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An assessment of Auxillia Mnangagwa's efforts on combating the crisis of early child marriages in Zimbabwe. A case study of Epworth.

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the efforts of Auxillia Mnangagwa in combating early child marriages in Epworth, Zimbabwe, a peri-urban community affected by poverty, cultural practices, and limited access to education. Guided by Social Norms Theory, which explains how individual behaviour is shaped by community expectations and shared beliefs, the study examines how deeply embedded social norms continue to influence the persistence of early child marriage. The research focuses on understanding the nature and extent of early child marriage, the interventions implemented, and how effective these efforts have been in reducing the problem and improving the lives of vulnerable girls. A qualitative approach was used, with data collected through interviews from key community members including young girls, parents, teacher leaders, and representatives from organisations.The findings show that early child marriage remains common in Epworth, mainly driven by poverty, school dropout, and strong cultural and religious beliefs. In line with Social Norms Theory, the study reveals that the practice is sustained not only by economic factors but also by community expectations that normalise early marriage. While awareness campaigns, education programmes, and community outreach initiatives, many linked to Auxillia Mnangagwa's advocacy, have helped increase knowledge and shift some attitudes, the overall impact is still limited. Behavioural change is slow, as social pressure and economic constraints continue to reinforce the practice.The study concludes that although progress has been made, more integrated and long-term solutions are needed, especially those that address both economic challenges and deeply rooted social norms. It recommends stronger collaboration between government, communities, and organisations, as well as improved enforcement of laws and increased support for girls' education.

DECLARATIOM FORM

I solemnly declare that this research study herein is my own work and has not been copied from any sources without the acknowledgement of the sources.

Supervisor’s Signature

……… Date .28/08/2026.....

Student's Signature

……/……..... Date .29/08/2026.....

Chairperson’s Signature

…… Date .....02/09/2026.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my dear father and mother, my sister, my brother, and his wife, for their unwavering support, encouragement, and hard work have been the foundation of my journey. I express my heartfelt gratitude for your sacrifices and patience. Your support has been instrumental in making my academic year a success. I fell truly blessed to have you in my life.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency
UCAZ	United Christian Alliance of Zimbabwe
RDC	Rural District Council
MoWACSMED	Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development
SMS	Social Management Systems
WHO	World Health Organization

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
POSDCORB	Planning, Organising, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting, Budgeting
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The chapter includes the background of this study by providing the background, context and purpose of the study. It ponders on how Auxillia Mnangagwa can contribute to resolving the old issue of early child marriages in Epworth. The chapter provides an overview of the high prevalence of child marriage and socio-economic dynamics that support this vice and its impacts on the health, education and overall well-being of young girls. It also places the study at the national and regional level campaigns against the negative cultural practices. Further, the chapter contains the problem statement, research objectives and key questions that guide the research. The chapter preconditions the understanding of the significance of the research, showing how particular interventions and advocacy efforts can be used to reduce early child marriages and attain a sustainable social change.

1.2 Study Background.

Child marriage is an ancient practice that is entrenched in the socio-cultural, economic and patriarchal structures of the world. Traditionally, early marriages were used to unify the family ties, preserve the wealth and regulate female sexuality, particularly in those societies where the separation of roles was rigorous (UNICEF, 2023). Child marriage may be less common in certain regions but with time it is an aggressive human right issue with modernization and legal reforms. This means that the structural inequalities are persisting because the UNICEF (2023) estimates that annually approximately 12 million girls are married off below the age of 18. Scholars such as Girls Not Brides (2022) believe that such factors as poverty, illiteracy, and gender norms remain as influential factors that keep the practice alive, especially in developing nations.

Child marriage is still prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa, and it is estimated that the region will be the most prevalent in the world in case the trends are not reversed (UNFPA, 2022). A study conducted by UNFPA shows that access to education and socio-economic vulnerability are major contributors to the tendency of young girls to enter into early marriages. Poverty and religious beliefs, as well as cultural practices in Zimbabwe are closely related to the practice. Studies indicate that nearly one-third of girls are married off below 18 years of age and more so among marginalized communities (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2022). Even though the Mudzuru v Minister of Justice case ruled that child marriages under 18 were unlawful, researchers such as Chireshe (2021) state that the legislation is poorly implemented due to the r

Auxillia Mnangagwa has become one of the prominent voices on the social issue relating to gender issues including child marriage. Since she assumed the position of the First Lady in 2017, she has been leading in terms of women empowerment, health, and protection of the vulnerable groups. According to United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2023), her programmes have included community outreach campaigns, gender-based violence education and partnering with local and international organisations. Machingura (2022) also says that she even urges girls to get educated and raises awareness about the disadvantages of cultural norms, which is why she is among the key participants in the national campaign to combat early marriages. This makes it useful as a point of reference to check how well high-level advocacy interventions have worked because of her presence and impact.

Epworth is a congested peri- urban community that is located in the southeast of Harare and is characterised by high rate of poverty, unofficial housing and the absence of social amenities. These socio-economic aspects help uphold this habit of child marriage since families are likely to employ early marriage as a coping mechanism (Plan International, 2022). ReliefWeb (2021)

studies show that, even though interventions have been implemented by government bodies and non-governmental organisations in Epworth, it is still facing issues that hamper the process, among them being the absence of enforcing the law, lack of awareness, and cultural resistance. Other interventions by organisations such as Plan International as well as local community groups have been on education and protection programmes but the problem persists. In this way, Epworth provides a negative example of how to judge the efficiency of the existing interventions, as well as the relevance of leadership-based programs to child marriage.

1.3 Problem Statement

Child marriage is a social issue in Zimbabwe, especially in the marginalized groups like Epworth, which has been a systemic challenge even after legal structures and continuous interventions have been established in the country to eliminate the vice. Even though constitutional court decision in Mudzuru v Minister of Justice established 18 years as the minimum marriage age, loopholes in implementation, cultural resistance, poverty, and lack of access to education still leave young girls vulnerable to early marriage (Chireshe, 2021). This does not only infringe their basic human rights but also contributes to the poverty-gender inequality-school dropout-poor health results cycles (UNICEF, 2023; UNFPA, 2022). Although advocacy campaigns headed by Auxillia Mnangagwa have been high-profile in order to overcome these challenges by creating awareness and engaging the community, there is scanty empirical data evaluating the real impact and effectiveness of these campaigns at the community level (Machingura, 2022). The absence of clear assessment leaves a void in the knowledge of whether the interventions are being translated into significant behavioural and structural change. This study therefore aims at evaluating the level to which such efforts have been able to play a role in fighting early child marriages in Epworth and to determine what gaps still exist that are inhibiting the process.

1.4 Research Aim

The aim of this study is to assess the efforts of Auxillia Mnangagwa in combating the crisis of early child marriages in Epworth, Zimbabwe.

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To examine the nature and extent of early child marriages in Epworth, **Zimbabwe.**
2. To evaluate the initiatives and interventions implemented by Auxillia Mnangagwa to combat early child marriages.
3. To assess the effectiveness of these efforts in reducing early child marriages and improving the welfare of vulnerable girls in Epworth.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What is the nature and extent of early child marriages in Epworth, Zimbabwe?
2. What initiatives and interventions have been implemented by Auxillia Mnangagwa to address early child marriages?
3. How effective are these efforts in reducing early child marriages and improving the welfare of vulnerable girls in Epworth?

1.7 Justification of the Study

The study is relevant to policymakers and government institutions in that it will offer evidence on the effectiveness of the existing interventions in reducing early child marriages. Through the evaluation of the work of Auxillia Mnangagwa, the study provides information on whether the high-level advocacy and policy encouragement is being implemented at the grassroots level. The researchers can use the findings to help policymakers reinforce their current laws,

enhance implementation processes, and more focused interventions that can help change the fundamental causes of child marriage in society like Epworth.

The study is also important to non-governmental organisations and development partners in the area of child protection and gender equality. Empirical evidence is employed by such stakeholders in the design of the programmes, allocation of resources, and the intervention strategies. The study by highlighting the success and failure of the existing efforts can help organisations to refine their approaches, better their relations with communities and develop more viable programmes that may effectively be used to protect vulnerable girls against early marriages.

This research has practical implications to the Epworth community which sensitizes the community on lived experiences and problems of young girls who would be at risk of becoming early marriages. It strengthens community voices and provides an avenue to seek culturally sensitive and context-specific solutions. The outcomes can also raise awareness to families and local leaders to transform behaviour and help with the emphasis on education and child protection.The research is also important to academic researchers and scholars because it adds to the background on child marriage, gender studies and social development. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by concentrating on a particular case study and also including the leadership aspect in social change. It can also be used as a basis in future research which aims at investigating similar problems in different settings.

Lastly, the research is significant to the researcher because it will improve his or her knowledge on social issues that expose the vulnerable population to and train the researcher to be a critical researcher. It gives one a chance to work in real-life areas, practice what they have learned and can serve the society in a meaningful way. The study also enables the researcher to gain

experience in gender and development research, which could be of benefit in future academic or career endeavors.

1.8 Assumption of the Study

The study has the following assumptions:

1. It is assumed that the participants will be honest and give correct information on the early child marriages in Epworth.
2. The researcher supposes that the initiatives of Auxillia Mnangagwa have been carried out in the community and are familiar to at least some locals.
3. It is presumed that early child marriage is still one of the issues that are still pertinent and persistent in Epworth.
4. The research also presumes that the current policies and legal systems are aimed at decreasing child marriage, although they may not be fully working.
5. It is presumed that the sample chosen will be representative in such a way that it will give significant information about the issue.

1.9 Delimitations / Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to the evaluation of the work of Auxillia Mnangagwa in the field of tackling the problem of the early child marriages in one of the peri-urban settlements of Zimbabwe, Epworth. The study targets exclusively girls who are at risk or already victims of early marriage and important stakeholders like community, school administrators, and the concerned organisations in the region. The study is restricted geographically to Epworth and is not extrapolated to other parts of Zimbabwe, although the results can provide insights to apply in a similar setting. The paper will focus on chosen programs associated with awareness campaigns, community mobilization as well as advocacy initiatives, instead of assessing all the national

programmes on child marriage. Regarding time, the study concentrates on the recent interventions that have been put in place by Auxillia Mnangagwa in her capacity as First Lady. The research also narrows down to qualitative data, where it seeks to get a more in-depth insight as opposed to general statistical generalisations.

1.10 Study Limitations.

The large geographical coverage of the study is one of the key constraints because the results might not be generalised to the whole of Epworth. Although Epworth offers a good case study since it contains a socio-economic profile, the circumstances and dynamics in this community might not be the same as in the rural or other urban regions in Zimbabwe. Consequently, the results might not be completely generalized to the national context, and only to a limited degree can conclusions be generalized to the country.

The other limitation can be attributed to political environment in Zimbabwe which can affect the willingness of participants to freely discuss issues associated with government or prominent individuals. Since the research is a case of evaluating the work done by a high-profile individual in the country, some of the respondents might give socially desirable responses or decline to respond in fear of punishment. This can have an impact on reliability and objectivity of the collected data.

There is also a limitation of religious and cultural beliefs, especially in the communities whereby early marriage is advocated by some apostolic sects. People that belong to this kind of a background might not be willing to divulge information or even offer justification to practice using their strongly held beliefs. It can be hard to get honest answers and may lead to incomplete or biased data on the actual scope and motives of child marriage.

Finally, the study may be affected by sampling limitations, as one may not be able to reach all the relevant participants, especially vulnerable girls who are directly affected by early marriage. The participation can be limited because of such aspects as accessibility, parental permission, and ethics. Consequently, the sample may be small or not representative as a whole, which may also influence the depth and breadth of the results.

1.11 Definitions of major terms.

Child marriage -A formal or informal marriage with at least one or both partners being below the age of 18, and linked to socio-cultural and economic reasons (UNICEF, 2023).

Early Marriage -Marriage is a union between individuals who are not physically, emotionally, or legally mature, that is, below 18 years (UNFPA, 2022).

Gender-Based Violence - Violent acts towards a person due to their gender, such as forced and early marriage (WHO, 2021).

Advocacy - Actions directed at a certain social problem to change the policy of the state, social attitudes, and influence the division of resources (Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

Women Empowerment - This is the process of enhancing the access to resources, opportunities and decision making power of women in the society (Kabeer, 1999).

Peri-Urban Area - A transition zone between the city and the country of high population growth rate and poor infrastructure (Tacoli, 2006).

Intervention - Planned actions or programmes that are aimed at introducing positive social change or addressing a particular issue (Rossi, Lipsey and Henry, 2019).

1.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter formed the basis of the work, as it gave an introduction of the research topic, the background, and the definition of the problem of early child marriages in Epworth. It outlined the research purpose, goals, and questions that will help in shaping the research and the justification that indicates the significance of the research to the different stakeholders. The limitations and scope and the assumptions of the research were also addressed in the chapter to be clear on the boundaries and possible limitations of the research. Lastly, terms were identified to contribute to better comprehension of main ideas. The chapter in general provided a clear outline of the study and pre-conditioned the literature review in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the literature that is available to the study in a bid to offer a theoretical and empirical background to the study of early child marriages. It discusses world, regional and local views of the causes, prevalence and impact of child marriage with special emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa and Zimbabwe. The chapter also discusses the major theories explaining why the practice still exists as well as past research on interventions to diminish early marriages. Moreover, it examines how leadership, advocacy, and policy frameworks can help to combat the problem, particularly focusing on the actions related to Auxillia Mnangagwa. The chapter aims to fill gaps in existing literature by critically discussing scholarly work and explaining why this study is necessary. Generally, literature review gives a comprehensive insight into the subject and guides the research strategy used in this research.

2.2 Conceptualising the Topic

2.2.1 Child Marriage

The general concept of child marriage is when a girl or boy is married off before they reach the age of 18, most scholars concur that child marriage is a severe social and human rights issue. The UNICEF (2023) states that the primary reason of child marriage is gender inequality where children do not appreciate girls as they do boys. This perception demonstrates that the issue is cultural as well as associated with the way the society treats girls.

Other researchers, including Walker (2019), believe that child marriage is strongly correlated with poverty. This is because in most families and more so poor communities, marrying off a daughter is a method of alleviating financial burden. Although this might appear to be a viable

idea to some families, it can be criticised due to the fact that it overlooks the adverse impact this may have on the life of the girl including the loss of education and independence.

Other scholars such as Raj et al. (2020) concentrate on health dangers of child marriage. They elaborate that early marrying girls stand to have a higher chance of encountering early pregnancies, health problems, and emotional stress. This renders child marriage both a social problem and a severe health concern that impacts individuals and communities.

Legally, Maswikwa et al. (2021) state that most countries, such as Zimbabwe have laws that establish the minimum legal age of marriage at 18. Nevertheless, such laws are not strictly adhered to particularly in the societies where both traditional and religious orientations are high. This demonstrates that laws are not sufficient to prevent child marriage.

Lastly, organisations like Girls Not Brides (2022) claim that a good method of preventing child marriage is through education. Girls are less likely to marry early when they remain in school. But this concept hinges on whether girls have access to education and this is a problem in such locations as Epworth. This implies that child marriage is a multi-faceted issue and requires combined efforts.

2.2.2 Interventions to Reduce Early Child Marriage.

Early child marriage interventions refer to actions and programmes that have been put in place to reduce or even end child marriage at an early age. UNFPA (2022) also states that successful interventions should address the primary factors leading to child marriage including poverty, education, gender inequality. This implies that, it is not sufficient to solve one aspect but a comprehensive approach is necessary.

Other researchers, including Bicchieri et al. (2020), believe that child marriage persists due to the fact that it is perceived as a common practice in some societies. They elaborate that individuals do what others in their society think and act. Due to this, community attitudes and beliefs should be targeted through interventions rather than educating the people about the wrongness of child marriage.

A different approach is adopted by Malhotra and Elnakib (2021), who aim at empowering girls. They claim that girls will not be so easily taken into early marriages once they are educated and trained on life skills. Although this strategy is effective, it might not do the complete job when the families continue to live in poverty, and rely on early marriage to sustain themselves.

The role of laws and policies is emphasized by other scholars in decreasing child marriage. According to Chae and Ngo (2017), one way of protecting children is to establish and enforce a legal minimum age to marry. But the laws are not always adhered to and in most situations, particularly in societies where the cultural or religious ideologies prevail over the law.

Influential leaders are also receiving some interest with respect to combating child marriage. According to Machingura (2022), leaders like Auxillia Mnangagwa can create awareness and impact communities via campaigns and outreach programmes. Although these efforts are capable of raising awareness about the problem, one should find out whether they result in actual change in terms of alleviating early marriages in the community.

2.3 Character and scope of early child marriages.

Child marriage is a prevalent problem around the world, especially in developing countries where socio-economic problems are more significant. UNICEF (2023) reveals that millions of girls are married under the age of 18 every year, indicating that the practice is still present

regardless of the efforts taken by the international community to stop it. Likewise, UNFPA (2022) emphasizes that child marriage rates are likely to be highest in sub-Saharan Africa in the next few years unless the current tendencies are altered. According to scholars like Walker (2019), this persistence is an indication of gender inequalities that have deep roots in which girls are considered subordinate and forced into entering into marriage at a young age. To this end, Maswikwa et al. (2021) elaborate that child marriage in society becomes entrenched, despite the existence of legal frameworks, due to the normalization of the practice in particular communities. It indicates that child marriage is not merely just a legal problem but a multi-layered social challenge perpetuated by established traditions, gender roles and power disparities and that is hard to eliminate by a policy intervention alone.

Poverty and economic instability are the two key factors that prompt early child marriage, and the level of it is closely connected to them. According to Plan International (2022), families in a bad financial situation tend to consider early marriage as one of the methods of lessening economic burden or ensuring the financial independence of their daughters.

On the same note, Malhotra and Elnakib (2021) observe that early marriage could be viewed as a type of social insurance in low-income families, especially in those with restricted access to education and the labor market. But Raj et al. (2020) find a problem with this point of view, stating that poverty can be the reason to use it, but not the justification because early marriage can result in poorer economic results in the long run. On this point, Field and Ambrus (2008) discovered that the early-married girls have higher chances of lower levels of education and restricted economic prospects in adulthood. This suggests that despite an early marriage being a result of poverty the fact that early marriage perpetuates poverty cycles would imply that early marriage is both a cause and an outcome of economic vulnerability.

The nature of early child marriage is also influenced by cultural and religious beliefs. According to Chireshe (2021), early marriage is considered to be a socially accepted norm that upholds family honour and moral values in certain communities. Similarly, Bicchieri et al. (2020) maintain that child marriage remains a social phenomenon, with people obeying what is required in their society. This implies that despite the fact that people might not personally agree with the practice, there is the possibility of them engaging in it under the influence of social pressure. However, researchers like Mackie and LeJeune (2009) propose that social norms are also subject to change with time in the event of people uniting to alter their beliefs and expectations. But they warn, this change can only come with a prolonged involvement and trust-building, not top-down interventions. This shows the challenge of resolving child marriage in such a situation whereby the culture and religion have entrenched it such that any intervention should not only focus on the awareness of the people, but also focus on the belief systems that people hold that encourage the practice.

Education has been commonly referred to as one of the most important determinants of the prevalence of early child marriage with a number of scholars referring to it as one of the most effective protective mechanisms. Girls Not Brides (2022) confirms that girls who stay in school have much lower chances of becoming early marriage victims because education makes them more awake and confident and opens more opportunities to them. On the same note, Lloyd and Mensch (2008) are of the view that education postpones marriage by offering girls alternative life opportunities and enhancing their worth beyond the conventional roles. This opinion is however not straightforward given the results of Mensch et al. (2005) who indicate that mere access to education is not sufficient and that other areas like school quality, safety, and affordability also determine the educational persistence of girls in school. Moreover, according to Hunt (2008),

poverty and gender discrimination still restrict educational opportunities of girls in most situations. This indicates that although education is a potent instrument in the fight against child marriage, it has to be backed with even greater social and economic benefits to work.

Health and social effects of early child marriage also reflect the scope and severity of the problem on a global level. According to Raj et al. (2020), early marriage is directly linked to early pregnancy, which highly predisposes young girls to maternal mortality and other health problems. To reinforce this, the World Health Organization (2021) points out that adolescent mothers are at a greater risk in the course of childbirth because of their physical immaturity. On top of health risks, Parsons et al. (2015) also highlight the psychological and social consequences of early marriage, which can result in isolation, loss of education, and a restricted personal development in the majority of cases. Moreover, Wodon et al. (2017) state that child marriage has even more extensive economic effects, as it decreases the level of workforce and slows down the national development. These views reveal that early child marriage is not a personal problem but a broader societal problem with a long-term health, educational, and economic development impact.

2.4 Programmes and Interventions that have been taken to fight Early Child Marriages.

Multi-sectoral intervention that targets the underlying factors leading to early child marriages has become more and more a point of activity in combating the vice. As UNFPA (2022) notes, effective interventions are a combination of education, health services, legal frameworks, and community participation to achieve a lasting change. In a similar vein, UNICEF (2023) states that combined strategies are better than single programmes since child marriage is a problem with more than one cause. This opinion is also supported by scholars like Malhotra and Elnakib (2021), who demonstrate that efforts to address the issue on the level of girls and their community can

deliver more positive results. Raj et al. (2020) warn, however, that successful implementation, and sufficient funding underlie the success of such programmes despite their promising nature. This indicates that as much as multi-sectoral approaches are popular, their success is mixed insofar as the degree to which they are implemented in practical sense.

One of the most popular strategies that have been propagated to reduce early child marriages is through education based interventions. Girls Not Brides (2022) underlines that retaining girls in schools postpones marriage and expands their prospects in the future. To back this up, Lloyd and Mensch (2008) claim that education does not just impart knowledge but also transforms the attitude towards gender roles and gives girls the ability to make independent choices. This view is however opposed by Hunt (2008) who adds that the only reason poverty and cultural norms continue to dominate in areas that have access to education are not enough to ensure less child marriage. Another finding presented by Field and Ambrus (2008) is that even with economic pressures, families may still be forced to choose marriage over schooling. These points demonstrate that education remains an essential intervention but it has to be complemented by more extensive socio-economic changes in order to create significant change.

There are also legal and policy interventions which are crucial in the issues of early child marriage. Chae and Ngo (2017) state that the introduction and implementation of a legal minimum age at which one can marry are critical in protecting the rights of children. Equally, Maswikwa et al. (2021) emphasize that good legal systems serve as a deterrent in the event that they are enforced in a proper manner. Nonetheless, as Bicchieri et al. (2020) observe, in many societies, social rules prevail over legal regulations, laws alone are usually not enough. Moreover, according to Mackie and LeJeune (2009), the legal changes should go hand in hand with the community-level changes

of attitudes and beliefs in order to be successful. It means that the legal actions are needed; nevertheless, they are not sufficient to eradicate child marriage alone.

The community-based interventions have become an issue of interest as a means to combat the social norms perpetuating the early child marriage. According to Bicchieri et al. (2020), it is possible to change collective beliefs in communities to achieve long-term behaviour change. On the same note, Plan International (2022) emphasizes the need to involve parents, religious leaders, and local authorities in the awareness campaigns and dialogue. Nevertheless, Chireshe (2021) claims that cultural and religious beliefs that are ingrained may complicate such interventions to be effectively implemented. Moreover, Parsons et al. (2015) observe that community resistance can make the progress slow when interventions are viewed as an external/imposed force. This demonstrates that trust, cultural sensitivity and long-term commitment are essential in community-based approaches to success.

Interventions led by leadership and advocacy have also taken centre stage in creating awareness and mobilisation against early child marriages. As Machingura (2022) puts it, such influential people can contribute to changing the attitude of people and promoting behaviour change via campaigns and outreach programmes. On the same note, Wodon et al. (2017) emphasize that political commitment plays a very crucial role in facilitating the national action towards ending child marriage. Nevertheless, Raj et al. (2020) warn that advocacy activities should be backed by quantifiable policies and observable results to do so. In the absence of the evaluation, it will not be easy to tell whether such initiatives bring actual change. This underscores the need to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions through the leadership in resolving early child marriage.

2.5 The program's efficacy in terms of curbing early child marriages and enhancing wellbeing of girls.

The success of initiatives to end early child marriages is usually gauged by whether the interventions will result in a reduction of the rates of marriages and also in the lives of the girls. UNICEF (2023) argues that, in some areas, child marriage rates have been declining gradually due to global efforts, indicating that it can be done. Equally, UNFPA (2022) observes that efforts that have been coordinated through education, legal amendment and community mobilization have yielded positive results in some countries. Nonetheless, researchers like Raj et al. (2020) believe that the development has been disproportionate, and certain groups have not improved at all. Maswikwa et al. (2021) also state that the power of these interventions is usually minimized due to poor implementation and a lack of resources. This implies that although efforts have proven to be potential, they must be applied consistently and be relevant to the context.

Interventions based on education have proved effective in minimizing early child marriages, especially where access and retention are enhanced. According to Girls Not Brides (2022), the protective nature of schooling may be viewed as the fact that girls who obtain secondary education are much less prone to early marriage. To prove this, according to Lloyd and Mensch (2008), education enhances the decision-making power of girls and postpones marriage by providing other life opportunities. Hunt (2008) however disagrees with this opinion and points out that poverty, school costs and gender discrimination remain some of the barriers reducing the effectiveness of education programmes. Field and Ambrus (2008) also observe that there are instances where economic pressures supersede the gains of education hence compelling families to focus more on early marriage. These arguments demonstrate the fact that education is not effective, but its effectiveness depends on the overall social and economic situation.

Legal and policy interventions have also helped in curbing early child marriages, especially whereby mechanisms of enforcement are sound. According to Chae and Ngo (2017), establishing a legal minimum end of marriage age establishes a formal institution of child protection and disarming of criminals. Correspondingly, Maswikwa et al. (2021) propose that behavioural change is possible through legal reforms with the support of effective enforcement. Bicchieri et al. (2020), however, note that laws are not always effective in the community where social norms and traditions are more dominant than formal laws. Mackie and LeJeune (2009) also point out that legal measures can be disregarded or avoided unless they are accepted by the community. This means that the legal structures though significant rely on the context of the social and cultural settings.

Community based interventions have demonstrated mixed rates of success in dealing with early marriages. According to Bicchieri et al. (2020), social norms interventions are capable of creating sustainable change as it can result in a change in collective beliefs. Likewise, Plan International (2022) emphasizes that early marriage should be less accepted by engaging community leaders and families in dialogue. Nevertheless, Chireshe (2021) points out that such programmes may not succeed because communities with strong cultural or religious beliefs will resist such changes. Parsons et al. (2015) also note that community interventions should be long-term and based on trust to have significant outcomes. These views indicate that although community-based approaches are important, their results are determined by the degree of community involvement and approval.

The awareness creation and advocacy activities have been significant in spreading awareness and encouraging action against early child marriages, although their efficacy is

questionable. Machingura (2022) believes that influential leaders may mobilise resources, influence the discourse, and make the issue more visible. Likewise, Wodon et al. (2017) emphasize that political commitment plays a significant role in the national strategies and policy implementation. Nonetheless, Raj et al. (2020) warn that advocacy is not enough in itself unless it results in quantifiable changes like decreased marriage rates and better welfare of girls. It is hard to gauge whether there was an actual impact of such efforts without the proper monitoring and evaluation. This demonstrates the importance of constant evaluation of interventions to guarantee their ability to bring about realistic and sustainable changes in the lives of vulnerable girls.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The research paper is informed by the Social Norms Theory, which provides the influence of beliefs and expectations of a society on the behaviour of an individual. The theory has been formulated based on the works of scholars like Bicchieri (2006) who opined that individuals are likely to engage in practices that are socially acceptable, despite being harmful to them. Applying the theory in the context of child marriage, it can be said that the families might still perpetuate the practice since they feel that the community expects it to occur. Mackie and LeJeune (2009) also add that as long as they are supported by community beliefs they are hard to alter and that is why practices like child marriage continue to thrive as they are supported by the collective beliefs held by the community.

The Social Norms Theory is relevant to this study in that it provides the basis of understanding why early child marriage persists despite legal prohibitions and sensitisation efforts. It points out that behaviour is not only influenced by personal decisions but also by societal pressure and cultural demands. This renders the theory appropriate in the analysis of community

response to interventions on child marriage reduction especially whereby the traditions and beliefs are deeply entrenched. It can also be used to understand why certain interventions are successful and other ones fail based on the effectiveness in which they deal with the community norms.

The study uses this theory by analyzing the impact of community beliefs and expectations on the continuation of early child marriage and how interventions aim to alter such norms. It offers a guide in examining the effectiveness of initiatives, such as advocacy efforts, in changing attitudes and behaviours. The theory, however, has its flaws, since it can ignore economic issues, like poverty, which are also major factors contributing to early marriage. To overcome this shortcoming, the paper uses both socio-economic views and social norms to give a more detailed perspective of the issue.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable - Interventions to Combat Child Marriage.

Certain interventions like advocacy campaigns, education programmes and community engagement initiatives are meant to minimize early child marriages. These initiatives are aimed at creating awareness, attitude change, and dealing with underlying causes such as poverty and gender inequality. Their success will be based on their implementation, acceptance by the community, and long-term support by the stakeholders.

Dependent Variable - Early Child Marriages reduced.

The primary finding of the research is the decrease in the number of early child marriages. It involves the reduced instances of girls getting married off before the age of 18 and a better

protection of the children rights. Reduction in early marriages is also an indicator of good social change and more awareness by communities on the negative impacts of the practice.

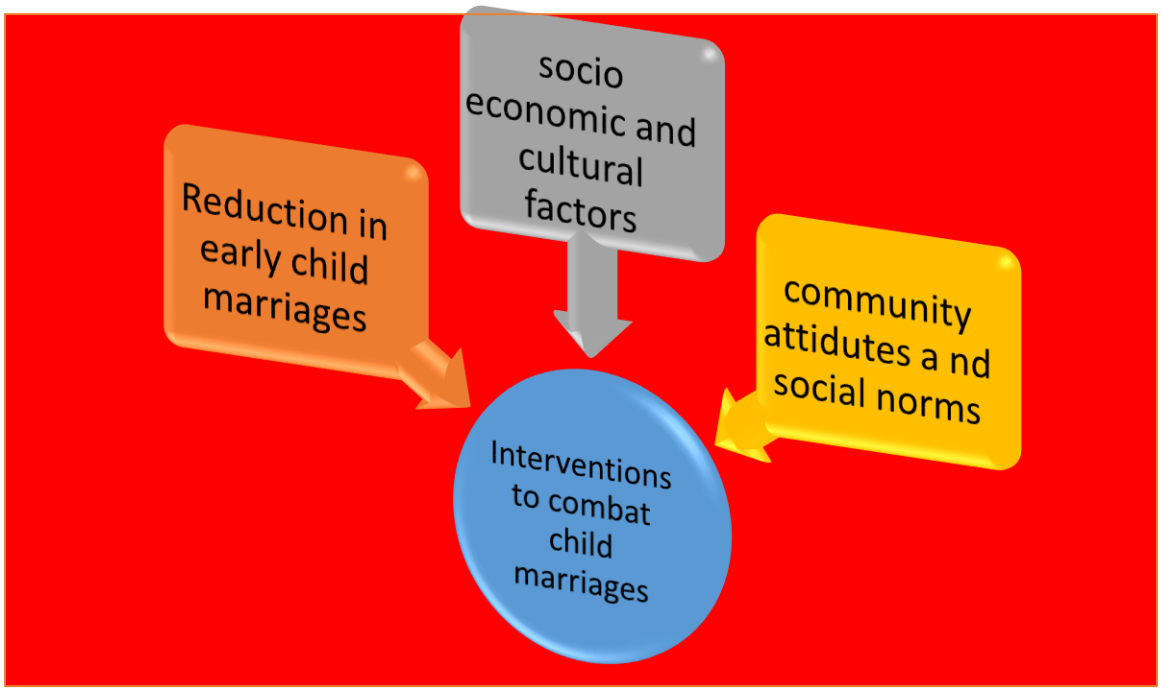
Mediating Variable - Community Attitudes and Social Norms.

The nature of response to interventions depends on community beliefs and social norms. In cases where the society tolerates early marriage, interventions can not be effective. But once attitudes start shifting, the communities will be reluctant to embrace the bad practices and interventions will be more effective in the reduction of early child marriages.

Moderating Variables - Socio-economic and Cultural Factors.

The strength of relationship between interventions and outcomes can be influenced by factors that include poverty, level of education, and religious beliefs. These variables can either favour or be a hindrance to progress. As an example, poverty can promote early marriage whereas improved education can lessen the practice of early marriage.

Figure 1:Conceptual Framework Diagram



2.8 Empirical Review

Wodon et al. (2017) carried out an international research in various countries on the economic consequences of child marriage and their results revealed that early marriage results in massive losses in education, low lifetime earnings and overpopulation. Likewise, Parsons et al. (2015) conducted a cross-national study of health and social outcomes of child marriage, and discovered that young women who contract a marriage are more susceptible to maternal health issues, restriction of healthcare and social isolation. Raj et al. (2020) carried out another study on the global level and investigated the connection between child marriage and health outcomes, where early marriage predetermined an early pregnancy, gender-based violence, and poor mental health. These researches always reveal that child marriage has the long term adverse effects on individuals and national development.

In Africa, Malhotra and Elnakib (2021) performed a systematic review of interventions that can help to reduce child marriage in sub-Saharan Africa, and their data revealed that the most

efficient programmes are those that focus on educating girls, economically empowering them, and engaging the community. In a parallel manner, Walker (2019) carried out a research in Southern Africa about the causes of child marriage and discovered that poverty, gender inequality, and cultural requirements are the primary contributors that perpetuate the vice. Moreover, UNFPA (2022) stated that child marriage is still widespread, even in the presence of legal reforms in most African countries, because of the poor enforcement and the existing social norms. These results indicate the necessity of combined strategies that consider both structural and cultural aspects.

In Southern Africa, UNICEF (2023) undertook research in Mozambique and Malawi on the trend of child marriage, and discovered that despite the legal frameworks in place, enforcement is lax, and cultural practices encourage early marriages. Likewise, Girls Not Brides (2022) examined the trends of child marriages in the area and discovered that the rate of school dropouts and poverty are closely connected to child marriage. Chae and Ngo (2017) in another study analyzed the effectiveness of minimum age laws and identified that legal frameworks cannot be effective without a change at the community level. Such studies demonstrate that there have been limited success of regional efforts by the prevailing socio-economic and cultural barriers.

In Zimbabwe, a survey was done by Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) and UNICEF (2022), the results indicated that a large percentage of girls in Zimbabwe are married before they attain the age of 18, especially in the vulnerable populations. A study by Chireshe (2021) in Zimbabwe revealed that religious beliefs, particularly in apostolic sects contribute significantly towards the encouragement of early marriage. Besides this, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2023) has documented that though awareness campaigns and efforts on policies have been on the rise, issues like poverty, cultural resistance and poor

enforcement remain a limiting factor. These results indicate that despite the efforts, early child marriage is a major problem in Zimbabwe.

2.9 Research Gap

The available literature on early child marriage has addressed the reasons, effects, and potential solutions to this issue on global, continental and national levels. The works by Wodon et al. (2017), Malhotra and Elnakib (2021), and Chireshe (2021) have shed light on the economic, social, and cultural factors that contributed to the practice. To a large extent, however, this research is inclined to general trends and general interventions, little emphasis being placed on the analysis of the efficiency of particular leadership-based initiatives. Specifically, empirical research has not been done to determine the direct effect of advocacy activities by influential people like Auxillia Mnangagwa at the community level. Moreover, not many studies have been specifically devoted to peri-urban environments like Epworth, where there are specific socio-economic and cultural processes. This paper thus aims to address this knowledge gap by offering a narrow, context-based evaluation of the leadership interventions and their success in dealing with early marriages.

2.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed pertinent literature on early child marriage by looking at the nature of the child marriage, its causes and prevalence and interventions that have been put in place to combat the vice. It further explained the efficacy of these undertakings and presented the theoretical framework that will be used in the study. Furthermore, the chapter revealed empirical studies on global, continental, regional, and national levels with a particular focus on the major findings and trends. The gap in research was identified, which indicated that context-specific

studies that evaluate leadership-based interventions are required. On the whole, the chapter was a good starting point of the study and it guided the research approach taken in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter describes the research approach that was employed in the study to evaluate the initiatives that have been taken to fight early child marriages. It describes the general design of collecting, analysing and interpreting data in a methodical and dependable way. The chapter explains the research design, research philosophy and approach that the research will be conducted and the target population and sampling methods which will be used to select the participants. It also explains the methods and tools to be used in data collection to obtain pertinent information on the respondents. Besides, the chapter outlines the methodology of data analysis, which makes the data valid and meaningful. Problems of reliability, validity and ethical implication are also discussed to promote the credibility and integrity of the research. All in all, this chapter offers a clear outline which will inform the way the study was carried out and how the conclusions will be drawn.

3.2 Research Approach

A research approach is a broad plan according to which a study is going to be carried out, which connects the research problem, data collection, and analysis. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a research approach can be described as a step-by-step procedure that assists the researcher in transitioning between problem identification and data gathering and interpretation. In the same manner, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) describe research methods as primarily either qualitative or quantitative and mixed methods, depending on the nature of data needed and study nature.

A qualitative research method was used in this study. This method was selected, as the research aimed at comprehending the struggles to combat early child marriages and the way in which these struggles are realized in the community. The subject matter being addressed was human behaviour, beliefs and social practices and as such, could not be measured numerically but had to be explained in detail.

Qualitative approach was suitable since it enabled the researcher to gather rich and descriptive data and have a better understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the participants. It also enabled exploration of such complex social issues as culture, poverty, and gender dynamics which play a role in early child marriage. This method thus was appropriate to answer the research questions and present valuable results.

3.3 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a collection of beliefs and assumptions that inform the way research is performed and the knowledge is comprehended. Creswell and Creswell (2018) also note that a research paradigm influences how the researcher perceives reality, knowledge and how he or she examines a phenomenon. Equally, Guba and Lincoln (1994) define a paradigm as a framework, which guides researchers to interpret data and their understanding of the surrounding world. These common paradigms are positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism.

The interpretivist paradigm was used in this research. The reason why this paradigm was selected was that the study sought to learn the experiences, perceptions and social realities of people with respect to early child marriage. The interpretivist paradigm concentrates on the interpretation of human behaviour based on the view of the people being studied as opposed to objective measurements.

The interpretivist paradigm was suitable since the research was a social problem that was shaped by culture, beliefs, and personal experiences. It enabled the researcher to deal with the participants and contextualize their opinions. This allowed learning more about the perception of early child marriage and the experiences of interventions in the community, and thus, the findings became more valuable and applicable.

3.4 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy can be defined as beliefs regarding the process of developing knowledge and what research deems as valid knowledge. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) argue that research philosophy determines how data is gathered, examined and understood and it determines the general path of the research. On the same note, Bryman (2016) indicates that research philosophy makes the researcher know how reality is perceived and how to construct knowledge about that reality. Some of the common research philosophies are positivism, interpretivism and realism.

Interpretivism was chosen as the research philosophy in this study. The reason behind this philosophy was that the study wanted to learn the experiences, perceptions, and meanings that people give to early child marriage and the interventions they employ to solve the problem. Interpretivism is more concerned with subjective cognition and acknowledges that the social reality is construed through human activities and perceptions.

Interpretivism was also suitable since the research was on a social problem which cannot be explained entirely by the use of numerical data. It enabled the researcher to dive deeper into the thinking of the participants and also to explain their experiences in their social and cultural context.

This enabled a creation of valuable information on how early child marriage is experienced and how it is being dealt with within the community.

3.5 Research Choice

Research choice is the term used to describe the method or combination of methods applied in a research to gather and analyse data. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) distinguish between mono-method, mixed-method and multi-method approaches to research choice, which are based on the use of a single or multiple types of data in the study. Creswell and Creswell (2018), on the same note, elaborate that the decision is determined by the goals of the research and the kind of information required to address the research questions.

A mono-method qualitative research choice was used in this study. This implies that the research used qualitative data alone to examine the research problem. The decision was taken as the research was aimed at learning about people experiences, perceptions and opinions about early child marriage and the actions to fight it. The application of one qualitative approach guaranteed data collection and analysis consistency.

This option was suitable as it gave the researcher a chance to dwell much on the responses of participants and have an in-depth understanding of the issue. It also made sure that the data obtained was rich and meaningful and it was therefore easier to make inferences about social behaviours and attitudes. As such, the mono-method qualitative method was appropriate in meeting the objectives of the research.

3.6 Research Strategy

Research strategy can be defined as the general plan that identifies how the researcher is going to go about the research and respond to the research questions. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) define a research strategy as a structured method of data collection and analysis and encompasses strategies like case study, survey, experiment, and ethnography. In the same way, Yin (2018) provides a research strategy as a way of investigating a modern problem in the context of its practical application, particularly when the limits between the phenomenon and its context are not well-established.

A case study research strategy was taken in this study. This design was selected since this study was to be conducted on a particular location, which is Epworth, and to have a thorough picture of the early child marriage there. The case study approach enabled the researcher to delve deeply into the issue by analyzing real life experiences and situations in the community.

Case study strategy was the right choice as it gave a detailed insight into the problem as it concentrated on a specific case. It also enabled the researcher to gather comprehensive and context-based data, which is valuable in researching complicated social problems. Thus, this method was appropriate to attain the goals of the research.

3.7 Population Frame

The whole group of people or things that a research sample is based on is called a population frame. Creswell and Creswell (2018) define a population as the entire group of individuals or units that have shared features of interest to a study. Likewise, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) say that population frame assists the researcher to establish who ought to be part of the research depending on the research goals.

The sample frame of this study consisted of the population of Epworth that is directly or indirectly affected by the early child marriages. This was one of young girls who encounter threats of early marriage, parents or guardians, leaders of society, teachers and those in organisations that are concerned with child protection and gender related programmes. These groups were chosen because they have the corresponding knowledge and experience on the issue under research.Selection of this population frame was suitable as it enabled the researcher to obtain information on various viewpoints in the society. It made sure that the study represented a general understanding of early child marriage and the interventions that are necessary to tackle it. This allowed more detailed and valid results to be obtained.

3.8 Sampling

Sampling is the process of representing the whole population by means of choosing a smaller group of participants to gather data. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) assert that sampling enables researchers to analyze a manageable number of participants and still come up with meaningful conclusions about the entire population. In the same manner, Creswell and Creswell (2018) give an explanation that sampling is necessary in a study since it is not always feasible to study the whole population.

The purposive sampling was employed in this study. This approach is whereby the participants are chosen according to their knowledge, experience or interest in the issue under study. The researcher has selected the participants who were directly impacted by the issue of early child marriage or took active part in its resolution, i. e., community leaders, educators, and the representatives of the corresponding organisations.

Purposive sampling was suitable since it ensured that data gathered was rich and pertinent to the research objectives. It enabled the researcher to concentrate on the participants who were in a position to give in-depth and pertinent information on the matter. This approach was specifically best suited to qualitative research, in which the depth of information is of greater significance than a large sample size.

3.9 Research Sample

A sample of research is a certain group of people, who are chosen among the population to take part in the research. Creswell and Creswell (2018) explain that a sample is a part of the population that reflects the opinions and experiences of the entire population. On the same note, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) inform that the sample must be selected with care to guarantee that the sample offers relevant and reliable data to the study.

The research sample used in this study was 30 individuals that were selected as a representation of the Epworth population. The sample consisted of 10 young girls who were experiencing or were likely to experience early marriage, 8 parents or guardians, 4 community leaders, 4 teachers and 4 child protection and gender related organisations representatives. Purposive sampling was used to select these participants to make sure that they possessed direct knowledge and experience that was relevant to the topic of research.

The sample that was selected was suitable since it comprised various groups in the community and the researcher was able to get wide view of a perspective. It enhanced the richness and authenticity of the results because the information considered was based on actual experience of individuals who were directly involved in or affected by early child marriage.

3.10 Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods include the methods that the researcher employs to obtain information about the participants in an attempt to respond to the research questions. Creswell and Creswell (2018) define data collection as the process of acquiring specific information in a detailed manner by using different techniques that include interviews, observations, and documents. Equally, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) elaborate that data collection methods are determined by the research methodology, and the kind of data needed.

The primary data collected in this study was through interviews. Interviews were selected since they provide a chance to engage in a direct interaction between the researcher and participants and, consequently, collect detailed and meaningful information. The researcher carried out face-to-face interviews with the selected participants in Epworth, which gave her a chance to get a glimpse of their experiences, views and opinions regarding early child marriage and the activities done to combat the vice.

Interviews were also a good choice as they allowed the researcher to pose follow-up questions and get better understanding of the responses of the participants. It also enabled the participants to express themselves in a free manner, which is critical when researching on sensitive social issues. Thus, this approach was used to guarantee the rich, detailed and relevancy of data collected to the objectives of the study.

3.10.1 Interviews

Interviews are one of the data collection techniques in which the researcher meets the participants face to face to collect in-depth information. Creswell and Creswell (2018) claim that interviews enable researchers to delve deeper into participants, their experiences, opinions, and

perceptions. On the same note, Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) define an interview as a deliberate dialogue which offers qualitative rich data, particularly in the context of researching on social issues. Depending on the degree of flexibility, interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured.

Semi-structured interviews were employed in this study. This kind of interview not only enabled the researcher to have guiding questions but also to allow the participants to be free to air their opinions. The researcher engaged the selected participants in face to face interviews in Epworth with the aim of understanding their experiences and perceptions about early child marriage and the measures to curb it. Where necessary, follow-up questions were posed to get a better understanding.

Semi-structured interviews were suitable since it gave a chance to be flexible and enabled the researcher to dig deep on the complex issues. It also aided in the creation of trust with the participants, which is significant when engaging in sensitive topics. This approach was used to make sure that the information gathered was rich, detailed and pertinent to the research.

3.11 Data Analysis

Data analysis can be defined as a process of order, interpretation and comprehension of the data gathered in the course of study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) cite that data analysis in qualitative studies is about the ability to find patterns, themes, and meanings in the answers of participants. On the same note, Braun and Clarke (2006) indicate that qualitative data analysis is concerned with the interpretation of textual data to make inferences about the underlying ideas and experiences.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data collected during interviews in this study. This entailed the transcription of the responses of the interviews, reading the data thoroughly, and finding the general themes and patterns surrounding early child marriage and interventions that could be used to tackle it. The researcher categorized homogeneous answers and came up with the main themes that encompassed the opinion and experience of the participants.

Thematic analysis was suitable as it enabled the researcher to sort the voluminous qualitative data into significant themes. It also simplified the interpretation of the findings and association to the research objectives. The approach made the analysis systematic, clear and pertinent to the research.

3.12 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are significant concepts in research because they assure the validity and consistency of the results. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) explained, the validity is the degree to which the research indeed measures what it is supposed to measure, and reliability is the degree to which the research results are consistent across time. On the same note, Lincoln and Guba (1985) elaborate that validity in qualitative research is commonly known as credibility, and reliability as dependability, and that it is concerned with the credibility of the research.

Validity in this research was achieved by using meaningful and clear interview questions with close relevance to the research objectives. Follow up questions were also employed by the researcher in the interviews to help in clarifying answers and also making sure that the participants clearly understood what they were saying. Moreover, data were gathered using various groups in the community, which contributed to the more comprehensive and precise vision of the issue.

Consistency of approach was used to ensure reliability in the data collection process. The researcher applied the identical interview guide to all the participants and noted the responses correctly to prevent biasness and misinterpretation. The notes and transcripts were carefully maintained to make sure that findings could be backed up to original data. This served to make the study consistent and reliable.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent

The participants were made aware of the objective of the study, their role in the study and they had the right of withdrawing at any point in time. Before the interviews took place, consent was taken to make sure that the participation was voluntary and on the basis of clear understanding.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The researcher made sure that all information given by the participants was confidential. The final report did not note personal information like names and identities. Participants were identified using codes to ensure their anonymity and privacy.

Protection from Harm

The research was on a sensitive topic and therefore, care was taken to make sure that the participants were not subjected to any emotional or psychological injury. The researcher provided a risk-free and respectful atmosphere in interviews and did not use questions that might lead to distressors.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in the research was voluntary. No respondent was coerced or pressured to participate and the respondent had the freedom to pull out of the study at any point without any repercussions.

Permission and Approval

Before conducting the study, the researcher sought the permission of the relevant authorities and leaders in the community. The research process was conducted in accordance with ethical standards to make sure that the research was conducted in a responsible and professional manner.

3.14 Chapter Summary

This chapter described the methodology applied in the study including the research approach, paradigm, philosophy and strategy. It also explained the population, sampling and data collection methods employed to collect information. The chapter also elaborated on the method of data analysis and ensuring validity and reliability. Ethical considerations have also been addressed to make sure that the study was done in an ethical manner. In general, this chapter has given a clear outline on how the research was conducted and made the findings credible and trustworthy.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines and discusses the results of the research on evaluating the work of Auxillia Mnangagwa in her fight against early child marriages in Epworth, Zimbabwe. The study was qualitative in nature and semi-structured interviews were held to obtain the experience and perceptions of the participants.The data is categorised into themes based on research objectives which include the nature and level of early child marriages, the interventions put in place and their effectiveness. This chapter starts with the introduction of the demographic data of the participants, and thematic analysis is presented, backed by responses of the participants.

The objectives that directed this study included:

- To investigate the nature and the level of early child marriages in Epworth, Zimbabwe.
- To assess the efforts and measures that Auxillia Mnangagwa has taken in its fight against early child marriages.
- To determine the success of these interventions on mitigating early marriages of children and enhancing the well being of the vulnerable girls in Epworth.

4.2 Data Displaying the Interviews.

The aim of the interviews was to obtain detailed information about the participants in Epworth on the issue of early child marriages and the success of the interventions that have been put in place to curb the vice. The information is provided based on the responses of the participants, which include demographic details, and then thematic conclusions based on the stories of the participants.

Table 1: Profile of the Participants

Participant	Role	Age Group	Gender	Highest Qualification	Occupation	Position in Community	No. of Children	Organisation Represented
P1	Young Girl	14–18	Female	Primary	Student	N/A	0	N/A
P2	Young Girl	14–18	Female	Secondary	Student	N/A	0	N/A
P3	Young Girl	14–18	Female	Primary	Unemployed	N/A	1	N/A
P4	Young Girl	14–18	Female	Secondary	Student	N/A	0	N/A
P5	Young Girl	14–18	Female	Primary	Student	N/A	0	N/A
P6	Young Girl	15–19	Female	Secondary	Student	N/A	0	N/A
P7	Young Girl	15–19	Female	Primary	Unemployed	N/A	1	N/A
P8	Young Girl	15–19	Female	Secondary	Student	N/A	0	N/A
P9	Young Girl	15–19	Female	Primary	Student	N/A	0	N/A
P10	Young Girl	15–19	Female	Secondary	Student	N/A	2	N/A
P11	Parent/Guardian	30–50	Female	Secondary	Vendor	Parent	3	N/A
P12	Parent/Guardian	35–55	Male	Secondary	Self-employed	Parent	4	N/A
P13	Parent/Guardian	30–50	Female	Primary	Vendor	Parent	5	N/A
P14	Parent/Guardian	35–60	Male	Secondary	Informal Trader	Parent	3	N/A

P15	Parent/Guardian	30–55	Female	Primary	Unemployed	Parent	4	N/A
P16	Parent/Guardian	35–60	Male	Secondary	Self-employed	Parent	2	N/A
P17	Parent/Guardian	30–50	Female	Primary	Vendor	Parent	5	N/A
P18	Parent/Guardian	35–60	Male	Secondary	Informal Trader	Parent	3	N/A
P19	Community Leader	40–65	Male	Tertiary	Civil Servant	Ward Councillor (Epworth Local Board)	4	N/A
P20	Community Leader	35–60	Female	Secondary	Community Worker	Community Development Officer	3	N/A
P21	Community Leader	45–65	Male	Tertiary	Religious Leader	Apostolic Sect Leader	5	N/A
P22	Community Leader	40–60	Female	Secondary	Community Worker	Women's Affairs Representative	3	N/A
P23	Teacher	25–45	Female	Tertiary	Teacher	Secondary School Teacher	1	N/A
P24	Teacher	30–50	Male	Tertiary	Teacher	Primary School Teacher	2	N/A

P25	Teacher	25–45	Female	Tertiary	Teacher	Guidance & Counselling Teacher	1	N/A
P26	Teacher	30–50	Male	Tertiary	Teacher	Deputy School Head	2	N/A
P27	Organisation Rep	25–45	Female	Tertiary	Social Worker	Programme Officer	Plan International Zimbabwe	
P28	Organisation Rep	30–50	Male	Tertiary	Project Manager	Programme Coordinator	UNICEF Zimbabwe	
P29	Organisation Rep	25–45	Female	Tertiary	Social Worker	Case Management Officer	Musasa Project	
P30	Organisation Rep	30–50	Male	Tertiary	Project Officer	Field Officer	Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development	

Table 2: Themes and Sub-Themes for the Interview

Theme	Sub-Themes	Participants (n = 30)
Theme 1 **Nature and Extent of Early Child Marriages in Epworth**		
	• *Prevalence of early child marriage in the community*	26
	• *Age at which girls get married*	23
	• *Poverty as a contributing factor*	25
	• *Cultural and religious influences*	24
	• *School dropout and lack of education*	22
Theme 2 **Interventions Implemented to Combat Early Child Marriages**		
	• *Awareness campaigns and community outreach programmes*	24
	• *Education and empowerment programmes for girls*	22
	• *Role of government and NGOs*	21
	• *Community engagement and participation*	20
	• *Advocacy and leadership initiatives (Auxillia Mnangagwa)*	23
Theme 3 **Effectiveness of Interventions in Reducing Early Child Marriages**		
	• *Increased awareness and knowledge in the community*	23
	• *Reduction in early marriage cases*	18
	• *Behavioural and attitude change*	20
	• *Improved welfare of vulnerable girls*	19

	• *Continued challenges despite interventions*	25

4.3 Theme 1: Nature and Extent of Early Child Marriages in Epworth

Table 3: Nature and Extent of Early Child Marriages

Aspect	**Number of Mentions**
High prevalence of early child marriage	23%
Poverty as a major contributing factor	10%
Cultural and religious influences	22%
Age at marriage (15–17 years)	23%
School dropout and lack of education	22%

The interviewees disclosed that the issue of early child marriage is still a reality in Epworth, especially in the poor families. Participant 2 mentioned that early marriage is very prevalent, particularly among girls who do not attend school, whereas Participant 11 said "*parents allow girls to marry young because of economic issues".*

It was always found that poverty is the major cause. Participant 14 observed, "*Some girls marry at an early age because their parents need to marry them off in order to relieve themselves of financial strain"* and Participant 7 noted, that, "*some girls marry at a young age because they have no money to go to school"*. This was also manifested in personal experiences where Participant 3 discussed his experience when she said, "*I already have a child since I got married early when my family was in a bad state".*

Cultural and religious aspects were underlined as well. Participant 21 indicated that, "*some churches promote early marriage"*, whereas 19 said that "*the tradition still favors early marriage*

in this society". Participant 22 added in more detail, "*Family is pressured to marry young, because of the expectations of the community".*

Another important factor was education. Participant 23 pointed out, "*Girls who quit school have more chances of being married at a young age"* and Participant 10 added, "*I got married young after I left school and now I have two children".*

Discussion

The results indicate that child marriage in Epworth occurs not just extensively but also fundamentally found within structural and socio-cultural processes. The strongest factor that impacted early marriage was found to be poverty, which supports a long-standing relationship in the existing literature. UNICEF (2023) further says that economic deprivation is still among the most powerful predictors of child marriage since families tend to resort to it as a form of coping to minimize household pressures. Consistent with this, Malhotra and Elnakib (2021) suggest that the early marriage concept is viewed as a kind of economic security in resource strained environments though such a decision has adverse effects in the long-term.

The results also emphasize the importance of education as a protective and risk factor. The respondents consistently associated school dropout with early marriage, which supports Wodon et al. (2023) that education postpones marriage significantly, broadening the opportunities and raising the agency of girls. As a result of poverty or institutional constraints to accessing education, girls are more susceptible to early marriage. This forms a cycle of poverty where school dropout causes poverty, and poverty causes school dropout and so on.

The issue is further complicated by cultural and religious factors found in the results. The fact that some of the religious and traditional settings still embrace the idea of early marriage is

indicative of social norms that are ingrained. According to Chireshe (2021), early marriage in Zimbabwe, especially in the apostolic sects, is commonly justified by religious beliefs and cultural norms. This is the reason why, although the legal provisions like the constitutional court ruling of establishing a minimum age of marriage as 18, the practice is still practiced at the community level. The results hence indicate that legal interferences are not effective in absence of underlying belief systems.

Theoretically, these results are closely related to Social Norms Theory (Bicchieri, 2006), according to which behaviour is shaped by the communal anticipations and the social tolerance. Early child marriage thrives in Epworth due to normalisation of the same in the community and breaking this norm is a hard task to individuals and families. Whereas the participants are aware of the adverse effects of early marriage, the social force and financial need support it.

Moreover, interplay between poverty and social norms demonstrates the multidimensionalism of the issue. Although it is the poverty that gives the economic incentive to marry early, it is the social norms that justify and accept the practice. This interaction justifies the claim by Raj et al. (2020) that both structural inequalities and cultural beliefs should be tackled to achieve success in the given intervention.

On the whole, the results affirm that early child marriage in Epworth is a very dynamic and deeply rooted problem because of economic poverty, lack of education and social values. The solution to this problem thus involves concerted solutions that involve economic empowerment, access to education and community based norm change.

4.4 Theme 2: Interventions Implemented to Combat Early Child Marriages

Table 4: Interventions to Combat Early Child Marriages

Intervention	Number of Mentions
Awareness campaigns and community outreach programmes	23%
Education and empowerment programmes for girls	13%
Role of government and NGOs	21%
Community engagement and participation	20%
Advocacy and leadership initiatives (Auxillia Mnangagwa)	23%

Participants identified various interventions which would alleviate early child marriages at Epworth with much focus on community outreach and awareness campaigns. Participant 18 said, "*there are programmes which educate people on the harmfulness of early marriages"* and Participant 27 said, "*we run community awareness programs to educate families and young girls"*.

Education and empowerment programmes were also mentioned frequently. Participant 23 observed, "*Girls are encouraged to remain in school by schools and organisations"* and Participant 5, added, "*some programmes help girls to understand their rights"*.

The government and non-governmental organisations were identified as important players. Participant 28 mentioned that , "*organisations such as UNICEF Zimbabwe and Plan International Zimbabwe are on the mission of protecting children"*, as well as Participant 30 said that ""*government departments are also involved in the mission of addressing early marriages"*.

The importance of community involvement was also mentioned. Participant 20 commented, "*Community leaders have a role to play in educating families"* and Participant 22 added, "*we involve parents to change their attitude".*

The role of advocacy of Auxillia Mnangagwa was also recognised by the participants. Participant 19 wrote, "*her campaigns have created awareness on the issue of early child marriages"* and Participant 21 wrote, "*that she has encouraged communities to protect girls and support education"*.

Discussion

The results suggest that there are several interventions that have been undertaken in Epworth to fight early child marriages, with the awareness campaigns and education programmes coming out as the most noticeable. These results are in line with the world and regional literature, which has stressed the relevance of multi-sectoral strategies in combating child marriage. The UNFPA (2022) notes that effective interventions need to integrate education, community participation, and policy implementation to combat the causes of early marriage. And in the same vein, Malhotra and Elnakib (2021) point out that the most effective strategies in reducing child marriage are programmes that empower girls and create awareness in the community.

The awareness campaigns found in the results are essential in questioning the negative social norms. The respondents have observed that such programmes have raised awareness on the adverse effects of child marriage. It is consistent with Bicchieri et al. (2020) who believe that social norms-based interventions can result in behaviour change through collective belief change in communities. Nonetheless, the success of such campaigns requires long-term involvement and involvement of the community.

Key interventions were also identified as education and empowerment programmes. The focus on the retention of girls in school helps to confirm the results of Girls Not Brides (2022), according to which education is among the most effective protective measures against early marriages. Education not only postpones marriage, but also empowers the girls in decision making, as well as in future. Nevertheless, the fact that early marriage remains common despite such programmes implies that education intervention is not enough without socio-economic changes at large.

The participation of agencies like the government and non-governmental organisations like UNICEF Zimbabwe and Plan International Zimbabwe shows the relevance of institutional support in dealing with child marriage. Wodon and colleagues (2017) believe that it is necessary to have synchronized work between governments and development partners in order to achieve sustainable decreases in child marriage. Such collaborations allow mobilising resources, implementing policies, and engaging communities.

The results also emphasize the importance of leadership and advocacy especially Auxillia Mnangagwa. Interventions led by leaders have the potential to impact the attitudes of the population and mobilise society towards a change. According to Machingura (2022), influential leaders are very important in the process of creating awareness and defining the discourse in this country regarding issues related to gender. But as shown in the results, the effects of these advocacy activities will hinge on whether these activities are translated into the real-life results at the community level.

Theoretically speaking, the following results can be attributed to Social Norms Theory (Bicchieri, 2006) according to which interventions should be aimed at collective beliefs and behaviours in order to be effective. Although the use of awareness campaigns and advocacy

activities tend to change the social norms, the effectiveness of the campaigns is subject to social acceptance and reinforcement of the community. This means that multiple interventions are in place, but they need to be effective, which is influenced by how well they tackle both structural and cultural factors.

In general, the research indicates that the work done in Epworth is extensive and needs a more intense level of integration, consistency, and alignment to the community to produce significant and sustainable effects.

4.5 Theme 3: Effectiveness of Interventions in Reducing Early Child Marriages

Table 5: Effectiveness of Interventions

Aspect	**Number of Mentions**
Increased awareness and knowledge	23
Slight reduction in early marriage cases	18
Behavioural and attitude change	20
Improved welfare of vulnerable girls	19
Continued challenges despite interventions	25

The respondents gave varied opinions on effectiveness of interventions to reduce early child marriages in Epworth. It was widely recognized that awareness has increased. Participant 1 said, *"It is now known by people that early marriage is wrong and Participant"* 18 said, "*There is increased knowledge than before".*

Other respondents reported that there has been a marginal decrease in early marriages. Participant 23 said, "*Cases are gradually declining due to awareness programmes"*, and Participant 27 said, "*We have seen some improvement, especially in school going girls".*

But, the change in behaviour was characterised as being slow and erratic. Participant 20 replied, "*Some individuals are changing, others adhere to the tradition"*, and Participant 22 also replied, "*Attitudes are improving, but not everywhere"*.

Another aspect that was pointed out by the participants was the improvement of the welfare of the vulnerable girls. Participant 5, remarked, "*Girls are now being encouraged to remain at school"*, and Participant 29, elaborated, "*that there are programmes that offer support and protection to girls at risk".*

Although these are some positive developments, issues remain. Participant 14 said, "*Poverty continues to compel families to marry off their daughters"* and Participant 19 said, "*Cultural beliefs are still high in this community"*. Participant 10 also added, "*some girls do get married early despite the awareness".*

Discussion

The results indicate that some of the interventions that have been implemented to curb early child marriages in Epworth have been successful especially in raising awareness and enhancing knowledge among people. This is in line with evidence around the world that shows that awareness campaigns can work to change attitudes and perceptions. UNICEF (2023) argues that the initial step in behavioural change is usually increased awareness as it provides the community with knowledge on the negative consequences of early marriage. Likewise, UNFPA (2022) highlights the importance of education and awareness campaigns to change the perception of communities and achieve gender equality.

Nevertheless, the results also show that higher levels of awareness do not always lead to a long-term behavioural change. Though other respondents cited a reduction in the number of early marriages, others emphasized that the practice is still common owing to the existing socio-economic and cultural reasons. This confirms the argument that Raj et al. (2020) put forward that awareness is not enough when structural imbalances including poverty still perpetuate early marriage. Poverty was identified several times as one of the key limitations in this study which supports the notion that economic vulnerability is a limiting factor to the success of interventions.

The progressive and irregular change in behaviour in the results also shows the difficulty of dealing with deeply entrenched social practices. Bicchieri et al. (2020) state that social norms change can be achieved through collective changes in behaviour instead of individual awareness. At Epworth, the community has not changed much despite the adoption of new attitudes by some of the individuals. This indicates that interventions are yet to achieve a critical mass that would completely change societal norms.

The positive outcomes of targeted interventions are reflected in improvements in the welfare of vulnerable girls, especially via education and support programmes. Research by Girls Not Brides (2022) shows that girls could be much more vulnerable to early marriage in case they are empowered by means of education and social support. The sustainability of such outcomes, however, relies on access to the resources and conducive environments.

In terms of theory, the results are a great support of the Social Norms Theory (Bicchieri, 2006) which states that shared expectations in a community are the reason why certain behaviour is upheld. Although people might acknowledge the adverse effects of early marriage, the social

pressure and fear of not going along with the accepted standards might cause them to resort to the practice. This is the reason why early marriage is still practiced even with awareness.

In general, the results show that even with the progress of interventions in terms of awareness creation and enhancement of welfare, the results are constrained by the lack of socio-economic factors and cultural beliefs. It shows the necessity of more long-term and integrated approaches that would deal with structural and social aspects of the issue.

4.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the results of the research on early child marriages in Epworth were introduced and discussed. The findings revealed that early child marriage is still common, as a result of poverty, cultural practices and illiteracy. Although some positive changes have been achieved through interventions like awareness campaigns, education programmes and advocacy initiatives, they have not been effective enough. The existing difficulties like poverty, ineffective law enforcement, and robust social norms keep on hampering the progress. The results also indicate that there is a need to have more comprehensive and more integrated strategies to curb early child marriages. The following chapter gives the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary, conclusion and recommendations of the research on the evaluation of the works of Auxillia Mnangagwa in fighting early child marriages in Epworth, Zimbabwe. It gives a quick summary of the whole research, what each chapter had intended to do. The chapter also concludes on the basis of the findings that were brought out in Chapter 4 and give practical suggestions to policy-makers, community leaders and other stakeholders involved. Lastly, it proposes future research directions.

5.2 Research Summary.

Chapter 1 presented the study by giving a background and setting of early child marriages within the global, regional and Zimbabwe context, with the focus being on the Epworth, and it gave the problem statement by demonstrating that the practice is still taking place despite the existence of laws and interventions to end it, and it also presented the research aim, objectives, and questions that informed the study, indicating the reason why the study is important to policymakers Chapter 2 surveyed available literature on the subject of early child marriage by discussing its causes, nature, extent, and consequences in various settings, discussing interventions that have been applied to tackle the issue and their effectiveness, and pinpointing the role of leadership and advocacy, as well as presenting theoretical and conceptual frameworks, especially Social Norms Theory, and identifying a gap in the research that required a dedicated study in Epworth. Chapter 3 described the research methodology by presenting the qualitative approach and interpretivist paradigm that will be used to understand the experiences of the participants, presenting the research strategy, population, sampling methods, and data collection which will be semi-structured

interviews, and explaining how data will be analysed using thematic analysis, and considering the validity, reliability and ethical considerations to ensure the credibility of the study. Chapter 4 reported and discussed the results of the field study according to the themes that were in line with the research objectives and indicated that early child marriage is still prevalent in Epworth because of poverty, cultural beliefs, and the lack of education and that despite interventions being effective at increasing awareness, the strategies still could not work effectively because of the socio-economic and cultural barriers that still exist and the findings were discussed in the context of the existing literature and theory The entire summary of the study was given in Chapter 5, which concluded the findings on whether the research objectives were met, the main findings on early child marriages and intervention measures in Epworth, practical recommendations to enhance policies and interventions, and areas of future research to facilitate long-term solutions.

5.3 Summary of Findings

This research has found out that the issue of early child marriage has been a major and constant social challenge in Epworth, Zimbabwe. The results revealed that it is a very common practice with several girls being married off at the age of between 15 and 17 years. The most prevalent factor which led to early marriages was poverty because families tend to consider marriage as a way of coping to save money. Moreover, access to education, and dropping out of schools were also cited as major factors, and this made young girls more susceptible to early marriages. The ideas of culture and religion were also discovered to have a significant influence since even some of the communities still normalise and promote the act despite the legal limitations.

The research also found that a number of interventions have been put in place to fight the early child marriages. These are campaigns, education and empowerment programmes to the girls

and community involvement programs through government institutions, non-governmental organisations, and leadership figures like Auxillia Mnangagwa. These programs have helped in raising awareness among the community members and many of the participants have noted that the community has become more aware of the adverse consequences of early marriage.

Nonetheless, the results show that the effectiveness of these interventions is poor. Though it is possible to note that there are slight decreases in the number of cases of early marriages and gradual changes in behaviour, the problem persists because of the socio-economic difficulties and cultural traditions. Poverty, especially, is still one of the most significant obstacles to change because families still have survival as their priority instead of long-term welfare. Moreover, the impact of these intervention programmes is diminished by poor law enforcement and the insufficient coverage of intervention programmes.

All in all, the research established that despite the gains realized in regard to awareness creation and attitude change, early child marriage in Epworth is a multifaceted problem that needs more multi-faceted, coordinated, and sustained interventions to bring positive and enduring transformation.

5.4 Research Gaps

The research revealed various critical research gaps in the field of early child marriage especially in the peri-urban setting of Epworth and other related communities. To begin with, despite an ample amount of literature on the causes and impacts of early child marriage, there is a paucity in empirical studies that directly assess the effectiveness of leadership-based interventions, particularly the ones related to influential leaders like Auxillia Mnangagwa at a community level. In the majority of studies, the trends are usually on a national or regional level, and little focus is placed on the implementation of such initiatives into the practical results at the community level.

Secondly, there is a void of context-specific research on peri-urban environments such as Epworth, which possesses distinct socio-economic and cultural processes compared to both rural and urban environments. The available studies tend to generalise the findings without sufficiently dealing with these differences so that the applicability of interventions can be restricted.

Thirdly, the research points out the absence of longitudinal research that will look into the long-term effectiveness of interventions on early child marriage. A majority of the studies available are short-term, and it is challenging to establish whether any change observed can be maintained.

Lastly, a little body of research has been developed to combine both socio-economic and cultural aspects into one research. Prospective research must embrace the multidisciplinary methods that will enhance comprehension of the intricate interaction between poverty and education, culture and social norms in perpetuating early child marriage.

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 The government must intensify on the implementation of laws that ban early child marriages so that the perpetrators can be dealt with.

5.5.2 Poverty alleviation programmes are necessary to be put in place to support vulnerable families to alleviate the economic constraints which cause early marriages.

5.5.3 Educational assistance, such as scholarships and paying school fees, needs to be heightened to retain girls in school and lower the dropout rates.

5.5.4 Community awareness campaigns The campaigns should be strengthened to constantly inform families and communities about the adverse consequences of early child marriage.

5.5.5 There must be active involvement of religious and traditional leaders in a move to challenge and change cultural practices that encourage early marriages.

5.5.6 Programmes intended to empower girls with life skills, reproductive health skills and decision-making skills need to be increased.

5.5.7 Non-governmental and governmental organisations are to enhance the level of coordination to make sure that the interventions are properly integrated and implemented.

5.5.8 Additional community-based interventions need to be implemented to make sure that programmes are delivered to every part of Epworth, including the most marginalised areas.

5.5.9 Practical, community-based support programmes should be added to advocacy initiatives by influential people like Auxillia Mnangagwa.

5.5.10 There should be enhanced monitoring and evaluation mechanisms which will help in understanding whether the interventions are working and what needs to be improved.

5.5.11 The parents and guardians must be enlightened about the need to safeguard the rights of the children and the need to focus more on education rather than early marriage.

5.5.12 Future interventions will be based on a holistic approach that incorporates socio-economic issues and cultural beliefs to effect sustainable change.

5.6 Study conclusion.

This paper aimed at evaluating the work of Auxillia Mnangagwa in fighting the crisis of early child marriages in Epworth, Zimbabwe, with a view of comprehending the nature and scale of the issue, assess the interventions that are in place, and how effective they are. The study results have shown conclusively that early child marriage is a long standing and deeply entrenched social menace in Epworth that is perpetuated by poverty, low access to education and ingrained cultural and religious beliefs.

The study shows that awareness campaigns, education programmes and community engagement initiatives have been put in place but their effectiveness has not been fully achieved. The above measures have helped create awareness and a progressive attitude change in society. This awareness has however not always translated to a relevant behavioural change or a significant decrease in the cases of early child marriage. This implies that knowledge is not sufficient to solve the problem.

Finally, the paper concludes that structural inequalities and strong social norms that persist in affecting the behaviour of communities are the factors that perpetuate early child marriage. She is forced to marry young due to economic hardship, which places the family in a situation where they have to marry young as a survival option, and the culture and religion support it. Consequently, even the most good-intended interventions cannot bear sustainable effects in case such underlying factors are not tackled.

The study thus takes the conclusion that educating and advocating on the issue of early child marriage is not sufficient to fight it. It requires a holistic and integrated solution that is able to deal with the socio-economic situation as well as the cultural beliefs that perpetuate the practice.

Only a combination of policy implementation, economic empowerment, education, and community-level change can result in sustainable change.

5.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the last elements of the work were introduced, namely the summary of the research, the main findings, the gaps in the research, the recommendations and the general conclusions. It gave a brief introduction of what each chapter would accomplish to show how the research was organized and carried out. The findings summary indicated that cultural beliefs, poverty, and inaccessibility to education have led to early child marriage being still common in Epworth, despite the interventions.

Critical research gaps were also found in the chapter, especially the fact that there is little assessment of leadership-based interventions and insufficient context-specific and long-term research. On the basis of these findings, some practical recommendations were made to enhance the implementation of the policies, refine the intervention strategies, and tackle the actual causes of early child marriage.

The conclusions highlighted that though there has been an increase in awareness, further meaningful and sustainable change needs a more integrative approach which is a combination of economic, educational and social interventions. All in all, this chapter brought together all the elements of the study and supported the necessity to place concerted efforts to effectively fight early child marriages.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Schedule for Young Girls

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

My name is ……., and I am conducting a study on the efforts to combat early child marriages. The purpose of this study is to understand experiences, challenges, and the effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing early marriages. Your responses will be kept confidential and used for academic purposes only.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your age?
2. What is your highest level of education?
3. Are you currently in school?
4. What is your marital status?
5. Who do you live with?

Section B: Nature and Extent of Early Child Marriages

6. What do you understand by early child marriage?

7. How common is early marriage in your community?

8. What are the main causes of early marriage among girls?

9. At what age do girls usually get married here?

10. How does early marriage affect girls' lives?

Section C: Interventions to Combat Early Child Marriages

11. Are you aware of any programmes or campaigns against early marriage?

12. Who is involved in these interventions?

13. Have you participated in any awareness programmes?

14. What messages are usually shared in these programmes?

15. How accessible are these interventions to girls like you?

Section D: Effectiveness of Efforts

16. Do you think these interventions are helping to reduce early marriage?

17. What changes have you noticed in your community?

18. What challenges still exist in preventing early marriage?

19. What more can be done to protect girls?

20. How can young girls be supported to avoid early marriage?

Appendix B: Interview Schedule for Parents/Guardians

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

My name is ……., and I am carrying out a study on early child marriages and the efforts to reduce them. The study aims to understand community views and evaluate current interventions. Your participation is voluntary, and all responses will remain confidential.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?

3. What is your level of education?
4. What is your occupation?
5. How many children do you have?

Section B

6. What is your understanding of early child marriage?

7. How common is it in your community?

8. What causes early marriage among children?

9. At what age do children usually marry?

10. What are the effects of early marriage?

Section C

11. Are you aware of any interventions against early marriage?

12. Who is responsible for these interventions?

13. Have you been involved in any programmes?

14. What do these programmes focus on?

15. How effective are they in your opinion?

Section D

16. Have these efforts reduced early marriages?

17. What changes have you seen in the community?

18. What challenges still exist?

19. What role should parents play?

20. What improvements would you suggest?

Appendix C: Interview Schedule for Community Leaders

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

My name is ……, and I am conducting research on early child marriages and interventions aimed at addressing them. The study seeks to understand leadership roles and community responses. Your input will be confidential and used for academic purposes only.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your age?
2. What is your position in the community?
3. How long have you served in this role?
4. What is your level of education?
5. What is your gender?

Section B

6. How would you describe early child marriage in your community?
7. How widespread is the problem?
8. What are the main causes?
9. Which groups are most affected?
10. What are the consequences?

Section C

11. What interventions exist in your community?

12. Who implements these interventions?

13. What role do you play in these efforts?

14. How are community members engaged?

15. What challenges do you face?

Section D

16. How effective are current interventions?

17. What improvements have been observed?

18. What barriers still exist?

19. What strategies would improve outcomes?

20. How can leadership better support efforts?

Appendix D: Interview Schedule for Teachers

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

My name is ……, and I am conducting a study on early child marriages and interventions to reduce them. The study focuses on understanding the role of education and awareness. Your responses will remain confidential and used for academic purposes only.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your teaching experience?

4. What level do you teach?
5. What is your highest qualification?

Section B

6. How does early marriage affect learners?

7. How common is it among students?

8. What are the causes?

9. At what stage do learners drop out?

10. What are the long-term effects?

Section C

11. Are there school-based interventions?

12. What programmes are in place?

13. What role do teachers play?

14. How do learners respond?

15. What challenges are faced?

Section D

16. Have interventions improved school retention?

17. What changes have you observed?

18. What challenges remain?

19. What support is needed?

20. What recommendations would you give?

Appendix E: Interview Schedule for Organisation Representatives

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

My name is …….., and I am conducting research on efforts to combat early child marriages. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of interventions and identify gaps. Your responses will be treated with confidentiality and used strictly for academic purposes.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your age?
2. What is your role in the organisation?
3. How long have you worked in this field?
4. What is your level of education?
5. What organisation do you represent?

Section B

6. How would you describe the extent of early child marriage?

7. What are the main causes?

8. Which groups are most affected?

9. What trends have you observed?

10. What are the key impacts?

Section C

11. What interventions does your organisation implement?

12. What strategies are used?

13. Who are your target groups?

14. What challenges do you face?

15. How do you measure success?

Section D

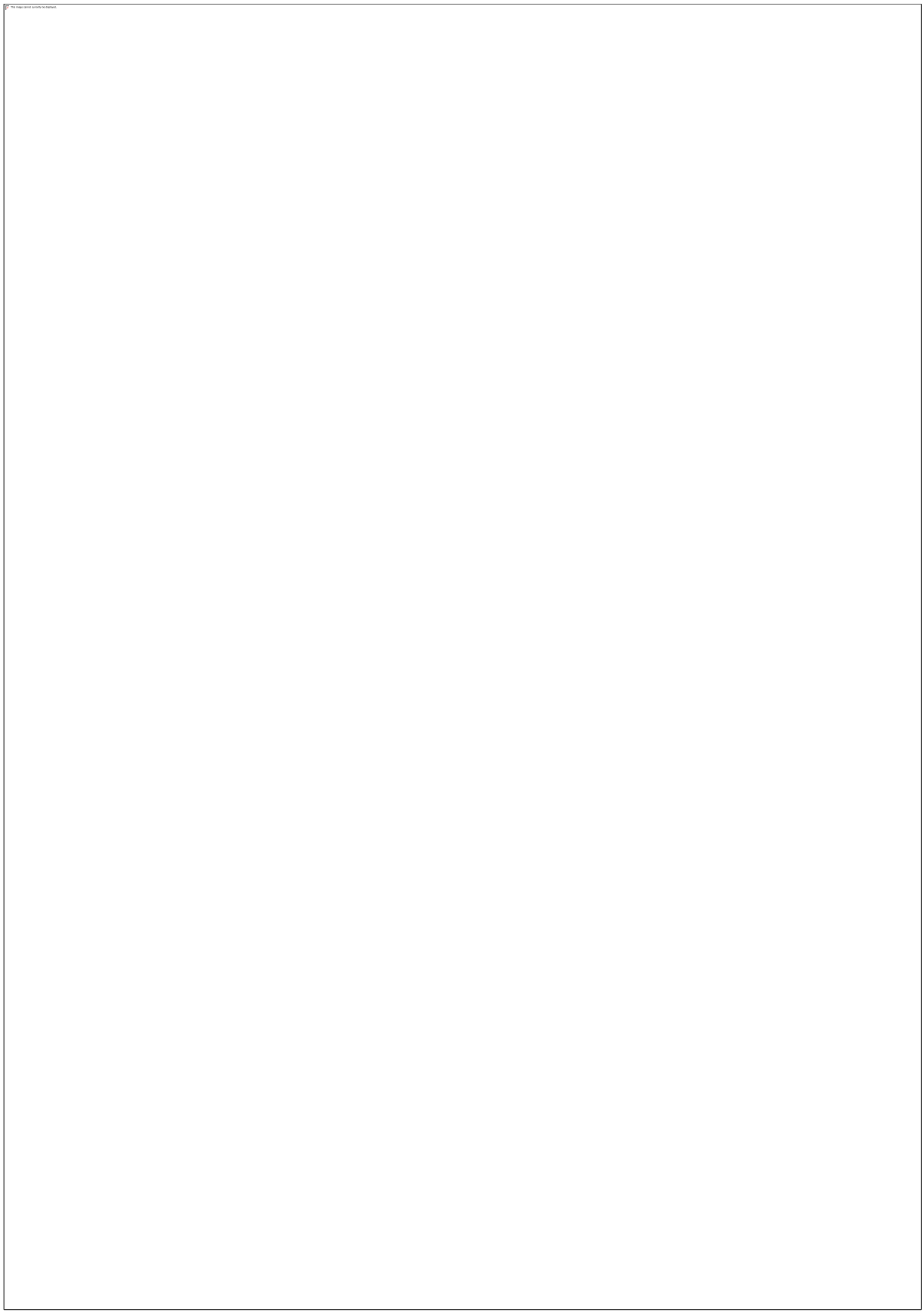
16. How effective are your interventions?

17. What outcomes have been achieved?

18. What gaps still exist?

19. What improvements are needed?

20. What future strategies would you recommend?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