage in risky behaviors as they seek acceptance and financial support. Participants shared;

> *Most girls at this school when they reached form 2 they start to enter into relationships and the moment you start suspecting any of your students after the few months the next thing you see is absence. Trying to investigate the reason behind absenteeism will be that she fall pregnant.* **(female teacher)**

Munharaunda ino ndakawana kurudziro yakanyanya mukusaenderera mberi nechikoro kudarika mukuendererra mberi nedzidzo nekuti vana vazhinji vari kuita zvemujolo chero varikuchikoro vacho zvakangofanana nekusaenda.

(*In this community, I found more encouragement in dropping school than pursuing education because many children are engaging in relationships even while at school, making it seem like going to school is the same as not going at all.*) **(Girl, 14 years)**

Kuchikoro ndairohwa nekuti ndaiva ndisina zvinhu zvakakwana ndakazopedzisira ndave kutora zvinodhaka nekubira vabereki vangu mari.

(At school, I was beaten by my class teacher because I didn't have sufficient resources, and I eventually turned to drugs and stole money from my parents). **(girl, 18 years)**

Ndakasiira chikoro munzira nekuti ndaifunga kuti ndichatora upfumi hwevabereki vanhu nekuti vaiva vapfumi kasi havana kundtisigira pasarudzo yangu zvekuti iye zvino ndavakuda kuita hangu chero course yekusona.

(I dropped out of school because I thought I would take advantage of my wealthy parents, but they did not support my decision. Now, I wish to pursue a sewing course.) **(girl, 19 years)**

These findings aligns with Mlambo (2018) who argued that conforming to peer pressures can reduce motivation to continue education, creating a cycle of risk behaviors and academic disengagement. Also, the pressure from school, family and society reveals how the mesosystem create barriers to educational success. This relates with findings from document analysis where the report from UNICEF (2013) indicates that peer influence (bad habit) and attitude towards school (teachers, lessons, dislike of school) play an important role in dropout. This indicates the need for combined efforts to address the root causes of such behaviors among girls. Thus girls should be provided with necessary resources and guide to help them navigate the challenges they face. Therefore engagement in risk behaviors reveals a significant challenge that contribute to dropout rate among rural secondary schools like Chiweshe ward 11 area

4.3.2 Theme 2: The extent to which these sociocultural factors influence dropout

The responses showed that there is high influence from sociocultural factors among dropouts in Chiweshe ward 11. 10 participants highlighted that social perception which involves gender roles affected their interest in pursuing education. Participants mentioned that girls are supposed to do household duties which lead to no one encourage them to stay in school if they decided to leave school. They also mentioned that gender roles in their communities promote boys to go to school on time since they are not responsible for doing house chores before leaving. The school environment put pressure on most girls which results in decisions to dropout. 12 girls indicated that they faced discrimination and bullying at school which made the environment unsafe and unwelcoming for them. In line with this a senior teacher at Nyachuru secondary mentioned that;

Girls face pressure from those who come from better families and peers end up dating old people consequently fall pregnant and also people in the community do not assist in reporting cases of early marriages or assists in dealing with mischievous behaviors therefore influencing dropout rates. **(Senior teacher B)**

In this community appreciation of girls education is 50 50 because some parents participate in school programs was well as some headsmen they discourage early marriages whilst others do not participate or make efforts as community leaders or parents to reduce dropout rates. **(female teacher)**

Munharaunda muno hapana akambondikukurdzira kudzokera kuchikoro nekuti munhu anongozviitira zvake nemhuri yake Ini handingade zvangu kudzokera kuchikoro nekuti ipapa munin'ina wangu anzwa nekusekwa kuchikoro achisekerwa kuti sisi vako vakamitiswa saka in ndakabva ndatashaya shungu dzekudzokera kuchikoro pandakasununguka nekuti tinopiwa hedu mukana wekuenderera mberi nedzidzo.

(In this community, no one has ever encouraged me to go back to school because people only look out for themselves and their families. I really don't want to return to school because my younger sister has been mocked at school because of me who dropout due to falling pregnancy, so I don't think I could go back again since they offer the place to continue with education) **(Girl, 17 years)**

Munharaunda ino zvinonzi vasikana vakadzidza kusvika kuUniversity vanopedzisira dzava pfambi voita zvechihure uyezve vabereki havangamboshandidzane muku tsigira kuti vana vasikana vadzidze kusvikawo kumusoro nekuti tinokosheswa zvakasiiyana.

(In this community, it is said that girls who have studied up to university often end up in prostitution, and parents do not collaborate to support girls in pursuing higher education because we value different things). **(parent B, 37 years)**

Ndakazorega kuenda kuchikoro nekuda kwekuti ndairohwerwa kurovha kwandinge ndaita pamazuva andinenge ndiri kumwedzi nekuti zvaisaita kuti ndiende kuchikoro ndakaisa machira.

(I eventually stopped going to school because I was often beaten because of absents during my menstrual days, which made it impossible for me to attend school since I would use clothes). **(girl 19 years)**

Munharaunda ino tinotarisira kuti musikana anofanira kunge aroorwa ari pasi pemakore 25, vakomana chero zvavo vakatanga vaenderera mberi nekuita makosi vozoroora nekuti ndivo vanozochengeta mhuri vanofanira kunge vane mapaper edzidzo yepamusoro.

In this community, we expect that a girl should be married before the age of 25, while boys can continue with their studies and then get married because they are the ones who will provide for the family; they should have higher education certificates. **(CCW)**

Chikoro handione kubatsira kwacho vanasikana ini nekuti hapana mudzidzisi mumwe zvake akambobvira afona achida kuziva kuti sei mwana akusauya kuchikoro akatosvika pakupona zvekuti handifunge kuti iye wacho angadewo kudzokera kuchikoro.

(I do not see the support of school for girls because no teacher has ever called to find out why a child is not attending school, and because of that I don't think this child would want to return to school). **(parent A, 30 years)**

The experiences shared by the participants indicate that social stigma exacerbates the dropout issue. The participant's narratives reflect a sense of stigmatization, as illustrated by the girl who expressed reluctance to return to school due to the stigma faced by her sister. This is supported by

Shahidul and Karim, 2015 in their research indicating that girls are more likely to drop out due to social pressures and bullying, which can be intensified by their economic status. The expectation that girls should marry before a certain age while boys are encouraged to pursue higher education, highlights the systemic inequalities that persist in the community. The testimony from the senior teacher shows the lack of community support in addressing some of the issues reflecting a broader societal failure to protect and empower girls. From an ecological systems theory perspective the microsystem and the mesosytem of Chiweshe girls is characterized by negative interactions that discourage girls from continuing their education. It is the community and school environments which is falling to create an environment where girls feel encouraged and remain in school. Therefore not only educational reforms addressing dropout issue in rural areas like Chiweshe ward 11 area does not need educational reforms but also more of community engagement to challenge and change the sociocultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality in education.

4.3.3 Theme 3: An investigation of support systems for girls education

The support systems explored by participants were counselling and tutoring, financial support in school and Mambo and B V NGOs support. They also listed the shortcoming of these which includes favoritism, shortages in service delivery and increased demand among others

4.3.3.1 Counselling or tutoring services in schools

This study show that girls in Chiweshe Ward 11 recognize the importance of counseling services provided in schools. Despite the availability of services, girls feel that the school environment is not conducive to addressing their personal issues. They express a lack of trust in teachers, who they believe are too busy to provide the necessary support.

> *Kuchikoro taiita nguva yeguidance and counselling tichidzidziswa kukosha kwedzidzo uye kuti uvewo munhu pane vamwe kasi zvekodzero dzevasikana kuitira kuti tisambunyikidzwa nevakoma taisambonyanya kuzvidzidziswa isu.*

> *(At school, we had guidance and counseling sessions where we learned about the importance of education and personal development, but we were not adequately taught on sexual rights so that we dot get harassed by boys).* **(girl, 17 years)**

> *Handina kuudza varairidzi matambudziko andaisangana nawo kumba aaita sekunyimwa chikafu nemari yechikoro kuri kupfidzisirwa kuba kwandaimboita mari kumba ndichidya*

neshamwari nokuda kwekuti vaizogona kundishorawo nekundituka kuti ndaimbobireiwo mari.

(I did not inform the teachers about the problems I faced at home, such as being denied food and school fees, because of stealing money at home to eat with friends, because they would criticize and insult me for having stolen money.) (**girl, 14 years)**

Kuchikoro kunopiwa dzizdziso maringe nekukosha kwedzidzo and vabereki ngavape vana vasikana mitemo uye nenguva dzekudzoka kumba kana vaenda kuchikoro kuitira kuti vasaita misisnganzwa yevakomana.

(*In school, they offer valuable information about the significance of education and personal development. Parents should provide girls with rules and set times for returning home when they go to school).* **(girl 19, years)**

The evidence of little tutoring and guidance services are significant gaps which need to be addressed in an attempt to reduce school dropout in rural areas like Chiweshe ward 11. Concerning sexual and reproduction education, communities and schools need to continuously provide girls with this education because Jones and Smith (2019) also states that absence of education on sexual and reproduction rights is a recurrent theme in many regions, contributing to higher dropout. The evidence that the school environment was not conducive to share personal isues aligns with Smith et al (2020) view that, lack of trust in educators in this case guidance and counselling teachers can hinder communication and support. Thus, to a larger extent schools in Chiweshe ward 11 they do not provide irls with support to stay in school. The lack of trust in teachers represents a barrier within the microsystem, affecting emotional and educational support. The responses from participants also shows the pressing need for parent's guidance and involvement in their daughter's education so as to reduce dropout rates. According to Khan et al (2024) in their research states that parental active participation in their children's schooling reinforces a positive attitude towards learning and the schools with higher parental environment are associated higher retention. However, this study shows the strong African culture that individuals are unwilling to seek help and discuss personal issues thus the broader societal values influences girls' decision on their education. Therefore for the effective implementation of counselling and tutoring services it requires a culture of trust and open communication which is lacking between teachers and students.

4.3.3.2 Financial support in schools

The investigation into the support systems for girls' education in rural areas reveals critical insights into the financial assistance available to students. Participants highlighted that while some support exists, it is often insufficient and inequitable.

Vana vari muDREAMS vanopiwa mapads, biscuits, drinks and get school fees payment izvi zvinoita kuti vaenderere mberi nechikoro.

(Children in DREAMS receive pads, biscuits, drinks, and school fee payments, which helps them continue their education). **(girl, 14 years).**

Chikoro chinopa rubatsiro rwakaita sekupa mabook nekubhadhara hafu yefees kasi ini ndakatadza kuwanawo rubatsiro urwu kusvika ndazoitawo sarudzo yekusiya chikoro. Chizivano ndicho chinowanda nekuti vana vema SDC members nevavanowirirana navo ndivo vaive vakawanda muma organization anopa rubatsiro.

(The school provides assistance such as supplying books and paying half of the fees, but I was unable to receive this support until I made the decision to drop out of school. The situation is widespread because the children of SDC members and their associates are often the ones receiving help from various organizations) **(girl 19 years)**

Hurumende inofanirwa kuwedzera nhamba yevana vanoiswa muBEAM kuitira kuti tiitewo basa redu zvakanaka nekuti vanhu varikuda rubatsiro rwefees vakawandisa, vabereki vaye vanenge vane vana vatinenge tatadzawo kuisa paBEAM gore iroro vanotokuvenga kuita seuchatoroiwa.

The government should increase the number of children enrolled in BEAM so that we can also fulfill our duties well, as there are many people seeking fee assistance. Parents of children we were unable to enroll in BEAM that year tend to blame us. **(CCW).**

Chikoro chinofanira kuisa vana vanenge vachishaiwa mari zvirokwazvo kwete zvavanoita zvekupota vachiti gore rino vanomboisa mwana rinouya vobubvisa paBEAM uyezve vanofanira kutora vabereki vanotambura kuti ndivo vashande pachikoro vachita mabasa akaita sekutsvaira, kuvaka kana kubikira vana vechikoro.

(The school should definitely prioritize children who are in need of financial assistance, rather than just saying that this year they will enroll a child and the following year remove the child from BEAM. Additionally, they should engage struggling parents to help at the school by doing tasks such as cleaning, building, or cooking for the students). **(Parent A, 30 years)**

These responses indicates that some girls receive partial sponsorship, while others are excluded from programs like the BEAM and DREAMS. CCW emphasized the need for increased government support due to the rising numbers of girls requiring assistance. Additionally, favoritism in the distribution of financial aid was noted, with children of SDC members and their friends receiving preferential treatment, leaving the neediest without support.

The findings indicate limited availability of funds and the inequitable distribution of resources reflecting systemic issues within the educational support framework. This finding supports Chhen and Hossain (2018) who highlights that favoritism and corruption can hinder equitable access to educational support, particularly in rural settings. The CCW's call for an increase in BEAM funding suggests that government interventions are crucial in addressing educational disparities. According to Malhotra and Schuler (2005), increased financial support can significantly improve educational outcomes for girls, particularly in low-income communities. However, this finding reveals disconnect between program intentions and implementation, as favoritism and misuse of funds undermines the effectiveness of these programs.

The ecological systems theory proves to be valuable framework for understanding the multifaceted influences on girls' education in rural areas. For instance limited financial support directly impacts girls ability to attend school and succeed academically and relationships between different systems (family, school, and community), reveals how favoritism in financial aid distribution can create barriers for the most vulnerable girls. Gupta (2023) highlights the need for integrated support systems that considers the broader ecological context in which girls live and learn. Hence in Chiwese ward 11 requires urgent need for reviews in the financial support mechanisms for girls' education. Therefore community and social workers should ensure equitable access to financial support, ultimately fostering an inclusive educational environment for all girls

4.3.3.3 Role of NGOs (Mavambo and BV) in reducing school dropouts

NGO iri muno handione kubatsira kwayo nekuti kubva zvavakanyora vana vasikana vangu vatatu ava vachida kuvapa rubatsiro gore rapera hapana chavati vaita.

(I do not see the help that this NGO is providing because, based on what they say, my three daughters were supposed to receive assistance last year, but nothing happened). **(parent B, 37 years)**

BV inopa vana vasikana mapads nekuvapa mari vose nevabereki vavo yekutanga mabussiness. Kasi vamwe havazoshandise kamari kaye kuita business vonotoidya zvavo.

(BV provides girls with pads and gives them and their parents' money to start businesses. However, some do not use that money to start a business and end up spending it on themselves). **(Girl, 15 years***)***

Community workers nemaNGOs vanodzidzisa kukosha kwedzidzo nekuti kunyangwe zvazvo tava ana amai kudai tinofanira kutsvaka zvekuita kana kuitawo zvekusona kana kudzokera kuzvikoro kasi ndifunga kuti vanofanira kusatinyepera pane zvavasikangagone nekuti tanzwa nekunyorwa mazita emari dzekutanga mabussiness kasi dzisingazouye

Community workers and NGOs teach the importance of education teaching that even though we are now mothers, we should seek ways to do something, be it sewing or going back to school. But I think they should not mislead us about what they cannot actually do because we have been taken down our names long back for us to receive the funds for starting businesses but nothing actually come. **(Girl, 19 years)**

The findings from this research highlight the role of NGOs, specifically Mavambo and BV, in supporting girls' education in rural areas. Despite the intentions of these organizations, the effectiveness of their interventions appears limited, as evidenced by the experiences of the participants. Limited impact of NGO Support. Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the support provided by NGOs, noting that promises of assistance for their daughters were not fulfilled. This raises questions about the accountability and effectiveness of these organizations in delivering their services. While BV provides financial support for starting businesses, some beneficiaries reportedly misuse these funds for personal expenses rather than investing in sustainable business

ventures. This indicates a potential gap in financial literacy and support. Community workers and NGOs are involved in educating families about the importance of education.

However lack of tangible support for the girls indicates a failure in accountability mechanisms within these NGOs. This research shows the need for effective NGO interventions and the consistent follow-up and engagement with beneficiaries to ensure that promised resources are delivered. The disappointment expressed by participants aligns with Islam and Sultana (2005) who stated that trust and reliability is very important in NGO operations. The misuse of funds for personal gain rather than business development highlights a critical need for financial literacy programs. This gap in financial education is contributing to the ongoing cycle of dropouts, poverty and hinder the potential for sustainable development in the area. The dissatisfaction with NGO support reflects how external factors can impact the microsystem of girls' education. Hence better communication and partnership between NGOs, schools, communities and individuals could enhance the effectiveness of educational support.

Therefore, NGOs like Mavambo and BV play a role in supporting girls' education in rural areas like Chiweshe ward 11, and their effectiveness is currently limited by issues of accountability, financial literacy, and increased demand. By applying the principles of ecological systems theory, it becomes clear that a more integrated and active participatory approach is necessary to enhance the impact of these NGOs on girls' education.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings on the factors influencing school dropout rates among secondary school girls in Chiweshe Ward 11. The presentation of these findings was based on data collected from the area, and the analysis was linked to the research aims and objectives through thematic analysis. The following chapter will summarize the findings, draw conclusions, and provide recommendations and strategies for reducing dropout rates.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the research study as analyzed and presented in the first four chapters. It offers conclusions and recommendations based on the data regarding strategies to reduce sociocultural factors influencing school dropout rates among secondary school girls in rural areas, specifically in Chiweshe Ward 11. The recommendations aim to address the identified themes in the study to help overcome the girl's dropout issue in rural areas.

5.1 Summary

This section presents a summary of the findings related to the study objectives, focusing on the sociocultural factors influencing dropout rates among secondary girls in Chiweshe ward 11. The results highlight the complex interplay of individual and community expectations and support systems that collectively impact girl's educational experiences and decision to abandon school.

5.1.1 Sociocultural Factors Influencing Dropout rate

The study identified several sociocultural factors influencing dropout rates among secondary school girls, including poverty, religious beliefs, household responsibilities, and engagement in risky behaviors. Poverty emerged as major factor leading to limited access to essential school supplies and created social stigma, while religious sects, particularly the Johanne Marange Sect, pressured girls to prioritize marriage over education. Household chores and caregiving added to the stress, making it difficult for girls to balance school and domestic duties. Additionally, peer pressure led to risky behaviors like unprotected sex and substance abuse, further contributing to academic disengagement. Together, these factors illustrate the complex interplay of individual, familial, and societal influences on girls' educational outcomes.

5.1.2 The extent to which sociocultural factors influence dropout among secondary girls in Chiweshe ward 11.

The study highlighted the significant influence of sociocultural factors on school dropout rates among girls in Chiweshe Ward 11. Respondents cited that gender roles dictate that girls prioritize household duties over education, leading to a lack of encouragement to remain in school. The school environment was described as pressuring, with experiences of bullying and discrimination

contributing to feelings of unsafety and lack of interest in pursuing education. Participants expressed that community expectations, such as marrying before the age of 25, further hindered their educational ambitions. This reflects Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, where the microsystem and mesosystem interactions create a negative environment for girls, indicating that both educational reforms and community engagement are necessary to challenge these entrenched sociocultural factors.

5.1.3 An investigation into support system for girls education

This study identified various support systems, such as counseling, tutoring, and assistance from NGOs, but also noted significant shortcomings like favoritism and inadequate service delivery and little parent involvement. While girls in Chiweshe Ward 11 recognized the necessity of counseling services, the study found out that they felt the school environment was not conducive to addressing their personal challenges. This lack of trust in educators, represents a barrier within the microsystem, affecting girls' emotional and educational support. The study suggests that effective implementation of support services requires building a culture of trust and open communication and that the dropout problem has to be addressed from a holistical approach which involves increased community education, family involvement and empowering both girls in school and those who have dropped school and their families

5.2 Conclusions

From the findings of the study it can be concluded that school dropout in rural areas is a multidimensional problem with poverty as the chief driver. The insufficient resources for basic educational needs and inequitable distribution coupled with societal norms and peer influence creates an environment where girls feel pressured to leave school. This study also established that demographic characteristics had a bearing on the likelihood of dropping out of school. As such girls who were in form 2, from Apostolic sect and whose parents never finished secondary level had the highest frequency amongst girls who were researched on in this study. Addressing these issues requires a multisectoral approach that combines equity in resource distribution empowering girls and their families, awareness and behavioral change strategies.

5.3 Implication for Social Work

The findings from the study have several implications for the social work practice particularly in rural areas which include;

➢ Increased demand for fewer resources as a result of complex interplay of poverty hinders social work practice of ensuring education for all

➢ Addressing dropout problem among Marange congregates creates tension between respecting religious preferences and pushing for educational equity limiting the ability of practitioners to provide assistance.

➢ Reported favoritism in CCWs and SDC members running creates ethical concerns regarding fairness and equity, complicating efforts to support at risk girls.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings presented in preceding chapter regarding the factors influencing school dropouts among secondary girls in rural areas, the researcher has formulated the following recommendations:

5.4.1 To the government

✓ The government of Zimbabwe should promote effective enforcement of strict laws that stop parents from not sending their children to school and teen pregnancies. Thus there should real fines or imprisonment such that it act as warning for others ultimately reduce negative perception and harmful believes and practices that hinder girls from pursuing education

✓ The government through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) should employ professional counsellors in school. The role of role of counsellors will be to guide and creating a safe space for students to share personal experiences concerning education preventing decisions to dropout from school.

5.4.2 To Stakeholders/ Partners Based

✓ School leaders, community groups and NGOs should form partnerships to create support networks for girls with regular meetings every school term.

✓ Local NGOs and social workers to organize community workshops and campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of girls education challenges societal norms and harmful beliefs. Should be conducted at least twice every year

5.4.3 To the community/ Research Participants Based

- ✓ Local parents to utilize the water sources in their community and start fruit plantations, gardening and fishing for commercial purposes so that they will not depend much on aid and be able to support their daughters education

- ✓ Community members to actively participate in programs , community workshops that aim at promoting girl child education

- ✓ Parents should monitor their daughter's movements and their cellphones such that if they are indicators of being in a relationship the parents with guide the child to avoid being sexually abused.

5.4.4 To local educational authorities

- ✓ Local education authorities and community leaders such as CCWS and SDC members should establish a transparent resource allocation framework that ensure equitable distribution of educational resources through means testing with annual reviews to assess equity.

- ✓ Local educational authorities to create a platform for community members to provide feedback on educational policies and resource distribution reviewing feedback at least four times a year.

- ✓ Schools and local community leaders to implement educational sessions for parents on the benefits of girls education, the importance of their involvement in their daughter's education and the implication of early marriages. Sessions should be conducted every month to ensure rapid behavioral change.

5.4.5 To Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

- ✓ NGOs should develop scholarship programs for girls who excel academically especially from income families to cover school fees and related costs with evaluations of the programs every academic year
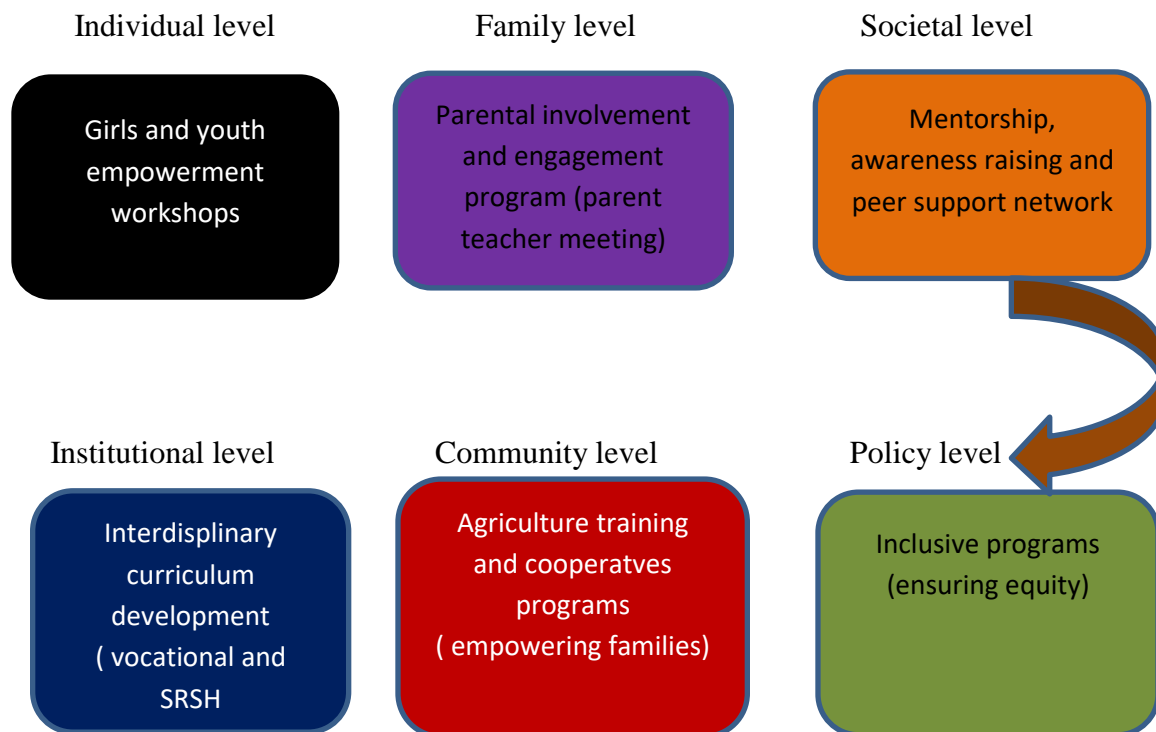
5.4.6 To Social Workers

- ✓ Social workers should explore ways of supporting the girls already dropped school such as vocational training, prevention of gender based violence, enabling access to sexual

reproductive health and economic programs and facilitating other alternative education pathways.

5.5 A proposed model for this study

Figure 5.1: The Chiweshe Ward 11 Girls Educational Empowerment Model (GEEM)

Individual level

Girls and youth empowerment workshops

Family level

Parental involvement and engagement program (parent teacher meeting)

Societal level

Mentorship, awareness raising and peer support network

Institutional level

Interdisplinary curriculum development (vocational and SRSH

Community level

Agriculture training and cooperatves programs (empowering families)

Policy level

Inclusive programs (ensuring equity)

5.5.1 Relevance of theoretical framework to Girls Educational Empowerment Model (GEEM)

The ecological systems theory is relevant to this proposed model because it put forward that the dropout issue does not caused by a single factor but by a combination of multiple factors hence strategies to address this problem should be holistic in nature. This tallies with the GEEM model whereby the strategies address the dropout problem from individual, family, policy societal, community up to institutional level.

Individual level

The figure 5.5 above shows the model which the researcher has come up with after a thorough investigation into factors influencing school dropouts and the already existing support mechanism. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) should conduct monthly workshops focusing on

building confidence and self-esteem to girls from Marange sect and those who feel pressured to leave school due to economic hardships or peer influence. Schools should have early warning system early warning system such as inserting suggestion box around school environment to be able to identify at risk children early. This will lead to self-confidence among students and reduction in early marriage hence improved school attendance.

Family level

The model also suggest that parents should actively engage and participated in their daughter's education. Thus school authorities should host regular parent teacher meeting to discuss students' progress and challenges. Also conducting parent education sessions on the importance of education and avoiding child labor and conducting home visits for students identified as at risk of dropping out. This will help in creating a strengthened school-home relationships for better student support and behavioral change leading to reduction in early marriages and child labor.

Societal level

Moreover, the model put forward that community leaders and religious leaders should run community awareness campaigns on educational rights, dangers of school dropouts and harmful practices such as early marriages. Mentors should be drawn from local successful individuals and role models to meet student at least twice a year to provide guidance and encouragement. Also establishment of peer groups within schools where students can support each other emotionally and academically hence boosting retention.

Policy level

NGOs and government policy makers at local, regional and national level should develop `and effectively enforce policies that ensure free education for girls from low income families and introduce the school feeding program to breach the gap between girls from low and rich family background. Policies design and review should be done every 2 to 3 years to allow marginalized children gain access to education.

Community level

Local government agriculture and economic development departments, NGOs specializing in community development and livelihoods and cooperatives should provide agricultural training sessions for families, teaching modern farming techniques to improve productivity and income. Also, establishment of community cooperatives focusing on chicken rearing, piggery amongst others where families can work together to improve their economic stability. In addition, organizing ongoing community savings program "mukando" to help families invest in education whilst discouraging over dependency on aid. Therefore, parents are more likely to afford school related costs like uniforms hence supporting their daughters to stay in school.

Institutional level

The Ministry of Education should develop policy and curriculum which integrates sexual and reproductive health education to address early marriages. Also providing vocational training sessions once a week during school terms like carpentry to empower students with knowledge and like skills. The ministry of education and social workers should partner in providing school administrators with training on delivering interdisciplinary content and creating a safe environment for girls. Therefore teachers become better equipped to deliver diverse content and students see the practical value of education hence reducing girl's dropouts.

5.6 Areas for further study

1. Exploring the mental health of girls in rural areas who face educational pressures and sociocultural expectation.
2. Dropouts among people with disability
3. Dropouts among rural boys

5.7 chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a summary of the research findings, conclusions, and recommendations aimed at addressing the sociocultural factors influencing school dropout rates among secondary school girls in Chiweshe Ward 11. The study identified poverty, religious beliefs, household responsibilities, and risky behaviors, as significant barriers to girls' education. It also provides recommendations such as empowering girls, engaging families in education, raising community awareness, implementing equitable policies, promoting economic stability through and reforming school curriculum to include vocational training and sexual health education. These strategies

collectively aim to create a supportive environment that reduces dropout rates and promotes long-term educational equity for girls in rural areas. The chapter also proposes a Girls Educational Empowerment Model (GEEM). Grounded in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the model offers a holistic approach for tackling girl's barriers to education through strategies at multi-sectorial levels.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Informed Consent

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title: Strategies to reduce socio-cultural factors influencing school dropout among secondary school girls in rural areas. A case study of Chiweshe Ward 11.

I am a fourth year student at Bindura University of Science Education currently studying Honors Degree in Social Work. As part of program requirement I am carrying out a research aimed at assessing the socio-cultural factors influencing school dropout among secondary school girls in rural areas. The study is also aimed at investigating the support systems that are there to reduce school dropouts among secondary school girls in Chiweshe ward 11. I am therefore kindly asking you to help me carrying out this research by taking your time to freely and openly answer the following questions. The information obtained from this research will be strictly used for academic purposes. It will be highly confidential and all identities will be kept anonymous. You are free to withdraw from the interview anytime you feel to do so.

Participant's Agreement

I am fully aware of the purpose of this research and that my contribution to this research is voluntary. I have understood the above information concerning the aim, purpose and requirement of the research and agreed to participate freely in the research.

Participant's signature ……………………….. Date ………………………

Interviewer's signature …………………………………………………..

Appendix 2: In-depth Interview guide for girls who dropped school

My name is Shiphrah Ruvimbo Katekwe, l am a student at Bindura University of Science Education currently studying towards Bachelor of Science Honors degree in Social Work. In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the program, l am carrying out a research on strategies to reduce socio cultural factors influencing school dropout among secondary school girls in rural areas. A case of Chiweshe ward 11. This interview guide is part of a research project aimed at identifying the key factors contributing to girl child school dropouts. Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. The interview will take approximately 15- 30 minutes. Your input is invaluable and it will help the researcher generate viewpoints of this research. Please answer the questions honestly and feel free to ask for clarification if needed.

Section A: Demographic data

1. Current age?

2. At what age did you leave school?

3. Are you married?

4. Do you have any children? If yes, how many?

5. Are you employed?

6. Which church do you go to?

Section B: To identify sociocultural factors influencing school dropout among secondary school girls in Chiweshe ward 11 area.

7. How do your parents view girls' education? Do they support your schooling?

8. Are there specific household responsibilities or expectations that contribute to your decision to leave school?

9. Did your parents complete their secondary school? If no, at what level did they drop from school?

10. What cultural practices, beliefs interfere with your ability to attend school? Give examples.

11. Are there differences in educational expectations between boys and girls in your community? How does this affect you?

12. Do you think girls' education is valued in society?

13. How do your friends influence your decision to drop out of school? Can you provide examples?

14. How do you perceive the school environment regarding support for girls? Do you feel safe and encourage to pursue your education?

Section C: To examine the extent to which sociocultural factors influence girls' dropout amongst Gweshe and Nyachuru secondary schools in Chiweshe ward 11.

15. How did your parents take it when you left school?

16. Where there any financial or economic constraints that made it difficult for you to continue with your education?

17. Did you feel that pursuing education was valued or devalued in your community? Explain your answer

18. What do you think are the most significant barriers to education for girls in your community?

Section D: To investigate the support systems that are there to reduce dropouts amongst secondary schools girls in Chiweshe ward 11 area.

19. How do parents in this community support their daughters' education? What role do they play in preventing drop outs?

20. What types of academic support does your school provide to help girls succeed? (Tutoring, life skills, counselling services, extracurricular programs)?

21. How did you learn from the support services available for girls in your community? Do you think more awareness is needed?

22. Are you aware of any government programs aimed at reducing school dropout rates for girls? How effective do you think these program are?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 3: Key informant guide for school leaders

M y name is Shiphrah Ruvimbo Katekwe, l am a student at Bindura University of Science Education currently studying towards Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Social Work. In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the program, l am carrying out a research on strategies to reduce socio cultural factors influencing school dropout among secondary school girls in rural areas. A case of Chiweshe ward 11. This interview guide is part of a research project aimed at identifying the key factors contributing to girl child school dropouts. Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. The interview will take approximately 15- 30 minutes. Your input is invaluable and it will help the researcher generate viewpoints of this research.

Section A: Demographic information

1. What is your position/ title at this school?

2. How long have you been at this school?

3. From your experience at what level do most girls drop out from school?

4. How many girls dropped out from 2019-2023 as compared to boys?

Section B: To identify sociocultural factors influencing school dropout among secondary school girls in Chiweshe ward 11 area.

5. Can provide insights into the dropout rates among girls at this school? What trend have you observed in recent years?

6. From your experience both at this school and in the community do you think girls' education is appreciated?

7. What do you think are the key socio-cultural barriers that lead to girls in your class or at this school to dropout?

8. Can you share any specific cases that highlight the sociocultural factors affecting girls' education in the Chiweshe area?

Section C: to examine the extent to which sociocultural factors influence girls' dropout amongst Gweshe and Nyachuru secondary schools in Chiweshe ward 11.

9. How do you describe community attitude towards girls' education? Do you think it influences dropout rates?

10. How involved are parents in their daughters' education at this school? From your experience at this school what factors influences their level of participation?

11. How does the economic situation of families in this community affect girls' ability to continue with education?

12. How does individuals play a role in dropping out from school?

13. What specific support system does your school have in place to help girls succeed academically? How effective do you believe these systems are?

Section D: To investigate the support system that are there to reduce dropout rates among secondary school girls in rural areas Chiweshe ward 11 area.

14. Which recommendations would you like to give the Government in order to curb girl's dropout rate?

15. Which activities can teachers or school implement in order to reduce the dropout rate?

16. What input can parents provide with in order to curb the problem of girls dropping out from school?

17. Any comments?

Appendix 4: Key informant guide for community leaders

My name is Shiphrah Ruvimbo Katekwe, l am a student at Bindura University of Science Education currently studying towards Bachelor of Science Honors degree in Social Work. In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the program, l am carrying out a research on strategies to reduce socio cultural factors influencing school dropout among secondary school girls in rural areas. A case of Chiweshe ward 11. Thank you for participating in this study. This interview guide is part of a research project aimed at identifying the key factors contributing to girl child school dropouts. Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. The interview will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Your input is invaluable and it will help the researcher generate viewpoints of this research. Please answer the questions honestly and feel free to ask for clarification if needed.

Section A: Demographic information

1. What is your position/ title in this community?

2. How long have you been in this community?

3. How many years of experience in community leadership?

Section B: To identify sociocultural factors influencing school dropout among secondary school girls in Chiweshe ward 11 area.

4. At what age are girls in this community expected to be married and how does this expectation contribute to drop outs?

5. Do girls in this community face any form of abuse which eventually lead to dropping? (Rape case, harmful practices such as kuzvarira)

6. What do you believe are the main challenges related to girl child school dropouts?

Section C: To examine the extent to which sociocultural factors influence girls' dropout amongst Gweshe and Nyachuru secondary schools in Chiweshe ward 11.

7. How do you describe the overall attitude of the Chiweshe area towards girls' education?

8. How do household responsibilities affect girls' ability to attend school consistently in this community?

9. How do the traditional gender roles in this community influence the education expectations for girls compared to boys?

10. Can you share any specific experiences that highlight factors affecting girl's education in this community?

Section D: To investigate the support system that are there to reduce dropout rates among secondary school girls in rural areas Chiweshe ward 11 area.

11. What measures have you put in place as community as leaders in order to curb this problem of school dropout? How effective these measures?

12. Are there community led initiative or organization focused on promoting girls education? What kind of support do they provide?

13. Are there successful female role models in this community who encourage girls to pursue education?

14. Does the community leaders, parents and schools work together in order to improve girls' education outcome?

15. Any comment?

Appendix 5: FGD guide for girls who dropped school

M y name is Shiphrah Ruvimbo Katekwe, l am a student at Bindura University of Science Education currently studying towards Bachelor of Science Honors degree in Social Work. In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the program, l am carrying out a research on strategies to reduce socio cultural factors influencing school dropout among secondary school girls in rural areas. A case of Chiweshe ward 11. This focus discussion group is part of a research project aimed at identifying the key factors contributing to girl child school dropouts and strategies to reduce those factors. This Focus Group Discussion Guide serves to acquire information from girls who have dropped out from school from the years 2019 to 2023. This discussion will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated and it will help the researcher generate viewpoints of this research. Please feel comfortable to participate in this discussion.

Section A: Participants Demographic Details

1. Number of participants...

2. Participants age range..

3. Employed status..

Section B: To identify sociocultural factors influencing school dropout among secondary school girls in Chiweshe ward 11 area.

4. What are some cultural beliefs in your community about girls' education?

5. Do you think that parents play a part in school dropping? How?

6. Do you think that girls' education is valued in your community?

7. Are there any positive community initiatives that support girls' education?

8. Any comments?

Section C: To examine the extent to which sociocultural factors influence girls' dropout amongst Gweshe and Nyachuru secondary schools in Chiweshe ward 11.

9. Why did you not return back to school after you birthed following the second chance program which allow you to be readmitted in school.

Section D: To investigate the support system that are there to reduce dropout rates among secondary school girls in rural areas Chiweshe ward 11 area.

10. What do you think would have been done either by your parents, peers, or teachers to stop you from dropping out from school?

11. Is the community support for girls' education, such as NGOs? What kind of support do provide?

12. What additional support systems do you think are needed to help girls stay in school?

Thank you for taking your time to participate in this study.

Appendix 6: Questionnaire for girls who dropped out from school

Dear participant

My name is Shiphrah Ruvimbo Katekwe, l am a student at Bindura University of Science Education currently studying towards Bachelor of Science Honors degree in Social Work. In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the program, l am carrying out a research on strategies to reduce socio cultural factors influencing school dropout among secondary school girls in rural areas. A case of Chiweshe ward 11. This questionnaire is part of a research project aimed at identifying the key factors contributing to girl child school dropouts. Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. The questionnaire should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Your input is invaluable and it will help the researcher generate viewpoints of this research. Please answer the questions honestly and feel free to ask for clarification if needed.

Section A: Demographic data

1. Age/***Makore:*** ………………………………

2. Form at which you dropped school/ ***Fomu yawakaperera:*** …………………….

3. Current occupation (if any)/***Basa raurikuita (kana riripo):*** ………………….

4. What is your family economic status?

5. What is your mother's level of education?

Section B: To identify sociocultural factors influencing school dropout among secondary school girls in Chiweshe ward 11

7. Did you experience any cultural or societal pressures that eventually lead to drop out of school (e.g., early marriage, domestic work)? "***Wakambosangana nerunziro kubva kuzvitendwa kana kuvavakidzani here zvakanzokonzera kuti usaenderera mberi nechikoro?''***

3. Did you experience any form of discrimination or harassment at school? "*Wakambosangana nekusarurwa kana chiitiko chakaitika kuchikoro chakakushungurudza?"*

4. How do you describe your parents, school and community attitude towards your education? (Supportive, unsupportive) Can you explain your answer showing how it influence your decision to drop out? *"Ungatsangura sei maitiro evabereki, chikoro, nevenharaunda maringe the dzidzo yako? Tsanangura mhinduro yako uchiratidza kuti zvakakonzera sei mukusiya chikoro kwakazoita?"*

5. What role do peer influences play in your decision to drop out? "*Shamwari pane zvadzaitaura here or kuita zvakazota kuti usiye dzidzo?"*

6. In your own opinion what do you think are the key sociocultural factors contributing to girls dropping out in your community? "*Pamaonero ako zvii zviri kunyanya kukonzera kuti vasikana varege kuenderera mberi nedzidzo munharaunda yako?"*

Section C: To examine the extent to which sociocultural factors influence girls' dropout amongst Gweshe and Nyachuru secondary schools in Chiweshe ward 11.

7. Do you feel that there is pressure in your community to marry early instead of pursuing education? Give examples. *"Munharaudza yaugere mune zvakawanda zvinokumanikidzira kuti uroorwe uchiri zera rekuenda kuchikoro kudarika zvinokukurudzira kuenderera mberi nezvidzidzo here? Ipa mienzaniso"*

8. Are there specific traditions or customs in your community that affect girls' education? Please explain your answer? *"Munharanda yako mune tsika dzinotevedzwa here dzinokanganisa kudzidza kwevanasikana? Tsanangura mhinduro yako"*

9. Can you share any additional information about your experiences or challenges that contributed to your decision to drop out from school? "*Ungatsanangura here chero zvimwe zvawakasangana nazvo kana mamwe matambudziko awakasangana nawo akazoita kuti utore sarudzo yekusiya chikoro?"*

Section D: To investigate the support system that are there to reduce dropout rates among secondary school girls in Chiweshe ward 11 area.

10. Were you encouraged by your family, school or community to pursue education? "**Wakambokurudzirwa nemhuri yako here, vadzidzisi vekuchikoro kana nevamwe vemunharaudza kuti uenderere mberi nezvidzidzo?**"

11. Does the school provide counselling services to students facing academic or personal challenges? *Chikoro chinopa here rubatsiro kuvana vechikoro vanenge vachinetseka nezvidzidzo kana vanenge vachisangana nematambudziko sedungamunhu*

12. Do local community leaders advocate for girls education? *"Vatungamiriri vemunharaunda vanotsigira dzidzo yemwanasikana here"*.

13. Have you faced any barriers in accessing support sytsems for your education*? "Wakamboshaiwa rubatsiro maringe nezvedzidzo dzako here?"*

14. What improvements would you suggest for the existing support systems? *"Zvii zvingadziriswe panzira dziripo kare dzokubatsira nadzo vasikana kuti vaenderere mberi nezvidzidzo zvavo"*

Thank you so much for your time. Maita basa nenguva yenyu

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Zimbabwe

Appendix 7: Research letter for the Department

Appendix 8: Approval letter for the Organization