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THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECT OFCOVID-19 ON HOUSEHOLDS IN EPWORTH, HARARE

Memory Tinotenda Mashatise (2086487)

Abstract

This research report explores how COVID-19 impacted households on a socioeconomic level. Epworth, a peri-urban suburb of Harare, was the study's research location. This study focuses on the Southern African context, where social distancing and lockdowns implemented by governments in order to curb the spread ofthe COVID-19 pandemic in the year(s) 2020, 2021, as well as 2022. Most specifically,the government of Zimbabwe, being the government, this study focuses on implemented measures that had persistent negative socioeconomic effect on households by disrupting livelihoods, businesses, and other sources of income. Sucheffects were not only experienced during COVID-19, but also in the after of the pandemic. *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* was utilized as a theoretical foundation to frame the research in examining how the COVID-19 epidemic affected Epworth households. The premise of *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* theory emphasizes the value of human needs and how implemented regulations led to scenarios where citizens lost opportunities for economic survival and stability for their individual and households' material well-being. Consequently, such a crucial point is well placed within Maslow's identified need for safety, and security. Literature reviewed specified that the weakened economy and social problems in Zimbabwe, such as unemployment, poverty, inadequate healthcare, and a lack of supplies for COVID-19 treatment, predominantly exacerbated the pandemic's adverse effects. Semi- structured interviews with 15 breadwinners in Epworth aged 18 to 64 were used for qualitative research. After interview transcription, the data was examined through thematic analysis. The findings of the research demonstrated the need for better access to essential services in the sense that the majority of individuals experienced restricted access to such services as a result of implemented lockdowns. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic's detrimental effects on people's freedom of association, mobility, people began adopting strategies including returning to live with relatives and lowering expenses. Furthermore, self-employed and employed people were found to have been severely affected by the outbreak of the pandemic. To support youth, notably breadwinners for children whose parents lost their lives and jobs due to COVID-19 effects, It is recommended that that the business sector and government authorities ought to create economic opportunities. Lastly, it is

recommended that breadwinners diversify their sources of income.

Key Terms:

COVID-19; Vulnerable community; Households; Labour pools; Marginal urban spaces; Unemployment; Poverty; Breadwinner; Epworth.

Declaration

I, Memory Tinotenda Mashatise student number (2086487), am a registered Masters' student in the academic year 2023/2024. This research report is submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Management (economics and development in the field of Management.
I hereby honestly declare the following:

I certify that the work I have completed for the aforementioned course is all my own. I have referenced other people's ideas and opinions in accordance with the required referencing style.
I am aware that it is improper to use someone else's work without that person's consent or without giving credit to the original author. I am aware that if it becomes apparent that this is not my original work or that I have not properly credited the source of any concepts, ideas or words in my writing, the Universityof the Witwatersrand may institute disciplinary steps against me.

24 October 2024 Signature: M.T.M

Memory Tinotenda Mashatise

Dedication

I dedicate this research report to myself as an embodiment of my research skills, resilience, as well as unwavering enthusiasm for lifelong learning. Apart from that, I want to express my gratitude for this research to every one of my family, colleagues, relatives, and close companions who shown me support, knowing that postgraduate studies can at times give one stressful moment, but encouraged me until completion.

M.T.M

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As I look back and reflect on the research process and what it took for me to get to this point of finalisation and submission, I would like to acknowledge, and recognise the support, motivation, and encouragement of all who were with me throughout the research journey as follows:

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- Professor Pundy Pillay, my research supervisor, I appreciate your guidance, and critical criticisms. Above all, I would like to thank you for your enthusiasm for this research focus area and commitment to me as your student.
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- I am grateful for the sacrifices, love, and support provided by my family, in particular my partner Panda.

List of Abbreviations

COVID-19	Corona Virus
CRP	COVID-19 Response Project
EU	European Union
FAO	Food Allied Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MERS-CoV	Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PSTD	post-traumatic stress disorder
R&D	Research and Development
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
TA	Thematic Analysis
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic proved to be an alarming disruption worldwide, and most governments panicked and began determining measures for mitigating the virus's effects while simultaneously attempting to safeguard economies that had been established throughout years. The body known as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) asserted that the coronavirus (COVID-19) widespread not only caused severe suffering among populations but also economic instability at a global level (OECD, 2020).

As reported by Gennaro et al. (2020), the pandemic constituted an increasing tragedy, specifically in countries such as the Unites States (US), China, Italy, as well as Iran. Each of these nations experienced impacts in a number of ways, primarily in areas such as the social, economic, health and other spheres of society. Similarly, another author, Ozili (2020) points out that the COVID-19 epidemic had an effect on the world's financial system, with repercussions reaching poorest African nations.

In addition, the pandemic's harm extended throughout the African continent, and Zimbabwe could not be immune to such harm. Despite the fact that several governments in the African continent put in place solid measures including isolation (quarantine), social distancing, along with lockdown protocols to tackle the vast transmission of COVID-19 among people, their medical systems had already been at higher rates of failure when the pandemic emerged, resulting in a devastating economic downturn.

Amongst the World Trade Organisation (WTO)'s projections, it reckoned that the COVID-19 pandemic would bring down international trade to around 32% for the year 2020 (Asudani, Dudhani, & Lachhwani, 2020, p. 158). For the contextual purposes regarding such projections by the WTO, it is imperative to note that COVID-19 caused an array of effects on the global economy, encompassing distribution networks, manufacturing, uncertainty in markets, and the entire financial services industry. In the same sense, the COVID-19 pandemic inflicted more despair than prior outbreaks to economic systems worldwide that mainly are dependent on unregulated industries.

Yet a result, whereas the pandemic progressed everywhere globally, both professional and informal workers were especially subjected to upheavals in terms of the labour market as well as socio-economic standing (Shaikh, 2020).

The adverse effect that COVID-19 had on populations worldwide were projected to worsen in African economies. Throughout Zimbabwe, as the focus of this study, individuals were heavily dependent on unregulated economy, in short, informal commerce (Kabonga, Zvokuomba, Nyagadza, & Dube, 2023). Additionally, as many residents' livelihoods were at risk, the crisis was urgent and needed intervention by the government.

In the year 2020, following a downturn in economic activity alongside additional restrictions, there emerged an extensive decline in commerce globally, affecting all industries. The financial system of Zimbabwe is very informal. As the epidemic spread over massive informal economies, many informal workers went without jobs, triggering severe destitution and insufficient food supply. As the prospect for disorder and social friction grew when residents complained about the lockdown regulations, the plight of informal labourers remained a major socio-political problem, internationally as well as within Zimbabwe.

This study is focused on looking into the effects of COVID-19 on homes in Epworth, Harare. In an attempt to contextualize Epworth and justify the study, it should be mentioned that the African Development Bank Group's COVID-19 Response Project (CRP) identified Epworth as a region with vulnerable and impoverished populations that experienced healthcare issues as a result of the coronavirus's spread (African Bank Development Group, 2023).

It is crucial to also note that Neville (2020) discovered that Epworth had more chronically hungry households than any other built-up location in Zimbabwe, which provides unique background for the situation there during COVID-19. Recalling a site visit in the Epworth area where handfuls of individuals were loitering around dusty roads as well as piles of disintegrated breeze blocks, Neville (2020) also disclosed that many of Epworth's businesses and informal settlements have fallen apart since the Zimbabwean government implemented the national lockdown on March 30, 2020.

Looking at this topic and its theoretical grounding, it is important to argue that it can better be premised on the social capital theory. "The aggregate of the actual or

potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" is how Bourdieu (1985) originally defined social capital theory (SCT). Its fundamental idea is that a network gives its members value by giving them access to the variety of social resources that are embedded inside the network (Bourdieu, 1985; Florin, Lubatkin, & Schulze, 2003). At the core of COVID-19 pandemic, communities in developing and underdeveloped countries, such as Epworth in Zimbabwe reflected the need for access to resources e.g. access to healthcare, and financial resources to survive the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19.

According to Grootaert and Van Bastelar (2002), social capital plays a significant role in enabling communities to coordinate and cooperate in order to accomplish shared goals. According to Ostrom and Ahn (2009), trust, networks, and the formal and informal rules of collective behavior can all be used to identify different types of social capital. Similarly, in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, social capital can be leveraged as a common asset that enables group efforts to bring communities together in order to realize a collaborative response to the problem (Makridis & Wu 2021). In this sense, a number of social capital components might have suffered as a result of the epidemic. Affective ties within a society may have been weakened, for instance, as a result of the emphasis on other people as possible viral transmission sources and the subsequent, enforced social separation.

To put it another way, social capital can be abused by the government or employed successfully for the benefit of the general people. Therefore, researching how the pandemic threat affects social capital may help us understand how and what kinds of public and individual health interventions are accepted by the community, as well as which kinds of interventions may strengthen and which may weaken social capital.

The researcher's expectation is that this study will contribute to the current body of knowledge on the COVID-19 epidemic as well as policy discussions on socioeconomic concerns. The effect has been discussed in the backdrop of the manner in which COVID-19 influenced the availability of food, money, and income while also limiting people's movement. The government took many methods to slow the advancement of the virus, namely social isolation, reduced mobility, rigid shutdowns of economic and

social activity, and layoffs, all of which affected many households, families, and individuals.

1.2. Problem Statement

It is imperative to note that the COVID-19 pandemic created unique difficulties such as a national lockdown which restricted the movement of individuals, consequently impeding the flow of economic activity throughout the world. Scholarship and literature have been undertaken throughout the outbreak of COVID-19, however, there has been minimal research regarding how households within Epworth had been affected by the pandemic, notably in terms of basic necessities. Therefore, almost all of existing research is centred on the effect of COVID-19 affecting national economies and levels of employment in the African continent. The effects of the pandemic on labour pools across large neighbourhoods including Epworth has attracted limited focus. Given that the COVID-19 pandemic remained a health emergency that has had a profound effect on economies and societies, the research problem in this study is that the socioeconomic effects of the pandemic on the Epworth area have not been extensively documented. Moreover, this is in consideration of the fact that the pandemic's effects may have contributed to poverty and inequality among marginalised and vulnerable communities such as Epworth in more widespread and worsening ways, which makes development even more urgent to assess.

This study is intended to fill a gap in the existing research by examining how households within labour pools including Epworth survived under national lockdowns including local businesses' subsequent closures due to COVID-19. The real-life experiences of locals within Epworth are the main source where the researcher elicits valuable and informed perspectives on the nature of this phenomenon.

1.3. Research Question

The researcher formulated the following research question:

- How did the widespread of COVID-19 affect the necessities of everyday existence, in Epworth, Harare?

The sub-research questions in this study are as follows:

- What are the socio-economic effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on Epworth households?
- Which strategies for coping were utilized by such households to satisfy their fundamental necessities?
- What policies were put into effect by the Zimbabwean government in order to safeguard economically disadvantaged families from further impoverishment during the pandemic?
- Which recommendations for policies regarding better provision of basic needs to households exposed to the outbreak are necessary?

1.4. Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the COVID-19 epidemic has affected Epworth households, with a focus on how an individual breadwinner in particular provides for the fundamental needs of their family. Being aware of the COVID-19's effects renders simpler to figure out the manner in which households experienced and survived during the outbreak. Furthermore, it offered perspectives on policy issues which Zimbabwe's government are obligated to tackle.

This study is significant because it sheds light on the manner in which more research may offer solutions for disadvantaged households. The study's findings and solutions might be applied to the creation of policies that would improve the quality of life of residents in townships. The results will also add to the policy discussions regarding how African governments might safeguard populations that are at risk during sudden calamities and outbreaks of disease.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research have been with an intention to:

- Explore the socio-economic effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on Epworth households;
- Assess the strategies for coping utilised by such households to satisfy their fundamental necessities;
- Review the policies put into effect by the Zimbabwean government in order to safeguard economically disadvantaged families from further impoverishment during the pandemic;
- Propose recommendations for policies for better provision of basic needs to households exposed to the outbreak.

1.5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth look of the manner in which the widespread of COVID-19 affected Epworth, Harare, households. Additionally, the study explored actual life experiences of people in such households, and this was carried out through investigating the extent of negative outcomes the pandemic had on ordinary lives. It provided clarification on areas of emphasis regarding the onset of social protection programmes, which has the potential to assist the underprivileged by addressing the basic needs of communities.

1.6. Chapter Layout/Structure

This research report was structured in this manner:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduced the topic of the research and gives a background as well as context to what the study is about. This includes elaborating the identified research problem, the purpose of the study which is supplemented by aims/objectives and formulated research question of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review- Chapter 2: Literature Review- This part serves as a historical account of pandemics throughout the continent of Africa, as well as considerations of geographical or demographic characteristics pertaining Epworth. Examples of concepts including basic necessities have been provided, in addition to data on Africa's township origins. For the purpose of gaining a more thorough

comprehension of the research project, numerous publications on the implications of the COVID-19 widespread on African economy were looked into. Furthermore, a detailed discussion of the theoretical foundation was included in this section.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology- The techniques for gathering and interpreting data have been clarified in depth within this chapter. Drawbacks and concerns regarding ethics throughout the research process have been addressed and further discussed to offer an improved awareness of the veracity of the techniques used.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results Presentation

This chapter comprises the data was obtained as well as the analysis of such data. This was conducted using the appropriate analytical approach the study has adopted.

Chapter 5: Summary of Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

An overview of the data, which includes the summary of the insights presented in chapter 4 were explained in this chapter, subsequently, recommendations for future research as well as to various stakeholders regarding the topic were provided. In more than many ways, this chapter summarised the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

According to Arshed and Danson (2015), knowing what is known regarding a topic area in addition to, or by extension, what is unknown is a critical ability for students, researchers, as well as practising managers. This is known as evaluating literature in academic circles, and it helps you to comprehend the present level of knowledge in a subject area, link it to ongoing research, and discover gaps in this knowledge. A literature review can help clarify a point of view, identify the need for more study, and select a research subject (Bruce, 1994). This chapter comprises a review of the literature and is organised thematically (which is, in themes). The purpose of the first theme is to explain and examine the history of pandemics in order to characterise the COVID-19 pandemic breakout in 2019. The subsequent portion of the review examines the effect of COVID-19 on households. The third aspect provides an overview of the background of Harare's marginal urban zones. The fourth factor is the condition of well-being in Zimbabwe prior to the COVID-19 pandemic population. The final part comprises a consideration of COVID-19's effect on employment in Zimbabwe. Prior to underscoring the knowledge gap revealed in the assessed literature, the chapter elaborated on the theoretical underpinning of the study.

Overall, this part will concentrate on findings concerning earlier global epidemics, living conditions in urban spaces, particularly in a context that accounts for the socio-economic historical setting of Zimbabwe prior to the emergence of COVID-19.

2.2. History of Pandemics

The World Health Organisation (2022) defines a pandemic as a communicable disease which transmits fast, multiplies swiftly, and results in a rise number of cases every single day. In accordance to the Mailman School of Public Health (2019), a pandemic is an outbreak of illness that transcends borders globally and erupts on an enormous magnitude. COVID-19 does not represent the first pandemic that has afflicted the world; there have been countless others throughout history which have struck tens of millions of people and devastated civilisations. In this current research, it is important to distinguish and clearly make a clarification of what a pandemic as well as epidemic illnesses mean. As stated by Center for Disease Control and Prevention

(2021), an outbreak of an epidemic constitutes a disease that spreads abruptly in an identifiable geographic zone for example yellow fever, an emergence of smallpox, influenza, or polio. In this sense, it is clear that epidemics, similar to pandemics, kill populations and destabilise local economies.

The phrases “endemic”, “epidemic”, “outbreak”, as well as “pandemic” refer to the emergence of a disease in comparison to its projected rate, alongside its geographical reach (Grennan, 2019). An endemic disease spreads at a predictable rate within a community. An outbreak is defined as an unexpected increase in the number of persons suffering from a health condition or the development of instances in a new location. An epidemic is a large-scale outbreak that spreads across a vast region. A pandemic is an outbreak that spreads over the world (Grennan, 2019). An emerging infection refers to one that arises in a population for the first time or spreads to a new geographic region (Morens, Folkers & Fauci, 2004).

Throughout history, illnesses that are transmissible with pandemic potential have emerged and spread on an on-going basis (Piret & Boivin, 2021). Humanity was previously tormented by major epidemics and pandemics including the cholera epidemic, plague, the flu, as well as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) (Piret & Boivin, 2021). In the year 2009, a novel strain of H1N1 swine flu expanded rapidly among humans throughout the entire globe, prompting the WHO to declare it a pandemic. The 2009 H1N1 virus, did not constitute zoonotic swine flu since it was not transmitted from pigs to people. Rather, it spreads by droplets of air from person to person, and perhaps via human contact containing inanimate objects infected with the infectious agent and conveyed to the eyes or nose (Keenliside, 2013; Rewar, Mirdha & Rewar, 2015).

Some authors Asudani, Dudhani and Lachhwani (2020) emphasised that in historical times, a multiplicity of pandemics have afflicted populations, and this can include Influenza, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Ebola, Black Death, amongst other related pandemics that have had substantial harm on health systems, and national economies globally. For purposes of illustration, in one country, namely - Peru at the time of an outbreak of a sudden and unanticipated cholera in the year 1991 the country experienced US$12.9 million loss in their economy (Asudani *et al*., 2020). Elsewhere, in another country – Sweden, the outbreak of the Spanish Flu reflected

adverse ramifications, in particular on the country's labour supply that in turn had an effect on capital returns. However, it is worth mentioning that in the same Sweden context this resulted in the increase of wages, thus increasing cheap labour and rather than leveraging resources in the production of goods, the country saw the need to distribute and direct support human capital, which inevitably led to the diminishing economic rate (Karlsson, Nilsson, & Pichler, 2014).

Likewise, the OECD made a clarification that in comparison to historical pandemics, such as the SARS outbreak within the year 2003, the world economic system survived as a result of its interlinkage (OECD, 2020). In the same sense, it is also argued that the 2003 outbreak of SARS impaired the economy adversely in specific sectors such as tourism, travel-related services, consumption. However, the COVID-19 has in many ways surpassed such a record of SARS. In other words, This COVID-19 has extensively affected more populations, as they experienced an increase in layoffs. Such evidence from a historical context remains valuable lessons. Furthermore, another example is that of Ebola, which impacted economies and led to a downturn in commodity and valuables exports in many nations (for instance in Liberia, exports saw a downturn of 38%, and in Sierra Leone a decline of 20%) (Asudani *et al*., 2020, p. 157).

From a perspective looking at COVID-19, some researcher, namely, Ozili (2020) postulated that quarantine (isolation) measures along with social distancing, culminated in the closure of corporate spaces, large enterprises, social events, as well as trade/markets. Likewise, as the pandemic progresses and lockdown periods were extended, the extent to which economic activities had ordinarily been carried out was altered, for example – restrictions on global travel, and decisions regarding fiscal policy. Nevertheless, Rehman, Khan, Zainab, Ahmed, Ishaq and Ullah (2020) claimed that ordinary people had not been conscious of how social distancing along with quarantine was rewarding health wise. Moreover, ordinary people did not not seem to take it too much into consideration as they wanted to see themselves continuing with their usual economic activities. Isolation (quarantine) alongside social distancing may have been rewarding in terms of remaining healthy, however it did not benefit people socio-economically as they had been restricted and depended on informal commerce for a living. Similarly, the African Union (2020) reported that "*global growth fell by 0.5%*

for the year 2020". Such a decline in the growth of the world economy meant that global trade was also affected negatively (p. 5).

The effect of the pandemic has been transmitted through various channels as shown in the diagram below. The same diagram, Figure 1, depicts the manner in which of the pandemic is spread and how it affected the quality of life. The many alterations brought forth by COVID-19 in people's jobs, businesses, work-life balance along with their socio-economic standing have adversely had an effect on their well-being. IN addition, the socio-economic effects of the widespread vary in each household's case and can be distinguished in terms of age, educational, gender, location, family size, the number of individuals employed, as well as their levels of income.

COVID-19 Pandemic

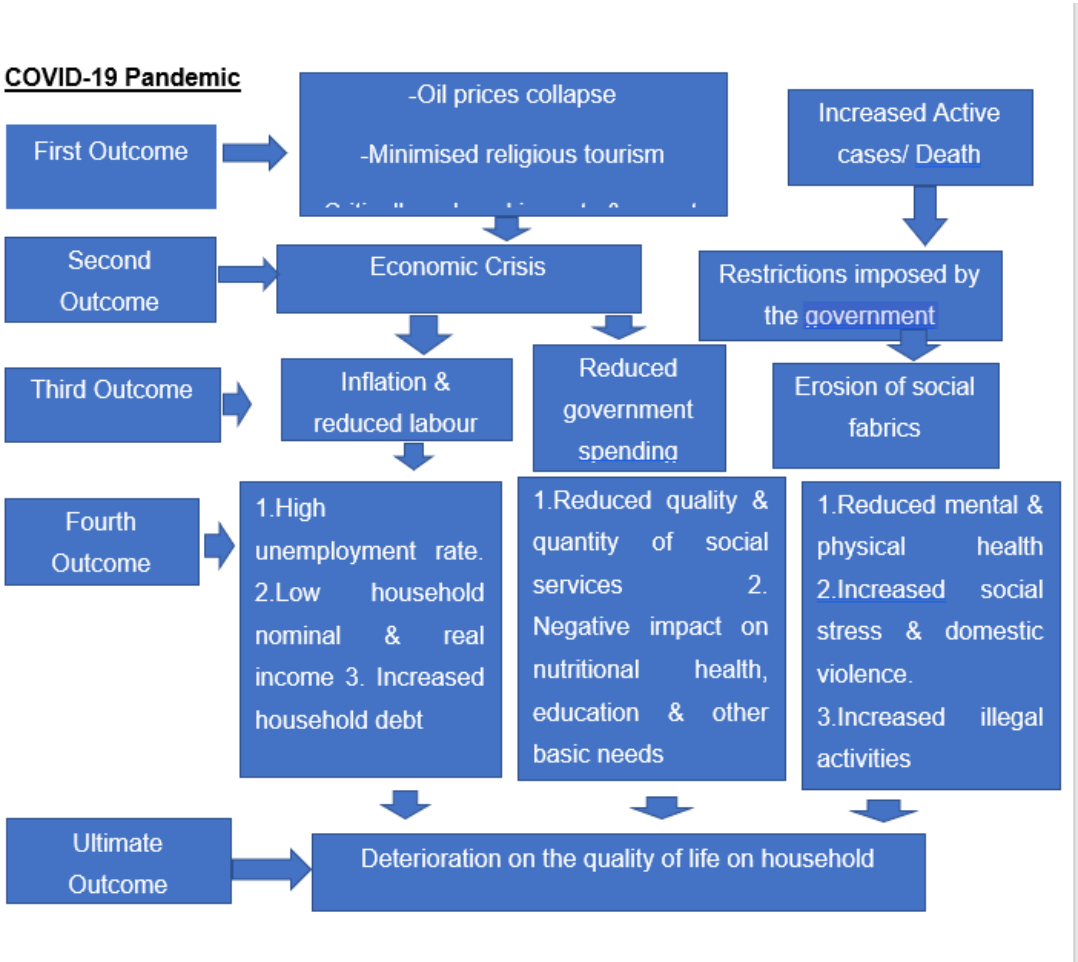


Figure 1: *COVID-19 Pandemic*

Source: Researcher's own compilation.

2.3. COVID-19: Widespread Effect on Various Households

Since WWII, COVID-19 can be listed as the greatest challenge that had not been anticipated and faced by all world nations (Chifamba, 2021). Due to the fact that world countries had not anticipated the outbreak, they suffered the pandemic's ravaging effects. An increase in the death toll across countries necessitated emergency measures to contain the widespread (Gentile & Abenavoli, 2020). Many governing authorities shut their countries' borders with an objective to contain the widespread of the virus. However, this meant that their economic activities including accessibility to world markets and normal trade was compromised (Chirisa *et al.,* 2021). It is also important to mention that as a result of the COVID-19, countless governing authorities were remained less optimistic of any possible positive change. The virus affected living standards amongst households because there was suddenly food insecurity which ranged from 9% to 87% the average being 59%. This meant that many households were not able to meet basic nutritional needs resulting in them introducing coping mechanisms such as reducing their daily number of food consumption. As a result, individual members of households' living standards alongside their wellbeing drastically declined.

According to a report from the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (2021) in the year 2020, approximately 8.8% of all the hours of work internationally were lost, and that is surpasses the time loss of the 2008/2009 world financial crisis 4 times higher. It is therefore evident unlike any other prior crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic presented increased instability in many people lives globally. Such a time loss regarding working hours could only mean that people also lost emormous monetary gains in terms of profits that had been projected in the case of businesses and incomes in the case of the working population (WHO, 2020; ILO, 2020; FAO, 2020; Chirisa et al., 2021; Chirisa *et al.,* 2021).

As breadwinners (those deemed as providing financially for their families/dependents) experienced layoffs, sickness from the pandemic, wage cuts, and death, it meant that their dependents were subjected to impoverishment or economic hardships (Chirisa *et al.,* 2021). As stated by the United Nations (2020), the pandemic led to more isolation, inequality, as well as discrimination. A shift from usual income to more

informal strategies of making a living meant that those who experienced job cuts had remained vulnerable, and in many ways their state of health also became affected (United Nations, 2020).

In the European context, it was reported that the European Union (EU) allocated aid and relief of up to 750 billion Euros to support industries during the pandemic, however, some nations including Netherlands, and Italy did not sufficiently benefit from the relief financial aid as it could not cover all their basic necessities (International Labour Organisation, 2020). Furthermore, Chifamba (2021) indicated that such aid by the EU did not work since not all populations intended for it were assisted. WHO (2020) made a claim that throughout Latin America, many governing authorities had shortcomings in terms of tackling the challenge of meeting the demands of impoverished families, and this has been attributed to limited resources alongside many extended periods of lockdowns.

The African continent had a different and worsened situation as the corona virus widespread was anticipated to be increased because there is reportedly greater movement of people from China to Africa and vice-versa (Velavan & Meyer, 2020). In addition, because many African countries ordinarily have weaker financial systems, and health systems, characterised by unending military and insurgent conflicts, the pandemic's socio-economic effects were heavily experienced (Chifamba, 2021). As a continent with nations characterised by public service corruption, populations had been pessimistic about how government officials were to be entrusted with handling relief and aid packages during the pandemic to sustain people's lives (Gentile & Abenavoli, 2020). As a result of the many laws enacted to restrict movement, households experienced poor wellbeing as they could not travel to public health amenities. In consideration of the experience of Ebola epidemic that had already struck Sierra Leone, the response strategies that individuals and the state took disrupted food supply culminating into increased food insecurity (UNDP 2014). Similarly, the COVID-19 experience became the same to that of Ebola. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Africa made reference to how government policies limited people's mobility by means of road blockages and local (isolations) quarantines throughout many places in the West African region of in an attempt to contain COVID-19. Consequently, many markets faced closure,

culminating in high cost of food and food insecurity. Such a move meant that peoples incomes were negatively affected. In comparison to nations throughout the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Zimbabwe began tallying the cases of COVID-19 infections around the month of March in the year 2020. Such a situation has been one that opposition politicians alongside critics made reference to and attributed it to the government's shortcomings regarding medical resources (i.e. testing equipment). The pandemic outbreak occurred at a period when the many sanctions that were imposed by the West (US and United Kingdom alongside the EU and trade organisations) have already struck the economic status of Zimbabwe.

2.4. Marginal Urban Spaces: An Outlook on Harare

The nation of Zimbabwe encountered expansive rural-urban migration immediately following its independence (Makombe, 2021). Urban areas therefore experienced pressure in public services including education, sanitation, and water. Consequently, many urban areas found it challenging in providing decent jobs and housing, and this ultimately led to growing poverty amongst the population (Chirisa & Muchini, 2011). In Murisa (2010)'s opinion, by the year 1998, the Ministry of Health of Zimbabwe's projected Tuberculosis cases grew by 1000 for every 100000 people within Mbare. It is therefore evident that for decades, Zimbabwe's health system had been under-resourced.

Epworth, Harare rural, Harare urban, and Chitungwiza all constitute the 4 main district of the city of Harare metropolitan's province. Located approximately 25km from Harare CBD, lies Chitungwiza, a colonially built area reserved for African labourers employed in the CBD by whites. On the other side lies Harare urban which is comprised of Harare, Zimbabwe's capital (Kamusoko, Gamba, & Murakami, 2013). In comparison to the other regions/districts, Chitungwiza is comprised of large enterprises and industries, however, the majority of its inhabitants are employed in Harare.

Located approximately 25km on the southern side of Harare, lies Epworth, a suburb that can be labelled as 'peri-urban' (Kamusoko *et al.,* 2013; Taderera, Hendricks, & Pillay, 2016). It is noteworthy to indicate that when Epworth was built, there was no planning, rather, it was established by during the days of liberation for independence by immigrants. In terms of its description, Epworth remains a place with poor

healthcare, sanitation and educational facilities, and it is predominantly an informal settlement area (Gutsa, 2013).

Epworth's locals are in abject poverty, and survived through informal trading, and this is despite the fact that some of its inhabitants are employed in certain professional fields such as being an educator, or working in nearby industries (Gutsa, 2013). To summarise, it is necessary to note that Epworth remains an area with increased susceptibility to impoverishment. The area's susceptibility is reflected by its increased poverty rate (Tawodzera *et al.,* 2016). It is also indispensable to highlight that Epworth's poverty rate has been documented to be approximately 64.5% (twice the rate of Harare urban at approximately 31.6%). (ZIMSTATS, 2015; Manjengwa, Matema, & Tirivanhu, 2016). Another indication was a recent one by ZIMSTATS (2022) which emphasised stated that by the year 2022, the poverty line per individual in the Epworth area was ZW$27 297.53. In other words, an individual needs such an amount for affording necessities to be deemed not impoverished (ZIMSTATS, 2022).

2.5. Period Prior to COVID-19: Zimbabwe's Well-being Condition

For decades, the economy of Zimbabwe has underwent rising socio-political and socio-economic challenges. Alongside an expanding informal sector, the country's economy has been constituted by high levels of unemployment, inflation, lower salaries for workers. To simply put it, Zimbabwe difficulties in its economy began a long time ago to an extent that the socio-economic effects presented by COVID-19 pandemic by default can be considered the "crisis within a crisis" (Tom & Chipenda, 2020, p. 289).

Accounting for approximately 60.6%, the economy of the nation of Zimbabwean is predominantly based on agricultural production and it remains informal (UNDP, 2021). By the year 2019, 34% of the total population were documented to be in a state of abject poverty, whereby the country witnessed a 500% rate of inflation, and amongst its Sub-Saharan African counterparts, the economy remained in a state of decline (IMF, 2019). In the same year, Zimbabwe's economy remained in recession where economists and financial institutions reported a contraction of 6%, and this was prior to the advent of the pandemic (African Development Bank, 2019).

In the period before COVID-19 emerged, persistent drought condition had been encountered in Zimbabwe culminating into food insecurity concerns (Tui *et al.,* 2021). Additionally, there was also a situation where the government increased prices for basic goods in response to the higher inflation rate, and inadequate agricultural produce. By the year 2019, the inflation regarding food was projected to be at approximately 865%, thus impoverished people who cannot afford basic necessities were worst hit by such a situation (World Bank, 2020)

2.6. Effect of COVID-19 on Employment in Zimbabwe

At the time when the very first COVID-19 case was reported, the stipulation of a state of disaster nationally was enacted and given effect by the Statutory Instrument (SI) 83 of 2020 Public Health (Makombe, 2021). Following that, a national lockdown was put in place by March of the year 2020 in an objective to halt the widespread of the illness. The lockdown meant that a variety of restrictions were imposed including curfews, and the closure of enterprises in the exception of services considered essential (fuel service stations, major food retailers, as well as public transport). Such a measure exacerbated difficulties in the already impaired informal sector through which many impoverished Zimbabwean families rely on (Kudejira, 2020; Makombe, 2021).

Furthermore, the joblessness levels increased as the pandemic also rose and the government's measures such as the closure of business activities was maintained. In a report by the World Bank (2021), income levels per household rose from the time measures to combat the pandemic were instituted as many layoffs and job cuts occurred. In **Figure 2** below, the graphical representation of trends regarding unemployment prior to and after the pandemic are depicted.

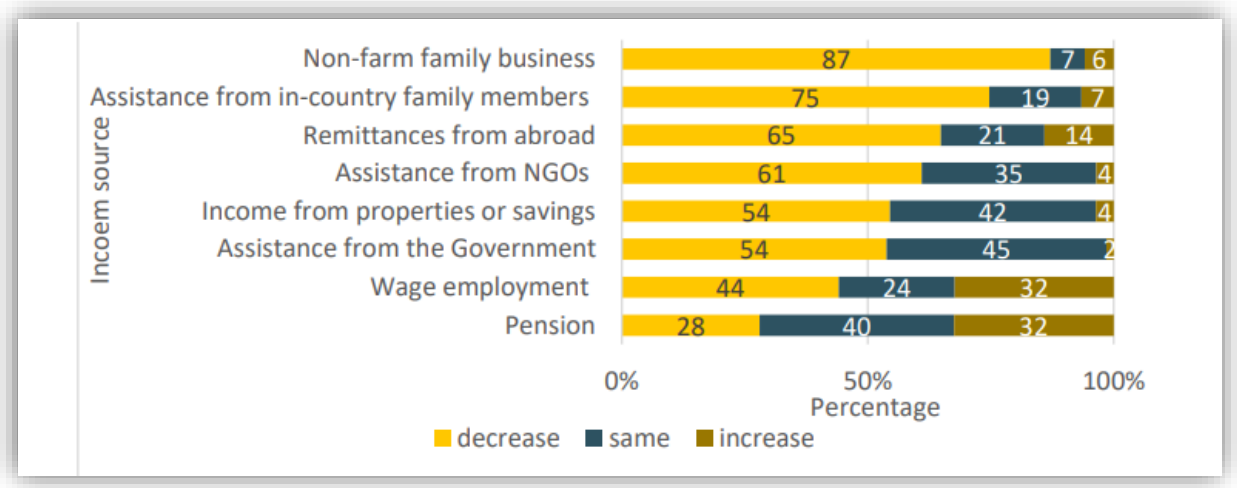


Figure 2: *Alterations in Income Levels (per household in %)*

Source: (World Bank, 2021).

As shown in the graphical representation in **Figure 2** above, the World Bank (2021) indicated that by the year 2020, a vast number of individuals 2020 depended primarily on surviving on family-based financial support and that all remittances from global countries considerably declined due to the manner in which COVID-19 pressured the global economy. **Figure 2** above, further outlines that pension funds grew, and this is largely attributed to how many people experienced layoffs and job cuts. It was some researchers, Dudzai & Wamara (2021) who noted that the Zimbabwean government did not provide relief aid to sustain its population's livelihoods, and this rendered countless households susceptible to destitution. Zvokuomba & Kabonga (2021) assert that implemented measures to contain the widespread of COVID-19 became unsustainable to an extent that many people saw themselves in abject poverty. In addition, joblessness was in the range of 5% until 49% whereby the median income earners were approximately 39%. Also, the rate at which income declined ranged between 8% and 87%.

2.7. Knowledge Gap

The research expanded on the literature available on how COVID-19 pandemic affected the quality of life of households. The goal of the study is to address and

identify the factors that transformed the quality of life of households and how their reaction was to facets of the crisis which has contributed to poverty levels in Epworth suburb. The research showcased how COVID-19 also affected the households by extending literature on food availability, finance, utility bills, employment, and education. The only available research is that documenting the effect of the pandemic using a context and lens that accounts for national levels. To simply put it, the available literature only accounts for informal settlements being the main labour pools to the several major areas that have been recognised as areas of social challenges i.e., high rate of crime attributed to joblessness. This study therefore has an intention to bridge the knowledge gap and make emphasis on an unexplored setting in this context of the pandemic, which is Harare. Ultimately, the research hopes to make contributions to programs/frameworks/models/strategies/techniques which might be valuable in tackling the pandemic's many social and economic effects whilst ensuring people in impoverished areas begin to experience livelihoods that are improved.

2.8. Theoretical Framework

The theory that this research's conceptions, ideas, and notions are founded on is that founded and coined by Abraham Maslow, also known as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow's emphasis was on what is considered making people be happy and in turn what actions people carry out to accomplish such a state of happiness they require (Cherry, 2022). In essence, this theoretical foundation outlines that there are only five basic needs which inspire and encourage people: One) physiological needs; Two) safety needs; Three) love and belonging; Four) esteem needs; and five) self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943). For context purposes, the needs are labelled in an order of a hierarchy, as depicted in **Figure 3** below. It is worth-mentioning Maslow' theory of human needs possesses impeccable significance, and, in this study, it is applied been in contexts of non-compliance by citizens with regard to safety protocols pertaining COVID-19. Simply put, the aforementioned needs could reflect the reasons people risk their lives, those of their families, as well as the lives of the community they inhabit through an ignorance of the incidence, occurrence, effect and nature of the pandemic using disobedient behaviours.

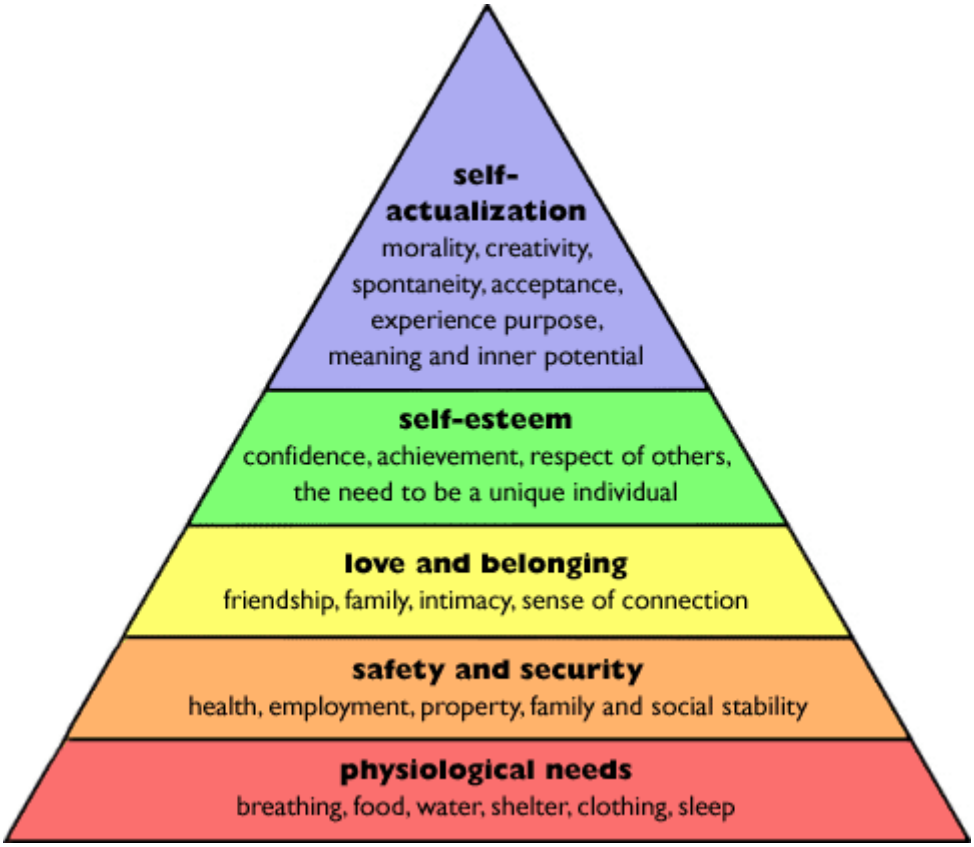


Figure 3**:** *Needs Hierarchy: A Presentation from Maslow's Conception*

Source: Maslow (1943).

By presupposition, the hierarchy of needs asserts that people's actions are largely driven by their individual desire for fulfilling a particular need for the betterment of their lives (Mcleod, 2020). In other words, the safety, physiological, esteem, as well as love needs are intended at tackling certain areas of shortage whilst the self-actualisation need is intended on sense of being alongside where one defines themselves defining within the universe entirely (Poston, 2009). At their core, the needs that are labelled physiological are the most crucial and this can be attributed to the fact that their shortage their renders it difficult for an individual to concentrate entirely (Modell *et al.,* 2015).

In terms of applicability to this study, for instance, according to some authors, Mortell (2022), establishing future pandemic responses and recovery plans, such as those for the COVID-19 virus, requires an awareness of and comprehension of human needs. Using Maslow's theory of needs once more, the researcher contends that in order to

protect the mental health needs of those under isolation and quarantine, special attention must be paid to meeting their basic requirements. As countries attempt to stabilise and recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Shoib et al. (2022) contended that Maslow's hierarchical model offers a framework for intervention from both a community and individual perspective, especially when combined with social measurements of health. This understanding may have important public health implications.

The Maslow's theory of needs has been used before in many instances examining certain socioeconomic shocks, conditions and situations. For instance, in their research on socioeconomic deprivation trends and their effects on quality of life in the West Bengal region of India, Sakar, Barneji, and Sen (2014) drew on Maslow's theory of needs. In a different study, Austini (2018) examined the impact of the economic crisis on the types of lives that people in the UK have reason to value, using Maslow's theory of needs to analyse practical reason in difficult circumstances. Furthermore, Domingos (2018) used Maslow's needs theory in a different study to analyse the socioeconomic ramifications of South Africa's brain drain scenario. Furthermore, Loxton et al. (2020) examined the socioeconomic consequences of the type of consumer behaviour during the COVID-19 crisis using Maslow's needs theory.

In this study, it can be submitted that in contemporary economic systems, the need for safety is reflected by purchasing actions i.e., purchasing insurance schemes, seeking employment, registering for health insurance as well as possessing savings banking accounts. In short, individuals desire control of their own self-stability and whilst guaranteeing that the future is certain (Hopper, 2020). It can also be argued that in addition to the needs labelled ‘physiological’ it is important to consider the survival of people and throughout pandemic, people find themselves reliant on their pursuit of needs regarding stability, security, and safety. Such needs are ordinarily pursued when a crisis emerges or in the event of shortage, thus developing a sense or feeling anxiety within the household environment.

The needs regarding belonging and love are representative of an individual’s well-being. Such needs are pursued when an individual want to fulfil their sense of wanting to love and being loved back alongside the sense of belonging. To a greater extent, such a pursuit for love as well as belonging can be reflected through participating in

romantic relationships, religious affiliations, social groupings/associations, and friendships and so forth (Cherry, 2022). At their core, such needs remain essential for human interaction whether with family, friends, or community because they lowered fear and anxiety in the unprecedented times.

In terms of esteem-related needs people's pursuit and emphasis is the objective towards achieving self-confidence alongside the sense or feeling of being appreciated by other people. In this sense, people may wish to attain certain goals and in turn be seen by others regarding that attainment, which in turn elevate individuals' self-confidence entirely (Wang, Zhang, & Jackson, 2013).

At its most basic definition as a need in this hierarchy reflected in **Figure 3** above, self-actualisation represents an individual's self-awareness once fulfilled, and thus full leveraging of one's capabilities whilst being less concerned of the opinions of other people is also reflective of this need (Cherry, 2022; Maslow, 1943). Once individuals have achieved both the basic and physiological needs, they reach the final level of self-fulfilment. Self-actualisation can ordinarily be associated with the objective of altruism where individuals place themselves at risk in an effort to guarantee care, provision and support for others who could have or have already experienced been infected with the virus. An example may comprise the work of care service providers like frontline workers, physicians, surgeons, and police officers. In Maslow (1943)'s understanding, it could be inferred that in such occupations, efforts, and endeavours, such individuals are reflective of the accomplishment of the greatest level and that is the self-actualisation needs level in the hierarchy.

The aforementioned needs were used to conceptually establish the concepts, notions, as well as ideas of this research. As a theory, the needs hierarchy is still significant for this research project since it serves as a pattern for the numerous compelling needs that individuals seek to nourish themselves and their families. This streamlines the research concerning the pandemic socially and economically affected people within households in Epworth. During a pandemic such as COVID-19 a central emotional response for defying biological threat is fear, unwanted emotions which are challenging and result from an unsafe situation which infectious. However, it is important noting that, in the context of this undertaking, all human beings have a

vested interest in satisfying their needs. Given its hierarchical structure, this theory can be used as a great blueprint for crafting interview questions.

2.9. Chapter Summary

This part went into great length into the scholarship on the subject matter under question. The COVID-19 epidemic prompted authorities throughout the world to initiate national lockdowns, which had an unfavourable effect on the economy. Such a situation is one in which many individuals found themselves unemployed without any means to maintain themselves materially. Throughout the pandemic years i.e. 2020, 2021 and to a certain extent 2022, families had to formulate avenues to cope with this abrupt crisis. Maslow's model of needs shall act as the explanatory basis for this research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this third part of the research, a description is outlined concerning techniques, tools, strategies, practices, and processes used to collect and analyse data.

The chapter includes a research approach, a research philosophy, research instruments and their application, sampling, and population (which explains the study's accessible and targeted populations, as well as sample type and size). This is followed by a knowledge of the data analysis framework used in the investigation. The chapter also discusses the study's limitations, as well as the ethical aspects associated with carrying out research.

3.2. Research Philosophy and Research Paradigm

Martela (2015) framed research philosophy as a set of thinking informing the means in which research inquiry is supposed to be executed depending on convictions underlying society and the foundations of insight. Such presumptions influence ontological, epistemological, as well as axiological considerations when choosing an appropriate research paradigm for a study (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). A research paradigm is made up of a collection of assumptions such as ontology, axiology, epistemology, and methodology (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). The following are the assumptions:

- **Ontology** explores the underlying principles of existence. Subsequently, it is tied to convictions regarding individuals, society, and the environment around them, and researchers utilise it to shape the objectives of their studies. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).
- In the view of Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, and Snape (2014), **epistemological** paradigm is a pursuit of assumptions about how information comes into being and acquiring knowledge. It is concerned with grasping the essence of knowledge and the manner in which to acquire and use insights into reality including the world around people.
- According to Saunders et al. (2016), the **axiology** paradigm pertains value judgements and the researcher's personal influence on the technique for carrying out inquiry.

- In the words of Birk and Mills (2015), the terms "***methods and methodology*** *refer to the ideas, concepts, as well as principles that overseeing the formulation of scholarly endeavours and research activities. Techniques, on the opposite, are legitimate approaches to gathering and interpreting evidence for inquiry*" (p. 4).

A research philosophy and paradigm that this study chose is an interpretivist paradigm resting on the ontological assumption mentioned above. Interpretivist research acknowledges numerous realities as perceived by various participant groups. Because the experiences of breadwinners in households within Epworth, Harare served as the major source of data throughout this study, the ontological strain of interpretive inquiry was employed.

Saunders et al. (2016) further postulated that by exploring participants circumstances, interpretivism strives to build a novel and fuller knowledge of social settings and worlds. It is pertinent to recognise that interpretivism takes into account reality in its multiple forms from the viewpoint of various populations. The interpretivist researcher connects with the environment of the participants in order to comprehend their circumstances it from their perspective (Saunders *et al.,* 2016).

3.3. Research Approach

For data collection and analysis, three research methodologies can be used: (1) qualitative, (2) quantitative, and (3) mixed methods (Creswell, 2014). Without a doubt, the three techniques are not as distinct as they look. Qualitative and quantitative techniques should not be seen as inflexible categories, opposites, or dichotomies. On the contrary, they are at opposite extremes of a spectrum (Newman & Benz, 1998; Creswell, 2014). It should be noted that while quantitative approaches gather and analyse data based on numerical/statistical computations, qualitative data uses subjective knowledge and views in a naturalistic setting to achieve the goal of data collection and analysis (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). A study is more likely to be qualitative instead of quantitative in nature, or vice versa. Since it contains parts of both quantitative and qualitative techniques, mixed methods research rests somewhere in the centre of this spectrum (Creswell, 2014).

This study adopted a qualitative research approach and adopted an interpretivist approach. The interpretivist paradigm recognises that research findings aren't just waiting for the researcher to find them; rather, they are produced via the interpretation of data. Interpretations are developed by researchers to better understand human agency, conduct, views, and perceptions. The interactions between the researcher and the subjects are impacted by this, making the connection between the two subjective to interpretation (Bertram & Christiansen, 2018). The researcher carrying out this study took the effort of probing through interviews viewpoints from a variety of participants concerning the implications of the pandemic, and in addition these each interview served the purpose of providing crucial evidence that necessitated analysis of such implications.

An in-depth examination about Epworth households took place considering the household representing the basis of analysis the areas representing the setting. Furthermore, the in-depth inquiry investigated phenomena exhibiting a sense of shared location, belonging, as well as significance, along with enabling the exploration of such occurrences (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). Research comparisons were drawn regarding households' encounters with the pandemic's outbreak along with their accessibility of fundamental necessities. It is also noteworthy that other parallel case studies assess causal connections between features while meticulously contrasting experiences (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Concentrating on Epworth, a low-income and informal sector area considered a labour pool for the City of Harare, permitted an in-depth look of the implications of the pandemic.

3.4. Location/Setting: A Closer Look at Epworth within Harare

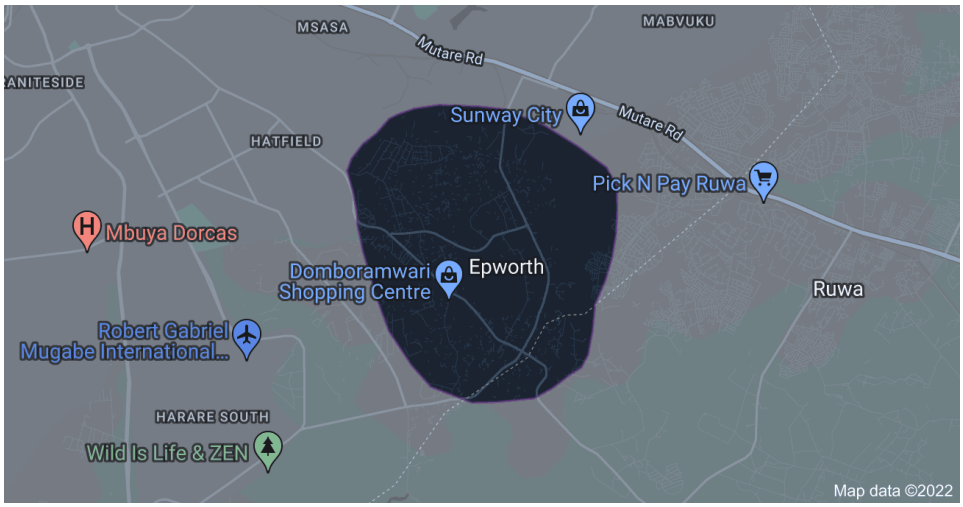


Figure 4: *Map of the Area of Epworth*

Source: Google Maps (2022)

The peri-urban Harare neighbourhood of Epworth served as the research project's site. Since Epworth represents both a susceptible community and a labour pool that serves the Harare metropolitan region, its inclusion is vital to the aim of this research project.

Discovering whether Epworth households fall either above or beneath the threshold of poverty remained another intention of the study, as that influences knowing how its inhabitants' capacity to obtain the basic necessities. Apart from that, Chigumira et al. (2018) indicated that the neighbourhood constitutes an anchor for unofficial enterprises which benefit people in the community.

3.5. Research Tools' Application

Semi-structured interviews were the major source of the main information utilised throughout the research project. Publications served as the basis of secondary data. Throughout this study, an aggregate number of 15 Epworth households have been utilised and an interview was conducted involving the breadwinner throughout each household. Each breadwinner identified for the study had to be no younger than 18 years old in addition to having been aiding the family financially for no less than a five-year period. This contributed to making it feasible for the researcher carrying out this research project to gain insight regarding participants' encounters looking into the socio-economic conditions prior to as well as following COVID-19 outbreak.

The participants were presented with a single set of questions to be asked during interviews, which prompted questioning and enabled the researcher conducting the study maintain concentration on the research's purpose. For individuals who would rather comment using Shona language, broad inquiries were also adapted into Shona. Answers could have been provided in the language of Shona or by choice of the English language for the people taking part. The researcher conducting the study sought an interpreter once a participant communicated a language beyond the English language or the use of Shona.

In circumstances when in-person interviews proved to be impractical or unfeasible, telephone discussions were carried out and subsequently published on record. During the research process, this research project's participants were fully informed concerning their anonymity prior to the interview sessions, and they obtained an opportunity to determine their preferred location regarding interviews that were conducted in person. Prior to undertaking the interviews, the researcher obtained permission from the participants. In the same context, in-person type of interviews also afforded participants the opportunity to fill out consent documents; for phone interview sessions, they consented orally as well as on record. The adoption of pseudonyms guaranteed confidentiality all across the entire research procedure.

3.6. Research Sample and Population

In research, the term population refers to an overall group of individuals with a certain set of characteristics, whereas a sample is a segment of the population (Turner, 2020). In the context of a study, sampling is choosing of a portion of the population of focus. In the great majority of research endeavours, involvement of an entire population of interest is not feasible, hence data gathering is reliant on a smaller group (Turner, 2020). Following this clarification, it is necessary to specify the target population, the accessible population, in addition to the sample type and size.

3.6.1. Accessible Population

The accessible population is achieved after excluding those members of the target population who either will or might not take part in the research or who are unable to be contacted during the duration of the research (Bartlett *et al.,* 2001). It is the last collection of participants from whose data is gathered by measuring either all or a selection of its members. If the objective is to pull a sample from it, it symbolises the frame of sampling (Bartlett *et al.,* 2001). The accessible population in this study were:

- Breadwinners in Epworth.

3.6.2. Target Population

The target population can be described as a group consisting of individuals or participants who have specified characteristics of interest and significance (Bartlett *et*

al., 2001). The target population appears more refined than the overall population since it lacks any trait that controverts a study premise, context, or purpose (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, & Bezuidenhout, 2021). The target population in this study were:

- Residents of Epworth, in Harare
- Breadwinners for at least five years.
- Participants are of working age.
- Age group: 18-64 years
- Understood the effect that COVID-19 had on households.

3.6.3. Sample type

Snowball as well as purposive sampling served as adopted techniques to determine participants. In reference to the usage of snowball sampling, it was chosen as the right kind of sample strategy for this research since it does not involve a sampling frame. Notwithstanding its sluggish pace, this sampling strategy permits an accumulation of massive quantities of evidence. Purposive sampling proved acceptable for identifying participants depending on their familiarity and grasp of the topic under scrutiny (Palinkas et al., 2015). It was decided by the researcher conducting this research project in terms of what should be included, and from who to elicit the required information to be recognised as appropriate participants.

The researcher had easy access to the target population of participants and therefore found it time-effective and cost-effective to reach the participants and gather data from them.

3.6.4 Sample size

In order to undertake an in-depth examination of how different working ages were particularly affected by COVID-19, the researcher conducted interviews with fifteen individuals who live in Epworth and have all been breadwinners for a period of no less than five years. Participants had to be between a range of 18 and 64 years old.

3.6.5. Summarised view of Population and Sampling

The following table reflects and summarises the entire section of the sampling and population:

Table 1: Summarised view of Population and Sampling

	Variables
	Qualitative Data Gathering
Size of Sample	• 15 people
Type of Sampling	• Purposive sampling • Snowball sampling
Targeted Population	• Reside in Epworth, Harare • Breadwinners for at least five years • Participants are of working age • Age group: 18-64
Data collection instrument	Semi-structured interviews
Accessible Population	Breadwinners in Epworth, Harare

Source: Researcher's own compilation

3.7. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) of data was used in this study. Once patterns emerge in the study, the researcher could carefully find, examine, and report on them using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher was able to categorise, present, and interpret findings in a variety of themes by means of thematic analysis (Ibrahim, 2012). The data was then manually coded to identify recurring patterns and groups. Subthemes were subsequently created by combining the data categories.

The way analysis is carried out involved data preparation (cleaning), arrangement (coding), as well as evaluation (analysis). Following the interviews, the researcher succeeded in being able to write down the data herself due to the fact that she is proficient in both the languages of English and Shona. In terms of data transcription, it was completed by means of tools which included Wreally for English interviews along with Word by Microsoft regarding Shona interviews. The audio recordings of the interviews were streamed employing the VLC multimedia player, a programme that allows for playing and decreasing the pace of the audio and captures each expression.

Grammarly, a software programme, was used to clean up the transcriptions of the interviews. Such activities fall within the purview of quality control regarding data. Another software known as NVivo served as the tool to code the gathered data, and

themes have been derived from the data that was gathered. The interpretation of the data has been carried out in a manner that it would remain valuable irrespective of its usage in different circumstances.

3.8. Limitations, Feasibility and Positionality

It is crucial to note that the researcher conducting this research project was vigilant avoiding being biassed for the reason that Zimbabwe is her homeland, which means that she is well personally acquainted with the Epworth area. To overcome prejudices, participation constituted both men and women. Interview sites were not potentially risky locations, for example - establishments that serve alcohol The researcher favoured having the interviews within the participants' living spaces, although ultimately the choice lay with each person who participated.

3.9. Ethics

The researcher verified and guaranteed that she was carrying an ethics clearance document from the University of the Witwatersrand ahead of starting data gathering. Prior to commencing interview meetings, the researcher managed to ensure participant approval to be interviewed and yet preserve anonymity. Participants did not feel coerced to answer questions when they felt discomfort replying.

3.10. Conclusion

A qualitative research design was used to execute the analysis. Throughout research, ethical behaviour was determined in order to compile trustworthy and impartial information. Considering the technique assisted participants to answer questions about their own personal encounters throughout the pandemic, qualitative research was found sufficient for this research project.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

4.1. Introduction

The socioeconomic circumstances in Africa, and particularly in the Southern African nations beforehand, during, and subsequently following COVID-19, were shown by studies to have worsened (Josephson, Kilic, & Michler, 2020). The world economy was projected to shrink by 3.0%, based on a report by the International Monetary Fund (2020), which called this downturn the worst since the 1930s Great Depression. Nevertheless, the lockdown has significantly reduced economies, and the spread of COVID-19 around the world and the increasing number of verified cases in Africa have sparked worries about the continent's inadequate healthcare systems (Khowa, Cimi, & Mukasi, 2022).

To this end, given the gaps in knowledge and limited research concerning the effects of CVOID-19 on the socio-economic conditions of households in Zimbabwe, this research project's intention was to:

> Explore the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had on Epworth, Harare, in particular households everyday basic necessities?

This findings and data analysis chapter is structured in themes (or thematically) with different sub-section(s) as follows: The first involves the restatement of main research question in subsection 4.2; This is followed by the profile of participants' demographic and biographical data in sub-section 4.3 along with an explanation of each key component of the profile in various accompanying sub-section(s) to it; Thereafter, sub-section 4.4 makes a contribution on the rationale and significance of theme patterns and overview; Furthermore, sub-section 4.5 along with its various subsections include a variety of themes to clarify, elaborate, code, and categorise themes in line with the interview schedule; Lastly, the final sub-section of the chapter which is 4.6 along its accompanying sub-section(s) performs the core of thematic analysis, which is to present and analyse the findings across theme(s) A-D.

4.2. Restatement of Research Question and Objectives

Table 2: Restatement of Main Research Question and the Research Objectives

Research Question	
	Research Objectives
How did the widespread of COVID-19 affect the necessities of everyday existence, in Epworth, Harare?	- Explore the socio-economic effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on Epworth households.
	Assess the strategies for coping utilised by such households to satisfy their fundamental necessities.
	Review the policies put into effect by the Zimbabwean government in order to safeguard economically disadvantaged families from further impoverishment during the pandemic.
	Propose recommendations for policies for better provision of basic needs to households exposed to the outbreak.

Source: Researcher's Own Compilation.

4.3. Participants' Demographics/Profile

In **Table 3** below, the participants' profile is summarised:

Table 3: *Profile of Participants*

Key Information						
	Age	**Gender**	**Marital Status**	**Business Type**	**Education**	**Employment**
No. P[1]						
P1	35	Female	Single	SME	Form 4	Self-Employed
P2	42	Female	Married	None	Bachelor's	Employed
P3	26	Male	Single	Temporary	Master's	Self-Employed
P4	56	Female	Widowed	None	Ordinary Level	Retrenched
P5	34	Male	Single	International	Bachelor's	Self-Employed
P6	28	Male	Married	None	Master's	Employed
P7	40	Male	Married	Online Trader	Bachelor's	Resigned
P8	23	Female	Single	None	Student	Unemployed
P9	57	Male	Married	SME	Ordinary Level	Self-employed
P10	67	Female	Widowed	None	None	Unemployed
P11	22	Male	Single	None	Student	Unemployed
P12	32	Female	Single	None	Advanced Level	Employed
P13	33	Male	Married	SME	Ordinary Level	Self-employed
P14	43	Female	Single	SME	Ph.D.	Self-employed
P15	29	Female	Single	None	Master's	Employed

Source: Researcher's Own Compilation.

[1] *In accordance with the study ethical principles of participant privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity, the capital letter "P" has been used, accompanied by the sample identifier/code (number) that belongs to each unique participant.*

4.3.1. Age

The participants age range shows a gap between those who are still studying and without a job or business, with those already working, and the category of those who are elderly and retired or stopped performing any economic activity (income generation activity). The youngest category of ages 22, 23, 26, 28, and 29; The middle category of participants ages includes ages 32, 33, 34, 35, 40, 42 and 43; Moreover, the older category includes the ages 56, 57, and 67. This reveals how as a representative sample of the area (Epworth) and similar areas within Zimbabwe, the breadwinner concept varies in relation to the participation, and distribution of people whose socio-economic well-being have been affected adversely by COVID-19.

4.3.2. Gender

In terms of gender, there is a gender parity of more females than males in terms of the sample of participants and that is a reflection that in women in society generally face socio-economic challenges. This is mainly because if not widowed, they are mostly single, and unemployed, rendering it a difficulty for them to gain sustainable livelihoods as the economic realm of society is male dominated. Therefore, the negative effect of COVID-19 on their social and economic well-being can be considered higher as they lack resources and financial stability.

4.3.3. Marital Status

The marital status category reveals a dominance of the grouping of those participants who are mainly single, followed by those who are widowed. The assumption of the researcher is that when single, women in particular tend to grapple with being able to financially provide for their dependents, This is in particular reference to the COVID-19 era where lockdown restrictions made it difficult for people to make movement to access marketplaces or sell anything for a living.

4.3.4. Business Type

In terms of business ownership, the profile of the participants reveal that many participants do not own a business, while those who do are only in ownership of SMEs (Small Medium Enterprises), or temporary businesses that can be considered precarious (insecure).

4.3.5. Education

The level of educational attainment across the participants' profile indicate that first time university degree holders are in majority in Epworth, despite them grappling with unemployment, as well as the effect of the outbreak and widespread of COVID-19 in their socio-economic wellbeing.

4.3.6. Employment

In terms of employment status, it is evident with the category of self-employed people being the domineering key component on the profile of the participants that people have resorted to creating business activities for themselves for survival. Especially in the face of the conditions imposed on the economy by COVID-19 pandemic.

4.4. Clarification of the Style of Using Thematic Analysis

According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017), the ultimate intention of any thematic analysis process is to uncover, pinpoint and locate themes i.e., meaningful, crucial, or persuasive patterns within the obtained data. Such a task of locating persuasive and appealing themes is then followed by the task of utilising those themes to analyse the research findings and formulate a viewpoint or standpoint. Thus, thematic analysis comprises considerably more than merely bringing together or structuring the content or subject matter from the findings related to the topic effectively (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Given that they are clarified with regard to the multiple key notions highlighted in existing literature only themes exhibiting the explicit purpose of addressing the research problem, objectives, as well as purpose of this research serve as the point of departure for this data analysis. This, in simple terms, sets out the role of responding to and bridging the significant gaps within existing literature. It could be feasible to adopt, integrate, arrange, separate, or potentially eliminate/discard certain themes outright (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017).

Finding themes in the collected data involves the researcher noting significant patterns in the data and using these themes to respond to and address the research objectives. Thematic analysis is a technique used to analyse qualitative data (Delahunt & Maguire, 2017).

Since this study gathered qualitative data in a format of words, thematic analysis was the perfect method to utilise. The researcher began the procedure by gathering data

through semi-structured interviews. According to Delahunt and Maguire (2017), qualitative data often comprises of written or visual information. Textual data was gathered for this study while the researcher was questioning participants and taking notes. The participants gave their consent for the interviews to be recorded.

4.4.1. What Divergence and Convergence Mean in this Data Analysis?

In order to assess how well answers provided by participants responded to the study's objectives, the problem statement, along with the research question, the researcher chose to make use of the features that constitute divergence and convergence which were demonstrated by responses from participants throughout this analysis of data.

Pluye, Grad, Nicolau, and Levine (2014) define data discordance—also termed divergence—as an appearance of contradictory evidence to support and substantiate viewpoints for various qualitative findings or outcomes throughout the course of the research. Dissonance, inconsistencies, or divergence within studies is commonly termed the presence of proof that breaks away from the perspectives of others with regard to a similar problem or subject matter partly because of several different points viewpoints or unique factors. Research might value the dissonance, variance, along with complexity of divergent viewpoints for their ability to spawn unique notions and ideas, contrary to interpreting them as an abnormality to be overlooked or eliminated (Freeman, 2017).

In other contexts of research, Bezley (2017) emphasises that in any kind of data handling analysis, an informed but deliberate review of competing and unfamiliar perspectives constitutes an indispensable prerequisite for reaching the starting of valid insights throughout diverse the subject perspectives.

In the words of Bezley (2017), divergence is referred to as a technique of interpretation which reverses notions, yields fresh clarifications, recommends pathways that warrant additional research, or entirely reimagines the topic under discussion.

On the other hand, convergence in the context of qualitative research data analysis corresponds to the integrating of perspectives, which also takes place if participants' patterns either within, across, or in-between themes are seen unified and similar in the data set linked to a multifaceted or unexplored issue which the research observed

(Humble & Radina, 2019). Considering that, convergence is an amalgamation of outcomes which effectively confronts research obstacles (Humble & Radina, 2019).

4.5. Identification, Coding, and Arranging of Themes

Table 4: *Identification, Coding, and Arranging of Themes*

Theme Label	Theme Code	Chosen (Pertinent) Questions
Theme A: Effects of COVID-19 pandemic on households in Epworth	ECHE	Question 6 (see **Appendix 1**)
Theme B: Coping strategies of the households in providing basic needs	CSHB	Question 7 (see **Appendix 1**)
Theme C: Effect of COVID-19 on Employment in Zimbabwe	ICEZ	Question(s) 3 and 4 (see **Appendix 1**)
Theme D: Critical evaluation of government measures to alleviate COVID-19's effect on households	CEGM	Question(s) 8 and 11 (see **Appendix 1**)
Theme E: State of citizens' employment and poverty in the aftermath of COVID-19	SCEPAC	Question 9 (see **Appendix 1**)

Source: Researcher's Own Compilation.

4.6. Thematic Analysis: Themes of Findings

As broken down in the manner indicated in **Table(s) 5-9** along with subsequent sub-subsections 4.6.1 through to 4.6.5 below, the theme(s) (A–E), which were also shown within **Table 4** above, all include well studied opinions, insights, and points of view using the transcripts of interviews. These were then meticulously analysed for the

purpose of reporting, presenting, analysing, and displaying a range of divergent and convergent perspectives amongst the individuals who took part in this research.

4.6.1. Theme A: Effects of COVID-19 pandemic on households in Epworth

Table 5: *Participant's Viewpoints Related to Theme A (ECHE)*

Convergent Interpretations	Divergent Interpretations
In relation to theme A (ECHE), selected participants' responses that were categorised and rendered convergent, as they revealed effects of covid-19 pandemic on households in Epworth are as follows: "…*yes, it affected our lifestyle because there was a time when we couldn't even buy food from the stores because they were closed …. we could not travel*" [P3]. In addition, it was also elucidated that: "…*yes, because some of my closest friends that I call family lost their loved ones, and we could not make any arrangements or go and see them*" [P15]. Furthermore, another participant elaborated that there: "…*yes, it affected my sister she fell sick from COVID, and we do not have medical aid, my parents had to pay for her medical bills*" [P11]. A more crucial point was mentioned that: "*we were taking care of our two grandkids whose parents died from COVID and also my husband died from COVID, and I was left to fend for them alone with no money*" [P4].	The chosen participants responses regarding this theme were considered divergent due to of how they frequently to deviate from the theme as follows: *"…yes, covid affected us because we both had COVID, but we survived, it was a hard moment because we thought we were going to die, and our child…"* [P2]. Subsequently one other participant expounded and gave her opinion saying that: "*yes, because I suffered from COVID at some point*" [P7]. In addition, it has been explained that: "*…yes, because I lost my husband during COVID*" [P1].

Source: Researcher's Own Compilation.

As depicted in **Table 5** above, the participants' responses that were considered convergent represent socio-economic challenges imposed by COVID-19 on households comprehensively rather than partially, and this is since four (4) key aspects reflect a concurrence pattern which merged from their grouped responses as follows:

a) Travel restrictions prohibit movement to purchase daily essential supplies.
b) Social distancing prohibits meeting of relatives for necessary functions.
c) Orphaned children whose parents died from COVID-19 lack financial support.
d) Inability to financially afford medical aid for hospitalisation.

4.6.2. Theme B: Coping strategies of the households in providing basic needs

Table 6: *Participant's Viewpoints Related to Theme B (CSHB)*

Convergent Interpretations	Divergent Interpretations
Responses relating to theme B (CSHB) which have been chosen and considered as convergent indicated the following: "*we used the little money that came from selling and moved back to my parent's house because we could not afford to pay rent*" [P3]. A further interpretation was that: "*selling masks helped with some money and were able to afford the basics……*" [P9]. It was also mentioned that: "*…yes, I managed to take care of them using the profits that were coming from the business*" [P5]. Another key explanation was when some participant said:	For this theme, certain participants' divergent interpretations included the following: "*not really, I just continued with my business, but I told my clients that they had to book appointments so that I help them separately. …..*" [P7]. A subsequent response by a participant included a mere: "*...no*" [P10]. As another participant attempted to reflect on own experiences, he mentioned that: "*on the first few months yes, we did manage but as time went by, we started struggling financially, and for 2 months we failed to pay rent,*

"*…we reduced spending habits and we do not have children yet, it was just me and my wife our expenses were not too many*" [P6]. Another concurrent view was that: "*we survived on the little amounts that we earned from the few customers that were buying on days we were open"* [P13].	*luckily our landlord was understanding*" [P3].

Source: Researcher's Own Compilation.

In **Table 6** above, the responses of participants that were chosen and categorised as convergent interpretations by participants represent a concurrence of viewpoints. This is because they all allude to the mechanisms that people had to devise to survive the COVID-19 effect. The responses were mostly related to their economic survival and the provision of basic needs for their dependents. Key notions that emerged from this theme were three (3) as follows:

a) Savings from business small business revenue and the option of relocating to reside with parents.
b) Innovative creativity of turning the pandemic into an income generation phenomenon by selling protective Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
c) Modification of household expenditure patterns.

4.6.3. Theme C: Effect of COVID-19 on Employment in Zimbabwe

Table 7: *Participant's Viewpoints Related to Theme C (ICEZ)*

Convergent Interpretations	Divergent Interpretations
The only convergent and overwhelmingly favourable comments that some participants provided that would have been sufficient to address theme C (ICEZ) are those that state: "…*no, it did not affect any work because I am not working but it affected my parents who were working, my mum lost*	Divergently, the following perspectives emerged: *"yes, we could not go out to church or socialize because of lockdown"* [P15].

her job, and my dad was changed to working from home." [P8]. It was also emphasised that: "*…Yes, it affected the business because everything was slow especially the movement of trucks at the border, our aggregates were affected because our drivers are paid per load, and we were receiving small orders from clients to support our business*" [P5]. Another participant clarified that: "*….no, but it affected me in other areas because I have been trying to hustle to make ends meet by using my car to transport school children to and from their houses, and school and school were closed because of the lockdown*" [P3]. Whereas the above were convergent responses to Question 3: "How did COVID-19 affect your work? the following were responses to question 4: Did you manage to find work", and participants indicated that: "*I tried looking but did not find anything*" [P2]. Another crucial response was that: "*…No, I did not try to look for any because most businesses were closed*" [P4].	Moreover, another participant added that there was: *"COVID affected my studies mostly because schools were closed but it also affected my parent's finances because their salaries were reduced"* [P11].

Source: Researcher's Own Compilation.

To adhere to thematic analysis principle of discarding certain themes, only the convergent perspectives are selected, and in the case of **Table 7** above, the following five (5) key emergent notions can be identified:

a) Retrenchments and loss of jobs.
b) Change from office-based work to remote and hybrid type of work.
c) Low business turnover affected self-employed people during COVID-19.
d) People who faced retrenchments or job losses due to COVID-19 had to adapt to new strategies to survive.
e) Unemployment rate was high during COVID-19. Theme D: Critical evaluation of government measures to alleviate COVID-19's effect on households

Table 8: *Participant's Viewpoints Related to Theme D (CEGM)*

Convergent Interpretations	Divergent Interpretations
In order to analyse this theme, some participant's responses consistently matched, as follows: "*yes, the government could have supplied the hospitals with enough medicine and vaccines instead of only implementing the lockdown without providing healthcare*" [P5]. In addition, it was emphasised by another participant that: "*we need to be more prepared for such disasters our government needs to supply our hospitals with machines and any other equipment needed*" [P9]. Pertinently, it was reiterated that: "…*yes, we do not have medicine in hospitals and so many people died in their homes because the hospitals were full and expensive plus they should have assisted with food at least"* [P1]. More crucially it was noted that: "*yes, the government should have helped us with food hampers or free medication, but we had no assistance at all*" [P4]. Whereas the above are answers to question 8, the following were responses to question 11 in **Appendix 1** as follows:	No divergent responses were recorded across the data set regarding this theme.

"*…no, we did not*" [P13]. Lastly, it was noted that: "*we did not receive help from anyone including the government*" [P3].	

Source: Researcher's Own Compilation.

It is important to note that theme D (CEGM) in **Table 8** above did not comprise any deviant responses, all the perspectives and insights offered which were considered convergent matched in terms of similarity and relatedness of arguments. The following five (5) key emergent notions emerged from the findings of theme D (CEGM):

a) Lack of medical care and vaccine provision.
b) Inadequate preparedness of the government for COVID-19 in terms of essential machinery to treat the infected people.
c) Hospitals' lack of capacity to accommodate large number of infected people.
d) Lack of food supply by the government.
e) Lack of assistance by authorities and related agencies to help COVID-19 patients. Theme E: State of citizens' Employment and Poverty in the aftermath of COVID-19

As already indicated, this theme was built using question 12 in **Appendix 1**: "Is there anything else that you would like to add in respect of the effects of COVID-19 on unemployment and poverty?".

Table 9: *Participant's Viewpoints Related to Theme E (SCEPAC)*

Convergent Interpretations	Divergent Interpretations
These responses from participants were selected, categorised, and deemed convergent in a far more uniform pattern of concurrence: "…*yes, the unemployment situation was bad before COVID but now it has worsened, this will increase poverty and there is no employment for us the youth*" [P11].	There was a point of discordance in theme E (SCEPAC) when certain participants said that: *"…things have not been the same because money is not circulating at all*" [P7].

Another elaboration was that: "..*the economy has gotten worse, and the situation is getting worse for our youth, the government has to help with creating employment opportunities.* " [P9]. Lastly, it was mentioned that: *"a lot of people have lost their jobs and many people lost their breadwinners because they died from COVID*" [P8].	

Source: Researcher's Own Compilation.

For the purposes of theme E (SCEPAC) only convergent theme interpretations have been considered and they produced three (3) key emergent notions as follows:

a) Worsened youth unemployment and poverty.

b) Declining economy.

c) Deaths of breadwinners and loss of jobs.

4.7 Key Assumptions on Findings

In terms of the travel restrictions, it can be assumed that the more government was persistent on lockdown restrictions, many people from many households in Epworth, and similar areas in the Zimbabwean context experienced the adverse effect of COVID-19 in terms of obtaining essential items from retail stores.

In this context, this adds and improves knowledge to gaps found literature such Makombe (2020) or kudejira (2021) who although acknowledged the effect of COVID-19, theoretically without practical and empirical insights mentioned that the shutdownwas implemented but did not apply to essential services such as food retailers, and public transport. This is because as the participant explained

that:

> "…*there was a time when we couldn't even buy food from the stores becausethey were closed …. we could not travel*" [P3].

In addition to this assumption, it can also be asserted that socially, the distancing measures in place denied people the freedom to associate with relatives, and close family people during necessary functions such as funerals. The limit of the number ofpeople who were allowed meant that in cases where certain African families with manyrelatives more than that number would not be present to bury their loved ones. At thecore of this assumption, is that literature is limited in signifying how this could have created psychological and mental strain on certain people in many households.

Another key assumption related to theme A (ECHE) can be made that research is notadequate in relation to the extent to which many children were left orphaned as parentsdied of COVID-19, thus leaving them behind with no one to take care of them. In many cases, the parents were employed persons (in other words, breadwinners), thereforeeven though some relatives can look after children, the economic form of support.

Many assumptions can be made regarding the above theme B (CSHB)'s findings. Thefirst of those assumption is that in order to pay for living expenses during the pandemic,a large number of owners of small or unofficial enterprises relied on the assistance given to breadwinners or people in general in households.

Nevertheless, there was no specific assistance programme in place to assist small and unofficial enterprises with covering any losses, covering additional costs for obtaining a permission or purchasing equipment to comply with new health and safetyregulations, or just carrying on with business as usual.

This is especially troubling because a lot of businesses had to support themselves andtheir family with the few savings or cash they had. Furthermore, even though microbusinesses are a little more structured, it is evident from this information that most company owners lack funds and depend on their venture for personal

spending.

Thus, any adverse effect on the unorganised sector and its entrepreneurs directly affects their capacity to sustain their living expenses, placing strain on their personal financial circumstances. In the event that business owners run out of money, they areforced to draw from their money saved, if any, or sell items of stock, equipment, or capital in order to make ends meet, which jeopardises their capacity to carry on with operations in the years to come.

The reality that not all participants (residents), who were primarily breadwinners in Epworth, are business owners, as evidenced by the participant profile above, and makes this finding more complex. There is a knowledge and research gap because itis evident that those that were unemployed and not self-employed lacked coping mechanisms to deal with the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19 and were clearly dependent on government institutions for assistance.

Another assumption could be that when the COVID-19 epidemic first started, many households and individuals were going through difficult times. However, some peopleused their creativity and ingenuity to create and sell masks as a reliable source of revenue. However, it is clear that as demand increased, it became less profitable, and common people had to contend with large corporations that also made masks. As a result, this approach may be regarded as having been unsustainable in terms of results over the long run.

Regarding changes in household spending, and specifically the spending of breadwinners, it can be said that for as long as the COVID-19 pandemic continued, family income was going to keep falling. Although households were able to continue spending on food in the first few weeks following the first measures, this grew increasingly challenging over time. To prevent food insecurity, levels of income had tobe safeguarded.

A narrative concerning two economies emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic: thosethat were capable to save and others that found it difficult to survive. In

short, the results of COVID-19 strategies for coping indicate that while savings have increased,Epworth residents were not necessarily sitting on large sums of money. It can furtherbe postulated using the responses of the participants in Table 5 above that the most appropriate course of action for an individual with personal resources in the COVID-19 era of 2020 and 2021, however, depended primarily on the specific work or business they do—some have been affected more severely than others.

In an impoverished area such as Epworth, it can also be asserted that while COVID- 19 added strain socially, it also contributed more economic hardship on households with infected individuals. This is in consideration of the key emergent notion that certain households lacked medical fees for hospitalisation. It is not unexpected that there is a favourable association between poor overall health and racial background as Africans are far less probable than other racial groups (particularly Whites) to be involved in private medical assistance schemes. As a result, they are more prone to use the overworked public health system.

The concurrence pattern in this theme further reveals that the COVID-19 epidemic hasbrought to light long-standing disparities in the nation regarding the poor and vulnerable population's access to enough nourishing food. Most affected by the current situation are women, children, old persons, homeless people, and black Zimbabweans. During this harsh and misguided lockdown, the government's incompetent, inept, and corrupt institutions of state have made it difficult for disadvantaged people to obtain enough food.

Furthermore, alongside with the above-mentioned aspects, it may also be argued that, within the context of the theme of home socioeconomic situations, the education of children and their siblings in higher education was affected on a social level. This is explained by the one participant who stated that:

> "….*it affected me a lot because I could not go back to school*" [P8].

In terms of the divergent viewpoints or perspectives drawn from the interview transcripts related to theme 1 theme 1 (ECHE), it is clear that he scenario in

Zimbabwe during the first few months of the pandemic's appearance demonstrated that a significant number of deaths had been caused by it. Another participant indicated that:

"*…yes, because I lost my husband during COVID*" [P1].

It can further be asserted that Covid-19-related deaths put survivors at great risk for acquiring a grieving pathology, a painful condition with traumatic elements resemblingPost Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Regarding the customary elaborative complexities of mourning, without the presence of the departed body to grieve over, the absence of a burial, and any other kind of communal or private ritual, have to beseen as barriers and exacerbated circumstances.

A variety of assumptions that can be made regarding retrenchments include the fact that when the COVID-19 pandemic first started and widespread shutdowns were implemented, indicators such as an occupation's suitability for remote work, declines in overall demand, and economic downturns in contact-intensive industries like travelor restaurants would determine the likelihood of job losses. But as the crisis had deepened, several unexpected causes of employment losses have come to light.

First, while this may have been a widespread perception in affluent economies that the labour supply is dropping, **Table 7**, which presents the results of this studyspecifically for Epworth, rendering it abundantly evident that COVID-19 disruptions to labour market has constituted the main cause of job losses in developing nations likeZimbabwe.

In terms of change from office-based work to remote and hybrid type of work, breadwinners in Epworth faced many effects on their work from COVID-19. This is a key factor with which it can be assumed and implied given the findings that it is widelyacknowledged that the COVID-19 outbreak sped up the transition of many breadwinners to full-time remote employment.

This analysis is able to isolate the consequences of firm-wide type of remote

employment from additional complicating factors connected to the pandemic by seeingthis transition as a natural experiment in which some people were working remotely prior to the outbreak. In this instance, the effects of remote work on breadwinners meant that their employment were no longer stable, productive, or guaranteed, and that they risked losing them due to the fact that working from home does not always equate to being present in a firm. This kind of uncertainty led to the dread of losing one's employment. Therefore, it is essential that this be regarded as a significant discovery for knowledge and study.

Business activities were severely disrupted as a result of the epidemic. A large number of self-employed workers were compelled to temporarily close their companies or wereunable to provide their services. Overall, based on **Table 7**'s findings about the loss of revenue for independent contractors, it may be inferred that many people in Epworth, Zimbabwe, may have thought about quitting their work.

Additionally, these results show that the self-employed operate in industries that are twice as likely to be negatively affected by containment measures, which has resulted in a large loss of revenue, clients, and network interruptions. Furthermore, there's a good chance that these effects vary among those who are self-employed.

Table 7 indicates that breadwinners who lost their jobs or faced layoffs as a result of COVID-19 had to find new ways to subsist. This data supports the notion that even industries that were previously thought to be secure had historically high layoff rates. Consequently, it meant that, when their jobs changed, Epworth breadwinners had to adjust to new, creative ideas in order to start making money in order to survive.

An assumption about **Table 7'**s finding, which shows that the unemployment rate washigh during COVID-19, supports the idea that this was a startlingly difficult time to geta job. This is due to the fact that the coronavirus pandemic made it particularly difficultto get a new employment because so many companies were

terminating workers, andrecruiting practises were also altered.

In terms of the findings in theme D (CEGM), various assumptions can be provided regarding the above mentioned key emergent notions. The first relate to how even though the shortcomings of Africa's healthcare system can be widely acknowledged, this study's findings in **Table 8** regarding the lack of vaccine and medical care by government in Zimbabwe, in particular for people in Epworth revealed that: insufficientequipment as well as resource availability is one critical key area that has to be takeninto account for any future pandemics such as COVID-19 as now the study is written in a time of the aftermath of the pandemic. Furthermore, it can also be revealed that as a country with many insufficient resources there was clear observable evidence ofrestricted testing capabilities, and insufficient surge capacity for managing the situationwith COVID-19.

In terms of the second emergent notion on the inadequate preparedness of the government various points can be made as follows:

> It is a critical point to note that although the population of Zimbabwe is huge can meet the capacity for people infected with COVID-19, swift measures suchas foreign aid and loans from international institutions could have been applied for. This could have ensured that machinery and equipment are provided sufficiently to treat people. In light of the feedback provided by the participants in **Table 8** regarding the scarcity of food during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Zimbabwean government could have taken the following actions to guarantee food security: prudent utilisation of food reserves; the security of food sectors; utilisation of mobile payments for social security;and, ultimately, safeguarding food industry employees and farmers.

In terms of the key emergent notions that were described in the above section relating to findings and insights outlined in **Table 9**, a variety of assumptions can be drawn.

The key finding where participants revealed that unemployment and poverty, in particular for youth has increased in the aftermath of COVID-19 can be mean that in the context of this study, a developing nation like Zimbabwe was acknowledged

to have economic difficulties even prior to the pandemic; In this sense, young people there had already encountered hardships due to high living expenses, student loan debt, as well as stagnating earnings. Actually, poverty among young adults was already on the rise before to COVID-19, and this tendency has only become worse.

It is therefore possible to infer that the COVID-19 issue is having an especially disastrous effect on the livelihoods of those who are most vulnerable Zimbabweans in Epworth, particularly young people, considering the insights provided by participants in Table 8. It is expected that the COVID-19 aftermath could render the situation of youth unemployment to worsen further.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter used tables and direct citations of participant responses to present data in the form of themes. The socio-economic effects of COVID-19 were highlighted for the time periods prior to, during, and beyond the pandemic, with a focus on the state of unemployment in particular. Additional elements were also included, such as vital decisions the government could have made but failed not to. Additionally, the chapter included information about COVID-19's effects on Epworth as a whole before demonstrating how locals, particularly breadwinners, came up with various coping mechanisms to deal with the pandemic's effects. This made it easier to comprehend how Epworth residents survived in the midst of the epidemic. The study's conclusions are presented in the next chapter, which also includes an outline of the findings' limitations, lessons for future research, and recommendations to different stakeholders.

Chapter 5: Summary of Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

The research study's findings and a summary are provided in this chapter. Moreover, suggestions are made for additional research as well as proposals that the Zimbabwean government might take up and put into practise to improve the unemployment challenge posed by COVID-19 and solve other effects that it had imposed on people in Epworth and similar areas to it. In addition, ideas for policies are put out for researchers, academics, and government officials in positions of authority to take into account should future pandemics similar to the COVID-19 break out.

5.2. Summary of Key Findings and Conclusions

The data presented provides undeniable evidence that COVID-19 did, in fact, have a negative effect on the socioeconomic well-being of Zimbabweans, in particular in Epworth. The key findings included the understanding that even though existing mainstream literature has fallen short in covering the extent to which essential services including food retailers and public transport were not included in the restrictions of COVID-19, an overwhelming majority of people experienced restricted access to such essential services due to the lockdown restrictions that the government had made.

The findings also alluded to the way in which social distancing caused harm to the liberty of freedom of association and freedom of movement, along with failure of people to bury close relatives during the pandemic. It was also noted that education, along with nutrition was not spared by the harsh restrictions that were imposed on citizens in Zimbabwe and specifically Epworth for the relevance of this study.

Other findings of this research found that amongst the strategies that people used were their last resort to move back to live with relatives as well as saving money from their various small business's earnings. This also brought forth the notion that although those with some income generating activities managed to use their savings, those who did not own a business, or have not saved any money due to unemployment they faced even before COVID-19 relied on government.

However, the finding that the government did not sufficiently help citizens means that there had been enormous challenges they faced and thus failed to cope essentially with COVID-19 and its effect. The creative ingenuity of using the pandemic and turning its misfortunes to generate revenue through the sale of PPE was another major strategy noted by bread winners who had lost their jobs and income generating opportunities due to the pandemic.

In addition, this also meant that breadwinners in particular had to alter their lifestyles in the habits of household spending. This meant that they had to cut non-essential goods when purchasing so that they can save money. However, the findings made it clear that in a country such as Zimbabwe where the economy was already in decline before the pandemic, it would have been difficult for anyone with savings to sustain themselves for the longer period.

It was also discovered that the onset and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative effect on people's employment and jobs, whether they were fully employed or self-employed and operating their own enterprises. This includes employment losses and layoffs; a shift from workplace to remote work activity; Those who were self-employed during COVID-19 were affected by low business turnover; those who lost their jobs or experienced layoffs as a result of the pandemic had to find new ways to live; and the unemployment rate was elevated throughout the pandemic.

Participants (mostly breadwinners) criticised the government for failing to handle the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly by failing to take adequate initiatives that would mitigate COVID-19's detrimental effects on households. Key findings comprised: a lack of medical attention alongside vaccine delivery; unsustainable government readiness for COVID-19 in respect to critical equipment to treat infected individuals; on the contrary hospitals' shortages of capacity utilisation to cope with an excessive number of infected individuals; and an absence of alimentary supplies by the government as a whole.

Other important conclusions from this study are that youth unemployment and poverty will inevitably worsen in the pandemic's aftermath since they are a vulnerable demographic who despite having qualifications, did not have jobs prior to the outbreak; Another conclusion was that the effect of COVID-19 suggested that a sinking economy is inevitable since emerging countries like Zimbabwe had previously suffered

economic downturns; Finally, because so many breadwinners perished, the children left behind can already be seen as those who are struggling financially to survive, as those who stayed behind to care for them also lost their employment due to the pandemic's effects on the labour market.

5.3. Recommendations to a Range of Stakeholders

Across the study, various stakeholders ranging from breadwinners, government, business sector were mentioned. For that reason, it is important when using this study as a guide on how the aftermath of the COVID-19 should set the task for preparedness for future related or similar pandemics, they ought to take into account the following recommendations:

5.3.1. Recommendations to Breadwinners

- Breadwinners ought to save enough money regularly to avoid being in a situation where any emerging pandemic like COVID-19 can disrupt their abilities to provide for the dependents and themselves.
- Breadwinners must adopt an approach having multiple streams/sources of incomes.
- Given the unknown complexity of pandemics, breadwinners must invest in medical aid schemes that are affordable in case any other similar or related pandemic to COVID-19 occurs.

5.3.2. Recommendations to Government

- The government should begin adopting measures in place such as developing a adequate food reserves for emergencies and disasters such as the manner in which the COVID-19 pandemic found them unprepared.
- Government authorities should make it a priority to reserve funds for disaster in a maximised way than usual to ensure that when a pandemic such as COVID-19 occurs, they can provide sufficiently to citizens while adopting other measures to sustain such provision.
- Policy considerations regarding budgetary allocation should be set in place for households who do not have breadwinners for cases of emerging pandemics and unexpected outbreaks.

- The use of force or violence while restricting people's movement to avoid the spread of a pandemic such as COVID-19 should be mitigated with more simple "nudging" strategies found in theories of public governance research.
- Adequate medical facilities must be established to ensure that there is capacity in case of an unexpected outbreak of a pandemic such as COVID-19.
- Research and Development (R&D) should be the focus of government to fully develop capacity and skills for sufficient medical personnel to help impoverished people with medical attention when an unexpected outbreak of a pandemic such as COVID-19 occurs.

5.3.2. Recommendations to Business Sector

- The business sector ought to apply sustainable business practices and ethics such as corporate social responsibility to give back to the community by investing in the creation of adequate medical facilities.
- In addition, the business sector must identify areas that were hard hit by COVID-19 and provide food supplies to vulnerable communities such as households in Epworth.
- Job creation should be prioritised to absorb young people who face socio-economic effects of COVID-19, in particular young adults taking care of children who are left behind to head households by parents who died.

5.4. Lessons for Future Studies/Research

Future studies may find it useful to adopt a different methodology such as quantitative research design to enhance research similar this study. In addition, future research could find it valuable to include a larger sample than the current research to build more understandings extending to more areas than merely one area such as Epworth. This would help in increasing a variety of insights and contributing knowledge for the broader community of research, practitioners, policy makers or government authorities. Another future study related to this research may extend the topic to more than merely the socio-economic effect of COVID-19 by exploring other concepts and aspects that could improve research and add value to society as well as governance.

5.5. Limitations of Findings

The findings of this study had their shortcomings in the sense that certain participants, although understanding the topic and its purpose did not necessarily answer all questions as evidenced by the interview transcripts. The response rate of findings shows a lower participant inclination to support a total overhaul of the current economic status qou for equality. This is evidenced by the lack of in-depth criticism on government. Expected responses that would have added a pertinent voice regarding COVID-19 should have been one: that if the pandemic found the economic situation in an improved state it would have not affected residents in the manner it did in Epworth and Zimbabwe as whole. Although the study focused mainly on breadwinners, the perspectives of people who are indeed breadwinners concerning their experiences with COVID-19 in relation to how they were limited to provide for their dependents are limited.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR A SEMI- STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Research question: *How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect basic household needs in Epworth, Harare?*

Goal of study: *Explore the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 pandemic on households*.

Section A: Biographical Information

1. Age category

18-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-64

2. Gender: ……
3. Marital status: ……
4. Level of education: ……
5. Employment Status…….
6. Number of dependents in your household: ……

Section B: Effects of COVID-19

1. Where do you work currently/ where did you work before?
2. How long have you been employed or was employed in the company you are or used to work for?

3. Did COVID-19 affect your work? If yes, please explain how.
4. Did you manage to find another job during the COVID-19 pandemic?
5. Is there any other source of income for your household or it is solely dependent on you?
6. How did COVID-19 affect the wellbeing of your family? Were you still able to provide support the same way as before COVID-19 pandemic started?
7. How did you manage to take care of your dependents without a stable income?
8. Do you think the government's decision to implement a lockdown was helpful to the ordinary citizen?
9. Are you still feeling the effects of COVID-19 now or the situation has gotten better?
10. Do you have a suggestion of how the government could have handled the pandemic other than lockdown?
11. Do you/have you ever received any financial support from institutions or organizations to support your family during the pandemic?
12. Is there anything else that you would like to add in respect of the effects of COVID-19 on unemployment and poverty.

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Consent Form

Tittle of the Project: Exploring the Socio-Economic impact of Covid-19 on households in Epworth, Harare. A vulnerable community.

Name of the Researcher: Memory Tinotenda Mashatise

I..... agrees to participate in this research project and agree to the following.

Please tick the relevant options below for your answer.

The research project was clearly explained and I am aware of what the study is about.	Yes	No
I am fully aware that I can volunteer to take part in the study.	Yes	No
The researcher has fully explained that the interviews might be recorded and I agree.	Yes	No
The Researcher explained that the participant's responses are confidential.	Yes	No
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous and my name will not be disclosed.	Yes	No
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview based on the ethics clearance obtained without using my name	Yes	No

Name of Participant.....

Signature.....

Date.....

Name of researcher/ person seeking consent : Memory Tinotenda Mashatise

Signature.....

Date.....

Appendix 3: Participant Sheet

Dear Sir/Ma'am

My name is Memory Tinotenda Mashatise. I am pursuing a Master's Degree in Management at the University of Witswatersrand school of Governance. I am conducting a research study about Covid-19 and the research title reads, Exploring the Socio-Economic impact of Covid-19 on households in Epworth, Harare. A vulnerable community. My supervisor is Prof Pundy Pillay.

I would like to warmly invite you to feel free to participate in an interview/questionnaire for this research. If you wish to contribute, the research study will last about 30 minutes to 1 hour and the interview will take place at the place of your convenience or it could be telephonic. With your permission I would like to audio record the interview. The data will be stored at the university library for research purposes and deleted after 1-2 years. Only the researcher will have access to the data.

During the interview process I would like to ask some personal information about you including your family. The interview will be very confidential and anonymous. When the results are of the research are shared your name will not be included or anything that could identify you. Other researcher's may use the data collected from this research study with your permission and none of your information will be used.

In the event you decide to take part in the research study, it should be because you want to volunteer. If you are not comfortable during the process, you are allowed to withdraw your participation at any given time. On the questions asked, you do not have to answer any if you do not wish to. Please note there are no direct benefits from taking part in this research study, if you wish to take part. There are not any services or losses or costs incurred during the process. Participants will not be charged anything during the research study.

The risk in this research study is close to none, it is very low and it is nothing compared to what happens in life on a daily. The questions that are going to be asked may feel very personal and may upset or make you emotional and if this happens I will stop the interview, you are also free to tell me to stop and could continue some other time.

The research study will be written up as a research report. The report will be available at the university library website in case you would like to receive a summary of the report. If you have any questions during and after the interview in relation to the research study, please feel free to contact me or the research supervisor on the following details. If there are any concerning issues about ethical standards of this research you may contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical) telephone +27 (0) 717 1408, email hrecnon-medica-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Memory Tinotenda Mashatise

Researcher: Memory T Mashatise, (0651722089), mashatisetinotenda@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof Pundy Pillay, (011 717 3808) pundy.pillay@wits.ac.za

Appendix 4: Ethics Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF GOVERNANCE ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE: WSG-2023-44

PROJECT TITLE: Exploring the impact of covid-19 on unemployment and poverty in Harare, Zimbabwe.

INVESTIGATOR	Memory Mashatise
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	School of Governance
DATE CONSIDERED	27 May 2023
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
RISK LEVEL	Low Risk
EXPIRY DATE	Date of submission of the Research Report

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 6 June 2023 **CHAIRPERSON** Rekgotsofetse Chikane

Rekgotsofetse Chikane

cc: Supervisor:

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

_____ _____/_____/_____

Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix 5: Turnitin Originality Report