

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

**EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG MALES IN CHILD MARRIAGES IN CHITUNGWIZA, ST
MARY'S**

RESEARCH DONE

BY

B201237B

**A DISSERTATION REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTEMNT OF SOCIAL
WORK, BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION, FACULTY OF SOCIAL
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SOCIAL WORK HONOURS DEGREE**

ABSTRACT

The study examined the experiences of young males in Chitungwiza, St Mary's. The main aim of the research was to explore the experiences of boys in child marriages. The objectives of this study were to analyze factors that contribute to the child marriages among boys, to scrutinize the consequences of child marriages and to examine the coping strategies utilized by boys in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's. The research was qualitative in nature and it made use of in-depth interviews, Key informant interviews and focus group discussion. The research was qualitative and made use of a narrative phenomenology research design. The sample size for the research was 25. The research used thematic analysis to analyze the data which was collected. The major findings of the research were based on the causes of child marriages amongst young males in Chitungwiza, St Mary's, the consequences of child marriages on boys as well as the coping strategies which are being utilized by boy in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's. The study found out that poverty, religion, peer pressure and sexual desires are some causes of child marriages among young male in Chitungwiza, St Mary's. The consequences of child marriages amongst boys which were noted in this study are sexual and reproductive health challenges, drug and substance abuse, poverty and mental health issues. The research found out that boys in child marriages seek support from the peers and family; they also seek help from organisations and also engage in different activities like street vending and attending church as coping strategies. The study suggests the recommendation which can be implemented by different authorities in order to address the issue of child marriages amongst boys. The study recommends the government to strengthen the legal and policy frameworks through developing a comprehensive national action plan to end child marriages, with clear roles and accountability for different government agencies. The civil society should engage on awareness campaigns to address the issue of child marriage amongst boys. Dialogues should be conducted in the community on the issue of child marriages in order to address the some harmful gender norms that perpetuate child marriages.

APPROVAL FORM

Supervisor

I certify that I supervised **B201237B** in conducting her research titled: Experiences of young males in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's, in partial fulfillment of a Bachelor of Science (Honours) Degree in Social Work and I hereby recommend that it proceeds for examination.

Name.....Signature.....Date.....
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Chairperson of the Department Board of Examiners

The departmental board of examiners has determined that **B201237B**, titled: **Experiences of young males in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's**, meets the examination requirements. Therefore, the board recommends that Bindura University of Science Education accept this research project as partial fulfillment of the Bachelor of Science, Honours Degree in Social work.

Chairperson Name.....signature.....Date

DECLARATION RELEASE FORM

I **B201237B** studying for a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Degree in Social Work, aware of the fact that plagiarism is a serious academic and that falsifying information is a breach of ethic in Social Work, I truthfully declare that:

1. The dissertation report titled: Experiences of young males in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's is my own work and has not been plagiarized.
2. I have followed research ethics required in pursuit of Social Work research
3. I hereby grant permission to Bindura University of Science Education to use this dissertation for academic

Student

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been instrumental in my academic journey. To my parents, who have always believed in me and pushed me to reach new heights. I also dedicate this dissertation to my big brother for his support has been a source of strength throughout my academic pursuits.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
DSD	Department of Social Development
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
UNCRC	United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Children
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

This section of the research paper covers the introduction and context for the study. It lays out the introduction, background information, the problem being investigated, the purpose of the research, the specific objectives, the research questions, any assumptions made, as well as the limitations and boundaries of the study. Additionally, it provides definitions for important terms and a summary of this chapter.

1.1 Background of the study

For many years now, child marriage issues according to Robles (2018) have been prevailing around the whole world despite of a wide range of efforts that are being done by different organizations. Globally, this issue is still trending around the globe affecting millions of children (United Nations, 2015). Child marriage which refers to getting into a formal marriage or informal union before reaching the age of 18 according to the United Nations (2015), is acknowledged by the United Nations Human Rights Council as a harmful practice that violates, abuses and impairs human right and usually young boys from the age of 15-18 are the most affected. Despite the statistical droppings of child marriage cases in other parts of the world like Bangladesh, some countries still have high records of child marriages for example India with about 1.5 million (UNICEF, 2022). The practice of child marriages has mostly affects females but it is important to note that males have not been spared as well (Gaston, Misunas & Cappa, 2019). According to UNICEF (2019), the global statistics of child marriages among boys adds up to about 115 million because of poverty, limited access to education and social norms. UNICEF (2019) states some gender specific factors influencing child marriages among boys which are pressure to provide for their families and the desire to assert their masculinity. The factors leading to child

marriages amongst boys at global level mostly third world countries like Chad, Madagascar and Niger, as stated in the report published by UNICEF in 2019 include, limited economic opportunities, lack of education which can limit boy's opportunities and make early marriage more attractive and also pressure from families or communities to marry early in order to fulfill traditional gender roles (UNICEF, 2016).

According to UNICEF (2023) the Central African Republic has 28% of men aged 20-24 who were married before the age of 18 and 8% were married before the age of 15, this shows that in Central African Republic it is affecting boys from the age of 15-18. Madagascar has 13% of its men aged 20-24 who got married before 18 and 2% before the age of 15 (UNICEF, 2023). The major causes of child marriages amongst boys in Central African Republic according to UNICEF are polygamy, education gaps and social norms. According to Papadopoulou and Prokopi (2017) child marriage rates among boys vary across Europe although they are generally lower than any other regions of the world. These European countries with high rates of child marriages amongst boys are Turkey which has 4% of men aged 20-24 who got married before the age of 18 and 1% before the age of 15. According to UNICEF (2023) in Albania 3% of men aged 20-24 were married before the age of 18. In Romania 2% of the men were married before the age of 18 and 0.3% before 15 years. Child marriages amongst boys in these European countries according to Martina and Girelli (2017) are driven by traditional gender roles, lack of education and also poverty.

The effects of child marriages amongst boys are health risks as they are exposed to sexual reproductive health problems such as sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS because of lack of access Sexual Reproductive Health information UNICEF (2019). This can be evident from the story of a 15 year old boy who married a 13 year old girl in Nepal because he wanted to follow

of the tradition of his community but said he did not know anything about marriage or about contraception and prevention of diseases (Plan International & Coram International, 2015). Child marriages also limits boys' access to education as they drop out of school to manage the responsibilities that comes with being a father for example from the report given by UNICEF and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled of Afghanistan (2018) in Afghanistan a 16 year old boy married a 14 year old girl to escape poverty and insecurity and he had to drop out of school and started to work as a laborer to support his wife and child.

The UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and World Vision as part of the responsible authorities on child marriage issues have been vigorously working towards ending child marriages. These efforts include the United Nations Global Programme to accelerate Action to end Child Marriage, the Global Partnership to end violence against Children as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Chae, 2017). This has seen a decline in child marriage cases, the Global prevalence is 19% down from the 23% a decade ago (UNICEF, 2023). The rate in which child marriage cases are going down is however according to UNICEF (2023) not equitably enough to meet the sustainable development goal of ending the practice by 2030. There has been a little research on child marriages among boys unlike the cases of child marriages among girls which have been thoroughly researched and documented as argued by Gaston, Misunas & Cappa (2019).

Regionally, statistics have shown that west and central Africa have the highest records of child marriages according to UNICEF (2019). Although child marriage is more common in girls, boys are also affected. UNICEF (2019) reports that in Eastern and Southern Africa, 4% of young men aged 20-24 years were married before the age of 18 with the highest rates in Comoros 19% and Madagascar 13%. According to McKenzie (2016) the research done by the Demographic and

Health surveys shows that 8 African countries which are Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger and South Africa have the highest rates of child marriages among boys in Africa because of unemployment, lack of education and social norms. Madagascar recorded 12.9%, Mozambique 9.7% and Nicaragua 19.4% of child marriages among boys (Misuna et al, 2019). In Mali, UNICEF conducted a research and found out that 26 percent of boys are married between before the age of 15-19. Sub Saharan Africa has the highest prevalence of child marriages among boys and the cases have been recorded with the causes of child marriages varying from country to country and the main being lack of economic opportunities (UNICEF, 2019). According to UNICEF (2019) this has led to poverty, poor parenting, drug abuse as well as an increase in gender based violence cases. In Africa there are a lot of organisations working towards ending child marriages at regional level and these include the SADC and the Eastern African Community. The SADC has developed a Regional Strategy to end child marriage and this has helped in reducing the cases of child marriages in Africa. It is however important to note that most of these interventions are targeted at girls thereby leaving behind boys which will lead to the increase of child marriages amongst boys as supported by Misuna et al (2019).

Due to a number of challenges including economic hardships and cultural norms, Zimbabwe has also been a victim of child marriages (Mudimba, 2021). The high rates of unemployment in the country have led to high school drop outs, drug abuse, illegal dealings and a high rate of children getting married before the age of 18 thus some of the means to escape poverty has resulted in children getting robbed of their innocence (Zimbabwe Gender Commission, 2021). In Zimbabwe, one in 3 girls gets married under the age of 18 hence about 33% of girls are married below the age of 18 and 2% of boys married before 18 years according to ZIMSTAT (2022). According to ZIMSTAT (2015) 3.8% of boys between the ages of 15-19 were married in 2014. According to

Zimfact (2021) a population of about 2% of boys is married before 18 years of age in Zimbabwe. The Ministry of Gender, the Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of children and the Department of Social Services are doing a lot of programs towards ending the cases of child marriages. Over the years studies have been focusing more on child marriages among girls yet boys are also being involved in child marriages (Misunas, et al, 2019). In as much as child marriage cases among boys are rare, there is need for researchers to also focus on child marriages among boys in order to raise awareness to responsible authorities so that they put more effort in addressing the issue before it gets out of control. The Covid 19 introduced lockdown which increased problems for boys which have led to them getting married at a tender age according to Chingwe(2020), who conducted research in 14 primary schools, 12 secondary schools and 12 high schools in Zimbabwe. The time children spent without school during the pandemic may have encouraged children to engage in destructive behaviour (Chingwe, 2020). The increase in the rate of drug abuse amongst boys has resulted in them making poor decisions leading to child marriages but however a lot of awareness campaigns on child marriages are being conducted but they mainly focus on girls hence the gaps in the research of child marriages among boys have led the researcher to have the eager to research and have a higher understanding on the experiences of boys in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's since it is a densely populated area with high school drop outs, child headed families which are some key factors leading to child marriages according to UNICEF (2019). This research therefore seeks to examine the experiences of boys in child marriages because there have been little or no research in regards to this issue thereby leaving young boys exposed to this harmful practice.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Child marriages amongst boys have proven to be a cancer eating at the core of the society and needs to be addressed as they violate human rights and perpetuate cycles of poverty and inequality (UNICEF,2019). The child rights protection watchdog, UNICEF, WHO, World Vision, SADC and other child protection organisations worldwide are implementing a lot of policies to curb child marriages. There has been enforcement of strict rules, awareness campaigns on child marriages but nevertheless the cases of child marriages amongst boys are still prevailing and they can increase especially among boys since there has only been a few policies focusing on child marriages among boys specifically. Child marriages affect boys according to Nabayaza(2021) and girls are largely affected as well as the nation at large. The issue of child marriages according to UNICEF (2019) affects both the child bride and the child groom because they are often deprived of their childhood and they face a lot of challenges and risks exposing them to violence and abuse and also may drop out of school. Child marriage is a problem in the sense that it leads to health consequences like depression to both girls and boys (Fan & Koski, 2022). Gorney (2013) argues that child marriages affect both boys and girls mentally and physically. Child marriages also have a harmful impact on educational attainment and economic opportunities. The child marriages affect the parents and the relatives of the child couples because they may lose the support and care of their children, who are forced to take on adult responsibilities and they also face social stigma. The children of the child spouses are also affected as they are more likely to be born prematurely and die in infancy or childhood according to UNFPA (2018). The communities are also affected as they may lose the potential and contribution of those children who could have been productive and be vibrant agents towards development of the community (Greene, Taylor & Lauro, 2015). From a human rights perspective the ideal situation is supposed to be a world in which no one is

married before the age of 18 but however the reality is that there are still millions of child marriages amongst boys taking place each year according to UNICEF (2020), including a significant number of marriages involving boys. According to UNICEF (2022) about 115 million males in Central Africa have been involved in child marriage and Zimstats (2019) recorded about 2% population of boys in child marriages. Even though boys may be less affected by the negative consequences of child marriages they are still at risk of being denied the right to a childhood. Due to the quest for gender equality, boys have been left out therefore it is of a paramount importance to conduct a research on the lived experiences of boys in child marriages to understand more on child marriages among boys so that they can be better policies targeted at addressing this issue in order to handle the situation whilst it is still manageable.

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to explore the experiences of boys in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's

1.4 Research objectives

- 1.4.1 To analyse the factors that contribute to child marriages among boys in Chitungwiza, St Mary's.
- 1.4.2 To scrutinize the consequences of child marriages on boys in Chitungwiza, St Mary's.
- 1.4.3 To examine the coping strategies utilized by boys in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's.

1.5 Research questions

- What are the factors influencing child marriages amongst boys in Chitungwiza, St Mary's?

- How are child marriages affecting boys in Chitungwiza, St Mary's?
- What are the coping strategies used by boys in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's in dealing with the challenges they face?

1.6 Assumptions

- The participants will be able to understand the research objective and will be able to contribute vibrantly to this study.
- The researcher assumes that boys experience child marriages differently from girls hence the need to consider the specific needs and challenges of boys
- There are economic, social, environmental and religious factors contributing to child marriages among boys

1.7 Significance of the study

The study will play a pivotal role in enabling the researcher to acquire more knowledge on the experiences of child marriages on boys which is a study that is being undermined by a lot of researchers. The study is of great importance to the boy child because of the lived experiences of males in child marriages which will help in conscientising young boys on the risks and consequences of practicing child marriages. It will equip the boy child with knowledge and some of the solutions they can put in place in order to end up this child rights violation practice. The data gathered from the study will benefit the community and the world as it gives an insight on causes and impacts of child marriages among boys. Over the years, people have been living with a belief that child marriages affect girls as shown by much of the literature currently available. This study will enlighten the world so that they realize that in as much child marriages affect girls; boys also get affected by the impacts of child marriages (UNICEF, 2019). From a strategic vantage

point the research will have a positive influence to the policy makers and the government of Zimbabwe as this help in developing effective interventions and policies to address this issue hence ensuring equal services for both girls and boys since they are both affected.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The study will possibly face some challenges due to confidentiality issues which lead to limited disclosure of information. The study is also limited to biases as some participants may give false information in relation to the questions asked and the researcher might interpret the responses in a way that serves her best interests. Also the participants might not feel comfortable sharing their experiences with the researcher of the opposite sex and they might also be afraid of being judged. The researcher will however consider ethical principles to avoid some of the limitations mentioned above.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

The research is limited to child marriages among boys particularly the experiences of boys in Chitungwiza, St Mary's. Chitungwiza, St Mary's is characterized by a high population density with high number of schools, informal business and poor sanitation. The research will be conducted within the boundaries of the lived experiences of boys in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's. It is an area located in Chitungwiza an urban centre and town of Harare province. Chitungwiza has a population of about 404 000 people (City population, 2023)

1.10 Definition of key definition

Child- refers to any human being under 18 years of age according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a child and this is in line with the Zimbabwean children's act chapter

5.06 which also defines a child as all boys and girls below the age of 18 according to (Bill watch, 2022).

Child marriage- UNICEF (2022) defines child marriage as the formal or informal union of either a boy or a girl under the age of 18. According to Save the Children (2022), child marriages are a form of child rights violation without his or her full consent even though the marriage may sometimes be formal.

1.11 Chapter summary

In conclusion the first chapter has an insight of the global, regional and national background of the research. It also discussed the significance of the study, the statement of the problem, aims, research objectives and also research questions. The assumptions, limitations and delimitations of the study were discussed.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The literature review aims to bring to light existing literature in regards to the research worldwide. It helps researchers understand the existing knowledge on a topic and identify gaps in the literature. This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework, conceptual framework and the knowledge gap.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework refers to a structure that guides the study and helps to organize the study and interpret findings. This research made use of the social learning theory and the intersectionality approach.

The social learning theory- Albert Bandura (1977)

The research will focus on the social learning theory to understand the reasons behind child marriages among boys and how they cope. The social learning theory presents the role of the social

environment in influencing behaviour. According to this theory people observe and model the behaviour of others and then they apply the learned behaviour on their own lives. Akers (2017) asserts that humans observe behaviour through two ways, either directly through interactions or indirectly by observing behaviour through communication media. According to this theory there is no a specific age of learning behaviour since learning is a continuous process that occurs throughout one's life and it is shaped by social and cultural influences. This therefore helps in understanding some of the factors leading to child marriages among boys such as culture, peer pressure and poverty. The theory helps in understanding how the socialization process has an impact on human behaviour. The socialization process impacts human behaviour in that people tend to internalize principles and values that are taught to them and these have an influence as they grow up (Murauzi, 2018). Therefore the theory helps understanding the consequences of child marriages amongst boys by examining how young boys in child marriages are influenced by their family, peers and society in terms of their attitude, behaviors and out comes in the sense that boys who witness child marriages will end up believing that it is acceptable and are more likely to engage in the practice making it difficult to break the cycle of child marriages. The theory helps in examining how boys in child marriages learn from the behaviour of their parents, peers and other role models in their environment. It helps examining how boys perceive and cope with the challenges that come as a result of being married at a young age and how their attitudes are shaped by their experience. Hence, the theory is going to be a fundamental framework in understanding the experiences of boys in child marriages.

Intersectionality approach

Intersectionality according to Crenshaw(1989) is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own experiences of discrimination and oppression and it involves considering cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination for example racism, sexism and classism, intersect and overlap. Intersectionality is a way of understanding how a person, group, or social issue can be influenced by multiple, overlapping forms of discrimination and disadvantage (Crenshaw, 1989). This theoretical framework plays a role in understanding the multi-faceted nature of the experiences of young boys in child marriages. It includes recognizing that the experiences of young boys in child marriages are not only shaped by their gender but rather shaped by other intersecting factors such as socio-economic status and also cultural background. Intersectionality allows for the exploration of how various forms of oppression intersect and interact in one's life. For example it sheds light on how societal norms and expectations related to masculinity intersect with the vulnerabilities associated with being in a child marriage. It also helps the researcher to understand how like religion, culture intersect with their experiences thus influencing their access to resources. Cook (2009) argues that the social expectations and power structures associated with traditional masculinity can prevent some men from making decisions they believe are best, due to concerns about their age and fears of not conforming to societal norms of manhood.

2.3. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a structured representation with key concepts, variables and their relationships in a research study(Saunders et al., 2019).The conceptual frameworks guide the research process or provides a foundation for understanding the research study (Jabareen, 2009). The conceptual frameworks below provided a guide to the study on the prevalence of child

marriages amongst young male, the efforts being done by different authorities ,the causes of child marriages amongst young males as well as what the males are experiencing in child marriages

2.3.1. Child marriages

Child marriages according to ActionAid (2022), child marriage refers to any informal or formal union where one or both parties are minors under the age of 18. The United Nations Population Fund (2022) defines child marriage as a formal marriage or informal union where one or both parties are under the age of 18. The UNFPA (2022) further posits that child marriages are most popular across cultures, religions and regions of the world and it is most prevalent in low and middle income countries. Studies that have been conducted recently managed to examine the prevalence of child marriage cases in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to the report given by UNFPA (2022), the prevalence of child marriage in the region is approximately 38%. This implies that more than one in three girls are married before reaching the age of 18. The report also found that West and Central Africa have the highest prevalence of child marriages where rates can reach up to 60%. The practice of child marriages is recognized at global level as a form of child protection and violation of human rights. In the constitution of Zimbabwe sub-section 78 chapter 1 and sub-section 81 chapters the minimum age of marriage for both girls and boys is 18 years (The 2013 Constitution, 2017). Scholars like Dzimiri (2017) managed to identify a number of factors leading to child marriages. Dzimiri (2017) in his study done in Mashonaland province of Zimbabwe identified the factors causing child marriages and these include poverty, religious beliefs, social norms and lack of education. The World Health Organisation (2022) noted that child marriages have health consequences for both the child and the future children, they also increase the rate of gender based violence, malnutrition and maternal death.

2.3.2. Child marriages among boys

According to UNICEF (2019), studies by the United Nations shows that child marriage child marriage is a wide spread issue that affects both boys and girls. Approximately million boys got married before reaching 18 years of age and 115 million men and boys married before the age of 18. This shows that child marriage is a pervasive issue which affects the future of both girls and boys. Boys in child marriages are at high risk of physical and mental health problems and are most likely to engage in high risk behaviour like drug abuse. According to Ratcliffe (2019) the Central African Republic recorded the highest number of child marriages with almost one third of the boys getting married before the age of 18. Nicaragua 195 and Madagascar with 13% of males and boys married before reaching the age of 18. In as much as there have been studies on child marriages among boys Misuna et al (2019) argues that little research has been done on the factors causing child marriages among boys.

2.3.2. Factors causing child marriages among boys

Mutandwa(2017) postulates that the major drivers of child marriages can be classified into economic, social and environmental factors. Politics also contributes to child marriages among boys. Bicchieri et al (2014) argues that “child marriages are on the decline, but it is still a widespread practise”. Studies show that there has been a thorough research on the drivers leading to child marriages but however initiatives to curb child marriages have been futile over the years. Misunas et al (2019) argues that child marriages amongst boys are as a result of the boys coming from a poor family background with less or no educational backgrounds. Not having access to education and issues related to poverty according to Misunas et al (2019) is very detrimental to the development of young boys which affects their future.

2.3.2.1 Social factors leading to child marriages among boys

Peer pressure

According Mutandwa (2017), one of the causes of child marriage among boys is peer pressure. Boys are getting married because of seeing some of their friends getting married and think that there are benefits that are attained in marriages. According to the study by Population Reference Bureau (2016) peer pressure is a major factor contributing to child marriages among boys in some community. Many of these young males marry in order to conform to the expectations of their peers thus peer pressure can be argued to have a great influence on child marriage (Lee-Rife, Malhotra, Warner & Glinski, 2012). In communities that have limited educational opportunities marriage may seem to be the only viable path as supported by UNICEF (2019) hence peer pressure can reinforce this perception leading boys towards early marriage.

Social norms

The Population Reference Bureau (2016) also notes the role played by the social norms in contributing to child marriages among boys. According to Nilan and Colquhoun (2020) Sasak boys in Rural North Lombok they get married because in their societies fatherhood is the ultimate masculine status maker. These hegemonic ideals of masculinity tied to their society discourage boys and forces them to want to marry at a tender age. According to Bicchieri, Jiang and Lindemans (2014) child marriages are being caused by a combination of individual behaviours according to the social norms perspective. The cause of child marriages amongst boys can be attributed to the social norms as some boys marry not only because the society they live in expects them to be married but because the other boys in that community are doing the same thing.

According to Solotaroff and Pande (2014) social norms and gender stereotypes can make the issue of child marriage less recognized and addressed therefore this increases the cases of child marriage amongst boys.

Religious influences

From the different studies conducted, it has been proved that religious beliefs also contributes to child marriages for instance ,Bantebya et al. (2014) assert that in certain African countries, such as Uganda, child marriage is strongly rooted in Catholic and Islamic religious beliefs. In these contexts, when young girls and boys reach the age of 15, there is an expectation that they should get married. The practice of child marriage is deeply embedded in the cultural and religious traditions of these countries, according to the research by Bantebya et al. (2014). Kohno et al (2020) argues that in some religions like the Islamic religion, their doctrine suggest that when one gets married he will have fulfilled another part of the church's doctrine, thus this puts pressure on young boys and they end up getting married at an early age to ensure that they adhere to the doctrines of the church. Biswas et al. (2020) assert that religious norms in Bangladeshi urban slums have a greater influence on young men's decision to get married young thus religion proves to be another major cause of child marriage amongst young boys.

2.3.2.2 Economic factors

Economic hardships

Due to economic hardships in countries especially the third world countries has resulted in a rise of child marriages among boys. Munangagwa(2009) argues that due to the economic hardships in Zimbabwe some people no longer afford to pay fees for their children thus leading to school

dropouts which are one of the drivers of child marriages. Quitting school increases child marriages amongst young boys because they will be lacking alternatives this is supported by Biswas et al. (2020) on the study which was conducted in Bangladesh it was discovered that boys there are into child marriages because of school dropouts. Petroni et al. (2017) also discovered African studies which prove that school drop outs often increase the rate of child marriages. Unemployment is another element of economic hardship that contributes to child marriage among boys. Adolf (2016) argues that in Zimbabwe boys and girls engage in relationships which end up in child marriages because they have nothing to do. Greene (2014) asserts that poverty, lack of education are some factors that lead to child marriages of boys in some regions.

Engaging in income generating projects at a young age

Engaging in income generating activities has also led to child marriages among boys. This is because they are being burdened with responsibilities which makes them feel they have grown and can be able to take care of a family. Biswas et al (2020) postulates that engaging in income generating activities results in child marriages amongst boys because they are given responsibilities to take care of the families due to circumstances like poverty and death of parents. Biswas et al (2020) further argues that once boys gets employed and start earning some money they feel like they are powerful and grown up enough to start their own families thus leading to child marriages amongst boys.

2.3.2.3 Personal factors

Irresponsible

Studies have shown that the issue of irresponsibility among boys is one of the factors leading to child marriages among boys. In Africa, the tradition in most African societies tend to be more strict on girls rather than boys therefore boys seem to be more irresponsible which leads them into impregnating girls while they are still young thus leading to child marriages. Verma & Pandey (2016) argue that irresponsibility is linked to the social construction of masculinity and sexuality which encourages boys into engaging into sexual behaviors without taking into considerations the implications. The irresponsible behaviors include having multiple sexual partners, not using protection as well as coercing girls into sex.

Early interest in sexual activities

The prevalence of child marriages among young boys due to early sexual interest can be attributed to several factors, as highlighted by (Koster et al 2017). According to Koster et al (2017) sexual desires play a crucial role towards early matrimony. The surge in sexual hormones during puberty often prompts a desire to experiment with and engage in sexual experiences, which lead to early marriages as societal norms may view premarital sex as immoral, thus making marriage the only socially acceptable avenue for sexual exploration (Biswas et al, 2017). Additionally, the absence of comprehensive sex education in primary schools, secondary schools and even tertiary institutions can contribute to the prevalence of early marriages among children (Dzimiri et al, 2017).

2.3.3 The experiences of males in child marriage

Recently there has been a slight increase of studies focusing on understanding the experiences of boys and men in child marriages. According to a study by the International Center for Research on Women (2020) boys also face a lot of challenges in child marriages and these include sexual

violence, early fatherhood and increased responsibility for financial support of the family. Boys maybe severely affected by child marriages as they may feel a sense of shame and isolation and this may cause mental health problems. Gender stereotypes within the communities in Africa also increases the impact of child marriages on boys since they are perceived as stronger people who should not cry out for help. Misunas et al (2019) argues that boys also get affected by the devastating effects of child marriages just like girls therefore policies should be implemented targeting ending child marriages among boys.

2.3.3.1 Poverty

Edmeades et al, (2022) argue that poverty is one of the worst experiences of young males in child marriages. Edmeades et al (2022) argues on the research on the factors of early marriages among boys that boys who marry before the age of 18 are highly affected by poverty because they have responsibilities that they cannot manage because of age. Misunas et al (2019) argues that child marriages leads to school dropouts which limits one's economic opportunities thereby leading to poverty. Since the children lack qualifications needed to be employed in better fields they resort to street vending which according to Sayi and Sibanda (2018) argues to be the most employing sector in Zimbabwe and Africa for child marriage survivors. According to Nabayaza (2021) once a young boy get married they need to fulfill the spouse's needs in order to make the wives happy which is another burden weighing on them.

2.3.3.2 Drug and Substance Abuse

Drug and substance abuse is also amongst the consequences of child marriages amongst boys. Swiney (2021) postulates that some children in child marriages resorted to unwanted behaviors like drug abuse because of the stress of making ends meet in order to ensure the wellbeing of the

family. The inability to properly care for one's family, coupled with a lack of adequate care and support from one's own parents during childhood, can lead an individual to engage in risky behaviors such as drug and substance abuse. The young boys in child marriages end up abusing drugs because of the lack of education that enables one to have adequate information that empowers them to have a brighter future (Misunas et al., 2019).

2.3.3.3 *Underprivileged in terms of childhood experiences*

Malhotra (2010) argues that the most fundamental thing that children are deprived of when they get married is their childhood and future. Young boys in child marriages are deprived of their right to play and the right to be taken care of by their parents. Boys in child marriages are overwhelmed with responsibilities hence they are forced by the situation to work at a tender age in order to provide for their families. It is important to note that child marriage violates human rights and is detrimental to social and economic development, rooted in gender inequality (Economic Impacts of Child Marriage: A Review of the Literature, 2015). The patriarchal societies believe that the father is the head of the family hence the young boys have to take the responsibilities of a father whereas they are still children who also need to be fathered.

2.3.3.4 *Health Challenges*

There are a lot of sexual health challenges which is faced by boys in child marriages. Loaiza and Wong (2012) argue that child brides are at a higher risk of sexually transmitted infections and maternal or child mortality. This does not only affect child brides but also child grooms face a high risk of sexually transmitted infections. In support of this is Raj (2010) who argues that child brides are often unable to negotiate safe sexual practices which put them on high risk of STIs including HIV. It is also important to note that young males in child marriages also face mental health

challenges. They face trauma because of loss of childhood which can also lead to long-term psychological depression and anxiety (Raj & Boehmer, 2013).

2.3.4 The efforts towards addressing the issue of child marriages

Bicchieri et al. (2020) support that child marriages affect health as they assert that the traumatic experience experienced during child marriages may also impact the ability to form healthy relationships later in life.

Different initiatives are being implemented by different organisations and agencies to end the practise of child marriages. The cases of child marriages amongst girls have been reducing in most parts of the worlds. According to UNICEF (2019) South Asia has highest statistical dropping in child marriages. Some of the efforts to end child marriages according to Chae (2017) include the United Nations Global Programme to accelerate Action to end Child Marriage, the Global Partnership to end violence against Children as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5. UNFPA and UNICEF in 2016 launched a global programme which seeks to address child marriages amongst girls through empowering then and about 14 million girls are now empowered with life skills and have sex education knowledge and were financially supported so that they go back to school(UNICEF , 2022). 193 governments according to Zafar (2017) are putting efforts through implementing initiatives that targets ending the practise of child marriages for both boys and girls by 2030 through ending poverty, hunger, promoting good health and access to education.

2.3.5 Related literature on the prevalence of child marriages amongst boys

This seeks to outline the issues related to child marriages amongst boys according to the global literature, Regional Literature as well as the Local literature.

2.3.5.1 Global literature on the prevalence of child marriages amongst boys

Child marriage is a global issue that affects both boys and girls around the world (Malhotra, 2010). According to UNICEF (2019), 51% of the world's male population has are in child marriage. Additionally, research which was conducted in 82 countries according to UNICEF (2019) showed that about 4.5% of men in those countries were married before turning 18. In total, the global population of child marriages among males is estimated to be 115 million. However, child marriage issue among boys has not received as much attention or research as child marriage among girls, putting many young men at a disadvantage by depriving them of their childhood and opportunities for a better future.

2.3.5.2 Regional literature on the prevalence of child marriage amongst boys

Regionally, Africa has the highest rates of child marriage globally. In Zambia, the minimum legal age for marriage is 21 or 16 with written parental consent for both boys and girls. It's estimated that around 1% of boys in Zambia have been married as minors. To address this, 1,714 Zambian had access to education and were also trained and equipped with life skills to help prevent child marriage (UNICEF, 2021). Similarly, in Madagascar, research shows that 13% of boys marry before 18 years, and 2% of boy are married between ages 20-24 (Ratcliffe, 2019, UNICEF, 2021). Madagascar has adopted a national strategy, with support from UNICEF and UNFPA, to reduce the child marriage rate by 2024 (UNICEF, 2021). The drivers of child marriage in African countries are relatively consistent, including social norms, religious and cultural factors, peer pressure, school dropout, and unemployment (UNICEF, 2022).

2.3.5.3 Local literature on the prevalence of child marriage amongst boys

In Zimbabwe, there is a lack of research and justice surrounding the issue of child marriage among boys. This has exacerbated the problem, as without proper education on the consequences of child marriage, the practice continues and the statistics keep rising. Most of the available literature on child marriage in Zimbabwe focuses on the experiences of girls (Mudimba, 2021). According to a study by Zimfact (2021), around 2% of males in Zimbabwe were married before the age of 18. The lack of attention and research on child marriage among boys in Zimbabwe has allowed the problem to persist, as interventions and solutions have primarily centered on the experiences of girls (Misunas et al, 2019). Addressing this gap in understanding and programming is crucial to comprehensively tackle the issue of child marriage in the country.

2.3.6 Legal frameworks on the issue of child marriages among boys

The legal frameworks play a fundamental role in preventing child marriage and addressing any other related issues. There are a lot of International Laws which address this issue for example Convention on the Rights of children prohibits child marriages and sets 18 as the minimum age for marriage for both boys and girls (United Nations, 1989). The United Nations (1979) also notes that there is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women which also call for the end of child marriage but however it is important to note that it does not mainly focus on boys as victims of child marriages.

National laws are being set to address the issue of child marriages. Parsons et al. (2015) argue that many countries have set 18 as the minimum legal age for marriage although enforcement and exceptions may vary. In line with this is the constitution of Zimbabwe, the constitution establishes 18 years as the minimum age of marriage (The 2013 Constitution, 2017). Simuka Afrika(2019)

supports that the government of Zimbabwe does not allow the marriage of girls and boys who below the age of 18. Wodon et al. (2017) also argue that in some countries they have gender-neutral laws prohibiting child marriage regardless of sex of the child therefore this shows the efforts some countries are making towards addressing child marriages amongst boys. However, there is lack of legal protections and social support services for boy victims of child marriage and this is a challenge which might slow the vision of many countries to address the issue of child marriages (Nasrullah et al., 2017)

2.4 Knowledge gap

The information present on the issues of child marriages shows that there has been little research on child marriages among boys. Most studies worldwide have been focusing on child marriages amongst girls. In Zimbabwe a little to no research on child marriages among boys have been done. This has led to formulation of policies that only seek to address the issue of child marriage among girls. Therefore, in order to fill this gap the researcher will conduct a research that focuses on the lived experience of boys in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's.

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter provided the theoretical frameworks that best explain the research. This chapter also reviewed the existing literature on the causes of child marriages amongst young males, their lived experience or consequences of child marriages on boys as well as the efforts that are being done by different authorities to address the issue of child marriages amongst young males.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on giving detailed information on how the research was tackled. The chapter will focus on the research approach, research design, target population, sampling size, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data presentation and analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Approach

A research approach according to Chetty(2016) can be defined as the process or plan that one utilizes in order to collect, analyse, and interpret data. Qualitative research approach was used throughout this research. QuestionPro (2023) defines qualitative approach as a process that mainly focuses on collecting data through the use of open-ended and conversational communication. The research made use of the qualitative research approach because according to Bhandari (2020) the process of collecting and analyzing data in qualitative research gives room for a deeper understanding of concepts and opinions. In this research qualitative research approach gave the researcher the opportunity to get in-depth understanding and first-hand information on the lived

experiences of young boys in child marriages. This was done through interviews and focus group discussions.

3.2 Research design

A research design can be defined as a framework that is used to respond to research questions and determines how data is collected and analyzed (Creswell, 2010). The phenomenology research design is defined by Patton (2015) as a qualitative research design that aims to understand the lived experiences of individuals. The researcher made use of the narrative phenomenology research design. This is defined by Creswell and Poth (2018) as research design that combines elements of narrative inquiry and phenomenology to explore the lived experiences of individuals. Therefore, the design helped the researcher to understand effectively the factors leading young males in Chitungwiza, St Mary's into child marriages, consequences of child marriages as well as how they are coping. The researcher also made use of the phenomenology research design through conducting interviews as supported by Patton (2015) who argues that phenomenological research involves interviewing participants about their experiences and analyzing data to identify common themes. The researcher used the phenomenology research design because it helps to understand participant's subjective experiences (Deakin University, 2017).

3.3 Study area

Study area according to Leedy and Omrod (2014) is the area in which the research is to be conducted and this includes both the geographical location and the socio-cultural context of the study. The research was conducted in Chitungwiza, St Mary's. St Mary's is a place in Chitungwiza located approximately 23.8 km from the town of Harare. St Mary's is characterized

by a high population density with high informal business, school drop outs and poor sanitation. The high rate of school drop outs explains the reason why child marriages amongst young males are more common in this area. Drug and substance abuse is also common in St Mary's. It is also characterized by drug dealers and a high rate of people who still practice the Gule Wamkulu (Zvigure) culture.

3.4 Target population

Saunders (2012) defines a target population as the people from which the research is going to be conducted. Hu (2014) defines a target population as a group of people or objects with different characteristics or traits on which the researcher carries out her research. McLeod (2019) defines a target population as a group of people with a specified criterion from which the sample is drawn. Therefore a target population can be viewed as a specific group of people needed by the researcher in order to get information and draw conclusion from the data which would have been collected. In this case the targeted population were boys in child marriages from the age of 16-20 living in Chitungwiza, St Mary's because they can provide information required from their experiences in child marriages and boys who are not in child marriages from the age of 16-20 because they can give their opinion on the issue of child marriages amongst boys and it also gives insights into the unique challenges and experiences of boys in child marriages. For key informants the researcher engaged with the social workers from Chitungwiza Department of Social Development because they have specialized knowledge and skills in working with children and families hence they can provide valuable insights into the experiences of young boys in child marriages, teachers because they can provide the educational experiences of boys in child marriages and community organisations as they can help in providing information on the social, cultural and economic

context of child marriages amongst young boys and they can help in recruiting participants for the research..

3.4 Sample size

A sample size according to Coghlan and Brannick (2014) is a selected number of participants that are chosen from the target population. A sample size of 25 participants was used to represent Chitungwiza as a whole. 10 participants were boys in child marriages, 9 boys who are not in child marriages as well as key informants 2 social workers from Chitungwiza Department of Social Development, 2 teachers from local schools in St Mary's and 2 participants from Community based organisations in Chitungwiza.

3.5 Sampling Technique

A sampling technique can be defined as a method that is used to select a subset of individuals or units from a larger population when conducting a research study (Malik, 2016). Punch (2015) defined sampling technique as a tool that is used in the process of selecting a group of individuals from a population for the purpose of conducting a research. This research made use of the convenience sampling and the snowball sampling.

3.5.1 Convenience sampling

The study utilized the convenience sampling which Taherdoost (2016) defined as collecting information from participants who are readily available, accessible and are interested in participating in the research and also if they qualify in the targeted population. Creswell (2014) defined convenience sampling as a non-probability sampling methods that is based on collecting

data from participants who are conveniently available to participate in the study. Basically, convenience sampling refers to data collection from any person from the targeted group wherever the researcher can find them and are willing to share their experiences. This was used to select the 9 boys from 16-18 years of age who are not in child marriages but have knowledge on the experiences of young boys in child marriages. This sampling technique was applied through informing people in the area where the research was being conducted and this allowed volunteers to take part as supported by (Stratton, 2021). The research made use of the Convenience sampling because it has got advantages over other methods and these include that it is not time consuming and is easy to apply.

3.5.2 *Snowball sampling*

Snowball sampling was used in this research and it is defined by Bryman (2015) as a non random sampling technique where participants recruit other participants based on their personal networks. The snowball technique is used when the targeted population is hard to reach and also when the researcher want to collect confidential information and participants may feel uncomfortable to share their personal information (Taherdoost ,2016). The research used the exponential discriminative snowball sampling. The tool was used to select the 10 boys in child marriages from the age of 16-18. This technique was also used through engaging with the key informants so that they would refer the researcher to the boys in child marriages as they can be able to recruit boys in child marriages whom they know and can be able to provide the required information. Snowball in this research was of a great significance as it is time efficiency, and can reach hard to reach populations. It usually occur when a few people are willing to participate and then other join after seeing some people participating or at times those few participants who would have started the

participation can refer the researcher to other people who have much information in regards to the research. The snowball sampling was used because it is effective especially on this research which involved sensitive issues which most people find difficult to disclose information to the researcher.

3.5.3 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is defined by Creswell (2013) as a sampling tool that involves selecting participants who have the most relevant information about the topic being studied. According to Etikan, Musa and Alkasim (2016) it is a sampling technique that involves selecting individuals who are well-informed with the topic being discussed. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the key informants, 2 Social workers from Chitungwiza Department of Social Services, 2 teachers from local schools in Chitungwiza, St Mary's and also 2 participants from the community based organisations. These key informants have the required knowledge and skills in working with children hence they can provide the required information on the experiences of boys in child marriages. This tool was utilised guided by the research questions and the purpose of the study. Purposive sampling was used because according to Creswell (2013) it allows the researcher to be able to recruit people who are proficient and have detailed information on the research topic, hence this helps to ensure the quality of data collected.

3.6 Data collection

Data collection is the processes of collecting and evaluating information. Data collection is defined by as the process of gathering, measuring and analyzing accurate data (Duggal, 2023). Sharma (2017) postulates that data collection is the systematic approach of gathering and

measuring information from different sources to ensure that one is able to answer relevant questions and evaluate outcomes.

3.7 Data collection techniques

Data collection techniques refer to the methods that are used to collect information or to gather data from participants for research purposes according to Bryman (2015). The researcher made use of the in-depth interviews, key informants interviews and focus group discussion.

3.7.1 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews are to be used on this research as a tool for data collection. According to Canals (2017) in-depth interviews are conversations done in person whereby the researcher asks questions and the participant responds and it is done with one participant at a time. The research required in-depth interviews with the boys in child marriages because the research topic was very sensitive hence the need to uphold privacy and confidentiality. The interviews were done to 10 boys in child marriages. In-depth interviews were conducted with one participant at a time through obtaining informed consent from each participant before starting the interview and also through the use of interview guides that have questions relating to the research objectives. The interviews helped reducing the chances of getting biased information from the participants as they are done with one participant at a time so it allows one to be able to give the valid and accurate responses. Leanne (2023) argues that in-depth interviews are usually done to collect information about sensitive personal experiences of the participant hence it is applicable to this study since issues related to child marriages are sensitive especially to boys due to gender stereotypes within the communities.

3.7.2 Key Informant Interviews

These are defined as one on one dialogue with people who have relevant knowledge and insight about the research being conducted according to Sharma (2017). The researcher made use of the key informant interviews in order to get different perspectives on the causes of child marriages amongst boys from people with relevant knowledge and also to get recommendations. These were done through engaging with 2 social workers from the Chitungwiza Department of Social Development, 2 teachers from local schools and also 2 participants from the Community Based organisations in Chitungwiza. The researcher used the key informant interviews through conducting face-to-face interviews with the 6 key informants making use of loosely structured and generally open ended questions that are few and intended to draw out views and sentiments from the key informants as supported by Creswell (2013).

3.7.3 Focus group discussion

A focus group discussion is a technique used in qualitative research whereby a small group of 6-10 people are brought together to discuss on a specific topic (Morgan, 2017). Neuman (2014) asserts that focus group discussion is an exploratory tool used to explore people's thoughts and feelings to acquire detailed information about a topic while they are a small group of between 6-12 people. The researcher conducted 1 focus group discussion with the boys from 16-18 years who are not in child marriages. This was done through engaging with the key informants so that they would help to mobilize the group. The researcher also made use of a focus group discussion in order to elicit the views of other boys on the effects of child marriages on boys and also the factors leading to child marriages amongst boys. Another reason for conducting focus group discussions

is that it allows for a group interaction hence they generate more in depth and complex data than individual interviews.

3.8 Data collection tools

Data collection tools according to Braun and Clarke (2006) can be defined to the instruments that are used to gather data for a research study. The research made use of the in-depth interview guide and the key informant interview guide and these are expanded below.

In-depth interview guide

In-depth interview guide according to Corbin and Strauss (2015) are a series of questions that a researcher uses to direct the conversation and to guide the interview. The researcher used the in-depth interview guide to gather data from the targeted population. The in-depth interview guide refers to the semi-structured interviews that have open ended questions and follow-up probes. The researcher utilized the in-depth interview guide because it has both open ended and close ended questions to allow participants to give detailed information on their experiences in child marriages.

Key informants interview guide

Key informants interview guide refer to a research tool that is used to collect information accurately from the knowledgeable individuals on a specific topic (Jones, 2015). The researcher used the key informants guide to gain information from the 6 key informants who have relevant information concerning the issue of child marriages amongst boys. The research also made use of the key informant interview guide because it plays an essential role in coming up with unique

insights and perspectives that might not be found from other sources. Another important reason for using the key informant guide is that it helps in gaining knowledge on the gaps in the existing research and this gives room for suggestions. The key informant guide consisted of both open-ended questions and close ended questions.

Focus Group Discussion Guide

A focus group discussion guide according to Krueger (2014) is a set of questions that are used to facilitate a discussion. This focus group discussion was used to the 9 boys who are not in child marriages from the age of 16-18 as they were in the focus group discussion. The researcher also made use of open ended questions that encouraged the discussion. The researcher used the focus group discussion guide because they help the researcher to stay on track and cover all the topics that need to be discussed, (Stewart and Shamdasani, 2014). Another reason for using the focus group discussion guide is that it allows the discussion to be focused on the participant's perspectives.

3.9 Data collection procedures

Lotame (2019) define data collection procedures as the steps taken when gathering data in a research. The researcher first obtained a letter from the Department of Social Work at Bindura University which is used to seek permission to conduct the research in Chitungwiza, St Mary's. The researcher went to seek permission to conduct the research from the Ministry of Labour and Social welfare and was given an approval letter to conduct the research. The researcher collected information on the lived experiences of boys in child marriages in Chitungwiza; St Mary's using

research questions as a guide, in-depth interviews, key informant guide as well as focus group discussions.

3.10 Data presentation and analysis

Data presentation is the process of organizing data in a way that makes it easier to understand (Abela, 2020). Data analysis according to Homan (2022) is a process of turning raw data into useful information that can be used to answer research questions or inform decision making. Thematic analysis was used by the researcher in organizing data and ensuring that the researcher makes sense out of the collected information. Thematic analysis refers to a method used to analyse qualitative data which involves collecting all information given by the participants and giving meaning out of the collected information according to Braun and Clarke (2006). The thematic data presentation and analysis procedure has six steps according to Kiger and Varpio (2020) which the researcher followed and these are data familiarization, generation of initial codes, theme searching, review of potential codes, defining and naming themes and lastly producing the report. Thematic analysis was used because it helps the researcher to organize data collected and draw the meaning of the data given. Thematic analysis suit questions relating to peoples experiences or views and perceptions hence the researcher had to make use of it picking the main ideas shared by the participants in regards to the causes of child marriages among boys, the experiences of boys in child marriages and also the coping strategies they are using.

3.10.1 Data familiarization

Data familiarization is the first step in qualitative data analysis. It involves reading and re-reading data collected. The main aim of the data familiarization stage according to Braun and Clarke (2008)

is for the researcher to be familiar with the data collected and to be able to have a deeper understanding of the data collected. It also enables the researcher to establish a close and empathic connection with the participants and their experiences. The researcher made use of writing notes to record the initial impressions, thoughts or questions about the data as supported by Braun, Clarke, Hayfield and Terry (2019).

3.10.2 Initial coding

According to Saldana (2016), the initial coding stage involves thoroughly reviewing the data and identifying the first set of themes or concepts that arise from the information. This is done by carefully reading through the data, taking notes, and then grouping together similar ideas. The researcher collects relevant codes by highlighting meaningful sentences that contribute to an overall understanding. Initial coding is a crucial step, as it helps the researcher gain a high-level perspective on the main ideas present in the data (Caulfied, 2022)..

3.10.3 Theme identification

Maguire and Delahunt (2017) explain that a theme represents a pattern of relevant ideas found within the collected data. It can also be described as the overarching concept that emerges from the relevant codes. Braun and Clarke (2006) define the theme identification process as "looking for connections, both within and between the codes". This involves carefully examining the data and making notes on the links and relationships between the different themes. Identifying themes is a critical step, as it helps the researcher make sense of the data and allows them to explore it in a comprehensive manner (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

3.10.4 Review of potential codes

This stage involves making sure that themes found in stage three are relevant to the research and they respond to the research questions (Maguire&Delahunt, 2017). According to Saldana (2016) it involves reflecting to the potential codes that have been identified and considering how they relate to the research question and the overall data set, involves weighing the importance of each potential code and selecting a subset of the potential codes to focus on in the next stage of the analysis.

3.10.5 Defining and Naming Themes

This means formulating the meaning of each and every theme and how it helps understand the information collected. The researcher interpreted each and every theme and this shows the importance of this stage as supported by Braun and Clarke (2006) who argue that the main aim of this stage is to “identify the essence of what each theme is about”.

3.10.6 Producing report

This refers to the presentation of the analysis report of the data collected (Cauified, 2022). The report must tell the complicated story of the data which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of the researcher’s analysis. The report consisted of an introduction which helps the reader understand the objectives of the study, the aim of the study and the methodology which was used.

3.11 Ethical considerations

These are a set of values, principles, rules and regulations that the researcher has to consider during conducting his or her study. Bhasin (2020) asserts that ethical considerations refer to the regulations, values and principles that guide the researcher to conduct a study which avoids

harming the participants. Ethical considerations help in ensuring that there is no infringement of the human rights while the researcher is carrying out his or her study.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The researcher ensured confidentiality to the participants through assuring them that the information collected from them will not be disclosed and is to be kept in confidence. Bhasin (2020) argues that the issue of confidentiality might affect the research as some people will not want to participate because they do not want the world to know about their personal information. Anonymity is a process of hiding the participant's identity to avoid identification (Creswell (2014) posits that one issue to expect about confidentiality is that some participants may want and some may not want to have their identity to remain confidential. The researcher must keep participant responses as a secret because in Bhandari's opinion it is unethical to disclose the participants' information for purposes outside from the study (Bhandari, 2021).

Voluntary participation

The participants made their own decisions on whether they wanted to participate or not. According to (Resnik, 2020) voluntary participation refers to the willingness of the participants to provide information or to take part in the research without being forced. The participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from participating in the research when they felt they no longer needed to be part of the research. Voluntary participation is useful in attaining true information from the participants.

Informed consent

Informed consent according to Fleming (2018) refers to a process of informing participants about the research so that the participants have a deeper understanding on the requirements of the research and also possible effects of the research on the participants. Informed consent helps participants to make informed decisions and also it gives a platform for them to ask what they will not understand in regards to the study before they the research commences. This is important in that child marriage issues especially among boys are sensitive hence the need to inform participants so that they decide on their own if they want to participate.

3.11 Chapter summary

In conclusion, the chapter focused on the methods that were utilized throughout the research. The data collection techniques, research design, target population and ethical considerations highlighted in this chapter and there was justification of the use of the qualitative methods.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to present, interpret and discuss the findings obtained during the research which focused on analyzing the factors that contribute to child marriages amongst young boys in Chitungwiza, St Mary's, to assess the consequences of child marriages on young boys as well as to examine the coping strategies utilized by young boys in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's. The information was collected through the use of focus group discussion, key informant interviews as well as in-depth interviews. The findings are going to be presented in order of the research questions and main themes will be used to present the results. Demographics for the participants are also discussed in this chapter.

4.2 Demographic data

A total number of 10 young males in child marriages were interviewed during the research. 6 key informants were interviewed and these are 2 social workers from the Chitungwiza Department of Social Development, 2 teachers from St Mary's High School and 2 members from the community based organisations. A focus group with 9 young males who are not in child marriage was also conducted. From the interviews conducted with the 10 young males in child marriages it shows that most of the young males in child marriages dropped school due to lack of funds before they had reached O'level which shows that most of them do not have any qualifications for them to be employed thus they are surviving on the small ghetto hustles which are sometimes not enough to meet the basic commodities they need. The demographic data of the participants who provided information required during the interviews have been presented below.

4.2.1

Table 1

Demographic data of young males in child marriages

CHARACTERISTICS		FREQUENCY
AGE		
16-18		6
19-20		4
EMPLOYMENT STATUS		
Employed		3
Self-employed		3
Unemployed		4
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS		

Primary level	4
Ordinary level	4
Advanced level	1
Never attended school	1
MARITAL STATUS	
Still in Marriage	6
Divorced	3
Widowed	1

4.3 Presentation of findings

4.3.1 The driving factors behind child marriages amongst males in Chitungwiza, St Mary's.

The first objective of the research focused on the analysis of the driving factors leading to child marriages amongst young males in Chitungwiza, St Mary's. From the interviews conducted during the research it shows that the drivers of child marriages amongst young males in Chitungwiza, St Mary's includes, poverty, peer pressure, religious influence and sexual desires. These issues are presented, interpreted and discussed below.

4.3.1.1 Poverty

Poverty according to the interviews conducted proves to be a major contributing factor to the prevalence of child marriages particularly for young males. The information which came from the young males in child marriages through in-depth interviews indicated that they dropped out of

school due to the fact that their parents were not able to pay for their school fees. One of the key informant testified that these young males are getting married at an early age because their parents cannot afford to school them. From the focus group discussion which was conducted it was confirmed that some of these young males are getting married because their parents cannot afford to pay for their school fees and to pay for everything required at school hence they end up dropping out of school which leads to child marriages.

From the in-depth interviews one participant had this to say:

“I got married at an early age because my mother could not afford to pay for my school fees since she is a widow. Sometimes she would go to work at my school which covered for my school fees but however I would go to school with torn uniforms or without books. Therefore I decided to drop out of school and had no other option except of starting my own family.”(Xz1)

Another participant on the in-depth interviews said that

“At the age of 16 I was now in form 3, my parents then made it clearer that the family was living in extreme poverty and they could barely afford food. Since I am the eldest son I had to leave school and find some hustles in order to help my family that is when I ended up engaging in sexual activities since I thought I had grown enough to be a man. I then impregnated a girl and she had to come to our house”. (Xs2)

The key informant interview with one of the teachers at St Mary’s High School confirmed that poverty is a major driver as they said:

“Poverty robs these young boys of their agency and forces them into adult responsibilities that they are wholly unprepared for. I remember one of my students was 15 years old when

he dropped out of school because his guardians would not afford to pay his school fees. He was on BEAM but still the guardian could not afford uniforms and other school related requirements. He would sleep in class or miss class which shows that he had maybe other works he was doing in the streets in order to get food and other things at home. He left school and within a month I heard that he impregnated a girl". (Kx)

The above verbatim clearly show that poverty has affected youth development hence this reflects the existence of disparities within the community whereby these young males face barriers in accessing resources. It is very crucial to put into consideration the socio-economic context in which these young males live. Poverty limits access to quality education as families may struggle to afford fees, uniforms and other school requirements. This may force these young males to leave schools which is one of the major causes which according to Munangagwa(2009) lead to child marriages amongst young males. Poverty has proven to be the reason why a lot of young males leave school prematurely and engage in income generating activities and as argued by Biswas et al (2020) when these boys start earning some money they feel like they have grown enough to start their own families. Therefore, without proper education, these individuals will face limited prospects for stable employment in future which perpetuates the cycle of child marriages amongst young males and also poverty at large thereby putting youth development at stake.

Every child regardless of gender has a right to his or her childhood but child marriages rob boys of their childhood and threaten their wellbeing and this indicates the detrimental effects of child marriages on young males. It is also important to note that the parental attitudes and behaviour also have an influence on the social learning process of these young males and this is in line with Bandura social learning theory, if their parents experienced poverty and early marriages they can

be influential models for their children thereby shaping the young males' perceptions and decisions. It is therefore crucial to include parents in the designed policies targeted towards empowering young people so that they understand very well the importance of empowering young people.

4.3.1.2 Peer pressure

From the interviews and the focus group discussion conducted, peer pressure proves to be amongst the major causes of child marriages amongst young males. In many societies where child marriages are practiced like in this case in St Mary's there is immense peer pressure which influence young boys to marry at a tender age in order to demonstrate their transition to manhood and get a social status amongst their peers. The focus group discussion which was conducted confirms that peer pressure leads to child marriages because if one is left unmarried in their peer groups they get threats from their peers and they are viewed as immature or weak. Some of the participants from the in-depth interviews testified that they got married due to peer pressure because their peers had married. The key informants testified that these young males succumb to peer-pressure during adolescents which has resulted in child marriages amongst young males. Below are what the participants had to say regarding peer pressure as a cause of child marriages amongst young males.

One young boy from the in-depth interviews had to say:

"I had to marry because my gang had find their life partners so I did not want to be left out, even my peers used to laugh at me but when I impregnated the girl I received a lot of praises since I had found a beautiful girl for myself."(Xs4) He further went on to say *"vakatonditi wasimbisa clan"* meaning he had made their peer group stronger and popular.

The other participant from the in-depth interviews had this to say:

“As for me I was the eldest in my peer group but I was surprised all of my friends had married some at 15 years and some at 16 years yet I was almost 17 so I realized I had to find myself a wife because I was very ashamed that my younger ones had shown that they are real men” (Xz2)

A participant from the focus group discussion said that:

“I know of a guy whom used to be my classmate, he married because of peer pressure as he dropped out of school because all of his friends were no-longer in school because of reasons I am not aware of. His parents would afford everything but he just decided to quit school and I am sure it was because of his friends and unfortunately he then impregnated a girl from our hood and he is now suffering in marriage.” (Ps1)

A social worker from the key informant interview said that:

“Many of these young men I’ve worked with from St Mary’s have shared that they felt immense pressure from their peers to get married. They think that real manhood is defined by having family and taking care of it. I remember one of my clients from St Mary’s was just 17 he said he married because he was teased and ridiculed by his friends for not being married to an extent that he married even though he was nowhere near being financially and emotionally ready for it.”(Ks)

The narratives above are a clear proof that there is reinforcement of harmful gender norms which strengthens patriarchal structures and makes it harder for communities to progress towards more equitable social and economic arrangements. This also reflects the impact peer pressure has on an individual’s psychological, emotional and social development. It is crucial to note that peer pressure forces boys to make early sexual debuts which leads to child marriages and teen

pregnancy as postulated by Nanfuka et al (2021). The role of peer pressure in causing child marriages amongst young boys is explained well by Bandura (1977) on the social learning theory which says people tend to incorporate other peoples values, principles and behaviours through observing and imitating and this is supported by Murauzi(2018). The verbatim above also shows that these young boys think only of the positive things that comes with marriage when they see their peers getting married thus they do not want to be left out and this is in line with Mutandwa (2017) who argues that the young boys think that there are benefits attained in marriage that is why they rush into early marriages. The influence of peer pressure can also be viewed as manifestation of the need for social acceptance and belonging.

4.3.1.3 Sexual desires

The research conducted shows that sexual desires are also a leading cause of child marriages amongst young males. The interviews conducted with the key informants confirmed that these young males are engaging in sexual activities due to several which include social media which exposes them to pornography and other movies that contain explicit sexual acts. The participants from the in-depth interviews also testified that sexual desires has led to child marriages as young people are getting married because they are becoming sexually active at an early age which leads to teenage pregnancies leading to child marriages. The sexual desires at a young age lead to child marriages because most of the young boys will not have been equipped well on sexuality education and healthy relationships. The responses from these interviews shows that sexual desire play a role particularly in situations where boys are socialized to view sexual relationships as a symbol of masculinity. The participants had this to say:

One participant from the in-depth interviews said:

“I really wanted to explore the world and pursue my education but however the societal pressure coupled with my own sexual urges led me into impregnating a girl of the same age with me and we had to start our own family.”(Xz1)

Another participant during the in-depth interview said that:

“When I reached 15 years I felt the urge to indulge into sexual activities. Maybe it’s because of adolescent period I would see my body changing and failed to control myself that is when I slept with the girl while my parents had gone to a funeral. We did not use protection since I never thought I would make the girl pregnant since that was my first time having sex.”(Xs4)

One key informant from the community based organisations said:

“We are very worried about this generation, in the past girls were known to be the only victims of child marriages but it is a different case now. These boys are exposed to pornography which has caused their sexual desires at an early age. Since they are young they do not make informed decisions regarding sex therefore they end up in these unwanted child marriages.”(Kz)

These above mentioned issues are a clear manifestation that there is limited information dissemination regarding sexual activities to these young boys hence they indulge without knowing even the consequences of child marriages or even the safer ways of having sex. This also shows ignorance of regarding their sexual and reproductive right which might exacerbate sexual health challenges. Sexual desires have therefore proven to be amongst major reasons leading to child marriages amongst men although there is limited research which focuses specifically on the sexual desires of young boys as drivers of child marriage. However this is in line with Biswas et al (2017)

who argues that during puberty or adolescent sexual hormones rise and in most cases young boys would want to experiment and this may lead to child marriages. In line with the above verbatim are Koster et al (2017) who argue that the need to quench sexual desires lead to young boys and girls engaging into sexual activities which end up in child marriages. Hence, from the studies done previously and also as evident by the results of this study it can be agreed that sexual desires are a crucial factor leading to child marriages amongst young boys.

4.3.1.4 Religious influence

Religious influence has proven to have a significant impact in contributing to child marriages amongst young boys. From the in-depth interviews it was stated that the religion plays a role because in some cultures or religion they believe in having sexual activities after people get married. Therefore some of these young boys are getting married at an early age in order to have sex without limitations since it is considered immoral to indulge in sexual activities when people are not yet married. Another issue which was raised by young males in child marriages during the research was the issue of church doctrines which led other young males to get married at a young age because it is part of their belief system. The fact that in some churches young brides are married by the elders in the church also causes young boys to get married early as they fear that their brides would be taken by the church elders.

One young male in child marriage said that:

“I had to take my bride before elders could because they have a tendency of prophesying that they are being told to marry some young ladies in church. I really loved my girl and didn’t want to lose her to these elders and since I wasn’t going to school because my parents could not afford I just thought it was wise to start my own family.” (Xz3)

The other participant said that:

“I got married because as a family we go to a white garment church which believes that when boys reach 16 years they are grown enough to become men. My parents also got married early so it was easy for me to accept this. They arrange for us the young girls we should marry while we are still young, so when I turned 16 years the girl then came to our house with her aunts and that’s when I realized I had transformed from childhood to fatherhood.”Xs4

One key informant said that:

“I have worked with many clients who ended up in child marriages because of church doctrines and church beliefs. It is a hard issue to deal with but we cannot hide from the fact that religion has affected our children’s wellbeing by influencing them to get married at an early age. One of my clients explained that he got married because that is the only way one can be regarded as a man in their church hence he had to do it to please his family since they go to the same church” (Kr)

Although it is important to respect cultural diversity the narratives above shows that children are being robbed of their right to protection all in the name of religion. This affects their mental, physical and emotional which further impede them from participating towards community development. The role of religion in causing child marriages is in-line with what Bandura(1977) postulates in his social learning theory whereby he argues that one learn through imitating other people’s behaviour, these young males go to churches where their parents go and find it easier to engage into child marriages since their parents also got married at an early age due to the church doctrines. The fact that they grow up in these churches seeing people getting married early and

they see it as the right thing to do when they also reach that targeted age is a confirmation that the social learning theory by Bandura(1977) is applicable in Zimbabwean societies and it also a crucial guiding framework in understanding child marriages amongst young people. This is also in line with the arguments of Kohno et al (2020) who argue that in some religions like the Islamic religion when one gets married he is said to have fulfilled a part of the church doctrine.

4.3.2 The consequences of child marriages amongst young males in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's.

The research done with the use of key-informant interviews, in-depth interviews and also focus group discussion shows that young males are having negative experiences in child marriages. From the research done, young males in child marriages are facing a lot of challenges these include mental health issues, drug and substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health challenges and also poverty.

4.3.2.1 Poverty

According to the research done through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and key informant interviews it shows that poverty is one of worst experiences of young males in child marriages. Most of them cannot even afford food. They fail to pay rent for their accommodation hence they have to rent one room and divide it into two. From the responses of participants young males in child marriages are more likely to come from low-income households compared to their peers who would have married as adults. They suffer a lot because child marriages cause them to leave school hence making it hard for them to get employed. From the discussions and interviews it shows that child marriage amongst young males increases poverty because it is difficult for them to have assets as they have limited or no opportunity to accumulate savings or assets. It is also hard for these young males to send their children to school because they are also too young to be

performing the duties of a father and also they lack jobs which might make them earn a living. Below are what the participants had to say on poverty as a consequence of child marriages amongst young males in child marriages.

One participant from in-depth interviews said that:

“I am struggling to make ends meet. Every day I have to work in order to get food for the family. I now have a daughter who is turning 5 years but I can’t send her to school because of lack of money. Life is very difficult for me if I compare myself to one of my friends who married recently and he is 26 years now, he is proving to be able to take care of his family because he has a paying job.”(Xs5)

Another young male in child marriage had this to say:

“It is so hard that some days I can come home with nothing and my wife will be looking forward to seeing me as the head of family coming back with something to eat. We struggle to an extent that she sometimes goes for piece jobs in order to get food for the family”(Xz6)

A key informant said that:

“My client lost his child because he could not afford to buy medicines and other requirements for the health of his child. Another issue was of a young boy who could not feed his wife and his child suffered from child malnutrition”(Ks)

These findings paint a troubling picture of how child marriages can exacerbate poverty for young males as they disrupt education and development. The narratives show that there is a gap within the social safety nets which has led to the suffering of these young males hence this is detrimental

to child development. They drop out of school and are forced to take the responsibilities that come with fatherhood. This also reflects exploitation of minors as they are forced to work for the family at a young age thus violating the children's rights. All this lead to the young boys missing critical opportunities to build human capital and qualifications that can make it possible for them to improve the potential for future earnings. This is supported by Nabayaza(2021) who argues that the future of young boys in child marriages is affected because instead of learning skills that might help them improve their lives, they will shift focus to making ends meet for the survival of the family. This shows that poverty is a greater challenge faced by young boys in child marriages because fatherhood comes with a lot of responsibility of which they cannot manage those challenges and this is in support with the study done by the International Center for Research on Women (2020) which argues that boys also face challenges in child marriages such as increased responsibility of financial support for the family.

4.3.2.1 Mental health issues

From the focus group discussions and the interviews conducted, the results from the research done shows that young males in child marriages face a lot of mental challenges. The combination of early marriage, economic hardships and disrupted development takes a major toll on the mental health of young males in child marriages according to the research findings. This has led to high rates of suicide and depression. Responses from the focus group discussions shows that some mental health challenges facing young males in child marriages are as a result of isolation and lack of support systems. Some participants argued that young males in child marriages experience a lot of mental health problems because they are weak t manage the pressure that comes with being a father and some argued that these mental health challenges are as a result of traumatic experiences as they witness or experience violence and exploitation which deeply impacts their mental

wellbeing. Below are what some of the participants had to say regarding mental health challenge as a consequence of child marriage amongst young males.

A participant on the in-depth interviews said that:

“Mental health challenges are one of my worst experiences in my marriage. Sometimes I don’t sleep thinking of the plan for the next day since I need to wake up early in the morning with a plan so that I make sure my family has something to eat for breakfast, lunch and super. As if this is not enough pressure, I have to work harder to get rent for each and every month” (Xs9)

Another one said:

“Even now I cannot say I’m now in a position to manage stress, I sometimes talk alone while going to look for piece-jobs. Imagine not having a stable job yet you have a child and a breastfeeding wife.”(Xz2)

A participant from the focus group discussion said:

“In as much as we would want to say economic hardships are causing mental health challenges to boys in child marriages, I have seen that these people are isolated and lack support from families which results in depression” (Ps4)

A key informant said:

“The data we have collected on males in child marriages paints a very concerning picture when it comes to mental health outcomes. One of the most alarming trends we have seen is of the shockingly high rates of suicide among this population. They thrust into these so called marriages before they are emotionally equipped to handle the pressure” (Kg)

The information above gives a clear picture of the devastating psychological toll that this harmful practice takes on vulnerable young males. These young boys are suddenly thrust into adult roles and responsibilities that far exceed their emotional and cognitive capacities thus leading to a disruption in their normal developmental trajectories. The mental health consequences are not simply individual failings but rather a combination of personal, interpersonal and structural forces. Social isolation which they face deprive these boys of witnessing and modeling healthy, supportive relationships and problem solving strategies since according to Akers(2017) humans observe and model behaviour through different ways including directly through interactions and this is in line with the Social learning theory by Bandura(1977).

4.3.2.2 Drug and substance abuse

Drug and substance abuse according to the research findings proves to be a challenge that is faced by young males in child marriages. The participants from the focus group discussions, key informant interviews and in-depth interviews argued that these young males are more vulnerable to drug and substance abuse. Drug and substance abuse according to the participants is a challenge that these young boys often face because of the mental health challenges they experience. They argued that social isolation and lack of support systems further exacerbate the problem as they have limited access to positive outlets hence turning to drugs and alcohol becomes a way to self-medicate the depression and anxiety. They also argued that in St Mary's substance abuse has been normalized hence since these young males cannot make informed decision especially considering the burden they have they end up coping what others in the community are doing thus they engage in drug and substance abuse.

One participant had this to say:

“I wasn’t ready to get married when my wife was sent to our house by her parents because she was pregnant. I struggled to accept the situation but it was only when I started taking drugs when I came to accept that I was now married, so whenever I’m stressed I take drugs then I spend my whole day sleeping.”(Xs1)

The other participant said that:

“My friend who is also married introduced me to drugs and at first I really enjoyed them but I am now more addicted to them that I can’t send a day without having them. Sometimes I use all the money to buy drugs and I can no longer provide for my family.”(Xz6)

The other one said that:

“Ever since I married, I lost my friends and even my parents do not support me so I realized drugs are the only support I can have.” (Xs4)

A participant from the focus group discussion said:

“These young people end up taking drugs because they face discrimination yet their situations need social support especially from the family and friends.” (Ps5)

The narratives above show that child marriages have a devastating consequence on young males as they increase risk of drug abuse. These narratives show that the overwhelming stress can drive these young males to turn to drug and substance abuse which is very detrimental to socio-economic development. This is supported by Swiney(2021) who argues that some children who married early resorted to risky behaviors like drug abuse because of the stress that comes along with taking care of the family. Lack of education amongst these young males can be another reason why they end up taking drugs because they are not equipped enough to make informed decisions as supported

by Misunas et al (2019) as they postulated that these young boys end up abusing drugs because of lack of knowledge which enables one to have adequate information that empowers them to have a brighter future. The information given above shows that the community normalized drug and substance abuse which means that these young males are coping what is already being done even by those who are not in child marriages hence bringing to light the influence which the environment has towards one's behavior and this supports the social learning process by Bandura (1977).

4.3.2.3 Sexual and Reproductive Health challenges

Young males in child marriages face significant sexual and reproductive health challenges. They are exposed to sexual transmitted infections because of limited knowledge about sexual health and safe sex practices. Another sexual and reproductive health challenge faced by young males in child marriages is lack of access to sexual and reproductive services like obtaining information about sexual health, contraception and other necessary resources. This is according to the information given by the participants during focus group discussion, key informants interviews and in depth interviews. They face stigma and discrimination which limits them from seeking sexual health services in Health facilities. Below are what the participants had to say regarding sexual and reproductive health challenges amongst young males in child marriages.

A participant from the in-depth interviews said that:

“I never had the opportunity to get information regarding sexual and reproductive health because of the attitudes of the nurses at St Mary’s clinic.”(Xs3)

Another one said:

“I visited St Mary’s clinic twice but it wasn’t easy sharing my problem with the nurses because they were very harsh on me and had lot of questions to why I married early.” (Xz1)

A key informant said that:

“One major challenge faced by boys is the increased vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS because they have limited knowledge about safe sex practices. I once dealt with a case of a 17 year old boy who was in a marriage he contracted STI which caused him discomfort and worry. He had no access to youth-friendly SRH services and he felt too embarrassed to seek help fearing to be judged and also stigma.”

(Ks)

The narratives stated above reflects the gap on Sexual and Reproductive Health rights that if this challenge is left unsolved the increased risk of Sexually Transmitted Infections including HIV among young male spouses can contribute to a public health burden straining the healthcare system and public resources. This calls for advocacy on the issues of Sexual health so that the whole community is equipped with the necessary information required to safeguard the community’s sexual and reproductive health. The issue of sexual health challenge amongst young males in child marriage can be reinforced by harmful gender norms that lead to poor health seeking behaviour amongst males. This is further supported by the Intersectionality framework which recognizes how societal constructions of masculinity shape the vulnerabilities of young males in child marriages. Cook (2009) on the intersectionality approach also postulated that the disparities that are created by gender norms prevent men from making decisions that are best for them and this hence explains why these young males are facing sexual reproductive health challenges as they fear stigma and judgment. Due to their young age and lack of education they do not have the courage to seek sexual and reproductive health services hence this shows that there is interconnectedness of factors that

are making young boys in child marriages more susceptible to sexual health challenges and this is also in line with the Intersectionality Approach.

4.3.3 The coping strategies utilized by young males in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's

The third objective of the research focused on examining the coping strategies utilized by young males' child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's. The young males in child marriages utilize various coping strategies to navigate their circumstances. From the interviews conducted and the focus group discussion the responses of the participants shows that these young males seek support from peers and families, seek practical help from organisations and also engage in other activities that distract them from their stress.

4.3.3.1 Seeking support from peers and family

The research findings from the key informant interviews, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion show that young males in child marriages seek support from their families, peers and other trusted individuals in order for them to cope with the challenges they encounter. These young boys ask their families to help them by assisting them with food. They also go to their peers to get advices when the situation gets harder. Their families also assist them by paying rent for them and some by even letting them come back home. Some even ask individual whom they trust to give them assistance whenever they feel they can no longer handle the pressure in their marriages alone. The research also shows that the young males also have relatives who sometimes help them with school fees for their children. Below are what the participants had to say.

In-depth interview participant said that:

“I often go to my parent’s place to get food. And sometimes they send my siblings with some groceries”

Another one said that:

“I have a friend who recently got \a job, he earns much better and sometimes I go to his place whenever I need assistance”(Xs4)

Another participant said:

“My wife once got sick and I had to ask my neighbor to help me send her to the hospital, I have very amazing neighbor so that’s where I seek help.”(Xz1)

A participant from the focus group discussion said that:

“My uncle is currently assisting my younger brother by paying fees for his child. Although our family wasn’t happy with this marriage they provide some times send him money so that he can help himself and his family” (Ps2)

These narratives are a positive sign that indicates that young boys are not simply passive victims but are demonstrating agency and resilience in the face of their circumstances. Although it might not be enough, these support networks are very important to the young males as they help them in managing the challenges that they face which includes tremendous emotional, social and even physical strain. This shows the power of the environment in shaping one’s behaviour. Receiving assistance from the people surrounding them has a large impact on their behaviour as they are likely to imitate that same behaviour of assisting others in need and this is in line with the social learning theory which postulates that people learn behaviour through imitating and modeling the

behaviour of the people surrounding them (Bandura,1977). This coping strategy utilized by young males

4.3.3.2 Seeking practical help from organisations

The research findings from the key-informants, focus group discussion and in-depth interviews revealed that the young males in child marriages also seek practical help from organisations in order to manage the challenges they face in their marriages. The organisations provide different services which help the young males manage the challenges they are facing. They get counseling services which are very crucial for their mental and emotional wellbeing. The organisations offer empowerment and support programs that help these young males. They also conduct awareness campaigns which help in educating these young males in child marriages. Community engagement done by some community based organisations has been very useful in helping young males in child marriages cope with the challenges they face. Organisations also provide assistance through giving these young males cash transfers and food which has lessened the burden of fatherhood on these young males thereby making it a bit easier for them to cope with the challenges they face.

A participant from the in-depth interviews said that:

“I struggled for many months to provide for my family. I then went to Young Aspire Development Trust where I was empowered and they offered free training on carpentry. I am now earning something although I’m still struggling to start my own business.”(Xs10)

The other participant had this to say:

“There is this organisation which often visit the area where I stay I have forgotten the name of the organisation, but they often come having interactions with young people they made me realize there is still hope and I can still make the future positive”(Xz3)

A key informant said this:

“A lot of organisations are making efforts directed at addressing child marriage issues amongst young girls through cash transfers and also food but however boys also benefit from this indirectly”. (Kz)

The other key informant had this to say:

“Although most interventions done by organisations mainly target young girls in child marriage it is important to acknowledge the few empowerment programs that are being implemented by other organisations which targets empowering young males”(Ks)

The above verbatim clearly shows the fundamental role which is being implemented by different organisations but however highlights the importance of providing gender-neutral support for children affected by child marriages. While the focus has traditionally been on girls, the findings emphasize the need to recognize the unique challenges faced by boys in such circumstances. This is in line with the arguments of Misunas et al (2019) as they argue that boys also get affected by the devastating effects of child marriages just like girls hence there should be interventions targeted at directly addressing child marriages amongst boys. Community engagement which is being done by organisations highlights the role of organisations in fostering community dialogue, challenging harmful norms which the Population Reference Bureau (2016) notes to be a challenge to young boys with regards to child marriages amongst boys and also promoting inclusivity for boys affected by child marriage.

4.3.3.3 Engaging in other activities

According to the research findings from the key informant interviews, in-depth interviews and the focus group discussion young males engage in other activities that provide a sense of normalcy

and distraction from the challenges of their situations. These activities include street vending, attending churches, and playing football in local football clubs. They use street vending as a way to get income which helps them secure the basic needs like food, clothes and also shelter. These young males also use street vending as way to reduce stress as they will be interacting with colleagues and different customers. The participants interviewed also expressed that attending church and praying is another coping mechanisms used by young males which helps cope with traumatic experiences such as rejection or discrimination that they will be facing which comes from their families, peers and the community at large.

One of the young males in child marriage mentioned that:

“Going to church has helped me cope with the challenges I was facing, this is because it is one place that I know if I go I will be free from discrimination.”(Xs4)

Another participant said:

“If it was not for the local football clubs that we have I could have committed suicide by now, going to play football has relieved me from depression” (Xz8)

The other participant had this to say:

“I started a small business of selling snacks in exchange with empty bottles and yes I am trying to make a living from that so that my family won’t have to die from hunger.”(Xz5)

A participant from the focus group discussion said that:

“Street vending and football has helped these people to cope with their problems because they get to talk to fellow customers and talk with friends who relieve them from stress” (Ps7)

The narratives above highlights that the young males in child marriages have other activities they do without other peoples assistance like street vending which promotes them with the opportunity to work independently thus leading to self reliance. It is also important to note that street vending is very crucial as it provides income which helps them to pay for school fees for their family and also to be able to provide food for their families. Street vending proves to be helping these young males in improving their living conditions and also the standards of living. This research finding aligns with the research done by Sibanda and Sayi as they assert that street vending is the most employing sector in Zimbabwe and Africa at large (Sibanda&Sayi, 2018). Street vending which is being used by these young males is very common in St Mary's even to those men who married in during their adulthood. It is a coping mechanisms used by a lot of people even those who are not in marriages. This therefore aligns with the research of Bandura(1977) who emphasized on how one learns behaviour through imitating others. This shows the power of the environment in influencing these young males to use street vending as a coping strategy as they will be imitating others. Going to church for prayers is mainly used by a lot of Christians as a way of relieving themselves from stress or depression. The research findings show that for a human being to survive there is interconnectedness of different social structures which include religion and economic aspect of life; this is consistent with the Intersectionality Approach.

4.4 Chapter summary

The chapter managed to give the presentation, interpretation and discussion of the research findings on the causes and consequences of child marriages amongst young males in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the research study as presented and discussed in the first four chapters. It also provides the recommendations and the conclusion on the data which was presented and discussed regarding the lived experiences of young males in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's. The recommendations seek to address the problems which were highlighted in the research findings.

5.1 Summary

This research was based on examining the lived experiences of young males in child marriages in Chitungwiza St Mary's. The three objectives of this research were to analyse the factors that contributes to child marriages amongst young males in Chitungwiza St Mary's, to assess the consequences of child marriages amongst young males in Chitungwiza, St Mary's and to examine their coping strategies they utilize. The research made use of the phenomenology research design. It was conducted in Chitungwiza, St Mary's. The research consisted of 25

participants. Key informant interviews, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion are the research tools which were used during data collection.

5.1.1 Factors that contribute to child marriages amongst young males

The research found out that child marriage amongst young males in Chitungwiza St Mary's is being caused by poverty, peer pressure, religious influence and sexual desires. According to the research finding young males in Chitungwiza, St Mary's are very susceptible to child marriages because most of them drop out of school because their parents cannot afford to pay their school fees due to poverty in their families. Therefore they end up dropping out of school which then leads to child marriage as they end up indulging in sexual relationships. According to the research findings peer pressure also leads to child marriages amongst young males in child marriage as they end up marrying in order to fit in a their peer group if the other members would have married. The research also find out that religion has influence to child marriages amongst young males because some of them marry at a young age because they will be fulfilling part of their church doctrine and some marry because they are afraid of losing the girls they love to the elders in their church. Sexual desires according to the research findings are also a major driver of child marriages amongst young males in Chitungwiza, St Mary's. From the research it shows that sexual desires are being caused by the young male's exposure to pornography due to social media.

5.1.2 The consequences of child marriages amongst young males

The research also found that young males in child marriages are facing a lot of challenges in child marriages. The consequences of child marriages which were discovered during the research are mental health challenges, poverty, drug and substance abuse and also sexual and

reproductive health challenges. The research shows that child marriages perpetuates the cycle of poverty. This is because these young males will not be having a proper source of income which might help them improve their living standards. They face a lot of food challenges and some cannot even afford to pay rents or sending their children to school because of lack of finance. Mental health challenges are also a consequence of child marriages amongst young males in child marriages as they suffer from depression because they are too young to handle the pressure that comes with fatherhood. Another challenge which is being faced by young males in child marriage is drug and substance abuse. They end up engaging in drug abuse as a way to manage the pressure. Another challenge faced by these young males in child marriages is sexual and reproductive health challenge. This challenge according to research is being cause because the young males lack information regarding their sexual and reproductive rights and also the fear of discrimination and stigma in Health facilities.

5.1.3 The coping strategies utilized by young males in child marriages

From the research findings the young males in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's have different coping strategies they utilize in managing the challenges they face. According to the research it shows that they seek support from their families and peers, seek practical help from organisation as well as engaging in other activities. The research found out that these young males seek support from their families or peers when they face challenges. According to the research the families and the peers assist them with food, money to pay rents and some even assist with school fees for their children. The research also found out that they also seek help from the organisations and these organisations provide counseling services, some cash transfers and other organisations assist them with free skills training such as carpentry. They also engage in other activities like street vending, attending church services and also playing

football in local football clubs. Street vending according to the research findings relieves them from stress as they will be interacting with different people and it also helps them improve their living standards.

5.2 Conclusions

Most of the studies which were conducted focused on understanding the causes, effects and solutions to child marriages amongst young girls. Little research has been done regarding child marriages amongst young boys. The policies being implemented are therefore not enough to respond to the child marriages because they directly focus on girls. The research focused on the lived experiences of young males in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's which helps in understanding the cause of child marriages amongst young males, understand the challenges they face and to hear from them the strategies they are using to cope with the challenges in their marriages. This helps in coming up with the information that has been lacking which helps in coming up the gender responsive approaches to the issue of child marriages. The young males in child marriages are suffering because the community is not aware or tend to ignore that they are also human beings just like girls hence they also need to be included in all interventions that seek to address the issue of child marriages.

The research findings highlighted the intersectionality of the causes of child marriages amongst young males and the social norms or religious beliefs that lead these young males to marry before the age of 18. The findings also help policy makers to also shift their lenses from economic and social causes of child marriage to religious causes. The issue of poverty being the major cause of child marriages has been over emphasized in different researches hence the research also helped in understanding the impact religion has on child marriages amongst young males. The research also influences the policy makers to come up with policies that seek

to cover up the gap within the coping strategies that is being used by young males in child marriages.

Implications to social work

This research has a huge impact to social work because it highlights a critical but often overlooked population that requires specialized, trauma-informed and culturally competent social work interventions to address the complex challenges they face. The research shows the need for social workers to be culturally competent so that they can be able to provide appropriate and effective assistance. Social workers should understand the family and community dynamics that enable and perpetuate child marriages for young males. The research also highlights the need for social workers to navigate legal systems and advocate for policy changes. Being forced into marriage at a young age can have severe psychological impacts which leads to trauma, depression and anxiety hence this highlights the need for social workers to be trained to provide trauma-informed care and connect these young men with appropriate mental health services.

5.3 Recommendations

The research findings on the lived experiences of young males in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's led the researcher to come up with the following recommendations.

5.3.1 *The government*

- The government of Zimbabwe should strengthen legal and policy frameworks through developing a comprehensive national action plan to end child marriages, with clear roles and accountability for different government agencies. It should

also ensure that laws and policies protect the rights of boys in child marriage situations not just girls.

- The government should enhance implementation and enforcement by imposing penalties for those who facilitate or participate in the child marriage of boys.

5.3. 2 *The civil society organisation*

- The civil society organisations should strengthen advocacy and awareness-raising through leading public campaigns that challenge the social norms and misconceptions that child marriage only affects girls. They should also advocate for legal reforms and stronger enforcement mechanisms to end child marriage for both girls and boys.
- They should also strengthen documentation and evidence by conducting research to better understand the prevalence, drivers and impacts of child marriage on boys in different religions.
- They should also foster multi-stakeholders partnerships

5.3. 3 *To the health facilities*

- Train healthcare providers to have a positive attitude towards these young boys in order to ensure that they have access to a full range of physical, sexual and reproductive health services.
- Develop referral pathways to connect boys affected by child marriage with appropriate social services and support programs.

5.3. 4 *To the community*

- Should engage in open dialogues to re-examine the social and cultural beliefs that perpetuate the perception of child marriage as a male privilege rather than a violation of children's rights
- Create safe spaces for boys to share their experiences with community elders and parents.

5.4 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the summary, conclusions and the recommendations to the study gaps identified. The recommendations were on strategies which different authorities can utilize in order to address the issue of child marriage amongst young males.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Interview Guide for young boys in child marriages

SECTION A: Biographic information

1. Can you please introduce yourself i.e., your age, educational background, the number of children you have if there are any and which part of the district do you stay?
2. How old were you when you got married?
3. Do you go to work currently and if so, where do you work?

SECTION B: causes of child marriages amongst young boys

1. .Can you please explain your understanding of early child marriage?
2. Was getting married early your own choice or someone prompted it? If so, who?

3. Can you share in detail the factors that led you to getting married whilst you were still a child?
4. What do you think are the main factors leading to early child marriages amongst boys here in your community?

SECTION C: consequences of getting married at a young age

1. Did you know the consequences of getting married at a young age and what were your expectations from the marriage? Were they met?
2. Due to getting married early, can you share your experiences as a married men?
3. Can you say early child marriages amongst boys are good or bad and why?
4. What problems have you encountered since you got married and how has these problems affected your life, goals, and dreams?

SECTION D: Coping strategies utilized by young boys in child marriages

1. From the problems you have faced as a result of early child marriages, what is it that you have done so as to solve them?
2. Are the coping strategies effective?
2. Do you think early child marriages amongst boys can be completely eradicated? if yes how? and if no why?

3. What social and religious interventions can be put in place so as to end early child marriages amongst boys?
4. In your own opinion, what economic interventions can be put in place so as to end early child marriages amongst boys?

APPENDIX 2: Key informant interview guide

SECTION A: Biographic information

1. Age
2. Sex
3. What's your view on the issue of child marriages amongst young boys and the kind of assistance you provide for them

SECTION B: Causes of child marriages amongst boys

1. What are the general factors contributing to child marriages amongst young boys?
2. Do you think some of the young boys are getting married out of their own choice?

3. Can we blame parents or guardians for causing child marriages amongst young boys in Chitungwiza St Mary's?
4. Do you think there is a gap being left out by the Law which has led to child marriages amongst boys in Chitungwiza St Mary's?

SECTION C: Consequences of child marriages amongst young boys

1. Are young boys in child marriages having equal access to educational and health services like other children in Chitungwiza St Mary's?
2. What is being done in the community to share knowledge on the consequences of child marriages amongst young boys in Chitungwiza St Mary's ?
3. Do boys in child marriages have access to employment opportunities?
4. What are the other challenges being faced by young boys in child marriages in Chitungwiza St Mary's?

SECTION D: Coping strategies utilized by young boys in child marriages

1. What are the coping mechanisms used by young boys in child marriages in Chitungwiza St Mary's?
2. What is the efficacy of the coping strategies utilized by young boys in Chitungwiza
3. What are the existing programs or interventions that aim to address child marriages amongst young boys in Chitungwiza St Mary's?
4. What are the gaps and needs in terms of preventing or addressing the issue of child marriages amongst young boys?

5. What is your suggestion on the possible solutions to end the practice of child marriages amongst young boys in Chitungwiza St Mary's?

APPENDIX 3: Focus group guide

SECTION A: Introductions

1. Age
2. Educational background

SECTION B: Causes of child marriages amongst young boys in Chitungwiza St Mary's

1. What are your views on the issue of child marriages amongst young boys in Chitungwiza St Mary's?
2. What are the common reasons for young boys to get married in your community?
3. How do young boys and their families decide whom to marry and when?

SECTION C: Consequences of child marriages amongst young boys

1. What are the challenges faced by young boys in child marriages in Chitungwiza St Mary's?

2. How does it affect the education, health and wellbeing of young boys and spouses?
3. What are the attitudes of your community towards child marriages amongst young boys and how do they differ from the attitudes towards child marriages amongst young girls?

SECTION D: Coping strategies utilized by young boys in child marriages

1. What strategies are being used by young boys in child marriages to ensure the wellbeing of their families.
2. Are the coping strategies used effective?
3. What are the existing programs that aim to assist boys in child marriages?
4. What recommendations do you suggest that might end the practice of child marriages amongst young boys in Chitungwiza St Mary's?

APPENDIX 4: Informed Consent Form

Project Title: Experiences of young males in child marriages in Chitungwiza, St Mary's.

Consent to take part in research

I voluntarily agree to take part in this research by Netsai Patience Chikuni, Student at Bindura University of Science Education. I understand that even if I agree to participate in this research now, I can withdraw anytime and I can refuse to answer some questions. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded and consent the student to use information from my interview in her data collection for school-related research. I have read and understood the nature of the research, its objectives, pros and cons.

I understand that I will not directly benefit from this research because it is voluntary. I understand that the information I will provide for this study will be treated with confidentiality and my identity

will remain anonymous. In the case of queries, I understand that I can contact the University for further Clarifications and information.

I hereby give my signature as proof of agreement between me and the researcher.

Signature of research participant..... Date.....a

Signature of researcher..... Date.....

APPENDIX 5: Research Approval



Official communications should
Not be addressed to individuals

Telephone: Harare 790872/7
Telegrams "SECLAB"
Private Bag 7707/7750



ZIMBABWE

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL
WELFARE
Compensation House

Cnr Fourth Street and Central Avenue
HARARE

07 May 2024

Netsai Patience Chikuni (B201237B)
Bindura University of Science Education

**REF: LETTER OF APPROVAL TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY
TITLED, "THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BOYS IN CHILD
MARRIAGES". A CASE STUDY OF CHITUNGWIZA.**

Receipt of your letter with the above mentioned matter is acknowledged.

Please be advised that permission is hereby granted for you to carry out research
titled "The lived experiences of boys in Child marriages"

Permission is granted **STRICTLY** on condition that the research is for academic
purposes only in pursuit of your Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social
Work. The data collected should not be shared to third party (3rd).

You are requested to submit a copy of your final research documents to the
Department of Social Development upon completion as your research has a bearing
on the Department's mandate.

T. Zimhunga

Director Social Development.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE

