

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING



TITLE OF THE PROJECT

CONTRIBUTIONS OF COMMUNITY BASED INITIATIVES TO OLDER ADULTS' WELL BEING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION. A CASE STUDY OF MELFORT COMMUNITY, IN ZIMBABWE.

BY

ABIBO WENDY

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE EDUCATION IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES DEGREE

2025

APPROVAL FORM

The signatories confirm that they have examined and permitted this dissertation entitled “, **Contributions of Community based initiatives to older adults' well being and social inclusion. A case study of Melfort community, in Zimbabwe** submitted to the Geography Department at Bindura University of Science Education. This submission partially fulfils the requirements for the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Development Studies. The project was submitted by **Wendy Abibo**, student number **B212691B**

.....

Dr K Mhlanga (Supervisor) Signature



.....

Date

7.7.2025.

Chairman's Signature

Date

.....

External Assessor Signature

.....

Date

STUDENT DECLARATIONS

I **Wendy Abibo (B212691B)** declare that this dissertation with topic entitled **Contributions of Community based initiatives to older adults' wellbeing and social inclusion. A case study of Melfort community, in Zimbabwe** is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Development studies, is my work and has not been submitted previously at any other university or institution for any degree or diploma

Student Signature

... 

Date

...**29 June 2025**.....

DEDICATION

This dissertation which is entitled **Contributions of Community based initiatives to older adults' well being and social inclusion. A case study of Melfort community, in Zimbabwe** is dedicated to my beloved family, whose unwavering support and understanding fuelled my academic journey. Additionally, I extend this dedication to Melfort Old People's Home, the inspiring NGO dedicated to positive change, whose values resonate deeply with my research searches.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I humbly acknowledge the divine guidance that sustained me throughout this research journey. My heartfelt thanks to God for providing strength, wisdom and inspiration. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my dissertation advisor Mr Mhlanga for his invaluable guidance and support throughout this research journey. Special thanks to Makomborero Abibo, Kudzai Success Rusere, Tendai Ruzive, Wayne Abibo and Ruvarashe Wilmer for their insightful contributions and support. I am also deeply thankful to my family for their unwavering encouragement, support in all spheres and understanding.

ABSTRACT

This research explores the effectiveness of community-based initiatives in supporting the well-being and social inclusion of elderly individuals in Melfort, Zimbabwe. The central question guiding this study is: How can community-based programs enhance the social lives and health outcomes of older adults in Melfort? Grounded in the pragmatism paradigm, which emphasizes practical solutions and real-world applications, the study employed a mixed-methods approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by older adults. A variety of sampling methods were utilized, including purposive sampling to ensure diverse representation of older adults engaged with community organizations, as well as random sampling to capture a broader demographic perspective. Data collection methods included structured questionnaires to gather quantitative data, informant interviews to gain insights from key stakeholders, and focus group discussions that facilitated in-depth conversations among older adults about their experiences with community services. The findings indicated that while several community organizations, such as the Melfort Old People's Home and Mavambo, provide valuable support, there are significant gaps in outreach, particularly for isolated individuals and those with limited mobility. Additionally, the study highlighted the need for more tailored services that address the specific challenges faced by older women and other vulnerable groups. Ultimately, the research concludes that enhancing collaboration among community organizations and addressing identified weaknesses in service delivery can significantly improve the well-being of older adults in Melfort. Recommendations include developing targeted programs that address transportation barriers, increasing awareness of available services, and fostering intergenerational interactions to create a more inclusive community environment for seniors.

Key Words - Community based, initiatives, older adults, well-being, social inclusion Melfort , Zimbabwe

List of Tables

Table 4. 1 Interview Response Rate	29
--	----

List of Figures

Figure 2. 1 The Social Inclusion Theory. (Source: Leachy et al., 2015)	8
Figure 3. 1 Study Area Map.....	17
Figure 4. 1 Questionnaire Response Rate	29
Figure 4. 2 Focus Group Discussion Response Rate.....	30
Figure 4. 3 Distribution of Respondents	31
Figure 4. 4 Gender Distribution of Respondents	32

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STUDENT DECLARATIONS	iv
Dedication	v
Acknowledgement	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
CHAPTER 1.....	1
1.1 introduction	1
1.2 Background to the Study	1
1.3 Statement of The Problem	2
1.4 Aim.....	2
1.4.2 The Main Question	2
1.4.3 Specific Objectives	2
1.5 Research questions.....	3
1.6 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	3
1.7 Definition of terms.....	4
1.8 Structure of study	5
1.9 Summary.....	5
CHAPTER 2 :Literature Review	6
2.1 Introduction.....	6
2.2 Theoretical Framework: the inclusion theory	6
2.2 Social inclusion and its impact.....	9
2.3 Overview of Community based initiatives: Global view, Africa and Zimbabwe	9
2.4 Community-Based Initiatives and Older Adults' Well-Being	11
2.4 Challenges faced by Community based initiatives	11
2.5 Solutions and Recommendations	12
2.6 Gaps in the Literature	14

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	16
3.1 Introduction	16
3.2 Study Area.....	16
3.3 Research Paradigm	17
3.4 Research Approach.....	18
3.5 Case Study Design.....	18
3.6 Sampling design and target population.....	19
3.6.1 SAMPLE SIZE.....	19
3.6.2.Sampling Methods and sampling technique	20
3.7 Piloting the Study.....	21
3.7.1 Reasons for Piloting	21
3.8 Data Collection Instruments and Methods.....	22
3. 9 Procedure or Protocol.....	22
3.10.1 Key Informants Interview Guide	22
3.10.2 Focus Group Discussion	23
3.11.1 Questionnaires.....	24
3. 12 Data Analysis.....	25
3.12. 1 Qualitative Analysis	25
3.13 Data Reliability.....	25
3.14 Data Validity.....	25
3.15 Ethical Considerations	26
3.16 Limitations of Study.....	26
3.17 Chapter Summary	26
Chapter 4: Data presentation and interpretation.....	28
4.1 Introduction	28
4.2 Response Rate	28
4.2.2 Interviews.....	29
4.2.3 Response rare from group discussions	30

4.4. Demographic characteristics	31
4.4.1 Gender Distribution	32
4.5. Objective 1: Community-based initiatives in to the well-being of older adults of Melfort.....	33
4.6. Objective 2: Examining the Roles of Community-Based Organizations for Older Adults in Melfort.....	33
4.7. Objective 3: Identifying the Weaknesses of Current Services Provided to the Elderly in Melfort	34
4.8 .Objective 4: Programs to improve the existing initiatives.....	35
4.9 Summary.....	36
Chapter 5: Discussion	37
5.1 Introduction	37
5.2 Interpretation of Findings.....	37
Demographic characteristics	37
5.2 .1 Age Distribution	37
5.2.2 Gender distribution.....	37
5.3 Discussion on Objective 1: Identifying Community-Based Initiatives in Melfort	38
5.4. Discussion on Objective 2: Examining the Roles of Community-Based Organizations for Older Adults in Melfort.....	39
5.5. Discussion on Objective 3: Identifying the Weaknesses of Current Services Provided to the Elderly in Melfort.....	39
5.6 Discussion on Objective 4: Proposing New Programs or Improvements to Existing Initiatives	40
5.7 Implications for the Community.....	40
5.8 Conclusion	41
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	42
6.1 Introduction	42
6.2 Recapitulation of the Central Topic and Objectives	42
6.3 Significance of the Study.....	43
6.4 Study Summary.....	44
6.5 Results Summary and Conclusion.....	45
Objective 1: Identifying Community-Based Organizations	45

Objective 2: Contributions to Well-Being	45
Objective 3: Weaknesses of Current Services.....	45
Objective 4: Proposing Improvements	45
6.6 Relevance of the Theoretical Framework.....	46
6.7 Limitations of the Study.....	46
6.8 Policy Recommendations	46
6.9 Suggestions for Further Study	48
REFERENCES.....	49
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	55
PLGARISM REPORT.....	67

CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

As the global population ages, older adults increasingly face a myriad of challenges that threaten their well-being and quality of life. Issues such as social isolation, inadequate healthcare, and limited access to social support systems are prevalent among this demographic (WHO, 2015). These challenges not only affect their physical health but also significantly impact their mental health and overall life satisfaction. In this context, the role of community-based organizations (CBOs) becomes crucial, as they have the potential to address these issues at the grassroots level. By fostering social inclusion and enhancing access to essential services, community initiatives can play a pivotal role in improving the lives of older adults.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Zimbabwe, like many other countries, is experiencing a demographic shift characterized by a gradual increase in the elderly population. This trend is particularly pronounced in rural areas such as Melfort, located in Mashonaland East Province. Here, the challenges faced by older adults are exacerbated by limited resources and inadequate infrastructure (Cramm et al., 2015). Many elderly individuals in Melfort suffer from social exclusion and isolation, often resulting in poor health outcomes. The lack of access to community services, healthcare, and social support networks further compounds these issues, leading to deteriorating mental and physical health among the elderly population. According to the World Health Organization (2015), such conditions can significantly impair the quality of life for older adults, necessitating urgent action.

Despite these challenges, there is hope. Community-based organizations have emerged as vital players in addressing the social and health needs of older adults. By implementing initiatives that promote social inclusion and improve overall well-being, CBOs can help bridge the gaps in services and support that many elderly individuals face. These organizations not only provide direct assistance but also foster a sense of community, encouraging older adults to engage more actively in their social environments. Through this study, the aim is to explore the effectiveness of these community-based initiatives in enhancing the well-being and social inclusion of older adults in Melfort.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Several studies have emphasized the importance of community-based initiatives in promoting social inclusion among older adults. For example, Cramm and Nieboer (2015) found that community programs focusing on social participation significantly improved the well-being of older adults in low-income settings. Similarly, a study by Goll et al. (2015) highlighted the need for tailor-made community services that address the specific needs of the elderly in rural areas. Researching on the development and the rights of older people Gorman (2017) argued that social structures that once supported older adults, like extended family networks, have weakened due to urban migration, leaving many elderly individuals without adequate support. However, while many studies have stressed the importance of community-based initiatives, there is a gap in the literature focusing on Zimbabwe, particularly in the context of rural communities like Melfort, a rural area in Mashonaland East Province, where the proportion of adult population is growing relative to local resources. Thus the question that remains unanswered is: What is the effectiveness of such initiatives in Zimbabwe?

1.4 AIM

1.4.1 The aim of this study is to assess the effectiveness of community-based initiatives in enhancing the well-being and social inclusion of older adults in Melfort, Zimbabwe.

1 4.2 THE MAIN QUESTION

The core question to be answered is: Are community-based initiatives supporting older adults' well-being and social inclusion in Melfort? If not, how can community-based programs be developed or enhanced to improve the social lives and health outcomes of elderly people in Melfort?

1.4.3 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. Identify community-based organizations supporting the well-being of old adults in Melfort.
2. Examine the contributions of these community-based organizations to the well-being of old adults in Melfort.
3. Identify the weaknesses of the current services provided to the elderly in Melfort.
4. Propose new programs or improvements to existing initiatives.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Which community-based organizations are supporting the well-being of the elderly in Melfort
2. Which services are these community-based organizations offering to the wellbeing of older adults in Melfort Community?
3. How effective are these community-based initiatives in promoting social inclusion among older adults in Melfort Community, Zimbabwe?
4. How can the operation of these community-based initiatives in Melfort be enhanced?

1.6 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is highly significant because it can provide essential data on how community-based initiatives can serve the aging population in rural Zimbabwe. Ignoring this problem will likely lead to increased healthcare costs and a further decline in the quality of life for older adults. Solving this problem will not only improve social inclusion but also reduce the burden on formal healthcare systems by promoting preventative care and community engagement. The benefits of the solution include improved mental and physical health, reduced isolation, and better utilization of existing community resources. This study is also important as it helps in Social Development. This study argues that Older adults' wellbeing and social inclusion are critical aspects of social development, focusing on improving quality of life and promoting social justice. Furthermore, this study contributes to issues of Human Development. The study argues that Community-based initiatives align with human development approaches, which emphasizes empowerment, participation, and capacity-building. The proposed research aligns closely with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by addressing critical areas related to health, social inclusion, and community-based development. By focusing on the well-being and social inclusion of older adults in the Melfort community of Zimbabwe, the study contributes to several SDGs and can inform policy development in the different ways. The research directly addresses SDG 3 which aims to “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.” Older adults are a vulnerable population often overlooked in health and social policies. The study seeks to assess how community-based initiatives can improve the physical and mental health of elderly people and promote preventative healthcare by encouraging social participation, which reduces isolation, depression, and other

health risks (Cramm & Nieboer, 2015). It also informs local and national policies on aging to ensure that older adults have access to health-promoting community programs and the findings can guide policymakers in designing inclusive health strategies that integrate community approaches to reduce healthcare burdens.

The research also supports SDG 10, which focuses on reducing inequalities within and among countries. Older adults, especially in rural areas like Melfort, often face systemic inequalities, such as limited access to healthcare and social services due to geographic and economic barriers and Social exclusion caused by urban migration of younger family members. By identifying gaps in community service delivery and proposing solutions, the research contributes to reducing these inequalities. The findings can inform policies that promote equitable access to resources for marginalized groups, particularly the elderly in rural areas.

Many older adults in Zimbabwe face financial insecurity, exacerbating their vulnerability. The research indirectly supports SDG 1 by addressing how community programs can reduce the financial burden on older adults through support networks and resource-sharing initiatives. It also advocates for policies that allocate funding toward community services that support the elderly, reducing poverty-related risks.

Policy Implications

The alignment of this research with the SDGs provides a strong foundation for influencing policy at both local and national levels. Key policy implications include Development of Aging Policies where the findings can contribute to the formulation of national aging strategies that align with the SDGs, emphasizing community-based care and social inclusion. Resource Allocation Evidence from the research can guide policymakers in allocating resources to community programs that address the specific needs of older adults in rural areas. Integration into National SDG Framework, By addressing SDGs related to health, inequality, and sustainable communities, the research can support Zimbabwe's efforts to achieve its SDG commitments, particularly in areas of social protection and inclusive development.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Community-based - Refers to initiatives or programs that are designed, implemented, and sustained by members of a local community (Wiggins et al., 2017).

Orderly - Implies a structured and organized approach to promoting social adult wellbeing (Havighurst, 1963).

Social Adult Wellbeing - Encompasses the overall quality of life, health, and social connections of adults within a community (Keyes, 1998).

1.8 STRUCTURE OF STUDY

Chapter 1 the chapter addresses the background and purpose statement of the research, objectives and research questions, significance of the study, operation definitions and the research outline.

Chapter 2 this chapter focuses on the literature utilized in the research.

Chapter 3 it provides a description of the study area and details on the research methodology.

Chapter 4 this chapter presents the findings.

Chapter 5 it discusses the implications of the findings

Chapter 6 it gives summary and provides recommendations for future research and policy interventions.

1.9 SUMMARY

The proposed study investigates the contributions of community-based initiatives to the well-being and social inclusion of older adults in Melfort, Zimbabwe. The chapter has provided the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives, research questions and the significance of the study. The next chapter focuses on the literature review.

CHAPTER 2 :LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an in-depth review of the existing literature on community-based organizations in relation to how they contribute to older persons' wellbeing and social inclusion. The main aim is to enhance understanding. The chapter critically assesses the current literature, while pinpointing gaps for future investigation. The chapter starts by providing the theoretical framework. It then delves into the conceptual framework. The chapter is organized thematically and pin points the research gaps before providing the chapter summary.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE INCLUSION THEORY

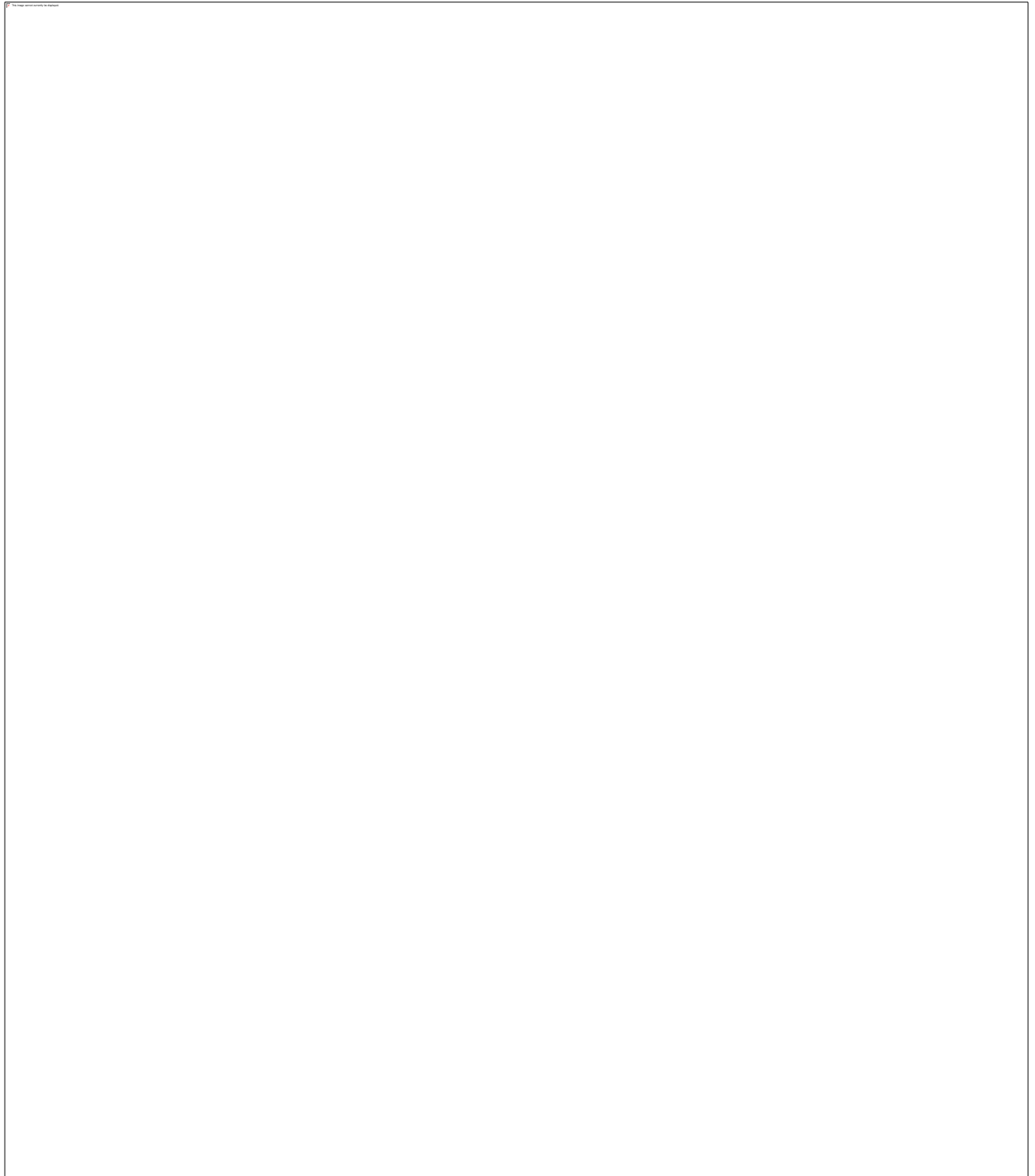
In this study, Inclusion Theory serves as a foundational framework for understanding how community-based initiatives can enhance the well-being of older adults by emphasizing the importance of social inclusion and engagement. Dr Fullan (1990) says that this theory posits that when individuals are actively included in social, economic, and cultural activities, their quality of life improves significantly. Inclusion Theory is linked to Dr. Michael Fullan and other theorists, who highlights the significance of social inclusion within educational environments and community involvement. The social support theory provides the framework for understanding the contribution of external support to the elder adults' wellbeing and social inclusion Fullan, (1990) says the theory empathizes the importance of social connections and support in coping with stress adversity and significant life expects. This theory posits that social inclusion is vital for individuals to participate fully in society, which fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment (Levitas, 2005).

The inclusive theory provides a basis of equity, social justice and diversity. It ensures a source of belonging where older adults feel accepted and valued within the community. The theory suggests that external support—emotional (empathy and trust), informational (advice and guidance), instrumental (practical help), and appraisal (feedback)—reduces stress and anxiety, improves mental and physical health, enhances coping skills and resilience, fosters a sense of belonging and social cohesion, and ultimately boosts overall quality of life (Cohen et al, 1985)

While inclusion theory provides valuable insights, it also has some weaknesses that should be considered in the context of this study. Firstly, overemphasis on participation says that the theory may place too much focus on the act of participation itself, potentially overlooking the quality of

engagement. Not all participation leads to meaningful inclusion, superficial involvement may not significantly enhance well-being (Kearns & Joseph, 2000). Also Structural Barriers is a weakness of Inclusion theory. According to Cramm & Nieboer, (2012) Inclusion Theory may not fully account for the structural barriers that prevent older adults from engaging in community initiatives, such as transportation issues, economic constraints, or health limitations. These factors can significantly impact the effectiveness of inclusion efforts). Cultural Variability is another weakness. The theory may not adequately address cultural differences in how social inclusion is perceived and practiced. What constitutes "inclusion" can vary widely across different cultural contexts, and this variability may affect the applicability of the theory across diverse populations (Marmot, 2005). Moreover, Neglect of Individual differences is another weakness of inclusion theory. Rowe & Kahn, (1997) states that the theory may assume a One-size-fits-all Approach, neglecting the individual differences among older adults in terms of their preferences, needs, and experiences, which can impact their ability to engage meaningfully in community initiatives.

Figure 2. 1 The Social Inclusion Theory. (Source: Leachy et al., 2015)



2.2 SOCIAL INCLUSION AND ITS IMPACT

Social inclusion is pivotal for the well-being of older adults, impacting their mental, emotional, and physical health. Research indicates that social connections can significantly reduce the risk of cognitive decline and depression among older populations (Berkman et al., 2000). The World Health Organization (2015) emphasizes the importance of social support networks in promoting health and well-being in older age.

Evidence from studies conducted in various contexts highlights that socially included older adults' exhibit higher levels of life satisfaction and lower incidences of health-related issues (Cattan et al., 2005). It may follow that in Melfort, community-based initiatives that foster social inclusion, such as local clubs and social gatherings, can enable older adults to engage with peers, share experiences, and participate in communal activities. These interactions not only enhance their quality of life but also contribute to their sense of identity and purpose within the community.

The opposite of social inclusion is social exclusion. Scholars like Tilly (2004) argue that social exclusion can lead to marginalization, particularly among vulnerable populations, including older adults. This marginalization can manifest through restricted access to resources, social networks, and decision-making processes. By employing inclusion theory, the study aims to explore how community initiatives can mitigate these barriers, thereby enhancing the social inclusion of older adults in Melfort. For instance, community programs that promote intergenerational activities not only foster relationships between younger and older community members but also combat loneliness and isolation, which are prevalent among older adults (Putnam, 2000).

2.3 OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY BASED INITIATIVES: GLOBAL VIEW, AFRICA AND ZIMBABWE

The global landscape of community programs highlights a growing focus on social inclusion and support for older adults. Research indicates that community-based initiatives play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life for the elderly, particularly in urban settings. For instance, the World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes that community engagement is vital for promoting active aging and improving health outcomes (WHO, 2015). Various studies, such as those by Cattan et al. (2005), demonstrate that community programs can significantly reduce social isolation among older adults, thus fostering a sense of belonging and well-being. Initiatives like community

gardening, social clubs, and wellness programs have been widely implemented in developed nations, demonstrating significant positive outcomes. For instance, the work of Greenfield and Marks (2006) illustrates how community engagement can reduce feelings of isolation among older adults, thereby enhancing their mental and emotional health.

In the African context, the emphasis on community programs has gained traction, yet the focus remains largely on urban initiatives. Scholars like Mupedziswa and Chimedza (2014) have explored the role of community programs in urban settings, highlighting their effectiveness in addressing social issues such as poverty and health disparities. These studies illustrate how urban community initiatives often receive more funding and attention compared to rural counterparts, which may face unique challenges related to access, resources, and cultural practices.

Davis and Wainwright, (2017) conducted their studies primarily in Zimbabwe, focusing on various community-based initiatives aimed at improving the well-being of older adults. Their research emphasizes the need for longitudinal studies and the examination of socio-economic factors in both urban and rural contexts within the country.

Mawere, (2016) states that in Zimbabwe, community-based initiatives have made significant contributions to the well-being of older adults, addressing both their immediate needs and long-term social integration. This advocacy is supported by the work of scholar Mawere, (2016), who emphasizes the importance of empowering older adults to participate actively in community decisions that affect their lives.

According to Chikanda, (2018), these initiatives often provide essential services, including health screenings, nutritional support, and social engagement opportunities, which are vital for the aging population. For instance, the Safe Community Program in Melfort specifically aims to enhance safety and accessibility for older adults, creating an environment where they feel secure and encouraged to engage in community life. This program not only focuses on physical safety but also incorporates social elements, such as organizing community events that foster interaction among generations, thereby bridging the gap between older and younger community members. Moreover, this research by Chikanda, (2018) underscores that such programs do more than improve the immediate well-being of older adults; they also contribute to fostering a culture of respect and recognition for their contributions to society. This cultural shift is significant, as it

enhances the overall social standing of older adults, allowing them to feel valued and included. Initiatives like community storytelling sessions and heritage projects serve as platforms for older adults to share their experiences and wisdom, thereby enriching the community's cultural fabric.

Additionally, the work of Hawkins et al. (2020) highlights the psychological benefits of community engagement for older adults, noting that social isolation can lead to detrimental health outcomes. Mawere, 2016 states that Community-based initiatives in Zimbabwe aim to combat this isolation by creating support networks that connect older adults with peers, thereby enhancing mental health and emotional well-being. Programs that facilitate regular social gatherings, such as tea parties or game nights, provide older adults with opportunities to form friendships and share their life stories, further reinforcing their sense of belonging.

Community-based initiatives in Zimbabwe not only address the immediate needs of older adults but also contribute to a broader societal change that values and integrates older individuals into the community fabric. By advocating for their rights, enhancing their safety, and fostering social engagement, these initiatives play a vital role in promoting a more inclusive and respectful society for all ages.

2.4 COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES AND OLDER ADULTS' WELL-BEING

Community-based initiatives play a crucial role in enhancing the well-being of older adults by providing support systems tailored to their needs. Programs such as senior centers, health workshops, and volunteer opportunities create spaces where older adults can connect and engage meaningfully (Rowe & Kahn, 1997). For example, the Elder Friends Program in Zimbabwe pairs older adults with trained volunteers, fostering companionship and reducing feelings of isolation. Such initiatives not only address emotional needs but also promote physical health through organized activities that encourage mobility and exercise.

Additionally, community gardens and arts programs provide avenues for creativity and physical activity, which are essential for holistic well-being (Kahn & Anton, 2015). These programs exemplify how targeted community efforts can significantly improve the quality of life for older adults, promoting their independence and social engagement.

2.4 CHALLENGES FACED BY COMMUNITY BASED INITIATIVES

Community-based initiatives targeting older adults in Zimbabwe face numerous challenges that undermine their effectiveness. One significant challenge is the lack of trained personnel equipped to address the unique needs of older adults. Moyo, (2019) notes that many programs rely on volunteers with limited training, which can lead to inadequate support for participants. Additionally, the socio-economic instability in Zimbabwe has resulted in a diminished focus on social welfare. , Noting the effect of social economic stability Mawere (2016) argues that it has made it difficult for community organizations to secure funding and resources. The scholar has pointed out that the Elderly Support Program in Melfort experienced funding cuts, limiting its ability to provide essential services such as healthcare and nutrition and also NGOs like the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society, struggle with funding and material resources, limiting their reach and effectiveness. Economic constraints, according to Mavindidze (2017) are a significant barrier, as limited funding can hinder the development and sustainability of programs aimed at supporting older adults).

Apart from economic situation of the country, cultural attitudes towards aging and older adults have been noted to have an influence participation in community initiatives. In some communities, traditional beliefs may lead to the marginalization of older individuals, preventing them from engaging fully in social activities (Chigunta, 2002). There is also inadequate Policy Support Community health programs often depend on governmental policies that may not prioritize older adults, leaving gaps in service delivery.

According to Guitart et Al, (2012) sustainability issues is also a challenge. Projects like Community Gardening Initiatives may flourish initially but struggle to maintain momentum and funding over time. Inequitable Access Programs aimed at improving access to health services may not reach remote areas, leaving vulnerable populations underserved. Such challenges underscore the need for a more structured approach to community support for older adults. Some challenges include Community-based programs in Zimbabwe, while vital for promoting social inclusion and addressing local needs, face several limitations.

2.5 SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mandizvidze, (2017) discusses the importance of collaborative efforts to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of programs aimed at older adults. The study emphasizes that such partnerships

can leverage resources, expertise, and community engagement to better address the needs of the aging population. He moves on to say that to enhance the effectiveness of community-based initiatives for older adults, several solutions and recommendations can be proposed. First, establishing partnerships between local governments, NGOs, and community organizations can provide the necessary resources and expertise to support these initiatives. For example, collaborative efforts between health departments and community centers can lead to integrated health services that cater to the specific needs of older adults (Chikanda, 2018). Additionally, training programs for volunteers and community workers can ensure that older adults receive adequate support tailored to their unique circumstances.

Furthermore, Mawere, (2012) argues that fostering awareness and changing perceptions about aging through community education campaigns can encourage greater participation in social programs and enhance the overall social inclusion of older adults. Enhancing Resource Mobilization by establishing partnerships with local businesses, NGOs, and international organizations to secure funding and resources. He moves on to say create community fundraising initiatives and grant-writing workshops to empower local leaders in resource mobilization. For example, collaborating with organizations like Zimbabwe Red Cross Society can lead to shared resources and joint programs.

Chikanda, (2018) supports the idea that capacity building and training for local leaders and volunteers can enhance their skills. This help develop mentorship programs in partnership with universities and professional organizations to train community members in key areas like healthcare, project management, and community organizing. He moves on to say, cultural Sensitivity and Inclusiveness by designing programs that respect and incorporate local cultural practices by engaging community leaders and elders in the planning stages of initiatives, ensuring that programs like Elders' Forums are culturally relevant and accessible to all community members.

Also, Mawere (2016) argues that sustainability planning should focus on creating long-term strategies for community projects. This includes integrating income-generating activities, such as Community Gardening Initiatives, to establish self-sustaining models that diminish dependence on external funding sources.

Moreover, Mavhindidze, (2012) states that community Engagement Strategies foster greater community involvement in program design and implementation by organizing community forums and workshops to gather input and feedback, ensuring that projects like Microfinance Programs align with the actual needs and desires of participants. By implementing these solutions and recommendations, community-based programs in Zimbabwe can overcome existing challenges, enhance their effectiveness, and create a more inclusive environment for all community members.

2.6 GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

Despite a growing body of research on community-based initiatives and their impact on older adults' well-being and social inclusion, several significant gaps persist on a global view, Africa and particularly in the context of Zimbabwe and specifically in areas like Melfort. At the global level, community programs play a crucial role in enhancing the well-being of various demographics, especially older adults. Research indicates that such programs are pivotal in fostering social inclusion, promoting mental health, and improving overall quality of life (World Health Organization, 2015). However, much of the literature tends to focus on urban settings in developed countries, often neglecting the unique challenges faced by rural communities and developing nations. This oversight creates a gap in understanding how these initiatives can be adapted to different cultural and socio-economic contexts, particularly in areas where resources and infrastructure may be limited.

In the African context, community programs have gained attention for their potential to address social issues, yet the focus remains predominantly on urban areas. Research by Mupedziswa and Chimedza (2014) highlights the effectiveness of community initiatives aimed at improving the lives of individuals in cities, where access to services and support systems is more robust. These studies emphasize the role of community programs in fostering resilience and support networks among older adults. However, this urban-centric focus leaves a significant gap in understanding the dynamics of community programs in rural settings, where traditional support structures may differ. As noted by Fafchamps and Minten (2002), rural communities often face distinct socio-economic challenges that can hinder the effectiveness of programs designed without their specific needs in mind. This lack of localized research limits the ability to tailor interventions that could significantly benefit older adults in these regions

Narrowing down to Zimbabwe, the gap in research regarding community programs is particularly pronounced. While there are some initiatives aimed at supporting older adults, much of the existing literature lacks a comprehensive examination of how these programs operate in rural contexts. For example, studies like those conducted by Mavindidze et al. (2018) address the challenges faced by older adults but often fail to investigate the specific community-driven solutions that could enhance their quality of life. Overall, there is a pressing need for research that explores the implementation and outcomes of community programs tailored to the unique socio-cultural landscape of Zimbabwe, particularly in rural areas where support is often most needed.

There is also a need for research that considers cultural factors and socio-economic diversity within rural communities, as well as the active involvement of older adults in program planning. Furthermore, robust evaluation frameworks for assessing the effectiveness

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter delineated the methodology employed in this study, which explores community-based initiatives aimed at enhancing the well-being of older adults. The methodology selected for this study was grounded in the recognition that older adults' experiences and perspectives were essential for informing effective community-based initiatives. The chapter begins by briefly describing the study area. This is followed an overview of the research design, sampling strategy, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures employed in this study. By outlining the methodology in detail, this chapter aimed to demonstrate the study's credibility, dependability, and confirmability, ultimately contributing to the trustworthiness of the research findings.

3.2 STUDY AREA

This study is based on a case of Melfort, a rural area in Mashonaland East Province along Harare-Mutare road. The study area is shown in Fig 3.2.1. The study area was selected based on its relevance to the research objectives. It is an area characterized by a significant population of older adults engaged in community initiatives. The demographic and socio-economic context of the area as highlighted by Bowling (2005) is crucial for this study. The area, has seen a gradual increase in its elderly population relative to resources. Bowling, (2005) further says the elderly population in Melfort suffers from social exclusion, isolation and poor health due to limited access to community services. who notes that such factors influence the well-being of older populations.

Figure 3. 1 Study Area Map



3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), the research paradigm refers to the overarching framework that guides the entire research process, encompassing the philosophical assumptions, methodologies, and strategies used to investigate a particular phenomenon. The authors mentioned several paradigms including Positivism interpretivism critical theory and pragmatism. In this study, a pragmatic paradigm was adopted, which emphasized practical solutions and real-world applications of research findings. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), moves on to say pagmatism allows researchers to use multiple methods and approaches to address complex research questions, reflecting the reality that social phenomena often require diverse perspectives to be fully understood. Tashakkori & Teddlie, (2010) says pragmatism encourages researchers to focus on the research questions rather than strictly adhering to one methodological approach, this flexibility enables the integration of both qualitative and quantitative methods, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand. Therefore, by utilizing a pragmatic paradigm,

the study aimed at producing findings that were not only theoretically robust but also relevant and applicable to the community in Melfort Ward 20.

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

In line with the pragmatic paradigm, this study employed a mixed-methods approach. This is an approach that combined both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In relation to the research paradigm, this approach is supported by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010), who argue that mixed methods provide a comprehensive perspective on complex social issues. Mixed-methods research is particularly valuable in social sciences, as it allows researchers to explore complex phenomena from multiple perspectives (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The qualitative insights are employed to capture the depth and breadth of older adults' experiences and perceptions. The qualitative component will focus on understanding the nuances of participants' lived experiences through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. This approach is supported by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), who emphasized the importance of qualitative research in revealing the meanings and interpretations that individuals attach to their experiences.

On the quantitative side, structured questionnaires were used to gather data from a larger sample of older adults. This allows for statistical analysis and the identification of patterns and correlations within the data. The combination of both methods not only enhances the reliability of the findings through triangulation but also allows for a richer interpretation of how community-based initiatives impact various dimensions of well-being (Fetters et al., 2013).

3.5 CASE STUDY DESIGN

The study utilizes a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the community in Melfort Ward 20. Yin (2014) highlights that case studies are effective for exploring contextual factors that influence social phenomena. This design is particularly useful for examining complex social phenomena where the boundaries between the case and its context are not clearly defined (Yin, 2014). In this study, the focus on Melfort Ward 20 as a case allows for a detailed investigation of the socio-economic dynamics affecting the community. According to Stake (1995), case studies facilitate a deep understanding of the unique aspects of the case, which can lead to the development of theories or models that are grounded in empirical evidence. Furthermore, case studies often employ multiple data collection methods, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis

and enhance the validity of the results (Creswell, 2014). By utilizing a case study design, this research aims to capture the diverse voices and experiences within Melfort Ward 20, providing a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities present in the community.

3.6 SAMPLING DESIGN AND TARGET POPULATION

According to Creswell (2014), sampling design is a critical component of research methodology that involves selecting participants in a way that ensures the sample reflects the characteristics of the larger population. According to Breakwell et al. (2006) describe the target population as the intended group of people from whom the researcher seeks to collect and evaluate data for the study. The target population comprises residents of Melfort Ward 20, focusing on various demographic groups to capture a wide range of perspectives. For this study, key informants will include community leaders, social workers, and active participants in community-based initiatives. As emphasized by Bryman (2012), understanding the population is critical for meaningful data collection. This demographic is significant, as studies show that active engagement in community activities positively impacts their physical, mental, and social well-being (Rowe & Kahn, 1997).

3.6.1 SAMPLE SIZE

According to the work of Casteel and Bridier (2021), sample size refers to the number of individuals or units selected from a larger population to participate in a study. It represents the subset of the population that will be studied to draw conclusions. Determining an appropriate sample size is critical for ensuring the reliability, validity and applicability of research findings. In this study, the researcher chose the sample size of 60 participants because similar studies in the literature like Smith & Jones (2018) in their exploration of health services access for older adults, the researchers utilized a sample of 60 participants. They demonstrated that this sample size provided sufficient diversity to capture varying perspectives within the population, successfully utilized comparable sample sizes, reinforcing the adequacy of my choice. Given the qualitative nature the research, the researcher believed that 60 participants allowed for rich insights while being manageable within available resources and practical challenges such as limited time, budget constraints and the unavailability of helpers. Although the population of interest, comprising community leaders, social workers, and active participants in community-based initiatives is significantly larger, this sample size is deemed sufficient for meeting the study's objectives.

Although the sample size was smaller than that is supposed to be calculated for large populations, its justification lies in the alignment with the study's objectives, resource constraints and the use of mixed methods to enhance the breadth and depth of findings. This strategy ensured that the study generates reliable and meaningful results while remaining feasible within its practical limitations.

3.6.2.SAMPLING METHODS AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

According to Ritchie et al., (2014) sampling techniques refer to the various methods used to select individuals from a population for participation in a study. The methods include Probability and non probability Sampling . Probability sampling is a method involving random selection, allowing each member of the population an equal chance of being chosen, which enhances the representativeness of the sample (Creswell, 2014) and Stratified Sampling where population is divided into subgroups (strata), and random samples are taken from each stratum (Creswell, 2014). Non-Probability Sampling method, not all members have a chance of being included, which can lead to biases. It is often easier and quicker but may not provide a representative sample (Creswell, 2014). The techniques include Convenience Sampling is selecting individuals who are easiest to reach (Trochim, 2006). Judgmental Sampling is when researcher uses their judgment to select participants who are believed to be representative (Creswell, 2014). This dual approach allows for both generalizability and in-depth exploration of specific subgroups within the population. The scholars continue saying that these techniques can be divided into probability sampling methods, such as simple random sampling, stratified Poor sampling, systematic sampling, and cluster sampling, and non-probability sampling methods, such as convenience sampling and purposive sampling. The choice of sampling technique can significantly impact the validity and reliability of the research findings (Bryman, 2012). In this case to achieve a representative sample, a combination of random and purposive sampling techniques was used.

➤ Random Sampling

According to Fowler, (2013) random sampling, also known as probability sampling, is a method of selecting a sample from a larger population in such a way that every individual has an equal chance of being chosen. Cohen et al, (2007) says the process typically involves assigning a random number to each member of the population and using a random number generator to select

participants. This technique was designed to ensure that the sample is representative of the population, minimizing bias and allowing for generalizations to be made about the entire group based on the sample selected.

➤ Purposive Sampling

According to the work of Bodgan and Biklen, (2003) purposive sampling is also known as non-probability sampling or judgmental sampling where researchers select participants based on specific characteristics or criteria relevant to the research objectives. As defined by Palinkas et al. (2015), this technique is essential for qualitative research where specific knowledge is sought. Purposive sampling targeted specific groups, such as community leaders and local organizations, to gain deeper insights into the socio-economic dynamics of the ward.

3.7 PILOTING THE STUDY

A pilot study was conducted to test the research instruments and procedures. This preliminary phase is crucial for identifying any issues before the main study (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). A pilot study serves as a small-scale trial run of the main research project, allowing researchers to test their methodologies, instruments, and procedures before full-scale implementation (Fowler, 2013). This phase is essential for identifying potential issues that could affect the validity and reliability of the research findings. By conducting a pilot study, the researcher was able to refine the approach, ensuring that the main study is both feasible and effective in addressing the research questions posed.

In the context of the research question regarding the socio-economic dynamics in Melfort Ward 20, piloting the study allowed for the exploration of specific community characteristics and challenges. It provided an opportunity to gather preliminary data that can inform the main study's design and execution (Fowler, 2013). For instance, the researcher assessed the clarity of the survey instruments or interview questions, ensuring that they effectively capture the nuances of the community's experiences and perspectives.

3.7.1 REASONS FOR PILOTING

Piloting was essential to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity of the instruments. It helped refine questions and methodology, ensuring that the data collected will adequately address the research

questions (Bryman, 2012). Like mentioned above, It provided an opportunity to gather preliminary data that can inform the main study's design and execution (Fowler, 2013).

3.8 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS AND METHODS

Primary data was collected through multiple data collection instruments to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Bryman, (2012) say Primary data refers to information that is collected firsthand by the researcher for a specific research purpose. It was typically gathered through methods such as surveys, interviews, observations, and experiments. According to Creswell (2014), primary data is crucial for obtaining specific insights that directly address the research questions and objectives, as it provides a direct connection to the phenomenon being studied to. Primary data was collected through key informants interviews guide, questionnaires and focus groups.

3.9 PROCEDURE OR PROTOCOL

The data collection procedure followed a structured protocol to maintain consistency and reliability. This includes the administration of questionnaires and interviews. . Data was collected through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, ensuring a comprehensive approach to data gathering. This multi-faceted strategy aligns with best practices in developmental research (Creswell, 2014).

3.10.1 KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE

Key informants interview guide were used to collect primary data. According to Bryaman, (2012) Key informants are individuals who have a deep understanding of the community's context, challenges, and opportunities, making them invaluable sources of qualitative data. A semi-structured interview guide was developed for key informants, allowing for flexibility while ensuring that essential topics are covered. The interview guide contained the questions. According to Kvale (2007), semi-structured interviews facilitate rich, detailed data collection through key informants interviews. In this study, data was collected from key informants who possess specialized knowledge and insights relevant to the socio-economic dynamics of Melfort Ward 20. In this study the key informants were community Leaders which is a group that consisted of local government officials, traditional leaders, and heads of community organizations who had a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic landscape of Melfort Ward 20, Local

Business Owners like Entrepreneurs and business owners provided insights into the economic activities within the ward, including challenges and opportunities for growth, Social Workers and NGOs Representatives from non-governmental organizations and social services who work directly with community members offered perspectives on social issues, such as health, education, and poverty, Residents with Unique Experiences such Individuals who have lived in the area for an extended period or those who have faced specific challenges (e.g., youth, women) provided rich, personal narratives that highlighted the community's dynamics. Studies like Morris et al. (2019) examined the role of community organizations in supporting elderly residents, using key informant interviews to gather detailed information from leaders of local initiatives. Therefore, that is why in this research key informants interview guide were of great use as they enabled to gain a comprehensive understanding of the context and dynamics affecting elderly individuals and the services available to them.

Semi structure interviews

Data collection from key informants was conducted using semi-structured interviews. This method allowed for flexibility in questioning while ensuring that essential topics are addressed (Bryaman, 2010). The process will involve the following steps:

1. Recruitment Key informants was identified through community networks and referrals.
2. Interview Guide Development: A semi-structured interview guide was created to facilitate discussions. This guide included open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses while allowing informants to share their perspectives freely.
3. Conducting Interviews: Interviews was conducted in person or via video conferencing, depending on the informant's preference and availability.
4. Data Analysis: After conducting the interviews, the data was transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. This process helped identify key themes and patterns related to the socio-economic conditions in Melfort Ward 20.

3.10.2 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

According to Krueger and Casey (2015), focus groups are a research method that gathers a diverse group of people to discuss a specific topic, providing rich qualitative data through interaction. Focus group discussions were conducted to gather qualitative data from older adults participating in community initiatives. This method encouraged interaction among participants, fostering a collective dialogue that revealed shared experiences and diverse perspectives (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Other studies like Carr and Kahn, (2011) conducted a study on the perceptions of elderly individuals regarding healthcare services in community settings. They used focus groups to gather qualitative data, which revealed important insights into the barriers and facilitators affecting access to care. The researcher guided the discussion using a prepared set of questions, ensuring that all relevant topics were addressed while allowing for organic conversation flow. The focus groups was held in accessible community spaces to ensure comfort and convenience for participants. Sessions were audio-recorded, with participants' consent, and transcribed for thematic analysis. This method was particularly useful for exploring the dynamics of community engagement and understanding the social interactions that contribute to the well-being of older adults.

3.11.1 QUESTIONNAIRES

According to Fowler (2014), a questionnaire is a set of written questions that are used to gather information from individuals about their opinions, behaviors, or experiences. In this research questionnaires were designed to gather quantitative data from a broader participant base. Questionnaires allowed researchers to gather data from a large number of participants in a relatively short amount of time (DeVellis, 2016). This is particularly beneficial when studying community-based initiatives for elderly individuals, as it enables the collection of diverse perspectives within a limited timeframe. Other studies like Bowers et al. (2014) conducted a study on the impact of community engagement on the well-being of older adults, employing questionnaires to gather data on participants' satisfaction with community services. The design incorporated both closed and open-ended questions to capture a range of responses. The questionnaires were distributed both online and in paper format to accommodate participants' preferences and access to technology. This mixed-mode approach was beneficial in reaching a broader demographic, including those who may not be comfortable with digital platforms. Data collected through questionnaires was quantitatively analyzed to identify trends and and correlations related to community engagement and well-being.

3.12 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis involved both qualitative and quantitative techniques to triangulate findings and enhance the robustness of results. Mixed methods analysis is key to achieving a comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Therefore these analysis were essential in this research.

3.12.1 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Qualitative data was systematically coded and analyzed to derive meaningful insights. This process involved identifying key themes and patterns that emerged from the data (Saldaña, 2016). Qualitative analysis complemented the quantitative findings by providing context and depth to the numerical data. As highlighted by Patton (2015), qualitative analysis is not merely about coding responses but involves a holistic understanding of the participants' contexts and experiences. This study employed a combination of inductive and deductive approaches analyzing qualitative data, allowing themes to emerge naturally while also being guided by the research objectives.

Furthermore, member checking was employed, where participants reviewed the findings to ensure their views were accurately represented. This technique enhanced the credibility of the qualitative data and reinforces the trustworthiness of the research process.

3.13 DATA RELIABILITY

Data reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the data collection methods and results Creswel, (2014). Reliability was ensured through consistent data collection methods and pilot testing of instruments. According to Creswell (2014), reliability is crucial for the credibility of research findings. In both qualitative and quantitative research, ensuring reliability is crucial for obtaining trustworthy results. For quantitative data, reliability was assessed using statistical measures such as Cronbach's alpha to evaluate the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. In qualitative research, reliability was enhanced through systematic data collection procedures and maintaining detailed records of the analysis process, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

3.14 DATA VALIDITY

Validity was addressed by employing various techniques, including triangulation and member checking, to ensure that the findings accurately represented the participants' perspectives (Cohen

et al., 2018). Data validity pertained to the accuracy of the data in measuring what it intended to measure. For quantitative data, validity was ensured through rigorous questionnaire design, including pilot testing to refine questions and confirm that they accurately capture the participants' experiences. In qualitative research, validity was achieved by employing triangulation using multiple data sources or methods to corroborate findings, as noted by Denzin (1978). This comprehensive approach enhanced the credibility of the research outcomes.

3.15 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The importance of ethics in research was emphasized by Orb et al. (2001) He says Ethical considerations are paramount in research involving human subjects, particularly vulnerable populations such as the elderly. Ethical considerations guided the research process, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. In this study, informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they understand the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing responses and securely storing data. The research adhered to ethical guidelines set forth by the relevant institutional review board, prioritizing the well-being and rights of participants (American Psychological Association, 2017).

3.16 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

While this study aimed to provide valuable insights into community-based initiatives for elderly individuals, it was essential to acknowledge its limitations. Fowler, (2014) says one potential limitation is the reliance on self-reported data, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability or recall bias. Additionally, the study's cross-sectional design limited the ability to infer causality between community services and the well-being of elderly residents (Cohen et al., 2018). Furthermore, the sample size might not have fully represented the diversity of the elderly population in Melfort, potentially impacting the generalizability of the findings. Despite these limitations, the study's mixed-methods approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the contributions of community-based initiatives, paving the way for future research and program development.

3.17 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has detailed the methodology utilized in this study of the Melfort area. The chapter has presented the research framework for studying community-based initiatives that enhance older adults' well-being. It employed a mixed-methods design, utilizing random and purposive sampling for diverse participant representation. Data collection methods included key informant interviews, semi-structure interviews, structured questionnaires, and focus groups. The chapter emphasized strategies for ensuring reliability and validity, along with ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality. Overall, it laid a solid foundation for generating insights to inform elder care policy and practice.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

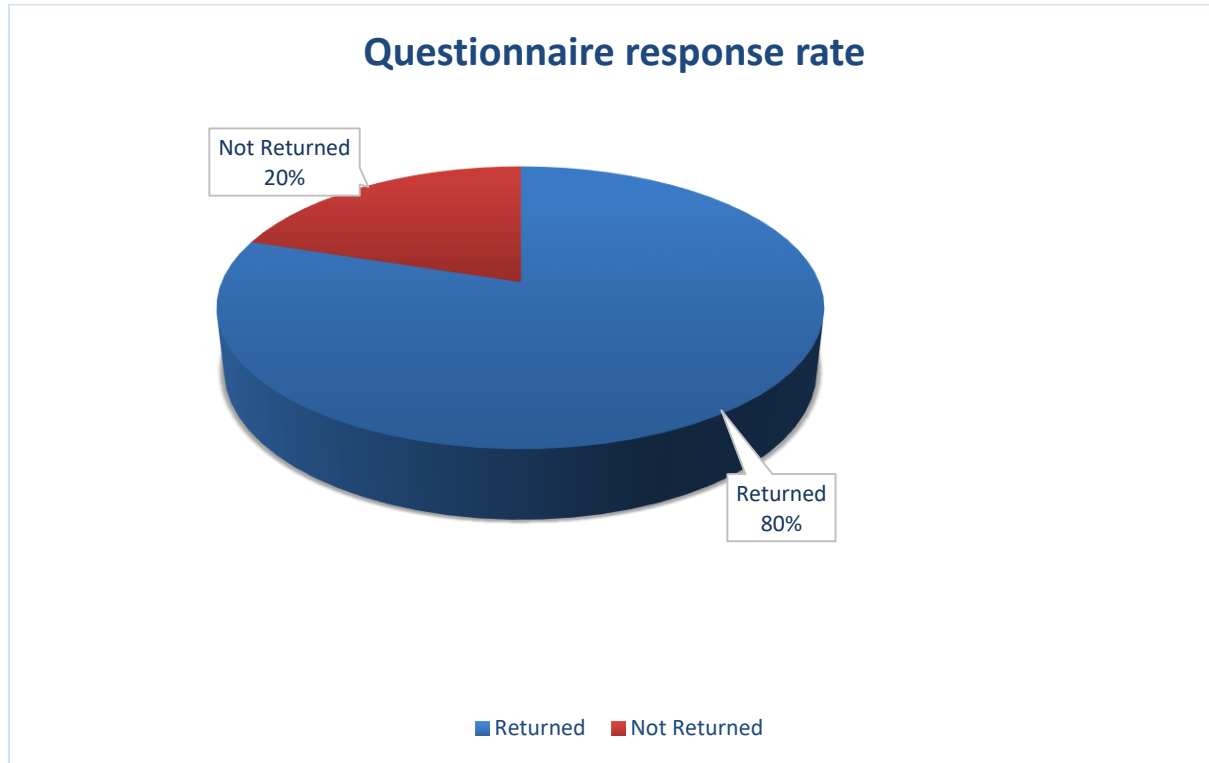
This chapter presents findings the study that focused on the contributions of community-based initiatives to the well-being of older adults in Melfort, Ward 20. By aligning the analysis with the research objectives, we will explore the roles, strengths, and weaknesses of these initiatives, as well as propose enhancements based on participant feedback. The research employed mixed methods approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative data. Surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions were conducted to provide a holistic view of the effectiveness and challenges faced by these initiatives. The findings aim to inform policymakers and community leaders about the current landscape of support for older adults and identify areas for improvement. The presentation of results is in relation to the studies objectives including;

1. Identifying community-based initiatives in Melfort.
2. Examining the roles of community-based organizations for older adults in Melfort
3. Identifying the weaknesses of the current services provided to the elderly in Melfort.
4. Proposing new programs or improvements to existing initiatives.

4.2 RESPONSE RATE

Figure 4.1 provides the response rate generated from questionnaires. As shown in Figure 4.1. out of 60 questionnaires distributed, 48 were returned, yielding a response rate of 80%. This indicates a high level of engagement from the targeted population, reflecting the community's interest in discussing their needs and the services available.

Figure 4. 1 Questionnaire Response Rate



4.2.2 INTERVIEWS

Figure 4.2 shows response rate generated from the in-depth interviews. As indicated in Table 4.1, from the 20 community leaders and organization representatives were approached, a 11 agreed to participate, resulting in a 100% response rate. This high participation can be attributed to the established trust and rapport with the participants, who felt comfortable sharing their insights.

Table 4. 1 Interview Response Rate

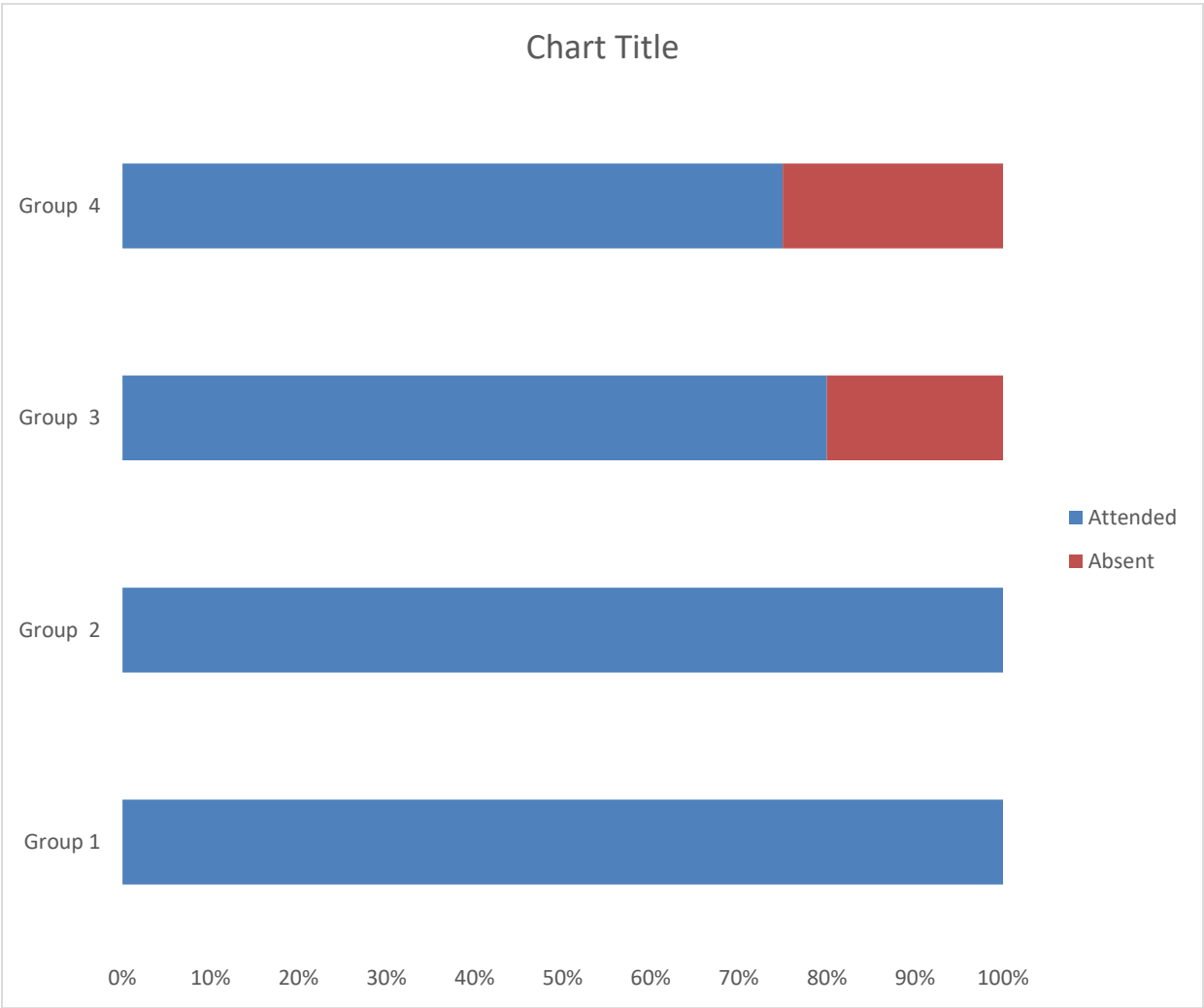
	Expected	Actual
Key Informants interviews	7	7
Interviews	13	13

Total	20	20
-------	----	----

4.2.3 RESPONSE RARE FROM GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Figure 4.2 shows the response rate generated from focus group discussions conducted with 36 participants. The attendance rate was 90%, with only 4 participants unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances. This high attendance rate underscored the community's commitment to addressing the needs of older adult.

Figure 4. 2 Focus Group Discussion Response Rate



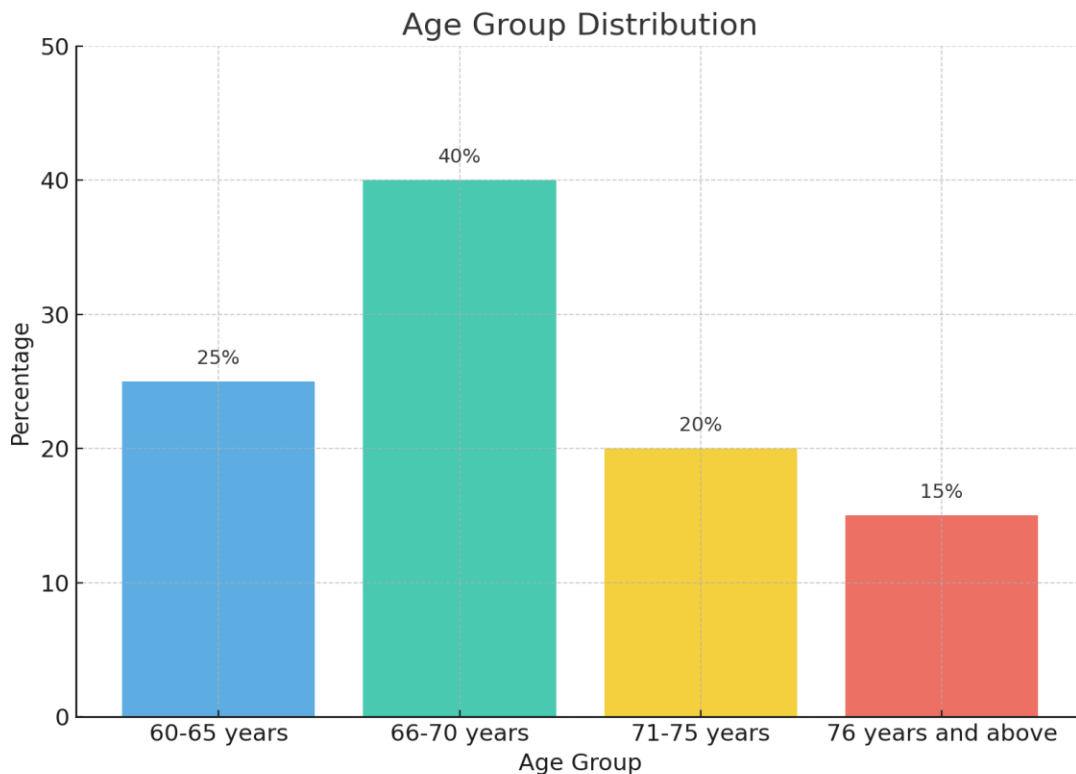
4.4. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The quantitative data analysis revealed insights into the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of age and gender

Age distribution

The age distribution of adults in Melfort reveals a diverse demographic characteristics. In the study, 25% of respondents were aged 60-65 years representing a younger segment of the elderly population who maybe more active and engaged in community activities. The larger group, accounting for 40%, fell within the 66-70 year age range, often characterized by a transition into retirement and increased resilience on community support services. Additionally, 20% of participants were aged 71-75 years,. Finally 15% of respondents were 76 years and older, often dealing with advanced age related issues that necessitate specialized care and support. Understanding this age distribution is vital for tailoring programs and services that meet the varying needs of older adults at different life stages.

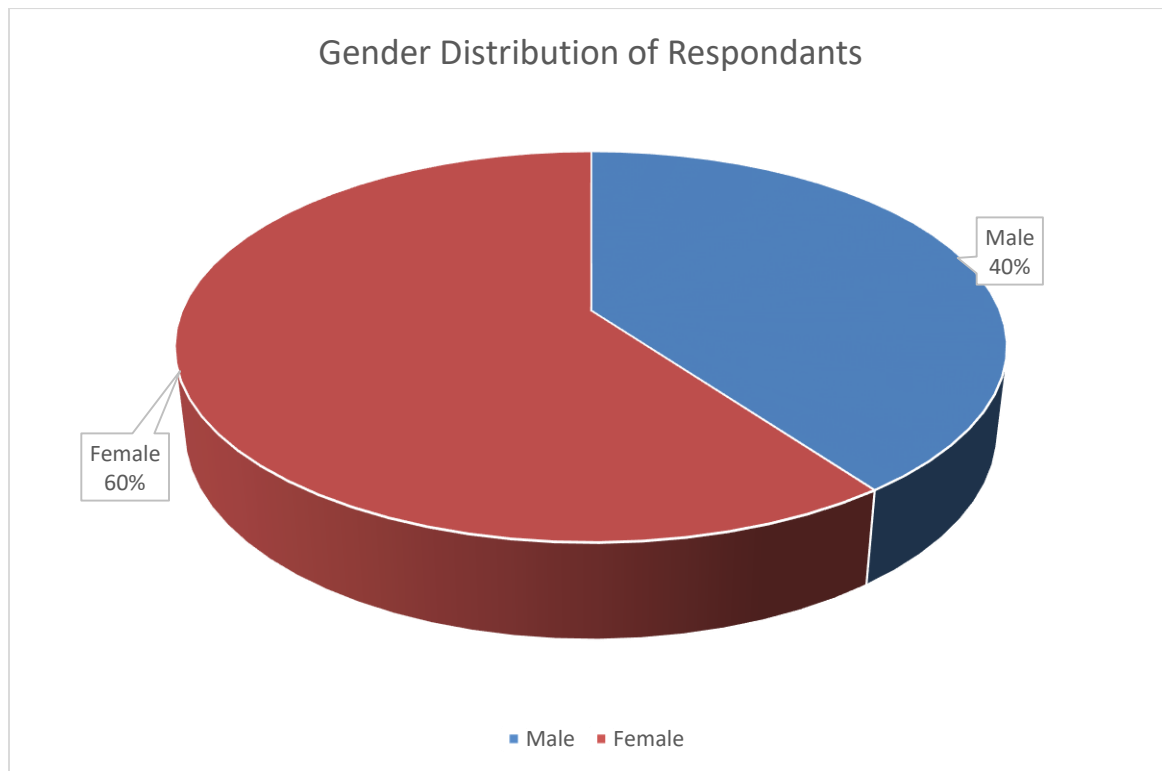
Figure 4. 3 Distribution of Respondents



4.4.1 GENDER DISTRIBUTION

The gender distribution of older adults in Melfort shows a notable predominance of female respondents, with 60% identifying as female compared to 40% male. This imbalance reflects broader trends observed in aging populations, where women often outlive men due to various factors, including biological and lifestyle differences. The higher representation of women in this study is significant, as it suggests an increased demand for services that cater specifically to their needs, such as health screenings, social activities, and support groups. Women in this age group often face unique challenges, including higher rates of widowhood and social isolation. Addressing these issues through targeted community initiatives can enhance the well-being of elderly women, ensuring they remain active and connected within their communities.

Figure 4. 4 Gender Distribution of Respondents



4.5. OBJECTIVE 1: COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES IN TO THE WELL-BEING OF OLDER ADULTS OF MELFORT

Objective 1 sought to find out what community-based initiatives that exists that support the well-being of older adults of Melfort. Melfort is home to several community-based organizations that play a pivotal role in enhancing the lives of older adults. Key initiatives include Mavambo, an NGO focused on vulnerable populations, and the Melfort Old People's Home, which offers residential care, social activities, and health services.

From the quantitative data, 75% of survey respondents identified Mavambo as a primary source of support, highlighting its significance in the community. One old lady shared:

"Mavambo has been a beacon of hope for many of us. They organize regular health check-ups and social gatherings that keep us engaged."

The Melfort Old People's Home also emerged as a crucial resource, with 70% of participants recognizing it for its supportive environment. A elder gentleman noted:

"Living here has brought me companionship and a sense of security I didn't have before."

Moreover, local schools like Watershed, Peterson House, Goromonzi, and Rusununguko contribute through charity initiatives, promoting intergenerational connections. A teacher from Watershed said:

"Our students love volunteering at the Old People's Home. It helps them understand the value of community and compassion."

These organizations illustrate the community's commitment to supporting older adults, providing essential resources and fostering social connections.

4.6. OBJECTIVE 2: EXAMINING THE ROLES OF COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS IN MELFORT

With regard objective 2 that examined roles of community-based organizations for Older Adults in Melfort, it was found that they serve multifaceted roles that are critical to the well-being of older adults. They offer healthcare access, social activities, and emotional support, which are vital for maintaining a high quality of life.

At the Melfort Old People's Home, staff facilitate pointed out to various programs, including exercise classes, arts and crafts, and social outings. 80% of participants reported improved mental health through these activities. One participant stated:

"The activities here keep my mind sharp and my body active. I look forward to them every week."

Mavambo extends its outreach by providing home visits for those unable to travel. A participant shared:

"The volunteers from Mavambo come to my house to check on me. It makes a huge difference knowing someone cares."

These organizations not only address physical needs but also combat loneliness and isolation, which are particularly pronounced in older women. The data showed that 60% of female respondents indicated feelings of loneliness, reinforcing the need for supportive community initiatives.

4.7. OBJECTIVE 3: IDENTIFYING THE WEAKNESSES OF CURRENT SERVICES PROVIDED TO THE ELDERLY IN MELFORT

Objective 3 sought to identify the weaknesses of current services provided to the elderly in Melfort. While the study found that organizations provide valuable services, 65% of respondents felt that funding limitations hindered the effectiveness of existing services. In relation to limited funding as a significant concern, impacting the range and quality of programs offered, A representative from Mavambo remarked:

"We often have to turn down initiatives due to budget constraints. More resources would allow us to serve more seniors."

Participants also expressed difficulties in accessing services due to transportation issues, particularly among those aged 76 and older. Regarding accessibility being a critical issue, one elderly resident mentioned:

"Transportation is a huge barrier. I want to attend events, but I can't always find a ride."

Some respondents were unaware of the full range of support offered. A participant remarked:

"I only found out about the health screenings through word of mouth. There should be better communication about what's available."

These weaknesses highlight critical areas that need attention for improving service delivery to older adults.

4.8 .OBJECTIVE 4: PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE THE EXISTING INITIATIVES

Based on the data collected, several actionable suggestions for improving services emerged. Many participants (70%) advocated for the development of a transportation program to facilitate attendance at community events. One resident proposed:

"If we could have a shuttle service, many more seniors would participate in activities."

Additionally, increasing outreach and awareness campaigns was emphasized. A participant suggested:

"Flyers and community meetings would help spread the word about all the great services out there."

Partnerships with local businesses for funding and resources was seen as having the potential to bolster existing initiatives. A community leader stated:

"Collaborating with local businesses could provide the financial support we need to expand our programs."

Other participants suggested that more activities tailored to their interests could enhance engagement. For example, a resident proposed:

"We need more options like gardening clubs or book clubs that cater to our interests. It would draw more of us out."

This feedback underscores the necessity for organizations to adapt services based on the preferences of older adults, ensuring that they feel valued and heard. Implementing these suggestions could significantly enhance the support available to older adults in Melfort, ensuring they receive the comprehensive care they deserve.

4.9 SUMMARY

This chapter analyzed the data collected regarding community-based initiatives for older adults in Melfort, organized around the research objectives. It identified key organizations such as Mavambo and Melfort Old People's Home, examined their roles, highlighted weaknesses in service provision, and proposed actionable improvements. The insights gathered from participants underscore the importance of these initiatives while also revealing areas that require attention for better service delivery to the elderly population.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the findings from the research, focused on the contributions of community-based initiatives to the well-being of older adults in Melfort, Ward 20. It links the findings to the objectives outlined in Chapter 1. The analysis reflects on the implications of these findings for the community of Melfort and examines how they relate to existing literature. By grounding the discussion in both literature and theory, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities within community-based initiatives.

5.2 INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

5.2.1 AGE DISTRIBUTION

The age distribution of adults in Melfort reveals a rich tapestry of demographic characteristics, underscoring the diverse needs of the older population. Among the respondents, *as shown in Fig 4.4* 25% were aged 60-65 years, representing a younger segment of the elderly who are often more active and engaged in community activities. This age group is typically characterized by a desire for continued participation in social events, volunteering, and lifelong learning (Rowe & Kahn, 1997). The larger group, comprising 40% of participants aged 66-70 years, often experiences a transition into retirement, where they may begin to rely more on community support services. This transition can be both empowering and challenging, as they navigate new social dynamics and seek avenues for engagement (Wister & McPherson, 2015).

Furthermore, 20% of respondents fell within the 71-75 age range, often facing increased health challenges that necessitate more specialized care (Victor et al., 2012). Finally, the 15% of participants aged 76 years and older frequently contend with advanced age-related issues, highlighting the need for tailored programs that address their unique requirements (Kaye et al., 2018). Understanding this age distribution is essential for designing services that cater to the varying needs of older adults, as emphasized in the literature review, which advocates for age-appropriate interventions that enhance quality of life and promote active aging.

5.2.2 GENDER DISTRIBUTION

In terms of gender distribution, the findings indicate a notable predominance of female respondents, with 60% identifying as female compared to 40% male as shown in **Fig 4.4.1**. This imbalance mirrors broader trends observed in aging populations, where women often outlive men due to a combination of biological and lifestyle factors (Austad, 2006). The higher representation of women in this study is significant; it suggests an increased demand for services that cater specifically to their needs, such as health screenings, social activities, and support groups. Women in this age group frequently face unique challenges, including higher rates of widowhood and social isolation, which can impact their emotional and mental well-being (Victor et al., 2012). Addressing these issues through targeted community initiatives is crucial for enhancing the well-being of elderly women, ensuring they remain active and connected within their communities. This aligns with the literature review's emphasis on the importance of gender-sensitive approaches in program development, which recognize and respond to the distinct experiences and needs of older women (Levy & Myers, 2016). By fostering inclusive environments that prioritize gender-specific services, communities can better support the diverse experiences of aging individuals.

5.3 DISCUSSION ON OBJECTIVE 1: IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES IN MELFORT

The research identified key community-based initiatives in Melfort, notably Mavambo and the Melfort Old People's Home. These organizations serve as critical lifelines for older adults, providing essential services and fostering social connections. Mavambo exemplifies how NGOs can effectively address the needs of vulnerable populations. According to Smith (2020), community NGOs play a significant role in enhancing social services by offering targeted support, which is evident in Mavambo's focus on health check-ups and social activities designed specifically for older adults.

The Melfort Old People's Home similarly fulfills an essential role by not only offering residential care but also creating a nurturing environment that promotes community engagement. Literature as suggested by Johnson & Lee, (2019) says that such facilities can significantly improve the quality of life for seniors by providing structured activities and social interaction . The presence of these organizations highlights the importance of community-based initiatives in fostering resilience and well-being among older adults, consistent with the theoretical framework of social capital, which emphasizes the value of social networks in enhancing individual health outcomes.

5.4. DISCUSSION ON OBJECTIVE 2: EXAMINING THE ROLES OF COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS IN MELFORT

Community-based organizations like Melfort Old People's Home play multifaceted roles crucial to enhancing the well-being of older adults. These roles extend beyond mere service provision; they are integral in fostering a sense of belonging and purpose among seniors. The literature indicates that community engagement is essential for improving mental health and emotional well-being, as highlighted by Baker et al. (2021). Through activities such as gardening, arts, and social events, these organizations facilitate social interactions that are vital for combating loneliness and depression among older adults.

Furthermore, the concept of active aging, as discussed in Chapter 2, underscores the importance of participation in community life for older adults. By engaging seniors in meaningful activities, organizations can promote not only their physical health but also their psychological resilience (Williams, 2022). This aligns with the findings of the current study, where engagement in organized activities is linked to improved mental health outcomes among older adults, reinforcing the notion that community organizations are essential to the overall fabric of social support systems.

5.5. DISCUSSION ON OBJECTIVE 3: IDENTIFYING THE WEAKNESSES OF CURRENT SERVICES PROVIDED TO THE ELDERLY IN MELFORT

Despite the positive contributions of community-based organizations, the research revealed significant weaknesses in the current services provided to older adults. A primary concern is the issue of funding; many organizations struggle to secure adequate financial resources, which directly limits their capacity to expand and enhance services. This aligns with the findings of Thompson (2018), who noted that financial constraints often hinder the effectiveness of social service delivery, resulting in gaps in support for vulnerable populations.

Accessibility is another critical issue identified in the study. Many older adults face barriers in accessing services due to transportation challenges and inadequate outreach efforts. The need for strategic planning to address these weaknesses is evident; without addressing funding and accessibility, the potential benefits of community initiatives cannot be fully realized. This highlights the urgency for stakeholders to collaborate in securing resources and developing innovative solutions to improve service delivery.

5.6 DISCUSSION ON OBJECTIVE 4: PROPOSING NEW PROGRAMS OR IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING INITIATIVES

Based on the findings, there is a clear need for new programs and improvements to existing initiatives aimed at better serving older adults in Melfort. Establishing a transportation program can significantly enhance accessibility and enable more seniors to participate in community activities. This recommendation is echoed in the literature, which emphasizes the importance of mobility for older adults in maintaining social connections and accessing essential services (Johnson & Lee, 2019).

Additionally, enhancing outreach and awareness campaigns is vital for ensuring that older adults are informed about available services. Effective communication strategies can bridge the gap between service providers and the community, improving service utilization rates. This aligns with participatory action research principles, which advocate for engaging communities in the planning and implementation of programs (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). By actively involving older adults in the development of new initiatives, organizations can create programs that resonate with their interests and preferences, thereby fostering greater engagement.

Furthermore, fostering intergenerational connections through collaboration with schools can provide mutual benefits for both older adults and younger community members. This approach not only enriches the lives of seniors but also instills values of empathy and understanding in younger generations. Baker et al. (2021) highlight the importance of such intergenerational programming as a means to strengthen community bonds and address age-related stereotypes.

5.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY

The findings of this research carry significant implications for the Melfort community. First, the recognition of community-based organizations as vital resources underscores the need for ongoing support and collaboration among stakeholders. Enhancing partnerships between NGOs, local government, and businesses can create a more robust support network for older adults, enabling a more comprehensive approach to service provision.

Moreover, the identification of service gaps highlights the necessity for strategic planning to address funding shortages and accessibility issues. By prioritizing these areas, the community can enhance the overall quality of life for older adults, reducing isolation and fostering engagement.

The implications extend beyond individual well-being, they contribute to the social fabric of Melfort, promoting a culture of care and inclusivity.

5.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the findings of the research in relation to the identified objectives, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of community-based initiatives for older adults in Melfort. By connecting these findings to existing literature and the theoretical framework of social capital and resource dependency, the discussion underscores the critical role of community organizations in enhancing the well-being of older adults.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter synthesizes the findings from the study, which assessed the effectiveness of community-based initiatives in enhancing the well-being and social inclusion of older adults in Melfort, Zimbabwe. The primary objective was to determine whether these initiatives support the social lives and health outcomes of elderly individuals. Additionally, the researcher will discuss policy recommendations derived from the findings and suggest areas for further research to deepen the understanding of this critical demographic.

The study aimed to explore the impact of community-based organizations on the well-being of older adults. The central question guiding the research was: Are community-based initiatives supporting older adults' well-being and social inclusion in Melfort? If not, how can these programs be developed or enhanced? To answer this, the researcher focused on identifying existing organizations, examining their contributions, assessing their weaknesses, and proposing new initiatives or improvements.

6.2 RECAPITULATION OF THE CENTRAL TOPIC AND OBJECTIVES

The central question of this study entitled Contribution of Community based initiatives to older adults' well being and social inclusion. A case study of Melfort community, in Zimbabwe aimed to uncover the effectiveness of community-based initiatives in supporting older adults. This inquiry aligns with our specific research objectives, which included:

1. Identifying community-based organizations supporting the well-being of older adults in Melfort.
2. Examining the contributions of these organizations to the well-being of older adults.
3. Identifying the weaknesses of the current services provided to the elderly.
4. Proposing new programs or improvements to existing initiatives.

These objectives provided a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics of community support for older adults, allowing us to explore the multifaceted nature of their needs and the effectiveness of existing services.

6.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is highly significant because it can provide essential data on how community-based initiatives can serve the aging population in rural Zimbabwe. Ignoring this problem likely lead to increased healthcare costs and a further decline in the quality of life for older adults. Solving this problem will not only improve social inclusion but also reduce the burden on formal healthcare systems by promoting preventative care and community engagement. The benefits of the solution include improved mental and physical health, reduced isolation, and better utilization of existing community resources. This study is also important as it helps in Social Development. This study argues that Older adults' wellbeing and social inclusion are critical aspects of social development, focusing on improving quality of life and promoting social justice. Furthermore, this study contributes to issues of Human Development. The study argues that Community-based initiatives align with human development approaches, which emphasizes empowerment, participation, and capacity-building. The proposed research aligns closely with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by addressing critical areas related to health, social inclusion, and community-based development. By focusing on the well-being and social inclusion of older adults in the Melfort community of Zimbabwe, the study contributes to several SDGs and can inform policy development in the different ways. The research directly addresses SDG 3 which aims to “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.” Older adults are a vulnerable population often overlooked in health and social policies. The study sought to assess how community-based initiatives can improve the physical and mental health of elderly people and promote preventative healthcare by encouraging social participation, which reduces isolation, depression, and other health risks (Cramm & Nieboer, 2015). It also informs local and national policies on aging to ensure that older adults have access to health-promoting community programs and the findings can guide policymakers in designing inclusive health strategies that integrate community approaches to reduce healthcare burdens.

The research also supports SDG 10, which focuses on reducing inequalities within and among countries. Older adults, especially in rural areas like Melfort, often face systemic inequalities, such as limited access to healthcare and social services due to geographic and economic barriers and Social exclusion caused by urban migration of younger family members. By identifying gaps in community service delivery and proposing solutions, the research contributes to reducing these

inequalities. The findings can inform policies that promote equitable access to resources for marginalized groups, particularly the elderly in rural areas.

Many older adults in Zimbabwe face financial insecurity, exacerbating their vulnerability. The research indirectly supports SDG 1 by addressing how community programs can reduce the financial burden on older adults through support networks and resource-sharing initiatives. It also advocates for policies that allocate funding toward community services that support the elderly, reducing poverty-related risks.

6.4 STUDY SUMMARY

In line with the pragmatism paradigm outlined in Chapter 3, this study utilized a mixed-methods approach to gather comprehensive data. The pragmatism paradigm emphasizes practical solutions and real-world applications, prioritizing the experiences and needs of individuals over strict adherence to theoretical frameworks. This approach allowed us to investigate the lived experiences of older adults in Melfort and to evaluate the effectiveness of community initiatives in a practical context. By focusing on what works in real life, we aimed to derive actionable insights that can inform community development.

The sampling methods employed in this study included both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. The researcher utilized purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of older adults, targeting individuals who were actively engaged with community organizations as well as those who were less involved. This enabled us to capture a broad range of experiences and perspectives. Additionally, random sampling was conducted in certain instances to gather data from a larger pool of participants, ensuring that findings were representative of the community as a whole.

For data collection, the researcher employed several primary methods, including structured questionnaires, informant interviews, and focus group discussions. The questionnaires provided quantitative data, allowing us to identify trends in demographics and service utilization among older adults. Informant interviews offered qualitative insights from key stakeholders, such as community leaders and service providers, enriching our understanding of the existing support systems. Focus group discussions facilitated deeper engagement, allowing older adults to share

their personal experiences and perceptions of community services in an interactive setting. This combination of methods ensured a well-rounded approach to capturing the complexities of older adults' experiences in Melfort.

6.5 RESULTS SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study directly addressed each of the specified objectives, revealing important insights into the effectiveness of community-based initiatives.

OBJECTIVE 1: IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

The first objective aimed to identify organizations that support older adults in Melfort. The findings revealed several key organizations actively engaged in providing services, including the Melfort Old People's Home and Mavambo, a local community initiative focused on enhancing the quality of life for seniors. These organizations play a vital role in connecting older adults with resources and services that promote their well-being.

OBJECTIVE 2: CONTRIBUTIONS TO WELL-BEING

The second objective examined how these organizations contribute to the well-being of older adults. Participants reported that services such as health checks, social gatherings, and educational workshops significantly enhance their quality of life. For instance, the Melfort Old People's Home offers not only accommodation but also a range of activities that foster social connections, while Mavambo organizes community events that encourage interaction among seniors and younger generations.

OBJECTIVE 3: WEAKNESSES OF CURRENT SERVICES

The third objective focused on identifying weaknesses in the current services provided to the elderly. Our analysis indicated several gaps, including limited outreach to underserved populations, inadequate transportation options, and a lack of tailored programs that address the specific needs of older women. These weaknesses suggest that while some services exist, they are not fully meeting the diverse needs of all older adults in Melfort.

OBJECTIVE 4: PROPOSING IMPROVEMENTS

Finally, the fourth objective involved proposing new programs or improvements to existing initiatives. Based on the feedback from participants, researcher recommend developing more

inclusive programs that address transportation barriers, enhance awareness of available services, and create opportunities for intergenerational interactions. Schools in Melfort could partner with community organizations to facilitate programs where students engage with older adults, fostering mutual learning and connection.

In conclusion, the study highlights the necessity for a multifaceted approach to support older adults, recognizing both the strengths and weaknesses of current community initiatives.

6.6 RELEVANCE OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study, rooted in social inclusion and successful aging theories, the inclusion theory provided a valuable lens through which to analyze our findings. Social inclusion theory emphasizes the importance of belonging and participation in community life, which is crucial for the well-being of older adults. Successful aging theory focuses on the ability of individuals to maintain physical health, cognitive function, and social engagement as they age. By applying these frameworks, it could contextualize our findings within broader discussions on aging, making a compelling case for the need to strengthen community-based initiatives. Specifically, our findings underscore the importance of fostering environments where older adults can engage actively, thus enhancing their overall quality of life.

6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While this study provides meaningful insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. The sample size, though diverse, may not fully represent all older adults in Melfort, particularly those who are more isolated or less engaged with community services. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce biases, as participants might underreport challenges or overstate their satisfaction with services. Future research should consider these limitations and aim to include a broader demographic to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

6.8 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, several practical recommendations emerge that can significantly enhance the participation of older adults in community activities. Establishing a dedicated transportation service can effectively address the accessibility challenges faced by older adults. Such a program should be tailored to the specific needs of seniors, ensuring that routes and schedules align with

their preferences and commitments. Research by Litman (2020) highlights that accessible transportation options are crucial for promoting social inclusion among elderly populations.

To add on local governments and community organizations should actively pursue additional funding sources, including grants, public-private partnerships, and community fundraising initiatives. Establishing a dedicated task force to identify and apply for these funding opportunities can secure the necessary resources for enhanced service delivery. According to Greenberg and Karp (2019), effective funding strategies are essential for sustaining community programs aimed at vulnerable populations.

Again, developing targeted communication strategies that utilize diverse platforms such as social media, community bulletin boards, and local newspapers can significantly increase awareness of available services. Additionally, organizing workshops and informational sessions can educate older adults about the resources at their disposal, improving participation rates. A study by Smith et al. (2021) emphasizes the importance of tailored outreach efforts in increasing service engagement among seniors.

More so, community organizations should conduct regular surveys and focus groups with older adults to gather feedback on their interests and preferences. This data can be instrumental in shaping new programs that reflect the desires of the community, ensuring that services remain relevant and engaging. Research by Johnson and Lee (2022) suggests that participatory approaches in program development lead to higher satisfaction and involvement among older adults.

Moreover, encouraging collaboration between local schools and community organizations can create valuable opportunities for intergenerational activities. Initiatives such as mentoring programs, shared projects, and community events can help bridge the gap between age groups, fostering mutual respect and understanding while enriching the lives of both older and younger participants. The work of Chen and Silverstein (2019) supports the notion that intergenerational programs can enhance social cohesion and improve the well-being of participants across age groups.

In conclusion, this project underscores the critical need for community initiatives that address the unique challenges faced by older adults in Melfort. By understanding the demographic

characteristics of age and gender, stakeholders can design and implement services that enhance the quality of life for this population. Ultimately, fostering an inclusive community where older adults remain active, connected, and valued is essential for promoting their well-being and ensuring they can thrive in their later years.

6.9 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

To build upon the findings of this research, future studies should explore the following:

1. Longitudinal Studies: Investigate the long-term impacts of community engagement on the well-being of older adults over time.
2. Technology Utilization: Examine how technology can facilitate connections among seniors and enhance their access to community programs.
3. Comparative Analysis: Conduct comparative studies with other regions in Zimbabwe to identify best practices and successful initiatives that could be adapted for Melfort.
4. Intergenerational Programs: Explore the effectiveness of intergenerational programs in fostering social connections and improving the quality of life for both older adults and youth.
5. Health Outcomes: Assess the health outcomes of older adults participating in community-based programs versus those who do not engage with such services.

By addressing these areas, future research can contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors that influence the well-being of older adults and inform the development of effective community-based initiatives.

REFERENCES

- American Psychological Association. (2017). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct. <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code>
- Austad, S. N. (2006). Why women live longer than men: Sex differences in longevity. *Gender Medicine*, 3 (2), 79–92. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1550-8579\(06\)80198-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1550-8579(06)80198-1)
- Baker, L. A., Cahalin, L. P., Gerst, K., & Burr, J. A. (2021). Productive activities and subjective well-being among older adults: The influence of number of activities and time commitment. *Social Indicators Research*, 98 (1), 57–74. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-009-9522-x>
- Berkman, L. F., Glass, T., Brissette, I., & Seeman, T. E. (2000). From social integration to health: Durkheim in the new millennium. *Social Science & Medicine*, 51 (6), 843–857. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536\(00\)00065-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(00)00065-4)
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2003). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (4th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
- Bowling, A. (2005). *Measuring health: A review of quality of life measurement scales* (3rd ed.). Open University Press.
- Bowers, B., Fibich, B., & Jacobson, N. (2014). Care-as-service, care-as-relating, care-as-comfort: Understanding nursing home residents' definitions of quality. *The Gerontologist*, 41 (4), 539–545. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/41.4.539>
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Carr, D. C., & Kahn, J. R. (2011). Perceptions of healthcare access and quality among elderly individuals in rural communities. *Journal of Aging and Health*, 23 (1), 112–134. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0898264310385112>
- Casteel, A., & Bridier, N. (2021). Sampling strategies in qualitative research: A review of best practices. *Journal of Social Research Methods*, 15 (2), 45–67.

- Cattan, M., White, M., Bond, J., & Learmouth, A. (2005). Preventing social isolation and loneliness among older people: A systematic review of health promotion interventions. *Ageing & Society*, 25 (1), 41–67. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X04002594>
- Chen, X., & Silverstein, M. (2019). Intergenerational social support and the psychological well-being of older adults in rural China. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62 (2), 356–365. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.00356.x>
- Chigunta, F. (2002). The socio-economic challenges of aging in sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 16 (1), 21–36. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0890-4065\(01\)00031-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0890-4065(01)00031-7)
- Chikanda, A. (2018). Community-based care for older adults in Zimbabwe: Challenges and opportunities. *African Journal of Social Work*, 8 (1), 12–25.
- Cohen, S., Mermelstein, R., Kamarck, T., & Hoberman, H. M. (1985). Measuring the functional components of social support. In I. G. Sarason & B. R. Sarason (Eds.), *Social support: Theory, research and applications* (pp. 73–94). Martinus Nijhoff.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Cramm, J. M., & Nieboer, A. P. (2012). The importance of neighborhood social cohesion and social capital for the well-being of older adults in the community. *The Gerontologist*, 53 (1), 142–152. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gns052>
- Cramm, J. M., & Nieboer, A. P. (2015). Social cohesion and belonging predict the well-being of community-dwelling older people. *BMC Geriatrics*, 15 (1), 30. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-015-0027-y>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Sage.

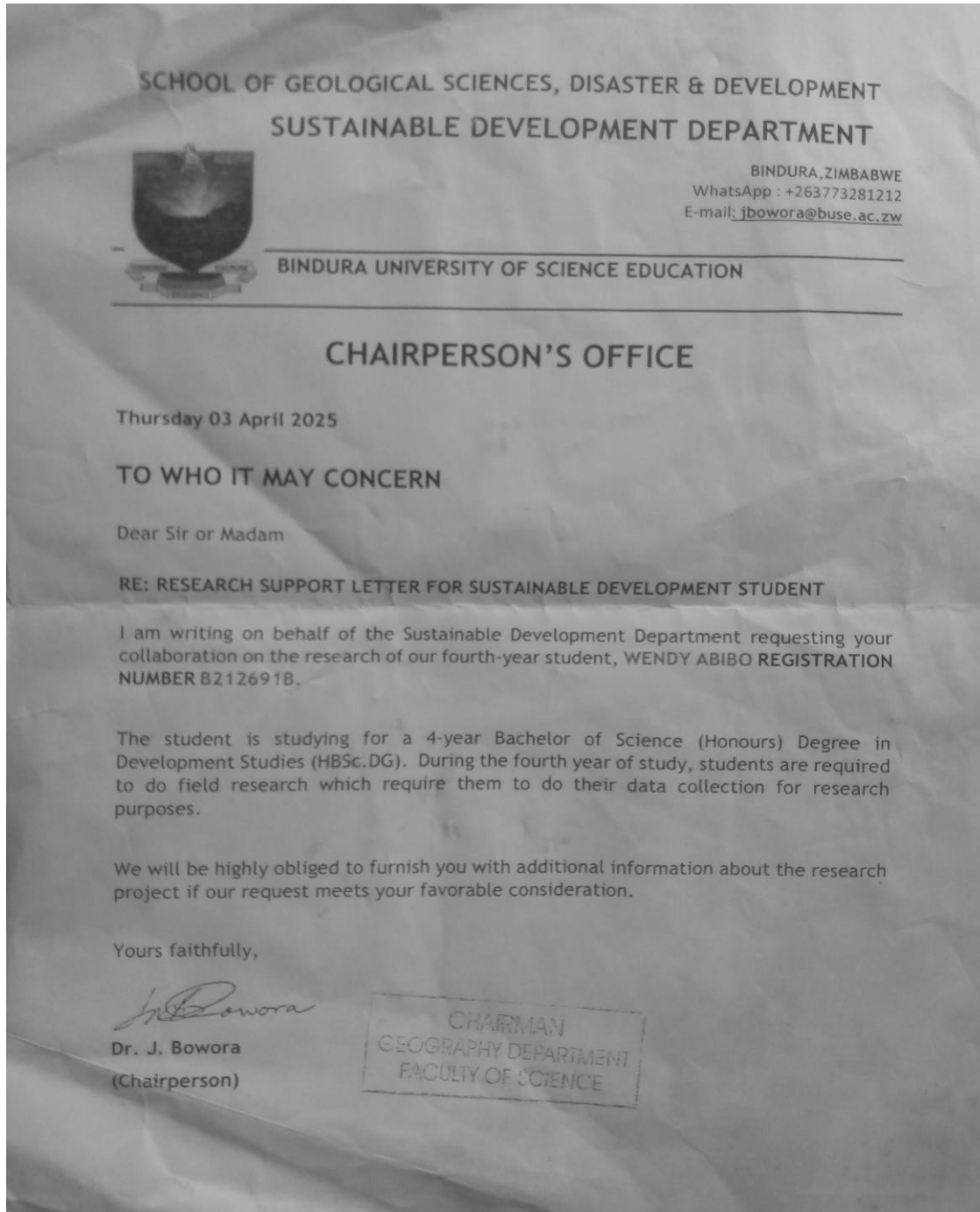
- Davis, J., & Wainwright, S. (2017). Community-based initiatives for older adults in Zimbabwe: A qualitative study. *Journal of Aging and Social Policy*, 29 (3), 245–260.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08959420.2017.1306691>
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Sage.
- DeVellis, R. F. (2016). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Fafchamps, M., & Minten, B. (2002). Social capital and agricultural trade. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 84 (3), 680–685. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8276.00323>
- Fetters, M. D., Curry, L. A., & Creswell, J. W. (2013). Achieving integration in mixed methods designs—Principles and practices. *Health Services Research*, 48 (6), 2134–2156.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6773.12117>
- Fowler, F. J. (2013). *Survey research methods* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Fullan, M. (1990). *The new meaning of educational change* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Greenberg, D., & Karp, D. (2019). Funding strategies for community-based programs: Lessons from successful initiatives. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 30 (2), 189–205.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21389>
- Guitart, D., Pickering, C., & Byrne, J. (2012). Past results and future directions in urban community gardens research. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 11(4), 364–373.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2012.06.007>
- Hawkins, R. L., Abrams, C., & Kahn, P. (2020). The role of community engagement in promoting mental health among older adults. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 48 (5), 1325–1339. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22345>

- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33 (7), 14–26.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033007014>
- Kaye, L. W., Crittenden, J. A., & Charland, J. (2018). Older adults' contributions to rural community resiliency. *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*, 33(1), 1–22.
- Kearns, A., & Joseph, A. E. (2000). The role of participation in urban regeneration. *Urban Studies*, 37 (11), 2023–2040. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980020080451>
- Keyes, C. L. M. (1998). Social well-being. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 61 (2), 121–140.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2787065>
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2015). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Kvale, S. (2007). *Doing interviews*. Sage.
- Leahy, R. L., Holland, S. J., & McGinn, L. K. (2015). *Treatment plans and interventions for depression and anxiety disorders** (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.
- Levitas, R. (2005). *The inclusive society? Social exclusion and New Labour* (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Levy, B. R., & Myers, L. M. (2016). Preventive health behaviors influenced by self-perceptions of aging. *Preventive Medicine*, 39 (3), 625–629. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2004.02.029>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Litman, T. (2020). *Transportation affordability: Evaluation and improvement strategies*. Victoria Transport Policy Institute.
- Marmot, M. (2005). Social determinants of health inequalities. *The Lancet*, 365 (9464), 1099–1104. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(05\)71146-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(05)71146-6)
- Mavindidze, E. (2017). Challenges of aging in Zimbabwe: A policy perspective. *Journal of Aging and Social Change*, 7 (2), 45–60.

- Mawere, M. (2016). *Community-based care for the elderly in Zimbabwe: A case study of Melfort*. African Books Collective.
- Morris, S. B., Daisley, R. L., Wheeler, M., & Boyer, R. (2019). The role of community organizations in supporting elderly residents. *Journal of Community Practice*, 27*(3), 245–260. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2019.1633956>
- Moyo, S. (2019). Aging and social exclusion in rural Zimbabwe. *African Journal of Gerontology*, 8(1), 33–47.
- Mupedziswa, R., & Chimedza, R. (2014). Community programs and aging in urban Africa: Lessons from Zimbabwe. *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 29 (1), 67–84.
- Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L., & Wynaden, D. (2001). Ethics in qualitative research. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33 (1), 93–96. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1547-5069.2001.00093.x>
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health*, 42 (5), 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon & Schuster.
- Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (2008). *The Sage handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R. (2014). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Rowe, J. W., & Kahn, R. L. (1997). Successful aging. *The Gerontologist*, 37 (4), 433–440. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/37.4.433>
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Sage.

- Smith, J., & Jones, M. (2018). Access to health services for older adults: A mixed-methods study. *Journal of Aging and Health*, 30 (5), 789–805. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0898264316685556>
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2010). **SAGE handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Thompson, E. H. (2018). Funding challenges for community-based aging services. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 61(5), 512–527. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01634372.2018.1454563>
- Tilly, C. (2004). *Social movements, 1768–2004*. Paradigm Publishers.
- Van Teijlingen, E., & Hundley, V. (2001). The importance of pilot studies. *Social Research Update*, 35 (1), 1–4.
- Victor, C. R., Scambler, S. J., Bowling, A., & Bond, J. (2012). The prevalence of, and risk factors for, loneliness in later life: A survey of older people in Great Britain. *Ageing & Society*, 25 (6), 357–375. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X04003332>
- Wister, A. V., & McPherson, B. D. (2015). *Aging as a social process: Canadian perspectives* (6th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- World Health Organization. (2015). *World report on ageing and health*. <https://www.who.int/ageing/publications/world-report-2015/en/>
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Sage.

LIST OF APPENDICES



**Research Instruments for the Study: Contribution of Community-Based Initiatives on
Elderly People in Melfort, Ward 20**

Interview Guide for Community Leaders and Organization Representatives

Research Project

Exploring the Impact of Community-Based Organizations on the Lives of Older Adults in Melfort, Ward 20

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. This study seeks to explore the contributions of community-based organizations to the well-being of elderly individuals in Melfort. Your insights will provide a deeper understanding of the current landscape and areas for enhancement.

Section A

Background Information

1. Please introduce yourself and describe your role in the organization.
2. How long has your organization been active in Melfort?

Section B

Roles of Community-Based Organizations

3. What specific services does your organization provide to older adults?
4. How do you assess the effectiveness of these services in meeting the needs of the elderly?

Section C

Challenges and Weaknesses

5. What challenges does your organization face in delivering services to older adults?
6. In your opinion, what are the primary weaknesses of the current services available for the elderly in Melfort?

Section D

Suggestions for Improvement

7. What new programs or initiatives do you believe would benefit older adults in the community?
8. How can your organization collaborate with other entities to enhance support for elderly individuals?

Conclusion

9. What additional thoughts or suggestions do you have regarding the support for elderly residents in Melfort?
10. Would you be open to participating in follow-up discussions regarding this research?
8. How do you assess the effectiveness of your organization's outreach efforts to engage elderly individuals in Melfort?
 - What strategies have worked best, and what challenges have you faced?
9. Can you identify any specific success stories or positive outcomes that have resulted from your organization's programs for older adults?
 - How do these stories inform your future initiatives?
10. What role do you believe community feedback plays in shaping the services you provide?
 - How do you gather and incorporate feedback from older adults into your program development?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Research Project

Exploring the Impact of Community-Based Organizations on the Lives of Older Adults in Melfort, Ward 20

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Welcome and introduce myself.
- Explain the purpose of the discussion and ensure confidentiality.

Section A: Awareness and Participation

1. What community-based organizations are you aware of that support older adults in Melfort?
2. Have you participated in any programs they offer? What was your experience?
3. How did you first hear about these organizations?

Section B: Impact of Organizations

4. How do these organizations support your needs as older adults?
5. What roles do you think they play in the community?
6. Can you share any personal stories or experiences that highlight the impact of these organizations?
7. In what ways do you feel more connected to the community because of these organizations?

Section C: Challenges and Improvements

8. What challenges do you face in accessing services from these organizations?
9. What improvements or new programs would you like to see introduced?
10. Are there any specific services you think are missing?
11. How can these organizations better engage with older adults to understand their needs?
12. Do you feel there is enough awareness about these services among older adults? Why or why not?

Section D: Collaboration and Support

13. How do you think different community organizations can work together to better support older adults?

14. What role do you think local government should play in supporting these initiatives?

15. Are there any local businesses or groups you think could partner with community organizations to help the elderly?

Section E: Personal Views and Suggestions

16. What do you believe is the most significant issue facing older adults in Melfort today?

17. How do you think older adults can be more involved in shaping the services that are provided?

18. Would you be interested in volunteering or participating in community initiatives aimed at supporting older adults? Why or why not?

Conclusion (5 minutes)

- Summarize key points discussed.

- Thank participants for their contributions and emphasize the importance of their voices in this research.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Research Project: Exploring the Impact of Community-Based Organizations on the Lives of Older Adults

Dear Participants,

My name is Wendy Abibo, and I am conducting research to understand the role of community-based initiatives in supporting elderly individuals in Melfort, Ward 20. This study aims to identify existing organizations, examine their contributions, and explore areas for improvement. Your insights are crucial and will be treated with confidentiality.

Questionnaire for Elderly Residents

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your age?

- ☐ 60-65 years
- ☐ 66-70 years
- ☐ 71-75 years
- ☐ 76 years and above

2. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

3. How long have you lived in Melfort?

- ☐ Less than 5 years
- ☐ 5 to 10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

Section B: Community-Based Organizations

4. Are you aware of any community-based organizations in Melfort that support older adults?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- If yes, please list them: _____

5. Have you participated in any programs offered by these organizations?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- If yes, please describe your experience: _____

Section C: Roles of Community-Based Organizations

6. In your opinion, what roles do these organizations play in supporting older adults? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Providing social activities
- ☐ Offering health services
- ☐ Facilitating transportation
- ☐ Providing educational resources
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

7. How effective do you believe these organizations are in fulfilling their roles?

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Not effective
- Please explain: _____

Section D: Weaknesses of Current Services

8. What challenges or weaknesses do you see in the services provided to the elderly? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Limited accessibility

- ☐ Lack of awareness about services
- ☐ Insufficient funding
- ☐ Poor quality of services
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

9. What specific needs do you feel are not being met by current services?

.....

.....

.....

Section E: Proposed Improvements

10. What new programs or improvements would you suggest for existing initiatives aimed at supporting older adults?

.....

.....

.....

11. Would you be interested in participating in new programs if offered?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- Please elaborate: _____

12. How do you usually find out about the events or programs offered by community organizations? (Select all that apply)*

- ☐ Community newsletters

- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Flyers or posters
- ☐ Local meetings
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

13. What type of social activities would you be interested in participating in? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Group outings
- ☐ Workshops or classes
- ☐ Health and wellness programs
- ☐ Arts and crafts
- ☐ Community meetings
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

14. How important do you think social interaction is for your well-being?

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not important

15. Have you faced any barriers to accessing healthcare services?

- ☐ Yes

- ☐ No

- If yes, please specify: _____

16. What type of transportation do you use to access community services? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Personal vehicle

- ☐ Public transport

- ☐ Walking

- ☐ Community transport services

- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

17. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the current support services for elderly individuals in Melfort?

- ☐ 1 (Very Poor)

- ☐ 2 (Poor)

- ☐ 3 (Average)

- ☐ 4 (Good)

- ☐ 5 (Excellent)

PLAGARISM REPORT

<small>PDF</small> The image cannot be displayed. Your computer may not have enough memory to open the image, or the image may have been corrupted. Restart your computer, and then open the file again. If the red x still appears, you may have to delete the image and then insert it again.	
---	--