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TITLE OF PROJECT

The experiences of teen fathers in early marriages in Zimbabwe. Case study of St Mary's, Chitungwiza

By

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APPROVAL FORM

This research project is suitable for presentation to Bindura University. It has been checked for conformity with the department guidelines.

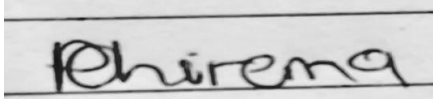


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(Supervisor's signature)

Declaration

I, Primrose Chirema, declare that this dissertation titled “The experiences of Teen Fathers in Early Marriages,” is my original work. I have conducted this research under the guidance of Dr Makambanga and acknowledged all sources used in this study.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a white background. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read 'Chirema'.

Student's signature

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all the young fathers who, despite the challenges, strive to embrace their responsibilities, grow through their experiences and provide for their families while navigating the complexities of early fatherhood. Their resilience, courage and determination are an inspiration. I also dedicate this work to my family and loved ones, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been a constant source of strength throughout this journey.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to God and my supervisor Dr Makambanga, for his invaluable guidance, support and encouragement throughout this research process. His expertise and patience have been instrumental in shaping this work. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the participants of this study, the teen fathers who courageously shared their stories and experiences. Their openness and honesty have provided invaluable insights and made this research possible. To my family and friends, thank you for your endless encouragement, understanding and support during this challenging yet fulfilling journey. Their belief in me has been my motivation to persevere. Finally, I am grateful to the academic and support staff of Bindura University for providing the resources and environment necessary to complete this dissertation. Their dedication to fostering academic excellence has been deeply appreciated. This work is a testament to the collective efforts of everyone who has contributed to my academic and personal growth. Thank you all.

Abstract

Teenage parenthood and early marriage are two grave concerns in Zimbabwe, with much past research inclined toward the teen mother. But the unique challenges encountered by teen fathers have been greatly marginalized. The current study investigated the lived experiences of teen fathers in early marriages in St Mary's-Chitungwiza, a high-density suburb rendered vulnerable through poverty, unemployment and limited education opportunities. According to a qualitative case study approach, in-depth interviews, systematic questionnaires, focus group interviews, and observation were conducted among purposively selected teen-age fathers. Through thematic and content analysis, the study revealed that peer pressure, early sexual debut, unemployment, drug abuse and culture put pressure on early fatherhood. The study revealed that teen-age fathers were affected through interruptions in schooling, economic empowerment, psychological stress, health-related issues and increased vulnerability to domestic violence. Coping strategies of the teen fathers included seeking non-formal employment and receiving family support. The study concluded that there is an immediate need for specialized interventions providing educational support, economic empowerment, and psychological counselling complemented by intensive community awareness campaigns. It further recommends reviewing sexual and reproductive health education and the formulation of policies directed at young fathers, which would ultimately assist in breaking the interlinked cycles of poverty and early childbearing.

ACRONYMS

CFE - Comprehensive Sexuality Education

DSD- Department of Social Development

FDGs - Focus Group Discussions

IFSW - International Federation of Social Work

NASW - National Association of Social Work

NGO - Non-Government Organisation

PAF - Pregnancy Assistance Fund

SACSSP - South African Council for Social Service Professions

SLT - Social Learning Theory

SRH - Sexual and Reproductive Health

TPPP - Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

WHO - World Health Organization

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Adolescent parenthood and early marriages are serious issues globally, affecting millions of adolescents every year. While the mothers of teenagers have been widely discussed, the issue of teen fathers, especially in the context of early marriages, has been significantly understudied. Global agencies like UNICEF and WHO have highlighted the socio-economic and health implications of adolescents becoming parents globally, but interventions and research primarily focus on girls. Yet adolescent fathers themselves have their lives severely disrupted by these events, including their education, employability mental health, and social contacts.

Early marriage is a general issue in Zimbabwe, particularly where there is poverty, joblessness, and cultural practices favouring early access to adulthood. Although, according to ZIMSTATS (2016), child marriage among girls is horrifyingly prevalent, the trend for young boys to be married and subsequently to take on the role of fatherhood—began increasing as well. Suburbs such as St Mary's in Chitungwiza, high-density urban areas, provide a particularly compelling case study, since economic adversity, limited access to education and entrenched cultural pressures converge to create an environment in which early fatherhood is being increasingly normalized.

Past studies in Zimbabwe and other regions have largely examined the experience of young mothers at the expense of the young father's situation. Teenage fathers, while not as visible via discourse, are also at critical risk. Teenage fathers are inclined to be tasked with becoming the family provider, protector and head of family without having the maturity emotionally, stability economically and support systems to facilitate this. This research deficit not only perpetuates incomplete narratives of adolescent parenthood but also prevents the implementation of inclusive policies and support services addressing the needs of all young parents.

This study therefore seeks to fill this critical gap by examining the lived experiences of teen fathers in early marriages in St Mary's, Chitungwiza. Through the focus on young men, the study seeks to articulate their socio-economic struggles, emotional and psychological challenges, and coping mechanisms. Understanding these experiences matters for guiding more effective community interventions, situating gender-sensitive policies and furthering the broader agendas of sustainable development and social justice.

This chapter thus sets the study background, posits the research problem, outlines the objectives and importance of the study, defines key terms and provides an overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background

The origins of early marriages can be linked to ancient times. Mensch et al. (2019) indicate that such practices persisted well into the 19th century, particularly in communities with predominantly rural populations. In these societies, men typically marry at a later age if they were anticipated to create their own households. This often resulted in men delaying marriage until they had gathered enough resources to sustain a new household, leading to unions where mature men married young adolescent girls Mensch et al (2019).

As noted by Haberland et al. (2020), child marriages have been prevalent throughout history and remain a significant issue globally. This problem is especially pronounced in developing countries across regions like Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, West Asia, Latin America, and Oceania. Nevertheless, information from UNICEF (2020) reveals that even developed nations are not immune to this challenge, as certain legal loopholes permit child marriage to occur.

The extensive mentions of child marriage found in the response's literature from the 16th century and various other sources indicate that such practices were exceedingly prevalent, almost regarded as standard behaviour Godha et al (2019). Similarly, in Ancient Greece, it was customary for girls to marry young and become mothers during their teenage years, while boys were also expected to marry in their adolescent years. In the Roman Empire, the typical age for girls to enter into marriage was 12, and for boys, it was 14. Throughout the Middle Ages, English civil laws, which were influenced by Roman law, permitted marriages to take place before the age of 16. Furthermore, in Imperial China, child marriage was widely accepted Godha et al (2019).

The countries where child marriage is most prevalent for boys are notably different from one another and from those where this practice is more common for girls Mensch et al (2019). As reported by UNICEF (2020), the nations with the highest rates of child marriage for boys are geographically varied, with the leading five Central African Republic, Nicaragua, Madagascar, Nauru and Honduras representing regions in Central Africa, Latin America, Eastern Africa and the Pacific. This contrasts sharply with the geographical distribution for girls, where 17 out of the top 20 countries are situated in sub-Saharan Africa UNICEF (2020).

Data collected from 82 countries across seven regions reveals that approximately 1 in 21 young men were married during childhood, with notable differences in prevalence levels among various countries and regions UNICEF (2020). The nations where child marriage among boys is most prevalent differ significantly from one another, as well as from those where the practice is most widespread among girls. An examination of the prevalence across different age groups shows that this practice has decreased over the last 25 years, a trend observed consistently in all geographical regions UNICEF (2020).

According to the Herald of Zimbabwe (2017), "cohabitation" is now a popular practice that is slowly gaining societal acceptance, despite the fact that it was historically frowned upon and linked to promiscuity, particularly among teenagers. The rise of cohabitation in Africa is further highlighted by Kang'ethe and Mafa (2014). In Zimbabwe, early marriages are prevalent in both rural and urban area, and St. Mary's in Chitungwiza is no exception. St. Mary's is a high-density area characterized by high levels of poverty, unemployment and limited access to quality education Chireshe and Chireshe (2010). These socio-economic conditions contribute to the high incidence of early marriages, where young people, both male and female, are pressured into adulthood prematurely. For teenage fathers, early marriage often leads to a complex set of challenges. They are expected to take on the role of family providers despite their limited education and employment opportunities, which are exacerbated by the economic difficulties present in areas like St. Mary's Kaufman (2019).

The socio-economic pressures on teenage fathers in early marriages are immense. Many of these young men are still in school or trying to complete their education when they become fathers, making it difficult to balance their academic aspirations with the responsibilities of fatherhood. In most cases, they are compelled to leave school to seek employment to support their families, but their lack of education and skills limits their employment prospects, often relegating them to low-paying, informal jobs that do not provide financial stability Mupfumira (2017). This abrupt shift from adolescence to fatherhood not only disrupts their personal development but also affects their mental and emotional well-being, as they struggle with the societal expectations placed on them as men and breadwinners.

Cultural traditions in Zimbabwe also play a significant role in perpetuating early marriages. In some communities, marriage is viewed as a rite of passage into adulthood and young people are encouraged or even pressured to marry early. For teenage fathers, the cultural expectation to take on the responsibilities of a husband and father can be overwhelming, especially when

they are not financially or emotionally prepared Mupfumira (2017). The intersection of cultural expectations and economic hardship creates a challenging environment for these young men, who often face societal judgment and stigmatization if they fail to meet the expectations of being a provider.

Despite these challenges, there is a noticeable gap in the research on the experiences of teenage fathers in early marriages. Most existing literature focuses on teenage mothers, whose experiences are undoubtedly critical to understanding the broader implications of early marriage and parenthood. However, teenage fathers are equally vulnerable to the socio-economic pressures of early parenthood, and their experiences are often overlooked in both academic research and policy interventions Kaufman (2019). The limited focus on young fathers means that their unique challenges such as balancing education, employment and family responsibilities are not adequately understood or addressed.

The percentage of women who joined a union before turning 15 is 3.1% in Harare and 7.1% in Mashonaland West (ZIMSTATS, 2016). Although the percentage of teen fathers is not fully and clearly specified in these numbers, they nevertheless offer some indication of the growing prevalence of this practice in Zimbabwe in the absence of any other data. According to a Kenyan study by Muthengi and Austrian (2015), teenagers had a 10.1% chance of cohabiting. According to 2014 research by the Zimbabwe Youth Council, most pregnant girls elope to their men.

Given the socio-economic and cultural factors at play in St. Mary's, teenage fathers in early marriages face a distinctive set of challenges that warrant further examination. This study seeks to address the gap in the literature by focusing on the lived experiences of these young men. By exploring the socio-economic pressures, educational disruptions and emotional challenges they encounter, the study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of early marriage on teenage fathers and contribute to the development of policies and programs that can better support them. The findings of this research could also inform broader discussions on gender, poverty and education in Zimbabwe, particularly in relation to how early marriage affects young men and their potential for future success

1.3 Justification of the study

The phenomenon of child marriage among girls, including its frequency, contributing factors, and effects for young marriages, has been thoroughly investigated, Jain and Kurz (2020). In contrast, there is relatively little research concerning child marriage among boys, likely due to

its lower incidence and the absence of significant health risks associated with early pregnancy and childbirth that primarily affect girls, UNICEF (2020). Consequently, a study examining the experiences of teen fathers in early marriages will be highly valuable for all relevant parties. The findings of this study will enhance societal understanding of the detrimental impacts of early marriages on young fathers. Additionally, it will provide participants with insights into strategies they can employ to tackle the challenges they encounter. Moreover, the findings of this study could contribute to broader discussions about gender, poverty and education in Zimbabwe, particularly in high-risk communities like St. Mary's Chitungwiza.

1.4 Problem statement

Teenage fathers in early marriages deal with a special set of difficulties that are frequently disregarded in scholarly studies and policy debates. Studies on early parenthood have mostly focused on teenage mothers, but the duties of early fatherhood also have a significant impact on teenage fathers. Even though these young men do not have the emotional maturity, educational background, or financial means to successfully support their new families, they are frequently expected to do so Kiselica and Kiselica (2014). These adolescent fathers, who may already be having difficulty adjusting to adulthood and their own personal growth, are under tremendous pressure to fulfil the position of breadwinner, as expected by society. The literature on the lived experiences of teenage fathers is still lacking, despite this, especially when it comes to early marriages in impoverished nations like Zimbabwe.

Teenage Fathers are in a particularly vulnerable position at St. Mary's, Chitungwiza, where early marriage rates are noticeably high. High rates of unemployment, poverty and restricted access to high-quality education are characteristics of this densely populated area Mupfumira (2017). Many adolescent fathers are compelled to drop out of school early in order to find work to support their new families because of the socioeconomic circumstances. There are few job options in St. Mary's, especially for young males who have not finished their education or developed marketable skills, making the economic climate difficult. Because of this, these young fathers are frequently forced into low-wage or informal professions that provide little financial stability and limited chances for professional growth.

Teenage father's decision to drop out of school has long-term effects on their personal and professional development in addition to their immediate financial prospects. These young men are more likely to experience ongoing financial difficulties throughout their life and are less likely to escape the cycle of poverty if they do not have a strong educational foundation. Their

children may likewise grow up in poverty and with few opportunities, which can then have a knock-on effect on their family. Furthermore, the emotional toll of juggling the demands of parenthood, work, and personal growth can result in stress, anxiety and even depression. These symptoms are frequently made worse by the dearth of support networks available to adolescent fathers Kaufman (2019).

Teenage fathers in early marriages confront emotional and psychological hurdles in addition to socioeconomic ones. The pressure to support a family and the abrupt transition from childhood to adulthood can be too much to handle. In addition to attempting to manage their own identities and goals, many adolescent fathers find it difficult to handle the demands of fatherhood. Teenage fathers frequently face social isolation and a lack of emotional support, in contrast to teenage mothers who might benefit from more established support networks. These young men may experience additional stress and feelings of inadequacy if they are stigmatized by their communities or viewed as reckless Madzima (2017).

In spite of these difficulties, there is an obvious absence of support frameworks tailored to meet the requirements of young fathers in early marriages. Although certain programs exist to aid young mothers, adolescent fathers frequently remain excluded from these initiatives, forcing them to handle the challenges of parenthood largely by themselves. The lack of focused policies and initiatives implies that adolescent fathers in St. Mary's, Chitungwiza, have restricted access to resources that might assist them in managing their roles as fathers, students and employees.

This research aims to investigate the socio-economic, emotional and educational difficulties encountered by adolescent fathers in early marriages in St. Mary's, Chitungwiza. The study seeks to bridge the gap in current literature by concentrating on their lived experiences and providing insights into the particular challenges faced by these young men. Moreover, the research will explore the presence, or absence, of support systems for adolescent fathers in this context, aiming to guide future policies and programs that could more effectively meet their needs.

Grasping the challenges and coping strategies of young fathers is essential for creating comprehensive methods that assist both young mothers and fathers in early marriages, ultimately aiding in disrupting the cycle of poverty and premature parenthood in communities such as St. Mary's.

1.5 General objectives

1. To identify the factors that contribute to teen fatherhood in St Mary's Chitungwiza.
2. To investigate the perceived impacts of teen fatherhood in St Mary's Chitungwiza.
3. To determine the coping strategies employed by teen fathers in early marriages in Chitungwiza.

1.6 Specific Objectives

1. To examine the socio-economic impacts of early fatherhood on the education and employment prospects of teen fathers.
2. To investigate the effects of early fatherhood on young fathers.
3. To identify available support systems and resources for teen fathers in St Mary's Chitungwiza

1.7 Research questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the factors which lead to teen fatherhood in St Mary's Chitungwiza?
2. What are the effects of teen fatherhood in St Mary's Chitungwiza?
3. Which strategies may be taken in St. Mary's, Chitungwiza, to prevent early fatherhood?

1.8 Definition of terms

According to Jors (2012) teen father is typically defined as a male who becomes a parent as having a child under the age of 19. This term encompasses young men who may have fathered a child through various circumstance, including relationships, casual encounters, or other situations. Teen fatherhood can come with unique challenges, including social stigma, economic difficulties and the need for education and support in parenting responsibilities.

Early marriage

Marriage before the age of eighteen is sometimes referred to as "early marriage" or "child marriage," and it is more prevalent among young girls Jisun (2016). It often occurs in the context of cultural, social, or economic factors and can have some significant implications for the individuals involved particularly regarding education, health and personal development. It is a topic of concern for many organisations advocating for child protection.

1.9 Organisation of study

This study is organised into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the research, including the background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, justification of the study and definition of key terms. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature examining research on teen fatherhood, early marriage and related themes in socio-economic contexts. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, describing the research design, data collection methods and analytical techniques employed in the study. Chapter 4 Findings and Conclusions it presents the collected data and discuss the findings in relation to the research questions and objectives. Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendations provides the research findings, draw conclusions and offer suggestions for community practice and policy aimed at teen father support.

1.10 Chapter summary

This chapter served as an introduction to the study which asses the experiences of teen fathers in early marriage. The chapter therefore outlined the background to the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study as well as the justification and defining the key terms. The next chapter major looked on the literature review and theoretical framework.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter was aimed at establishing factors, effects, theories, and useful strategies relevant to the study. In this chapter, the organization was generally put into several sets, including the theoretical framework upon which the study was based on; the background information on the topic under study; and a critical review of pertinent literature. This ensures that the subject was comprehensively understood, which sets the stage for the discussion of research findings. The issues discussed in the study were critically examined, with information from academics, researchers, and organizations analysed by means of journals, reports, theses, textbooks, dissertations, and online sources, among other key sources.

2.2 Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory (SLT) as the main theory was developed by Albert Bandura in the 1960s. Bandura introduced this theory through his ground-breaking work on observational learning, which he presented in his famous "Bobo Doll" experiments. These studies demonstrated that children could learn social behaviours such as aggression through the observation of adults acting aggressively towards a doll, rather than through direct reinforcement or punishment.

Bandura initially laid down the framework of Social Learning Theory in his 1977 book titled "Social Learning Theory." This theory emphasizes the importance of observing and modelling the behaviours, attitudes and emotional reactions of others and suggests that learning occurs within a social context, often occurring through observation rather than direct experience.

This theory is particularly relevant when examining the experiences of teen fathers in early marriage, as recent research emphasizes the significant influence of social contexts, role models and societal norms on these young men's lives. Hernandez et al. (2018) examined the networks of support available to teen fathers and found that observing the behaviours of older, more experienced fathers significantly shaped the expectations and practices of these young men. Participants in their study reported that positive role models encouraged them to embrace their parenting responsibilities and engage fully in their marital relationships.

Wang and Chen (2019) conducted research that highlighted the impact of peer influence and social interactions on the experiences of teen fathers. They argued that the norms established by peer groups regarding masculinity and fatherhood create a framework that influences how

young men perceive their roles as fathers and partners. Teen fathers in their study indicated that they adopted parenting styles based on behaviours they observed in their peers.

Carlson and Waller (2020) focused on the emotional and psychological challenges faced by teen fathers in early marriages. They discovered that stigma and social isolation could adversely affect these young men's well-being. However, they also found that positive reinforcement from supportive peers and family could mitigate these negative impacts by providing models of healthy relationships and responsible parenting.

Pérez et al. (2021) examined the role of social media in shaping adolescent behaviours related to family life and parenting. Their study revealed that teen fathers were influenced by the portrayals of fatherhood featured on social media platforms, which helped shape their expectations, aspirations and parenting practices. This emphasizes the relevance of observational learning in the contemporary context, where young fathers can encounter both positive and negative representations of fatherhood.

Thompson and Harris (2023) conducted qualitative interviews with young fathers and found that a lack of paternal role models significantly impacted their perceptions of fatherhood. The participants often turned to their peers for guidance, which highlighted the social learning process. They concluded that community programs that provide mentoring and promote positive role models could significantly enhance teen fathers' experiences by fostering healthier family dynamics.

2.3 Psychological theory

Psychosocial theory which explains human development, served as another study's theoretical framework. There are challenges associated with teen fatherhood in young marriages, especially in socioeconomically underprivileged areas. The experiences of teen fathers are examined in this chapter using Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory as a framework. Teen fathers in young marriages encounter developmental challenges and responsibilities that can be examined through the perspective of Erikson's theory, which emphasizes identity development and the resolution of psychosocial crises. Understanding how these young men manage their responsibilities as husbands, fathers and individuals—often in the face of social shame, financial difficulties and insufficient support networks is made easier with the help of this framework.

In order to promote healthy psychological and emotional development, Erikson's psychosocial theory highlights the significance of resolving certain developmental crises at every stage of

life (Erikson, 1963). Teen fathers who marry young are usually in the adolescent stage, which is marked by identity versus role confusion. Erikson states that this stage entails establishing a concept of self and investigating personal identity Syed and McLean (2016). However, this normal developmental process is frequently disrupted for teen fathers by the early responsibilities of marriage and parenthood, which force them into adult duties before they have completely resolved their own identity issues.

Teen fathers in early marriages have many obstacles that affect their capacity to move through Erikson's phases of psychosocial development. Teen fathers frequently struggle with role conflict as they balance the responsibilities of fatherhood, marriage and personal growth, according to a study by Mollborn and Jacobs (2015). They are compelled to assume duties that call for emotional and financial stability, which they might not yet have, rather than pursuing their identity.

Social pressures and cultural expectations make things worse for a lot of teen fathers. Young men are expected to support their families in patriarchal countries, which can be a demanding task for teenagers with little access to school and career possibilities Madiba and Nsiki (2017). Role uncertainty and identity crises are exacerbated by the failure to meet these expectations, which frequently results in low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy.

The next developmental stage in Erikson's concept is closeness against isolation, which is usually connected to early adulthood. Teen fathers who get married young are thrown into this stage too soon, where they have to build enduring bonds with their spouses. However, their inability to develop wholesome marriage connections is frequently hampered by their emotional immaturity and unresolved identity difficulties. Young children lack awareness of the negative health effects of adolescence and the physical and psychological changes that occur during this time Sivaguruthan et al (2015). The stress of unstable finances and a lack of social support make it more difficult for teen fathers to be intimate in their marriages.

Psychosocial, cultural and economic factors interact to shape the experiences of teen fathers. Young parents shared stories of discrimination, humiliation and stigma related to moral judgment and views about their suitability as parents Conn et al (2018). Teen fathers are further isolated since extended families and communities sometimes fail to help them because of the prevalent belief that they are careless or inept.

Additionally, teen fathers are under a lot of stress due to the economic difficulties that are common in low-income metropolitan neighbourhood. Without access to steady jobs or

educational opportunities, many individuals find it difficult to support their families, which often leads to feelings of frustration and despair. These struggles can disrupt their ability to progress through Erikson's psychosocial stages of development, leaving them trapped in a cycle of unresolved challenges.

Viewing the experiences of teen fathers through the framework of Erikson's psychosocial theory highlights the importance of tailored interventions that address their unique developmental and emotional needs. Initiatives such as vocational training, counselling and peer support can equip teen fathers with the tools and confidence necessary to embrace their responsibilities as fathers and partners. Additionally, community-driven programs that work to reduce stigma and encourage the involvement of teen fathers in parenting and family support efforts can create a more nurturing and inclusive environment.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Teen fatherhood within the context of early marriages is a complex phenomenon influenced by sociocultural, economic and psychological factors. In low-income urban areas in Zimbabwe, the experiences of teen fathers in early marriages are shaped by societal expectations, poverty, lack of education and limited access to resources. The Frameworks provide a comprehensive lens to examine how societal, family and individual factors influence teenage fathers' lives.

2.5. Factors which lead to teen fatherhood

Historically, fathers have played a crucial role in providing for their children's needs. However, research by Chideya and Williams (2013:209) highlights that teenage fathers face some challenges in developing a meaningful understanding of fatherhood due to socioeconomic disparities. This suggests that teenage fathers encounter distinct challenges in establishing a viable paternal identity, differing from those experienced by low-income males.

2.5.1 Culture

The patriarchal culture's emphasis on the provider role in parenthood poses a significant challenge for teenage fathers, who often struggle to meet this expectation due to unemployment and lack of financial resources, leading to feelings of inadequacy and guilt. Cultural norms that encourage early parenthood and emphasize the importance of providing for one's child can lead to a higher likelihood of teen fatherhood (Mollborn, 2017). Furthermore, As Masilo (2018) notes, fathers are crucial players in the family system and their involvement is essential for the well-being of their children, highlighting the need for cultural sensitivity and support systems that address the unique challenges faced by teenage fathers.

Cultural practices, such as paying damages and negotiating child-care arrangements, significantly impact teenage fathers, as noted by Jacobs and Marais (2013). Unemployed teenage fathers, in particular, face significant challenges, as their inability to pay damages often leads to their exclusion from their child's upbringing. Furthermore, Jacobs and Marais (2013) found that teenage fathers often engage in risky behaviours, such as unprotected sex and excessive alcohol consumption, due to a desire to assert their masculinity and gain a sense of authority. This reckless behaviour can lead to impulsive decisions, including engaging in unprotected sex, without considering the potential consequences, ultimately resulting in teenage pregnancy and fatherhood. These societal expectations can create an environment where young men are more likely to become fathers at an early age.

2.5.2 Early Debut to sexual activities

Since early sexual debut is frequently accompanied by inconsistent use of contraceptives, limited access to sexual health services and poor information about contraception, it is a significant contributing factor to unwanted births and teen fatherhood (Smith et al., 2018). The chance of fathering a child during adolescence is increased for teenage boys who have early sexual activity because they may not be emotionally and cognitively mature enough to make wise decisions about safe sex practices. Additionally, hazardous sexual activities including unprotected intercourse and having several sexual partners are often associated with early sexual debut, increasing the likelihood of unwanted pregnancies Garcia and Miller (2019). Early sexual debut is also influenced by contextual factors, including media exposure to sexual content, peer pressure and inadequate parental supervision. Furthermore, according to Johnson and Carter's (2021) research, boys from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to initiate sexual activity at a young age. This is frequently associated with a lack of access to sexual and reproductive health education, which feeds the cycle of teen fatherhood. All things considered, preventing unwanted pregnancies and assisting teen fathers require addressing early sexual debut and encouraging thorough education about sexual and reproductive health.

2.5.3 History of conduct Disorder and substance abuse

Because conduct disorder is frequently accompanied by impulsivity, poor decision-making and a lack of consideration for long-term consequences, it significantly increases the likelihood of unintended pregnancies and teen fatherhood among adolescents. Conduct disorder is a psychiatric condition that is defined by persistent patterns of aggressive, disruptive and antisocial behaviours that violate societal norms (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

According to research, teens with a history of conduct disorder are more likely to participate in hazardous sexual practices, like repeated sexual partnerships and unprotected sex, which can result in unwanted pregnancies and the spread of STDs (Smith et al., 2017).

Male adolescents with conduct disorder were twice as likely to become teen fathers as their peers without the disorder, according to a longitudinal study by Johnson and Carter (2019). This finding emphasizes the need for focused interventions to prevent teen fatherhood and foster positive relationships among adolescents with conduct disorder. The importance of addressing the intricate interactions between individual, family and environmental factors that contribute to teen fatherhood among adolescents with conduct disorder is further highlighted by the fact that these adolescents frequently grow up in unstable home environments that are marked by inadequate parental supervision, exposure to violence and reinforcement of maladaptive behaviour patterns. These factors increase the likelihood that these adolescents will become teen fathers and perpetuate a cycle of disadvantage.

Adolescents' decision-making, behaviour and general well-being are all greatly impacted by substance misuse, which is a major contributing factor to the occurrence of teen fatherhood. Substance-using adolescents are more likely to participate in dangerous sexual behaviours, such as unprotected intercourse, while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs Garcia and Miller (2018). This is due to the fact that substance abuse raises the risk of unwanted pregnancies by impairing judgment, lowering inhibitions and decreasing the likelihood of utilizing contraception. Additionally, social settings that normalize and promote risky behaviours—like peer groups that support permissive views toward sexual activity—are frequently linked to substance dependence Brown Taylor (2020). Teen fatherhood is more common among adolescents who use drugs as a result of these social dynamics as well as the decreased inhibitions brought on by substance use. The probability of teen fatherhood is further increased by the compounding effect of substance misuse, which frequently intersects with other underlying problems including conduct disorder. The combined effects of impulsive behaviours, poor decision-making and hazardous sexual practices put adolescents with co-occurring conduct disorder and substance addiction at considerably greater risk of becoming a teen father Martinez et al., (2021). A perfect storm of unsafe actions, bad choices and unforeseen repercussions can result from this confluence of circumstances, which can eventually raise the prevalence of teen fatherhood and prolong cycles of poverty.

2.5.4 Peer pressure

Teenagers' sexual activities can be significantly impacted by peer pressure, which is particularly prevalent during adolescence. According to recent studies, youths' attitudes and behaviours about sex are greatly influenced by peer pressure because they frequently feel pressured to live up to their friends' standards in order to be accepted, prevent rejection, or preserve their social standing Suleiman and Deardorff (2015). Particularly for adolescent boys, sexual activity is frequently strongly associated with masculinity and social standing, fostering a culture in which peers support and even glorify dangerous sexual behaviour. Adolescents may have unprotected intercourse in these situations to establish their manhood, win approval from others, or show off their bluster, which raises the risk of becoming a youthful father. Peer groups that normalize or even glamorize early sexual experiences can encourage boys to pursue sexual activity at a young age without thinking about the possible consequences, according to numerous studies that have repeatedly shown the link between peer group norms and attitudes toward sexuality Kheswa (2020). Particularly when teenagers lack proper sexual education, the urge to blend in with their peers frequently takes precedence over sound judgment, increasing the risk of unintended births because boys are less likely to use contraception regularly. According to study by Martínez et al. (2019), peer dynamics can encourage impulsive behaviour, which can result in early sexual activity. Teenage boys who are affected by their peers frequently lack the emotional maturity necessary to handle relationships appropriately.

Peer pressure might also deter young men from talking about abstinence or contraception because these practices may be viewed as "unmanly" or at odds with conventionally accepted male standards. Teen fatherhood risk is increased by this lack of communication and preparation, underscoring the necessity of peer-led interventions and comprehensive sexual education that support good masculinity, healthy relationships and responsible decision-making.

2.5.5 Unemployment

Teenage and young adult unemployment is a serious problem with wide-ranging effects that can significantly affect both the individuals' and their families' life. Young men may feel pressured to take on adult responsibilities, such as marriage and parenting, too soon in order to achieve social stability, satisfy cultural norms, or demonstrate their manhood when they have few options for further education or job. Numerous studies have emphasized the link between teen fatherhood and unemployment, especially when it comes to early marriages. For example,

scholars have observed that early marriage is a prevalent occurrence among both boys and girls, frequently in low socioeconomic circumstances Gerbaka et al., (2021).

Even though these marriages might not be financially viable, they are occasionally viewed as a means of achieving social stability or meeting cultural standards. Teenage fathers find it difficult to support their young children since unemployment causes them to lack a reliable source of income, which furthers the cycle of poverty. Teenage fathers without jobs are more likely to face long-term financial instability, which has a detrimental effect on both their own and their children's general well-being, according to Wagner et al. (2019). Both the father and the child may experience strained relationships, reduced educational attainment and fewer chances in the future as a result of this financial instability. Cultural expectations and conventions are a major factor in the continuation of early marriages in many societies. Young men may feel under pressure to get married young in order to demonstrate their manhood or to live up to family expectations when unemployment is high. Adolescent fatherhood is more common in East Africa, according to a study by Terefe et al. (2024). This study emphasizes the complexity of adolescent fatherhood and suggests that a number of factors, including sociodemographic traits, influence the likelihood of becoming an adolescent father. A comprehensive intervention that addresses the underlying causes of poverty, promotes education and employment opportunities, and challenges harmful cultural norms and expectations is necessary because unemployment, poverty and cultural expectations combine to create a perfect storm that raises the risk of teen fatherhood.

2.6 The effects of Teen fatherhood

In the setting of early marriages, teen fatherhood poses a complicated set of issues that impact families and society at large in addition to the people involved. Early marriage and parenthood obligations can have serious repercussions, such as interrupted schooling, unstable finances and psychological stress. These young fathers are expected by society to support their children even though they lack the means, know-how, or maturity to do so successfully. Teen fathers are especially susceptible to social stigma, financial difficulties, and a lack of personal growth chances, all of which can feed cycles of poverty and inequality, claims Mollborn (2017).

2.6.1 Education Disruption

Teen father's interrupted schooling has serious, long-lasting effects that can prolong generations-long cycles of disadvantage. First of all, it restricts their ability to earn money, forcing people into low-wage, precarious employment and making it difficult to escape the cycle of poverty Kassa et al., (2018). Because they frequently lack the resources to support

their family, the teen father's financial instability has an effect on not just their own well-being but also that of their spouse and child. Additionally, disrupting education can have psychological effects like low self-esteem, feelings of guilt and inadequacy, which can make it harder for them to parent well and cause tension in their marriages Mollborn (2017). Additionally, offspring of teen fathers are more likely to suffer from behavioural problems, poor academic achievement and a lower socioeconomic standing, which perpetuates cycles of disadvantage throughout generations. This means that the effects of disrupting schooling go beyond the individual. According to research by Masud et al. (2015), parental practices have a big impact on child' academic achievement, and positive role modelling is crucial. Teen fathers who lack adequate education frequently find it difficult to be good role models for their children, which exacerbates these intergenerational effects and emphasizes the need for focused interventions that help teen fathers finish their education and acquire effective parenting techniques.

2.6.2 Health risks

Early marriage is closely linked to mental health conditions such stress, anxiety and depression. Young fathers frequently feel overburdened by the abrupt shift from adolescence to parenting, having to balance the demands of raising a child with the demands of their marriage and finances. Teen fathers are more likely than their peers who are not fathers to experience psychological discomfort, according to research by Winstanley et al. (2016). Feelings of loneliness and inadequacy are made worse by the shame and social condemnation surrounding teen parenthood, which can result in long-term mental health issues.

Due to the demands of supporting their families, teen fathers in early marriages frequently disregard their own physical well-being.

Early childrearing costs can result in inadequate self-care, sleep deprivation and poor nutrition, all of which can exacerbate long-term health problems like exhaustion, stress-related ailments, and compromised immunity (Mollborn, 2017). Teen fathers are also more likely to have occupational injuries due to the necessity of working in physically taxing or low-paying occupations, frequently without the necessary safety precautions or training.

In certain instances, a lack of knowledge about sexual and reproductive health exacerbates the health hazards that teen fathers confront. There may be issues for both mother and child as a result of many teens fathers' lack of readiness to attend to their partners' medical needs during pregnancy and delivery. Adolescent fathers frequently lack access to reliable information

regarding prenatal and postnatal care, which raises the health risks for their families, according to a study by Kassa et al. (2018). The young father's spouse and child are both at risk for health issues related to teen parenting in young marriages. Adolescent pregnancies, which involve serious health risks for the mother, such as postpartum depression, maternal mortality and problems during childbirth, are frequently associated with early marriages. Teen fathers put their partner's and child's health at greater risk because they are frequently unable to offer sufficient support during this crucial time because of their inexperience and lack of finances (Kassa et al., 2018).

Teen fathers' insufficient parenting abilities and financial means can lead to poor nutrition, insufficient healthcare and restricted access to medical services for their children. Children of adolescent parents are more likely to experience chronic illnesses, developmental impairments and low birth weight (Mollborn, 2017). The child's psychological health may suffer long-term consequences as a result of the stress and instability in the family setting.

Access to healthcare for themselves and their families is frequently severely hampered for teen fathers in early marriages. Common barriers include lack of funds, lack of mobility and ignorance of healthcare services. Furthermore, teen fathers may be deterred from getting help by social shame and judgment, which would increase their health risks Winstanley et al., (2016). These barriers highlight the need for targeted interventions to ensure that young fathers have access to affordable and inclusive healthcare services.

2.6.3 Economic Disempowerment

One of the main causes of teen fathers' economic disempowerment is the disruption of their education, since the demands of marriage and fatherhood frequently force young men to drop out of school early in order to find work, which limits their ability to obtain the training and credentials required for well-paying positions. Less than half of teen father's finish high school, and even fewer go on to further their education, which drastically lowers their earning potential and limits them to low-paying, precarious jobs (Mollborn, 2017). Teen fathers who lack access to education and training options frequently find it difficult to compete in labour markets that place a greater value on skilled labour, which makes the lack of vocational training an even bigger problem.

Because of this, individuals are unable to move up the economic ladder and are stuck in low-income groups (Kiselica & Kiselica, 2020). The well-being of the teen father's spouse and child, who rely on them for financial assistance, is also impacted by this economic stagnation.

The costs of raising a child and running a household can quickly overwhelm young fathers without steady incomes and teen fathers in early marriages feel tremendous financial pressure to support their families, frequently with little to no preparation. According to research by Kassa et al. (2018), teen fathers are overrepresented in low-income homes, with many of them living below the poverty line. As a result of this financial burden, many teen fathers are forced to work several jobs labour long hours or depend on unofficial work, which further restricts their capacity to further their education or better their financial situation. Furthermore, early parenthood's financial needs frequently result in a dependence on government assistance programs or the help of extended family, which can prolong poverty cycles and cause long-term financial instability for the family (Mollborn, 2017). Inadequate support networks, restricted access to resources and social stigma are some of the obstacles that teen fathers in young marriages must overcome in order to achieve economic empowerment. These factors can result in discrimination at work, diminish prospects for steady employment and exacerbate their financial difficulties Winstanley et al., (2016). Many teen fathers are left to handle the challenges of fatherhood because there aren't any organizations specifically designed to support them and employment alone, without the assistance or guidance required to attain financial security (Kiselica & Kiselica, 2020). According to Kassa et al. (2018), the economic disempowerment of teen fathers in early marriages has a significant impact on their families, especially their children, who are more likely to grow up in poverty and have limited access to quality healthcare, education, and other necessities, thus sustaining poverty cycles for generations to come.

2.6.4 Psychological and Emotional Impact

Increased emotional stress is among the most direct effects of teen fatherhood in early marriages. Teen fathers are frequently ill-equipped to handle the duties of fatherhood, such as supporting a family financially, upholding a marriage and raising a child. Chronic tension and anxiety might result from these excessive obligations. Teen fathers report much higher levels of stress than their counterparts without children, according to Mollborn (2017). Since many teen fathers lack the maturity, resources and skills necessary to carry out their jobs effectively, feelings of inadequacy may be the root cause of this stress.

Emotional stress is further exacerbated by the financial burden of early motherhood. Despite having few educational and career options, teen fathers are frequently expected to take on the role of breadwinner. It may result in emotions of powerlessness and dissatisfaction (Kiselica

& Kiselica, 2020). Their emotional health suffers as a result of feeling like they have failed when they are unable to live up to these expectations.

Adolescent fathers in young marriages are more likely to suffer from low self-esteem and despair. Adolescence and adulthood are already difficult times, and the additional duties of marriage and fatherhood can make them feel even more alone and dismal. Teen fathers are more likely than their classmates to suffer from depressive symptoms, according to research by Winstanley et al. (2016). This is frequently due to social shame and a lack of support networks.

Another prevalent psychological effect of teen parenting is low self-esteem. Because society views young fathers as reckless or immature, many of them feel judged by it. Their sense of self-worth may be further damaged by internalized sentiments of shame and inadequacy brought on by this external judgment. These unfavourable feelings may make it more difficult for them to build wholesome connections and raise their child (Mollborn, 2017).

Teen fathers in early marriages frequently have emotional difficulties in their partnerships. Conflicts with their spouse might arise from the demands of marriage and motherhood, especially if there is a lack of emotional or financial support. Teenage marriages are more likely to be unstable and conflict-ridden, which can make young fathers' psychological issues worse (Kassa et al., 2018).

Teen fathers also frequently experience emotional alienation from their peers. Teen fathers are juggling adult obligations while their pals may still be partaking in normal teenage activities. Poor mental health outcomes can result from this isolation since it can cause feelings of loneliness and a lack of social support (Kiselica & Kiselica, 2020). Teen fathers could find it difficult to handle the emotional demands of their new roles if they don't have a strong support system.

Teen fathers' emotional and psychological difficulties may potentially impair their capacity to be good parents. Their ability to form a link with their child and offer the emotional support required for healthy growth may be hampered by stress, despair and low self-esteem. According to Mollborn (2017), teen fathers who have mental health problems are less likely to participate in their child's life, which may have long-term effects on the child's mental and emotional health.

Fatherhood's emotional toll can occasionally cause disengagement or even the resignation of parental duties. The teen father may experience regret and remorse as a result, which would feed a vicious cycle of unpleasant sentiments. Therefore, it is essential to attend to the psychological and emotional requirements of teen fathers in order to encourage good parenting habits and strong family bonds.

2.6.5 Increased vulnerability to Domestic violence

Teen fathers and their partners live in unstable environments as a result of early marriages, which are sometimes caused by cultural expectations, poverty, or a lack of educational possibilities. Because the male spouse is typically expected to take on the role of provider and decision-maker despite his youth, adolescents in these partnerships frequently face power imbalances (Raj & McDougal, 2015). Frustration brought on by the need to live up to social norms might result in violent action. Adolescent fathers may also be unable to resolve disputes amicably and resort to violence as a way to establish their authority (Miller et al., 2016).

The difficulties that come with young marriages are exacerbated by teen parenting. Economic stress and domestic violence have been linked in recent studies, especially in households where young fathers are unable to meet their financial responsibilities (Kalokhe et al., 2017). Feelings of inadequacy brought on by their incapacity to support their family may show up as verbal, emotional, or physical violence directed at their partners. Teen father's emotional immaturity can also make it difficult for them to communicate effectively, which can lead to arguments turning violent (Stöckl et al., 2021).

Furthermore, male partners are not the only ones that commit domestic violence. Because of the stress and discontent caused by their situation, teen fathers may occasionally also experience physical or psychological abuse at the hands of their spouses (Yount et al., 2021).

The fact that domestic violence is reciprocal highlights the intricate interactions between various elements that lead to its high incidence in adolescent parent marriages.

Teen fathers are more susceptible to domestic abuse when they lack proper support networks. According to research, early intervention programs that emphasize conflict resolution, parenting techniques, and economic empowerment can reduce the likelihood of violence in young families (García-Moreno et al., 2015). However, adolescents in underprivileged areas frequently lack access to such programs, making them ill-prepared to successfully navigate the demands of marriage and parenthood.

2.7 Strategies that are being employed to teen fatherhood

A serious socioeconomic issue that affects teenagers, families and communities broadly is teen fatherhood in the setting of early marriages. Early marriages are frequently the result of cultural norms, poverty, illiteracy and legal loopholes that do not prevent young people from being married too soon. Teen fathers' struggles have received less attention than the predicament of teen mothers, which has received a lot of attention. These young males frequently experience emotional immaturity, unstable finances and restricted access to resources, all of which can contribute to poverty cycles and negatively impact their families' well-being (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2015). Literature indicates multifaceted solutions that address the underlying causes of the problem and give young fathers the tools they need to address teen fatherhood in early marriages are needed.

2.7.1 Promoting Access to education

Due to social pressures or financial difficulties, adolescents who drop out of school are more likely to get married and have children early. According to Chandra-Mouli et al. (2015), males who receive little education are less able to understand the duties of fatherhood and find work, which feeds the cycle of poverty and dependency. The design and analysis of policies that aim to retain or re-enrol socioeconomically vulnerable students in the educational system, such as secondary school grants and scholarships, as well as initiatives that encourage delaying parenthood by altering social norms or disseminating information on reproductive sexual education programs, are informed in part by research Busso and associates, 2017.

Promoting education has advantages that go beyond the person. Teenagers with higher levels of education are more likely to make constructive contributions to their communities, ending the cycle of poverty and enhancing the social and economic well-being of coming generations (UNESCO, 2019). In addition to improving young men' capacity to support their families, education helps them develop a deeper awareness of gender equality and shared household duties. Over time, this more comprehensive viewpoint can aid in changing social norms, which will lower the incidence of teen parenthood and early marriages.

2.7.2 Economic Empowerment for families

One of the most important ways to solve the interrelated problems of teen fatherhood and early marriages is to empower families economically. Because families in economically disadvantaged situations may see early marriages as a means of easing financial pressures or securing economic stability, research shows that poverty and financial instability are important drivers of early marriage and adolescent parenthood (Chari et al., 2017). Enhancing family

economic prospects lessens the need to marry off children at a young age, allowing teenagers to postpone childbearing and focus on their studies and personal growth.

Reducing Families' Financial Stress: Cash transfers, microfinance programs and vocational training are examples of economic empowerment programs that can assist families escape poverty and lessen the financial incentives behind early marriage. For instance, by giving families financial incentives to keep their kids in school, conditional cash transfer schemes have been demonstrated to reduce the rates of child marriage (Baird et al., 2016). By providing youth with knowledge and goals, education not only postpones marriage but also lowers the risk of adolescent pregnancy.

Gender stereotypes that support teen fatherhood and early marriage can be addressed through economic empowerment. Research indicates that households with higher levels of financial stability are more inclined to encourage girls' education and postpone marriage (Parsons et al., 2015). This change gives both boys and girls the opportunity to mature and acquire new skills before taking on roles like parents or spouses.

Teen fatherhood can be decreased by giving teenagers access to vocational training and opportunities to earn money. Engaging young men in productive economic pursuits can help divert them from high-risk behaviours that often lead to premature fatherhood (Amin et al., 2018).

2.7.3 Strengthening legal frameworks and Enforcement

Addressing teen fatherhood and early marriages requires bolstering legal frameworks and enforcement. Cultural traditions, law enforcement and weak laws frequently permit early marriages to continue, which exacerbates problems like adolescent parenting. Governments may foster a protective environment for adolescents and lower the incidence of early marriages and the difficulties that come with teen fatherhood by enacting stricter laws and making sure they are enforced.

Increasing the Legal Minimum Age of Marriage Addressing early marriages begins with establishing and upholding a minimum legal age for marriage. Research shows that child marriage and teen parenthood are less common in nations with well-defined legal systems and strong enforcement capabilities. For instance, early marriages significantly decreased in nations that raised the marriage age to 18 without exceptions (Maswikwa et al., 2015). A legal foundation for prohibiting child marriages and prosecuting offenders is established by clear legislation.

The practice can be discouraged by making child marriages a crime and punishing individuals who assist or participate in such partnerships. Early marriage rates have been found to decline in nations with criminalized child marriage and consistent enforcement (Chowdhury et al., 2021). By making teen fathers responsible for statutory infractions and giving teenage moms legal recourse, these laws can also address the issue of teen fathers.

Better Implementation of Current Laws Weak enforcement frequently compromises the efficacy of protective legal structures, even in nations with them. It is crucial to fortify the legal and law enforcement systems in order to keep an eye on and address infractions. For instance, it has been demonstrated that community-level monitoring initiatives that support legal systems can deter early marriages and guarantee adherence (Raj et al., 2019).

Challenging Legal Loopholes, a lot of nations permit exemptions from minimum marriage age requirements, such as those based on parental approval or religious tolerance. To ensure that legal frameworks are effective, these gaps must be closed. Lower rates of teen fatherhood and child marriage have been linked to the removal of such exceptions (Koski et al., 2018).

Legal Support for Adolescents: Adolescents who are at risk of being married young or who are already in such relationships might benefit from advocacy and legal assistance, which can uphold their rights and encourage responsibility. Early marriages have been successfully decreased by legal empowerment initiatives that inform communities about child marriage regulations (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

2.7.4 Community Consciousness and Behavioural Change Programs

Key tactics for combating teen fatherhood in the context of early marriages include behavioural change initiatives and community awareness campaigns. These strategies question norms, educate communities and encourage beneficial behavioural changes in young people at the individual and societal levels.

In order to handle the difficulties of teen parenthood, behavioural modification interventions—like the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)—are essential. Enhancing parenting abilities, encouraging healthy family relationships, and lowering stress—especially for young mothers and fathers are the main goals of this research-based program. According to research, programs that focus on young men's parental responsibilities have a major positive impact on family stability and children's wellbeing (Hoath & Sanders, 2002).

These programs lessen the negative effects of teen fatherhood by giving teen fathers the tools they need to support their partners and kids. Community-based initiatives place a strong

emphasis on promoting discussion and increasing awareness regarding teen fatherhood and early marriages. In order to spread ideas that question conventional gender norms and support deferring childbearing until young people are emotionally and financially ready, these programs involve educators, parents, and religious leaders. Research by Philliber (2015) shows how community-based initiatives foster a favourable atmosphere for changing behaviour, particularly in culturally sensitive regions where young marriages are accepted.

Another essential element is comprehensive sex education, which emphasizes the twin objectives of lowering adolescent pregnancies and preparing teenagers for the obligations of parenthood. Programs that include discussions on fatherhood responsibilities and long-term planning equip young men with the knowledge to make informed decisions. Moreover, the integration of policy initiatives, such as the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPPP) in the U.S., demonstrates the effectiveness of combining education with systemic support to address teen parenthood (Philliber, 2015).

By integrating individual-focused interventions with community-level consciousness-raising campaigns, these programs provide sustainable solutions to reduce teen fatherhood and mitigate the negative outcomes of early marriages. Further research and evaluation, as recommended by Philliber (2015), will help refine these approaches to maximize their impact.

2.7.5 Social work Interventions

In the setting of early marriages, social work interventions are essential in tackling teen fatherhood. By encouraging their active participation in parental responsibilities, these treatments seek to lessen the emotional and socioeconomic difficulties that adolescent fathers and their families confront.

Programs designed to meet the needs of adolescent fathers frequently emphasize education, skill development and emotional support. For instance, research has shown how critical it is to provide teen men with parenting skills, cultivate healthy co-parenting relationships and remove obstacles like restricted educational prospects and financial challenges. In order to help young fathers, manage their developmental requirements and parental obligations, social workers are essential in offering counselling services and putting them in touch with resources (Haworth, 2019).

Additionally, social work highlights how communities and families may help teen fathers. Through workshops and support groups that tackle cultural stigmas and encourage responsible fatherhood, community-based organizations foster positive fatherhood involvement.

Furthermore, both maternal and paternal families are involved in family-centred activities to establish a network of support that promotes improved outcomes for both the child and the parents (Philliber, 2015).

The goal of social workers' advocacy work is to change laws that assist adolescent parents. For young parents, initiatives like the Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) have played a critical role in enhancing their educational and financial results. These programs demonstrate how important it is to incorporate father-specific interventions into more comprehensive parenting programs in order to meet their particular requirements.

In order to empower teen fathers, lessen the detrimental effects of early marriages, and enhance child welfare outcomes, social work interventions offer a comprehensive framework. These methods help young families find long-term solutions by removing structural obstacles and encouraging behavioural change.

2.7.6. Strengthening sexual and reproductive health education

One important way to address young fatherhood in the setting of early marriages is to improve sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education. In order to provide teenagers with correct information regarding sexual health, reproduction, relationships, and decision-making, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is essential. In addition to raising knowledge of the obligations and difficulties that come with being a teen parent, this education helps avoid early pregnancies.

Teaching teenagers about gender equality, consent, contraception, and healthy relationships is a crucial part of CSE. According to research, school-based CSE programs raise the likelihood of postponing birth, decrease risky sexual conduct, and greatly boost adolescents' understanding of contraception (BMC Women's Health, 2023). Additionally, by dispelling myths around reproductive health, these programs help youth make educated decisions.

Furthermore, incorporating SRH education into school curricula guarantees that youth from underserved communities—such as those living in rural or low-income environments—have access to important knowledge. It has been demonstrated that incorporating CSE into educational systems in low- and middle-income nations improves results by shattering cultural taboos and incorporating parents and educators (Reproductive Health Journal, 2022). Adolescents can voice concerns and ask for help without feeling stigmatized when safe and encouraging conversation spaces are provided.

The effectiveness of SRH education is further enhanced by programs that provide access to preventive treatments like STD testing and contraception advice. By empowering teenagers to make responsible choices, these services lower the likelihood of unwanted pregnancies and the problems they bring, such as teen fatherhood (The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health, 2023).

2.8 Chapter summary

The literature review for the research study on the experiences of teen fathers in early marriages was the main emphasis of this chapter. Its main purpose was to critically analyse and examine the body of knowledge that already existed in relation to each of the research objectives that were relevant to the research questions posed in the first chapter of the study. In respect to the experiences of teen fathers in early marriages, it also sought to properly analyse the data provided by other academics, researches and organizations in journals, dissertations, theses textbooks and online sources, among other significant sources. The next chapter examined research methodology.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study explored the experiences of teenagers fathers in early marriages. A mixed-methods approach that brought together qualitative and quantitative techniques was used to obtain a range of viewpoints. In-depth interviews, questionnaires, focus groups and observations were utilized in the study, which was conducted at St. Mary's in Chitungwiza. Rigorous adherence was maintained to ethical standards, including informed consent and confidentiality. The results provide data for policymakers and inform action through the prominent themes of social stigma, economic hardship and disrupted education.

3.2 Research Design

In order to capture the complex and individualized viewpoints of teen fathers, qualitative methods and quantitative were frequently used in research designs that examined the experiences of teenage fathers in early marriages. Smith, (2016) emphasized how phenomenological, ethnographic and case study approaches were used to investigate the difficulties, coping strategies and lived experiences of teen fathers. To collect detailed information, researcher employed focus groups, semi-structured interviews and narrative inquiry (Williams et al., 2020). These techniques enabled a more thorough comprehension of the effects of early fatherhood on relationships within early marriages as well as emotional, social and economic well-being.

For example, topics like role tension, social stigma, a lack of support networks and juggling young parenthood with personal growth were identified thanks in large part to qualitative designs (Garcia and Lopez, 2019). In order to examine broader patterns and contextual factors influencing the experiences of teenage fathers, studies sometimes used mixed-method approaches, combining qualitative data with quantitative surveys (Lee et al., 2023). These results highlighted the intricacy of teen fatherhood in early marriages and the necessity of focused therapies to assist these adolescents.

3.3 Methods

To collect thorough and varied data, this study used a multifaceted research approach that included focus groups, structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews and observational techniques. A thorough investigation of the research phenomena was made possible by the integration of several qualitative research methods, which produced insightful information about individual experiences, group viewpoints and contextual elements. The acquisition of

rich, varied and extensive data was made possible by this mixed-methods strategy, which eventually improved the findings' validity and dependability.

3.3.1 In-depth interviews

Participants could tell their story in their own words during in-depth interviews, which gave the researcher access to perspectives and experiences that may not have been revealed through other research techniques (Williams et al., 2020). Furthermore, this approach worked especially well for comprehending the environmental and cultural elements that affected the responsibilities of teenage fathers in early marriages. According to Johnson and Brown (2018), researchers observed that in-depth interviews also promoted rapport and trust, both of which were essential for sympathetically examining complicated and frequently stigmatized problems. As a result, conducting in-depth interviews was very crucial to documenting the complex experiences of teen fathers and producing information that could guide therapies and policy.

3.3.2 Structured Questionnaires

In mixed-methods or quantitative designs, structured questionnaires were an essential study tool for examining the experiences of teenage fathers in early marriages. According to Johnson and Brown (2018), they made it easier to collect standardized data on a range of life factors, such as socioeconomic position, education, emotional health, social support and difficulties associated with early fatherhood. Questionnaires with Likert-scale items and closed-ended questions allowed for the evaluation of attitudes, perceptions and support levels as well as comparative response analysis (Ahmed, 2021). They showed trends and patterns among teen fathers and benefited from extensive administration (Garcia & Lopez, 2019). Recent research using structured questionnaires had shed light on the psychological and social effects of early fatherhood, identifying areas that needed assistance and focused interventions (Williams et al., 2020). Questionnaires were useful for gathering quantitative data, but they were frequently used in conjunction with qualitative techniques, such as interviews, to offer deep, contextualized insights into participants' lived experiences and promote thorough comprehension.

3.3.3 Focus Group Discussions

A crucial research technique for examining the intricacies of teenage fatherhood in early marriages was focus group discussions (FGDs), which fostered lively exchanges and provided priceless insights into societal dynamics, views and shared experiences. FGDs enabled the researcher to explore the common viewpoints of teen fathers by fostering

group discussions, shedding light on the ways in which social pressure, cultural norms and societal expectations interacted to define their experiences and roles (Johnson & Brown, 2018). Because participants frequently felt more comfortable giving their opinions in a supportive group context than in solo interviews, this method worked well for examining delicate subjects (Ahmed, 2021). FGDs guaranteed thorough examination of important topics, such as coping strategies, support networks, parenting obligations and emotional well-being, under the direction of organized or semi-structured discussion guides (Garcia & Lopez, 2019). According to recent studies, focus group discussions (FGDs) were excellent in producing rich, qualitative data that captured the many viewpoints and experiences of teen fathers (Lee et al., 2023). Furthermore, FGDs created a safe space where participants could share knowledge, encourage Candor, trust and empathy and offer a special forum for delving into difficult topics.

3.3.4 Observations

With personal knowledge of everyday living, interactions and behavioural patterns in natural settings, observational research presented a unique viewpoint on the experiences of teenage fathers in early marriages. Through the use of nonverbal clues, contextual information and dynamics that were missed in focus groups or interviews, this methodology allowed researchers to record and examine participants' unguarded conduct (Garcia & Lopez, 2019). The experiences of teenage fathers were influenced by cultural norms and societal expectations, which were revealed by ethnographic methodologies that mostly relied on participant observation (Ahmed, 2021). Accurate documentation and analysis were ensured by field notes and audios Lee and associates (2023). In addition to interviews, observational data offered a thorough grasp of difficulties, coping strategies and lived realities, such as role-navigating, family involvement and responsibility management (Smith, 2016). Direct observation, contextual awareness, lived realities and cultural subtleties were among its main advantages. Contributions included empirical evidence, theoretical development and informing policy and interventions. Ethical considerations comprised informed consent, anonymity and data security. Limitations included sampling bias, observer effect and contextual limitations. Future directions involved longitudinal studies, cross-cultural research and mixed-methods approaches, enhancing understanding of teenage fatherhood experiences and informing targeted support (Ahmed, 2021).

3.4 Procedure

The study used St. Mary's, Chitungwiza, as a case study to investigate the experiences of teen father's experiences in early marriages. To obtain a thorough grasp of the phenomenon, a qualitative research approach was used, emphasizing observation and interviews. This supported Creswell's et al (2015) assertion that qualitative approaches were crucial for delving into intricate social phenomena and comprehending people's actual experiences.

The initial stage was to get ethical approval from the appropriate authorities, such as institutional review boards, Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. According to Bryman (2016), ethical issues highlighted how crucial it was to uphold anonymity throughout the research process, guarantee informed consent and defend participants' rights. Participants were given a thorough description of the study's objectives, confidentiality protocols and their freedom to discontinue participation at any time before giving their consent.

Teen fathers between the ages of 13 and 19 who were either married or had previously been married young were the target of the purposive sample. According to Palinkas et al. (2015), purposeful sampling worked well for choosing cases with a wealth of information that were pertinent to the study issue. According to Etikan et al (2016), snowball sampling was utilized to find more participants through referrals, allowing for the inclusion of community members who were difficult to contact.

In depth interviews were used to collect data over the course of four weeks in neutral, private settings. As suggested by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), in-depth interviews provided flexibility while preserving an organized method for answering important research questions. In keeping with Saldaña (2018), who highlighted the significance of thorough documentation for reliable qualitative analysis, interviews were audio recorded with participants' permission and complemented by field notes.

To offer more background, observations of the individuals' interactions within their families and communities were made. Since it allowed the researcher to record behaviours and interactions that might not have been fully expressed through verbal responses, this approach was consistent with the work of Yin et al (2014), who emphasized the importance of direct observations in case study research.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Informed permission, anonymity, confidentiality and harm avoidance were all upheld in this study. Any research had to take ethical considerations into account. Concerns about how to do

research properly and without endangering research participants were known as ethical considerations, according to Saunders (2022). The Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare also provided the researcher with a letter of authorization to carry out the study.

3.5.1 Informed Consent

Participants received information on the study's goals, methods and any dangers. Prior to participation, consent was acquired verbally or in writing, according on the participant's desire. In order to adhere to ethical standards, parental or guardian consent was also obtained for participants under the age of 18. According to Creswell (2014), gaining informed consent was a crucial ethical prerequisite for qualitative research in order to guarantee openness and respect for the autonomy of participants.

3.5.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

All data collected were anonymized to protect the identities of participants. Personal information was replaced with unique codes, and all data were stored securely in password-protected files or locked cabinets, accessible only to the research team. According to Bryman (2016), maintaining confidentiality was an essential aspect of ethical research practices, particularly when dealing with sensitive topics such as early marriages and teen fatherhood.

3.5.3 Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw

Participants were made aware that participation was completely optional and that they might leave at any moment without giving a reason or risking any repercussions. This guaranteed that participants were at ease and had the autonomy to choose whether or not to participate. Ensuring that volunteers had the freedom to withdraw from study without facing consequences was a crucial ethical criterion Marshall and Adebamowo (2006).

3.5.4 Avoidance harm

Efforts were made to reduce any psychological distress to participant by the researcher. Questions were carefully asked to avoid negative emotions. Participants were referred to local counselling services such as Department of Social Welfare for additional support after the study.

3.6 Methods of Observation and Interpretation

In order to comprehend the lived experiences of teen fathers in early marriages within the St. Mary's community, observation and interpretation were essential. These techniques were meticulously planned and carried out to guarantee the gathering of accurate and significant data.

Both formal and informal observations were made to supplement the data collected through focus group discussions (FGDs), interviews, observations and structured questionnaires. This approach was adopted in order to record interactions, behaviours and nonverbal clues that participants might not verbally convey.

3.6.1 Observations

Participant Observation during focus group discussions and interviews, participants' body language, tone of voice and emotional responses were noted. This approach aligned with the work of Jalal (2023), who highlighted the importance of participant observation in ethnographic research to uncover hidden emotions and social dynamics. Non-Participant Observations were made within participants' family and community settings, focusing on their interactions with spouses, children and other family members. This method, as described by Yang (2014), enabled researchers to capture behaviours in natural settings, contributing valuable insights into family dynamics and role expectations.

Field notes were maintained to record observations systematically. Notes included details about participants' demeanour, significant actions and environmental conditions. These notes were later categorized to align with themes identified during the data analysis phase. The process of documenting observations and linking them to the thematic analysis was supported by Saldaña (2015), who emphasized the role of field in providing rich qualitative data for analysis.

3.6.2 Questionnaires

One popular technique for gathering information on the experiences of teen fathers in young marriages was the use of questionnaires. They worked especially well at collecting uniform data from a sizable population, guaranteeing that recurring themes like psychological difficulties, educational disruption and financial stress were methodically recorded. Both closed-ended questions, which yielded quantifiable and comparative data, and open-ended questions, which let respondents elaborate on their experiences, could be found in questionnaires. Because of its effectiveness and affordability, this approach was suitable for research projects with participants that were spread out geographically. For example, Allen and Wiles (2016) pointed out that surveys could provide a comprehensive picture of the difficulties faced by teen fathers by identifying trends in the ways that societal pressures and few resources impacted their roles and duties in early marriages.

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions (FGDs) teen fathers were given a forum to talk about their experiences as a group, encouraging communication and interaction that might reveal common struggles and coping strategies. This approach was very useful for examining how societal expectations and cultural norms affected teen father's experiences in early marriages. In order to create a dynamic that might highlight both similarities and contrasts in their circumstances, focus group discussions (FGDs) urged members to think back on their experiences while also expanding on the viewpoints of others. Focus groups shed light on the social aspects of early fatherhood, like peer support, stigma and community influence, which were frequently overlooked in individual-level research (Smith et al., 2017).

3.6.4 Interviews

One of the best ways to learn more about the unique experiences of teen fathers in young marriages was through interviews. Interviews, whether semi-structured, unstructured, or structured, gave participants the opportunity to tell their own stories, offering rich and in-depth descriptions of their struggles, goals and coping mechanisms. This approach was especially helpful for examining delicate subjects like interpersonal dynamics, emotional difficulties, and the effects of early fatherhood on identity and aspirations for the future. According to Brown and Clark (2018), interviews were a useful tool for capturing the complexities of teen fathers' life, including their internal conflicts and the social and familial pressures they encountered. Because interviews were so flexible, researchers could customize their questions to each participant's particular situation and delve further into particular topics.

3.7 Data interpretation methods and techniques

In order to extract meaning and insights, data interpretation was an iterative process that integrated information from several sources. The objective was to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the participants' experiences, taking into consideration both spoken and unspoken communication.

3.7.1 Thematic Interpretation

Recurring themes were identified by coding and analysing data from observations, interviews, and focus group discussions. During this process, themes like coping mechanisms, social stigma, mental anguish and financial difficulties emerged. By confirming or refuting oral reports, observational data enhanced the interpretation. This was in line with Braun and Clarke's (2014) research, which highlighted the value of thematic analysis in spotting trends in qualitative data.

3.7.2 Contextual Analysis

The sociocultural and economic background of St. Mary's was taken into consideration while interpreting observational data. For instance, themes of financial hardship and interrupted education were connected to participant observations of individuals straining to support their families through manual labour. Maxwell (2014) supported this strategy by stating that comprehending the participants' life experiences was improved by analysing data in its context.

3.7.3 Triangulation

Information from many sources, including questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and observations, was compared to guarantee validity. For instance, observational notes and focus group discussions were used to cross-verify a participant's assertion that they received support from their family during an interview. Triangulation improved the validity and dependability of qualitative research findings, as proposed by Moon (2019).

3.7.4 Interpretation techniques Content Analysis

Emotional undertones in nonverbal clues were examined during interviews. For example, hesitancy or tone shifts were associated with uneasiness while talking about delicate subjects like stigma. According to Denham and Onwuegbuzie, this method of content analysis enabled researchers to glean more profound meaning from both spoken and unspoken communication.

3.7.5 Pattern Recognition

Observational data made it easier to spot trends, like participants' ongoing difficulty juggling their parental duties with social expectations. Miles et al (2014) supported this pattern recognition methodology as a way to combine and analyse qualitative data.

3.8 Data Processing and Analysis

The study's crucial phases of data processing and analysis made sure that the unprocessed information gathered from focus group discussions (FGDs), structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews and observations was arranged, cleaned, and examined to offer insightful information about the experiences of teen fathers in young marriages. Processing data was sorting, classifying, and getting the data ready for analysis were all part of the data processing process. The accuracy and dependability of the data were ensured by this procedure.

3.8.1 Sorting Data

Excels were used to methodically arrange the data gathered via structured questionnaires according to participant demographics, including age, marital status, educational attainment and economic background. Early data organization and sorting was essential to the integrity

and structure of both qualitative and quantitative research, claimed Creswell et al (2015). The verbatim transcriptions of the FGD and interview recordings were safely archived. To facilitate easy retrieval and connection to the relevant participant's questionnaire, each transcript was tagged with a unique identification number.

Themes including family dynamics, caregiver responsibilities, and community attitudes were used to organize observational field notes. As recommended by Saldaña (2018), who highlighted the significance of structuring field notes in accordance with major study themes, this method represented best practices in qualitative research.

3.8.2 Performing quality control checks

To guarantee accuracy, transcripts were examined and compared to audio recordings. Participants were contacted for follow-up interviews to clarify any ambiguous responses. This was in keeping with Maxwell's (2014) recommendations, which emphasized the necessity of confirming the precision and coherence of data in qualitative research.

The consistency and completeness of the questionnaires were examined, and any unclear or missing answers were noted and dealt with. The observational field notes and themes were reviewed and validated through peer debriefing sessions with research assistants.

3.8.3 Data Categorization and Coding

Thematic analysis was used to code qualitative data from observations, FGDs, and interviews. The codes were organized into more general categories and topics that represented important facets of the participants' lives, including coping strategies, social stigma, emotional difficulties and financial hardships. The significance of recognizing patterns and recurrent themes was emphasized in this thematic analysis technique, which adhered to Braun and Clarke's (2014) methodology for qualitative research.

Statistical summaries were created from quantitative data obtained from surveys (e.g., percentages of participants reporting specific obstacles or forms of support). This quantitative analytic approach was in line with recommendations made by Etikan et al. (2016), who supported the methodical coding and classification of data in order to get significant insights.

3.9 Data analysis

Finding patterns, connections, and insights in the processed data was the main goal of the analysis. According to Islam (2020) Data analysis was defined as a process of cleaning, transforming and modeling data to discover useful information for business decision-making.

The purpose of Data Analysis was to extract useful information from data and taking the decision based upon the data analysis.

3.9.1 Qualitative data analysis Thematic analysis

Using this method, the participants' narratives were examined for recurrent themes and sub-themes. For instance, by examining coded data, themes like "economic hardship," "disrupted education," and "family support systems" were created. According to Braun and Clarke (2014), theme analysis aided in the identification and interpretation of noteworthy patterns in qualitative data.

3.9.2 Content Analysis

To give the themes more depth, nonverbal clues like hesitations or emotional tones recorded during observations were examined. Denham and Onwuegbuzie (2013), who emphasized the need of examining both verbal and non-verbal clues in order to derive deeper meaning from qualitative data, was the source of this content analysis methodology.

3.9.3 Contextual Analysis

A fuller comprehension of how these elements influenced the participants' experiences was made possible by the interpretation of the data in light of St. Mary's sociocultural and economic reality. According to Moser and Korstjens (2018), making correct and pertinent inferences from qualitative data required an awareness of the environment in which the data was gathered.

3.9.4 Quantitative data analysis

Descriptive statistics were produced by analysing data from structured questionnaires. For example, percentages were computed to indicate the proportion of individuals who relied on family support, dropped out of school, or experienced financial hardship. This statistical method adhered to the guidelines provided by Etikan et al. (2016), who highlighted the significance of data summarization and quantification in research.

A thorough grasp of the participants' experiences was produced by utilizing quantitative data to bolster qualitative themes. The mixed-methods approach that Creswell (2014) discussed was reflected in this combination of quantitative and qualitative data.

3.9.5 Triangulation of data

To guarantee consistency and validity, the results from the various data sources questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and observations were compared and combined. For instance, observations of participants' interactions in community contexts were used to cross-verify any reports of stigmatization made by participants during interviews. According to Patton (2015), triangulation was an essential method for guaranteeing validity.

3.9.6 Presentation of findings

A narrative approach was used to present the key themes and patterns that were summarized. To emphasize their voices and highlight important themes, direct statements from participants were incorporated. Context was provided by quantitative data, and key conclusions were summarized using visual aids like tables or charts.

3.10 Chapter summary

The study examined teenage fathers' experiences in early marriages using qualitative and quantitative approaches involving questionnaires, focus groups, interviews and observations. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to collect data, with confidentiality for the participants provided by ethical protocols. Thematic and contextual analysis identified typical issues like family dysfunction, social stigma and economic difficulties. While mixed-methods analysis yielded an in-depth understanding of teen fathers' lived experience with important implications for intervention programs, triangulation of data increased validity. The next chapter would cover data presentation, interpretation and discussion of findings and conclusion.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS/ RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter assessed the experiences of teenage fathers in early marriages within St. Mary's, Chitungwiza utilizing a mixed-methods approach. Aside from prescribing policy and community responses for supporting teen fathers, the findings also emphasized psychological effects, social stigma, interrupted education and economic difficulties. By presenting these findings, this chapter presented critical insights into the experiences faced by teenage fathers in early marriages, laying the foundation for the discussion.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Participation

This study had 30 participants and 15 of them were teen fathers as primary participants while the remaining participants were parents and community members. Due to their background and expertise in child care and protection, one probation officer from the Department of Social Development and one officer from the Padare Men's Forum were chosen as key informants. This was carried out in order to balance the research's conclusions. The age range of these participants was 16-40 years old.

4.2.1 Age Distribution

In order to gather a variety of viewpoints, the study included volunteers of all ages. Respondents between the ages of 20 and 30 made up (40%) and offered insightful commentary as young adults who may have witnessed or experienced early marriage. While the remaining participants were older people (31–40 years and above), such as parents and community leaders, respondents who were 16–19 years old (50%) were those who were most at risk of having adolescent experiences in early marriages. With an average age of 18, the majority of teen fathers were between the ages of 16 and 19. This emphasizes how early family duties entered their life.

Table 4.2: Demographic characteristics n= 30

CHARACTERISTICS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Age		
16-19	15	50%
20-30	12	40%
31+	3	30%
Gender		
Male	24	80%

4.2.2 Educational Attainment

Significant differences were found in the respondents' educational backgrounds, with 60% having only completed primary school, 20% having completed secondary school, and 20% having no formal schooling at all. A more thorough analysis of the data showed that most participants had either left secondary school too soon or had finished their Ordinary Level coursework but had not continued on to the Advanced Level. This was primarily because early marriage disrupted their studies and frequently made them prioritize family obligations over their education, which shortened their educational goals and may have contributed to cycles of limited opportunities and socioeconomic stagnation.

Table 4.2.2: Demographic characteristics n= 15

PARTICIPANT	FATHERHOOD AGE	DATA COLLECTION AGE	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL
PARTICIPANT 1	16	23	HIGH SCHOOL
PARTICIPANT 2	16	22	PRIMARY SCHOOL
PARTICIPANT 3	17	23	HIGH SCHOOL
PARTICIPANT 4	18	19	PRIMARY SCHOOL
PARTICIPANT 5	16	17	PRIMARY SCHOOL
PARTICIPANT 6	17	17	SCHOOL DROUPOUT
PARTICIPANT 7	16	20	PRIMARY SCHOOL
PARTICIPANT 8	17	21	PRIMARY SCHOOL
PARTICIPANT 9	16	21	SCHOOL DROUPOUT

PARTICIPANT 10	17	18	PRIMARY SCHOOL
PARTICIPANT 11	16	21	SCHOOL DROUPOUT
PARTICIPANT 12	19	24	PRIMARY SCHOOL
PARTICIPANT 13	17	22	PRIMARY SCHOOL
PARTICIPANT 14	19	23	HIGH SCHOOL
PARTICIPANT 15	18	20	PRIMARY SCHOOL

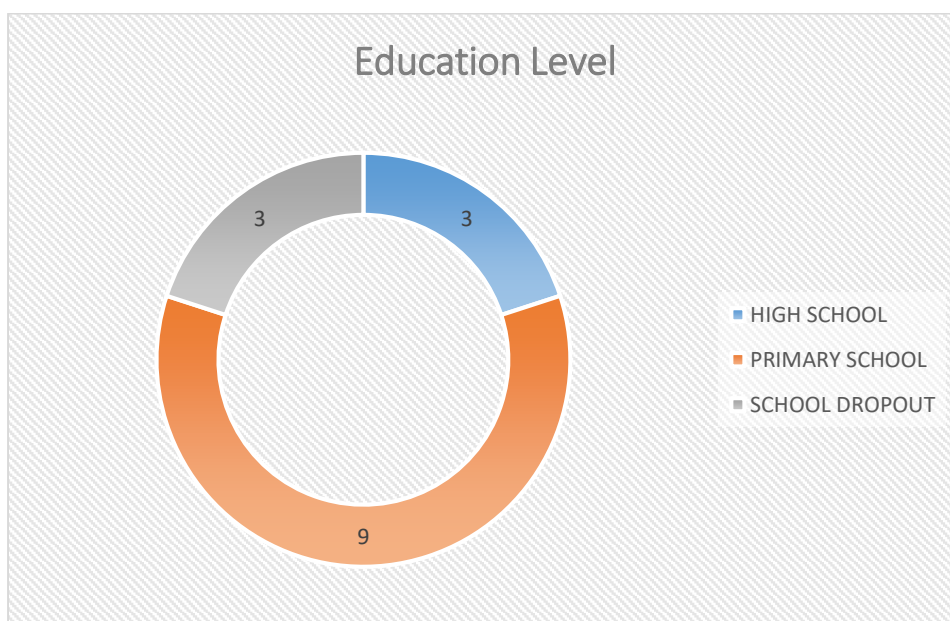


Fig 4.2 Education Level of Teen Fathers

4.2.3 Employment status

The majority of participants were found to be engaged in informal employment arrangements, such as street vending, manual labour, or other precarious forms of work, which offered limited job security, unstable income and negligible benefits. Furthermore, a significant proportion of the participants expressed profound challenges in securing stable, formal employment

opportunities, primarily due to the constraints imposed by their limited educational attainment and lack of relevant work experience.

4.3 Factors which lead to teen fatherhood in St Mary's Chitungwiza

According to participants and key informants, several factors contribute to teen fatherhood, with cultural influences, early engagement to sexual activities, peer pressure, unemployment and substance abuse use emerging as significant contributors to this phenomenon.

4.3.1 Cultural Beliefs

According to participants and key informants, early fatherhood at St. Mary's was not significantly influenced by culture. Key interviewees, however, stated that culture matters in rural areas more than in cities.

According to Participant 6, "I doubt that very much.... if culture does influence early marriages, then it could be very few cases." In particular, for those of us living in urban areas, early marriages can be linked to other factors that are not closely related to culture.

"My sister, this has nothing to do with culture. I think the prevailing global trends should be blamed and culture should be exonerated from this.... if you look at our culture as shonas it does restrict early marriage, particularly for boys," said Participant 2 confidently.

According to key source number two, "In an urban setting, contemporary factors are at play, while in a rural setting, where patriarchy is still dominating, culture plays a significant role."

Although these results show that culture has little bearing on teen fatherhood in St. Marys, it should be noted that one key informant acknowledged the impact of culture in a rural context, citing patriarchy as one of the contributing factors. These results stand in stark contrast to the body of research that suggests culture plays a role in promoting early marriages.

The patriarchal culture's emphasis on the provider role in parenthood poses a significant challenge for teenage fathers, who often struggle to meet this expectation due to unemployment and lack of financial resources, leading to feelings of inadequacy and guilt. Cultural norms that encourage early parenthood and emphasize the importance of providing for one's child can lead to a higher likelihood of teen fatherhood (Mollborn, 2017). Furthermore, As Masilo (2018) notes, fathers are crucial players in the family system, and their involvement is essential for the well-being of their children, highlighting the need for cultural sensitivity and support systems that address the unique challenges faced by teenage fathers.

Cultural practices, such as paying damages and negotiating child-care arrangements, significantly impact teenage fathers, as noted by Jacobs and Marais (2013). Unemployed teenage fathers, in particular, face significant challenges, as their inability to pay damages often leads to their exclusion from their child's upbringing. Furthermore, Jacobs and Marais (2013) found that teenage fathers often engage in risky behaviours, such as unprotected sex and excessive alcohol consumption, due to a desire to assert their masculinity and gain a sense of authority. This reckless behaviour can lead to impulsive decisions, including engaging in unprotected sex, without considering the potential consequences, ultimately resulting in teenage pregnancy and fatherhood. These societal expectations can create an environment where young men are more likely to become fathers at an early age.

4.3.2 Early engagement to sexual activities

One of the factors contributing to teen fatherhood in St. Marys is early engagement to sexual activities, according to both participants and key informants. Additionally, participant 3 stated, "As a result of my sister's peer pressure to engage in sexual activity, I rushed into it without understanding the consequences. We believed it would be exciting and enjoyable, but we had no idea that we would become fathers at a young age."

"From my experience in child protection, children are engaging in sexual activities at a young age, which is concerning and, in my opinion, contributes to early fatherhood," said the key informant.

Based on the aforementioned results, it can be said that early sexual activity debut significantly increases the likelihood of early fatherhood most than other factors. This is consistent with other research that found early sexual activity debut similarly increases the likelihood of teen fatherhood. Since early sexual debut is frequently accompanied by inconsistent use of contraceptives, limited access to sexual health services and poor information about contraception, it is a significant contributing factor to unwanted births and teen fatherhood (Smith et al., 2018). The chance of fathering a child during adolescence is increased for teenage boys who have early sexual activity because they may not be emotionally and cognitively mature enough to make wise decisions about safe sex practices. Additionally, hazardous sexual activities including unprotected intercourse and having several sexual partners are often associated with early sexual debut, increasing the likelihood of unwanted pregnancies (Garcia & Miller, 2019). Early sexual debut is also influenced by contextual factors, including media exposure to sexual content, peer pressure and inadequate parental supervision. Furthermore, according to Johnson and Carter's (2021) research, boys from socioeconomically

disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to initiate sexual activity at a young age. This is frequently associated with a lack of access to sexual and reproductive health education, which feeds the cycle of teen fatherhood. All things considered, preventing unwanted pregnancies and assisting teen fathers require addressing early sexual debut and encouraging thorough education about sexual and reproductive health.

".... children are learning sexual content and this is fuelling early marriages as you see on me. If we had been restrained from using social media, I think this could have been avoided but it happened and nothing will change but I do have regrets sister," said participant 8.

4.3.3 History of Conduct Disorder and Substance abuse

Participants also point to substance misuse among St. Mary's youth as a contributing reason to the issue of teen fatherhood. Young people are abusing drugs and other substances, which leads to them having sex.

"My sister, there are no jobs out there, drugs are everywhere, and it's causing children to engage in sexual activities and they end up being fathers at teenage age," said participant 5.

The second participant, who appeared to be under stress, added, ".... it's tough my sister, I started to engage in truancy in form 3. I started to engage in drugs and that forced me to cohabitate with my girlfriend last year and that is how I became a father." "Substance abuse and early fatherhood are inextricably linked; as the prevalence of substance and drug abuse rises, social ills also rise, which explains why child marriage is so prevalent in modern societies," stated Key Informant 1.

These results demonstrate that substance and drug misuse and early fatherhood are related. Drug and substance abuse, according to participants, pushes teenagers into sexual activity where they become pregnant and are sent to them.

Participant 10 said that because conduct disorder is frequently accompanied by impulsivity, poor decision-making and a lack of consideration for long-term consequences, it significantly increases the likelihood of unintended pregnancies and teen fatherhood among adolescents. Conduct disorder is a psychiatric condition that is defined by persistent patterns of aggressive, disruptive, and antisocial behaviours that violate societal norms (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). According to research, teens with a history of conduct disorder are more likely to participate in hazardous sexual practices, like repeated sexual partnerships and unprotected sex, which can result in unwanted pregnancies and the spread of STDs (Smith et al., 2017).

Male adolescents with conduct disorder were twice as likely to become teen fathers as their peers without the disorder, according to a longitudinal study by Johnson and Carter (2019). This finding emphasizes the need for focused interventions to prevent teen fatherhood and foster positive relationships among adolescents with conduct disorder. The importance of addressing the intricate interactions between individual, family and environmental factors that contribute to teen fatherhood among adolescents with conduct disorder is further highlighted by the fact that these adolescents frequently grow up in unstable home environments that are marked by inadequate parental supervision, exposure to violence and reinforcement of maladaptive behaviour patterns. These factors increase the likelihood that these adolescents will become teen fathers and perpetuate a cycle of disadvantage.

Adolescents' decision-making, behaviour and general well-being are all greatly impacted by substance misuse, which is a major contributing factor to the occurrence of teen fatherhood. Substance-using adolescents are more likely to participate in dangerous sexual behaviours, such as unprotected intercourse, while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs (Garcia & Miller, 2018). This is due to the fact that substance abuse raises the risk of unwanted pregnancies by impairing judgment, lowering inhibitions and decreasing the likelihood of utilizing contraception. Additionally, social settings that normalize and promote risky behaviours—like peer groups that support permissive views toward sexual activity—are frequently linked to substance dependence (Brown & Taylor, 2020). Teen fatherhood is more common among adolescents who use drugs as a result of these social dynamics as well as the decreased inhibitions brought on by substance use. The probability of teen fatherhood is further increased by the compounding effect of substance misuse, which frequently intersects with other underlying problems including conduct disorder. The combined effects of impulsive behaviours, poor decision-making and hazardous sexual practices put adolescents with co-occurring conduct disorder and substance addiction at considerably greater risk of becoming a teen father (Martinez et al., 2021). A perfect storm of unsafe actions, bad choices and unforeseen repercussions can result from this confluence of circumstances, which can eventually raise the prevalence of teen fatherhood and prolong cycles of poverty.

4.3.4 Peer Pressure

One of the factors contributing to teen fatherhood in St. Marys is Peer pressure according to the participants and key informants. Participant number 15 said that “My friends told me it was normal to have a girlfriend and not to worry about consequences.

“My friends told me you can’t get someone pregnant the first time.” said participant 11.

Teenagers' sexual activities can be significantly impacted by peer pressure, which is particularly prevalent during adolescence. According to recent studies, youths' attitudes and behaviours about sex are greatly influenced by peer pressure because they frequently feel pressured to live up to their friends' standards in order to be accepted, prevent rejection, or preserve their social standing (Suleiman & Deardorff, 2015). Particularly for adolescent boys, sexual activity is frequently strongly associated with masculinity and social standing, fostering a culture in which peers support and even glorify dangerous sexual behaviour. Adolescents may have unprotected intercourse in these situations to establish their manhood, win approval from others, or show off their bluster, which raises the risk of becoming a youthful father.

Peer groups that normalize or even glamorize early sexual experiences can encourage boys to pursue sexual activity at a young age without thinking about the possible consequences, according to numerous studies that have repeatedly shown the link between peer group norms and attitudes toward sexuality (Kheswa, 2020). Particularly when teenagers lack proper sexual education, the urge to blend in with their peers frequently takes precedence over sound judgment, increasing the risk of unintended births because boys are less likely to use contraception regularly. According to study by Martínez et al. (2019), peer dynamics can encourage impulsive behaviour, which can result in early sexual activity. Teenage boys who are affected by their peers frequently lack the emotional maturity necessary to handle relationships appropriately.

Peer pressure might also deter young men from talking about abstinence or contraception because these practices may be viewed as "unmanly" or at odds with conventionally accepted male standards. Teen fatherhood risk is increased by this lack of communication and preparation, underscoring the necessity of peer-led interventions and comprehensive sexual education that support good masculinity, healthy relationships and responsible decision-making. One of the participants said that "Looking back, I realize I only did it because my friends were pushing me not because I was ready."

4.3.5 Unemployment

Participants also point about unemployment among St. Mary's youth as a contributing reason to the issue of teen fatherhood. The responses reflected their personal experiences, socio-economic conditions and perceptions of how unemployment influenced their decisions or circumstances.

Participant 11 said that I wasn't working or going to school, so I spent most of my time hanging out with my girlfriend, which lead to this situation.

If I had a job and or something to keep me busy, I wouldn't have been in this situation" said participant 9.

One of the participants noted that teenage and young adult unemployment is a serious problem with wide ranging effects that can significantly affect both the individuals' and their families' life. Young men may feel pressured to take on adult responsibilities, such as marriage and parenting, too soon in order to achieve social stability, satisfy cultural norms, or demonstrate their manhood when they have few options for further education or job. Numerous studies have emphasized the link between teen fatherhood and unemployment, especially when it comes to early marriages. For example, scholars have observed that early marriage is a prevalent occurrence among both boys and girls, frequently in low socioeconomic circumstances (Gerbaka et al., 2021).

Even though these marriages might not be financially viable, they are occasionally viewed as a means of achieving social stability or meeting cultural standards. Teenage fathers find it difficult to support their young children since unemployment causes them to lack a reliable source of income, which furthers the cycle of poverty. Teenage fathers without jobs are more likely to face long-term financial instability, which has a detrimental effect on both their own and their children's general well-being, according to Wagner et al. (2019). Both the father and the child may experience strained relationships, reduced educational attainment, and fewer chances in the future as a result of this financial instability. Cultural expectations and conventions are a major factor in the continuation of early marriages in many societies. Young men may feel under pressure to get married young in order to demonstrate their manhood or to live up to family expectations when unemployment is high. Adolescent fatherhood is more common in East Africa, according to a study by Terefe et al. (2024). This study emphasizes the complexity of adolescent fatherhood and suggests that a number of factors, including sociodemographic traits, influence the likelihood of becoming an adolescent father. A comprehensive intervention that addresses the underlying causes of poverty, promotes education and employment opportunities, and challenges harmful cultural norms and expectations is necessary because unemployment, poverty, and cultural expectations combine to create a perfect storm that raises the risk of teen fatherhood.

4.3 Graph 1: Factors that lead to early fatherhood in St Mary's

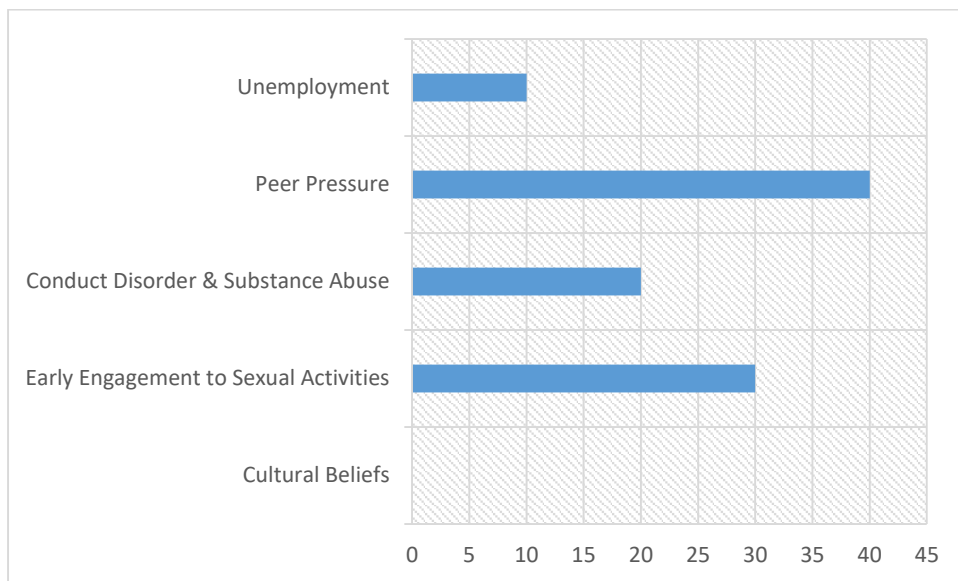


Fig 4.3 Factors that lead to early fatherhood in St Mary's

4.4 The perceived effects of teen fatherhood in St Mary's Chitungwiza

The study participants highlighted the effects of teen fatherhood. Among them effects on vulnerability to domestic violence, health risks, Psychological and emotional impact, education disruption and economic disempowerment.

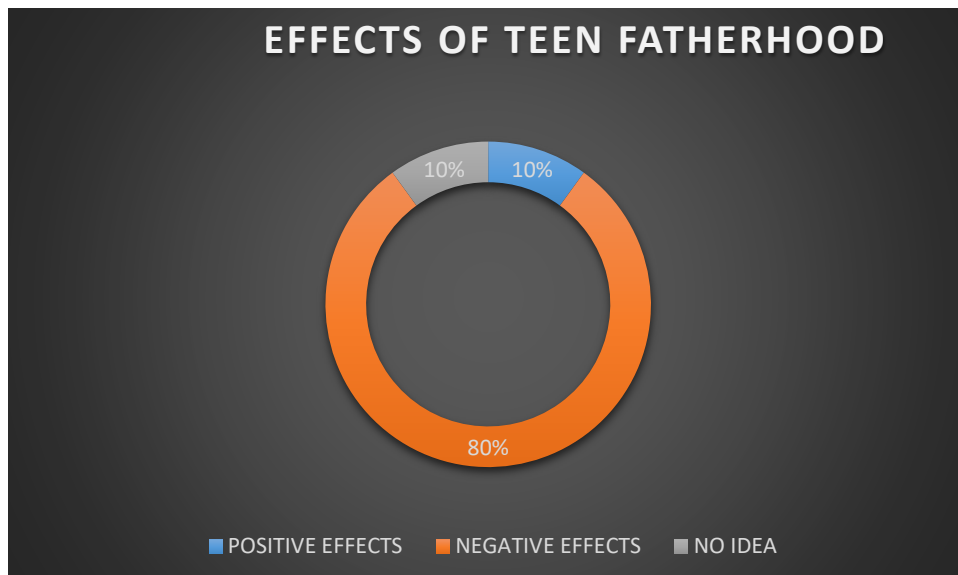


Fig 4.4 Effects of teen fatherhood

4.4.1 Education effects

Key informants and primary participants agreed that early fatherhood has an impact on a boy child's education.

According to Participant 5, "I ended up being a school dropout because it became very difficult for me to go to school because people knew that I was cohabiting."

Additionally, participant 14 stated, "I did not stop going to school after getting married, but I did not manage to pass because of responsibilities as a young father, it did not go well my sister." "Once children begin living together, responsibilities also come and this can have negative implications on their education and many boys drop out of schools," observed key informant 2, echoing nearly the same comments.

These answers show that teen parenthood had a detrimental effect on the boy child's education, and it is evident that every participant felt that teen fatherhood had nothing to do with academic performance. Since the psychological system is one of the systems that has an impact on human development, according to the psycho-social theory, these youngsters may also be impacted because they must consider marriage and schooling at the same time. Teenage fatherhood may affect education for a number of reasons, according to earlier research. A child's birth is a life-changing event that can necessitate a major reallocation of time and financial resources.

Teen father's interrupted schooling has serious, long-lasting effects that can prolong generations-long cycles of disadvantage. First of all, it restricts their ability to earn money, forcing people into low-wage, precarious employment and making it difficult to escape the cycle of poverty (Kassa et al., 2018). Because they frequently lack the resources to support their family, the teen father's financial instability has an effect on not just their own well-being but also that of their spouse and child. Additionally, disrupting education can have psychological effects like low self-esteem, feelings of guilt and inadequacy, which can make it harder for them to parent well and cause tension in their marriages (Mollborn, 2017). Additionally, offspring of teen fathers are more likely to suffer from behavioural problems, poor academic achievement and a lower socioeconomic standing, which perpetuates cycles of disadvantage throughout generations. This means that the effects of disrupting schooling go beyond the individual. According to research by Masud et al. (2015), parental practices have a big impact on kids' academic achievement and positive role modeling is crucial. Teen fathers who lack adequate education frequently find it difficult to be good role models for their children, which exacerbates these intergenerational effects and emphasizes the need for

focused interventions that help teen fathers finish their education and acquire effective parenting techniques.

4.4.2 Health effects

Participants also cited health consequences as another effect of teen fatherhood. Other participants, however, argued that there were no negative health impacts associated with teen fatherhood.

According to Participant 10, "Yes, fatherhood presented health challenges for me. I made a huge mistake by not knowing that my wife was on ART. I regret it, but I also came to terms with it over time."

"OH no, my sister, getting married at a young age doesn't come with health complications, take a closer look at me, am I looking like a sick person? ..." stated participant 3 in a cheerful attitude. "Even though it is challenging to determine the health effects of early marriage on boys, these effects are more prevalent in girls as compared to the boys," stated Key Informant 2.

Based on participant replies, it may be concluded that teen fatherhood has both health effects and no consequences, depending on the individual. However, research has shown that teen fatherhood has numerous detrimental health effects. A third generation of studies on teenage motherhood, which compare data using an instrumental variable method, typically show either a surprising positive influence or no detrimental effects of giving birth as a teen on the quantity of schooling (Hats, McElroy, and Sanders 2015). Early marriage is closely linked to mental health conditions such stress, anxiety and depression. Young dads frequently feel overburdened by the abrupt shift from adolescence to parenting, having to balance the demands of raising a kid with the demands of their marriage and finances. Teen fathers are more likely than their peers who are not fathers to experience psychological discomfort, according to research by Winstanley et al. (2016). Feelings of loneliness and inadequacy are made worse by the shame and social condemnation surrounding teen parenthood, which can result in long-term mental health issues.

Due to the demands of supporting their families, teen men in young marriages frequently disregard their own physical well-being.

Early childrearing costs can result in inadequate self-care, sleep deprivation and poor nutrition, all of which can exacerbate long-term health problems like exhaustion, stress-related ailments, and compromised immunity (Mollborn, 2017). Teen fathers are also more likely to have

occupational injuries due to the necessity of working in physically taxing or low-paying occupations, frequently without the necessary safety precautions or training.

In certain instances, a lack of knowledge about sexual and reproductive health exacerbates the health hazards that teen fathers confront. There may be issues for both mother and child as a result of many teens fathers' lack of readiness to attend to their partners' medical needs during pregnancy and delivery. Adolescent fathers frequently lack access to reliable information regarding prenatal and postnatal care, which raises the health risks for their families, according to a study by Kassa et al. (2018). The young father's spouse and child are both at risk for health issues related to teen parenting in young marriages. Adolescent pregnancies, which involve serious health risks for the mother, such as postpartum depression, maternal mortality and problems during childbirth, are frequently associated with early marriages. Teen fathers put their partner's and child's health at greater risk because they are frequently unable to offer sufficient support during this crucial time because of their inexperience and lack of finances (Kassa et al., 2018).

Teen fathers' insufficient parenting abilities and financial means can lead to poor nutrition, insufficient healthcare and restricted access to medical services for their kids. Children of adolescent parents are more likely to experience chronic illnesses, developmental impairments, and low birth weight (Mollborn, 2017). The child's psychological health may suffer long-term consequences as a result of the stress and instability in the family setting.

Access to healthcare for themselves and their families is frequently severely hampered for teen fathers in young marriages. Common barriers include lack of funds, lack of mobility and ignorance of healthcare services. Furthermore, teen fathers may be deterred from getting help by social shame and judgment, which would increase their health risks (Winstanley et al., 2016). These barriers highlight the need for targeted interventions to ensure that young fathers have access to affordable and inclusive healthcare services.

4.4.3 Economic Disempowerment

The study's participants had differing opinions about how teen fathers are affected by economic disempowerment.

"I had to drop out of school when my girlfriend got pregnant," said one attendee. I now work part-time, but it's never enough to support the mother and child.

Finding a steady employment is difficult, according to participant 13. Since I can't always provide for my family, I sometimes feel like I'm failing as a father.

The themes showed how societal expectations for young fathers and economic fragility connect. One of the main causes of teen fathers' economic disempowerment is the disruption of their education, since the demands of marriage and fatherhood frequently force young men to drop out of school early in order to find work, which limits their ability to obtain the training and credentials required for well-paying positions. Less than half of teen fathers' finish high school, and even fewer go on to further their education, which drastically lowers their earning potential and limits them to low-paying, precarious jobs (Mollborn, 2017). Teen fathers who lack access to education and training options frequently find it difficult to compete in labour markets that place a greater value on skilled labour, which makes the lack of vocational training an even bigger problem.

Because of this, individuals are unable to move up the economic ladder and are stuck in low-income groups (Kiselica & Kiselica, 2020). The well-being of the teen father's spouse and child, who rely on them for financial assistance, is also impacted by this economic stagnation. The costs of raising a kid and running a household can quickly overwhelm young fathers without steady incomes and teen fathers in early marriages feel tremendous financial pressure to support their families, frequently with little to no preparation. According to research by Kassa et al. (2018), teen fathers are overrepresented in low-income homes, with many of them living below the poverty line. As a result of this financial burden, many teen fathers are forced to work several jobs labour long hours or depend on unofficial work, which further restricts their capacity to further their education or better their financial situation. Furthermore, early parenthood's financial needs frequently result in a dependence on government assistance programs or the help of extended family, which can prolong poverty cycles and cause long-term financial instability for the family (Mollborn, 2017). Inadequate support networks, restricted access to resources and social stigma are some of the obstacles that teen fathers in young marriages must overcome in order to achieve economic empowerment. These factors can result in discrimination at work, diminish prospects for steady employment and exacerbate their financial difficulties (Winstanley et al., 2016). Many teen fathers are left to handle the challenges of fatherhood because there aren't any organizations specifically designed to support them and employment alone, without the assistance or guidance required to attain financial security (Kiselica & Kiselica, 2020). According to Kassa et al. (2018), the economic disempowerment of teen fathers in young marriages has a significant impact on their families, especially their children, who are more likely to grow up in poverty and have limited access to

quality healthcare, education and other necessities, thus sustaining poverty cycles for generations to come.

4.4.4 Psychological and Emotional Impact

Stress, anxiety and a sense of unpreparedness for the duties of marriage and children were indicated by the participants. They frequently lacked networks of support to assist them deal with these difficulties. Adolescent fathers frequently experienced social and institutional isolation and lack of support. "There are days when I feel overwhelmed," stated participant number fifteen. Sometimes I just miss being a teenager, and I didn't think marriage would be this difficult.

"People judge us because we are young parents," another participant added. Programs to support young fathers like me are something I wish existed. Increased emotional stress is among the most direct effects of teen fatherhood in young marriages. According to many Participants noted that teen fathers are frequently ill-equipped to handle the duties of fatherhood, such as supporting a family financially, upholding a marriage, and raising a kid. Chronic tension and anxiety might result from these excessive obligations. Teen fathers report much higher levels of stress than their counterparts without children, according to Mollborn (2017). Since many teen fathers lack the maturity, resources, and skills necessary to carry out their jobs effectively, feelings of inadequacy may be the root cause of this stress.

Emotional stress is further exacerbated by the financial burden of early motherhood. Despite having few educational and career options, teen fathers are frequently expected to take on the role of breadwinner.

It may result in emotions of powerlessness and dissatisfaction (Kiselica & Kiselica, 2020). Their emotional health suffers as a result of feeling like they have failed when they are unable to live up to these expectations.

Adolescent fathers in young marriages are more likely to suffer from low self-esteem and despair. Adolescence and adulthood are already difficult times, and the additional duties of marriage and fatherhood can make them feel even more alone and dismal. Teen fathers are more likely than their classmates to suffer from depressive symptoms, according to research by Winstanley et al. (2016). This is frequently due to social shame and a lack of support networks.

Another prevalent psychological effect of teen parenting is low self-esteem. Because society views young fathers as reckless or immature, many of them feel judged by it. Their sense of

self-worth may be further damaged by internalized sentiments of shame and inadequacy brought on by this external judgment. These unfavourable feelings may make it more difficult for them to build wholesome connections and raise their child (Mollborn, 2017).

Teen fathers in young marriages frequently have emotional difficulties in their partnerships. Conflicts with their spouse might arise from the demands of marriage and motherhood, especially if there is a lack of emotional or financial support. Teenage marriages are more likely to be unstable and conflict-ridden, which can make young fathers' psychological issues worse (Kassa et al., 2018).

Teen fathers also frequently experience emotional alienation from their peers. Teen fathers are juggling adult obligations while their pals may still be partaking in normal teenage activities. Poor mental health outcomes can result from this isolation since it can cause feelings of loneliness and a lack of social support (Kiselica & Kiselica, 2020). Teen fathers could find it difficult to handle the emotional demands of their new roles if they don't have a strong support system.

Teen fathers' emotional and psychological difficulties may potentially impair their capacity to be good parents. Their ability to form a link with their child and offer the emotional support required for healthy growth may be hampered by stress, despair and low self-esteem. According to Mollborn (2017), teen dads who have mental health problems are less likely to participate in their child's life, which may have long-term effects on the child's mental and emotional health.

Fatherhood's emotional toll can occasionally cause disengagement or even the resignation of parental duties. The teen father may experience regret and remorse as a result, which would feed a vicious cycle of unpleasant sentiments. Therefore, it is essential to attend to the psychological and emotional requirements of teen fathers in order to encourage good parenting habits and strong family bonds.

4.4.5 Increased Vulnerability to Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is significantly impacted by teenage fatherhood, according to study participants. Many participants talked about their own experiences with marital conflict, which frequently resulted from poor communication, financial stress, or conflicting expectations between spouses, making them more susceptible to domestic violence. One participant noted, "Sometimes we argue about money or how to raise our child," highlighting the difficulties of juggling duties as fathers and husbands. We are both really young and still learning stuff, so

it's challenging." This demonstrates the difficulties that many adolescent dads encounter in adjusting to their new duties and responsibilities, which leads to a perfect storm that raises the possibility of domestic violence. Many participants highlighted that

Teen fathers and their partners live in unstable environments as a result of early marriages, which are sometimes caused by cultural expectations, poverty, or a lack of educational possibilities. Because the male spouse is typically expected to take on the role of provider and decision-maker despite his youth, adolescents in these partnerships frequently face power imbalances (Raj & McDougal, 2015). Frustration brought on by the need to live up to social norms might result in violent action. Adolescent dads may also be unable to resolve disputes amicably and resort to violence as a way to establish their authority (Miller et al., 2016).

The difficulties that come with young marriages are exacerbated by teen parenting. Economic stress and domestic violence have been linked in recent studies, especially in households where young fathers are unable to meet their financial responsibilities (Kalokhe et al., 2017). Feelings of inadequacy brought on by their incapacity to support their family may show up as verbal, emotional, or physical violence directed at their partners. Teen fathers' emotional immaturity can also make it difficult for them to communicate effectively, which can lead to arguments turning violent (Stöckl et al., 2021).

Furthermore, male partners are not the only ones that commit domestic violence. Because of the stress and discontent caused by their situation, young dads may occasionally also experience physical or psychological abuse at the hands of their spouses (Yount et al., 2021).

The fact that domestic violence is reciprocal highlights the intricate interactions between various elements that lead to its high incidence in adolescent parent marriages.

Teen fathers are more susceptible to domestic abuse when they lack proper support networks. According to research, early intervention programs that emphasize conflict resolution, parenting techniques, and economic empowerment can reduce the likelihood of violence in young families (García-Moreno et al., 2015). However, adolescents in underprivileged areas frequently lack access to such programs, making them ill-prepared to successfully navigate the demands of marriage and parenthood.

4.4.6 Perceived Positive effects

The findings were derived from participants and key informants. Teen fatherhood increases sense of responsibility, many young fathers reported that the experience of becoming a father

at an early age fosters a stronger sense of responsibility. Parenthood often motivates them to work harder, pursue stable employment and prioritize the wellbeing of their families.

Teen fatherhood increases growth, maturity and sense of purpose. Teen fathers often perceive fatherhood as a transformative experience that accelerates their emotional and psychological growth. They reported becoming more disciplined and focused on their future. It often acts as a turning point, encouraging them to leave behind risky or unproductive behaviours.

4.5 Strategies which are being employed to curb early fatherhood in St Mary's

Among other strategies that are being employed to curb teen fatherhood, the study participants highlighted that economic employment, strengthening legal frameworks and enforcement, strengthening legal frameworks and enforcement, community response and social work interventions leading strategies being implemented to curb teen fatherhood phenomenon.

4.5.1 Social Work Interventions

Participants emphasized social work interventions as ways to lower teen fatherhood in St. Mary's.

According to participant 4, "I really appreciate their time and message; it changed me. Probation officers from the Department of Social Development helped me a lot. They sat down with me a few days after my girlfriend came home and gave us counselling."

"Yes, social workers are doing a fantastic job in reducing early marriages. We have seen awareness campaigns and education of young people in secondary schools, which should be encouraged and commendable," stated Key Informant 2. "The Department of Social Development is tirelessly collaborating with communities and educational institutions to guarantee that children are taught about the dangers of early marriages, and this will significantly reduce the number of early marriages," stated Key Informant 2.

This leads to the conclusion that social work programs are in place to shield children against adolescent fatherhood. To address this issue, social workers might apply the psycho-social theory. Social workers can control the biological system, ego system, and sociocultural system—the three systems emphasized by psycho-social theory—to prevent youngsters from having sex, which can result in an early marriage. The material currently in publication also dissects social work interventions. Social workers have been tasked by the National Association of Social Work (NASW) and the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) with enhancing people's social wellbeing both individually and collectively (NASW, 1999; IFSW, 2012). Social workers are guided in their interventions by the cardinal values of the

South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). One of the SACSSP's core values for social workers is to provide social justice and services to individuals or social service recipients.

By teaching male youths about the patriarchal culture and peer pressure that might result in adolescent pregnancy, social workers can sustain the cardinal value of service.

In the setting of early marriages, social work interventions are essential in tackling teen fatherhood. By encouraging their active participation in parental responsibilities, these treatments seek to lessen the emotional and socioeconomic difficulties that adolescent fathers and their families confront.

Programs designed to meet the needs of adolescent fathers frequently emphasize education, skill development, and emotional support. For instance, research has shown how critical it is to provide teen men with parenting skills, cultivate healthy co-parenting relationships, and remove obstacles like restricted educational prospects and financial challenges. In order to help young fathers, manage their developmental requirements and parental obligations, social workers are essential in offering counselling services and putting them in touch with resources (Haworth, 2019).

Additionally, social work highlights how communities and families may help teen fathers. Through workshops and support groups that tackle cultural stigmas and encourage responsible fatherhood, community-based organizations foster positive fatherhood involvement. Furthermore, both maternal and paternal families are involved in family-centred activities to establish a network of support that promotes improved outcomes for both the child and the parents (Philliber, 2015).

The goal of social workers' advocacy work is to change laws that assist adolescent parents. For young parents, initiatives like the Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) have played a critical role in enhancing their educational and financial results. These programs demonstrate how important it is to incorporate father-specific interventions into more comprehensive parenting programs in order to meet their particular requirements.

In order to empower teen fathers, lessen the detrimental effects of early marriages, and enhance child welfare outcomes, social work interventions offer a comprehensive framework. These methods help young families find long-term solutions by removing structural obstacles and encouraging behavioural change.

4.5.2 Community Response

According to the participants, the community is not doing much to stop the phenomenon of early fatherhood. Participants acknowledged the government and NGO's presence, but there was minimal reaction from the community.

"OH, my sister, the community has failed us. There is absolutely nothing concrete the community is doing about early marriages. What they are good at is laughing at the victims, which is painful and shameful," stated Participant 4. Additionally, participant 2 stated, "...we lack community leaders, early marriage cases are occurring daily and nobody is worried, and other parents are also permitting their children to marry young, so things are not good and it's hard to tell where the community is heading."

The second key informant stated that "the community should be very much proactive as the government and non-government alone cannot end this problem unless the community response to early marriage is strengthened."

Key tactics for combating teen fatherhood in the context of early marriages include behavioural change initiatives and community awareness campaigns. These strategies question norms, educate communities, and encourage beneficial behavioural changes in young people at the individual and societal levels.

In order to handle the difficulties of teen parenthood, behavioural modification interventions—like the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)—are essential. Enhancing parenting abilities, encouraging healthy family relationships, and lowering stress—especially for young mothers and fathers are the main goals of this research-based program. According to research, programs that focus on young men's parental responsibilities have a major positive impact on family stability and children's wellbeing (Hoath & Sanders, 2002).

Community-based initiatives place a strong emphasis on promoting discussion and increasing awareness regarding teen fatherhood and early marriages. In order to spread ideas that question conventional gender norms and support deferring childbearing until young people are emotionally and financially ready, these programs involve educators, parents, and religious leaders. Research by Philliber (2015) shows how community-based initiatives foster a favourable atmosphere for changing behaviour, particularly in culturally sensitive regions where young marriages are accepted.

Another essential element is comprehensive sex education, which emphasizes the twin objectives of lowering adolescent pregnancies and preparing teenagers for the obligations of parenthood.

Programs that include discussions on fatherhood responsibilities and long-term planning equip young men with the knowledge to make informed decisions. Moreover, the integration of policy initiatives, such as the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPPP) in the U.S., demonstrates the effectiveness of combining education with systemic support to address teen parenthood (Philliber, 2015).

By integrating individual-focused interventions with community-level consciousness-raising campaigns, these programs provide sustainable solutions to reduce teen fatherhood and mitigate the negative outcomes of early marriages. Further research and evaluation, as recommended by Philliber (2015), will help refine these approaches to maximize their impact.

4.5.3 Economic Empowerment for families

As a means of preventing early fatherhood, the survey participants emphasized economic empowerment for families; accordingly, they gave a wide variety of answers.

"Having a business or job would give us something to work toward instead of rushing into relationships or having kids," stated participant 7.

Additionally, one person stated, "When you don't have money." You don't consider what lies ahead. You simply go through life, and that's how I became a father.

According to the Participants one of the most important ways to solve the interrelated problems of teen fatherhood and early marriages is to empower families economically. Because families in economically disadvantaged situations may see early partnerships as a means of easing financial pressures or securing economic stability, research shows that poverty and financial instability are important drivers of early marriage and adolescent parenthood (Chari et al., 2017). Enhancing family economic prospects lessens the need to marry off children at a young age, allowing teenagers to postpone childbearing and focus on their studies and personal growth.

Reducing Families' Financial Stress: Cash transfers, microfinance programs, and vocational training are examples of economic empowerment programs that can assist families escape poverty and lessen the financial incentives behind early marriage.

For instance, by giving families financial incentives to keep their kids in school, conditional cash transfer schemes have been demonstrated to reduce the rates of child marriage (Baird et al., 2016). By providing youth with knowledge and goals, education not only postpones marriage but also lowers the risk of adolescent pregnancy.

Gender stereotypes that support teen fatherhood and early marriage can be addressed through economic empowerment. Research indicates that households with higher levels of financial stability are more inclined to encourage girls' education and postpone marriage (Parsons et al., 2015). This change gives both boys and girls the opportunity to mature and acquire new skills before taking on roles like parents or spouses.

Teen fatherhood can be decreased by giving teenagers access to vocational training and opportunities to earn money.

Engaging young men in productive economic pursuits can help divert them from high-risk behaviours that often lead to premature fatherhood (Amin et al., 2018).

4.5.4 Strengthening legal frameworks and enforcement

Participants in the study discussed how to reduce early fatherhood by enforcing the law and strengthening legal frameworks. They gave a range of answers based on their individual experiences, legal knowledge, and opinions about how laws affect their lives and the incidence of early fatherhood.

One example of an answer is, "I was unaware that there were laws pertaining to early marriage and fatherhood." Nobody ever discussed them with me.

"Stronger laws could make young fathers like me realize we have to take responsibility for our kids," stated participant 3.

Addressing teen fatherhood and early marriages requires bolstering legal frameworks and enforcement. Cultural traditions, lax enforcement, and weak laws frequently permit early marriages to continue, which exacerbates problems like adolescent parenting. Governments may foster a protective environment for adolescents and lower the incidence of early couplings and the difficulties that come with teen fatherhood by enacting stricter laws and making sure they are enforced.

Increasing the Legal Minimum Age of Marriage: Addressing early marriages begins with establishing and upholding a minimum legal age for marriage. Research shows that child

marriage and teen parenthood are less common in nations with well-defined legal systems and strong enforcement capabilities.

For instance, early couplings significantly decreased in nations that raised the marriage age to 18 without exceptions (Maswikwa et al., 2015). A legal foundation for prohibiting child marriages and prosecuting offenders is established by clear legislation.

The practice can be discouraged by making child weddings a crime and punishing individuals who assist or participate in such partnerships. Early marriage rates have been found to decline in nations with criminalized child marriage and consistent enforcement (Chowdhury et al., 2021). By making teen dads responsible for statutory infractions and giving teenage moms legal recourse, these laws can also address the issue of teen fathers.

Better Implementation of Current Laws: Weak enforcement frequently compromises the efficacy of protective legal structures, even in nations with them.

It is crucial to fortify the legal and law enforcement systems in order to keep an eye on and address infractions. For instance, it has been demonstrated that community-level monitoring initiatives that support legal systems can deter early marriages and guarantee adherence (Raj et al., 2019).

Challenging Legal Loopholes: A lot of nations permit exemptions from minimum marriage age requirements, such as those based on parental approval or religious tolerance. To ensure that legal frameworks are effective, these gaps must be closed. Lower rates of teen fatherhood and child marriage have been linked to the removal of such exceptions (Koski et al., 2018).

Legal Support for Adolescents: Adolescents who are at risk of being married young or who are already in such relationships might benefit from advocacy and legal assistance, which can uphold their rights and encourage responsibility. Early marriages have been successfully decreased by legal empowerment initiatives that inform communities about child marriage regulations (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

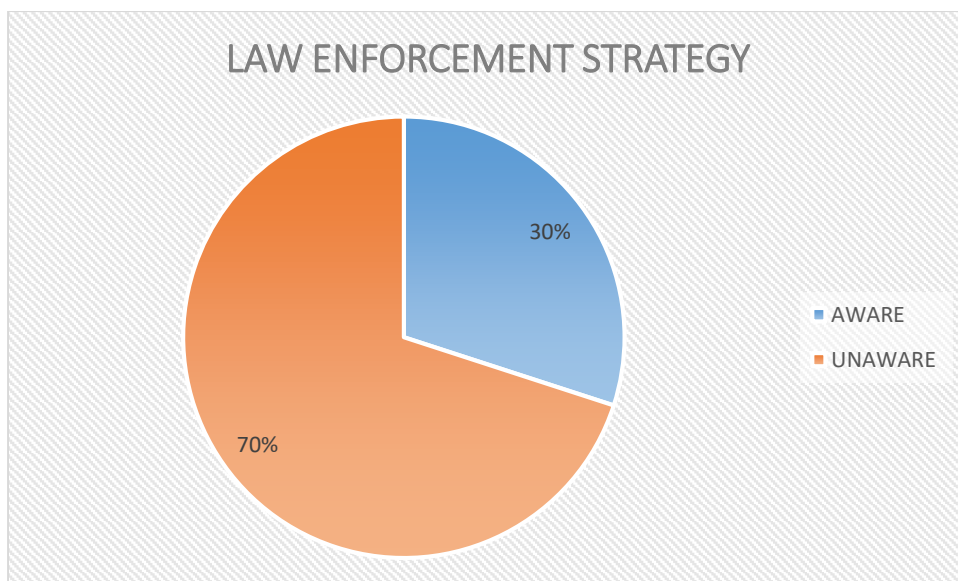


Fig 4.4.5 Law enforcement strategy

4.5.5 Strengthening sexual and reproduce health education

In order to prevent early fatherhood, the participants underlined the importance of bolstering sexual and reproductive health education. The importance of thorough sexual and reproductive health education in preventing early fatherhood was acknowledged by many adolescent dads.

In order to instil a sense of responsibility, participant 14 recommended that sexual health education programs actively engage young males. According to the key informants one important way to address young fatherhood in the setting of early marriages is to improve sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education. In order to provide teenagers with correct information regarding sexual health, reproduction, relationships and decision-making, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is essential. In addition to raising knowledge of the obligations and difficulties that come with being a teen parent, this education helps avoid early pregnancies.

Teaching teenagers about gender equality, consent, contraception, and healthy relationships is a crucial part of CSE. According to research, school-based CSE programs raise the likelihood of postponing birth, decrease risky sexual conduct, and greatly boost adolescents' understanding of contraception (BMC Women's Health, 2023). Additionally, by dispelling myths around reproductive health, these programs help youth make educated decisions.

teenagers.

Furthermore, incorporating SRH education into school curricula guarantees that youth from underserved communities such as those living in rural or low-income environments—have

access to important knowledge. It has been demonstrated that incorporating CSE into educational systems in low- and middle-income nations improves results by shattering cultural taboos and incorporating parents and educators (Reproductive Health Journal, 2022). Adolescents can voice concerns and ask for help without feeling stigmatized when safe and encouraging conversation spaces are provided.

The effectiveness of SRH education is further enhanced by programs that provide access to preventive treatments like STD testing and contraception advice. By empowering teenagers to make responsible choices, these services lower the likelihood of unwanted pregnancies and the problems they bring, such as teen fatherhood (The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health, 2023).

4.6 Chapter Summary

Thirty participants were involved in the study, including key informants, parents, community members and fifteen teen fathers. From demographic data, 50% of teen fathers between 16-19 years, and the majority of them had only reached basic school as they were quitting school prematurely. Most people were unemployed and working under informal conditions. Whereas urban respondents minimized cultural significance, cultural influences, peer pressure, drug abuse, early sex, and cultural significance were all causal factors of teen fatherhood. Whereas some reported personal growth, the effects of teen fatherhood included disruption to education, economic adversity, psychological stress, and an increased probability of domestic violence. Litigation, economic empowerment, sensitization of the community, social work intervention, and sex education were some of the methods used to combat the phenomenon. The finding underscored the need for targeted support systems and policy reforms to mitigate the challenges faced by teen fathers. The study summary, conclusions and recommendations were covered by the upcoming chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION/ CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The primary goal of this chapter was to present the study's overall overview, conclusion, and recommendations was the primary goal of this chapter. Teen father's experiences at St. Mary's, Chitungwiza, were investigated in this study. Following the study's execution, presentation, and analysis, the researcher went on to offer a summary, suggestions, and conclusions. A summary, conclusions, and recommendations were given in line with the goals, using the literature and the empirical inquiry as references.

5.2 Discussion

In-depth analysis of the causes of teen fatherhood, its perceived impacts and prospective preventative measures for early fatherhood in St. Mary's, Chitungwiza, are provided by this study, which dives into the complicated experiences of teen fathers in early marriages. The five parts that make up the study's framework begin with an introduction chapter that provides background information and context for the investigation. With the social learning and psychosocial theories acting as the study's guiding framework, the second chapter offers a thorough analysis of the body of existing research and theoretical frameworks. The research methodology, which included a qualitative approach, case study research design and purposive sampling strategy to identify 30 participants and 2 key informants, is explained in detail in the third chapter. The findings, which were subjected to thematic analysis, are presented, interpreted and discussed in the fourth chapter. In order to add significant knowledge to the body of existing research on this important social issue, the study ultimately sought to accomplish three main goals: investigating the perceived causes of teen fatherhood, analysing the perceived effects of teen fatherhood, and identifying strategies to prevent early fatherhood in St. Mary's, Chitungwiza.

The following conclusions were made based on research findings

5.3 Achievement of Research Objectives

The study has been successful in achieving its goals in engaging the experience of teenage fathers who marry early in St. Mary's, Chitungwiza. Identifying factors leading to early fatherhood such as cultural beliefs, peer pressure, unemployment and early sexual debut. It thoroughly examined the socio-economic, emotional and psychological impacts of teenage fatherhood, highlighting education disruption, economic disempowerment and emotional challenges, among others. The research considered strategies of coping from teenage fathers

and the availability of support systems including social work intervention, community responses, and educational programs. This encompasses the synthesis results with the existing body of literature and theoretical frameworks- thus a full understanding about some key issues surrounding teen fatherhood. With that approach, the study realized all the research objectives set up at its inception.

5.3.1 Conclusions on factors which lead to teen fatherhood in St Mary's, Chitungwiza

The study's goal was to identify the fundamental causes of teen fatherhood in St. Mary's, Chitungwiza, and the results showed a complex web of interrelated variables. According to the study's research, culture has a relatively minor influence on teen fatherhood, even though participants and key informants listed culture, early sexual activity, substance misuse, peer pressure and unemployment as major variables. Rather, the data showed that early sexual debut and peer pressure are more significant determinants, indicating that these behaviours are more closely associated with the risk of teen fatherhood.

5.3.2 Conclusions on the effects of teen fatherhood in St Mary's, Chitungwiza

Participants in the study offered priceless insights into the complex implications of this phenomena, which was intended to explore the far-reaching repercussions of teen fatherhood in St. Mary's, Chitungwiza. According to the research, teen parenthood has a significant influence on a young father's life in a number of ways, such as interrupted education, health issues, psychological and emotional effects, economic disempowerment and heightened susceptibility to domestic abuse. Some interviewees emphasized the emotional and psychological effects of teen fatherhood, while others reported experiencing serious health issues as a result of becoming fathers at an early age.

5.3.4 Research conclusions

- The survey found that the number of teen fathers in cities is rising. According to the research findings, there are more teen fathers in urban settings, which is concerning because most studies conducted by various researchers have focused on teen mothers and less is known about teen fathers.

- The survey also found that there are several challenges faced by teen fathers.

Teen fathers struggle to provide for their children, and among these difficulties are stress, unemployment and health issues that prevent them from abstaining from narcotics.

- Teen fathers are being stigmatized, according to the study's findings.

Based on the research findings, the researcher came to the conclusion that the majority of teen father's experience stigmatization from peers and the community. Most of them drop out of education after getting married out of fear of stigmatization.

- The study came to the conclusion that social work interventions are necessary to reduce child marriages.

Social workers are required to locate teen fathers in their communities and devise ways to support them in overcoming their obstacles. Teen fathers must also be included in social work interventions, rather than just teen mothers.

In conclusion, additional research on boy child is needed because, up until recently, the majority of studies on early marriages in Zimbabwe focused on girl child or young mothers abandoning teen fathers.

5.4 Recommendations

The study's conclusion offers crucial, actionable suggestions. Therefore, these suggestions are grounded in research findings that are informed by the goals of this study. In light of the study's objective, the following recommendations are offered:

5.4.1 Government

Since children's varied needs require strong financial support, the government should give the Department of Social Development more funding. For the agency to properly fulfil its responsibilities, especially when it comes to addressing early marriages in communities, this financing is essential. The department can create and carry out focused projects, offer necessary services and assist disadvantaged groups if enough funding is allocated. To make sure that these resources are used effectively, effective budget planning and administration are crucial in the end, boosting funding for the Department of Social Development (DSD) is essential to tackling the intricate problems surrounding early marriages and advancing children's welfare and protection. Government should start public-private programs aimed at hiring young fathers for neighbourhood development projects. Offer rewards to companies who recruit and train teen fathers.

Create free or heavily discounted vocational training facilities that provide instruction in trades like carpentry, plumbing, IT, and electrical work. Create short-term certification programs targeted at immediate employment by collaborating with NGOs and educational establishments. Include comprehensive sex education with a focus on consequences, consent,

and accountability in school curricula. In clinics and schools, offer free access to counselling and reproductive health services.

5.4.2 Department of Social Development

In order to ensure that all early teen fathers receive the assistance and direction they require to manage their complicated situation, social workers in these departments play a crucial role in promoting the provision of comprehensive services. Additionally, probation officer's ought to visit teen fathers' homes on a frequent basis to evaluate the success of their interventions, spot possible problems and offer specialized assistance. Identifying the particular issues and obstacles that teen fathers face, such as a lack of education, unemployment, or insufficient access to healthcare, can also be made possible by these house visits. Social workers and probation officers can better understand the needs of teen fathers, create more successful intervention plans, and more by interacting with them in their natural settings. To lessen stigma and encourage responsible parenting, the Department of Social Development should launch national awareness programs about teen fatherhood that feature true tales. Target parents and teenagers with targeted advertising on social media, TV, radio, and schools. Make free emotional and psychological counselling available to teen fathers.

Teach social workers how to provide trauma-informed treatment, particularly to people who have suffered from mental distress or domestic abuse. Provide parenting classes tailored to young fathers that cover topics including budgeting, conflict resolution, and child care. Establish father-child bonding initiatives to improve emotional ties and lower the rate of abandonment.

5.4.3 Society

Teen fathers need the community's help and a comprehensive and long-lasting support system depends on the community's participation. The community must actively participate in order to establish a supportive atmosphere that promotes the growth and well-being of teen father's, even while government initiatives and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are essential in providing resources and services. In order to assist teen fathers, deal with the difficulties of fatherhood, societal support is essential since it gives them a feeling of acceptance, encouragement, and belonging. The community may encourage beneficial outcomes including higher educational attainment, better health and stronger economic stability by taking responsibility for assisting teen fathers. Additionally, community service can lessen stigma and promote a culture of understanding and empathy, ultimately contributing to a more supportive and inclusive environment for teen fathers. Community clubs and support groups

formation of local adolescent father organizations to offer mentoring, peer support, and parenting education. Encourage neighbourhood churches, NGOs, and youth organizations to host workshops and life skills courses on a regular basis. Organize community talks to dispel harmful cultural beliefs that hinder teen fathers from taking on parental responsibilities or that justify early sexual behaviour.

Encourage good male role models and parental responsibilities through local media and community events. Offer community-based programs, such treatment centres, to prevent and treat drug use among young people. Collaborate with reformed addicts to offer mentors or speakers at community centres and educational institutions.

5.5 Chapter summary

The main findings of the research study were thoroughly summarized in this chapter, which also contained the comments, conclusions and suggestions that resulted from the thorough examination and presentation of the data in Chapter 4. Building on the wealth of information and understanding gathered from the research, this chapter condensed the key themes, trends, and ramifications into succinct, useful conclusions and suggestions. The research questions and objectives were thoughtfully addressed in these conclusions and suggestions, which offer a convincing and understandable story that highlights the importance and applicability of the study's findings. This chapter sought to serve as a useful resource for stakeholders, policymakers and practitioners who wish to better comprehend and solve the intricate challenges surrounding teen fatherhood by summarizing the study's main findings and conclusions.

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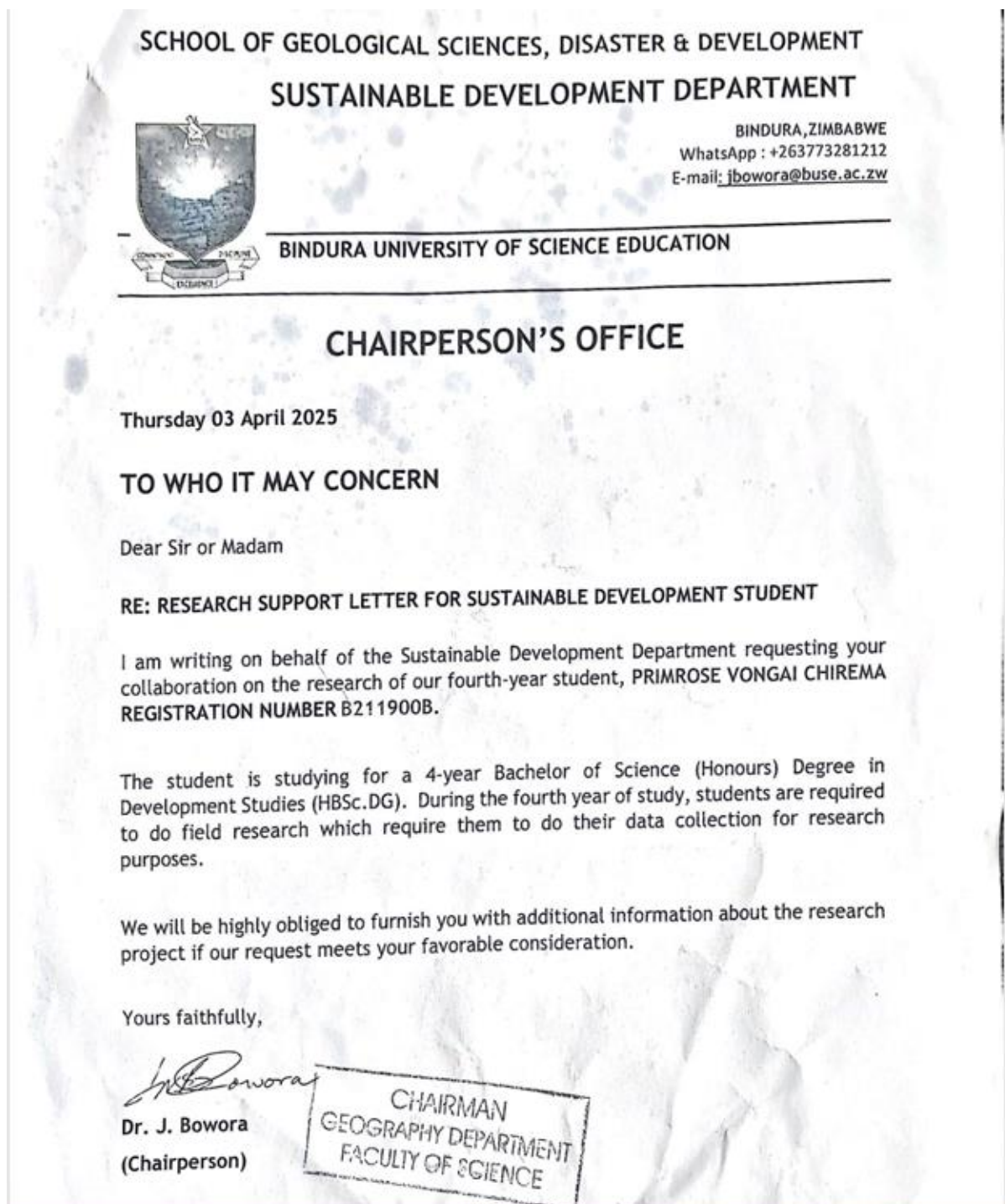
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research letter from Bindura University



Appendix B: Approval letter from Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare

Official communications should
Not be addressed to individuals

Telephones: 703711 / 794711-4
Harare


ZIMBABWE

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL
WELFARE
Compensation House
Chr S.J. Murenda and Central Avenue
HARARE

30 April 2025

Primrose V. Chiremba(B211900B)
Bindura University of Science Education

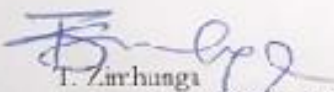
**REF: LETTER OF APPROVAL TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY
TITLED 'EXPERIENCE OF TEEN FATHERS IN EARLY MARRIAGES
IN ZIMBABWE. A CASE STUDY OF ST MARY'S CHITUNGWIZA'**

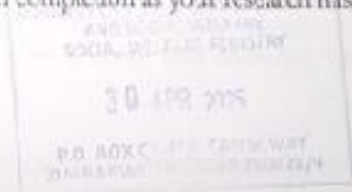
Receipt of your letter with the above mentioned matter is acknowledged.

Please be advised that permission is hereby granted for you to carry out research
titled "Experience of teen fathers in early marriages in Zimbabwe. A case
study of St Mary's Chitungwiza"

Permission is granted **STRICTLY** on condition that the research is for academic
purposes only in pursuit of your BSC Honours Degree in Developmental
Studies. 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. Zirhungu
Acting Chief Director Social Development and Disability Affairs.
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE



Appendix C: CONSENT FORM

RESPONDENT:

I, _____

[FULL NAME OF RESPONDENT IN BLOCK LETTERS]

- have read and understood all the information above; YES/ NO
- was given an opportunity to discuss the information and to ask questions; YES/ NO
- volunteer to take part in this study; YES/ NO
- Confirmed that I have received a copy of this consent form. YES/ NO

Signature of respondent: _____ Date: _____ [or of parent
/ guardian, if under 18 years]

Appendix D: RESEARCH TOOLS

Questionnaires

1. Age: -----

2. Gender:

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Other

3. Do you have any formal education?

☐ Primary only

☐ Some secondary

☐ Completed Secondary

☐ No schooling

4. Who do you stay with

☐ Alone

☐ Family

☐ other (please specify) :.....

5. Employment status

☐ Employed

☐ Unemployed

☐ Self Employed

6. How old were you when you got married?

7. How many children do you have?

Interview Guide for Participants

1. What does it mean to be a Teen father?
2. Why do you think there is high rise of Teen fathers?
3. What are the negative effects of being a Teen father?
4. Are there any benefits of being a Teen father?
5. How did you feel when you first learned you were going to become a father?
6. How has becoming a father at a young age affected your life (e.g., education, career, social life)?
7. What are some of the biggest challenges you have faced as a teen father?
8. Can you describe your role as a father in your home?
9. How do you cope with the challenges of being a teen father?
10. Are there any resources or services you wish were available to help you?
11. Is there any support you are receiving from the family and the community?

Interview Guide for Key Informants

1. According to your experience, can you explain Teen fatherhood phenomenon?
2. Based on your expertise what are the drivers of Teen fatherhood?
3. What are the negative effects of being a Teen father?

4. Are there any initiatives that were put in place in order to help Teen fathers to overcome their challenges?

5. Can you explain the effectiveness of these initiatives?

Focus Groups Discussions

1. How do these challenges affect your daily life and responsibilities?

2. Are there any services or organizations that have helped you? If not, what kind of support would you find helpful?

3. How do your families perceive and support your role as a father?

4. What are your hopes for your future and your child's future?

5. If you could change one thing about your experience as a teen father, what would it be?

APPENDIX E: PLAGIARISM REPORT

CHIREMA PRIMROSE V B211900B.docx			
ORIGINALITY REPORT			
11 %	7 %	4 %	6 %
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS
PRIMARY SOURCES			
1	Submitted to Midlands State University Student Paper	4 %	
2	vital.seals.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<1 %	
3	www.tandfonline.com Internet Source	<1 %	
4	www.coursehero.com Internet Source	<1 %	
5	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %	
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