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**FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**RESEARCH TOPIC
THE IMPACT OF TRADE IN SECONDHAND CLOTHES ON THE LIVELIHOODS OF
WOMEN IN ZVISHAVANE**

BY

FORGIVENESS NDINDA

R143808E

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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to the Midlands states University for acceptance. A dissertation entitled: **THE IMPACT OF TRADE IN SECONDHAND CLOTHES TRADE ON THE LIVELIHOODS OF WOMEN IN ZVISHAVANE** submitted by **Forgiveness Ndinda (R143808E)** in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies Honours degree.

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SUPERVISOR

DATE

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.....

CHAIRPERSON

DATE

.....

.....

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

DATE

DECLARATION

I, Forgiveness Ndinda Registration Number R143808E declare that all the information presented in this study is my own work and was not written by another person. Quotations and paraphrasing from other published and unpublished work was acknowledged.

Signed

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to the Ndinda family and my fiancé Brighton Bobo for their unwavering support during the entire professional and academic research. I love you all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I extend my utmost gratitude to the Almighty God for making this research a success. Credit also goes to all Development studies lecturers and my supervisor Mr C. Munhande for their relentless efforts and expert guidance. Most importantly I want to thank my parents and friends for their support, motivation and inspiration through my academic endeavor. All your efforts are well appreciated. Above all, I also want to extend my gratitude to the Zvishavane Town Council for allowing me to carry out my study in their town and all women in secondhand clothes trading for their cooperation during the course of this study. Their cooperation significantly contributed to the successful completion of this research.

ABSTRACT

The study took a micro-level approach to examine how trade in secondhand clothes has impacted the household livelihood of women in Zimbabwe with particular attention to Zvishavane town. A qualitative research design was used to gather and analyze data. Structured questionnaires and interviews were the main methods used to collect data from the sampled/selected twenty respondents. Information was also gathered through reviewing the already existing literature from journals and internet on recent debates on the role of secondhand clothes trading as a source of livelihood for the urban poor. Purposive sampling was used to identify and select respondents. Findings from the research indicate that secondhand clothes trading has played an important role as a source of livelihood through creating employment for the unemployed and the retrenched labour force. Women involved in this trade have indicated that they can afford basic needs and other services compared to the period when they were not selling secondhand clothes. Food security was improved, women could afford to send their children to school as well as to acquire movable and immovable assets. Secondhand clothes trading proved to be a big employer among women although they encounter a number of challenges such as harassment and torture from the local authority officers, limited capital for growth and lack of skills and knowledge in the business. It is recommended that the local authority and government should work with the relevant stakeholders to create a more conducive environment that support the development of this trade as it is proven to be among the source of community livelihood among women in Zvishavane.

ACRONYMS

GDP	Gross domestic product
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency
SMEs	Small to Medium Enterprises
ZIMRA	Zimbabwe Revenue Authority
HIV	Human Immune Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
ZIDERA	Zimbabwe democracy and economic recovery act
NIEEF	National Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Fund
CSOT	Community Share Ownership Trust
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
SADC	Southern African Development Committee
E U	European Union
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WFP	World Food Programme

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Introduction

The trade of second-hand clothes (mabhero), part of the informal activities has proved to be a growing economic activity among other activities which has enabled the majority of the people in Zimbabwe to earn a living. This business was triggered by the social, economic and political challenges that the country is currently facing. The introduction of ESAPs in 1990 and the closure of many companies in Zimbabwe gave a huge blow to the formal sector. This resulted to the retrenchment of the majority and depreciation in the economic performance leading to a number of people to lose their jobs. This situation result to an increase in unemployment rate and poverty which threatened the survival of many people in Zimbabwe. It is during this period that most women migrated to urban areas to find ways to sustain their families in the informal sector. Studies have shown that there is greater participation of women in the informal sector especially in the developing countries. Zimstat (2014) Labour Force Survey estimated that females constitute about 52% of the population in Zimbabwe at 13447 286. Women also constitute about 52% of the total population and perform about 53% of the economic activities but their work is unrecognized because it is not measured and is lowly paid (Express, 2013). Dube (2014) in his study conducted in Zengeza 4 in Chitungwiza, points out that if women are fully financed and economically enabled they can eradicate urban poverty. Therefore it is important to have an understanding of the degree of women participation and their efforts towards the reduction of poverty in many households across the country. Henceforth, this research seeks to assess the extent to which the informal sector activity of trade in second-hand clothes has impacted the livelihoods of women in Zvishavane.

Background of the study

The informal sector activities have increased enormously since the early 1990s, in the wake of the liberalization of many Third World economies (Hansen, 2004). Chidoko et al (2011) defines the informal sector as a sector which encompasses jobs which are not recognized as normal income sources and evade taxation. On a global scale, the informal sector activities constitute more than one

third of non-agricultural employment (ILO, 2002). The gains from the informal sector are not included in the Gross National Product hence its contribution to the country's economy is not fully recognized as it operates outside the framework of the law (Negash, 2005). The informal sector has increasingly become one of the Africa's key strategy for coping with growing poverty and unemployment especially in urban areas. Trade in secondhand clothes is among other activities in the informal sector. The activity is more dominant in the developing countries than the developed countries. Organizations such as Goodwill, Salvation Army and Oxfam are the major contributors of the second hand and pre-owned clothing categories which they donate to the poor. In Sub-Saharan African countries it is a dominant feature such that second-hand clothing markets constitute more than 30 per cent of the total value of imports, and more than 50 per cent in volume terms (Baden and Barber, 2005). Hansen (1991) also notes that sub-Saharan African countries are among the world's largest importers, with consumption of second hand clothing exceeding that of all other regions. The global trade of second-hand clothing has grown ten-fold since 1990 to reach a value of around \$1 billion annually. In several European countries new garments were not affordable (Frick, 2005) thus the introduction of second-hand clothing have allowed those of low income to have access to clothes. Countries such as Zambia, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe to mention a few are involved in this business of selling second hand clothing.

In Uganda, women including widows are dominating the second-hand clothes markets. Many women get their starting capital through savings as well as borrowing from different financial credit institutions. The business is said to be profitable thus giving them the opportunity to cater for other responsibilities like family expenses (Mohammed, 2005). However, women in this informal sector face a number of challenges such as low demand, high taxes levied on second-hand clothes imports, competition and also government threatens to ban their operations on the condition that their operations are illegal. Despite the challenges mentioned above, many female headed families in

Uganda managed to pay fees for their children, food security, construct houses and also the social status of women is being uplifted.

In Zimbabwe, clothing imports sharply increased since the trade liberalization measures which were introduced in 1991 and the current economic hardship is one of the major contributing factors that have led to the growth of second-hand clothes markets known as “*mabhero*” or “*kotamayi*” boutique because of the nature of shopping. Second-hand clothes markets have become popular in Zimbabwe in places such as Mupedzanhemo which is located in Mbare, Harare. Drawing closer to Zvishavane, in places such as Mandava, the selling of second-hand clothes has become the business of the day among other items like tomatoes, potatoes and airtime. Women in particular are mostly involved in this business although men are also active. Thus the importance of trade in secondhand clothes cannot be overemphasized in terms of employment creation for the thousands of people who want to make a living given to the hardships befalling the economy of Zimbabwe. Therefore, if this business is properly managed it can effectively be a key driver towards the reduction of poverty which includes having access to food security, accommodation, income as well as tangible assets at household and at community level.

Statement of the problem

From the inception of the economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP) in the 1990s and the closure of a number of industries in Zimbabwe, many people have resorted to the informal sector in order to earn a living. There was an increase in urban poverty and unemployment and the trade in secondhand clothes have proved to be a popular survival strategy among many urban dwellers with a large population of women dominating the business. The study therefore seeks to examine how the trade in secondhand clothes has impacted the livelihoods of women particularly in Zvishavane.

Theoretical framework

The study used the Sustainable Livelihood approach which was first introduced by the Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development and in 1992 the United Nations Conference on

Environment and Development expanded the concept and advocated for the achievement of sustainable livelihoods as a goal for poverty eradication. Sustainable livelihoods approach put poverty eradication at its core and employment showing the variety of activities that people engage into in order to make a living particularly the poor who rely on a number of different economic activities for their living. The approach was recently been applied to urban working poor.

The approach also consider the fact that the economic growth is important for poverty reduction hence engaging the poor people in more productive economic activities to improve the standards of living .The approach is relevant to the study in that it focus on the need to give more attention to vulnerable groups particularly women and on how they develop livelihood strategies to respond to the prevailing harsh economic conditions which is the central key to the study .It also allows us to measure the socio-economic impact of a strategy or project in which poverty reduction is its main objective as well as having access to resources . The Sustainable Livelihood Approach also acknowledges the role of formal, informal, organizational and institutional factors in enhancing or limiting sustainable livelihood outcomes. Hence the theory is brought to bear on the lives and livelihoods of urban women traders in Zvishavane.

The study also used the Marxist-feminist theory which is a sub-type of feminist ideology which focuses on the dismantling of capitalism as a way to liberate women (Engels, 1995). The theory was propounded by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1848) in Manifesto. The Marxist-feminists view the capitalist drive for profits as responsible for women second class status and other forms of oppression. Women oppression developed in pre-history when communal, matrilineal societies were violently replaced with patriarchal societies in which individual wealth and private property were key (Engels, 1995). Women are confined to the domestic sphere where the labor is reproductive and thus uncompensated and unrecognized in a capitalist system (Benston, 1969).It emphasize on the view that women are confined to private sphere and deprived to own the means of production and are only obliged to perform reproductive roles whilst men perform production roles. Sharpe in O'Donnell

(1992; 172) regard women as only temporary labour, and should consider themselves privileged to have a chance to earn money for their own. Hence women engage into wage labour from a lower position where they will be undervalued and their wages will be low.

The researcher adopted the Marxist-feminist theory because it suits well with her study as the theory is mainly concerned with the disparities between women and work and how they are confined to the private sphere which is the key issue to the study. Furthermore, the world today is calling for proper representation and equal access of males and females in education, employment and also advocates for women's participation in the public sphere thus their liberation from the dependence on men. Marxist feminists suggest that women's liberation is centered on their active involvement in the public sphere where they can own factors of production hence improving their social status (Mawere, 2011). Therefore, the involvement of women in other economic activities such as selling second-hand clothes had paved a way for the participation of women in the public sphere resulting to a change in their economic and social status in the society.

Conceptual framework

Livelihoods

The term refers to a means of making a living which encompasses people's capabilities, assets, income and activities required to secure the necessities of life. UNDP (1997) defines livelihoods as the means, activities, entitlements, and assets by which people earn a living.

Secondhand clothes

The term refers to pre-owned clothing or clothes that are not new and have been owned by someone.

Research Aims and Objectives

1. To establish the prevalence of trade in second hand clothes in Zvishavane.
2. To find out the motivating factors for women participation in this trade.

3. To establish the impact of this trade on the livelihoods of women in the trade.
4. To find out challenges facing women in the trade.

Research Questions

1. What is the prevalence of trade in secondhand clothes in Zvishavane?
2. What are the motivating factors accounting for women participation in this trade?
3. What is the impact of this trade on the livelihoods of women in the trade?
4. What are the challenges being faced by women in this trade?

Significance of the Study

The study intends to fill up the gap in literature on the significant role played by secondhand clothes trading to the urban poor livelihoods despite the consistent harassments by the local authority. With unemployment estimated to be at 90% by other sources, informal sector can be used as one of the engines that will fuel economic growth as well as reduce poverty. Therefore, the study will help to mend the contradictory relationship between the government and the informal sector in Zimbabwe whereby the government will get to formalize the informal sector as it contributes in the survival of the urban poor. This study is also of great importance to different organizations that closely work with women such as the Ministry of Women and Youth Affairs as well as other non-governmental organizations associated with women empowerment and poverty reduction. This will influence such organizations to craft sound programs and government policy formulation that are centered on women, understanding their roles as a stepping stone towards the development of household livelihoods and as well as the surrounding community.

Literature Review

Literature review is an evaluation report of the available literature to a given subject or chosen topic area. It gives the opportunity to summarize and clarify the literature. Therefore, in this study the

literature review is going to focus on the informal sector in general, its importance to the socio-economic development and its widespread globally, regionally and Zimbabwe.

The concept of the informal sector was introduced at the beginning of the 1970s (Charmes, 2012). The informal sector refers to the underground market, black economy, shadow economy, or gray economy which is part of a country's economy and not accepted as normal income sources (Hazans, 2011). People who are participating in the informal sector do not declare their income and are exempted from taxation. The emergence of the informal sector in Europe was triggered by the need to escape taxation and unlike in the developing countries which is driven by economic hardships. Studies have shown that the informal sector in the developed countries has managed to generate high profits than those who are formally employed in organizations. Chen et al (2006) points out that in South East Asia and South Asia, the informal sector constitute for 30 to 50% and 50 to 80% of the non-agricultural employment. Furthermore, it was argued that informal sector makes up to 55% of non-agricultural employment in Latin America as well as in Caribbean whilst in Southern Europe and Western Europe it makes up to 24 %. Women are over-represented in the informal sector worldwide and studies have proved that there is a greater participation of women in informal activities for instance in Latin America 58% of informal traders are women whilst men comprise of 48% (Chen et al, 2006). In China the idea of informal sector is quite new as it was summoned following the intensification of the state enterprise reform from the mid 1990's. Recently the Chinese government (Shanghai Municipal government) has shift attention in the informal economy as a way to address the issue of unemployment.

In Africa, the informal sector can be viewed in terms of its significant contribution to the economic and social development through reducing poverty which is a problem for all African countries. Its contribution to GDP in Africa is estimated at 20% and GDP of non-agricultural sector is 34 % (UN, 1997). It appears to provide a viable avenue for economic development as compared to the public sector. Gwete (2014) highlighted that the informal sector in Africa has a larger proportion than the

formal economy in terms of share and impact for example the GDP and income. Hope (1997) reported that up to the present date, the informal sector emerge to be the most fast growing economic sector in Africa. Issues such as globalization and urbanization help to explain the dominance and expansion of the informal economy in Africa. Chen et al (2006) advanced that in terms of urban employment, the informal sector accounted for over half in Africa and Asia and a quarter in Latin America and the Caribbean. Just like in Europe, women also dominate the informal sector activities in Africa. The facts behind this thinking vary where other scholars argues that the informal sector is the primary source of employment for women in most developing countries whilst the (UN, 2000) indicated that the informal sector is a bigger source of employment for women than their counterparts (man). In other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, almost all of the female non-agricultural labor force is in the informal sector. For example in Benin, Chad, and Mali, women accounts for more than 95 % of the workers in the informal sector. This proportion indicates that women workers in the informal sector exceed that of men in most countries.

Furthermore, livelihood diversification phenomenon has been greatly recognized in Africa as individuals engage into different activities to sustain their households (Ellis, 2000).The diversification included non-agricultural activities such as selling of petty commodities such as food items and other small items. Street vending is very prevalent on the continent and women make up to 75% of the vendors (Charmes, 1998).Other scholars agreed that informal sector activities have become the Africa's largest employment provider as they are broadcasted all over in many cities of the developing countries. UN (1997) points out that informal sector have created more than 60% to 70% new jobs regardless of education and training. For instance in Kenya and Uganda informal employment exceeds employment in the formal sector. In Kenya, informal sector contribute to 35% of the GDP while in South Africa it contribute to 40% and its contribution to GDP is perceived as higher than of the manufacturing sector in most African countries. Hence from a broader perspective,

the significance of the informal sector in Africa can be viewed as an engine of growth that can enable poor people to earn a living and lessen the effects of the liquidity crisis across the African countries.

In Zambia and Malawi, the informal sector is growing at a faster rate than the formal sector. In the case of Malawi, studies have reported that the informal sector has taken over many streets and the sector has expanded in 1991 after the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment programme and a multi-party system. This aligns well with (Meager, 2003) who advanced that the effects of ESAP were felt among many countries in Africa thereby resulting to the widespread of the informal sector which today is responsible for creating jobs annually for the majority. Thus to this end, Zimbabwe has not been spared to suffer the effects of ESAP as well.

The growth of the informal sector in Zimbabwe was experienced over the past two decades. This was attributed by a number of related factors that include high unemployment, increase in urban poverty, food insecurity and shortages of foreign currency. Chani (2008) highlighted that the unemployment rate in Zimbabwe stands nearly at 90%. Development policies such as market liberalization and Operation Murambatsvina are accountable for the expansion of the informal economy in Zimbabwe in which it had worsened the socio-economic and political status quo that have left many Zimbabweans suffering. It was during this period that saw many people shifting attention to the informal sector to earn a living and among such groups are secondhand clothes traders. Magaba is a popular place in Harare which is highly known for accommodating informal sector activities, it comprised of market stalls that were established by the Municipal authority. Informal sector activities had managed to provide skilled and unskilled labour force with a source of income and employment. It had also enabled traders to meet education, accommodation and other important basic needs for their dependants. Hence, the informal sector can be seen as an employer of last resort.

In the literature, other scholars viewed the informal sector as a stumbling block to the success of established companies as they deform price incentives to producers. Despite the negative impacts of

the informal sector on the formal sector which include a reduction of the revenue base, deforming prices and polluting the environment, it should be noted that other scholars had viewed it having the capability to reduce poverty through guaranteeing a source of livelihood.

To add more, secondhand clothes trading is one particular and special component of the informal economy which is considered as a survival strategy in most developing countries. Studies carried out by Velia et al (2006) highlights that Maputo is the central for used clothing purchases and most of the used clothes sold within the informal sector in Zimbabwe come from Maputo. Many scholars have agreed that the business of selling second hand clothes was motivated by the economic hardships prevailing especially in developing countries. Velia ,et al(2006)in his study in South Africa find out that most of his respondents commented more, that lack of employment and hard economic conditions prevailing in the country have aroused the zeal for them to join the business of selling second hand clothes. This tally well with (Mkhize, 2003) that 35% of her respondents were employed before engaging in this sector. This explains that the need for jobs and survival means motives have encouraged them to join this sector.

In South Africa the business was viewed as an avenue where the people could improve their livelihoods (Velia et al, 2006). It was reported that the business is highly dominated by women (Mkhize, 2003) and also a growing increase of vendors in Uganda has been seen to have gender dimension whereby women tend to dominate the markets (Negash, 2005).Their participation in the public sphere together with men had managed to do to do away with the manipulation coming from their counterparts. Negash (2005) stipulates that the involvement of women in the selling of secondhand clothes in Uganda had resulted to their empowerment economically and some of his respondents also commented that she can use her money without the interference of men. Peberby and Rogerson (2000) indicated that this trade involves a greater part of women than their counterparts thereby promoting women empowerment in the Southern Region. This becomes a fundamental step towards the eradication of the patriarchal system (male dominants over women) because women are

afforded the chance to operate in the own way without limitations. Probably their social status in the society is respected and can be viewed as equal among their counterparts.

Furthermore, the business provides the source of income to several women in Africa where they can also own the means of production and reduce their dependence on men. The business had given women the opportunity to cater for other family responsibilities and to send their children to school providing all the fees, accommodation as well as food security (Negash, 2005). This concurs with the findings of (Milgram, 2008) who highlighted that in India women have managed to acquire important resources through this business. However, scholars such as Mkhize (2003) and Nyoni, et al (2010) agrees that the business faces a number of challenges such as harassment and unrest from the council officials due to the illegal operation of the business, competition as many people are undertaking the same activity and also the business is under a threat of ban by the government in Uganda, South Africa and Zimbabwe. These challenges draw back their operation hence the business tends to be unprofitable. Ericsson and Brooks (2014) and Mkhize (2003) alludes that there is little evidence that the business contribute much towards the eradication of poverty as some sellers finds it difficult to meet the costs of operation. Starting capital also limit the operation of the business as it has been reported that the business requires huge amount of money whereas women accumulate the capital through savings, financial help from the family members as well as financial credit institutions (Velia et al, 2006). Thus the study remains debatable if it had managed to improve the living standards of people in the developing countries and uplifts the socio-economic status of women.

Research Methodology

Methodology refers to technique of finding an answer to a problem. The study was conducted from February 2018 to May 2018. The study used the qualitative research method. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as involving an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world which means that researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. It provides insights into the

problem and the description of people's life experience. The researcher selected qualitative research method as it is more flexible and allows the interaction between the researcher and the respondents and also enables the researcher to collect information on the perspectives of respondents on the trade in secondhand clothes in Zvishavane. It also allows the collection of information from individual's point of view as well as enabling the participation of the researcher in carrying out the research.

Research design

Ader et al (2008) advanced that a research design is the set of methods and procedures used in collecting and analyzing measures of the variables specified in the research problem research or it is a framework that has been created to find answers to research questions. The study used the descriptive design. The purpose of descriptive design is to analyze things clearly in their natural settings and characteristics of a given situation. The researcher proposed this so as to give a thorough description of the facts that surround women being involved in secondhand clothes trade. An explanatory research design was also used in which it tries to give an explanation and unearth the reasons why women engage on this trade for their sustainable livelihoods.

Sample size

The informal sector in Zvishavane constituted 1391 traders (Zvishavane Town Council statistics). A large number of women are being involved in the business of selling second hand clothes (mabhero) in Zvishavane hence it becomes impossible to interview every participants. Thus the researcher selects a sample size that reflects utmost representation. Hence the study used a sample size of 20.

Sampling

Sampling is a process used in statistical analysis in which a predetermined number of observations are taken from a larger population. Fridah (1990) defined sampling as a set of people or organizations selected for the purpose of survey from a large population. Zina (2004) highlighted that the process of sampling is far from any haphazard activity and is always strategic and mathematical. For the purpose

of this study, a non probability sampling in the form of purposive sampling was used .This involves the selection of relevant persons that bear interest to a particular research question. The main reason for purposive sampling is that it allows the researcher to deliberately focus more on the respondents that enabled her to answer research questions. It was easy for the researcher to select the participants as she was familiarized with the markets where the trading activity takes place. Thus to this end, she select four respondents from Mandava market, four from Mupani mabhero vendors market, four from Chiedza hall market ,three from Maglass township and five who operate both from their residential areas and from roadways .

Target population

Targeted population refers to a group of people that have similar characteristics regard to a particular study (Ben and Khen, 1993). Women in Zvishavane involved in this trade and Zvishavane Town council officials were the targeted group for this study. The trading site targeted is Mandava market as it accommodates many secondhand clothes trading activities .The Zvishavane Town Council officials were targeted because they have full knowledge of the informal trading activities in the town.

Data collection tools

These are instruments used to collect data during the course of the study such as questionnaires, interviews, observation and desktop research. These tools were designed to enable the researcher to collect adequate information and increase its credibility.

Interviews

Interviews are primary source of data gathering and it is a conversation with a purpose (Rubin, 1995). Before carrying out the interviews the researcher engaged in a thorough study of existing literature on the key variables of the topic as this is imperative for the researcher to understand, be equipped with knowledge about the background information to contextualize the topic and create an interview program. Interviews were carried out at the trading post with the sampled traders. For the first visit to

the sites, the researcher wanted to assess the widespread of traders and sensitize them about her research as well as to make appointments on a purposive basis. During the second visit, the researcher went with the interview guides which consist of a number of questions pertaining to the study. In depth interviews were also used for Zvishavane Town Council officials from the Department of Welfare who had full knowledge about the informal activities. The in-depth interviews helped the researcher to obtain first-hand information and knowledge about the business. Interviews also create the chance for explanations and clarifications as the literacy levels among the traders were low. This technique also helps the researcher to record and interpret non-verbal communication and opinions of the respondents.

Questionnaires

Bell (1999) defines a questionnaire as a collection of questions that enable a person to get detailed information on what is being investigated. It is also a primary data collection method that helped the researcher to gather tangible information relating to the business of secondhand clothes trade and its impact on the livelihoods of women .They consist of open and closed questions. A maximum of twenty (20) questionnaires were distributed to the sampled respondents to fill in their own time and the researcher collected them after a period of four days .The advantage is that they help the researcher to gather important information and extracting perspective from respondents thereby enhancing validity. The method is not time consuming and allows the aspect of confidentiality .

Observation

The study also makes use of one off observation where the researcher goes to the area of study to observe the operation of the business because she cannot study a certain criteria without being part of it. Observation involves direct contact with the situation. This tool assist the researcher to gather information missed from the questionnaires as well as interviews and also get first-hand information based on lived experience.

Desktop research

Desk research is also known as secondary sources of information which includes internet, articles, journals and books. Desk research exposed the researcher to the general overview of secondhand clothes trade through already existing material thus contributing to the success of the study. The advantage of this tool is that it provides a huge database required in the study and a stepping stone in tracing the origins of informal sector in Zimbabwe.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher faced a number of challenges whereby the respondents denied disclosing important information regarding it as their privacy and others in the fear of stigmatization. Secondly, the markets were not closely located hence making it difficult to collect all the valuable data required. To add more collecting data through questionnaires and interviews was also challenging as it was time consuming. High illiteracy rate among the respondents result to the collection of biased information and at some point they was need to do follow ups for clarification on some missed points. The patriarchal system was also a challenge whereby some women cannot be interviewed without the consent of their husbands hence missing out some information that could be relevant to the study.

Ethical Considerations

Research ethics are mainly interested in the management of risk, protection of confidentiality, honesty, working with integrity and the process of informed consent. The researcher shall inform the participants all the details concerning the study as well as its impact allowing the participants to have a proper decision making before dissemination their information. To add more the researcher shall get the consent of the respondents before involving them in the exercise. The researcher shall also be in a position to maintain confidentiality and privacy so that people will be free to express themselves. This also meant that the information gathered from the respondents' could not be shared to other people rather protecting their identity.

STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter One: Development and growth in secondhand clothes trade in Zimbabwe (informal sector).

Chapter Two: Secondhand clothes trade and women's livelihoods in Zvishavane.

Chapter Three: Sustainability of trade in secondhand clothes in Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

References

CHAPTER 1

THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF TRADE IN SECONDHAND CLOTHES IN ZIMBABWE

1.1 Introduction

This traces the development and growth in secondhand clothes trade in Zimbabwe as a source of livelihood, poverty alleviation and employment creation among Zimbabwe communities. The section also aims to profile enlightenment to the current informal sector development and also enhance the importance of this trade as one of major strategies that can fuel economic growth and development in Zimbabwe. This activity is grouped among other informal activities which emerged as a result of the country's economic meltdown experienced in the last decade. Therefore, the researcher traced how the trade in secondhand clothes began, its development and it becoming popular in Zimbabwe as well as the contributions of other economic reforms that could have resulted to the emergence of this activity.

1.2 The Secondhand Clothes Trade In Zimbabwe.

It is imperative to understand the events that occur within the economic and political spheres so as to get a clear picture on the development and growth of secondhand trading since the attainment of independence in 1980. The trade in secondhand clothes as part of the informal sector activities has managed to serve as an escape route for many Zimbabweans to earn a living considering the economic hardships befalling the country. Hart (1973) defines the informal sector as a part of the urban labor force which takes place outside the formal labour market and similar to self-employed activities. Cross (1998) also describe the informal sector as the economic activity that takes place outside the formal norms of economic transactions established by the state and formal business practices but which is not clearly illegal in itself. Studies have observed that informal sector activities

are more dominant in many cities in Zimbabwe as job seekers migrate from rural areas to urban areas for better economic opportunities.

The development and growth of secondhand trade in Zimbabwe emerged as a result of de-industrialization caused by ineffective economic development policies which were implemented and failed to attract the foreign investors thereby affecting the formal sector. The adoption of Economic Structural adjustment program in 1991 under the guidance of the International Financial Institution as well as the land reform programme have greatly intensified the economic meltdown which reached its peak towards the end of 2007 and 2008. The outcomes of these policies resulted in the retrenchment of many civil servants workers in state-owned enterprises (Ndiweni, 2014). Henceforth, there was a decline in employment growth in the formal sector whilst the informal has been growing both its share of output and employment creation.

Poverty levels intensified in urban areas and became a major phenomenon hence precipitating the growth of the informal economy such as vending and various micro enterprises. Almost everyone is trying to get money from setting up some small business to fill up the gap that was created by massive de-industrialization of the city (Masvora, 2013). Robertson (2013) a Zimbabwean economist estimated that 100 000 jobs have been lost from 2004 up to date as government fails to create new jobs and it is the informal economy that has borne the brunt of absorbing the masses of unemployed people.

The informal sector in Zimbabwe has become an important source of livelihood for the majority. Due to hard economic conditions which include lack of employment opportunities in the formal sector, many Zimbabweans have demonstrated their excessive capability to create jobs for themselves which include trade in secondhand clothes.

Mupedziswa and Gumbo (2001) advanced that Zimbabwe's experience is not different from its neighboring countries in the sub-region when it comes to the issues of a growing informal sector. Zimstat as cited in Express (2013) shares that about 3.7 million people in Zimbabwe are involved in informal sector activities. These informal sector activities have kept many people in jobs despite the

hard economic conditions. The International Labor Organization (ILO) (1985) states that the share of the informal economy employment grew from less than 10% of the labor force in 1982 to 20% by 1986 to 1987 by 1991. By 1996 the sector employed 1.56 million people compared to 1.26 million in the formal sector (Gumbo, 2001).

The trade in secondhand clothes became a popular and vibrant informal economic activity and absorbs many citizens due to low entry barriers, unregulated entry qualifications, efficient at generating job opportunities at a very low cost, no fixed place of operation and also unrecorded tax payments. Countrywide in Zimbabwe women dominate this activity. Hansen (1999) highlights how there has been a rapid expansion in exports of second hand clothing from the developed countries of the North to the markets of developing countries in the South where it is consumed again and worldwide second hand clothing exports has increased six fold between 1980 and 1995. Zimbabwe itself was not been spared from this trade although they operate outside the legal framework where they lack license and violate the by-laws that restrict commercial activity from residential areas.

1.3 Influencing Factors to Secondhand Clothes Trade expansion in Zimbabwe

The existence of trade in secondhand clothes and its popularity can be explained by a number of reasons. It is believed that Zimbabwe witness a widespread of informal employment during the economic downturns period. Williams (2007) advanced that it is important to consider both the motives in the informal economy as push and pull factors. A number of scholars have agreed that the expansion of trade in secondhand clothes was heavily triggered by the economic necessity.

Renooy (1990) highlighted that the structural and pull factors determine the active participation of people in the informal sector. Structural factors refer to financial constrains, socio-psychological pressure and institutional constraints whilst the pull factors refers to free choice, one's background, skills, standard of living and education. Research conducted by Makaye and Munhande (2008) stipulates that push factors such as unemployment, poor salaries, lack of skills and opportunities have

encouraged traders to engage in the secondhand clothes trading. The economic hardships is the major reason contributing to the introduction of the secondhand clothes trading and traders are viewing the informal sector as an avenue where they can make a living and increase their income generation. These economic reasons are related to unemployment, inflexible formal labour market and the declining real price of capital due to the unfavorable economic development policies such as Economic Structural Adjustment Programme and the Fast Track Land reform programme and Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe that are discussed below.

1.3.1 ESAP and Trade in Secondhand Clothes in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe inherited a dualist economic system in 1980 and in an attempt to readdress the colonial social imbalances, the government embarked on a socialist mode of development through implementing policies like Growth with Equity of 1981, Transitional Development Plan and the Five Year National Development Plans (Chinakire and Masunungure, 2007). This led the government to indulge in a huge deficit as more funds were diverted to infrastructural development in rural areas to recompense the imbalances. The government became bankrupt and highly indebted and this led the government to turn to the IMF and World Bank in the second decade for financial assistance. In 1991, the government adopted the criticized ESAP that alter the economy into a more market oriented (Saunders, 1996). Following are some of the aims of the ESAPs according to the Minister of Finance, Bernard Chidzero in July 1990:

- To facilitate sustainable development, increase GDP to at least 5% per annum.
- To reduce the poverty levels in societies.
- To reduce the government budget deficit from 12% of 1991 to 6% by 1995 and improve investment in the economy to 25%.
- To reform the socialist ideology to a more liberal system.

- To deregulate the economy by removing controls on exchange rates, prices of goods and reduce wage bills.
- To promote trade liberalization through the removal of barriers on the exchange of goods and services.
- To reform the public sector to privatization and also reform the civil service.

Zimbabwe's adoption of such economic policy (ESAP) was considered as a stepping stone towards the achievement of sustainable national economic development. The expectations were that the government expenditure will be reduced and at the same time attracting foreign and domestic private investors. The government also saw the adoption of ESAP as a crucial move to restore and rejuvenate the economic growth in the formal sector and assuming that its negative effects would be only felt in the short term by poor unskilled women (Mupedziswa and Gumbo, 2001). However, few investments were brought back into the country compared to the Western allied countries because the economy lacked enough resources to attract investors. The programme involved a number of terms and conditions which include the opening up of markets, removal of trade barriers thereby affecting the local manufacturers.

The removal of trade barriers resulted in stiff competition due to the influx of foreign goods into the country. Their operation in the country affected the local producers since their resource base was poorly financed compared to that of the foreign investors which was financially stable. The local industries reduced their operations as the prices detected by the foreign investors were not favorable in that they were low leading to the closure of many industries. ESAP introduced the local businesses to the international arena which they were not prepared for. As a result the local business faced stiff competition and eventually closed.

Export promotion programme was also meaningless to the local producers as the foreign investors were the first priorities hence there was the proliferation of multinational companies which led to the

removal of the local producers in the business. This explains the gap that increased between the local manufacturers and the foreign investors when it comes to issues of expanding their businesses. During this period there was also an increase of loan interest rates thus making it difficult for the indigenous manufactures to borrow money from the banks to boost their businesses. Unemployment, poor standards of living, high rates of school drop outs and sky rocketing of food prices and other commodities was as a result.

Retrenchment both in the public and private sphere impacted all spheres of the livelihoods for many Zimbabweans. To make matters worse, prioritization of export agriculture resulted in decrease in food production which forced women to be exploited in the labor force in which labor laws were been loosened through ESAP deregulation that undermine labor social rights hence exposing women to risk of experiencing hunger and starvation (Dananer,2000). School children dropout rates were witnessed with more children joining street life of begging and vending for a livelihood as parents were incapable to provide school fees hence undermining the human capital. Health problems also increased due to lack of sources of income especially women who began to engage into prostitution leading to the widespread of HIV and AIDS (Mupedziswa, 2007). Accommodation also became a problem as there was high influx of people who migrated from rural areas to cities hence exerting pressure on limited resources available resulting in unsustainable practices. The drought experienced between 1991-1992 periods also worsened the problems that were already severe. Though the first stage of structural adjustment programme has in some point resulted in better improvements in the standards of living, it has worsened urban poverty to the extent that urban poverty becomes a common feature in most cities. Eventually a large number of women ventured into different informal economic activities including trade in secondhand clothes to supplement the salaries of their spouses and sustain their households as employment in the formal sector was difficult to secure. Chen etal (2004) mention that women are affected by economic reforms because of their disadvantaged position on all fronts.

1.3.2 Fast Track Land Reform Programme (2000) and the Trade in Secondhand Clothes in Zimbabwe

There were several amendments to both the Constitution of Zimbabwe and the Land Acquisition Act during the 1980s and 1990s that try to increase the quantity of land for resettlement and ease land reform broadly. Moyo (1986) argues that between 1980 and 1990 the government managed to acquire only 3, 5 million hectares of land and resettled 71,000 households. However, the communal areas remained overcrowded and having no access to quality land. Thus the land question in terms of land redistribution remained unanswered for twenty years after independence in 1980 (Mlambo, 2005). The government in July 2000 embarked on the Fast Track Land Reform programme under the code name of “Third Chimurenga”. The government adopted the slogan that “Land is the Economy and the Economy is Land”. Two resettlement models were used in the fast track phase which is the A1 and A2 farms. The A1 farms consist of small plots designed to address the needs of the landless and the A2 farms intend to increase the number of black commercial farmers, with many of these farms going to beneficiaries linked to the ruling party (Marongwe, 2003). The main objectives of the programme were to guarantee food security, create employment, ease existing political pressure and decongest the communal areas.

Apparently the national agricultural production declined compared to levels before fast track land reform. Tobacco, maize, beans, wheat and soya beans were some of the major crops which were affected and decreased from 70% of production to 20% of production in major crops (Richardson, 2007). The land reform policy affected commercial farms resulting in the collapse of Zimbabwe’s agricultural output. Taking land from the white farmers in 2000 reduced agricultural output by almost 60% that is from 2.7 million tonnes of maize in 1981 to only 600 000 tonnes in 2006 (Mbanje and Mahuku, 2011). It was during this period that saw Zimbabwe shifting from being the “bread basket” of the Southern African region into a “basket curse”. This situation severely affected the national economy, not only the agro-based industries but also mining, tourism and the banking sector . UNDP

(2008) highlights that Zimbabwe's economic meltdown occurred at a period where other African countries were beginning to achieve reasonable development comparing the cumulative gain of over 40% of GDP elsewhere in Africa, Zimbabwe's GDP between 1998-2006 declined by -37%.

This contributed to the closures and downsizing of manufacturing industries due to lack of inputs (agro-based companies) as well as the foreign currency to secure the required inputs. FAO/WFP (2007) advanced that the agriculture that generated much of the foreign currency declined in its total exports from 39% to 21% in 2006. Agriculture is the backbone of Zimbabwe's economy and the largest employer, hence the disturbances in the agricultural sector served to widen the retrenchment and growth of unemployment rate in urban areas due to de-industrialization. The most affected places in the country include Manicaland, Matabeleland, Mashonaland East and Mashonaland West. Ncube (2000) posted that the combination of collapsing agriculture and industrial sector, together with uncertain political risk turned the economy from glory to gloom. The immediate effect was the shortage of food and other commodities resulting to the widespread of hunger and starvation thus giving birth to a flourishing informal sector. High inflation rates were witnessed in Zimbabwe whereby the GDP declined by 5.1 in 2000 and by 7.4 in 2001 thereby causing commodity prices to change every day. This had serious implications on the livelihoods of people and the informal sector gradually becomes an escape route for human's survival.

From the inception of the Fast Track Land Reform programme all the economic sectors tend to cripple down while the country's domestic currency reached quadrillions and quintillions (Mlambo, 2010). This situation had a bearing on women more than it was on men because women did not benefit much compared to their male counterparts in terms of land allocation and could benefit when they were jointly allocated land together with their spouses. The decrease in commercial farming meant the farm workers no longer get their standard incomes resulting in many engaging into the informal sector activities.

Changes brought by the land reform programme also heavily affected women who dominate the agricultural sector constituting 54% of the workforce (Zimstat,2016). The Women and Development perspective recognize that women are the mainstay of agricultural production in many areas of Africa, although their contribution has been systematically overlooked and marginalized in national and donor development plans (Connelly et al, 2005). Therefore it was during this period where the crisis was at its peak that many women resorted to informal trading activities which include trade in secondhand clothes where they import secondhand clothes from Mozambique as well as from South Africa. The absence of visa requirement on border also motivated women to become active in this trade.

1.3.3 Sanctions (2002) On Zimbabwe

Following condemnation of the Zimbabwean government for the abuse of human rights, election violence, and violation of property ownership rights on the FTLRP and disrespect on the rule of law, the country was sanctioned by the West. Sanctions are defined as a foreign policy instrument used by states to influence a particular government to change their policy by restricting trade, investments or other commercial activity (Chingono, 2013). In Zimbabwe the EU sanctions were meant to target the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU P-F) leadership and those who support it into submission but they have turned to hurt the ordinary Zimbabweans. Mahuku and Mbanje (2011) advanced that sanctions were directed against the political leaders and other government officials of the country and the vulnerable groups of the societies suffered more than the targeted group.

Sanctions resulted in lines of credit being cut for Zimbabwean firms and the Government. The country could no longer access funds from the Bretton Woods institutions. USA through the ZIDERA 2001 had ensured that Zimbabwe was cut off from the international community particularly the West and Western allied countries. Local firms were no longer able to recapitalize and they eventually had to downsize through retrenchments. Some even closed altogether. Mbanje and Mahuku (2011) in their

research in Mutare have discovered that nearly all companies have to obtain offshore at exorbitant interest rates. Thus the situation was tense on the country's employment levels.

Furthermore, foreign direct investment was also affected by these sanctions. Kromah (2007) highlighted that in 1994, foreign direct investment inflows in Zimbabwe amounted to US\$444,3million and by 2006 it had declined to US\$40million. Western companies were discouraged to operate in Zimbabwe resulting to shortages of foreign exchange which further perpetuated shortages of imported raw materials and accumulating payment arrears. Foreign currency shortages gave a huge blow on industries that relied upon imported inputs for its daily operations resulting in closure and retrenchments. The education, health and agricultural sector also declined. A decline in the major sectors of the economy resulted in high unemployment rates, limited health delivery services, decline in the education sector, a decrease in FDI and drying up of balance of payment support. By so doing, it crippled down the welfare of the general populace in Zimbabwe. This concurs well with Koffi Annan, the former United Nations Secretary General who reports that sanctions remain a brunt which hurt the majority of the ordinary people who were not the primary targets. Thus the undesirable effects of sanctions on the vulnerable groups in the societies have driven them to extend to the informal sector to revive their decent standards of living.

1.3.4 Operation Murambatsvina 2005

In July 2005 the government also embarked on a programme Operation Murambatsvina referred to as "Operation Restore Order" without warning. The programme started in Harare and spread throughout the country. Tibaijuka (2005) under UN special envoy reported that the programme was portrayed as designed to enforce bylaws to ban all forms of illegal activities in areas such as vending, prohibited structures as well as illegal cultivation. Homes, business premises and vending sites were destroyed and an estimated of 700,000 people in cities across the country lost their sources of livelihood. Afrobarometer (2006) highlighted that 2.7 million people were affected by the operation, a sign that the programme was controversial as it had negatively affected the sustainable livelihoods of many

urban dwellers. Masunungure and Braton (2006) points out that the programme is popularly known as “Operation Tsunami” because it had destroyed all the physical, economic and social resources of the poor which includes backyard sharks and unlawful industries.

The government –UN Rapid Assessment on Urban Displacements in Bulawayo, Harare, Mutare, Kariba and Victoria falls discovered that female headed families severely suffered the effects of Operation Murambatsvina as it reported that women /female headed families dominate and earn their income in the informal sector. Chances are high that female headed families look after orphans hence they were affected more. The reason behind Operation Murambatsvina according to Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum (2006) was to destroy the urban livelihoods of those who support the opposition party against the ruling party in urban centres. Thus the government was shortsighted and failed to consider the implications of the programme on the livelihoods of many poor urban dwellers. Studies have shown that the operation have led to the increase of the number of the internal displaced persons. There was a dramatic decline in access to health care, food, education, water and sanitation

Official government statistics indicated that 32,538 structures of small, micro and medium-size enterprises were demolished and an estimated of 97,614 lost their primary source of livelihood. As a result a large number of people were left unemployed and living below poverty datum line and those who had borrowed loans to start business and construct houses were left without any means of repaying their debts. To make matters worse, the economic structure had not recovered from the outcomes of ESAP, land reform programme and sanctions.

1.3.5 Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act Of 2008

The government also enacted on the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act in April 2008 aimed at reducing the foreign dominance over Zimbabwean economy so as to empower the underprivileged indigenous black Zimbabweans to fully participate in the main economic activities of the country and broaden the base of economy. Wilson (1990) defines indigenization as the increase of local participation in ownership of their resources or recognized entities and one of the most popular

measures of economically empowering the previously disadvantaged. The policy was a step forward to address and do away with colonial injustices that were prevailing in Zimbabwe whereby the colonizers were fully exploiting the physical, human and economic resources. This tally well with Anderson (2010) perception that indigenization of the economy in Zimbabwe is regarded as part of Third Chimurenga.

The Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act command that all foreign owned companies investing in Zimbabwe should give up 51% of their shareholdings to indigenous Zimbabweans with a net value of or above US\$500 000 (Shumba,2014). The 51 %t will be distributed as follows; 10 % will be allocated to the employees as part of their share ownership scheme, another 10 % will be directed to the local communities through community share ownership scheme, 15 % can be obtained by any indigenous Zimbabwean with financial capability and have enough resources to buy the shares, and the outstanding 16 % will be directed to the National Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Fund (NIEEF) (Watson, 2010).

This 51/49% policy had serious consequences on the economy as it discouraged foreign investment which in turn affects employment creation and economic growth. In the banking sector the capital inflows were also affected as the foreign investors began to disinvest from the country thus the country has become an unfavorable environment for investment destination .Furthermore, the way foreign owned companies were being forced to comply with the Indigenization Policy shows that the policy was a political approach rather than an economic programme aimed at empowering indigenous Zimbabweans (Murombo, 2010). Thus investors abandon the country when they face unfavorable business risks tied to political unsteadiness (Fatehi, 1994).

The policy crippled down the economy of Zimbabwe due to shortages of foreign-exchange as well as limited technological advancement. This situation has caused many companies to begin operating below capacity due to shortages of raw materials/inputs from other countries and exorbitant imports prices. The unstable economic environment created by the indigenization legislation increased the

closure of manufacturing companies particularly in Bulawayo, Kwekwe and Gweru (Ndlovu, 2011). Government involvement in the mining sector has also contributed to the closure of a number of mines and suspension of projects which weaken the capacity of the mining sector to continue acquiring the much needed foreign currency (Magure, 2013). The closure of companies' resulted in job losses and this led to a higher rate of unemployment and a decreased GDP for the people of Zimbabwe (Fatehi, 1994). Retrenchments and poverty levels were intensified forcing many people to resort to the informal sector which includes trade in secondhand clothes to enable them to earn a living as they could not afford jobs in the formal sector. Thus the policy has failed to deliver sustainable economic liberation for the current and future generations.

1.4 Institutional Structure behind Informal Sector Enterprises

The understanding that the informal sector has become the chief employer in Zimbabwe in the current economic situation where there is high unemployment rate and poverty has triggered the government to introduce several mechanisms through its Ministry of Industry and Commerce and later through the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises to cater for the informal traders in different activities. The formation of the Small Enterprises Development Corporation (SEDCO) in 1983 was meant to accommodate for the financial needs of informal economy activities. Informal sector activities were established all over the country though their operations were severely hindered by underfunding. Thus the renamed Small and Medium Enterprises Development Corporation (SMEDCO) in 2014 venture in as a development finance organization that promotes micro, small and medium enterprises through the disbursements of loans. According to Rukuni (2014) the ministry targets to provide essential business management training to encourage the Zimbabweans to venture into small business so as to produce income for their sustenance. Chidoko et al (2011) highlights that the existence of the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and organs such as Small Enterprises Development Corporation (SEDCO) demonstrate the importance of the informal sector in contributing to economic growth. The ministry also aims to support the informal traders through the creation of markets for

their products as well as links to other nations. Unfortunately, the institutional structure has not been effective in supporting the expansion of SMEs due to a number of factors that include limited availability of finance in microfinance institutions and banks, high cost of credit finance, limited access to infrastructure and technology, limited access to domestic, regional and international markets. However, the ministry seeks to promote the production of local products so as to boost exports and augment balance of payment.

The government also provides support for the informal sector through implementing a number of policies aimed at reducing constricted regulations so as to incorporate the new actors in the production and distribution of goods and services. Statutory Instrument 216 of 1994 of the Regional Town and Country Planning Act has effectively permitted the development and growth of non-residential activities in residential areas. Dr Anna Kajumalo Tibaijuka highlighted under UN special envoy that by 2004, the informal sector was estimated to have constituted for 40% of all forms of employment.

1.5 The Degree of Women Participation in the Informal Sector in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe women tend to dominate the informal economy prior to the 1980s, constituting 64% compared to only 25% in the formal sector (Government of Zimbabwe, 1991). A research conducted by Ndiweni (2014) as cited by (Dube, 2014) also reflects that women accounted for 67% of all micro-enterprises in 1991 and constituted 57% of the total informal sector employment. The percentage continued to increase especially during the period of structural adjustment programme and the fast track land reform programme due to limited jobs. Women dominance in the informal sector can also be attributed to the fact that women tend to have high levels of illiteracy, unskilled or semi-skilled thereby making them undesirable in the formal sector. This concurs with the notion highlighted by World Bank (1989) arguing that the informal sector provides important avenue of income generation and accumulation for women, who have traditionally been denied access to formal education and formal employment. Women's entry in the informal sector was also increased by their exclusion in

better positions in the formal sector as they are mostly allocated to underpaid and exploitative positions.

It is also noted that women engage in informal activities so as to complement the income of their spouses. Some females are the heads of the family by de-facto, divorce or death .Gumbo (2001) states that female headed households (widows, divorced) constituted 42 % of women traders in 1998. Hence from a gender perspective the reproductive role of women of taking care of the children will be increased as they will be performing the role of the father as well that of the mother at the same time. This means that women are a critical component of the livelihoods for both rural and urban households (Manganga, 2007). In Zvishavane, women prominently dominate the informal sector (especially secondhand clothes trading).

1.6 Trade in Secondhand Clothes in Zvishavane.

Zvishavane is a town located 90km away from Gweru in the Midlands Province. The town has a population of 45312 according to Zimstat 2012 census. Gold panning is the main economic activity within Zvishavane as the area is rich in minerals such as platinum, chrome , gold and asbestos .This is witnessed by the existence of big mine companies such as Sabi mine, Murowa Diamonds, Mimosa and Shabani mine among other small mining companies and illegal gold mining claims that surround the town. However, informal sector activities are also prominent in the town.

A larger number of people in Zvishavane are active in the informal sector to sustain their families. The informal sector in Zvishavane varies from production and some are involved in vending. Factors that gave rise to the informal sector in Zvishavane have to be noted from a broader perspective. Studies have shown that the area was not spared from the new millennium of experiencing the social, economic and political downturns that have negatively affected all economic sectors leading to an increase of poverty levels. Statistics gathered from Zvishavane Town council as articulated by the Welfare officer ,show that the informal sector constituted 1391 traders who are registered .He went on to separate them stating that traders in secondhand clothes comprised of 278; 363 from Mandava

structured flea markets and 400 from town markets,106 from three sections in Mandava tomatoes markets,108 selling tomatoes from Mandava wholesale market, 24 from Esrow market, 58 from Gweru road food market,30 from Bulawayo road and 24 from Machipisa though currently others are not active. Most of the people lost their jobs after the closure of Shabani mine which had employed a large number of people and this adversely affected their livelihoods as these people relied upon this mining company for their income. Retrenched workers included women in which some were the heads of the family.

It is during these hard times that women organized themselves into different cooperatives and engaged in informal activities for the purpose to generate income for the survival of their families. Of such activities is the trade in secondhand clothes whereby people buy bales of pre-owned clothes for both adults and children from as far as Mozambique. The nature of items they sell include skirts, trousers, shirts, jackets, shoes, bags as well as bedcovers. Women have larger share of participation although man are also involved. They operate from wide open spaces, road sides, pavements as well as from their residential areas. Most of them operate from Mandava market during the week and shift to open markets known as “*huya uhodhe*” during the weekends near Pick and Pay supermarket. Women preferred secondhand clothes trading indicating that the trade offers better returns comparing to other small items such as food stuffs.

1.7 Conclusion

In this chapter it can be traced that the informal sector in Zimbabwe proved to be a fundamental sector that had been adopted to reduce poverty and create employment for the majority of people who cannot secure employment in the formal sector. The situation was exacerbated when the government embarked on policies that were unfavorable for the development of the country. The introduction of ESAP, land reform programme, Operation Murambatsvina and the Indigenization Economic and Empowerment policy has a bearing on the livelihoods of the people at large. All of these can be attached to the fall of the economy since the attainment of independence. As noted earlier these

policies negatively change the social, economic and political spheres of the country. Based on the literature review, the economic hardships came to be the major contributing factor towards the development and growth of secondhand clothes trading activity in Zimbabwe. Hence, the development and growth of trade in secondhand clothes in Zimbabwe as part of the informal activity was as a result of the rapid increase of poverty levels, high inflation and high levels of unemployment. Furthermore, women dominate this trade but their contribution to the survival of many households has been ignored and this constitutes the purpose of this research.

CHAPTER 2

SECONDHAND CLOTHES TRADE AND WOMEN'S LIVELIHOODS IN ZVISHAVANE

2.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter explains how women in Zvishavane manage to sustain their families through the trade in secondhand clothes during the Zimbabwe's economic meltdown up to the present date. A number of jobless women and low income earners have resorted to this business as their most important source of livelihood. It has managed to uplift the lives of people facing the socio-economic downturns in Zimbabwe which has exacerbated level of poverty. The chapter shall give particular attention on the situational status of women before venturing in the business, the profile or characteristics of the respondents and the impacts of this trade on their livelihoods. The research outcomes presented herein are from the empirical research conducted in Zvishavane.

2.2 The profile and characteristics of women participating in secondhand clothes trading

Demographic information of women involved in secondhand clothes trading is important in order to understand the impact of this trade to the improvement of their livelihoods. Therefore this section shall provide the basic information of the participants involved in this activity which include age, level of education attained, marital status as well as household characteristics.

Table 1.1: Distribution of secondhand clothes traders by age

Age range	Frequency	Percentage
21-30	7	35%
31-40	9	45%
41-50	4	20%
Total	20	100

Source: Research findings

The table above shows the age range of secondhand clothes traders and a large number of sampled and interviewed aged between 31-40 years constituting 45% of the total respondents. Also women of age group of 21-30 constitute 35% whilst those of age group 41-50 constitute 20%. This trend indicates that young adults are the most active players in this trade.

Table 1.2: Distribution of secondhand clothes traders by marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	6	30%
Married	5	25%
Widowed	9	45%
Total	20	100

Source: Research findings

The statistics above shows that widows contribute a greater part in the trade amounting to 45 %. However, single women also dominate the trade with 30% followed by married women with 25%. The number of years in the trade varies as they engage at different times and at different places. This implies that this business is still luring many women for survival and development at household and community level. One of the widowed women aged 51 even noted that she has more than 20 years now in this business from the time her husband was still present and she is able to provide for all her family's needs and requirements from the sale of second hand clothes.

Table 1.3: Distribution of secondhand clothes traders by level of education attained

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	0	0
Secondary	15	75%
Tertiary	5	25%
Total	20	100

Source: Research findings

The table above shows the levels of education attained by traders of secondhand clothes with those attaining secondary education dominating the trade with 75%. None of the respondents have missed the primary level whilst a few have managed to make up to colleges and universities contributing 25%. The trend shows that the shortage of jobs in the formal sector has forced these women to divert to the informal sector considering the better outcomes at secondary level and those who have reached the tertiary level. A lady aged 27 also indicated that she managed to acquire better results at “O” level but unfortunately her mother who was a widow could not afford to finance her education. After a few years she got married and the husband was formerly employed at Shabane mine, which however closed her husband who was the bread winner got retrenched and thus she later engaged in this business to earn a living for her family. A 36 year old woman also stated that she acquired a certificate in Secretarial studies from the local colleges. One can conclude that the current bad economic situation is the main driver for these women to participate in this trade.

Table 1.4: Distribution of secondhand clothes traders by household size.

Household size	Frequency	Percentage
3-4	12	60%
5-6	5	25%
7-8	3	15%
Total	20	100

Source: Research findings

The sampled households had family members ranging from 3-8 and the average family size was 4 members whilst the minimum was 3 and the maximum was 8. A respondent who sell her clothes on a shade at Toddy shopping centre in Maglass Township, articulates that in her family she is the elder sister surviving with her two children who are still school goers. In addition she sends other six children of her late young sisters who reside in Mberengwa with the grandmother to school.

2.3 Place of operation

In this study the researcher gathered that most women traders do not have permanent trading areas. This means that they operate from their residential home, along road sides, door to door services as well as on pavements in busy street where there is a lot of movement of people. They also operate from any strategic open space where they can also easily locate a large number of customers. However, there are designated areas where traders are allowed to do their business without facing any harassment from the local authority officials. Mr Malumisa the Welfare officer from Zvishavane town council highlighted that

most traders operate from illegal sites but we as a council board we have created designated areas through our engineering department where secondhand traders can safely carry out their business and we do not allow the traders to be broadcasted everywhere around the town. He also added that only those who have gone through the correct procedure of the waiting list are mostly considered

There are a number of structures that have been constructed by the local authority in Machipisa and Mandava shopping centre to cater for those who sell food stuffs such as tomatoes, onions, vegetables. The local authority also goes on to designate other trading posts that are specifically meant for secondhand clothes trading only and these include Mupani mabhero vendors trading post along Gweru road as well at Chiedza hall near the council Health and Welfare department in Mandava. To create more convenient trading sites the council is in the process of gathering all secondhand clothes traders at one post which is along Masvingo road and they are preparing to install boreholes as well as toilets near the site.

The council also assists these sellers with materials as well as monitoring

activities and they are some vendors who are exempted from paying to the council considering as an incentive for their compliance with the local authority said Mr Malumisa”.

Those operating from illegal and legal places are obliged to pay a certain amount (fee) so as to continue doing their business without threats and torture from the council police. Mr Malumisa also added that

we began by charging them a \$1 per day of which they failed to provide then we decided to make it \$5 per week and again they failed to pay it highlighting that they are having low sales thus we finally came to the conclusion that we make it \$5 per month and failure to comply we remove that person and allocate someone in his or her position

Toilets and clean water sources are also available at these sites so as to maintain good sanitation and hygiene. Recently the trade has improved with the introduction of weekend secondhand clothes market popularly known as “*huya uhodhe*”, a site at an open space opposite Pick and Pay supermarket where the local authority have allowed the traders to trade during weekends at a fee of \$5 per day thus \$5 for Saturday and another \$5 for Sunday. This opportunity is only for those who are capable to pay the amount. The council police also commented that the business seems to be profitable because a large number of traders will be crowded at the site despite of the charges.



Figure 1 showing a trading post of secondhand clothing at Mupani mabhero vendors market along Gweru road.



Figure 2 shows the weekend secondhand clothes market known as huya uhodhe

2.4 Situation before engaging in Secondhand clothes trading.

The Zimbabwean economy has presented different conditions that have driven women to join the informal sector. There was an economic meltdown and an increase of poverty and unemployment

levels since the 1980s. There are a number of items that women could not manage to acquire before engaging in this activity. Most of the participants amounting to 70% indicated that sending their children to school was not easy for them considering this harsh economic environment. Their reasons vary as some argued that the retrenchment of their husbands from Shabani mine left them with nothing to depend on and another widow mentioned that taking care of the children after the death of her spouse was difficult for her such that her children dropped out of school. She could only manage to pay fees for those who were in primary school. She goes on to mention that for her, enabling her children to read and write was enough. Thus these women could not pay fees for their children as well as for the dependents thereby increasing school dropout rates. According to the Human Development Index, high literacy rate is an indicator of development and the attainment of effective human capital necessary for development to take place. Hence secondhand clothes trading became a better off mechanism through which they can respond to their challenges.

Food insecurity was also a challenge to some of the interviewed respondents were 50% of them being unable to provide adequate food for their families. Food security is also another crucial aspect of human development hence its absence also hinders the development of a country. It was highlighted that they could only afford two meals per day and the third meal was considered as luxury. This was based on the view that the income earned by their husbands was not enough to support the whole family thus women engaged in this trade to complement their husband salaries.

Of the interviewed respondents, a few of them mentioned that buying property and other assets was not a priority before venturing into the business. Using the little savings, sending their children to school, securing accommodation as well as providing food was only their priority. Before engaging in the business they could not buy assets such as residential stands and furnished the house. However after joining the business, she could manage to save the money from the business and other savings termed “mukando” which women do every month. In addition, 5% of the respondents mentioned that before engaging in the trade and being financially independent they were excluded from other

important family matters that include decision making. Thus this trade came as a tool that fosters the empowerment of women in the communities.

2.5 Reasons accounting for women entry in secondhand clothes trade

The dominant reasons for women's entrance in secondhand clothes trading comprised of both pull and push factors. Although the reasons varied, almost all the respondents articulated that the economic hardship was the main driver and the informal trading was the only option left out for the survival due to shortages of jobs in the formal sector.

Lack of formal employment has led to the absorption of many women in secondhand clothes trading in Zvishavane. A lady who specializes with selling secondhand shoes stated that

I managed to acquire a certificate of Secretariat from the local colleges hoping to find job in the formal sector so as to provide food at the table for my family after divorcing with my husband. Nevertheless, having been searching for employment for about two years in the formal sector nothing turned out for my good and I remained idle at home for some months . It was during this period that I decided to venture into second hand clothing trade after seeing many people surviving from selling secondhand clothes

This shows that secondhand clothes trading was the only alternative left for her to earn income for a living after failing to secure job in the formal sector

The need to supplement income from various activities also account for women's entrance in secondhand clothes trading. Another respondent highlighted that

after working for 20 years as a housemaid in Estlea at a certain house, my salary was insufficient to cater for my two children and other six dependents in Mberengwa. I engaged my boss asking for a salary increment and she claimed to have been facing a difficult time as well. She then later advice me to work on secondhand clothes trading during my off days. I start to operate at a small scale and improved the scale after realizing some profit in the trade. I sell a variety of items ranging from bedcovers, handbags as well as clothes.

This implies that secondhand clothes trading have become an imperative self-employment that has managed to mitigate many households from the vagaries of poverty through getting fast money.

Lack of qualifications to suit in the formal sector is also another reason mentioned among the respondents. Informal sector has managed to integrate and create jobs for both skilled and unskilled workers to earn a decent life. A 25-year-old lady responded that she had 3 O level subjects and could not secure a job in the formal sector and thus she engaged in this trade to fulfill her dreams and visions. The flexible nature of the business has enabled easy access with minimal capital, non-gendered and requires no educational qualification. This has attracted many women to venture into the business. To add more, retrenchment from the formal sector has also triggered the involvement of women in secondhand clothes trading as evidenced by three women who were once employed at Shabani mine as security officers and were retrenched in 2004 were also involved this trade for survival. They also noted that they ventured into the business with the hope that it would alleviate poverty and improve their standards of living. Most women engaged in this trade with proportion of 64 % of all the respondents have proven to be a high profit business in the history of the informal sector.

2.6 The positive impact/effects of secondhand clothes trading on women's livelihoods

Poverty among women has become a major issue especially in many developing countries. The situation has been worsened by the poor economic conditions which are not viable for the majority to earn a living. Livelihood diversification trend has been significantly acknowledged as individuals engage into different activities to sustain their households. Limited jobs available in the formal sector comes with low wages and as a result many people tend to flood the informal sector which includes secondhand clothes trading to maximize their profits as well as improving their standards of living. The study discovered more positive than negative gains as the trade has played a crucial role in easing economic hardships, reducing poverty and increasing welfare and human development in Zimbabwe.

❖ Employment creation

Job creation is one of the positive impacts brought by the selling of second hand clothes in women's livelihoods. This concurs with the study carried out by Velia,etal(2006)when he indicated that most

of his respondents commented more on the fact that lack of employment and hard economic conditions prevailing in the country have aroused their zeal for them to join the business of second hand clothes trading. This tally well with some of the respondents who reported that they had no formal jobs before joining the trade. This explain that the need for jobs and survival motives have encouraged women to join this sector and had managed to reduce unemployment which is an indicator of underdevelopment as well as poverty alleviation. This meant that the decline of poverty can also be credited to the increased number of people engaged in the informal sector activities. The unemployed are also given the opportunity to start their own business in the form of secondhand clothes trading and offered the opportunity to women who were deprived in the formal sector to have jobs. The business offers greater advantage to the majority especially those who are not educated as it requires no academic qualifications. Thus women found it better than to remain idle and jobless.

❖ **Income generation**

The involvement of women in this trade saw the improvement in income generation among most respondent households comparing prior to the period before they engaged in the business. The trade significantly provided the source of income to several women hence can be credited as a livelihood strategy as well as enabling women to own the means of production and reduce their dependence on men. With the unsteady and failing macroeconomic conditions in Zimbabwe, real incomes have been declining since the 1990s driving most people in the formal employment or jobless to seek supplementary or new sources of income. Almost 50 % of the respondents claimed to be receiving good profits from this business compared to the low wages from the formal sector. Another respondent who operate from the road side way noted that she imports a bale from Mozambique for \$130 or \$100 depending with the quality of clothes and after a week of selling those clothes she estimated to have received \$200 profit. Another respondent claimed to have bought a bale of shoes for \$600 and in every week she claims to be receiving more than \$200 cash in hand excluding the money she used during the course of selling. This indicates that trade in secondhand clothes offers

hope for the poor women to survive in this crumbling environment. It also enables them to adequately sustain the family expenses and support other dependents such as siblings and parents in rural areas. Many respondents appreciated their incomes and highlighted that they have positively improved their lives. Through improved women are able to gather savings and continue to invest and reinvest in the business. The trade does not only improve household incomes but it also generates foreign currency which is fundamental for the country.

❖ **Education**

As far as education is concerned, income from secondhand clothes trading has made life easier for women to carry the burden to educate their children as most women were enabled to send their children and dependants to school. One respondent reported that ever since she joined the business she could afford to send her two children to school, pay off school fees arrears and support other six children of her late sisters. Some even indicated that they were managing to send their children to tertiary colleges and universities within and outside Zimbabwe. This served as a stepping stone towards attaining effective human capital development which is crucial for development to take shape through reducing school dropout rates. Out of the total number of children who were said to be supported about 10 % had not attained school going age. It is of great importance to note that in the previous sections women highlighted that they could not send their children to school due to inadequate funds.

❖ **Food security**

Household food security is one of the major indicators of benefits of secondhand clothes trading. From a gender perspective, the provision of food is a major concern for many women as they directly bear the reproductive and productive burdens. Many respondents shared that they could afford one meal or two meals per day before engaging in the trade. However, the information from the research indicated that 70 % of the respondents could afford three meals per day whilst 15% only afford two meals per day. This varies due to the incomes they get from this trade. Some indicated that they used

to eat food for the sake of eating but now they could not afford a balanced diet which is a key in promoting the health standards thereby reducing mortality rates. A healthy population also reduces the Governments' public spending on public health which in the long run will result in reduced budget deficits in government thereby saving a lot of much needed revenue.

❖ **Socio-economic empowerment of women**

Women empowerment cannot be sidelined when it comes to their involvement in this business as it offers them the authority or opportunity to control their future and self-actualization. Their confidence and freedom is increased through controlling their own finances. It is also crucial to note that economic liberty has allowed women to have a voice in the family matters or decisions. From the interviews a 43 year old lady stated that

my in-laws could sideline me whenever they wanted to discuss issues that pertain to the family but instead they invite some of the younger daughter-in-laws who were financially stable yet I was the elder daughter-in-law in the family

This is of great importance to the socio-economic livelihood of women in the sense that they become self-reliant and cases of physical abuse will be minimized as women will be empowered both socially and economically as independent candidates. Furthermore, their participation in the public sphere together with men had a greater impact to do away with the manipulation coming from their counterparts. This concurs with the Marxist economist feminist theory which advanced that women should be economically empowered to avoid all forms of oppression and exploitation in the society. The theory also challenges the patriarchal system where man exercise power over women and fights for equality between women and men in all spheres of life. Women participation in secondhand clothes trading has resulted to their empowerment economically and some of the respondents also commented that they can now use their money on their own judgment or way without the interference of men. This has become a fundamental step towards the eradication of the patriarchal system (male dominants over women) because women are afforded the chance to operate in their own way without limitations and building self confidence. Thus women are playing an integral part in complementing

other development efforts as articulated by Women in Development approach through their participation in various economic activities which improves their status in societies.

❖ **Assets accrued**

The participation of women in secondhand clothes trading has enabled them to purchase movable and immovable assets which include fridges, stoves, sofas, wardrobes, beds, cars and residential stands respectively. Among the respondents some reported that

we managed to buy a residential stand in Isaiah Park and some in Highlands Lot 4, furnished the house from bedrooms to kitchen and others bought cars whilst others mentioned that they are ready to buy a car out of this business of selling mabhero

However, only a few have not acquired a lot because they have just ventured into the business recently but from the look of things they are observing that great things might and huge profits might come out of the business measuring the performance so far. Investment in property or assets shows that the respondents have satisfied their basic needs and range from 2 to 90 %.

Table1.5: Assets acquired by women.

Assets	Percentage of women who managed to acquire	Type and location
Cars	3%	Fun cargo which is now operating as taxi
Furniture	90%	Televisions (plasma), beds, 4 plate stoves, kitchen chairs, sofas, radio, wardrobe, fridge
Property (farm land ,cattle etc)	2%	Four miles, Mundamurefu farms
Residential stands	5%	Isaiah park, Highlands Lot 4 x 3

Source: Research findings

❖ Health standards

Health is an imperative variable of development both at micro and macro level. Many respondents accounting to 90% reported that they are affording to take care of the family health services through the income generated from the trade. Only one respondent shared that she fell sick periodically and has never taken any of her children to the hospital, but she is able to cater for her health services. However, some highlight that they could not afford expensive health care such as operations due to low incomes hence only affording the basic medical health service. None of them was part of any medical aid schemes due to lack of required documents and other requirements such as pay slips. As noted by another respondent

we are asked to pay the rent of \$5 per week so that we could operate from the road side ways but we denied access to the public toilets by the local authority officers

This scenario forces these women to resort to the nearby bushes to relieve their selves thereby exposing them to diseases such as cholera and diarrhea.

2.7 Negative impacts

Although secondhand clothes trading has managed to bring about positive effects to the livelihoods of women in Zvishavane, it is also important to note that the trade has posed detrimental negative effects which undermine the survival of local industries as well as the environment which further contribute to underdevelopment of the country and in turn heavily affects the livelihood strategies of other citizens.

The secondhand clothes trading has adversely increased unfair competition on the local textile or clothing industries which lowered the investment in the local economy hence weakening the private sector development. The products are cheap and affordable ranging from as little as 0.50 cents going forward for example a blouse cost \$ 3 against \$25 from big shops like Jet and Edgars. These

favorable prices have successfully increased competition as it accommodates the elite, middle as well as the low income people. To add more, the local business incurs higher basic production costs and their incapability to escape tax payment makes it difficult for them to compete with informal traders who do not pay taxes to the government. This entails that the formal traders carry the entirety of the tax burden which shrink their incentives to invest in the formal economy. Nyoni et al (2010) reported that there is a growing concern in the clothing sector as a result of the continuous growth in the secondhand clothes market and unlawful imports from within the SADC region.

The proliferation of secondhand clothes has crippled the textile and the thriving clothing industry in Zvishavane leading to the decrease in market share of locally manufactured goods. The Association of Cotton Value Adders of Zimbabwe (ACVAZ) reported that there are 64 million tones of secondhand clothes from overseas waiting to be dumped in Africa. Generally it has been noted that the clothing industry in Zimbabwe has crumbled due to cheap imports that have flooded the markets. Notably three out of four Power Sales (a clothing company) which were operating in Zvishavane were closed and also Nyore Nyore Zimbabwe Furniture Company which was also sell clothes was closed. This explains that many clothing companies have continued to go down due to high cost of production, the entry of cheap clothing and fabrics. The closure of such companies results to a number of people employed in the sector to lose their jobs. Of importance the legislation that bans the importation of secondhand clothes was passed though it was ineffectively implemented and the approach has amplified smuggling through the country's leaky borders. The concern on the ineffectiveness of the legislation on of secondhand clothes was also questioned by the Cotton to Clothing Indaba. According to the financial gazette published on 11 November 2016, the Minister of Industry and Commerce, Mike Bimha points out that secondhand clothes should be banned so as to protect the local industries and permitted only in the event of the gap between the local supply and the local demand. Thus the government should effectively implement legislations that are viable to control the influx of secondhand clothes.

It has been also noted that a lot amount of money has been lost due to unpaid customs duties at the border posts as many traders import their bales through smuggling. More so, secondhand clothes trading business is not registered thereby escaping the payment of tax. This undermines the collection of government revenue and budget deficit by evading taxation. Tax collection is important in balancing the gross domestic product and the gross national product of the country as well as facilitating the development of public sector services. This enables the country to make further public investments in production industries and infrastructural development which is crucial to facilitate trade and boost its economy. Clothes are being smuggled into the country where they enter into the country illegally and have become the major concern among officials from the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA). It is also those traders that skip the correct procedures at border posts who pose unfair competition prices to the local markets because would have not incurred any extra costs. By so doing this deprived the government to acquire needed revenue from them hence undermining the government capitals which could have been used to reduce poverty among urban dwellers through formulating and implementation of viable poverty alleviation programmes and Zvishavane was not spared.

The fact that the trade is not registered on the national economy it undermine the effective formulation of macroeconomic and development policies. The absence of recorded statistics limits the implementation and monitoring of domestic, regional and international trade policies. Secondhand clothes sometimes increase risks of the spread of diseases such as skin diseases thereby undermining the health standards of people. This is one of the reasons why goods must pass through inspection at border posts to avoid such eventualities. Also the widespread of secondhand clothes traders have occupied some of the spaces that were supposed to be used for development purposes .For instance

the council intend to construct a bus terminus along Masvingo road to maintain order in the town but due to the broadcasting of secondhand clothes traders everywhere we have to establish a trading post for secondhand clothes traders, highlighted the Welfare officer of Zvishavane town council.

The local authority was also complaining that secondhand clothes traders and other vendors in general are chasing away greater opportunities that could have been opened for them to invest. From an interview with the Welfare officer from Zvishavane town council mentioned that

so many people who wanted to open big shops and had the potential to pay more money from the licenses withdraw back in fear of the inevitable growing of secondhand clothes traders

This undermines the collection of council revenue as these big shops tend to pay more money to the council than vendors. It was mentioned that vendors consist of the poor and vulnerable hence the council charge them with lenience with the aim to assist them to earn a living. It was also highlighted that despite charging them low rents, many vendors are always in arrears. Thus it affects the finances required for other developmental purposes.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has offered an understanding of trade in secondhand clothes as a livelihood strategy for women to escape the brunt of poverty. Analysis have shown that a number of households have been sustained by this trade hence improving their standards of living compared to the situation before joining the business. Income flows was increased which enabled women to cater for their children's education, provision of food, accommodation to mention a few. Thus women participation in the secondhand clothes trading is a solution to various developmental challenges. Although women witness several benefits from this trade, they also face numerous challenges that will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

THE SUSTAINABILITY OF TRADE IN SECONDHAND CLOTHES IN ZIMBABWE

3.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter profiles different challenges faced by women in secondhand clothes trading. These include harassment from the local authority officers, exposure to sexual abuse at the border posts by the border officers, high transport costs to ferry their goods to and from the markets, limited capital to boost their business, high interests rate charged by micro-finance institutions and low demand of their goods. Possible solutions were suggested so as to improve the business operations through the local authority interventions such as the provision of affordable market places as well as affordable rental fees and loan facilities to start-up and boosting their business.

3.2 Challenges being faced by women in secondhand clothes trading

It can be concluded that secondhand clothes trading have much probability to lighten urban poverty as well as creation of employment. However, a number of constraints limit the growth of this business. These challenges vary depending with the scale of operation as well as the place of operation.

❖ Limited capital for growth

Limited capital for growth is one of the major problems mentioned by the respondents thereby expansion of this business is limited. This is attributed to late/delayed payment mainly by those customers who purchase on credit. One of the respondents reported that

I sold my clothes on credit to a number of my church mates as well as my neighbors in January 2018 but until April 2018 they haven't make any payment. Whenever I do follow ups, I gradually become their enemy and this has strongly disrupted my social relations with other members in the society

The selling prices are also subject to negotiations as a result traders tend to reduce prices in order to suit the customers' needs. By so doing, traders are likely to receive low returns leading to insufficient capital flows. To add more, most informal traders have limited access to banking services because they lack appropriate documents and collaterals required by micro institutions for one to access a loan. Forms of collateral security includes pay slips which most second hand clothes traders do lack as they are not formally employed. Chidoko et al (2011) advanced that the government and other stakeholders in the economy have begun to realize the significance of the sector but there is little assistance for many small businesses hence some are operating at below capacity. Demo (2012) in his study in Gweru also highlighted that financial institutions viewed the informal traders with contempt. From an interview, a secondhand clothes trader also commented that micro finance institutions offer small loans to individuals suitable for consumption which limit our potential to engage into big investment. It is due to these reasons that made women engage in women saving clubs known as "mukando" so as to boost their financial capacity for business growth.

❖ **Corrupt tendencies by the local authority officers.**

Town council officials are also blamed for disturbing the operation of secondhand clothes traders in Zimbabwe. The council police chase out traders by use of harassment and torture which has become the business of the day. Council officials coerce traders to pay a fee (rental) so as to allow them to operate in illegal open spaces. These unregulated rentals vary from site to site. Those operating from designated areas are privileged to pay less and regulated rentals whilst those operating from illegal posts are subject to high and unregulated illegal or underhand charges. A secondhand clothes trader who operates under a tree near Maglass public toilets reported that

the council officials require me to pay \$5 rent every week yet they denied me access to those toilets. To me \$5 is too much considering the low performance of the business especially during the rainy seasons yet the council police did not accept my grievances

Another trader who operates under a shade also added that

during rainy season she experience great losses in the event that her

clothes get wet and they develop moulds. Eventually the clothes became unmarketable and unprofitable

This concurs well with Demo (2012) in his research, where some of the respondents argue that weather conditions affect their operations and those operating at the outskirts of the designated areas comment of hardships due to their vulnerability to rain, sun and dust. This is very correct and valid but it seems to be a mix-up with tendencies of officials. Those officers who put on civilian clothes clash with traders and catch them uninformed. Becker (2004) states that the absence of adequate labour legislation and protection has caused traders to face numerous risks due to lack of security and protection. This results in a tense environment which makes life difficult for traders to operate as their goods are confiscated and sometimes they are charged fees which are not illegal /unregulated after being caught at the wrong side. Probably one can conclude that the council officials are using the money they collect from unregulated fees for their own personal interests.

❖ **High interest rates charged by the micro finance institutions**

Micro-finance institutions had played a crucial role in assisting women enterprises in Zimbabwe so as to capitalize their businesses through loans facilities. Nonetheless these institutions are blamed for charging high interest rates on short term loans trapping people into debt crisis. K.C.I and Inclusive are some of the micro-finance institutions that provide informal traders with loans in Zvishavane.

Micro-finance institutions charge 20% interest per month which is higher thereby limiting our profits. Thanks be to the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe which mandated that the interest rates should be reduced to 10 % said another responded.

Some respondents advanced that there are failing to pay back their loans considering the low sales. Hence many women tend to avoid these micro-finance institutions as they complain to be pulled into debt trap.

❖ **Mode of transport**

The traders also complain about the public transport they hire to ferry their goods to and from the market places. It was reported that owners are charging high costs that negatively affect their profits.

Many respondent highlights that the charges are too much that they might save and use the money on other family expenses. They also advanced that taxi drivers charge them \$5 for one trip from Mandava to town or Cottage Maglass to town. This means per day they are losing \$10 to cover transport cost. The situation is worsened during the weekends where they are also obliged to pay a fee of \$5 to operate on the site recommended for the weekend markets. All these issues are stumbling blocks towards the improvement of secondhand clothes trading.

❖ **Low demand of goods and services.**

Low demand of goods and services came as a result of lack of customers which arouse from stiff competition imposed by other traders who operate without licenses and with flexible prices since they can avoid rental fees. Dube (2012) in his study in Zengeza 4 he discovered that majority of women engaged either in secondhand clothes trading and petty food stuffs due to many factors, unemployment and retrenchments being the major drive. However, the influx of women in the same activity compromise the flow of income and traders tend to receive low incomes which limit their capability to provide the day to day expenses of their lives. It is of importance to note that these traders are not spaced rather they operate from the same sphere of influence which means the small money received from the customers will be shared among many traders. One respondent articulated that competition increased in the event that you have old stock bale while others will be opening new stock of bales and customers tend to like the new stock bales which contains nicer and variety fashion style according to their taste and preference. Hence despite the efforts invested by these women to improve their living standards, progress is hindered by the growing population of secondhand clothes traders.

❖ **Lack of permanent trading sites**

Trading posts for secondhand clothes is also a challenge being faced by these traders. The traders are broadcasted everywhere and for every 500 metres there is a secondhand clothes trader especially in

urban areas .This means that this vending system of secondhand clothes in urban areas has become inevitable. Some are allocated in peripheral areas and others at open spaces where they are no hygiene and sanitation structures such as toilets and clean water supplies /boreholes. These environments expose traders to health risks as well as depreciation of the clothes value due to bad weather conditions such as rain and also overstaying on the market. This increase the risk of earning little income as these adverse weather conditions affect the quality of clothes on the market.

❖ **Lack of skills and knowledge**

The entry requirements of the business are flexible in that they accommodate women who were once deprived access education due to different societal beliefs. There are no technical and entrepreneurial skills that are needed to start up and anyone can organize to start up with the assistance from those who have already begun the trade. Ngundu (2010) noted that there are high levels of illiterate, poor education, training and high proportion of female employees in this business. They lack accounting and managerial skills so much so that they do not keep records. Chidoko et al (2011) pointed out that traders at times rely on their memory for purposes of business records and relying on memory as an alternative to written records has the biggest drawback of forgetting. This explains how some respondents are failing in business as well as unable to implement innovative ideas geared to boost the growth of the business. In as much as they get loans from various micro institutions to boost their business, traders sometimes lack financial knowledge on the proper use of loans.

❖ **Physical and sexual abuse**

Women involved in secondhand clothes trading are considered to be highly vulnerable to physical and sexual harassment or abuse. Abuse emanates both from trading sites and also from border posts where they struggle to import their bales into the country. Many traders respond to smuggle their goods due to high import rates charged at border post. One respondent indicated that

due to struggles to import my goods, I pay an agent who usually imports goods on our behalf popularly known as “malaicha” .At one point in time he approached

me to engage in a sexual activity with him so as to reduce the importation costs.

This scenario proved to expose these women to infections such as STIs and HIV/AIDS. At the trading posts as well women are prone to sexual harassment by customers and law enforcement officers. Some women are trapped in these sexual activities with these officers so as to escape from tax payment. Failure to pay tax or rentals traders attracts physical abuse as well. Hence this undermines the dignity of women and their self-esteem.

3.3 Possible solutions

Poverty has become a serious problematic issue among many societies in Zimbabwe and various individuals have extended their abilities to other means (informal sector) in order to deal with this problem. The informal sector is there to stay in the country due to the existence of mass urban poverty (Dhemba, 1999). For the past decades the situation was exacerbated by the economic hardships. However, the government as well as the local authorities is fighting tirelessly to distract the operation of secondhand clothes traders owing to the limited of formal employment in Zimbabwe. This section therefore seeks to discuss suggested solutions that could be adopted by the local authority as well as the government to address the concerns of the secondhand clothes traders in Zimbabwe.

The local authority should accept the activity of secondhand clothes trading as a response mechanism adopted by the poor urban dwellers to respond to the issues of poverty, unemployment and inflation. This can be achieved by creating a conducive environment where they can operate together with the formal economy. Issuing of trading permits and licenses allows the smooth functioning of this business. The local authority should also provide proper structures to enable secondhand trading during the rainy season. To add more, the local authority should ensure transparency and accounting through issuing appropriate legal and frameworks that support secondhand clothes trading activity. Mupedziswa (1999) argues that some legislation and by-laws are detrimental to the development of the informal sector. This will enable these traders to maximize their profits thereby reducing poverty through operating at their full capacity hence the improvement in their standards of living. For

instance in Zimbabwe during the late months of 2017 until now there was the skyrocketing of food prices and other commodities thus high income flows will also assist traders to afford basic needs required for the survival of the family as well the extended dependants.

The government should also reduce the rates of customs and excise duties at border posts so as to minimize the smuggling of goods into the country. Traders tend to complain about the payment of high custom duties at border which negatively affect their profits thus they resort to smuggling to reduce costs. Reducing duty cost will increase the collection of the government revenue, statistics and information relevant to the planning and formulating of national development policies. It will also inform the government about the GDP and GNP performance of the country which also assist in policy formulation. Furthermore, cases of bribery and corruption will be reduced resulting to better earnings to the traders.

Micro-finance institutions should also revise their terms and conditions so as to increase to the marginalized poor people to access credit facilities. Micro finance should provide long term loans so as to give enough time for the creditor to gather and payback the money and also realize profitability. To add on, banks should encourage inclusiveness of the marginalized through flexible collateral security requirements. Women are over represented among the marginalized and perform both reproductive and productive roles yet they lack collaterals. Hence, the services should be gender sensitive in implementation thereby encouraging the poor to venture into business.

The government has to formalize the informal sector and work together with the relevant stakeholders to integrate secondhand clothes trading as a developmental tool in which it transform the social and economic livelihoods of poor citizens in the country .This will enable these traders to contribute to the national fiscal. Furthermore given that the poor dominate this trade, the government should closely work with other regional bodies such as SADC to address the sustainable development goal of poverty reduction. Poverty reduction is the first crucial goal among other sustainable development goals which aims to end poverty in all its forms everywhere through increasing access to adequate

food ,clean water and sanitation thus according to UNDP. Many are living in anguish poverty and according to UNDP 80% are living in extreme poverty in South Asia and Sub-Saharan countries. To add more, the government should create more jobs in the formal sector through reviving the industries so as to ensure better living standards .Thus poverty reduction policies should be a major concern.

Micro finance institutions should also offer entrepreneurial skills training to impart knowledge to the business entrepreneurs. They should educate traders on financial management and accounting, record keeping, business plan drafting, statistical decision making in business choices and risk management skills. This will enable clients to use the loans efficiently as well as paying back their loans on time. As a result proper management of funds increases the generation of income. Government should also continue to educate the people so as to improve inclusiveness in the business arena .Dhemba (1999) states that the informal Sector Training and Resource Network formed in Masvingo, is a brain child of a bilateral agreement between Zimbabwe and Germany.

3.4 Conclusion

Traders of secondhand clothes have faced a number of challenges that negatively affect their operations. These undermine their efforts to respond to the effect of poverty in their respective households. The traders are receiving low profits as a result of the challenges they are facing which further compromises their access to acquire basic needs such as food security, accommodation, health services and education required for an improved livelihood. Some of the challenges encountered by secondhand clothes traders include the corrupt tendencies of the local authority officers, limited capital for growth, high interests rate charged by micro finance institutions, physical and sexual abuse to just mention a few. However a number of recommendations were brought forward to address the plight of traders thus the government should take a step further to formalize the informal sector, the government should also reduce high rates of custom and excise duties at the border post, micro finance institutions should reduce high interest rates with flexible long payment term, the local authority also should provide more improved structures for these traders to operate as well as to craft more friendly regulations and frameworks that support this activity as mentioned in this section above.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The main aim of the study was to examine the impact of trade in secondhand clothes in improving the sustainable livelihoods of women in Zvishavane. The research has done justice to bring out an understanding on the growth and expansion of secondhand clothes trade since the late 1980s up to the present date in Zimbabwe. Secondhand clothes trading have become a popular activity nationwide owing to its role of alleviating poverty as well as creating employment to those who cannot access employment in the formal sector. Employment creation offers women the opportunity to effectively play their care giver role through the provision of basic necessities in their respective households. The research discovered that women are the main active participants or players in the secondhand clothes trade due to a number of reasons summarize some. The secondhand clothes trading have also offers hope and an escape route to all jobless urban and rural dwellers who could not occupy jobs in the formal sector.

It is important to note that it was during the era of economic meltdown that saw the development and growth of secondhand clothes trading in Zimbabwe as a whole. Implementation of unfavorable development policies threatens the survival the majority of Zimbabwe. These policies include the adoption of ESAP of 1991, the Fast Track Land reform Programme (2000) which came with a curse of attracting sanctions from the West, Operation Murambatsvina as well as the Indigenization and Economic empowerment policy. These policies gave a huge blow on the Zimbabwean economy as their outcomes could not support a viable economy thereby affecting the vulnerable groups which include women as well as the working class. Retrenchments, high rates of inflation and an increase of poverty levels were witnessed nationwide.

Many people resorted to other economic activities outside the formal sector and thus there was a progressive increase of the informal sector which encompasses trade in secondhand clothes. The business has low entry barriers and is gender sensitive. This trade sprouts to be a crucial income generating activity as the majority has lost their jobs, receiving low wages and poor salaries. Some

took it as a mechanism from whence they can earn a living whilst others invest their low wages to supplement their incomes. Hence the formal and informal sector co-exists in the same particular economy. As revealed by this research, there are several goods and services women could not access before venturing in this trade but was made easily accessible and affordable from the income generated in this business. From the research findings, women could now afford to buy assets, send children at school, provide food, health services, accommodation for both their households and extended families. This meant that other complementary mechanisms are to be adopted directed to urban poor households so as to reduce urban poverty. It can never be doubted that trade in secondhand clothes played a significant role to deal with many developmental challenges.

Despite the prevalence of a number of challenges, the study had demonstrated trade in secondhand clothes plays a fundamental role to the survival of the majority of women in Zvishavane who have been affected by the economic meltdown. Women in the trade face various challenges such as undercapitalization to boost their business, lack of proper structured trading posts, harassment and torture from the local authority officers, lack of skills and knowledge to mention a few. However, numerous measures were suggested to improve or counter the problems being faced by women in the trade. The researcher together with participants suggested that the relevant stakeholders, local authority and the government should implement regulations and frameworks that are user friendly to support the operation of this activity and of importance micro finance institutions should also revise their lending policies in terms of interests, so as to comprehend the full developmental potential of this trade and involvement of women in particular. Hence while people are struggling to survive, the majority have demonstrated qualities of resourcefulness and innovation than just being passive victims of the Zimbabwean crisis.

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5.1 APPENDICES

Questionnaire guide for women participating secondhand clothes trading

My name is Forgiveness Ndinda, a student who is currently studying Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies Honors degree at Midlands State University. I am undertaking a research on how the trade in secondhand clothes has impacted the livelihoods of women in Zvishavane as part of the programme requirement.

Your co-operation in this matter will be highly appreciated and the findings will be only for academic purposes.

Instructions

- Please answer all questions
- Tick appropriate box where applicable.

- 1) Age range 21-30..... 31-40 41-50.....
- 2) Marital status..... Marriedsingle
- 3) If single, are you the head of the house? YES..... NO.....
- 4) Level of education attained PrimarySecondarytertiary
.....
- 5) Number of children or dependants do you look after?
- 6) How many are school goers.....
- 7) Period of years employed in the business.....
- 8) Source of income before joining the business formally employed..... Not employed.....
- 9) What motivate you to join the business
.....
.....
.....
- 10) Where did you get the starting capital
.....
.....
- 11) In what way has the business helped you to earn a living
.....
.....
.....
- 12) What are your average profits per day.....week.....month..... no idea
.....
- 13) What are your achievements at household have you acquired from the business.....
.....
- 14) What kind of environment do you operate from
.....
- 15) What are the challenges you are facing as traders

.....

16) What are the solutions have you put in place to address the challenges

.....

17) What help do you require from the local council and the government?

.....

18) Do you have other sources of income.....

19) Do you manage to take your children or dependants to hospital? YES.....NO.....

20) How many meals do you afford a day?

5.2 INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What was your source of income before engaging in the trade?
2. What motivated you to venture in the trade?
3. How does the economic meltdown affect your life?
4. What were the strategies you use to fight the hardships?
5. What are the benefits of engaging in secondhand trading?
6. What have you managed to gain since you started selling?
7. What are other sources of livelihood besides secondhand clothes trading?
8. What are the challenges are you facing as well as from the environment you are operating from?
9. How did you think the government/town council can help?